

The sheep and the goats

(Matthew 25: 31-46)

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into

everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

If we plunge beneath the surface of this parable, we see that Jesus wanted more than that we should take baskets of food to the hungry, and so forth. As Mrs Eddy quotes, “The best alms are to show and to enable a man to dispense with alms,” so there must be a higher meaning than the usual human interpretation. The deeper spiritual import is far more challenging and far more divinely practical, although it in no way detracts from the good human interpretation or lessens the importance of good human activity in the interests of mankind. We cannot confine the parable to human activity, however, for at the back of everything Jesus said was the purely spiritual.

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.” This is a picture of how the Son of man should be in our experience — a picture of what Mrs Eddy called “practical, operative Christian Science” (Mis.207:5-6). The glory of the Son of man is the coincidence of the divine and the human — “divinity embracing humanity in Life and its demonstration, — reducing to human perception and understanding the Life which is God” (S&H 561:17-20). That was the experience of the Son of man which Jesus had, and he had it because he gave to Principle’s ideas all the power and all the glory inherent in them. “All the holy angels with him” gives a picture of Christ-ideas simple but profoundly direct, going straight to their destination without confusion or deviation. “With our Master, life was not merely a sense of existence, but an accompanying sense of power that subdued matter and brought to light immortality, inso-much that the people ‘were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes’ ” (Ret.58:7-11).

With Mrs Eddy too her Son of man was “upon the throne of his glory.” When she gave a lecture or held a class, there was such a living sense of the presence of Christ, Truth and such an open allowance to ideas which could be described as “angelic” that people were inspired, blessed, and healed beyond measure.

We may feel that Principle’s ideas are not as full of power and glory for us as they were for Jesus and Mrs Eddy, but that cannot be

THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS

so. Principle cannot be less vigorous and invigorating than it was for them, and we should not accept that the divine standard has trailed in the dust since their day. The Son of man, or the demonstration of Truth in immediate experience, can be as glorious for us as it was for Jesus or Mrs Eddy. Jesus was showing what we need to do if we want this to be so, and we should accept that if we do the work called for in this parable, we *shall* feel our Son of man in its power and glory.

“And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.” Set before each one of us is the vast realm of Mind and the limitless opportunities of joy and strength which this offers us. In this realm of idea we continually have the choice before us represented by the sheep on the one hand and the goats on the other. If we want our Son of man enthroned in its glory — fully expressed and enjoyed by us — and if we want it to bring angelic ideas, then we must distinguish between the active involvement and acceptance symbolized by the sheep and the passive resistance symbolized by the goats. Jesus’ use of the term “sheep” complies with his statement, “My sheep hear my voice . . . and they follow me.” The sheep represent those who accept the rousing challenge of Principle and follow its ideas right through to the natural conclusion of their purposefulness. “Goats” are those who do not exercise their inherent ability to be intelligent. Children sometimes call someone a “silly goat” when he just will not use his intelligence.

The sheep stand for those who are ready to demonstrate ideas of Principle, because they know them to be fully effective in every direction to meet the needs of men. The goats stand for those who have the same potential, but have not learnt to realize the effectiveness of Principle’s ideas; therefore they do not have fruitage, and are consequently dissatisfied with their failure to achieve what they know to be natural and right.

Whether or not we use the language of the Bible or of Christian Science, we can see that it has always been true that men have distinguished between the theoretical, however sound, and the pract-

ical, however good, and realized that there has to be a balance. Practice without a thorough understanding of the theory and principles involved, in any scientific sphere, is dangerous and at best dissolves into an activity of faith. At the same time a devotion to the theory alone blinds one to the needs of mankind; this leads to the individual being discontented with himself and with the science of which he is an adherent.

“And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.” Jesus is illustrating that in all activity there is a need to practise what we know (which can be termed the “right hand” of the activity of Principle) and also a need to hold ourselves close to the source of that knowing by acknowledging and affirming that it is Principle which is the source, for Principle gives us the ideas and supports us as we activate them in human demonstration. If we are painting our house, we probably find that with the left hand we hold on to the paint-pot and with the right hand demonstrate its practical purpose by applying it to the structure in order to protect and beautify the structure. A left-handed person would naturally disagree, but most people are right-handed, and it is what Jesus was symbolizing that is important. He was giving a simple illustration of our need to hold on to and make practical our realization of the presence of the source of all goodness and at the same time see to it that we play our part by activating ourselves and the understanding we have in the processes of good both for ourselves and others.

When Jesus said, “My Father worketh hitherto,” he was as it were using the left hand of his ability to recognize Truth as the presence of God; and then when he completed the sentence with the words, “and I work,” he was revealing the purposefulness of this activity in his individual ability and necessity to demonstrate its presence and practicality both for himself and for mankind. To dwell with the “left hand” and not cause ourselves to utilize the “right hand” is to live with theory, which will finally lose its meaning through not being used in practice, whilst to dwell with the “right hand” without a full and constant acknowledgment of the “left hand” leads to a drying up of the supply of ideas and a loss of

THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS

inspiration. When the beloved disciple John said, "That which . . . our hands have handled, of the Word of life, . . . declare we unto you," he was pointing to the fact that because he and others like him had turned divine theory into practice in the areas of their cognizance, this would have an appeal for mankind — and the only proper appeal.

Why did the Master proceed to commend those on the right side and condemn those on the left? The answer is plain: let any individual take his paintbrush in order to paint and he will be driven to recognize that he simply has to have a paint-pot and the paint it contains; but let an individual have just a full paint-pot and no incentive to use it, and the whole purpose of himself and the paint is lost to experience and will cause him all the disappointment and aggravation which such a position creates.

So the Master is saying, "Go out to do good with your understanding of Science and you will be driven to the recognition that you must turn to that Science for all the ability to follow your rightful desire. But if you cultivate an intellectual understanding of Science with no effort to apply it, you are bound to be disappointed, because you are not fulfilling your part as a servant of that Science."

Those on the left hand in the story, the goats, came in for criticism only when theory remained theory for them and they did not acknowledge the needs of mankind nor utilize the theory to meet those needs in the natural demonstration which all true theory based on Principle makes possible.

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." The kingdom of Principle's ideas in their full expression of Life, Truth, and Love is always ours, "before Abraham was." We take up our eternal heritage when we claim it and refuse to allow anything to deprive us of it, letting our thought be exalted to the level of those ideas and accepting their challenge right where we are. Each of us has always had the ability to fulfil our Christ inheritance — and also the need to fulfil it in order to find what we are and why we are. Jesus goes on to show us how to do this.

“For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

When Jesus uses the words “I was an hungred,” “I was thirsty,” “I was a stranger,” and so forth in this parable, he was showing us that the “I” of our true selfhood (the “I” that is one with the great I AM) is forever reaching forward to identify itself clearly with what it instinctively knows itself to be, namely, the perfect expression of Principle. If any proof is needed of the reality and presence of the divine Principle, it is found in the fact that no one’s true selfhood as the reflection of Principle is fully satisfied with where he thinks he is in character-expression, but is forever calling it on and out. Principle’s presence operating as us is what gives us the instinct for perfection and the longing to express it in our lives. At whatever stage of understanding we may feel ourselves to be, we experience in *our* way the hunger which Principle experiences in the ways of the infinite unfoldment to itself of its own ideas; Principle is forever affirming freshly the completeness and perfection of its own infinitude. This is the activity of Principle. We should admit daily the truth hinted at in the words of Mrs Eddy, “We are hungry for Love” (Mis.369:20). We should openly acknowledge our need and then decide to find that need met according to the teaching of this parable. But it is necessary to admit that because we *are* perfect in Principle’s eyes, we can find satisfaction only in reaching forward to measures of that perfection. Those who do this voluntarily and intelligently receive convictions of their wholly spiritual nature which can be gained in no other way; those who resist this calling or fail to give it due attention must eventually be *driven* to accept Principle’s

THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS

mandate embraced in that statement of Jesus, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." The purpose of this parable is to show us how to follow that calling—through Science and not through suffering.

The only way man can serve the principle of anything is through its expression. The musician cannot be a servant to the Principle of music except through serving symbols of music, and we cannot serve the divine Principle except through serving its ideas. Otherwise our service is merely vague and vacuous. There is nothing vague about God. God is unfathomable Mind, but that Mind is expressed in ideas and therefore in the tending of those ideas we serve God. This is a parable about accepting and responding to the challenge of Principle in the expression of its ideas, so that they have in our thinking the freedom which is theirs.

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren"—obviously the "brethren" of Principle must be ideas, and therefore the demand on us is to take the ideas of Principle and grant them their true import and significance.

Every idea of Principle is meaty and thirst-quenching, is natural and fully clothed, is healthy and free from limits, but we have to find this out for ourselves and realize that it is so and not stay with a finite concept or negative interpretation. To do this we must accept the idea from Principle and realize that it is from Principle, then dwell with its message until we see clearly what it requires of us, and proceed to obey its requirement. In so doing we make it our own. We know when this is done as soon as we find that it is meaty in purpose and in the ability to demonstrate that purpose; that it quenches our thirst for that which is satisfying; that it is not a stranger to us, and is so fully clothed that it clothes us with a new sense of life; and that it is by no means sick or imprisoned once we have released ourselves to a full compliance with its purpose in the expression of good. A first-class musician is so because he values the music he plays; it has life and reality for him and he treasures it and works to be controlled by it. As a result in the sphere of music he is as "the Son of man . . . upon the throne of his glory."

If a mother declares the truth, "I am a loving mother" — the truth she has drawn from Christ, Truth, the Son of God — it still has no real meaning for her if it does not lead her to perform with love all the least little activities involved in motherhood. If she has not carried out in practice her understanding of any of Love's ideas which have come to her from the Christ Mind, she has not identified herself with the truth she has declared about being a loving mother and it remains mere theory. But inasmuch as she does identify herself with them in all her thinking and actions, even to the least little detail — inasmuch as she feeds, clothes, etc any of the least of the ideas of motherhood in her immediate experience — it could be said that the Son of man comes to her "in his glory, and all the holy angels with him" and she is refreshed, inspired, and satisfied as a result. The Son of man sits "upon the throne of his glory" — she has a sense of rest in action, reflecting the truth that "God rests in action" (S&H 519:25). All the little tasks of motherhood join the greater in "one grand brotherhood" (S&H 518:16), because whether they appear small or great they are all "brothers" in the main theme of motherhood and are all equally demonstrations of the Son of man, all based on Christ-ideas now translated into human language in her present experience and all contributing to the full realization of the Son of God here in life-experience.

"I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat." Each time we feed our "famished affections" (S&H 17:5) with that which is spiritually substantial, we experience its sustaining power. An idea is never "meaty" to us until we rouse our Christ selfhood to demonstrate it to be so in our own life. We have some sense of what "meat" meant to the Master when we think of his words, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you . . . My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." We can look at an idea and *call* it "meaty," but it is ineffectual until it satisfies our need or someone else's. For instance, "Matter is unreal" expresses a thoroughly "meaty" idea, but in itself it is merely a statement; it gives no meat to anyone in our experience until we have demon-

THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS

strated for ourselves the unreality of matter by proving in some degree somewhere its non-entity and inability to interfere with the activity of Truth. Jesus throughout this parable emphasizes the part which the individual has to play. This is what he stressed with the parents of the girl whom he raised from the dead; he told them to give her meat (Luke 8:55), not only to confirm that she was alive, but also and more importantly to symbolize that she needed a sense of strengthening purpose in life to lift her out of the effects of a sheltered life, for this had weakened her ability to think and act for herself and may well have led to her anaemic capitulation to some strong claim of the senses.

On every side there are demands for greater meatiness in the explanations of life and its purposes and requirements. Parents are finding that their children will not be satisfied with explanations given only at the level at one time associated with childhood and which would now be termed "pappy". Today children require their parents to be able to put real meaty background to their teachings; otherwise they will not accept them. The same demand for "meat" obtains on the factory floor and in the boardroom. In the church also there has to be the satisfying substance of intelligent explanation, rather than a call for blind faith.

So the question is: where do we stand in relation to the point raised here? Do we discern for ourselves, for our friend, our patient, or our world that there is a hunger and that it can only be satisfied by giving Truth the meatiness inherent in it, the strength-giving quality that it possesses when seen and applied?

"I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink" — the thirst for Truth felt by any of us can be quenched only with ideas which are clean and refreshing, taken from the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal." Mrs Eddy wrote in her Preface to "No and Yes" of those who are "athirst for the life-giving waters of a true divinity." This was what Jesus discerned as the need of the woman at the well in Samaria. He said to her, "whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst" — note that word "never"; "but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing

up into everlasting life." He awakened in her a satisfaction of the thirst previously misinterpreted as sensual desire; he showed that desire to be pure desire, and he did it not by rebuffing her, but by giving her just the companionship which revealed to her what she really wanted, which was nothing to do with all she had been playing with. He took an interest in her and her spiritual capacity. If we read the account of this incident in the fourth chapter of the Gospel of John, we see that here was no empty-headed sensualist, but an individual with a very deep conviction of the purposes of spirituality as illustrated in the history of her race. (Note verses 11, 12, 19, 20, 25, 29.) Jesus opened up for her new vistas in a new world where she felt truly at home and realized that this was what she had always been seeking, but had sought along channels which did not lead her to it. He met her at the levels to which he was accustomed and found her at home on those same levels. In the mutual spiritual refreshment which took place her life was changed and his thought was freshly inspired and satisfied. So the question for us all is this: are we giving ourselves draughts from this thirst-quenching well and are we doing it for others?

"I was a stranger, and ye took me in." We are a stranger to an idea and that idea is a stranger to us unless we take it in and give it immediate welcome. Any one of Principle's ideas is a stranger unless we give it a home in our own consciousness. For instance, the idea that there is no death is very wonderful, but it is not our own until we ourselves become absolutely convinced that there is no death. Jesus made a friend of that idea. He "accepted the one fact whereby alone the rule of Life can be demonstrated, — namely, that there is no death" (Un.55:1-3). He took that idea until it became such a friend to him that he could commune with it in the realm of inspiration. When we find ourselves saying of an idea, "This is new to me; I'm not sure that I can take it," we are bound to feel Principle's presence and praise if we awaken our individual reflection of the Christ Mind to reply, "It is not new to God and therefore not new to me, so I will welcome it and take it to heart as my dearest friend which I already understand, appreciate, and love. It is not a stranger;

THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS

it is an idea or expression of the one Principle, the one Being, just as I am, and so we are brothered and related, of the same kith and kin."

"Naked, and ye clothed me." Any truth is naked as far as we are concerned unless we clothe it. Jesus was always clothing Principle's ideas with illustrations from the life he saw around him, so that they were not left "naked" to human comprehension. If one of Principle's ideas seems bare and cold, we must clothe it with the Love that is Principle and see it alive with that Love. This is a necessity, or else we may think of the divine Principle as coldly impersonal and dictatorial. Principle's commendation is with us if we stir ourselves to give a Christly garment to a truth, for it can be left bare and cold in its assertion or be clad in such a way as wins the heart. We can say to someone, "You've got to love," and it may be true, but it is far more attractive if through our Christ selfhood we show him that he is loving and has only to express it.

Are *we* clothing the naked? Statements of Truth merely made and not understood *are* naked. Mrs Eddy speaks of buffeting invalids with "the superficial and cold assertion, 'Nothing ails you'" (S&H 460: 22-23), and she criticizes such repetition of truth without its being clothed from our own ability to clothe it with reason leading to revelation and revelation leading to demonstration. Every mother wants to clothe her babe in the clothes that are the most attractive for the purpose; she does not feel that "any old clothes will do."

"I was sick, and ye visited me." If an idea of Principle seems weak and sickly and does not appear to be expressing itself for us or for another, it is we who can rouse our individual Christ reflection to "visit" it and show us its healthy, vigorous stature. Whenever our thoughts of Truth are anaemic and without punch, they have to be visited by the strength and purpose of manhood and the fact of their effectiveness, and this must be demonstrated. A mother can wake up in the morning feeling tired and may declare to herself, "I am not tired, because I am a spiritual idea," but that is just a sickly, ineffectual statement unless she follows it up by saying, "Right, if I'm not tired, I can get up and make breakfast and see the children off to school." She has then visited her statement of Truth with her own

individuality and her own invigorating expression of it and she feels the certainty, joy, and power of Science. Her individual Christ-expression has been raised from its sick-bed. Jesus' commands, "Stretch forth thine hand," "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk," and so on, illustrate this very point. He caused the individual to visit with his own individual capacity the truth which had been held out to him.

"I was in prison, and ye came unto me." We win the commendation of Principle if we do not let its ideas remain imprisoned in the smallness of an old theological sense, but release them to ourselves in their infinitude. Say a man is imprisoned by the belief that something is wrong in his thinking and he therefore shuts himself into a cell of condemnation: he must visit himself with the Christ truth about himself. That truth is very simple — because there is nothing wrong with God, there is nothing wrong with him; because God does not condemn Himself, he does not condemn himself. God never made an error, He knows it not, he therefore need not fear it. (See "Unity of Good," page 20.) But he must specifically visit his imprisoned sense with the strength and richness of his own individual being. That is the only way to come out of prison and be free. Freedom comes in the ratio that he accepts that everything about him and all his experience is God expressing Himself and that God is All-in-all. In every direction he has to let himself go to the joys and freedom of being himself as Principle's idea, with no shadow of doubt about it.

Too often we allow ourselves to be imprisoned in daily routine and the human requirement, and let it become drab and dutiful instead of inspired. The household tasks, the office desk, the classroom, and the daily routine anywhere are full of symbolic lessons showing us the presence of the Truth which will lead us to realize that we are *not* imprisoned, because on every side there are open doors of discovery in response to the spiritual. "Citizens of the world, accept the 'glorious liberty of the children of God,' and be free! This is your divine right" (S&H 227:24-26). Note those words "citizens of the world" — that is, housewives, business and professional men, schoolchildren, everyone.

THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS

“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Whatever any one of us has done to give meat, drink, clothing, and so forth to Principle’s ideas in any least aspect of our experience, we have done for the whole embodiment of our individual expression of manhood, that is, our Christ, and also for the full Christ of which our individual Christ is an active part. It is all “one body.” Our Christ is the full expression of our individual selfhood as Principle’s expression of itself. That full expression is made up of all the ideas covered here by the phrase “these my brethren.” The thoughts and actions which continually brother our overall individual Christ expression are as important to it as is the main theme of our character-expression. We need to pay attention to the detail of our wholeness and not neglect any facet of it, just as an athlete has to pay attention to the detail of his performance and realize that he has to demonstrate not just strength, but also suppleness, control, freedom, and so on, if he wants to express his best as one complete whole.

Jesus was also making it plain that we cannot do for others what we have not done for ourselves, and conversely we cannot long do for ourselves what we are not doing for others. We do not want to cook merely for ourselves all the time, and others do not want us to cook for them unless we *can* cook and have proved it by cooking for ourselves. Anything dies on us if it is done merely for ourselves. Jesus’ words, “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” show that in the ratio that a man lifts himself out of the claims of ignorance in any department of life he becomes an attraction to those who feel the need to be lifted out of those same claims. So whatever he has done for his own Christ selfhood he has also done for the Christ selfhood of many others.

The Master was emphasizing the necessity for each one of us to rouse our Christ selfhood into active participation. The individual’s consciousness and action as the presence of Principle is what he was calling for. A man may have praise for Principle in his thought, but it is no good merely being an onlooker on the touchline and not joining in the game. The demonstration of Science causes him to be

involved, and that is why the healing work is important. Jesus was always "involved," and he said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The teaching of Eastern philosophy is, in effect, that God is working His purpose out and all will be well; individual consciousness is superseded. But Science demands individual understanding and demonstration of the fact that man is spiritual and perfect and that there is no opposite to Truth. There is no room in Science for listlessness and inaction.

Now Jesus goes on to outline the negatives which will try to stop the demonstration of our Christ selfhood. "I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat." Principle is always giving us its ideas, and it is true of us and of all mankind that we do hunger for such ideas, but it is also true that unless these ideas are made meaty by our seeing to it that they have practical effectiveness and demonstration in our lives, they do not satisfy that hunger. An idea of Principle must be challenging by the very nature of its source, and so we must not neglect to find its meat and accept its challenge. We should not be content merely to repeat it without vital interest, but must call out of ourselves responsiveness to its challenge. We should ask ourselves seriously: Are we approaching the teachings of Science with the expectancy of their satisfying our hunger in this meaty or strength-giving way? Has our thought got real meat in it from Truth, so that it truly satisfies our hunger?

"I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink." We may be allowing Principle's ideas to be dry and abstract to us, but Mrs Eddy wrote, "Metaphysics, as taught by me . . . is far from dry and abstract. It is a Science that has the animus of Truth. Its practical application to benefit the race, heal the sick, enlighten and reform the sinner, makes divine metaphysics needful, indispensable" (Mis.38:16-21). Enlightening and reforming the sinner was what took place for the woman at the well through Jesus drawing out of her the deep, satisfying draughts of her latent spirituality which she had mistakenly overlaid with sensual desires. The lesson is that we must honestly recognize how much *we* thirst for the water which Jesus referred to in his conversation with that woman and how fully equipped we are to

THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS

satisfy that thirst both for ourselves and others through the spiritual capacity which is present for us all.

"I was a stranger, and ye took me not in." When an idea first comes to us, it does often seem strange, because it is so new to us, so almost foreign to the way we thought before. We may feel that we do not understand it and will just let it remain a stranger. We miss so much through this. We must take it in and dwell with it, and thus begin to understand it, until finally we feel quite at home with it and it is no longer a stranger. It is like taking a foreigner into our home. He is one at first to us, but we are not satisfied to leave him as a stranger and as we live with him, we find that he is like ourselves and he is no longer a foreigner as far as we are concerned. Jesus was the great friend to mankind because he never allowed Truth to stand as a stranger for others; through parables, explanation, and demonstration he showed that they were not estranged from it, but that it was natural to them. He took them in to his understanding and showed them how *they* could be taken in to *their* full understanding and ability to demonstrate. At one time he sent his students out in pairs to teach and demonstrate the truth which he had given them, so that no longer would they feel a stranger to it, but would take it in to their understanding through the challenge he gave them. Are we doing this for ourselves and others? Do we allow ourselves to stand as a stranger at the door of understanding and not take ourselves in to the very depths of that understanding, to the very possibility we are endowed with? Do we throw aside the suggestion that we have not the capacity to understand Truth clearly and finally and make it our friend?

"Naked, and ye clothed me not." Ideas which we allow to remain superficial do nothing to clothe anyone. For instance, if we tell someone that he is warm in Love, the statement is naked of all effectiveness if we ourselves hold a cold and distant thought towards him so that he does not feel the warmth and welcome we profess, or if we do not show him his wonderful capacity for love and how he loves loving and how that love does so much for others and is effective in detail in his family life. Only as we clothe the idea of love in that

kind of way does he begin to feel its warmth and becomes aware of how he is clothed in it.

“Sick, . . . and ye visited me not” — we may be belittling Principle’s wonderful and humanly astounding ideas into sickliness, weakness, and feebleness, as old theology so often does. The truth of Principle’s ideas is always healthy, whole, health-giving, invigorating. Even the statement “God is Love, therefore I am loving” can become faint and anaemic in human thought, a mere sickly repetition, unless we rouse ourselves to visit it with individual expression in thought and action, making ourselves be what we have declared. Mrs Eddy wrote, “Love is not something put upon a shelf, to be taken down on rare occasions with sugar-tongs and laid on a rose-leaf. I make strong demands on love, call for active witnesses to prove it, and noble sacrifices and grand achievements as its results. Unless these appear, I cast aside the word as a sham and counterfeit, having no ring of the true metal. Love cannot be a mere abstraction, or goodness without activity and power” (Mis.250:14-21).

There is a sickly tendency in the human mind not to obey immediately the demands of the Science of being set out by Jesus and Mrs Eddy, but to indulge what amounts to insubordination to those demands. This tendency has to be met and mastered by acknowledgment of man’s spiritual capacity. Prompt obedience to the mandate and requirements of Principle is necessary for all of us; it will destroy that sickly attitude which is half-tired for the simple reason that it has not sprung at once into action — which would be like the mother previously referred to lying in bed declaring the truth yet not identifying herself and her actions with it. In proportion to his quick and sustained obedience the individual feels for himself the true health or wholeness to which he is entitled.

“In prison, and ye visited me not.” We must not allow ideas of Science to be imprisoned by limited beliefs of what they can accomplish, because we can realize their power and freedom, their strength and breadth. We cannot outline or circumscribe the infinite or ourselves as the expressions of Principle, but we can release Principle’s expression to its own magnificence. That includes never being

THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS

satisfied to confine Christian Science to ourselves and our families, but setting it free to an ever-expanding community and to the universality which constitutes its native air. Science belongs in the realm of the universal. There is no Science unless it is universal. It must be released from the prison of parochialism. Whenever a great new discovery has blessed men universally, it is because an individual or a group of individuals has laboured with mankind in mind. So if we feel that our activity in Science is confined to a small circle, we have it within us to break down those apparent prison walls and let our ideas go out universally and with a universal love, certain of their dynamic effect. Mrs Eddy says, "The 'still, small voice' of scientific thought reaches over continent and ocean to the globe's remotest bound" (S&H 559:8-10). She wrote also, "From the interior of Africa to the utmost parts of the earth, the sick and the heavenly homesick or hungry hearts are calling on me for help, and I am helping them" (My.147:28-30), and we should have the same attitude. If we listen to the news on radio or television, we shall find the universal nature of Science throwing us its challenge every day. We shall feel what Mrs Eddy refers to — a universal calling on us for help, and it is up to us to reply as she does, "and I am helping them." In other words, we must challenge the errors we hear with the truths given by Principle and realize emphatically that those truths are true and operative and that everything else is the fabrication of a dream-world, un-Principled and therefore very much untrue.

Jesus fulfilled the demands of this parable in his own life because he never allowed his Christ-expression to be hungry, thirsty, alien, naked, sickly, or imprisoned. That was why he knew the importance of everyone else doing the same.

The parable ends with the reward to the sheep of life eternal and the condemnation of the goats to "everlasting punishment." It seems to the small boy in arithmetic who has reckoned $2+2=5$ that the principle of arithmetic says to him, "You're for it," but that is only from his point of view and only until he does what the principle requires of him. If man does the work of allowing himself to be Principle's expression and to recognize the attributes of Principle's

ideas in all their power and glory, he will find stealing over him a strong conviction of Principle's approval of what he is doing and of its love for him in recognizing this. We should surely more naturally cultivate obedience to Principle and thus more naturally be able to feel what Jesus felt when he said, "The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that Himself doeth." The student of music, for instance, may often feel a sense of satisfaction as a result of his honest devotion to and response to the demands of the principle of music, and so it must be natural that as students of the Science of being we should experience even greater satisfaction, accompanied by the touch of a growing humility through the deeper realizations behind those satisfactions.

In the parable those who put theory into practical effect in the symbols they understand are commended; those who do not do so are condemned by the Principle they have not served. The latter are of the same calibre as those who are commended, and that is the very reason why they feel the chafing and the frustration represented here by "everlasting fire" and "everlasting punishment." The theory and the letter are certainly necessary, but if they are liked for their own sake without claiming fruitage, there is no fruitage, but only the intense frustration symbolized by "everlasting fire." Principle could never say, "Depart from me." It is men who feel their own departure from Principle. Any such process is bound to be self-consuming and to lead to a return to the Principle they could never really have left.

When through stubbornness (symbolized here by "the devil and his angels") we argue against the need to practise Christian Science in taking care of the needs of humanity, that in itself is a departure from Principle, because above all Principle includes proof and endows its adherent with the ability to have proof. If we do not expect proof, we are departing from that Principle and entertaining "the devil and his angels."

If we study, for instance, without realizing that the truth we are studying is meaty and thirst-quenching and will release us from the confines of mortal thought, we are allowing the arguments or

THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS

“angels” of the devil to crowd in and suggest that we should not expect any immediate blessing from that study of Truth.

The question for us is this: Are we first of all awakening our thought through our “left hand” studies and then never allowing them to stay inert and inapplicable to immediate requirements, but bringing them into practice through our “right hand” abilities to do exactly what those studies have shown us how to do? If so, we shall experience perpetual happy progress.

Principle is ever ready to prove itself as fully effectual, not only to relieve us of an erroneous condition in our physical body or our experience amongst mankind, but also to demonstrate to us its own spiritual value and substance, its pure logic and consistency, its utterly satisfying and thirst-quenching nature.

We are demonstrating Truth when we cast out all the devils of temptation and reveal or demonstrate the presence of the truth which some error of belief tried to hide. And we are also demonstrating Truth when we demonstrate it to men in its pure spiritual value and thereby bring enlightenment, understanding, and that real conviction which satisfies man’s thirst for Truth. In either case that demonstration is the great need of mankind and provides us with our biggest challenge and opportunity. That is what this parable rouses us to accept.

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