

## **MAKING FRIENDS OF THE UNRIGHTEOUS MAMMON**

**"And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." – Luke 16:9.**

GOD'S chosen heritage was the Jewish people. Under the Mosaic Covenant there were certain members of that nation who were representatives of God and of the people Israel. Therefore Jesus could say to His disciples, "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Whatsoever, therefore, they bid you do, that observe and do; but do not after their works; for they say and do not." (Matthew 23:2,3.) God had committed to them these special responsibilities, blessings, privileges and knowledge, and the people were more or less dependent upon them; and they were unjust in their dealings with the people.

Through His Son, the Lord sent word to these Scribes and Pharisees that they were to be cast out of the stewardship. They had come to understand in a general way that a New Dispensation was coming in – the Gospel Age. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, had also proclaimed that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. Now Jesus gives a parable, which explains the reason for the course which these classes should take. He assumes the case of an unjust steward who was called upon by his lord to render up his accounts, because his stewardship was about to end.

When notified that his dismissal was at hand, this steward tried to make friends of all who were debtors to his master. No matter how unjust the steward had been with these debtors before, he now minimized their accounts, as he had a right to do. In olden times a steward had the right to make contracts, etc., for his master. So this steward cut down the accounts and made friends of the

people. Commenting upon his course, our Lord said that this was a very wise procedure on the part of the steward, for thus he would be ingratiated into the favor of those who could help him. While our Lord commended this course as good worldly wisdom, He did not commend the steward's injustice, but his shrewdness in adopting a policy which would win the favor and friendship of those whom he had unjustly treated before.

Applied to His time, our Master's words would teach that the Scribes and Pharisees should have sought to win the love and gratitude of their Jewish brethren. Had they tried to make the people happy and contented, it might have gone better with them afterward. But they did not do this; and when the great time of trouble came upon the nation, in the year 70 A.D., these religious rulers [R5750 : page 250] were among the chief mourners and sufferers in the trouble. They had not been as wise as the unjust steward.

## **OUR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AS GOD'S STEWARDS**

Then our Lord applied the parable to His disciples, and gave *them* a lesson. "Likewise I say the same unto *you*." The application of the parable to His followers is somewhat different from its application to the Scribes and Pharisees. "I say unto you: Make for yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness." In other words, the Lord's people are here advised to use whatever of the unrighteous mammon they may have in doing as much good as possible, in blessing and assisting others; and thus they will make grateful, appreciative friends.

This does not mean that our good deeds and our use of whatever means the Lord has given us should be with a view to bringing commendation and material advantage to ourselves, but with a view to being of real service in blessing others along the lines laid down in the Scriptures. Thus the Lord's children make

themselves truly worthy and pleasing to God. We believe this is a good plan to follow now. The Master declared that the children of this world are generally wiser than the children of light in recognizing what is for their best interests.

## **TIME OF TROUBLE PICTURED IN FRENCH REVOLUTION**

The ecclesiastical powers of today are professedly sitting in the seat of Christ. The masses of the people know nothing better than what their religious rulers tell them. Now that these Doctors of the Law see the present Dispensation coming to an end, they should seek to correct their former mistakes in dealing with their flocks, should seek to make some reparation for all their past delinquencies. They have been to a greater or less extent hiding "the key of knowledge" (Luke 11:52), to a greater or less extent imposing on the superstitions of the people, and taking the people's money under false pretenses. They should now seek to rectify all this so far as possible by telling the people the truth. They should try to save themselves from the violence of the fall which is coming to them. Were they to do so they would not fall so hard when the great disaster comes. But in antagonizing the interests of the people more and more they are adding to their own distress in the near future, as the Scriptures point out.

We should not be surprised if the priests and ministers will suffer more distress in the great trouble time nearing than will the people, because of their having hoodwinked the people. The Catholic priests suffered terribly at the time of the French Revolution, which was a picture on a small scale of the approaching great cataclysm. The French Revolution, we understand, is clearly referred to in Revelation 12:15,16. See also STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol. 3, pp. 50-54, and pp. 64-69. We believe that the nominal church clergy and leaders will particularly suffer in the universal overthrow of the Present Order

near at hand – some of them because they have actively opposed the Truth; some because of posing as representatives of truth and enlightenment and the liberties of the people, and failing really to stand for the truth which they recognized – keeping quiet about it for policy's sake. They have failed to conserve the interests which they pretended to serve.

## **APPLICATION OF PARABLE TO THE SAINTS**

In applying the words of Jesus to ourselves, they would seem to teach that to whatever extent we have the mammon of unrighteousness, worldly goods, we should be inclined to be liberal rather than penurious, according to the measure of our ability. We take it that the Lord is showing us here that we as His followers have more or less of means, opportunity, influence, etc., and that we should use these talents He has given us in forwarding His Cause. And if in our presentations of Truth a certain amount of denunciation may be met with, we should rather let the matter go unnoticed and seek to be generous, so far as is compatible with faithfulness to the Lord and the spirit of His Word.

The Master adds, "that when ye *fail*, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." Those who could receive us into everlasting habitations would be only the Lord and His angels. He has promised to receive all His faithful ones. Our use of the unrighteous mammon, our sacrificing of earthly interests, which might in some cases bring us blessings from men, would surely at last bring us the crowning blessing from the Lord, as is promised. Our *failing* will be the reaching of the end of our sacrificial course. All of the Lord's people are to die – that is the purport of their consecration; it is a sacrifice *even unto death*. If they are of this class who make friends **[R5750 : page 251]** *with*, or *of*, or *through*. the mammon of unrighteousness, if they sacrifice these earthly things, then when they fail, when they die, when they have finished their course, they will be received into everlasting

habitations – the place prepared for the faithful class of "more than conquerors," the "House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens."

We would not apply the word "*they*" necessarily to those of whom we made friends. God is our Friend, if we as His children live a life of self-sacrifice and ignore the selfish use of earthly mammon in favor of the service of the Lord. Then our friends, those who will receive us when we fail, will be not those alone or those necessarily who may have been benefited by our sacrifices, but will be especially those beyond the veil – the Father, the Lord Jesus, the glorified saints, and all the holy angels. Blessed expectation!

