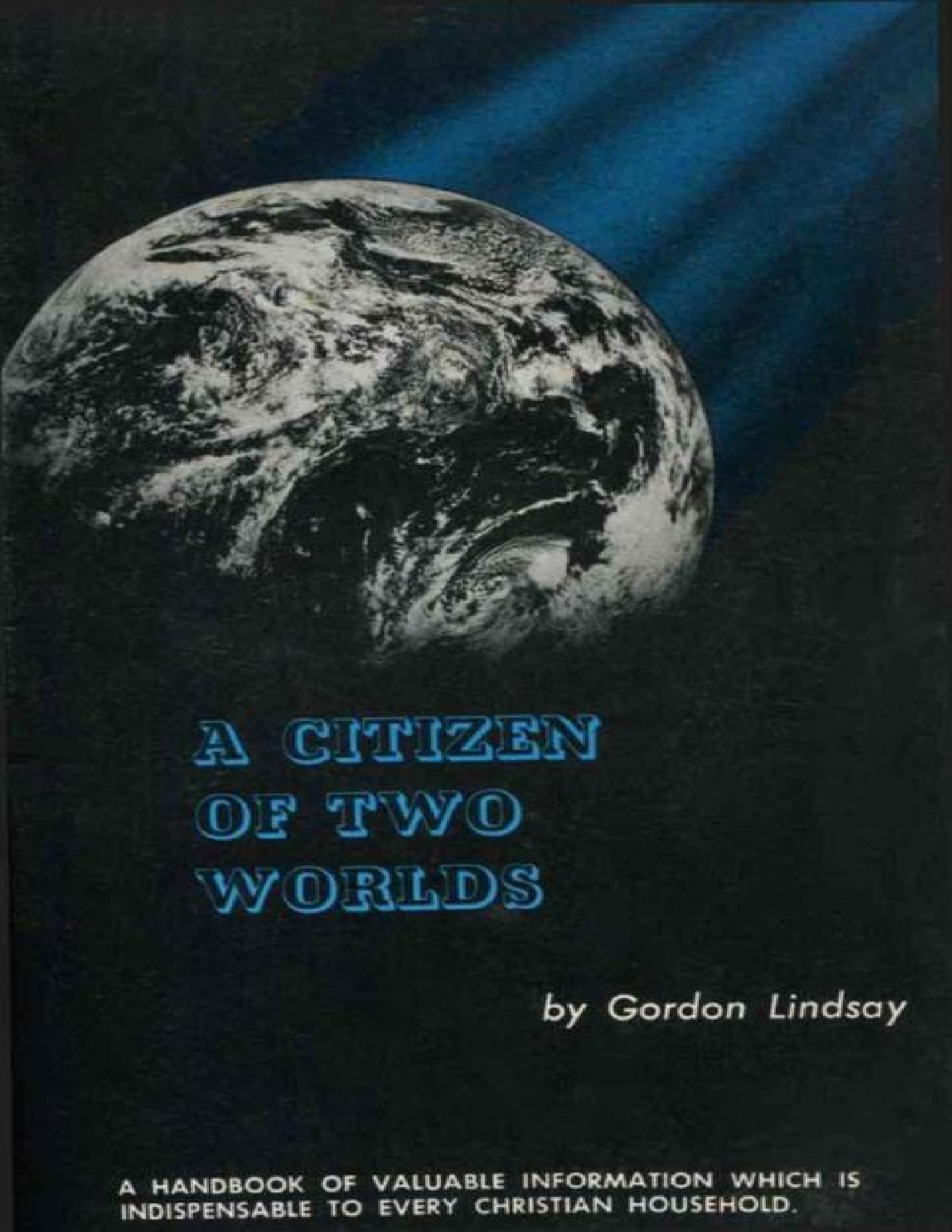

A CITIZEN OF TWO WORLDS

by Gordon Lindsay

A HANDBOOK OF VALUABLE INFORMATION WHICH IS INDISPENSABLE TO EVERY CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLD.

Contents

Introduction
CHAPTER I
What Most People Do Not Know About Stewardship
CHAPTER II
You Are a Citizen of Two Worlds
CHAPTER III
What a Wife Should Know Before She Becomes a Widow
CHAPTER IV
What You Should Know About Wills
CHAPTER V
The Problems of Probate and the Living Trust
CHAPTER VI
How You Can Take It With You
CHAPTER VII
A Missionary Plan for the Citizen of Two Worlds

Introduction

A most wonderful fact and a fundamental truth of Christianity is that the believer is a citizen of two worlds. This mortal life when it is over is only the preliminary phase of our existence. This surely means that while we are in this world we should carefully make our plans for the next.

While the writer was engaged in the preparation of this little volume he was surprised to learn how many things the average person does not know which are vitally important to his transition from this world to the next. Even many ministers of the Gospel are ill-informed on some of the most important steps a Christian should take. It is clear that the lack of such knowledge can be extremely costly to the person both spiritually and materially.

As far as we know there is no book available of modest size written in popular style and from the Christian standpoint, which generally covers the entire subject.

Though Christ has taken the sting out of death, robbing it of its power, Christians and sinners alike instinctively shrink from death. This is understandable from the children of the world's standpoint to whom this life is all. This however should not be true of the believer. Christianity boldly declares that physical death is not the end. Nevertheless, despite faith in a future life, the Christian, as well as the sinner, tends to put off certain necessary steps of preparation for it. They just don't like to think about death happening to them.

But physical death is not the real death. Jesus said: "**Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die"** (John 11:26). Christians are citizens of two worlds! This being true, they owe it to God, to their family, and to themselves to make all necessary preparations "to set their house in order" before they leave. This is indeed a part of a Christian's stewardship.

It is an old axiom oft repeated, that when you leave this world "you can't take it with you." Nothing could be further from the truth. *You can take it with you—providing you make the proper preparations beforehand.* What those preparations involve is the subject of this little book.

CHAPTER I

What Most People Do Not Know About Stewardship

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (I Cor. 4:1-2).

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (I Peter 4:10).

Man's stewardship is based upon two things—God's ownership of us by right of creation and by redemption. A steward is one who has been given the management or administration of someone else's household affairs. All property in this world belongs to God, and man is accountable to Him for every detail of his stewardship. As the Scripture says: **"For all the earth is mine"** (Exod. 19:5). **"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts"** (Hag. 2:8). If the man is wise, he will set aside all self-interest and think only of the welfare of the One whose property he is administering.

We know that ideally the Christian experience calls for the turning over in entirety one's life to Christ at the moment of conversion. It is a total committal, a giving of ourselves to God unreservedly. God owns us first of all, by right of creation. **"All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made"** (John 1:3). But as every Christian knows man became estranged from God and God had to redeem him. Peter tells us of this in I Peter 1:18-20:

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you."

Thus we see that God has a double claim on us. We belong to God by right of creation, and secondly, because He has redeemed us. We are, therefore, not our own (I Cor. 6:19). This is a great theme. Because we are not our own, we present our bodies to God (Rom. 12:1-2). Yea, we present our families and all we have to God. We regard any property we hold as only a sacred trust, a divine stewardship that the Lord has placed in our hands.

When the subject of stewardship comes up, people generally think of tithing. Tithing of course is included in stewardship, but it is not the subject of this volume. We mention it here only to make a point. We frequently hear it said in reference to the tithe that nine-tenths belongs to man and one-tenth to God. In only a minor sense is this true. In the broader sense the whole belongs to God, and we are only the stewards of it. It is a great mistake to suppose that the remaining nine-tenths is ours to do with as we please.

The payment of the tithe is only an acknowledgment that a man is responsible to God for all he possesses. The tithe was an obligation of every Israelite, although it was only a part of his stewardship. He was to give offerings in addition to tithes (Deut. 12:11; Mal. 3:8-10).

The Old Testament lays out the principles of stewardship, *but in the New Testament giving is based on grace rather than as a legal obligation.* Indeed New Testament stewardship goes far beyond the legal stewardship under Mosaic Law. We tithe under grace, not as a legal obligation, but as an acknowledgment of our Christian stewardship. We are not to consider the other nine-tenths as ours to use as we please.

The Principle of Total Committal

Christian giving begins first with the giving of self unto God. Paul noted with approval that the Corinthians in their giving began first with the giving of themselves:

"And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God" (II Cor. 8:5).

Now while giving under grace is not a legal requirement as under the Law, the Scriptures do not fail to make clear that a Christian's committal of everything he has is a real test of the reality of his love for God. Christ Himself is set as an example, who though rich became poor for our sakes.

We learn from Christ the principles of total committal to the Lord. He for our sakes became poor indeed. His mother Mary was too poor to offer the usual offering of a lamb for her firstborn, but only turtledoves, a concession allowed by the Law to the very poor (Lev. 12:6-8; Luke 2:24). Christ Himself spoke of His poverty in Matthew 8:20:

"And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

Not only did Jesus come into this world in the deepest poverty, but He had to endure neglect and denial, the taunts of His enemies and finally to lay down His life. "He saved others; himself he cannot save," they said, and it was true. Thus did Christ set an example of total committal unto God.

John, the apostle said, "As he is, so are we in this world" (I Jn. 4:17).

We see, therefore, that Christ the poorest of the poor made a total committal of all that He had to God. There are few, if any, Christians that are as poor as Christ was. And yet the limitation of their means has discouraged some in the matter of stewardship. They feel that what they have to give is so small in comparison with others, it is, therefore, inconsequential. This is a grave mistake. God judges a man not by what he doesn't have but what he has:

"For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (II Cor. 8:12).

God does not expect a man who has little of this world's goods to give as much as one who is wealthy. It is well said that "there are generous and stingy people among both rich and poor." A beautiful example of God's attitude in this matter is the case of the poor widow. When Christ saw her giving two mites — an insignificant amount in comparison with what the rich were giving—He said that she gave more than they all!

"And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living" (Mark 12:41-44).

This incident is worthy of the most careful consideration by those who feel that they have little to give.

Giving Should Be an Act of Faith

Stewardship, like other Christian ministries, should be a ministry of faith. This point is often missed. We know that to accept salvation we must exercise faith. To receive healing we must do the same. But in the matter of giving, too often the faith element is left out. We want to give but fail to do so because we fear we will be unable to meet other obligations, or we might become sick, incur heavy bills and so need our money, etc. There is a place for prudence in handling finances, but there is also a place of faith. We should give in the light of the promise that "God shall supply all your need according to his riches" (Phil. 4:19).

There is another important facet in giving. No man is to give under compulsion or through excessive pressure. It should be done willingly:

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Cor. 9:7).

Stewardship must never become an irksome duty; it should be considered a joyous privilege. Faithful giving to God not only gives the person the joy of participating in God's work of winning souls, and a reward in the world to come, but it indeed provides a person with security in this present world as Jesus tells us in Luke 6:38.

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

The above promise is not to be thought unworthy of consideration. It should not be supposed that it is un-Christian to think of God's giving His children something in this present world in return for their faithfulness. Indeed, if it were God's will for all Christians to be poverty-stricken, who would support the evangelization of the world?

Nevertheless, we do not teach that giving to God is a direct line to wealth in this world. God does raise up some who are able to give in large amounts. But it would be a serious matter if people should regard giving to God's work only as a shrewd business investment. Such a motive is a long way from the spirit of the meek and lowly Christ.

The promise of material blessing to the giver is however entirely Scriptural, though it is not the chief blessing he receives. Beyond that is the joy of participating in God's work of winning souls to Christ. But the greatest reward is the one reserved for the world to come.

While some rich people respond to God's call, the fact is (and everyday observation confirms it) God's kingdom is largely supported by those in moderate circumstances. Many who are rich intend sometime to do something for God, but experience, alas, shows that in most cases their money is tied up in investments by which they have hopes of doing something big for God, but always in the future. Too often they get caught in a vicious cycle of financial involvements and they are never quite able to do what they planned. Paul spoke of this desire for riches that has led many astray (I Tim. 6:9).

The pursuit of riches, without consideration that every man is a steward accountable to God, has led many into disappointment and disillusionment. Men labor to accumulate wealth and then at long last when they get it, they find that ill health or some other reason deprives them of their ability to enjoy it. Another gets the benefit of it, as Solomon remarked in one of his proverbs:

"There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease" (Eccl. 6:1-2).

There is an answer to all this. *There is a way that a person can have full benefit of what he has labored for in this world, and in the one to come.* As we shall see in the next chapter, we are citizens of two worlds. Therefore, it is our privilege to make provision not just for this brief life, but for the world to come, a world that knows no end.

CHAPTER II

You Are a Citizen of Two Worlds

A Christian is a citizen of two worlds—the present one and the world to come. He should, therefore, seek possessions not only in this world, but in the one of the future. All that he has in this world will someday be taken from him. As Paul said, **"For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out"** (I Tim. 6:7). Does this mean that everything we have in this world is lost to us? No! The amazing truth that Christ taught us is that while we can take nothing with us, if we wait until we leave this world, *nevertheless, if we choose we can send it on ahead!*

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt. 6:19-20).

The fact is that at what the world calls our decease, we do not really die. That is the great and fundamental revelation of Christianity. Jesus said to Martha, on the way to the grave of Lazarus, **"And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"** (John 11:26). The truth is our spirit does not die at physical death, but is immediately conveyed into paradise by the angels of God (Luke 16:22; 23:42-43).

The apostle Paul tells us about paradise, how he was caught up to the third heaven and heard wonderful things that he dared not reveal fully (II Cor. 12:1-4).

As a reward for his long and faithful service, God permitted his servant Paul to have a view of paradise. What he saw there had a tremendous effect upon him. The beauty and glory of paradise is no doubt beyond the human imagination. Paul said that he heard **"unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."** When he returned, he undoubtedly would have liked to record what he saw. Nevertheless, God does not want the Christian to spend his time dreaming about paradise and thus forget the immediate task of saving those living on earth. Yet He wants us to know that paradise is glorious beyond anything in this world; that we should all make proper provision for the time we shall enter it.

What happens to the human soul at death? Does God have someone watching over and guarding our destiny at death? Surely! We are told that even during our lifetime, angels watch over us (Psa. 34:7; 91:11). Jesus Himself said that little children have guardian angels in constant vigil over them (Matt. 18:10). At death these angels escort the believer into the regions of paradise. Heaven in many ways will correspond with what we are familiar on earth, except that it will be purer, more perfect, and free from the curse of sin. We shall surely

recognize our friends and our loved ones there. The apostles, when they were on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-4), identified Moses and Elijah as the same men who lived on earth. The human spirit after it has left the body obviously has a definite form and as such is recognizable in paradise, even though it has not yet received its resurrection body.

In view of the fact that as Christian believers we are all hastening toward the moment when we shall leave this world and enter the next, how should this knowledge be best employed to our advantage?

The apostle Paul gives us the answer. He admonishes us to lay up a store against the time to come:

"That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (I Tim. 6:1819).

The apostle is giving very important advice indeed. If one is blessed with this world's goods, he has the opportunity to do good in this world and at the same time lay up riches for his eternal home!

In regard to this matter, Christ made a most remarkable statement in Luke 16:9 (the very chapter in which reference is made to angels conveying Lazarus to paradise):

"And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

The significance is unmistakable. Christians are not to lay up treasures on this earth where they will surely perish. They are to use the mammon of unrighteousness (money, riches, wealth), to make friends for eternity. He who dedicates his means to God so that it is used for winning souls is making friends for eternity. Mammon has proved to be an enemy to many, but if it is used to win souls for the kingdom of God, it will become a friend!

What do these words of Jesus mean, "that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations"? There is only one possible interpretation. Evidently those who are already dwelling in paradise are informed when someone whom they know is about to leave the earth's scene. They are permitted to act as a welcoming committee to "receive" the new member into the celestial society!

This indeed is a remarkable truth. There will be a welcoming committee to receive the earth's soul-winners into paradise! What a tremendous joy to see familiar faces waiting for us there. What glory it will be for those who have dedicated their lives to soulwinning to meet those who have been won to Christ, either through their ministry of the Word or through their giving, making it possible that others may carry the message. As Daniel 12:3 says, **"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the**

stars forever and ever."

On the other hand, there is a solemn thought to consider. The Scriptures inform us that many shall be **"saved; yet so as** by fire." They are saved, but they have no reward. They accepted Christ's sacrifice and received salvation, but they have no sheaves to bring with them. And so when they enter paradise, there are few to welcome them into "the everlasting habitations."

The Judgment Seat of Christ

If there be sorrow in heaven, it must be to those who had opportunity to put their means to work for Christ and yet failed to do so. They may be saved, but alas their reward is lost.

At some point after the coming of the Lord, the redeemed will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. This is a solemn matter. The judgment seat of Christ does not involve our salvation but our reward. Everything we have done will meet us again, except our sins. Thank God, these will be blotted out and remembered against us no more. Nevertheless, our works are to be judged. All our labors as believers will at that time be brought before the tribunal of Christ and weighed. Upon the basis of our works shall our reward be given. Men's works shall be tried by fire to see whether they are built on gold, silver, and precious stones, or on hay, wood or stubble:

"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (I Cor. 3:13-16).

After this judgment is completed at the tribunal of Christ, men will be given their respective positions of rank and honor for which they have fitted themselves. In this world men achieve position largely on the basis of natural abilities, wealth, or talents that they have inherited. But in the world to come men will be rewarded or promoted on the basis of their faithfulness to what God gave them, not how much they had. So the Lord commended the faithful servant who had earned only two talents the same as He did the one who had gained five:

"His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25:23).

The spirit of this world is to think and to plan entirely for this life. But God intended that as believers we should be different from the world. Christ said:

"For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Luke 12:30,31).

How then can we be sure that we are fulfilling our responsibility of

stewardship? As we have noted earlier, it is not the province of this little volume to dwell on the subject of our regular giving to our church. That of course is a part of our stewardship, but at present we are particularly interested in a subject not often discussed: How can you take your possessions with you when you leave this world?

CHAPTER III

What a Wife Should Know Before She Becomes a Widow

There may be those who will think that the subject of this chapter has no relation to what we have already said about stewardship. This, however, is a mistake. We are God's stewards in our home, and making provision for our family is part of our stewardship. A man who fails to take care of his own family properly and has the power to do so is considered worse than an infidel:

"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Tim 5:8).

Therefore, in planning the disposition of your property in the way that is pleasing unto God, you must include the needs of your own family.

The one who comes first in this matter is the wife. In the marriage ceremony is written the clause "until death do us part." But even after death a man is morally committed to guard the welfare of the one he has married. On the average a woman is younger than her husband and according to actuarial tables she is several years more long-lived. *So it is that in seven cases out of ten the man dies first.*

It is therefore important that the wife should know something about her husband's business, his income, any debts he might have, and how to budget an income. She may have the whole problem dropped in her lap without an hour's notice. Who has not witnessed the tragedy experienced by some widow because her husband failed to give her the proper knowledge of these things?

There is a saying that a man should start teaching his wife "to be a widow" right after marriage. Doing this could even lengthen the husband's life for there are fewer things more destructive to health than worry. Certainly one of the first steps in family life is the sharing with the wife the disbursement of the household finances. She should undertake to pay the household bills, help develop the budget, assist in determining how much insurance should be carried. She should keep record of deductive expenses for income tax, etc.

By doing these things, she will be aware of her husband's business, his expenses and investments. A woman has a penchant for business details, and once she gets some knowledge of how such things operate she can be the best business partner a man ever had. And if she comes into a sum of money, such as his insurance, she will not be stampeded into squandering it.

There is no guarantee in the Bible how long a man will live. Therefore, one

should always keep in mind James' admonition in Chapter 4:13-15:

"Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

A wife should be prepared in case she becomes a widow to engage in some gainful occupation that will make her selfsupporting. If, for example, she was a secretary before marriage, she should do something such as helping keep her husband's correspondence, so that in case an emergency develops she will not be found rusty at her trade. If she has to return to work she will have to compete with younger and perhaps more proficient girls.

When a man dies, not only does his will have to be probated, but his bank account becomes frozen. In some states half of a joint checking account is frozen when one of the joint-owners dies. It is well, therefore, that a wife have at least a small savings account of her own to tide over the expensive days after her husband's departure.

In the next chapters is a discussion of how one may best transfer his property after death. We shall speak of a number of things the average person does not know. Having a will properly executed is certainly a tremendous advantage over having no will, and can be the difference between financial security and actual disaster for the widow. There are, nevertheless, some disadvantages in a will. A little later we shall speak of an alternative which obviates some of these disadvantages and which is rapidly gaining favor among many.

CHAPTER IV

What You Should Know About Wills

(Note: The information in this chapter is of a general nature and accurate so far as it goes. However, laws differ from state to state, and they change from time to time, so all matters mentioned are subject to your particular situation and the advice of your attorney. *All documents which concern disposition of one's property after death should be prepared by an attorney of one 's choosing.)*

Over half of the people who die in America and leave property fail to have a will or any other instrument that provides legal disposition of that property. The result is confusion, injustice, unnecessary expense and often serious want. For example, the husband usually intends for his wife to get a large part of his estate, but without a will she may get only one-third. The fact is that if you have no will or other document for the transfer of your property, the state in effect makes a will for you, and it may not be to your liking.

Here is an actual case: A man in Connecticut had a small hardware business. He died just before the war, leaving a modest estate of some $13,000. His wife was an invalid, the sole object of his consideration, and this sum at that time (before inflation) would have taken care of her nicely. He also had a prosperous son who was estranged from his parents. The man did not get around to making a will.

What happened? The wife got only $4,000 after incidental charges and legal fees were deducted. The son came in for the other two-thirds, a windfall he didn't need and which the father never intended he would get.

The need for a will is important even for a man whose children are young. If he dies intestate (the legal term for not having a will) the widow in most states gets a third and the children two-thirds. According to law, this cannot be transferred to the mother unless she goes to the expense of being appointed by the court as legal guardian of the children. It can be disbursed only by court order and that in limited amounts for support and education.

The mother has to give a continuous accounting to the court that her expenditures are in the best interests of the children, all of which is usually burdensome to her. Yearly fees are of course attached to this service by the court.

If you die without a will, the court will appoint an administrator for your estate. The administrator may be a relative that you would not have chosen. To guarantee that the administrator will not make away with the assets, the law requires that he put up a bond. This usually means paying a surety company an

annual bond premium. The cost of course comes out of the estate. The surety company may insist on signing every check to be paid out for debts, funeral expenses, legacies and the like. There is in addition, the administrator's fees which could have been avoided had there been a will.

The wife as well as the husband should have a will. If, for example, she has a bank account or personal property, and she dies childless without a will, the husband may find himself battling relatives over a home or savings he originally gave her.

The will should be made out by a lawyer. The fee usually is not excessive. There are technicalities which if omitted could invalidate the will.

Home-made forms are not safe. A New York Court threw out a will made by a woman because she used a form on which the place for witnesses' signatures was on the wrong part of the page.

The will should be signed in the presence of three witnesses. Some states require only two, but if the person should happen to die in a state that requires three there could be legal complications. The witnesses chosen should be younger and likely to outlive the maker of the will. The witnesses may be required to appear in court and swear under oath they saw the will signed by the testator. They should be persons of some standing and permanence in the community. Wills have been held up while the hunt for fly-by-night witnesses went on. *Important: None of those who are to benefit by the will should be witnesses.* Nor need the witnesses read the will. They should see the testator and the other witnesses as they sign it. They should witness the testator as he initials each page if the document is several pages in length.

After the will is made, the signed copy should be left with the lawyer. Only one copy should be signed, but an unsigned carbon copy should be taken home. There should be no erasures or crossing out of names on the will. An erasure or addition may automatically nullify it. A will can be changed by adding a codicil. But this must be solemnized by witnesses so it may be better to start afresh and incorporate all changes in a new document.

One of the most serious mistakes is leaving will-making until the last moment. A person facing death is apt to be in a state of mind in which he may deal unjustly with his heirs. He may remember some distant relative who attended him during his last illness, and forget, for example, a sister whose savings years ago paid his way through college. People near death are prone to act upon impulse.

Actually great care should be given to the making of a will. In the case of children the bequests should be made specific. Confusion and hurt feelings can result in the distribution of jewelry, furniture or the automobile.

Some General Facts About Wills

A testator in making a will must be 21 years of age, of a sound mind, know he is willing his property, and the names and identities of those to whom he wills it.

Oral wills are generally not recognized by courts as valid, except in the case of servicemen who were engaged in actual war.

Handwritten wills are recognized by fewer than half of the states.

Joint wills involve complications. Each person should make a separate will.

Property such as insurance made payable to a named beneficiary cannot be transferred in a will.

Divorce does not invalidate a will. In that event the testator should make a new one.

A will can be changed at any time. In fact, it should be reviewed from time to time to see that it is appropriate to present intentions and the financial position of the testator. But there should never be any marks or deletions on the old will. A new one should be made.

A codicil can be used where only minor changes are made. But it should be prepared by a lawyer. Codicils often invite litigation by disgruntled relatives.

In the case of married people, ordinarily the spouse is named as executor. If the person is unmarried or the spouse is dead, someone in whom the testator has confidence should be appointed as executor.

All charitable donations in a will are exempt from federal estate taxes.

A signed copy of the will should be left with your lawyer. A carbon unsigned copy should be retained by the testator. If a signed will is lost, unsigned copies may not be accepted by the court.

A “self-proving affidavit” is helpful in securing swift probate of a will. The witnesses, after signing the will, sign a notarized statement declaring the will has been properly executed and the maker is of a sound mind. This obviates the necessity of paying costly fees to round up witnesses.

FINALLY: Do not prepare your own will. Let your lawyer do this.

Is a Will the Best Way for a Man to Transfer Property at His Death?

We have gone to considerable length to explain the function of and the advantages of a will over having no will. Nevertheless, a will also has some serious disadvantages which are usually not fully understood by the testator. Here are some of them:

1) On the average a Probate Court requires from two to five years in

settling an estate. If the validity of the will is challenged the time could be even longer.

2) The interruption of income over a long period could and often does work a severe hardship on the heirs.

3) The offering of a will for probate must be advertised and a record of one's assets becomes public property, which to many is undesirable. (In some states this need not be done if the testator takes certain precautions. However, most people are not familiar with such technicalities in making wills.)

4) The greatest disadvantage of probate is the expense which is often as high as 20 per cent of the value of the estate.

There is an alternative that obviates all these difficulties and this will be explained in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V

The Problems of Probate and the Living Trust

Having said all this about wills, it is necessary to note that from the standpoint of the heirs there are some serious disadvantages in a will. As previously mentioned, the first is the time consumed in probate procedure. *A recent survey shows that on the average from two to five years are required for probate.* In case the will is contested by any of the heirs or claimants, the matter can drag on for years.

Second, it is no secret that a will under present laws leaves doors open for the charging of excessive fees. We are not speaking of the lawyer. We strongly advise that no document which concerns the disposition of one's property be prepared except under the direction of an attorney. But under probate there are different individuals to be paid besides an attorney. Courts, appraisers, an executor, affidavits, paperwork, and whatnot are involved. Fortunately there is a way by which much of this expensive procedure can be eliminated.

The Living Trust

The answer to these difficulties lies in the "living trust" or "inter vivos" (life-time) trust. Few laymen have heard about it and some attorneys who do not specialize in this field may not understand its use nor know how to advise on it.

A living trust is essentially different from a will and largely takes its place. In the execution of a living trust, what you say amounts to this: "I declare my property to be held in trust for the benefit of (name of heir or beneficiary). I appoint John Doe as successor trustee and at my death the said successor trustee shall dispose of the property as follows ..."

There are two kinds of "living trusts": The revocable, which can be cancelled; and the irrevocable, which cannot. The settlor (term corresponding to testator of a will) should choose the kind of trust he wishes.

The living trust is exempted from probate which eliminates costly court fees, and can be executed at once upon notification of death. The great advantages of the living trust over a will are as follows:

1) A testator naturally does not wish to have his will challenged after his death. It is a matter of every-day occurrence for wills to be contested and estates do not always go to the person intended by the testator. A living trust reduces the likelihood of a successful challenge of the disposition of property by disgruntled persons. The fact that it is legally necessary to advertise when a will is being presented for probate invites the attention of those who are not included in the

will but who suppose they might have a basis to contest it. The living trust is executed privately and no advertisement is necessary.

2) A second advantage of a living trust is that in many cases of probate there is an interruption of income which works a severe hardship on beneficiaries. Such is not the case with a living trust in which the transfer can be executed at once. The trustee needs only a certification of death to fully activate the trust's terms and provisions. This can be extremely important to the family beset by the usual uncertainties and financial difficulties that are experienced at the death of the head of the home.

3) There is a further advantage to the living trust in the case of a business which is to be run or disposed of on advantageous terms. The trustee can take action at once, while in the case of a probate a long period often has to elapse before the court gives its approval.

4) In the matter of a will it is often the case that undesirable publicity is attached to the probate of the property. An inventory of everything the testator owns (in most states) becomes public record. Unlike a will, the terms of a living trust are not disclosed to a probate court, and the assets and the identity of the persons to receive them are closely guarded secrets.

5) Another added dimension to a living trust is that in the event you do become disabled or incapable of managing your own affairs while living, the trustees are authorized to manage your affairs for you. If you had only a will, it would be necessary for the court to step in and to appoint an administrator while you are yet living. It is possible that this appointment would be someone you yourself would never have chosen. A will is only effective after death. A living trust is effective while one lives and also after death.

6) The greatest advantage of a living trust, however, lies in the elimination of the large expenses of probate. The cost of administering an estate of $10,000 to $20,000 is often as high as 20%. The expense entailed in an estate of $100,000 may average around $10,000 or more. Most of this can be saved in the use of a living trust.

Let us now consider ways by which a man may avoid the serious problem involved in the probate of a will through use of the living trust or other means.

The Joint Ownership of the Home

Joint ownership of a home makes it possible to keep it out of probate and is to be recommended. Nonetheless, it is important to ascertain the particular provision of the law in your state regarding joint ownership. It may be that your deed is an old one under a "tenants in common" clause. In this case (in most states) your property does not automatically go to the wife, but is disposed of according to the husband's will. If he has no will the property will be distributed

in accordance with the particular laws of the state. The solution is to change the deed to that of joint ownership. See your lawyer on this.

Avoiding Probate of Joint Checking and Savings Accounts It is important to know your bank's policy in regard to joint checking accounts. Some banks block an account upon receipt of notification of the death of one of the depositors. If you own a joint account it would be well to secure a letter from your bank stating that it will not block a jointly owned account upon the death of one of the joint owners.

Avoiding Probate of Securities

A husband and wife who have joint ownership of securities or "tenancy in common" suppose naturally that these will become the property of the spouse who survives. This may not be true. The widow may find that she does not have control of all the stock and that half of it goes to probate.

To avoid these difficulties, the living trust is the ideal arrangement in connection with the registration of securities. By executing a simple trust document the owner may be certain that the proceeds of the stocks will go entirely to the beneficiary without going through Probate Court.

(Note: If stocks or bonds are given outright to a religious organization during the life of the donor, he should consult his attorney first. There may be capital gains tax. Religious organizations can dispose of securities without paying the tax.)

Life Insurance Policies

Life insurance policies payable to a named beneficiary are usually exempt from probate. If, however, it is payable to the estate it will go to probate. Except under unusual circumstances life insurance should be made payable to a person or organization rather than to the estate. This is especially advisable since in most states insurance policies made to an individual are exempt from state taxes.

It is unfortunate, however, that two-thirds of all life insurance payable in cash, according to insurance companies is dissipated within two years. In fact, there are businesses which compile "sucker lists" of women who have become recent widows.

It is not only confidence men who get to the widow but often a relative exerts pressure on her to get the money to invest in a business which because of his lack of experience may be more likely to fail than to succeed.

Hence the husband has not only the responsibility of seeing that sufficient support is left to the widow, but to leave it in a manner that will provide her with as much security as possible for the rest of her life.

An obvious plan is to arrange for the insurance money to be paid out over a period of years. The main drawback of this plan is that it is an inflexible device

that does not take account of emergencies.

An alternative is to appoint a corporate trustee—your local bank or preferably a trust company which specializes in this business. In this case the trustee can be given discretion to vary payments in accordance with the needs of the heirs.

We have considered the matter of how a man can transfer his property at death to beneficiaries. We have shown how he should consider his widow and those who are dependent on him, in his will or through a trust. The next question is this: Having made provision for his family (or in the case of the wife whose husband is deceased) *if in addition he desires to take a portion of his estate with him, how can this be done? We shall consider this question in our next chapter.*

CHAPTER VI

How You Can Take It With You

It was a simple incident that was related to the writer which brought his attention to a certain phase of stewardship, the importance of which is often overlooked. A certain couple well along in years decided to make a will. Like many others they had put off this matter year after year. But at length they chose to take the step, and they called in a Christian consultant for advice with the intention of making a will which would transfer their property to a religious institution to carry on the Lord's work after they were gone.

In the course of the conversation they mentioned that they had been faithful in paying their tithes throughout their entire married life. Their income during much of their lifetime had only been average, they having lived during the worst years of the depression. Altogether they had given about $12,000 to the Lord's work. While inventorying the value of their possessions, in the process of making out the will, they took account of their home, an insurance policy, a savings account and some other assets. To their surprise they discovered that it totaled in all to about $50,000. The man they had called in to advise them remarked, "The property that you are about to leave in your will for God's work is equivalent to four times what you have given to the Lord during your lifetime. If you had died without making a will, who would have gotten the proceeds?" The wife appeared startled. "Why," she exclaimed, "a relative who has several times as much as we have would have gotten it, and he is just a sinner!"

And so it is with many people who are scrupulously faithful in their giving to God during their lifetime but sadly fail in their stewardship in the proper handling of their estate. Too often the property for which they have worked all their lives and which they could have transferred so easily into the work of the Lord, and thus as Paul said, **"Laying up in a store for themselves ... against the time to come,"** is completely lost. What a tragedy! And what regrets they must experience when it is too late to do anything about it.

Let us picture to ourselves an elderly Christian couple that has accumulated an average estate. If their home is nearly paid for, it is probable that they will have assets of between twenty-five and fifty thousand dollars, or it may be more. They may not have children. If they do have, they will naturally want to leave them a substantial bequest. And this is Scriptural: **"Children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children"** (II Cor. 12:14).

But should it all be given to the children? In cases where there is poverty

they may need the larger part of it. But in most cases should not the parents reserve something for themselves? Are they not entitled to take anything with them? Of course they cannot take their property or money with them in their purse. But they can transfer it into heavenly currency; they can lay up a store against the time to come. This is a thrilling thought—in reality they can take with them that for which they worked so hard, to enjoy forever!

It may be that they will be approached by civic leaders to leave their estate or a bequest for some civic cause. They may be told they will be honored by having their name attached to a school, a library, or a park. What about this? For the children of the world this is perhaps a desirable thing. But alas such a reward will be only for this world. As Jesus said, **"They have received their reward."** If a man or woman is among the children of the resurrection, and believes in the reality of another life to come, then he has the privilege of making an investment not for this perishing world, but for the world to come! *He can indeed take it with him!* He can use it to win precious souls who will some day bless him in the "eternal habitations."

To Whom Shall God's Part Be Left?

The question which is now presented is to what organization should the Lord's part be left. This is a matter which requires careful consideration. While God regards the good intentions of our hearts, one of the requirements of a steward is to make wise investments. It is no secret that money taken up in the name of religious work is sometimes misappropriated or used for other purposes than that for which it was designated, so that only a small proportion of the funds, if any gets to their proposed objective. Of course there are administrative expenses involved in all religious work, and these cannot be avoided. Anyone who says there are not is hardly truthful. But it is a solemn responsibility of religious organizations to see that a substantial part of the funds received goes to the purpose for which they are raised.

A responsible missionary organization, for example, will provide proof that its missionary funds are disbursed properly and honestly. Some organizations are very careless in their accounting methods. However, the dereliction of some does not give excuse for anyone to criticize those in position of responsibility who remind the people of God of their responsibility of stewardship. Nor is it amiss to tell people that God has promised special blessings to those who are faithful in their giving. The Scriptures relate stewardship to a farmer planting and sowing:

"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully" (II Cor. 9:6).

Ways to Invest in God's Work

There are several methods by which a person may invest in God's work, one

or more of which would perhaps be most suitable for his particular circumstances:

1) The best gift possible is the outright gift of cash or securities. A man may find that he has funds which he can give now. Why should he not put the money to use at once? Time is running out and every year counts. The antichrist is on the horizon. The day of reaping may soon be over— sooner than we think. There never was a time in history in which there were such tremendous opportunities in the harvest field. By giving the money outright, you can be absolutely sure it will get to the people you want to use it.

2) The second is the will. The making of a will so that a religious or missionary organization might be one of the beneficiaries. This is a common method.

3) Then there is the living trust. In this case, one retains complete control of his property during his lifetime. At death it can go immediately into the Lord's work, and not suffer the delay of two to five years and the expensive fees of probate.

4) In cases where beneficiaries of a life insurance policy have died or else no longer need the protection, the policy can be an admirable gift to Christian work.

5) Another favorite plan that many people find acceptable is the annuity. There are elderly people who wish to give their property to God's work but need the income during their lifetime. For them the annuity plan is admirably suited.

Gift Annuities

Many older Christians who wish to give to the Lord's work and at the same time retain the earnings of their property during their lifetime are choosing the annuity plan. Some not understanding the plan, often keep their money in a savings account, *not realizing that they could derive much larger returns from an annuity investment and at the same time make a substantial gift to God's work.*

An annuity simply stated is a method of using capital and interest to secure a lifetime income for the investor.

There are several advantages to the gift annuity plan. Not only is part of the original investment considered by the government as a gift to the Lord's work, but it is deductible as a charity gift during the year that the annuity is purchased.

Suppose a Christian having reached the age of 70 has $10,000 in cash from which he wishes to receive an annual guaranteed income for the balance of his life, but also desires to be a good steward of the Lord. By investing in a gift annuity he will receive a steady income for the balance of his life at a rate considerably above what a bank would pay. In addition during the year in which

he secured the annuity, he may declare $3,509.96 as a charitable gift and deduct this amount of money for income tax purposes. Then as his yearly payments are received by him, $559.49 of the total $682.30 is deemed as a return on his investment, thereby escaping income taxation. As it turns out, only $122.81, or less than a fifth of his yearly annuity income is taxable.

If part of the gift is in stocks which have increased in value, it is possible to avoid the capital gains tax, because the gift is to a religious institution. Thus, all in all the annuity becomes a very attractive investment.

There may be cases in which it is wise for a joint and survivor arrangement under an annuity. In such instances, two investors enter jointly into an annuity agreement and payments are made until the death of the survivor occurs.

Most of all, the owner of the annuity has the satisfaction of knowing that a substantial portion of his gift can go immediately into the Lord’s work.

CHAPTER VII

A Missionary Plan for the Citizen of Two Worlds

(This volume has been prepared for the benefit of all Christians, regardless of where their responsibilities may be in extending God's kingdom. For those who are interested in the world outreach of Christ for the Nations, we have prepared the following information.)

All of us know the importance of supporting God's work in America. But at the present hour it appears that the supreme responsibility that weighs upon the church is that of world missions. America has long had its opportunity. Scores or even hundreds of churches carry on regular religious services in larger communities. Yet in heathen lands there may not be even one evangelical missionary to a million people. We who are favored in America owe a debt to the heathen who live and die without Christ. As a Christian prepares to leave this world there is no better plan than to leave a portion of his estate to the salvation of the lost. We have space to quote only a few Scriptures from the Lord Jesus Christ in His Great Commission which fully bear out this responsibility:

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24:14).

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:19-20).

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15, 16).

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

These words of the Lord Jesus are sufficient to show us our great responsibility. However, all of us are not able to go to the foreign lands. How then can we discharge our debt to the heathen? The answer is through our giving to missions—that is to help someone else do what we can't do.

What greater gesture can be made when we leave this world than to put our means to work in winning the lost to Christ? In that way we can take it with us!