

Dishonest Giving

By A. T. Jones

Present Truth, July 17, 1902

Exodus 20

² I am the Lord your God, which have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

³ You shall have no other gods before me.

One method of manifesting idolatry in the worship of Mammon not often considered is in *giving away* the money that has been so obtained. There is just as much idolatry in giving away money that is obtained by idolatry, as there is in getting it by idolatry.

Not all Mammon worshipers are misers; only a few of them. Many of them are abundant givers; and these have just as much satisfaction in giving away the money as they had in getting it, because it is further indulgence of the same idolatry.

The laboring man is oppressed and robbed in his wages; the poor man is oppressed and robbed in the increased prices; small dealers are oppressed and robbed or driven entirely out of business in order that a few in the great combinations may draw to themselves the tribute of all the people.

And when that is done, they will make gifts of millions to colleges and universities, hundreds of thousands to hospitals, thousands to churches, etc., etc.; and then further pride themselves upon the world's idolatry of their "great benevolence." But there is not a particle of benevolence in any gift that is thus made: it is sheer idolatry.

By the Lord, in perfect justice and righteousness, all our gifts are measured, and stand, altogether upon the basis upon which *we get the money*.

We say it again; for it is applicable to people who are not millionaires, as truly as to those who are: All the value of our giving as measured by the Lord, in perfect justice and right-

eousness, rests altogether upon the basis upon which we make our money. If my money is not made honestly, not a cent that I ever gave away will stand to my credit: it can not in righteousness: it can not in justice. I robbed another man to get it; it is his still, and when I give it away, it is his money that I give away.

And this is another reason why the two mites of the poor widow that day when she gave it, was more than all that the wealthy put in of their abundance.

We know that the Mammon worshipers in Christ's day were like the Mammon worshipers in this day: they would *crowd down* in the dealing when people were selling to them; and they would *crowd up* on the price when people were to buy of them, and thus at both ends they increased their gains. Of these it is written:

It was this spirit that was manifested by the priests and temple officials in their gatherings for the Passover. Cattle were bought by the dignitaries, the moneyed men, who oppressed those of whom they purchased. The representation was made [to these owners out in the country, who had the cattle, the sheep, and the doves, and whoever had these to sell] that these animals were to be offered as a sacrifice to God at the Passover, and thus urged, the owners sold them at a cheap price. Then these scheming men brought their purchases to the temple,—purchases which meant double robbery,—robbery of the men of whom they had purchased, and robbery of those who wished to sacrifice, to whom they were again sold at exorbitant prices.¹

And when they would put great offerings into the temple treasury of the Lord, and take credit to themselves because they gave so much to “the cause.” But that poor widow, who, because of these men who devoured widows' houses and for a pretense made long prayers, was reduced to a pittance honestly gotten, but by the hardest,—that widow, who, out of her love to the Lord, gave what little she had left after she had

¹ Ellen White, *Spalding and Magan Collection*, “The Education Our Schools Should Bring,” p. 138.

passed through the devouring hands of these men,—when she came into the temple of the Lord, giving the little that she had, she gave more than all the others together. Every particle of it was honest. Every particle of it came from honest effort. And that was a gift that measured according to righteousness in the sight of God.

There is such a thing as honest dealing; and it can be practiced in this world. And whatever means is not acquired in that way, how much soever of it may be given, it can not be counted as the gift of him that gives it. It will be counted to those widows and the poor whom he has ground down to get it, to the laborers whose wages he ground down to the lowest notch to increase or to preserve his great gains.

This is why God says to the laborers,

James 5

⁷ Be patient unto the coming of the Lord. The husbandman waits for the precious fruits of the earth, and has long patience for it...

⁸ Be also patient...

Your labor is not in vain. God knows the just wages that you earn, and of just how much of it you are robbed. And in the day of reckoning He will reckon it to you in full justice and righteousness. Be patient. Serve God.

Colossians 3

²² Obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God;

²³ And whatsoever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

²⁴ Knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

In that day God will distribute justly all the rewards of labor. He is the righteous God. The Christian can cheerfully bear to be ground down, robbed, and oppressed: he can wait for the day of grand distribution in righteousness; for he

knows that in that day he will receive all that his honest toil ever earned, and he shall have the eternal glory of it.

Even though in this world some Mammon worshiper absorbed it, and made a great gift of it, and got the worldly fleeting glory of it; yet since from the beginning it belonged in righteousness to him who was defrauded of it. And in righteousness, it, with all the fruits of it, will be reckoned to him to whom in righteousness from the beginning it belonged.

This is the word and the message of God to the robbed, oppressed, and defrauded workingmen everywhere today, who are clamoring for a righteous distribution of the fruits of their labor:

Ecclesiastes 12

¹³ Fear God, and keep His commandments.

No righteous distribution can be made by force and violence. In that way, an iniquitous and bad condition can only be made more iniquitous and worse.

Isaiah 8

¹³ Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread.

James 5

⁸ Be you also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draws nigh.

Then shall every man receive his own reward according to his own labor.