

The Stewardship of Money

By Hermon Eldredge.

Money is a good servant but a bad master.—French Proverb.

WE recall John Wesley's sermon on "Money," with its triple heading of: 1. Earn all you can. 2. Save all you can. 3. Give all you can. The majority of men will fall in line with the first proposition, and a lesser number will line up on the second, while the third will be but a "thin red line" of courageous and sacrificial givers.

Money rightly acquired is life. One ~~gives and brawn~~—and receives in return so much of the thing we call money. This money represents the life we have expended, and when received that life, in the form of the money received, may be frittered away in harmful or useless diversion (which is the same as frittering away life itself), or it may minister to the upbuilding of physical, mental and spiritual life in one's self and others. This life (represented by money) may go on in help or hindrance to any walk of life or in any nation on earth. We may transfer ourselves in helpfulness through this medium to "the uttermost parts of the earth," or we may so distribute it as to make it better if we had never been born. The real point is that we may work anywhere on God's wide earth through this medium which is our blood and brain. Through this I may give my physical and mental strength in Ohio and transfer that physical and mental strength to Oahu or to darkest Africa—and be at work again for good or ill in the rum trade or in the spreading of life and light. Therefore, the stewardship of money is a tremendous responsibility. The earning of it is a fundamental obligation. The conservation of it must follow or the first is fruitless. But the final investment of it is the test of character and the measure of usefulness of a life to a large degree. Someone has said that if he knew just how a man earned his money and spent it he would have the real key to his character. It would show his finer or coarser tastes and his capacity for work, service and feeling of obligation and fellowship with God and his fellow man.

We can, at least, know one person, and how that one earns and invests his earnings. It would be well to test that one's character, by turning such a spotlight in on ourselves. How do I get my money and how do I invest it, and what does that prove as to my real worth and fitness or lack of it? It is a severe test, and most of us are not brave and honest enough to fully face it.

At least we must face the fact that the Eternal God gave us (1) the power to earn what we do earn and (2) that we must at last give an account of how we have squandered or invested it. And let us be further assured in the words of our Golden Text, that a **man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the "things" he "possesseth,"** but rather in how he got them and his use of them to the glory of God and the good of himself and his fellow man.—(Published by arrangement with the Congregationalist and Herald of Gospel Liberty.)