

* The Sunday School *

BIBLE LESSON

Abridged from Peloubet's Notes.

Fourth Quarter.

THE UNJUST STEWARD.

Lesson V. November 4. Luke 16:1-13.

Read Luke 16:1-18.

Commit Verses 10-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.

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

EXPLANATORY.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES.—V. 1. AND HE SAID UNTO HIS DISCIPLES. The "also" implies that these words were spoken at the same gathering at the Pharisee's table, where Jesus had spoken the three parables of the last chapter. The first and second were spoken to the Pharisees; the third to both publicans and Pharisees; the one in this lesson to his disciples in the presence of the publicans, from whom and for whom a lesson was to be learned; the one in the next lesson with special reference to the Pharisees.

I. THE PARABLE.—VS. 1-8. A CERTAIN RICH MAN. This parable is rather an illustrative narrative, and we are to look upon the rich man and the steward as necessary parts of the setting of the great truth to be taught, and not as having a separate interpretation, or typical and mystical meaning. WHICH HAD A STEWARD. An agent, or factor, the manager of his estates, "entrusted with large discretionary powers." THE SAME WAS ACCUSED UNTO HIM THAT HE HAD WASTED (R. V., "was wasting") HIS GOODS. The word "wasted" is the same as that applied to describe the extravagant of the prodigal son.

2. HOW IS IT (R. V., "what is this") THAT I HEAR. Is it true? GIVE AN ACCOUNT. Make your statement, and you will show whether the accusation is true. Or, I believe it is true; therefore settle up your accounts with me, and leave.

3. THEN THE STEWARD SAID WITHIN HIMSELF, WHAT SHALL I DO? He did not repent, but only sought the shrewdest way of escaping out of the trap. I CANNOT (lit., "have not strength to") DIG. "Yet manual labor was all that honestly lay between him and utter destitution." TO BEG I AM ASHAMED. It would be too great a degradation from his high position.

4. I AM RESOLVED. "I know, I have found out, I have it at last"; as if the bright idea had just struck him. THAT ... THEY (his lord's debtors) MAY RECEIVE ME INTO THEIR HOUSES. And out of gratitude, or from fear of exposure, give him a home, or provide one out of part of the dishonest gains he had enabled them to acquire.

5. SO HE CALLED EVERY ONE. All together, or, more probably, each one by himself, so that the others would not know what he did for any one. This would be much the safer way. HOW MUCH OWEST THOU. How much is your unsettled account? "Rent is almost invariably, in the East, paid in produce." The harvests coming in at different times, there would naturally be some delay in payment.

6. AN HUNDRED MEASURES (baths) OF OIL. Olive oil from the olive orchards. A "bath" is about nine gallons, and worth about \$50. TAKE THY BILL. Lit., "writings." "The document in the steward's hands, showing the obligation." QUICKLY. Lest some one come in and detect the fraud. Lest the man have time to think, and refuse to be partaker of the fraud. AND WRITE FIFTY. The steward, having done the business before, would apparently have the right to change the bill.

7. AN HUNDRED MEASURES OF WHEAT. Measures here is not the same word as in v. 6; but is the "homer," equal to 10 baths, of 35 quarts each, i. e., 350 quarts, or 11 bushels, so that the whole debt was about 1,100 bushels of wheat, worth \$500 to \$600, according to Int. Crit. Com. But the bath and homer varied at different times, and the Bible dictionaries vary. TAKE THY BILL, AND WRITE FOURSORE. He deducted 20 measures, or 220 bushels.

8. AND THE (his) LORD. The lord whose steward this man was COMMENDED THE UNJUST (unrighteous) STEWARD, BECAUSE HE HAD DONE WISELY. Shrewdly, prudently. The Lord had expected that his steward would be dishonest; now he is amused at the talent, dexterity, and cleverness which the man shows in escaping from his difficulty.

II. OUR LORD'S LESSON FROM THIS PARABLE.—VS. 8-13. FOR THE CHILDREN OF THIS WORLD. This is the comment of Jesus upon the action of the steward and the praise of his master. ARE IN THEIR GENERATION WISER. Rather "for," or "towards, in reference to" their own generation, the affairs of this world, their dealing with other worldly men, in reference to worldly things. "Worldly people are very far sighted and ready in their transactions with one another for temporal objects."

9. MAKE TO YOURSELVES FRIENDS (by means) OF THE MAMMON OF UNRIGHTeousNESS. "Mammon" in the Syriac means "money." It represents wealth, gains, money. It is called the mammon of unrighteousness, either because it refers to wealth even when gained unrighteously, as was the case with many hearers, or because it tempts to unrighteousness, is the frequent cause of fraud, is full of danger. "Take any coin out of your pocket and make it tell its history, the hands it has been in, the things it has paid for, the transactions it has assisted, and you would be inclined to fling it away as contaminated and filthy."

THAT, WHEN YE FAIL. Die and can no longer use your wealth, or when you lose what you have gained, as often happens. THEY MAY RECEIVE YOU INTO EVERLASTING HABITATIONS. Those whom you have helped will welcome you in heaven. Heaven will be sweeter, brighter, happier to you on account of them. Even in this world, giving to them brings you into the spirit of heaven, and gives you a foretaste of the future blessedness.

10. HE THAT IS FAITHFUL IN THAT WHICH IS LEAST. Lest it should seem strange that so much importance is attached to the proper use of perishing and unrighteous wealth, remember the great principle: "He that is faithful," etc. "Least" refers to worldly possessions and opportunities. IS FAITHFUL ALSO IN MUCH. Faithfulness is a permanent characteristic and runs through everything. This is illustrated in the parable of the pounds, where those who used faithfully their five and ten pounds were given authority over five and ten cities. The "least" was the test and the preparation for the greater.

11. IF THEREFORE. Here Jesus makes an application of the principle just stated. FAITHFUL IN THE UNRIGHTeous MAMMON. The riches of this world. WHO WILL COMMIT TO YOUR TRUST THE TRUE RICHES? Of spiritual and heavenly things, either in this world or the next. He that cannot use even money aright to make the world better, how can he be trusted with the care of souls, the truths

of the gospel, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the graces of character?

12. FAITHFUL IN THAT WHICH IS ANOTHER MAN'S. The worldly things God has entrusted to you as stewards. They may be attached to you, as clothes are worn, but are never a part of yourselves. WHO SHALL GIVE YOU THAT WHICH IS YOUR OWN? The true riches, which are a part of your being, enlarged talents, noble character, great ability, heavenly wisdom, the graces of life.

The steward of the parable had tried to serve two masters, his lord and himself. But he tried to do the impossible, for (v. 13) NO SERVANT CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS. For they are distinct and opposite in character and demands. They belong to different kingdoms, each one with its own separate interest.

* * *

Janice Meredith

By Paul Leicester Ford. Paper, 75c; cloth, \$1.50.

These are two novels of American origin which have, within recent months, taken the entire reading public by storm. The latest, and in some respects the most remarkable, of these is, "Janice Meredith," by Paul Leicester Ford. "Richard Carvel," in seven months, passed the 300,000 mark, and "Janice Meredith" in three months reached a circulation of 200,000 copies. Why has the sale of these stories run into figures so far beyond the dream of the greatest masters of fiction? It may be noted in the first place that "Janice Meredith" and "Richard Carvel" contain about 200,000 words each, and the inference may be drawn that though the public likes poems short, it prefers novels long. The great length of "Janice Meredith" enables the author to create the effect of time passing—to present a bird's eye view of an age, and above all to thoroughly engross the attention of the average reader. The average reader will live with this book for a week or so. It will be a part of his daily life, and he will speculate on its developments and debate on the conduct of its characters. Then like "Richard Carvel" "Janice Meredith" illustrates the war of independence. It is an able resume of the war, and it contains

a masterly portrait of the Cincinnati of the West, just as "Richard Carvel" had a brilliant presentation of fashionable life in London in 1770, and portrayed the virtues of Charles James Fox and Horace Walpole. Mr. Ford has undeniably written an American historical novel of great power. He combines with an intimate knowledge of the subject the ability to write well. It has been happily said that he has done for the North what Thackeray did for the South in "The Virginians." His characters are not all generals, colonels and soldiers, nor do his scenes consist of battlefields and places of sanguinary encounters. The domestic life of the squires, their wives and daughters, and servants is felicitously depicted.—Montreal Herald.

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A Halifax despatch says: The sub-committee appointed at a meeting of the general Canadian contingent reception committee met Friday afternoon and decided on the following programme. A public holiday, salute from the ships and forts, landing at the dockyard, parade to the common, thanksgiving service, welcome home by the lieutenant governor and mayor, massing of the children on parade, dinner at the armories, general illumination in the evening, torchlight procession. It was also decided to invite Premier Laurier, the ministers of the crown, Lord Strathcona, Admiral Sir Frederick Bedford, Major General O Grady-Haley, Col. Bischoff, Sir Charles Tupper, the mayors of provincial towns, foreign consuls, commanders of provincial regiments, the mayor of St. John and the mayor of Dartmouth.

Bedford, June, 11, 1897

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