

The Lesson Council.

Question 11. What is covetousness? How is it manifest in our time?

Covetousness is a greedy, selfish desire for more. A desire to prosper in life, to increase in mental and material riches, is perfectly consistent with most spiritual piety; but when this desire becomes a craving greed which cannot be satisfied, always crying "more! more!" the end is lost sight of in the means. Covetousness is manifested in our times by the dealer in intoxicating liquors; by politicians and office-holders who seek and hold public office merely for personal gain; by the absorbing thirst for money manifest in almost every branch of commercial enterprise.—*Rev. Vaughan S. Collins, A.M.*

Covetousness is an inordinate desire for worldly possessions, and may be manifested by extraordinary efforts to obtain them, or by firmly holding what has been obtained already. It is not confined to the rich or the "well-to-do," but is often seen in the poor, who covet as intensely as their more successful neighbors. This vice is manifested in our time in the mad rush for wealth, or fame, or for that peculiar something called success. It is manifested also in hoarding up wealth and refusing to give from it for benevolent purposes.—*Prof. James C. Murray.*

Covetousness is a dominating love of the world, having its motive in human opinion, in lust for gain, in reliance upon material possessions as a necessary means of support and satisfaction. It is the setting of man-mun before God, and therefore is idolatry. It is manifest in all who, in the pursuit of worldly possessions or for their retention, are willing to sacrifice the claims of God and humanity.—*Rev. R. W. Copeland.*

Covetousness is a selfish desire for wealth. It grows with indulgence, and becomes a mental disease. Its victim loves and trusts, not the Almighty, but the "almighty dollar." It becomes idolatry. Scripture classes it with murder, theft, and adultery. It manifests itself in our day in reluctant and meager giving, in anxiety to get rich, and in gaudy display and sumptuous living. It is the prevailing sin of the Church to-day. One can be covetous over a little as well as over much. Its only antidote is constant, liberal giving. It is a deceitful and deadly moral malady.—*J. C. Jackson, D.D.*

Covetousness is the inordinate desire of acquiring and the inordinate love of possessing certain things as solely and absolutely our own. It cannot be applied to heavenly things, since these are never held as individual property apart from God. It relates to earthly matters, and shows itself in the greed of the child, in the struggle of the young after riches, and in the reluctance of the old to part with what has been acquired. It gives possession the chief place in the heart and life, and thus becomes idolatry.—*Sarah G. Stock.*

Lesson Word-Pictures.

There is a sharp, querulous voice in the crowd about the Saviour. Somebody is dissatisfied. Somebody wants a rectification of his trouble. Ah! it is Pleonektes. Every body knows what he is grumbling about. When his old father died, Pleonektes was not satisfied with his proposed share, and has been fighting with his brother ever since. Hark! Hear the grumbler. If he does not bring his quarrel before the Saviour! In rasping, grating tones he tells his story. There is silence. Then how indignantly the Saviour refuses to countenance the quarrel, and how stingingly he rebukes all the covetous! And now he tells a forcible, serious story about a certain rich man. As he speaks, I can imagine some such scene as this:

It is twilight time. Plusios is walking out to see his

farm. The fields are broad and fertile. Out of the rich, black earth came so readily the green, luxuriant growth. Vineyard and oliveyard have added their beauty. All so fruitful! Such a rich picture of prosperity, framed in the golden glow of the sinking sun and the purple of the adjacent hills.

Plusios cannot repress his admiration. So elated is he that he rubs his hands gleefully. He chuckles. He nods his head and says, "Yes, that will do! All my work!"

But what about his small barns, that now rise before him as he continues his walk? They are crammed already. What will he do with the increasing crop? His barns seem to swell. They look nigh to bursting. Plusios shakes his head discontentedly. The smile has gone from his face. The tone of self-satisfaction has passed from his voice.

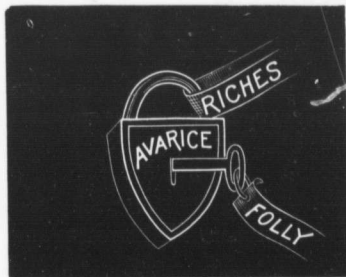
"Too small! Too small!" he murmurs.

He frowns, contemplates those small barns a while longer, and then goes up to the roof of his house. He there sits down, and in the last of the twilight contemplates his widening fields. Soon the after-glow fades from the west. Little stars peep out from behind the blue folds of the heavens. The fields of Plusios are in shadow. He cannot see them distinctly. But there are those great crops, he knows. There are the vineyards, the fat oliveyards, and Plusios smiles; but—there are the little barns. Plusios frowns. He suddenly rises. He exclaims with energy, "This will I do." He will build bigger barns.

But something else occurs to him. He is now in the years of his strength. What a plump day's work he can do! How hearty his digestion! How strong his lungs! How sound his sleep! How many years must be before him! It would seem, while mortal, as if his stay on the earth would be that of an immortal. He will take his ease. Yes, ha, ha! he bids his soul "eat, drink, and be merry."

He has scarcely finished that address, when suddenly, out of the night, out of the mystery of a Presence everywhere, comes a solemn summons to the soul. Soon there is bitter wailing through the house! The rich man has been found dead! So poor now! His barns are big enough now. How a very small place can be get his possessions, even into that "narrow house appointed for all the living."

Blackboard.



DIRECTIONS FOR COLORS. The lock is to be drawn in outline with blue chalk; the key with white; "riches," yellow; "folly," red.

The design is intended to show that avarice is the lock that hoards up riches, and selfishness is the key that turns the lock and fastens it. Such selfishness is folly. Does the lesson teach that it is folly to be rich, or to be