

## The tower-builder, and the king going to war

*(Luke 14:25-33)*

“And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”

The first question that arises is this: could Jesus have meant that we should literally hate father, mother, wife, and so on? If he did mean this, it contrasts to an amazing degree with his teaching, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another” and “Love thy neighbour as thyself.” Then what did he mean? The Master had no hate in him as we understand the word — that is, blind, unreasoning dislike. It was said of him in Hebrews that he “loved righteousness, and hated iniquity,” and so he must have meant in this verse of Luke that we should hate or repudiate the general

suggestions symbolized by the relationships to which he referred. In doing this we shall find ourselves led to a greater and truer regard for father, mother, wife, children, and so forth.

First of all, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother" — we should vigorously dispute the belief that we were ever born, for only in this way can we realize that we are not material. This conforms with Jesus' saying, "call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." "If any man come to me, and hate not his ... wife" — we should reject the belief that we are dependent on another individual in any degree to help us in the expression of our own completeness. In order to follow the Christ ideal to which Jesus was pointing it is necessary to understand that each one is a complete expression of Principle through the qualities of the true male and female. Jesus was the Christ because he did hold the Christ-idea of his own completeness as Principle's idea. This balanced attitude, reflected towards any companion, especially a husband or wife, will in itself remove many of the strains which are otherwise often felt through a false sense of dependence or a feeling of incompleteness on either side. "If any man come to me, and hate not his ... children" — again we should dismiss utterly the belief that we have ever originated anything, whether it be a fleshly child, an idea, or an ideal; Jesus was careful to say, "I can of mine own self do nothing ... the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works." "If any man come to me, and hate not his ... brethren, and sisters" — Jesus once asked, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? ... whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother," meaning by this that we should have no sense of relationship on earth based merely on birth and family, but only that which is founded on a shared individual responsiveness to the one Principle. Every other claim of relationship except that which is in the spiritual should be discarded. "Jesus acknowledged no ties of the flesh" (S&H 31:4). "If any man come to me, and hate not ... his own life" — the Master did not mean that we should hate ourselves, but that we should thoroughly silence any claim that our life is our own and accept instead that it is Life ex-

pressed. When Mrs Eddy was asked, "Do you believe in God?" she replied, in part, "He sustains my individuality. Nay, more — He is my individuality and my life" (Un.48:7-9).

So Jesus was establishing that we should acknowledge no relationship outside the one and only relationship of Principle and idea. Frequently without realizing it a man is relying on his family background, and through looking at his relationship to others in that family or at the history of that family may find himself belaboured either by personal disappointment or personal pride. Mrs Eddy says that God is "man's only real relative on earth and in heaven," and she adds, "I pray thee as a Christian Scientist, delay not to make Him thy first acquaintance" (Mis.151:14-15, 19-21).

Jesus now brings home through an illustration the importance of strictly obeying his injunction to put behind us decisively the lines of thought connected in general belief with these terms father, mother, and so forth. He asks, "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish." If a man tries to build a tower of strength through his own understanding of what he is and why he is as the expression of God, it is essential that he counts the cost, and the cost lies in obeying the demands which the Master sets out. From the point of view of human reason the requirements may appear unreasonable, but Jesus unmistakably says that unless we deal with these false claims and count the cost of continually dealing with them, we may have a desire to build a tower, but having started wrongly we shall not be able to finish it. "We cannot build safely on false foundations" (S&H 201:7).

To take these false claims in the order in which Jesus gives them, we have to begin by seeing that without holding clearly to the truth that we were never born and have no human origin, we cannot build a tower of strength and certainty through the realization that man is an immortal being and has inherited nothing from a human source; his only inheritance is that which Peter described as "incorruptible,

and undefiled," because he is forever the image of perfection held by the divine Mind in that specific channel of its realization known as him and his individual expression. If we dispossess ourselves of all claims in thought of a human father and mother as our origin, we must cease to celebrate birthdays and all such milestones, which bring problems right along the path of our erecting them from one to one hundred years and beyond.

Secondly, we cannot build a tower of individuality as Principle's expression of itself unless we dismiss any belief that we can gain in substance, strength, understanding, or completeness by marrying ourselves to something besides Principle, whether it be to another individual, to a system of thought, or to anything else. We can of course companion ourselves with any one individual or with many individuals or with any system evolving good, but to marry ourselves in the sense of believing them necessary for our completeness is against the teaching of Science, for the individual must find himself complete and must express both the manhood and womanhood qualities of Principle.

We cannot build a tower of certainty about the success of ideas we have expressed unless we see that they are not our children, our ideas, but Principle's. Jesus had absolute certainty about the ideas he expressed for that very reason — he knew they could do nothing but come to fulfilment, because they were Principle's ideas. We need to count the cost of maintaining clearly and utterly in every detail of life that we have no ideas of our own, since they come from the divine Mind and in themselves make up our true being, created by God and found by us to be what we are. The cost of sustaining this clear understanding, as crystallized by Jesus in the words "I can of mine own self do nothing," is tremendous and very easily neglected or forsaken when we are successful in any line of action.

Again, we cannot build a tower of true individuality and its healthy expression unless we count the cost of accepting our individual responsibility to live our lives in our own way under the direct government of Principle, without letting any argument sidle up to us in a brotherly or sisterly manner to turn us aside from that course.

We have to be alert to the tendency to be influenced to such an extent by the lives of those with whom we are closely associated that we find ourselves copying them, rather than doing things as Principle makes clear to us. When he was told that his mother and brothers were outside wanting to speak to him, Jesus shook off the suggestion that he should be interfered with in his work by the call upon him of these personal relationships, however good and dear the individuals concerned. (See Matthew 12:46-50.) We all have to discover that whilst we can learn from others, especially those close to us, we cannot lean on them, and finally what we have learned from them still has to be expressed in our own individual way. We should not allow our individual ability and responsibility to be weakened by imitating others in *their* particular and unique expressions of the one Principle. A healthy family is known by the distinct individualism of each of its members in their lives and by the fact that as a result they hold a high respect for each other. There is no overlapping in the Science of being, no false brothering or sistering to dilute the individual responsiveness to Principle. A big brother in Science is no help to anyone unless he helps him to be a big brother in his own right, able to act decisively without any assistance from him. Moreover, those who have worked out their own relationship to Principle find themselves properly related to all others, whether or not those others are humanly classified as being of the same family.

Finally, we can build a tower of fearlessness and certainty only if in the true meaning of "hate" we turn on every belief that our life is our own and that we are personally responsible for maintaining it through obeying the physical necessities laid down by such a belief. Even while we still exercise these necessities in the spirit of the Master's words, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," we must have a constant recognition and conviction that God and God alone is our Life and that this Life, being God, is self-sustained.

Without a comprehensive study of what Jesus' requirements are in this brief statement of his, embracing the whole realm of relationship, and realizing that in this way only can we establish our true

relationship as the child of God, that is, the full and complete individual expression of Principle, we cannot build a tower to heaven in any direction. It is as if Jesus is saying that if we tried, for instance, to build the tower of being a Christian Scientist and neglected a thorough dealing with these fundamental points, we should find only a mockery of our effort. The Master would not have laid such emphasis on all this unless he saw it to be essential. Any genuine student would therefore do well to accept this and examine his thought along the channels covered by the terms father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life.

In the ratio that we gloss over or ignore as unimportant what Jesus is demanding of us in this parable we misunderstand the whole purpose of Science, which is to establish in consciousness the true sense of relationship to Principle. That relationship was expressed by John when he wrote, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." In other words, we should admit now that we are the sons of God, and then find out all we can about God, because in the proportion that this appears to us we shall be finding ourselves. In that one verse John sets out the whole purpose of Christian Science, and in this parable Jesus shows us what we have to get rid of in order to see God and our relationship to Him as He is.

"And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Bearing the cross means recognizing what Jesus was requiring — the tremendous but wonderful effort which he said we must accept if we wish to be his disciples.

Now to underline the importance of this work he follows with the second illustration: "Or what king, going to war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an embassy, and desireth conditions of peace."

Jesus now warns against the mistake of thinking that we have a personal knowledge of Science with which to meet an opposing army

of error. If error was real, then we *would* have to realize that our understanding was insufficient to meet it because of its entrenched position and vast backup. But since it is not real, we can at once send envoys of peace and open our thought to the fact that “God’s law is in three words, ‘I am All’ ” (No.30:11). By reason of that allness, error is nothing, engaged in the hopeless activity of trying to support nothing, but 0 multiplied by 0 is still just 0. Truth is the great “something” upholding, proving, and perpetuating its onliness. If we have a clean, unweighted admission that there is nothing going on but God, we have agreed to disagree with the claim of error on the basis of its unreality and the reality of Truth alone. “Truth is real, and error is unreal. This last statement contains the point you will most reluctantly admit, although first and last it is the most important to understand” (S&H 466:15-18).

If we make the mistake of thinking that we have a personal knowledge of Science, the extent of our knowledge and even our correct formation of ideas will never be equal to the power of the enemy. Our egotism will double back on us, as indicated here by the hostile king having 20,000 men as against the 10,000 of the first king. With such a state of mind it is necessary to recognize our mistake and empty boasting — empty only because we thought it was all us, that we were the originators of the spiritual ideas which we looked upon as our army. We should then come to terms with this lie, for the whole strength of the enemy depends on that one factor — our belief in our personal ability, even though we may admit some help from Principle. The only strength is again to fall back on the teachings of Jesus, who said, as we have seen, “I can of mine own self do nothing . . . the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works.”

If we yield to that truth, that overpowering truth, we have done a wise thing and we shall have no battle to fight, for that is the only battle to be fought, the battle clarified in the first Commandment, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” If we were always keeping that one great Commandment and letting the “adorable One” (S&H 16:29) be in the forefront of our thought, we should never feel defeated by anything. But if in any degree we feel personally capable

or personally responsible, we are vulnerable.

The best course is to come to terms with egotism before it overwhelms us. As the Master said, "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison." The "adversary" is the claim of a selfhood apart from God, and we should agree at once on its nothingness.

When we reach our patient through divine Love (see S&H 365: 15-19) and not through any form of egotism, we have first become fully responsive to Love; we have accepted its All-in-allness as what makes us and holds us as we really are. With that understanding we can reach our patient, for from that standpoint we immediately realize that he too is embraced in that All-in-allness, to the exclusion of any other claim.

Believing that we are very clever and have an army of ideas to meet any situation soon brings us to a confrontation with something which is too much for our personal ability to meet successfully. We may try to help someone, for instance, and find that we cannot do so. If we think that *we* can heal anyone, by that very thought we create an army of personal responsibility and personal everything, which leaves Principle out. When we let Principle be All-in-all, there is no personal anything and then there is no army in opposition. Mrs Eddy says of enemies, "Even in belief you have but one (that, not in reality), and this one enemy is yourself — your erroneous belief that you have enemies; that evil is real; that aught but good exists in Science" (Mis. 10:29-32).

Our own human reasoning (our army of 10,000) is bound to be insufficient to meet that which has been built up *from* human reasoning, as all error is. We can therefore never come to terms with error on the strength of that human reasoning. The only way to do so is to send out the envoy of reasoning based on the perfection and onliness of Principle and with that go straight to the error and deal with it specifically, to the point where it no longer exists and we make the only conditions of peace possible with error — namely, its complete annihilation as a reality or a presence as far as our consciousness is



concerned.

If David had stopped in fear and trembling to measure the size of Goliath and the inadequacy of his own armour, he would never have slain him, but he “agreed with [his] adversary quickly” that he was nothing. Then he went forward “in the name of the Lord of hosts” (I Samuel 17:45) and victory was inevitable for that very reason.

Mrs Eddy warns that you “render the divine law of healing obscure and void, when you weigh the human in the scale with the divine, or limit in any direction of thought the omnipresence and omnipotence of God” (S&H 445:15-18). If we look at almost any case requiring our help and begin to reckon the difficulties we are up against according to human calculations, we feel defeated at the outset if all we have to rely on is our own small army of understanding. But if at once we utterly repudiate that basis of reckoning and turn to Principle, we have on our side, as it were, the might of omnipotence. From this basis we can send to the case our envoys of peace — the strength of spiritual realization — to exterminate the belief that there is anything in opposition to perfection.

To take another example: if we start enumerating the details of a catastrophe and outlining all its possible causes, each one of which is twice our ability to handle, then however much we want to help, we have built up in opposition an army much bigger than our own understanding could possibly tackle. On the other hand we have peace directly we see that it never happened — that a dream “calleth itself a dreamer, but when the dream has passed, man is seen wholly apart from the dream” (Hea.11:4-5). So our immediate envoy for peace is to see that it never happened, that nothing has touched the persistent, consistent, unbroken flow of certainties proceeding from Principle which permeates all consciousness to eliminate every belief to the contrary. In fact, the sensible course is to sit down and count the cost of *not* doing this, but instead making error a reality and trying to overcome it by magnifying its power and taking its whole weight on our own shoulders. In the ratio that we settle thoroughly the question with ourselves as to whether the catastrophe could actually have taken place, based on forsaking all misdirected reasoning about the circum-

stances and going straight to Principle and its undisturbed perfection, we come to a true peace.

In the story the king sees the enemy when he is “yet a great way off” and at once sends his envoys. He is a wise man who looks ahead and sees, for instance, that if he does not deal now with the claims of age and mortality, those claims will suddenly overtake him when he is unprepared and they will come with the formidable strength of human belief. If he starts dealing with the belief of death now, sending out envoys of Truth by dwelling every day with the truth that there is no death and that nothing real ever dies, he will not be caught out. He should build up for himself through a wealth of supporting evidence the idea that Life is, until the immortality of man and the universe becomes natural to him and he also sees that nothing unreal and untrue has ever had life, any more than  $2 + 2 = 5$  has ever had life. Dealing with the enemy while it is “yet a great way off” includes such simple but profound necessities already mentioned as not recording birthdays or anniversaries or indeed allowing any milestone to appear in his thinking even with regard to his understanding of the facts of Christian Science. A milestone presupposes space and time, and to the divine these elements do not exist. When Jesus stated, “before Abraham was, I am” and Moses heard the voice of Principle telling him to say to those who needed freedom from oppression, “I AM hath sent me unto you,” they gave the scientific answer to the claim of milestones or measurements of that which is the only real experience of man. Through Jesus’ “steadfast and true knowledge of pre-existence, of the nature and the inseparability of God and man” (Mis.189:8-10), he forestalled every possible effort of the “last enemy” and could finally say, “the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me” (John 14:30).

“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” All that we have to forsake is the whole mortal concept of ourselves — all that we think we have. We do not have to forsake anything worth having. Mrs Eddy says that prayer “shows us more clearly than we saw before, what we already have and are; and most of all, it shows us what God is” (No.39:22-24). And she

asks, "When will mankind awake to know their present ownership of all good?" (My.356:1-2)

And so what Jesus is showing in these parables is that if we eliminate from thought the claims of origin and relationship which he runs through first of all, we thereby eliminate the false sense of selfhood apart from God which can neither build a tower to heaven nor deal with error in any form. We must come to terms with the lie which is the basis of all error — namely, the claim of self apart from God in any degree whatever. Counting the cost means realizing that in order to accomplish anything worth while, we have to be *out* of the way in a personal manner and *in* the way and flow of Principle's realization of itself. Jesus certainly counted the cost at Gethsemane, realized his own inability separated from Principle, and finally said, "not my will, but Thine, be done." The sweat which fell to the ground like great drops of blood was not caused by casualness or any lack of recognition of everything that was required of him in letting Principle be All-in-all.

To hate the false claims of origin and relationship means to learn and accept the truth of origin and of all relationship. This equips us with everything we need to complete every kind of building in the realm of character-structure and to find that the troops of ideas which we have as the expression of Principle are equal to all demands. It was said of Gad, who according to Mrs Eddy's definition in her "Glossary" represents Science, "a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last." That troop which overcomes us is our egotistical belief that it is *our* understanding of Science which counts, but it is overcome when at last we awaken our thought to the truth — namely, that Principle alone evolves Science and that we are included in Principle's expression of itself as Science. "All consciousness is Mind, and Mind is God" (Ret.56:18), and this means that our true consciousness is nothing more and nothing less than the individual reflection of God's consciousness of Himself.