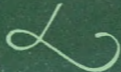


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# BUILDING MANSIONS IN THE SKIES

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# Building Mansions in the Skies

Did you ever wonder, Friend Reader, what you would say when you arrive at the door of the better world if you were asked for an accounting as to how you spent your life here upon the earth? The Bible does not give detailed information upon such a question, but we are indebted to that distinguished lay author, S. D. Gordon, for the following imaginative description of the appearance of a man rich in this world's goods before Heaven's gateman:

"Here is a man who gets through his life down on the earth and goes out into the other life. . . . Here he comes up to the gateway of the upper world. He is lugging along a farm or two, some town lots and houses, and a lot of beautifully engraved paper—bank stocks and railroad bonds and other bonds.

"As he gets up to the gateway the gateman says: 'What's all that stuff?'

"'Stuff?' he will say, astonished. 'This is the most precious wealth of earth, sir! I have spent my whole life, the cream of my strength, in accumulating this.'

"'O, well,' the reply will be, 'I have no doubt that is so. . . . But that sort of thing does not pass current up in this land. That has to be exchanged at the bankers' offices for the sort of coinage we use here.'

"The man looks a little relieved at this last remark. 'Where are the bankers' offices?' he asks eagerly.

"'They are all down on the earth,' comes the quiet answer. 'You must do your exchanging before you get as far up as this. That stuff is all dead loss now. You can't take it back to the bankers now, and it is of no value here. Just leave it over on that dump heap there outside the gate and come in.'

"And the man comes in with a strangely stripped and bare feeling.

"What we get and keep for the sake of having we lose, for we leave it behind. What we give

away freely for Jesus' sake, for men's sake, we will find by and by we have kept, for we have sent it on ahead."

## Christ Taught These Principles

Note how closely the thoughts of Mr. Gordon coincide with the teachings of Jesus upon the futility of laying up earthly treasures to the neglect of building mansions in the skies:

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is there will thy heart be also."

*Matt. 6: 19-21.*

"And he said unto them, Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

*Luke 12: 15.*

As if these emphatic messages from the Master were not sufficient, we find them reinforced by the fact that sixteen of his thirty-eight reported parables deal with the right use of possessions and talents; while of the four gospels giving a narrative of Christ's ministry and message, one verse out of every six deals with money. Since Baptists profess to acknowledge Christ and him alone as Lord and Master, they owe it to him to do what he says in the administration of those possessions which he has entrusted to them as stewards.

## Should Match Doctrines with Gifts

So consistent have Baptists in general, and Southern Baptists in particular, been in their adherence to Christ's teachings on the meaning and method of baptism and the Lord's Supper that they have won the admiration of the Christian world for their loyalty to these great Bible principles. They glory in their orthodoxy on these and various other fundamental Christian doctrines, but how faithfully have they obeyed Christ's commands on the right use of money?

Southern Baptists were twenty-fourth on the list of twenty-six leading evangelical denominations of North America in their per capita gifts of \$2.21 to missions and benevolences last year, while their total per capita gifts to all purposes, amounting to \$10.80, ranked twenty-fifth on the list. All informed persons know there are among Southern Baptists many thousands of loyal, liberal men and women who are investing generously in the Lord's cause, and are thereby building for themselves an eternal heritage. The average per capita gifts are so small because the vast majority of church members are doing so little or nothing.

From a review of the reports of Southern Baptist churches to their district associations, Dr. E. P. Alldredge, statistical secretary of the Baptist Sunday School Board, has estimated that only about 200,000 Southern Baptists give as much as a tenth of their income to the Lord's work. (The associational letters give the approximate number of tithers in the respective churches.) About 1,500,000 members give fairly regularly but less than a tenth; 500,000 give occasionally but rarely; while at least 1,500,000 never give anything to missions!

If every member of every Southern Baptist church demonstrated his religion by carrying his proportion of the responsibility for advancing Christ's kingdom in the world our denomination would immediately become the most vital force for Christianity the world has known since the First Century. Certainly we ought to be as orthodox in our giving as we are in our baptism.

### **Giving Is Essential to Worship**

Someone has well said: "Until men think of God as the sovereign owner of all property and life, he will not be to them a real person." More emphatic pronouncements from God's Word are to the effect that no one can acceptably worship the Father who refuses to honor him with his substance:

**"They shall not appear before Jehovah empty: every man shall give as he is able."**

*Deut. 16: 16, 17.*

**"Bring an offering and come into his courts."**

*Ps. 96: 8.*

Equally explicit are the teachings of the Word to the effect that God will greatly honor and bless those servants of his who are faithful stewards of the possessions entrusted to them:

“Honor Jehovah with thy substance,  
And with the first-fruits of all thine increase:  
So shall thy barns be filled with plenty,  
And thy vats shall overflow with new wine.”

*Prov. 3: 9, 10.*

“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.”

*Luke 6: 38.*

Have you ever stopped to consider what Southern Baptists could do in kingdom building if they really consecrated themselves, their time, their talents and their possessions to the one supreme task of Baptists, carrying out the great commission of Jesus Christ? Look for a moment at their vast numbers and resources: 24,774 churches with 3,616,964 members; 21,147 Sunday schools with 2,683,331 pupils; \$183,830,835 worth of local church property; 112 Baptist schools for the training of workers, which now have 40,000 pupils enrolled, and own assets in the sum of \$57,744,087; twenty-five hospitals in the homeland with property in excess of \$14,000,000; and eighteen orphans' homes with property valued at \$5,000,000! The denomination, Southwide, state and local, has assets in excess of \$275,000,000. While all have heard a great cry about debts (and the debts are heavy and ought to be paid) the total indebtedness, exclusive of that on local church property, will scarcely exceed \$20,000,000, or only a little more than \$5 per capita for our church membership! To these resources should be added the vast annual income of Southern Baptists, which is estimated at \$1,600,000,000!

## God Has Purpose for Baptists

Why, we may well ask, has God so greatly honored Southern Baptists with numbers and resources? We speak reverently when we say we believe the Lord, out of appreciation of South-

ern Baptist loyalty to many of the great fundamental truths of his Word, has honored us with numbers and wealth in order that we might be in a position to carry the whole gospel to the whole world.

As never before Southern Baptists, for the most part, are enjoying such comfort and ease, not to say luxury, as they have never known before. They are living in better homes, wearing costlier clothes, eating finer food, riding in more expensive cars, and indulging themselves along practically every other line to a greater degree than ever before. But do these things represent a sufficient investment of our vast resources? Did not God expect when he gave us this great prosperity that we would do vastly more than we are doing for the advancement of his cause in the world? This would seem to be indicated by the fact that at the same time he has given us such wealth he has opened wide the doors of missionary opportunity in the Southland and around the world. On no side of the world is there a door closed to the Christian missionary, and from practically every land there comes to Southern Baptists the Macedonian call, "Come over and help us."

## God Has Workers Waiting

Already God has raised up and trained hundreds of missionaries to carry the message. It remains now for the merchant, the professional man, the farmer, the mechanic, the teacher and whoever in our churches professes the name of Jesus Christ to provide the funds with which to send these missionaries to their fields and maintain them there; for in the language of Paul, "*How can they go except they be sent?*"

An interesting feature of God's plan for world redemption is his provision that the man at home who makes his money and consecrates it to missions has a vital share in the winning to Christ of those souls who respond to the preaching of the missionary whose sending this man's money made possible. "*For as his share is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his share be that tarrieth by the stuff.*" When time ends and all the redeemed enter into their eternal reward, the consecrated

contributor and the loyal missionary who preached the Word will both have a share in the salvation of those souls whom their joint labors have won to the Master. And each will have built for himself a mansion in the skies.

## God Multiplies Small, Loving Gifts

This folder is intended not alone for persons of large means but for those of small means as well, and all others in between. Probably the greatest gifts in the world's history have been made by the very poor, because in many instances they have given their all. God is able to take the small gift that is offered in love and multiply it a hundred and even a thousandfold. Illustrative of this truth the following beautiful story is told:

An old woman one day said to her pastor, who had a short time before made an appeal for money to be used in carrying on the charitable and missionary work of the church: "It is little that I can do, Mr. H.—, with my scanty means to help along the good work. Where others give ten, fifteen, twenty dollars, I can give but one. What can one dollar signify where so many are needed?"

An expression of sympathy flitted across the minister's face. "I know how you feel," he answered. "I, too, have been through that experience. But, my friend, let me ask you a question. Did you ever calculate the increase of a dollar at compound interest?"

"Never," replied the other, wonderingly; "at least, not since I was a child at school."

"I did not long ago," was the minister's response, "and I found that in less than two hundred and forty years it would amount to more than two and a half million dollars, and I asked myself whether God would not make a dollar given for his cause grow as rapidly as it would do by the laws of trade. What do you think about it?"

"I am satisfied now to give my one dollar," was the reply, and the minister was well content.

In this age of ease and luxury we need oft to remind ourselves of Paul's warning words: "Each one of us shall give an account of himself to God." It depends entirely upon us as individuals whether the record we present is good or bad. Probably all who read this message are already regular contributors in a fashion, but possibly we need to catch the spirit of David, in many respects a man after God's own heart, who evinced the right motive when he declared: "Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto Jehovah my God which cost me nothing."

Southern Baptists need to so get the causes of God's kingdom upon their hearts that they will count it a privilege to deny themselves some of the luxuries and even conveniences of life in order that they may help the more in carrying the saving gospel to a dying world, and thus build for themselves mansions in the skies.

Over against the treasury  
He sits who gave himself for me.  
He sees the coppers that I give  
Who gave his life that I might live.  
He sees the silver I withhold  
Who left for me his throne of gold,  
Who found a manger for his bed,  
Who had not where to lay his head.  
He sees the gold I clasp so tight,  
And I am debtor in his sight.

*Missionary Review of the World.*