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## I Was Afraid and Hid Thy Talent in the Earth.



Hidden away from all use, hidden away while one opportunity after another passed by, no wonder the Master's face grew stern: A coin hidden away while a little child near by cried for hunger,

while the people in a far land cried for the Bread of Life. A voice silenced that might have softly comforted the sorrowing, or raised in strong protest might have overpowered the voice of the Tempter and steadied the wavering will. A pen laid down that might have given pleasure to the homesick, or spread the gospel of Christ abroad among the nations. A home kept for self that might have been a resting place for tired bodies and minds. Is there any end to the list one might make. Each of us in our heart knows well the hidden talent, hidden because we are afraid or lazy or wilfully

wrong. How will we face the Master. What can we say when He asks us what is our harvest, what we have gathered from the seed he gave us to plant and tend for Him.

### 'To Keep it Holy.'

In days when the rules were more stringent and the atmosphere more tonic than now, mothers used to lay aside the secular literature of the home, on Saturday afternoon, and on Sunday morning it was not to be found by the most diligent seeker. Re-appearing on Monday, it brought with it the appropriate week-day dress and tone, but it did not invade the one sweet and hushed rest-day. On Saturday night, as the mother tucked it away on its shelf, she might have waived her hand and said, 'Beyond these voices there is peace.' Nobody puts it out of sight or mind now; the very children in a thousand homes of other and more sacred traditions look for their own page in the big Sunday newspaper, and the air of sweet and sacred tranquillity has gone from our Lord's day. The people who do not go to church do not spend their hours in any specially religious or spiritually elevating exercises. If they fancy they

do, they cheat themselves. After a little they cease to feel uneasiness on the subject, and quite readily yield up the hours that are not their own to the pursuits that are anything but in line with the purpose and meaning of the hallowed day.

What is the manifest obligation of the Christian at home, or in absence, in town, or in country, if in health on the Sabbath day? First and foremost, to attend public worship. By simply doing this, by taking a seat in a pew, by listening to the preacher, by joining in prayer and praise, he or she ranges as an individual on the right side.

Every household should, if possible, have its service of song on the hallowed day. A daughter who can play the piano may lead the rest, either in the morning or the evening, all may gather and sing hymns and psalms to God's praise.

When, by reason of mismanagement, the Sabbath is a gloomy and tedious day for children, a great wrong has been done

them. And great is the pity of such a blunder. No day should be so happy, so welcome, so eagerly anticipated, as this one. For one thing, the father is at home, and that ought to make the day a festive one. The mother's morning face should wear a most cheery smile. The house, keyed to melody, should seem brighter than on other days.

Every child in the world loves to hear stories, and on the Sabbath the best and dearest stories should be told, and Bible stories, so sweet, so thrilling, so eternally fresh and so dramatic in their movement. Too many children have a very slight acquaintance with Bible stories now.

Wise mothers do not forbid little children's play on God's day. They must play. The lambs do, and the squirrels and the birds. Why not the babes? But there may be toys reserved for Sundays, blocks and puzzles not used on other days. The little girl need not be forbidden to hold her doll, but children soon learn that Sunday play may be of a quieter, less boisterous order, than the romping of the week.

All social visiting of a purely formal character is inappropriate on the Lord's day. Entertainment of friends which implies ceremony and dress and the pageantry of fashion, is manifestly not in the fashion of worship, nor yet in the line of repose or of spiritual quickening and refreshment. There are other days when people may be asked to dinner, and to the evening company. But the latch-string should be loose for friends who have no other day in which to come, for the young man away from home, for the young girl living among strangers, for the old lady whose life is behind her, and who is spending her declining years in some asylum of charity. An extra plate and cup, for these express Christian hospitality.

Whosoever loves his native land and fears God must be concerned in the question of Sabbath-keeping the whole year round.—Canadian 'Churchman.'

### Adjusting Expenses—A True Story.

Brother and Sister Careful were seated by their cozy fire on New Year's Day. They made a careful review of the year's receipts and expenses. The returns had not been what they had expected. The surplus was small. Then they began to talk about the year just beginning, and to lay plans. That which seemed to impress Brother Careful most was that 'there must be retrenchment.' They must economize, and they would as well begin it now as to wait. The sooner begun the better.

'One thing sure, my dear,' said Brother Careful, 'we must cut down some of our expenses; we must spend less this year.'

'Yes,' said his wife, 'we will have to deny ourselves some things which we have enjoyed in the past. I have already begun to think what I shall deny myself.'

'That's the way it has to be,' said her husband, 'and we might just as well decide