

October.

Oh, sumach plumes and goldenrod,
With hazel boughs entwining,
Where purple asters gaily nod,
And clematis is vining,
Mid maple fires that brightly burn,
The red and gold together,
Beneath the hazy smoke-blue skies
Of Indian summer weather

The summer's dead ' Methinks thy garb
Should be a whit more sober,
And that thy mood too festive seems.
Oh, riotous October!

And yet we would not miss one hue
Of all thy vivid splendour;
For that would lose us part of you,
To whom our hearts are tender.

Thou heapest up the measure full,
Of all the summer's glory,
The June sun kissed the fruit and leaves:
October tells the story.

Thou hast within thy bosom's store
A wealth of lavish treasure,
And spread'st it out to feast our eyes,
And fill our souls with pleasure.

And so we would not miss one hue
Of all thy vivid splendour;
For that would lose us part of you,
To whom our hearts are tender.

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF JESUS.

LESSON V.—NOVEMBER 4.

THE UNJUST STEWARD.

Luke 16. 1-13. Memory verses, 10-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Ye cannot serve God and mammon.—
Luke 16. 13.

OUTLINE.

1. Living without Worldly Forethought,
v. 1, 2.

2. Living with Worldly Forethought,
v. 3-12.

3. Living with Heavenly Forethought,
v. 13.

Time.—Winter of A.D. 29-30.

Place.—Probably in the province of
Perea.

LESSON HELPS.

1. "He said also"—In continuation, probably, of our last lesson, which connects closely with the passage we study to-day. "Unto his disciples"—Not to the apostles only, but to a great group of followers. "A certain rich man"—Standing here for God, who knows all men's talents, and for whom all men stand as stewards. "A steward"—Israel in particular; mankind in general, each human soul. "Had wasted his goods"—"Was wasting." The steward was demanding from the farmers, to whom the rich man's estate was leased, a great rental, while he paid to the rich man only a fair rent. But, although he thus received a fraudulent income, he evidently had not made himself rich, and was living above his income.

2. "Mayest be no longer steward"—A dishonest man is precluded from such a position. As we go on with this story we are to think of the gross unfaithfulness to God that the scribes and teachers of Israel were guilty of, but we are also to remember that this parable applies to us all.

3. "What shall I do"—He had been living thoughtlessly as well as wickedly—"I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed"—"When the prodigal son came to his worst stress he was still ready for work, if he could get it to do; but this man had lost his manliness and strength, while he retains the false shame which makes him prefer fraud to poverty."

4. "That when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses"—I will do them such a favour that they will not leave me poverty-stricken. "They," of course, refers to the farmers who owed the rich man for their rent.

5. "So he called every one of his lord's debtors"—His lord had evidently given him time to prepare the required amount. "How much owest thou"—Probably the sums owed were the rents to be paid in kind, the share of the growth of the field.

6. "A hundred measures of oil"—Baths of oil. The bath was a Hebrew measure, but its amount is uncertain. It is generally understood to be about olive oil, large quantities of which were produced in Palestine. "Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty"—The bill is the bond or lease which has fifty-six pints. The oil is, of course, been in the steward's keeping, and therefore he says to the farmer, "Take it—it must be quickly done, because the lord is presently expected back and

the whole transaction must be kept from him."

8. "The lord commended the unjust steward"—Not, of course, the Lord Jesus, but the rich man, and his commendation simply means the admiration that one worldly and tricky man might express for the trick of another. "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light"—Those whose hopes are limited to the things of the earth are more prudent and farseeing in their dealings with their fellows than God's servants are with regard to their fellows.

9. "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness"—Mammon is a Chaldean word meaning riches. Let worldly wealth, which, whether acquired or inherited, is too often ill-gotten, be employed in works of mercy. If money cannot be restored to a more rightful owner, let it be given to the poor, and used to make friends of those from whom we cannot hope for any return but their prayers. "When ye fall"—Probably this should read "when it falls"—the mammon. "They may receive you"—The friends that have been made by the wise use of the mammon. "Sin consists not in being the steward of God, but in forgetting that we are his steward."

10. "A general proposition, yet with reference to mammon as the least of things."

11. This verse shows that fidelity is possible toward the unrighteous mammon.

HOME READINGS.

M. The unjust steward.—Luke 16. 1-13.

Tu. Prudence of Jacob.—Gen. 32. 6-20.

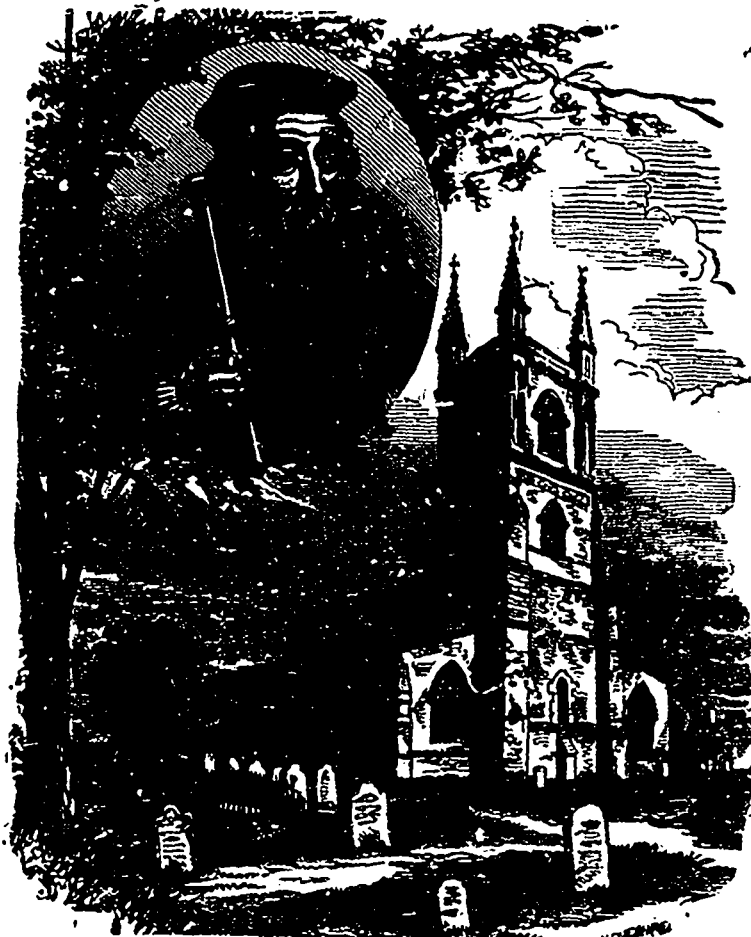
W. Firm standing.—Psa. 15.

Th. Faithful service.—Dan. 6. 1-10.

F. Better than sacrifice.—Prov. 21. 1-12.

S. As to the Lord.—Col. 3. 16-25.

Su. Reward of faithfulness.—Matt. 25. 14-30.



WYCLIFFE AND LUTTERWORTH CHURCH.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. Living without Worldly Forethought,
v. 1, 2.

What is a steward?
What accusation was brought against the rich man's steward?
Can a wasteful steward be honest?
Is any, even the smallest, waste ever right?

Is it right to have forethought concerning the things of this world?
What did the rich man say to his steward?

Are we stewards? Of whom?
What sacred trusts committed to us are we often tempted to waste?

2. Living with Worldly Forethought,
v. 3-12.

How did the disgraced steward seek to mend his fortunes?

What sort of shame is that which prefers fraud to poverty?

Who were the "debtors"? (Probably farmers who rented their grounds from the rich man.)

Why were their debts to be paid in "measures of oil and wheat"?

Was the steward's advice to the debtor honest or not?

Was it "smart" or not?

Why were they likely never to tell on him?

Who was "the lord" who "commended the unjust steward"?

Does the Lord Jesus commend his course?

What particular trait of his does Jesus commend?

Can any one who is unfaithful in trifles be faithful to great trusts?

Can any one who is unfaithful in earthly duties be faithful to God?

What is the "mammon of unrighteousness"?

Is it right to seek this world's goods?
Rom. 12. 11.

Will any amount of outward observances atone for a divided or unclean heart?

3. Living with Heavenly Forethought,
v. 13.

To what things will the wise give first attention?

Can we make a thorough success of life and still faithfully serve God?

Can there be any success of life that God does not permit?

What is the great need in these days of hurry and bustle?

What is the Christian's safeguard?

Is it a greater sin for a Christian to be unfaithful in daily duties than for others?

Are we in any danger of trying to do this?

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Where in this lesson do we learn—

1. That living without worldly forethought is a folly and a sin?

2. That living with worldly forethought becomes a great temptation?

3. That living with heavenly forethought brings sure salvation?

When our knight was about thirty-two years old he entered on a long struggle with the various orders of friars. These friars pretended to be very poor, and with wallets on their backs went about begging with piteous air, while at the same time they lived in palaces and dressed in costly garments. They used to kidnap children and shut them up in monasteries. When the orders were first organized their idea was to become a body of self-denying and consecrated men, who would go about arousing the people to a better life. At first their influence was very good, but when they became very popular and very powerful, they became also very degenerate.

But there was one man who was not afraid to tell them what he thought of them, and he did his duty so thoroughly and so fearlessly that Rome became alarmed, and at last summoned the Gospel Doctor to appear at St. Paul's Cathedral, London, on the nineteenth of February, 1377, and answer to the charge of heresy.

The cathedral was crowded, and yet a very little thing scattered the crowd. Lord Percy, who attended Wycliffe, desired him to be seated. But the Bishop of London declared that Wycliffe "should not sit, and that according to law an accused person should stand during the time of his answer." A controversy soon followed, and in the tumult the whole assembly was broken up and the next day was succeeded by a riot. As for Wycliffe, he was dismissed with the injunction to be more careful about his preaching in the future. But public opinion declared in his favour.

"If he is guilty," the people said, "why is he not punished? If he is innocent, why is he ordered to be silent?"

In 1379, Wycliffe was seriously ill. The mendicant friars thought that their opportunity had now come. They went in much state to see him and solemnly tried to make him recant. He ordered his servant to raise him on the pillows, and to the great astonishment of the friars, the apparently dying man, fixing his eyes on his enemies, said: "I shall not die, but live, and again declare the evil deeds of the friars."

His enemies left him, and the great reformer did live. He was yet to put the finishing touches to his greatest work—the translating and scattering of the Word of God, that the people might read it in their own tongue. For ten or fifteen years he worked steadily at this task, and at last, in 1380, it was completed. This was a great event in the religious history of England. To us today it sounds like odd English. The first verse of the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians reads like this:

"If I speke with tungs of men and of angels, and I have not charite, I am maad as bras sownynge or a cymbal tynklynge."

The work met with a wonderful reception. Citizens, soldiers, the rich and the poor welcomed it with delight. Even Anne, the wife of Richard II., began to read the Gospels. John de Wycliffe had indeed become The Gospel Doctor. It cost a large sum to own a Testament—estimated to equal one hundred and fifty dollars of our times.

To carry the Bible into the remotest hamlets was the sole idea of The Gospel Doctor, and for this purpose he sent forth preachers, bidding them—

"Go and preach; it is the sublimest work; but imitate not the priests whom we see after the sermon sitting in ale-houses or at the gaming table. After your sermon is done, do you visit the sick, the aged, the poor, the blind, the lame."

These "poor priests," as they were called, went about barefoot, staff in hand, and dressed in coarse robes; they lived on alms and were satisfied with the plainest food. Their theme was Christ and they preached with wonderful eloquence.

Wycliffe continued in his glorious work for many years, until one day, as he stood in the midst of his little flock in the Lutterworth church, administering the communion, he was stricken with paralysis, and was carried home to die in two days at the ripe age of sixty years. He was buried beneath the chancel of Lutterworth church, but thirty years after, Rome directed that his body should be disinterred and thrown far away from church walls. They took up the body, burned it, and cast the ashes into an adjacent brook.

"The brook," says Fuller, "did carry his ashes into Avon! Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow seas, and they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over." If Luther and Calvin are the fathers of the Reformation, Wycliffe is its grandfather.—The Well Spring.

JOHN DE WYCLIFFE.

BY EVALENA L. FEYER.

The kind, patient woman who rocked a cradle in the little village of Wycliffe, in Yorkshire, England, about the year 1324, could not know that the sleeping occupant of the swinging cradle would grow up to become one of the foremost men of his times, and so she rocked and nursed and crooned lullabys, and the baby slept and ate and grew, just like all other babies.

The next time we see this baby he has grown to be a man and is among the students in the scholastic Oxford. While there Wycliffe was a faithful pupil, for besides studying the writings of the famous Greek philosopher Aristotle and the writings of the church fathers, like Augustine and Basil and Jerome, he studied civil law and canon law, and he even went to the Bible for knowledge, which was a very unfashionable thing to do in those days, the biblical teachers being called "the ballocks of Abraham." Wycliffe was nicknamed "The Gospel Doctor."