

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES
AND IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.
\$2.00 Per Year, Postpaid, to any address. 5c Per Single Copy.

Editor: T. T. SHIELDS

Associate Editor: ALEXANDER THOMSON

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16.

Address Correspondence: THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2, Canada.
Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada.

Vol. 14, No. 9

TORONTO, JULY 11, 1935

Whole Number 686

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE PARABLE OF THE UNJUST STEWARD

A Sermon by the Late Rev. R. L. Harper

A minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South Carolina. The sermon is taken from a volume of sermons published in 1885. See Editorial Note on this sermon.

"And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, A hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your truth the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail. Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery."—Luke 16:1-18.

To "search the scriptures" is the inalienable right and bounder duty of all who possess them. In this exercise, however, the greatest vigilance is necessary if we would "come to a knowledge of the truth". Particularly should we guard against interference from early and precipitate

conclusions. It is common in youth to form opinions respecting all the prominent passages of Scripture; but as in numerous instances these opinions are formed not by deliberate study and reflection, but solely by giving credence to the assertions of others, it not unfrequently happens that they are more or less erroneous. When, therefore, we have resolved to examine personally any particular passage of Scripture, it is highly proper that we lay aside for the time all previous opinions respecting it, and endeavour to ascertain, with singleness of purpose, the teaching of inspiration, whatever that teaching may be. By adopting this precaution, there will be a greater probability of our arriving at the truth; which done, should we find our former opinions coincident with the result of our present investigation, we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that we "have not followed a cunningly devised fable".

In no instance is this precaution more necessary than in the examination of the parable before us. Here, for centuries, commentators have been labouring for a satisfactory solution as for a lost pearl; but so many have professed to find it, and most of these have differed so widely in their relation of it, that it may well be questioned whether, in fact, it has ever been discovered. Indeed, many inquirers think it has not; and some of these, disconcerted by the futile efforts of the past, and dreading a like issue to any renewed search which they might institute, have gone so far as to pronounce the parable wholly unintelligible. This, however, is going much too far. We believe that the parable admits of a solution, and that this solution is discoverable. We have the most implicit confidence in the accuracy of St. Luke in recording this parable, and in the perspicuity of the Saviour when delivering it. Moreover, we regard it as an integral part of that "scripture which is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Different solutions should teach us caution, but not despair. The truth must be somewhere. Believing this,

we shall seek it. Reason, not prejudice, shall guide us. Favourite opinions shall be held in abeyance. Our eye shall be single. The effort may prove but one more added to the many unsatisfactory efforts of the past. If so, it will soon be forgotten; if not, it will not be despised by the lovers of Biblical truth, and will help in a measure to settle more firmly the foundations of our faith.

Our first endeavour will be to ascertain the precise lesson which the parable was intended to convey. This, we think, will give the key to a satisfactory solution of the whole; for as the parable was given to illustrate and enforce the lesson, all its parts must correspond with that lesson, whatever it may be.

Many high authorities hold the lesson of the parable to be Christian prudence; and with this as their key they have arrived at the following solution: The steward, they say, showed a wise caution in the management of his temporal affairs, which, dishonest as he was, commended itself to his lord; and such a caution, though not such a mode of manifesting it, Christ would have his people exhibit while engaged in His service. Like the steward who, while defrauding his lord, was prudent enough to secure for himself friends and a home when dismissed from his office, so we, by a prudent use of the wealth we may possess, are to make to ourselves friends, that "when we fail"—a euphemistic expression meaning "when we die"—there may be a multitude to welcome us to everlasting habitations.

But much as we esteem and venerate the authorities in question, we cannot concur with them in the view that prudence is the lesson inculcated. To such a view there are several objections.

First, scrutinize we ever so closely the application which follows the parable, and in which the lesson is undoubtedly contained, we can discover no allusion whatever to prudence. Faithfulness and justice are the only virtues mentioned. "Faithful in the least, faithful also in much"; "unjust in the least, unjust also in much"; are among our Lord's observations in applying the parable; but not a word is uttered in reference to prudence. The authorities in question perceiving the difficulty, have laboured to remove it by showing that Christian prudence is faithfulness to God. This, in a certain qualified sense, we admit. One of the divine commands is that we "walk circumspectly"; and in our covenant relation we cannot disregard this command without incurring the charge of unfaithfulness. But here it should be observed that it is not prudence itself, but the exercise of prudence *in obedience to a command of God*, that constitutes faithfulness. In this sense charity, as well as prudence, is faithfulness. Between prudence and faithfulness, however, there is a manifest distinction. Prudence is a wise forecast for the future, faithfulness is the being true to our engagements with others. Any attempt, therefore, to make the application enjoin a lesson on prudence, by confounding prudence with faithfulness, is inadmissible.

The second objection is that prudence cannot be well employed as the key to the solution of the parable. Now, with the true key all the parts of the parable will correspond, as the parts of a lock, and their application to moral conduct will be without difficulty. But how they correspond with prudence, and how, without forcing, they may be made effective by it, we cannot perceive.

That the steward's conduct in lowering the bills, and thus endeavouring to secure himself friends, is to be

regarded as furnishing an example of *prudence*, which prudence is to be imitated by all true Christians in respect to the disposition of their worldly substance, we cannot believe. For what is the test of prudence? Is it not success? But where was the success of the steward when, notwithstanding his scheme, his lord discovered the fraud? But even granting that he had been able to deceive his lord, we are far from believing that the steward's act was prudent. Those who united with him in his villainy were unquestionably unjust men; and from what we know of such characters there was not a great probability of their befriending him when dismissed from his office. Aware of his real character, they would rather keep him at a distance when powerless to assist them in further fraud. They would know that he could not inform on them for the share they had taken in his theft, as he would thereby implicate himself, and his lord had power to imprison, torment, and even sell him. True, it is stated in the parable that "the lord commended the unjust steward because he had done *wisely*", and from this statement the authorities in question argue that the steward *must*, as a matter of course, have exhibited prudence. But it seems to us that the commendation is to be understood as ironical. We cannot conceive that his lord, after finding his steward so grossly unfaithful, would feel like commending the course which had a tendency to beggar him. We think his lord appears like one rejoiced that he has his enemy in his power, and that there is no escape from his toils. It would be entirely unnatural for him to appear otherwise. And the beauty and force of a parable depend on the characters acting in conformity with nature. Is it likely that you or I would commend a man for skillfully cheating us, especially when it was not the first offense? I trow not.

We think it is just here that the authorities in question have erred in their endeavour to ascertain the true lesson of the parable. Forgetting the fact that in the narrative we altogether miss the manner of our Lord's address, they have taken every word in its most literal signification; and finding it stated that "the lord commended the unjust steward because he had done *wisely*", they have without reflection sprung at once to the conclusion that prudence is the lesson taught. In support of the view that the commendation of the steward's wisdom is to be regarded as ironical, there are other considerations beside those already mentioned. Such an ironical use of language is not only natural but common, and is to be found in all literature, sacred and profane. Moreover, irony is often employed with striking effect. As an instance, take our Lord's inquiries respecting John the Baptist, as recorded by St. Luke: "What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously appareled and live delicately are in kings' courts. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet."

In the parable before us the use of irony is peculiarly appropriate and natural. What could more deeply impress us with the extreme folly of the steward's scheme than his being suddenly confronted by his injured lord, who in tones of irony "commends him because he has done *wisely*"?

The words which follow bring to view the persons for whom the parable was specially intended, and were

doubtless delivered in the same ironical strain. "For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." Immediately around our Lord were His disciples and a throng of publicans and sinners. On the edge of this circle were the Pharisees, who were usually present on such occasions—not for the purpose of receiving instruction, but with the hope that the Great Teacher would say something on which they could base a charge of heresy or sedition. These Pharisees, though ostensibly pious, were essentially worldly. They lived only for the present; they gave to it their affections, and they sought their happiness in what it could bestow, especially in the way of honour and applause. They were "the children of this world", in contradistinction to the disciples, who were "the children of light". To these worldlings the conduct of the disciples in renouncing all for Christ appeared the profoundest folly. They could see nothing to be gained by thus publicly acknowledging their guilt and imperfection, and trusting for salvation to the doctrine and words of another. They were already in high repute among the people for superior sanctity. This repute they would maintain at all hazards, "for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God". It was, no doubt, what they thought a prudential regard for their reputation which led them to reject the baptism of John. It is stated that "all the people who heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." To place themselves on a level with the multitude, as sinners needing pardon and renewal, would, they feared, jeopardize their position in society, and perhaps forfeit that esteem, that adulation, to which they had been accustomed and of which they were so fond. No, they would rather violate conscience, they would rather, if necessary, lower the standard of morality, than forego "the greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi". Though thus supremely worldly, they nevertheless entertained expectations of sharing in the glory and felicity of the future, overlooking the fact that they were making no suitable provision for the future, and that the allotments of eternity would be fixed, not by erring estimates of man, but by the strict and impartial judgment of a righteous God. Our Lord suddenly and ironically announces to them the folly of their course, assuring them that, however much they might be esteemed by men, there was as little likelihood that the Omniscient would approve them as there was that a master would commend his steward when he had detected him in fraud.

The injunction, "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations", is also to be understood as ironical. Its apparent direction to use ill-gotten gain to secure everlasting happiness is so contrary to scriptural analogy, and to the revealed character of God, that every interpreter seeks, by some peculiar rendering of the words, to give it a different signification. When once considered as ironical, however, all difficulty vanishes, the direction, as we shall see, is inserted with point, and we are saved the unsatisfactoriness of endeavouring to harmonize the passage with the rest of the Scriptures by departing from the plain sense of the words.

The word "mammon" is from the Syriac, and denotes riches, gain, profit. As used in the New Testament it

refers not simply to money, but to all that appeals to the depraved heart—what is desired and coveted by "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life". In one sense the object desired may be wealth, in another power, in another fame, in another sensual pleasure. The desire, indeed, may embrace all of these objects, and though one may be chief, the other may be craved as accessory to its attainment. Thus, wealth may be desired, not only for its own sake, but for the sake of the honour and ease it secures.

"The mammon of unrighteousness", by means of which the Pharisees were "making friends", was not money, but usurped authority. Like the steward in the parable, the Pharisees occupied a responsible position—they "sat in Moses' seat"; in other words, were the recognized custodians and interpreters of the law. Instead of upholding the authority of that law, they perfidiously lowered its demands for selfish ends. This they did by their "traditions"—oral communications of purely human authority, but to which they attached an importance even superior to that of the written word. We might cite numerous instances of their unfaithfulness as religious teachers. For example, the law inculcated the widest and tenderest benevolence; this they interpreted as referring solely to Jews, all other persons being regarded by them as aliens whom they were at liberty to despise at pleasure. The law required the strictest adherence to truth—their exposition was that an oath in which the name of God was not distinctly mentioned was not binding; indeed, that a man might swear with his lips, and at the same time annul it in his heart. The law enjoined the exhibition of filial love and obedience—in their opinion all that a son who desired to evade the obligation of assisting his parents had to do was to say "Corban" over his property—to declare it consecrated, bound over to the Lord—and he was free. As might be supposed, the advocacy of such a system of casuistry was not without its reward: it rendered its upholders popular with the masses, who were only too glad to find a sanction in high places for the indulgence of their wickedness. It was the means of augmenting their worldly substance, affording them, in various ways and under the cloak of an assumed piety, abundant opportunities for extortion. Moreover, it enabled them to give unlimited license to their own passions, a punctilious observance of rites and ceremonies being all that was necessary to commend them to the dulled conscience of a besotted nation.

That our Lord, by the parable of the unjust steward, aimed a blow at these corrupt teachers, is evident from the closing remarks of His application: "The Pharisees also, who were covetous (greedy of gain, especially honour), heard all these things; and they derided him. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail. Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." Here he declares the perpetual obligation of the moral law, and specifies one of the many instances in which they had made it null by their unauthorized assumptions. From the circumstances of the

divine institution of marriage, from the express command connected therewith, it was evident that there was but one sufficient cause for divorce. The marriage bond was to continue indissoluble until death, save in this extreme case. Such, however, was the condition of the Israelites on coming out of Egypt, that Moses, in his capacity as civil legislator, suffered husbands to put away their wives for other causes than adultery. This was on account of "the hardness of their hearts", he attempting to regulate, with an imperfect remedy, an evil which the obstinacy of national feeling would not allow to be at once repressed by a positive statute. A civil regulation, given to meet the exigencies of the times, the Pharisees invested with all the force of a moral precept. They allowed a man to divorce his wife for the most trivial reasons. National licentiousness, in this respect, was the inevitable consequence. And this, they contended, was in accordance with the will of Heaven, while it was practically subversive of one of the divine commands. "I say unto you", said Christ with terrible irony, as He scanned the motives which prompted them to this course of action, "I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." The friends of the unfaithful steward—what home, what permanent refuge, could they give him when his lord discovered his treachery and appeared to punish him? Go on in your chosen course; pervert the Scriptures; make void the moral law by your vain traditions; win, by the mammon of unrighteousness, the power, the trust you have abused, gifts and a good name from a sensual and degraded people; but remember eternity, remember Him in whose hands are the destinies of eternity, and ask yourselves what will be your position then. No merely human distinctions will rise up to plead for you in the divine councils. No wealth, or position, or fame, to which you may fraudulently attain in this life, will secure to you an entrance into the eternal city. The rule of judgment will be: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." "If, therefore, you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon"—the office which has been confided to you, and which you have wrongfully and unscrupulously used for the advancement of your secular interests—"who will commit to your trust the true riches?"—the honours and glories of the skies. "And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's"—a trust delegated to you, and in its nature temporary—"who shall give you that which is your own?"—the heavenly inheritance which, once bestowed, will be a permanent possession.

Such a rendering of these passages opens up, we think, the true lesson of the parable. It is not prudence, but fidelity—*fidelity in respect to the trust with which God has honoured us*. And is not this the lesson we should naturally expect from the story of a master and his steward? Says St. Paul: "Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found *faithful*." This lesson, as we shall see, gives unity and consistency to the parable; adds force to the remark, "Faithful in the least, faithful also in much"; and wings the arrow of the moral to its mark—"Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Having found, as we believe, the true key to the parable, let us now see how its various parts correspond with it, and how they would be made effective by it.

First, the correspondence. There was a certain rich man who had a steward to whom he intrusted his goods. The steward, however, proved unfaithful, and in the course of time someone accused him to his lord. His lord, anxious and alarmed, summoned him to his presence, acquainted him with the charge, and demanded an inspection of the books, that he might know whether to continue him in office. The steward departed, and apprehensive that his guilt would be detected, and dreading the consequences that would follow, began seriously to ponder how he could remedy his folly. "What shall I do?" he said, "for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig." He had long lived a life of ease, and if dismissed from his present employment would be unable to earn a livelihood by hard manual labour. "To beg I am ashamed." His office had been one of dignity and authority, and pride shrunk from assuming the position of a mendicant. To have frankly confessed his fraud, and to have thrown himself on the mercy of his injured lord, would have been his wisest course. Had he done so, the result might have been similar to that elsewhere described by our Lord: "And when the king began to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant, therefore, fell down, and worshiped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt." The steward, however, had no lofty conception of duty, and was too selfish to consider what repentance and amendment might do with his master. At last he resolves on a plan by which he will extricate himself from his difficulty. He will conspire with his lord's debtors to lower their bills, which will enable him, perhaps, to present a satisfactory balance-sheet, and if not, will secure to him friends when ejected from office. The plan is no sooner formed than it is carried into effect. Calling the debtors together he inquires of the first, "How much owest thou my lord?" and he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, A hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write four-score." And thus he proceeds to lower the bill of "every one of his lord's debtors". Really a shrewd plan! So the steward thought. But he has "reckoned without his host". In some way his lord is apprised of his further unfaithfulness. Quite likely one of the debtors, more honest than the rest, felt constrained to inform him of the nefarious transaction. To the steward's surprise, his lord suddenly confronts him. He is now not simply indignant, but there is a gleam in his eye before which the steward turns pale. With ironical emphasis he commends him for his wisdom. He feels that he has the villain in his clutches, and can afford to play with him a moment, as a lion with his prey. It is easy to paraphrase his commendation: "O man, it was wise in thee to avoid labour, for full well thou knowest that if thine account be unsatisfactory there is no one who can sell thee to make up the deficiency. It was wise in thee to avoid beggary, for full well thou knowest that if thy delinquency be proved there is no one who can imprison thee till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing. It was wise in thee to join hand in hand with knaves, and,

doubtless, they will brave my anger and shelter thee, now that I reckon with thee. Fool! thy doom is sealed."

Now, we think the correspondence is exact. There is no need that we strain any of the parts of the parable to make them fit the lesson; all are in unison with it.

We shall now see how the parable, as illustrative of the folly of unfaithfulness, is turned to spiritual instruction.

The rich man represents Jehovah, to whom pertains universal authority. The steward, in his position of responsibility and trust, represents the Pharisees, who as religious teachers, were "stewards of the mysteries of God". The fraudulent career of the steward portrays the history of that sect, their uniform endeavour being the aggrandizement of self, even at the expense of righteousness and truth. The threat of dismissal may refer to the ministry of the Baptist, arousing them to a sense of their unfaithfulness, and warning them of the speedy termination of their power. The lowering of the bills marks still greater perfidy on the part of the Pharisees, their determination being taken to make friends of the people by sanctifying their sins, so that in the event of their overthrow as the dominant ecclesiastical body of the nation, they would still have influence sufficient to command that adulation, and those opportunities for worldly emolument they so insatiably coveted. The sudden appearance of the indignant master, and his ironical commendation of the steward, point to the judgment which these Pharisees seem to have forgotten, and to the awful punishment which awaited their unfaithfulness.

The parable thus understood is not without its lesson for our times. To the Church collectively, to every denomination of professed Christians, to each minor society of believers, it stands forth a light-house of guidance and warning. Our position in the world is one of solemn moment and vast responsibility. To us has been intrusted the moral culture of humanity, and the ingathering of that revenue of glory which is Jehovah's due. As faithful stewards, as loyal vice-regents, we are to "shun not to declare the whole counsel of God." We are to "preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine." The lofty end we are to propose is, "that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." It is by no means easy to fulfil our trust; it is sailing against wind and wave; it is toiling up steep precipitous and perilous. Often the more scrupulously faithful we are in the discharge of our duties, the intenser hatred we shall enkindle in the hearts of the unconverted. For there are times when men "will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears." It is then that our fidelity is tried. We are tempted to lower the demands of Christianity, to dilute the truth, to suit the taste and to win the favour of the world. Alas! there are organized bodies naming the name of Christ, there are individual Churches, which pervert the Scriptures, and relax the claims of the moral law, to render themselves popular with men. "These are the Churches for us!" is the cry of careless, impenitent sinners. "They tell us nothing that grates on our ears, and we can hold our membership there and do as we list." O the folly of these unfaithful stewards! They "make to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness"; they barter truth and honour, heart and conscience, for wealth and power and the applause of the unholy; but the withering glance of

the Omniscient is upon them, and the day approaches when He shall consign them to the punishment they deserve. This suggests an important question—What is the conduct of our own Church? the Church of Wesley and Asbury, of Coke and McKendree. Is she true to her first love? Is she faithful to her bridal vows? O the wondrous part that was hers when, clad in divine beauty and leaning on divine strength, she went forth to reclaim the nations! Righteousness followed in her steps, and tributes of thanksgiving ascended to the Lord. Is she faithful? Sounds she forth the truth as sincerely, as fearlessly as ever? Insists she on holiness of heart and life by counsel and discipline, as of old, though rich men forsake her and timid men tremble for her? Alas! there is reason for humiliation and repentance and prayer. We are not as faithful as we should be; there are signs of remisness among us like dark specks in a summer sky. God forbid that they should increase! for with the gathering cloud will assuredly come the lightnings, and the tempest, and the thunder of deserved wrath!

Fidelity—let this, brethren, be our watch-word. What though we should become the national Church of this broad land; what though we should be able to point to stately edifices and towering spires without number; what though wealth and fashion, rank and learning, should come trooping to our shrines; *unfaithful*—lowering the laws of Christ, gaining popularity at the expense of principle, the winged curse of the Almighty would pursue us, and the talons of his wrath eventually rend us. Far better to be few in numbers, and poor in outward attractions, than disloyal to duty, untrue to doctrine and discipline. God's covenant is with the faithful Church. "No weapon that is formed against her shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against her in judgment, thou shalt condemn." And sooner or later she shall triumph—*triumph!* I say. The promise is hers: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

The parable is not without its lesson to the individual believer. My brother, in assuming the name you profess and the livery you wear, you pledged inviolable fidelity to Christ. You are to be a living representation of the truth and power of His religion. His laws are to regulate your thoughts, your words, your desires, your pursuits, your entire life: Your fidelity will be sorely tried. Worldly policy will court you with its smiles; passion will prompt you to turn aside from the narrow path; imagination will dazzle you with its visions of embowered evil. O how many have been seduced from their integrity! The love of the world has usurped the love of God, and forgetful of their vows, recreant to their position, they have chosen evil, and reaped the wages of unending death. Shun the folly of these unfaithful stewards; be firm in your allegiance to the King of kings; cleave to truth; to principle, to duty; lower not, by your example, the standard of religion. Rather "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven." "Be thou faithful unto death," says Christ, "and I will give thee a crown of life." A crown of life! The highest physical, the highest intellectual, the highest moral life!

"Who, then, is that faithful and wise steward? Blessed is that servant, when his lord when he cometh shall find so doing."

THE KING'S JUBILEE THANKSGIVING SERVICE

At Highgate Road Baptist Church, London, N.W.,
Sunday Morning, May 12, 1935

A Silver Jubilee Thanksgiving Service was held at Highgate Road Chapel on Sunday morning, May 12th, 1935, conducted by Pastor John Wilmot.

The hymns sung were "All people that on earth do dwell"; "O God of Bethel"; "Now thank we all our God"; and "Lord, while for all mankind we pray".

The Scripture readings were: Deut. xvii. 14 to 20, Joshua i. 7 to 9, Psalm cxxi.

The opening exercises were extempore, and the following Prayers from the Official Order of Service were also used:

"It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty that we should give thanks to Thee O Lord, the Everlasting God, for that Thou wast pleased to set our Sovereign King George upon the Throne of this Realm, and hast protected him in days of sickness and of health throughout his reign of five and twenty years. For the example of unceasing service set by him and by our gracious Queen Mary; for strength and steadfastness bestowed on him and on this nation in years of war and of manifold anxieties; for the love and loyalty borne to him in all parts of the world, we magnify Thy glorious name. We bless Thee for increase in the knowledge of Thy marvellous works, in care of those who suffer from sickness or the lack of work; in desire that all men may live in peace. For these and all other mercies vouchsafed to us, O Lord, we yield Thee unfeigned thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to Whom with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory now and for evermore."

"O God, Who providest for Thy people by Thy power, and rulest over them in love: Vouchsafe so to bless Thy servant our King, that under him this nation may be wisely governed, and Thy Church may serve Thee in all godly quietness; and grant that he being devoted to Thee with his whole heart, and persevering in good works unto the end, may by Thy grace come to Thine everlasting kingdom; through Jesus Christ Thy Son our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end."

"O Lord our God, Who upholdest all things by the word of Thy power: Receive our humble prayers for our Sovereign George, set over us by Thy grace and providence to be our King; and together with him, bless we beseech Thee, our gracious Queen Mary, Edward, Prince of Wales, and all the Royal family; that they, ever trusting in Thy goodness, protected by Thy power, and crowned with Thy gracious and endless favour, may long continue before Thee in peace and safety, joy and honour; and after death may obtain everlasting life and glory; by the merits and mediation of Christ Jesus our Saviour, Who with Thee and the Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth ever one God, world without end."

"Almighty God, Who rulest in the kingdom of men, and hast given to our Sovereign King George a great dominion in all parts of the earth: Pardon, we beseech Thee, our sins and shortcomings; keep far from us all selfishness and pride, and give us grace to employ Thy good gifts to Thy glory and the welfare of mankind; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son our Lord, to Whom with Thee and the Holy Spirit, be all glory and dominion, world without end."

"Gracious God, the Fountain of all wisdom, Who knowest our necessities before we ask, and our ignorance in asking: We beseech Thee to have compassion upon our infirmities; and those things, which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot, ask, vouchsafe to give us, for the worthiness of Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen."

The address, which follows, was delivered by the Pastor, and the service concluded with the singing of two verses of the National Anthem.

THE ADDRESS

It is both fitting and opportune that the Thanksgiving Services in the separate Churches should be held, as commanded by His Majesty, on the first Lord's Day after the Day of Jubilee. Thus we have had the advantage of observing and following the events of this memorable week in general, and the official Thanksgiving Service in St. Paul's Cathedral in particular.

The Churches of Dissent, or Nonconformist, claim, on Scriptural ground, as we believe, freedom from State control in matters of religion and conscience. At the same time we should heartily respect, and as heartily obey, those precepts which enjoin dutifulness to our Monarch and to the Powers that be.

I purpose, therefore, on this occasion asking your attention, in the first place, to those principles which govern—not our *Christian citizenship* which is heavenly, but our *citizenship as Christians* in this world. And, secondly, to mark the appropriateness of our sharing in this Thanksgiving for the twenty-five years' reign of our King and Queen, to whom these principles so suitably apply.

Let us read three Scriptures:

From the First Epistle of Peter, chapter two, verses thirteen, fourteen, and seventeen:

"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by Him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well . . . Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."

From the Epistle to the Romans, chapter thirteen, verses one to eight:

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou, then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore, ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God's (public) ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render, therefore, to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man anything, but to love one another, for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."

From the First Epistle to Timothy, chapter two, verses one to six:

"I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men. For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

A spirit of disloyalty to the Crown will find no support, but rather suppression in Holy Scripture.

A Christian man I met in my first pastorate, of sympathetic nature, who had witnessed some oppression (as he considered) inflicted upon employees by their masters,

turned socialist, and became a self-styled, "Christian Socialist"! I recall how he claimed that Jesus Christ was a first rank socialist! I did not respond with argument, but I recommended him to examine Scripture differentiation between classes of men, and the Christian duty to higher ranks. He promised to do so. At our next meeting, he told me of his surprise on discovering that the Bible made mention even of dukes. And he remarked, "That made me angry with the Bible!"

There are between 2,000 and 3,000 references to kings in the Bible; and I submit that any who would find therein warrant for disloyalty to the King as supreme, or to higher Authorities, will rather meet with Scripture rebuke. Perhaps such, like my friend, would become angry with the Bible, but of this I am sure, they would merit the displeasure of the Sovereign Being Who gave us the Bible. For His orders respecting obligations attaching to our temporal citizenship, are no less authoritative and binding than those evangelical precepts concerning our spiritual citizenship as Christian pilgrims.

I.

Christian duty to the reigning and ruling authority and personages, as given in our key-scriptures read just now, may be summarized thus: We are to HONOUR the King. We are to OBEY the King. We are to PRAY for the King.

Our first duty is that of giving due respect to the King: The apostle Peter uses the word "Honour". He speaks of "the King as supreme". But he also makes the following classification; giving four precepts:

"Honour all men": that is the general obligation, because men were made in the similitude of God, and therefore, *as men*, are entitled to respect above the beasts which perish.

"Love the brotherhood": that is, the company of believing people, selected from among, and in contrast with, "all men" generally; those whom the Lord Jesus Christ is not ashamed to call His brethren, by reason of their being redeemed by His blood, regenerated by His Spirit, and ruled by His Word.

"Fear God". The brotherhood just mentioned, implies God's Fatherhood, Whose Spirit is sent into our hearts whereby we cry, Abba Father; yet is He God, although our Father in Christ Jesus; the supreme and sovereign Ruler over all classes of creatures; and so, to be feared, that is, revered, worshipped and obeyed.

"Honour the King". From God the Ruler supreme, we are directed to the subordinate ruler, the earthly monarch.

So that, the race in general is to be respected, and the selected redeemed race to be loved; and God, the supreme Ruler, to be feared; and the king, as subordinate to God, to be honoured.

Our second duty is that of submission: The apostle Peter writes: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man . . . whether to the king as supreme, or to governors."

The apostle Paul, agreeable to this, states that such authorities are the ordination or appointment of God, and, therefore, resistance instead of submission, is as a defiance of God's law, and a culpable offence. Rather, he says, "Render to all their dues"—and dues differ according to status—"tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour." And to all, we owe, and must keep on paying, Love!

I must remind you that the ruling and reigning powers at the time these Scriptures were written and communicated to the Church, were by no means friendly, but antagonistic to Christian truth. Then it was known commonly that to be a Christian was to suffer for Christ's sake. There were the Religious Rulers, the Sanhedrin, bitter opponents of Christ and Christians; and there were the Secular Powers: Pagan Rome, the Cæsars, a Nero, Felix, Festus, Agrippa; and the servants of the Lord suffered bonds and imprisonment and martyrdom. Yet their inspired precepts are: "Honour, Obey, Pray for, Love!"

There are, however, historical exceptions to this rule of submission. As when the subordinate ruling power conflicted with God's sovereign word. Thus, when forbidden to preach the gospel—the command of Him Who has all authority in heaven *and in earth*—the preachers respectfully submitted that in this they must obey God rather than men—and they prayed, "Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto Thy servants that with all boldness they may preach Thy word." Thus the positive precepts regarding submission are intended to bear this qualification, because rulers are appointed for the praise of the good—and the gospel is good news—and for the punishment of evil!

So there have been occasions when our own King and Government have recognized certain sanctities—the sanctity of the religious calling, and of the Christian conscience. Albeit the consciences of Christian men, of equal integrity, appear to direct them to adopt reverse attitudes! And it should be remembered that on some matters the Scriptures do not legislate, and it is written, "Let each one be fully persuaded in his own mind."

Our third duty is that of prayer: The apostle Paul thus exhorts us. And did we require Bible authority for a Jubilee Thanksgiving Service in a Christian Church, we might find it here—"Giving thanks for Kings and for all who are in eminent place." Moreover, this exhortation takes precedence of the rest: "I exhort, *first of all*"; and again, "Kings" are the first named, while those of eminent rank would include such as our most gracious Queen Mary, and all of the royal blood.

The language here employed is inclusive. Fourfold is the nature of prayer. Twofold is its object. Singular, the means (I. Tim. 2).

Notice the fourfold nature of prayer:

Supplication: that is, prayer which expresses the idea of personal insufficiency, and therefore makes request for divine mercy and help.

Prayers: that is, reverent devotion, confession and adoration, in recognition of God's ability.

Intercessions: the approach to God on others' behalf; or prayer offered in any urgent case.

Thanksgiving: the due acknowledgment of mercies received.

Thus we have: human insufficiency, and the sufficiency of God; we invoke God's aid; and as mercies are sought in prayer, praise is returned for mercies supplied.

The twofold object of prayer: Firstly, prayer for our King and rulers is calculated to secure that we "lead a quiet and peaceable life in godliness and gravity". Such is the desirable benefit to ourselves. A tranquil and a quiet life, in the fear of God, and on grave and good terms with our fellows! How very appropriate to this end were the King's words in reply to the address of

the Lord Chancellor and Mr. Speaker, last Thursday (May 9th) at their Majesties' reception in Westminster Hall. I quote the following paragraph:

"In these days, when fear and preparation for war are again astir in the world, let us be thankful that quiet government and peace prevail over so large a part of the earth's surface, and that under our flag of freedom so many millions eat their daily bread, in far-distant lands and climates, with none to make them afraid."

The second object of prayer is their personal salvation: "For God will have all men to be saved" includes kings, for whom prayers are to be offered. And is not this our very heart's desire for our King and Queen? And have we not good reason to believe that God will be savingly gracious to them? In any case, let us pray for it!

God is more magnanimous in tolerance and sympathy than is the devoutest of His people. He makes allowances for circumstance, estate, position, privilege, duty, responsibility and opportunity. We cannot determine the salvation of those of such high rank, by the evidences of salvation, essential and of comparative ease, in a humble Christian subject. The associations, and so-called worldliness, and fashion, of a responsible King and Emperor, are not to be judged by our humbler standards. To their own Judge they will stand or fall. There is a place for pomp and circumstance which usually surround the throne.

We recall that there were saints in Cæsar's household, whom, perhaps duty compelled to engage in that which might justly be condemned in Christians at liberty. There are some duties involuntarily performed! Naaman, we remember, converted to the God of Israel, asked mercy—and, shall we not believe, freely received it—when compelled to attend the heathen temple on national and kingly duty.

Not to go back beyond the reigns recalled within the lifetime of most of us here this morning we surely say—

That Queen Victoria was a humble believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, saved by His grace. To a Scottish Cottar, she said, when asked if she could read her title clear to mansions in the skies, "Yes, by the grace of God, and through the blood of Jesus." I read of good Queen Victoria a few days ago, that, enquiring of her chaplain, who seemed ignorant upon the subject, about the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus, she remarked that she wished He would return in her lifetime so that she might have the privilege of personally handing to His Sovereignty her country and empire! When, again, at the rehearsal of "The Messiah", the Queen was informed that she would not be expected to stand with the audience at the hallelujah chorus, it was noticed that she knelt before Him Who is to be crowned "Lord of all".

Of King Edward VII, not so much of definiteness may, perhaps, be said. But we remember it is stated, he was once asked by his royal niece, "Uncle, what is whiter than snow?"—who thereupon told him the secret: "A sinner washed in the blood of Jesus." Her governess had instructed her in the heart of the gospel. On his deathbed, the King requested that the much-blessed little book, "The Sinner's Friend", be read to him, and a foreword to that effect appears in the present edition.

Our present Queen Mary, within recent months, told an evangelical bishop that she had received much spiritual help as to the assurance of her salvation, through reading the well-known and God-used booklet, "Safety, Certainty and Enjoyment".

And there are many personal touches which would testify to our King's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; as, for example, when he wrote to the Methodist bodies at their recent Conference, expressing a hope "for the quickening and strengthening of their zeal for a high standard of personal religion, to enable them with increased efficiency and devotion to fulfil their service to the cause and kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ".

Yes, God will have even kings to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. Therefore, and therefore, let us pray.

The singular means of such effective prayer: the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ; "for there is one God, and one Mediator, Himself Man, Christ Jesus". It is surely cause for thankfulness in these days of so much latitude and elasticity in religious forms and language, that in the Cathedral Service on Jubilee Day—where were assembled all the representatives from the empire, and of foreign courts, some of non-Christian religions—that the pardon of sin and shortcoming; of selfishness and pride; and the blessing of spiritual and temporal good, were sought; and that praise and thanksgiving were offered, "by the merits and mediation of Christ Jesus our Saviour", and "for the worthiness of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord".

II.

And now, as we have a firm foundation in Holy Scripture for prayer and praise, obedience and honour, in respect of our King and Queen, so also have we good ground in their personal character, service and example.

Note the qualities of the ideal human King, read in our lesson: Deut. xvii. 14-20. The salient features herein, I believe, apply to King George and Queen Mary.

The King was to be of the people that he might serve and sympathize with the people. So in later Scriptures, the King was a shepherd, as one who led in and out his flock. This would be the intention of the reading of Psalm cxxi. at the Thanksgiving Service—"The Lord preserve thy going out and thy coming in."

To this, characteristic expression was given in the eulogies presented to the King and Queen. As the Lord Chancellor remarked: "The King's loyalty and love have given a new meaning to the name of King"—not the despotic, autocratic, unsympathetic lording over the heritage, but regarding his people and empire as a call to service. Thus in the Jubilee broadcast, His Majesty said: "I dedicate myself anew to your service for the years that may still be given me."

Further, in respect of the other features which Moses named, as required of God in a king: Are not the following apparent? Godfearingness; personal morality; regard for spiritual values; practical piety.

Our King and Queen have displayed a genuine regard, and sometimes, concern, setting the nation an example to emulate. As Mr. John Buchan says in his book, "The King's Grace": "The King's duty nowadays, is not to act, but to be." And as the Archbishop remarked in his Jubilee address: "They" (i.e. the people) "have felt that his life was founded on the faith and fear of God." While it is well to recall that upon the King's accession to the throne, twenty-five years ago, His Majesty, in his first letter, wrote: "I take courage, and hopefully look into the future, strong in my faith in God."

Mark, then, several religious features deserving of emphasis and of emulation.

Their Majesties' public recognition of God's goodness: the first and foremost event in the Jubilee Celebrations was this recognition of God, and return of thanks to Him for twenty-five years of mercies vouchsafed.

This is noteworthy: What if the King, in keeping with the religious decline of these days, and despising of the Divine Being elsewhere in Christendom had appointed that the first event in His Jubilee Celebrations should be some Court function, or Government or Empire banquet, or even his Parliamentary reception! Rather, the very first public event, and indeed, the first procession and the greatest, was for this act of humble and worshipful acknowledgment of God—and on a weekday, not a Sunday—pictures of which reproduced in the newspapers showed our King and Queen kneeling in prayer, in the presence of four thousand representatives of the ministries and services of country and empire. Let us emulate the King's example in this matter of giving God first place.

I mention the King's reverent and repeated acknowledgment of God. In his broadcast, and other speeches, God was named in a worthy manner; not by the title, "the Almighty", as though He were a far-distant Being; nor yet as an impersonal factor, as "Providence"; but GOD, Himself.

In acknowledging the addresses from his Parliament, the King said: "*I have been blessed in all my work in having beside me my dear wife, of whom you have spoken so kindly. I give thanks to Almighty God, Who has thus far sustained me and my people, and I pray that we may continue to pursue the cause of freedom and progress in the spirit of peace, tolerance and understanding.*"

To the foreign Ambassadors and empire Premiers the King said: "*May God grant you peace and happiness and prosperity in the years to come.*"

And his son, the Duke of Kent, speaking at the Albert Hall Thanksgiving Service, said: "*I am sure that to the King and Queen it must be a great joy to realize that the prayers they are offering to-night are also being offered by those near and dear to them in the four corners of the world. Throughout the empire there are people thanking God for the blessings of the King's reign.*"

But especially to the broadcast speech on Jubilee night, obviously spoken with deep feeling and sincerity, does this apply:

There is this comment on the past: "*I look back on the past with thankfulness to God.*"

There is this anticipation of the future: "*Other anxieties may be in store. But I am persuaded that with God's help they may be overcome.*"

And to the whole nation, this concluding word: the quotation of Queen Victoria at her Diamond Jubilee: "*From my heart I thank my beloved people. May God bless them all.*"

Thanks for the past; hope for the future; and benediction for the people; but all to and from God.

I say, this is in pointed contrast with the blatant, boastful, blasphemous denial of God elsewhere in Europe; and although we might, perhaps, have wished that the language were more distinctively evangelical, let us nevertheless be thankful, and let us in our affairs have the courage publicly to make acknowledgment of God.

I name their Majesties' reverence for Holy Scripture. The King's esteem for the Bible is testified in the following words, written on the occasion of the Tercentenary of our Authorized Version (1911): "*The English*

Bible is the first of National treasures, and in its spiritual significance, the most valuable thing that this world affords." While, as recently as January 21st this year, the King, in a letter, confirmed an earlier statement that "*He promised Queen Alexandra as long ago as 1881 that he would read a chapter of the Bible daily, and that he has ever since adhered to this promise.*" This is in accord with the Divine instruction and doubtless is the chief secret of the King's nobleness and humility of character, and dependence upon God; for Moses had said: "*The king shall read therein all the days of his life.*" Do we follow this example? Do we read the Scriptures daily?

Lastly, I mention Their Majesties' respect for the Sabbath of worship. We have the King's words thereon, in a message addressed to a society for the preservation of the sanctity of the Lord's Day, as recently as December 5th, 1933: "*His Majesty the King fully recognizes the value to the community of keeping Sunday as a day of rest and worship.*"

But the King and Queen practise what they prescribe. These words are reinforced by deeds. Regularly and methodically, whether in residence in London, or at Windsor, or Sandringham, or Balmoral, or recuperating at a seaside resort (as Bognor or Eastbourne) do their Majesties attend Divine Worship.

Would that their subjects in this land where the Word has run on a free course through many years, followed them! But it is to be feared that many who profess and call themselves Christians—and among them, Christians, spiritually enlightened, who emphatically affirm their belief in the integrity of the divine Word and declared Will—excuse themselves from obedience to this unequivocal command of the Lord; a command to be given increasing emphasis until Christ shall return in His majesty and grace, to inaugurate for His people, and for mankind, the true Sabbath of rest and worship.

Let us then, learn this lesson from the example of our King and Queen—to respect God's Day by assembling regularly for worship and attendance upon the means of grace.

"By Me" (saith the Lord) "Kings reign and Princes decree justice." And again: "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. viii. 15, xiv. 34).

THE REV. JOHN WILMOT OF HIGHGATE ROAD

As we go to press Mr. Wilmot has just arrived from London. Before his arrival we received a copy of "The Supplement to *Our Outlook*, June, 1935"—the quarterly magazine published by the Fellowship of Highgate Road Church, containing an account of the Jubilee Thanksgiving Service at Highgate Road Church, and including Mr. Wilmot's address.

Greatly daring, and without Mr. Wilmot's knowledge or consent, we reprint the account herewith, first for its intrinsic merit, and also because we believe it deals with a subject which needs special emphasis on the part of Christian teachers in our day. It is too generally forgotten that the Bible has anything to say about governments. Mr. Wilmot's treatment of the matter in connection with the Jubilee address is most admirable, and affords a good illustration of the quality of his work. The address was published in response to many requests.

THIS WEEK'S SERMON

A number of years ago we gave a good deal of study to the sixteenth chapter of Luke, particularly to the parable of the unjust steward. We were, of course, familiar with the usual interpretation, which assumes that the parable was spoken especially for the ninth verse which reads, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." According to this interpretation, the parable would exhort us so to make use of our material substance that when we have done with all earthly things there may be many to receive us into everlasting habitations. We have no doubt that many an effective appeal for money has been based upon this interpretation.

In our study of the parable we consulted every commentary we could find, and every writer of every sort who had written anything about it; but there was a singular unanimity respecting the principle of this interpretation. We were never able to accept it. We had not a better one, but we felt confident that the whole scheme of salvation by grace made such an interpretation almost an absurdity. In a way in which we have no space to relate, we were led to what we then believed, and still believe, to be the true interpretation of the parable; and this, notwithstanding our reluctance to believe that any portion of Scripture should have failed to open its treasures to spiritually-enlightened expositors. In a word, our interpretation was to the effect that the parable named is ironical; that the unjust steward deliberately forfeited the favour of his lord, and obtained the favour of his lord's debtors, at his lord's expense. In view of this, the lord said, "When you have proved the folly of your choice, do not come knocking at my door, but let the friends you have made receive you into everlasting habitations."

We could, however, find no confirmation of our view until, when pastor in Hamilton, we met Mr. John L. Harper, who, in the course of conversation, told us of a brother who had died some time in the eighties in the Southern States; and that, following his death, a volume of his sermons was published as a memorial. In that volume was a sermon on the unjust steward, and to our surprise and delight we discovered it confirmed our own view. The volume was returned to its owner, and not until comparatively recently did we secure a loan of the volume again. In this issue of THE WITNESS we publish Mr. Harper's sermon. WITNESS readers who are accustomed to preserve their WITNESSES will find a sermon on the unjust steward, giving our interpretation of it, in Volume One, Issue Forty-three. After all these years it may be interesting to read the two sermons in contrast.

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

Farewell for Missionaries

On Friday evening, July 5th, a Farewell was held at Rest Acres Camp and Bible Conference for Rev. and Mrs. G. D. Mellish, and Miss Minnie Lane, who are sailing on the S.S. Letitia, on Friday, July 12th, for England en route to Liberia, West Africa, where they will again take up their duties on the Mission Station. The prayers of our readers are asked for them as they begin their second term of service.

Rainy Season in Liberia

In a letter from Mrs. H. L. Davey, dated May 11th, she writes: "The rains are drawing near again, heralded as usual by terrific storms, mostly coming on at night. The people

are away working on their new rice farms, and the towns are deserted. This ends for a few months the village work which has given so much joy during these last few months.

Taking the Gospel to the Farms

Very soon the people will have finished the actual planting, and will sit down in their little grass shelters by the side of their rice to watch it grow, and drive the birds away. This will give opportunity again of going to them in the farms, and gathering the little groups together. I find that in this way you continually come in contact with new faces who never come to the hill for the ordinary church service.

The Evil One Busy

The devil isn't idle, either, and we have felt his power this year in a peculiar way. Naturally these people were much perplexed over our loss during the fire, and much of the old superstitious fear which surrounds this hill has been revived. It has not affected the little group who are seeking to follow Christ, but those who were looking for excuses to carry on their evil ways are using this as an excuse. Our hearts have been grieved over the fall of two of our most promising young men, members of the Bible College, also the school. We plead for your prayers that God will pour His power and blessing on the work, that each one of us may be wholly yielded and filled with His Spirit, and that those who have been tripped up by the devil may be restored.

Health and Beauty

We are glad to say the little ones are well, including all the babies. They form a real link with the women, who never tire of exclaiming over their chubby legs and arms. "Tubbiness" being a sign of real beauty, my babies are all considered real beauties! Thank you for your kind wishes regarding Niell. He has grown into a sturdy little lad now, enjoying life very much with the other children, sometimes working in the cassada patch, planting cassada and digging up weeds, or out gathering fire wood and carrying home his little bundle on his head, true native fashion. I envy him the ease with which he talks Bassa; Danny and he sing and talk it as easily as English.

Many Thanks!

In a further letter, dated June 12th, 1935, Mrs. Davey writes, "Will you please thank all the friends who sent out the very welcome special gifts of money? We shall be delighted to receive the boxes, and I know they will meet some very real needs of ours"

Rainy Weather Pleasures!

The rains are here in earnest now. It rained steadily all yesterday afternoon, all night, and it is still coming down as though it never meant to stop. My husband is busy to-day trying to make the kitchen a little less like a swimming pool, by nailing up some zinc. We miss our nice big house now, for then one could find a dry spot. Outside is one swampy mess; however, when the sun does decide to come out that will soon be remedied.

Encouraging News

I am glad to say we are all well and happy, if a little wet, and the Lord is blessing the work. In spite of farm time there was a splendid crowd out for the Sunday services, women as well as men, something seldom seen in the early days. One of our Christian women who has had a good deal of real trial, yet has maintained a good testimony, has been removed to a town some three hours' journey away, but she says she will come in every week if able. She is always willing and eager to talk to others, and we gave her a book of Bible pictures which she carried to help her as she tells the story of God's love to the women in the section in which she now lives. Then another woman asked if she could do the same, and I told her, yes. So she came yesterday, through the rain, and listened while we explained a book of pictures, and now she has gone back to her farm where there are several women who never come to the services here. As she herself knows the Saviour, she will tell the story to others.

Then Charles is out this month on a preaching tour through the towns inland. We hope soon to place him on an outsta-

(Continued on page 12)

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 10

No. 3

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 30

Third Quarter

July 28th, 1935

GOD'S WONDROUS WORKS

Lesson Text: Psalms 105 to 107.

Golden Text: "Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."—Psalm 106:1.

Bible School Reading: Psalm 107:1-22.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Gen. 17:1-8; Tuesday—Gen. 46:1-7; Wednesday—Deut. 26:1-11; Thursday—Is. 26:12-21; Friday—Matt. 8:14-22; Saturday—Mark 4:35-41.

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND FIVE

This psalm records thanksgiving to God for His goodness to His people. It opens with a call to give thanks to the Lord, and make known His deeds among the people (v. 1). Note the duty, blessing, and scope, of thanksgiving and witness-bearing (I. Thess. 5:18; Acts 1:8). Song is then urged as a vehicle of thanksgiving in addition to talk. Observe the helpfulness of spiritual songs and conversation. A good deal of both, even among saints of God, is of the unprofitable kind. It is necessary to keep in touch with God in order to possess the proper stimulus and interest which will enable us in a natural manner to praise Him in song and conversation. We speak of that in which we are genuinely interested; therefore our conversation betrayeth us. Several exhortations follow, wherein we are enjoined to glory in the holy name of God; to rejoice in heart; to seek the Lord and His strength; and to remember His marvellous works (vs. 3-7). Men glory in the works of their own hands (Is. 2:8, 9), but children of God should glory in the One Who made all things, and upon Whom all things depend (Is. 42:12). Note the necessity for reading the Word of God, for meditation on its contents, and for obedience to its precepts that we may be kept in remembrance of the marvellous works of the Lord.

A record of God's goodness to Israel follows, beginning with a statement respecting His faithfulness in keeping the covenant made to Abraham, and confirmed unto Jacob (vs. 8-12; Gen. 15:18). Note the grace of God manifest in His choice of Abraham, and in the remarkable promise made to him (Gen. 12:1-3). The choice of New Testament saints is in accordance with the same principle (Eph. 1:4; 2:8). Observe also the terms, significance, and fulfilment, of the covenant, and the omniscience and omnipotence of God revealed respecting the same. In connection therewith the new covenant is also worthy of consideration (Heb. 9:15). Proceeding with the record, the psalmist next relates the divine protection afforded during the patriarchal wanderings (vs. 13-15). No harm could come to those who were looked after by God (Gen. 50:20; Dan. 6:22). "If God be for us, who can be against us?" The interest of God in His people is a very real matter (Ex. 2:23-25; Acts 9:1-5). The provision made for meeting the needs of the people during the famine in Joseph's day is then mentioned, and references are thereafter made to the numerical increase of Israel in Egypt; their deliverance from the land; and the divine care manifested toward them on the wilderness journey, and in their entrance into the promised land (vs. 16-45). Observe the blessedness and profit of belonging to the family of God, and the manner of entrance thereto (John 1:12). What particular blessings have we received from God, that we ought to make known to others?

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND SIX

This psalm records Israel's failures and God's attitude toward His people in consequence of them. It opens, like the preceding psalm, with a note of praise and thanksgiving. The psalmist is meditating on the wonderful works of God; and such meditation, even when it considers divine chastisement, leads to praise of the Lord's goodness. Reference is made in this introductory section to the enduring mercy of God, and to His mighty acts; and a prayer is offered for divine favour and salvation, that the psalmist might see his nation blessed, and be able to glory in the Lord's inheritance

(vs. 1-5). Note the psalmist's love for his people, his desire for their highest welfare, his faith in God, and his belief in the goodness and beneficent purpose of the Lord.

Confession of sin follows the petition for favour. First, there is confession in general terms: "We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly." This intimates realization of sinfulness, humility of spirit, and repentance. And such an attitude brings divine forgiveness (I. John 1:9). Note the union of the psalmist in this confession of the sins of his people—a characteristic of other men of God (Neh. 1:6; Dan. 9:5). Specific national sins are then confessed, beginning with the rebellion at the Red Sea (vs. 7-12; Ex. 14:11). Observe the attitude of the Israelites: they "understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red Sea". Human nature has not changed respecting the things of God. It still fails to understand the works of God; it forgets His mercies, and continues to provoke Him to anger. It is enmity against Him (Rom. 8:7). In contrast with this, note God's action: "He saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known." Salvation in the present day is for His name's sake. We are chosen in Christ, accepted, redeemed, and seated in heavenly places in Him; and our prayers are answered for His sake (Eph. 1:4-7; 2:6; John 14:13, 14). To Him is accorded the glory for all things (John 16:14).

The second specific national sin mentioned relates to the lusting of the people in the wilderness (vs. 13-15; Num. 11:4). They soon forgot God's works; and, desiring that which was contrary to the divine will, they received their request, but leanness was sent into their souls. Note the warning here respecting self-will. This explains the starved condition of many of the Lord's people (Is. 10:16). The third specific sin is that of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram against Moses and Aaron (vs. 16-18; Num. 16:1). The fourth relates to the worship of the calf at Sinai (vs. 19-27; Ex. 32:4) the fifth to the idolatry and immorality of Baalpeor (vs. 28-31; Num. 25:1, 2); the sixth, to the waters of strife at Kadesh (Num. 20:13); and the seventh to the adopting heathen customs (vs. 34-46). A prayer for deliverance closes the psalm. Note the depravity of Israel, and the mercy of God. What was the cause of such continued disobedience on the part of Israel?

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND SEVEN

This is a psalm of thanksgiving for the goodness of God manifested toward men. The content is divided into several sections. First, there is the record of the divine help granted to the Israelites on their wilderness journey, probably, on their return from captivity (vs. 1-9). Note the call to give thanks, the action of God in gathering His people from the lands of their exile, their suffering on the way, their cry to the Lord, and His gracious response. God's care for His people is evident in their experience. In the second section there is a record of Israel's rebellion, chastisement, and divine deliverance (vs. 10-22). Observe in this the nature of the rebellion, the suffering brought by it, and the foolishness of it. "Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities are afflicted. Note the presence of hope: "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses." God hears the cry of His people, and comes to their aid (Ex. 3:7, 8). Divine chastisement is a blessing in putting a stop to rebellion, and directing attention to God (Heb. 12:5-11).

In the third section the power of God manifest respecting the waters of the sea, and experienced by seafaring men, is recorded. Such men see the works of God in the deep, in the storm, and in the calm; and in their distress they call upon God. He hears them, answers their prayers, and they are glad. It would be well if all seafaring men would remember God, and see Him as the power behind the actions of the great deep. Note our Lord's power over the Galilean lake (Mark 4:39). In the last section the power of God in relation to the fruitlessness of the ground is dwelt upon (vs. 33-43). In accordance with the attitude of men, God deals with them through nature, granting prosperity as a reward of righteousness, and barrenness a punishment for wickedness. Note our entire dependence on God for the fruit of the soil, and the wisdom of obedience to Him in all things. God is over all His creation of men and animals and things, and should be revered as the Almighty One. What special deliverances have been granted to us by God?

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

(Continued from page 10)

tion. He has attended the Bible College for some time, and has shown an intelligent grasp of the Scriptures. There have been so many blind leaders of the blind in this land that we pray as these young men go out equipped with the knowledge of God's Word, they may bring many to know the Saviour. Meanwhile the ordinary station routine is carried on. We have about thirty-four children in school, and day by day God's Word is taught to them, and rain or not this important work can still go on. We shall be so glad to hear Mr. and Mrs. Mellish and Miss Lane are on the way back.

Mr. and Mrs. Mellish at Runnymede Road

Rev. and Mrs. G. D. Mellish spent their last Sunday in the homeland at their home church, Runnymede Road Baptist Church, Toronto. They both spoke at the evening service, which was well attended. In introducing Mr. and Mrs. Mellish, the Pastor stated that as a Church they were thankful to God for such Missionaries, as they, and were proud to have them as members of their Church.

At the close of the service, the Lord's Supper was observed, at the conclusion of which farewell messages were extended to Mr. and Mrs. Mellish. Deacon Woodley with a few well-chosen words presented them with a cheque as a token of the love and esteem of the members of Runnymede Road. The pastor added a few words, assuring the Missionaries of

the continued prayerful and practical interest and support of the Church. Also an official message of greeting to the native Christians in Liberia, and to the Missionaries now laboring on the field, was sent by the Church through Mr. and Mrs. Mellish. The meeting closed with the singing of "Blest be the tie that binds."

OTHER BOOKS BY DR. T. T. SHIELDS

"CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT".

A Series of Week-Evening Bible Lectures from Genesis to II. Samuel. 50c.

"THE MOST FAMOUS TRIAL OF HISTORY".

A series of sermons preached in Jarvis Street Church, on "The Trial of Jesus". 50c.

THE OXFORD GROUP MOVEMENT ANALYZED.

A booklet of 40 pages. Five cents per single copy, 25 for \$1.00, and 100 for \$3.75.

What Others Say of "Other Little Ships"

THE WATCHMAN-EXAMINER

New York

"Other Little Ships". By T. T. Shields. The Hunter-Rose Company, Limited. \$1.50.

Preaching is still the most fascinating art in the world. Millions listen to sermonic themes every week. The rich discoveries of the study and the still richer treasures of personality and attestations of divine power make the sermon the center of Protestant worship. Thus books of sermons are interesting to vast numbers of people. When the writer of sermons in such a dramatic and interesting personality as the popular Toronto pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields, there is an added incentive to get the book. Dr. Shields does not disappoint his readers. He is not the power as a writer that he is as a preacher. However, the silent, written word reveals the richness of mind and great spiritual purpose of the author. These sermons were spoken to uncountable multitudes in churches and over the radio. While lacking the vibrant personality which thrilled the hearers as

they were preached, they hold to the truth of the Gospel, are stimulating to thought, and the heart is frequently moved by the simple appeal and the common form of illustration which Dr. Shields uses. We hope many

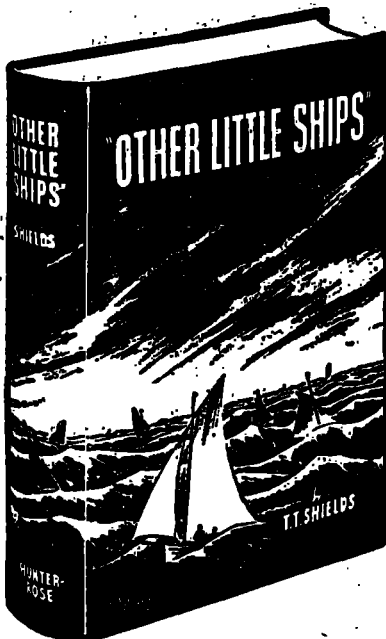
readers will profit by the thoughtful earnestness of these sermons. They are refreshingly human and deeply spiritual.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES

Philadelphia

"Other Little Ships". By T. T. Shields. (The Gospel Witness, 130 Gerrard St., Toronto, Can., \$1.50.)

It is not at all difficult to credit the announcement regarding this book,—that three of its sermon-talks were each published four times in a noted religious journal, the supply of copies in each case becoming immediately exhausted. A great variety of subjects is herein presented; sometimes those particularly suited to young people, again, that which makes the theologian prick up his ears; here, a ready dart is thrust at the "philosophical simpleton" who decries our "slaughter-house religion"; there, parents are shown the result of using such modernized commandments as, "Children, obey your parents"—"I'll give you a penny if you do." But most often the weary and disheartened are addressed, the Mr. Fearings and Ready-to-halts in church and home life,—those too seasick to crawl on deck and see that "other little ships" are likewise buffeted by storm of wind and wave. The book abounds in seed-thoughts: "There is a tendency to welcome all the inhabitants of Shundem and yet to have no place for the prophet of God." "Never has God asked anyone to work for him, but with him." These sermons are sound in exposition, inimitable in illustration, and brimful of well-mixed admonition and comfort.



ORDER FORM FOR DR. SHIELDS' NEW BOOK

THE GOSPEL WITNESS

130 Gerrard Street East

Toronto, Ont.

Please find enclosed \$1.50 for which send me, postpaid, one copy of "Other Little Ships". (If remitting by cheque, add 15 cents for exchange.)

Name.....

Address.....