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A table of contents for *The Bible Student* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bible-student\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bible-student_01.php)

(c) *A Determination* to be of use in the Church where one has been 'set'. Many will use all their energies in every type of Christian activity save that which is connected with their own local company. But surely the right order is the reverse of this. Let us have exercise of heart with reference to the local body first and then to the wider sphere afterwards.

(d) *A Durability* and effectiveness in Service: It is to teach and keep on teaching, there being implied that such continuity of teaching will be effective. Let us not be weary in our Service!

## THE KINGDOM AND THE REWARDS

W. FRASER NAISMITH, Scotland

The Lord Jesus Christ made numerous allusions to the Kingdom, both in its mystery character and in its manifestation throughout His public ministry, and on occasions intimated that there were rewards associated with the Day of Manifestation. The Father's House is the realm where love abides in its sweetness and unalloyed enjoyment: there the redeemed shall dwell in the undisturbed fellowship of the Lord who paid the price of their redemption in His own precious blood. His coming to the air to call His own to dwell with Him in cloudless light and glory may be expected at any moment: for there are no prophetic scriptures to be fulfilled prior to this great event. Consequent upon the summoning shout and the departure of the saints of God from this scene there will be realised the delights of that Home on high, a scene of eternal ecstasy and worship. Then we shall all appear at the judgment seat of Christ to have our lives reviewed and to be awarded commensurate with our fidelity in this little while of opportunity. Our places in the kingdom will then be allocated to us. The marriage of the Lamb will follow—'his wife has made herself ready'—meaning that the judgment-seat has been passed and the examination has taken place, and in garments of pure white linen the Bride of the Lamb shall be

manifested to share the delights of her heavenly Bridegroom. It is interesting to observe that when God would picture for us the joys that shall abide in that realm where the threnodies of human failure have never once been heard He uses the imagery of a marriage, that most delightful day in the human history. It will be bliss without any possibility of a cloud dimming the horizon or eclipsing the grandeur.

There is a delightful little parable told by the Lord in Luke 19, and the reason for Him speaking this parable is also given. The miracles of our Lord were parables of His power; the parables of our Lord were miracles of His wisdom. They were nigh to Jerusalem, and the disciples thought that the kingdom should immediately appear. Jerusalem would naturally be associated with the kingdom. To the Hebrew Jerusalem was the metropolis of the world—to them all roads led there. In that city, with its sanctuary, God had been pleased to dwell; and there King David had ruled over the people of Israel. In the coming day there shall be a sanctuary and a throne in that city and the true Melchisedec shall 'sit a priest upon His throne'. The disciples recognised in their Teacher the One who would establish a kingdom 'which shall never be moved'; and they presumed the hour had arrived for its inauguration. The little story that follows is associated with those two thoughts.

The Lord was a master at speaking in parables—oftentimes His messages were not fully understood by a bewildered company of disciples. On one occasion they asked Him—'Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?' He replied 'Because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom, but unto them it is not given.' The Lord would communicate certain truths to those esoteric followers while the same ministry was indiscipherable to the multitudes; and this was the fulfilling of the words of Isaiah the prophet in his prophecy chapter 6 and verse 9.

Before examining the parable spoken by the Lord and recorded by Luke in chapter 19 it might be wise to observe that this is not the same story as related by Christ and recorded by Matthew in chapter 25. In the latter Christ spoke of talents which were distributed according to the abilities of the servants—one

received five, another two, and another one. This story is illustrative of the sovereignty of God who distributes gifts severally as He wills. The parable in Luke 19 shows each servant receiving the same amount. This would emphasise the truth of human responsibility. It should be further noticed that the two stories were not related by the Lord at the same time: the story of the talents was told after Christ had arrived at Jerusalem and leaving the temple had taken His seat on the Mount of Olives—He had said 'Your house is left unto you desolate'. The Olivet discourse was delivered in answer to questions put to Him by His disciples, and this story of the talents forms part of the last section of that discourse which is divided into three parts. The parable of Luke 19 was told after Christ had left Jericho and after He had bestowed blessing on Zacchaeus, and ere He entered into Jerusalem. It is patent to the careful reader that the Lord Jesus had some specific line of teaching in both stories. Divine sovereignty and human responsibility are often misunderstood; and if we would look at divine truth with an oblique eye everything will appear out of focus, but when we examine the portions in their context everything will regain the proper perspective.

Luke 19 brings into view service in light of the Kingdom. There is a word characteristic of the beloved physician Luke, viz., 'certain'. It would be expected that the doctor should be certain, for if in doubt then other skill should be sought. A proper diagnosis is essential to a beneficial treatment. 'There was a certain nobleman'—it is not any nobleman, but a 'certain' one. It needs no stretch of imagination to determine who is alluded to in this term. Christ is that nobleman. Noble in birth—for He was born King of the Jews: noble in life—for the Father opened heaven to announce His satisfaction in His walk and ways: noble in death—for 'He bare the sins of many': noble in exaltation—being greeted by God in Ps. 110 who said 'Sit thou on my right hand'; in every detail of His history He is noble.

The long journey to the 'far country' has been undertaken. There is a tremendous distance between heaven and earth; there is no moral relationship between them. The nobleman

has gone to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. The Lord Jesus Christ sits on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens awaiting the moment when He shall hear the words 'Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance'; for He sits on God's right hand until His enemies are made His footstool.

There were ten servants to whom the nobleman gave each a pound with this instruction 'Occupy till I come'. The word 'occupy' is the word 'trade'—and in v. 15 he uses it 'how much every man had gained by trading': so he actually said 'Trade till I come'. Trading is done in the world. If a person has some capital he invests it in a business and expends every ounce of energy to make it prosperous. It means going out on a venture. The evangelist and the missionary are examples of what trading really means—and we all can be missionaries even though we never leave our own home district. Christ was the world's greatest missionary and only once was out of the country and that was when He was a child.

The citizens of the place hated the nobleman and sent a message after him saying 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' The stoning of Stephen answers to the messenger who was despatched after his master to make that declaration.

The time came for the nobleman to return, having received the kingdom, and He called his servants for interview. The first said 'Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds'. This man had obviously been promoting the interests of his master; for it is good business when one pound can be made ten pounds. To this servant the master said 'Well, thou good servant; because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.' The reward given was commensurate with the fidelity of the servant. 'The Lord is not unrighteous to forget your work!' There is one point worthy of note here and it is this—there are more cities to rule over than suitable men to rule over them, and this is revealed in the fact that one man gets ten cities to rule over. Cities are on the earth, and the control of earth's cities is entrusted to faithful men. The second servant came saying 'Lord, thy pound hath gained five'. The master commend-

ed him in similar terms to those addressed to the first servant, adding the words 'be thou also over five cities.' What have you ventured for Christ? It may mean sacrifice of friends, fellowship, earthborn joys and natural pleasures—but O! what a reward if you are faithful. To be given the responsibility of controlling in the kingdom of our Lord, under His guidance, is surely worth an earnest endeavour.

The third servant came saying 'Lord, behold here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.' What an impression to have of the master; yet there are many in Christendom today who take the place of servants and they have a low estimate of the Lord they profess to serve. What do you think of the Lord you profess to serve? This man was judged out of his own mouth, and the master designated him a 'wicked servant'. One can readily understand that with such a poor esteem for the master this servant would not engage in any service that would prove profitable. The master said to him 'wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?' The Lord changes the thought from trading to banking at this point. Banking suggests a measure of security—it is a place for weaker people: monies can be lodged there and the capital or interest can be withdrawn as occasion demands. It is not so testing to one to bank money as it is to invest it in a business. The word for 'bank' is the word used in 1 Cor. 10:21 where it is translated 'table'. The Lord's table is the fellowship of the death of Christ—it signifies all that accrues from the dying of the Lord Jesus and is the portion of the redeemed. If this man had only put the money into the Lord's 'trapeza'—bank or table—then He would have received His own with interest. The Lord is always looking for interest, and the bank is the place that yields it; so whatever is placed there will yield something for the Lord. This man had kept the pound laid up in a napkin. The napkin is the sweat-cloth; and it is obvious that he never used it. He lost no perspiration for his lord since the pound was secreted in the sweat-cloth. How much energy

have you expended for your Lord? Have you perspired for Him at all? The word 'napkin' is found three times in the New Testament and once the same word is translated 'handkerchief'. The three times it is translated 'napkin' are all associated with a dead person: Lazarus came forth and his face was bound about with a napkin. In John 20 in the grave of the Lord Jesus Christ, when He had risen in triumph and when the disciples were able to look within, they saw the napkin that was about His head wrapped together in a place by itself. We rightly infer that this man who took the place of a servant and who had such a poor estimate of the lord was a picture of the many who profess to serve the Lord yet have never been born again—they are spiritual corpses, dead in trespasses and sin.

The lord said 'Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.' The greater the faithfulness the richer the reward will be to the servant. This wicked servant is stripped of everything—even his sham profession—and left naked in his own sinfulness and shame. The Lord also said 'To him that hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.' 'Everything is naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.' Make sure if you would presume to serve the Lord Christ that you had the experience of new birth, for service rendered by one without such an experience will never meet with the divine approval, nor will it secure any commendation or reward.

The Lord speaks next of the enemies who refused to have Him as their ruler and on them His just judgment is executed. When He comes to establish His kingdom—a kingdom which shall never be moved—He will break every opposition with a rod of iron and smash in pieces those who have refused to obey the Gospel. see Ps. 2:9 and 2 Thess. 1:8.

Peter refers to the coming kingdom and speaks of it as the 'everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ'. Gentile empires there have been in the past, worldwide in their dominion; this can be confirmed by examining the dream of that monarch Nebuchadnezzar which Daniel interpreted (Dan. 2).

Daniel addressing the Chaldean monarch said 'Thou art this head of gold'. The head of gold represented the Chaldean Empire of which King Nebuchadnezzar was the ruler. 'After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee'—this is represented in the breasts and arms of silver—and this was confirmed when the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar made that feast and when 'there was a sound of revelry by night . . . when Chaldea's capital had gathered then her beauty and her chivalry'. The Medo-Persian forces took the city and superseded the power of Babylon. Then the Macedonian power under Alexander the Great seized the empire from the Medo-Persians and the Grecian empire was established. This too, was superseded by an inferior power the Romans—the hordes from Rome came and established themselves as universal rulers. The Grecians were the 'belly and thighs of brass', and the Romans were the 'legs of iron'. There is no universal kingdom today, nor likely to be until He reigns, whose right it is to reign. When Christ comes forth in might and majesty then 'The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.' The Spirit of God, by Peter's pen, desires that we should have an 'abundant entrance' to this kingdom which shall never be superseded—for 'it shall not be left to other people'. When He takes His great power and reigns then this poor earth shall know equity and peace that it never could have dreamed of; for Christ must reign 'till He hath put all enemies under His feet'. When all things are subdued unto Him and He hath delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, 'then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.' Christ shall hand back the Kingdom as perfect as He got it to God His Father, and retreat Himself into the Godhead where He has a place, 'that God may be all in all.'

What a wonderful consummation to all the prophetic utterances of the prophets of old and of the greatest of all prophets, Christ Himself, who on the Mount of Olives uttered the most remarkable prophecy ever spoken to men. Be assured of this: He



said—'Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away'. We wait then the fulfilment of the declarations of that prophet about whom Moses spoke when he said 'A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear.' Acts 7:37. We would remind ourselves of the statement God made Balaam make in Numbers 23:19 'Hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall he not make it good?' Paul assures us that at the coming of Christ 'those also which sleep through Jesus will God bring with Him'. We ask 'bring with Him where?' 'Into the Kingdom, of course', we reply. But He wants us to have an abundant entrance into that Kingdom. That will depend entirely upon your fidelity in this the day of opportunity. The means of entrance into the Father's House is the precious blood of Christ; that is appreciated by faith! The means of gaining a position in the Kingdom is by faithfulness to the Man who is out of sight at the moment. Invisibility tests us—Israel said about Moses 'Up make us gods that will go before us, for as for this Moses we wot not what is become of him.' Your place in the coming kingdom will reveal to others how much you valued the Man who today is out of sight. He commends, not for success necessarily, but for faithfulness. 'For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.' Phil. 1:29.

## THE ROYAL OWNER

A. C. ROSE

Such is the literal meaning of the title 'Lord' so frequently applied to the Son of God in the pages of the New Testament. He who had not where to lay His head was the rightful owner of every roof-tree. 'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor that we through His poverty might become rich'. The Possessor of heaven and earth would not enjoy His vast estates alone. It did not suffice that man was the crown of His creation, he must be made the companion of His counsels, whatever the cost. So it has