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The Feet of Christ in Luke

Alex Dryburgh

Luke 7:36-50. . . "a woman . . . stood at his feet behind him weeping. . ."

Let us consider the feet of Christ in Luke's gospel. What a privilege! What an honor! How rewarding to sit at the feet of Christ! "I sat down under his shadow with great delight His fruit was sweet to my taste." (Song 2:3).

It is the place of learning. In 2 Samuel 7:18, David went in and sat before the Lord. David learned four things:

1. A true estimation of self. We can have a high opinion of self. We can have an underestimated opinion of self. We should not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but to think soberly, (Romans 12:3). David said, "Who am I, oh Lord God? and what is my house that thou hast brought me hitherto." So David received and expressed a true estimation of self.

2. A true estimation of God (7:22). David talks about God's greatness. He is great in power, great in wisdom, great in love. No one is like him, and there is none beside him. God is in a class all by Himself.

3. Then David had a true estimation of the people of God (7:23). "And what one nation in the earth is like thy people".

4. Then, he had a true estimation of the Word of God, (7:25). "Thy word is true."

Everything about Christ is unique.

Boundless in might and yet so meek,
In every circumstance unique,
None else we see and only speak,
Of Thy beloved Son.

The Beauty of His Feet

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace." (Isaiah 52:7). When we think of the beauty of the feet of Christ we think of feet that never wandered, feet that never strayed, feet that never stumbled, that never slipped, that never did slide. At the feet of Christ you learn something of the greatness of the glory of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. We learn the glory of his perfection, the glory of his passion, the glory of his preeminence. In Matthew 15:30, they bring the lame, the dumb, the blind, the maimed, and many others, and they cast them at the feet of Christ, and he healed them all. There is healing at the feet of Christ.

We notice where the feet of the Lord are found. We notice who are at the feet of the Lord Jesus. Then we notice what they did at the feet of the Lord Jesus. We notice different positions at the feet of Christ.

The Places for His feet

In Luke 7, they are in the house of Simon the leper. In Luke 8, they are just outside the city of Galilee. In Luke 10, they are in the house of Martha. In Luke 17, He is in a certain village. Many different places where the feet of the Lord Jesus were found, and all have great interest and instruction to our souls.

The People at His Feet

Some are well known, but some are unknown. The woman in Luke 7 is unknown. The Lord calls her "this woman", so she is unknown. The man who had his dwelling among the tombs is unknown. The Samaritan of Luke 17 is unknown. But we have Jairus in Luke 8, and we have Mary of Bethany in Luke 10 and they are well known.

Their Positions at His Feet

The woman in Luke 7 is standing at the feet of Christ. The man who had his dwellings in the tombs is sitting at the feet of Christ. Mary in Luke 10 is sitting at the feet of Christ. And

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Jairus and the Samaritan are both prostrate, lying at the feet of Christ. So we can stand, we can sit, and we can lie at the feet of Christ. The important thing is to be at His feet.

What Each is Doing at His Feet

The woman in Luke 7 is standing, weeping, washing, wiping, worshiping, anointing, and kissing the feet of Christ. In contrast to Simon, who gave the Lord a cold reception, this woman gave him a warm reception. Notice four things about this woman: Her Name: "Sinner". A woman who is a sinner, and was known, for Simon says she is a sinner. Then her Aim: She is aiming for the feet of Christ. Then her Action: She is weeping, washing, wiping. Then her Commendation: The Lord speaks of her as one who refreshed him and noted her devotion in kissing his feet. The heart must be engaged for Christ or the hands will soon hang down. The man from whom He cast out the demons is beseeching the Lord, he is begging that he might be with Him. Also note Jairus; He is beseeching, he is begging the Lord on behalf of his daughter. Mary is at the Lord's feet and is listening in Luke 10. In John 11, she is at His feet as a mourner. In John 12, she is at His feet as a worshiper. She is as a learner in Luke 10. She knows Him as a Prophet. In John 11, as a mourner she knows Him as a Priest, experiences His sympathy. In John 12, as a worshiper she knows Him as a King, and she worships Him. She experienced his teaching; tasted his sympathy; and worshiped at his feet. The Samaritan in Luke 17:16 is at the Lord's feet. He is marked by thanksgiving.

Notice all who speak in Luke 7. Simon speaks to himself: "If this man were a prophet he would have known who and what manner of woman she is, for she is a sinner." Simon talks about a woman who is a sinner touching Him. Then the Lord speaks to Simon about the woman: He mentions what she has done. The Lord speaks about a woman who was a forgiven sinner, who was refreshing him, anointing him, worshiping him. Then he speaks to Simon. Then he speaks to the woman. Then others in the house speak within themselves about the forgiveness of sin and question His right to do so.

Martha's eye saw Christ's weariness and would give to Christ. Mary's faith apprehended his fullness and would draw from Christ.

Opposition of others to those at His Feet

We see man's criticism of those at the feet of Christ, but there is also the Lord's commendation of those at the feet of Christ. The woman in Luke 7 finds opposition from Simon. What is the difference between the woman and Simon? She is taken up with what manner of man this (Christ) is. But Simon is taken up with what manner of woman this is. Simon not only finds fault with the woman, but he finds fault with the Lord. "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner." (7:39). What is the important thing in life? Not what one thinks of self. Not really what others think of me, but what does God think of me?

What does the Lord think of me? In the two debtors, He speaks about her love. Here is a woman she has been freely, frankly, fully, finally forgiven. Notice the Lord's words to Simon: "Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest no water. ." – No refreshment. "You showed me no affection – no kiss. You gave me no anointing – no worship. But this woman did all three. So He said to her, "Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace."

Jairus had opposition: Others said, "Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the master." (Luke 8:49). The Lord says two things First, He says, "Fear not." Then He says "Weep not." He takes with him into the house Peter, James, and John; they are with the Lord Jesus on three occasions. They were with him in the mount of transfiguration, where they saw His majesty. "We were eyewitnesses of his majesty" when they were with Him in the holy mount. In the gloom of the garden of Gethsemane, they witnessed the mystery of His agony.

The sore amaze the mystery,
The blood-like sweat the agony;
Remembering Remembering.

In the house of Jairus they saw the might in His mighty power to raise the maiden to life.

Mary at the feet of Christ had opposition from Martha. She said, "Lord. . . bid her there-

fore that she help me." Mary had opposition from the disciples. Judas said, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" Notice in each occasion you have the Lord's commendation. The Lord speaks well of what the woman did. Then He spoke the same with Mary: "She has chosen that good part." (Luke 10:42). "She hath wrought a good work on me. . . She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying." (Mark 14:6-8).

The important thing in life is not what I think of my self or even what others think. What does God think?

What matters else since God approves;
None can distract, none can deter.
Obediently He onward moves,
The cross to reach and triumph there.

**Whatever tends to increase our faith,
or draw us nearer the Lord, should be
welcomed by us with Thanksgiving.**

Prologue of John, pt 3

Joel Portman

The theme of "witness" predominates in John's gospel. F. F. Bruce ("The Gospel of John") says, "The witness to the truth of God's self-revelation in the Word is manifold: it comprises the witness of the Father (5:32, 37; 8:18), of the Son (8:14, 18), of the Spirit (15:26), the witness of the works of Christ (5:36, 10:25), the witness of the scriptures (5:39), the witness of the disciples (15:27), including that of the disciple whom Jesus loved (19:35, 21:24). The purpose of this manifold witness, as of John's witness, is 'that all might believe'; it is the purpose for which the Gospel itself was written (20:31)." The word translated "witness, or testimony" occurs 33 times in this gospel, more than in others.

After a look backward into eternity in 1:1-2, a look at creation in 1:3, and a glance at man's history in the Old Testament in 1:4-5, he turns our attention toward the historical reality of a man sent from God, who came to bear

witness to the Light, in 1:6-9. There are two historical events having to do with John that are recorded in the prologue. Every gospel makes mention of him who is called John the Baptist, (though never called this by John), who was the forerunner of Christ, being sent from God to announce His coming into the world. John places emphasis on the fact that his coming as a witness means that he himself was not the Light, or the Christ. Perhaps there were some in that day who held to the belief that John might be the Christ (Luke 3:15). John writes to emphasize that he was only a "burning and shining lamp" (New Trans JND), not the Light that was coming into the world. His light was as a candle in the obscurity of the dark scene into which the brightest Light of the universe and eternity would come. The true Light was from eternity; John "came" or came into being, he began in time. We learn from Luke 3:1-3, that God passed by all the ones who were considered to be important, great, and mighty in the land, and the word of the Lord came to John while he was in the wilderness. He was a man sent from God (using a word closely associated with "apostle," or messenger with divine authority). He was the last of the Old Testament prophets, and his message was the recapitulation of Old Testament prophecy concerning the Messiah, he being the greatest of prophets (Luke 7:28). John's gospel declares plainly that his mission was temporary, and that he would decrease while Christ would increase (John 3:30). But the fact that he was sent to prepare a people for the coming of the Lord (Luke 1:16-17, 76-80) is an indication of how blind the hearts of men were and are, so that they were not able to recognize the greatness of the One who came as John had prophesied concerning Him. "Men loved darkness rather than light" (John 3:19), so God in grace made every effort so that men in darkness might be prepared to receive the true Light that was coming into the world (1:9) and believe on Him (1:7).

We can apply this truth to ourselves. We aren't sent into the world to make a name for ourselves or to attract men to us; we have the same mission, not to prepare men for His coming, but to seek to open the eyes of the blind and direct them toward the person of

Christ. The devil seeks to oppose any witness that honors Christ (2 Corinthians 4:3-5), but as Paul, "we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. . ." Let us keep our focus on this very important mission, as Paul expresses it in Acts 26:18, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light. . .that they might receive forgiveness of sins. . ."

It has been pointed out, also, that John 1:7 does not say that John came to be a witness, but it is the verb, he was sent for witness. Lange writes ("Commentary on John's Gospel"), "Testimony: stronger here than preaching; stronger even than prophecy, as hitherto existing." His was not a static position to occupy, but a responsibility to fulfill in actions, even as it is for us. God doesn't call men to an office to occupy a position, but He calls them to a work, whether it be to witness (true of all believers), or evangelism, overseership, etc. It is to function in that work that He has given to each person.

John witnessed to four things in this chapter concerning Christ: 1. v.7, the coming of the True Light into the world, 2. v.15, Christ's precedence and preeminence relative to John, 3. v. 29, His Sacrifice in Purpose and Prospect, 4. v. 36, the Perfection of His life and work. He was a true witness, telling that which he had received concerning Christ. In John 15:27, Christ declares that the disciples (and all believers) are to be witnesses, empowered by the Holy Spirit (v. 26), and we suggest that our witness is to be centered on the same themes as John's was.

The True Light Incarnate, 1:9-11

John writes of that which is "true" eight times in this gospel (1:9, 4:23, 4:37, 6:32, 7:28, 15:1, 17:3, 19:35), using a word that indicates that it is genuine, dependable, real, perfect and substantial, as contrasted with what is fanciful, shadowy, and counterfeit (Vincent's Word Studies). John was not the 'true' light, nor were the Pharisees and scribes, who proclaimed their veracity and authority. This was the only true Light that came into the world from another sphere, the heavenly. All other testimonies to the Light were flickering, temporary, partial, but this was the Light that was genuine in every aspect of its character and expression. It was

the full, complete revelation of the invisible God as v. 1:18 declares, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared (revealed, displayed, manifested) Him." Again in 14:9, ". . . he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In past times, God spoke to the fathers through the prophets, but at the end of these days, He has spoken in Son (Hebrews 1:1-2), not only in what He said, but in His own person, a genuine expression to man of what and who God is, and the perfection of His infinite holiness and righteousness. No man could be the "true Light" apart from the incarnate Son.

The Light had always been in the world, providing some degree of illumination to men regarding Divine truths, but now John anticipates the incarnation, His visible, physical presence in the world that He had made and sustained.

He was coming personally into the world, as a Light that lighteth every man. It is not that He lightens every person coming into the world (though that is true, for the Light is not restrictive but universal), but it was the Light coming into the world. Every use of this expression in John's gospel ("come into the world") refers to Christ's personal coming. See 3:19, 6:14, 9:39, 11:27, 12:46, 13:1, 16:8, 16:21, 16:28, 17:11, 17:13. It was a coming of revelation, a coming to rescue ungodly sinners (Luke 19:10), a coming to deliver those who were under bondage (Hebrews 2:14-15). He came to do something that John and all other prophets could never do; He revealed the Father (14:6-11), manifested God's love and grace, preached the gospel (Mark 1:38, Luke 3: and accomplished redemption and to give life.

But "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not," (v. 10). Both Robertson ("Word Studies") and Vincent ("Word Studies") point out that the imperfect "was" indicates that He was always in the world, even though this points to His advent. "Not merely at His advent, but before His incarnation no less than after it," (Vincent). Robertson says, "Imperfect tense of continuous existence in the universe before the Incarnation, as in John 1:1, 2."

Concerning this verse, Alford has a nice thought in this sense: "The three members of

the sentence form a climax;—'He was in the world' (and therefore the world should have known Him), 'and the world was made by Him' (much more then should it have known Him), 'and the world knew Him not'." ("Greek New Testament"). Lange's commentary puts it thus: "The repetitions of the idea of the world (κόσμος) are to be distinguished thus: In the first case the word combines the material and the moral world in one; in the second, it means the material or visible world alone, up to the roots of its moral conduct; in the third, the moral world alone, but considered as resting upon and representing the visible. Meyer well says: (1) The world might have known Him (constitutional affinity); (2) it should have known Him (according to His claim). Comp. Romans 1:19 ff., where Paul fully proves the guilt of Gentiles and Jews in rejecting the light of nature and the preparatory revelation of the O. T."

What a disappointment for Him, to come into the things that were His by creation, and to reveal Himself personally to those who were His own people, and yet to be unrecognized and not received! Nothing has changed, even in our days. The world is still the same; men would still crucify the Lord of Glory (1 Corinthians 2:8) and men still reject the Prince of life.

But still further, v. 11 says that He came to His own, or, what was His own and truly belonged to Him by creatorial rights, but His own people (Israel) received Him not. Regarding the first phrase, Lange again writes, "He came unto his own house or inheritance. . . It is not, however, the historical New Testament coming of Christ in Israel, which is here spoken of. The expression *He came*, as denoting the historical moving of the Logos in the history of the world, determines us against the more general conception of the 'own'." But then he says, that the second "His own" refers to His own people, or the Jews. What people on earth should have received Him more than they? They had the Old Testament prophets who had foretold the coming of Christ. He came with all the credentials that were anticipated concerning Him. John bore witness to prepare their hearts for His coming. What more could have been done? If the world in general didn't receive Him, how much greater is the guilt of that

nation, having had such great privileges? Those who have received greater light have greater responsibility, and thus, greater degree of punishment

However, v. 12 introduces a theme that *is more* pleasing in this gospel. Out of the vast majority that rejected Him, there were those who did receive Him. They are all the more honorable! They refused to be guided by the opinions of the mass of their people. They resisted the evidence of the leaders' determination to remove Him from their presence. What a blessed group to be identified with, and all who are included in this description, whether Jews or Gentiles originally, have every reason to be full of thanksgiving and praise that will only swell louder in the day of His manifestation. We continue this consideration in the next issue.

(to be continued)

We often forget that our fellow-Christians have their cross to bear, and Satan to withstand, the same as we have.

God's Work for us and in us

T. D. W. Muir

In preaching the gospel, we do well to keep before ourselves and those who hear us, that we are not saved by the Spirit's work in us, but through the work that has been done for us at Calvary by our Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel is that "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). It is a message as to what has been done for us by Another! To receive Christ by faith means salvation. To reject Him means death and hell as the inevitable outcome.

That there is a working in every true believer that is the blessed fruit of a new relationship which the believer now sustains

toward God is also clear, however, as we shall see.

Two Spirits

Scripture speaks distinctly of two spirits, one or other of which energizes every human being. The one is the spirit of Satan, the other is the Spirit of God. For instance, we read in Ephesians 2:1-2 concerning the past condition of the Ephesian Christians, that they had "walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in (or energizeth) the children of disobedience." That is, the motive power that carried the unsaved on in the course of this world is the power of the spirit of Satan. Solemn thought! Rich and poor, learned or illiterate, religious or profane, all alike are energized by this same mighty spirit. They may not believe it, they may never have heard of it, nevertheless it is true—awfully true. Possessed and energized by the Devil!

In Ephesians 1:12-14 we find, however, the other Spirit referred to. A great work had been done for these people—they had been quickened into life eternal. They had been forgiven their many sins, according to the riches of God's grace, and in chapter 1:13, we read, "In whom (Christ) ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also after that ye believed, (or, upon believing, R. V.) ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," etc. The Spirit of God takes possession and is the seal of God, marking out the believer as belonging to Christ, to be claimed by Him when He comes. And concerning those who lack this, the Word is clear: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Romans 8:9).

The Energy of His Power

In Ephesians 2:18-19, the apostle prays for the saints, that "the eyes of their understanding being enlightened that might know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working (energy) of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead."

The same mighty power which brought Christ from the dead is displayed in the quickening of every true child of God. For we have been subjects, not only of His grace, but of His power—His exceeding great power!

Oh, the reality of the work of God in the soul! The Lord said to Nicodemus: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." (John 3:7). And this new birth is emphatically a work of God in the soul. Has the reader made sure on this point? Have you been born again? Many, alas, who make a loud profession of "Christianity" lack this one thing. Regeneration, or the new birth, is simply a new, a divine life, implanted by the mighty power of God in the soul, and it is well to remember that there is no middle ground to occupy between being "dead in sins," and having "the life of God" in the soul. Men sometimes speak of "quickenings," as though it were a condition midway between death and life. God's Word ever uses it, most emphatically, as meaning all that is involved in the Spirit's work, both in the awakening and regeneration of a soul.

"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name; which were born. . . of God" (John 1:12-13). "Ye are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26). By nature, the "children of wrath, even as others"—by grace, through faith in Christ, made the children of God—the standing monuments, through all eternity, of the grace and power of Him who quickened us into life in Christ!

God Working in Us

But in giving us life, God was but beginning with us. It is His blessed purpose to work in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, bringing forth the blessed fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

As we read in Philippians 2:12-13, "Wherefore, my beloved. . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." This portion, very much misunderstood by many, does not say, "work for your own salvation," but "work out," etc., for it is "God that worketh in you." This is not the means of salvation, but it certainly is one of the

"things that accompany salvation" (Hebrews 6). If there be first life in Christ, then we may expect to find fruit in keeping with that life—and God calls for it.

It might be well, here, for the Christian reader to ask himself or herself the question: "Are the things that 'accompany salvation' found in me?" Is God, by His Spirit, working in me that which is His good pleasure, enabling me to work out in my life the salvation I call "my own"? In other words, is my life the salvation I call "my own"? In other words, dear reader, let us ask the old-fashioned question at this point:

How is it with Your Soul?

How is God's work prospering in your own soul? You may be busy with "Christian work" of one kind and another, but is the work within keeping pace with the activity without? Are you having exercise in the presence of God over His Word and at the throne of grace; do you really enjoy reading and meditating on the Word of God? Is this joy increasing, or not? An honest searching and trying of our ways before God may now reveal to some of us the hidden reason of our lack of progress in the things of God. And if our condition be judged in the light, and the Spirit, being ungrieved once more, is able to work in us unhindered, then the prayer of the apostles in Hebrews 13:20, 21 might be answered in us to the glory of God, our own joy, and the blessing of others!

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

There is just one point more. In Philippians 3:20-21 (R.V.), we learn that our "citizenship (or commonwealth) is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus" to come for us. And our hope is that He shall change this body of humiliation, fashioning it like unto the body of His glory. And all "according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."

The energy of His power, therefore, which quickened us into life and energized us for service, will in that day, complete the work and fashion us like unto Himself—as we read in 1 John 3:2—“We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” What a prospect! The Lord keeps His own on the tip-toe of expectation looking for Him. And “Everyone that hath this hope set on Him,” (R. V.) will “purify himself even as He is pure” (1 John 3:3).

(A.A. Feb. 1938)

The Christian and Money

Robert E. Surgenor

The first occurrence of the word “money” in the Bible can be found in Genesis 17:12 where Abram’s household is mentioned. Prior to this we read of his riches, which betrays the fact that he knew how to manage his financial affairs.

As we look at the world today we stand amazed at the folly and ignorance of many humans regarding the management of money. Consider our own government who have plunged the nation over 17.5 trillion dollars in debt. American consumers are no better, they total \$11.68 trillion in debt. The average household owes over \$7,000 on their credit cards. So where does the Christian stand in relation to all of this? He should be different for he possesses the greatest finance guide in all the world — the Holy Bible! It is a guide for all time, and those who give heed to its instructions regarding personal finances will be secure in many ways. Those who implicitly bow to the Word of God will always have peace of mind, and security, even if poor financially.

Israel’s Donations

When Israel came out of Egypt they were wealthy. In the wilderness, God gave Moses the pattern for a sanctuary for Him to dwell. The needed supplies were wholeheartedly donated by the people, so much so, that they had to be restrained from bringing, as “the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much” (Ex.36:7).

There is an interesting statement from King David regarding his wealth, recorded in 1Chronicles 29:14; “But who am I, and what is

my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.”

David basically acknowledged that whatever riches he possessed were in reality God’s. In other words, David was a steward, responsible for diligently managing the substance God had entrusted to him.

Six-hundred years later we find the opposite regarding Israel’s devotion and love to the Lord. Instead of giving God their best they were giving Him polluted bread upon His altar and offering useless things. They had become what we would term, “tight-fisted.” The question was raised, “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings” (Mal. 3:8).

The Church Age

Coming to the Church age, at its commencement we find wholehearted love and devotion to the Lord. “And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need” (Acts 2:44-45). “Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet” (Acts 4:34-37). This behavior soon disappeared for in AD 60 there were both rich and poor in the Corinthian assembly. Everyone was not equal in temporal possessions.

In the Ephesian assembly there were those who were rich, either by inheritance or by intelligent use of their money. Then there were also those who coveted to be rich - a sin in itself. It is not a sin to be rich, but it certainly is a sin to lust after riches, and that is what is dealt with in Paul’s first letter to Timothy in chapter six. “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be

therewith content. But they that will (desire to) be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (verses 6-10).

Making Money our Friend

The Christian should be aware that all he possesses in temporal things are the Lord's. God gives temporal possessions to His stewards to use for the furtherance of His kingdom. In other words, every Christian is a steward, thus responsible to the Lord how he uses what God has entrusted to him. His house, his belongings, his automobile, his money, his spiritual gifts, yes, all that he has is in reality the Lord's. Every steward will be held accountable to the Lord how he has used that which God has entrusted to him. This can be seen in the parables of the pounds and the talents (Lk.19; Matt. 25).

God requires faithfulness in our stewardship (1 Cor. 4:2). What about our money? There is a very interesting portion of scripture regarding our stewardship found in Luke 16:9-13. "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Mammon is money and it is termed "unrighteous" because basically it is mostly used for purposes rather than the glory of God. By making friends of the money that God has entrusted to us simply means that we make it work for us so that we benefit in the end. We are to use our money now with a view to the future. The day will come when we shall fail, that is, we shall leave this earth for heaven.

Never again will we be able to use our money on earth.

In other words, as far as using our money on earth we will fail to be able to use it, for we won't be here. Who are the "they" that will receive us into the eternal habitations? They are the people that were reached and saved through hearing the gospel as a result of us giving our money to the effort that brought them the gospel. Our finances made it possible for the gospel to reach their ears. Also, the sick, and the poor that we helped in life with our money. When we enter heaven these redeemed people will receive (welcome, embrace) us there. What a reward!

If a Christian is faithful in that which is least (his money), he will be faithful in that which is much (his spiritual treasures). His money is termed "least" for relatively it is unimportant to him, for he looks upon money as uncertain and temporary. He considers spiritual things of far more value than money, thus they are termed "much."

Since God has entrusted to the Christian money, if that Christian is faithful in his use of that money, God will commit to his trust "the true riches." What are "the true riches"? I take them to be spiritual things, one of them being the Holy Scriptures.

I remember the late William Warke stating that if a man is unfaithful with his money, God will never give him a deep understanding of the Scriptures. A stingy Christian doesn't understand the Bible too well.

True riches also include rewards given at the judgment seat of Christ, which are eternal. The Lord's teaching on stewardship ends with the fact that we cannot serve two masters. We either live for our own self-interests, or we live wholly yielded to God. God demands all that we are and have to be at His disposal at all time. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple" (Lk.14:33).

Can you truthfully sing like James Small;
I've found a friend, O such a friend!

He bled, He died to save me;

And not alone the gift of life,

But His own self He gave me!

Naught that I have mine own I call,

I'll hold it for the giver,

My heart, my strength, my life, my all,
Are His, and His forever.

Or like Frances Havergal;
Take my silver and my gold;
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose,
Take my will, and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart; it is Thine own;
It shall be Thy royal throne.

These hymns are very soul-searching, and I feel that many of us are not telling the truth when we sing them in the presence of our God who hath given us richly all things to enjoy.

The Manner & Avenue of Giving

With many new Christians the question arises; what percentage of my income should I give to the Lord, and in what manner, and in what avenue do I give it? These are good soul-searching questions, and the Holy Scriptures provide the answers.

There is no given percentage required to give. The amount is determined as one purposes in his heart. It may be 10%, 20%, or even more. The late William Williams who saw over 60 assemblies planted in Venezuela, at the end of his life was giving back to the Lord 50% of what was entrusted to his hands. What a person purposes in his heart is strictly between him and the Lord.

There are good guidelines in 2 Corinthians 9. Paul introduces a law of nature into the question. "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver" (verses. 6,7). If a farmer sows only half of his seed, then his crop will be 50% less than if he had sowed all his seed. That only stands to reason. Solomon had it right, stating, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." (Prov.11:24).

God loveth a cheerful giver. That word "cheerful" is "hilaros" where we derive the word hilarious. When we are forced to pay for some-

thing against our will, we do it grudgingly. Many have this attitude when paying their taxes. This attitude should never accompany Christian giving. Any Christian feeling pressured to put his offering into the basket at the Lord's supper because it is expected, is giving grudgingly.

The Old Miser

The late Archie Stewart told of a miser, who at the collection time at his church, had two bills in his pocket, a one dollar bill and a twenty dollar bill. He had them folded differently so that by feeling them with his hand he knew which one was the one dollar bill. Feeling what he thought was the one dollar bill, he put it into the collection. However, when he later pulled the supposed twenty dollar bill out of his pocket, to his dismay it was a one dollar bill! He was distressed. He inadvertently gave the Lord \$20. I say, he got credit for \$1, and lost \$19.

The Benefits of Giving Cheerfully

If a Christian gives cheerfully, God is able to resupply him that he always will have more to give. This is the truth of 2 Cor. 9:10. "Now He that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness." Then we read in verses 12 to 14; "For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men. And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you."

Those who benefit from the giver's grace are caused to thank God for the giver and his subjection to the teachings of Scripture regarding giving. Not only this, they pray for the giver and long after them for the exceeding grace of God manifested in the giver on their behalf. How wonderful to have others pray for you, and thank God for you, and long to see you, because of your giving to them.

(to be continued)