

## SELF-DENIAL, THE KEY TO BLESSEDNESS

R. W. Ives

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself."  
—Matt. 16:24.

Let us put to ourselves these questions in earnestness and simplicity: What is my purpose in life? What is the aim and ideal I place before myself? Is it enjoyment or duty? Is it pleasing myself or pleasing God? Am I living for the life that now is, in this present world, getting and gaining from it as much as I can, or am I resolved to live in the light of eternity, looking for the better home beyond the grave? Self-denial is a holy art, acquired by practice, and can become perfect only in practice. The Holy Spirit is the only teacher of "how to give." The early church received Him, and they gave all.

When General Gordon, the great Christian general, left China, the emperor, out of gratitude for the services he had rendered the empire, presented him with a large gold medal, suitably inscribed. Gordon prized it greatly, but when he reached Plymouth and heard of the famine among the silk weavers in and around Coventry, he knew at once he must give up his treasure. The people were starving, some were dying, and public funds were being subscribed for the relief of the distressed. General Gordon had come home full of honors, but had no riches besides his medals. Therefore, although it was his most treasured possession, he did not hesitate; but, having erased the inscription, he sent it anonymously to the treasurer of the Coventry Relief Fund. General Gordon had learned the true spirit of self-denial.

It is when our giving, whether of money, strength, or time, touches the quick that it becomes vital; and it is sacrifice that makes all deeds effective.

A poor blind girl once brought to a minister thirty shillings for a missionary. Surprised that she should offer him so large a sum, he said, "You are a poor, blind girl. You cannot afford to give so much as this." But she replied, "I am indeed, sir, a blind girl, but I can better afford to give thirty shillings than can the other girls who have eyes." The clergyman was deeply interested and said, "I shall be glad to know how you make it out." "Sir, I am a basket-maker, and being blind I can make the baskets as well in the dark as in the light. Now, I am sure that during last winter, when it was so dark, it must have cost the other basket-makers more than thirty shillings to buy candles; and so I can well afford to give that sum for the missionaries, and I hope you will take it all." This idea of self-denial is worthy of emulation.

When David Livingstone went to Africa, there was a Scotch woman named Mrs. MacRoberts, quite advanced in years, who had saved up thirty pounds, which she gave to the great missionary, saying: "When you go to Africa, I want you to spare yourself exposure and needless toil by hiring some competent servant, who will go with you wherever you go and share your sacrifices and exposures." With that money, he hired his faithful servant, known as Sebalwe. When the lion had thrown Livingstone down, and crushed the bones of his left arm, and was about to destroy him, this man, seeing his critical condition, drew off the attention of the lion to himself, thinking that he would save his master at the cost

of his own life. The lion sprang at him, but just at that moment the guns of other companions brought him down, and Livingstone's life was prolonged for thirty years. Surely, that noble Scotch woman, as well as the servant, should be credited with some at least of the results of the noble devotion of that great missionary. Truly her self-sacrificing gift saved the life of David Livingstone.

The character of the giver determines the value of one's gift. If there be sacrifice in the giver, there will be spiritual power in the gift. I believe that all offerings of strength, time, or money have their virtue conditioned by the sacrifice which gave them birth.

More than a century ago, a young woman in America made herself famous by her contribution to the press. A dazzling future was before her, but at the very zenith of her fame, Fanny Forrester surrendered all to the Lord. She became the wife of Adoniram Judson, and spent the remainder of her life in seeking to make known the Gospel of Christ to the heathen women of Burma. Henry Martyn, at an early period, with his university honors newly won, and a brilliant career before him, sacrificed his hopes of advancement and went forth to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation in India and Persia. And many others have done likewise, unto whom the life of Christ has come, displacing the old self and reigning in its stead.

There is no limit to the usefulness and blessedness of a life of self-denial. What you give you have, what you keep you lose.

God's love hath to us wealth unheaped;

Only by giving is it reaped.

The body withers, and the mind,

If pent in by selfish rind.

Give strength, give thought, give deeds,  
give pelf,

Give love, give tears, and give thyself."

—God's Revivalist

So long as the church is just one of many institutions, she will have her little day. She will die, and that will be all. But just as soon as she gets the Spirit of Jesus until the world thinks she has gone stark crazy, then we shall be on the high road to capture this planet for Jesus.—Dr. Joseph Parker.

## OBEDIENCE

When God tells you what to do,

Start to do it;

He will surely see you through,

So pursue it;

If to Him you're faithful, true,

He your foes will all subdue.

Needed strength He will renew;

Why not do it?

When God tells you what to say,

Rise and say it;

Do not while the time away,

And delay it;

If God's message you convey,

And you faithfully obey,

He will prove your rock and stay;

Why not say it?

When God tells you where to go,

Don't forego it;

Do not wait till more you know,

God will show it;

Grace and help He will bestow,

Bless you as you onward go;

All you are to Him you owe,

Why not show it?

—Sel.

## MAKE ME A CAKE FIRST

By Edna Loveless Hook

God seems to make it a condition of receiving, that we give from our meager store first.

The widow to whom Elijah was sent would never have found that the meal "wasted not" throughout the whole period of famine had she not had faith to believe the prophet's words and make him a little cake first.

"For thus saith the Lord God of Israel. The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruise of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did . . ." (I Kings 17:14).

There is the formula—faith and obedience.

Look at Peter, the fisherman. Business was bad. They had toiled all night and taken nothing, and Jesus wants him to take time off and lend Him his boat! Do you think he hesitated? But afterward—the draught of fishes!

And there was Abraham. The Lord had promised him the land, but the promise seemed slow of fulfillment. He separated from Lot, and was even willing to lose what small part of the land he might rightfully have claimed for his flocks rather than be selfishly grasping.

This magnanimous act seemed to bring God's more magnanimous response: "And the Lord said unto Abram after that Lot was separated from him. Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever."

Jesus says, "Give, and it shall be given unto you." Not: "It shall be given unto you, and from your abundance, give."

We have to believe God and step out in faith before we receive.

"Make me a little cake first."

## AN EXPERIENCE

When a Tithe Covenant Band was organized some years ago in one of the churches in Indianapolis a poor widow who made her living by taking in washing signed the Covenant Pledge. Nearly every one felt that she could not afford it and should not thus deprive herself of one-tenth of her little income. Finally two or three kind-hearted sisters in the church, who themselves had signed the Covenant, volunteered to see her and remonstrate. In answer to their knock she came to the door direct from the wash-tub, wiping her hands on her apron. She knew them all, and of course was pleased to see them in her humble home. After a little conversation on other subjects, one of them in the kindest and most sympathetic manner possible mentioned and tried to explain the object of their call. As its full meaning came to her she broke down. Covering her face with her apron she sobbed out, "You let me alone. You are trying to take away the greatest pleasure of my life. Let me alone, let me alone." Soothing her feelings as best they could, the ladies soon withdrew, but they carried with them new conceptions of what tithing means to God's poor.—Selected.

"The token of the Divine Presence is the fire of the Holy Ghost. When we pray for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, we are praying that God will send through our nature this searching, scorching flame, that it may burn up in heart and life whatever is earthly and sinful."—Samuel Chadwick.