

# The Teaching of Jesus Concerning the Use of Money As Seen in the Gospel of Luke

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### Introduction

“Evangelicals are increasingly recognizing the need to discover and present a biblical perspective on the urgent social and political issues of our age. Among these issues, that of wealth and poverty ranks high in importance.”<sup>1)</sup> “Yet the evangelical student often feels a sense of unease at the extent to which this atmosphere lacks a serious concern for the biblical data.”<sup>2)</sup> If so, the task of Christian ethics is to examine the economic life in the light of biblical teaching.

If Jesus is the most important person in history—and we believe that He is—then what He taught has to be the most important body of truth ever given to us.

Jesus has a great deal to say about money<sup>3)</sup> and our attitudes toward it (mainly in the parables).<sup>4)</sup> But we must not expect to find anything like an exhaustive, systematic teaching about the use of money in recorded sayings of Jesus. Therefore we must glean Jesus’ teachings which are related to the subject from all the Gospels. We will, however, concentrate on the Gospel of Luke.

We must also remember that the parables are numerous, each of them presenting a particular aspect of Jesus’ teaching.<sup>5)</sup> And “His parables are not general moral teaching,

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1) Editor’s note on Peter Davids, “The Poor Man’s Gospel”, *Themelios*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Spring 1976), p. 37.

2) *Ibid*

3) John R. Crawford, *A Christian and His Money* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967), p. 23.

4) See John E. Simpson, *Faithful Also in Much-A History of Man in His Relation to His Possessions and His God* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, Co., 1952), pp. 49–82.

5) C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London: Fontana Books, 1963), p. 18; W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Gospel Parables in the Light of Their Jewish Background* (London: SPCK, 1936), p. 15; Neil R. Lightfoot, *Lessons from the Parables* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965), p. 16.

but intended to challenge men in concrete situation.”<sup>6)</sup>

Before we go into further discussion, one thing we must establish is the idea that money is not in itself an evil thing.<sup>7)</sup> It is what is done with it that makes it good or evil.<sup>8)</sup> Therefore our main concern in this paper is not a question of how to get money and keep it; but, rather, as our topic indicates, how to use it.<sup>9)</sup>

The purpose of this study will be to explore existing materials concerning the use of money in the Gospel of Luke and to suggest how to apply them in our lives.

## I. Money

In order to put money in its place in our lives we need to understand what money is. Dr. Roy L. Laurin<sup>10)</sup> says:

Money has been described by the Wall Street Journal as ‘an article which may be used as a universal passport to everywhere except heaven, and as a universal provider of everything except happiness.’<sup>11)</sup>

What are we talking about when we talk about money? Are we speaking only of those jingling coins and rustling bills we have? Are we talking about savings accounts which can be turned into cash in a matter of minutes? Do we also consider personal possessions

6) Reginald H. Fuller and Brian K. Rice, *Christianity and the Affluent Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), p. 27.

7) Though Jesus has many warnings as to the perils of riches, there is no depreciation of wealth. It is true He refuses to interfere in a dispute between two brothers as to worldly property, and repudiates generally the office of arbiter. It is true also that He warns His disciples against covetousness (πλεονεξία, the Greek word for covetousness, means the desire to have more), that “a man’s true life is not made up of the things he owns.” But these sayings, so far from implying disapproval of earthly possessions, imply rather that property and trading are the indispensable basis upon which the outward fabric of the social order is built. Jesus does not counsel withdrawal from the activities of the world. Cf. Charles Paul Conn, *Father Care What It Means to be God’s Child* (New York: Berkley Book, 1984), p. 91; William Barclay, *Ethics in a Permissive Society* (London: Fontana Books, 1971), [Hereafter *EPS*] pp. 154, 167f.; E. Clinton Gardner, *Biblical Faith and Social Ethics* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1960), p. 285: “The Christian doctrine of creation declares that the material world is good, and we have noted that man’s proper response to the Creator is one of gratitude and thanksgiving for His good gifts. On the one hand, however, it is possible to conceive of these goods as being intended primarily for possession and control by isolated individuals; or, on the other hand, they may be conceived of as being intended primarily for possession and control by the community. In the former case, Christian faith would be identified with an individualistic conception of property; in the latter, with a collectivistic view.”

8) John Thompson Peter, “Money for the Church,” *Pastoral Psychology*, Vol. 16 No. 152 (Mar. 1965) [hereafter *PP*], p. 38; “Money is, of course, a symbol of God’s created world. In itself it is neither good nor evil, but laden with a terrific potential for either. It should be devoted to the purposes that are in the mind of Christ; not only some of it, but all of it.” Dorothy Strauss, *Prepare Yourself To Serve-God’s Call to a Life of Discipline and Service* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1960), p. 64; John Wesley, “The Use of Money,” *Christian Ethics—Source of the Living Tradition* (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1955, edd. Waldo Beach and H. Richard Niebuhr), [hereafter *CE*] p. 372.

9) Conn, *op. cit.*, p. 99; Brian L. Harbour, *Famous Parents of the Bible* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1983), p. 67.

10) Roy L. Laurin, *What the Bible Says* (Glendale, Calif.: Heaven & Home Hour, Inc., n.d.), p. 19.

11) Cf. Eileen L. Guder, “What Money Can’t Buy”, *The Many Faces of Friendship* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1969), pp. 33-39.

such as food, clothing, shelter, and even land, which may or may not sell in a given period of times?<sup>12)</sup>

In the Bible, in fact, such terms “money”, “Mammon”,<sup>13)</sup> and “materials” (property, treasure, wealth, etc.) are used inter-changeably.<sup>14)</sup> So we can equate money with mammon or materials. Whenever we say money in this paper, then, we must think in larger terms than the simple amount of currency we have available.<sup>15)</sup>

What is money, then? Simply stated, money, as we shall see later, is an instrument of exchange.

## II. Money and Goods

Money is a medium of exchange.<sup>16)</sup> It is “the central nervous system of our economic system. Its value is determined in part by government fiat and in part by the consumer. Average prices of commodities (price level) are determined primarily by the supply of money and by the rate by which it changes hands.”<sup>17)</sup> The money we earn we exchange for food, clothing, shelter, education, taxes, transportation, medical care, insurance, investment, entertainment, benevolences—for all the necessities of life and for some of the luxuries.<sup>18)</sup> Money itself is worth nothing; it is worth something only when it is exchanged for something.<sup>19)</sup> We want money only because of what it can buy for us. With it we can buy both goods and services. We give our services or our time and service in exchange a salary (i.e. money). With it we can buy the intangible as well as the tangible. Some goods are not materials. They are goods that are commodities of the spirit.

In the Old Testament, the major prophet Isaiah pointed out a common error of his days:

Why do you spend money for what is not bread,

12) Crawford, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

13) Mammon was the Syrian deity of riches (?) See. J. Harold Gwynne, *Christ's Word to This Age* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), p. 103; F. Hauck, *μαμωνᾶς*, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley), [hereafter *TDNT*] IV, p. 388: “ is used obj. for resources, not merely in money, but also in property and anything of value (e.g., slaves).”

14) See Mt. 6:21,24; 17:24; 22:19; 25:18; Mk. 10:21; LK. 12:34,35; 18:21, etc.

15) Cf. Crawford, *Op. cit.*, p. 17.

16) Cf. Wayne E. Oates, “The Pastor’s Money: Selfhood and Ambiguity,” *PP*, p.23: “The Levitical and Deuteronomical laws presuppose an agrarian culture. Money itself was not the medium of exchange. Raw materials for food, clothing, and shelter were a type of barter.”

17) John C. Bramer, Jr., *Personal Finance For Clergymen* (Eaglewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 13.

18) Cf. Richard V. Clearwaters, *Stewardship Sermonettes* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1955), pp. 12 and 29.

19) Cf. Laurin, *op. cit.*, pp. 19f.: “Money is a thing which has no value unless associated one way or another with both man and God. It is of no value unless it has a possessor. Neither is it of any value unless it has an objective. Nor has it any permanent value when it dies with its possessor. Therefore it must have some relation to God.” See also *infra*.

And your wages for what does not satisfy?  
 Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good,  
 And delight yourself in abundance (Is. 55:2).

The minor prophet Haggai referred to the same mistake:

You have sown much, but harvest little;  
 You eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied;  
 You drink, but there is not enough to become drunk;  
 You put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and  
 he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes (Hag. 1:6).

Jesus says, "Man cannot live on bread alone." (Lk.4:4; Mt.4:4). The physical bread alone is not enough for our life. We need a spiritual bread too. "Watch out," Jesus also says, "and guard yourselves from all kinds of greed; because a man's true life is not made up of the things he owns, no matter how rich he may be" (Lk.12:15 cf. v.23). In the parable, the foolish rich man was so interest in the getting of material things that he did not realize that riches cannot satisfy his soul.<sup>20)</sup>

Thus both OT prophets and Jesus teach that every one who lets the gaining of earthly riches blind him to those that are eternal is just as foolish.<sup>21)</sup> Jesus goes on further to say that "save your riches in heaven, where they will never decrease, because no thief can get to them, no moth can destroy them" (Lk.12:33). His teaching concerning treasure in heaven rather than treasure on earth is mentioned several times in the Gospels.<sup>22)</sup> He warns people of the insecurity of earthly riches. There are three insidious enemies: (1) Those that destroy from without—the thief. (2) Those that destroy from within—the moth. (3) Those that undermine—the rust (Mt. 6:19,20). But over against this insecurity of earthly riches, Jesus recommends the true security of the heavenly treasure.<sup>23)</sup> Here, then, is Jesus' point. There is no eternal value in money at all. It can be altered, wasted, corrupted, changed, or stolen. There is nothing about it which has a real significance in the light of eternity. Therefore, this is the question we all need to ask. How much of our earthly treasures are we exchanging into heavenly treasures?

With Robert A. Moore<sup>24)</sup> we can say:

Money is important to all of us, and a frank recognition of this is necessary if we are not to be enslaved by it. As some people make money their only goal, others fight against this, and are equally enslaved by their obsessive altruism.

20) *EPS*, p. 168: "A fortune in money is a poor substitute for a man's soul."

21) Simpson, *Op. cit.*, p. 66; *EPS*, p. 156.

22) LK. 12:33,34 and parallels.

23) Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

24) "The Meaning of Money: A Psychiatric-Psychological Evaluation," *PP*, p. 48.

### III. Money and Gain

Money is a means of gain. The Parable of Minas (Lk.19:11-27)<sup>25)</sup> deals directly with the one side of stewardship of money. It was spoken to the crowd who were criticizing Jesus for going in to stay at the home of Zaccheus. It would seem that Jesus wanted them to recognize that the actual amount involved doesn't make much difference.<sup>26)</sup> Each man was given a mina. The owner travelled to a distant country and left them free to invest as he would without restriction. But the day came when he returned and demanded an accounting. One man had been very successful and honest. He was commended and rewarded. Another had been less successful but equally honest. He was rewarded too. A third had been totally negligent in his responsibility, and was stripped of that which he had. This parable teaches that God gives to everyone something that belongs to Him to invest for Him, and everyone is either honest or dishonest in the handling of it.

Laurin<sup>27)</sup> strongly insists:

There are two things that any successful system must produce if it is to be an acceptable way of life. It must produce prosperity for all on the basis of merit and industry; and security for all on the basis of justice and equality.

There was a system that actually worked this way in the parable.

Jesus denounces the teachers of the Law, "Who take advantage of widows and rob them of their homes, and then make a show of saying long prayers! Their punishment will be all the worse!" (Lk.20:45-47). Whenever we wrong or hurt the poor and oppressed for material gain, we are far removed from the attitude toward money that Jesus said we should do.<sup>28)</sup>

There is another wrong attitude toward gaining money. One may get his riches honestly but, as we have seen, focus upon them as an asset for this life only. To do so is not so much wicked as it is foolish.<sup>29)</sup> Jesus comments, in applying this foolishness, "This is how it is with those who pile up riches for themselves but are not rich in God's sight" (Lk. 12:21).

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25) The Parable of the Minas is closely related in teaching to the Parable of the Talents (Mt. 25:14-30).

26) *EPS*, p. 155: "A man has to learn that the value of his life cannot be assessed by the size of his bank balance." Strauss, *op. cit.*, p. 65: "The Christian worker must accept the fact that what he has of this world's goods is the exact amount God has given to him to use. A small amount is not a cause for anxiety or fretfulness, since God Himself is his portion (Ps. 73:26)."

27) *Op. cit.*, p. 23

28) Stanley C. Baldwin, *What Did Jesus Say About That?* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1975), p. 90; *EPS*, pp. 158f., 169; *CE*, 374f. Cf. Davids, *op. cit.*, p. 38 n. 11.

29) See *supra*.

An even worse attitude regarding money is to value it as an end in itself.<sup>30)</sup> One day an earnest young man came to Jesus asking how he might secure eternal life. After questioning him, Jesus suggested distributing his riches to the poor. It is thought that he was given the opportunity to start the work that was later done for the widows and orphans. But the young man went away sorrowful. He was not willing to make the sacrifice. He had a chance to make a great investment and foolishly passed it by. So Jesus laments over his soul, "How hard it is for rich people to enter the Kingdom of God! It is much harder for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle" (Lk.18:24,25).<sup>31)</sup> His money had not satisfied his spiritual needs for he came to Jesus seeking eternal life. Yet he would not sacrifice his money.

Worth noting too is Jesus' insistence on getting rid of anything which stands between man and a full response to God's righteous love.<sup>32)</sup> This is what Jesus told the rich young ruler.

The gaining itself, as we have seen in the Parable of the Minas, is not an evil at all. That is why John Wesley<sup>33)</sup> urges that "Gain all you can."<sup>34)</sup>

#### IV. Money and God

Jesus says, "No servant can be the slave of two masters; he will hate one and love the other; he will be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money" (Lk.16:13).<sup>35)</sup> Who is the master of our souls?

Jesus tells us plainly what we need to know concerning the principles and motives that determine the issues of life in this world and in the world to come. Jesus is teaching the necessity for singleness of motive in life, having one aim, purpose, and goal. He is illustrating the principle of the unification of life at a center, from which the issues of life proceed. He is showing that a man's life cannot have two supreme motives, two opposing ruling principles.<sup>36)</sup>

30) *EPS*, p. 166; "What was wrong with the rich young man was not his possessions, but his possessiveness. He was in fact possessed by his possessions."; Brain L. Harbour, *Famous Couples of the Bible* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1979), p. 55.

31) Cf. Robert E. Speer, *The Principles of Jesus* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1902), pp. 96-99.

32) Cf. Mt. 5:27ff.; *EPS*, p. 156: "The desire for riches can blind a man to the higher things. 'The cares of this world and delight in riches' are like the fast-growing weeds that choke the life out of the seed."

33) *CE*, pp. 373ff.; *Infra*.

34) Cf. Paul L. Lehmann, "The Standpoint of the Reformation," *Christianity and Property* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1947, ed. Joseph Fletcher), p. 114: "According to the Reformation the right to use determines the right to possess . . . Rightly understood, possession is in order to use; use is not in order to possess." Emil Brunner, *Justice and the Social Order* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1945, trans. Mary Hottinger), p. 42; George F. Thomas, *Christian Ethics and Moral Philosophy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), p. 312.

35) The most illuminating illustration can be found in Clearwaters, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

36) Fuller *et al*, *op. cit.*, p. 29: "To set one's heart on something is to be totally committed to it. You cannot be totally committed to Christ and to earthly goods. You cannot serve God and Mammon. You cannot have two absolutes." William Lillie, *Studies in New Testament Ethics* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), p. 96: "The pursuit of money takes the place of the worship of God."

From the standpoint of Christian faith, all property belongs to God who is its Creator.<sup>37)</sup> The ultimate ownership of all belongs to the Creator alone. Cameron P. Hall<sup>38)</sup> is quite right when he says:

For Christians to put any part of the domain of money outside of their relationship to God is to distort the doctrines both of creation and of redemption. For God created, and in Christ he has redeemed the whole life of the whole man.

Therefore, Christian's relationship to all property is one of stewardship,<sup>39)</sup> i.e., of using them in accordance with the will of God the Creator who is sovereign over all.<sup>40)</sup> In other words, Christians are God's stewards and it is a main difference between the Christian and non-Christian. The biblical conception of man as made in the divine image and the warning of Jesus that "a man's true life is not made up of the things he owns" constitute a clear and explicit rejection of the secular materialism. When, therefore, we talk of the stewardship of money we are considering a theme of large dimensions.<sup>41)</sup>

### For Whom the Bell Tolls

A severe judgment on riches and a more favouring attitude toward poverty has been found in the Gospel of Luke<sup>42)</sup> than in the Gospels of Matthew or Mark or John. Throughout the Gospel of Luke there is a tendency to regard riches with a condemning eye.<sup>43)</sup> At any rate, it doesn't mean that it is a sin to possess money, but it does say that it is a grave danger. It is not money itself, but the love of money that is the root of all evils.<sup>44)</sup>

It seems to me, then, the theology of Luke is that a man's wealth must be administered not for his own ease or pleasure, or for any selfish end, but for the highest purposes he can

37) See Gen. 1:26-29; Ps.24:1; 50:12; Job 41:11; Ex.19:5; Eph.1:14, etc. Cf. Charles L. Taylor, Jr., "Old Testament Foundations," *Christianity and Property* (ed. J. Fletcher), p. 12; Strauss, *op. cit.*, p. 65; Laurin, *op. cit.*, pp. 19f; *supra*.

38) "The Morality of Money," *PP*, pp. 32, 33.

39) Cf. Joseph Fletcher, *Moral Responsibility-Situation Ethics at Work* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), p. 209: "It seems to me that the essential feature of stewardship as an abstract concept is well enough stated by Nels Ferré: 'All property [i.e., wealth] belongs to God for the common good. It belongs, therefore, first of all to God and then equally to society and the individual. When the individual has what the society needs and can profitably use, it is not his, but belongs to society, by divine right.'"

40) Warren A. Quanbeck, "Stewardship in the Teaching of Jesus," *Stewardship in Contemporary Theology* (New York: Association Press, 1960, ed. T.K. Thompson), p. 47: "God is the possessor of all things; man owns nothing at all. But man is nevertheless entrusted with the administration of his master's estate, and must give an account of his management."

41) See *supra* p. 3; Luther E. Lovejoy, *Stewardship for All of Life* (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1924), p. 79.

42) See the general treatment of riches in Luke. Lk. 6:24-25; 12: 15-21; 14: 12-14; 16:19-31; 18: 24-25; 19:8. The same idea can be found in Acts 2: 44-45; 4: 32, 34-37. Cf. Davids, *op. cit.*, pp. 39f.

43) See *supra* n. Cf. Paul, who was Luke's master, has no sympathy with Luke's severe condemnation of wealth (Phil. 4: 11-12; 2 Cor. 9: 11; 1Tim. 6: 17).

44) Cf. C. K. Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 21.

perceive (e.g. the Parable of the Good Samaritan, Lk.10:25-37).<sup>45)</sup> No man must think that his wealth has been given to him in absolute ownership.<sup>46)</sup> Jesus' teachings seem to be the spiritual benefits which come from giving freely to help the poor.

There is a Jesus' parable which has at least something to tell about His attitude to wealth—the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk.16:19-31). The story of the rich man who permitted a beggar to die unaided at his gate teaches a lesson that we need to learn. Lazarus does nothing especially good, except to be poor;<sup>47)</sup> this seems a foil to the rich man, who does nothing bad, except for continuity to enjoy his riches while someone else was going hungry. What it is condemning so unsparingly is “irresponsibility”, lack of awareness, lack of concern.<sup>48)</sup>

Jesus' parables indicate as admirable in His sight a generous open-heartedness in the dealing of man with man. The rich man should not have left Lazarus to hunger for his crumbs. The friend surely should not have been reluctant to rise and give the asked for loaves (Lk.11:5-8). He appeals to the certain beneficence of father to son as proof of the good will of God to us (Lk.11:13). And He urges on the rich man, “Sell all you have and give the money to the poor” (Lk.18:18-30).

One thing is certain: God will give us the opportunity to help the poor to a happier and healthier life, if we are willing to do it. It was so tragic that the rich man, of whom Jesus tells, missed his opportunity.

There is another parable of Jesus we must study thoroughly in order to understand His teaching of the use of money, i.e., the Parable of the Unjust Steward (Lk.16:1-13). It might be called the true use of riches. It deals directly with the other side of stewardship of money, i.e., how to use it.<sup>49)</sup> Many people have a trouble with the interpretation of the parable.

The story goes that a certain steward knew he was about to lose his job for mismanagement. Ashamed to beg and not strong enough to dig ditches, he was on the spot. Calling his master's debtors, he falsified their accounts to their advantage and to the disadvantage of his master.<sup>50)</sup> The idea was that he was buying their favour; he was making them personally indebted to him. Later, when he was out of a job, he would expect help from them in return.

The steward was unprincipled in his ethics, but he was wise enough to look ahead.

45) Jesus enumerates six things that the good Samaritan shared with the one whom he found in distress. They are: his first aid equipment, provisions, conveyance, lodging place, money and credit.

46) See *supra*.

47) Ernest Bammel, *Πτωχός*, TDNT, VI, pp. 905ff.

48) *EPS*, p. 157.

49) Cf. *supra*.

50) In each case the debt was recorded as considerably less than it was.



He was wasting his master's money (v.1b), scheming (v.4) and even dishonest (vv.5-7). But he was wise in making the money he possessed count for his future; even his master commended him for his wisdom.<sup>51)</sup> Then, the parable tells us that this is a lesson we Christians have been all too slow to learn.

This parable is preeminently a case where the interpretation must be held to the one main point of the parable.<sup>52)</sup> It is not pretended that the steward's procedure was right; he is called "unrighteous" (v.8). The motive for the praise is the master's admiration of the steward's shrewdness.<sup>53)</sup> The single point of approval is of his wise foresight in providing, through his present opportunity, for the future.

Jesus applies the principle especially to pointing out how even money can be used in providing for our future best self and service, in the rich store of friendships for all future (v.9).<sup>54)</sup> The exhortation here is that we cannot carry our money, or the things which it can buy, with us beyond the death, but we can carry the results of its loving ministering use in eternal friendships.<sup>55)</sup>

Jesus further suggests that "a man's conduct in money matters is no bad test of the man. If, we might almost say, a man can be trusted with money, he can be trusted with money, he can be trusted with anything" (vv.10-11).<sup>56)</sup>

Again, if you cannot be trusted to use unselfishly money and material possessions—that which can never be in any full sense one's own—how can you be trusted with that which would be peculiarly and absolutely "your own,"—greatly developed inner capacities, intellectual, moral, and spiritual powers? (v. 12).

Once more, it is urged that one cannot serve God and mammon (v.13). This principle suggests that if you are not using your money for serve, then you are really making

51) Joachim Jeremias had asked how the master could praise him. Since v. 8b belongs to Jesus, He must be the lord of v. 8a. Jeremias gives four arguments for taking Jesus as the lord (*ὁ κύριος*): (a) How could the owner praise the one who had cheated him? (b) Lucan use of *ὁ κύριος* absolutely refers to Jesus; (c) there is a similar pattern in Lk. 18.6; and (d) this usage would be following a literary form where a parable ends with a word of Jesus to the audience (cf. Lk. 14:11, 24). See J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963, trans. S.H. Hooke), p. 45; Archibald M. Hunter, *Interpreting the Parables* (London: SCM Press, 1964), p. 67. Cf. J. Fitzmyer, "The Story of the Dishonest Manager (Lk. 16: 1-13)," *Theological Studies*, 25 (1964), pp. 27-28, interprets otherwise.

52) Cf. *EPS*, p. 160: "That is an extraordinary parable. It is so extraordinary that it is clear that by the time Luke recorded it, its original lesson was lost, because Luke attaches no fewer than four different lessons to it—and all of them are relevant to the question of the Christian and his money."

53) *ὄν* indicates that shrewdness is the reason for praise.

54) H.F.B. Compston, "Friendship without Mammon," *The Expository Times*, 31 (1919-20), p. 282: "This seems to involve our Lord's advocacy of the acquisition of friends by means of the 'mammon of unrighteousness' = unrighteous mammon, a Jewish epithet for 'filthy lucre'—dirty money."

55) Cf. Lillie, *op. cit.*, p. 97: "Whatever else this means, it teaches that money is to be used as a means, and not as an end itself," *EPS*, p. 161: "So this tells us that money is meant to be used and not to be kept, and that it must never be regarded as an end in itself, but always as a means to an end—and the end towards which it is a means will be all important."

56) *Ibid*, pp. 161f.

money your god, The true service of God in the loving, ministering life delivers from bondage to mammon; they cannot go together.<sup>57)</sup>

## Conclusion

It is not easy to sum up Jesus' teaching on this subject so as to produce universal conviction. Because Jesus' teaching does not hold in its view the conditions of our modern life. But at the same time the problems of Jesus' day and of our own are the same at their root, and when we can grasp Jesus' fundamental principles we can outline the obligations of the rich.

First, it is clear that Jesus regarded riches as a stewardship.

Secondly, Jesus regarded riches, when honestly and honourably gained, as an achievement.

But we should not forget that Jesus regarded riches not only as a stewardship and an achievement but as a peril, unless we use them in the Master's service.

John Wesley's excellent comments on this matter reflect exactly the results of this study and we shall produce his words in full:<sup>58)</sup>

And, perhaps, all the instructions which are necessary for this may be reduced to three plain rules, by the exact observance where of we may approve ourselves faithful stewards of 'the mammon of unrighteousness.'

Having first, gained all you can, and secondly, saved all you can, then, give all you can.

The directions which God has given us, touching the use of our worldly substance, may be comprised in the following particulars. If you desire to be a faithful and a wise steward, out of that portion of your Lord's goods which He has for the present lodged in your hands, but with the right of resuming whenever it pleases Him, first, provide things needful for yourself; secondly, provide these for your household. If, when this is done, there be an overplus left, then, 'do good to them that are of the household of faith.' If there be an overplus still, 'as you have opportunity, do good unto all men.' In so doing, you give all you can; nay, in a sound sense, all you have: for all that is laid out in this manner is really given to God. You 'render unto God the things that are God's,' not only by what you give to the poor, but also by that which you expend in providing things needful for yourself and your household.'

57) *Ibid.*

58) *CE*, pp. 373, 377-8

1) Cf. Harbour, *Famous Parents of the Bible*, p. 67; Robert W. Burns, *The Art of Staying Happily Married* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 160.

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