

Make to Yourselves Friends.

There is a certain courting of friendship, not for friendship's sake, but for the sake of the unrighteous mammon possessed by those whose friendship is sought.

This fawning upon the rich and hanging around them for the purpose of gaining their favor is the most detestable of all sycophancy. This kind of making of friends—this following for the loaves and fishes—is happily not a very profitable business, unless it be so managed that both parties will be gainers, after the example of the unjust Steward and his master's debtors in the parable recorded in Luke xvi.

The Steward was commended because he acted shrewdly, cleverly, for his own interest—commended by his master not by the Savior—"for," adds the Savior, "the children of this world are wiser (more shrewd) in their generation (as respects their family, as respects themselves, hence more shrewd as respects their self-interest) than the children of light." I am glad it is so, and I hope it will always be the case. The mention of their generation—their family—implies that there is a higher family—the children of light—who are to exercise higher wisdom—even the wisdom which is from above, which is "pure, peaceable, full of good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."

The Steward's shrewdness prompted him to use unlawfully his master's property for his own aggrandizement—to secure for himself friends who would receive him into their houses when he should be deprived of his stewardship. Read the parable and then read the Savior's application of it, remembering that the dishonesty of the Steward, the kind of friends he secured, and the way he did it, all belong to the children of the world and have no counterpart in the application of the parable to the children of light. As in all the parables of our Lord, there is here just one leading thought, and it was never intended that, to understand a parable, we should seek for something to correspond to every feature of the parable—every circumstance and allusion in it—like the preacher, who speaking of the grain of mustard seed growing into a large tree, insisted that there was a definitely fixed number of branches and leaves on that tree, and that each branch and each leaf represented something in the church, while the birds resting on the branches represented the sinners who would rest upon and even receive food from the church, and yet not acknowledge it; this would be to make shocking nonsense of the parables.

The one thought before us is that the Steward was far seeing, or shrewd enough to make, dishonestly to be sure, but still to make to himself friends—such as they were—by the use of what had been entrusted to him. Now the very manner in which the Savior introduces the lesson to his disciples ("and I say unto you") seems to recognize a necessary difference in the two situations; as if he should say: "although you are the children of the light and of the day and hence can do no such furtive acts, as characterized the unjust Steward, yet I say to you: 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness'—use this world's goods with which God has entrusted you—use your money (mammon) which is called 'the mammon of unrighteousness' because the children of this world make an unrighteous use of it, use it in a righteous way, and in such a way that by the use of it you will make to yourselves friends—such friends as will, when you fail—when you die—receive you into the everlasting habitations—friends of a nobler, better sort than earth affords, and who will give you a welcome that no earthly friends can give. I do not think it possible to name these friends. Whether the reference be to God and

the Savior, or to Jesus, and the angels who will accompany him at the judgment when the righteous shall go into life eternal—into the everlasting mansions—I do not know. But it seems clear, that since they are to "receive you into everlasting habitations," they are no earthly friends, they must be among the heavenly host. The whole parable resolves itself into an exhortation to righteously use the means—the talents—which God has entrusted to our use, in such a manner as by the use to secure heavenly friends who will receive us into the everlasting mansions. It has something to do, then, with the person's getting to heaven! If it hadn't I would not be disposed to write about it.

Akin to this is the parable of the talents in which we are taught that the slothful servant, who buried his talent instead of using it, was cast into outer darkness. The notion which some have entertained (perhaps to suit their pockets) that there is no danger of being condemned for covetousness, no matter how niggardly we act (as a man said to me, "I'll not give anything. I don't expect to purchase my salvation! I am a Christian.") This notion is twin sister to that doctrine which says: "Everybody was saved when Christ died for all, and all you have to do is to believe it, and when you believe you are saved, you are saved, and then you should obey the Savior, not because obedience has anything to do with your salvation, but because you are saved." No more mischievous doctrine was ever preached.

But we must not wander away from the "unrighteous mammon," if we do we lose sight of the parable, for the thought is the right use of riches. Among the many uses made of this world's goods even by Christians the word of God teaches as I conceive but three, viz: 1st. The provision for one's own (kindred), especially for his own household. 1 Tim. v. 8. 2nd. The provision for the poor. Ps. xli. 1. Gal. ii. 10. Acts xx. 35, et al. 3rd. The support of the Gospel. 1 Cor. ix. 11-18. Gal. vi. 6, et al. (observe that the 3rd is not included in the 2nd, for it was never intended that preachers should be paupers or beggars, even tent-making is unexpedient.)

Now we who claim that the Bible alone shall govern us in faith and practice, have special need to give heed to the above, and not have too many outlets for our money. Let us carefully consider these things, for by rightly using our means in these three directions we will lay up our treasures in heaven. It is plain that, if these be the outlets for our money, we must not let it all out through one channel. If a man spend all his income on his own household he will not have the blessing attached to giving to the poor, and to the preaching of the Gospel. It may be that a man's income is so little that it can be profitably spent on his own household. Yes, but then a part of it can be more profitably spent on the poor saints and in supporting the Gospel. Here comes the meaning of the Savior's words, "deny yourself"—here is the meaning of sacrifice. It is no sacrifice for those to give who have plenty (have it to spare). Where now is a poor widow who gives two mites and this her all? Some, I fear, have sought to imitate the poor widow by giving a mite when they might have given an abundance. They forget the meaning of those mites. For the benefit of these I would ask, Where now are the noble, earnest, generous souls who would lay all their treasures at the Apostle's feet? I say there is no sacrifice in giving "what one can spare," unless indeed the one who spares a little has the love of money in him, in which case, I doubt not it would be a sacrifice for him to give any—even a little. It was reported of a rich man, who was asked to give, that he reluctantly made up his mind to part with a little, so, holding up a

note and looking sorrowfully and lovingly at it, he said to the filthy lucre:

"When we asunder part,
It gives us inward pain,
But we will still be joined in heart,
And hope to meet again."

Doubtless he made the best use of that pathetic hymn which his covetous heart would allow and I will not deny that it was a sacrifice for him to give even a little; yet I do deny that such a sacrifice is well pleasing to God and doubt whether such giving would make to himself a single earthly friend, much more do I doubt that it would make for him friends who will receive his niggard soul into the "everlasting habitations."

Now if we can decide what should be expended on our household it will not be very difficult to determine what should be devoted to the maintenance of the poor saints and what to the preachers, for generally speaking our preachers are among the poor saints. (I would only suggest that the "poor saints," who are preachers, should come in for the first share.) However, I insist upon my former statement, that the Scriptures make a distinction between the "poor saints" and the preachers.

But some will say that in providing for our household we are to look to the future and "lay up for a rainy day." Certainly the parable teaches that very thing, but the way some lay up one would think that they looked for some fearfully rainy weather—rainy years, instead of rainy days.

Now we come to another serious question. Will the providing for our households make to ourselves friends who will receive us into "the everlasting habitations?" If we make the right kind of provision it will, if that provision tends to their eternal welfare—not otherwise. But there are an hundred ways, invented by the devil, of spending money on households which will be only laying up curses for the children in after years, by not teaching each child to work for itself; and by forgetting that each member of the household soon comes under the teaching of the parable "make to yourselves friends" and then each should act for himself.

If the dead could arise from their graves and hear their children quarrelling over what they had left behind, they would wish they had given more to the poor and to the church, instead of begetting in their offspring the love of money, under the pretence of providing for their households. It is most unfortunate for brethren to spend all upon their households, for it may be a curse to their children, but what is given to the poor and to the church is always a safe investment. Besides, the church needs your cheerful contributions. I do not believe in begging money from the world, neither do I believe in begging money from Christians. They should give cheerfully. I would not ask a Christian for money a second time unless he misunderstood me. All that a Christian wishes to know in this matter is how best to use his means to the glory of God, and I simply urge that there are only three ways. 1st. By providing for his own household, and he should not be always at this. "It is a poor kind of a household that cannot provide something for itself. 2nd. By giving to the poor, especially to the poor saints. 3rd. By giving to those who preach the Gospel.

It is very sad to know that so much of what God has entrusted to us is being given to the devil to curse us with. We will soon be no longer stewards, but we will have to give an account of our stewardship. May we so use our Master's goods that we shall make to ourselves friends who will receive us into the "everlasting habitations."

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Grief counts the minutes; happiness forgets them.—Madame Woolley.

Miss Louisa May Alcott.

She was born, it appears, in Germantown, Pa., but at two years of age her parents took her to Boston, and six years afterward they removed to Concord, Mass., where they still reside. When sixteen, Miss Alcott began teaching school in Boston, but gradually drifted out of teaching into the more congenial work of writing stories. It was some time, though, before she made writing pay, but at last fortune smiled upon her, and since then she has been exceptionally favored.

In the war, like many other noble women,—to quote the Herald's language—Miss Alcott volunteered as a hospital nurse, and was assigned to one of the most unpleasant hospitals—one in Georgetown, near Washington. After several months' service the unhealthy surroundings told upon her vigorous constitution, and she had a severe attack of typhoid fever, from the effects of which she never fully recovered. Her "Hospital Sketches," which came from this experience, were the first things which called general attention to her. They were letters written to the family at home. Mr. Moncre D. Conway was in Concord at the time, and was so interested by them that he asked leave to print them, and when Miss Alcott recovered from her severe illness, the request was granted. Mr. Henry James of Cambridge, the father of the novelist, told her that in these sketches was her true style. That was the first time, she said, that she had the faintest idea of style; her style was a natural commingling of humor and pathos.

The first novel of Miss Alcott that appeared under her name was "Moods" of which she tells the story in "Little Women." It was spoken of highly by Mr. Ticknor, when he read it in the manuscript in its original form, but it was reconstructed at the request of Mr. Loring, who published it. After the great popular success of "Little Women," much attention was naturally attracted to it. It was written when Miss Alcott was eighteen years old. One day Mr. Alcott came to Mr. Niles of Roberts Brothers, with a volume of fairy stories by his daughter. Mr. Niles said that collected short stories hardly paid, and suggested that Miss Alcott write a story of New England life; Miss Sedgwick had recently died, and perhaps she might be her successor. He wanted a story about girls, but Miss Alcott said she knew nothing about girls; boys were her favorites. No, there were plenty of books for boys; Mr. Niles wanted a book for girls. Miss Alcott said she would write about herself and her sisters tell about the things they used to do. Mr. Niles told her to go ahead, and the result was the first part of "Little Women." He was pleased with the manuscript, and showed it to his young niece at the sea-shore, who went wild with delight over it. He offered Miss Alcott \$1,000 outright for it, but told her she had better run the risk and take a royalty. A thousand dollars seemed a large sum to Miss Alcott at that time, and she had a narrow escape, but luckily she decided for the royalty. The success of the book was phenomenal, and the presses could not run fast enough to supply the demand. Of course a second volume was called for, and letters poured in upon the author beseeching her to continue the story. Many were from little girls, and ran like this:

MISS ALCOTT:—If you do not write another volume of "Little Women," and tell us more about Jo, and make Laura marry Beth, I will never read another of your books as long as I live. Yours very respectfully,

MAMIE BROWN.

So a second volume was written; this was followed by "An Old-fashioned Girl," and then came "Little Men." All of these had an immense sale, for everybody who had read one

read the others. Miss Alcott's published works number eighteen volumes altogether, the united sale of which in America alone amounts in round numbers to half a million. This does not include a novel which some ins has appeared in the "No Name Series." The demand for her books today is as great as ever. Their circulation abroad is also enormous, and they have been translated into German, French and Dutch.

Miss Alcott, although spending most of her time in Concord, is more frequently in Boston, and prefers to call herself a Bostonian than to hail from the American seat of philosophy. Most of her work has been done here; the first part of "Little Women" was written at the South End, and the second part in the Belleville hotel on Beacon street, her favorite quarters, where she generally occupies pleasant rooms high up, with a wide view over the roofs and harbor. She has no regular study and is indifferent to her surroundings while at work. The style of pen, ink or writing paper is immaterial to her, and she uses whatever is handiest at the moment. She writes in a free, back-sloping hand and composes rapidly, never making a copy of her manuscript and rarely going back to change words or expressions.—Boston Herald.

The codeducto which is obsolete in England and nearly so in this country seems to preserve its vigor among the Catholic nations of Europe. Last week two fatal duels occurred, one between high born Spaniards, and the other between well known Frenchmen. In the first the Marquis de Givars killed the Count de Laidi. In the latter Henry Rochefort fell under the sword of another Frenchman by the name of Koehlin. Rochefort has occupied a large share of public notice since he published the *Lanterne* in the days of Louis Napoleon. Banished from France he returned with the fall of the Empire, was a prominent communist leader during their occupation of Paris, was banished on the suppression of the revolt, escaped and has since plotted revolution across the French frontiers. A few weeks since a son of the Rochefort was engaged in a communist broil in Paris and was pommelled by the police. This caused the enraged father to write a savage and threatening letter to the chief of police. Koehlin, conceiving himself insulted in some way by the letter, challenged the old communist. The result is that a stormy, restless life has been quenched in blood, and Frenchmen have disgraced their civilization before the world.—Evangelist.

"George Eliot," the novelist, that Marian Evans, then Mrs. Lewes, is no Mrs. Cross. There was always something to overlook and forgive in her way of marrying Mr. Lewes and living with him happily, for we know, so many years when Mr. Lewes died, a year and a half ago, we read:

"The terrible grief to which Miss Evans fell a prey was regarded as still further proving the strength and fulness of that intense love which was at once the cause and justification of her lapse from social grace. And it was considered the most natural thing in the world that she should announce her intention of abstaining from all writing in the future. Even those who had been disposed to see an ugly caricature of George Lewes in the 'Cassanow' of *Middlemarch* felt that their judgment had been unjust, and that here really was a case of true love that would be true beyond the grave. The publication of *Thou shalt not* did not materially shake this belief. Everybody who thought about the matter at all felt that in the very effort to deaden her grief hard work would be a relief and comfort. But now this 'widow' of a sudden has abandoned her weeds and bestowed herself upon a genuine husband. In the face of this eccentricity of genius the faithful love and bitter grief theories wholly break down."

The lover and husband is a London banker, forty years old and in comfortable circumstances. Mrs. Lewes had a good income, and was 61 when this new experience happened to her. It is not quite settled whether this is another instance in which she has been "crossed in love," or not. It is hoped that she may endure it many years. But then, "George Eliot," is a candidate for a sainthood in the calendar of "Positivists," and it is their privilege to make the most of her.—The Pacific.