

mal and mechanical might be on hand, but the glory of other days was vanished. This had to precede and always does go ahead of the darker record.

In the Old Testament we read of a man whose enemies captured him; but the Bible states just as clearly that the man had first lost the Lord.

In the New Testament the solemn statement is made that "If we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us." This means also that the love of God leaves the soul before the love of the world gets in. The first has to go to make room for the other. How can one serve two masters? How can light and darkness dwell together?

The Unjust Steward is head of a great following. A great many have lost the favor and old time constant smile of God, and are now ready for grave breaks, and for the fearful unfaithfulness and falsity mentioned by figure in this solemn parable.

Second, the man in this parable seeks the favor of those who were of lower rank and far beneath his Lord.

The class referred to here is the tenantry. The people who tilled the soil of the absent master and owner. Being out of favor with his Lord, he sought favor, friendship and popularity with the servants of his Lord.

Certainly, the reader will get character outlines and well recognized lives in this thought and that without the slightest difficulty.

I never knew a man in my life who was a preacher or some kind of servant of God, who lapsed in his spiritual life, lost favor and standing and communion with God, but at the same time he became a human favor seeker, a regular politician hand-shaker, a soft sooper of congregation and people, a head patter, back smoother, children trotter and amuser, a stencil plate flatterer and stereotyped grinner and beamer on mankind, and especially on that body of mankind who could help on in some way his material interests.

Of course this is not and could not be an attack on the kindness and graciousness of perfect love, nor the thoughtfulness and tact that belongs to spiritual wisdom. But we refer to characters that in their simulations and counterfeits are as readily recognizable by men in the Spirit, as the true and genuine follower of Christ is felt and acknowledged by the same.

Just how much truth there is in those heavily larded compliments to rich and prominent people; how much sincerity and real affection is in the ministerial handshake at the church door after service, will be clearly revealed at the Judgment Day, but a lot of the greasy, chaffy and hollow thing will be found out even here.

Wise pastors soon learn to put a heavy discount on the swift cordial rushes made at them after the first sermon. And thoughtful laymen also get to place a quick and exact estimate on the hand grip, the teeth exhibition and soft soap ministrations to which reference has been made.

Not all recognize the Unjust Steward in the clerical coat and beaver hat man making friends for himself rather than for his Lord. The great majority indeed fail to see the Bible character of that awful parable figuring around to-day in conventions and conferences, in pulpits and on platforms. But there he is just the same; and every sermon, every hand-shake, every disparaging reflection or detraction of

his brethren, even the lodge pin on the lapel of his coat or on his watch guard, is but one of the many movements of the Unjust Steward of today to make himself friendly and advance his interests with the "tenantry" of the church and this world.

There is not a sublimer spectacle on earth than the sight of a faithful servant of Christ, honoring and exalting his Master, declaring His messages without fear or favor, without abuse, and yet in perfect courage, and that, too, whether men hiss or applaud, endorse or oppose, follow after or fall away from Christ's man and ambassador.

Another spectacle is just as sickening as that is for Heaven's messengers to be seen trying to please men. If I please men, I cannot be the servant of Christ, said Paul; and yet the land is full of just such cringing fear of men and disloyalty to God.

Let the reader turn to the Old Testament and read in the Books of Kings how many prophets were trying to please the king, queen and nobility, and how many stood true for God. And the figures show on a single occasion eight hundred for a crowned sinner and one for a holy God.

The eight hundred were the Unjust Stewards of that time, and were after feathering their nests and getting in such favor with the prominent and great that the bread, meat and clothes question would be most satisfactorily settled for the balance of their lives.

And so they did; but alas for them, they did not live as long as they calculated and hoped; for the Word of God tells us that the whole eight hundred were slain one morning under Divine judgment at the hands of an outraged people.

Better to be God's solitary man that day on Mt. Carmel than the eight hundred who lived to please a temporarily exalted man, who, flying before a rainstorm himself, had no power to save a single one of them.

A third lesson in the parable is that the Unjust Steward robbed his master and lord in order to conciliate and make friends with the tenantry.

He asked them what they owed his lord. They replied, one hundred measures of oil and one hundred measures of wheat.

He told them to write down at once fifty measures of oil and eighty measures of wheat.

He made friends of these tenants, but he had deliberately robbed his lord of one-half of his due in one commodity and one-fifth in another. Moreover, the tenants were robbers also, for they knew what they owed their master, and it was not eighty and fifty, but one hundred in everything. They allowed their consciences to be quieted and hushed by the fact that the steward outranked them, was the representative of the lord, ought to know what he was doing, did know what he was doing, and so they proposed to say nothing and reap the advantage of the lowered rental.

Truly we need no reasoning to convince men that they owe God a perfect consecration of all they are and have. The Bible declares it, the conscience realizes it, the mind recognizes the justice of it, and life and experience prove the necessity of it. We owe God the "one hundred" of a perfect devotement of self, time, talents, influence, material interests and all else, for everything comes from God and belongs to Him.

Now when His servants and representatives teach differently, and cut down a perfect to an imperfect consecration, change a complete de-

votement of self to an offering abounding in mental as well as heart and life reservations, then here we have the Unjust Steward going around robbing God again with the full consent to the tenantry in the pew.

To win the love of the people to one's self instead of to God, is to rob God. And who has not seen preachers and evangelists do that?

To win men's favor and regard by letting down the restrictions and exactions of God, is to defraud the Almighty again, and in a double sense, in that it cheats His Kingdom of a certain wealth, glory and power, and in addition harms His own creatures whom He has made through such actions of spiritual theft.

When a preacher to please a worldly unconverted carnally minded membership allows the House of God to be a place of social entertainment, a lyceum, a debating club, a fair or bazaar, or shelter a popular gospel meeting, so called, and he knowing what God says about His House, and how the power and glory and salvation of God can be had on and in the people, and yet rules out the very doctrine and preaching and servants of Heaven, by whom such a revival of true religion can be introduced, behold this man is a defrauder and robber of God. He is the Unjust Steward of the Twentieth Century.

When a preacher knowing the perfect consecration God exacts of us all, the one hundred that He demands and requires; when he allows his congregation to hear only the first principles of the Gospel, lets them be satisfied with one or two attendances on the church a week, a certain amount of quarterage more or less, permits them to attend unwarned and unclothed places of worldly amusement, to go into wrong business, to join lodges and fraternities where in most Christ is ignored, and in all "the Son is not ignored as is the Father;" where such is done, not only is the Triune God robbed, but the Second Person, the Saviour, is peculiarly defrauded and dishonored.

God is robbed when an earthly institution becomes a rival of the church; and God is robbed when the glory and fruits of Christianity is taken from His Son and put upon the head of a secret association that originated according to history and the Encyclopedia Britannica, in the sixteenth century. The pastor or preacher who allows or endorses such things is our old acquaintance seen first in Luke's Gospel, and moving around now in these days with a clerical coat and sometimes in a procession wearing a white apron.

A fourth lesson in the parable is that the tenantry rewarded the Unjust Steward for the trick he played on his lord in their behalf. The parable speaks of their receiving him into their Unjust Steward—continued—habitations as a matter beyond question. He got pay for his faithlessness to his master and lord.

In like manner the pastor or evangelist who trims down the conditions of church membership, of pardon, of sanctification; who makes holiness a name, or an endless growth instead of a present obtainment and life; who allows card playing, dancing, theatre going and automobile Sabbath desecration, making them compatible with accepted church membership, and Christian living, such a preacher will be well rewarded by his congregation and audiences in this world.

There are many large city churches that will gladly pay an ordinary preacher a large salary if he will only let them and their personal misdoings alone. There are cities whose leading