Articles by James Kennedy

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Christian Stewardship In Action (Mar 1955)

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Christian stewardship is partnership with God at work in the world. The entire phase of Christian experience is served by it. All that a child of God is and has is included. The new birth is the point of beginning. The final accounting before the judgment seat of Christ marks its close.

This stewardship is not something new. Throughout the entire Christian era redeemed souls have entered into partnership with God. Before this period, Old Testament saints knew the deep joy of stewardship and were the recipients of Heaven’s fathomless blessings.

Faithful stewards are among Heaven’s choicest gifts to the Church. In them and through them the Lord is honored and.the kingdom of God is constantly extended in ever widening circles. In this moment God is seeking each reader of this brief message as his faithful steward. Will you in this opportune moment let him have his way with you?

All titles, of everything we possess are vested in God. His is the silver and the gold, the beasts of the field, and the cattle on a thousand hills, the earth and the fulness thereof. All souls are His, and every child of God is bought with a price, the Precious Blood of Christ.

In the Old Testament, men recognized the sovereignty of God by bringing to Him their tithes and their offerings and by observing His sabbaths. In the New Testament

this recognition was continued by surrendering every possession to Him.

Christian stewardship is divided into three parts: the stewardship of wealth, of talent, and of time. All of these things are God-given and must be considered a trust and not a prize. Whether the Christian possesses one or more talents, they are all divine gifts. As talents differ in number, so they differ in kind. Back of this two-fold difference is the wisdom of God. To serve God effectively in the time and place of his choosing, special talents are needed and for this reason there is this distinction. Talents do not come to anyone all wrapped up and ready to use. They lie buried in hearts and lives. First they are discovered, then developed and put to work.

The variance found with goods and with talents is not found with time. The Christian steward, whether old or young receives day by day, not more and not less time than his fellow stewards. Time also is God given. The faithful steward recognizes this. He starts and he closes every day with God. Where ever he is and whatever he is doing he places first things first. He uses all moments well because he knows that time ill-spent incurs an eternal loss.

The possibilities of Christian stewardship are boundless. As a result of it Christian lives and homes have been transformed, greed and coveteousness have been overcome, greater missionary and gospel efforts have been launched. and God has been exalted and His kingdom expanded.

God is never enriched or impoverished by our returning to Him, or our withholding from Him that which is His. These experiences come to us, either when we invest

our possessions in the cause of Christ, our lives are enriched, or when we withhold from Him that which belongs to Him, our lives are impoverished.

Beloved in Christ, the present need is not for more offerings or collections, but a generation of Christian men and women who will recognize God’s sovereign ownership. Just now our Lord is seeking such stewards to be His representatives in a broken, bleeding, and blundering World. Will you be one of them? You can be if you will. Right now the Lord is waiting to fill your life to overflowing and to send you forth a faithful steward.

The Counsel of Christ (Oct 1955)

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James W. Kennedy

If there is anyone in the world who needs tenderness and compassion shown to him, it is the person who has professed to be a child of God, and then has departed in life and ways from Him. We recall with sadness and disappointment the great number of those who during our own lifetime, have turned their backs upon God. Realizing that very little ministry is ever heard, or even printed on this subject, we present the following thoughts for the benefit of the Lord's people.

Christians are often like little children, not only in their good but also in their bad qualities; they are docile and they are foolish; they will sometimes cry for what they do not need and cannot have. Frequently they have false wants yet do not know their true needs, clamouring for what would do them no good, and acting carelessly toward their real deficiencies. It was this way with the church of the Laodiceans; she said," I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," whereas she was wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. It was a great mercy when the Lord, in the midst of the golden candlesticks, came in to rectify this misconception. In The Revelation, chapter 3, it is well to notice the words of the "Wonderful Counsellor" who gives a piece of sound commercial advice to those who have wandered from Him, "I counsel thee to buy." We know how quick business men are to purchase when they have the prospect of a good bargain, and can make a ready profit on the merchandise at the time of sale.

The counsel of Christ here relates to the heavenly and the more enduring goods. The Laodiceans, as a church, had said, “I am rich,” yet the Lord says, “Thou art poor.” He also counsels them that, if they would be rich indeed, they should buy from Him. Let us, who are apt to be foolish merchants, listen to these words of admonition, for in them we learn of three moral commodities for sale, and we shall consider these three moral commodities in the reverse order in which they are given.

Eye Salve:

The Laodiceans were not literally, but spiritually, blind; they, without knowing it, were very defective in their spiritual perception; they were unable to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong. How few Christians have discernment keen enough to penetrate the pretentious nature of the mundane things around us today. Many there are who “see no harm,” as the phrase goes, in a thousand little things in which there is much harm, harm in principle, harm which, in the final analysis, is the germ of great and manifold evils. Many there are who do a thousand things which they ought not to do, and which they would not do if they were not blind to the false nature of these things. What is worse, there are many who when the evil is pointed oust only respond, saying, “I do not see it,” which in most cases simply means “I will not see it.” The will is at the bottom of this blindness; what then is the cure? The only cure is spiritual eye salve. What is this eye salve? It is the conviction or reproof of the Holy Spirit, which like salve, smarts while it heals. It is the operation of the Spirit of Truth applying the Word of God to the conscience, the

eye of the soul, allowing the light of truth to enter and reveal every action in its deceptive colouring. May we anoint our eyes that henceforth we shall see everything in the light of Heaven.

“Turn your eyes upon Jesus,

Look full in His wonderful face,

And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,

In the light of His glory and grace.”

White Raiment:

The second commodity mentioned is white raiment. What is this white raiment? Is it the robe of Christ’s righteousness without which a man could not be a Christian, or come under the wholesome instruction of our Great High Priest? No, for the righteousness of Christ is not affected by our walk or conversation. The best robe of heaven, divine righteousness, can neither be torn nor tainted, nor can it be removed from the soul that in it has been attired. The white raiment of our passage, as frequently found elsewhere in Scripture and especially in The Revelation, is a spotless life before men, a blameless walk, an irreproachable character before the world. The lack of these result from a life that has lost touch with God. The description of the carnality of the Laodiceans is a true description of every one who has wandered from the Lord, for they are miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Hence the suggestion from the heavenly Counsellor, “Buy of Me, white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed.” It is only as we maintain this covering, that we can present a proper and a fitting testimony to the world for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. “Let your light so shine before men that they

may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

Gold:

We are now to look at the third and the most important spiritual commodity, gold. "Buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich," said the exalted Lord. The Laodiceans replied that they were rich and had need of nothing. The Lord Jesus intimated that in this they were wrong, for they were poor, but He suggested that if they would be rich, they should buy gold of Him. We are not left to guess what this gold is. A comparison of Scripture makes it clear that it is the faith of God's elect, the faith of which Christ is the Author and Finisher. It is that precious faith, the trial of which is much more precious than gold that perisheth. It is the possession or the lack of the possession of this moral gold, this spiritual wealth, that constitutes a man rich or poor in the sight of God. In other words, what money is to the man of the world, faith is to the child of God, for it procures all that he needs and enables him to appropriate God Himself. We read, "All things are yours," but it is the measure of faith that possesses these, and makes the realization of them a blessed experience. Lest there be some misunderstanding, let it be stated that Christ is not telling the unsaved to buy saving faith from Him, that is the gift of God, absolute and unconditional. He, however, is stating that in the conflicts, trials, and duties, of post-conversion life our peace, happiness, and triumph, depend on the measure of our faith. The apostle John in his epistle says, "This is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith." In direct reference to such victorious faith Christ says,

“Buy of Me.” Something must be paid for this spiritual gold, this divine wealth, but it is not literal money, but rather real heart exercise before the Lord. It is this, and only this, that produces faith for faithfulness, faith for watchfulness, faith for prayerfulness, and faith for self-denial.

Here then is profitable trade for the Christian, buy, Buy, BUY. Here is business in which, if he is diligent, he is sure to become rich in spite of the spiritual poverty of the world, in spite of seasons of adversity, and in spite of fluctuating economy: rich, perhaps not toward men, but toward God.

Let us then, dear child of God, take heed to the wise counsel found in this portion of Scripture, that we may be more truly occupied with heaven’s business rather than with the weak and beggarly elements of the world, that we may be preserved from an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, and that we may be so enriched, that in turn we may be able to impart of these divine riches to others.

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The Cost Of Faithfulness:

It cost Abraham the yielding up of his son.

It cost Esther the risk of her life.

It cost Daniel being cast into the den of lions.

It cost the three Hebrew servants the fiery furnace.

It cost Stephen death by stoning.

It cost Peter a martyr’s death.

It cost the Lord Jesus His life.

What does it cost you?

Does it cost you anything?

Anon.

Christ Will Come (May 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 5, May 1961.

One of the most important and precious truths of Scripture is that of the Lord's return.

Before His crucifixion Christ said to His disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Certainly, if this great fact were more impressed upon our hearts, it would serve as a constant reminder of Eternity, a reproof to our worldliness, a stimulus to wider service in the Gospel, a comfort to all sufferers, and an admonition to every sinner.

The careful reader of the New Testament will find within it three very solemn and important facts. First, that Christ the Son of God has come into this world, has died, and has gone away. Second, that the Holy Spirit has come down into the world, and is still here. Third, that the Lord Jesus is coming again.

The First Advent of Christ

Let us consider briefly the fact that the Son of God has been here. There is nothing in history more clearly established than this. Think of those wonderful words found in the third chapter of John: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that

whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

He came in perfect love, the very expression of the heart, mind, and character of God. He was the brightness of God's glory, the express image of His person; yet, He was lowly, humble, and gracious. He went about from day to day ministering in kindness and gentleness to all. He dried the widows' tears, soothed the stricken and the sorrowful heart. He fed the hungry, healed the sick, cleansed the leper, and met every form of human need and misery. He was truly the unwearied Servant of man's necessities. He never thought of Himself, but was ever mindful of His creatures. From His loving heart flowed streams of blessing to all who felt the pressure of this sin-stricken and sorrowful world. You will agree it is marvelous that this earth should have been visited by that blessed One to whom we have referred, the Son of God.

This One who is also the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe became the lowly, self-emptied, loving, and gracious Son of Man. What became of this Person? How did the world treat Him? It cast Him out. It rejected Him, and preferred a murderer and a robber to Him. The world was given its choice. Jesus and Barabbas were placed before the throng in Pilate's judgment hall. He, the governor, put the question before them, "Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?" The answer came, "Not this Man, but Barabbas." The religious leaders and guides of the people, the men who ought to have led them in the right way, persuaded the poor ignorant crowd to reject the Son of God and accept a robber instead. In spite of the fact that Pilate found no

fault in Christ, he condemned Him to the death of the cross.

In connection with the crucifixion of Christ we must carefully distinguish between two things: first, the death of Christ viewed as the act of man involves wrath and judgment; second, the death of Christ viewed as the act permitted by God involves everlasting blessing to all who believe. The facts are that Christ came from Heaven to Earth by means of the Virgin Birth at Bethlehem, lived a sinless, spotless, holy life before God and men, died a vicarious death upon the cross, was buried, and on the third day was raised triumphantly by the power of God. Finally, He was exalted to God's right hand as a "Prince and a Saviour."

The Descent of the Holy Spirit

Space does not permit a lengthy discussion of the second doctrine mentioned, that of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, this should be stated. It is now over nineteen centuries since this Belssed Person descended from Heaven. His work here is twofold: to convict the world of sin and to comfort the Church in her pilgrimage.

The Second Advent of Christ

We now have come to the main subject of our paper, the second coming of Christ. What a blessed hope to the child of God! The Scriptures declare that our Lord Jesus will come again, that personally He will, some day, perhaps very soon, leave the place which He now occupies on His Father's throne, and will come to the air to receive His people to Himself.

It is well to remember that there are two aspects to our Lord's coming.

The Rapture: Christ will come to the air for His saints as we read in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." This passage deals with the "Rapture," the first stage of Christ's return, and comprises the resurrection of the dead in Christ and the translation of the living saints.

The Revelation: This will transpire when Christ finally returns to earth as the Son of Man to take vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1:7-8).

"The Revelation" will be as sudden and as unexpected as "The Rapture." The sun will rise on that day strong and clear. Gentle breezes will waft themselves over the earth. The people as usual will buy and sell, build and plant, eat and drink, marry and be given in marriage. Statesmen will be evolving new plans for the betterment of the world. The pleasure loving will be seeking new sources of amusement, and the unbelieving will be proving to their own satisfaction that there is no God, no hell, no judgment. Suddenly, there will be a change. All peoples of the earth shall mourn for they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven in power and great glory. "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced

Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen" (Rev. 1:7).

The last sight the world had of Jesus was as He hung on the cross, The next sight they will see of Him is when He comes with lightning flash to execute judgment upon this guilty world.

As we conclude this paper, let it be clearly understood that the grand and glorious hope of every Christian is the coming of Christ for His people. This hope may be realized even today. There is nothing to wait for! No events must transpire! God be praised, Christ may come for His own today!