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CLAIMING, RECEIVING AND ADMINISTERING A KINGDOM.

– LUKE 19:11-27. – DEC. 23. –

"Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." – Rom. 14:12.

NATURALLY enough the fact that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, the city of the great King, and that he had definitely acknowledged himself as the Messiah, and that he was exercising a great influence amongst the people, and that under this influence the rich Zacchaeus had been soundly converted, led the disciples to believe that when they reached Jerusalem, then only fifteen or twenty miles distant, they would immediately see tangible evidences of the establishment of God's Kingdom – that they would see Jesus assume regal robes, power and authority, and that they themselves would be associated with him in the throne of power, and that speedily Israel would arise from the dust to be the dominant nation of the world, and through its laws, at the mouth of Messiah, supported by his divine powers, would bring blessing to every nation, people, kindred and tongue.

It was in view of this erroneous expectation that our Lord gave the parable of this lesson – to point out to the disciples, and vaguely to others, that kingdom glories were yet a considerable distance in the future, and that before they could be expected he must leave them and go to the central seat of government and receive his commission from Jehovah, the Father, and return; and that meantime he would give to some of his servants a work to do in his name which would prove their loyalty, their love, by their faithfulness.

The figure used as the basis of the parable was one with which the people of Jericho were quite familiar. They had in their city the palace of Herod, and knew that when his father, Herod the Great, died,

Herod Archelaus, then king, set out on a mission to Rome, to the court of the Caesars, the rulers of the world; – the object of the mission being to obtain Caesar's authority and investiture of government as the king of Judea instead of his deceased father. They knew that Herod returned, fully equipped with authority, and was in consequence the ruler. They knew also that when he went to Rome a deputation of citizens of Judea was sent after him to make complaint against him, and to urge that he be not appointed; – and to inform Caesar that the government of the Herods was no longer desired by the people of Judea. Josephus says that this deputation of opponents who went to Rome numbered 500. The people probably also remembered that when Herod Archelaus returned with kingly power he first of all rewarded his faithful retainers with various offices throughout the kingdom, and subsequently dealt harshly with those who had manifested their opposition. Thus we see that those who heard this parable were much more likely to be appreciative of its significance than the majority of the people of today would be, because customs of the present time are so different.

It was understood by those who heard the parable that the Lord referred to himself as the nobleman, that heaven was the far country, that Jehovah himself was the great King, whose commission was essential to the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom, and that Jesus' [R2735 : page 362] disciples were the servants to be entrusted with the "Pounds," and that those who would not have him rule over them were more or less in love and in league with the darkness of sin. Everyone who opposes righteousness, or who loves and serves unrighteousness, is thereby declaring *his opposition* to the reign of righteousness, which the Lord proposes to establish in the earth in due time, – when his Kingdom shall come and his will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

There is in this lesson a severe rebuke (which alas! is not often recognized) to those who claim that the Kingdom of God was set up at Pentecost. They must see, unless they with more or less wilfulness

close the eyes of their understanding, that this parable is against their theory, and teaches that the Kingdom is not to be expected to be set up until the return of Messiah at his Second Advent. It is also a rebuke to those who claim that in some manner, incomprehensible to themselves or anybody else, the second advent took place 1800 years ago, at the time of Israel's overthrow, about A.D. 70. They must see, unless with a certain amount of wilfulness they close their eyes of understanding against it, that nothing at all corresponding to a second advent of Christ took place at that time – nothing corresponding to the setting up of his Kingdom occurred there; nothing corresponding to the calling of those of his servants and reckoning with them and rewarding them with places in the Kingdom took place there; nothing corresponding to the calling of his enemies who would not have him rule over them, and the punishment of them, took place there – in A.D. 70.

Indeed, the parable is opposed to every theory respecting the Kingdom except the right theory, and it is in full accord with it; because the right theory is not a human wish or whim or conjecture to help substantiate some human program of events, but is the sum and substance of all the teachings of the divine Word brought into harmonious unison and interpreted thus, Scripture throwing light upon Scripture, by the holy spirit. **[R2736 : page 362]**

Those who heard the parable might have conjectured that it required months, or possibly years for its fulfilment; but probably none of them expected that it would require more than eighteen centuries – because, as natural men, they would be disposed to look at matters from the natural standpoint, from the standpoint of seventy to a hundred years as being the limit of human life. Nor did the disciples even know how to view matters from the divine standpoint until after they had received the holy spirit. Under its enlightenment, however, the Apostle tells us plainly that "A day with the Lord is as a thousand years." – 2 Pet. 3:8.

As the Revised Version points out, the ten servants to whom the pounds were given, were only a part of all the nobleman's servants; they would seem to represent the *consecrated* class who have professed full devotion to the Lord, and to each of whom is given a special gift or blessing, not given to others of the servants of the household of faith. This special gift or blessing seems to be referred to by the Apostle, when he says, "A measure of the spirit is given to every man [in the true, consecrated Church] to profit withal." (1 Cor. 12:7.) It is the same gift to all, the same spirit amongst all, working in all of this class; and the duty of each one is to use this gift of the Lord for its increase; and the more his devotion and the more his faithfulness the larger may be the results.

We are to notice a difference between this parable of the "Pounds" and a somewhat similar one of the "Talents." The latter represented the natural abilities of the individual – "to every man according to his several ability," some one, some two, some five talents or opportunities. But this parable of the pounds ignores the individual abilities of the servants, and shows them each as receiving the same thing and for the same purpose. Possibly the differences of opportunities are to be understood as implied, because the Lord expressed as hearty approval of the one who gained four pounds as he did the one who gained nine. Both did well, both were good, both were faithful. The one with greater talents, in order to be equally faithful with the one of fewer talents, *should be able to* and should show larger results: and the rewards given would seem to imply the same thing – that greater sacrifices in the present time "work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," And this emphasizes the instructions of a previous lesson, showing that those who are *rich* in talents, opportunities and privileges, if faithful, achieve a larger victory and a still grander reward than those who are poorer and who therefore sacrifice less, tho the sacrificing be done in both cases with the same spirit, which in both is thoroughly acceptable to God, pronounced well done, and the servant faithful and good.

The servant who hid his talent and returned it, and whose loss of all opportunity to share in the Kingdom is shown, would seem to represent a class not merely justified but sanctified – consecrated fully to the Lord, and made the recipients of the holy spirit, even as the other members of the body. He is called a "*wicked*" servant; not because he had committed murder or robbery of any kind, but because, having assumed an obligation by which he was entrusted with certain of the Master's goods not given to others, he failed of his covenant and obligation. Such a servant could not be trusted, and properly was considered unfit for any share in the Kingdom; and the blessings which had been entrusted to him were given to the one who had [R2736 : page 363] already most, but whose faithfulness had been so abundantly attested by zeal. So to everyone who uses present blessings and opportunities well, zealously, further blessings, privileges and opportunities shall be granted, and from those who do not so use them they will be taken away.

To our understanding we are now living in the very time represented by this feature of the parable – the time when our Lord, invested with the authority of the Father, is about to take to himself his great power and reign; and when preparatory to that reign, he is reckoning with his servants now living, with a view to their appointment to places in the Kingdom he is about to inaugurate. It is from this standpoint that we interpret the testings and siftings now in progress amongst the consecrated ones in and out of all the sects of Christendom. "The Lord your God proveth you, whether ye do love the Lord your God or no." Present truth and present conditions are testing and *showing* to what extent those who have received the Lord's favor are faithful. This does not imply that others of this class who have died in the past of this age are ignored: on the contrary the Scriptures assure us that they would be dealt with first, and that those accounted worthy have a share in the first resurrection preceding those who are alive and remain at the present time. – 1 Thess. 4:1-17.

But the living ones pass through an experience of testing (the ending of their trial) before they die; they must give an account; judgment must pass respecting them; they must either be gathered, as "wheat" into the barn or be left in the field where the "tares" are shortly to be burned. Fortunately for us, the reckoning is not one of an instant, but time is granted to us to make up our accounts; and blessed is he who, finding that he has not been as faithful as he might have been in the past, is now putting forth redoubled energies – "*redeeming the time*" (*grasping opportunities* – *Eph. 5:16*), in order to make as favorable an account as possible while our King is waiting to receive them and willing to show us all the favor that could be desired.

Ten servants were chosen as a *general number* to represent all of the consecrated, but only three of these are mentioned as illustrations of faithfulness and unfaithfulness. Thus the Lord avoids even intimating how many of the whole number of consecrated will prove faithful to their consecration and enter into the joys of the Lord – into the Kingdom, and to share with him in the throne; and how many of them will fail to be accounted worthy of these honors and blessings; and how many of the latter may be counted worthy of the Second Death; and how many of them will come, through faithfulness in tribulation, to be honored servants in the Kingdom. – *Rev. 7:9-15*.

The enemies of the King are all to be slain, after he takes to himself his great power and begins his reign; "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Some would suggest that this slaying will be with the sword of the spirit, and imply a universal salvation; but to our understanding such an interpretation would be utterly at variance with the spirit of the parable, and hence sophistical, and unworthy of any one claiming either honesty or ability as a teacher in Israel. There ought to be a reasonable relationship between the figure of the parable and the reality, as it will be fulfilled. To our understanding the slaying of the enemies represents clearly and distinctly the punishment which the Lord prescribes for the enemies of righteousness, *viz.*, the Second Death. However, this by no means signifies that all the people (aside

from the specially trusted servants) are enemies. It was not so in the parable, which rather implies four classes: (1) The king's servants; (2) those specially granted the pounds for use in his service; (3) the citizens; (4) the class of the latter opposed to the king, his laws, etc.

After the Kingdom has been established under the King, and his then exalted servants, we may be sure that all in harmony with him will have cause to rejoice in his favor and the blessings of the Kingdom; and if some of the citizens had misunderstood the King's character, having heard him traduced and slandered, they will soon perceive, under the blessed conditions of the Millennial Day, how grossly the "Prince of this World" had misrepresented the character of the Prince of Peace, telling them that he (the latter) had a place of eternal torment prepared for them, into which he would surely cast nine-tenths of their number, etc., etc. When these begin to have the eyes of their understanding opened, so that "the light of the knowledge of the goodness of God," shining in the face of the new King, will bring them enlightenment and joyful privileges hitherto undreamed of, many of them, unquestionably, instead of longer being enemies and hating the King and hating his rule, will become staunch friends and supporters, and will rejoice greatly that they are freed from the yoke of the former prince, Satan, and will rejoice in his binding, which makes possible their liberation from the bondage of ignorance, superstition, fear and calumny.

It will require all of the thousand years to demonstrate who are the friends of truth and righteousness, and who their *enemies*. The "*enemies*" of righteousness are enemies of God and of Christ, and of all who are in harmony with righteousness; and this separation from the King's friends is Scripturally represented as the separating of the "goats" from the "sheep," which will progress throughout that Millennial period, and eventuate in the gathering of all the "sheep" to the right-hand of the King's favor, and the gathering of all the "goats," of contrary disposition, to the left-hand of his disfavor, – where,

because of their wilful and intelligent rejection of the principles of righteousness (the laws of his Kingdom), they will be counted not his servants or messengers, but the servants or messengers of Satan, and as such they will meet their destruction in the symbolical lake of fire, "which is the Second Death." – Rev. 20:14; Matt. 25:31-46.*

*See our issue of [March 15 and April 1, 1900, page 101](#).
