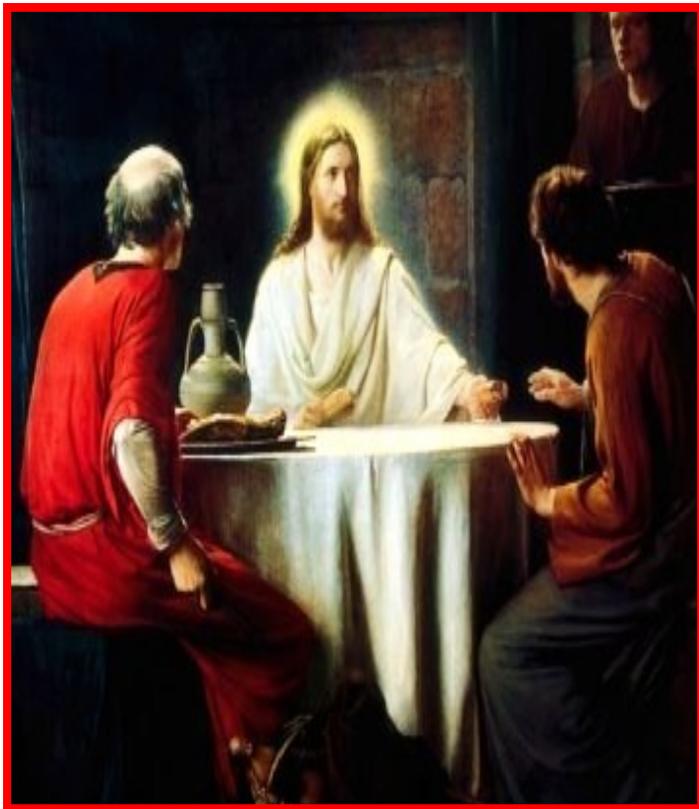
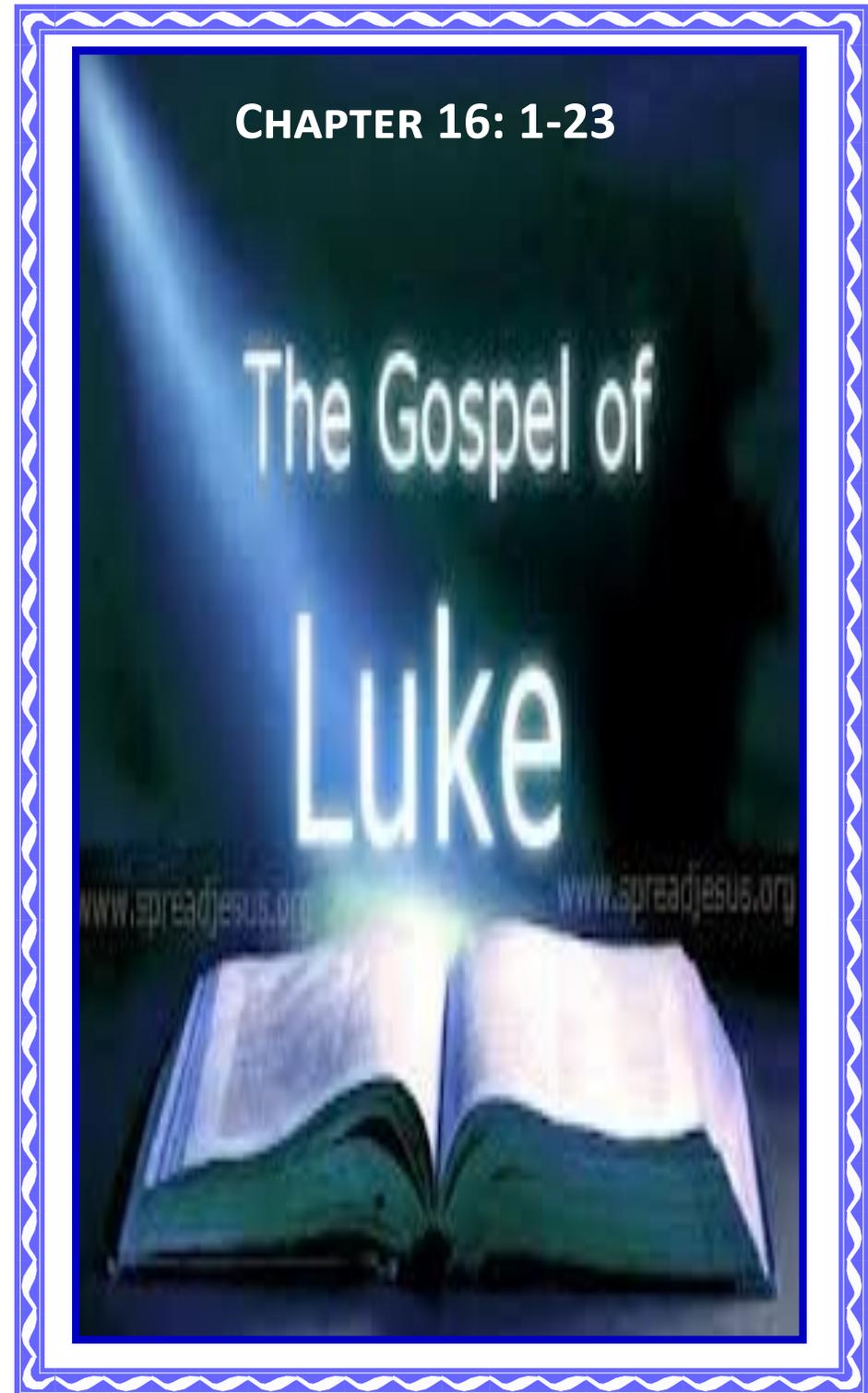


men who are liberal in their banquetings, illiberal to the poor—who spend pounds on one feast alone, but grudge a penny for the relief of those in want. Thus they who always study themselves, neglect others, and consume everything on their own pleasures. For gluttony is a master passion and says, “All is for me, nothing for thee.”

He lift up his eyes. The eyes not of his body, but of his mind. God showed the rich man Lazarus in Abraham’s bosom, that, says S. Chrysostom, “he might be the more tormented, not only from the nature of his punishment, but also from seeing the estimation in which Lazarus was held. For as the sufferings of Lazarus, when a prey to so many evils, were increased by the sight of the rich man abounding in good things, so now the sight of Lazarus, in his turn comforted, was to Dives an increase of misery.” Hence S. Gregory (*hom.* 40) and after him the Gloss says: “We must believe that before the judgment the wicked see the just at rest, and are tormented by their happiness, and also that the just behold the wicked in torment, that their joy may be increased as they look upon the evils from which they have been mercifully preserved.”



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For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.*

Luke's gospel is a compilation of various interviews with eye-witnesses and close followers of Jesus (Luke 1:1-4). The author, Luke, probably did not become a Christian until several years after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He is first mentioned (implicitly) in Acts 16:10 (Acts is another book of the New Testament which Luke wrote). He did not, therefore, meet Jesus in the flesh and he himself was not an eye-witness.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

Luke 16: 1-23

Douay Rheims Version

The parable of the unjust steward and of the rich man and Lazarus.

1. And he said also to his disciples: There was a certain rich man who had a steward: and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods.
2. And he called him and said to him: How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship: for now thou canst be steward no longer.
3. And the steward said within himself: What shall I do, because my lord taketh away from me the stewardship? To dig I am not able; to beg I am ashamed.
4. I know what I will do, that when I shall be removed from the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.
5. Therefore, calling together every one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first: How much dost thou owe my lord?

In hell, i. e., "in purgatory," says James Faber, who thinks that the rich man, after suffering the purgatorial fires, was saved. But others understand here the place of the damned, and hold that the rich man had received his condemnation, an interpretation which is supported by the after narrative, particularly by the 26th verse; and indeed, this is the proper signification of the word "hell," which—in the Greek, *ἄδης*, from the primitive particle *α*, and *ιδειν*, to see—means a place of darkness, where there is neither seeing nor light.

But you will say, We do not read that the rich man sinned, save inasmuch as he fared sumptuously every day, which as a venial sin was deserving of purgatory, but not of hell.

I answer, that although to fare sumptuously is a venial sin, yet if it leads to evil and to excess, especially if it is productive of selfishness and a disregard of the poor, it becomes mortal, and this must happen to him who is a slave to his appetite, for as I have said (ver. 19), a man cannot at the same time serve his belly and his God. The rich man therefore was damned on account of these sins, and chiefly because of his neglect of Lazarus. For he was bound, under peril of committing mortal sin, to minister to the need of the poor man, and since he did not do so, he became liable to the punishment of hell.

"For it is robbery," says S. Chrysostom "to keep what we have received, and to refuse to others a share in our abundance." Again he adds, "the rich man was tormented, not because he was rich, but because he had no compassion." So also S. Gregory of Nyssa.

Hear also S. Hieronymus (*Epist. 34, ad Julianum*): "The flames of hell received the purple-clad Dives. But the poor and suffering beggar, whose sores the dogs licked, who scarcely could maintain himself on the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, is carried into Abraham's bosom, and comforted by the Patriarch with a parent's care. For it is difficult, nay impossible, to enjoy both present and future possessions; to fill here the belly, there the soul; to pass from delights to delights; to be first in both worlds, and to appear glorious both in heaven and on earth."

Hence S. Basil (*serm. 1, De Jejuniis*) says, "Beware of luxury, for the rich man is tormented, not because of his evil deeds, but because of his self-indulgent life." For they who are indulgent to themselves are harsh and unmerciful to others. They take away what the poor man needs to minister to their own unnecessary enjoyments, as this glutton did, not only from Lazarus, but also from the other poor. For, adds S. Chrysostom, "If he had no pity on him whom time after time, as he went out of his house and returned to it again, he was compelled to see lying at his gate, on whom has he ever had compassion? He therefore was content that they should die of hunger, cold, and disease. So to this very day there are some rich

You ask, What is Abraham's bosom, and where situated? S. Augustine (*lib. iv. De Anima*) replies, "It is the place of rest in which are received after death the souls of all who are imitators of the faith and piety of Abraham. The place which before Christ was the 'limbus patrum,' but now is heaven, the paradise of the blessed. Hence the Church sings, "Martin rejoices in Abraham's bosom—Martin, here poor and mean, enters heaven abounding in wealth."

And S. Augustine, treating of the death of Nebridius (*Confess. lib. ix.*) says, "He lives in Abraham's bosom, wherever that may be, there my Nebridius lives." And the Church prays that God will receive the souls of the departed in Abraham's bosom, and give them eternal rest, "as thou hast promised to Abraham and his seed for ever."

It is called Abraham's bosom.

1. Because children rest quiet in the bosom of their parents, and all the faithful are called children of Abraham, who excelled all in faith and holiness. Hence "in the limbus of the fathers" he was chief.
2. Abraham's bosom, therefore, says Ambrose, is a certain haven of rest, and a sacred retreat. In the Greek *κολπος*, in the Latin "sinus," because retired or secret. S. Augustine. Because this blessedness was promised to Abraham and in him to all the faithful Gen. xxii. 18.
3. Because Abraham was remarkable for his hospitality. Hence it was fitting that the poor and friendless Lazarus, whom the inhospitable rich man had rejected, should be received into his bosom. For, says Chrysologus, the kindness which he showed to God made him chief of the heavenly banquet, and because he received two men with God at an earthly feast (Gen. xviii. 8), he will receive the people of the East and West at a heavenly.

Hence the soul of the poor man was carried, not into Abraham's presence only, but into Abraham's bosom, in order that it might receive comfort and refreshment. S. Chrysostom. And again, Because Lazarus when on earth, was poor and despised, in heaven he became honoured and rich. Thus, solely on account of the ills which he suffered, Lazarus obtained a reward like to that of the Patriarch, and this, not because he had pity on the poor, or had relieved the oppressed, or had done some good thing, but because he bore patiently all the ills he had to endure.

The rich man also died, and was buried. "The man who had so buried his soul in drunkenness and self-indulgence that it was useless and dead within him," says S. Chrysostom; who goes on to give a touching description of the change which had now come over Dives. "Consider," he says, "the pomp in which he had lived, the flatterers and friends which were wont to seek his company, and the luxury which had surrounded him: and now all had departed. Everywhere nothing but dust and ashes, lamentation and weeping; no one to help him, no one to call back his soul. Of what avail were his riches, now that he was taken away from all his dependents and left deserted, defenceless, and neglected, left alone to bear in his own person an intolerable punishment?"

6. But he said: An hundred barrels of oil. And he said to him: Take thy bill and sit down quickly and write fifty.
7. Then he said to another: And how much dost thou owe? Who said: An hundred quarters of wheat. He said to him: Take thy bill and write eighty.
8. And the lord commended the unjust steward, forasmuch as he had done wisely: for the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.
9. And I say to you: Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity: that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.
10. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in that which is greater: and he that is unjust in that which is little is unjust also in that which is greater.
11. If then you have not been faithful in the unjust mammon, who will trust you with that which is the true?
12. And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?
13. No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other: or he will hold to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.
14. Now the Pharisees, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.
15. And he said to them: you are they who justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts. For that which is high to men is an abomination before God.
16. The law and the prophets were until John. From that time the kingdom of God is preached: and every one useth violence towards it.
17. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fall.
18. Every one that putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.
19. There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and feasted sumptuously every day.
20. And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, who lay at his gate, full of sores,
21. Desiring to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. And no one did give him: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.
22. And it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died: and he was buried in hell.
23. And lifting up his eyes when he was in torments, he saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom:
24. And he cried and said: Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue: for I am tormented in this flame.

25. And Abraham said to him: Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted and thou art tormented.

26. And besides all this, between us and you, there is fixed a great chaos: so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot, nor from thence come hither.

27. And he said: Then, father, I beseech thee that thou wouldst send him to my father's house, for I have five brethren,

28. That he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torments.

29. And Abraham said to him: They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them.

30. But he said: No, father Abraham: but if one went to them from the dead, they will do penance.

31. And he said to him: If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe, if one rise again from the dead.

Ver. 1.—*And He said also unto His disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.* Having rebuked in three parables those who murmured because He received penitents, Christ now adds a fourth and fifth on almsgiving and frugality, for the proud and avaricious Pharisees refused both pardon to the penitent, and relief to those who were in want. Gloss.

Unto His disciples, i.e. His hearers, those who were His followers, although they had not given up all, as the Apostles.

A steward, οἰκονόμος, one who had the management of his master's property, and was answerable for the letting of his land.

Hence we learn "that we are not masters of what we possess, but rather stewards of that which is another's." S. Ambrose and Theophylact.

For although as regards men we are the absolute masters of our own possessions, yet with respect to God, who is Lord over all, we are but stewards. Because, whatever we possess was given us for our own moderate use and for the relief of our poorer brethren, and in the day of judgment we shall have to render a strict account of our stewardship.

So S. Paul says, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." 1 Cor. iv. 2. For all our gifts and endowments are not our own, but belong to God who gave them. Hence we are bound to use them not for our own pleasure, but according to His will. Thou hast genius, a keen judgment, a retentive memory, wisdom, eloquence, or the like! Forget not that thou art a steward of these gifts, not a master. Remember that thou hast to give an account of their use, and take heed to use them to the honour and glory of God. Hear S. Chrysostom, "There is an erroneous opinion that all the good things of this life which we possess are our own, and that we

those whom they ought to pity." S. Ambrose.

S. Chrysostom (*hom. De Lazaro*), enumerates nine grievous ills to which the poor man was subjected:

1. A poverty so extreme, that he could not even obtain the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.
2. A disease so grievous and so weakening, that he was unable to drive away the dogs which gathered round him.
3. Desertion by all, even those who ought to have aided him.
- 4 The constant sight of the rich man's happiness, for his bodily pains and his grief of mind were increased by the knowledge, that they who were possessed of every enjoyment had no thought or consideration for him.
5. The hard heartedness of the rich man, who passed him by, without a kind word or look.
6. His loneliness, for "it is pleasant to have a companion in misfortunes."
7. Uncertainty as to the future, for since the coming of Christ, faith in the resurrection of the dead is a wonderful support in affliction.
8. The long continuance and constancy of his sufferings.
9. The loss of reputation, for many thought that his sufferings were a direct punishment for some great crime. But, like another Job, he bore all his trials with fortitude and an undaunted mind. Hence God has set forth Lazarus, Job, Tobias and S. Lydwina, whose sufferings are recorded by Sirius, to be as long as the world last examples of patience to all who are sick and afflicted.

Ver. 22.—*And it came to pass that the beggar died*, of disease, misery, and want.

And was carried, i.e. his soul was conducted with honour for the soul after death needs no actual carrying. Observe here the office of the angels; for S. Chrysostom says, if we need guides then we are changing from one country to another, how much shall we need some to lead the way when the disembodied soul is on its passage to futurity. He further adds, "Ye saw the poor man at the rich, man's gate: ye see him now in Abraham's bosom; ye saw him surrounded by dogs: ye see him in company of the angels; ye saw him poor, famished, struggling: ye see him happy, filled with good things, and possessed of the prize. Ye saw his labours: ye see his reward."

Into Abraham's bosom. In order that, beholding Lazarus entertained as a guest by Abraham, the rich man might be confounded at his own want of hospitality. Euthymius. Abraham was hospitable: that the sight of Lazarus might rebuke the rich man's want of hospitality. Abraham was wont to watch for wayfarers, to bring them to his house; but the rich man despised him who lay within his gate, and though the poor man was daily ready to his hand, he used him not as a treasure by means of which he might obtain salvation. S. Chrysostom (*hom. De Lazaro.*)

Ver. 20.—*And there was a certain beggar*, a poor man, according to the Arabic. A beggar, poor in earthly possessions, but rich in virtues and in patience; named Lazarus.

“The mention of the name,” says S. Ambrose, “shows this to be a narrative, not a parable;” and S. Cyril tells us, “that according to the tradition of the Jews, there was at that time a certain poor man at Jerusalem, by name Lazarus, apparently so called because he was laid at the rich man’s gate to pray for the help which he needed so much.”

For Lazarus is in Hebrew ,רצץלאazar, “ad adjuvandum.” Hence S. Chrysostom and Augustine explain the name as meaning helped, or rather one that ought to be helped, for Lazarus, by drawing attention to his sores, as good as exclaimed, ye see my misery, help me in my wretchedness.

Was laid. ἐβέβλητο, was placed by bearers at the gates of the rich or the entrances of the temples as a breathing corpse, bereft of the power of motion. “He lay,” says Titus, “each day and every day in abject misery, neglected, counted as nothing, uncared for, and unprotected.” “So that,” says S. Chrysostom, “the rich man, as he went out and as he came in, could look upon him, and see his miserable state.” “By which things,” as S. Gregory teaches (*Hom.* 40), “our Lord has explained His two judgments, the greater condemnation of the un pitying Dives, and the greater acceptance and reward of the suffering Lazarus. For how great,” he asks, “do ye suppose were the temptations which the poor and suffering beggar had to resist, when hungry and diseased he saw the rich man enjoying health and the delights of life? When overcome by pain and cold, he beheld him clothed in purple and finelinen and rejoicing in the good things of this life. When brought low by the nature of his ailment, and in need, he saw him in full prosperity, yet regardless of another’s wants. What a storm of temptation, may we, my brethren, think there must have been in the heart of the beggar, to whom either ill—poverty or sickness, alone would have been a sufficient punishment! But that he might be the more tried, he was subjected to both evils, and saw, moreover, that whilst the rich man was surrounded by flattering friends and supporters, he had no one to visit him in his misery and want.”

Full of sores. Not only poor but diseased *εἰλκωμένος*, covered with ulcers. Hence many think that Lazarus was a leper, and therefore look upon him as the patron saint of those afflicted with leprosy, who are called Lazars, and their hospitals Lazarettos, after his name.

Ver. 21.—*And dogs came and licked his sores.* Francis Lucas thinks that they did this as if feeding on a dead body, and that they thus caused the poor sufferer much pain, for, S. Chrysostom adds, “he had not the strength to drive them away.”

But in another sense the dogs may be considered as cleansing and healing the poor man’s sores. Hence S. Chrysostom says, “The wild animals in compassion lick the sores which no one, much less the rich glutton, cared to cleanse. For the rich, unmindful of the condition of their fellowmen, laugh at misery, and turn away from

are lords over them. But we are as it were guests and strangers, whose departure draweth nigh, and dispensers of another’s bounty. We ought therefore to assume the humility and modesty of a steward, for nothing is our own, but all things are the gift of God.”

Was accused, διεβλήθη, denounced, Arabic. Hence the devil διάβολος, is called the “accuser” (Rev. xii. 10), because he accuses us before God. “We are accused,” says the Interlinear, “not only when we do evil, but when we omit to do good.” For a steward ought to omit nothing which concerns his own duty or his master’s good.

Had wasted his goods, i.e. by carelessness and riotous living.

Ver. 2.—*And he called him, and said unto him, . . . give an account of thy stewardship*, i.e. of how much thou hast received and how thou hast

So Christ saith, unto every one in the hour of death, “Give an account of thy stewardship. Give an account of thy life, of thy goods, and of thy talents, whether thou hast used them to promote the glory of God and the salvation of thyself and thy fellow-men.”

Climacus relates that a monk, who was afterwards abbot, saw in a dream, the first night he entered the monastery, certain men who demanded of him the payment of one hundred pounds of gold. Whereupon for the space of three years he gave himself up to obedience and mortification, and at the end of that time was told that ten pounds had been subtracted from his debt. For thirteen years longer he continued to practise still greater austerities, and then messengers were sent from God to say that all his debt was forgiven. The same writer has also something terrible to say about the abbot Stephen, who had for forty years lived a holy life of fasting and prayer. This man, the day before he died, fell into a trance, and was heard as if in colloquy with an unseen judge, denying at one time the accusations against him, at another time pleading guilty to the charges, and praying for mercy. Terrible indeed was the spectacle of this invisible and stern judgment.

Ver. 3.—*Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do?* The steward acknowledges the justice of the accusation. He had wasted his master’s goods, henceforward he must labour or beg for his living. The one thing he was unable, and the other he was ashamed to do. In his distress, he knows not which way to turn. Truly, St. Chrysostom says, “A slothful life is powerless in action.” Symbolically, when life is past, no compunction can, as it were by digging, prepare the soul for fruit; whilst to beg, after the manner of the foolish virgins, is not only disturbing, but vain and useless. Gloss.

Ver. 4.—*I am resolved what to do*, &c. 1 will give each one of my lord’s

debtors a bond to show that they owe less than they are actually indebted, so that in return for my kindness and dishonesty, they may entertain me when I am deprived of my stewardship.

Vers. 5 and 6.—*How much owest thou unto my Lord? And he said, an hundred measures of oil.* Greek *βάτος*, in the Vulgate cadus, the tenth part of an homer. Levit. xxvii. 16, and Ezek. xlv. II.

And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fourscore. Greek *γάρμμα*, i.e. “cautio” or bond, or as the Vulgate renders it “obligatio.” The meaning is, “Take back thy bond, wherein thou didst acknowledge that thou owest one hundred measures of oil. Tear it up and write another, confessing to a debt of fifty only, and divide the other fifty between me and thee.”

Ver. 7.—*Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.* The *κόζος* which was the same size as the homer, contained ten ephahs. See Ezek. xlv. II.

“To me,” says S. Augustine (*Quæst. Evang. Lib. ii 34*), “the meaning of the passage seems this; that whatever the Jews do for the priests and Levites, should be more liberally provided for in the Church; that whereas they give a tenth, Christians should give a half, as Zaccheus gave, not of his crops, but of his goods; or at least that they should give two tenths, and thus exceed the payments of the Jews.”

Ver. 8.—*And the lord commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely.* The landlord, not the Lord Jesus, as Erasmus holds. The lord praised not the action, for it was dishonest, but the prudence, the cunning craft of the steward, just as we often admire, not indeed a crime, but the cleverness shown in contriving it.

The children of this world are in their generation, i.e. after their kind, in worldly matters, or as Himmel understands it, amongst their fellow-men, *wiser than the children of light, i.e.* than those who are followers of Christ. Very wisely has some one said, “In worldly matters we are philosophers, as to our spiritual affairs, fools; in earthly things we are lynx-eyed, but in heavenly we are moles.”

The children of this world, says S. Augustine (*Lib. ii. de Genesi*) are wiser in providing for their future; and very naturally so, because the desire of earthly pleasure and enjoyment is strong in man, but the aspirations of his soul are blunted and weakened, partly because of the body, partly from love of earthly things. Hence those that are led by the flesh are more active and energetic than those who are led by the spirit, inasmuch as spiritual things, being invisible, produce but little effect on the minds of men.

The parable was directed against the avarice of the Pharisees. We are taught by it to use our riches not for our own selfish ends, but for the relief of our poorer brethren. For Christ bids us all remember that we are but stewards of God’s good gifts, and

Ver. 19.—*There was a certain rich man.* You ask, Is this a parable or a true history? I answer, A history!

1. Because Christ does not call it a parable.
2. Because the poor man is named Lazarus, and the rich man, according to a Hebrew tradition quoted by Euthymius, is called a native of Nice.
3. Because the torments of the rich man are related as an actual reality.
4. Because in memory of Lazarus many hospitals for those suffering from leprosy and such like diseases are called by his name.
5. Because with the exception of Justin, Theophylact, and Eucherius, all the Fathers are of my opinion.

Euthymius infers from the mention made of Abraham and Moses in verses 24 and 31, that this rich man was a Jew, and mentions a Hebrew tradition to the effect that he was living in the time of Christ, who gave his history as that of a well-known man, in order the more to impress his hearers, and to teach them to despise the good things of this present life.

Was clothed in purple and in fine linen. The one denoting luxury and pride, and other softness and effeminacy. There are some, says S. Gregory, who do not think that extravagance in apparel is a sin. But if it were not so, the Word of God would not have so directly stated that Dives, who was tormented in hell, had been clothed in purple and fine linen. No one seeks fine clothing but out of vainglory, in order to appear better than his fellow-men.

And fared sumptuously every day. The Greek *εὐφραίνόμενος* signifies both gladness and feasting. So Dives, not content with the richness of his banquet, sought to add to the pleasures of the feast the delights of music, dancing, and whatever else could add to his enjoyment. Forgetful of the future, perhaps not believing that there was any future at all, he lived without God, a follower of him who bids men “eat, drink, and enjoy themselves, for death makes an end of all delights.” He lived as they live who “take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave” (Job xxi. 12, 13).

Hence S. Gregory teaches that we cannot indulge in revelling without sin. For when the body is given up to the enjoyment of the feast, the heart is led away to empty rejoicing. As it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play” (Exod. xxxii. 6).

Conversation generally follows after a feast, for when the appetite is satisfied, the tongue is let loose. Hence Dives is fitly described as desiring water to cool his tongue, for feasting ministers to gluttony, wantonness, pride, evil speaking, envy, and many other vices.

Christ reproves avarice, and shows that he who loves money cannot love God: therefore the Apostles, if they would love Him, must despise riches. S. Jerome. But the better interpretation is one which I am about to give.

That which is your own. “Christ calls heavenly riches ours says Euthymius, “because, as Theophylact explains, ‘our citizenship is in heaven.’ For man was created in the image of God, but wealth and earthly possessions are not ours, for there is nothing divine therein. But to enjoy divine blessings, and to partake in the nature of God, is ours.”

But you will say, Men are wont to value that which is their own, more than that which is the property of another. Why then does Christ here imply the contrary?

I answer that the force of our Lord’s argument is seen: 1. If we look to the meaning of the parable, If ye have not been faithful in earthly things, how will ye be so in heavenly, and who will dare to commit such things to your trust? and 2. From the parable itself. Men are as a rule more careful in their management of the affairs of others than of their own, for many reasons, but chiefly because they are bound in justice to make good any losses which may have been incurred by their carelessness, and if careless may even be suspected of dishonesty or theft; whereas for their own losses, or for the mismanagement of their own concerns, they are responsible to no one.

True, therefore, is the argument of Christ, If ye have not been faithful in earthly things, which are another’s, God will not give you those heavenly treasures which are rightly your own. For he who makes a wrong use of that which belongs to another deserves to lose that which is his own. For, as Dionysius (Denis) the Carthusian astutely remarks, “In the former verse, Christ spoke of the good things of this life, ‘who will trust, or commit,’ because an account will have to be rendered of their use. But of the good things of the heavenly country, he says, ‘who will give,’ for we shall not be called upon to account for these, because once given they are everlastingly our own.”

For the following verse, see S. Matt. vi. 24.

Ver. 14.—*And the Pharisees also derided Him, ἐμυκτήριζόν, “turned up their noses,” sneered at Him.*

Ver. 15.—*And He said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, i.e. make outwardly a show of justice, whereas God knoweth your hearts to be full of all uncleanness. For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.*

Your pretended zeal for the service of God, which is held in admiration of the common people, is hateful to Him who seeth the foulness and corruption of your hearts. For my explanation of verses 16 to 19, see S. Matt. xi. 12; v. 18; and xix. 9.

therefore bound to use them so that we may give a good account of our stewardship, and obtain our due reward. In this sense the unjust steward is held up as an example, and not because of his injustice and fraud.

Hence S. Augustine, as already referred to, considers that Christ reasons thus, “If this steward could so wisely provide for this life, much more ought we to be solicitous for the life to come.” And again, “If this steward, unjust as he proved himself to be, was praised for his wisdom, much more shall we receive praise of God, if by our almsgiving we injure none, but benefit many.” And he goes on to say, “If a wrongdoer received praise from his lord, how much more pleasing are they to the Lord God, who do all in accordance with His will. So from the parable of the unjust judge Christ took occasion to speak of God as judge, although between the two no comparison was possible.”

We learn then from this parable (1.) That those who are possessed of riches, or any other gift of God, such as health, intellect, and the like, are but stewards of His bounty. (2.) That every one is bound to use his possessions to the honour and glory of God. (3.) And that every one at the day of judgment will have to give account, not only for the sins which he has committed, but also for duties which he has neglected to perform. Such is the general meaning of the parable. Its particular application I will proceed to explain.

Ver. 9.—*And (in like manner) I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.* Ye have heard how the unjust steward made his lord’s debtors so kindly disposed towards him, that when he was deprived of his stewardship, they were willing to receive him into their houses. In like manner take heed that ye, who have wasted your lord’s goods through your misuse of them, by the mammon or the riches of unrighteousness—not by robbery and fraud, but in another sense which I will soon explain—give to the poor, so that after this life is over, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

Here note that the word unrighteousness has a double signification. In the case of the steward it meant dishonesty and deceit: in our case it has a different meaning, as I shall proceed, to show.

Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, i.e., of riches, which are “unrighteous” in a fourfold sense and from a fourfold cause.

1. Because riches are often amassed through unrighteousness, *i.e.* through fraud, usury, and the like of oneself or one’s ancestors. Hence S. Jerome (Ep. 150) says every rich man is either himself unrighteous or else the heir of an unrighteous man, and although he may not be ignorant of the evil-doings of his ancestors, yet he can scarcely be expected to know to

whom restitution should be made. Therefore he is bound to make such restitution as lies in his power, by giving to the poor. And commenting on S. Matt. vi. the same Father goes on to say, Riches are called Mammon because they are acquired through unrighteousness, taking mammon to be derived from מַמּוֹן, and מוֹמֵנָה, *i.e.* violence, from the root מוֹנֵה, the meaning being “to exercise force.” But the real derivation seems to be from מַטְמֵן, to hide or conceal; for riches and money are wont to be hidden.

2. They are unrighteous in the sense of faithless and deceptive, for they are not to be depended upon, but often desert one man and pass on to another.

3. They are called the mammon of unrighteousness, because in their endeavour to become rich men are guilty of fraud, dishonesty, unrighteous dealing, and every kind of sin.

4. And again, they are unrighteous, because wicked and ungodly men esteem them of more value than the heavenly treasures. S. Augustine (*serm. 35 De Verbis Domini*). Hence we may understand Christ as saying, “Ye rich and avaricious men have made money your god, but be ye well assured that it is unrighteous, *i.e.* vain and deceptive. Break up your idol, therefore, and give to the poor, and God will recompense you with eternal riches.” See S. Matt. vi. 24.

That when ye fail, when life is over and your riches are no longer at your disposal, or according to the Syriac version, when it, *i.e.* mammon, fails you.

They may receive you. The poor, *i.e.* those whom you have made your friends by the right use of your riches. For they, if they are worthy of heaven, will by their prayers and by a communication of their merits make a way for you to enter therein: but if, on the contrary, they are unworthy of so great a blessing, you will be received into heaven because of your almsgiving, for what is given to the poor is accepted of Christ. Christ seems, here to be speaking of the poor who lead godly lives, who are poor as far as earthly possessions are concerned, but rich in understanding and in spiritual grace. Let not the rich then think that they are conferring, but rather that they are receiving benefits from such as these, for they give gold, to receive in return heaven. Hence S. Gregory (Moral. xxii. 14) says, “Almsgiving is not so much the relieving the necessities of the poor as the offering of gifts to those who hereafter will receive us into everlasting habitations.”

Learn therefore, that heaven is the inheritance of the poor, not for their own possession, but rather that they may introduce therein those who have been their benefactors. They are therefore the door-keepers of heaven, for “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (see S. Matt. v. 3), and this their blessedness is not of their own deserving, but the special gift of God. So S. Augustine (*lib. ii. q. 38 Quæst. Evang.*) says, “They receive them not as of right but by the permission of Him who counselled them to make themselves friends, and who deigns to look upon Himself as being fed, clothed, entertained and visited in the person of the least of His followers.”

“Everlasting habitations,” says Theophylact, “are in Christ ordained for the poor, wherein they may receive those who have given them liberal alms out of that which

God has committed to their trust.” Happy indeed is the exchange, for earthly things become heavenly. Hence almsgiving is the most skilful of arts, for it does not build us an earthly tabernacle, but provides us with eternal life.” S. Chrysostom.

Ver. 10.—*He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.* By “that which is least” we must understand earthly possessions as distinguished from the “much” of spiritual gifts. That ye may not be deprived of your heavenly stewardship, or rather that ye may be entrusted therewith, take heed rightly to administer your temporal affairs, and especially to give alms to the poor, according to the purpose of God. For so Christ explains His words in the next verse. In a similar sense S. Paul writes, “If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?” (1 Tim. iii. 5.) Christ seems here to be reproaching the Pharisees with unfaithfulness in the disposal of their riches, and in the interpretation of the law, and also with being little worthy of the position they held (see S. Matt. v. and xxiii.), for from ver. 14 it is clear that these things were spoken against them.

Ver. 11.—*If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?* If ye have made a wrong use of this world’s fleeting possessions (1 Tim. vi. 7), who will entrust to your care the things which are lasting, and which pertain unto the kingdom of God? Theophylact and many others.

Ver. 12.—*And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own?* The wording of this verse is different, but the sense is the same as that of the preceding. The mammon which in the verse above Christ called unrighteous, he here calls “another man’s.” For temporal possessions are another’s:

1. Because they are in their nature totally different from the nature of man. They are of the earth, given to man for his use in this life, to revert again to the earth after death.

2. They are another’s as regards God, for we are not absolute masters of what we possess but administrators only, bound to dispose of our goods according to His will. So Titus says, “He describes much riches as that which is another man’s, because to abound in riches is, considering human nature, foreign to men. For if any man possesses them, they are external to him, and as it were, an accident.” “They are,” says S. Ambrose, “foreign to the nature of man, for they have no continuance, they were neither born with us, nor can they follow us when we die.” S. Augustine also (*Quæst. Evang. ii. 35*) “He calls earthly endowments another’s, for no man can carry them away with him at his death.” “We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out” (1 Tim. vi. 7); and Euthymius: “Earthly riches are called another’s for they do not remain long with their possessor.”