

August 27, 2007 - Subject: Christ Jesus.

Dear Friends: Mary Baker Eddy gave her students 26 subjects for weekly Bible Lessons, to be covered twice yearly. Flowing through the year in her order of the subjects, we hereby present fresh views of each one by outstanding Christian Scientists. In this way, we hope to partake with you of new unfoldments of her infinite revelation.

Our selection this week is from a series of Pamphlets entitled "without a parable... by Clifford Stamp and Rosalie Maas.

The hidden treasure

(Matthew 13:44)

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

The field is the world, as Jesus said in his explanation of the parable of the wheat and tares, and the treasure hidden in that field is Principle expressed in its various aspects, such as Life, Truth, and Love.

We find our tools, our lens, our eyes for discerning that treasure in the sanctuary of our communion with Principle, where we learn from Principle, but we find the treasure in the field. Jesus had the means, the tools, and the spiritual discernment, but it was in the field that he had the joy of it - in the widow and her mite, in the centurion, in the Syro-Phoenician woman, in Peter and the other disciples, in the children. All that was wonderful to him. His whole world was alive with his God, everywhere - in the lilies of the field, the sparrow, everything.

It was wonderful to him as he watched the widow casting in her mite, and he exclaimed to the disciples that she had "cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury" (see Mark 12:41-44). He saw that the treasure she had was an abandonment of self and selfishness in laying her "earthly all on the altar of divine Science" (S&H 55:23-24). Her treasure was her natural and thorough responsiveness to that Principle which is always giving all to man. No principle anywhere retains or withholds one iota of good from man, but supplies it with unlimited abundance. So the Master saw not just a wonderful woman, but a wonderful expression of Principle - not just someone who had given up all she had in worldly coinage, but someone who had allowed Principle's largesse to flow through her. She had not given up anything, but had responded in a manner, which gave her all, for she became Principle's expression of itself; and this is the only true man.

The Master saw too the magnificence of the centurion. (See Luke 7:1-10.) This man had recognized that he (Jesus) was operating under a power, which could not be challenged, just as he himself operated when he issued orders to his soldiers with the same expectancy of unquestioning obedience. The centurion gave orders not in order to contend with any opposition, but in full expectancy of an acquiescence, which spelt out harmony and order in his own sphere of action. He lived in a realm of particular symbols and he saw that Jesus lived and moved and had his being in a higher realm of natural spiritual goodness. And so Jesus “marveled” at him, and said, “I have not’ found so great faith [so clear an understanding of reality and what it is all about], no, not in Israel.”

Again, in the Syro-Phoenician woman he saw not only a dauntless humility, but a consciousness convinced that nothing could separate it from the reception and expression of Truth. When she first cried out to him for help for her daughter, who was “grievously vexed with a devil,” Jesus answered her not a word. When he did answer, because his disciples wanted her out of the way on account of her continual calling out, he said, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Yet she came and knelt at his feet, entreating him, “Lord, help me.” His reply to this was, “It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and cast it to dogs,” to which she responded, “Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.” It was as if she was saying, “I love what you teach, and therefore although you may reserve the higher purposes of that teaching for your own race (which you are quite entitled to do), yet because I love what you say, the crumbs of comfort falling from your mind which I shall receive will have the same potency as the main meal.” This was because of her love for what he taught, which was like the love of a dog for its master, asking little, asking only for whatever is given, and therefore receiving much in measures of spirituality, which have no relation to human measurement. She saw past the human Jesus to what he stood for - Truth itself - and he so marvelled at her declaration that he said, “O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” Her daughter was “made whole from that very hour.” In his contact with her there was for Jesus an explosion out of the limits of his own race with its parochial teachings into the realization of what omnipresence meant in its freedom for all; and he recognized the wonder of this (see Matthew 15:21-28).

It was Peter who showed him that it was the living, palpitating, practical healing Christ which was the rock of all building; he knew that it was God speaking through Peter, and so he said, “Blessed art thou, Simon

Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”

These were the treasures, which Jesus was constantly finding in his developing consciousness of the all-presence of the one and only Being. It is this spiritual realm in which we should strive to baptize our whole consciousness, for this is the only treasure, this treasure in heaven. This is the treasure we can buy if we will sell all pre-conceived notions that there is anything at all but Principle and its expression of itself, that expression being you, me, and all mankind and the universe.

This field, this open consciousness of heaven, is everywhere and through an honest selling of all other opinions we can exchange them for those sudden realizations which were portrayed and outlined for Jesus in the motivations and aspirations of the widow, the centurion, the Syro-Phoenician woman, and in such declarations as he heard through Peter.

If we walk with God, we only meet God’s children and we increase their happiness just as they increase ours. Principle has only to be lived and loved for any of us to find how it multiplies itself in our experience and reflects itself back, as light does light.

The study we do gives us our tools, but we must go out and use those tools. It is of no benefit to us or anyone if we have a whole set of tools nicely polished in the tool shed, but never use them for the purpose for which they were made. Through using them we learn how to plunge beneath the material surface and find the spiritual cause, as Jesus did (see S&H 313:23-26). John the beloved disciple understood the need to use these tools when he wrote, “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”

Mrs. Eddy tells us of her world and its treasure in the poem at the beginning of “Miscellaneous Writings”:

*If worlds were formed by matter,
And mankind from the dust;
Till time shall end more timely,
There’s nothing here to trust.*

*Thenceforth to evolution’s
Geology, we say,-
Nothing have we gained therefrom,
And nothing have to pray:*

*My world has sprung from Spirit,
In everlasting day;
Whereof, I've more to glory,
Wherefore, have much to pay.*

That poem shows clearly that: it is not in a matter-world that we find the hidden treasure, but in spite of matter. We can quickly get fooled if we look at a matter-world to find the treasure. But if we have “destroyed the foe” of belief in a matter-world and have the expectancy of seeing the expression of Life, Truth, and Love, through our gratitude for Life, Truth, and Love, then we can “leave the field to God” (see S&H 419:4-7); the symbols will fall into place and reflect back to us and confirm for us all that we know of God, just as everything talked back to Jesus of what he already knew of God.

There is no matter, but all around us there is a language we can understand and through which we can hear the voice of God, Principle. We are alive; we do not make ourselves so, but there we are We are intelligent, but how could any man or any form of matter make the breath and scope of intelligence as it operates through us—intelligence that goes beyond matter and challenges it continually? We are loving; no man can *make* love, but everyone has it. To Jesus Principle spoke to men through everything in a language whereby they could recognize its presence. He saw the impelling power of Love in its flowing towards them and surrounding them with such symbols, and therefore he wanted everyone to find, to recognize, and to value them.

We are told by Mrs. Eddy of the Master: “When *he* was with them, a fishing-boat became a sanctuary, and the solitude was peopled with holy messages from the All-Father. The grove became his classroom, and nature’s haunts were the Messiah’s university” (Ret.91: 23-27). We have the opportunity still to walk with that Christ presence and have that Christ translation.

When the man in the parable had found the treasure, he was wise enough to hide it. Mrs. Eddy says, “Christians rejoice in secret beauty and bounty, hidden to the world, but known to God” (S&H 15:25,-26). She saw the danger of talking too much about what is very sacred and precious to us before we have made it our own through demonstration. Ridicule can even change our own thinking about it, and talk us out of it. And so we must heed what she wrote: “Jesus’ wisdom oftentimes was shown by his forbearing to speak, as well as by speaking, the whole truth. Haply he waited for a preparation of the human heart to receive startling announcements. This wisdom, which characterized his sayings,

did not prophesy his death, and thereby hasten or permit it. The disciples and prophets thrust disputed points on minds unprepared for them. This cost them their lives, and the world's temporary esteem; but the prophecies were fulfilled, and their motives were rewarded by growth and more spiritual understanding, which dawns by degrees on mortals" (Mis. 83:27-12).

Until we become strong in the truth, a truth just glimpsed and then prematurely talked about can be devastated for us by the years of opinions opposed to the truth. There were eighteen years of Jesus' preparatory activities between the ages of twelve and thirty, during which he did not talk publicly of his discoveries of Truth until he had proved them to the hilt. He had to be strong because his teachings were contrary to Mosaic codes of goodness and he introduced a completely new way of living. Mrs. Eddy went away for three years after she had found her treasure of "Life in and of Spirit; this Life being the sole reality of existence" (Mis. 24:17-18). As she says in the poem already quoted, she saw that she had "much to pay" for her new world of Spirit in consecration to Truth, until it took hold of her and she was no longer worshipping it from a distance. At that point she was safe. She needed to be strong in Truth because there was so much opposed to her, and it was not a simple path.

We have to sell or exchange all the other methods we once employed, and all the concepts we once had of where and how the kingdom of heaven is to be found. Without that we cannot buy and enjoy that kingdom as not "here" or "there" but "within" – within man's present possibilities (see S&H 573:13-2).

We sometimes think that it is only in our study of the textbook that we find the real treasure of Christian Science. But a textbook in any walk of life provides the tools whereby to find its theme expressed in our own experience. That is all that we have a textbook for. A textbook sets out to tell us what is what and what to do and how to do it, and above all its message is "Get out and do it!" Someone interested in cooking may open a recipe book and say, "Oh, I've found a real treasure of a dish," but until that enthusiasm has gone to the kitchen and made that treasure into the substance of its demonstration, the treasure is not really his or hers; and the same applies to our study and our sanctuary realizations in Science.

At one time Jesus sent his disciple's out because he wanted them to confirm what he had told them. They came back with joy because their experience did confirm it. If we will have that sense of our textbook in

Christian Science, so that what we read becomes so clear to us that we long to go out and find it true in experience, then it will be what it was meant to be – a textbook on Christian Science.

What might be called the diamonds of the treasure hidden in the field are often found through practicing the ability to find the lesser jewels in all the little expressions of daily life. Jesus found treasure every time he “beheld in Science the perfect man, who appeared to him where sinning mortal man appears to mortals. In this perfect man, the Savior saw God’s own likeness, and this correct view of man healed the sick” (S&H 476:32-4). As we study, we may see very clearly the perfection of man as the idea of God and it may thrill us, but say we walked out of the door of our study and saw a cripple healed by that vision of the perfection of man – would not that bring us the real treasure of understanding? We do not usually maintain our glimpses of perfection. It is as if we have a spade that turns up a jewel, but then we leave it there. John said, “That which... our hands have handled, of the Word of life ... declare we unto you.” We may find jewels in our study, but we make them our own only through handling them and finding their truth in the “field.”

“No doubt must intervene between the promise and event” (Mis. 319:28-29), and our job is to deal with that doubt as the Lord’s Prayer indicates: “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,” which Mrs. Eddy interprets: “Enable us to know, – as in heaven [in the -sanctuary of our pure realizations], so on earth [the place of the demonstration of what we have found], – God is omnipotent, supreme” (S&H 17:1-3). We should daily pray to be enabled to know, so that the promise and event become one and that little word “doubt” does not stand between them. This is the coincidence of the divine with the human, which Jesus demonstrated, and it is practiced in all other activities related to any form of science. Only a false theology has endeavored to destroy the naturalness of this practice in matters of the divine as related to the human. Jesus and the early Christians practiced it naturally, with the same ease that a good cook practices it in the kitchen. To a good cook no doubt intervenes between the promise and the event. And to the Master there was no doubt between the realization of God, good and the same goodness being expressed before him. When we attain that state of mind, we shall be natural Christian Scientists, as he was, and we can attain to it through increasing our treasure finding. Everything he saw built up and confirmed his certainty of the omnipresence of Life and Truth and Love. Finally he just could not believe in sin and so he asked, “which of you convinceth me of sin?” The build-up of the perfection of

Principle had been so detailed and from every direction that the belief of sin had become insignificant and trivial to him, for everywhere he found the treasure of Principle's presence. If we will faithfully sell (that is, exchange) all notions in order to accept Principle's speech about itself to us, then we shall enjoy wonderful explosions out of matter into Mind, into that which Mrs. Eddy refers to as pure Mind or Spirit's onliness; and these revelations, beginning with moments, will finally become all-in-all to us, as Jesus found through his fidelity, until they became his only consciousness - which men discerned as his ascension. The ascension is the final treasure, in which faithful use of all symbols to find what they are symbolizing attains to a consciousness, which is the experience and the expression of that which those symbols symbolized. For such a treasure it is surely wise to sell all that false education has told us we have.

If a consciousness filled with good can have no error in it and have such a dynamic effect as in the case of the Master, then how wise it is first to polish up our tools of discernment from our studies, but then to realize that we are always walking in the field, that the field is ours to buy, and that in it there is wonderful treasure.

The field is there. The treasure is there. It has always been natural to man to find and enjoy it. So the more we became at one with the Principle of all-good, the more we increase our treasure-finding, until good becomes so natural to us that we find it everywhere. Then the strength of our individual conviction of Principle's presence will dispel and dispense with any opposite testimony supplied by the senses and their lies far more quickly and decisively than ever before. It is an activity which "begins with moments, and goes on with years" (Mis.15:13-14).

Each one of us has the right to a complete world in heaven with everyone already there, as was so for Jesus, and it is solely a matter of consciousness. If we wait for all men to prove to us that they are in heaven, we shall not even be able to see it, because our consciousness will not have changed and therefore we shall not recognize it. So let us remember that we can buy the field, which is the world. By selling all our previous convictions and theories based on mortal reasoning, we can buy with Principle's currency of true reason and inspiration the field of our world-experience in which the treasures of Truth await our taking. Then we can walk in that field, finding treasure everywhere. These treasures are the signs of Principle's presence in the character of people and things, and in this way Principle talks to us. There is no limit to the amount of this treasure, and through practice we shall find that we can

dig deeper and find more, until in some measure we reach that consciousness which Jesus had of the omnipresence of good in everything and through everything. When we walk in the field as he did, such things as the lily of the field and the sparrow will have a vital message for us and the men and women we meet will continually tell us more about the nature of God than we knew before. So why do we not do as he did?

Sometimes in reading these parables one may find oneself saying, "Oh yes, very interesting, some very good points," and then thinking, "I must do something about it some time." A Negro preacher once said to his congregation in the inimitable way of such preachers, "If you people knew what a little time you've got left to prepare your-selves for the kingdom of heaven, you wouldn't even wait for me to finish my sermon!" "Behold, now is the accepted time," declared Paul, Mrs. Eddy wrote, "We own no past, no future, we possess only now. If the reliable now is carelessly lost in speaking or in acting, it comes not back again" (My.12:20-22). We are told that the great Master "made himself the Son of God" and we should appreciate that if mental exertion and fidelity were necessary for him, they are necessary for all.

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