

The mustard seed

(Matthew 13:31,32)

“The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”

What Jesus is emphasizing in this parable is the propagating power of Truth. “A grain of Christian Science does wonders for mortals, so omnipotent is Truth” (S&H 449:3-5). Truth, expressed in any way and at any level, humanly and divinely, has in itself the power of propagation, and we should expect to see this. A farmer has absolute faith in the propagating power inherent in the seed he sows, and we should feel the same about the seed of Truth.

The farmer knows that once he has sown the seed, its propagating power has nothing more to do with him. Jesus said, “ye shall know the truth,” — that is, accept it and affirm it, — “and the truth shall make you free.” We do not make the truth or make it make us free. Truth sown for Truth’s sake has all the propagating power in itself which is required. So our job is to sow it, regardless of the value placed on it by mankind. We have only to plant it well into the ground — to accept it fully. “Leaving the seed of Truth to its own vitality, it propagates” (Mis.111:15-16).

We need to sow the seed humanly and divinely, until such time as we find that it is one and the same activity. We should bear in mind the range of Truth: it ranges from true human statements to true divine statements about Principle and its idea and the Science of being, but, at whatever level and in any degree, Truth expressed has unfoldment built into it, just as a seed has built into it all that it

requires for coming to full growth.

And so if we say to someone spontaneously and genuinely, "You do look lovely in that outfit," or "What a sweet face you have" or "You do look well and happy today," or "I'm so grateful for what you have done," that apparently small and supposedly insignificant remark has the power to generate good. We have all experienced what a difference comments such as these have made to our happiness, and we have also experienced the converse — that if someone says, "You do look tired and ill," we don't feel so good!

We all wish we could raise the dead, and this sometimes makes us despise such apparently small things as little kindnesses. We forget that if we make a kind and encouraging remark, we may well be raising an individual from something which was deadening him. Like Peter we often feel impatient to walk on the water, but again we should remember that here and now in every little instance we can "walk *over*, not *into* or *with*, the currents of matter, or mortal mind" (Un.11:3-4); we should not neglect this, because ultimately it will lead to the understanding which Jesus had that there is no matter, or mortal mind, to act as a separating factor. For Peter walking on the water was merely an exhibition which served no purpose, whereas with Jesus it was natural to walk on the water to reach his disciples. (See Matthew 14:22-33.)

The Master was drawing attention in this parable to the magnitude of the growth of the mustard seed in relation to its size, and every one of us has examples of this when an individual reminds us of something quite small which we said perhaps years ago which has grown for him into a "tree" of Principle and influenced his whole life. From time to time someone will tell you that the first thing which convinced him that Christian Science was worth while was a remark made about himself or how he was looking which really cheered him up, and that apparently trivial statement grew for him into a sense of the "tree" of Principle and Science which proved a lifelong inspiration.

The seed of Christian Science can be sown as much by saying, "You do look well and happy" as by saying, "You are well because

you are a spiritual idea of Principle." In each instance Principle dictates the sowing or framing of the declaration of truth in order to meet the requirements of the case. It is Principle which gives the perception of the presence of good.

We can say spontaneously to someone, "You do look well," knowing this is not because of the body but because of his individual expression of Soul's joy and certainty; or we can notice that he looks tired and say to ourselves, "That cannot be true from the standpoint of Truth, because 'God rests in action' (S&H 519:25) and 'The consciousness of Truth rests us more than hours of repose in unconsciousness' (S&H 218:7-8), and the only consciousness there is is Truth itself." The important thing is declaring the truth in order to dispel the state of thought focused in tiredness. The sowing of the seed of Truth according to the call upon us is bound to create an atmosphere with a healing and regenerative effect. "Speak the truth to every form of error" (S&H 418:28-29). Jesus was recommending the sowing of Truth through all known means if we wish to find ourselves in the atmosphere which we could define as the "kingdom of heaven."

In a railway carriage on a very hot day everyone was grumbling and fussing. But there was a child in the corner who kept saying, "Isn't it a lovely day? Isn't it a lovely day?" and noticing first one thing and then another as she looked out of the window. Finally the whole carriage was filled with the sense of a lovely day. That child was just naturally responsive to the presence of good, but there could have been a Scientist in that corner thinking to himself, "There is no mortal mind to express itself in grumbling, because there is only the one divine Mind fully expressed in gratitude for itself" and the same results could have been produced by knowing that truth in Science. So any truth, whether expressed divinely or humanly, provided it derives from Truth itself, has the power of propagation which will develop it into the stature of the "tree" of Principle necessary for that condition; and there inspired thought can rest.

We do not always have to make statements of metaphysical Truth and, vice versa, we do not always have to make humanly cheering

statements. The great thing is to declare truth on all sides in whatever way is shown us to be appropriate and then know that, however small, it has in itself all the propagating power of Truth.

It is just as fallacious to think that Truth can only be sown by statements of human good as it is to believe that it can only be sown by purely scientific statements without any relation to humanity. It is just as wrong to be a solely humanized Scientist, concerned only with the blessings of good without relating them to their Principle, as it is to be a solely metaphysical Scientist without reference to the immediate picture. We must have the coincidence of the divine with the human as much as the coincidence of the human with the divine. Some people err on the side of metaphysics and have to learn to let that coincide with its human expression. Others err on the side of the human and have to learn that this is not good enough in itself, since it needs to be scientifically empowered.

We cannot have Science without Christianity any more than Christianity without Science. The two are one, whichever we put first. A Christian is a man who recognizes God, good, in every symbol everywhere. A Scientist is a man who from the standpoint of looking at everything from the point of view of God, good, translates it into the language of that Principle so that it speaks back to him of that Principle. The best Christian on earth was the best Scientist on earth, therefore the best Scientist was the best Christian, and his name was Jesus Christ. "It has been said, and truly, that Christianity must be Science, and Science must be Christianity, else one or the other is false and useless; but neither is unimportant or untrue, and they are alike in demonstration. This proves the one to be identical with the other" (S&H 135:21-26).

Mrs Eddy shows very simply the effects of sowing the seeds of error or the seeds of truth when she writes, "That mother is not a Christian Scientist, and her affections need better guidance, who says to her child: 'You look sick,' 'You look tired,' 'You need rest,' or 'You need medicine.' Such a mother runs to her little one, who thinks she has hurt her face by falling on the carpet, and says, moaning more childishly than her child, 'Mamma knows you are hurt.' The

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better and more successful method for any mother to adopt is to say: 'Oh, never mind! You're not hurt, so don't think you are.' Presently the child forgets all about the accident, and is at play" (S&H 154: 24-2). In each case these are seeds of thought apparently as small as the mustard seed, and yet in the first instance they agree with error and do no good, whilst in the second they turn the child's thought into happy channels and have a health-giving effect.

The art of sowing the seed of Truth needs to be cultivated, since to thrust ideas which are admittedly absolutely true upon those unable to accept them if presented from this absolute point of view is like a gardener planting his seed in such a position that it has to make its way through a heavy stone, rather than coming up in soil which can readily receive it. Here as always we need to take note of what Mrs Eddy 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).

If we are conscious of Truth and we speak Truth, however small it appears in human measurement or scientific measurement, we should realize that it is bound to become an expression of the tree of Principle, for "one is as important a factor as duodecillions in being and doing right, and thus demonstrating deific Principle" (Pul.4:12-14). We cannot measure goodness or Truth, but we can sow the seed. Its growth and expansion is a matter for Principle. No idea of Principle has any limit to it.

Instances of the growth from a seemingly minute seed in every aspect of life show that we should practise the continual sowing of Truth in all the areas of conscious experience and expression in the "field" before us. We can leave it to the Principle which gives us the

ability to do the sowing to further its purpose with beneficial results, both for ourselves and those to whom the sowing is addressed.

We should *expect* to see beneficial results from Truth expressed, even though we cannot outline the forms those results will take. "A few immortal sentences, breathing the omnipotence of divine justice, have been potent to break despotic fetters and abolish the whipping-post and slave market" (S&H 225:16-19). "The spiritual power of a scientific, right thought, without a direct effort, an audible or even a mental argument, has oftentimes healed inveterate diseases" (Rud.9: 21-23); there we see instances of a mustard seed, a grain of Truth, growing into a tree whose leaves are for healing, and it confirms that it is the truth which makes free and we have only to know it.

Even if it seems that we have but a small understanding of a great truth, "a grain of mustard seed," nevertheless that seed of Truth has the quality of Truth itself and dwelling with it will cause it to grow into a conviction of Principle, a tree rooted in Principle, and a continual source of inspiration.

Mrs Eddy in her true humility wrote towards the very end of "Science and Health" of her "present feeble sense of Christian Science" (S&H 577:28). She saw her present sense of it as a mustard seed, but she knew that that attitude allowed for infinite growth, expansion, and progress, for she knew the Principle behind that mustard seed. Even the Master acknowledged the mustard seed of his understanding when he said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father," and in that acknowledgment he pointed the way for us. Just as he expected his own understanding to grow into the full tree of Principle, he implied here that we should expect the same if we obey what the parable asks of us, however small our understanding may appear to us to be.

The mustard seed grows into the "greatest among herbs," and we read in the first chapter of Genesis that man is given the herb bearing seed and the fruit of the tree for his true meat. So it is good to note that the propagating power of Truth is as beneficial to the sower as to all those directly blessed by its expression. When we sow the seeds

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of Truth in the field of experience around us, we ourselves are partaking of that sustaining Truth as much as the recipients of the sowing.

Jesus went on from the tree to the birds of the air to show that a grain of Truth has no limits to the areas in which it can spread. Our initial ideas in Science grow into a firm sense of the tree of Principle, but from that tree we should find ourselves taking off on "the wings of the morning" with further developments of those ideas which Principle has for us if we will take them. These ideas have their basic lodgment in the branches of Principle, but they rise for us with healing in their wings and lift us into realms of fresh realizations of Truth where thought has not previously soared.

*Other booklets in this series, covering all the parables,
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