



# DOING BUSINESS FOR GOD<sup>\*</sup>

**GUY L. MORRILL**

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Stewardship. The answer is Stewardship, according to the Rev. Guy Louis Morrill, which is what sets Kingdom business apart from secular business, and gives eternal meaning to the purpose of commerce as he defines business as a “divine ordinance and...a holy thing to be conducted in accordance with the divine will.” This perspective transcends time, conquers shifting ideologies, and overcomes tides of trials such as cycles of natural and man-made calamities. With the horrors of the global pandemic not yet fully visible in the rearview mirror and the sobering alarms of secularism roaring across horizons, we feel the timeless message of the Rev. Morrill in *You & Yours* (Fleming H. Revell, 1922) would offer a clear reminder to marketplace Christians as to the purpose of why they are chosen to be Christ’s ambassadors in this realm of culture and time of human existence. This is also a great anchoring message for this CBR issue as we explore the direction of commerce in the “(New?) Kingdom Economy,” as Rev. Morrill did a centennial ago, when it defined the meaning of service in the employ of the Most High God.

<sup>\*</sup> Adapted from “Study III: Doing Business for God” in *You and Yours* by Guy L. Morrill (Fleming H. Revell, 1922). This work is in the public domain in the United States of America, and possibly other nations. Within the United States, readers and adapters may freely copy and distribute this work, as no entity (individual or corporate) has a copyright on the body of the work. The current adaptation is from book accessed on 5/24/2021 at: [https://www.google.com/books/edition/You\\_and\\_Yours/cBOZAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv](https://www.google.com/books/edition/You_and_Yours/cBOZAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv).

**W**e need a Christian theory of business that will relate business to the eternities. To get the world out of bed and dress it and feed it is too much like a mother's job not to have the right to be deemed a holy service. We Christians, believing that God is the Creator of the earth and of us who live upon the earth for a time and knowing the absolute necessity of what we call business for the sustenance of the human race, ought to believe and know that business is a divine ordinance and therefore it is a holy thing to be conducted in accordance with the divine will; that rightly conducted, it is a true service of God. The conduct of business constitutes that greater part of our moral life.

It is in the handling of things that we have our largest, is it an exaggeration to say our only, opportunity to develop our moral nature. In ordaining this great system of business God gives us the means to be true and just, honest and faithful toward Himself and towards one another. Without the handling and disposal of things in business relations there could be no development of the Christian virtues of truth, goodwill, integrity, justice, goodness, generosity, faithfulness and the other traits of character struck out by human intercourse. The business man if he would seek the Kingdom of God must seek and find it in the world of business. To the unrighteous man, Wall Street is indeed the Kingdom of Mammon, but to the righteous man, Wall Street is just as much the Kingdom of Heaven as Trinity Church at the head of Wall Street is; and he who cannot find the Kingdom of God in the street cannot find it in the Church.

We are most like God not when we are enthralled with holy meditation and engaged in passionate prayer; we are nearest to God and most like Him when we as workers together with Him are producing. God is Creator and every true child of His must be a creative personality engaged in producing in business. Every man, to be like God, must be a producer. It is in the world of things, in business, that man finds his chief opportunity to express this creative ability, this godlikeness. In their offices, their shops, their factories, as men work with material things, it is not only things they produce but life, in

themselves and in others.

Manhood is made both in the process of creating things and in the use of the things created. God uses things in their acquisition and their accumulation and their distribution as sharp tool to fashion the lives of men. The workshop of the world's business where men spend so many of their working hours, is the place in which God does most of His building of human character. The spirit of God was no more potently present in the carpenter shop at Nazareth where our Lord increased day by day at His work-bench, "in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man" than is the Spirit yearning to be in the world of business today. He is ready to permeate the whole life of business, the making and using of money, with a holy power which will transfigure the now repugnant muck of greed and selfishness and deceit and dishonesty into the white flower of manhood living in conscious partnership with God.

**Business is a divine ordinance and therefore it is a holy thing to be conducted in accordance with the divine will; that rightly conducted, it is a true service of God.**

The acceptance of the principles of stewardship, by which man would realize that in a blessed partnership they are co-workers with God, would enable Christian men to break the chrysalis of the imprisoned character-building capacities of busi-

ness and set them free in full-winged power to help build the Kingdom of God. ...Stewardship practice will cultivate the consciousness of the divinity of one's work. Things as they are must be converted into things as they ought to be; and this can be done only as we each begin to do our business, whatever it may be, for God and count it work for the Kingdom.

## ▶ HOLY SERVICE WITHOUT SPECIAL ORDINATION

**T**he making of the world of business a holy service for God involves the recognition by each worker that he has a special mission to perform even if he has no special ordination. The laying on of hands of ordination upon the head of

the man dedicating his life to the ministry of the preached word, does not give him a more special mission than the man who in solemn performance of his daily work seeks to serve God and build the Kingdom. One man preaches God's message by his words, the other by his works. The calling to the one ministry is not more divine than to the other. All work done for God becomes a holy ministry by which God is communicated to the world and the world led up to God.

Isn't this what Jesus said to the woman of Samaria? "Ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem worship the Father... The hour cometh and now is when true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." Not alone in some holy spot nor in some special liturgy, but in every place of work and trade, the Father desires every man to recognize his labor as a holy calling if done in spirit and in truth and the method in which God, who is a Spirit, is to be worshipped. So that the blacksmith swinging his hammer at his anvil will be ministering at an altar of God just as much as the acolyte swinging his censer before the altar in the cathedral.

It wrenches all our thinking to consider all work as service, holy as the specially ordained priesthood of God. One may ask, if all is holy, why should there be any setting apart to the Gospel ministry by special ordination? The setting apart of the priest by special ordination is but a reminder that all life is a holy service. For a time in man's kindergarten days God set lives, by special ceremony, apart to His service that men might come to know that every life was His and should be devoted to His service. So did He set apart one day in seven as His day not to indicate that the other six were not His days, but to keep in men's minds the facts that all time was God's and every day was His day and if the one special day - God's day - and the specially ordained man - God's man - were given a particular sanctity, their holiness was intended to make the more evident that to God belongs all time and all lives and that every day and every man's calling were holy. The Sabbath and the priesthood are but symbols of God's rights in all time and all life. They in no way warrant the dividing of life into "holy" and "not holy" sections. No man's calling in God is unspiritual, for every man is the servant of the Most

High. When men begin to run their lathes, use hammers and saws and plow their fields and harvest their crops, keep their ledgers and sell their goods for God, men's work will become the holy thing God intended it to be. There is a similar import in the separated part of our possessions, the portion we set aside as God's for giving. This setting aside as God's part of our possessions does not mean that the separated portion - the tithe, if that be the amount of our separated portion - is God's and the remainder of our possessions belongs to us. God's portion is but the reminder that God is the owner of all, and every particle of our possessions must be used for Him.

The teaching of the fact of stewardship will help create the consciousness in every man of his special mission in the particular work to which he is called. Then shall the work of men be as a priestly service and trade become a holy vocation.

## ► SECULAR VERSUS SACRED

Christ greatly blurred and even obliterated the boundary line between the so-called secular and sacred segments of life. All life became sacred in His thought and teaching. He taught in the synagogues and He went about doing good, healing the sick and cleansing the lepers. There is not the slightest intimation that He counted the one more religious and sacred than the other. The Prophet of God was not engaged in sacred work when He proclaimed the gospel of the Kingdom and in secular work when with wondrous gentleness He

**All work of every sort offered to God, without respect to what it might be in itself, was deemed by Christ as sharing in some important way in the divine plan.**

became the Friend of the Needy by the way. To Jesus one was as sacred as the other and both equally were work for God. It is sometimes said that Jesus healed the sick so that thereby He would get attention to His real mission, which was preaching the Gospel. This is wholly mis-representing Jesus. He healed the sick with no ulterior motive. This ministry of helping people to Him was service for God as really sacred as the work of preaching. All work of every sort offered to God, without respect to what it might be in itself, was deemed by

Christ as sharing in some important way in the divine plan. While the tithing of mint, anise and cummin was most proper and ought to be done, Jesus did not want men to deem this prescribed religious act of tithing as more sacred than the carrying on of one's business with one's fellows in a just manner and in love for God. This business is to be counted holy also.

The whole world is to be one great place of vision wherein God is to be seen sanctifying all life and wherein the now so-called secular business and trades, the work of the carpenter and painter, the work of the printer and the salesman, the work of the clerk and the politician, the work of the farmers and the day-laborers, shall be irradiated with a divine glory. Life in that hour shall be deemed the glad task of God's children fulfilling the Father's purposes of love.

## ▶ BUSINESS AS SERVICE

The service of Dorcas (Acts 9:36-42) is generally called charity. The English word "charity" is a transliteration of a Greek word meaning "love." Charity is love seeking to minister to a need. It has in our modern thought a much more restricted meaning. Charity is almsgiving, liberality to the poor. But the idea of service in the word charity, a service growing out of love, is the basic idea of the Christian life. This is what Christians are for, to serve in love, to help the heavenly

Father care for mankind, whom He loves. And this concept of charity should be at the heart of all business. Business in the mind of God is a charity, a service growing out of love.

Sometimes businessmen, irritated by the increasing restrictions imposed upon their business, blurt out the question, "Do you think we're in business for charity?" Of course they mean by this question to assert that they are not. But the fact is if they are Christian stewards they are in business for just that purpose. They are in business for charity, for the service of humanity in love. Why should not

every mill and clothing factory and tailoring establishment be conducted as a gigantic organized "charity" – in the sense of being a service of "love" for all mankind, and carried on in the same spirit in which Dorcas, knowing the need of the widows, lived to provide them with garments to keep them warm. The world must be clothed and kept warm. Must this need of men be selfishly exploited? Or can this need be seen as a calling to service for God? Why may not the clothing business be conceived as a service of charity – love – for humanity? Can it be fairly conceived in any other terms from the Christian viewpoint?

And in the same way, if I were a farmer, what a holy calling mine would be? I must believe that God sets me the task of feeding a hungry world. Little children will open their mouths and by my plough and cultivator I will provide the bread to fill them. It would be my God-given job as a farmer to help God answer the world's prayer. "Give us this day our daily bread" (Mt. 6:11). It would be easy for me to believe that Christ was speaking of my work when he said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also and greater works than these shall he do" (Jn. 14:12). For while Christ fed His thousands in the miracle by the sea, I feed my tens of thousands by my work as a farmer.

And the carpenter must think of his work of providing homes not merely nor chiefly as an opportunity to profit by the needs of men. As a partner with the Carpenter of Nazareth he must undertake his work and do it with the consciousness of performing a God-given service.

Stewardship requires that we think of business as a service. We are not in business as Christian stewards to make money in the first instance, but to offer just such a charity, just such a service of love to mankind in God's name, as Dorcas offered to her needy widows. Some men say you cannot mix sentiment with business, but Christ asks: Where else you can have any sentiment? That's the damnable fact about our paganzed economic life. Love and sentiment and brotherhood and generous service have been squeezed out between the upper

**Stewardship requires that we think of business as a service. We are not in business as Christian stewards to make money in the first instance, but to offer just such a charity, just such a service of love to mankind in God's name.**



and nether millstones of “my own” and “profits.” It is time now for the Church to send Christians out into business to put charity – love – back into it, by the practice of the principles of Christian stewardship. Jesus must have been thinking of this hour when He prayed for His own, saying, “Father, I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from evil. As thou hast sent me into the world even so have I sent them into the world” (Jn. 17:15). The “world” today is a world of things, business, money making and into this world the Christian steward is sent of Christ with a very special responsibility. He is to teach men that business is a divine mission – a service – a charity – to be executed for the glory of God and the good of mankind.

This is no mere Utopian dream that cannot stand the racket of real business conditions. Business can be made a genuine service and yet let those live by it who offer the service. Stewardship does not demand that a man cease making profits. It does demand, however, that a Christian man shall put service first and let profits follow. A Christian steward has a divine right to live by his business. “The laborer is worthy of his hire” (Lk. 10:7). But while the Christian steward has a divine right to live by his business, he has no right, if he is an employer of labor, to strain out the utmost farthing by oppressing his employees and profiteering on the public. And the worker, the wage-earner, must count his job as a service for God. He cannot be a good steward and give as little as he can for what he receives. His job is not for his boss, but for humanity and for God. And “scaped” work, or any scheme for underproduction, or any sabotage that wastes the wealth of the world, is contrary to the stewardship ideal. Business under the stewardship regime will be a service to provide contentment and life to both the server and the served. ... The Church must teach men to be stewards for stewardship will take the rule of gold out of business and put in its place the Golden Rule.

**Stewardship is the counting of life as glorious partnership of love and service with God. Then every job is a divine mission and there can be no shirking, no selfish purpose and no dishonesty.**

## ▶ DIVERSITIES OF GIFTS BUT ONE SPIRIT

There is no manner of service, however humble, but may share in the ministry of the Kingdom. Paul (in 1 Corinthians 12:14-31) describes the relationship which exists between all sorts and conditions of men, between all classes of whatever description, between all sorts of jobs in man’s common life. We all are workers in the body politic, and all are dependent upon and bound up in the life of the others. No one can prosper at the expense of others. If any one of them

suffers, all the others are in pain. We are many members and being many are one body. Every man’s work is needed, and if not done will be missed. There may be diversities of operations but it is “the same God which worketh in all.” “There are diversities of administration but the same Lord.”

“There are diversities of

gifts but the same spirit ordering every man severally as he will.”

Every man has the right to stand in his own place unabashed with his own gift ready to serve where and how God wills and feeling that he has a holy mandate for his work, whatever that work may be. It is truly his work – God’s assigned task – and as a good steward he must faithfully do his appointed work. And if it is left undone or done imperfectly there is a note missing from life’s symphony. Of course many men are not doing the task God appointed for them. They are doing their own will and seeking their own ends. It is as Christian stewards that men step into the divine program and sense their work also as divine.

This stewardship recognition of the right of each gift to make its own distinctive contribution to the life of man will vacate the artificial caste system now prevailing, that puts one man’s work above or below that of another. The distinction between “wages” and “salary” will not indicate a distinction in esteem. The “office” and the “shop” will not be two areas of life’s service with diverse degree of respectability

and honor. Stewardship will make all men workers together with God. It will make every man's work, when honestly and faithfully done, equally worth in the eyes of God from whom come diversities of gifts but the one spirit uniting all men in one holy ministry of love. No task will be scorned as menial for it will have its own place of recognized worth and is entitled to a full meed of praise.

Stewardship will make every man's work something more than an undesired and compulsory duty. Our work is not merely something which must be done. It is not only a mandate, it is a mission. If work were nothing more than a kind of task-master it would be somewhat irksome and unwelcome. We take medicine when we are ill, not because we enjoy it, but because we know it is for our physical welfare. The aim conquers the aversion to the means. Work must be something more than a corrective, if it is to fulfill its mission. It is, in fact, the means of our liberation. It makes us free human beings.

The sense of our stewardship, our partnership with God in our work, lifts our tasks to the only level upon which alone they are tolerable or worthwhile. When we see the place our work holds to the whole kingdom task, then it takes on a new dignity. ... Stewardship is the counting of life as glorious partnership of love and service with God. Then every job is a divine mission and there can be no shirking, no selfish purpose and no dishonesty.

Today is a new hour for good stewards. Christians who will administer all they have, their life, their time, their money and their job for the sake of the Kingdom. The employer will seek the good of all for whom he is responsible. The employee will do an honest day's work for his wage. Buyer and seller, producer and distributor, will have first in mind God's ownership and their stewardship and then exercise their gifts with zeal and diligence, remembering it is one spirit in them all.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**THE REV. GUY LOUIS MORRILL** (1874-1966) was a minister of the Presbyterian Church and served in the Church's Stewardship Department and the Department of Missionary Education of the Church's New Era Movement. He is the author of several books, including *Life as a Stewardship* (Westminster Press, 1924), *Laughing Stewardship Through* (Richard Smith, 1931), and *Stewardship Stories* (Harper & Brothers, 1941), in addition to *You & Yours* (Fleming H. Revell, 1922).

