

## The Stewardship of Money.

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Our theme is hackneyed. It keeps coming to the front in every Association, Convention and Missionary Conference. It is one of the irrepressibles and is therefore always fresh whether or not it receives fresh treatment. Like water, the gospel is free, but as it costs to bring water through pipes from the lake, so it requires money to convey the glad tidings to thirsty souls. People get weary sometimes under appeals for funds, and it is little wonder when we consider the injudicious ways in which they are often made. But the pity is that hearers are ever restive under demands fair and just. There is constant outflow from educational and missionary treasuries so that there must be ceaseless replenishment. It is quite out of place that any should ever ask when in the world these calls for money are going to stop. Let every soul come at once to the calm and ultimately sweet conclusion, that they will not end till time's clock has entirely run down. What would we have to live for if it were not for collection boxes? They furnish a worthy goal for our varied activities. Dislike of sermons designed to stimulate benevolence augurs not well for the displeased. Discomfort under proper sort of plea for reinforcement of missions is a premonition of larger discomfort when the Lord of the vineyard demands final settlement. This unrest should be taken as indication that we have not been proceeding aright in the use of possessions, and that consequently we should speedily mend our ways. In the early part of my first pastorate there were only bi-monthly collections for the denominational societies. On other Sabbaths there was no sound of coins. Things temporal and eternal, thought I, were not mixed. And I spoke well of this for a while. But, as the Bedford tinker would say, I spoke as one upon whose head part of the egg-shell still remained. Mixing things temporal and eternal—isn't that exactly what we are to be about? Heaven is to be brought to earth. This world is to be annexed as a suburb of the eternal city. Silver sings songs in the sanctuary prophetic of soul-saving. Giving is an act of worship as surely as praying, and all should participate regularly in the one as well as the other. Praying without paying is praying only in name. Weekly offerings, commensurate with prosperity, are an acknowledgment of stewardship, and form a fitting close of one week and a fitting opening to another. "Preach the gospel and let money alone," is now said less frequently than once, because, as John Jasper would say, "the world do more." A gospel that lets money alone is not the gospel of Christ. People must be employed for the gathering and disbursing of dollars, and Christianity does not leave an immense section of our lives outside its jurisdiction. It has something to say as to how to get money and how to spend it. Get money in legitimate ways and no other, it says; do not lay it by like the miser and thus rob it of its only prerogative; do not use it in ways harmful nor inferior, but appropriate it to the very highest ends. Make not the evil desires of men the basis of a business. Open no liquor saloon nor tobacco shop. Use no dishonest methods in honest pursuits. Make no outlay that the great Proprietor cannot approve of at the day of reckoning. Our attitude toward gold announces our attitude toward God. Getting and spending for self shows that we serve self and not the Creator. Doing both with a view to the glory of the Redeemer makes known that we are answering the end of our existence.

There is money enough in the hands of Christians to sow every acre of earth with gospel seed. People somehow get money for things they delight in—jewelry and bicycles, chewing gum and ostrich feathers. Hosts hear Albani although so expensive a luxury. About the time of the first visit of that star to Halifax, when she drew some thousands from purses, friends of the Y. M. C. A. held a meeting to consider ways and means of raising five hundred dollars for removal of debt from that beneficent institution, and if the amount was obtained at all it was by the hardest. People are in poverty when little interested in a thing, and in affluence when otherwise. At least that is the way with multitudes. And the question is: How can money be more largely set free from the improper and inferior and applied to supreme purposes? We are anxious for live questions, and this is one of them. How can the waters of the great river be turned into the bed of the little brook? How can the brook be made a river and the river a brook?

This may be answered in brief and all-inclusive way by saying that the men and women who love God must love him more, and the number of those who love him must be multiplied. No sort of mechanical appliance can work the change.

But passing from the general to some particulars, let it be remarked in the first place, that much will be done to set funds flowing in worthiest channels to a more becoming degree by right conception of ownership and stewardship. Most men's ideas of ownership need reconstructing.

God is sole Proprietor. We are not in partnership with him. He is Master and we are stewards. In theory we readily admit this, but it is customary to deny it in practice. What is acknowledged in word must be acknowledged in deed. It is not optional with a man whether he come under Divine proprietorship or not. He is there already, he always has been, and always will be. But it is optional with him whether he live in recognition of this fact. Often it is assumed that heavy responsibilities rest upon Christians since they have professed allegiance to Christ, while unbelievers are under no religious obligations because they have not taken the badge of discipleship. But this is a grievous mistake. More is required of yonder man who is not a Christian than of the one who has accepted Christ and is living to some extent as pleases God. If two persons have been equally indebted to a third, and one has paid part while the other has paid nothing, the latter, of course, owes the more. It is exacted of all that in all things they live to the glory of Jehovah.

You may say that yonder lots of land are yours, and certain houses and monies, in the sense that they have been left in your charge and not in the charge of your neighbor. But God is their owner. He has given you the agency to look after them and make to him suitable returns. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," says the oldest of land records; and David and Paul in the words, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," indicate that no foot of land has been made over to anybody. It is distinctly stated also, as if anticipating man's disposition to claim what does not belong to him, that God owns all gold, silver and cattle. Moreover, concerning ourselves it is written: "Ye are not your own, ye are brought with a price." I myself belong to God and must make some outlay upon myself that I may day after day be thus helped to serve my Master efficiently. My children are God's, and there must be expenditure for the good of their bodies, their minds and their souls. It will not do to treat children as if they had nothing but bodies, nor as if they had nothing besides these two. Appropriations must be made for their spiritual welfare. Indeed the bodies and minds must be ministered unto as a means of ministering to their immortal natures. The poor are God's, and if I am blessed with temporal possessions, he grants them orders, upon me for help, orders that I am bound to honor. My church is God's. So are the institutions at Wolfville. So are home missions and foreign. Not in person does the owner of the vineyard come to claim his own of laborers, but he comes in our own necessities, in the family, the church, the educational and missionary Board; and unless there is strong and abiding conviction of accountability to him, conviction begotten of contact with his book of instructions for workmen, unless he is practically as well as theoretically regarded as proprietor, what is near and obtrusive, what ministers most to self-glorification, will get over-much, while the remote is left to suffer. Putting funds just where they ought to be put, and in proper proportions, is rarer than great preaching or skilled statesmanship. It is possible to give our families less than their due in order to swell a contribution for Telugus, although we would have to look long to find where it is done. If a man's family is large and his income small, demands upon him in other directions are correspondingly affected. This is why the tithing system is inadequate. We do not propose now to discuss that subject, however. Our present point is that solicitors which stand nearest—love of show and pleasure and what yields, or is expected to yield, quick temporal returns—usually get the lion's share. Absorbed with the near, the far is neglected. That is why an occasional church member is still found lagging so far behind in the procession as to protest against sending missionaries abroad when there are so many heathen at our own doors. But it is a notorious fact that those who send not away empty God's solicitors for foreign parts are worth most to domestic missions and their own families. The light that shines farthest shines brightest at home. No just demand upon our liberality can be ignored without damage to all other interests, whether intimately or remotely related thereto, nor without injury to ourselves also. Indifference to general good means local loss. The impression is often given that there are a number of causes to work for, rather than one great cause with different departments. A representative of one department of Christian labor is heard to make appeal as though other departments were of small account compared with his. He affirms or implies, and sometimes correctly, that too much is going, relatively, for this and that, and not enough for what he represents. But there is call for much of caution here. That there may be justice to any particular section there must be a broad and sympathetic view of the whole. Clashing is suicidal. Special pleas that are overwrought and skillfully belittled all besides, are exceedingly injurious in the redemptive programme. For the hour they make feeling prodigal with dollars, but in the reaction there is damage. It is better to draw very heavily upon people now and again for one or two objects, by heroic pressure, than to have them maintain a low level in their giving for gospel extension; but it is better still to help them to the correct idea of the stewardship, and to appreciate the various claims upon their generosity, without pushing any one thing so far to the front as to do injustice to something else. This is a difficult thing to realize, indeed it will no where be realized in perfection, but it is the thing to aim at. General and foundational effort of this sort would make so much of special pleading unnecessary. It would bring principle to the front, so that the making of contributions would not be so much at the mercy of oratory and weather. Family purchases would not be made without thought of benighted heathen. Missions would be in mind during the selection of furniture, and cause exercise of economy to the end that we might do our part in distributing the Bread of Life. We would do as did "Thanksgiving Ann," and not as did those she served. This old colored woman, who had long been with a well-to-do family and rendered superior service, carefully laid by out of her little, and limited her outlay upon herself, with thought of spiritual destitution

in distant parts, while her master and mistress gave to missions whatever they happened to have when the time came for donations, claiming that there was more heart in that sort of spontaneous giving. But the good servant dared to teach them a much-needed lesson in a unique way, by putting upon the table cold corn cake, bones and remnants of fruit, just what she happened to have when the time came for eating, instead of making careful preparation. Benevolences must enter into daily calculations and have to do in regulating all expenditures, else we act not as becometh children of God.

But we must hasten if we are not to trespass seriously in the matter of time. Our main question is: How can money come to be appropriated more largely as it should be? We say as a second particular. By greater familiarity with God's Word and world. Carey's course must be repeated in prayerfully making way farther into the heart of the Great Commission, and seeing the criminality of doing nothing or doing little for the heathen nations. There must be a shifting from man's view-point to God's by contact with God's revealed will. When the heathen world is seen as with the eye of Jesus, there is intense desire that heralds of the Cross should go over the seas. Such as kept at a distance in Carey's time from the inmost import of "Go ye into all the world," tried to repress "the little man with a far off look," thinking him fanatical. And there were some, and preachers among them, who made sport of his proposals. But when a man profoundly realizes that Jehovah is ordering him forward, it takes more than trifles to hold him back. "Go ye." Go by going as did Thomas and Carey, as did Burpee and Crawley. Go by praying and paying, as did those poor ministers in the parlor of Widow Wallis at Kettering. Go by informing others and inciting them to pay as did Samuel Pearce and Andrew Fuller. Go by joining the unknown hosts who unite in sending forth those whose names become household words. It will be impossible to do otherwise if we listen to the voice of God. Talk about preaching the gospel and leaving money alone! Why the most of Christ's parables in some way represent the relations of men to earthly possessions. The Master commits to us certain things with the injunction, "Occupy till I come." And we evince the state of our hearts toward him by the use made of these assignments from His hand. Our employment of the perishing declares the measure of our love and obedience. Study of these parables would end irritable reference to what are often called begging sermons. The Master who claims His own is not engaged in beggary.

Then also a study of the Word was attended in Carey's case by study of the world. He saw the appalling need that millions had to learn of Jesus Christ. A visit to a starving family urges to effort for their relief; and so it comes about that clear sight of spiritual destitution in Quebec or India means more missionaries and more money. The information and appeals of those who return to us from heathen shores should be well laid to heart, and a more thoughtful and more general use should be made of missionary literature. An interest in missionary biography should be fostered among children, for there is nothing, aside from the Bible, which will do more to furnish them with right conceptions of life and to incite them to run vigorously over Divinely-chosen paths. When there is much done among boys and girls, mission forces will not lack for recruits nor will mission treasuries be empty. Allow Scotch story writers to get the go by for a while, and in company with the children trace the steps of God in the carrying out of his beneficent arrangements respecting our race. The needs of local churches are discerned by us, and offerings made accordingly. Let us look afar. "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields." Where there is one-sided investigation, and the partial view, there will be one-sided contributions and one-sided contributors. Only the all-round helper is an all-round man. The whole world must come into our sympathies if we are to know our Saviour well and serve him honorably.

How can more money be turned into proper channels? Finally, by distinct recognition that there is but one programme of many parts, and that sacrifices must be made by all in all the parts. Kindly give us your attention as we expand this piece by piece.

It must be seen clearly, we say, that there is but one programme. I wish that we might all be helped in this direction to-night and by this conference. There is a great deal going on in the world, an endless variety of occupation. But after all there is only one work being prosecuted, and that is the winning of the world to Jesus. Discovery and invention, material and intellectual progress, social and political advancement, all these are tributary to the one grand end. Every worthy engagement is articulated to Christ. And success for individual or church lies nowhere else save in filling the Heaven-appointed place in bringing this glorious consummation. God had a plan for Judson in Burmah, but no more surely than he has a cherished plan for each of us. What is done by those who choose their own courses will be over-ruled from on high, for the general weal, but naught save loss will accrue to the disobedient themselves. Surrender of the heart to Christ, then, and complete giving up of the life to the doing of what he bids, is the only avenue of true and abiding success open to any son of Adam. Happy are they who recognize this and proceed accordingly.

There is but one programme, but, according to our second clause, it has many parts. Numerous hands are employed in making a watch, and numerous are the spheres in which to toil for the world's saving. There is call for pastors and missionaries, for professors and teachers in colleges and schools. But multitudes are required in numberless departments besides. The various needs of men—needs physical and intellectual, social and political, moral and religious—give rise to a great variety of incidental vocations, and the one supreme and common purpose should be kept in view and designedly furthered in every calling. There are doctors and lawyers, handicraftsmen and merchants, seamen and farmers, but all may, and should, purposely assist in the restoration of an apostate world. The goal of the right living mechanic is the same as that of the faithful minister. There is a great

deal of talk about preaching were so tends to perpetuation is committed people are to tro may give small enterprise, but th quite aside from wrong and calls f sacred and secu dualism." "He wrote Mr. Beech politics, and relig of one's all to Go devil, and poli the cracks and cr critical outpou Ploughing is as a The question is n what God has ag motive and to the ploughs that he r in keeping up o missionaries at l laborers abroad, w whit less importa missionary? "I sent?" Is our Presidency any and givers in the more needed th have scarcely beg ye," are our mar repeating, as for their own respect by journeying af the gospel, many that preachers s should be the sa destination in the If the former, al established, giv does what is a the latter. A gr shops and kitch up to pointing t When those who humbler walks o places in the on do for their Lo a result, to great generosity, there an I send me," dollars, earned i preachers; and an attic, took in support of a six pastora and mi Saviour, are in their opportuniti is most likely b It used to be heathendom." to be, "Lord rai message of Salva the prayer is ( consequences), consecrated to about doing wh some one said purse-and-all co are ready to go will permit of se only partially d To fall short of box is to make Kingdom come, inmost heart. ings." The cler prison. And wh every day, and the water of life a robber on a big in getting arou hand and make punishment in cherub in a play died because the the story. And many a one is n analogous reason ourselves we los to this, no doub take care that holding of their straitened? Pa give little. But is seriously affe portant. When small or great, still sits over ag will dawn in Zi Once more! S what parts they sionaries who lo with very little minds to endu terrible foreign am Telugus must r chime, bereft of light has been m missionaries any Hindu to recour the proper thing ours. And all ambitions, and spiritually poor