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HOW IMPORTANT IS TIME?

(The sermon which was selected for this issue of The Symbolic Code is the one Brother V.T. Houteff delivered May 27, 1944. It is especially timely now as we have already launched into a new year. And it may serve as a guiding thought to "the children of light" who are "not in darkness" as to the lateness and importance of the time in which we now live.)

PRAYER THOUGHT: "As something strange and new, these words fall upon the ears of the wondering multitude. Such teaching is contrary to all they have ever heard from priest or rabbi. They see in it nothing to flatter their pride or to feed their ambitious hopes. But there is about this new Teacher a power that holds them spellbound. The sweetness of divine love flows from His very presence, as the fragrance from a flower. His words fall like 'rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth.' All feel instinctively that here is One who reads the secrets of the soul, yet who comes near to them with tender compassion. Their hearts open to Him, and, as they listen, the Holy Spirit unfolds to them something of the meaning of that lesson which

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humanity in all ages so needs to learn." -- Mount of Blessing, pp. 17, 18.

We see by this that everything strange is not always wrong to teach. The Jews in Christ's time had not learned the things humanity needed then to learn. Let us pray that this afternoon we may learn more about the things we need to learn.

Eccles. 9:10, 11 -- "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work,

nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest. I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all."

Whatever duty we are called upon to perform we must do it diligently with 100% of our might in order to get it done right and on time. All of you have heard it said many times that "if a thing is worth doing at all it is worth doing right." Still even though it be done perfectly if it is done late it may never be of any value; and what we leave undone will be undone forever so far as we are concerned.

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Eccles. 9:11 -- "I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all."

Everyone has time. Everyone has chance. The winner of the race is not victorious simply because he was born to be swift, but it is because of the meeting of time and chance in his life. No, it was not just natural for him to win the race. In order for him to win he first had to spend the necessary time to fit himself for the race, and then the chance to run came. The same principle holds true in every field of endeavor. One must first study to fit himself for duty while he has the time in which to do it and then comes his opportunity to demonstrate or use what he has learned. The successful man, then, makes good use of his time and then watches and avails himself of his opportunity to serve when it presents itself. For instance, Abraham Lincoln, in his spare time, learned to be President of this country, and so when his chance came he was ready to fill the office admirably. To make a success in anything one must start out by mastering the most elementary fundamentals and then keep on progressing in advancement step by step.

Honest men who gain wealth do not do it

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because they naturally knew a great deal or were naturally skillful. It was because they used well their time and their chance. They, too, had put forth the necessary effort to equip and train

themselves to be successful when their chance came. Those who do not make profitable use of their time cannot possibly live successfully.

Nobody can tell just what electricity is. And what about time? What is time? -- Nobody here knows.

In the beginning, "the evening and the morning were the first day." Day is a measurement of time, and God created it. The day, as you know, is composed of twenty-four hours, an hour being merely a shorter measurement of time. Since the earth can measure but twenty-four hours each time it turns on its axis, Earth, then, has as its only means of time measurement its rotation on its axis and its circuit through its orbit. Do you realize that were it not for this we would be without time? Instead, it would be eternity. Therefore eternity has no time. Time is manufactured. Daniel refers to "Time, times, and half a time" which explains what time is. It is a span measured by the completion of a full round of the earth in its orbit. That is one time. The repetition of it makes times. Then what is eternity? It has no measurement, for it is never to repeat itself

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like the years do. Time is given us that we may know what part of eternity man has existed on this earth.

Which do you think is the more important: time or eternity? -- Time is everything, for without it there is no eternity; still eternity is not time because it cannot be measured. Time saved is even more important than money saved, for you can not save money if you do not save time.

If earth, through its constant movement and change of location in the universe, represents time, then everything might represent time. Plants represent time, for you can tell by its size how old a plant is. In another form human beings represent time. Trees represent time by their growth. The Bible represents time, for it took time for man to live the history It records, to write It, to print It, to manufacture the paper on which It is printed and the machinery that prints It, to grow and process the material for Its cover, -- it all represents time. The workman's wages represent time paid in money. Neither gold or diamonds are obtained without the representation of the time element being present both in the commodities themselves and again in the money that people

give in exchange for them.

Through this discussion you can see that

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time is vitally connected with material though it is invisible. It is far more important to save time, for time is priceless; it is just like salvation. But the sad fact is that but few people realize how valuable time is. In view of the great value of time what sin it must be to waste it! Yet to all are given time and chance.

In one hundred years there are about 36,500 days. In a general sense that amount in terms of dollars is not much, for today money is measured by billions of dollars. But a person's lifetime is in reality very short, and composed of three periods: childhood, prime, and old age. It is usually in his prime period of life that man is most productive, and since it is but a part of his lifetime, he should never waste a minute of that time.

We should see that we get 100% value out of every minute we live. To accomplish this we must conserve our energy by eliminating useless and unnecessary effort. In that way our endurance is lengthened and we can actually accomplish more. Since it does take time and effort to talk, for instance, we should avoid useless talk, and learn to make every word count for good only. Lost time can never be recovered regardless how we wasted it. It is gone for eternity. Therefore how valuable time is!

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We should perhaps ask ourselves this question more often than any other: Am I doing something now that I may regret in eternity? And if we are we should at once set about to substitute worthy pursuits for the useless or worthless one. The Christian's great duty is to accomplish the things that God wants done. Doing that makes us rich in one way or another. Should a man then rob us, God will reimburse us. Really, no one can cheat us if we engage ourselves in doing the things God wants done, but the man who tends only his own interests never actually gets very far, especially when his accomplishments are evaluated in the light of eternity. And "there is no limit to the good a man can do if he does not care who gets the credit."

Chance is what brings us eternity. Therefore, if we make use of time and chance, we do not

have to worry about eternity.

Are you personally aware that time and chance are given to each of us, and that if we would be successful now and in the hereafter we must as judiciously invest our time as we would our money? Are you a time "spendthrift" or a time wizard? Are you just existing, or are you preparing for your great "chance"? Each must answer this question for himself. Soon that great chance will come to every soul, and when it comes it will prove the faithfulness

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or the unfaithfulness of our stewardship over the time that was given us to prepare for it. As you stand now, are you ready?

"Our time belongs to God. Every moment is His, and we are under the most solemn obligation to improve it to His glory.... Of no talent He has given will He require a more strict account than of our time.

* * *

"...We shall individually be held responsible for doing one jot less than we have ability to do. The Lord measures with exactness every possibility for service. The unused capabilities are as much brought into account as are those that are improved. For all that we might become through the right use of our talents God holds us responsible. We shall be judged according to what we ought to have done, but did not accomplish because we did not use our powers to glorify God. Even if we do not lose our souls, we shall realize in eternity the result of our unused talents. For all the knowledge and ability that we might have gained and did not, there will be an eternal loss.

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"Whatever the line of work in which we engage, the word of God teaches us to be 'not

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slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.' 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might,' 'knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.'" -- Christ's Object Lessons (1941 edition) pp. 342, 363, 346; (1900 edition) pp. 345, 365, 349.

In the day that we must account for our stewardship WE WILL BE ABLE TO GIVE
A
GOOD ACCOUNT OF EVERY OTHER TALENT ENTRUSTED TO US IF WE CAN SHOW
THAT WE HAVE MADE THE MOST PROFITABLE USE OF OUR TIME. That is how
important time is. May God help each of us to be wise time investors.

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