

APPLICATION.

1. *Those who honestly desire God's guidance will get it.* Abraham's servant, Gen. xxiv. 12; Moses, Ex. xxxiii. 15; Psal. xxxvii. 23. So Manoah, ver. 8.

2. *None are too young to be God's.* Samson was so from his birth. God can give a new heart and prepare for his service while very young. So Samuel—John the Baptist—Timothy. You should be God's already. We serve Satan too long, 1 Pet. iv. 3. None ever repent of beginning too soon.

3. *God alone can make men either great or good.* God knows what each child will be before it is born—Jacob and Esau. So God sent Moses—Jeremiah, Jer. i. 5; Cyrus, Isa. xlv. 1; John Baptist, Luke i. 15-17, into the world—to do a great work for Him, Eph. iv. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 10. You have your work—your duty—do it.

4. *What the child is, the man will be.* Grown larger, but still the same, like a young plant. A foolish, a lazy, a wicked boy, will generally be a foolish, lazy, or wicked man.

(1.) What are you now? Samson early was in the camp, ver. 25—Samuel early at the temple—Christ early about His Father's work. Try and pray, to be wise and good now, and you will be wiser and better when old.

(2.) How important right training, especially a mother's! Samson's mother was, for her child's sake, to be very careful what she did—Timothy's mother. Remember how much may depend on any one child.

5. *God's visits now are in mercy.* He is willing to accept of Christ's sacrifice for you and fulfil all his promises. O! seek to know him—to see him now! If you do not see him while on earth, you will die for ever! It will be death to the wicked to see God at judgment! Rev. vi. 16.—*Edin. S. S. Lessons.*

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THE UNJUST STEWARD.

Read Luke xvi. 1-12.

Soon after the parable of the prodigal son, that contained in the present lesson was spoken to those who gladly listened to the Saviour. Its general purpose was to show the difficulties and temptations which wealth often occasions; the necessity of using it aright; and that if we would serve God we must be honest and upright in the use of whatever may be entrusted to us. Care must be taken in explaining this parable, as in explaining other parables, against spiritualizing everything it contains.

Ver. 1. *Disciples*—not the twelve, but all who listened to the Saviour's instructions.

Steward—the superintendent of a rich man's household and business. See chap. xii. 42. Eliezer and Joseph were such stewards, Gen. xxiv. 2-12; xxxix. 4.

Wasted his goods—allowed their rents to run on without being collected at the proper time.

Ver. 3. *I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed*—The man had lived so as not to be able to work, and he would not demean himself so much as to beg.

Ver. 6. *Bill*—a writing by which the debtors acknowledged their obligations, and promised to discharge them. The reduction which the steward directed in what was owing was probably a reduction in annual-rent, so that the steward reckoned on the tenants feeling continually obliged by what he did for them.

Ver. 8. *The lord*—See also ver. 3, 5—The rich man, ver. 1. The words translated *wisely* and *wiser* indicate worldly prudence or forethought. It was this which the steward's master commended. The latter half of the verse relates to the prudence which worldly men display towards one another, as compared with that of God's servants.

Ver. 9. *Mammon of unrighteousness*—worldly wealth, uncertain and often mixed up closely with what is morally wrong, so as to be justly called "mammon of unrighteousness."

Ye fail—ye die. Some think the expression should be, when it (the mammon) fails or falls off. *Everlasting* is in contrast with the failing, and means permanent or enduring.

Ver. 10-12. These verses contain reflections designed to prevent an abuse of what Christ had said. Faithfulness in little things is essential to obtaining the greater trust or spiritual blessings.

Ver. 14. *Derided*—laughed at and mocked. They made merry, and spoke contemptuously at the teaching of Jesus.

Ver. 16. *Presseth into it*—is eager to enter. In these words Jesus described what had actually taken place during John's ministry, and what was still taking place among the publicans and sinners.

Ver. 17. *One tittle*—the smallest thing.

EXPOSITORY.—*First, THE STEWARD AND HIS DISHONESTY.*

This steward occupied a place of trust. His master left everything in his hands, and never seems to have suspected him of doing wrong.

He was wasting his master's property. This was dishonest. That property was left in his hands to improve for his master's benefit.

It is not said that he stole. He considered it. Dishonesty often manifests itself in