

GROUNDS FOR GIVING

by J. D. Abbott

An official statement in the tithing program of the Methodist Church in the past has been "We are not concerned with your share of our budget! What matters is God's share of your income." It is reported that this statement was used in Sunday bulletins, congregational correspondence, declared from the pulpit, and spoken in the classroom. Prospective members heard it and local church papers bore its message. I find it rather precise and positive.

To so emphasize the individual's obligation to the church and its various programs to the point where devotion to God and the discharge of one's obligation to Him are relegated to secondary places is to misplace emphasis. Let budgets be what they will be, but first consider what God's share is of what you have. A well-balanced program of good stewardship instruction must begin with an understanding of the wholehearted response which the individual owes to God. This is clearly stated in the Gospel according to Luke: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself" (10:27). This, quite evidently, is the Master's own summary of the extent of man's obligation to his Maker.

According to the Word of God it could be stated that a circle is drawn about our total life and God claims our full existence as His own. This being so, we cannot discharge our stewardship responsibility by a sizeable contribution in either area of tithe, talent, or time. My giving to God must be based upon the abilities of the day or hour or moment, these may increase or they may diminish. God claims only a portion of that which we have.

A consistent program of dedicated stewardship may be subverted by some who would give largely, but who would do so only once a year. This is neither good training nor a good example. How much better it is for the individual believer to consistently take from his earnings, strengths, and abilities and place them into the coffers of the Lord to be used in the furtherance of His cause.

In the Pilgrim Holiness Church it is hoped that a program of giving will be developed which will be focused on the soul and not on the purse, on the heart full of devotion and not on the size of the bill dropped in the plate. The principal matter to be emphasized is that of aligning the heart with Christ. It is hoped that our giving to God shall be motivated, not by the pitiful plea for a present need, but rather, by a desire to give all to Christ. This is a basic fact and it must ever be kept before us in all that we do.

The church seeks souls—souls to be won to Christ—and not purses emptied for a particular program. When the church experiences salvation success it need have no fear about a shortage of funds for its work. The fully dedicated heart will share what it has for the purpose of doing God's will among men. This can be counted on. This is the basis for giving.

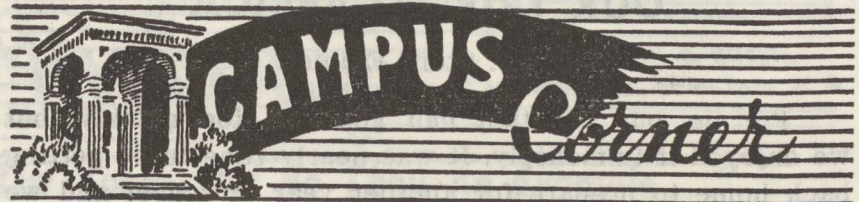
—Pilgrim Holiness Advocate

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THOSE LIQUOR ADVERTISEMENTS

The liquor industry never uses its best customer as its advertisement. The motor manufacturer quotes the man who has driven his car 100,000 miles a year; the church advertisement is the man who has spent the most time and effort in his faith. But the liquor industry looks for its recommendation in people who have not tried its product to the limit. It never advertises its supreme accomplishments.

The alcoholic shows the possibilities, the terrible potentials of the business. No one ever takes up drinking out of admiration for such a man; he is not an example likely to draw followers.

—Forward