

• The Quiet Hour. •

The Unjust Steward.*

BY WAYLAND HOYT, D. D.

Unto the disciples (v. 1). That the Pharisees heard it also, we may be sure from verse 14.

There was a certain rich man (v. 1). The rich man represents God; the steward one trusted by God. Dean Farrar states well the main intent of the parable—"the use of earthly gifts of wealth and opportunity for heavenly and not for earthly aims." Learn the fact of stewardship; what we have is a trust committed to us by God. Are any of us wasting that which God has given us—time, talents, money, opportunity? There will surely come an accounting-time. Unfaithfulness on our stewardship brings doom. Especially heed and press the lesson of the supreme necessity of faithfulness to trust of any sort.

What shall I do? (v. 3). Unfaithfulness always, sooner or later, forces the question, "What shall I do?" The only safe questionless road is the right road.

I am resolved what to do (v. 4). "The original graphically, represents the sudden flash of discovery, 'I have it! I know now what to do.'" He was a poor enough specimen, this steward; he was willingly and cravingly dependent; he would anyway and anyhow force himself into other people's houses, he would cheat to do it; he was one of these good-for-naughts going about declaring, "The world owes me a living."

Take thy bond, and sit down quickly and write fifty (v. 6). Learn how unfaithfulness breeds unfaithfulness; having been already unfaithful, now this bad steward, to save himself, must go plunging on into deeper fraud. See, too, how a corrupt man corrupts; fraudulent already himself, he sets himself about making others fraudulent.

His lord commended the unrighteous steward because he had done wisely (v. 8). Mark especially that "his lord." Many have been misled by thinking that "lord" here refers to Christ, and that Christ somehow commended this fraud, which is utterly false. Notice specially, too, that "wisely" is literally "prudently," better, "shrewdly." I cannot do better than quote Dean Farrar here. "The tricky cleverness, by which the steward had endeavored at once to escape detection, and to secure friends who would help him in his need, was exactly what an Oriental landlord would admire as clever, even though he saw through it. The lesson to us is analogous skill and prudence, but spiritually employed. This is the sole point which the parable is meant to illustrate.

Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness (v. 9). "Mammon" is wealth. "Mammon of unrighteousness" is so called not that wealth itself is unrighteous, but because it is so commonly abused. Mark that "it shall fail;" at death the richest man must yield his last penny. How now shall wealth be used? Selfishly? Nay, our Lord says; make friends by means of it; have a far-

looking and prudent method; so invest your money in the weal of others, in all good causes, "that you may enjoy the fruit of your beneficent use of earthly riches through eternal ages." We are saved by faith; we are rewarded according to our works.

He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much (v. 10). It is not amount, but motive, that tests. Be faithful in little things. So will you manifest trustworthiness for great things. The meshes of a sieve are each one little, but no sieve can hold water. Look out for the little leakages.

If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches (v. 11). "True riches" are the blessings, substantial, lasting, of the eternal tabernacles. How can you expect that these shall be yours at last, if all the time here on earth you have been untrue to the trust of earthly possession with which God has dowered you? See how this matter of giving, of the right use of money, takes hold of the eternities.

And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? (v. 12). "The lesson of the verse is that nothing which we possess on earth is our own; it is intrusted to us for temporary use (1 Chron 29:14), which shall be rewarded by real and eternal possessions (1 Pet. 1:4)."

Ye cannot serve God and mammon (v. 13). It is impossible to serve God with a divided heart. We must seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

For the beauty of the earth,
For the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us flies,
Lord of all to thee we raise
This, our grateful hymn of praise.

The Book of Life.

REV. JOSEPH HAMILTON.

I can believe that this wonderful memory of ours may really be the book of remembrance where our life is fully written, and from which we are to be judged. The memory retains far more than we usually think. The images it holds may be buried deep down in its depths; they are not present to our consciousness; we can not even call them up when we wish. But there are certain laws of association that do call them up, and sometimes very unexpectedly. You visit, we will suppose, the scene of your childhood. Does not every fence, and tree, and house, and turning in the road, bring up some tender recollection? In the rush and hurry of later years those memories seemed to have faded, and to be entirely lost. But they are not lost. They are treasured in the soul, only waiting for certain associations to bring them to the surface.

There are subtle, and secret, and tender associations of this kind that are very strong. Perhaps there is some plaintive air which you can never here without calling up the memory of some dear departed friend. And when once that tender memory is stirred, what hosts of others followed in its wake. There is a

certain old tune which I can never hear without being carried back on the wings of memory to a sacred scene of long ago. It is the Communion Sabbath. I see the minister as with saintly air he presides at the table; I see the long rows of tables draped in white, and filled with communicants; I see the grave elders carrying around the vessels of the Lord; I hear the solemn, plaintive Psalm. Those memories come upon me like a rushing flood when I hear that old tune that was sung on those solemn, holy days. The soul carries all such memories without effort; they seem for the time to be lost; but they can be summoned back; and they grow not less vivid with the lapse of years. Surely we have a hint here that the memory may retain all its impressions, and that it may open to be read like a book in the last great day.

The Twentieth Century Revival.

Editor DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN:—Was a Spiritual revival a part of the 20th Century Fund scheme? Those who were present at its very impressive inauguration could hardly do other than answer in the affirmative. Indeed the impression left on the writer was that of the two parts of the dual aim of the scheme, the spiritual was to be regarded as the vastly more important object to be sought. The sentiment of the Assembly that on the occasion referred to, was heartily approved, was, "the raising of one million dollars will be of but little benefit to the church if there should not at the same time be a corresponding advance in the spiritual life of our people."

With this most worthy object in view, it would reasonably be expected that effort for the attainment of each several part thereof would have been made in due proportion. But what do we find in reviewing the nearly 16 months of work in connection with the scheme? That the special efforts that have been put forth, in organizing, interchange of pulpits, exchange of service in canvassing on the part of ministers, have been upon the material part of the scheme, while the admittedly more important part has been all but neglected. Surely Mr. Editor this is not as it should be! I cannot think that such manifest apathy in regard to the better part of the scheme is a good representation of the attitude of the majority of the members of our church. It is to be lamented too that even our press, that is usually so wide awake, has failed to point out this deplorable discrepancy. In your editorial of last week on the Century Fund this part of the scheme was not even mentioned. At least one Presbytery (Owen Sound) is moving in the matter, the result of which will be published at an early date. Why should not every Presbytery in the Church plan as carefully and work as faithfully in some special effort for this part of the scheme as they have done for the other? Surely a rare opportunity will be lost if something more is not done than has yet been. I am,

Yours fraternally and gratefully,

AN OWEN SOUND PRESBYTERIAN.

Enriched by Giving.

REV. JOSEPH HAMILTON.

Every good deed done with a good motive taps a hidden well spring of blessedness in your own soul.

*S.S. Lesson, November 4, Luke 16: 1-13—Golden Text.—Ye cannot serve God and mammon.—Luke 16: 13.