

THE USE OF MONEY

By John Wesley

[The following excerpts from the sermon on "The Use of Money," by Rev. John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, although written over one hundred and seventy years ago, is timely. If it was needed in Wesley's day, surely it is needed today.]

"I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."—Luke 16:9.

Our Lord, having finished the beautiful parable of the prodigal son, which he had particularly addressed to those who murmured at his receiving publicans and sinners, adds another relation of a different kind, addressed rather to the children of God. "He said unto his disciples," not so much to the scribes and Pharisees, to whom he had been speaking before, "There was a certain rich man, who had a steward, and he was accused of him of wasting his goods. And calling him, he said, Give an account of the stewardship, for thou canst be no longer steward," verses 1, 2. After reciting the method which the bad steward used, to provide against the day of necessity, our Saviour adds, "His Lord commended the unjust steward;" namely, in this respect, that he used timely precaution; and subjoins this weighty reflection, "The children of this world are wiser in their generation, than the children of light," verse 8; those who seek no other portion than this world "are wiser" not absolutely, for they are, one and all, the greatest fools, the most extreme madmen under heaven; but, "in their generation," in their own way, they are more consistent with themselves; they are truer to their acknowledged principles; they more steadily pursue their end "than the children of light," than they who see "the light of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." Then follow the words above recited: "And I, 'the only begotten Son of God, the Creator, Lord, and Possessor of heaven and earth and all

... is a shame for a Christian not to improve upon them, in whatever he takes in hand. You should be continually learning, from the experience, reading, and reflection, to do every thing you have to do better today than you did yesterday. And see that you practice whatever you learn, that you make the best of all that is in your hands.

Having gained all you can, by honest wisdom, and unwearied diligence, the second rule of Christian prudence is, "save all you can." Do not throw the precious talent into the sea; leave that folly to heathen philosophers. Do not throw it away in idle expenses, which is just the same as throwing it into the sea. Expend no part of it merely to gratify the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or pride of life.

Do not waste any part of so precious a talent, merely in gratifying the desires of the flesh; in procuring the pleasures of sense of whatever kind; particularly, in enlarging the pleasure of tasting. I do not mean avoid gluttony and drunkenness only: an honest heathen would condemn these. But there is a regular reputable kind of sensuality, an elegant epicurism, which does not immediately disorder the stomach nor (sensibly at least) impair the understanding; and yet (to mention no other effects of it now) it cannot be maintained without considerable expense. Cut off this ex-

pense! Despise delicacy and variety and be content with what plain nature requires.

Do not waste any part of so precious a talent, merely in gratifying the desire of the eye, by superfluous or expensive apparel, or by needless ornaments. Waste no part of it in curiously adorning your houses in superfluous or expensive furniture; in costly pictures, painting, gilding, books; in elegant rather than useful gardens.

Lay out nothing to gratify the pride of life, to gain the admiration or praise of men. This motive of expense is frequently interwoven with one or both of the former. Who would expend anything in gratifying these desires, if he considered that to gratify them is to increase them. Nothing can be more certain than this: the more they are indulged they increase more.

A man cannot properly be said to save anything, if he only lays it up. You may as well throw your money into the sea, as bury it in the earth. Not to use is effectually to throw it away. Having first gained all you can, and then saved all you can, then [three] "give all you can."

When the Possessor of heaven and earth brought you into being, and placed you in this world, he placed you here not as a proprietor, but a steward. If you desire to be a faithful and wise steward, provide things needful for yourself; provide these for your wife, your children, your servants, or any others who pertain to your household. Then, do "good to them that are of the household of faith." "As you have opportunity, do good unto all men." All that is laid out in this manner is given to God.

Calmly and seriously inquire: In expending this, am I acting according to my character? Am I doing this in obedience to his word? Have I reason to believe, that for this very work I shall have a reward at the resurrection of the just? If any doubt still remains, you may further examine yourself by prayer.

Do not stint yourself, like a Jew rather than a Christian, to this or that proportion. Render unto God, not a tenth, not a third, not half, but all that is God's, be it more or less. Whatever ye do may it be "a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour to God."—Guide to Holiness.

THE CONVERSION OF CHILDREN

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three years; Esther Cason (missionary), four years; Dr. Godbey, four years; P. P. Bliss, twelve years; J. A. Wood, ten years; John Fletcher, seven years; Bishop Asbury, seven years; Adoniram Judson, twelve years; David Brainerd, when a child; Bishop McCabe, eight years; Adam Clark, four years; Bishop Simpson, four years; Mathew Henry, ten years; Polycarp, nine years; Jonathan Edwards, six years; Isaac Watts, eight years; Robert Moffat, about ten years.

The Sunday School is recognized as the place where the Gospel seed is sown. The children come Sunday morning and hear the lesson taught, then most of them go home to return no more until the next Sabbath day. They do not stay for the church service, nor do many of them come to any evening services during the week.

Aggressive city churches have a large Sunday school composed mostly of children from homes where the parents are not church goers. Few of these children ever attend any other

services of the church, so if they are to hear the vital message of the evangelist it must be during the hour they attend the weekly session of the Sabbath School.

We secure an evangelist to come and hold a revival with the purpose in view that our young folks who are beginning to smoke cigarettes and are rapidly going down into sin and other adult sinners may be saved, often with disappointing results but we have little thought of the tender hearted children who can be won so easily and who would be saved from the paths of sin from which few are ever rescued.

The evangelist should be given the whole Sunday school hour, minus not over fifteen minutes for class records, to preach to the children on each Sabbath of the revival. The evangelist when arranging his revival dates should expect the Sunday school hours for salvation work among the children—if he desires to be his utmost for God.

The children need the evangelistic message and understand it much better than most folks think. The seed falls on virgin soil before it becomes hardened by sin or hindered by the cares of life. We think a great victory has been won when a hardened sinner comes to God, but how much better it would have been had that soul been converted in childhood and escaped those wasted years of sin.

Paul says of Timothy, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures." The prophet Samuel, "ministered before the Lord, being a child."

"They brought young children (Mark, Mathew says, 'little children,' and Luke calls them 'infants') to him, and he blessed them."

It is a fact that should never be forgotten that the children want to be Christians and often wet their pillows, night after night, over their sins.

Many parents and teachers seem to be satisfied to give the young children mental instructions, hoping that at some future time the seed will spring up and bear fruit, but their immediate conversion ought to be the aim and expectation of every faithful Sunday school teacher.

If the child is capable of sinning it has the capacity of being born again. In Matt. 18. Jesus, speaking of little children says, "And of these little ones which believe in me," teaching that little children can believe in Christ and be converted.

Bishop William Taylor, one of the greatest leaders in the Christian church since Pentecost, writing in favor of childhood conversions says, "Rev. Clark P. Hard, Presiding Elder of Madras District, India, a most indefatigable and successful minister of the Gospel, was converted to God, when he was a child of five years."

Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, a strong advocate of the early conversion of children says, "Our converts from among children are among the very best we have. I should judge them to be more numerously genuine than any other class, more constant, and in the long run more solid."

If given equal opportunity with adults fewer children backslide. Many of the great spiritual leaders of the Christian church of the past were earnest and successful believers in the early conversion of children. Is it not strange that the leaders in the church today are silent on the subject of childhood conversions? Why

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