

MAKING AND USING MONEY

The Bible has much to say about the honest production and proper use of material resources. It recognizes and regulates the relation between the production and the distribution and use of wealth. It is axiomatic that those who contribute to the making of money should share in the enjoyment of it.

There are two obligations that naturally attach to the making and use of money: it should be made **honestly**; and it should be used **rightly**.

It should be obtained honestly. *"Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men"* (2 Cor. 8:21). Those who have come into possession of money dishonestly sooner or later will pay for their dishonesty. The covetous Gehazi, by lying, obtained silver and raiment from Naaman; but *"he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow"* (2 Kings 5:20-27). Judas betrayed his Lord for 30 pieces of money; but his heart was so tortured by the fires of remorse that he returned the price of his treachery with the awful confession, *"I have betrayed the innocent blood"* (Matt. 27:4). The rich men of James 5 had filled their coffers with the toil of their underpaid, or unpaid, laborers and the terrible consequences of their sins were upon them. But it is not enough to obtain money in the right manner.

The rich men to whom, and about whom, Jesus spoke (Luke 12, 16, 18), so far as we know, came into the possession of their wealth by no fraudulent means. They may have inherited it; they may have married it; they may have received it as a gift; or they may have earned it. The rich young ruler is not charged with dishonesty. The rich farmer of Luke 12 and the rich man of Luke 16 are above reproach so far as the manner of obtaining their riches is concerned. The way they made their money is not the point primarily under consideration. It is not enough to obtain money honestly. Having obtained resources **honestly** there remains the solemn obligations to use them **properly**. The three rich men in question made their grave mistake, not in the **manner they obtained** their wealth, but in the **way they used it**.

There are three factors which contribute to the making of money, regardless of the amount. First, the person who immediately has the money contributes his part. This has been true from the beginning. *"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread"* (Gen. 3:19). *"If any will not work, neither let him eat"* (2 Thess. 3:10). *"The labour is worthy of his hire"* (Luke 10:7). It is his duty to **produce** and his privilege to **enjoy** the fruit of his labors. Second, society contributes its part. A man with no contact with society is incapable of making money in the usual sense of the term. If Robinson Crusoe had remained a thousand years on this fabled island, with no contact with the outside world, he could not have produced any wealth. Third, God contributes His part. His is the largest part. *"But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth"* (Deut. 8:18). He is the one in whom we live and have our being, the giver of every good and perfect gift. His blessing makes one rich (Prov. 10:22). If all three factors contribute to the making of resources, and they do, should they not be considered in the distribution and use of them? If three men in business make a legitimate profit, each has a right to his respective part of it. No one of the three has the right to take all that has been made.

It is significant that the three rich men under consideration failed at this point. May it not suggest that the greater danger lurks in the **use** of, rather than in the **making** of, resources? The rich farmer would pull down his barns and build greater, and there bestow all his grain and goods and say to his soul that it had much goods laid up for many days. In his plan neither society nor God was considered for his wealth. Another of the rich men was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. He was not interested in God nor his fellow man in the use of his resources. Seemingly the desire of Lazarus to be fed of the crumbs, which fell from this rich man's table, was not granted. It was nothing to him if Lazarus, sore-covered and dog-licked, died of hunger and exposure at his gate. For God and His cause he had not thought nor gift. The rich young ruler **kept**, for a brief time, his wealth while the cry of the needy was unheard and the voice of the Lord was disobeyed. These made their fatal mistake in the **use** of their money. What a lesson for us – what a warning to us! Brother, what are you doing to help the poor and to preach the Gospel? Will the Lord be pleased with the use you are making of your money?

"Charge them...that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:17-18).

B.C. Goodpasture
Deceased

BELVEDERE BEACON

"Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)

Volume 7

Number 35

August 27, 2006

A PUBLICATION OF THE BELVEDERE CHURCH OF CHRIST

535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841-2574

(Greater Augusta, GA area)

DIVINE ILLUMINATION ON THE SAINT

Illumination is defined as the direct supernatural help granted by the Spirit of God to the reader of Scripture to enable him to lay hold on the divine message, and going beyond historical, cultural, lexical/syntactical, contextual, and logical analysis. Some say that it is only with the alleged direct aid of the Holy Spirit that the Christian is able to learn the meaning of God's word, apply it correctly, and possess the moral strength to obey God. Here are a few implications of this *"Direct Illumination Theory of the Holy Spirit"* heresy. This view teaches that the Scriptures are all sufficient coupled with General (Indirect) Providence to produce salvation for the **non-Christian** who is obedient from the heart to the gospel of Christ, but somehow are **not** all sufficient coupled with General (Indirect) providence to produce salvation for the **Christian**. It is alleged that the Christian needs a direct operation of the Spirit for: understanding God's Word, having sufficient strength to act in godly fashion, and being completely furnished unto every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Yet many Bible verses demonstrate that these things apply to both Christian and non-Christian (Ephesians 3:4; Titus 2:11-12; cf. Acts 10:34). To argue "no one can fully comprehend the meaning of the bible unless he is regenerate" is straight from Reformed theology, not the Word of God.

Some declare that there is no distinction between God's directly infusing spiritual *life* into a person when they become a Christian and directly infusing *moral attributes* into them. The former, man cannot do for himself because he cannot merit salvation (Romans 3:27; John 3:5-6). Life, physical or moral, is not a moral attribute, but human moral attributes are of such a nature that we must do them ourselves. As free human beings made in God's image we are the real, **selfdetermining** cause of our own actions, and consequently responsible moral agents. To turn this into a bizarre **"Theistically Directly Determined"** system (where "I", God Through the Spirit immediately did something beyond my own direct will submitting to His Will as revealed in the Bible) is strange indeed. This is to falsely claim: "I did it" when in fact **"WE-**God's Spirit and my spirit-did it." Maybe we need to ask if the Holy Spirit will be judged according to what His Will did in immediately influencing my mind (2 Corinthians 5:10). God infused life into Adam, not **behavior**. As an accountable human, he had moral capacity and was certainly influenced indirectly by God. It is analytical to the definition of accountable moral agency that we act directly and freely by our own personal will without any other being's will being superimposed upon our will to carry us onward past what our own will would do by itself. For instance, while our faith is a "work of God" (John 6:28-29), God will not do it for us. If this is not true, then God did directly operate to cause Pharaoh to sin (Ex. 4:21) and then held him accountable for it. Only the Calvinist would teach that God can directly send a working

Continued on Page 3

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 10.00 am.
Morning Worship 11.00 am.
Evening Worship 6.00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m.

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GUEST EDITORIAL**MISDIRECTED BENEVOLENCE**

Poverty in the biblical world was commonplace; it was so acute that we scarcely can appreciate it from our modern, American vantage point. While there are different economic levels among Christians, no one with whom I am acquainted in the church is "poor" in the biblical sense (cf. Mark 12:41-44). Furthermore, the Scriptures nowhere demand the Communistic concept

that Christians are required to "level out" their resources so that everyone has precisely the same measure of economic prosperity.

Under the Mosaic regime, ample provision was made for the poor (Exodus 23:11; Leviticus 14:21, etc.). But being poor was not itself a reason to set aside all other considerations. For example, a murderer might not plead his innocence on the ground that he was poor (cf. Leviticus 19:15).

Tragically, today many would significantly ignore the guilt of criminals who live in slum areas. But what about those who live in disadvantaged areas who are honest? Clearly, one's environment does not determine his morality.

Jesus declared that "you have the poor always with you, and whenever ye will ye can do them good" (Mark 14:7). Note the emphasis that has been placed upon the verb "will." This indicates that "when," "where," "how" and "whom" one assists as "needy" is a matter of judgment (cf. Galatians 6:10; 2 Thessalonians 3:10). In discharging one's personal obligations, he/she makes those decisions. In congregational situations, the elders make those determinations. Sometimes our choices are wise; sometimes they may not be.

Phone calls that are directed to the church facility may ultimately come to my residence. Occasionally I am forced to make decisions regarding requests for benevolence. If it is a serious issue, I refer it to the elders. If I judge it to be trivial, I may handle it myself, and I accept that responsibility.

Recently I received a call from a gentleman asking for money. He had driven to our town from a city in the northern part of the state. He was about to head home and he needed gas money. Perhaps I was a bit curt, but I asked: "Sir, when you left home, did you not calculate that you would need money for the fuel to return?" There was a long pause. "Are you still there?" I inquired. "Yes," was the soft reply. "Well, didn't you think about the return trip?" "I guess not," he said. "I am sorry, sir, we cannot help you."

The church of the Lord is not a re-fuelling station for travelers who seem to think Christians should finance their trips hither, thither, and yon. And yet some folks hand out cash to beggars with no sense of judgment in the process.

Theoretically, we could place a sizable container downtown in the slum district of our city. Each Monday morning we might fill it with one-dollar bills. The poor then could pass by and help themselves to what they might need. Might some good be done? It's possible. But would not this be a very foolish maneuver? There is something to be said for "wisdom" along with "good intentions."

Both individuals and congregations need to think judiciously about their benevolent plans. We need to look for worthy recipients, rather than simply providing gifts for any and all who pass by.

One man recently called and asked if I would take a hamburger and fries to his girlfriend at a nearby motel. Unbelievable! I was tempted [not really] to ask: "Would you like ketchup with those fries?"

This is not the type of benevolence that Christ and the early church practiced. It is more akin to ill-conceived denominational programs. We must learn to be prudent in our good works.

We must not swing to the radical position of our kinsmen in Christ who advocate the "saints only" benevolent doctrine, but we assuredly need to be wiser than we sometimes are.

Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier

Brethren, the above article makes some important points when it comes to the benevolent work of the church. The church of the Lord is NOT a social service agency. Its mission is NOT benevolence but evangelism and edification of the body. We have Bible authority to practice benevolence, even to those who are not members of the Lord's body. However, we must use good discernment in the benevolent activities in which we engage realizing that our mission is evangelism and edification, benevolence should be practiced to those ends

Ken Chumbley

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

October 1 through 5 will be the dates of our Gospel Meeting. We will be using preachers from the general area. The theme will be "Our Perfect God".

NEWS AND NOTES

Let us continue to keep in our prayers Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett, Kathy Treadway's mother, Lanny Niver's father, Tim Arnold's father.

Our sympathy is extended to Odie and Dot McLemore on the passing of his brother on Monday.

Keep Ted Rush, preacher at Mauldin, SC in your prayers as he continues his recovery.

Sister Grimsley is out of town visiting with her son.

Helen Culpepper was unable to be out Sunday.

There will be a potluck dinner following morning services today. Plan to stay and eat.

LISTEN TO THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST RADIO PROGRAM

1050 AM -- WFAM

Sundays 8.00 a.m. to 8.30 a.m

DIVINE ILLUMINATION OF THE SAINT, continued from Page 1

of error into someone's mind that they should believe a lie, and then teach that God damns them for believing what He sent (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12)? We must distinguish and defend the huge difference in "Direct" and "Indirect" action by the Holy Spirit upon Christians.

Some argue that only Christians possessing the Holy Spirit can pray to God and receive divine wisdom (James 1:5). This can only mean that since no young person possesses the indwelling (in the stage of unaccountability or just becoming accountable, but so far without sin), that not one of them can pray expecting to be heard or answered by God (Matt. 18:1-6; Mark 10:13-16). It may be "that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 18:10), but according to this theory, none of their prayers reach God to get any attention from Him because they do not possess the Holy Spirit's indwelling. Further, no such young person can have so much as one part of the "fruit of the Spirit" in order to live godly. What a damnable lie! One even has to "explain away" verses where those without an indwelling had to produce ethical fruit (Matt. 3:8). Mac Deaver alleged that he sees no verse wherein non-Christians are required to produce "fruit." This can only mean that non-Christians, including these children, cannot produce the "fruit of the light" even when walking ethically as children of light (Eph. 5:8-9), or it is something different than "fruit of the Spirit"! According to this theory, non-Christians can only commit **sin**. Faithful brethren call this what it is: Total Depravity!

If no one can produce the fruit of the Spirit without the Holy Spirit being directly in them, and our Lord did not receive the Holy Spirit until He was baptized (John 1:32-33; 3:3-4), then it follows that Jesus Christ Himself did not bear any fruit of the Spirit until after this immersion. From about twelve years until age twenty-nine, He produced no fruit? Believe it who can! Prove then that Jesus did not get some of his growth in "wisdom" from God during all those years in answer to prayer (Luke 2:52; cf. James 1:5). The "seed" of Luke 8:11 has not been replaced by the Spirit's indwelling for the production of ethical behavior, and he who teaches otherwise is a heretic. Reject this pernicious error.

*Terry Hightower
Vega, TX*