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Roland Grumm

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SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES OF STEWARDSHIP  
ACCORDING TO THE PARABLES

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Short Title

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF STEWARDSHIP

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of New Testament Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

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by

Richard H. Cross

June 1957

Approved by:

Victor Boutwell  
1957

Richard H. Cross

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## CHAPTER I

### BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

The idea of stewardship, according to the Scriptures, is a manner of explaining the Christian life--a life of service using the abilities, opportunities, and means which God has given to His child for work in His kingdom. The entire Bible overflows with principles and directives concerning stewardship. But especially do we find that the New Testament dwells on such ideas. For example, we see Jesus wandering through Palestine instructing the following crowds in stewardship living (Lk. 12:42; 16:1-8). The Apostle Paul speaks of stewards in a special sense, with respect to the office of the ministry (1 Cor. 4:1,2; Titus 1:7), as also does Peter (1 Peter 4:10).

We might also trace the New Testament usage of the word servant. Often it is used in like manner as steward. Matthew records Jesus explaining the slave-life to those who accompanied him (Matt. 20:27; 24:45; 25:23). It is this very term that the Apostles liked to use to characterize themselves in relation to their Savior (Rom. 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1).

And again, the New Testament shows the elements of this stewardship life by a description of discipleship. The Gospels are filled with explanations. The most familiar are probably those in John: "If ye continue in my word, then are

ye my disciples indeed" (8:3); or, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (15:8).

In speaking of stewardship, it must not be forgotten that Paul has given us a beautiful guide to Christian giving in the eighth and ninth chapters of Second Corinthians. In a practical manner the Apostle instructs these early Christians, and through them also us, in the basic principles and motives of the grace of giving. A study in these two chapters is quite rewarding.<sup>1</sup>

So it is quite evident that the New Testament considers the elements of stewardship as very important. As part of His message while on earth Jesus emphasized this necessary aspect of the life of the sons of light. His warnings against the dangers of materialism rang out again and again, both to the rich (Mk. 10:17-25) and to the poor (Matt. 6:19-24; Lk. 12:22-34). The covetousness of the Pharisees who made much of their almsgiving was condemned (Matt. 6:1-4); while, on the other hand, our Savior praises the widow as she gave her two mites (Lk. 21:1-4) and points out the true motive for any stewardship, as in the case of the sinful woman who, having her sins forgiven, anointed the feet of Jesus (Lk. 7:36-50).

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<sup>1</sup>For an example of such a study see Roland E. Grumm, "The Principles of Christian Giving According to Second Corinthians Eight and Nine" (Unpublished Bachelor's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1955).

Probably the most interesting instances of stewardship teaching in the New Testament are those preserved for us in the parables. Parables were utilized by our Lord quite frequently during His earthly ministry. From the literary point of view we are very thankful to the Synoptic Evangelists for handing down to us these precious stories. Even though the word-pictures paint scenes of centuries ago, it is not hard even today to see what teaching Jesus was attempting to convey. The literary beauty of Christ's parables so struck one commentator that he wrote:

The literary perfection of the parables belongs to Jesus and appears in the parables in all the Gospels. . . . They were spoken in the Aramaic, and yet their originality is attested in the Greek translation and even in the English by their freshness, beauty, and moral earnestness. They possessed a matchless charm for the people who heard them for the first time as they fell from the lips of the Master Story-teller of the ages. For sheer witchery of words and grip upon the mind and heart, the short stories of Jesus stand alone.<sup>2</sup>

Our Savior, however, was doubtlessly not primarily interested in literary art. His purpose was to reach the people with a message. Parables were a means to this end. They were a device that caught the attention of the listener and drove the lesson home. He was speaking about things and situations that they knew about, that they were concerned with every day. Often they could not miss the significance of a

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<sup>2</sup>A. T. Robertson, Luke The Historian in the Light of Research (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), p. 143.



story, for the Lord was describing the very circumstance in which they found themselves. And when something puzzling arose, the parable at times concealed the point, so that His disciples would be drawn to ask questions (Lk. 8:9).

But our Savior gives us another reason why He spoke so frequently in parables:

And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. . . . Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. . . . For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them (Matt. 13:10,11,13, 15).

The person who has a taste for music or art or literature enjoys the work of masters in those fields. Not only does he enjoy them, but he finds there many things which the composer, artist or writer wished to convey, many of which the normal observer will miss. Especially, will a person who has a prejudice against a certain form of art or the artist find it difficult to interpret the picture's meaning.<sup>3</sup> So it was with Jesus. Many had prejudiced themselves against Him because of His message. Thus Jesus directed his words to the believers in picture language, concealing the thought

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<sup>3</sup>G. H. Lang, The Parabolic Teaching of Scripture (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1955), p. 58.

to his enemies, while instructing his disciples in the art of interpreting His stories.

The art of interpreting our Lord's parables must needs be guided by certain principles, if we wish to understand their message clearly. To understand a parable properly, first, the context must be noted in order to see the precise light in which the story appears. This will largely determine the meaning which the parable is to convey. Secondly, the background of the illustration ought to be considered. The twentieth century man is not always aware of the full meaning of Christ's stories because he is ignorant of Jewish life, from which they are taken. Thirdly, each parable teaches one great truth, and this is the first thing to look for. Often this one truth is the only thing we need to learn. Yet, Jesus did sometimes make use of the details of His stories. So we may also, but with caution. Because many of the early commentators went to excess in this matter, Chrysostom says the details should be ignored altogether.<sup>4</sup> In general these few rules will guide us in this study of stewardship parables.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>P. Schaff, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (First Series; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1888), X, 394.

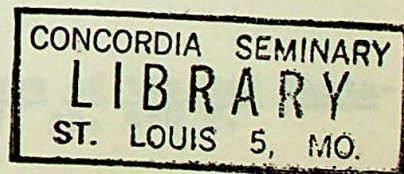
<sup>5</sup>There are some commentators, like C. H. Dodd, who look at Scripture purely as a historical document, subject to human error, and in need of a scholar's theory of correction. Thus Dodd can say that many of the applications which the Evangelists record are altogether different than those the Lord meant when He told them. C. H. Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom (London: Nisbet and Co., Ltd., 1950), pp. 29, 31 f.

After these preliminary remarks we shall now begin our study of a number of parables which teach stewardship principles. It is not our intention to make an exhaustive investigation of the stewardship elements of every parable in the Synoptics. Rather we shall examine eight parables and point out some of the lessons they would convey to the believing Christian. These eight are: 1) The Wise and Wicked Servant (Matt. 24:45-51; Lk. 12:41-48); 2) The Talents (Matt. 25:14-30); 3) The Pounds (Lk. 19:11-27); 4) The Rich Fool (Lk. 12:13-21); 5) The Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31); 6) The Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37); 7) The Building of a Tower and the Waging of a War (Lk. 14:28-33); 8) The Unjust Steward (Lk. 16:1-13).

These parables will be treated in the following manner. The stewardship thoughts contained in these stories will be gathered under five major headings. The second chapter will discuss the first of these, man's responsibility to God as a steward. This idea is stressed chiefly in the first three parables. Chapter Three will attempt to describe man's misuse of this responsibility, as is shown in the first five parables. Chapter Four will present the parable of the Good Samaritan. This story emphasizes that stewardship is based on motives of love. A practical aspect is brought up in Chapter Five. The last two parables seem to point out the necessity of planning for stewardship living. Finally, the seriousness of such a life is expressed in those parables

that picture this stewardship in view of the last times and judgment.

When Jesus narrated these parables, He intended that they not only be interesting stories, but that the message they conveyed should reach the hearts of the listeners to bring about action. In other words, our Savior meant His parables to have practical applications and practical results. He wanted to see His disciples begin acting as true stewards right then. So this study will not be just for the exercise of exegetical methods, but for the purpose of finding a message for today and how it will apply to living as a steward in this present day and age.



## CHAPTER II

### A STEWARD'S RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD

In the consideration of the first parable, that of the Wise and Wicked Servant, we find in the Lukan account the first mention in the New Testament of the word steward--  
*οἰκονόμος*. Here (Lk. 12:42) and in the parable of the Unjust Steward (Lk. 16:1-8) are the only places in the Gospels that we find the word or its relative *οἰκονομία*. The verb is found once in the New Testament, in Lk. 16:2. The word pictures the position of a manager or administer of a household or household affairs. He might be a slave or freed-man.<sup>1</sup> Such was the position of Eleazer, who was Abraham's head-slave (Gen. 15:2; 24:2). Joseph had a similar position in Egypt in regard to Pharaoh's affairs (Gen. 41:40). We find *οἰκονόμος* used twice by Paul in this general sense, once in describing Erastus as the city treasurer (Rom. 16:23), and once in describing the position of a man who was a child's governor (Gal. 4:2). Paul and Peter quickly saw the usefulness of this word in describing the ministry as pastors placed by God in the position of administering grace. Three times *οἰκονόμος* refers to the ministry (1 Cor. 4:1,2; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 1:7). Five times we find *οἰκονομία* in this sense

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<sup>1</sup>J. H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Co., 1889), pp. 440 f.

(1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10; 3:2; Col. 1:25; 1 Tim. 1:4). This is the basic concept of stewardship in the parables as we encounter them. Even where the men are called servants, it is with the idea that as servants they have been given certain responsibility for administering their duties in their given sphere.

The correlative of this basic thought is the Scriptural teaching of the ownership of God. God in creation made the world and then man, saying to him, "let them have dominion . . ." (Gen. 1:26). Thus Jewish life was based on a theocracy. Their theory and practice was that God made all things and, therefore, He was owner and governor by right. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (Ps. 24: 1). But this guiding concept was not confined to the Old Testament, for Paul preached it and even surmised that the heathen in Athens would agree with him: "Neither is (He) worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17: 25). This primary stewardship fact, that God owns and governs all, is important in showing the steward's responsibility to God. The three parables to be discussed in this chapter will bring this out even clearer.

The consequence of the teaching that everything belongs to God is man's responsibility to the Owner for everything he is and has. Human existence is responsible existence. Actually, this is an essential feature of the fact that man

was made in the image of God. Because he is accountable to God his Creator, man has an existence above the animal level. This heightened sense of responsibility to God is shown in Luther's words: "for all which I owe it to Him to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him."<sup>2</sup>

The implications of such belief in our accountability to God can be seen at once. Being Children of God, what we are and have must be used for the Lord and His kingdom. This certainly means directly utilizing our talents and lives in Kingdom work. But this would also mean more. As Rolston<sup>3</sup> puts it:

But the lordship of Christ over our possessions does mean that every expenditure for ourselves must be considered in the light of the relation of this expenditure to the whole work of the Kingdom.

Thus it is evident that the concept with which we must operate, and which will be brought out in these parables also, broadens to cover the whole life of the believer. Kantonen puts it very well:

The bearing of the concepts of God's sovereignty and man's trusteeship and responsibility upon stewardship is obvious. They make stewardship a philosophy of life which determines not only religious activity in the narrow sense but also all life's orders: home, citizenship, business and industry, science, art and education. Physical health, mental capacities, time, opportunity, material possessions--all these must be

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<sup>2</sup>Martin Luther, "The Small Catechism," Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 543.

<sup>3</sup>Holmes Rolston, Stewardship in the New Testament Church (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1946), p. 61.

viewed as talents which God has entrusted to us according to His purpose. In this light our every-day work becomes a sacred vocation in which to serve God.<sup>4</sup>

It is this principle that the parables of the Wise and Wicked Servant, the Pounds, and the Talents express, each in a different manner and with different aspects.

The parable of the Wise and Wicked Servants is found both in Matthew (24:45-51) and in Luke (12:41-48). In both instances the parable is in an eschatological setting. Christ is sitting with his disciples, according to the Matthew account (24:3), on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. His disciples have just asked Him to tell them about the last days. This parable is a part of that discourse. In fact, just prior to His telling this story Christ said: "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (24:42). Luke places this parable among the discourses of Jesus as He is journeying to Jerusalem. Exactly where He was on this journey is difficult to say, possibly near Bethany (10:38). However, here in Luke also it is noted that Jesus prefaces the parable with these words: "Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not" (12:40).

The two accounts are quite similar, yet there are differences. Luke introduces it by recording that Peter had asked whether these parables concerning Christ's coming were

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<sup>4</sup>T. A. Kantonen, "The Scriptural and Theological Basis of Evangelism and Stewardship," The Lutheran Quarterly, III (August, 1951), 272-273.



just for them or for all. Matthew records no such question. The conclusions are also different. Matthew (24:51) concludes by describing the punishment of the wicked servant, a sentence with those who are weeping and gnashing their teeth. Luke omits this description (v.46), but concludes with two verses of explanation, in which degrees of punishment are mentioned.

In the body of the narratives, there are slight changes also, particularly in use of different words. Matthew introduces the faithful and wise man as a slave--δούλος, while Luke considers him a steward--οἰκονόμος. In describing the appointment to office Matthew uses the aorist--κατέστησεν-- and Luke the future--καταστήσει. The household, over which this man is placed and towards which he has responsibility, is an οἰκετεία for Matthew, but a θεραπεία for Luke, emphasizing that it was a household consisting in servants. The food which this man was to supply for the household is simple τροφή according to Matthew, but Luke pictures it with the rare word σιτομέτριον. In verse forty-eight of Matthew we note that he used the descriptive adjective evil for the second servant. And in the following verse it is recorded by him that the fellow-slaves--σύνδουλοι--were mistreated, while Luke differentiates between the men and women slaves--παῖδας καὶ τὰς παιδίσκας.<sup>5</sup> Further on, the action of the evil slave is told

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<sup>5</sup>J. H. Thayer, op. cit., p. 473.

us by Luke to be that of drunkenness--μεθύσκεσθαι. But according to Matthew his drunkenness was not just by himself, for he fell into this vice along with others like him--μετὰ τῶν μεθύοντων. Finally, it is noted at the end that in the punishment of this wicked servant his lot is appointed with the hypocrites (Matt. 24:51)--ὑποκριτῶν--and with the unbelievers (Lk. 12:46)--ἄπιστων.

Despite what might seem at first glance to be a multitude of differences, there is a striking similarity in the two accounts.<sup>6</sup> Bringing the differences together and comparing them allows us to have a fuller picture of the parable as Jesus told His disciples.

We can picture the disciples gathered about the Lord with their eyes glued to His person, their ears straining to catch every syllable, and their hearts and minds overwhelmed by the message they were hearing. The future was being opened to them; God's Son was explaining what they could expect! But the disciples not only were thrilled by what they heard, they were also a little confused. Was this readiness for the future advent that Jesus spoke of for all people, or just for His disciples? So Peter asked the question. And the Lord went on to explain whom He was exhorting to be watchful.

It is the servant, one entirely dependent upon his lord,

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<sup>6</sup>This striking identity, says Dodd, makes it easy to recognize the original "Q" form. C. H. Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom (London: Nisbet and Co., Ltd., 1950), p. 158.

who is faithful and wise that will receive the blessing. Such a man's faithfulness<sup>7</sup> and wisdom<sup>8</sup> is explained. For this servant has been given responsibility. He has been made a steward, a manager, who has the duty of caring for the household and all the slaves that make up this household,<sup>9</sup> to see that they are fed<sup>10</sup> and nourished. If this servant faithfully carries out his duties and wisely administers his lord's affairs, at the lord's return that steward is blessed. And his reward is greater responsibility, the administration of not only the household, but everything that belongs to the lord. This is the wise and faithful steward.

But not all are faithful and wise servants. There are also those who are wicked. These are such as having an evil heart and selfish motives find ways of satisfying their own

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Num. 12:7--Moses is described as faithful in the Lord's house; 1 Sam. 22:14--David is declared faithful in his service to Saul.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Gen. 41:39--Joseph is so described; Lk. 16:8--the unjust steward is also called wise or clever.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Gen. 45:16--Pharaoh and his servants (Θεραπειά) rejoice at Joseph's stewardship.

<sup>10</sup>σιτομέτριον--a rare word, but used in Egypt and Asia Minor. Found in the Ptolemaic period Pap. Flind. Petr. ii. xxxiii a: G. Adolf Deissmann, Bible Studies (Trans. by A. Grieve; Second Edition; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1909), p. 158. It is also found in an Opramoas inscription of 149 A.D. at Rhodiapolis in Lycia with the spelling σειτομέτριον: G. Adolf Deissmann, Light from the Ancient East (Trans. by L. Strachan; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1927), p. 104 n. 1. Cf. Gen. 47:12 where the verb is used to describe Joseph as nourishing his father and his household.

base desires. They are like the wicked servant who took advantage of the lord's delay<sup>11</sup> to beat the very men and women who only before were his equal. In addition he is guilty of gluttony together with his drunken friends.<sup>12</sup> All this is done because the servant does not think the lord is returning. And when the lord does return, he will catch the evil man unawares and punish him severely, cutting him in two,<sup>13</sup> thus assigning him to the place where unbelievers and hypocrites have been banished. Here there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

It is quite clear that our Savior meant the words of this parable for Peter and the Apostles in particular. It was they

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Eccl. 8:11--the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily; 2 Peter 3:3,4--scoffers use this delay of the Lord's coming to make fun of the believers.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Acts 2:15--the accusation against the Apostles on Pentecost.

<sup>13</sup>διχοτομήσει--the method of execution is the antique one of cutting the victim in two. Cf. Homer, *Od.* 18,339: A. T. Murray, *Homer: The Odyssey* (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1928), II, 220. Herodotus uses διστομήσει (ii 139.2; vii 39.5): H. R. Dietsch, *Herodoti: Historiarum Libri IX* (Lipsiae: B. G. Teubneri, 1899), I, 203. *Ibid.*, II, 160. Suetonius in his *Caligula* (xxvii) has: *multos honesti ordinis . . . medios serra dissecuit*: J. C. Rolfe, *Suetonius* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), I, 448. The word is found in Ex. 29:17 describing a ram cut to pieces. For this kind of punishment cf. David sawing and axing the Ammonites (2 Sam. 12:31; 1 Chron. 20:3); the angels cutting up the offending elders (Sussannah 59); the Damascenes guilty of so treating the pregnant women of Gilead (Amos 1:3--LXX: πρίζω); the saints so suffering (Heb. 11:37--πρίζω). Some would like to modify this word by equating it to the idea of separation: H. D. A. Major, et al., *The Mission and Message of Jesus* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1938), p. 410.

whom the Lord was training as stewards in the kingdom of God. By the use of this parable Jesus emphasized that His apostles were held accountable to their Master. For it was He who had placed them in their position; everything they had and would have come from Him. And now as stewards of the mysteries of God they would not only acknowledge that Christ was their Master, but they would work the work they were appointed for. For this stewardship is to be understood not primarily in terms of rule, but of service. On account of this we often hear Christ tell His disciples that they are servants and not rulers (Cf. Mk. 10:42-45; Matt. 23:11).

What our Savior said to the disciples then is quite easily applied to the ministers of today. However, this idea of stewardship in the Kingdom, in God's household, is not restricted to called ministers of Christ. The parable does not necessarily exclude a broader interpretation. For in a sense every believer is a called minister of Christ. And as such he has become a member of God's household. As Christ not only gave the Office of Keys to the disciples, but also to the Church, the responsibility of stewardship is also one of the Church. This means that each Christian must be alert to his Church's program, its work, its opportunities, so that his Church does the work it should. By implication this means, too, that his talents will be enlisted in nourishing the children of God and being concerned about his fellow slaves. The seriousness of this responsibility is obvious and will be discussed in

detail in a later chapter. But the responsibility of every Christian as a steward is brought out clearly in this parable.

In the Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14-30) we find again an emphasis on our responsibility to God in this matter of stewardship. Other points are found in this parable, but for our present purpose this is basic.

We find the parable among our Savior's sayings concerning the Last Things. The twenty-fifth chapter begins with the parable of the Ten Virgins, which is meant to teach continued watchfulness. Just prior to this parable are the words: "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." Christ is pointing out that His coming will be soon, so we must watch. But as we watch, it is not in idleness, but in faithful work.<sup>14</sup> Thus the parable of the Talents is to teach that lesson.

Christ teaches us here that the kingdom of heaven is like a business man, who, just before he leaves for a lengthy business trip, wants his business to keep going. So he calls his slaves and puts into their hands<sup>15</sup> the welfare of his

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<sup>14</sup>For similarity and difference to the parable of the Pound in Lk. 19:11-27 see Appendix A.

<sup>15</sup>Two interesting passages in Josephus show the use of this word παραδίδωμι. Aaron παραδίδωσι τὴν ἀρχιερατικὴν στολήν Ἐλεάζαρω (Antiq. 4,83); Pharaoh παραδίδωσι αὐτῷ τὴν οἰκονομίαν (Antiq. 2,89): S. A. Naber, Flavii Iosephi: Opera Omnia (Lipsiae: B. G. Teubneri, 1888), I, 217, 87.

business. He does this by handing to each of his servants an amount of money,<sup>16</sup> talents,<sup>17</sup> which are to be invested or used in some manner to gain an increase for the master. The business man did not distribute the money equally, but to the servant whom he judged to have the greater ability<sup>18</sup> he gave five talents; to another, who he estimated had less ability, he entrusted two talents; and to the slave who had the least gifts he gave one talent. To all his servants the master thus gave his capital that it might be invested.

As soon as the business man left on his trip, the servant with the five talents invested his money in order to gain more capital for his lord. By the faithful use of his abilities he gained<sup>19</sup> five more talents. The two-talent man also began to barter and he gained two more talents for his master. These men saw their position as stewards and so worked. But the man who received but one talent reacted differently to his charge.

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<sup>16</sup>It is suggested by Montefiore that the amount was not talents, but minae as in Luke--a not necessarily logical suggestion, at the same time doing violence to the text: C. G. Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1927), II, 319.

<sup>17</sup>A talent is a weight equal to 60 minae or 6000 drachmae. The most widely used was the Attic talent which was worth \$1180. H. T. Peck, Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities (New York: American Book Co., 1896), p. 1521.

<sup>18</sup>Similar phrases as the *κατὰ τὴν ἰσὺν δυνάμει* are found in Josephus (Antiq. 3,102; 2,108; 11,172): Naber, op. cit., I, 158, 159; III, 33.

<sup>19</sup>Similar phrases as the *ἐκέρδησεν ἅλλα πέντε* are found in Josephus (Wars 2,590; Antiq. 5,135): Naber, op. cit., V, 237; I, 292.

Instead of trading or investing his capital, he dug a hole<sup>20</sup> in the earth and there hid his lord's money<sup>21</sup> until he should return.

Finally, after quite a length of time, the man returned from his trip. The first thing he did was to bring his servants before him to see if they had been faithful in their charge.<sup>22</sup> The five-talent man approached the lord first, and bringing the five he had gained he boldly stepped forward knowing that he had fulfilled his stewardship. When the master heard this report, he immediately pronounced his praise<sup>23</sup> for the faithful<sup>24</sup> fulfillment of his responsibility. As a reward there is greater responsibility together with the enjoyment of partnership and festivities with the master. The two-talent servant also came before the master to make his report and he

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<sup>20</sup>Josephus (Wars 2,149) uses ἀνορύχθειν γῆν to describe this digging, while the text uses ἄρυξεν γῆν: Ibid., V, 166.

<sup>21</sup>Money was hidden in the earth when there was special need for safety, as for instance in war time: (Josephus, Wars vii 5.2) W. Whiston, The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., n.d.), p. 840.

<sup>22</sup>συναίρω λόγον is used in this manner in secular Greek. The Oxyrhynchus Papyri 113.27 f. (Second Century A.D.) has: εἶνα συναίρωμαι αὐτῷ λόγον --"that I may make a reckoning with him;" a letter of the Berlin collection, No. 775.18 f.: ἀχρηστὸν ἂν γένουμε ἐκὶ καὶ συναίρωμεν λόγον--"until I come there and we make a reckoning." Deissmann, Light from the Ancient East, p. 117.

<sup>23</sup>Cf. the εὐχε in Lk. 19:17. Josephus also uses this word (Antiq. 2,227), Naber, op. cit., I, 114.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. Josephus (Antiq. 17,32), Ibid., IV, 74.



too received words of praise and the same reward.

Then comes the one-talent man. He has dug up his talent which he had buried. Now he brings it to his master. But he does so with an accusation on his lips. This unfaithful slave addresses his master as a harsh and exacting<sup>25</sup> man. He says that the master expects returns where it is impossible to get any, like trying to thresh grain when it has not been sown, or expecting clean kernels of wheat before the chaff has been blown away.<sup>26</sup> He was fearful<sup>27</sup> that the master would expect too much of him, and instead of investing his talent as the lord had said, he had hidden<sup>28</sup> it in the earth. Now he gives back what was not his, but had been entrusted to him to use. But it had not been used!

The lord quickly shows this lazy servant his disobedience.

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<sup>25</sup> σκληρός -- used in Josephus (Antiq. 8, 217), Ibid., II, 215. Cf. Is. 19:4 -- a fierce king. Cf. also σκληροκαρδία -- Matt. 19:8 and Mk. 16:14. This last in the Septuagint corresponds with uncircumcision of heart (Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4) and rage or pride of heart (Sir. 16:10). The adjective -σιος corresponds to "crooked" (Prov. 17:20) and "stubborn" (Ezek. 3:7). This last is the ordinary meaning of σκληρός in the Septuagint (Cf. ρυέν, Heb. 3:8; 4:7 and Jude 15). In the N.T. it also denotes "fierce" (James 3:4) and "difficult" (Jn. 6:60) and probably "stern" or "harsh" in this passage.

<sup>26</sup> διασκορπίζειν -- here in the same sense in which the Septuagint renders πρῶς in Ezek. 5:2 -- scatter in the wind. This use refers to fanning the wheat to purge away the chaff. Cf. Matt. 3:12.

<sup>27</sup> φοβηθεῖς -- Cf. Josephus (Antiq. 8, 348; 1, 165), Ibid., II, 243; I, 34.

<sup>28</sup> ἐκρύφα -- Cf. Josephus (Antiq. 1, 342), Ibid., I, 69.

Knowing that his master was so exacting, it should have been a goad to work even the harder. Instead of just lying down on the job and completely neglecting his responsibility, he could have taken his money and put<sup>29</sup> it in the bank, where it at least would have drawn interest.<sup>30</sup> Then the master would have received<sup>31</sup> something of an investment, anyway. But just hiding the money was a complete disregard of the man's responsibility.

The master then pronounces the sentence. The talent

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<sup>29</sup>Josephus uses *καταβάλλειν* (Antiq. 8,217), Ibid., II, 215. He also uses *δανείζειν* (Antiq. 4,266) to indicate such lending as in a bank: Ibid., I, 253.

<sup>30</sup>The notion that money, being a dead thing, ought not to breed, augmented the prejudice of the ancients against interest. Aristotle condemns it as *παρα δένειν* (Pol. i 30.23; Eth. Nic. iv 1.40), H. Rackham, Aristotle: The Politics (London: Wm. Heinemann Ltd., 1932), p. 50; H. Rackham, Aristotle: The Nichomachean Ethics (London: Wm. Heinemann Ltd., 1934), p. 202. Cicero represents Cato as putting it on the level with murder (De Off. ii 25.89), Walter Miller, Cicero: De Officiis (London: Wm. Heinemann Ltd., 1928), p. 267. Cf. Deut. 23:19; Lev. 25:36,37; Ex. 22:25. Jewish law distinguished between "interest" and "increase" and entered into many intricate details on the subject (Babba Mesia iv,v), H. Danby, The Mishnah (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), pp. 353-357. Yet many Jewish bankers in Josephus' day engaged in lending money at high interest rates (Antiq. xviii 6.3), Whiston, op. cit., p. 542. The Greek rate of interest was not restricted by law. At the time of Demosthenes it was from 12 to 18%. Roman interest was not restricted until the laws of the Twelve Tables (450 B.C.) at 8½%. But this was not effective because the laws referred only to Roman citizens. By the first half of the first century by common agreement a monthly rate of 1% (equal to annual 12%) was adopted. Peck, op. cit., p. 665.

<sup>31</sup>*ἐκομισάμην*. Cf. Josephus (Wars 3,374; 5,356; Antiq. 12,30); Naber, op. cit., V, 292; VI, 46; III, 70.

that this neglectful servant was given is to be taken from him and given to the man who has ten. For it is a principle in the kingdom that he who is faithful in his labors will be rewarded abundantly and given more and greater opportunities of service; while the man who wastes his gifts and his opportunities loses the value of what he has and so even that which he began with is taken from him. As a final sentence, the useless, unprofitable<sup>32</sup> servant is cast into outer darkness, the place of unbelievers, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

One cannot miss the lesson in this parable, that in stewardship there is a responsibility to God. In the very first verse it records the calling of the slaves by the master. These servants belonged to him. In like manner we are the slaves of Christ. We belong to Him in every sense of the word. For He purchased us and called us.

The lesson of responsibility is stressed in the picture of the master turning over his wealth and possessions to his slaves. To do this meant that he was honoring his servants with a great trust, which involved a corresponding responsibility. The implication is very strong that these servants were not entitled to such gifts as were given them, but the master's plans necessitated this procedure. The two faith-

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<sup>32</sup> *ἀχρεῖον* is also used by Josephus (Antiq. 13,240).  
Ibid., III, 187.

ful servants acknowledged this very fact when they rendered an account of their work. They prefaced their report with "Lord, thou deliveredst unto me . . . ." The credit is the Lord's. Without this gift the slaves could have accomplished nothing.

In like manner Christ offers His believers<sup>33</sup> opportunities and means whereby they are to labor and invest their time and talents in the Lord's affairs. The true steward, however, keeps emphasizing to himself that the situation he is in comes from his Master. The Lord is looking for an investment, for He has given the capital to invest, and consequently there is a serious responsibility to gain two or five talents more.

Whether we can identify the talents, or even ought to try, is a difficult thing to say. Chrysostom<sup>34</sup> thought they referred to each person's ability. However, this could hardly be the meaning since it is recorded that the master gave the talents "to every man according to his several ability." Also, the talents probably could not be interpreted as referring to God's gift to us of the Word and the Sacraments; for these are not allotted to Christians in different

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<sup>33</sup>Some feel the servants could not refer to Christians, but to Jews. A. H. McNeile, The Gospel According to St. Matthew (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1949), p. 363.

<sup>34</sup>The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 78. P. Schaff, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (First Series; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1888), X, 472.

measures.<sup>35</sup> There are also some who would think of the gift of the master as all spiritual gifts which Christ wishes us to use here on earth.<sup>36</sup> This could be easily understood, for such gifts come to us in varying portions (1 Cor. 12). However, it is probably better to understand this thing which the Lord has entrusted to us according to our ability as all gifts, over and above natural talents, by which man can advance the interests of the kingdom: position, opportunities, wealth, and all spiritual gifts.<sup>37</sup>

It consists of all the material, physical and spiritual endowments and the opportunities for service God has given to us. We must not here think merely of the wheat and corn of the farmer, the pay envelope of the mechanic, and the monthly check of the professional man, but also the eloquence of the political speaker and legal pleader, the poetic abilities of the literary artist, the picture of the painter, the acute reasoning of the logical thinker, the knowledge and skill of the physician, the Biblical understanding of teachers and pupils in Christian day-schools and Sunday Schools. All these possessions or endowments are included here as well as the diamond necklaces of our society dames and the lovely flowers gracing their rock gardens.<sup>38</sup>

It is often difficult in our thinking to differentiate

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<sup>35</sup>J. Ylvisaker, The Gospels (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1932), p. 623.

<sup>36</sup>J. P. Lange, The Gospel According to Matthew (Trans. by P. Schaff; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 442.

<sup>37</sup>Marcus Dods, The Parables of our Lord (New York: Thomas Whittaker, n.d.), p. 222.

<sup>38</sup>W. Arndt, "Justification, Sanctification, and Stewardship in their Aim and Relation to Each Other," Concordia Theological Monthly, VIII (February, 1937), 100.

between gifts and ability. Actually, we as Christians will have to say both come from God. God has equipped each man to perform a specific duty while in this world. Never can it be said by any one that because he has less gifts he is not completely furnished to do the work of the Lord. He has not been equipped to do certain kinds of work probably, but there still is something for even the one-talent man to do. This is the lesson of the parable. Whether the talents may be interpreted specifically as abilities, spiritual gifts, or wealth is unimportant. What is important, is that God has given every Christian some gift to invest. Regardless of the richness of that gift, the child of God is responsible to his Lord to produce from that talent.

The parable clearly emphasizes this work aspect. There is time. The man went into a far country for quite a length of time. It was in that period the servants were to work. We are living in that age now, just prior to His return. We must trade and barter with our talents. We must run immediately, as did the first servant,<sup>39</sup> and lose no time with this labor. To delay and remain idle is to violate our responsibility.

Thus the young person who idles away his time in school is violating a fundamental principle of Stewardship. The man in business who might create wealth, but does not, can with little consistency criticize the person

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<sup>39</sup>The promptness of the first servant is not shown by the A.V. translation because of the wrong punctuation. The εὐθὺς belongs to the πορευθεῖς, not to ἀπεδύνασεν. There is no point in the master leaving right away, but there is in the servant beginning to work at once.

who has been frugal, but is not liberal. Neither understands the meaning of Christian Stewardship.<sup>40</sup>

It is suggested that the talents which are gained by such working are the gifts and graces of people whom we have won for the Church.<sup>41</sup> Whether this idea is tenable or not, the basic principle of stewardship living is taught here. With what God has entrusted His servants, they must work.

The parable of the Pounds (Lk. 19:11-27) is in many respects similar to that of the Talents. It, too, emphasizes man's responsibility to God in the stewardship life.

The parable was narrated by our Savior probably in Jericho, which was about eighteen miles from Jerusalem<sup>42</sup> (Lk. 19:11). It could have been told in or near the house of Zacchaeus, as it follows the report of his conversion and the feast in his house (19:1-10). The reason why the Lord found it necessary to tell this story (19:11) was that all the people<sup>43</sup> thought that when Christ should enter Jerusalem, He would proclaim Himself king, deliver them from the Romans, and raise them to great earthly renown. To correct this idea,

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<sup>40</sup>H. B. Trimble, The Christian Motive and Method of Stewardship (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1929), p. 46.

<sup>41</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1943), p. 975.

<sup>42</sup>Whiston, op. cit., p. 762: Josephus (Wars iv 8.3) calls the distance between Jericho and Jerusalem about a six hour's march--150 stades, or about 18 miles.

<sup>43</sup>As to the fact that this parable was addressed to all the people and not just the disciples, see Appendix A.

and give them right views of His kingdom, Christ spoke this parable. His kingdom is different and is not appearing immediately. The King is tarrying, so there is time to work.

This is the parable. It seems that there was a certain well-born man, of nobility,<sup>44</sup> who was about to gain rule over a kingdom. However, it was necessary for him to travel a great distance and appear before his over-lord, in order that this rule would be validated. The citizens of the land he was inheriting hated him and were contriving to do anything to rid themselves of this noble, even sending ambassadors to the over-lord to demand the cancellation of this inheritance. Knowing that he would be gone a long time and also realizing the uneasy state in which he was leaving his land and his possessions, he called his ten<sup>45</sup> servants before him. To each of his servants he gave a pound<sup>46</sup> and instructed them to do business with this capital, in order that his affairs might continue to advance in his absence.

Upon his return, being now the rightful ruler of the land, he wanted a report as to what his servants had been

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<sup>44</sup>εὐγενής --of noble race, a prince. Thayer, op. cit., p. 257.

<sup>45</sup>The Talmud seemingly makes much of the number ten (Aboth 5,1-6), speaking of the ten sayings by which the world was created; ten generations Adam to Noah, and Noah to Abraham; ten temptations of Abraham; etc. Danby, op. cit., pp. 455 f.

<sup>46</sup>The mina was equal to 100 drachmae. The Attic mina was worth about \$16. Peck, op. cit., p. 1044.



doing with their trust,<sup>47</sup> so he commanded their presence.<sup>48</sup> The first servant stepped boldly forward, being a faithful laborer, and reported that the noble's money had increased to ten pounds through his labors. At once the ruler was pleased with this fine showing and he proclaimed the reward of greater tasks to be done, rule over ten cities. Another servant reported that the pound which the lord had given him was now being returned with five more. In like manner his reward was the responsibility of governing five cities. But a third servant stepped forth, and his report was different. For this man had wrapped<sup>49</sup> the lord's pound in a napkin<sup>50</sup> and left it there. He was fearful of his lord, because he figured him to be such a strict and exacting man<sup>51</sup> that he would expect return where there was nothing given to start with. At once the noble became furious, for the

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<sup>47</sup> διεπραγματεύσαντο--here only in biblical Greek. In Dion. Hal. iii 72 it means attempt to execute. C. Jacoby, Dionysi Halicarnasensis Antiquitatum Romanarum (Lipsiae: B. G. Teubnerii, 1885), I, 400.

<sup>48</sup> εἶπε with infinitive instead of ἔειπε with subjunctive, e.g. Matt. 4:3. A. B. Bruce, "The Synoptic Gospels," The Expositor's Greek Testament (New York: George H. Doran Co., n.d.), p. 606.

<sup>49</sup> ἀποκεκρυμένον--used of what is stored up and awaits us in the future. Cf. Col. 1:5; 2 Tim. 4:8; Heb. 9:27.

<sup>50</sup> σουδαρίον--used for swathing the head of the dead (Jn. 11:44; 20:17). Is also mentioned among the toilet articles of the dowry in the marriage contract, as found in the papyri. Deissmann, Bible Studies, p. 223.

<sup>51</sup> ἀσθηρός--a man who expects to get blood out of a stone. J. Moulton and G. Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949), I, 93.

wicked servant's very words had condemned him. The man knew that his lord would demand results from his labors. Instead of fearfully hiding the pound, he should have fearfully tried to invest it. At least he could have put it in the bank<sup>52</sup> where it would have gathered interest.

Such behavior along with the rebellion of the citizens can not be allowed in an oriental kingdom. So the wicked servant was relieved of his responsibility and the pound was given to the most successful servant. His punishment was to be worthless and useless. In turn the rebellious subjects were dragged before the king and killed before his very eyes.

The setting of the parable which Jesus spoke, especially the reference to a king going to obtain his kingdom and the citizens challenging his rule, is very suggestive of an actual historical event with which the Jews were very familiar. When Herod the Great died he left an altered will which granted the tetrarchy of Galilee and Perea to Archelaus. The soldiers of the army, hearing of the will, rallied about Archelaus.<sup>53</sup> However, this rule had to be ratified by Caesar in Rome. The prince set out immediately to claim his

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<sup>52</sup>τράπεζαν--the word is referred to as just a table (Mk. 7:28); then food on the table (Acts 16:34); a feast or banquet (Rom. 11:9); and then a table of the money-changers (Jn. 2:15; Mk. 11:15; Matt. 21:12). In this last sense, or as bank, we understand this word here.

<sup>53</sup>Josephus, Antiq. xvii 8.1,2. Whiston, op. cit., pp. 516 f.

throne. However, the Jews hated Archelaus, because at the very first Passover he slaughtered 3000 Jews when they started a riot.<sup>54</sup> So they sent an embassy to Rome to petition Caesar not to validate his rule. Josephus<sup>55</sup> records the entire scene. But Caesar gave Archelaus rule over part of the land that was subject to Herod.

Besides being reminded of this historical background, there have been some commentators who have equated most of the details of the story with the present circumstances of Christ's ministry. The nobleman is the Son of David<sup>56</sup> who is about to go to that far country, heaven, to establish His kingdom. That kingdom will be the resultant Kingdom of Glory at His second coming.<sup>57</sup> The servants left to work are the disciples, while the rebellious citizens are the Jews.<sup>58</sup> The slaughter of the rebels is then a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, in which Josephus<sup>59</sup> exaggerating says 1,100,000 Jews perished.

It is probably the safest procedure not to try to make

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<sup>54</sup>Antiq. xvii 9.3; Wars ii 1.3. Ibid., pp. 519, 666.

<sup>55</sup>Antiq. xvii 11.1 f.; Wars ii 6.1-3. Ibid., pp. 525 f., 670 f.

<sup>56</sup>R. C. Trench, Notes on the Parables of our Lord (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1862), p. 417.

<sup>57</sup>Ylvisaker, op. cit., p. 528.

<sup>58</sup>Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke (Fifth edition; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1951), p. 446.

<sup>59</sup>Wars vi 9.3. Whiston, op. cit., p. 832.

too many detailed identifications. Yet there is a lesson in stewardship involved here. First, we notice that the two faithful servants, making their report to the prince, answered, "Lord, thy pound has gained . . . ." Even the wicked servant returning the pound said, "Here is thy pound." The stewardship life in the kingdom is one which definitely realizes where all good things come from and to whom we are responsible. The Christian waives all claims of honor when a large confirmation class is presented to the church, or a successful financial program has been brought to conclusion. Lord, your pound has gained . . . !

Because the pounds were given out in equal number, it seems difficult to equate them with physical or even spiritual gifts. Such are not given in equal amounts. Consequently, some have suggested that this refers to the means of grace<sup>60</sup> or the great deposit of truth about salvation which every Christian receives.<sup>61</sup> These may be plausible ideas, but it seems that a safer interpretation would be to consider the lesson of this parable not as complex as that of the talents, but simply the necessity of fidelity. The Lord has given the Christian steward something to work with, which means he has a great and serious responsibility. For having

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<sup>60</sup>Ylvisaker, op. cit., p. 538.

<sup>61</sup>G. H. Lang, The Parabolic Teaching of Scripture (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1955), p. 286.

opportunities to work in the kingdom, and there being an interval to do the job, we must be faithful, or we become worthless servants.<sup>62</sup>

One last thought may be garnered especially from the two parables on the Talents and the Pounds. That is this: in speaking to the wicked servants the business man and the noble man both made the suggestion that the least the servant could have done would have been to put the money in the bank. Here is mention of minimum responsibility for the small-talent man.

The task of stewardship is an immense one. So immense it is, that the Lord cannot afford to have even the small-talent men unfaithful. The Lord expects mistakes; He knows man's sinfulness and weaknesses which tempt him to pervert his gifts and opportunities and He forgives. But He also expects some result from the Christian. The young and inexperienced child of God is frightened at the thought of telling someone else about church or redemption. But the Lord does not expect such a person just to quit there and say, "Let someone else do the job, I am not equipped for it." No, the Lord gives time for His servants to train themselves. In fact He gives that very suggestion. If a man is so fearful

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<sup>62</sup>Even the heathen knew the folly of not using money, for Phocian said upon refusing Alexander's gift: "If I make no use of this great sum of money, it will do me no good to have it." (Phocian 18,3). B. Perrin, Plutarch's Lives (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1919), VIII, 187.

to try to live the stewardship life and meet its responsibilities, he should then put his money in the bank, attach himself to a person who is experienced, so that by guidance he may learn how to do business properly in the kingdom. The responsibility is to God and it is a serious one. How serious, will be discussed in Chapter VI.

## CHAPTER III

### MISUSE OF A STEWARD'S RESPONSIBILITY

The response to the call to a stewardship life is not the same on the part of all. God has given the responsibility to all who accept Him, a responsibility for which He holds us accountable. Some are faithful to this trust, as the former parables exhibited. But others abuse and misuse their stewardship. It is this matter of abuse that we shall now dwell on, reviewing the examples of such abuse in the parables treated in the previous chapter, and taking up two others which point this up even more--the parables of the Rich Fool, and the Rich Man and Lazarus.

To begin with, we discover in the parable of the Wise and Wicked Servant an example of a very flagrant misuse of stewardship. The downfall of this man began with the sin in his heart. He had wrong thoughts about his master. Because he delayed so long in returning, the servant thought that his lord was unreliable. The return of the Lord Jesus seems to lie far in the unknown future, far enough off to lead many Christians to misuse their stewardship by compromising with the world. This is probably the greatest danger in the church today, because many do not consider this an abuse of their stewardship. In this connection Trimble<sup>1</sup> asks a very impor-

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<sup>1</sup>H. B. Trimble, The Christian Motive and Method of Stewardship (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1929), p. 151.

tant question: "Has the Christian the right to sell his time and talent to the highest bidder?" If our first principle of responsibility to God is to stand, our answer must be, No; for if we do, it is a flagrant abuse of such responsibility.

One other thought is conveyed in this parable, and that is the misuse of power.

The larger the powers a man has the greater the temptation to misuse or selfishly use these powers . . . . One of the tragedies of the life of the church is that many men of large ability have failed to understand their stewardship as a Christian in terms of the dedication of their powers to the service of God.<sup>2</sup>

It is very simple to pick out instances in history of men in prominent positions of the Church who have misused their powers. What dangers are involved in position! Even the common layman is beset with these temptations in his smaller position of stewardship. And every abuse centers in the desire for selfish gain--beginning with the sin in the heart, a distrust in the Lord, which may be the beginning of a man's road back to unbelief.

Another misuse of stewardship responsibility is very evident in the neglect of the servants in the parables of the Talents and of the Pounds. These examples of neglect are examples of men who have the least amount of ability, at least in one case. In the actuality of church life our daily experience shows that frequently the very ones who have the

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<sup>2</sup>H. Rolston, Stewardship in the New Testament Church (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1946), p. 59.



most ability and gifts are neglectful.<sup>3</sup> The point that is to be impressed by these sections of the parables is that to neglect opportunities is to lose them. As Sirach says: "Wisdom that is hid and treasure that is hoarded up, what profit is in them both? Better is he that hideth folly, than a man that hideth his wisdom" (20:30,31). Such neglectful use brings only the characterization of "useless," "unprofitable"--for fear has robbed man of his worth.

This miserable fear of being mediocre, how many a good work has it prevented or crippled. If we wait till we are fully qualified to serve Christ, we shall never serve Him at all.<sup>4</sup>

The reason for such neglectful misuse in stewardship is clearly shown by the evil servants in the parables. First of all, they did not listen to God's instructions to use this money to do business for Him. The reason they did not listen was they had a wrong view of God. Their accusation against their lords shows that. They did not believe in their lords' forgiving love and his gracious acceptance of their work with all its faults, when it is done out of a true heart and

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<sup>3</sup>The apocryphal "Gospel according to the Hebrews" has a similar parable. In this gospel there are three servants, "one who devoured his master's substance with harlots and flute-girls, another who multiplied it by trading, and another who hid the talent." The second was accepted, the third only rebuked and the first was shut up in prison. M. R. James, The Apocryphal New Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), p. 3. It is quite obvious how the seriousness of neglect is de-emphasized here.

<sup>4</sup>Marcus Dods, The Parables of our Lord (New York: Thomas Whittaker, n.d.), p. 225.

a desire to please him. But according to their accusations they pictured their masters as hard-hearted and selfish. And by doing so they gave themselves away and betrayed their own selfishness. Where does such a motivating attitude and regulating force come from? From unbelief! Christians, if they are going to take what Christ says about stewardship seriously, must face up to the fact that if they neglect their responsibility to God in this matter, they are but betraying their unbelief.

A very clear illustration of the misuse of God's gifts in stewardship living is found in Christ's parable of the Rich Fool (Lk. 12:13-21). Jesus had been speaking to His disciples and those that followed about confessing Him before men. Suddenly, a man of the group, obviously not listening to Jesus' words, interrupted. He wanted the Lord to judge the division of inheritance between himself and his brother. Now the Talmud<sup>5</sup> gives directions concerning this matter. The eldest brother usually obtains a double portion.<sup>6</sup> Cases, however, might arise when the claim is doubtful, and then the inheritance could be divided equally.<sup>7</sup> This was probably

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<sup>5</sup>Bekhoroth viii 2. H. Danby, The Mishnah (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 540.

<sup>6</sup>The double portion of an eldest son was computed in this manner. If five sons were left, the property was divided into six parts, the eldest son getting two parts. Babba Bathra viii. Ibid., pp. 376-378.

<sup>7</sup>Babba Bathra ix 2. Ibid., p. 378.

such an instance--a younger son challenging. Augustine<sup>8</sup> feels that the man had a case and his brother was unrighteous. Whether this is right or not, the fact remains that the man was so driven by covetous desires that he had paid no attention to what Jesus had been saying, and in addition, he interrupts the Master's instruction. Therefore, as soon as He had refused the request,<sup>9</sup> the Lord launches into another parable to show how a covetous nature<sup>10</sup> is an abuse<sup>11</sup> of the stewardship life.

There was a rich man who operated quite a large estate. He was very efficient with the management of the vineyards. He no doubt fertilized the soil and cared for his vines and wheat fields. Consequently, he was fortunate in obtaining a

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<sup>8</sup> Sermon lvii. P. Schaff, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (First Series; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1888), VI, 436 ff.

<sup>9</sup> Because Jesus did not reply directly to the man concerning covetousness, Montefiore believes that verse fourteen had an independent origin. G. G. Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1927), II, 488.

<sup>10</sup> ἄνθρωπε--a severe form of address, implying disapproval, for He sees this covetousness in the man's request. Peter used it in his denial (Lk. 22:58,60); cf. also Rom. 2:1; 9:20. Cf. Sophocles, Ajax 791 ("What is thy news, man?"); 1154 ("Man, do not evil to the dead."). F. Storr, Sophocles (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1932), pp. 66, 96.

<sup>11</sup> φυλάσσετε ἀπὸ--the expression is classical (Xenophon, Historia Graeca vii 2.10). Otto Keller, Xenophonitis: Historia Graeca (Lipsiae: B. G. Teubneri, 1904), p. 255. (Cyropaedia ii 3.9). Walter Miller, Xenophon: Cyropaedia (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1925), I, 180. The only similar passage in the New Testament is φυλάσσετε ἑαυτὰ ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων (1 John 5:21). It is stronger than προσεχετε ἀπὸ.

pretty fair crop.<sup>12</sup> So the wealthy estateholder decided some planning was needed, because he did not have room for his harvest. He struck upon an idea. He would tear down the barns that he had built before, and in their places he would erect even greater storehouses, so that he might have room for the expected crop.<sup>13</sup> Looking forward to this expected yield, the man decided, with such a harvest I can relax, for now I have security. With all these goods, from which I can live for the next twenty years, I will not have to worry about a thing. I can eat, drink, and be merry. What a fool this man was.<sup>14</sup> He had staked his whole life on these material possessions. And suddenly he was called to account before his Maker. What good would all these provisions do then? So it is with the man who seeks earthly treasures above heavenly riches.

This parable seems to be emphasizing the abuse of material possessions, although it can be applied easily to other aspects of the stewardship life also. In speaking of wealth, it must be pointed out that even though this rich man is condemned for his foolish use of abundance, having riches and

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<sup>12</sup> εὐφόρητον--here only in biblical Greek. Josephus uses it of Galilee as productive of oil. (Wars 2, 592). S. A. Naber, Flavii Iosephi: Opera Omnia (Lipsiae: B. G. Teubneri, 1888), V, 237.

<sup>13</sup> τὰ γενήματα--fruits of the earth. Common in the Septuagint. Ex. 23:10; Lev. 25:20; Jer. 8:13.

<sup>14</sup> ἄφρων--fool for lack of sense as in Lk. 11:40 and 2 Cor. 11:19.

using them is not evil in itself. The wealth of the man was honestly gained; he was farsighted and quite practical in his planning. For this the man is not condemned, but rather his attitude toward riches. As Augustine says: "God would not have thee lose thy wealth, but He hath given thee counsel to change the place thereof . . . ."15

Yet, wealth and luxuries are often spoken of in a very derogatory vein. "He who trusts in his riches will wither" (Prov. 11:27). And again, "Woe to those who lie upon beds of ivory and stretch themselves upon their couches" (Amos 6:4). The church father Cyprian with harshness exclaims:

He teaches us that riches are not only to be contemned, but that they are also full of peril; that in them is the root of seducing evils that deceive the blindness of the human mind by a hidden deception.16

Why do we find this harshness concerning material possessions? Because too many men have made it their principle of life. Their life has consisted in "the abundance of the things which they possess" (Lk. 12:15). The fallacy of this principle of life is basically in the fact that the man considers all that he owns as really his own. This rich man speaks of my fruits (12:17), my barns, my goods (12:18), and even my soul (12:19). He did not regard his possessions as things lent to him by God's grace to be used in the service

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<sup>15</sup>Exposition on the Psalms 29:9. Schaff, op. cit., VII, 171.

<sup>16</sup>On the Lord's Prayer 20. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1896), V, 453.

of the Lord. And so the man went on in his folly, reasoning with himself, instead of taking counsel with God, and trying to find security in earthly things.

Trimble<sup>17</sup> feels that a life built upon possessions is a result of a pagan conception of wealth. The Aryan race, from which Roman civilization sprang, placed force as the basis of possession. As civilization became more advanced, possession by intellectual conquest tends to take the place of acquisition by means of physical force. With the Reformation came the idea of the right of the individual in property, which was followed by the corporate idea, caused by the machine age. In all this there is nothing concerning a relationship of possessions to God, but rather it permits selfish ease and luxury, while emphasizing display and ostentation.

Thus we find the Lord calling this man a fool, for it is the fool who ruins wealth and its right use. "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them" (Prov. 1:32). Solomon knew the dangers of wealth when in the hands of a fool, and it concerned him as to his own riches, so that he said: "Yea, I hated all my labours which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool?" (Eccl. 2:18,19).

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<sup>17</sup>Trimble, op. cit., pp. 121-129.

Because the fool considers possessions are his and makes them the principle of his life, his life is guided by three false concerns: a concern for the future, a concern to obtain even more, a concern of physical pleasures. In regard to the first concern the Lord speaks immediately following this parable, "Take not thought for your life, what ye shall eat" (Lk. 12:22).<sup>18</sup> This worry about the future is what Augustine<sup>19</sup> considers the counsel of avarice. He points to the folly of this, exclaiming that even in old age these avaricious people are saying, "Consult for the future."

The very Greek word for covetousness--πλεονεξία--describes this desire for more.<sup>20</sup> Our age can give us example after example of men who have been driven only by the desire to expand, to get and get. This often drives men to other sins and mistakes. Herodotus<sup>21</sup> gives an illustration of this in Egyptian times. Queen Nitocris of Egypt had a tomb made for herself and had it placed over the most used entrance of the city. Graven on the tomb were these words: "If any king of

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<sup>18</sup>Tertullian, On Prayer 6, expands on this thought and connects it with this parable. Roberts and Donaldson, op. cit., III, 683.

<sup>19</sup>Sermon 36.9. Schaff, op. cit., VI, 371.

<sup>20</sup>Tertullian, Against Marcion 4.28, uses this parable to illustrate the Lord's condemnation of covetousness. Roberts and Donaldson, op. cit., III, 397.

<sup>21</sup>i 187. A. D. Godley, Herodotus (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1931), I, 233-235.

Babylon in future time lack money, let him open this tomb and take whatso money he desires; but let him not open it except he lack; for it will be the worse for him." The tomb remained undisturbed for years because of the oriental, religious respect for the dead. But Darius, driven by greed, violated the burial, and opening the tomb he found no money, only the dead body with this writing: "Wert thou not insatiated of wealth and basely desirous of gain, thou hadst not opened the coffin of the dead!"

"Take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry," the foolish man exclaims.<sup>22</sup> His plans of happiness rise no higher than the satisfying of the flesh. It is for this reason that Scripture so frequently berates luxury and the Epicurean life (Eccl. 2:1; Is. 22:13; Amos 6:4). This concern for pleasure is not just peculiar to rich people, but often a driving force in the lives of all classes. However, seen in the light of this parable, it is clearly evident that such attempts at happiness are only an abuse of our stewardship responsibility to God.

If the Christian falls into the temptations of riches and gives himself to these covetous concerns, he is only fooling himself as he regards material possessions as impor-

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<sup>22</sup>Cf. Eccl. 8:12 where God says the ungodly has no better thing to do than seek pleasure. Cf. also Euripides, *Alc.* 788: "Make merry, drink: the life from day to day account thine own, all else in fortune's power." A. S. Way, *Euripides* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935), IV, 470 f.



tant. Even the heathen philosopher<sup>23</sup> knew that money itself was not the important item in a man's life. Certainly the parable shows that this is the case. A man and his possessions are distinct. His life is neither longer nor happier in proportion to what he has.

He may fill his shelves with the wisest and most elevating books, and yet remain illiterate; he may gather round him precious works of art and be a clown and a boor; he may buy up a county, and be the smallest souled man in it; he may erect a mansion which will last for ten generations, and may not have ten years of life or ten minutes of health to enjoy it.<sup>24</sup>

We are but fooling ourselves by going after more and more.

Consider what a wise man from the East said upon viewing our

Western drive for greater and better machines:

You call your thousand material devices "labor saving machinery," yet you are forever "busy." With the multiplying of your machinery you grow increasingly fatigued, anxious, nervous, dissatisfied. Whatever you have, you want more; and wherever you are, you want to go somewhere else. You have a machine to dig the raw material for you . . . , a machine to manufacture (it) . . . , a machine to transport (it) . . . , a machine to sweep and dust, one to carry messages, one to write, one to talk, one to sing, one to play at the theatre, one to vote, one to sew, . . . and a hundred others to do a hundred other things for you, and still you are the most nervously busy man in the world . . . . Your devices are neither time-saving nor soul-saving machinery. They are so many sharp spurs which urge you on to invent more machinery to do more business.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Aristotle, Eth. Nic. x 8.9: "For self-sufficiency does not depend on excessive abundance, nor does moral conduct, and it is possible to perform noble deeds even without being ruler of land and sea." H. Rackham, Aristotle: The Nichomachean Ethics (London: Wm. Heinemann Ltd., 1934), p. 624.

<sup>24</sup>Dods, op. cit., pp. 281 f.

<sup>25</sup>As quoted in G. A. Buttrick, The Parables of Jesus (New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1931), p. 134.

It is but selfishness and a self-satisfying desire that pushes man onward, and not a responsible stewardship of God's trust.

The temptation of wealth, of crops, and prosperity continues with us always. It takes a stouthearted Christian who relies wholly upon God for strength and guidance to stand against the allure of a few more bushels or a few more dollars. Dr. Fritz puts it beautifully when he says:

When I was younger, I did not well understand why the Lord said that a rich man shall hardly enter the kingdom of God. As I have grown older in experience and have come into contact with many men, I better understand why the Lord has spoken those words. How often do we find that people while poor are good Church-members, give liberally, and are humble; but when they have grown to be wealthy, they neglect their church, give comparatively little, look down upon the "common people," and are delighted to be found in the company of the "Upper Four Hundred." <sup>26</sup> The blessings of riches have unto many become a curse.

The New Testament again and again emphasizes the Christian's necessary concern for the brother. The Old Testament also gave regulations for the helping of a fellow Israelite. This is, in fact, an important responsibility in the stewardship life, one which love of riches seems to hinder and prevent. To study this more clearly, the abuse of this responsibility God has placed upon us to care for our brother, we shall consider the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31).

In the preceding section Jesus had addressed himself to

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<sup>26</sup> John H. C. Fritz, Church Finances (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), p. 15.

His disciples. He instructed them in the proper use of earthly treasures and indirectly warned them of covetousness. Certain Pharisees who were covetous (Lk. 16:14) heard all these sayings and they felt that they had cause for offense. So they began to deride Jesus. In reply Jesus told this parable.<sup>27</sup>

Knowing the background it is evident that the Lord did not relate this parable in order to satisfy curiosity concerning life after death,<sup>28</sup> but to emphasize vividly the tremendous seriousness of life on this side of the grave, especially what comes of neglecting the poor and the fellow brother. It is this abuse of responsibility we wish to see in the light of the parable.

Two contrasting characters interest us in this story. The one is a rich man<sup>29</sup> who dressed himself in the finest clothes. In his wardrobe could be found expensive purple<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup>Most commentators say the rich man signified the Pharisees, e.g. R. C. Trench, Notes on the Parables of our Lord (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1862), p. 366. Some would rather equate the rich man with the Sadducees, e.g. H. Major, et al., The Mission and Message of Jesus (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1938), pp. 588 f.

<sup>28</sup>Montefiore explains away the last part of the parable concerning the life after death as a later addition by the Evangelist. Montefiore, op. cit., p. 539.

<sup>29</sup>The Sahidic manuscripts name him Nineue, while the Priscillian call him Fines.

<sup>30</sup>These garments were dyed with a purple color that was obtained from the purple fish, a species of murex. Cf. 1 Macc. 4:23. Pliny, Natural History ix 60. H. Rackham, Pliny: Natural History (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940), III, 247-249. Obtained from the coast of Tyre (Shabbath 26a), I. Epstein, The Babylonian Talmud (London: The Soncino Press, 1935), VII, 113. Cf. Mk. 15:17,20; Rev. 18:12.

robes like those worn by royalty, and also garments of the finest linen.<sup>31</sup> He definitely was not in want, eating meals of banquet proportion daily and in every manner living in luxury.

While this man was existing thus, there was also a beggar, by the name of Lazarus,<sup>32</sup> who was laid<sup>33</sup> at the gate<sup>34</sup> of this man's estate. This Lazarus was in a frightful condition. Not only was he poverty stricken, but his body was covered with sores<sup>35</sup> which the dogs licked. So in misery the beggar barely existed, looking for food to feed his pain-wracked body, food which might be thrown away at the rich

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<sup>31</sup>This linen was found usually in Egypt (Pliny, Natural History xix 2) or in Achaia, of which Pliny says that some was worth its weight in gold (Natural History xix 4). Rackham, op. cit., V, 425-429, 433. The white garments of the high priest on the Day of Atonement were made of byssus (Yoma iii 6,7). Danby, op. cit., p. 165. Cf. Esth. 8:15; Rev. 19:8, 14; 18:12.

<sup>32</sup>Greek for Ἐλεάζαρ (Eleazar)--God has helped. J. H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Co., 1889), p. 367. Tertullian (De Anima vii) urges the name as proof that the narrative is actual history and that the scene in Hades involves his doctrine that the soul is corporeal. Roberts and Donaldson, op. cit., III, 187.

<sup>33</sup>ἐβέβλητο--not "flung." Late Greek βάλλειν loses the notion of violence. Cf. Lk. 5:37; Jn. 5:7 et al. Also note the Septuagint of Num. 22:38.

<sup>34</sup>πυλῶν--a large gateway. Cf. Acts 10:17; 12:14 and also 2 Chron. 3:7.

<sup>35</sup>εἰλκυσμένος--common in Hippocrates and other medical writers. A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (New York: Harper and Brothers Co., 1930), II, 221. Also found in Xenophon (Art of Horsemanship 1.4; 5.1). E. C. Marchant, Xenophon: Scripta Minora (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1925), pp. 229, 317.

man's feasts or just any crumb which might fall from the table.<sup>36</sup>

The time soon came, however, when the poor Lazarus was relieved of his suffering. He died and was appointed to his place with the faithful; or as it might be said in Jewish picture language, his soul<sup>37</sup> was carried by the angels<sup>38</sup> into Abraham's bosom.<sup>39</sup> The rich man also died and was buried.

In Hades,<sup>40</sup> the land of the dead, the rich man experiences the deepest torments. He is suffering great anguish. While he is undergoing this misery, he happens to look up and

<sup>36</sup>Besa 52b: "There are three whose life is no life and they are: He who is dependent on the table of his neighbor; he whom his wife rules; and he whose body is subject to suffering." Epstein, op. cit., XII, 165.

<sup>37</sup>Irenaeus (ii 34.1) uses this parable to prove that souls exist in themselves and do not pass from body to body. Roberts and Donaldson, op. cit., I, 411.

<sup>38</sup>Jewish legendary details of angels carrying up the soul--the number of angels and the greetings--are recorded in the Talmud (Kethubhoth 104a). Epstein, op. cit., XVII, 664 f.

<sup>39</sup>Talmud (Qiddushin 72b) also uses this term. Ibid., XXII, 369. It also records (Erubhin 19a) a similar idea of Abraham receiving the penitent into Paradise. Ibid., IX, 130. One Jewish authority denies the authority of the Greek text in 4 Macc. 13:16,17 which is often cited as a reference to Abraham's bosom. I. Abrahams, Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels (Second Series; Cambridge: University Press, 1924), p. 202. Cf. Jn. 1:18.

<sup>40</sup>For a short study of Hades and its comparison to Gehenna, see N. Goldenhuys, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), p. 429. It is interesting to find him here say: "It is nowhere taught in the New Testament that the faithful at their death first go to the realm of the dead (Αιδης)."

see in the distance<sup>41</sup> the faithful, who along with Abraham their father, are resting in eternal bliss. A glimmer of hope, of possible relief, comes to the rich man. Perhaps Abraham will be kind and allow Lazarus to come and at least dip his finger in cool water and touch his parched and tormented tongue. After all, he had been a physical child of Abraham when he was on earth! But back comes Abraham's answer. He, the rich man, had his times of pleasure while living, while Lazarus was suffering. Now he was paying for such a life, while Lazarus, having remained faithful, has his place with the faithful. The answer is, No! Besides, there is a yawning chasm<sup>42</sup> between the place of torments and that of the faithful, and travel between the two is impossible. The rich man has another bright idea. He asks Abraham if he would send Lazarus back to his father's house to warn his brothers

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<sup>41</sup>According to the Jewish writings Sheol or Hades consists of two divisions. Garden of Eden and Tree of Life was the abode of the blessed (Jerusalem Targums on Gen. 3:24), and this Eden was distinct and superior to Adam's garden (Berakhoth 34b). The righteous see the wicked in Gehinnom and rejoice (Vayyikra Rabba 32); and the wicked see the righteous in Gan Eden and their souls are troubled (Vayyikra Rabba 48b). Several legendary instances are given of conversation between dead persons (Berakhoth 18b). The torment, especially of thirst, of the wicked is repeatedly mentioned (Jerusalem Chagigah 77d). Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), II, 280 ff.

<sup>42</sup>Cf. Virgil, Aeneid vi 126: "Facilis descensus Averno, Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis: Sed revocare gradus, superasque evadere ad auras, Hoc opus, hic labor est." J. Conington and H. Nettleship, The Works of Virgil (London: Whittaker and Co., 1875), II, 440-441.

about the torments that will await them if they live as he had lived. Again Abraham refuses, for he says that these men have Moses and the prophets, the Scriptures, to warn them. If men will not listen to the testimony of the very Word of God, how will a ghost returning from the dead ever bring such men to a faith that shows a concern for others. Thus is recorded the fate of a man who neglected his brother Lazarus.

Let us look closer at these two men. First, there is the poor wretched beggar in his misery. The very dogs are adding to this wretchedness.<sup>43</sup> Is poverty, then, a virtue? Was it the fact that he was destitute and suffering that brought Lazarus into the kingdom? No, riches or poverty is not the clue to the problem. Abraham, into whose bosom Lazarus was carried, was a very rich man (Gen. 13:2). Rather it is the humble spirit and trust in God. Lazarus' very name indicates that he sought help in God. Augustine<sup>44</sup> points out that sometimes rich men are humble and trusting. It is this that saves.

Looking at the rich man we find in him nothing greatly offensive at first glance. Outwardly he was quite a reputable man. Yes, he had riches, but so did other men of the Bible,

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<sup>43</sup>Montefiore denies the idea of pity in the dogs licking Lazarus' sores, but only an addition to the state of wretchedness. Montefiore, op. cit., p. 538.

<sup>44</sup>Exposition on Psalm 132:19. Schaff, op. cit., III, 621.

as David and Job.<sup>45</sup> Riches in themselves are not harmful.<sup>46</sup> He was not accused of breaking a law and he obviously was a prominent man in his community. According to the standards of this day he was not even hard-hearted toward Lazarus. He allowed him to lie at the gate. Today such a man would be hustled off to the nearest charity organization.

But there is more to a man than his outward appearance, and true charity is more than just flinging a coin to a beggar. The rich man thought of himself as a son of Abraham, as we consider ourselves Christians. If so, then there is a duty involved, that of caring for his brother, being concerned for his welfare. This man, as many today, sin against their privilege of being a son of Abraham. God had given him this money and with it a responsibility. This includes the matter of philanthropy. He had the opportunity; Lazarus was on his very porch. What is his excuse? The fact that the rich man died after Lazarus might indicate that the Lord was giving him a longer time, in order that he might repent.

Obviously, Dives did not repent, for at his death we find him in torment seeking relief. He has, in fact, been

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<sup>45</sup> Augustine (Sermon 41.4 f.) emphasizes that Job's riches did not prove hurtful. Ibid., VI, 398.

<sup>46</sup> The ascetic view of riches is seen in the Church Fathers, e.g. Tertullian (On Idolatry 13). Roberts and Donaldson, op. cit., III, 69.



forsaken<sup>47</sup> of God, in the place where there is no repentance.<sup>48</sup> This is the tragic result of a misuse of our God-given responsibilities in stewardship--a neglect in using our gifts for aiding the brother. Back of such a neglect, however, is a basic unbelief. The gulf was fixed between Dives and Lazarus long before they died. How definitely this unbelief had engrossed the man is shown by his contempt for the power of the Word. Scripture would not be enough warning for his brothers. It is the central thought of this parable to rebuke unbelief and its effects.

What a warning this parable is to Christians today! How many opportunities do we miss! We are blind to our duty as the rich man is described:

But he was blind. He never saw the beggar. He returned from the meeting of the hospital board so engrossed in the problem of the new laboratory they were building that he never even looked in the direction of the filthy fellow who was trying to beat off the street dogs that crowded about him as he lay on his vermin-infested pallet.<sup>49</sup>

It is not always a ragged beggar that will be there to give us a chance to fulfill our duty, but it may be a needy church

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<sup>47</sup>Fonck quotes Cyril of Alexandria as explaining that the rich man had no name in the parable because God says of the wicked, "I will not remember their names with my lips." L. Fonck, The Parables of the Gospel (Trans. by E. Leahy; New York: Frederick Pustet Co., Inc., 1914), pp. 612 f.

<sup>48</sup>Chrysostom (To the Fallen Theodore 19) emphasizes that there is no repentance after death. Schaff, op. cit., IX, 97.

<sup>49</sup>Roy L. Smith, Stewardship Studies (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1954), p. 192.

treasury. It may also be a deeper warning to the Church. The Church should not glory in its many blessings and privileges, while it is neglecting the spiritual wants and miseries of those who are ignorant of God's grace. This, too, is a misuse of our stewardship.

One last thought may be gathered from the very last portion of the text. This warning and the guide to recovery is Holy Scripture. As the Lord pointed out through the mouth of Abraham, a person cannot depend on his inherited place in the church, if this inheritance is only a physical one. Neither can he expect to be warned by a great supernatural event. It is all there in His Word. In the Law He says, Watch out, you are covetous. And in the Gospel He replies, In Me is forgiveness and strength. What more does a Child of God need to guard against any abuse of stewardship responsibility?

## CHAPTER IV

### STEWARDSHIP A MATTER OF LOVE

In the previous chapters we have learned from the parables that stewardship is a life of responsibility to God. We also saw that a merely outward appearance of respectability, as the rich man in the last parable studied, is not enough. There must be a desire in the inner man. As Kantonen<sup>1</sup> puts it: "Stewardship is the believer's whole life as motivated by responding love and gratitude for what he has received from God." From the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37) we hope to show that love is a very basic element in living the stewardship life.

This parable is in a very interesting setting. Jesus is teaching the people as He begins His journey to Jerusalem. The seventy disciples, who had been commissioned to work for the Lord, had returned with reports of great success. Hearing this, the Lord gave thanks to His Father for the advancement of the kingdom work, and especially that the message of the kingdom had been hidden from the wise and prudent, but revealed to babes. Turning to His disciples privately He indicated that it was they whom He meant by the babes. At this point a lawyer, a man trained in Rabbinical law, put a question

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<sup>1</sup>T. A. Kantonen, "The Scriptural and Theological Basis of Evangelism and Stewardship," The Lutheran Quarterly, III (August, 1951), 271.

to the Lord to test His knowledge and understanding. This man stands as an interesting contrast to the disciples, possibly a clear illustration of "the wise and prudent," as over against "the babes."

The lawyer who asked the question that prompted this parable has been a very controversial figure among commentators. There are some who will paint his character and his motives very black, as Dods, who describes him in this manner:

The Lawyer is the type of person who takes an interest in religious subjects and religious teachers, who goes to hear all the varieties of preaching, and is ready with an opinion on every novel theory, and who for the most part measures all he hears by a standard as obsolete and inapplicable as it would be to measure the sufficiency of a town's defenses by their ability to resist sling stones or battering rams.<sup>2</sup>

Goldenhuys,<sup>3</sup> not quite as harsh but still describing the lawyer with not unmixed motives, points to the unfavorable meaning of the verb ἐκπεράζειν, as it is often used in the Bible (Matt. 4:7; Lk. 4:12; 1 Cor. 10:9). However, probably a more appropriate interpretation of the reason and motive for the question is given by Lang.<sup>4</sup> In his study of the verb ἐκπεράζειν, he discovers that it is used twelve times in the

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<sup>2</sup>Marcus Dods, The Parables of our Lord (New York: Thomas Whittaker, n.d.), p. 257.

<sup>3</sup>N. Goldenhuys, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), pp. 311, 313.

<sup>4</sup>G. H. Lang, The Parabolic Teaching of Scripture (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1955), p. 188.

Old Testament of man evilly tempting God in unbelief. But the same word is used of God in His testing of Abraham (Gen. 22:1) and Israel (Ex. 20:20). The closest parallel to the lawyer's testing is that where the Queen of Sheba came to prove Solomon with hard questions (1 Kings 10:1; 2 Chron. 9:1). So here was a rabbi who had created a large following and seemed to teach with authority. The lawyer would put Jesus to a searching test as to the law and the future of man. "Master, what shall I do to inherit<sup>5</sup> eternal life?" It is quite certain that the man had not understood Christ's message or he would not have asked such a question; but to place malice into the man's heart is reading something into the text.

Our Lord did not ignore the question, but throwing it right back at the lawyer He directed the man to the very point in which he was supposed to be expert, the two tables<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>κληρονομίᾳ--frequent in the Septuagint of the occupation of Canaan by the Israelites (Deut. 4:22,26; 6:1) and thence is transferred to the perfect possession to be enjoyed in the Kingdom of the Messiah (Ps. 24:13; 36:9,11,22,29; Is. 60:20). See study in B. F. Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1955), pp. 167-169.

<sup>6</sup>Talmud interpretation of the First Table (Berakhoth 54a): "'With all thy heart'--with both thy impulses, that to do good and that to evil; 'with all thy soul'--even if it takes away thy soul; 'with all thy might'--'with all thy money.' Another interpretation: 'with all thy might'--in regard to every measure with which He measures to thee art thou bound to praise Him." Hillel says (Shabboth 31a): "What is hateful to thee, that do not to another. This is the whole law; the rest is only explanation." I. Epstein, The Babylonian Talmud (London: The Soncino Press, 1935), V, 328, 140.

of the law. This put the lawyer in a very embarrassing position, because he should have known such an answer. So he covered up his embarrassment by directing a second question to the Master: "Who is my neighbor?" In answer to this our Savior gave us the story<sup>7</sup> of the Good Samaritan to show just what is involved in true charity.<sup>8</sup>

Before we consider the parable itself, we note the interesting interpretation of this story as given by the Church Fathers. These early commentators were prone to allegorize the details of this parable. Trench<sup>9</sup> gives an outline of their procedure. The traveler is the human nature or Adam as the representative of the race. He left Jerusalem--the heavenly city--going to the profane city. No sooner has he forsaken the presence of God, than he falls under the power of robbers--the devil and evil angels. Consequently, he is stripped of his original righteousness. But being only half dead there remains a possibility of redemption. Many pass by unable to help--Abraham, Moses, Aaron. Only the Physician can help with wine, which is the blood of the Passion, and oil, the anointing

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<sup>7</sup>Manson suggests that this is actual fact, and that Jesus Himself was the certain man who fell among thieves. H. Major, et al., The Mission and Message of Jesus (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1938), p. 554.

<sup>8</sup>Montefiore, in his critical manner, declares that the subject and object of charity were muddled up in the Evangelist's mind. C. G. Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1927), II, 466.

<sup>9</sup>R. C. Trench, Notes on the Parables of our Lord (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1862), pp. 258 fr.

of the Holy Spirit. The Son of Man who came not to be ministered but to minister uses a donkey, because He was poor for our sakes. The inn is the Church where the healing takes place. As the Samaritan paid the pence and left, so Christ gave instruction to Peter, feed My sheep. The promise to pay more if it takes more is the Lord's promise that no labor shall be in vain. There are slight variations among the Fathers. For example, Clement of Alexandria,<sup>10</sup> equating the wounded man with the sinner and the Samaritan with the Savior, described the wine as the blood of David's vine and the oil as that which flows from the compassion of the Father. Cyprian<sup>11</sup> dwells upon the fact that the man was only half dead, so we must never give up in our work of bringing sinners in. Ambrose speaks of the Novatians<sup>12</sup> as those who pass by. In another place he thinks of the Christians who have lapsed under the threat of martyrdom as the man who was left for half dead.<sup>13</sup> All of which is interesting and instructive, but hardly the correct use of the parable.

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<sup>10</sup>Who is the Rich Man that Shall be Saved 29. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1896), II, 599.

<sup>11</sup>Epistle li 16. Ibid., V, 331.

<sup>12</sup>Concerning Repentance i 6. P. Schaff and H. Wace, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church (Second Series; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1955), X, 334.

<sup>13</sup>Concerning Repentance i 11. Ibid., X, 338.

The story that Jesus told in answer<sup>14</sup> to the lawyer's second question was something like this. One day a man decided to make a trip to Jericho. Leaving Jerusalem he began the short but hot journey through that wilderness<sup>15</sup> country. As he was walking along the path, suddenly a band of highway robbers<sup>16</sup> jumped out from behind some rocks and descended upon him. They stripped him of his clothing and beat<sup>17</sup> him, and taking all his belongings they left him to lie by the side of the road at the very point of death.

As it happened, a short time later a priest,<sup>18</sup> on his way

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<sup>14</sup> ὑπολαβών--took him up to reply to him. Only here in the New Testament does this word have this meaning, which is quite classical and frequently used in Job (2:4; 4:1; etc.). Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke (Fifth Edition; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1951), p. 286.

<sup>15</sup> Josephus (Wars iv 8.5) describes the country. William Whiston, The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., n.d.), p. 763.

<sup>16</sup> This area was infested with robbers. Pompey destroyed the strongholds of brigands near Jericho--Strabo, Geography xvi 2.40. H. L. Jones, The Geography of Strabo (London: Wm. Heinemann Ltd., 1930), VII, 291. Ληστής is distinct from κλέπτης--thief. Κλέπτης is one who takes by fraud in secret (Matt. 24:43; Jn. 12:6). Ληστής is one who takes by violence and openly (2 Cor. 11:26). R. C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Truebner and Co., Ltd., 1915), p. 148.

<sup>17</sup> πληγὰς ἐπιθέντες--cf. Acts 16:23; Rev. 22:18. In classical Greek πληγὰς ἐμβάλλειν. Plummer, op. cit., p. 287. Cicero (De Finibus iv 24.66) uses vulnera imponere. H. Rackham, Cicero: De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1937), p. 372.

<sup>18</sup> Jericho was at that time pre-eminently a city of priests, so that priests were continually moving to and fro between Jericho and Jerusalem. Geldenhuys, op. cit., p. 314.



to Jerusalem, passed by that section of the highway. When he saw the man, he quickly moved to the other side of the road and hurried on his way. Shortly after this a Levite came along this road also. When he saw the man, he came up fairly close to the unconscious man, and decided that he could not be of any help, so he, too, continued on his journey. But then another traveler happened by this place. He was a Samaritan, a member of a people who were at enmity with the Jews.<sup>19</sup> Despite a Samaritan's tendency to hate all Jews, this man, seeing him lie there just barely breathing, felt sorry<sup>20</sup> for him and decided to help him. Quickly he went to the wounded man and treated his cuts and bruises. He took some wine and oil<sup>21</sup> and poured<sup>22</sup> it into the open wounds and then bandaged<sup>23</sup> him carefully. Lifting the bruised man onto his donkey, he

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<sup>19</sup>Montefiore doubts that in the original parable the man was a Samaritan, but rather an Israelite, a layman. Montefiore, op. cit., pp. 466 f. See Appendix B for enmity between the two races.

<sup>20</sup>ἐπιλαχχνίσθη -- to be moved as to one's bowels. In the Greek poets the bowels were regarded as the seat of the more violent passions, but by the Hebrews it was the seat of the tender affections. J. H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Co., 1889), p. 584.

<sup>21</sup>Greek physicians commended oil and wine (Theophrastus, Enquiry into Plants ix 11.1). A. Hort, Theophrastus: Enquiry into Plants (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1916), II, 268. Roman physicians agreed. Trench, Notes on the Parables of our Lord, p. 257. The Jews regarded it as the common dressing for wounds (Shabbath 134a). Epstein, op. cit., VIII, 673.

<sup>22</sup>ἐπιχέων -- Cf. Gen. 28:18; Lev. 5:11.

<sup>23</sup>κατέδησεν τὰ τραύματα -- Cf. τραύμα ἔστιν καταδέσσει (Sir. 27:21).

carried him to a nearby inn.<sup>24</sup> Here at the roadside hotel the Samaritan cared for him that day. On the following morning, no doubt because business necessitated, he had to leave. However, he did not depart until he had made provisions for his patient. In advance he paid the innkeeper the man's keep, two pence,<sup>25</sup> and requested him to care for the victim. The innkeeper promised to do so, for he knew that this Samaritan was a trustworthy man and when he made his return trip, he would pay him anything more that would be owed him. Having made these arrangements, the Samaritan left.

Now the Lord turns to the lawyer and asks him which of these men kept the law by being a neighbor to the man who was beaten. What could the man answer, but the obvious? The Lord's parable was so clear that there could be no doubt as to who showed that he truly loved his neighbor, "He that showed mercy on him." This is what must be done if the law is to be kept.

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<sup>24</sup> πανδοχεῖον -- a colloquial word for inn. H. Kennedy, Sources of New Testament Greek (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1895), p. 74. There are ruins of two inns about halfway between Bethany and Jericho. A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (New York: Harper and Brothers Co., 1930), II, 154.

<sup>25</sup> δηνάρια -- originally the denarius was worth 18¢ to 20¢. In the period from 217 B.C. to Nero -- 14¢; after Nero -- 12¢; in the third century -- 6¢. T. H. Peck, Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities (New York: American Book Co., 1896), p. 495. In the Mishnah (Menhoth 13.8) four denaria is the price of a lamb fit for sacrifice. H. Danby, The Mishnah (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 512.

Looking first at the two who passed by the wounded man, we see examples of what stewardship is not. These two men were not driven by the inner urgings of love. The priest was by birth and by his office the brother of all his race. A soldier wounded in battle would rejoice to see a surgeon come by; so should the fallen man have rejoiced at seeing a priest.<sup>26</sup> But he did not pause! The Levite was even the more cruel. He came up close, saw the condition of the man, and went on. Although they were taught that if a brother's ox or ass fell, they were to help (Deut. 22:4; Ex. 23:5), here a brother was lying, and he hid himself (Is. 58:7).

Of course, these men no doubt had very fine sounding excuses for their neglect of love. They might have felt that it was not their business to stop and help. They might be willing to report the case to a Traveler's Aid Society, but beyond that they were not concerned.<sup>27</sup> Then, too, if they stopped, they would become easy prey for the same band of robbers. Perhaps the priest, knowing that the Levite was coming, considered the work fitter for him, while the Levite, looking at the beaten man, figured that it was no use to help him. Whatever the excuse they thought of, these men had failed in their stewardship, failed to show love as the guide of their lives. There is an interesting tale told in the Talmud of a

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<sup>26</sup>Dods, op. cit., pp. 261 f.

<sup>27</sup>H. E. Luccock, Studies in the Parables of Jesus (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1917), p. 59.

Nahum of Ginzu who acted in a similar manner as the priest and the Levite. Carrying a gift to his father-in-law, he met a leper who begged for alms. "On my way back," answered Nahum. But on his return he found the leper dead. Nahum was so contrite for his abuse of his duty, that he prayed God to strike him blind, which God did.<sup>28</sup>

To act as did the priest and Levite is as if

the English consul in some Italian port, in passing along the street, saw an Englishman being assaulted and in danger of his life, but instead of interfering turned into a side street, trying to persuade himself that the man was not an Englishman, or that the quarrel was not serious, though he saw blood.<sup>29</sup>

It sounds ridiculous that a person would act that way, but that is the way of the world. How often do we not find people who read in a paper an exciting account of a famine in some part of the world or some other kind of calamity; but when they come to a sentence intimating that subscriptions will be received at such and such a place, they pass to another column.<sup>30</sup> The reason? Their lives are not motivated by the power which drove the Samaritan. They did not make stewardship a matter of love.

The Samaritan is an example of a man who was motivated by love. This is shown by his actions. He was endangered in the same manner that the priest and Levite were. Every

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<sup>28</sup>Toanith 21a. Epstein, op. cit., XIII, 104 ff.

<sup>29</sup>Dods, op. cit., p. 263.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 266.

moment that he lingered on the scene gave the robbers greater opportunity to add him to their list of victims. But he did not give his own precarious position a thought. His only concern was for this man who needed help.

Another important factor can never be forgotten. This man was a Samaritan, a man who was at enmity with all Jews.<sup>31</sup> The Jews had excommunicated him from their company and among the Jews his name was synonymous with heretic (Jn. 8:48). In fact, our Lord calls a Samaritan a "stranger" (Lk. 17:18). But who the object of his love was seemed to make no difference--men of different nationality or race, enemy or friend, all are the objects of a steward's concern.

It might be noted also that the Samaritan was not out looking for such an opportunity. It came as he was going about his daily business. But he had his eyes open for the opportunity. That is the way with a charity-minded Christian. He does not run about trying to find a chance to help somebody, but rather he lives his ordinary life, keeping his eyes open for every instance in which he might show his love. Thus the action of the Samaritan indicates to us that if a man is motivated by love in his stewardship living, his concern is not for himself, but for the man in need, regardless who he is. And such love shows itself every time the opportunity arises in the course of his life.

So stewardship is a matter of love. Where does one ob-

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<sup>31</sup>See Appendix B.

tain this motivating power? The lawyer asked, "Whom shall I love?" This proved that he did not understand about love, for he wanted it set down what and how much he was to do. No one with his heart filled with love would have asked this question. Love never seeks limits. Jesus realized this. He realized that the man was seeking an answer to love on the basis of the law. Consequently, he replied, "This do!" Christ does not imply that it is possible to love as the tables of the law demand. The Word is irrevocable. He who observes the law perfectly will live. But with sinful man that is impossible. Thus Christ meets this lawyer on his own ground, so as to make him realize his guilt and weakness.

The action of the Samaritan, on the other hand, showed a man who was well-disposed toward his fellowmen. Neighborly love was a natural thing for him. There was something inside of him that made the difference. He would not have asked the question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The inheritance was already his, for it showed itself in his impulse to be neighborly. "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14). Being inheritors we gain the impulse and disposition to love the brethren.

To the man of the world the motive for philanthropy is the common good or a benefit for society. Scripture does not teach such a motive for charity, neither in this parable nor elsewhere. Rather, the reason Christians perform deeds

of love is as Kantonen says:<sup>32</sup>

The motivation for their action is grateful love. "And inasmuch as we love not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18), we shoulder the responsibility of Christian Stewardship.

This grateful love can only refer to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is probably at this point that the Church Fathers were not so far wrong in thinking of the Samaritan as the Savior. There is at least a similarity between what the Samaritan did for the wounded traveler and what Christ does for the sinner. For our Great Physician is He who strengthened the sick, and bound up the broken-hearted (Is. 61:1). In this healing act of forgiveness the Christian gains the ability and the desire to love and shoulder his steward's duties. Probably the clearest presentation of the importance of the grace of Christ in motivating stewardship living is found in Paul's exhortation to the Corinthian Christians (2 Cor. 8:9).<sup>33</sup> Throughout the two chapters in Second Corinthians Paul speaks about grace as a gift of giving, that which springs from the example and power of God's grace in Christ Jesus. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." Christ enriches us in the forgiveness of our sins, and by

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<sup>32</sup>Kantonen, op. cit., p. 274.

<sup>33</sup>Roland E. Grumm, "The Principles of Christian Giving According to Second Corinthians Eight and Nine" (Unpublished Bachelor's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1955), pp. 16-26.

this forgiveness we have a new life--a life which through the love of God has the power and desire to love as He has loved. In this manner love springs from our hearts, a motivation of new desires that wishes to consecrate all our resources for the cause of Him who loved so greatly.

To realize that in everything we are responsible to God is a very important element in the stewardship life. However, if the only reason for trying to keep this responsibility is out of a necessity to do this or do that, we fail and we will be wrong. The motive for service in the kingdom is a love that has been engrafted into our hearts from above. In that love can we only gain desires and motives such as the Samaritan portrayed. And in that love also do we find forgiveness for our failures and the strength to go on to greater heights as stewards in the kingdom.



## CHAPTER V

### A PLANNED STEWARDSHIP LIFE

According to the parables which have been studied up to this point, it has been evident that stewardship involves very much an active performance in life. The steward has a job to do, there is the responsibility of a position to execute, talents and pounds to work with, opportunities to show our love and concern for the brother. Now the parables show us that this activity of stewardship must be planned, the cost of this performance should be counted, and wisdom obtained from above ought to be utilized. Two parables have been chosen to bring this point out. The first one, actually two short illustrations, is the parable of Building a Tower and Waging a War. In this the necessity of planning is emphasized. Then on the basis of the parable of the Unjust Steward, we will discover that the Lord encourages the use of cleverness and wisdom for our service of the Lord.

These two short pictures (Lk. 14:28-33) of the Building of a Tower and the Waging of a War<sup>1</sup> are in the midst of a section of an address by the Lord on discipleship. Just prior to the parable of the Lord, addressing all the people, He tells them that if they desire to be disciples,

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Deut. 20:10 ff.: instructions to Israel for battle.

they had better realize what it is going to mean. It is going to cost! Because discipleship is a dedicated service to the Lord, it means that the work of the Lord comes ahead of father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters. It might also be that one's life will be demanded. The cost of discipleship might be compared to bearing a cross.

This is the price of discipleship. This is also the price of being a steward. These two words, disciple and steward, are very similar, describing the Christian life from two slightly different aspects. The disciple is pictured as a follower of Christ. The steward describes the disciple as fulfilling a responsibility of service to the Lord. Thus we find Christ training his "followers" to bear responsibility, sending them out two by two (Lk. 10:1). Consequently, when Christ says in these two illustrations that we must calculate the risks involved in discipleship, this has many implications also for the steward of Christ. The stories themselves will point this out.

If a man should desire to build a watchtower<sup>2</sup> in his vineyard, what will he do? Why, he will sit down,<sup>3</sup> take

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<sup>2</sup> πύργον--this could be a tower in the city wall like that by the Pool of Siloam (Lk. 13:4), but more likely a watchtower in a vineyard (Matt. 21:33).

<sup>3</sup> καθίσας--suggests long and serious consideration. Cf. Virgil, Aeneid x 159. J. Conington and H. Nettleship, The Works of Virgil (London: Whittaker and Co., 1875), III, 242.

an estimate<sup>4</sup> of the materials,<sup>5</sup> figure if he can afford to neglect his crops during the period he and his servants are building the structure, and then make a detailed blueprint of the job. All these important matters must be considered, because, if he will not be able to complete<sup>6</sup> the tower, what benefit will there be in all the labor that was put into the building? In addition to this, how ridiculous a half-finished tower would look! When people would see it, they would just laugh and make fun<sup>7</sup> of the builder and say, "Look, this fellow<sup>8</sup> was so foolish that he began building a tower without having made sufficient plans so as to have the means to finish it!"

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<sup>4</sup>ψηφίζεαι--only here and Rev. 13:18 in the New Testament. From ψῆφος, a stone, which was used in voting and so counting. To vote was to cast a pebble (τίθημι ψῆφον). Luke records Paul's speech in which he tells of "casting a pebble"--voting for the death sentence (Acts 26:10). A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (New York: Harper and Brothers Co., 1930), II, 301.

<sup>5</sup>ἀπαρτισμόν--Cf. ἐξηρτισμένους in 2 Tim. 3:17. In Greek literature found only in Dion. Hal., De Comp. Verb. xxiv, and Apoll. Dyse., De Adv., p. 532,7. Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke (Fifth Edition; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1951), p. 365.

<sup>6</sup>ἐκτελέσαι--nowhere else in the New Testament. Cf. Deut. 32:45; 2 Chron. 4:5; 2 Macc. 15:9; Dan. 3:40.

<sup>7</sup>ὄστος--used in a contemptuous manner. Lk. 4:22; 5:21; 7:39,49; 9:9; 13:32; 15:2.

<sup>8</sup>ἐμπαίζεω--to play with, trifle with, thence to mock. Used in Passion story of Christ being mocked: Matt. 27:41, 29; Mk. 15:20; Lk. 23:36. J. H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Co., 1889), p. 208.

Let us consider also the difficulties of a king,<sup>9</sup> who finds himself in a circumstance in which he should go forth to fight a battle<sup>10</sup> against his bitter enemy, the neighboring ruler. What does such a man do? The wise monarch sits down to do some planning. He must count the advantages and disadvantages he might have--the size of his army, their training, their weapons, all compared to the fighting men of his foe. And if he can only muster up ten thousand troops to battle the enemy's twenty thousand-man army, greater caution and concern must mark any further planning. Perhaps, if his troops are better warriors, he might risk a battle. Possibly he could arrange a surprise attack against the other king and the advantage would be with the attackers. But if<sup>11</sup> in such consideration this monarch can only visualize

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<sup>9</sup>A remarkable parallel to this parable is found in Xenophon's Memorabilia iii 6.8. E. C. Marchant, Xenophon: Memorabilia and Oeconomicus (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938), pp. 206-209.

<sup>10</sup>συμβαλεῖν εἰς πόλεμον--to encounter in war, or fight a battle. Πόλεμον is rendered "battle" in 1 Cor. 14:8; Rev. 9:9. The verb is intransitive as in 1 Macc. 4:34; 2 Macc. 8:23; 14:17. The more common expression is συμβάλλειν εἰς μάχην (Josephus, Antiq. 6,79). S. A. Naber, Flavii Iosephi: Opera Omnia (Lipsiae: B. G. Teubneri, 1888), II, 18.

<sup>11</sup>εἰ δὲ μή γε --frequent in Luke who never uses εἰ δὲ μή. Luke's phrase is stronger and follows both negative (Lk. 14:32; Matt. 9:17; 2 Cor. 11:16) and affirmative sentences (Lk. 10:6; 13:9; Matt. 6:1). Plummer, op. cit., p. 365. It is found in Plato, Republic iv 425E. C. Fr. Hermann, Plato Dialogi (Lipsiae: B. G. Teubneri, 1903), IV, 110. Cf. Herodotus iv 120.4. A. D. Godley, Herodotus (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1931), I, 375.

defeat in battle, he would be wisest if he would send an ambassador to this powerful enemy while he and his army are still some distance away, in order that a peace treaty may be arranged and his soldiers and his kingdom saved.

The Savior concludes the parables, again emphasizing the great cost of discipleship. A man's whole life must go into such a concern, so that all his possessions take a back seat to a well thought-out committance to the Lord and His service.

Many interpreters look at these two short stories in different ways,<sup>12</sup> but there seems to be only one chief thought that the Lord was trying to bring home to these people. And that was this: to serve Me in My Kingdom is going to take effort and time; it will mean forsaking attachments to worldly things; it might include suffering. Consequently, if you are going to be My disciple, you had better plan on this and prepare to meet all obstacles, whether they be obstacles which an ordinary man might encounter who could erect a tower, or whether he has great abilities and performs his discipleship in the class with kings who wage war.

This means to the person who is contemplating becoming a disciple that he had better think the matter over seri-

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<sup>12</sup>Cf. J. Oosterzee, The Gospel According to Luke (Trans. by Schaff and Starbuck; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), p. 231. Cf. also J. Ylvisaker, The Gospels (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1932), p. 490.

ously. For if a person recklessly takes upon himself the responsibility of being a disciple, he is going to fail and be ridiculed as the tower builder would be with an unfinished structure. Yet, it seems there are many young folks today who stand before the altar on their confirmation day and pledge themselves to be disciples of the Lord who have not counted the cost. For shortly thereafter they find they cannot bear up under the cross. It is not fun to forsake the company of one's worldly friends, some say, even though they lead one into un-disciple-like atmospheres. It is not fair to consider discipleship above devotion to the loved one, others say, hence one should join his church regardless of what it teaches. Such people have left towers unfinished. And whoever realizes what the dedication of a person's life at confirmation really means knows that such a person has made a fool of himself--a sad, pitiful fool to be sure. What makes the occasion so pitiful is the fact that outward service is an indication of inner life. Therefore, a man who has recklessly sent his ten thousand troops against vastly superior forces has lost everything--life, discipleship, and even the Master. The cost must be counted.

For the veteran in discipleship there is a lesson here also. Although he has experienced much of the suffering that goes with being a disciple and realizes that it is suffering only from the viewpoint of man, yet there is a continual demand upon him and a continual risk of not being able to per-

form the tasks--to complete the towers and win the battles. Man's evil self incessantly plagues the disciple to let up, to become careless about the cost. One is tempted to think that he has done his part in serving; there is no need to worry about all those demands that are made. And since outward concern and performance is a sign of the inward condition of the soul, such negligence may mean failure and loss of discipleship. To avert this failure the Lord gave these two short parables in order to stress the disciple's, and the steward's need for considering the risks involved.

Although the primary point of these two illustrations is to emphasize the need for counting the cost of discipleship, secondary thoughts may be suggested also. For example, Oosterzee<sup>13</sup> finds in the planning of the tower builder a method which the Christian may also follow as he considers the demands made upon his life. The man in the story attacked his task in this manner. First, he formulated a great plan of the project in his mind (θέλω). Then he sat down and considered carefully what was required for the carrying out of the plan (καθίστας ψηφίζει). Thirdly, he did not start to execute his plan before he was well persuaded that he really had the material to finish it.

The Christian disciple and steward attacks the project of service in the Kingdom. How should he go about it? First

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<sup>13</sup>Oosterzee, op. cit., p. 231.

he formulates in his mind the great plan of kingdom work. And where does he find this but in the Word of God? Hearing God's Message, he not only understands what it is all about, but he desires (θέλω) to participate in such service. So, then, he sits down and counts the cost. He has his natural desires which lead him away from the work. He will have to give some of those things up--at least it is giving up from the world's point of view. But, on the other hand, he does have some God-given abilities; he has learned in God's Word that he has a responsibility to God, and he also has come to know the love of a Savior who forgives him and promises power to support him in this endeavor. Now he is ready to serve his discipleship. But wait, one last check before he jumps into it. Can he make it? Can he hold true till the end? With God's help he can; so with a prayer on his lips he strides boldly into the service of discipleship and the performance of stewardship.

Such planning is done with divine wisdom. This is the kind of wisdom that was shown by the king. For when he saw that it was impossible to overcome the odds against him, he went about arranging for a peace treaty.<sup>14</sup> It probably took quite a bit for that king to swallow his pride and resort to diplomacy. But the kingdom was at stake. Thus it is with a

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<sup>14</sup>Hubbard would disagree with this interpretation. He considered the king a coward for sending the ambassador. G. H. Hubbard, The Teachings of Jesus in Parables (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1907), p. 263.



disciple. The kingdom is at stake, and only a divinely bestowed wisdom makes it possible for God's stewards to swallow their pride and go on to sacrifice in the work. A glorious work it is, but oh, the planning that it requires.

The Lord employed another parable later on (Lk. 16:1-13) to stress wisdom and cleverness as an important aspect of stewardship. This parable is commonly called "The Unjust Steward." This word-picture has always seemed to present difficulties for the interpreter.<sup>15</sup> Most of the trouble arises because of the dishonesty, or at least lack of integrity, of the steward, whose action is commended by the Lord. However, this problem is easily solved if the details are not pressed, but only the main point is sought. Besides, the Savior Himself calls him an "unjust steward."

Turning to His disciples the Lord gave them this parable. A certain wealthy man had a large estate and many various business affairs. To handle his vast holdings he entrusted much of his business to a steward. But it seems that it was not long before the report<sup>16</sup> came back to the lord that this

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<sup>15</sup> For critical views: C. H. Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom (London: Nisbet and Co., Ltd., 1950), pp. 29 f. C. G. Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1927), p. 527.

<sup>16</sup> διεβλήθη--implies accusing behind a person's back (Dan. 3:8; 2 Macc. 3:11; 4 Macc. 4:1. Cf. Herodotus vii 110.1. H. R. Dietsch, Herodoti: Historiarum Libri IX (Lipsiae: B. G. Teubneri, 1899), II, 302. Thucydidis iii 4.4. C. Hude, Thucydidis Historiae (Lipsiae: B. G. Teubneri, 1908), I, 193. Eusebius says of women in adultery--διαβλήθεις ἐπὶ τοῦ κυρίου (H. E. iii 39.16). J. P. Migne, Patrologiae: Patrum Graecorum (Paris: n.p., 1930), XX, 300.

steward had been throwing away<sup>17</sup> the master's profits. At hearing this the lord was very angry. Could such a thing have been going on behind his back? At once he called the steward into his office and asked him, "What is this I hear?"<sup>18</sup> Give account<sup>19</sup> of your stewardship! How could you do this to me? I have no alternative but to relieve you of this trust." The steward was stunned for a moment, muttering to himself, "What shall I do? I am left without a job. I have always been an overseer and I surely could not hire myself out as a laborer in the fields,<sup>20</sup> and I am too proud to go begging alms."<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup>δυσκάρπιζων--same word as in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:13).

<sup>18</sup>τί τοῦτο ἀκούω--can be taken three ways: 1) make τί to be equal to τί ἐστιν--what is this I hear? 2) take τί to be exclamatory, less likely; 3) τί taken as "why"--why do I hear this? (Acts 14:15). Robertson, *op. cit.*, II, 215.

<sup>19</sup>ἀπόδος τὸν λόγον--could have two interpretations: 1) a final account previous to dismissal, which is already resolved on; 2) an investigation into the truth or falsehood of the accusation--produce your books that I may judge for myself (Matt. 12:36; Acts 19:40; Rom. 14:12; Heb. 13:17; 1 Peter 4:5). This latter would be the reasonable course, but not necessarily the one taken by an Eastern magnate, who might rush from absolute confidence to utter distrust without any inquiry into the facts. A. E. Bruce, "The Synoptic Gospels," The Expositor's Greek Testament (New York: George H. Doran Co., n.d.), p. 584.

<sup>20</sup>σκάπτειν--cf. σκάπτειν ἦν οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι (Aristophanes, Aves 1432). B. B. Rogers, Aristophanes (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), II, 262.

<sup>21</sup>ἐπαίτειν--occurs here and 18:35 (cf. LXX Ps. 108:10; Sir. 40:28). It means to ask again and again, so to beg. Sophocles, Oedipus at Colonus 1365: "I beg my bread." F. Storr, Sophocles (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1932), I, 270 f.

I have it!<sup>22</sup> I know what I can do so that I might gain some friends who will see that I am taken care of. It may be that they will even recommend me for another position as steward."

So he arranged a meeting with his master's debtors,<sup>23</sup> calling them in one by one. To the first he said, "How much did I arrange for you to pay my lord?"<sup>24</sup> The man replied, "As I understood it, my debt was a hundred baths of oil."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *ἔγνω* is the dramatic or tragic aorist used in the classics, chiefly in poetry and in dialogue. It gives greater vividness than the use of the present would. Bruce, op. cit., p. 584.

<sup>23</sup> Two kinds of arrangements were made with tenants on the lord's land: 1) the farmer is called a Shetar Arisuth, and the lessee received a certain portion of the produce (Babba Bathra 46b); 2) the farmer entered into a contract for payment, either in produce, in which case he was called a Chokher, or paid a certain annual rental in money, in which case he was called a Sokher (Tosephta Demai vi 2). Possibly the lord's debtors were among this second group. Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), II, 273.

<sup>24</sup> Possibly the steward, in arranging the affairs for the lord, made the bills larger than what was really owed the lord, out of which the steward took a sizable "commission." By cutting the debts, he is forfeiting his commission in order to get on the good side of these men. This idea is suggested by Plummer, op. cit., p. 383; and alluded to by Bruce, op. cit., p. 585.

<sup>25</sup> According to Josephus (Antiq. viii 2.9) a bath was equal to 72 sextaries. W. Whiston, The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., n.d.), 242. A sextarius (a Roman measure) is equal to .96 pints. H. T. Peck, Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities (New York: American Book Co., 1896), p. 1698. Thus a bath would equal about eight and a half gallons. However, Edersheim explains that Josephus operated with the "Wilderness" measures, while he is certain that "Galilean" measures were meant here. A bath according to this measurement is larger, equal to 39 litres, or ten plus gallons. Edersheim, op. cit., II, 268.

The steward replied, "Take your bill<sup>26</sup> and quickly write fifty." And when another debtor came to see him, he followed the same procedure, asking, "What did I arrange with you to owe my lord?" This man replied, "A hundred cors<sup>27</sup> of wheat." "Take your bill, sir, and make it only eighty cors." And thus the steward altered the debt arrangements with all the lord's tenants, so that all of them felt quite well-disposed toward him.

The Lord<sup>28</sup> praised this unjust steward. He commended

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<sup>26</sup> *ὑπόγραφα* is sometimes used in Rabbinic writings for an acknowledgment of debt (Midrash Shemoth Rabba 15). Ibid., p. 272. The Mishnah (Kelim xxiv 7) enumerates three kinds of tablets: those where the wood was covered with papyrus; those where it is covered with wax; those where the wood is left plain. H. Danby, The Mishnah (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 639. The wax-covered tablets had a little vessel holding the wax attached to it (Kelim xvii 17). Ibid., p. 631. The writing instrument consisted of two parts--the hard-pointed writer and the blotter, which was flat and thick for smoothing out letters which had been graven in the wax (Kelim xiii 2). Ibid., p. 622. Acknowledgments of debts were ordinarily written on such wax-covered tablets (Pirquey Abboth iii 17). Ibid., p. 452. Special provisions were established regarding erasures (Babba Bathra 161, 163). I. Epstein, The Babylonian Talmud (London: The Soncino Press, 1935), XXVI, 705-711. The most formal debts required three witnesses to sign. Loc. cit. But the acknowledgments of debts for purchases or as in this case, it was not uncommon to dispense altogether with witnesses (Babba Bathra x 8). Danby, op. cit., p. 381.

<sup>27</sup> A cor equals ten ephah or bath. Edersheim, op. cit., II, 269. A cor was equal to a field 1500 cubits long and fifty cubits wide of wheat (Babba Metsia 105). Epstein, op. cit., XXIV, 603.

<sup>28</sup> Some commentators would take the *κύριος* of verse eight as not referring to Christ, but to the master. Such an interpretation would be difficult, for how could he praise the steward after dismissing him. Also the last part of the verse would be strange if spoken by him. J. Jeremias, Die Gleichnisse Jesu (Zurich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1947), pp. 23 f.

the man because he exhibited brilliance in his maneuver. And this example was used to show this man's cleverness, because the sons of this world<sup>29</sup> whose life principle is based on worldly things, show forth much more craftiness than do those sons whose existence is in the Light.<sup>30</sup> "Yes, I am telling you," the Lord says, "use this mammon<sup>31</sup> which is so often used in an unrighteous manner, and utilizing it as Children of Light help your brothers. For when material wealth becomes useless, when you enter the eternal mansions above,<sup>32</sup> you will find

<sup>29</sup> τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου--in a great measure agrees with אֵלֶּיךָ דְּהַיּוֹנָה--this age, the time before the dominion of the Messiah is present (in contrast with the מָחָר דְּהַיּוֹנָה, the age that is coming after the advent of the Messiah). In the New Testament the expression "this age" or "this world" is used in the Messianic time in reference to the present world in so far as it is still outside Christ and under the power of sin and Satan. N. Goldenhuys, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), pp. 418 f.

<sup>30</sup> υἱοὶ φωτός also in 1 Thess. 5:5 and John 12:36 (cf. τέκνα φωτός of Eph. 5:8). These should probably be taken as a quotation of Is. 16:8, or the saying of Jesus preserved there. At any rate, this is a familiar saying at this time. Adolf Deissmann, Bible Studies (Trans. by A. Grieve; Second Edition; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1909), p. 163. Cf. Enoch 108:11 f.: "I will summon the spirits of the good who belong to the generation of light . . . ." R. H. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1915), II, 281. Also a rabbi in Rabbinical writings is addressed as the "Lamp of Israel" (Berakhoth 28b). Epstein, op. cit., XXXI, 173.

<sup>31</sup> Chaldean--מַמְוֹנָה, to be derived from מָוֶן; hence what is trusted in. Then in New Testament it comes to mean riches (Matt. 6:24; Is. 16:13) where it is personified and opposed to God. The Septuagint translates the Hebrew מַמְוֹנָה in Is. 33:6 θησαυροί, and in Ps. 36:3 πλοῦτος. Thayer, op. cit., p. 388.

<sup>32</sup> αἰωνίου σκηνῶς--LXX of Ps. 14:1; 26:5.

that all those you have helped with that wealth will greet you with Allelujachs."

It must be remembered also that not only is the steward of light to be wise in his ways, but faithfulness is very much a part of his stewardship. For by being faithful in this little matter of using material possessions cleverly for the Lord, one shows that one has been faithful to the Lord in everything. Emphasizing this last point, the Savior concludes.

This parable is clearly a stewardship lesson in the use of material wealth and possessions, here called "the mammon of unrighteousness." Some commentators<sup>33</sup> and also Augustine<sup>34</sup> wished to explain this description of money as that which was obtained wrongly. This money, ill-gotten though it be, should be used for the kingdom of God. However, this is not the proper idea of this expression. Mammon is described as unrighteous, because riches are so often used in an evil manner. How often is not injustice involved in the accumulation of wealth? For this reason, and because it has so frequently tempted men to greediness, Christ considered mammon as being opposed to God (Lk. 16:13). Besides, material possessions are a very unstable thing, here today and gone tomorrow, and

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<sup>33</sup>This idea comes forth in Montefiore who feels that Jesus was not speaking to the disciples, but to tax-collectors and sinners (15:1). Montefiore, op. cit., p. 529.

<sup>34</sup>Sermon lxiii. P. Schaff, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (First Series; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1888), VI, 450.

as poor a security as the rich fool discovered it to be. Yet, despite the attribute given this wealth, the Lord says it is to be used and He magnifies the importance of a right administration of it.

And for what is this mammon to be used? In the parable our Lord says we are to make friends with it. These friends are not named, but certainly, considering that He followed this narrative with the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, He must have been thinking of the poor. Plummer<sup>35</sup> suggests this also, especially because he feels that the poor are the representatives of Christ (Matt. 25:40). However, we need not make the poor the exclusive objects of our administration of wealth. As Fritz says:

The best investment we can make with our money is to put it into the service of the Lord, especially into the service of His Church. In fact that should be the ultimate aim and purpose of all our money-making.<sup>36</sup>

It is interesting to note that our Savior suggests that Christians in many ways should follow the example of worldlings in the administration of this mammon. One thing which we can learn from them is the ardor with which they attack something that interests them.

The "sons of this age" in pursuit of pleasure show no lack of ardor. They will tax body and mind to their limit to win the goal. Is golf their pleasure? They will stint no money for clubs or instruction. They

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<sup>35</sup>Plummer, op. cit., p. 385.

<sup>36</sup>John H. C. Fritz, Church Finances (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), pp. 23 f.

will study the mysteries of stance, grip, swing, "follow." They will recite the incantations of the game ("Keep your eye on the ball") with a faith as of celebrants of some high ritual. Disappointment must not conquer them. If they fail a hundred times, they return with courage renewed, resolved to achieve.<sup>37</sup>

And the children of this world are the finest examples of a dedicated fervor with regard to money.

The worldling in pursuit of money shows a consuming eagerness. He labors early and late. He allows himself few vacations. When the hard day is ended, he gives himself with the fervor of a saint to the study of "psychology of salesmanship." Barriers do not daunt him; they are erected to be overcome. His devotion to the quest of wealth is all-absorbing.<sup>38</sup>

Yes, this same kind of zeal the children of light should copy. But there is a difference. For their zeal is motivated by a different type of wisdom; not a wisdom of the world, but a wisdom from above. Therefore, the son of light shows fervor not for money in itself, but that such possession may be used for Christ and the kingdom.

And cleverness is certainly one of the major points of the parable. For it was by the brilliant plan that the steward conceived, he was able to extricate himself from his difficulties. With the same kind of brilliance and diplomacy should the child of God concern himself about the Church's program. Instead of acting in a repulsive manner driving people away from church, with a sincere humility and a sin-

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<sup>37</sup>G. A. Buttrick, The Parables of Jesus (New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1931), p. 121.

<sup>38</sup>Loc. cit.



cere diplomatic manner people may be won for the Gospel.

Some people are concerned about this parable because of the moral problem involved in the use of the example of an unjust man. As explained before, the unrighteousness is not commended, but the cleverness of the man. This action was a fraud, but a most ingenious fraud. He was a rascal, but a wonderfully clever rascal.<sup>39</sup> It is the shrewdness<sup>40</sup> that our Lord wanted to teach us, as He also wished to express when He exclaimed: "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matt. 10:16). This parable is in fact a challenge to reality. We must face the facts. The work of stewardship is to be done in the world. Where we may, as children of light, we should use the tactics of the men of the world.

And what is the result of such a stewardship? Why, all those "friends" who have been helped by our administration of the mammon are there in heaven waiting to greet our arrival. Paul pictured for the saints of Corinth (2 Cor. 9:14) how their gracious offerings for the church at Jerusalem would

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<sup>39</sup>H. D. A. Major, et al., The Mission and Message of Jesus (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1938), p. 584.

<sup>40</sup>A somewhat similar parable occurs in the Talmud (Vay-yikra Rabba 5) about a prudent farmer. When matters went badly with his farm, he dressed himself in his best, put on a cheerful mien, and so appeared before his landlord. By well-turned, flattering replies to the inquiries about the cattle and the crops, he so conciliated favor, that when the landlord finally inquires what he wished, and he requests a loan, he receives double the sum he had asked. Edersheim, op. cit., II, footnote, p. 267.

cause prayers of thanksgiving and longing of fellowship in the hearts of the recipients. In the parable being considered Christ places this scene in heaven. By no means is Christ saying that by almsgiving we can gain heaven, but rather, when we reach heaven--ours by faith in Christ, those who have been the object of our expression of faith will rejoice at our coming. For in helping these friends, we are serving the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 25:35 ff.).

This parable cannot be left without consideration, brief though it may be, of the last section. For the Lord's final word is an exhortation to faithfulness. The steward, although showing cleverness, was dishonest in his dealing with money matters. The son of light is to be clever, but he must be just. God is the owner of all that he has. He is responsible to Him. With this thought guiding at all times, the steward plans with all craftiness to use his material wealth for the glory of God.<sup>41</sup>

Two major thoughts are discovered in these two parables. First, it is evident that because of the great task that is involved in stewardship, or discipleship, a person must seriously consider all aspects of this stewardship before he goes into it, and also while he is a steward. At the same time

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<sup>41</sup>The early Fathers spoke much of this. Irenaeus ii 34. 3. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1896), I, 412. Also see Second Epistle of Clement of Rome viii. Ibid., I, 70. Hippolytus, Haeretics x 29. Ibid., V, 151.

the Lord instructs us that there are many things we can learn from the children of the world. They are clever in matters of their concern. In like manner the children of God can become wise using their possessions in a wise stewardship. Thus the Lord helps the steward to face his task of being faithful to his responsibility--God-given suggestions for a prayerful planning of the stewardship life.

## CHAPTER VI

### STEWARDSHIP IN VIEW OF THE JUDGMENT

It is very evident from the study of the eight parables that stewardship is a serious obligation. A Christian's responsibility as a steward is not subjectively determined. It is a must, for it stands in a direct relation to the judgment. As Dr. Arndt explains it:

The parable of the Talents and the similar one of the Pounds are too well known to require a long discussion. Let us merely remind ourselves that in them the Lord shows in words that pierce to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow that His teaching on stewardship is not just a pleasant, entertaining diversion, but it represents a page in the books of which we read, Rev. 20:12: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works."<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, a study of these parables would not be satisfactory, unless the aspect of judgment be emphasized. For almost every one of them pictures stewardship as working until the day when Christ will return.

What may the steward look for at the end of his stewardship? For him who has grossly misused his position, his responsibility, his opportunities, there can only be punishment. Here we have the example of the Wicked Servant (Matt.

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<sup>1</sup>W. Arndt, "Justification, Sanctification and Stewardship in Their Aim and Relation to Each Other," Concordia Theological Monthly, VIII (February, 1937), 110.

24:48). When his master returned suddenly to interrupt his crass mismanagement, the evil servant received his punishment-- he was cut asunder and appointed to his place with the hypocrites and the unfaithful. There is a marked note of severity which is impossible to soften. For the reward for abuse in this office is not just a rebuke, nor just a flogging, but an utter destruction which relegates the offender to the congregation of the hopeless. "When there is relaxation, then come the terrors."<sup>2</sup> It is serious to misuse one's stewardship.

In order that the severity of this punishment might not be construed by some to be just an outburst of anger, the Lord gave an explanation (Lk. 12:47,48). It is a principle of divine justice which regulates this reward of evil. The man who realizes clearly his duty and yet is led by his evil heart to such abuse will suffer greater punishment than he who was ignorant of what was expected of him.<sup>3</sup> This means that the Christian overseers and teachers who know more and know better shall receive the greater stripes if they fail.

It is important to note, in applying this warning to our stewardship life today, that we realize what would cause a steward to fail or abuse his stewardship. We read that in

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<sup>2</sup>P. Schaff, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (First Series; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1888), X, 466. Chrysostom, The Gospel of St. Matthew lxxvii.

<sup>3</sup>The Church Fathers made much of this idea of degrees of punishment. Augustine, City of God xxi 16. Ibid., XXIV, 377 f.

the case of the wicked servant, the abuse arose from his evil heart. A person who constantly has the power of Christ within him by faith cannot fail. But when he looks to himself and his own concerns as a steward, then he is driving Christ from him and placing himself under the condemnation which fell upon the wicked servant.

The parable of the Rich Fool pictures it in another manner. This man lost himself in the affairs of the world. He forgot that these riches of his were really the Lord's to be used to His glory. His trust was in riches, and consequently, when his soul was required of him, what could material wealth help him as he stood before the great Judge (Cf. Psalm 49). His whole life was centered, not in the treasures above, but in what he could gather for himself. Could such a man ever inherit a reward as the faithful do? Deissmann gives us a concrete example of such a man. Two generations after Paul (149 A.D.)

a Lycian millionaire, Opramoas of Rhodiapolis, thrust himself forward with boastful ostentation among the crowd of inscriptions from Asia Minor. On the walls of the heroön destined for the reception of his mortal body we find still today high upon seventy records which, in order that his name might not perish, he engraved in marble, immortalising his money, benefactions and other services, as well as the honours he received from emperors, procurators, and municipal associations. Thanks principally to modern archeology this man with the full-sounding name has attained his object: Opramoas is today, at least in a few scholar's studies, a sort of celebrity. But where is his soul? So far as it was not identical with his treasures, it is not to be found on all those great marble tablets. And if we were to receive it from the hand of the angel commissioned to demand it of the rich man in the night, it

would not be a soul that felt at home with the poor souls of the New Testament.<sup>4</sup>

Abuse of stewardship is really rebellion against God.

The Creator has set man into the world to glorify Him, to attend to the affairs of His kingdom. He sent His Son to die on Calvary's cross, so that by faith the man of God might be a part of that kingdom. The Holy Spirit is sent into man's heart to give him the power and ability to fulfill this stewardship. If man rejects these acts of God towards him, he is a rebel, precisely like the angry citizens in the parable of the Pounds who did not want the king to rule them (Lk. 19:14). What was their end? They were slain before the king's very eyes. It is a serious thing to fall into the hands of the living God. So also it is a serious thing to abuse the stewardship which God has given His children. For by such abuse they exhibit their rebellion, and thus their fate.

But there is a more subtle way of misusing this responsibility than by this crass covetousness, rebellion, and wickedness; that is by neglect. Two of our parables portrayed this--that of the Talents, and of the Pounds. Looking first at the story of the Talents, we find there the neglectful servant returning an unused piece of money. He did not have as much as the others, but he had something to work with. Yet it remained unused. This servant had a long time to fig-

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<sup>4</sup>Adolf Deissmann, Light from the Ancient East (Trans. by L. Stracham; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1927), p. 294.

ure how he could live up to his trust, but he waited too long, and he found the day of judgment come upon him. Why did he not use this opportunity to serve his master? His accusation against the lord shows this. He thought of his lord as a hard money-making Jew, who expected results from practically nothing. He overlooked the master's love when he said to the faithful men, "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord." He could not even see the justice in the lord's expecting faithfulness from his servants. Why? Because he himself was a self-seeking man, who was not interested in his master's affairs, but only in himself. So with animosity he challenges the lord, showing forth his faithlessness in his every action.

And the reward of such neglect? The opportunity to retrieve the stewardship has been lost, and the unprofitable servant is cast into outer darkness. Because the neglect came from unbelief, this man's punishment is with those in eternal darkness.

If the deliberate burying of one talent was punished so severely, how heinous it would be to leave ten talents unimproved . . . . And again, if the mere keeping unused was so grievous a fault, what would it be to squander or destroy.<sup>5</sup>

The result of neglect as shown in the parable of the Pounds is very similar. This wicked servant also left his pound unused, because he lost sight of his responsibility in his stewardship. And the reason for this could only be un-

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<sup>5</sup> Alfred Plummer, An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew (London: Elliot Stock, 1909), p. 347.



belief. However, Luke pictures the punishment for this unbelief differently than does Matthew. For here the only punishment that the servant is recorded to have suffered is that his pound has been taken from him. Some commentators<sup>5</sup> jump at this seeming slight rebuke to interpret it not as a loss of salvation, but just a disgrace. However, if a man who has become a Christian steward by the grace of God is deprived of that stewardship, what is left for him? Practicing his stewardship is the Christian's manner of showing that He is a child of God. If he cannot show by his stewardship living that he is a member of the Lord's kingdom, is there salvation with him? The result is the same as though Luke had said that this man was cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Again and again the Lord wishes to impress us with the serious consequence of a misguided stewardship. Stewardship living is living in view of the age that is to come.

However, the day of judgment does not only have punishment in store for the wicked, but the faithful will then receive the reward of their services. Both the parables of the Talent and the Pound stress this. Looking at the parable of the Pound we notice that the prince, and now the ruler, upon hearing the report of the two faithful servants, rewards them

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<sup>5</sup> N. Geldenhuys, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), p. 475. G. H. Lang, The Parabolic Teaching of Scripture (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1955), p. 222.

for their fidelity and the energy with which they used the abilities they were endowed with. The reward is rulership in the eternal kingdom. There are degrees in the salvation of the elect, even in the matter of faithfulness in stewardship. Therefore, we will find in that eternal land those who will have the high positions. Paul and Peter, Stephen and Philip, Aquila and Priscilla, these will have authority over ten eternal cities, for it was men and women like these who were quick to do business with their pound and receive ten pounds for their efforts. There is a reward for all who are faithful, but for the more energetic is the higher praise and greater crown.

By implication there is a secondary meaning to this reward of the prince. Daily the King of kings brings His stewards to account to check their faithfulness, for the Lord is looking for more and better workers and leaders in His kingdom. Thus there is a reward now while we are still in this age. This reward is threefold. First, there is the commendation of our Lord. Each time we read His Word and find that our lives by His grace are conforming more and more to His wishes, we hear the King say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Then there comes the reward of greater opportunity of service. The man who gives liberally from his material possessions to the Lord finds that his wealth increases. Is this for his own covetous ends? No, it is so that he may support the Lord's work even more liberally. In

like manner the Lord enlarges the servant's opportunities in other fields of stewardship. Thirdly, there is the reward of joy in the fellowship of Christ as we serve.<sup>6</sup> Thus by the daily rewards of fidelity, Christ has placed us in greater authority to serve our stewardship in a greater and more glorious manner.

The reward for faithfulness in stewardship is very much the same in the parable of the Talents. However, since the overlord is pictured not as a prince, but as a business man, a man with many slaves, there is a slightly different idea. Upon hearing the report of success in their dealings, the master tells the faithful stewards, "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord." To the slave in the ancient world to be asked to a banquet with the master and to dine with him meant freedom.<sup>7</sup> That is precisely the reward for the faithful steward, the eternal banquet with our Savior which signifies complete freedom from sin, death, and the devil.

Stewardship is a serious aspect of Christianity, for it is always placed directly into a relationship with the judgment. For the man who is not faithful to his trust this can

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<sup>6</sup>R. C. Long, Stewardship Parables of Jesus (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1931), pp. 56-58.

<sup>7</sup>H. T. Peck, Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities (New York: American Book Co., 1896), p. 1004. Some interpret  $\chi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}$  after Esther 9:17 (LXX) where it means entertainment, feast of joy. Chrysostom thought of it as the Messianic blessedness. J. P. Lange, The Gospel According to Matthew (Trans. by P. Schaff; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 444.

only mean the severest eternal punishment. But to the faithful steward, there is the reward of joy and glory. And how may the steward be certain of bringing his stewardship to a faithful conclusion? Only by the grace and mercy of God. In Christ he gains his strength and ability to serve his duty as the Lord wills. Therefore, from these parables the lesson to be gained is that in stewardship living the Christian must be watchful and prepare for judgment with the Lord's help.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

The eight parables chosen for this study convey many a profound thought to the Christian reader. It would be a worthwhile task to consider just any one of them for a thesis of this size. Discussion of the many different interpretations could be very enlightening, as would the various applications. However, it was the purpose of this thesis to discover only some of the basic principles of the stewardship life in these Scripture illustrations. Certainly it could never be claimed that every idea had been exhausted in the foregoing pages. It is hoped, though, that the basic message in regard to stewardship living has been discovered and communicated in this study. The following summary might well exhibit whether it has or not.

The first concern that was taken up was the responsibility to God for stewardship living. From God all our gifts have come. And now that He has made us His children, we have been given a duty to perform, a task to accomplish. And the Lord is concerned that we realize this trust and remain faithful to our stewardship. The Wise Steward provided a fine example of what the Lord had in mind. As this man, having been given the management of the master's household, faithfully performed his duty, so the Christian, having been given the management of some particular aspect of kingdom work, faith-

fully is to perform that responsibility.

Again, in the two parables of the Talents and the Pounds, this responsibility is defined a bit more clearly. We are servants who have been entrusted with the master's money. The master has said that this is to be used for the furthering of his business affairs or the kingdom. In one case the money is given out according to ability. If we live up to such a responsibility, we would go out and invest that money. In like manner the child of God has been entrusted with opportunities and gifts and possessions which our Savior desires to be used in the Church. If we live up to that responsibility, we would immediately go forth to take advantage of those opportunities and use those gifts and possessions for the advancement of His Church. The Christian has a definite responsibility to God to perform in some manner or other in the kingdom.

But these same parables illustrate how this responsibility is defied and God's gifts are misused. The Lord pictures a wicked servant who beats the slaves in his household. There is an evil servant who buries his talent, who hides his pound in a napkin. These are examples of men who have betrayed the Lord's trust; they have abused their stewardship; they have neglected their opportunities of service.

Christ gives us several stories to emphasize this misuse. There is the great sin of covetousness which leads the heart of Christians astray, leads them to defile their stewardship. Such was the case with the Rich Fool who put all his future

in his material possessions. This is a danger every steward must face when the Lord gives him wealth. For if wealth becomes so important that it enslaves the heart, then the Lord will say to that person also, "Thou Fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." The earthly treasures have robbed that man of heavenly treasures.

One more thing in regard to covetousness. It basically is selfishness. Consequently, it has the tendency of dulling a Christian's concern for his fellowmen. One of the most important responsibilities of the steward is to be concerned for the brethren, and that is exactly what the rich man did not do, as Lazarus lay at his gate. He learned his mistake, but too late. However, we today may learn from him, for Christ has warned us in the Word of the great catastrophe that occurs when a God-given stewardship is defiled.

For a steward to abuse his position is a serious offense. But what can a person do to remain faithful to his trust? At this juncture we point to the Good Samaritan. For in him we find how a child of God is able to fulfill his responsibility. We begin to find clues when we notice the priest and the Levite pass by, for here is a negative example. These men were guided by the law, and like the lawyer whose question opened the door for this parable they did only what they felt they had to do according to the law. The law is impossible to keep, so they interpreted it to their own liking, and thus perverted it. So the law will not motivate and empower a person to ful-

fill his duty properly. Then we notice the Samaritan. He stops to help, though it is dangerous to do so. He binds the wounds of the man, though he is of an enemy race. He takes him to an inn and cares for him, though he might be losing business by tarrying. This man is entirely different from the others. Why? Because he is driven by a God-given love that overflows into a self-denying, spontaneous desire to use every opportunity to complete his task as a steward. Yes, behind any successful stewardship must stand Christ and His forgiving love. For in Him only is the motivation and the ability to perform faithfully.

Another aspect of stewardship is discovered in the parables--it involves a serious planning. This is very necessary, because being a steward, or a disciple, is a costly vocation. From the point of view of a worldlying it means giving up everything. But embarking upon a life of stewardship living is as intricate as a man planning to build a watchtower in his vineyard, or a king going to war against overwhelming odds. Men in these circumstances sit down and seriously consider for a long time. The builder wants to know if he will be able to finish the tower. The king's actions will decide the future of the kingdom, and he might have to resort to diplomacy. So the Christian must realize what the whole program of stewardship is going to involve, what he must give up, but also what resources he may fall back upon. Consequently, he will have to give up many of



his earthly ties, but he can resort to a heavenly stock-pile for materials to do the job. This is a serious business, and it takes much planning.

It takes clever and crafty planning also. Christians are in a world full of business "sharks." The Lord says we can learn from them tactics which will be successful in stewardship living. Take for example the Unjust Steward, who maneuvered himself out of a tight spot. The man's action was unjust, but wisdom and brilliant planning for the kingdom should become a part of a steward's tools. In like manner with wisdom the Christian steward should use that material wealth, which so often is used for unrighteous things, and with it help the poor and bring people into the kingdom. For if with cleverness we use the mammon of unrighteousness to bring the gospel to someone and to alleviate suffering, those very people will greet us at the gate of heaven, thanking God for our stewardship. Thus faithfulness and cleverness may and should work together to the glory of God.

Finally, these parables illustrate that our stewardship is a very serious matter, because in it we stand in the shadow of the judgment. If we fail, if we abuse our trust, if we neglect our opportunities, the Lord holds out only eternal punishment. For by our failure it is evident that Christ, too, is gone from our hearts and earthly and selfish concerns have become our god. However, if we are faithful in our duty and energetic in our performance, regardless of the degree,

the Lord stands there waiting to offer the reward of eternal bliss. Yes, the reward might be different in proportion to how well a person has done, but we will enter into the joy of the Lord. Is it because we have been so powerful to fulfill our stewardship? Yes, it is, if we understand by that the reason we have so been able. For Christ in forgiving our sins made us new creatures. As new creatures we have the desire and strength to be stewards. Therefore, by our stewardship living we have shown that Christ lives in us. Because of Christ, then, we enter into the joy of the Lord. Can stewardship and Christ be separated? Never! And this is the real heart of stewardship living!

## APPENDIX A

### DIFFERENCES IN THE PARABLES OF THE TALENTS AND POUNDS

Because of the similarities between the parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14-30) and the parable of the Pounds (Lk. 19:11-27) the commentators are at variance with each other as to their independence of one another. For instance, such men as Juelicher, Weiss, H. Holzmann, Bultmann, and Kostermann feel that the two are just variant versions of the same story which Jesus told. Others like Strauss, Ewald, Harnack, Wellhausen, and T. W. Manson think that Luke has welded the parable of the Talents together with another. At the same time there are such noted men as Zahn, Plummer, and Schlatter who defend the independence of the two illustrations.<sup>1</sup>

As an example of the critical approach to these parables, let us look at Dodd's<sup>2</sup> explanation. He says the history of the pericope has three stages. First, it was told by Jesus with a pointed reference to the actual situation. Then, in the second stage, the early church used it for the purpose of giving advice, applying it as an illustration of the maxim: "To him that hath shall be given." The Matthew tradition suffered further "paraenetic" development, and the money was

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<sup>1</sup>N. Geldenhuys, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), pp. 476 f.

<sup>2</sup>C. H. Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom (London: Nisbet and Co., Ltd., 1950), pp. 152 f.

graded. In the third stage the "paraenetic" motive was supplemented by the "eschatological." In Matthew the unfaithful servant was cast into outer darkness. In Luke, however, this took different lines. Christ becomes a nobleman, who slays his enemies. Then the introduction was added also.

On the other side of the question we find such men as Plummer,<sup>3</sup> Trench,<sup>4</sup> and Hubbard.<sup>5</sup> They point out the many differences in the two accounts showing that the two must have been told by the Lord at different times. For example, Plummer mentions that out of 302 words in Matthew and 286 in Luke, only sixty-six or parts are in common. The differences as suggested by these three men and as seen in the texts may be seen best if they are charted in the following manner:

	<u>Luke</u>	<u>Matthew</u>
1. Scene	Not yet entered Jerusalem. v. 11.	Christ is on the Mount of Olives and it is Holy Week. 24:3.
2. Audience	Public, mixed company. v. 11.	Privately to disciples. 24:3.
3. Reason	Because they thought the parousia near. v. 11.	They did not think the parousia was immanent. 25:13.
	Introduction. v. 11.	No introduction

<sup>3</sup> Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke (Fifth Edition; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1951), p. 437.

<sup>4</sup> R. C. Trench, Notes on the Parables of our Lord (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1862), pp. 219, 223, 224.

<sup>5</sup> G. H. Hubbard, The Teachings of Jesus in the Parables (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1907), p. 193.

LukeMatthew

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|---------------|---|---|
| 4. The lord   | Nobleman who goes to receive his kingdom. v.12.             | householder goes to a far country. v. 14. |
| 5. Historical | Suggestive of historical incident: Archelaus.               | -----                                     |
|               | Citizens hate him and send embassy to repudiate him. v. 14. | -----                                     |
|               | Vengeance taken upon his enemies. v. 27.                    | -----                                     |
| 6. Money      | Equally divided. v. 13.                                     | Unequally divided. v. 15.                 |
|               | Small amount--pound.  | Large amount--talent.                     |
| 7. Rewards    | They differ and are proportionate. vv. 17, 19.              | They are the same. vv. 21, 23.            |
| 8. Punishment | Pound deprived. v. 24.                                      | Cast into darkness. v. 30.                |

The differences are very evident when they are arranged in this manner. However, it must be admitted that the teaching in the two parables is very similar. Thus, they are considered in this thesis to contribute complementary thoughts on stewardship. Yet, to explain them in the manner of the critics and declare them to be one and the same would be to cut up Scripture and not consider the reporting of the Evangelists as truthful.

## APPENDIX B

### SAMARITAN--JEWISH RELATIONS

The hatred between the Jewish and Samaritan peoples can be traced in part to the regard the Jews had for the heathen. According to the Talmud<sup>1</sup> the heathen idolators were not to be delivered when in imminent danger, while heretics and apostates were even to be led into it. And again, we read<sup>2</sup> that, except to avert hostility, a burden is only to be unloaded if the beast that lay under it belonged to an Israelite, but not if it belonged to a Gentile. Maimonides<sup>3</sup> also declared that it was not the duty of a Jew to save a heathen man from drowning.

Yet, to be fair to the rabbinical writings it must be said that this attitude toward the heathen was not entirely universal. For example, the exclusion of a heathen man's ox from the category of a neighbor's ox (Ex. 21:25) is purely legal and refers only to the question of compensation.<sup>4</sup> Also, while Maimonides includes the opinion that it was not his duty to save a heathen from drowning, Eleazar ben Shammua actually

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<sup>1</sup>I. Epstein, The Babylonian Talmud (London: The Soncino Press, 1935), XXIX, 129 ff.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., XXIV, 201 f.

<sup>3</sup>I. Abrahams, Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels (Second Series; Cambridge: University Press, 1924), pp. 38 f.

<sup>4</sup>Baba Qama iv 3; Maimonides Nizge Mamon viii 1. Ibid., p. 38.

did that very thing.<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to note that the Talmud has an instance of a heathen man used as a model of love and reverence towards parents. The hero is Dama, son of Netinah, a non-Jew, an idolator, dwelling in Askelon. "To what limits should a son go in honoring his father?" asked the Rabbi. "Go forth and see what a certain idolator of Askelon did," is the answer. On one occasion he was silent and respectful when his mother publicly insulted him. Again, he refused to disturb his father who was sleeping with his head on the key of a box containing a priceless gem which the agents of the Sanhedrin wished to purchase for the high priest's vestments.<sup>6</sup>

The Jewish feelings toward the heathen carried over to the Samaritans, for they were considered idolators by the Jews. The Jews anathematized the Samaritan--called him a Cuthite, an idolator who worshipped the image of the dove--and cursed him publicly in the synagogue and prayed that he might have no portion in the resurrection of life.<sup>7</sup>

This attitude was not a one-sided thing, it must be understood. For the Samaritans, in turn, vented their wrath upon the Jews and many times gave good occasion for such action on the part of the Jew. On all public occasions the Samar-

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<sup>5</sup> Sanhedrin 98b. Epstein, op. cit., XXVIII, 667.

<sup>6</sup> Qiddushim 31a. Ibid., XXII, 151.

<sup>7</sup> R. C. Trench, Notes on the Parables of our Lord (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1862), p. 256.

itans took a hostile part toward the Jews, seizing every opportunity of injuring and insulting them. Thus, in the time of Antiochus III they sold many Jews into slavery.<sup>8</sup> In addition many devious schemes were tried to annoy the Jews. One such had to do with the Jewish feast days. To the Jew the beginning of every month was important in their festive arrangement and it was signaled by beacon fires. The Samaritans would often throw this calculation off by kindling spurious signals.<sup>9</sup> They also tried to desecrate the temple on the eve of the Passover,<sup>10</sup> and they waylaid and killed pilgrims on the road to Jerusalem.<sup>11</sup>

It is not surprising, then, that we find in Jewish writings that the term "Samaritan" was often used generally for heretics.<sup>12</sup> Other expressions can be quoted to illustrate the harsh feelings toward the Samaritans. One rabbi exclaimed: "May I never set eyes on a Samaritan."<sup>13</sup> Another said that to partake of their bread was like eating the flesh of swine.<sup>14</sup> However, at the time of Christ the food of the Samaritans was

<sup>8</sup>Antiq. xii 4.1. W. Whiston, The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., n.d.), pp. 356 f.

<sup>9</sup>Rosh haShanah ii 2. H. Danby, The Mishnah (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 189.

<sup>10</sup>Antiq. xviii 2.2. Whiston, op. cit., p. 532.

<sup>11</sup>Antiq. xx 6.1. Ibid., p. 592.

<sup>12</sup>Sanhedrin 90b. Epstein, op. cit., XXVIII, 606.

<sup>13</sup>Megillah 2. Ibid., XIV, 4.

<sup>14</sup>Shebhyith viii 10. Danby, op. cit., p.





not considered so vile, but declared lawful.<sup>15</sup>

As a final note, Scripture also gives us a few clues as to the relation of the Jews and the Samaritans at the time of Christ. We read in Lk. 9:51-55 that when a Samaritan village would not receive Christ, His disciples wanted Him to call down fire from heaven to destroy them. Only because the Lord was leading them through Samaria did they consider traveling that way. Otherwise they would have gone around that section. The evangelist John very clearly brings out the strife between the two peoples (4:9) when he reports the scene of Jesus at Sychar's well. When the Lord asked a drink of the woman there, she asked in surprise, "How is it that thou being a Jew askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." This clearly reveals the prevailing attitude of the two races toward one another, and makes it doubly meaningful that the Savior would picture a Samaritan helping a wounded Jew on a bandit-infested road.

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<sup>15</sup>Jerusalem Abhodah Zarah v 5. Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), I, 402.

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