

# The astute steward

(*Luke 16:1-13*)

This is usually considered the most puzzling parable of all, but what men cannot make out, the divine Mind interprets clearly, and when understood this parable is one of the wisest. The divine Mind and not the human mind wrote it and it is filled with divinely scientific reasoning

“And he [Jesus] 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. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord’s debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. 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. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. 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. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true

riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

The parable begins: "There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward." When Principle calls us to make a return as to how we are getting on (as it is always doing, for Principle is perfect and therefore always expecting perfection from us), our reckoning may be that we have been ineffective in our stewardship and have nothing to show — no fruitage, no results. We may feel that in all honesty a poor account must be given of our progress in Science and in our human relationships and activities. We may even feel so disheartened that we decide we should no longer make any effort to serve Principle.

But this steward did not adopt that sort of attitude. "Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed." He was not going to waste his energy in tilling the soil of depression, disappointment, and self-condemnation. He felt, "I'm still an individual and I can still do something for myself and I can still work in the best way I know, and that is what I am determined to do."

"I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses." What he decided to do tallies with sound commercial practice. He went to his lord's debtors and told them to reduce the amount of their debt, thereby making them his friends, and his lord commended this as astute. The latter realized that he had a steward who had used his initiative and would in future be a good manager of his affairs.

One of the essentials of good business is keeping the turnover going. If the manager of a store found that his goods were not selling and business was at a standstill, he would recognize that he would

go out of business unless he reduced his prices and caused turnover. If he did this, he would not only be commended by his principals when they saw the position, but he would also have made friends of those he had benefited, so that even if he was thrown out of that particular business, he would be taken on by people in another business, for they would know he was popular with the public they wished to serve. If this store manager said, "The price that was set on the goods is the price I've got to get," the goods would stay unsold and he would lose his job.

That is the plain business side of the story. The spiritual side of it is in line with the teachings of Jesus that if a student has set his sights too high, he is wise to moderate and reduce the demands he makes on himself to a level which is within his present ability to meet.

If a man tries to do the equivalent of walking on the water and finds that he cannot, he may get disappointed with where he is. That yields no fruit in Science except an unhappy student, who will probably soon become an angry student and may even turn on Science until he wakes up. Principle could not commend that process. But if like the steward he analyzes his own thought, he can make a sensible deal. His sense of his obligations to Principle enables him to see that he has asked too much of himself and that if he sticks to that position, he will soon be out of Science. He has no intention of just being thrown on society or the work of others, nor of tilling the soil of unrewarding human effort. By an honest assessment of his own stage of understanding, he can arrive at what is right for him in meeting his responsibilities to Principle.

"So he [the steward] called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty." Oil is a symbol of spiritual consecration, and so this is an illustration of a student realizing that in aiming for 100 per cent consecration to the spiritual alone, cutting himself off from all good human activity, he is demanding too much of himself in his present stage of understanding. Many students of Science are disappointed with themselves simply because

they have set their sights too high. They stall and may even go out of Science because they try to be perfectionists before being attuned to perfection and becoming accustomed to its atmosphere. They start off at the deep end, instead of coming to the deep end through spiritual growth. They think they are on the right track and they have plenty of heady inspiration, but the time comes when they learn that they are trying to live at a level which is above them and is not *them*. As Jesus put it, "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

The wise course therefore is to cut that 100 per cent demand by half and learn the true meaning of the coincidence of the divine with the human which the Master taught and demonstrated in his life. We read of Jesus as a boy that he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." He was not only progressing in his spiritual understanding, but also in his understanding of humanity as humanity and therefore learning how to help men and women. He was not going round with his head in the clouds, even though he had learnt the divinity of all being.

If your car is stalling on a hill, you quickly change into a lower gear. If you insist on staying in top gear, you strain the engine and then the car stalls altogether. A student of Christian Science can strain himself and finally stall if, for instance, he forces himself to study for perhaps four hours instead of saying in all honesty, "I find I can read and study for half-an-hour and enjoy it, but after that I can't take any more." The good driver changes down *before* there is any strain on the car.

It is a question of degree and quantity, not of quality. The oil in the story was still oil and was not changed to watered-down oil. The quality does not go, but the quantity which one individual can take or digest is what he needs to measure.

"Emerge gently from matter into Spirit. Think not to thwart the spiritual ultimate of all things, but come naturally into Spirit through better health and morals and as the result of spiritual growth" (S&H 485:14-17). Mrs Eddy wrote also that we should be "undisturbed by the frightened sense of any need of attempting to solve every Life-

problem in a day” (Un.5:12-13). She says too of the Christian Scientist that his “purpose must be right, though his power is temporarily limited. Perfection, the goal of existence, is not won in a moment; and regeneration leading thereto is gradual” (Mis.85:9-12).

Another important application of this parable has to do with a different extreme — becoming absorbed in human activities and worthy causes to such an extent that in our enthusiasm and sense of duty we outdistance our ability to meet the strains imposed by participation in these activities and end by being able to accomplish very little.

If we feel that we have been led into a particular activity by something in our individual nature which finds its means of expression in that direction, the devil always picks us up on the road we are walking and tries to run us out. It tries to exhaust us on the road that is right for us, but right only in proportion to our balanced intake of spiritual compensation and spiritual strength. So the solution is that we should never give undue importance to any good human activity in itself, but adopt the apparently ruthless but clear and simple rule set forth in this parable and stop allowing it to absorb all our time and thought. If we fail to do that, it loses the quality of good by the very fact that it has excluded from our thought the inflow of spiritual strength required to meet its demands. Whether our good human activity is in a business or a profession, in the home, or in some form of charitable service, we find that if we cut down our human absorption in it and give time and thought to the spiritual reasons why that particular activity exists and to the source of the intelligence and love which it entails and our ability to serve its real purpose, we shall make a far better job of it and have a far happier and more successful time. Whilst performing our work faithfully according to the basic principles involved, we shall realize that we owe to Principle everything, including our ability to fulfil the work, and therefore it is to Principle that our real devotion should be directed. This realization enables us to cut down by fifty per cent our disproportionately devotional attitude towards the job and yet perform it even better than before, because we have reserved our prime loyalty for the Principle

which gives us the ability to carry on our human activities with maximum effect.

The following paragraph in "Science and Health" emphasizes the practical advantages awaiting those who do give specific time, either through study or through individual contemplation, to ideas concerned solely with the spiritual. "The term Science, properly understood, refers only to the laws of God and to His government of the universe, inclusive of man. From this it follows that business men and cultured scholars have found that Christian Science enhances their endurance and mental powers, enlarges their perception of character, gives them acuteness and comprehensiveness and an ability to exceed their ordinary capacity. The human mind, imbued with this spiritual understanding, becomes more elastic, is capable of greater endurance, escapes somewhat from itself, and requires less repose. A knowledge of the Science of being develops the latent abilities and possibilities of man. It extends the atmosphere of thought, giving mortals access to broader and higher realms. It raises the thinker into his native air of insight and perspicacity" (S&H 128:4-19).

In one sense Jesus engaged in a life of good human activity for mankind, but he never allowed that activity to absorb him and so become out of proportion. He said, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." This is a statement which summarizes his continual experience, not just one period of his career. He was always coming forth purposefully into the world from the divine Principle of all being; but instead of staying in the world in thought, he continually left it after performing the deeds of human goodness which testified to his consecration to the source of all good, and returned to Principle for spiritual refreshment and in full acknowledgment of its allness and onliness. He understood that this human experience is a language speaking to us of divinity in all its aspects but only in the ratio that we develop the spiritual understanding through which alone we can translate that human language into the language of Spirit, which tells us unmistakably of God's omnipresence and omnipotence. Through fidelity to the spiritual we find the human scene speaking back to us

of that spiritual in constant realizations of its presence and purpose, and in consequence healing can be accomplished, as it was in Jesus' day.

And so the student should be balanced and honest in his demands on himself and give the consecration to the spiritual which he can happily fulfil, for this brings him the inspiration he longs for and also impels and enables him to do good for others in the human scene without losing the balance essential for success.

"Then said he [the steward] 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 wheat is a symbol of the bread of Truth and is used in the Bible in connection with learning and teaching. So this is an illustration of a student realizing that it is no good having or giving a sense of Science which is above the comprehension of himself or his hearers or is aloof from anything human. The ideal is put in the words of the beloved disciple John, "That which . . . our hands have handled . . . declare we unto you."

Why does the steward reduce the debt from one hundred to fourscore measures of wheat? "Fourscore" indicates that Jesus knew the importance of what is symbolized throughout the Scriptures by "four" and its multiples. Few people pause to acknowledge that all constructive reasoning follows a fourfold process, and that this was symbolized by the city foursquare in the Apocalypse with its four equal sides. If we take the word "city" as symbolic of the active reasoning which goes on continually in consciousness, we discover that a fourfold process is clearly discernible, along whatever line such reasoning is specifically directed. To illustrate: we start with *seeking* answers. This leads us to the *finding* of certain answers. We then pursue those answers by *using* them in practice; and this demonstration of the enlightenment which has come to us brings us to a *realization* of its timeless scientific basis. We can then see that our seeking is awakened by what the Bible calls the *Word* and that "In the beginning was the Word," the forever creative Principle; that our finding comes about because of the *Christ*, "the true idea voicing good, the divine message from God to men speaking to the human consciousness"

(S&H 332:9-11), that idea and message which Jesus expressed so consistently that he was called Jesus Christ; that our using demonstrates the impelling power of *Christianity*, since true Christianity is the acceptance and practice of Christ-ideas; and that our realization points to the eternal *Science* which the whole fulfilled activity illustrates. We can then begin to comprehend why it was revealed to Mrs Eddy that the four sides of the city foursquare in Revelation correspond to the Word, Christ, Christianity, and Science. Then in turn we begin to see why the "one hundred" of the perfection of Principle in its own realm has to be reduced for human comprehension to the "four-score," this fourfold activity of thought which makes that perfection understandable and demonstrable in our own experience. John saw the holy city as "coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" — that is, reasoning based on the perfection of Principle coming down to a language not only understandable and acceptable by mankind, but also filled with the expectancy of joy, care, and fruitage.

"The Christlike understanding of scientific being and divine healing includes a perfect Principle and idea, — perfect God and perfect man, — as the basis of thought and demonstration" (S&H 259:11-14), but the basis of the thought and demonstration process must be developed by the individual in order to avoid a blind worship without demonstrated understanding. So here Jesus shows that if our sense of spiritual perfection is reduced to an approach whereby the emphasis is on the fourfold activity of the spiritual (represented by the fourscore measures), we realize that for us and for all mankind the call of the hundred per cent perfection of Principle operates in consciousness in a fourfold manner comprehensible right where we are. The individual first feels the pull of perfection as he seeks for it, because that seeking is impelled by the Word of revelation itself. He then discovers that as soon as he seeks, he is led to measures of true finding — he feels the Christ operating in consciousness, bringing enlightenment and certainty. This spiritualization and Christianization of thought rouses him to use in his life-experience what he has found, in a manner beneficial to that experience. All this then ushers



him into a recognition of what the hundred per cent perfection of the Science of being is and *how* it operates in practical realizations for him in that fourfold activity which John the Revelator symbolized in the city foursquare.

John saw the holy city as coming down from God out of the heaven of the hundred measures of divine perfection and appearing to men in a way which makes that perfection relevant to their experience. Thus the Word of revelation shows each of us the Christ of our understanding of it, and this develops into our discovering it everywhere in the Christianity indicated by the third side of the city, which leads in turn to a fuller and better realization of the presence of the one Being in its Science, that Science having been indicated in the previous movements of thought. Through that "fourscore" comprehensible-to-thought method of divinity Science now appears as a practical proposition whereby we are enabled to know that "as in heaven [the hundred measures], so on earth" God is "omnipotent, supreme" (S&H 17:3). It was this which led to the commendation which the steward received, and it is this method of reduction from a whole perfection to an understanding of how it operates in our consciousness which the Revelator and later Mrs Eddy brought to mankind. That is why she was inspired to write, "Divine metaphysics is now reduced to a system, to a form comprehensible by and adapted to the thought of the age in which we live" (S&H 146:31-1).

To take a simple example: we are sometimes amazed at the way in which the young people of our generation attain a house for their homing in this age of what appears to be tremendous expense. A little reflection will show us that the same process taking possession of human reason has had similar results through all history. There was a time when wages were very low in comparison with today and the price of a house also very small by present standards, but the gap between the two was similar and therefore the same formidable picture presented itself to human thought as it does today, and yet then as now the intelligent process derived from divinity and expressed by humanity brought the answers. The individuals concerned *sought* means whereby to attain the end which was their ideal; through

seeking they *found* the possibilities available to them; and through accepting what they had found they were guided into the *use* of those possibilities in practical application or demonstration; and this naturally led them to *being* in possession of and actually living within the walls of their idea<sup>1</sup> aware of a rounded-out unfolding of their original desire for a home of their own. This illustration in relation to home-building applies in all walks of life and especially to our instinctive longing to find ourselves within the walls of what John called the holy city, which for us means a realization and complete certainty that here and now our whole experience is embraced in the activity of the one and only Being and presence known to us as God. The process derived from the perfection of Being has always and always will operate in the experience of man through what is termed the city foursquare — that is, through seeking, finding, using, and thereby not only realizing the presence of good in immediate experience, but also feeling something of the Science which impels the whole unfolding from the purposefulness of seeking and flowing right through to fulfillment. The ultimate for us all is the realization to which the Mars Hill orator pointed when he said, “Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you ... for in Him we live, and move, and have our being.”

Jesus was showing that instead of trying to talk over the heads of other people or talking to ourselves above our real understanding, we should bring it all down to reasoning which is still based on Spirit and spirituality, but understandable in its practical application both by ourselves and by anyone listening. He is making it plain that everything stalls when we try to keep reason at heights above the level where it is reasonable to ourselves and our listeners. The wise steward of spiritual things immediately recognizes this and through inspiration reduces what he is saying to the appropriate level.

When we try to think out on a basis of human cleverness how to reduce something in Science so that it is understandable by a particular individual, we ourselves may have a satisfied feeling and the person may even nod in agreement but still may not really be touched. We cannot reduce Science to human apprehension except

through the touch of Love which gives us a genuine feeling for the individual, as when we feel for a child and then the language in which to convey a spiritual truth spontaneously comes to us. The love we feel awakens us to the adaptability of Love and makes us responsive to intelligence. Love liberates our thought and speech and leads to the liberation of the thought of the other individual. "Love for God and man is the true incentive in both healing and teaching. Love inspires, illumines, designates, and leads the way. Right motives give pinions to thought, and strength and freedom to speech and action" (S&H 454:17-21).

If we are a faithful steward, we are always allowing percentages of pure Science in the ratio of the understanding which we discern in our friend or ourselves. We do not bulldoze on with something that is 100 per cent true but hits a brick wall of non-comprehension and bounces back. If we see that what we are saying is going way above the heads of our listeners, they as well as we are losing out in response to Principle; and we are not helping them because we are not giving them the stepping-stones to Truth. We are wise at that point if we quickly admit that we have set our sights too high and we resolve to share what we know that we do know and have seen demonstrated; in that way Science becomes understandable to our hearers and there is a mutually happifying experience.

When someone says, "I can't understand all this deep Science; I admit it must be deep, but I can't understand it," his first inclination may be to give it all up. But he will make good progress if instead of this he recognizes that what he needs to see is the practicality of the fact of infinite Mind, for instance, and realizes something of the truth of intelligence in his daily life; and so on with the other synonymous terms for God. The "platoons of Christian Science" must be "thoroughly drilled in the plainer manual of their spiritual armament" (Un.6:25-27) before addressing themselves to deeper questions.

We can be carried away with the inspiration of a big picture in Science, but we are wise if we do not leave it at that and instead substantiate our inspiration through the spiritual reasoning which leads to spiritual understanding. "Honesty is spiritual power" (S&H

453:16), and we are not being honest if we are getting nowhere by merely repeating statements about man being spiritual and perfect without challenging ourselves as to what those statements mean to us according to our highest present understanding. This was Jacob's experience as he progressed Spiritward; he rested his head on the "stones" of what he honestly did understand of the calculus of reality. (Genesis 28:11.) As he rested, he had that wonderful vision of a ladder reaching from earth to heaven with the angels of God ascending and descending on it. He saw and felt that the honest upreaching of spiritual sense would always be met by a down-embracing from Principle.

In our study of the spiritual it is helpful to bring down what we read to an illustration which makes it real to us. For instance, the three words "God is Love" perpetually need translating to our present apprehension, even though that apprehension will constantly rise.

To take another instance: the statement "Nothing ails you" is 100 per cent true, but to buffet an invalid with that "superficial and cold assertion" is neither Christian nor scientific. (See S&H 460:14-23.) The statement must be reduced to the "fourscore" of language which explains why it is true, so that it becomes acceptable and therefore full of healing.

There is no loss and no condescension in this process of reduction, because what we gain is not only the ear of our listener but also an increase in our own understanding. It can be said that a man's mastery of a subject is in proportion to his ability to express it in simple language.

Mrs Eddy demonstrates the importance of this reducing when she says, as we have seen, "Divine metaphysics is now reduced to a system, to a form comprehensible by and adapted to the thought of the age in which we live," and also when she states, "John saw the human and divine coincidence, shown in the man Jesus, as divinity embracing humanity in Life and its demonstration, — reducing to human perception and understanding the Life which is God" (S&H 561:16-20).

Jesus was the great exemplifier of this process of translating the divine down to a language, whether symbolic or direct, which was logical and understandable to his hearers. Again and again he used the language of reason rightly directed, based on the particular living experience of his audience, whether this had to do with farming, the business world, or anything else. He appealed to men through truths which were obvious to them in their own sphere and thereby won a hearing for the spiritual point he was making. All his parables illustrate this.

He continually referred to the spiritual ultimate, as when he said, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." But he also instructed men continually in how to attain to a fruitful harvest — for instance, in the warnings he gave in the parables of the sower and of the wheat and the tares. In other words, he did not leave men only with the scientific ultimate, so that they would simply say, "Well, there is no need for any improvement in our thinking because the harvest is already white without any process." That was the scientific fact, but he showed them how to attain it by avoiding the snares and deviations of human reasoning and human absorption of time (as in his parable of the sower) and by not giving too much attention to the tares or evils of this world other than to see that only by consecration to the harvest of the perfection of man here and now can they be dealt with and bound into their native nothingness (as in his parable of the wheat and tares). All that is symbolized in this parable of the astute steward by the one hundred per cent of the scientific ultimate, which was certainly presented to men by the Master, and the "fourscore" of the means and methods of attaining it, which he took care to make clear also. Mrs Eddy writes of the simplicity and the fidelity with which he ministered "to the spiritual needs of all who placed themselves under his care, always leading them into the divine order, under the sway of his own perfect understanding" (Ret.91:18-20). He did not set them standards too high for them.

A man loses touch with his students if he tells them things for

which their thought is not prepared. Jesus did not make that mistake. He himself carried out what he taught in this parable, for he said to his disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." In the story the steward saw his mistake and rectified it, but the Master foresaw the danger and never made the mistake. He did not ask of the disciples the standard which he did demand of himself. He took only his three most proficient students with him on the occasion of the transfiguration (see Mark 9:2).

In John, Chapter 16:16-29, we have an instance of the disciples not understanding what Jesus was trying to tell them about his forthcoming crucifixion and resurrection. Some of them said amongst themselves, "we cannot tell what he saith." Immediately he became aware of this puzzlement, he put what he wanted to say to them in terms which would make it simpler for them, and after this they declared, "now speakest thou plainly." Mrs Eddy explains that Jesus accommodated himself to "immature ideas of spiritual power, — for spirituality was possessed only in a limited degree even by his disciples" (S&H 313:26-28).

John tells us that "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" — not just the truth but also grace, the ability to accommodate himself to the atmosphere in which he found himself so that the truth would be defined in a way that made it acceptable. Mrs Eddy gives an enlightening interpretation of that line in the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread" in these words: "Give us grace for to-day; feed the famished affections" (S&H 17:5). Anyone who has developed his innate ability to express grace, to adapt himself to his present position, will always experience that he is fed according to the needs of that hour; this is true whether it is a question of human feeding through supply in particular directions or of divine feeding through being given the specifically satisfying ideas in their exactly right amount in order to find the situation conforming to the Principle which is Love.

"And the lord commended the unjust [dishonest — New English Bible] steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." If

through our being dishonest about our present capacity and therefore unjust to ourselves we have set our sights too high and displayed “a zeal . . . not according to knowledge,” as Paul puts it, but we are quick to lower them, Principle will approve this, because the effect on our own lives and on the impression we make on others will be such that it will glorify Principle. A stalled theologian aiming at a perfection which truly does exist, but to which he has not yet attained through a real humility, is no good to anyone. The “children of light” may be too idealistic and not as practical as the “children of this world.” If a man follows the highest path he can take in all honesty, it will lead him to the spiritual in the best way for him.

“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.” If we do not closet ourselves in a convent of good, but are friendly towards the ways of ordinary good people, we shall see how they respond to the spiritual in their own sphere — responding to intelligence, for instance — and so although we shall not be able to go along with them all the way, we shall nevertheless learn from them and be able to make use of what we have learnt to improve our own service to the spiritual, which is our real master.

Jesus was called “a friend of publicans and sinners,” and so he must have watched them and learned from them. For example, he admired the publican or tax-collector Zacchaeus for not letting his smallness of stature prevent him from seeing Jesus as he passed by. Zacchaeus climbed a tree, which was symbolic of his thought being raised above its normal level, so that he saw and appreciated the man who radiated the consciousness of Principle which had appealed to him. Then, because he had been active and alert in making a success of his business according to his own standards, he was active and alert enough to see that he had been mistaken in some aspects and should at once set this right. The practice of quickly seeing where he was making mistakes in his business and correcting them promptly had made him prosperous, and that practice had furnished him with the necessary mental pliability to enable him not only to see his mistaken methods of getting money when measured against the teach-

ings of the Master, but also to put things right immediately and publicly. The public declaration meant that it could not be just a thing of words alone or of temporary excitement. When he saw the value of rightness, he went straight for it. (See Luke 19:1-10.)

The world was Jesus' textbook and he brought to it the lens of Science by which to read it. That lens of Science translated it to him into ideas of God, and the lens was his admission that Principle is All-in-all and therefore we must be able to find that it is All-in-all.

He made friends of "the mammon of unrighteousness" in the sense that he made friends with the ideas which emerged for *him* in watching those who served mammon. He saw that Principle was still operating even amongst the servants of "the mammon of unrighteousness" because men follow their instinct that they are entitled to good and have no need to lose it. And so although he did not go along with Pharisaical doctrines, he was able to point out to the Pharisees when they were ready to accuse him of breaking the law (by healing on the sabbath the man with the withered hand) that even they responded to Principle, in spite of the fact that doing so meant contravening the rabbinical law forbidding doing anything at all on the sabbath. He told them what he must often have observed — that they broke this law themselves when one of their sheep fell into a ditch on the sabbath; commercial expediency demanded that they should rescue it that same day. He saw in their practice (as distinct from their doctrines) their admission that good is available at all times, without reference to the day of the week, and in that way he was their friend, even if they did not recognize this. (See Matthew 12:9-14.)

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." If we use common sense and reason sensibly according to the conditions presented to us (in our home, in our business, or anywhere else) and we cut down the demands we make on ourselves in line with what we honestly feel we can accomplish properly, then we shall also use common sense in that which is more important, and so all our responses to Principle will be right and wise.



“If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own?” In other words, if you cannot be a good business man with a store you manage for shareholders, or if you do not conduct yourself sensibly in ordinary human affairs, you will not deal well with your affairs in the realm of the spiritual; you will not have enough common sense to see where you are setting your sights too high in Science and modify them accordingly, for what men call common sense, if it be true common sense, is the realization given to man through Science.

“No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Jesus is making it quite clear that we cannot serve the spiritual and the material (as such), but he is also showing us that in what we term the material world there are such signs of intelligence, honesty, and love that through recognizing this, thought is led to a position where matter as matter disappears; however, as a language telling us that in fact only the spiritual exists it does provide confirmation of this truth of Spirit’s onliness when we use correctly our powers of observation. Jesus’ so-called material world spoke to him of the spiritual and only world with such clarity that he was able to restore that material or symbolic world to its rightful expression of the spiritual, which expression might have become distorted to those looking at it through the eyes of ignorance.

An honest student will learn so much from the world around him that finally he will realize that it is not a material world at all, but a spiritual world talking to him in language which he can understand. This realization must come to everyone, for we cannot get rid of matter as matter, but through developed spiritual discernment we find that it melts into disappearance to consciousness and individual experience in the ratio that its spiritual purpose unfolds to our understanding.

We cannot serve God and mammon, but we can serve God through

being practical according to the ways of mammon — either in business or in dealing with ourselves and the capacity of our understanding — by sticking to what we really know and know that we know and letting it develop naturally, instead of trying to know what we do not understand or could not explain to someone else.

Common sense is really responsiveness to Principle. “Science would have no conflict with Life or common sense, if this sense were consistently sensible” (Mis.105:12-13). If we are guided by human pride, it drives us on regardless of the effect on ourselves and others. If we are guided by Principle, we quickly see how to cut down the demands on ourselves to the point where we can fulfil them happily and without strain. In this manner we learn how to be real servants of Principle, operating with Principle’s full approval and praise.

Anyone who like the steward acknowledges the present human limits of his capacity and arrives at a sensible compromise experiences not only release from strain, but also that most desirable thing of all — a full allowance to the mandate of the Principle which has fashioned him for where he is and therefore defines the capacity whereby he will fulfil his role completely.

It is wise to bear in mind continually that in this wonderful parable, which shows us how to reduce the divine perfection to our understanding in a manner which is really divine for *us*, it was only the quantity and not the quality of both the oil and the wheat which was reduced. In other words, we must never allow ourselves to depart from that statement, “all is Spirit and spiritual” (S&H 331:24-25) by paying tribute to matter as being real in any degree whatever, but we can so learn from the activity apparent to the senses as they reach for Soul in the so-called realm of matter that finally as matter it has no substance to us at all, but serves only to show us clearly that all *is* Spirit and spiritual.

The following words from “Science and Health” embrace what Jesus was bringing out in this parable: “The divine demand, ‘Be ye therefore perfect,’ is scientific, and the human footsteps leading to perfection are indispensable ... Imperfect mortals grasp the ultimate

of spiritual perfection slowly; but to *begin* aright and to continue the strife of demonstrating the great problem of being, is doing much. During the sensual ages, absolute Christian Science may not be achieved prior to the change called death, for we have not the power to demonstrate what we do not understand. But the human self must be evangelized. This task God demands us to accept lovingly to-day, and to abandon so fast as practical the material, and to work out the spiritual which determines the outward and actual" (253:32-2; 254:12-23).

Mrs Eddy wrote also, "The discoverer of Christian Science finds the path less difficult when she has the high goal always before her thoughts, than when she counts her footsteps in endeavoring to reach it" (S&H 426:5-8). Neither Jesus nor Mrs Eddy ever ignored the footsteps, but the ideal was always in the forefront of their thought.