

a job, they will feel constrained to provide him with lodging and food.

The master can do one of two things. His first option: he can go to the debtors, tell them that it is all a mistake, that the manager has been dismissed and his actions are null and void. But if the master does this, the villagers' joy will turn to anger. They will curse him for his stinginess. The master cannot afford to lose face in the community. He is trapped! Second option: the master keeps quiet, accepts the praise that is already being heaped upon him, and allows the manager to ride high on the wave of popular enthusiasm. The rich man exercises the second option and compliments his manager for the shrewd and prudent way in which he uses money, even though it's not his own, to guarantee a more secure future for himself. ***“The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light.”***

Jesus calls for disciples to be equally shrewd in using their material goods so that when their unrighteous mammon fails they will have an eternal home. Disciples are not to make friends of unrighteous mammon, but by means of it they proclaim and spread the Gospel of God's love.

Since we cannot by any means gain forgiveness or heaven, let us not be like the unrighteous manager, but let us trust in God's grace and mercy for restoration and salvation. As our earthly mammon reminds us from the early years of our nation's birth, let us say: **“IN GOD WE TRUST!”**

THE LAMPLIGHTER



THEME: Jesus Spoke to Them in Parables – “In God We Trust”

Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. {2} So he called him in and asked him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.' {3} "The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg-- {4} I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.' {5} "So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' {6} "'Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,' he replied. "The manager told him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred.' {7} "Then he asked the second, 'And how much do you owe?' "'A thousand bushels of wheat,' he replied. "He told him, 'Take your bill and make it eight hundred.' {8} "The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. (Luke 16:1-8 NIV)

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Dear Trusting Tenants of God's Grace,

Just a few short years after winning our independence from the oppression of the British government, we begin to see on our currency the infamous words: "In God We Trust." After being prompted by a letter from R. M. Watkinson, minister of the Gospel from Ridleyville, Pennsylvania, Secretary Chase wrote a letter to James Pollock, director of the mint in Philadelphia, to prepare a motto. This letter, dated November 20, 1861, said: "Dear Sir, No nation can be strong except in the strength of God, or safe except in His defense. The trust of our people in God should be declared on our national coins.... You will cause a device to be prepared without unnecessary delay with a motto expressing in the fewest and tersest words possible this national recognition."

Prior to this date, however, it was found that the Act of Congress dated January 18, 1837, prescribed the mottoes and devices that should be placed upon the coins of the United States. Eventually Congress passed the Act of April 22, 1864. This legislation changed the composition of the one-cent coin and authorized the minting of the two-cent coin. The mint director was directed to develop the designs for these coins for final approval of the Secretary. "IN GOD WE TRUST" first appeared on the 1864 two-cent coin.

"IN GOD WE TRUST!" This motto has been the motto of Christians long before it ever became our national motto. In the parable of the unjust manager, we see a certain rich man who discovers that his manager is squandering his master's property. For this reason the master summons his servant and asks: "What is this I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your

management because you cannot be my manager any longer."

Through his encounter with his master, the manager discovered something about his master that is supremely significant. Though the master could have tried and jailed him, he fired him but did not jail him. He did not even scold him! The master has been unusually merciful toward him. Thus, in one scene, this manager has experienced two aspects of his master's nature. First, he is a master who expects obedience and acts in judgment on disobedient servants. Second, his is a master who shows unusual mercy and generosity even to a dishonest manager.

Instead of sitting in a dark and damp prison cell, he begins to contemplate his future. What will he do now that he has lost his job? He dismisses manual labor by stating he is not strong enough to dig. The manager's pride prevents him from becoming a beggar on the streets. For this reason he must come up with another alternative. Finally the light bulb comes on! "Ah, ha! I know what I will do!" Before the word gets out that he lost his position, he approaches the master's debtors and has them adjust their debts. "***He asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' {6} 'Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,' he replied. The manager told him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred.' {7} Then he asked the second, 'And how much do you owe?' 'A thousand bushels of wheat,' he replied. He told him, 'Take your bill and make it eight hundred.'***" Even though he saw the merciful side of his master, the manager takes steps to insure a descent future for himself. The goal of the manager's plan is to place people under obligation to him, so that when he is out of