

## TEMPORAL BENEFITS NOT NECESSARILY AN EVIDENCE OF GOD'S APPROVAL

By H. S. Dow

"He gave them their request: but sent leanness into their soul" (Psalm. 106: 15).

The words of our text were spoken many years ago in reference to God's dealings with His ancient people, when they cried for meat, while travelling in the wilderness and were being fed on manna. In response to their request God sent quails to them in abundance, which they ate; but God was greatly displeased with them and punished them severely, proving that temporal benefits, or prosperity in material things, is not necessarily an evidence of God's approval, although we may give God the credit for sending such blessings.

We have known professing Christians to work hard, putting forth much effort to obtain money and property, and succeeding in getting the things that they went after, and then saying, "The Lord gave us this house, or property". But we also saw wicked, unsaved men do the same things with the same results, and take the credit to themselves. In both cases, the material benefits which these industrious persons acquired proved to be a curse, rather than a blessing to them and their families. Their blessings became their curses.

We have heard prosperous parents say "We want our young people to have what other young people are having, and are enjoying. We don't want them to have to work hard, sacrifice, and do without things like we had to when young. So they gave them their requests—automobiles, money, fine clothes, etc., but sent leanness into their souls.

Temporal prosperity and spiritual advancement seldom go hand in hand, or travel together. This was true under the old dispensation. In spite of all of God's promises of temporal prosperity, if they would be true to Him, — for He said that their barns would be filled with plenty and their presses would burst with new wine — when prosperity came they forgot God's promises, went astray, and worshipped idols.

Someone has said, that the reason so many of us are poor, is because God cannot trust us with temporal riches. We can give you the names of several that were about our age, but unfortunately for them, their parents in those days, were called the well-to-do, or rich. Those young people did not have to work like some others of us in order to obtain the necessities of life; neither did they live as long, nor as well. Some of them had too much money, for they spent it in awful sin, ruined their health, and died in sin while still young in years. How much better it had been, had those parents used their money in gospel work, or to help the poor and needy christians. But, no, they gave them their request, which meant leanness, ruin, to their souls.

The Bible often warns us of the dangers of riches. The Psalmist said, "If riches increase set not your heart upon them". The apostle Paul wrote, "The love of money is the root of all evil". Our Lord said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth". He also told of a young man who was moral, upright, and who wanted to do something to obtain eternal life, and who when told by the Lord to sell all, and give to the poor, went away very sorrowful, because he was very rich.

We wonder sometimes just how much money, or how much of material things, such as property, stocks and bonds, we can hold and call our own until we die, and still have God's approval, and blessing on our souls, in view of the fact that there is such a need of money to send the gospel to those who have not heard it.

Our Lord told of a very successful farmer, whose ground brought forth plentifully until he had to build larger barns to make room for his goods. He then called on his soul to take life easy, for he had much goods laid up for many years. Then, God said, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee". Why was he a fool? Was it because he was industrious? No, but because he thought that his soul could subsist on much goods and earthly things.

Jesus also told of another man who was rich, and who died and was buried, and in hell lifted up his eyes in torment, calling for water to cool his parched tongue. The only thing our Lord said about him was, that he fared sumptuously every day and wore fine clothes. If all the people who wear fine clothes and fare sumptuously every day will go to hell, we fear for a great many church members who are not putting their money to better use.

One man said, there are two classes of professing Christians who make me think of two domestic animals: the cow, and the hog. One man gives his money to bless other people while he lives; he represents the cow, she gives milk to feed the hungry while she lives. The other, who holds all his money until he dies, represents the hog, which is of no value until after death.

A great many congregations these days take pride in, and boast of their fine church buildings and furnishings, and musical instruments, etc., and they think that they are doing a great service, and have all they need. Well, the Laodicean church did the same thing, and said they were rich, and had need of nothing, but, Jesus said, "Thou knowest not, that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked". See Rev. 3:17. They had their request, but were lean in their souls.

We have read that when John Wesley, as a young preacher, entered upon the work of the ministry, that his income was very small, perhaps about five or six hundred dollars a year, barely enough to live on. But as time passed and he became more efficient as a preacher, his income increased also, until he was receiving thousands of dollars a year; but the writer said that Mr. Wesley still lived on his very meager income, and gave all the remainder of his income away to religious work in spreading the gospel of full salvation. And when he died, all that he possessed that he could call his own was two silver spoons. But he left a host of people who were saved by his work in the gospel ministry, and brought into the experience of holiness by his teaching on entire sanctification, who are singing his praises, as well as the praises of the Lord, who will continue to rise up and call him blessed, while the ages roll along.

The most outstanding evidence of God's approval falls upon our souls when we are regenerated and sanctified by his grace, and are walking in all His known will. The Psalmist said, "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house." Isaiah said, "Eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness". It is that sense of the presence

## THE BLESSED LIFE

(Cont'd from page 3)

must be full surrender before there can be full blessedness. God admits you by the one into the other. First I was shown that the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son cleanseth from all sins; and then it was made plain to me that He who had thus cleansed me, had power to keep me clean; so I utterly yielded myself to Him and utterly trusted Him to keep me."

The seraphic Whitefield; the brothers Wesley; the great Welsh preacher, Christmas Evans; the French Pastor Oberlin, and many more have given the same testimony. And in their mouths surely this truth may be regarded as established, that we must pass through Gilgal to the land of rest; and that the strait gate of Consecration alone leads into the blessed life.

The ground of consecration is in the great Scripture statement that we are Christ's. There is a twofold ground of proprietorship. We are His by purchase. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price."

The Father has given to the Son all who shall come to Him. If ever you come to Jesus Christ as your Saviour you show that you have been included in that wonderful donation (John 6:37). And is it likely that the Father gave only a part of us? Nay, as utterly as He gave His Son for us, so hath He given us to His Son. And our Lord Jesus thinks much of that solemn transaction, though we often live as if it had never taken place, and were free to live as we pleased.

The act of consecration is to recognize Christ's ownership and to accept it, and to say to Him, with the whole heart, Lord, I am Thine by right, and I wish to be Thine by choice. Of old the mighty men of Israel were willing to swim the rivers at their flood to come to David, their uncrowned but God-appointed King. And when they met him, they cried, "Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse." They were his because God had given them to him, but they could not rest content till they were his also by their glad choice. Why then should we not say the same to Jesus Christ? "Lord Jesus, I am Thine by right; forgive me that I have lived so long as if I were my own; and now I gladly recognize that Thou hast a rightful claim on all I have and am; I want to live as Thine from henceforth; and I do solemnly at this hour give myself to Thee. Thine in life and death. Thine absolutely and forever."

Do not try to make a covenant with God, lest you should break it, and be discouraged. But quietly fall into your right attitude as one who belongs to Christ. Take as your motto the noble confession, "Whose I am and Whom I serve." Breathe the grand old simple lines:—

"Just as I am—Thy love unknown  
Has broken every barrier down;  
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,  
O Lamb of God, I come."

"Being confident of this very thing that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it."—Philippians 1:6

—Living Waters

of the Holy Spirit in our souls that makes us strong to live, and do battle for Him. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice in God My Saviour" is the language of the holy. Let us pray.