

enough, how shall I blame Persimmons for counting very largely upon the course of success and prosperity which he felt sure the Lord would give to him in return for his handsome contribution to the new church building? Blame him? No, indeed. He had given more than a tenth, and he had heard more than one preacher say in the pulpit and out of it that to give one-tenth was the best possible business investment, for God was sure to return it all and a great deal more. God would be in no man's debt. Why, surely He can return it all. Does He not own the earth? Are not the cattle on a thousand hills His, and the gold and the silver? How easy for Him to turn back upon your hand thousands for your hundreds.

Persimmons had heard all this over and over again, and if it did not occur to the preachers that this was rather an unspiritual and very worldly style of motive with which to appeal to men who find it hard enough to keep the world from possessing them; if they did not discover that they were appealing to the meanest kind of selfishness, then I am not going to blame Persimmons if he never thought of all that, but just went on dreaming of the high tide of prosperity which he felt sure the Lord was now about to send upon him in return for a subscription of \$1000.

It may be that I did sometimes, yea, often, talk with him about other ways in which God's unforgetfulness of a good man's work and labour of love may be shown besides returning to him a gift of money. It may be that I told him that the laughter of his happy children was music in my ears, and so tried to lead him to see how God was remembering him in this way, and that my congratulations on his uniform good health, and his wife's grace and beauty, and a score of other things crowding around him, were only an effort to show him that all these things were speaking of the great Father's bountiful love every hour of his life. If I did not succeed very well in leaving upon my dear friend's mind the impression I wished to leave, I just thought it was because I was always a miserably poor preacher, and while that flattered my vanity by making me think myself very humble, and therefore in the sure road to promotion, it always saved me from becoming censorious towards Persimmons, and so I never thought of blaming him as selfish or dull.

Also, I did sometimes venture modestly to assert that perhaps God cared something about the prosperity and well-being of sweet children whose parents had not yet seen it their duty to measure their obligations to God by using ten as a divisor, and that God might graciously bless and prosper some who in straits had not given even a twentieth of their income, as well as those who gave