

Bairly  
11/9/58  
"The Mammon of Unrighteousness"

Scripture Lesson:-

Text:- Luke 16: 11. "If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"

Introduction:- Jesus was a realist. He never denied the value of material goods or the importance of money. He insisted that money be put in its right place and keeping it there. He had much to say about money, but he kept hammering it home that money is useful as a servant but deadly as a master.

He said, "If money becomes the measure of values, your soul will become metallic!"

How much do you know of the value of "true riches", of which he spoke in the latter part of this text? How much are we concerned with acquiring them? How much are we prepared to invest in them?

It is rather humbling, for example, to be told that we own nothing in this world, but that every mother's son is just a pensioner on the bounty of the Almighty. *My father is rich*

In the parable of the of the Unjust Steward Jesus says, "Once there was a rich man whose agent was reported to him to be mismanaging his property" The property did not belong to the agent. It belonged to the rich "man."

The rich man is God, who long ago declared through his Psalmist, "Every beast of the forest is mine and the cattle upon a thousand hills." (Ps. 50:10) and whose ancient Tyre and Sidon was, "Ye have taken my silver and my gold!"

The attitude of humility required by living for the "true riches" is deepened as we realize that every jot and tittle of the material goods we handle, must be left behind us when we die.

Jesus speaks of money as the "mammon of unrighteousness." Although money, considered as a thing in itself, is morally neutral, most of the money we handle, is tainted. Somewhere along the line it has been earned by some bad means or put to some selfish use. But, our Lord says, that it can



be so used that it makes friends for us in that Eternal World towards which his disciples are journeying.

We hear Jesus say, "When it (the money) fails, that (the friends) may receive you into eternal habitations!" Mark the two words; "It fails." That is money!

Yes, money fails. Write it over your millions, over your thousands, over your hundreds, "money fails."

Let us fix it in our minds so nothing can dislodge it: no man can live the higher, no man can live the true life, who lives for the things that are perishable. A fact to keep us forever humble is that everything that you can hold in your hand must some day be dropped from your hand when death strikes that hand.

The word of the Savior that we are now to ponder is found in verse 10: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." When those words are taken seriously, and especially when they are read in the light of the parable that goes before, they add up to two imperative sentences. *Don't chisel.*

#### I.

First, don't chisel. Cain and Abel brought offerings to the Lord. Abel's was acceptable. Cain's was not. Why? The key difference was not that Cain's offering was vegetable, and Abel's animal, but lies in the fact that Abel brought the firstfruits of his flock and the fat thereof, while Cain brought of the fruit of the ground. Not the firstfruit, not the finest, just "the fruit." He gave something less than he was able to give, that he brought.

Have you taken seriously the Bible's teaching on giving? If you have, you know that it teaches giving according to ability. The law of the tithe in the Old Testament recognizes it. Contributing a tenth of the "increase" meant not that all Israel would give the same amount but they would all give in the same measure of capacity.

In the New Testament tithing is not a "law", but



it is an approved method for arriving at our minimum contributions to the Church which our Redeemer died to bring into being. The New Testament principle of proportionate giving is made clear by St. Paul in I Cor. 16:3. "On the first day of the week let every one put so much by him, according to his financial ability, so there will be no need for collections when I come!"

Here is a program of giving according to ability. In the light of it let each Christian say to himself, even as he says to his brother: "Don't chisel on God!"

## II.

The other imperative is, "Put your brain into God's business." Someone says, hey, wait a minute, you mean "heart", don't you? To be sure, I mean your heart, but I also mean this, precisely your brain, your dedicated intelligence.

Support for this contention comes from the Parable of the Unjust Steward. The Unjust Steward was about to lose his job for carelessness with his employers property. Forseeing himself jobless, he also foresaw himself in the need of friends. So he concocted a cunning scheme. He went to his master's debtors and told him that half of what he owed was cancelled. He did the same with the other debtor. It was a shrewd way of "winning friends and influencing people!" When this came to light, the employer, even in the final act of severing the man's employment, had to take off his hat to him for his shrewdness. "And the 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!"

*wiser than children of light*  
It was not dishonesty of the steward that was praised; it was only his sharp thinking.

Conclusion:- If you are going to live in the altitudes, in the heights, with Christ, it will cost you in the end, "fidelity", faithfulness. Let the solemn warning of the text come probinly home to all of us: "If therefore ye have not been faithful



