

## The Parable of the Pounds

TOPIC FOR THE APRIL CONSECRATION MEETING, WEEK OF APRIL 6.

Luke 19: 11-27.

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ing among the natives. Dr. Paton went home, and after visiting Australia and Scotland, he returned to the New Hebrides and began work at Aniwa.

The story of his years of service on this little island is one of the most thrilling of missionary records. Three years after his arrival, Dr. Paton celebrated the Lord's Supper with twelve converts—all formerly cannibals. The work grew rapidly. Schools were built and children taught; the Bible translated and Christian homes established; the power of witchcraft broken and disease cured. New plants were introduced into the island and new industries taught. In 1892 while in Canada, Dr. Paton said that the people of Aniwa were more reverent and openly Christian than any community he had ever visited. Dr. Paton's life story has been read by thousands of our young people, and has been the missionary inspiration of many.

### JAMES CHALMERS—"Great Heart."

"A heart as big as a Church" is what Robert Louis Stevenson said of one of the greatest missionaries to the South Seas—James Chalmers, whom the natives called "Tamat." In 1865 he and his wife landed at Rarotonga.

The natives here were already Christian, so, when the call came from New Guinea in 1877, Chalmers gladly went to begin pioneer work. In 1882 he reported all things as changed—no cannibal feasts; tribes, which were always at war, in peace together worshipping God.

Chalmers' call for missionaries is an index to the brave, consecrated spirit of the man. In 1886 Chalmers returned to England after twenty-one years of service, and in an address he said: "Recall the twenty-one years, give me back all its experience, give me its shipwrecks, give me its standings in the face of death, give me it surrounded with savages with spears and clubs, give me it back again with spears flying about me, with the club knocking me to the ground, give me it back, and I will still be your missionary."

In Chalmers, Stevenson saw the missionary—the man who lived in the islands not for what he could get but for what he could give. He came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and his service was unto death. In 1901 he was murdered by savages of New Guinea.

Robert Louis Stevenson's testimony to Missions in the Islands, we give in his own words: "I conceived a great prejudice against missions in the South Seas, and had no sooner come there than that prejudice was first reduced, and then at last annihilated. Those who debate against missions have only one thing to do, to come and see them on the spot. They will see a great deal of good done; they will see a race being forwarded in many different directions, and, I believe, if they be honest persons, they will cease to complain of mission work and its effect."

For further reference we recommend "The Life of John G. Paton," 35 cents (probably in your Sunday School library); "Life of James Chalmers," five cents; "Christus Redemptor," 35 cents. See outline programme in the *Missionary Outlook* (March number).

### Adjustable Authors

The most cheerful author, Samuel Smiles; the noisiest, Howells; the tallest, Longfellow; the most flowery, Hawthorne; the holiest, Pope; the happiest, Gay; the most amusing, Thomas Tickell; the most fiery, Burns; the most talkative, Chatterton; the most distressed, Akenaide.—*Chicago Record-Herald*.

THIS is the concluding study of the parables which began a year ago with the one about the sower. Has it been a profitable study? If it has suggested something which will make the study of the Bible more interesting it will have been worth while. We have had twelve of the parables under review. There are many others, and some of them very much shorter. The meanings are not as obscure as we are sometimes led to think. If we take the words in the ordinary sense, and think reverently about them we will surely be blessed in our study of the Word of God, whatever part it may be. Let us keep on. Go deeper into the mines of truth!

The parable of the pounds may be understood better by noting the meaning of the eleventh verse. Two reasons for speaking it are there given. Do we understand them? First, "because He was nigh unto Jerusalem"; and second, "because they thought that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear." It is a well known fact that the disciples had a notion due to a literal interpretation of the scripture that Jesus was about to set up at Jerusalem an earthly kingdom which would surpass even the glory of

terpretation of the motto of my old College class. (If any of the classmates read this they will be able to verify it by referring to the original Latin.) Jesus wanted to show the disciples a better, more truthful aspect of the way to the kingdom than that they had in mind. The kingdom was not going to come with visible suddenness. Those who were to take positions in it had to undergo a course of training ere they would be fit. We see now the meaning of the verse.

There seems also in this connection to be an allusion to the parable to a recent historical event. The parable would awaken all the more interest on that account. Archelaus, son of Herod, seems to have gone to Rome that he might be invested with the kingship according to the wish of his father. While he was absent, the "citizens" actually sent a message, saying that they did not want him to reign over them. Only a few of his "servants" were loyal to him. On a return they were duly rewarded with good positions. In the parable of the pounds then Jesus gives a history of His own experience. He, too, is looking for a kingdom. He came to his own and His own received Him not. He entrusted a few servants with His work.

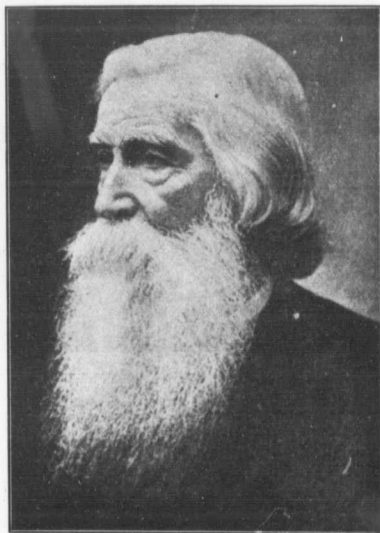
He will "return" as King, and their work will be recognized. They will then be qualified to reign with him. Jesus made good use of historical illustration in this case.

What is a "pound"? Talent is a word more easily understood by us. The pound is variously interpreted. Some make it synonymous with the Grace of God; some with our mission in life; some the "word" or message such as that entrusted to Timothy. In any case it is something with which we are entrusted. If we say it is the Gospel we will be near enough, for then all have the same gift. Or if we say the grace of God all are treated alike. All depends on our own efforts what we make out of it.

A general inference from the parable is that God trusts men. He bestows gifts upon us, entrusts them to us, and leaves us free. He respects our nature and our inherent dignity. He wants volunteers in His service. He wants to leave us to ourselves to see how we will act under such a test. Then

note the need of training for greater usefulness. When we least know the secret of leadership? First there must be long and lowly service. Leadership is a costly gift.

In dealing with the servants when the King returned we will take the last one mentioned first. About six verses are taken up with his case. Why was he so blame-worthy? There was work for him to do and he had neglected to do it. Many suffered on that account. He quarrelled with Providence, found fault with his Maker. We often meet his type. They say, "Why wasn't the Bible made so we



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Solomon. As they saw Jerusalem opening up before them their hopes were kindled anew, or perhaps it would be truer to say that their old illusions began to burn up again. They could not get clear of the idea that there was to be a great upheaval somehow, a cataclysm, and that the enemies of Jesus to be overturned and a new kingdom visibly set up in which they were to have the most prominent positions.

We labor under the same illusions where we indulge the hope of getting a crown without bearing the cross. "No palms without dust," was the literal in-