

LIVING BEYOND SELF.

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and is is certain we can carry nothing out." I Timothy 6:6-7.

Paul was deeply concerned about the attitude of some of the preachers of his day. They had found there was money in preaching if one did it the "right way". When the church is very poor there is not much temptation to make money out of religion. But as soon as the collection plate starts coming in full the palms of some men begin to itch. When Paul started preaching the church was too poor to attract avaricious men. But he lived to see the poor little group grow in numbers and in wealth till they could make a man rich if they ^{liked} like him. Selfish men who found a way to public favor could make a very soft place for themselves in the church.

A colored maid was working in the home of a D.D. People sometimes called him through mistake when they needed a medical doctor. One day they heard the maid say, over the phone, "Yes, this is Dr.M--'s residence. But he ain't the kind of doctor that does anybody any good." These preachers who preach for money are not the kind that do any body any good. And they don't do the church any good.

We are seeing the same thing in our day that Paul saw. Most preachers are working for less money than they could make in like secular occupations. But if a man finds a way to high public favor, he can sometimes makes his fortune preaching. Some men in our day have found ^{that} the "godliness is a paying thing." It is a sad day for goodness when people start being good for what it pays in dollars and cents. Real goodness often does

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pay in cash. It always makes people a lot richer than they were before they started being good. Sin makes people poor and keeps them poor. But if we are good just because it pays in money, we will stop being good when the money stops.

Would it be better for the church always to be so poor that men would not be tempted to come into it for money? John Wesley had a very pessimistic view of money in the hands of Christians. He seemed to think the church had to be very poor to be pure and holy. In one of his sermons he says that the church always turns away from God when it becomes prosperous. We know that people always become prosperous when they turn in earnest to God. Then if they start turning away from God as soon as they start gaining in wealth, what hope is there for the church?

A man with an empty store would not have to worry much about people stealing his goods. He could leave the door unlocked and go to sleep at night. But if he has the store full of merchandise that people want, he had better lock the door. Which is best for the man, an empty store or a store full of goods?

The nearest I ever saw this country to bankruptcy in my life time was in 1929-30. I hope I never see another one like it. Suppose some good did come out of that dark and troubled time. God can bring good out of evil. It seems to me that the moral and spiritual bankruptcy of those years was almost as complete as the financial. I think the churches suffered as much as business did. I think the social advance we made in those troubled years was long overdue and could have come without the great depression

If poverty made people good, the people of India and China would be very good indeed. They have had the most grinding poverty for thousands of years. It has not made them good. The "Rice Christians" of India and China are a source of embarrassment to the missionaries and are held in contempt by the educated people of those lands. Nothing could help the cause of Christianity in those impoverished lands ^{more} than a substantial rise in the standard of living. If poverty made people good the people of Mexico would be better than the people of America.

An increase in wealth does tempt men to hoard money. But in India, China and Mexico, with their teeming millions of ragged hungry people, there are rich men. They are more greedy and grasping and care less for the needy poor around them than the rich people of America do. We think our rich men are greedy and selfish. But when you put the rich men of America by the side of the rich in some lands, they are a pretty decent lot.

There are two kinds of wealth, scattered wealth and hoarded wealth. Scattered wealth always brings good things with it. It leaves health, laughter and good cheer in its wake. Scattered wealth does not breed envy and hatred. It binds men in a universal brotherhood. It is a blessing to any people. It grows like a snowball going down a snow covered mountain side. A thousand dollars hoarded is like the talent the man buried. But give that thousand to ten men and it soon becomes ten thousand.

People who scatter wealth are always happy. Those who
 "Scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
 Read their history in a nation's eyes."

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A man never enjoys hoarding wealth. No man ever got any real happiness from hoarded wealth. As soon as we have saved enough to satisfy our real needs all the joy of making money dies. Making money honestly for a good cause gives a man a thrill ^{that} makes him sleep at night. Sam Jones said an honest dollar sings a man to sleep under his pillow at night. If he needs the dollar it does. But if he is making it to hoard away, it stops singing the first night. Making money to hoard away keeps a man awake at night and gives more pain than pleasure.

A preacher was talking about John Wesley's three rules, "Make all you can, save all you can, then give all you can." A tightfisted old farmer was listening. When he was bearing down on laziness and lack of ambition the farmer said, "Amen." When he got to the part about saving money instead of throwing it away, he said, "Amen", again. Then when he started talking about giving the money away, the farmer turned a neighbor and said, "It sure is a pity to ruin a good sermon like that."

Some say Paul said, "Money is the root of all evil." He didn't. He said, "The love of money is the root of all evil." A man who hoards wealth loves money. A man who scatters wealth loves people. To one wealth is a blessing; to the other it is a curse.

"For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." Hoarded wealth never follows its owner out of this world. It stays here to provoke lawsuits and quarrels among his relatives. There is nothing truer about hoarded wealth than this, You can't take it with you.

Surely Paul knew there is a way for a man to take his money away with him. There is one Bank you can put your money in and find it when you get over there. It draws a very high interest too. Some men have put in a dollar and got back a thousand. One poor widow put two mites in this Bank and it made her rich. Some stingy people heard about her good fortune and thought they would try it. They put in two mites and kept their folding money to buy fine cars, fine furniture and fine clothes. They didn't get back a cent.