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mechanical,' we are apt to forget the extent to which the successful functioning of social life in its various departments depends on certain relevant activities being carried out with machine-like precision; a severe snowstorm soon convinces us of this.

Progress consists of selfhood exercising an increasing dominance over not only the material but also the social environment. In our experience, material mechanism is an expression of the activity of mind; and when we use the word mechanism we are thinking not only of the manufacture of the requisite constituents, but also of their orderly arrangement. And now we come to the point.

The more complicated the mechanism, whether material or social, and the more successfully coordinated the parts in their joint working, the more effectively is the personality behind the mechanism *concealed* from any observer whose mental capacity is of a much lower order, so that he is accustomed to simpler instruments or to none at all. In other words, if mind is dominant in the universe, the indispensable instrument of its effectiveness is an automatic mechanism which hides the agent from all but the initiated.

The word 'design' is ambiguous. In the sense in which the artist uses the word, the design is more or less obvious, and it is embodied in a finished product. But Dr. TURNER is thinking of 'design' in a larger sense: of a mechanism that solves a simple problem only to turn to a more difficult problem, of a mechanism which, indeed, implies the dominance of mind, but of mind with an inherent capacity to expand and transcend itself at every stage. This is the principle of 'automatic mechanism,' markedly distinct from all the earlier arguments from design.

Thus, instead of the matter of the materialist, matter dominated by physical necessity and invariable causal sequence that are antithetic to mind, what we find is matter that has been elevated by mind, and by mind alone, to its own superior level, thus providing mind with the sole means by which it can achieve its freely determined purposes. Matter apart from mind is as helpless as mind apart from matter.

The Parable of the Unjust Steward.

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By common consent the most difficult of all the parables is that generally known as 'The Unjust Steward' (Lk $16^{1ff.}$). Trench tells us that Schreiter, in a work entirely devoted to the parables, gave an 'appalling list' of explanations. Beginning with Trench, commentators, generally speaking (*e.g.* Jülicher, Bruce, Goebel, J. Weiss, Adeney, Lonsdale Ragg, Klostermann, and Easton), and with certain shades of difference, regard the Parable as teaching that the followers of Jesus must show in spiritual matters the same long-sightedness which enabled the steward to escape from his difficulties, and as inculcating the generous distribution of wealth with a view to a good reception in the next world. Some of them are manifestly uneasy at finding Jesus using an unsuccessful business man and a cheat to point a moral that looks uncommonly like sheer worldly wisdom, and J. Weiss makes the interesting suggestion that the story was taken from real life, and in relation to it Jesus half-ironically remarked: 'Take an example by this man.' The other rock on which all such explanations come to grief is that the money the steward used so generously was not his own money.

Modern criticism has delivered us from the necessity of supposing that this Parable was spoken at the same time as, or has any logical connexion with, the teaching that precedes and follows. We can easily see why Luke, or the tradition or document he followed, put it where it is. The prodigal made

his father's money fly, and the steward made his master's money fly (the same verb is used in both cases). When things came to the worst, the prodigal went home; the steward had no home to go to and must rack his brains to get one. The story of 'Dives and Lazarus' which follows, begins with the same words as the story of the steward: Dives too was a spendthrift, but he spent all his money on himself.

There seems to have been general agreement that the steward was set up as a model for our imitation, the only question being in what respect we are to imitate a character so objectionable. But if Jesus felt Himself at liberty to ask His followers to take example by a rascal, and that, be it noted, in respect of a selfish and dishonest prudence, why have we no other example of it? (The commentators quote: 'Be wise as serpents'!). The wicked vine-dressers, the five thoughtless bridesmaids, and the man with the one talent are not held up as models; why then the steward? To this it is replied that in v.[9], Jesus calls on His disciples to imitate him ('Make for yourselves friends with unrighteous mammon'). The verse is certainly puzzling; but, in the first place, we note that Jesus was capable of using irony ('Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers' [Mt 23^{32}]), and that there is irony here is confirmed by the curious phrase 'eternal tents.' Was not the tent the very symbol of the temporary? The phrase then may mean: 'The homes you will secure for yourselves in the other world by being generous with your ill-gotten gains will have only the eternity of tents.'

In the second place, we note that v.[9], which has usually been taken to express the moral of the story, is only one of several lessons which Luke finds in it. Luke is fond of explaining the teaching of the parables he records, and in this one he finds these lessons: (1) Worldly men show more prudence in dealing with their kind than the children of light. (2) 'Make friends for yourselves with "unrighteous money"' (a phrase used elsewhere and apparently meaning, not money unjustly acquired, but, as we should say, 'filthy lucre.' Could Jesus speak of money in that way?). (3) A man trustworthy in a trifle will be trustworthy in a big affair; the converse is also true, and if you cannot be trusted with 'filthy lucre,' who will commit to your keeping genuine (wealth)? (4) You may be a slave of God or of Mammon, but not of both; you must choose. (5) Luke also suggests that there was a certain disparagement of money; for example, in the phrases 'Mammon of unrighteousness' and 'allotrion' (money that is no part of one's true nature).

Is not the obvious inference from all this that, by the time Luke wrote, people were just as much puzzled by the Parable as we are to-day, and that various sayings of Jesus had become attached to it as its interpretation? (The second and fourth lessons have parallels in Lk 19^{17} and Mt 6^{24}). We suggest, then, that the true exegesis is in the line of Luke's third and fourth lessons, that the steward is held up not as a model but as a warning, as an illustration of one to whom a trust has been committed and who evades his difficulties by lowering his master's claims.

The Temptations of the Christian Steward in the Early Church.

In the early centuries the principle involved in this Parable proved to be of supreme importance. The Christians found themselves at first a tiny body of people all but swallowed up by the surrounding mass of heathenism; and although their numbers rapidly increased, generations passed before they were numerically formidable. They differed from their neighbours in their creed, their worship, their outlook on life, and the type of character for which they stood. The element of intolerance in Christianity made itself felt right from the very beginning. 'Judge whether we are to listen to God or to you.' 'They have another emperor, Jesus.' First Corinthians exemplifies the way in which from the first Christianity worked as a separatist force.

As time went on and the new religion spread, such questions became more complicated and far-reaching. (The relevant facts are given in convenient form in Harnack's *Expansion of Christianity*, translated by Moffatt, and in *The Early Church and the World*, by C. J. Cadoux.) The work of Jesus was in no sense a campaign against idolatry, or indeed against heathenism; but from the time the religion He founded entered the Gentile world, the Christians put in the very fore-front of their teaching that God is Spirit and that God is One. Then, as now, idolatry did not confine itself to a compartment of life that might be labelled religious; it insinuated itself into social life and into the occupations by which men earned their bread, and some felt that the only way to keep their garments clean was to hold aloof altogether from those outside the Church.

Not only guild feasts and dinners held in temples,

but marriages and the coming-of-age ceremony were closely associated with idolatrous rites: might a Christian accept an invitation to such? In the circus performances which were the football matches of those days, idolatry played an essential part: could a Christian be an actor or even a spectator? A magistrate or an army officer had to conduct sacrifices, while even the private soldier became involved in the sacrificial ceremonies: did that close to the Christian political and military service? Having to read with his pupils heathen literature and to explain to them heathen mythology and idolatrous customs, the schoolmaster was placed in an ambiguous position. There were, again, many trades—such as that of incense-seller, builder, or engraver—which might at any time involve their workmen, wittingly or unwittingly, in the service of idols, heathen temples, or sacrifices.

If the Christians felt that the worship of inanimate objects was incompatible with a Christian profession, no less strong was their antipathy to a living idol in the shape of the reigning emperor. Round this point centred one of the earliest and most persistent struggles between the Christians and the State. We hear the echoes of it from the pages of the New Testament; persecution for refusal to comply with imperial orders on the Kaiser-kult was bitter in the third century and continued into the fourth.

Nor was it by any means the case that aversion to idolatry was responsible for all the conscientious scruples that in the early centuries tended to separate Christian from non-Christian. Humanitarian feeling had much to do with the refusal to patronize gladiatorial shows or to follow the calling of a civil magistrate or military officer, liable as these were in their capacity as judges to have to sentence a fellow-creature to punishment, torture, or death. The difficulty about oaths and Christian unwillingness to use the heathen law-courts were also factors in the separation; while on all questions connected with marriage and the relation of the sexes Christians from the beginning set up the highest standard.

It is characteristic that the discussion of such questions played so large a part in the history of the early Church. From the first it was realized in the most vital way that a spiritual worship and a life of lofty moral purity were of the essence of the faith. If the Master had written a hundred, then, whatever pain or shame or loss might be involved, though the refusal might mean torture or death, the steward must not lower his Master's claims to eighty or fifty. Then, as now, there were those who said, 'But we must live'; Tertullian replied, 'Faith has no fear of starving.' On a review of the whole period we may say that, speaking generally, where the requirements of the faith were unambiguous, the Christians responded to them with a wonderful loyalty. Under the stress of temptation individuals, and many of them, might fall below the standards of the Church. By various devices, for example, many escaped martyrdom for refusal to worship the Emperor. Some actually fulfilled the idolatrous requirement; others managed to procure certificates to the effect that they had worshipped when, in fact, they had not done so; some found safety in flight; others worshipped by proxy, through their slaves. But, however much individuals might fail to reach the standard, the standard remained.

A danger, however, appeared from two sides. On the one hand, in an enthusiasm of self-sacrificing zeal, some tended to carry the rigour of the spiritual and ethical demands of Christianity beyond the bounds of reason. Where the Master's bills said a hundred, they wrote a hundred and fifty. Thus, during a period of persecution, we hear of all the Christians in a place in Asia Minor voluntarily presenting themselves before the governor, who executed a few of them and dismissed the rest with the words: 'Wretches, if you wish to die, ye have precipices and halters.' The emphasis on sexual purity was exaggerated into a glorification of celibacy and virginity, sometimes into an unnatural and even cruel ignoring of family ties. There was a tendency, also, to hold aloof from politics, from trade and commerce, and even from social intercourse with the world outside of the Church. The emergence of demands which, for the average man or woman, were all but impossible of fulfilment, led in turn to the unfortunate distinction which Eusebius notices between what we may call 'first class' and 'second class' Christians, those who lived the higher 'religious' life and the others who married, followed secular occupations, and lived the 'lower' life in the world.

As time went on, as Christian standards became firmly entrenched and the Church realized the actual conditions in which the Christian life has to be lived, a working compromise was reached. Certain things were definitely wrong; on the other hand, we can attain an ideal purity only by leaving the world altogether. A self-centred anxiety for the spotless

whiteness of our own garments engenders anti-social tendencies which are foreign to the genius of our religion; it does not reflect the mind of Jesus who was never afraid of touching pitch, and is hardly compatible with the missionary spirit which flourished so strongly in the early Christian generations.

One last remark on this period is very relevant to a study of the Parable. When Church leaders not only showed a Christian consideration for those who found the demands of their religion too rigorous, but actually sought to smooth the pathway to acceptance of the gospel by an unworthy lowering of its claims, there was a heavy price to pay. As Harnack has shown, the adoption from the third century onwards of semi-divine saints and angels, of local cults and holy places, of noisy annual festivals, and of relics and bones of saints as objects of reverence and instruments of healing, was really a reversion to paganism which has permanently degraded Christianity in the theory and practice of large sections of its followers. The classic example of lowering the standard to lighten the load alike of the leaders and of the rank and file was the introduction of the system of indulgences, which instituted what has been aptly called a tariff for sin.

The Present Problem of the Christian Steward.

It is very tempting to follow out the teaching of this Parable in its application to the questions that arise in the young Churches of our own day, but considerations of space forbid. In some important respects the situation of the Christian in the Western world to-day is different from that which obtained in the early centuries. There is no longer the sharp-cut 'either-or,' 'this or that, but not both.' We are living in countries where the civilization in theory, and to a considerable extent even in practice, is based on Christian principle. Yet every one who tries to take a dispassionate view of the situation must be seriously perturbed by the extent to which life even in the Christian West seems to demand one long series of compromises with the Christian standard. A powerful passage of Dr. Herbert Gray's *As Tommy Sees Us* reads like a commentary on 'The Dishonest Steward.' His soldier friends, he tells us, just said quite bluntly: 'In business you can't be Christian.' 'In the modern competitive scramble a man who took Christ's teaching seriously and honestly could not exist.' 'They did not feel it was all so very bad, but they were quite clear it was not Christian, and therefore for them Christianity was an impossible religion.' In other words, they themselves, however reluctantly, were quite prepared to abate twenty or fifty per cent. of the demands of Christian morality, but they were honest enough to call what they were doing by its right name.

In *Stones of Stumbling*, Mr. Tillyard, who had himself been in business, gave it as his conviction that 'no Christian has ever been engaged for long in a competitive business . . . without doing many things he would have liked not to do. He may desire to love his neighbour as himself, but he dwells in the midst of people who are out to do the best they can for themselves, and he must do as they do or go under.' No man with any Christian feeling will consent to make his living by pandering to the lower forms of sensual pleasure; but are there not many men who think themselves Christian and who yet build up businesses that flourish largely through their appeal to passions hardly more respectable, to vanity, for example, and the love of vulgar display, and who constantly not only permit but encourage people to purchase goods which they do not need and cannot afford? Are there not many, too, who acknowledge at least to themselves the absence of brotherliness in their treatment alike of their dependents and their public, but who honestly believe that the conditions of trade make it imperative for them to ignore considerations of mercy or even of justice and honesty?

As for politics, the intelligent voter is as well aware as the statesman that the statecraft even of those politicians who are enthusiasts for righteousness consists largely in accommodating the moral progress of the State to the pace of the average citizen. As Mr. Hodgkin says in *The Christian Revolution*: 'Its legislation is for men as they are, or seem to the politician to be, rather than for men as they may become, or seem to the Christ-eyes to be.' Any who are inclined to think that the temptation of the Dishonest Steward is one with which the Christian in the West has no longer seriously to reckon, should weigh the words of Dr. C. J. Cadoux: 'The spirit of the world has eaten deeply into the vitals of the Christian commonwealth, so much so that the charge can be made, not justifiably indeed, but at least without obvious absurdity, that the average moral life within the Church is little higher, if at all, than the average moral life without, that

the Church is as much the home of lazy reactionism and selfishness as it is of idealism and progress.' Is the proportion of Christians who feel the challenge of the vice, misery, and abject poverty of so many of their fellow-citizens much greater than that of those who, before the days of emancipation, felt the lot of the slaves a perpetual reproach?

The Church has her own peculiar problems: one of them is that of tainted money. Of the Chinese Christian, Pastor Hsi, we are told that money given for the work he did not hesitate to reject if he felt that the blessing of God did not go with it. He was of those who believe that the axiom of our arithmetic books, 'One dollar has the same value as another,' does not hold good in the things of God. To have God's blessing, he said, money must be given with a pure heart and a willing mind. A few years ago the authorities of a Church in the East received a handsome subscription from the local turf-club for the benefit of the poor. The gift was at first accepted, but on the development of an unexpected sensitiveness in the public conscience was finally refused. Yet in this sphere also, ideal purity is not even possible except within strict limits. Church balances kept in a bank may be employed to finance a distillery or a firm of swindlers.

The leaders of the Church are stewards of God in other than financial matters. They are defenders of the faith, not only of the faith once delivered to the saints, but of the new truth that God makes known to each generation. The very large company of 'believers,' who conceive that loyalty to a creed delivered once for all is the primary duty of a Christian, is apt to resent the idea that revelation is progressive. The stewards of the mysteries of God know very well that they can simplify their own task by placating the conservatives and keeping their own counsel about any new light they may themselves have received. Has it not at times been regarded even as a virtue in an ecclesiastic to be a 'safe' rather than an honest man? It is for every preacher, teacher, and Church leader to examine himself how far he has been a faithful steward.

What message, then, has the Parable for those of us who have been put into any kind of position of leadership in the Christian community? In the first place, on this subject as on all others, Pharisaic self-satisfaction and condemnation of others are out of place; to our own Master we stand or fall. Yet it is idle to minimize the reality of the danger or the seriousness of the temptation. Self-respect requires that we do not rest content with any comfort secured by acquiescing in a second-best.

The application of the Parable to life demands earnest thought and fearless facing of the situation. In our age the difficulty is increased by the extent to which moral responsibility has been socialized. Arrangements are made for us by our joint-stock company, our trade union, our municipality, our Church; our individual responsibility almost seems so small as to be negligible. Yet however helpless each one of us may seem to be, our stewardship not only remains but can be in some measure discharged. It is always in our power to strive to retain a conscience keenly alive to the difference between what is and what ought to be, and to throw ourselves into the work of trying to Christianize the social sentiment that dictates so much of our policy. There are times, too—we can learn to recognize them, and perhaps they come oftener than we think—when it is unmanly to take shelter behind the corporate conscience and the customs of our society. It is ours, too, to guard against the insidious danger, the temptation especially of middle life, of making props of the words 'impracticable' and 'impossible,' of believing that an unworthy compromise with wrong is the utmost that even the Church of God can ever hope to achieve.

Literature.

LORD HALDANE ON EXPERIENCE.

ANYTHING Lord Haldane writes is certain to be received and read with respect due to his high position in the world of thought. He is not an easy writer to follow. When his Gifford Lectures on 'The Pathway to Reality' appeared, they affected one reader much as Browning's first volume affected a well-known literary man. Indeed that work might claim to be one of the most difficult to read among modern philosophical essays. And so when we read on the 'jacket' of