

ALL THAT I HAVE
By Alta Higbee Johnson

Marvin was happy. His storage bins were full; his debts paid. For the rest of his life there would be no cause to fear what the future might bring. He had a choice wife whom he loved more each day. Their family of boys and girls had grown up to be noble men and women who served in the church and government respected and honored among men.

As Marvin surveyed his good fortunes his heart filled with gratitude. There was nothing more he desired. His heart swelled in thanksgiving, and he wondered what he could give the Father in return.

The world held no pearl more choice than the one he sought and presented at the Father's gate. "It is a gift of gratitude," he said to the angel there. But the angel answered. "What use hath the Father of this? Hath he not pearls surpassing any that you shall ever see? Go again and bring some other thing."

Marvin found the largest and most perfect diamond and said to the angel, "The earth holds no gift more rare." "It will not do," the angel spake, "for even these the Father made. Can you return what is his own? Now go again and don't despair; the treasure valued, surely is there."

When he had secured the greatest masterpiece of art, Marvin returned again to the gate, only to have his gift rejected.

So, hunting the world over, "What is there that the Father does not already have? What can I add to his stores? And as he pondered, Marvin knew there was nothing which the Father did not already have.

Finally Marvin went to the gate and said to the holy angel, "What unprofitable thing is this the Father hath done to make man? There is nothing for man to give in return."

"Ah," said the angel. "you seek as one seeking wisdom, Listen, and thou shalt hear. Why have you labored for your son? What is your reward for the parental care you gave him? What can he bring to you of great value, since you are comfortably situated in the world and desire nothing?"

Marvin thought deeply. "I rejoice when he hails me as Father and looks up to me for leadership. Always he remembers my teachings and is kind. Respectfully he honors me and speaks well of me to his companions. He does not use my name as a curse upon his lips. Repeatedly he expresses gratitude for my parental care. These things I treasure; they bring me joy. This gift of gratitude, praise, obedience, warms my heart; and it is good for my son to have it. This is all that he could give me that would add to what I already have. And though I have many sons and daughters, each gift is just as precious.

The light gleamed more brilliantly about the angel, and before he and the gate faded into the sky, he said softly, "Go thou and do likewise."