

Among The Circles

A SUMMER OBJECTIVE

The James St. Circle, Hamilton, has set itself the objective of raising during the summer months seventy-five dollars towards the first year's salary of Miss Janet Holmes, who goes to Bolivia next January.

The Board was greatly encouraged to learn of this special effort, and joins with the women of James St. in hoping that other Circles may follow their example.

Secretary.

STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship is a great word. The moment it is mentioned we think of giving, of sermons on stewardship in which the giving of money is usually emphasized.

What does the word steward really mean? The definition we find for it is "a person entrusted with the management of estates or affairs, not his own, hence, one who manages or disburses for another or others."

That describes our position, entrusted with affairs not our own but the Lord's. Hence we need to be the more careful how we handle them.

In the Old Testament the steward was over the house, as Joseph's steward. Gen. 43 : 19; 44 : 4. He was spoken of in the New Testament as one to whom a charge had been committed, Matt. 20 : 8, "Call the labourers and give them their hire." Luke 8 : 3, "Chuza, Herod's steward . . . which ministered unto him." Luke 16:2, "Give account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward."

Many stewards were no doubt slaves. Matt. 24 : 45; others freedmen, Luke 16 : 1-21;

In the parable of the "unjust steward" he was a freeman. He had full charge of his Master's affairs and could use them to his own advantage if he chose. He was fully accountable to his master and had to render an account when called upon.

A bishop or overseer is to be as God's steward. Titus 1 : 7.

In Christ's warning to His disciples He seems to imply they were to act as stewards in His absence. Luke 12 : 42; According to that passage a steward's task was to manage

all the affairs of his master—attend to receipts, expenditures, etc., and portion out to each one of his householders what should come to him. The disciples were left thus in charge of His Gospel—"the Good news," and were to use their gift to the best advantage in behalf of others until His return.

Paul and his fellow labourers were stewards of the mysteries of God. 1 Cor. 14 : 1, 2. The idea is that the steward takes scrupulous care of that entrusted to him and gives it out to others faithfully and as directed by his master—Jesus Christ.

Peter considered himself and all other Christians as "stewards of the manifold grace of God." 1 Peter, 4 : 10.

We see clearly, therefore, that we are stewards, placed here (for I do not believe we just "happened" to be where we are) entrusted with the work of the Lord. "We are workers together with Him," "co-labourers." We are not only to give of our money, to tithe, which is the meaning we so often receive from stewardship, but to give ourselves unto the Lord. After all, the money we have is a small part of what God has entrusted to us.

We are entrusted with the same message which was given the Disciples and the Commission, "Go ye . . . and preach the gospel." It may not always be in word, but often in deed. The main thing is "Are we faithful stewards?"

I am afraid only too often we are guilty of giving money to soothe our conscience when the Lord has some work for us to do instead. On the other hand, some of us may be guilty of withholding money when that is what He requires of us.

His Word says, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." All that we have and all that we are belongs to Him.

The parable of the talents, Matt. 25 : 14-30, and of the pounds, Luke 19 : 12-26, show us very clearly the result and benefits of our stewardship.

We see, after carefully considering these parables, the Master entrusted to His servants a portion of goods, and in Matthew it especially mentions "his goods." They were