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Holiness Writers

AN INVENTORY OF THE SOUL

By

Harry F. Taplin

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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AN INVENTORY OF THE SOUL

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"CAUGHT IN THE TIDE"
"MY CHURCH"

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Contents

Second Title Page

Dedication

Introduction

Preface

Chapter

1

Our Dollars and Dimes

2

That Endless Influence

3

Each Moment of Time

4

Our Daily Lives

5

Air We Breathe

6

Service to God and Men

7

Days As They Dawn

8

That Life-Giving Message

9

Strength of Our Bodies

10
Prayer
Off the Ration List

11
Our Faith
Little, Much, Great

12
Worshippers
Whisperers
Wanderers

13
Our Talents
One, Two, Five

14
The Atmosphere of Our Homes

15
Our Words An Index to the Soul

Conclusion

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To

Dr. Wm. G. Heslop

a true friend, whose upright
spirit and Godly counsel has stirred
and inspired me to broader visions, higher
heights, and deeper depths in the
stewardship of my life, this
book is lovingly
dedicated

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Introduction

It is with exceptional pleasure that I commend the reading of this book to all who would be faithful stewards of their lives to God. This is not just another book, but rather one that deals with the practical side of our life. This volume contains heart searching truths relative to the successful life in Christian Stewardship. Its contents will serve to strengthen the faith of all who read this book and I trust will impress upon them the joyous privileges which are theirs as stewards of the living God.

Here is indeed food for thought. I am certain that an honest inventory of the soul will be profitable to all after reading from these pages. Fortunately we are still in the land of the living and it is not, too late to better our lives and by His grace become profitable servants. "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" I Cor. 4:2.

The writer has through the years put into practice the exhortations of this book. We thank our brother for it, and pray that each reader will peruse its pages with more than a passing interest and will determine to incorporate its truth into his or her life. May it be the instrument of blessing that its author cherishes it to be.

G. W. HENRIKSEN
Bismark, North Dakota
December 12, 1946

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Preface

A prize was once offered for the shortest and most complete essay on, "Why the Spanish Navy Made Such a Poor Showing in the Spanish-American War." The winning paper was short and right to the point. It contained two statements: 1. The Spanish Navy failed because it lacked three ships. 2. They were disciplinship, battleships and marksmanship.

It would not be out of order to paraphrase this account by saying that the church today is making too little progress because of lack of three ships. They are: Discipleship to Christ, fellowship with one another, and stewardship to God.

The Christian life is two-fold, what God does for us and what we do for God and others. Stewardship includes every phase of life our daily living, our time, our talents our money, our everything. Sharing with others not only saves them, but helps us to be more happy.

"It's not what you'd do with a million
If riches would e'er be your lot,
But what are you doing at present
With the dollar and a quarter you've got."

It is a fact that few who read these lines will ever have a million dollars to spend. But an important angle of our lives is how we are spending the smaller amounts that we do have.

"Only one life will soon be past
Only what's done for Christ will last."

We will never have a thousand tongues with which to sing. This is the only life any of us will have. It is indeed important that we do our best during this one short trip that we are making.

When we look about us and see many squandering their money in the service of the devil, we cannot help but feel that it is a blessing that they do not have a million dollars to spend in the same way. And as we see others living every moment they have in sin, we conclude in the light of eternity that it is a blessing to all ages that they only have one life with which to serve the devil. And as we pass on down the street and hear a group of men using their tongues in cursing and swearing, we feel from the depths of the soul that it is a blessing that they only have one tongue to use in that manner.

Every Man Is A Steward

Webster says of a steward, "One who directs affairs, a manager, one who supervises." The question of man's stewardship and of his accountability is as old as history. It has entered into all philosophies of life, all creeds, and all religions. And the religion of Jesus Christ is no exception.

While on earth, Jesus said much regarding man's stewardship and faithfulness to what he has. Every race of every age has held to some form of stewardship. It is the only sensible and right way to look upon life.

Everyone has some things over which he is controller, supervisor and steward. The minor details of life are largely in man's own hands. We have a little money. We each have at least one talent. We have each spent a few years of life. What have we done with them? How have we used them? There is really no use boasting of what we would do for God if we had a thousand lives until we begin to make the most of and do our best with the one that we now have.

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CHAPTER 1 OUR DOLLARS AND DIMES

This is one of those touchy, ticklish subjects. The thought of money lies pretty close to a man's heart. Not many people, in comparison to earth's millions, are willing to freely and openheartedly listen to the Bible teaching about the stewardship of their money. Bishop Fowler once said, "On the Judgment Day more people will stand condemned for the way they have handled their money than for any other one thing." Every man ought to keep a set of books on how much money he received and how he spent it. In many cases it would reveal some interesting facts at the end of the first year. When I first began setting down my earnings and my spendings, I discovered at the end of the first year that I had spent more for candy than I had given to God. That shocked me. I reasoned with myself, "That is not fair and will not look well at the Judgment. I will be condemned when I see the multiplied millions of earth pass by the White Throne without ever having heard that wonderful saving Name of Jesus even once, and I have spent more money for candy than for their salvation." You can rest assured that I changed my spending during the next year. Oh, I was a tither. My mother had taught me that as a boy. I gave back to God His one-tenth. I was buying this candy out of my nine-tenths. But the fact still faced me, "I was spending more for candy than for God and missions." Even though we do tithe, God has a right and should have a part in our spending of the nine-tenths. We are stewards of our money.

Whatever has been said for or against the doctrine of tithing as taught by the Bible, everyone must admit that it is fair and just. From the man who makes \$50,000 a year God requires one-tenth. From the man who earns \$500 a year God asks one-tenth. From the boy or girl who makes \$.50 a year running errands, God asks one-tenth. That is the minimum. That is God's. If we do not give back to Him at least that much, Malachi declared that we are thieves and robbers. Could anything be more fair and reasonable? It would help each of us if we could definitely realize that we are stewards of every nickel we get. God is holding us responsible for the way we spend it.

God has promised each man a living. But no place in the teaching of the Bible is there any license for wasting. There is no place for over-indulgence. There is no place for misspending. The love of money is the root of all evil. One has said that money is the acid test. Would it not be the wisest and the safest plan for each one to take Jesus Christ in as His partner? He will guide us in the spending of our money and help us to make investments that will have eternal value. The things we eat and drink will pass with the using, but money given to a suffering, sin-sick world will be drawing interest long years after the sun has ceased to shine and the moon has turned to blood and the stars have fallen and grown dim. The tithe IS God's. But what a blessing God sends when we dig down into the other nine-tenths and give further to rescue a fallen world to Him. One of the important questions on that Great Day will be, "How did I invest my money?"

At our church last night the Superintendent of Study of our local Missionary Society brought us some startling facts. One was that America has an unfinished task of giving the Gospel to the world.

She said that a large percent of the world's population had never heard the story of Jesus. And from these heathen lands, daily, thousands of souls pass on into Christless graves, never once during life having the opportunity of hearing the Gospel story. And in these countries alone the heathen babies are born twenty-five times faster than the people accept Christ. For every one that accepts Christ and turns to Christianity twenty-five little innocent babies are brought into the world, most of them to live and die without hearing the precious Name of Jesus even once. And when we realize that there is no other Name under heaven whereby men can be saved, does it not stir us to spend our money wisely so we will have more to give to rescue perishing men?

Is it any wonder that our leaders are urging us to raise a million dollars for missions each year? This is our day. It will soon be past. We will never have another. This is the only opportunity we will have of investing our money in the kingdom of Jesus. Yes, we are stewards of our money. We can spend it upon ourselves or we can invest it in lost men.

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CHAPTER II THAT ENDLESS INFLUENCE

One man has said that our influence is one of those things that never dies. Long after we have been carried to the silent city of the dead our influence will be living. And the serious thing about our influence is that whether good or bad it lives on. If it has been corrupt it goes on and on widening and deepening until the end of time. If it has been good it will continue to bless the world as long as time shall last. Very often we are unconscious of the work of our influence. It works many times in silence, but for good or evil it works. Influence is somewhat like our shadow. It is with us all the time. We cannot get away from it.

I was pastoring a church in the Middle West country. One morning as I came to the church for the morning service I noticed a different car from our own group parked by the church. I approached the car and introduced myself as the pastor, inviting them to come in. There was the father and mother and four small children. At the close of the service I invited them to come back. That night the father and mother returned, leaving the four small children home, but bringing four older young people. I again invited them back. The next Sunday the entire family came to Sunday School -- mother, father and ten children. I found that they lived ten miles in the country. They became steady attendants at our services, both morning and evening. In a few weeks the children began coming to the altar. A few months later I took the father, mother and five of the children into the church. Today finds one of these young men a graduate of Northwest Nazarene College and a pastor in one of our churches.

Here is the part that influence played in this account. While driving ten miles in to Sunday School every Sunday morning and ten miles home, ten miles in to Young People's Meeting every Sunday night and ten miles home they naturally had to drive past other farm homes. Their influence was silently working. True, they did not realize to what extent. As a father he was only doing what he felt to be the right and Christian thing to do -- taking his family to Sunday School and Church and again to the evening services. But his neighbors were watching him.

One day one of his neighbors asked him how he could afford to drive forty miles every Sunday just to go to church. I have never forgotten the answer this Christian father gave to his unsaved neighbor. Here it is, "I am not sure that I can afford to go, but with ten children growing up, I know that I cannot afford to stay home. These boys and girls as well as my wife and I need the influence of the church services." This answer must have struck deep into this unsaved father's heart as he had three boys and two girls of his own. Soon they separated, each going to his work. But Sunday after Sunday this unsaved man watched the Christian man with his family drive by, going to church.

One Sunday, as he watched them go by, he said to his wife, "There must be something interesting about that Nazarene Church to pull that family in twice every Sunday. We ought to drive in some

Sunday and see what they do. Of course we won't go steady, but now and then will not do us any harm."

About that time the church of which I speak conducted a Sunday School contest. One of the members invited this unsaved man and his family to come and help their side to win. They came, were favorably impressed, and were there again the following Sunday. At this writing seven years have passed. Though they had to drive seven miles each way as a family they have not missed more than a dozen times. Soon they began to attend at night, giving God a better chance to deal with them. It was not long before their hands were raised for prayer. In a few weeks they made their way to the altar. I had the privilege of taking them into the church and today they are filling places of responsibility in that church. Did it pay for this Christian man to cast a churchgoing influence in the community? He was steward of his influence and he cast a good influence upon his neighbor. Eternity alone will reveal the result of this one incident.

But the account does not end here. Across the weeks as these two faithful families drove to church twice each Sunday other neighbors took notice. One Sunday another neighbor brought his family in to see what the attraction was. In a few weeks his entire family was at the altar. They were converted to Jesus Christ and soon joined the church. As these three faithful families drove to church twice each Sunday other neighbors became interested and started coming. At this writing three more families in this community have started attending church and everyone of them has found his way down to the altar and been saved by the blood of Jesus and gloriously sanctified by His Spirit. One by one these families joined the church and are filling positions as stewards, trustees, ushers, Sunday School teachers and Young People's leaders. It all started because one father felt his need of the influence of the church. Sunday after Sunday he was a faithful steward of his churchgoing influence. He began a train for good that will sweep on and on, generation after generation until time shall be no more. The Judgment Day alone will determine the amount of eternal good done because of one man's good influence. One young man in the ministry in the Church of the Nazarene, six families reached for the church is only the beginning of good things that will come from one man being a faithful steward of his influence.

But influence works for ill or evil to the same extent in that it lives on. As the influence for good never dies so the influence of a sinful man does not stop with his death. In a western State I know a family whose living brings out this fact very plainly. There was the father, mother and several children. While the family was young and growing the father would gather these boys and young men around the extended dining table and deal out to them a deck of cards. It was a pastime during the long winter evenings. They played "flinch," "rummy," "pitch" and the common so-called innocent (?) games of cards. But influence was working. Like father, like son. And parents, is that not the way with most of our children? Will they not to a large extent do what they see us do? If anything is all right for father, it surely will be all right for our children.

So the card games continued night after night, week in and week out. All the time these boys were growing and developing. Each wintry season found them one year older. It was not long until the tame card games at home did not satisfy. One by one they sought other forms of pleasure and

amusement. Some of the boys wended their way to the gambling dens of the cities. A few of them learned to play poker. Others learned to gamble. The craze of cards was in their blood. It was second nature to them. They had learned to deal cards around the dining table at home. Their dad had taught them how. As they grew older and the years rolled by, cards became more fascinating to them. Often the beginnings of sin are interesting. The devil never pictures the end of a life of sin at the beginning. Soon they were playing for money. Now and then they would win a little stake. Their desire to gamble grew and intensified. They reasoned, "It is easy money. Why not make more of it?"

Time went by. The card habit grew in their lives. More and more of their time was spent playing cards. They used to spend most of their evenings at home. Now they were seldom found at home during the evening hours. Cards, gambling, poker, money was taking most of their time. Very often their card games did not break up until the wee hours of the morning. It does not take long for a life to go down when men gamble all night and sleep all day. They soon get into the money. It came easy and went just as easy. One after another evil habits fastened themselves to these boys.

At the proper age a desire sprang into their lives to get married, have a home and raise a family. One by one each chose his mate and began a home of his own. But evil habits of ten or twenty years are hard to break. Across the years, cards, gambling, night life had been the hub of their lives. Now there arose a conflict. The wife, the children, the home were on one side. Cards, dice, poker, gambling were on the other side. Habits are binding, the devil is sly, trends of life are often hard to change. Which is going to win? Right is on one side; wrong on the other. The habits and course of a lifetime are pulling against the new found love and joy of a wife, a family and a home. Which way will they go? Will they stay home and make a home for the family or will they continue their night life with cards at the gambling dens of the cities? They are surely enough at the forks of the road. They are going to make an eternal choice. They were wrapped up in their cards. Their gambling had a mighty tight grip on their lives. If they chose to continue to spend their nights away from home, slowly but surely, their homes would fall apart for want of a loving father. No home can long exist where the father keeps late hours night after night, leaving the mother and children at home alone. Late hours and a happy home do not go hand in hand. In most cases, habits, infatuations for others, and a score of other sins enter here. Surely enough, these are important choices for these boys.

What choice did they make? The record shows that in too many of their lives the influence of cards, gambling, dice and poker won out. The thing that father taught them how to do at the dining table at home fastened itself upon their lives so deeply that they chose to do it throughout life regardless of the cost. In actions they said, "Let the home break up. Let the children go through life without a father. Let the Judge divide the property. In fact just let anything come, just so we can play poker, roll the dice, gamble, keep late hours at the dives and dens with all of their accompanying evils. If the children ever get to church, mother will have to take them, or they will have to go alone. We refuse to break the habits of a lifetime. We are having too much fun. Let us play on."

As the years went by, one by one of these boys entered the divorce courts. Homes were broken up. The children that they had brought into the world were forced in many cases to drift through life without a kind father's care and protection. Sweet little babes had to get along the best they could without the love of a father. He was too busy doing the thing that his father had taught him to do at the dining table at home -- play cards. The young brides that they had taken for better or for worse,

come what may, had been so soon discarded for a card game. The wife of their bosoms whom they had promised to love and cherish through sickness and through health was now being discarded for a poker den. The ones that they had promised to stand by until death separated them were being laid aside for the privilege of staying out until the wee hours of the morning doing the things their father taught them to do at home -- play cards.

Oh, the lasting impression our home training makes upon us. How far the influence of a father or mother goes toward molding our future and shaping our destinies. Good or bad, our influence goes on. How different these boys might have turned out had the influence of their father been uplifting and for good. In the plan of God there might have been in that family a missionary of the Cross or a minister of the Gospel, but through the wrong influence of a father the vessel was marred. That father lived within driving distance of a church. He could have heard the Gospel. He could have instituted a family altar in his home and taught those boys to pray. But no, he chose to leave the church and Jesus Christ out of his life until it was too late. In its place he taught his boys to play cards around the dining table. It will take the Judgment Day to reveal the extent of harm this father's evil influence has reached. He was a steward of his influence, and you be the judge whether it was for good or evil.

At this writing the father has passed from time into eternity. He lived to see a ripe old age. His earthly journey is over. Right now he is trying the realities of a life beyond the grave. His body is cold in death; the tongue is silent; the lips move no more; those hands which worked hard and long to provide for a family of eleven children are folded upon his breast. No more the rich red blood courses through his veins. His eyes are closed in that final sleep. But what about his influence? It still lives on in the hearts of his children and friends. It is as a stream flowing on and widening every passing year. It will last as long as time. It will go on living in the breasts of his posterity until the angel from God puts one foot upon the land and the other upon the sea and cries, "Time shall be no more." What a pity! What a shame that it was not an uplifting influence. Is it not too bad that every father does not live so that his influence will live on for good in the lives of his children and future generations?

In 1930 in South Dakota a Christian school teacher went into a small town to teach in a consolidated school. There was a church in the village, but they were struggling for an existence. They had no pastor. She felt led to throw her influence into the work of helping the church and Sunday School to reach the boys and girls and parents of the community. Soon the burden for the souls of these people began to weigh heavily upon her. God seemed to be calling her to conduct church services and to tell them the Gospel story. She yielded to His will and began announcing the preaching services. A small group greeted her each Sunday, but not enough to suit her. This was the only church for many miles and she knew that these people were getting very little, if any, spiritual food. In her sleep she could see these precious boys and girls, fathers and mothers tramping steadily on to the Judgment. And how they stood in the eyes of God, she could not be sure. Yet she could see their lives were not measuring up to the standards of the Bible. She said, "I will not be here long. My stay in this community may be short. I am going to meet every one of these souls at the Judgment.

What I do for them I must do quickly. I will not fail them. I will cast an uplifting influence over them. Maybe I can rescue some of them from the clutches of sin and Satan."

She went to work. She began to open her school days with the reading of a portion of God's Word. She went about on Saturdays and during the evenings inviting the people out to church. She sent invitations home with the children to the parents. She prayed, cried and held on to God in prayer. Her travail of soul for the lost could be heard in the night hours. She took walks up the road and over the hills that she might be alone. In the main the people remained unconcerned, indifferent and distant. She could have grown discouraged and given up or could have said, "After all they have hired me to teach arithmetic, reading, spelling, writing and geography. Here I am a self-appointed spiritual worker. Why spend my leisure hours in the evenings and on Saturdays praying and inviting the folks and preparing talks for the children? I may as well take life a bit easier." But no, she reasoned again, "I am a steward of my life and my influence. I cannot face these boys and girls and parents at the Judgment unless I have done my best for their spiritual welfare. I will continue on, trusting the God who called me to bring the harvest and the increase."

She worked on, writing cards, smiling, praying, preaching, persuading and entreating men to seek the Lord. She grew especially concerned for a family who lived nine miles in the country: a father, mother, three boys and two girls. The depression was on making money scarce and hard to get. She wanted to see them in the services so that she might win them to God. That was her sole purpose. But nine miles seemed a long way over a country dirt road for an unsaved man to bring his family to church. She said to herself, "I will try. I will do my best for them. Maybe by working together with God, I can influence them to come. I will do my little part, backed up by prayer, and leave the results with God."

Every Monday morning she wrote that family a card, just a one-cent government card, telling them that she had not seen them at church the day before. Then she would urge them to come the next Sunday. She kept that up for months, but the result was the same -- they were absent. She knew God was working because He continued to burden her heart for them. Finally, one day as the father read one of those cards, he said, "It looks like we'll have to go to church or that school teacher will spend all of her money and time sending us cards." The next Sunday morning found them in Sunday School. They stayed for church. The sermon impressed them. At the close of the service the father walked to the front and said to this teacher, "Thank you for being so persistent in sending those cards. We will come again." From every angle those cards were a gilt-edged investment for that school teacher. They cost her a very few cents and a little time during the year, but oh, the eternal results!

But the account could not stop there. They continued to come. One by one the family wended his way to that altar of prayer and was gloriously saved. About this time another baby girl came to bless the family circle, who at this writing is in the grades and serving the Lord. In the course of time they joined the church. God called the eldest son into his ministry. One night about midnight amidst tears and prayers I bade him good-bye. He was on his way to Northwest Nazarene College to study and prepare for his life's work. During his years at college a brown-eyed, brunette girl, a fine Christian, entered his life in a special way. They were drawn to each other. After graduation they were married and took a church on the west coast. But that is only the beginning. God laid His hands upon them

for the Mission field. They said good-bye to pine trees, balmy breezes of the Pacific Ocean, native State of Oregon, church people and fine parsonage nestled in the pines. God has called. We must obey. Our lives are young. We must follow the pattern and blueprint that our Heavenly Father has laid out. We will raise this little daughter that Thou has given to us on the Cape Verde Islands. If the General Board will accept us we will go. Boiling the account down, they were accepted by the Board, and at this writing have learned the language and been on the field several months. You be the judge. Did it pay for that school teacher to send Earl Mosteller Jr.'s father those post cards inviting him to church? Yes, a hundred fold in this life and far more in the life to come.

You are interested in knowing how the rest of the family are progressing. The second son was Sunday School Superintendent in the home church until he went to College at Nampa, Idaho. But in a few weeks Uncle Sam sent out a call for men. He joined the Navy and after proper training was sent out to sea. The war came on, bringing with it death and destruction everywhere. His ship was torpedoed. His parents received this message from the War Department, "Your son is missing in action." Later word came that he was dead. Just a few days before these messages came, his mother received the finest letter any boy could send. He gave a glowing testimony to the saving power of Jesus Christ. He also told of others on the ship becoming interested in salvation. That letter is one of the most cherished possessions to that mother now.

The eldest girl has completed her Nurses' Training at Samaritan Hospital in Nampa, Idaho, and is finding a place in Christian Medical service to a needy world. She is now married to a fine Christian man, making her home in northern Michigan. The next daughter was married last summer to a fine Christian young man and they are filling their places in the church. It looks like the world will hear from this family that a school teacher in a small town so faithfully tried to get interested in coming to church. It was not exactly her work as a school teacher, yet she felt that she was a steward of her influence, and must do her best to reach others.

We would term that a gilt-edged investment. Several government cards sent out, but oh, the dividends that they paid back. A father and a mother saved and proving faithful members in the Church of the Nazarene. One boy on the mission field preaching the Gospel to the heathen. One boy already in Heaven, a war casualty, died in the triumphs of the faith, leaving a glowing testimony to his mother and the world of the power of Christ to keep us true in times of danger. One girl with an R. N. degree out finding a place of service to the bodies and souls of men. Another girl married to a Christian young man together planning to invest their lives in service to needy humanity. At this writing he is attending college with plans laid to go as a medical missionary to Alaska. Add to this the hundreds of dollars that they have given to the church, missions and for the spreading of the Gospel and you have a picture of what happened when one school teacher realized that she was a steward of her influence. Think what the church, the Kingdom and the world would have lost had she confined her efforts merely to teaching reading and spelling.

About 40 years ago in the State of Iowa two young people were growing up as neighbors. Soon they became attracted to each other. The young lady moved to North Dakota settling with her parents on a farm. The young man also moved to the same community working on a farm near by. They were

nominal church members, but they knew nothing of an experience of salvation. The young lady had a thirst for dancing, spending many of her evenings on the dance floor. In due time they were married. They belonged to the church, but were very irregular in their attendance. About this time a pastor came to their church and under the anointing of the Holy Spirit stirred them to new depths of living. The mother was gloriously saved. Salvation was real to her now. She had received something from God that enabled her to live a Christian life in the home. The father still clung to his good morals and prided himself in paying his bills and being an honest citizen. He saw no need of getting saved, as they called it. In fact he was cynical and critical of her. As time went on four daughters came into the home.

The mother held on in prayer, becoming a faithful attendant at the church services even though she had to go alone. Often she would be seen hitching the horse to the buggy and with the girls drive away to Sunday School and church. She reasoned to herself, "God has saved me. He has given me these four girls and I must throw a church influence around them. They will be young ladies some day and I want them to be Christians and marry Christian young men." She tried to set up a family altar. She tried to teach the girls to pray. But the father made remarks about prayer that kept the girls from going on and getting saved. An unsaved father or mother can often defeat their children by indifferences and sarcasm. Sunday after Sunday she drove the horse to church. She held on to God in prayer for the salvation of her husband. She reasoned with him. But still he saw no need of going to church so often or getting converted. But her faith did not waver as her influence went on. She determined to be a good wife and mother. She continued to pray. In the course of years, God's mighty hand won out. Conviction gripped this father's heart until he was glad to yield his stubborn will to God. One day he said the final, yes, and went "all out for Jesus." It pays to pray. Together now the father, mother and four children drove to church. As soon as the father was saved; as soon as the girls heard him pray, they began to pray and were converted.

About this time Dr. J. G. Morrison came to town preaching old-fashioned, Wesleyan Holiness. He organized prayer bands over the state and this family joined one of his prayer bands. Months passed by and in the process of time he led all of these groups into the Church of the Nazarene. This family was faithful to the many duties of founding a new church in the city. They called a pastor and purchased a building. A Sunday School was conducted. A Nazarene Young People's Society was organized. Each one of the family filled his place of responsibility in the new work. The father was Sunday School superintendent for years. The mother taught the Bible Class (and still does). The eldest daughter was Y. P. President. One by one the other girls found places of service in the church. Often, numerous times, this family were the only ones present. But they pressed on both in faith and effort. They threw their influence into the cause of holiness in that community. They said, "We will not be defeated. Since it is going to take a holy heart to see God, we must have a church where holiness is preached in its fullness in this city."

So many times it would have been so easy to give up and quit. Nobody seemed to care much or be interested. But they drove on, beseeching God in public and private to send them a Revival and give them souls for their hire. Faithful pastors labored on, often being compelled to live on a very meager salary. One by one families in the community became friendly and interested. The church grew; while souls were being rescued from sin. The missionary giving increased. The pastor's salary was raised many times. One young lady was called to the mission field. Then a young man felt the

call to preach, went to Northwest Nazarene College, graduated and is now pastoring one of our churches on the home District. Another young lady went to N.N.C. to prepare for Christian service and while there married a promising young minister. Another young lady entered the Samaritan Hospital and graduated with an R.N. She found a place of Christian service doing her best for the bodies and souls of men. Another young lady went to N .N.C., graduated, married a young minister and they are now pastoring a church in Minnesota.

Did it pay for this mother to hitch up the horse and drive through the rain of summer and the snow of winter? Did it pay for her to realize that she was a steward of her influence both as a wife, as a mother and as a citizen in the community? Across the years many sinsick, wayward, travelers have found the peace of God in that church. Today, they have a lovely parsonage, paying their pastor a nice salary, and giving hundreds, yea, thousands of dollars to the cause of Missions and for the evangelizing of North Dakota and the world. Many on that Great Day will arise from the east and the west and the north and the south to call Christ blessed because one mother proved to be a good steward of her influence.

You are interested in knowing how the family are coming. Three of the girls married Christian young men. All are finding places of service in the church. The eldest daughter is Women's Foreign Missionary President of the local church and Prayer and Fasting Secretary of the District. The second daughter is Treasurer of the local church, also District Treasurer of the W.F.M.S. Her husband is Sunday School Superintendent in the local church. The third daughter for some time taught the beginners' class in the Sunday School and was church pianist. The youngest girl, still unmarried, at present is Young People's President of the local group, also District Young People's Secretary. The mother is Cradle Roll Superintendent and the father is a Trustee in the local church serving God and the church well. They are all storehouse tithers. And the times any of them miss any type of service are very few and always backed with a genuine reason. Nine grandchildren have come to bless the family circle and each Sunday find s them all at all of the services, the most of them coming for the first time when they were less than a month old.

Influence goes on. Grey hairs grace this mother's head now. The father is in his sixties. Their lives are heading down the western slope. But behind them is a trail of good influence. Those daughters and sons-in-law have knelt often around the old home family altar. Neighbors who have come there to work have heard prayer offered to God before every meal. Whenever services are announced at the church, their car can be seen heading that way. I have heard both father and mother testify many times that the way was growing brighter with every passing year. And if they had their lives to live over, they would live them for Jesus Christ. And this trail of good influence will be going on, growing and widening with every passing day in the lives of their children and in generations still unborn. You and I are also stewards of our influence. May we ever be faithful.

AN INVENTORY OF THE SOUL

By
Harry F. Taplin

CHAPTER III EACH MOMENT OF TIME

The use or the misuse of time very often spells the difference in failure or success. Time is something that is distributed equally. We each have the same amount of time. There are sixty seconds in each minute; sixty minutes in each of our hours; twenty-four hours in each of our days; three hundred sixty-five days in each of our years. In a normal life there are seventy years. That is only 25,550 days. Our lives are short even though we live our full three score years and ten. If we live the best we can and do all we can for others and for God, none of us will get much done in comparison to the great amount of work there is to be done.

It will pay anyone to guard well his time. It is a free gift of God, yet life is slipping swiftly by. You and I are each growing older with every passing hour. Everyone should cultivate the use of his time. There is plenty of time to live a well-rounded life. But we do not have even one moment to waste or misspend. If we get all done that God has planned for us to do we will be busy every moment from now on. If we as Christian stewards win all of those that God would have us win, we will need to be up and at it and always working faithfully.

Every man should live his life by a system or plan. Every one needs to discipline himself. You and I should never allow the passing frolics of life to crowd out our prayer and daily devotions to God. We cannot work all of the time, neither should we use too much time for recreation and play. It is impossible to spend all of our time in the bodily posture of prayer, yet how much faster we would grow and develop spiritually if we prayed some every day. Is there not a temptation at times to spend too much time on the physical man and to neglect the spiritual side of life? Most men do not intend to neglect the soul, but does not the devil come in and cause us to be careless at times? Every moment spent foolishly cannot be spent wisely. Every moment spent on the physical and the material cannot be spent on the spiritual or the eternal.

For example. using those figures just mentioned, in that 25,550 days that man lives in a normal seventy years, there are only 3,650 Sabbath days. If we miss church one-half of the time that cuts our opportunities of hearing the Gospel down to a small figure. If we attend prayer meeting only when everything is favorable, our opportunities will not be many.

I read an article recently in the "Preachers' Magazine" telling in detail of how one man spent one day in his busy life. It was a revelation to me. If we could only see ourselves and how we spend our time as others see us, we might change some things about our living. God has given us all the time necessary to live a well-rounded life. There is ample time to eat, sleep, play, work, pray, study and for service in God's great vineyard. Here is where the problem of the stewardship of time enters. Since God has given us ample time, it is up to us to plan and conserve our time so no portion of life will be neglected. The happiest people in the world are those who are busy. Even doing things at times that we do not enjoy helps us. Nobody succeeds in life who does only those things that he

wants to do. There were many things about Christ's life that He did not enjoy. The Cross was not easy to bear. Gethsemane took much from His life. But one great thing about His life, he kept busy as he went about doing good. He conserved his time in order that He might have more to invest in poor suffering humanity. Time! Time! Time! If only we realized that we are stewards and caretakers of our time, it would aid us greatly. If we, young in life, learn the value of time, we are well on our way toward success and heaven.

AN INVENTORY OF THE SOUL

By
Harry F. Taplin

CHAPTER IV OUR DAILY LIVES

When God placed man in the world, He instructed him to replenish the earth, have dominion over it, subdue it, dress it, till it, and keep it. But man was never told to own the world. We often remark about owning this thing or that property, but in reality, we own nothing. We are only stewards and caretakers of the things that we claim to own. Man is often heard to say, "My car, my hogs, my farm, my children," but that is not quite right. Man is only a steward of these things. Man often remarks of this being new or that being new, but in reality all man has is second-handed. The leather in the shoes we wear belonged to some cow before we bought them. The wool in our suit or coat or dress or sweater belonged to some sheep in yonder field before we bought it. The silk in your hose was the private property of a silkworm before man took it from him. Everything man has was given to him by another. Our lives are a gift of God. But He trusts us with them for a few short years to see whether or not we will be faithful stewards and guardians.

"Of all sad things of tongue or pen, the saddest are these, 'It might have been.' " If we will guard our daily lives here and now and live them each moment as it would please God, when we look back from the western slope, it will not be necessary to say those words. Oh, the wasted lives, the misspent years, the sinful acts, the unguarded moments the careless words, the cutting remarks that man will regret when his race is run and the sun is setting for the last time on his life.

One thing that will help us greatly to get the most out of life is to share it with others. Our Saviour once said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." That is true in every realm. The giving of ourselves to others will bring a great measure of enjoyment. Money is not the only thing that we can give. In fact money is about the cheapest thing in the world. We can give a friendly smile or say a kind word. None would deny that a friendly smile in the past has lifted you above the discouragements of life. Oftentimes in my ministry when I have felt as if I were a failure and that I might as well quit, someone came by and shook my hand and said just a word, but oh, the weight it carried and the good it did. My stock rose. I shook hands with the next person a different man. What did it? Someone came by and gave me something that in reality did not cost him anything.

God has given each of us a life. In turn he expects us to use it for his glory. No man can be entirely happy and live selfishly. It is the giving of ourselves to a war-torn, bleeding, hungry, sin-sick, devil-deceived, hell-bound world that brings joy and satisfaction and happiness. If we could but realize it, men and women everywhere are dying without God. All they need is someone who is willing to spend himself and to be spent for them. It is a challenge to you and me to put ourselves out a bit and be good stewards of this manifold grace of God.

"We were not placed here to dream and drift,
There are loads to carry, and burdens to lift."

It ought to be said of each one of us: he served his generation; he left the world a better place in which to live; he made his contribution to those in need; he put himself out; he suffered; he sacrificed to give his life for others.

God gave us health. He will demand an account of how we used it. Our lives, our health, our time are placed in our hands to use. But, does not God expect us to use them in his service? Were we put in this world to live in foolishness and sin and to twitter our lives away with the tinsel and the froth? No, God gave us health and strength to use for his glory. Every man has countless opportunities for service to a poor, perishing world. You are the steward of your life. I am the steward of mine. Our lives in the main will be lived as we choose they shall be. Man is the controller of his own life, therefore he determines his destiny by the faithfulness of his stewardship. It makes the living of a life doubly important when we realize that others are carefully watching us every day. If we fail, they may be lost.

We emphasize many things about our daily lives such as the rinsing of our dishes, the greasing and oiling of our cars and machinery, the feeding of our families a balanced diet so they will get the proper vitamins. But no man in the world has a bigger job or more important task than that of being a good steward and caretaker of his own life. We are passing this way but once. We will never travel this way again. If we fail in the living of this, one, short, brief life, we have eternally failed. If by our carelessness, we miss heaven, we have missed everything worth while. If we guard not our stewardship and by our neglect and unconcern fail to gain eternal life, we have lost the greatest thing known to man.

AN INVENTORY OF THE SOUL

By
Harry F. Taplin

CHAPTER V **AIR WE BREATHE**

When we as babes arrived in this world, one of the first things the doctor did was to make sure that we were breathing. Air is one of those free things that God gives to each one. There always seems to be plenty for everyone. And there has never been a charge or a tax placed upon it. Each one has had an equal amount of air to breathe. It has been a free gift of God all of these years to every man. In fact our breathing has gone on largely without our paying much attention to it. It is that way with many of the essential things of life.

But, when a man or woman draws some of this precious, essential, necessary element into his nostrils, it becomes his and his alone. It is his to invest in the service of God, or his to waste and misspend in the service of the devil. Man can use this pure air, this gift of God to bless humanity and glorify the God who provided it or man can use it to curse and swear in the service of the devil. At the Judgment one man will not be held accountable for how all the air in the world was used, but each man will be held a steward of how he used the air that he breathed. Each man is a steward of the air that he breathes.

I for one, want and determine to use my breath in prayer for others, in witnessing for my Christ who has done so much for me. If I can use my breath to speak a kind word here and there, that will help to lift a fallen brother, I know that my life will not be lived in vain.

AN INVENTORY OF THE SOUL

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CHAPTER VI SERVICE TO GOD AND MEN

Even though we are living in days of ration cards, government rulings, local boards, selective service, food stamps, points, and many other things brought upon our free lives by the war, there are still many things about us over which we do have control. We as individuals still have many things that the government has made no attempt to control or supervise. More than that to me it is cheering to note that we have some things over which no government or group of men will ever be able to control. There are some things about man over which he is supreme ruler, controller, and supervisor. Man may be forced to do some things, but man cannot be forced to do all things.

In our service to God you and I can be just as faithful as we want to be. On the other hand we can be just as unconcerned as we care to be. The government may tell us how much gas we can burn, or how many pounds of sugar we may use, but as yet, they have not rationed our personal contacts with lost men. In these days we are in danger of hiding behind and blaming the government rationing for a lot of things for which it need not be blamed. The devil is ever present with excuses that will defeat the church and in turn the souls of men. He cares little, if any, how he breaks up the program of the church. If the church cools off, lets down or gives up in its efforts to stem the tide of lawlessness and sin, it will not be the rationing program of the government that will cause it. The devil may try to make us think the government is to blame, but the final analysis will show it to be a lethargy, and unconcern, a cooling off, a letting down, a state of lukewarmness, coming over our own lives. We can be as faithful as we want to be in our service to God.

Whether we realize it or not we are living in the last days of this Gentile age. One of these days the trumpet will sound and time shall be no more. The stroke of midnight will peel out over land and sea any day now. Jesus told us that He was coming back. And when asked what would be the sign of His coming, he gave us several things that would precede His return. II Thessalonians 2:3, "For that day shall not come except there come a falling away first." Men on every hand are cooling off, letting down, and giving up the fight. Thousands are the church members who have no vital concern, and little vision of a perishing world. But even though others may give up the fight and lose the keen edge from their Christian experience, you and I need not go down. We may be living in the last days, but we are still stewards of our own personal service to God. We are promised that even though "a thousand may fall at our right hand, it need not come nigh us." And the old song says, "Not to the strong is the battle, not to the swift is the race. But to the true and the faithful, victory is promised through grace."

We are told in Jude 24 about Him who is able to keep us from falling. Yet in another place we are cautioned about even the very elect being deceived. We are urged to watch and pray, lest that Day come upon us unawares. We are exhorted to take heed lest a promise being left us of entering into that rest, we should fall short of it. Then we are told to give the more earnest heed to the things we

have heard lest at any time we should let them slip, (leak out). Yes, we are stewards all right of our faithfulness and service to God.

Few, if any, of us will be tempted to murder, to rob, to steal or to kidnap. Our temptations will come from other angles. The enemy of our soul will try to get us to round the corners a bit here and there. He will try to get us to let up and slow down and not put forth much effort to be faithful servants of God. We may be prone to lay the blame here or place it there, but in the final analysis we are stewards, managers and caretakers of our service to God. It is our privilege to be just as good a Christian as we want to be. We can work just as hard in God's vineyard as we want to work. We can be just as faithful in our prayer lives as we want to be. There is no limit that our faith cannot reach. All the resources of heaven are ours for the asking. God would quickly dispatch a legion of angels to help us in our efforts to reach others.

We have heard it said, "I'll never go to hell. I'll never be lost." But we are warned to guard ourselves and to be careful lest we slip, lest we miss it, lest we fall short. The Priest and Levite were not condemned because they mistreated the unfortunate man. Their condemnation lay in their being too self-centered and too wrapped up in their own lives. In Christ's interpretation of the parable of the sower he plainly states three things that defeat the progress and growth of the Word in the hearts of men: 1. The cares of the world. 2. Deceitfulness of riches. 3. The lust of other things. The religion of Jesus is not all negatives and prohibitions and must-nots. There is a positive side. We are stewards of our service to God. It is ours to choose how faithfully we will serve Him.

AN INVENTORY OF THE SOUL

By
Harry F. Taplin

CHAPTER VII DAYS AS THEY DAWN

Some people have lived long. Some lives have been very short. The good a man does is not always determined by the number of his days. Methuselah lived 969 years. And about all the Bible says of him is that he lived and died. On the other hand Enoch did not live nearly as long, but he packed so much into his life and lived it so well and was such a good steward that God took him home without allowing him to see the grave. Life is one of those things that is classified more by its quality than by its quantity. The main question on that reckoning day will not be, "How many days did we live?" but rather, "How well did we live our days?"

Men have an equal amount of air to breathe. Men have a like amount of hours in each day. And whether our days and years be many or few, we can live them well. It is the grand and redeemed privilege of every man to live each day as it dawns for God and righteousness and holiness. Each day as it dawns brings to all golden opportunities for service to the Christ who died upon the middle cross. Yes, on that Great Day each man will give an account of how well he lived the days as they dawned. We are stewards of each day. Shall we who have had so much given to us and were born with such a priceless heritage strive to live them well?

The dawning of each new day brings with it new responsibilities, new opportunities for service, new joys, new sorrows. Past blessings will not suffice for today. It will take a new touch, a fresh contact from God each morning to give us the best start for the day. Each new day finds us twenty-four hours closer to the Great Judgment morning. Should we not pack each day full of worthy deeds and acts and words. Our prayer at the close of each day should be in the verse of the old song,

"If I have wounded any soul today
If I have caused some foot to go astray
If I have walked in mine own willful way
Dear Lord, forgive."

AN INVENTORY OF THE SOUL

By
Harry F. Taplin

CHAPTER VIII THAT LIFE-GIVING MESSAGE

One of the reasons the world today is in the chaotic condition it is may be because men and women everywhere, in the church and out of the church, have neglected, forsaken, and cast aside the reading of the precious, old black Book. Not a large percent of the homes of America have a family altar. The old custom of reading a portion of the Word and praying with the children too often has been forsaken. The Word of Life in far too many homes has been buried for days and weeks under a huge stack of magazines. The Bible in too many homes is used primarily for pressing flowers and as a file for newspaper clippings. All the nations of the world who have tried to destroy the Bible have sooner or later found their shores littered with the bodies of their boys and girls. America is not trying to destroy the Bible, but I wonder if we are not guilty of neglecting its sacred pages.

On many of the enemy soldiers found dead upon the battlefield during the recent war, was discovered a New Testament. What does that mean? Oftentimes when men get into trouble they turn to the Bible and its Author. But why wait until trouble comes? Why wait until death is knocking at the door? Why neglect God's Word until that little bloom has been taken from the home? Why put off reading its sacred words until that loved one is taken from us? Why omit its life-giving message from our lives until the doctor shakes his head and says, "This is the end."? Why leave out of our lives God's wonderful promises until the War Department has declared for our boy, "Missing in Action"? Why procrastinate doing that one important thing until the hearse is backed up to the door? Since it is good during the dark hour, it will be just as good during the carefree days. Since it is good at the call of death, it will bring as much comfort in the midst of life. Since it is good to die by, surely it will be as good to live by. Since it is good when we are in trouble, surely it will be good when life is flowing smoothly.

But are we not the stewards of our Bible reading and study? Is it not ours to determine whether we will daily peruse its sacred contents or neglect it for other things. How carefully do we preserve our time that we might have more time to delve into this wonderful, life-giving, salvation-proclaiming Book? Yes, we are stewards of our Bible reading. But, on that Great Day will the Judge of all the earth call us faithful stewards? Others may choose to drift with the tide. Some near us may float downstream. Still others may allow themselves to get so wrapped up with even legitimate things that they neglect Bible reading. Even our relatives may grow careless and neglect to take the more earnest heed. They may cool off and let down for want of the necessary spiritual vitamins. Neglect of Bible study may cause our friends and even our loved ones to grow unconcerned. They may fail to live deeply concerned and burdened lives. In the end and even now they may be classed as unfaithful stewards. But, thank God, we can be faithful in our Bible reading. We can study God's will for us until our hearts will be strangely warmed. By the study of God's Word we can increase our vision of poor, perishing men about us. Yes, in spite of what others may do, we can be faithful stewards. Life is an individual affair. Others may go down, slip, cool off, give

up the effort, but we need not fail God! Faithfulness in our study of God's Word may mean the difference of success or failure both now and in the Judgment Day.

In the fall of the year, after I have purchased my hunting license, before I ever fire a shot, I sit down and study the laws and regulations put out by the Federal Government and the State. I do that to enable me to be on the safe side. I do not want to fall into the hands of the warden with illegal birds in my possession. Others may ignore the rules. Some of my friends may take chances. But I want my life to be open and above board, ready for inspection at a moment's notice. That is also true of my stewardship to God. The rules for life have been given to me. By careful study, I want to know them so I can observe and keep them. I purpose to study the rules so I will know what is right and what is wrong.

When I plan a trip across the country, one of the first things I do is to get a road map of the states through which I expect to travel. Better still, sometimes I obtain the free services of a "travel bureau." They plan my course. They draw heavy lines across my map. They indicate probable detours. They advise the best route. If I follow their instructions my trip will be more enjoyable. If I study their map, it will undoubtedly save me trouble. Why obtain a map? Why enlist their services? I have in mind a safe trip over the best route. I want to get to my destination without accident or harm.

It occurs to me that each of us is taking a life-long trip. It begins at birth. It will end at death. Apart from the road map none of us knows the way. Traveling through this desert world, we need a guide book to point us along toward Heaven. Yes, we are stewards of our Bible reading and study. As we awaken each morning it ought to be our prayer, "Oh, Lord, help me today to study the guidebook so I will not get off the main highway." We will glean a little by skimming through the Bible, but if we want the nuggets of real value, we will need to dig deep, and hard and long.

When my mother passed from this life in October, 1921, she did not leave us much of this world's goods. An old wallet containing a very few coins was all she left us in the line of money. But when we examined her Bible, we found its pages worn, the binding flexible, and verses on nearly every page underlined. I have not forgotten the look at that Bible. I said to myself, "If a mother of six children, the keeper of a home, the raiser of chickens, the tender of a garden could find time to study the Bible like that, surely I can." Yes, mother was a good steward of her Bible study. Often my prayer has been, "Lord help us as second and third generation Nazarenes to follow in the steps of our forefathers."

AN INVENTORY OF THE SOUL

By
Harry F. Taplin

CHAPTER IX STRENGTH OF OUR BODIES

None would challenge the statement that some people have more strength than others. Some seem to be able to stand more work than others. Some seem to be able to get along on less sleep. Some have stouter bodies. Some seem to get more done in the same length of time. But here again is another of those things that is classified by its quality rather than its quantity. Quantity, bulk, weight does not always count the most. The largest people do not always get the most done. The biggest preacher does not always preach the best sermon. The strongest man does not always carry the heaviest load. At the Judgment we will be held accountable only for what strength we had, and how we used it.

But in many realms the strong body has an advantage over the weaker body. If a man can stand a lot, God will hold him responsible for how he used that energy, stamina and stability. It seems very unfair for any to use the main part of his day's energy in selfish living and then give to God the fizzle, tired, haggard end of his strength. It seems reasonable that God is entitled to our best hours and youthful years. When Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," is it wrong to say that he meant: Give of your best to the Master; give of the strength of your Youth; give the first years; give the best that we have? For after you and I have done the very best that we can, we will still be unprofitable servants. Yes, we are stewards of the strength of our bodies. It is our duty to conserve it in order that we may have more to give to Him who laid down his life and gave all of His strength for us. If God has blest us with strong bodies, we ought to pour them out in service at the Master's feet.

AN INVENTORY OF THE SOUL

By
Harry F. Taplin

CHAPTER X **PRAYER -- OFF THE RATION LIST**

Here is one more thing that has not been rationed. Nobody has attempted to tell us only to spend a short, minimum amount of time in prayer. Rather, many of us from early childhood have been urged, entreated, coaxed, and begged to spend more time in prayer if we would defeat the devil in our lives. But in far too many cases is this not one of those things that we so easily put off and neglect? We look about us and see the dire need of prayer in the world. We realize the value of prayer. We covet the power that praying brings. It is one of those things that we know would benefit our lives. Most of us realize its importance in our daily living. We often mention it and at times go so far as to resolve or determine that we shall do better and pray more.

I have heard good, well-meaning, sincere, honest Christians say when stirred by a heart-searching message, "I am determined that nothing shall get between me and a consistent, up-to-the-minute, everyday prayer life. It will not happen again. I have resolved to do this before, but I will not fail this time." The revival season comes, the evangelist is on the job, the pastor urges us to pray. We do stir ourselves some and do better for a time. But, do we not find the devil a clever foe and are we not tempted to let up, cool off, lapse back into the same old rut of carelessness, negligence, and the path of least resistance? Days come and go, the weeks pass, the months roll on into years. The years speed by and all too soon our lives are lived. Then we will be ushered out before Him to whom we must give an account of our stewardship.

Most of us realize that is our need. We mean to do better. Yet, somehow, by hook or crook, by overmuch business, by the cares of this life, the enemy of our souls holds us back and hinders us from actually doing what we ought to do. It matters not to him how he defeats us just so he accomplishes his purpose. Many good, well-meaning people in the last run are going to fail to make the landing because the devil defeated them in their prayer lives. Anything that comes between us and a consistent, intercessory prayer life is an enemy. We find time to get most everything else done that we want to do. We ought to compel ourselves to find time for a real, well-rounded, prayer life. We ought to get alone with God a few moments every day and pray out our troubles to our Heavenly Father. Shall we do the thing now that will stand us in good stead when we stand before the Judge of all the earth?

AN INVENTORY OF THE SOUL

By
Harry F. Taplin

CHAPTER XI OUR FAITH -- LITTLE, MUCH, GREAT

There is no ration or limit on faith. Jesus did not say that we could have just so much and no more. Rather he taught us to believe and exercise our faith for the unusual. There are only two things recorded in the Bible that made the Master marvel. One was the great faith of the centurion; the other was the unbelief of the people of his own country. In the case of the latter it is recorded that there He could do no mighty works. That group of people tied down the hands of the blessed Son of God. In another case he refers to the faith of his own disciples and helpers with the words, "Oh, ye of little faith." But in the incident of the centurion he says, I have not seen so great faith, no, not in Israel."

Faith springs from the heart. It is impossible to believe from the heart until all handicaps and hindrances are put under the blood of Jesus. We increase our faith by using the faith we now have. But we are stewards of our faith life. It is possible to be saved and sanctified, a member in good standing in the church and yet not have much faith that really achieves. The heart can be full of doubts on the point of really getting down and believing God for the unusual and the seeming impossible.

Might it be that our faith has not grown deeper because we have used it so little? Could it be that the faith of many is growing hide-bound, matted, root-bound, shriveled, dwarfed? Are we not content with too little? Do we not give up too easily? To illustrate this I would quote a paragraph which was given at an Assembly some time ago. "Members received, none. Members dismissed, none. No weddings, No funerals, No baptisms. Missionary budget, unpaid. District Budget, unpaid. Home Missions Budget, unpaid. Pastor's salary, unpaid. Pray for us, brethren, that we may hold our own this coming year." Does it require any faith to manage a church in that manner?

If the F.B.I. gave up as easily as some professing Christians they would never overtake an outlaw or a criminal. But we as Christians and members of the Christian church who have the greatest thing in the world to offer to lost men seem to be so easily satisfied. Are we not just skimming the top of the great work that God has outlined for us to do? But is there not a place for real faith in this soul-winning and kingdom-building? Should we not come out of the corner where the devil has tried to drive us and exert our faith for some real, unusual, hard tasks? Faith like so many other things grows, develops, roots and strengthens so much faster and better when used and put to some real exercise.

I do not believe it pleases God who has promised us so much to have us accomplish so little for Him. "Has he not said and will he not do it?" But are we not stewards of our faith? Is it not for us to determine whether our faith will be little, much, or great? If we allow ourselves to be full of doubts, faith cannot work as it should. Ought we not as stewards of this manifold grace of God to stir ourselves until we get on believing ground and cry, "It shall be done of My Father which is in Heaven?"

AN INVENTORY OF THE SOUL

By
Harry F. Taplin

CHAPTER XII **WORSHIPPERS -- WHISPERERS -- WANDERERS**

Among Christians there is much said about the worship service. We refer to our coming to the House of God to worship. We often hear it said that our hearts should be filled with worship as we enter the church. But even with this sacred word, there may have been some false notions and ideas as to the basic meaning of the word. Webster declares it to mean, "Reverence, respect, adoration or homage paid to God." Could it be possible that some church-attenders have felt and acted like all there is to worship is the putting on of a serious expression and a sanctimonious look?

Should our worship end with the benediction at the church? If I respect anyone, I do so all the time, not just while in God's House. If I adore a person, I do so seven days each week. It is included in my thinking often during the day. Our worship should enter our daily lives. In our work, our plan, at the office and on the farm our thoughts should rise now and then in adoration and praise to Him who gave his life that we might have salvation. As Christians should we not cultivate that habit of the presence of God continually? We should ever strive to keep ourselves from growing like that group to which Jesus referred one time, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." Then to emphasize that his religion was of the heart he said one day, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Could that possibly mean just while at church? Is the "worship service" all there is to our worship? Is there any part of man's life that dares be separated from worship, homage, reverence, respect or adoration of God? Yes, we are stewards of our worship to God. Lord, help us to worship him more.

Coming back specifically to our worship in the church-house. Our worship ought to be free and easy. It should be spontaneous and never strained. Above all to be genuine it must be sincere and honest. We should not be tied down. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Sometimes we seem to forget that we are in the church-house. Our church is God's House. It has been dedicated to the service of God, singing, praying, praising and preaching. And we as Christians by our very heart attitude can make the service about what we choose it to be. If we are light and jesting others will be the same. If we are full of praise, others will join us. If we are distant and chilly, others will be like us. If we have allowed material things to have the majority of our thinking through the week, it will be hard to banish them the instant we enter the church. That is the reason we ought to keep God foremost in our thinking every moment we live. If we do that, we will come to church prayed up and blest, and it will be the natural thing for our hearts to lift to Him in worship and praise.

We need not be cold and formal. Our lives need not be dry and juiceless. It is not necessary to wear a long face to worship. Our hearts need not be rigid and unfriendly. Yet, on the other hand we need to guard against being too light and frivolous in God's house. We can use God's house to visit and laugh and talk about business of the week and miss the real purpose of the church. In the main the church services are held to magnify the Name of Jesus and to point men to Christ and to worship

the great Omnipotent God of the Universe. To me worship is not all quietness and form. Neither is it all praises and shouts. But if we have hearts full of worship there will be shouts or tears or some form of expression. If we worship Him through the week, it will be second-nature for us to worship and praise Him at the church. It will be well for us to remember a statement Jesus made one day, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" None will question the statement that the religion of Jesus Christ is "an around the clock" and "all through the week" business. Summer, winter, spring and fall we ought to be in tune with Heaven. And that alone will keep the joy-bells ringing in our hearts whether at church or at work. Most of us would get more from our church services if we prepared our hearts better in private worship and devotions before we came. I find my heart crying out, "Oh, God, help me to cultivate my worship to Thee and make me a good steward of Thine."

AN INVENTORY OF THE SOUL

By
Harry F. Taplin

CHAPTER XIII OUR TALENTS -- ONE, TWO, FIVE

Much is said about our talents. The parable of the Talents seems to teach that some have but one talent while others have two and yet others have five. It teaches that the number is not important. Our use and development of our talents is the major thing. And did you notice that the man with one talent was not held accountable for the talents of the men who had two or five? He was condemned because he did not use the one talent that he had. He was called an unfaithful steward because he refused to use what he had. On the other hand, the other men were acclaimed faithful stewards because they used and invested what they had. The same law is in operation even today.

This may be the reason for some of the trouble within the church and in the community. Some may have failed to realize that they are stewards only of those talents they have and not those that they do not have. It is easy for us to allow ourselves to become covetous of the other person's talent. And while we are doing that, we are forgetting and neglecting our own talents. And that is just as the devil would have it. If he can get any person to looking at the other person's talent and neglecting his own, he has that person slipping and heading down and out. Too often we fail to realize that the developing of our talents and the living of our lives as God wants them lived is a full sized job.

There are some things that we can do and it is our God-given responsibility to do them the very best we can. There are some things that we never will be able to do. These are not our talents. They are not our responsibility. At the Judgment we will not be held accountable for anything that we were unable to do. So it all boils down to this fine point. God has given us some abilities and talents; it is our life's work to develop them and to use them in the service of a needy, perishing world; he has endowed others about us with some talents and abilities; he has outlined their lives; they have a special work to do; it is in reality little or none of our business how they do that work or how much honor and praise they receive while doing it. One day an Apostle of Christ asked him regarding another of the Apostles. Jesus said, in substance, to him, "That is really none of your affairs. Your entire life's job is to follow me."

The man with two talents received the same reward as the man with five. It is not the quantity that counts, but rather the faithfulness of our service to him. And though it is not stated, by implication the parable teaches that if the man of one talent had used and invested his talent wisely and faithfully, he would have received the same reward. We need not feel too badly if we find ourselves with but one talent. It is not the amount that brings the reward, but our faithfulness to them. The less ability we have, the less we will be held accountable for on the Judgment Day. The man with one talent was not punished because he did not bring the same returns as the man with five talents. He was called an unfaithful steward because he did not use and develop and invest the thing that he had. That is the rule by which you and I will be judged. Not what we would do with fifty talents, but what are we doing with the one or two or five that we now have.

One of the saddest things we will face at the Judgment is the fact that it could have been different. "Of all sad things of tongue or pen, the saddest are these, it might have been." If we fail him now, we are going to be forever sorry. If God saw fit to trust us with abilities and talents, the very least we ought to do is our best in developing and investing and using them in His great vineyard. But in the final decision it is ours to decide whether we will be faithful or unfaithful stewards of the talents that God has given us. It is ours to decide what reward we will get on that Great Reckoning Day. The man with two talents and the man with five talents received the same praise and reward from their Lord, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Why did he say this to them? Because they had been faithful over a few things. But when he came who had received the one talent the answer was different. He called him wicked, slothful, and unprofitable. Did he call him these three names because he was only a one-talent man? No, simply because he was unfaithful. He neglected or refused to invest what he had. This drives me to my knees and my prayer is, "Oh, God, make me a faithful steward whether I have one or ten talents. Help me to faithfully do my work every day. I do not want to fail Thee when Thou hast done so much for me. In the last day I do not want to be called wicked, slothful or unprofitable. Help me to live so Thou wilt be pleased to call me a faithful steward. Above all else I want to enter into Thy joy."

AN INVENTORY OF THE SOUL

By
Harry F. Taplin

CHAPTER XIV THE ATMOSPHERE OF OUR HOMES

As individuals we may not always get our full desire in a complex government and civilization. We may not always agree fully with the acts of our legislators. Our Federal laws do not always meet with our approval as Christian citizens. We are living in a Democracy where the ballot wields a big influence. Some of us are not convinced yet that the 18th Amendment should have been repealed. It is a shame that vice and crime should be allowed to run at the pace it is going. Many of us are not blind to the fact that King Alcohol is taking a heavier toll annually than the World Wars. Thousands in our land do not like to see the Sabbath desecrated in Christian America as it is. We are not convinced that young men and young women should be turned loose on the dance hall floors and on the streets and highways with plenty of liquor, making "whoopie" until the wee hours of the morning. I have lived near two dance halls and I have been the loser each time. Many things are not carried on as we feel they should be in a so-called Christian nation. We note in history, both ancient and modern, how other nations went down by wine, women and song. And when we look about us, we shudder to think of the future of our own fair land.

But there is a place where we are in control. Maybe we cannot fully regulate the nation, state, county, township or city in which we live. But in the home we are sole supervisors. There may be liquor in great quantities down town, but we can refuse to allow it to be brought across the thresholds of our homes. Our neighbors may conduct wild, drinking parties, but we as stewards of our homes should not follow their example. Some of our neighbors and very dear friends may use their homes for card parties, but we can resolve not to allow cards in our homes. In our communities some may use their homes for dining and dancing until the wee hours of the morning, but we can refuse to pollute our homes with that kind of conduct. Even our relatives may use their homes for smokehouses, but we are not compelled to follow in their train. Others may use the sacred precincts of home for cursing and using the dear Name of our Saviour in vain, but we can guard our words. To a large degree we can regulate the music that comes into our homes over the radio. In the main we can control the music that stands on our pianos. We can regulate the kind of magazines that lie on our center tables. Yes, we can even control the kind of pictures that hang upon our walls. We are largely responsible for the type of books that stand in our libraries.

Analyzing it down, you and I are stewards of our homes. As parents we can train our children the appreciation for good music, good radio programs and uplifting pictures that teach silent lessons. Our homes, the only place on earth we do fully control, can be to a large degree places of love, worship, conversation and music that will lift our hearts up and point them to Jesus. The atmosphere of our homes can be a supplement to the services of our church. It can help to clinch the nail that the pastor or the Sunday School teacher has driven. The pictures on our walls can teach silent wordless messages to our children and to our friends as they visit us. The books in our library can be uplifting in content. The magazines in our stand can be of a high type and clean message. The conduct of our families can largely be a good example to our neighbors. As our friends and neighbors see us drive

away toward the church on Sunday morning, and for the other services of the week, they will be helped to live better. There may be many things about our complex world about which we have little to say. But we are still stewards of our homes and family life. The more members of any home that will go with God, the higher example that home will carry in the community. One unruly member in any home can do much harm. It is our individual, personal responsibility to make our homes the best that they can be in every way. Every member can lift the influence of the home or drag it down. Shall we each arise and say, as for my part our home will be the best home that I can make it?

In the fall of 1926 four young men and myself went north to work in the harvest fields. We remained up there nearly two months. Of that time twenty-nine days were spent in a fine farm home. Other neighbors threshed on Sunday. We did not. In place of working, we went to church. After the noon meal about twenty of us young men from many states gathered in the parlor at the invitation of the mother and spent the afternoon singing Gospel songs. Here was a mother that realized she was a steward of the home life for her eight boys and two daughters. Also she wanted to make a contribution to the lives of those hired men who came to her home every fall to thresh. And as far as I am concerned, she was a good steward. I shall never forget her and those hours of hymn singing on those Sunday afternoons. It lifted me. It did something worthwhile and lasting for me. Do you wonder that many of us brawny harvest hands wiped tears from our eyes when we broke camp and said the parting good-bye, returning to our homes?

Later, that same fall, I went to southeastern South Dakota to husk corn. The corn-harvesting time is always a rush season for the farmer. There is usually a race to get the corn in the crib before it is covered with snow. The first morning long before daybreak we were called to go to work. After doing our chores, we were called to breakfast. We ate a fine breakfast of wheat-cakes and sausage. At the close of the meal the father opened his Bible and began to read. When he had finished reading we got on our knees while he thanked God for the light of one more day. He invoked God's blessing upon his two hired men who were picking his corn. While on my knees my mind wandered back to our old family altar. It seemed I could hear my mother pray again. It impressed me. Here was a farmer with 5,000 bushels of corn in the field. Winter was coming on and it meant much to him to get his corn in the crib before snowfall. But he took time at the beginning of the day to lift his heart to God. When Sunday came, we went to church. Here was a man that was a good steward of his home life. The memory of this home lingers with me yet even though twenty years have gone by.

A home is not quite what it could be that has no family altar. Every home ought to have a place and time for family prayer. I was raised around a family altar. Even though mother has been gone to Heaven twenty-five years, I can still feel the pressure of those wrinkled hands upon my head as she prayed for me each morning around the family altar before I went to school. She seemed to realize that she was a steward of her home life and was responsible for the influence she threw around her family. I have never been able to get away from those prayers. Truly the song-writer fit my case when he wrote, "Mother's prayers have followed me the whole world through." Home! Home! Lord, help me to be a good steward of my home life!

AN INVENTORY OF THE SOUL

By
Harry F. Taplin

CHAPTER XV OUR WORDS -- AN INDEX TO THE SOUL

Words are vehicles of thought. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." James warned the people to whom he wrote his epistle to guard against a fountain giving forth both sweet and bitter water. He inferred that it ought not to be so. In other words he was saying that we should take careful heed to the source of our words, then the stream will be clean. That must have been the thought David had when he said, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips. Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works."

In referring to the tongue James says, "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth." In speaking of our words, in Matt. 12:36-37 Jesus says, "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of Judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." In Prov. 25:11 we read, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

Oh, the billions of words that have been spoken since Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden. Some were curse words; others were vulgar; several were using God's Name in vain; a few were sharp and pointed; many were unkind; too many were critical; some were words of judgment; others were words of commendation; many were kind; some were set on fire of hell; others were holy words; still others blest and praised the Name of Jesus.

Men are stewards of their words. You and I are responsible for the kind of words that come from our lips. At the Judgment we will not be held accountable for how every man from Adam's time until now used his words, but I am confident you and I will be held to account for the words that we used. There is no law in the Universe that compels us to be unkind or harsh. It is ours to choose the type of words that we will use. We, our inner selves, determine what words pass between our lips. We can allow ourselves to arise in the morning all snarly and snappy or we can awaken with the praises of God upon our lips. It depends largely upon the heart condition, the source of the stream. If the heart is full of God, praises will naturally come forth. But if there remains in the heart that root of bitterness, the words are very apt to be bitter and full of the sting and cut. If the heart is full of that Adamic nature, it will show forth in the words. If the heart still harbors the carnal nature, the words will be pointed and biting and raspy. If that old nature still remains on the throne and continues to rule the life, it will largely determine the words that come forth from our lips.

But if we have been pardoned and the blood has cleansed us from the last trace of sin; our words will be clean. The holiness of God implanted in the heart will clean up the source of our words. The sanctification of the Holy Spirit will change the inner man, the heart, the center, the core of any man's life. Where he once cursed and swore, he will now bless and praise. Where he once found fault and criticized, he will commend and encourage. Where his words were once sharp and cutting, now they will be mellowed and kind. We are warned by James that the tongue is an unruly evil full of

deadly poison. Thank God he is not speaking of the tongue of a sanctified man. We need not go through life with a sharp, pointed tongue. Jesus died on the Cross, shed his blood on Calvary's brow, opened a fountain for the House of David for sin and uncleanness to provide for all the needs of sinful man. There is not one small part of a man's nature that the holiness of God does not touch. And that surely includes the words that come from his lips. The words of a sinner and those of a sanctified man are different. The reason is that the source of the sanctified man's words -- his heart has been cleansed.

Since you and I are stewards of our words and will some day be asked to give an account of them, does it not behoove us to give much attention to them? And since the source, the heart, is largely responsible for the stream, would that not be a good place to guard and examine? And if we find the heart polluted and corrupt, we can expect nothing better of the stream of our words. But, since Jesus died on the Cross to cleanse the heart from all pollution, and has bid us come to him for cleansing, should we not go and wash and be made every whit clean? Then as the source has been cleansed, the stream will day by day grow clear and pure. In a short time we will begin to realize the meaning of the scripture, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Where once we cursed, we now bless. Where once we used the precious, matchless, saving Name of Jesus in vain, we now praise and adore Him. Where once we tore down, now we build up. The difference is in the source of the stream of our words.

But as the tract has pictured, it will do no good to paint the pump, the exterior, if typhoid germs have been found in the water. The only way to help that situation is by cleaning out the well, the water, the source of the pump. In man it does little good to join the church until the heart has been cleansed. It does little good to turn over a new leaf until the heart has been convicted and converted. It does little good to resolve to do better until the heart has been stirred to action. Exterior religion will do little good until the inner man has been purified and made white in the blood of Jesus. After the source is clean, we will not need to give so much attention to the stream. It will naturally flow clean.

Sharp words do not spring from sanctified hearts. Cutting remarks are not marks and signs of the holiness of God. Destructive criticism is not a signboard pointing to a clean heart. Sanctified words are tender words. A holy heart sends out words of cheer and hope and peace and encouragement. If the heart has been cleansed, the love for others will follow. A purified heart will speak words of help to the man who is lost in sin. Holiness and others go hand in hand in our words. No vision, no passion, no concern, no personal interest, are not marks of a cleansed heart. Yes, we are stewards of our words every day, all the way. And the best way to help the word stream is to clean the source, the heart.

Words once spoken either by saint or sinner can never be recalled. Sharp words as well as kind words go on and on; one to wield a degrading influence the other to help and lift. Every word we have ever spoken is still on the move for good or ill. We may apologize or we may beg forgiveness. We may be able to repair the breach between us and the one closely invoked. Yet in many cases the ones who first heard the sharp word, the cutting remark about the other person are not present when the apology is made and will never know anything about that side of the event. They remember us as saying a sharp word about a friend. They remember the friend very often as we describe him by

a critical word. Untold, immeasurable harm has been done in the world at this point. Is it any wonder that David prayed God to set a watch at the door of his mouth? I find myself praying David's prayer right now.

In the home, oh, God, help me to guard my words. On the street, keep my words above reproach. In the office, may my words never be dragged to the low level of criticism or fault-finding of others. Before my children, with my words, oh God, help me to leave a train of good influence that will be living on long after this stammering tongue is stilled in death. Around the table, help me to keep the conversation on a level that will lift men up and bless the Name of Christ. At school, may my words be such words that others will not stumble or fall over them, losing confidence in my church or my Christ. Winter, summer, spring or fall, at home or abroad at work or play, in church or on the street, oh God, help me to guard my words. Help me every moment to realize that I am a steward of my words. By them I will be justified or by them I shall be condemned.

AN INVENTORY OF THE SOUL

By
Harry F. Taplin

CONCLUSION

There is no phase of life that falls outside of the realm of a man's stewardship. It includes the whole of life from the days of accountability until death -- the kind of words used, how we spend our money, the kind of influence our lives send forth, what we do with the air we breathe, the use we make of our days as they dawn, how we invest our time, the lives we live in our homes, our service to God, our worship, our talents, how faithfully we study God's Word and how faithfully we pray. Everything we do and say or could have done and said comes within the scope of the Stewardship of Life. Which are we, good, faithful, wicked, slothful or unprofitable servants of God? Do we realize that our lives are a trust? It makes a definite difference. Our eternal destiny and happiness depends upon what kind of stewards we are.