

The widow and the judge

(Luke 18:1-8)

“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

The unjust judge represents the human mind when it is wrongly influenced, influenced by mortal mind and all its beliefs, so-called laws, judgments, and sentences. But when there is determined application for the justice of the divine Mind, that human mind gives up its resistance and acts on behalf of the rights of man. Jesus shows that the widow's persistent faith in the law of good, in spite of mortal mind and its beliefs, caused those beliefs to give way and brought her relief from oppression. The widow stands for that state of thought which has been widowed away from resignation to mortal mind and is actively and immovably determined not to let an unjust judgment stand in the way of claiming the rights of man. If we find ourselves in the position of the widow in any direction, then we must take on the attitude of mind symbolized here. To one individual the “adversary” from whom relief is sought may be disease, to another it may be lack, and so forth. The unjust judgment may lie in a man's

poor opinion of himself or in any opinion held about his state of health or circumstances. It may lie, for example, in the world's opinion of the fatality of certain diseases, although this has been disproved again and again in the experience of men.

In the first part of the parable Jesus brings out that despite beliefs imposed on the human mind by mortal mind and its myriad so-called laws and unjust sentences Principle has throughout all time operated to set aside false laws and bring release from tyranny. At the end of the parable he pleads for men to take the higher way — the way which eliminates belief in the unjust judge and thereby shortens the distance to the immediate realization of good and freedom from oppression. The distance is shortened when we have no "unjust judge" either in our self-condemnatory opinion of ourselves or in our belief in unjust laws and statutes.

The Master longed for men to shorten the distance by accepting the Son of man — the consciousness which he himself had here on earth that there was nothing going on but Principle and its idea or expression. Through accepting the Son of man in this way individuals are freed from the wrong and unjust notions in which they have been educated and which stand over their instinctive faith in God as the unjust judge did in the parable.

Throughout history people with faith in God have been able to annul would-be laws of mortal mind in particular instances, but they have not been able to annihilate belief in those laws. Therefore they have touched Truth, but have never found the Science at the back of it — the Science spelt out in the statement, "The Christlike understanding of scientific being and divine healing includes a perfect Principle and idea, — perfect God and perfect man, — as the basis of thought and demonstration" (S&H 259:11-14).

The lesson is that in spite of mortal mind and all its rules and laws an individual who causes himself to turn wholeheartedly to his understanding of God will become aware of the presence of good in a measure which will overrule the so-called laws of the "unjust judge" of mortal mind. But if instead of that long process, however admirable the persistent fidelity, men adopted Jesus' method of

THE WIDOW AND THE JUDGE

keeping his Son of man in heaven (see John 3:13) — in the harmony of Science — by an admission of this simple but profound truth, followed by a continual affirmation of the onliness of Spirit and above all the nothingness of matter and the nothingness of mortal mind, then there would be no need of constant supplication *against* something which had been allowed reality. The results would have the quickness and full fruitage associated with the realization of Truth. The realization of Truth depends on continually giving the lie to the lie — the denial of matter and all its laws. In the Master's words, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."

Jesus' prayers were "deep and conscientious protests of Truth, — of man's likeness to God and of man's unity with Truth and Love" (S&H 12:13-15). They were quite different from the prayers of the widow in this parable. Hers was an enlightened appeal *to* God; his was the full light of affirmation *from* God. He started from perfect Principle and idea as the basis of thought and demonstration and protested *from* that basis, instead of protesting *to* it about removing something already admitted as real. His understanding of Truth forestalled error.

Jesus kept his Son of man persistently in heaven. All any of us has to do is to persist and never lose heart until we see the nothingness of the lies or unjust judgments which try to obstruct our acceptance of Truth. We have no need to persuade Principle to come onto our side, but we have to keep at it until *we* come to the clean, clear understanding of what Principle is and must be in order to *be* Principle and also cease to imagine ourselves outside Principle. "Principle and its idea is one, and this one is God, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent Being, and His reflection is man and the universe" (S&H 465:17-1).

The judge in the story made it plain that he was not finally going to help the widow because of any respect for God or man, but only because she wore him out by her continual coming. We can do the same as the widow with the judgments enacted by mortal mind, for by continuing with the truth and constantly attesting its truth to our own understanding, "with an honest conviction of truth and a clear perception of the unchanging, unerring, and certain effect of divine

Science" (S&H 418:7-9), we also can wear out the resistances implanted by mortal theories, so that finally they give way and thus become channels for the good.

Jesus was pointing here to the fact that there is no favouritism in the Science of being, no special sons more beloved and blessed than others, but that through consistent application to finding more of the meaning and requirements of Principle we wear down our own false sense of Principle until the truth is all that obtains for us in every direction of consciousness. When we wear out our own false beliefs with regard to Principle and its relation to man, we find it acting on our behalf, as the widow found with the judge — that is, we experience that which has always been waiting for us to do so.

Sometimes one child in a family or one individual in a group feels disadvantaged in comparison with the others forging ahead who seem better endowed or in more favourable circumstances, but this is only a belief, an unjust judgment which can be nullified through consistency in the truth, just as the widow saw to it that the injustice to which she had felt subject was set at nought. "It is man's moral right to annul an unjust sentence, a sentence never inflicted by divine authority" (S&H 381:28-30); "Let your higher sense of justice destroy the false process of mortal opinions which you name law" (S&H 390:13-16).

We are always the judge in our own case through the ability furnished by Principle. "In the presence of the Supreme Lawgiver, standing at the bar of Truth" (S&H 440:25-26), what we are really doing is pleading with ourselves scientifically to accept the plea of Truth, and through persistence we break down our own objections, to the point where the unjust belief is rendered null and void.

In the story the widow, representing thought which feels temporarily widowed from something it knows it is right to have and is determined not to give way to injustice, had to regain through perseverance the wedded state, the conviction that Love was "wedded to its own spiritual idea" (S&H 575:3) in her. But she could have started out from and remained with that sense of wedding, and this was the path of Science which Jesus yearned for men to take when he

asked, "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

The long process of persistence represented by the widow is often illustrated in the long period of mental argument in the pursuit of Truth which may be required in Christian Science practice. The trial pictured at the end of the chapter on Christian Science practice (S&H 430:13 — 442:15) demonstrates the operation of Christian Science in dealing thoroughly and victoriously with the arguments presented by mortal mind. The individual on trial had got himself into the state of thought where he was worrying over the condition of his tongue, his skin, his nerves, and so on. One supposed law after another had to be dealt with and seen to be powerless, until at last the Son of man came, in the sense of the coincidence of the human with the divine. But had the man realized from the beginning that of himself he could do nothing and that he was but "the humble servant of the restful Mind" (S&H 119:32), he would not have got himself into a diseased state through his kindness to his friend. It was not his fault so much as the unjust judgment of mortal mind with which he had been educated to comply. That was what had to be erased from thought through the acceptance of Truth. The judge at the trial concluded with the words, "Our statute is spiritual, our Government is divine. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'"

Whilst the detailed method exemplified in this case is vitally necessary to us as students, with its wonderfully strengthening process, it is also essential that we do not lose sight of the higher method as shown by both Jesus and Mrs Eddy and confirmed by such statements as these: "Remember that the letter and mental argument are only human auxiliaries to aid in bringing thought into accord with the spirit of Truth and Love, which heals the sick and the sinner" (S&H 454:31-2); "Jesus required neither cycles of time nor thought in order to mature fitness for perfection and its possibilities" (Un. 11:24-26).

The Master knew that here and now we are already elected by Principle to perfection and therefore can and should elect to accept that election. We can elect to live in the realm of Principle and its

mandatory ideas of perfection. There is no need to live in the realm of mortal mind's suggestions. When Jesus asked, "And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily," he meant that those who have elected to take the way of persistent application of their understanding of God are bound to be rewarded, however long it takes. But the method which he himself followed and which he yearned for all to adopt was a higher, more restful method.

These two standpoints are illustrated in the third and fourth sections of the Lord's Prayer. Jesus' own outlook was the calm, continual certainty expressed in the third section, "Thy kingdom come," which is given its spiritual interpretation in "Science and Health" as follows: "Thy kingdom is come; Thou art ever-present" (16:31). It was the full and enlightened scientific faith in this which he himself had and which he longed for others to have which made him ask at the end of the parable, "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" However, in the fourth section of the Lord's Prayer we see the persistent activity of good as represented by the widow. This fourth section reads, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," which is spiritually interpreted, "Enable us to know, — as in heaven, so on earth, — God is omnipotent, supreme" (S&H 17:2-3). Through his great understanding of and love for mankind Jesus showed that this may be the way we choose in order to be enabled to reach the point where the words, "Thy kingdom is come; Thou art ever-present" finally become real and practical to us in consciousness and experience. The first method stands for the absoluteness of Science; the second stands for the Christian application to human thought of that absoluteness, meeting men where they believe themselves to be.

Jesus said, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." The consciousness which goes forth from Principle bathes this world or earth's experience in its own harmony and then through this reaches to a deeper understanding of Principle and its all-presence in its expression of itself.

THE WIDOW AND THE JUDGE

So in this parable Jesus makes plain the two methods and yet with his heartfelt desire that men should recognize and take the quicker way, he asked that last question, "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" It was almost a sigh. He was saying, in effect, "Why will you not accept my method? You already have abundant evidence of the power of Principle, so why not take it further and banish belief in the possibility of any other power or existence? Why not live as I do, in the continual certainty that *your* Son of man is always in heaven, that your only true and real consciousness just where you are is the consciousness of Mind, since 'All consciousness is Mind, and Mind is God' (Ret.56:18)? As through that enlightened faith you accept this true Son of man here on earth where you are and with no further delay you will find that no other consciousness exists for you and there will be no problem to solve, for no problem has ever existed in that consciousness which is Mind. That is the quick way to obtain the effects of this absolute truth in immediate experience."

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