

water springing up to slake the thirst of his cattle. The student who will not dig, needs not hope to make his own the rich treasures which lie hidden beneath the surface of the best books. Unless Sabbath School teachers and scholars are ready to dig, they will not find the best things in the Bible. We do not get much that is worth having, and we never get the things most worth having, without hard work. It is a great misfortune now to be able to dig. In the case of this steward it led to dishonesty.

I am resolved what to do, v. 4. This man acted promptly. There was no dilly-dallying in providing for his future interests. He had practically been dismissed and was now "working his warning;" and he made the best use of his opportunities. He did not allow "the native hue of resolution" to become "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." Our success in the affairs of this life will often depend on our acting with like promptness.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;

Omitted, all the voyage of their lives
Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

Still more important is promptness in accepting the invitation of the gospel. There is only one opportunity of obtaining salvation which is really ours and that is the present opportunity. All past opportunities are gone forever and future opportunities have not yet come. The present alone is ours. Let us promptly avail ourselves of the opportunity it brings.

And his lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely; for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light, v. 8. Having resolved upon his end, the discredited steward employed the best means for reaching that end. It is true that these means were dishonest, but they were admirably adapted to his purpose. He made it worth the while of his employer's debtors to assist him. He laid them under obligation to give him something as hush money to cover up the dishonest transaction from which they, as well as he, received

benefit. And it is not because of his dishonesty but on account of his practical wisdom that the steward is held up as an example to the children of light. They ought to show the same wisdom in using the best means to further their spiritual growth which he displayed in advancing his worldly interests. If we believe that the services of God's house, the choice of good companions, the reading of good books, the selection of a worthy partner in trade, will help us spiritually, we cannot afford to be careless about these things.

And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles, v. 9 (Rev. Ver.). Money has been defined as "something which will purchase for us everything except happiness, and take us everywhere except to heaven." It is true that we cannot carry money, as such, with us into the other world. A Spanish proverb expresses this truth with grim realism by saying: "A shroud has no pockets." But while money cannot purchase for us an entrance into heaven, the way in which we use money will have its effect upon our reception and condition in heaven. True, it is only by the unmerited grace and favor of God that we shall be admitted within heaven's portals. We cannot buy our way in; but, as our Lord reveals in his picture of the last judgment (Matt. 25), our use of present opportunities and possessions plays its part in the final awards.

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much, v. 10. It must not be imagined that the lesson of wisdom in the use of money is intended only for those who have a great deal of it. The right use of a little, if we have only a little, will count for as much in heaven as if we had a larger amount. We shall be held accountable for what we have and not for what we lack.

Our Lord here lays down a principle which it is specially important that the young people should take to heart. Faith-