A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MOTIVATIONAL EXHORTATIONS OF THE ANTE-NICENE FATHERS CONCERNING THE VALUE AND USE OF PROPERTY AND WEALTH

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PREFACE

The evangelical community has expressed a renewed concern for the proper use of wealth and the care for the powerless in this last decade. As we encourage our colleagues and congregations toward this concern, it may prove instructive to consider the perspective of the early church writings toward this topic. An investigation of the appeals, provokations, and motivational motifs which wind their way through the writings of the early church fathers, may shed some light on the perspectives and methods we utilize in exhorting our own materialistic society toward a higher social conscience.

INTRODUCTION

In the book of Acts, the historian Luke records the early church as having all things in common, selling all their possessions and goods, and distributing them to all as many as had need.[1] From this point (the inception of the church) on, the early church was committed to a regular, systematic care for the needy, and to a carefree attitude toward wealth. The significance of this free concern is noted well by the Catholic scholar, Igino Giordani:

> If, while it preached the life of paridise, Christianity had not regularly and effectively aided men to procure the means of earthly life also, especially through that long, vast, unceasing labour of redistribution of wealth known as charity, it never would have accomplished the revolution it did.[2]

Though it was concerned for the needs of the poor and relatively unconcerned with wealth and property, the actual practices of the early church were not always identical to those described in Acts. Out of practical necessity the economic koinonia of the apostolic age grew more organized. This organization served to enable the church to develop an ongoing system which would be practiced for several generations. This organized koinonia would prove so effective that the church of Rome in A.D. 250 would care for 1500 widows and other persons in distress, in addition to their clergy.[3]

remarkable concern

This care extended to many different situations and people. The church supported their own bishops and teachers, the widows and orphans, the sick, the poor, and the disabled. They cared for their brethren, placed in prison or in mines because of their faith. They provided burial services for the poor or those left on the streets. They encouraged equality amongst slaves and freedmen, cared for other churches in distress, and welcomed sojourners.

Of course, these practices varied with place and time. In addition to the increased organization, it seems that the father's beliefs concerning wealth gradually grew

less stringent, moving from a strict condemnation to a more utilitarian approach. It seems as though the Western church never learned or practiced the laws of the first fruits and tithes, whereas the Eastern church practiced them from the beginning.[4] Whether the early church tithed or not, the fact was that they seemed to care less about money and more about others.

These practices were continued largely because of certain beliefs they held. These were beliefs about God, about themselves, and about money. The early church saw themselves as the new and true Isreal. They saw in Christ the fulfillment of the Old Testament hope. The Messiah had come. Jesus, who was in some sence both God and man, had died on their behalf, thus freeing them to partake of an eternal messianic kingdom which was active in the present and consummated in the future. Jesus is Lord! This was the good news they were so eager to spread throughout the land. This "Lordship" of Jesus not only granted them access into a heavenly kingdom, it obliged them to a personal piety and self-control surpassing that of the Jews. Their moral character was to be impeccable, for they were new creatures, eager and waiting to enter a new and holy kingdom.[5]

These beliefs became manifest through their writings. These writings, mostly apologies and homilies, were written to defend or encourage Christian beliefs and practices. Because of the nature of these writings, the beliefs are couched in appeals, entreaties, and indictments. This paper will attempt to define and describe these appeals, or as they will be called, these "motivational motifs".

The concern of this paper lies not so much in WHAT the Ante-Nicece fathers encouraged others to believe or act concerning wealth, nor in what the early church did in fact DO with their wealth, but specifically in WHY they did what they did or believed what they believed. This paper will strive to discover those motifs the Ante-Nicene fathers used in exhorting others concerning wealth and property; to investigate those motivational bases which were provided by the fathers for certain beliefs or practices.

A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MOTIVATIONAL EXHORTATIONS OF THE ANTE-NICENE FATHERS CONCERNING THE VALUE AND USE OF PROPERTY AND WEALTH

I. THE MOTIF APPEALING TO A SENCE OF GOOD WORKS

The Hebrews believed that Yaweh was a Good God who did good works. His beneficence and kindness were clearly shown in all his deeds. Because God was good and kind, giving all things to his children, so his people were to be good. They were to be righteous and fair. They were to be just in their dealings and kindly toward the needy. They were not to turn their backs on the poor (Prov. 28:27), but were to practice good works (Ps. 34:14; 37:3,27), which include alms as well as other righteous deeds.[6] The Apostles kept this tradition, believing that Christ has saved the church for good works (Eph. 2:10; Col.1:10; II Cor.9:8).J.I. Packer describes this theme of "good works" as works of love,"laying out ones resources to meet their (others) need, and seeking their welfare in every possible way"[7] (c.f. Gal.6:9; Eph.4:28,29).

The early church fathers appealed to this sence of "good works" in their churches. Polycarp encourages the leaders of the Phillipian church to teach the widows to be,"discrete as respects the face of the Lord." He then lists those "indiscrete" sins which they should avoid, one of which is the love of money.[8]Hermas, in his second commandment,"On Evil Speaking and Giving Alms in Simplicity" encourages the church to "practice goodness; and from the rewards of your labours which God gives you, give to all the needy in simplicity."[9] Clement of Alexandria places value not in gold or clothing or in beauty, but in virtue.[10] This virtue is a righteousness and goodness which does not spend money on superfluities, but is willing to give to others. Virtue is a theme which is seen often in the writings concerning wealth. Lactantius, in his apology,"The Divine Institutes" argues against the philosophical mind-set of the pagan culture. He claims that the pagans, when they do

works of charity, do so in order to gain for themselves, whereas the Christians express a much better, self giving charity. He says,"This is the chief and truest advantage of riches; not to use wealth for the particular pleasure of the individual, but for the welfare of many, not for ones own immediate enjoyment, but for justice, which alone does not perish. We must therefore by all means keep in mind that the hope of receiving in return must be altogether absent from the duty of showing mercy."[11] Further evidences of the "good works" appeal are found in the section titles used in these writings. One of the sections of the "Constitutions of the Holy Apostles" concerning wealth is titled,"Concerning Doing Good".Cyprian's famous treatise concerning wealth is titled,"On Works and Alms".

It becomes clear through these writings that the church fathers would, on occasion appeal to a commonly held sence of goodness or "good works" which has roots in Hebrew and Apostolic thought (though it could be traced in Greek thought as well). Good works were works of charity for others done out of love, not self seeking, and done because God himself is the good God, who supplies all needs.

Related to these appeals are the occasional entreaties centering in on compassion for another's predicament. In Hermas' "Third Vision" he exhorts the church to"bear one another's burdens." The reason he gives for this bearing is that,"some, through their abundance of their food produce wickedness in their flesh, and thus corrupt their flesh; while the flesh of others who have no food is corrupted because they have not sufficient nourishment. And on this account their bodies waste away."[12] By painting this picture of the malnourished body, he tugs at the heart strings of the believer, who would never wish for others to be wasted away, while the believer rests, well fed and inwardly corrupt. Cyprian also expresses this motive, noting in his epistle to the Numidian bishops how he sorrowfully examined a letter from them, telling of all their trials. He says that his brotherhood (the church of Carthage) were stimulated to salutary works (a collection for the Numidians of 100,000 sesterces) by,"the consideration of so great a

suffering."[13] We can see that need, as well as good works often served to spur the Christians into action. It was good to give to others, and especially when they have a great need.

II. THE MOTIF APPEALING TO A SENCE OF JUDGEMENT OR SALVATION

The Christian God was not merely a God of kindness and mercy. He was also a just God who looked down upon man's works with approval or disapproval. James expresses the judgement aspect to the wealthy, claiming that the rich have laid up treasure (of penalty) for the last days, and that those persons which the rich have oppressed by fraud have cried to God, and that God has heard their voice and will come to judge them (Ja. 5:1-5). Much Old Testament prophetic literature also follows this judgement aspect (Jer. 22:17-19; Ez. 22:12,13,27-31; Amos 4:1,2). The roots of the salvation aspect of this motif are found in a passage often quoted (or misquoted) found both in Proverbs 16:6 and Tobit 12:8,9,"By almsgiving and faith sins are purged." A New Testament passage used by the early church to show the earning of salvation aspect is Luke 11:41, which Cyprian altars to read,"but give alms and all things are clean unto you." II Clement makes reference to both of these aspects in the same paragraph. In his section entitled "On the Excellence of Almsgiving" he exhorts his readers to repentance, that they should renounce their enjoyments and turn to God. He warns them that,"the day of judgement even now approaches." He pictures this day as a burning oven wherein men's works shall be tried. His conclusion from this warning is that,"almsgiving therefore is a good thing, as repentance from sin; fasting is better than prayer, but almsgiving better than both." He concludes by saying that almsgiving lightens the burden of sin.[14]

who is he? "Clement" and I wrote II Clement

The judgement aspect of this motif is seen in many examples. Hermas warns his brethren by asking them to,"heed the judgement which is to come." He exhorts the rich to seek out the hungry while they have time. He presents the image of a tower being built. In the tower's construction stages, they

have occasion to give; but when it is completed, there is no second chance. Furthermore, if the rich fail to give to the poor (who are often linked with the pious in biblical literature), the poor may cry out to God and God will hear their voice , and the rich will be "shut out".[15] Another example of the judgement theme is in Clement of Alexandria. In his classic "Who is the Rich Man that Shall be Saved?", Clement encourages these believers not to fall away from a carefree attitude toward riches:

> If one should escape the superfluity of riches...and be able to enjoy the eternal good things; but should happen, either from ignorance or from involuntary circumstances, after the seal and redemption, to fall into sins or transgressions so as to be quite carried away; such a man is entirely rejected by God.[16]

Also, in his Hypotyposes, Clement condemns those who have and continue to take from others.[17] Cyprian, in his treatise on works and alms sets a small warning to those who do not follow his advice. He quotes Matthew 25:31-46 (the separation of the sheep and the goats) in its entirety and just prior to that quotation promises a "reward to those are charitable, and a threatening punishment to the unfruitful."[18] Commodianus, a North African bishop, warns wicked and unbelieving rich men that by looking too much to their wealth they are wandering and will go to hell. He says,"Rich man... by and by thou shalt be driven with the furies of Charydis, when thou thyself dost perish."[19] Though the judgement theme was not the most prominent theme in the writings, it was a common one. These examples show the relationship which the early fathers held between the expression of faith in works (in this case almsgiving or ridding ones self of excess wealth) and their salvation, or lack of it. The church was to continue in a free attitude toward wealth, the rich were to reject their dependance on wealth, and all were to practice almsgiving; for if they failed, their soul may be in peril.

Along with the judgement aspect of this motif, the salvation-earning aspect was expressed by the early church.

Charity and almsgiving were thought to have a great deal of potency in washing sins and bringing one to acceptance before God. Louis Berkhof, in his History of Christian Doctrines has this to say about these deeds:

> These deeds are regarded as having expiatory value in atoning for sins committed after baptism. There is a tendancy to stress the necessity of good works, especially works of self denial, such as liberal almsgiving, abstinence from marrige, and so on, to attach special merit to these, and to coordinate them with faith as a means of securing the divine master.[20]

An interesting example of the use of almsgiving to aid in obtaining salvation is found in the Shepherd of Hermas. In the second "Similitude", Hermas sets up an analogy between the elm tree and the vine which grows on it, and the rich and poor man. In the way in which the vine and the elm help each other grow, so the rich man and the poor man help each other. The wealthy man (being rich in money) helps the poor by giving to the poor man liberally of his money. The poor man in turn (being rich in spiritual things) prays on behalf of the rich man, and his intercession "recompences the master". The prayer of the poor also serves to increase the income of the rich, and in this manner salvation and food are gained by all.[21] There are similarities between this salvation aspect and what Martin Hengel, in his book Property and Riches in the Early Church calls the "motive of exchange".[22] This motive of exchange is found most classically in Cyprians treatise on works and Alms. In this treatise he quotes many pertinent scriptures and then claims that, "by almsgiving we may wash away whatever foulness we subsequently contract."[23] He calls alms a remedy for propitiating God, and quoting Daniel 4:27 he labels alms as a means of redeeming sins.[24] He calls eternal life that "pearl of great price" which one is to part with all of ones wealth for, and through a complicated syllogism links their almsgivingwith an Abrahamic imputation of righteousness.[25]

Almsgiving and freedom from money in general, ~~was~~ were important to the early church fathers. With ~~it~~ them, one gained favour with God and access to the heavenly kingdom. Without it

one was in peril of the judgement of the most high God. The themes of judgement and salvation-earning run through much of the Ante-Nicene literature , yet are by no means the most prominent themes.

III. THE MOTIF APPEALING TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE DANGERS OF WEALTH

Those writers seeking to educate and exhort others accordingly using the "Dangers of Wealth" motif fell generally into two camps; the hard-liners and the moderates. Martin Hengel sees Greek philosophical roots for the hard line camp in the concept of a utopia where all posessions will be held in common, and where private property (a result of the fall) will not be needed. He also sees roots for the dangers of wealth motif in the minority and beaten status which the Jews and the early church had. He also notes the place of the Essene community in developing this radical criticism of riches.[26] Though Hengel's arguments must be acknowledged, the present author would see more influence for the dangers of wealth motif directly from the words of Jesus (Lk.12:16-21,33,34; 16:13,19-31; 18:18-23), and from apostolic encouragements (I Tim.6:6-19; Ja.2:14-17) than from Greek philosophy or sociological factors. Pagan writers, Intertestamental literature and the social factors are noted far less in the writings of the Ante-Nicene fathers than quotations of Christ and the Apostles. One common quote, used first by Polycarp is the phrase "the love of money is the root of all evils"(I Tim.6:10).

The "hardliners" simply condemned wealth. In their perspective, wealth is seen as evil in and of (or nearly so) itself. The passages here are too numerous to quote at length. Riches are referred to by the fathers as "sins","leading to idolatry","a weight","beggarly, foreign, transitory","like a serpent","a burden","a chain", and "an Idol". Commodianus cries,"Strip thyself, O rich man turned away from God, of all such evils"(referring both to his unconcern for the poor, and the riches themselves).[27] Cyprian speaks in this manner

concerning the rich investor,"nor does he perceive, poor wretch, that these things are merely guilded torments, that he is held in bondage by his gold, and that he is the slave of luxury and wealth rather than their master." Later in this passage Cyprian encourages the man to disburden his load and makes a lovely pun saying, "what a marvelous perversion of names! They call those things GOODS which they absolutely put to none but BAD uses.[28] very interesting

The picture one finds in the hard line approach and which appears in the moderate approach to a degree is that of a slave, being held back from freedom; or of a runner, being held back in a race by something. That something is wealth. It is wealth which holds the Christian back from experiencing true worship, true Christian freedom. It is wealth which chains a man to his home and his posessions, afraid to let them out of his sight. They are the thorns which choke out the Word, and the serpent which bites just when a man thinks he's safe. In the hard line, radical critique of wealth, only the abandonment of wealth altogether will enable a man to experience the life of Christ.

Though the hard line approach was used often by the early church fathers; and the pictures of slavery and burden were used throughout their writings, total abandonment as a universal practice, or even the "love-communism" (see Hengel, pp.31-34) of the apostolic church were gradually left behind. The practices which replaced total abandonment and love-communism grew out of some of the critiques of the hard line approach, but also out of a "moderate" approach.

This moderate approach stressed not so much the nature of wealth, as the attitude toward and the use of wealth. Giordani describes the effect of this approach upon the church in this manner:

> In short, material wealth is stripped of the value ordinarily attributed to it and is reduced to a status of relativity which is fraught with responsibility. In the usual revesal of things, the true rich man is the virtuous man, united to God, whom no change of fortune can affect.[29]

The argument of the moderate is summed up well in Archelaus' "Disputation with Manes", where he says:

> But someone may now reason with us thus; It is not a good thing consequently, to give up riches. Well, I reply, that it is a good thing for those who are capable of it; but at the same time, to employ riches for the work of righteousness and mercy is a thing as acceptable as if one were to give up the whole at once.[30]

The Psuedo Clementine literature also shows this new slant to the argument, when it claims that,"some are rich as far as their choice goes, though poor in actual wealth, and they are punished because of their desire to have more."[31] The similarity between the Psuedo Clementine literature and Archelaus' argument is this: the focus is not so much on the person's wealth itself, but on his godly heart, and the desires and charitable practices that may flow from this heart. The sine qua non of all early church literature concerning property and wealth, Clement of Alexandria's "Who is the Rich Man that Shall be Saved?" is precisely a moderate argument to rich men (who were increasingly becomming a part of the church), comforting them that they do not have to abandon all their riches to join the church, yet they must maintain a Christian attitude. The essay is in the form of a commentary on Mark's record of the story of the rich young ruler (Mark 10:17-31). It assumes that it is harder for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God than for a camel to get through the eye of a needle, and that all things are possible with God, and thus appropriatly seeks to answer the question, "Who is the rich man that shall be saved?" In this document Clement maintains that Jesus' injunction "Sell thy posessions" is not to be taken literally:

> He does not, as some conceive off hand, bid him to throw away the substance he posessed, and abandon his property; but bids him banish from his soul his notions about wealth, his excitement and morbid feelings about it, the anxieties, which are the thorns of existence, which choke the seed of life.[32]

In this essay, he encourages not the stripping of wealth per se, but the stripping of the passions for wealth. He contrasts the rich man who abandons his wealth, only to be left miserably in want of it; with the rich man who desires money

no more, but freely gives to all those in need. Clement views money as not that which is good or evil of itself, but as,"materials and instruments which are for good use to those who know the instrument."[33] Freedom from the slavery of riches is not to be found so much in ridding ones self from them , as in becoming master over them. The important factor is what is borne in a man's heart: riches or God's Spirit. Salvation does not depend on external things, but on the virtue of the soul.[34] Clement lets these rich men know that if they can't flee the passions without fleeing the money, the money must go.[35] He sums up his argument in this manner:

> Let it teach the prosperous that they are not to neglect their own salvation, as if they had been already foredoomed, nor, on the other hand, to cast wealth into the sea, or to condemn it as a traitor and an enemy to life, but learn in what way and how to use wealth and obtain life.[36]

Clement further exhorts them through quotes from Jesus and through eulogies about Christ and Love. He speaks of purchasing immortality for money and exchanging perishing wealth for a heavenly mansion; and then goes on to show what steps must be taken to make right use of wealth. He finally encourages them to repentance by use of a story of the Apostle John saving a wicked, backslidden man out of his sin. This document expresses most clearly the moderate approach, that riches are not to be abandoned as evil in themselves, but used as tools of righteousness. By the use of this moderate approach as well as the stricter hard line approach the early church educated and appealed to the brethren using a motif related to the dangers of wealth.

IV. THOSE MOTIFS APPEALING TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE VALUES OF CHRIST

Those motifs educating and appealing to an understanding of Christ's value are by far the most prominent and important motifs in the writings concerning property and wealth. It is this theme, the value of Christ, which provides the basis for

the others and from which all other themes flow. The gospel of the early church was that Jesus was Lord, and if he was Lord the relative importance of other things diminished, including money. The Old Testament and Apostolic roots for these motifs are far too vast to begin to quote. Word studies of "riches", "treasure", and "contentment" would be sufficient to show the Biblical notion that because of Christ, there are now riches to shun (earthly wealth), riches to seek (Christ), and a carefree attitude toward property in general.

The first aspect of this motif is its eschatalogical aspect. Hengel feels that the eschatalogical aspect was an important one in the development of the early churches' attitudes toward wealth. Yet he also notices that in its later and less millenarian stages the church carried a sence of "detachment" which functions much the same way. He characterizes their attitudes in this manner,"In concrete terms, that means that concern for property and posessions had become a quite secondary matter."[37] This eschatalogical aspect of the motif is seen in the Clementine Homily concerning posessions where Peter says, "We who have chosen the future things, insofar as we possess more goods than these... possess sins."[38] They have chosen the future things; the present things have lost their value. Polycarp reveals the "detachment" aspect when he quotes the phrase,"knowing therefore, that as we brought nothing into this world, so we can take nothing out."[39] The entire final section of Cyprian's treatise on works and alms is a moving description of the glories in paridise which those who have "laboured charitably" will experience. In it he speaks glowingly of the rewards the Christian will gain and the glories which will surround him. The eschatalogical aspect is simply this, that someone is coming that is worth far more than all the wealth of the earth. Thus, the focus is placed on Christ and the interest in wealth fades away.

The second aspect of this "values of Christ" motif is the "carefree" or "contentment" aspect. Because of the value of Christ for them, the early church was encouraged to have a

carefree attitude toward wealth. They were to be content with whatever they possessed, knowing that it was provided by God and that there were more important and pleasant things in life than slavery to riches. In Minucius Felix's "Octavius", the Christian Octavius argues strongly to the heathen Caecilius that it is not a penalty that some Christians suffer poverty, but a glory, "for as our mind is laxed by luxury, so it is strengthened by frugality."[40] Christians were content to suffer poverty, knowing that God works all things for the good. Cyprian, in his treatise on works and alms, weilds another series of puns contrasting the rich man's love for his money, as opposed to the life in his soul:

> While you are anxious, lest any of your wealth should be diminished, you do not see that you yourself are being diminished...while you fear lest for the sake of yourself you should lose your patrimony, you yourself are perishing for the sake of your patrimony... You keep your money, which when kept does not keep you.[41]

And in his treatise on the lapst:

> They think they possess, when rather they are possessed; as slaves of their profit, and not lords with respect to their money.[42]

His perspective is seen well in his use in this section of "On Works and Alms" of I Tim.6:8:

> Therefore having food and clothing, let us therewith be content.[43]

Lactantius describes this carefree attitude as it frees one from the bondage of money in his,"Divine Institutes" by saying, "He who is rich toward God can never be poor. If you esteem justice so highly, lay aside the burdens which press you, and follow; free yourselves from fetters and chains, that you may come to God without any impediment."[44]

The early church was encouraged to be content. They should not need alot of belongings surrounding them in order to live. Christ is all one needs. All else comes under the heading of unnecessary superfluity.

To the early church fathers, though, the "stripping" of superfluous wealth was not merely a freeing from bondage. It was an exchange. The Christian handed over his beggarly

earthly riches, and in exchange received the true heavenly riches. Clement of Alexandria, in a chapter of his "Instructor" titled "The Christian Alone is Rich" has these things to say, "He who has sold his goods and has given them to the poor finds the imperishable treasure... and he is truely rich with the greatest of all riches," and again,"it is not he who has and keeps, but he who gives away, that is rich; and it is giving away, not possession, which renders a man happy," and again, "For righteousness is true riches and the Word is more valuable than all treasure, not accrueing from cattle and fields, but given by God- riches which cannot be taken away."[45] In his "Who is th Rich Man", Clement makes the claim that,"the greatest and chiefest point of the instructions which relate to life must be implanted in the soul from the beginning- to know the eternal God, the giver of what is eternal, and by knowledge and comprehension to possess God, who is first and highest and one and good."[47] In addition, Clement, in this essay pens a beautiful eulogy on the Savior, his glory, his love, and man's responce.[47]

Tertullian, in his essay "On Patience" exhorts Christians toward the exchange of riches by encouraging them not to lay down their soul for the sake of money, but to lay down their money for their soul.[48] Cyprian, as well expresses this exchange motif in his works. Making reference to Revelation 3:17,18, Cyprian encourages Christians to, "buy for yourself gold tried by fire, that you may be pure gold." and later (with a little more eschatological flavour)to,"give to Christ earthly garments that we may receive the heavenly rainment; let us give food and drink of this world, that we come with Abraham,and Issac, and Jacob to the heavenly banquet."[49]

These few examples make it obvious that the early church felt that in Christ they possessed a treasure of immesurable worth. To them, Christ's kingdom was truely the "pearl of great price" which they would sell all they had to possess. The supreme value of Christ was quite clear in their writings. It was clear in their eschatology, it was clear in their contentment, and it was clear in their exchange.

In considering the four major motifs presented in this paper it is certain that this last motif, that of the preëminent value of Christ , whether seen in eschatology, detachment, a carefree attitude toward wealth, or whether in their focus on the "true riches",is the central motif and gives meaning to all the other motifs. Without a view of the supreme worth and goodness of Christ, "Good Works" become mere religious activities. Without a view of the value of God who is both Savior and Judge, the motif of Judgement/Salvation-earning becomes one of pagan terror. And most obviously, without a view of the eternal worth of Christ, the arguments concerning the dangers of wealth become nearly nonsensical. The early church turned their eyes on Jesus. As a result, the things of earth grew strangly dim. Cyprian sums up the matter nicely in one of his epistles:

> Hence, then, the only one peaceful and trustworthy tranquility, the one solid firm and constant security is this, for man to withdraw from these eddies of the distracting world, that anchored on the ground of the harbour of salvation, to lift his eyes from earth to heaven; and having been admitted to the gift of God, and already very near to his God in mind, he may boast, that whatever in human affairs others esteem lofty and grand, lies altogether beneath his consciousness. He who is actually greater than the world can crave nothing, can desire nothing from the world. How stable, how free from all shocks is that safeguard; how heavenly the protection and its perennial blessings,- to be loosed from the snares of this entangling world, and to be purged from earthly dregs, and fitted for the life of eternal immortality![50]

FOOTNOTES

1. Acts 2: 44,45 (Revised Standard Version). Henceforth all Biblical quotations will be placed in the text in parentheses, denoting book, chapter, and verse.
2. Igino Giordani, The Social Message of the Early Church, trans. Alba I. Zizzamia (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1977), p.254.
3. Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, vol. 29 of The Fathers of the Church, ed. Roy Joseph Deferarri (n.y.:Fathers of the Church Inc., 1955), p.82.
4. Adolph Harnack, The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries, vol. 19 of The Theological Translation Library, ed. James Moffatt (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1908),p.151.
5. see especially Hans Küng, The Church (New York:Image Books,1976) pp.60-113,147-169; Howard Snyder, The Problem of Wineskins (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1975), pp. 101-112; Harnack, pp. 240-265.
6. see also Martin Hengel, Property and Riches in the Early Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), pp.19,20, who links these "Good Works" with a rabbinic tradition of "works of love".
7. J.I. Packer,"Good",in The New Bible Dictionary, ed. J.D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1962),p.483.
8. Polycarp,"The Epistle to the Phillipians" in The Ante-Nicene Fathers, ed. Alexander Roberts (Buffalo: The Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), vol.1,p.34.
9. Hermas, "The Shepherd" in Ante-Nicene, vol.2,p.20.
10. Clement of Alexandria,"The Instructor" in Ante-Nicene, vol.2,p.280.
11. Lactantius,"The Divine Institutes" in Ante-Nicene , vol.7, p.176.
12. Hermas, p. 16.
13. Cyprian,"The Epistles" in Ante-Nicene,vol.5,p.355.
14. "The Homily Ascribed to Clement" in Ante-Nicene, vol.7,p.522.
15. Hermas,p.16.

16. Clement of Alexandria,"Who is the Rich Man that Shall be Saved, in Ante-Nicene, vol.2,p.602.
17. Clement of Alexandria,"The Hypotyposes" in Ante-Nicene, vol.2,p.578.
18. Cyprian, Treatise 8,"On Works and Alms" in Ante-Nicene, vol.5,p.482.
19. Commodianus,"Instructions of Commodianus" in Ante-Nicene, vol.4,pp.208,209.
20. Louis Berkhof, The History of Christian Doctrines (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975), pp.204,205.
21. Hermas, p.32.
22. Hengel, p. 75.
23. Cyprian,"On Alms",p.476.
24. Ibid.,p.477.
25. Ibid.,p.478.
26. Hengel,pp.9,48.
27. Commodianus,p.209.
28. Cyprian,"Epistles",p.279. (c.f. also "On Alms"p.479.)
29. Giordani, p.278.
30. Archelaus,"The Disputation with Manes" in Ante-Nicene, vol.6,p.217.
31. "The Clementine Homilies" in Ante-Nicene, vol.8,p.311.
32. Clement of Alexandria,"Rich Man",p.594.
33. Ibid.,p.595.
34. Ibid.,p.596.
35. Ibid.,p.598.
36. Ibid.,p.599.
37. Hengel, p.41. (c.f. also pp.39,40.)
38. "Clementine Homilies",p.311.
39. Polycarp, p.34.
40. Minucius Felix,"The Octavius of Minucius Felix" in Ante-Nicene, vol.4,p.195.
41. Cyprian,"On Alms", p.479.
42. Cyprian,"On the Lapst", p. 440.
43. Cyprian,"On Alms", p.479.
44. Lactantius, p.178.

45. Clement of Alexandria,"The Instructor", p. 280.
46. Clement of Alexandria,"Rich Man", p.593.
47. Ibid., p.599.
48. Tertullian,"Of Patience",in Ante-Nicene, vol.3,p.712.
49. Cyprian,"On Alms", pp.480,483.
50. Cyprian,"The Epistles", p.279.

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