

put my money to the exchangers. (His gold and silver—the pure words of the Lord, see Ps. xii. 6. Rev. iii. 18, Ps. xviii. 30), that when I come again I may have mine own with usury. “My Word” said Jehovah, “shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” Is. lv. 11.

“Feed my sheep.” Jesus, the Incarnate Word of God said, “I am the living bread that came down from Heaven.” “The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” And Paul tells us that God “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” (literally “times”) 1st Tim. ii. 4, 5, 6. Is not this the office of our stewardship—to give a hungry, dying world, its “portion of meat in due season”? Is it not to sow the “incorruptible seed,” “The Word of the Lord which liveth and abideth forever,” of which Peter further writes, “this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you?” 1st Pet. i. 23, 25.

That this is the Apostle Paul’s conception of stewardship is very evident.

In the first chapter of Colossians, speaking of the “hope of the Gospel” he says, “whereof I am made a minister according to the stewardship* (R.V.) of God, which is given to me for you, fully to preach (margin) the Word of God.”

Again he says, in 1st Cor. ix. 17, “For though I preach the Gospel I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me: yea woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel! For if I do this thing willingly I have a reward; but if against my will, a stewardship* of the Gospel is committed unto me.”

Again, in 1st Cor. iv. 1, he says, “Let a man

so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.”

In the 1st epistle to Timothy Paul speaks of the “glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.” Also in 1st Thess. ii. 4. “But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak,” and further down in the chapter hear this faithful steward, “Ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail: for laboring night and day.....we preached unto you the Gospel of God.”

Truly, if we obey his injunction, “be ye followers of me even as I also am of Christ,” we will take this matter of the stewardship of God’s Word very seriously.

Over and over Paul places the emphasis on putting forth the Word of God—the Gospel—as his one business, and implies in many passages that it is the paramount object to engage the attention of those who have heard of it, and know the grace of God in truth. In 2nd Cor. v., 18, 19, he writes, “all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry* of reconciliation; to wit, (a wonderful summing up of the Gospel, this,) that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” Think again now, of the nobleman who called his own servants and delivered to them his goods. Think of the Lord as He prayed, “and now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world. “I have given them Thy Word.”—“He hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”

We know how repeatedly Paul urged Timothy to keep that which was committed to his trust, to “preach the word,” being “instant in season, out of season,” to study to show himself “approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.”

**oikonomia*, the original of this word comes from *oikos*, home, and *nemo*, to distribute, the primary meaning thus being the ordering of the house, or stewardship. Our word *economics* is a derivative.

**diakonia* (ministry) and *oikonomia* (stewardship) have several meanings in common, the general idea being the performance of service.