

CLIFFORD STAMP AND ROSALIE MAAS

“Without a parable  
spake he not unto them”

No. 7

The sower

The rich man and the beggar

The wicked husbandmen

The dragnet

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**BOOKS BY CLIFFORD AND DAISY STAMP:**

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*How Divine Love Meets the Human Need*

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*The Man for All Men*

**BY ROSALIE MAAS:**

(published by The Foundational Book Company Limited)

*The Bible for Everyman*

*At the Start of the Day* (written under the pen-name of Faber)

## FOREWORD

“Without a parable spake he not unto them” (Matthew 13:34). This series of booklets took shape from ideas which were given to the authors by Principle as they studied the parables of Jesus, those masterpieces of a master teacher and demonstrator. Through them they learned of the true Science of being and its direct application to human living. The ideas which unfolded proved outstandingly kind and persistent in their persuasiveness and very much alive with freedom and happiness as well as with the imperative demands of Principle on its student. Because they also proved fruitful as they were assimilated, they are now made available in a spirit of sharing. They are not final nor mandatory; there is no question of telling anyone else what to do. Nevertheless the ideas recorded will by the very nature of their origin lead the reader to truths which will define themselves in ways unique to his own individual manner of thinking. As Mrs Eddy puts it, “In the scientific relation of God to man, we find that whatever blesses one blesses all, as Jesus showed with the loaves and fishes, — Spirit, not matter, being the source of supply” (S&H 206:15-18).

From the infinitude of the Mind which gave them it is clear that the parables have many meanings other than those presented in these booklets. May these particular interpretations be as helpful to the reader as they have been to those who had the privilege of entertaining them.

The following abbreviations of the titles of writings by Mary Baker Eddy are used in this series of booklets:

S&H	<i>Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures</i>
Mis.	<i>Miscellaneous Writings</i>
Ret.	<i>Retrospection and Introspection</i>
Un.	<i>Unity of Good</i>
Pul.	<i>Pulpit and Press</i>
Rud.	<i>Rudimental Divine Science</i>
No.	<i>No and Yes</i>
Message 1900	<i>Message to The Mother Church, 1900</i>
Message 1901	<i>Message to The Mother Church, 1901</i>
Message 1902	<i>Message to The Mother Church, 1902</i>
Hea.	<i>Christian Healing</i>
Peo.	<i>The People's Idea of God</i>
My.	<i>The First Church of Christ Scientist and Miscellany</i>
Chr.	<i>Christ and Christmas</i>
Po.	<i>Poems</i>

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# The sower

(*Matthew 13:3-13,16-23*)

“And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: but other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand . . . But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon

with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

"Behold, a sower went forth to sow." Principle is the sower, and since Principle is always declaring itself, its sowing is always going on. It is not a once-and-for-all activity. Truth is ceaselessly being sown by Science in the minds of men. The soil is man and each individual man. Moreover, there is no variation in the sower and the quality of the seed being sown; they maintain the same standard of perfection.

Jesus is showing in this parable the different states of thought in their response to Principle's forever revelation of itself. This emphasizes that the state of consciousness is the decisive factor as to the results we actually receive. Truth is perpetually voicing itself, but the immediate effect on us is according to our receptivity.

The first state of thought is described as follows: "And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up . . . When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side." Truth registers only superficially on the state of thought symbolized here. We cannot ignore any of these states of thought and think that they could never apply to us, because if we are not alert, we can all find them very close at hand and influencing our relationship to Truth without our even noticing it. Any of us can become casual in response to Truth, whether we are reading it or hearing it, and we must be awake to detect and reject this claim.

Jesus says, "then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that

which was sown," and there is no greater wickedness than being casual. Vacuity is a bigger evil than aggressive opposition. It is better to be in contact with someone angrily contesting what is being said of Truth, because at least this is a sign that Truth is registering and doing something, than to be with someone who smiles blandly but is not letting Truth make any impression because it has no importance for him. The Master could heal the demoniac, but not the scribes and Pharisees, even though he could point out to them the obvious folly of their ritualistic beliefs and practices.

Casualness is impossible in Science. You cannot play with Science any more than with an H-bomb. Science is serious – not serious with sadness, but serious in its purposefulness. "All is real, all is serious" (Un.26:24). The "fowls" represent the flighty, silly, empty thoughts of mortals which give no substance to Truth and so do not allow it to have any effect. We can all watch that we *are* alert to Truth – just declaring that we are awake and alert in Science is not enough if we are not following that declaration with active obedience.

"Superstition, like 'the fowls of the air,' snatches away the good seed before it has sprouted" (S&H 237:12-14). Superstition might be described as the active aspect of ignorance. Left alone and unchallenged by Truth, it operates in human consciousness through the false education of mortals and prevents Truth from registering.

We tend to laugh at the superstitious belief that if someone walks under a ladder, breaks a mirror, has a party of thirteen for dinner, or does anything else which contravenes any of the multitudinous fables of mortal mind, he will have bad luck. But we do not always laugh at the belief, for instance, that if we walk in a heavy shower and get wet through, we shall probably have the "bad luck" of a bad cold. In all these cases the Science of being has to be brought into play to show that man is spiritual and does not live in a physical body in a physical world and therefore is not subject to so-called laws which have been created by mortals after their admission that they are physical and consequently mortal. But the point is that unless challenged the walking under a ladder, for example,

will subconsciously destroy or snatch away our understanding that good is consistently good and that we “live, and move, and have our being” in that atmosphere of good, and thus we may find that we subconsciously expect and therefore receive a bad effect. From having tacitly accepted the superstition, which in itself has no foundation, we create some happening from our ignorant expectancy and then say that it came about because of walking under the ladder! And it is exactly the same with the belief that the bad cold comes about through getting soaked. (See S&H 377:26-378:7.)

Superstition always embodies matter as its most important ingredient and unless matter is continually seen as a lying supposition, superstition can hold sway and can snatch away seeds of Science. The seed of Science telling us that we are immortal is immediately snatched away if we believe that this applies to a physical body, for reason and experience based on the physical body as being “us” deny forever the scientific truth that man is an immortal being. So it must be recognized that the admission of matter’s reality and the lack of a vigorous denial of that lying supposition create a state of thought where superstition reigns. Superstition cannot be dismissed casually while we are still admitting matter and thus mortal mind as having any part to play in the realm of consciousness, which is wholly spiritual. We cannot laugh at superstition under any guise as long as we believe that matter is real, even temporarily. In the ratio that we understand that man and the universe are purely spiritual do we scientifically and effortlessly challenge the myriad claims based on the superstition of mortal reckoning. When we challenge matter and see that it is unreal and never existed, we find seeds of Truth taking root in consciousness, unhampered by the arguments of superstition. We can then walk under ladders, get our feet wet, or find the calendar saying that we have well exceeded threescore years and ten, and suffer no ill effects — so long as we recognize that we are not material in any degree, because there is no such thing as matter. The seeds of Truth sown from the basis of our understanding of matter’s unreality and Spirit’s allness thrive in our consciousness and bear the fruit of goodness, directly opposed to the claims of superstition or ignorance.



Superstition is not an actuality any more than darkness is an actuality. Bring in light and there is no darkness; darkness is not there as something to be overcome. Bring in Truth and there is no error, no superstition, no ignorance; none of these is there as a real something to be overcome.

The second attitude of mind is presented like this: "Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away . . . he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." If Truth is allowed to touch only the sentiments, the heart and not the head as well, this leads to emotionalism and Truth is not thoroughly digested and assimilated. The result is that as soon as adverse circumstances arise, the arguments presented are felt to be overpowering; there is no depth of understanding of Truth on which the student can rely to counter the apparently scorching arguments put forward by the so-called reasoning of mortal mind through *materia medica* or anything opposed to the onliness of Spirit. The only way to be safe from the withering blasts of mortal mind is to "abide under the shadow of the Almighty," where consciousness is so imbued and strengthened with spiritual reasoning that it cannot be moved.

We may accept some aspect of Science for its loveliness and attractiveness and then when an opposite so-called attraction operates through fear or doubt, our fidelity may not be sufficient to meet and defeat the arguments of sense and so we may give way to the rulings of *materia medica*, for instance. Our love of Truth is still there, but we may let the "stones" of many false calculations overcome for the time being our first love.

The stone has always stood for a line of reasoning. When Jesus said, "the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner," he was using the stone positively as a symbol

of the line of reasoning based on Principle which he himself employed and which is the cornerstone of all true building. But negatively a stone stands for a line of reasoning which is not truly reasonable but merely based on mortal mind, and it is often used in this sense throughout the Bible. We can deal with and remove such stones through our devotion to the spiritual – that is, through the depth of our soil.

Each of us has his own stones to remove, embedded through education, beliefs of birth, and so forth, but they are a problem only if our sense of Science is shallow; they are cast aside as easily as a strong plant pushes aside stones as it breaks through the soil when we see to it that we are rooted in Science. For example, while we may feel sure that we love Science, we may still harbour subconsciously a stone of belief that our forebears lived to a good old age; because we have almost made age a god and relied on the belief that we stem from a family noted for its longevity, instead of understanding that God is our Life, we may find that if we are struck down by some illness, the sudden fear that we shall not live to a good old age causes the whole edifice of belief to collapse around us and produces the very mental conditions which increase the illness. A similar kind of stone is the belief that we belong to a family where death has often come about through one particular disease, subconsciously inducing the fear that we shall suffer the same fate. Here although again we may love Science and accept its teachings, we could find that if this belief was not handled and removed, and we then thought we saw some symptom of that disease in ourselves, immediately the fear based on accepting the belief about family could wither inspiration and uproot our faith in and love for Science. We might wonder how we could possibly have been affected in this way after all the teaching given us by Science, whereas the point to recognize is that we have not removed the stone of family belief. “Disease being a belief, a latent illusion of mortal mind, the sensation would not appear if the error of belief was met and destroyed by truth” (S&H 168:26-29). The way to remove it is to realize that each of us belongs to no human family,

but is a direct individual expression of God, subject to no other but divine influences and laws. It matters not whether according to mortal belief our forebears lived to a good old age or suffered an early demise from some particular disease, because the only truth is that man has no beginning and no end, and this truth applies to them as much as it does to us. Man is the ever-present expression of Principle and always will be so, with no past and no future, but only a Principle-empowered "now." Jesus not only said, "Before Abraham was, I am," thus establishing the fact of pre-existence, but also on a human level 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."

Unless these stones and many others like them are cast out, our joyous reception of Truth can be suddenly withered by the fears produced by such beliefs being accepted instead of rejected — if necessary repeatedly rejected, until like nightmares they are completely extinguished in thought. The Master drew attention to the lack of depth of soil as the reason why the stones could stop the seed growing. Depth of soil symbolizes sincere devotion of thought to understanding the spiritual. The stones of human belief and theories founded on materiality would never have any effect if the roots of Truth went deep enough in that good soil. Those stumbling-blocks of human belief, whether based on heredity, on background, or on fresh forms of error in any of its phases, mental or physical, will all be taken care of according to our fidelity to our rootings in Principle. There were innumerable stones of belief surrounding Jesus in his day, just as there are today surrounding us, but his rootings were such that wherever he detected them he could remove them, and those which did not come into the areas of his cognizance had no effect whatever on his life or its purpose. We should expect the same in our own experience; our one concern should be to get our rootings right and keep them right. Then, if it is necessary, a particular stone or latent belief about ourselves will be uncovered, but more often than not these things will be dealt with by the very fact of our new and proper rootings. "The

prophylactic and therapeutic (that is, the preventive and curative) arts belong emphatically to Christian Science" (S&H 369:23-25), so we have no need to be troubled as to how the stones will be taken care of, but should devote thought to our rootings in Principle, through our growing understanding of the spiritual and all that it means.

Let us bear in mind that it was said of Jesus that "he made himself the Son of God," so it is not just a matter of accepting that we are the sons of God, but of making ourselves be it through strong spiritual reasoning, based on Truth and designed to subjugate and silence every one of the voices of error or materiality. In this case it is true that we are all of us "rooted and grounded" in Science in the reality of our being, but this only renders it all the more essential to get rid of any shallowness right where we are and become firmly established in what Science teaches. Understanding is creative, purposeful, and truly muscular — there is nothing flabby about it — and in proportion as we attain and maintain it, we find the strength which casts out error as unreal, and our understanding grows in zest and depth.

The third state of thought in response to Truth is described as follows: "And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them . . . He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful."

If we have a burdened sense of the troubles of the world and they are very real to us and we are always thinking of our duty to do something about them, then we can find ourselves fully occupied with servitude to a very thorny world with many thorny problems; it continually sticks its thorns into us to hurt us. It can certainly make Science unfruitful as far as we are concerned. The thorns choke the seed of Truth after we have received it because we feel that we have not the time — and even that we *should* not spare time — to dwell with the facts of Science, since we would be failing our world if we turned aside from it to obey the Scriptural command, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord." It may

seem callous to heed that demand, but it is essential if we are to be fruitful in Science. There must always be the human and divine coincidence, but that comes about *from* the divine, through the divine being very real to us.

It is bound to be a thorny path and bound to result in a loss of inspiration if we try to take on our shoulders the burdens of a matter-world as presented by mortal mind with all its lies. The Master constantly "withdrew from the material senses to refresh his heart with brighter, with spiritual views" (S&H 32:25-27). His attitude was, "I can of mine own self do nothing . . . the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works," and then in following the leadings of Truth he said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." That is the only right approach for the humanitarian in this world.

The "deceitfulness of riches" refers to the seductiveness of believing that we can depend on the supposed riches of personal mental capacity without resort to Principle or Truth. It is a form of egotism if we think we know better than Truth itself and so argue back at Truth and choke it in our consciousness. Mrs Eddy describes the right attitude when she says, "I will listen for Thy voice, Lest my footsteps stray" (Mis.398:1-2) — listening to discover what Mind is already knowing, not worrying things out on a basis of human intellect and personal responsibility, but being open to the acceptance of Truth, listening above all to its best demonstrators, Jesus and Mrs Eddy.

The parable ends with the fourth state of thought: "But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold . . . But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Here thought is open wide first to listen to Truth and then to receive it with depth and devotion, and this is the recipe for fruitage. Mrs Eddy tells us that the good ground represents "the soil of an 'honest and good heart'" (S&H 272:6). Honesty is love of

**Principle.** The good soil is that humility which is the constant recognition of the onliness and wonderfulness of God, the “adorable One” (S&H 16:29). The true basis of humility is adoration, and it is the good soil because it allows the individual to long, to listen, to seek, and to find through that seeking that the only thing going on is God and *His* goings-on. We see it in the Virgin Mary and it called forth from her the words, “My soul doth magnify the Lord.”

In such soil Truth is quickly apprehended and valued, so that time, thought, and energy are gladly devoted to its understanding. And this yields fruit in three different ways. First, “an hundredfold” — this is the acme, and it indicates those moments of inspiration which bring an “out of this world” realization and experience, such as a musician may have when he reaches a sense of communion with the soul of the music he is playing. The Scientist not only can but should expect to have experiences similar to that described by Mrs Eddy in the words, “When I have most clearly seen and most sensibly felt that the infinite recognizes no disease, this has not separated me from God, but has so bound me to Him as to enable me instantaneously to heal a cancer which had eaten its way to the jugular vein” (Un.7:8-12).

Secondly, “sixtyfold” — through being host to Truth with all the graces of Spirit, there will be a renewal of selfhood or true manhood (the “six” derived from the sixth day of creation in Genesis when man enters the picture), giving a totally new outlook and approach to life. Jesus recommended this to Nicodemus when he stressed the importance of being “born again.” (See John 3:1-8.)

Thirdly, “thirtyfold” — “three” in the Scriptures often indicates uplifted and resurrected thought, and the supreme instance of this is the resurrection of Jesus, which took place on the third day after the crucifixion. So here the Master is showing that devotion to Truth will bring continual resurrection morns, a constant uplifting of thought to altitudes higher than previously attained. Attending this will be the joy of being lifted out of beliefs which formerly held sway.

While we may tend to think that the stony ground applies to this

or that sort of person and that the thorny ground applies to another such classification, we should realize that the parable applies as a whole, in all its aspects, to each individual and therefore everyone should guard against those attitudes of mind symbolized here by the wayside and by the stony and the thorny ground. In anyone the seed may fall by the wayside at one time or into stony or thorny ground at other times, depending on the prevailing mood, unless he accepts the purpose of this parable by being determined that he will be alert to these negative processes and see that they never affect his devotion to Science. In the final analysis there is only the good ground in every man — that is, his spiritual instinct and identity — and this will receive the seed, which will spring up and bear fruit. So there is no one so hopelessly buried in materialism that he is exempt from this. All have the spark of spirituality. What Jesus implies is that the sooner men acknowledge that they are good ground and live according to that acknowledgment, the sooner they will enjoy the fruitage of the seed.

The Master gave the Sermon on the Mount, but the extent to which it all registered at the time was not his concern. He knew that even with the best will in the world he would have been interfering with Principle if he had been worried about the degree of acceptance in his audience. We all have to learn this lesson, especially with those we love and those for whom we feel a personal sense of responsibility. We do not always even recognize that we are trying to put mental pressure on them to accept what we think they should accept and at the time we think they should accept it. That was not the Master's way. He never interfered with individual development, because he knew the danger of trying to direct continually another mentality. A pressurizing teacher may get a whole class through some examinations, but the apparent success may not be for the ultimate benefit of the students.

The sower does his job of sowing, but he does not go round picking away all the stones, removing the thorns, and so on. We can take the sower as our guide in that he scatters the seed evenly and well and then leaves the field. And so we should not be disappointed

or anxious if the seed we sow appears to fall into shallow ground, where there is initial excitement but no real impact, or into stony ground, or if it appears to be choked by the cares of the world. We should "leave the field to God, Life, Truth, and Love, remembering that God and His ideas alone are real and harmonious" (S&H 419:5-7).

After Jesus had given this parable of the sower to the large crowds on the shore, the disciples asked him why he spoke to them in parables. His reply enables one to appreciate this method of teaching, a method which ensured that because of the people's familiarity with the subjects he chose, what he was bringing home beyond the surface meaning would be bound to penetrate their thought in due course. If he had tried to give them the spiritual interpretation of this particular parable, which he *was* able to give his disciples because through their studentship they were ready to accept it, the crowds would not have been interested and would have dismissed it altogether if they had felt it had been imposed on them. They could not dismiss, however, the truth of what they knew from their own observation of the life around them – the effect of seed sown by the wayside, for instance – and therefore the deeper, spiritual significance of all this would eventually dawn on their thought. Of that the Master could have had no doubt. "In no other one thing seemed Jesus of Nazareth more divine than in his faith in the immortality of his words" (Mis.99:19-20), and this was because his words expressed ideas established in the divine Principle and translated into human language. He rested his case there and left the seed to its irresistible propagation.

Surely the deeper lesson of this parable is that we should rejoice that the first three states of thought and all that they suggest have no reality, no validity, no claim on us or anyone; there is only one Mind and one type of mind and that is the Mind which men call God, the divine Principle from which emanates all intelligence. For the same reason we can see that the fourth state of thought, the good soil, is ours and is us. The student should understand how important it is that he establishes in his consciousness of himself the fact



indicated by the Master in that phrase "good soil." He should realize that because he is nothing more and nothing less than Principle's expression, his whole being represents the "soil of an 'honest and good heart.'" He can then turn to the negative tendencies raised by Jesus, analyze his thinking, and accept that they are no part of his being. Thus he acknowledges that the vital seeds of Truth are not something falling by the wayside of his experience, a subject in which he is occasionally interested when he has the time. Dismissing this lie, he knows that he is vitally interested, that Truth is not a wayside subject but concerns every side of his experience of living. Placing himself squarely in that position, he will find that it is so, and then his thought will pass to dealing with the suggestions covered by the stony ground and shallow soil. He will realize that he has no time to waste on the theories put forward in the world around him by the news media, idle gossip, ignorant reasoning based on mortal history, and suchlike - stony stuff which, if entertained, would cause such a stumbling-block in his thinking that it would endeavour to destroy his true rootings, his strong convictions about God and man, Principle and idea; in other words, he knows that like the Master he can "walk *over*, not *into* or *with*, the currents of matter, or mortal mind" (Un.11:3-4). With this joy and strength he moves to deal with his own personal self - the thorns of self-depreciation or of egotism which choke the wonderful truth that his whole selfhood is the expression and presence of that divine Self whom men call God.

Adopting the threefold purposefulness arising from the meeting of the challenges given by the Master in this parable, he finds himself standing in the stature of true manhood where he feels and knows that the Science of being as revealed to him through the teachings of Christian Science is not a wayside subject, but the whole subject with which he is vitally concerned; for that reason it does not allow of the stony reasoning of mortal theories which if listened to would weaken the certainties of his true rootings, the rootings which when held to give vigour and freedom to his thinking; nor does it allow of selfishness, the thorny stuff of self-

depreciation, "self-will, self-justification, and self-love" (S&H 242:18), which, again if allowed, would choke the clean realization of what he is and why he is.

Thoroughly dealing with the obstructive tendencies symbolized in this parable, he finds that his experience embraces realizations of Truth which take hold of his consciousness to such a degree that he enjoys that hundred per cent illumination and inspiration which men can find no words to explain; he also has that "sixtyfold" experience of the strength and purpose of his own manhood; and again he has constant reminders of the resurrection process, the threefold uplift out of various suggestions and inclinations of mortal mind which may have seemed to pursue him, on to a continual upward plane of reasoning. He has the joy of a continual flow of demonstrations, a continuous resurrection morn which confirms and encourages him in the realization that the ultimate perfection is drawing nearer to him day by day. These experiences give him a touch of what Mrs Eddy referred to when she declared, "To-day my soul can only sing and soar. An increasing sense of God's love, omnipresence, and omnipotence enfolds me. Each day I know Him nearer, love Him more, and humbly pray to serve Him better" (My.174:25-28).

As with all the parables of Jesus, when looked at properly and taken seriously, the student can only say of this parable, "How wonderful," and then pausing for the moment of Truth add, "Not only is it wonderful, it is me."

# The rich man and the beggar

(*Luke 16:19-31*)

“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

The man who gave this parable knew that there is no death. He had demonstrated this in many instances by bringing individuals out of the belief of death. As Mrs Eddy says, he “accepted the one fact

whereby alone the rule of Life can be demonstrated, — namely, that there is no death” (Un.55:1-3). His promise to us is definite and dynamic: “If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.” We may then ask ourselves why he gave this very parable, which on a first reading seems to imply that the transition called death is an actual happening. When we examine the story, however, we see that the rich man and the poor man, whom Jesus used to illustrate the points he wished to bring out, are still in a state of conscious existence and still expressing their individual way of thinking, although they have moved themselves to a new area of consciousness. We have to remember that the Master knew also that there was no process towards supply, as his words bear witness: “Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.” He demonstrated his understanding of this in the immediate availability of food necessary to feed the four thousand and the five thousand and also in such instances as the immediate availability of money to pay the tax when he sent Peter to collect it from the fish’s mouth. But this same man, knowing where others stood with regard to this understanding and realizing their entrenched belief in processes, gave the parable of the sower to make clear to anyone who does believe in these processes how to conduct himself through them in order to arrive at the same conclusion. Similarly, in this parable of Dives and Lazarus, he is showing what is necessary if someone does believe in the death process — that is, if he believes that we truly pass out of this existence into another. The truth is that it is impossible to pass out of consciousness. We are always conscious, that state of being is us, and it will never be moved from its purposefulness and wonderfulness as our only being. We go to sleep at night and we wake in the morning and through the whole of that period we have been conscious, fully conscious and fully operative; how else would our body have responded in its normal functioning?

In the story the poor man enjoyed a sense of relief on finding that he had not died, and consequently was inspired by the realization that he was and never had been dependent on matter and material con-

ditions for life and happiness. But after the first joyful relief given by these angel thoughts he had to establish the truth of their message through developing his scientific understanding; he had to go to the very bosom or central point of the Abraham experience. Jesus used Abraham in his story as a symbol acceptable to his hearers of a realization of the prime importance of the spiritual. Such a realization exposes reliance on matter as the basic error of mortal thought and the only producer of suffering. Abraham had recognized that material so-called substance could give him nothing, but he then had to turn his back on Ur of the Chaldees, the city which symbolized this, and seek "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" — that is, the spiritual understanding at the back of his revelation that only the spiritual is of value and has any creative power.

The poor man's path was easier than the rich man's because as Mrs Eddy puts it, "Better the suffering which awakens mortal mind from its fleshly dream, than the false pleasures which tend to perpetuate this dream" (S&H 196:6-8). Matter had never been a prop to Lazarus' sense of life; his problem had lain rather in the belief that a lack of matter made him justifiably sore with envy and caused his grievous sufferings. Now he stood in a position where all this had dropped away from him, but his first glimpse of the truth had to be made his own, as all glimpses of Truth have to be; for instance, when Mrs Eddy was led to that wonderful glimpse of ultimate Truth which raised her from suffering to the realization of "Life in and of Spirit; this Life being the sole reality of existence" (Mis.24:17-18), she knew that she had to go away and find the Science at the back of it so that the glimpse would never be lost; and she tells us that she spent three years in doing this. Jesus is making the same point here in relation to Lazarus.

On the other side of the picture, and with a "great gulf" between him and Lazarus from the standpoint of understanding, we have the rich man. Having worshipped matter as his god and the source of his so-called bliss and now tormented by realizing its utter uselessness, he saw that to remedy this very nakedness he had first to admit that

the Abraham way was the only way and the only escape from his mental torture — hence his request that Lazarus should leave Abraham's bosom to cool his tongue; but he was not prepared to take any action himself, seeking refuge in the vain hope that a mere admission of the value of the spiritual, although accompanied by a tenacious clinging to his old illusions, would bring some release from his pain of mind. The intensity of his acknowledgment of his mistake caused him to wish that those on earth indulging in sensuality as he had done should be warned against falling into the agony of his present position; his five brethren symbolized the sensuality based on accepting the testimony of the five senses. But Jesus makes the point that the individual can only learn his lesson from his own individual experience, and so if here on earth people take no notice of all the teachings and illustrations given them in the Scriptures of the fact that materiality and matter can do nothing for man and therefore do not exist, no other message or example will help them unless their own progress causes them to want to listen.

The Master was also dealing in this parable with the claims of spiritualism, one of which is that enlightenment can be gained on earth from those who have passed on to another experience. He first makes it plain that no communication can exist between opposite states of belief, just as someone in what we call a sleeping state cannot communicate with someone in what we call a waking state, and then shows that even if such intercourse were possible, it would bring no illumination to earth and make no impression on those buried in sensuality. Mrs Eddy states, "All that are called 'communications from spirits,' lie within the realm of mortal thought on this present plane of existence, and are the antipodes of Christian Science; the immortal and mortal are as direct opposites as light and darkness" (Mis.34:23-27). Jesus is also pointing out that here where we are we have all that we need to convince us if we are ready to be convinced — the persistent, scientific teaching based on the experience of individuals (represented here by Moses and the prophets) who proved to a large extent what they later put into words.

If we concede that our friends are in another state of consciousness

and yet claim that we can become cognizant of them through one or other of the senses, such as hearing, then logically we would have to go on to admit that we *could* become conscious of them through *all* the senses, since it is admitted that all the five senses combined are the means of mortal cognizance — and that would mean that they had not passed on to another state of consciousness. So any speculation based on superstition and mere theory can do nothing but confuse us and has no more substance than a house built of blocks of ice cream, which may be a temporary plaything but will finally melt. Any theory built on belief in the illusion called death can only dissolve before the inescapable fact of Life's allness.

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Those who believe in death and start their speculations on this basis, however much they claim that their thinking is directed in a spiritual manner, have made the prime mistake of admitting the reality of death, therefore their very materiality, although possibly cloaked in an effort at spirituality, produces a gulf between them and those who no longer make that mistake and who are either here in this existence or still as alive as ever in another existence. The "great gulf" is between those who believe in matter, including its final mandate of death, and those who have seen the nothingness of its claim to existence and power and have demonstrated this truth to themselves to some extent. The fundamental error is the belief in matter, which culminates in belief in the inevitability of death — that which can never take place in the realm of reality and is solely a phenomenon of mortal imagination.

The lessons which Jesus' hearers may have thought of as taking place in that fantasy world called "after death" were nothing more and nothing less than the lessons which anyone and everyone has to learn *here*, namely, that matter cannot give us anything because it does not exist, nor can it take from us anything, again because it does not exist; therefore belief in it as abundance or riches or belief in it as lack or poverty can and must be overcome in man's present experience. In any case it has to be resolved in the experience of the individual, whether he undertakes it now or puts it off in the hope that

in some mysterious way through that which never happens — death — it will resolve itself more easily. Jesus makes clear that it will not resolve itself more easily through that channel and that whether here or so-called hereafter the challenge is always *here* as regards the individual; it is something he has to meet in order to enter the true understanding of what he is and what he is made of.

Man has never for a moment ceased to be God's expression. Anything else is a dream. We may watch someone having a horrible dream and see his whole face twitching in agony, or we may watch someone having a pleasant dream and see a blissful smile as he stays in that dream as long as he can, but in both instances the individual is in dreamland, whether it is a case of suffering in dreamland or pleasure in dreamland. "Entirely separate from the belief and dream of material living, is the Life divine" (S&H 14:25-26), and what we all have to do is to wake from that dream of material living to find the Life divine which is already ours to enjoy.

The parable points out that even if we believe that death does take place, the less reliance we put on matter now the less we shall believe in it all along the line and the more quickly we shall be helped to accept the position in which we shall find ourselves, where through a growing disbelief in matter as a factor in our real life we see more and more the necessity of finding what the only important factor is, as Abraham did when he left Ur of the Chaldees and "looked for a city [a line of reasoning and revelation] which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Conversely, Jesus was making clear that the more we indulge belief in matter's so-called substance and capacity to confer health, happiness, and security, the harder it will be for us to climb out of those beliefs, as the rich man found. Jesus was saying, in other words, "Rid yourself now of your belief in matter as substance, cause, or reality, and this will open for you the path which leads in the right direction, just as Abraham had to leave Ur of the Chaldees in order to find the true city of consciousness."

So this parable was given by the Master to show us how to deal with the belief of death if we do accept it, just as he gave the parable



of the sower to show us how to arrive at the harvest if we believe that there is a process which we have to go through in order to have it. In that parable he made quite plain the best course to take and here he does the same; in this case it is to shed as far as possible belief in matter in every shape and form as necessary for our well-being. Thereby we shall be mentally fitted, as the poor man was, to carry the realization of this truth into the realm of scientific understanding as to why it is so, for our understanding of the spiritual Science at the back of these truths will make them real to us and therefore to our experience — and as with Abraham this understanding can come to us right here. The lesson thus is plain: we should start now to accept that “one fact whereby alone the rule of Life can be demonstrated, — namely, that there is no death” and get on with learning the rule of Life here. This rule is that life is wholly spiritual and is made up of spiritual realizations and convictions and that matter has no part to play other than to prove to us its own insubstantiality. If we obey that rule here and now, then if through our ignorance we do experience that which Mrs Eddy describes as “the transitional stage in human experience called death” (S&H 572.23-24), it will serve only to convince us of the rightness of the way we have taken. This is the way which is available to us here and now, as it was to Abraham without his having to die and as it was seen and experienced by the beloved disciple John, who beheld “a new heaven and a new earth” while on our plane of existence.

We must realize that even though in our present stage of understanding we may believe that death takes place, we shall all find that it does not; and so although we may not feel able to understand this truth fully now, it is a wise man who goes ahead with the development of those spiritual qualities which, being entirely separate from matter, can never even be touched by belief in death. If the Scriptural statement is true, “In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be,” it must also be true that if we will equip ourselves with an absolute disbelief in matter and a growing certainty and understanding of Spirit and spirituality, then when we wake from the belief of death to find that we have not died, we shall be well furnished to proceed

along the path which this discovery will make clear. We shall be conscious that we have many things yet to understand and accept, but at least are on the right track, learning that we are immortal and how to be what we are.

Therefore this story given us by the Master is as heartening and instructive as the story of the sower and the seed, and if we take it in that light it has the same wonderful lessons. Jesus was the great Wayshower, and our best course is to accept the way he showed, for through doing this we shall grow to the joyful realization implied in those words of his: "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." "Life is deathless. Life is the origin and ultimate of man, never attainable through death, but gained by walking in the pathway of Truth both before and after that which is called death" (S&H 487:3-6).

Mrs Eddy shows the immense present benefits which result from facing the issue squarely: "If the belief in death were obliterated, and the understanding obtained that there is no death, this would be a 'tree of life,' known by its fruits. Man should renew his energies and endeavors, and see the folly of hypocrisy, while also learning the necessity of working out his own salvation. When it is learned that disease cannot destroy life, and that mortals are not saved from sin or sickness by death, this understanding will quicken into newness of life. It will master either a desire to die or a dread of the grave, and thus destroy the great fear that besets mortal existence" (S&H 426: 11-22).

Once we have based thought on the fact that there is no death, it leads to an entirely new way of looking at the problems and sorrows which arise through belief in death. For example, if we wish to experience no gulf between ourselves and our friends from whom we feel separated through our ignorant belief in that which we term death, we have only to admit that every relationship in our life has come about through the operation of Principle demonstrating unity and harmony in character-expression. Therefore all our closest and best companionships have been part and parcel of Principle's reflection of itself. This being so, they cannot be interrupted or interfered

with, but must forever continue and forever unfold Principle's purpose for them. The unity and the purposeful development are perpetual, for they are a necessity of Mind's manifestation of intelligence. "What God hath joined together," no man *can* "put asunder." God never joined together two material bodies. Principle could only join together one of its ways of expressing itself with another of its ways of expressing itself, and the interweave is sustained and maintained by that very Principle.

These close relationships, which mortal thinking attaches to our earth-experience alone, never had anything to do with the physical, even when they seemed to have on superficial evidence. We have to lift ourselves out of the belief that we ever saw the true selfhood of each other with physical eyes, ever heard it with physical ears, ever touched it with physical hands. When we stop to think, we realize that we truly know each other, love each other, and communicate with each other only through spiritual qualities made manifest in the detail of character-expression — through understanding and appreciating in each other the unique God-reflecting character-facets which make us what we are. Communication between us is always mental and spiritual, always a question of Principle producing its own harmony in countless individual ways. Words and voices are merely the unimportant temporary vehicles. The real communication and companionship goes on in the spiritual realm, unseen by the physical senses, and because it is never anything to do with the physical, nothing that happens to the physical can affect it for better or for worse.

Who has not had the experience of finding his thinking moving along the same lines as his friend's, although not a word has passed between them and they have been unaware of considering the same subject? Such instances lift the veil of materialism and through them we can more easily accept the ultimate truth of relationship, the truth which is established by the fact that we are all ideas of Principle and Principle evolves its own harmony through the relationships and associations of its ideas. As soon as we cease to focus thought on physical phenomena, we find it opened to spiritual evidence, whose

fruitage is an increasing sense of joy for ourselves and therefore must also be the same for those we love.

These relationships go on even if through human beliefs and ignorance we may not be aware of it. When an individual goes to sleep at night, he may believe that there is a great gulf between him and his friends or even a special friend with whom he is sharing the room, but on waking he finds that no separation has taken place. And so it is with us and the belief of death when we bring this belief into subjection to what Jesus meant when he said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep" (John 11:11).

"Had Jesus believed that Lazarus had lived or died in his body, the Master would have stood on the same plane of belief as those who buried the body, and he could not have resuscitated it" (S&H 75:16-20). That statement from "Science and Health" gives us a line of reasoning which will require continual alertness, but which, when we attain to the certainty about it which was the Master's, will enable us to do as he did. Above all it can relieve us here and now of any sense of separation from those we love, and through this we shall learn how not to *wait* for a reunion, but instead find here and now a deeper unity than ever before. Every one of us knows even now that if someone we love goes away for a period, his individuality frequently stands out in much clearer outline and brings him closer in our true cognizance of him than when his physical presence lulled our true awareness, and so our love and gratitude are deepened.

Consciousness is consciousness and remains consciousness, and the realization of this comes through the lessons which reveal that truth to us. The one great lesson which anyone passing "the portals of a new belief" (S&H 251:11) can learn, just as anyone here can learn the same — and should start to do so at once — is that belief in matter plays no part either to benefit him or to deprive him of the ability to enjoy Life. The parable shows unmistakably that "the flesh profiteth nothing" either to do good or to do harm to anyone. It could not bring the rich man life and satisfaction, and it could not deprive the poor man of life and satisfaction, although their ignorant belief that it did caused their different individual experiences. There-

fore the rule is to give matter no power now either to take from us happiness or to endow us with happiness, to take from us life or to endow us with life, to take from us understanding or to endow us with understanding. This means that every single one of us, whatever our beliefs, can wake up to discover that the kingdom of heaven is within us, within our present possibilities of expressing it.

Our own assertion that we are immortal does not prove us to be so, but our realizations that we are the expression of Life, Truth, and Love prove that we must be immortal, for the qualities of thought and experience covered by those terms have always been immortal. Therefore if we wish to become certain of our immortality, let us cultivate our understanding of what Life means, what Truth is, and what Love embraces.

So this parable brings out, firstly, that no one dies in the sense of passing out of existence and, secondly, that the passing the portals of a new belief will only prove to the individual that because he has not died as a result of material processes, he never lived because of those processes. He will see that his material life had been supposed to end in death, but death has not taken place and so the belief of life in matter could only have been as much a dream as the belief of death has proved.

The only thing which is not a dream and can never be taken from us, here or hereafter, is what is based on reality, the kingdom of heaven within us *now*. We can never lose the spiritual ability and initiative which we have developed and expressed under the impulsion of Principle. In the last analysis we are but Principle's expression of itself, so this is not ours to lose. Therefore what we should cultivate is our realization of this. We need a clear and scientific understanding of the nothingness of matter and just as clear an understanding of the somethingness of the spiritual. Then we shall not rely on the wrong thing or put our trust in it as the answer to our longings, but shall have increasingly the joy that no man and no experience can take away. "The belief that existence is contingent on matter must be met and mastered by Science, before Life can be understood and harmony obtained" (S&H 427:9-12).

The following paragraph illuminates the path to which the parable points: "Progress is spiritual. Progress is the maturing conception of divine Love; it demonstrates the scientific, sinless life of man and mortal's painless departure from matter to Spirit, not through death, but through the true idea of Life, — and Life not in matter but in Mind" (My.181:8-12).

We should realize that it is not necessary to die in order to find out that we cannot do so. The time will come (and should be now) when we have the high goal always before us — namely, that there is no death. This was the goal set forth by Jesus, and he conducted his reasoning in every direction in accord with this ideal. He so developed his sense of Life and its meaning that finally his whole consciousness was filled out with the obviousness of its ever-presence and he could say, "The prince of this world [ignorance] cometh, and hath nothing in me."

The best way to deal with all speculation is to take what we know and have, use it and live with it. In the light of this we can see why at the head of her chapter "Science of Being" Mrs Eddy included this quotation from Martin Luther: "Here I stand. I can do no otherwise; so help me God! Amen!" The individual should realize that here he is, equipped to enjoy life, which he is bound to have, equipped with intelligence, which is present for him to utilize, and that he can and should adopt the standard of living of the great Master. With him, "life was not merely a sense of existence, but an accompanying sense of power that subdued matter and brought to light immortality" (Ret.58:7-9). That is where the individual stands and where he will always stand. Death is no more real than tomorrow is real — both of them are vacuous concepts and will never exist. How wonderful it would be for anyone who accepted this and simply said to himself, "All right, I am an immortal being and so I am not going to concern myself with speculation as to the future. I am going to concern myself only with Life and all that that means and how I am living it at this moment."

This day is ours and we are here, and with us is all that Science tells us. The child arrives on the beach, takes what he has — bucket,

spade, sand, water — and lives! Nothing else concerns that child as he fills his “now” with happiness and joy. There is a lesson in this, and whenever we meet those who fully express Life we find that they are like that child.

May not Mrs Eddy have summarized the whole purpose of this parable in these words: “Life is eternal. We should find this out, and begin the demonstration thereof” (S&H 246:27-28)?

# The wicked husbandmen

(*Matthew 21:33-44*)

“Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: and when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”

The parable begins: “There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard” — the vineyard is of course where vines grow and bear fruit, and Jesus (like Isaiah before him) is using the vineyard as a symbol of the fact that man is Principle’s idea and there-



fore fruitful. Jesus said of the Christ Mind which he reflected, "I am the true vine."

"And hedged it round about" — this symbolizes that Principle necessarily makes its idea Principled, holding it within its laws, its government, its infinite harmony. With Principle all is Principled and within the realm of Principle. "Mind's possibilities are not lessened by being confined and conformed to the Science of being" (Mis.60: 20-22).

"And digged a winepress in it" — as Principle's idea each individual has the means of inspiration leading to fruitage. The important thing is letting inspired ideas ripen into practical fruitage, so that we can say, "That which . . . our hands have handled . . . declare we unto you." In the story of Joseph in Genesis the butler's dream in Chapter 40 emphasized the pressing of the grapes into Pharaoh's cup — the grapes were not there just to be looked at, any more than spiritual ideas are there to be gazed at and not expected to operate in our experience.

"And built a tower" — an observation point to see that no one encroaches on the vineyard. Principle gives us the means of watching so that there is no invasion of thought by anything not of Principle. A man close to Principle in his particular sphere is quick to detect any deviation from Principle or any attempt to divert himself or others from the path of Principle or introduce an alien influence.

"And let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country" — Principle lets out to us a wonderful opportunity right where we are, because right where we are we can "live so as to keep human consciousness in constant relation with the divine, the spiritual, and the eternal," and if we do this, it will "individualize infinite power," which is Christian Science (see My.160:5-8). The "far country" into which we may think Principle has gone is our ignorant belief that Principle is ever absent. It is the belief that God is "up there" making demands on us, whereas that which requires perfection from us is Principle operating *as us*. "Immortal man was and is God's image or idea, even the infinite expression of infinite Mind, and immortal man is coexistent and coeternal with that Mind" (S&H 336:9-12).

“And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it” — there is never a time when Principle does not demand fruit. Principle knows nothing of excuses, of personal feelings or anything of the kind. It knows no seasons, no moods, no moments when its idea is off duty. There is never a time in mathematics when it is not “the time of the fruit,” and this we accept without difficulty. “When we understand that God is what the Scriptures have declared, — namely, Life, Truth, and Love, — we shall learn to reach heaven through Principle instead of a pardon; and this will make us honest and laborious, knowing that we shall receive only what we have earned. Jesus illustrated this by the parable of the husbandman. If we work to become Christians as honestly and as directly upon a divine Principle, and adhere to the rule of this Principle as directly as we do to the rule of mathematics, we shall be Christian Scientists, and do more than we are now doing, and progress faster than we are now progressing” (Hea.8:19-2).

Where we are, we are equipped to have all the ideas to make that position in our experience perfectly harmonious and responsive to Principle in all the fruitage necessary for that moment. Otherwise we would not be there. That is a fact of Principle. Mortal mind bears opposite testimony and says that we are in need of something not available at this moment, but we and our need are one. The need would not arise if the answer was not in our consciousness. That again is a fact of Science. That is why divine Love “always has met and always will meet every human need” (S&H 494:10-11). It is not a question of a benign Father stooping down to see a need; the individual’s progress has aroused that need by the very answer which the individual as Principle’s fully fruitful idea already *has*, waiting to be used.

“And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inherit-

ance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.”

Mortal mind, or the wicked husbandmen, will endeavour to get us to reject our privilege and ability to bear fruit at every stage of experience, and if we allow it to kill the servants of Principle, such as honesty, obedience, understanding, and love in our daily life, then indeed will this lead to the killing of that ability with which we are all endowed—the ability to help and heal mankind through the Christ-ideas which are ever available to the properly prepared thought.

The child has the ability to bear fruit in the home by the expression of love, decency, and responsiveness, but if permitted to do so, mortal mind will endeavour to cast out that servant of Principle. “Children should obey their parents; insubordination is an evil, blighting the buddings of self-government” (S&H 236:21-22). If through false parenthood a child is allowed to reject the requirements of good in the home, this opens the way to greater antagonism later in life towards the laws of the land and the laws of decency, which he may ridicule and attack.

The adult has the ability to bear fruitage to Principle in the expression of right relationship, right business practices, right family responses and responsibilities, and so on, but there again the wicked husbandmen will endeavour to beat him up on those counts, so that he mocks, rejects, and stifles the legitimate demands for fruitage in these spheres. He “stones” them by employing lines of reasoning which make them appear ridiculous. A man who will not be obedient to the laws of the land and the laws of decency on earth will never become obedient to the demands of Principle, and a man who tries to become obedient to the demands of Principle and yet would tear up the laws of human relationship will find that too to be impossible.

Through this parable Jesus was giving the warning that unless we nip error in the bud, we allow it to grow until we revile the higher demands of goodness with even more stubborn aggression, persecuting our own Christ nature and becoming an actual advocate of error against the claims of Principle. This finally makes it impossible for us

to accept the basic Christ-idea at the back of the lesser demands. It is all one.

Do not let us imagine that this parable applies to the world, but not to ourselves. When the demand comes to be loving or kind or whatever it may be, we may say that it is unnecessary and that we can be Christian Scientists without meeting such demands. But we cannot realize our inherent spiritual nature without the finest morality being manifested and without it being part and parcel of our growing expression of spirituality. It is as impossible to become spiritual by rejecting the moral as it is to become truly moral by neglecting the spiritual. There has to be the coincidence of the human with the divine, and it has to be consistent. Mrs Eddy repeatedly makes this plain in her writings.

The great Master said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Jesus came to lead morality out of mere ritual and habit into the inspiration which makes it natural.

One of the reasons why these parables are magnificent is that Jesus was not teaching a subject so much as what he himself had become, and thereby they have a depth and a living quality which other teaching may lack. It is himself which a man teaches — his own relationship to Principle, his own responses to Principle. Once it becomes mere theory, teaching becomes flat and uninteresting to the listener. But Jesus' words made his hearers' hearts burn within them. What gave his teaching its power was that he was fully involved in what he was saying.

Here we can see that he had lived the truth of this parable. The spiritual idea, or Christ, "entered into the minutiae of the life of the personal Jesus. It made him an honest man, a good carpenter, and a good man, before it could make him the glorified" (Mis.166:29-32). Earlier than that, it made him a good son. If instead of being "subject unto" his parents, he had said to them after they found him in the Temple at the age of twelve, "I'm finished with you if you question

what I'm doing," he would never have been able to say later, "not my will, but Thine, be done" or yielded to the demands of Principle and been controlled by it to the manifestation of good. At every point he was the servant of Principle and acquiesced in the demands of good at every level. In Jesus we see a man moving in complete harmony with all that was Principled, so that when he was asked, for instance, by the centurion to heal his servant, he replied, "I will come and heal him" (Matthew 8:7). The centurion represented Rome and the persecution imposed by Rome on his race, but no human reasoning interfered with Jesus' immediate responses to Love.

If we are in earnest and we look at our own lives, we can see that we feel the demands of Principle for fruitage first of all in our own individual thoughts and behaviour and then in our thoughts and behaviour towards others. In each case the arguments of mortal mind will try to kill or at any rate lessen our response to those demands. In the case of the first demand the argument may often come, for instance, "All this talk about the need to be kind and calm and controlled is outdated in this day and age, and I shall be left behind if I listen to it." If we heed any such argument, we do not render the fruit which Principle demands. Then when a greater call comes to be a servant of Principle by producing the fruit of practical good in helping others, the argument which tries to kill response to that demand is likely to be some form of self-depreciation or else laziness. And so again we may not yield the fruit we should.

Then comes the greatest call of all. It comes continually, but it is the one we find the hardest to admit. This is the direct demand to acknowledge our sonship, that we are Principle's idea, its perfect and wholly spiritual idea. Principle is always sending that to us as its great gift, its beloved son. False theology will do all it can to kill it for us; it masquerades as our own thought and suggests with many subtle lines of reasoning that it is sacrilegious to admit any such thing. But first and last this is the most important demand. Moreover, obedience to it will give us the fruitage which we can bear back to Principle from the vineyard of its everlasting knowing of itself. The inheritance or natural outcome of the Christ Mind depends

absolutely on our expression of that Christ Mind, and therefore if we allow anything to suppress or “kill” our natural ability to express it, we can never possess the inheritance, which is why the argument of the wicked husbandmen as to the way to gain the inheritance contradicts itself, as do all the arguments of mortal mind.

We know instinctively that Principle’s supreme call on us is a right demand and acceptable to intelligence, but mortal mind becomes more rampant by the very presence of that which it knows to be right and tells us to kill it by obstruction or argument against it or by sheer indifference. We can all listen to sweet nicenesses about being good, but most people find a stubbornness coming up when the demands of Principle are Principled without any deviation or trimmings. They complain of being pressurized when asked to identify themselves with Principle in consciousness, spiritual atmosphere, and character-expression. The resistance is never us, but is mortal mind trying to impede our fruitage, and it is for us to cast it out as a liar.

It was when Jesus said, “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30) that he was accused of blasphemy and of having a devil and the Jews took up stones to stone him. And so with each one of us in some degree: we may be able to admit theoretically that we are the son of God, but actually to put on the shoes of the son of God and wear them — to accept the joy and power of being “the royal reflection of the infinite” (S&H 313:16-17), to accept that we are entitled, for instance, to the best of answers immediately to any problem or need which we may feel — is a different matter. Everything tries to say, “This is the heir; come, let us kill him.” But Principle is imperative.

We do not always kill the servants and finally the “son” of Principle by hatred or rejection, but sometimes through our own poor opinion of our ability to respond and to rouse ourselves to meet Principle’s demand. Thus we may hear a voice saying, “I am not good enough” or “This isn’t meant for me.” Such despondency, if allowed, would kill the opportunity to be inspired by accepting Principle’s demands and to say, “Yes, I *can* respond and therefore I

*will* respond, even though the fruitage and how to attain it may not be clear to me at this moment.”

Jesus recognized in his own disciples that they had followed him faithfully, but had not fully realized the joys and privileges of sonship. And so he said to them, “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” He saw that they had not acted as sons. If they had asked, they would have wakened to what they *had* as sons of God. The only source of fruitage is the full recognition of the relationship between Principle and its idea, the acceptance of the joy and power of being Principle’s consciousness of itself.

To claim the fruitage of sonship without having lived as a son means that we have feet of clay and our claim will collapse. But to live as a son and not claim the fruits of sonship is equally bad. Jesus lived as a son in his own self and in the use of his understanding for others, but he did it all with increasing joy in sonship and what that entitled him to. It was this which he saw to be lacking in his disciples and in human consciousness in general.

“When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”

If we try to reject Principle’s demands for fruit, the only result will be that Principle will cast out the husbandmen of mortal mind which we have allowed in and will waken in us the inherent husbandry of good which will restore us to our natural status as Principle’s idea. The stone of our own Principle-impelled reasoning will inevitably

establish itself and there will be fruit for us to gather. We shall wake up to the fact that we *are* good and truly moral and *have* the power of Science. Then the stone which mortal mind tried to cause us to reject — the admission of perfection as Principle's idea — will become for us "the head of the corner." In falling on it we had what seemed a bad time, but finally it will have fallen on us to crush out all the false, negative thinking and grind it to powder, to the nothingness of dust. The calculus of good, represented by the stone in the Bible, is forever in man. If any man tries to reject it, he will find he cannot do so. *It* will crush all that tried to turn him against it and will annihilate it. The stone of the true line of reasoning impelled by Principle, even if it has been rejected at every level, does become the headstone of the corner, or that alone on which we build everything in our conscious experience. In other words, though we make our bed in hell, even there shall we be made by Principle into the man of Principle. Mrs Eddy uses the very words of this parable in her statement: "Truth is always the victor. Sickness and sin fall by their own weight. Truth is the rock of ages, the headstone of the corner, 'but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder'" (S&H 380: 4-7) — grind all his resistance, based on false education, into the nothingness on which it is founded.

Saul as a persecutor of the Christians fell on the stone and it broke him as Saul, grinding to powder all the false teachings which had influenced him, and thus he became Paul, the great Christian.

Jesus' utter conviction of the impelling power of Principle and the ultimate impossibility of resisting it made all his teachings stir human thought and cause men to make excuses or else to reject out of hand that which every one of them, like himself, knew to be true. His teachings uncovered a hating Saul and a loving disciple, John, but both of them arrived at the final truth — one through suffering, the other through Science. Simon the Pharisee entertained the representative of Truth as just a pleasant and popular thing to do and therefore temporarily it made no real impact on him. It is better to think that we hate something than to be tepid about it or indifferent to it, but the best way of all is to love in the manner shown us through the



beloved disciple John.

The solution to the process of suffering lies in never letting Principle go into "a far country," never thinking of ourselves as separate from Principle or as having lost or even *able* to lose contact with Principle. "Existence, separate from divinity, Science explains as impossible" (S&H 522:10-11). "God, the divine Principle of harmony, is ever with men, and they are His people. Thus man was no longer regarded as a miserable sinner, but as the blessed child of God" (S&H 573:15-18).

The Christ-idea can only be the realization of ourselves as Principle's expression of itself. The Christ-idea is forever aware of the fact that there is nothing going on but Principle and its expression of itself as ourselves and as others, and only by holding this true sense of ourselves and our true Christhood are we made safe from suggestions (symbolized here by the wicked husbandmen) that we can be or do anything of ourselves other than as the expression of Principle. The wicked husbandmen would husband in us a sense of egotism. The true husbandman of Principle fosters and enlarges the idea of our wonderfulness as Principle's expression of itself. This the wicked husbandmen can never assail.

We have to become aware of the fact that Principle *has* us as its exponents and expression and is going to have us as that from our point of view as well, since it knows nothing else. Any deviations which we like to indulge in are never taking place in actual fact, and have no more effect on the ultimate outcome and purpose of Principle than a small boy playing marbles on his way to school, for to school he has to go. Principle is never put off course, never interfered with.

So after giving this illustration Jesus shows that even if we continually reject Principle at every level, it will all be turned into its native nothingness. But that will be done through grinding it to powder, or the suffering of bitter experience, instead of through Science. The way of Science is the way of Jesus — to obey Principle first in youth, just as he did, which means for us that we respond to Principle even before we fully understand the reason why. We are told of the early days of Jesus that he was "subject unto" his parents,

but later in his life when he understood more of true parenthood, he was able to ask intelligently, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." He said this even whilst holding a deep respect and affection for his mother, which caused him to make provision for her future even when he was on the cross and she and his beloved disciple were beneath it (see John 19:26,27). In this way and this way only we respond to Principle in our growing maturity — in our increasing understanding of Principle — and thus we begin to feel and know that we are the son of that Principle which we have learnt to obey, until it becomes our All-in-all, our only Father, the father of all our movements, thoughts, and decisions. We cannot become a son until we are fully obedient to the Father, but when through practice we retain that full responsiveness, then in whatever sphere of life we are engaged, we finally cannot make a mistake, for Principle controls us absolutely. That day has to be for everyone. Delay only causes unhappiness and suffering, because instinctively and inherently and by all our spiritual sense we know that we are the son of Principle, that we are responsive and must be responsive.

Jesus must have been smiling on the shore after his resurrection because he knew the inevitable victory of Principle for its man. Had he not known that, he would have been very disappointed over the performance of his disciples so soon after he had left them, for they, trying to reject the necessities of the higher calling to which he had elevated them through the past three years — namely, to be "fishers of men" — had almost aggressively returned to the routine of ordinary fishing. This attempt to be no longer what they really were resulted in their catching nothing that night (John 21:3). But the disappointment this caused them allowed the ever-waiting friend of man, the Christ, to call them and awaken them to their true purposefulness; the Master's conversation with his errant but very capable student, Peter, revealed this at that wonderful breakfast on the shore of Galilee. We all have the privilege of partaking of that morning

meal so beautifully described in "Science and Health" (34:29 — 35:12).

If we would only realize that Principle is going to have us perfect in our experience and cognizance, even as it already has us perfect in *its* experience and cognizance, we would begin to acquiesce in Principle's demands and would watch earnestly to see and feel Principle's awareness and cognizance of us so that we could respond to it. It would be good if we developed the habit of asking, "What is Principle thinking of me now?" and having found the answer, said, "That is what I will think of myself." "What is Principle asking of me now?" and having found the answer, said, "That is what I will cause myself to do." We must look first to Principle, to God, and eliminate anything from thought which we know could not be in the divine consciousness and then conform to what we know must be in that divine consciousness. Then we have made ourselves the sons of God. In this way we yield Principle-created fruitage to our own cognizance and experience, and in so doing we are returning it, as it were, giving it back to the Principle which gave it to us. And, what is more, no doubts or negative arguments (that is, wicked husbandmen) are then able to kill this sonship or prevent it returning to its Principle with the fruitage of the true vine.

Some may argue that there is every reason to believe that a man can drift along through life without worry, just as a boy can drift through his schooldays at every stage of education. But inevitably there comes the time, either here or hereafter — and as far as he is concerned it is always "here" — when the individual has to face up to the facts of Life and his own immortal stature calling on him to respond to it. So it is as well to refute the argument that there is little or no spiritualization going on and in fact little need of it, for this is never so. In winter a man could look at his garden and be convinced that nothing much was happening, but a gardener knows that everything is happening; the spring will come and the seasons will bear their testimony to the impelling purpose of Principle to which everything has finally to respond.

The teachings of Jesus were not interesting theories which can be

ignored, but gave details of the wonderful opportunity every man has now for heaven here in immediate experience without procrastination. The simple fact is that Principle is going to have us recognize in ourselves the perfection which it recognizes in us, because we are its expression. Because this inevitably *will* take place, it is a wise man who resolves to do his best to bring it into his experience sooner rather than later. As Paul said, "now is the accepted time," so there is every need to get on with it. Any suggestion to the contrary can only be erroneous.

The lesson of the parable is that Principle demands of each one of us that at every level of our experience and expression we render fruitage which is Principled in nature. Sometimes the earnest student is misled in his interpretation of what may be termed the fruitage of Christian Science and believes that it is confined to the healing of so-called physical problems. Certainly this is important and necessary, but thought focused on that alone may overlook the importance of what may be called the "firstfruits" of spirituality, referred to by Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22). These are the firstfruits leading to the greater fruitage of demonstration over sin, disease, and death. They are the qualities which open the floodgates to the inspiration which enables healing to take place. "The highest spiritual Christianity in individual lives is indispensable to the acquiring of greater power in the perfected Science of healing all manner of diseases" (Message 1901, 2:3-5).

The impetuous Peter desired to walk on the water as his Master had done, and Jesus allowed him to do so, but may not the reason for his inability to sustain that demonstration have lain in the fact that whilst *he* was absorbed in his own performance of what he regarded as a miracle, Jesus had looked upon walking on the water as a natural process to reach the students who needed him? It was the fruitage of a true spirituality which gave Jesus the ability to dismiss the suggestion that anything physical could separate him from the students he loved. The ability to walk on the water undoubtedly represented a wonderful demonstration or fruitage of spirituality, but it was the

spirituality possessing his consciousness to the exclusion of all else which caused that demonstration to be made with consummate naturalness. (See Matthew 14:22-33.) And so it is with us: we find that the firstfruits of spirituality lead to that other fruitage which we long to have.

The servants of Principle, the qualities which express Principle, are so important that we should make sure that we do not disregard them and so kill their influence in our lives, thereby leading to the temporary killing of our own inherent right to reflect the son and heir of Principle, the Christ, in our ability to heal. Some of these servants of Principle and what they lead to are revealed in this question asked by Mrs Eddy: "if the unselfish affections be lacking, and common sense and common humanity are disregarded, what mental quality remains, with which to evoke healing from the outstretched arm of righteousness?" (S&H 365:11-14).

We need to be alert that mortal mind (symbolized by the wicked husbandmen) will use many arguments (throw many stones) to destroy these qualities. For instance, we may find ourselves accepting the false reasoning that there is no necessity to submit to the requirements of morality (that is, how we conduct ourselves in questions to do with the flesh) since matter is unreal. Logically, however, immorality in this sense can occur only through a conviction that matter *is* real; therefore before we can understand that matter is unreal it does become necessary to be moral and to understand true morality, which is the dismissal of all the claims of the flesh as having no more substance than a dream from which we desire to awaken ourselves. All along the line, so-called human reason will endeavour to destroy the servants of Principle and if allowed will lead us to a position where our heir, our inherent Christ ability to do good and to heal, will be killed in us either through self-depreciation or through a belief that the expression of this Christ ability is not necessary for us. As the expression of all these qualities is part and parcel of our true being and of the ultimate ability to overcome belief in evil and so help and heal mankind, Principle will demand and finally ensure that we come into line with its requirements.

## THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN

This is the lesson of the parable, and we are wise to take the lesson and begin to enjoy our ability to present Principle with fruitage which Principle has given us for that purpose. There is no greater joy to be had, as Jesus proved and stated.

# The dragnet

(*Matthew 13:47-50*)

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

Everything that is gathered into the net represents all that comes into our thought and experience from the “sea” of “tempest-tossed human concepts” (S&H 536:6-7). We are bound to gather a mixture of impressions. Every day our net is full and inevitably contains all kinds of material. Some will be good, some bad. The good will be based on Truth, the bad will not. It is a wise practice — more than that, it is essential — at the end of each day and at the end of a particular phase of experience to go quietly over the impressions gained in order to gather what is good and to cast out the rest from consciousness, having learned from its lessons.

The angels represent the spiritual instincts and intuitions which guide us as to what is truly valuable and what is not, what is real substance and what is not, what is to be loved and what is to be dismissed. If at the end of the day or of some special experience we sit down to let these “angels” of Principle separate the positive qualities of that experience from the negative, and we make sure that we eliminate the negative through seeing that it has no reality and therefore could never have happened in reality, this habit will prove beneficial both to our peace of mind and also to the strengthening of our understanding of Science and its purposes. We must use the

ability which Science confers to magnify the goodness of the good by seeing the Principle it expresses and to diminish until nullified any suggestions of an opposite to good occurring during the day or in some phase of experience. We thereby reduce error to "its common denominator, nothingness" (S&H 540:9).

If we do this work properly and, instead of trying to retain everything indiscriminately and ruminating over it all, we see to it that we are left only with that which emanates from Principle and is therefore positive and good, then there is not even a vestige of the un-Principled to cause remorse or anger in ourselves. Consequently there is no "wailing and gnashing of teeth," but a happy and proper conclusion to each phase of experience. If we do not sit down and give ourselves time to do this, but rush ahead, we may let a confused sense of things linger in consciousness and possibly cause later disturbance.

Jesus was not merely calling for a casual review of impressions gained, but for the strength of scientific reasoning which makes a clear-cut distinction between that which is of Principle and that which is not and then gathers the good into vessels of consecration and discharges the other totally, relegating it to its own atmosphere of discontent and ultimate self-destruction, so that there is nothing left which "worketh or maketh a lie."

"The end of the world" does not refer to a distant day when we are all lined up before God. The "end of the world" which comes continually is the end of our trust in some aspect of the world as mortal mind presents it. We begin to see the hollowness of something which previously appeared safe and sound in our eyes, and as a result we begin to enter and enjoy the spiritual world which made its end inevitable.

What is it that impels "the end of the world" in some specific aspect? It is the fact of  $2+2=4$  which impels the "end of the world" for  $2+2=5$ . And in the same way the initiative is always with our reflection of Principle, causing us to be unhappy with and spew out anything un-Principled. By obeying Principle, we hasten the day when we are finished with illusions. It is a "kingdom of heaven" or heavenly and satisfying experience to so recognize that which is true



that what is untrue drops out of our consciousness and experience.

The parable begins, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto . . ." It seems as if Jesus is showing how we can have a heavenly experience here and now, and if this is so, it is important to us. Mrs Eddy underlines this when she says, "Heaven represents harmony, and divine Science interprets the Principle of heavenly harmony. The great miracle, to human sense, is divine Love, and the grand necessity of existence is to gain the true idea of what constitutes the kingdom of heaven in man" (S&H 560:10-15).

The "wailing and gnashing of teeth" stands for the bitter disappointment which comes our way if we try to cling on to that which we know by spiritual instinct to be substanceless and unworthy of reliance. If we cling to the bad we do not find heaven, because the ideals we try to make our own are finite and not of the stuff of heaven.

It is animal magnetism which in belief makes anyone hold tight to what he really knows is not substance, hanging on to it time after time through stubbornness. Generally speaking, it is only stubbornness which keeps any of us out of the kingdom of heaven. Angelic intuitions do discriminate and distinguish for us; they tell even a burglar that he is doing wrong. Spiritual intuitions will always warn us, so no one has an excuse, but we may refuse to listen. If we adhere to the wrong — it is actually a case of allowing the wrong to adhere to us — we go down with what we have clung to, until we wake up. If we keep on the side of the angels, we have a heavenly experience all the time.

When the net is brought to shore, the good is gathered into vessels. This means that we should not deal casually with what is good in our experience. Even if we are picking blackberries, we do not let them slide through our fingers but put them in some container to make full use of them. And so we must gather good into vessels, or let it register spiritually. For instance, we should make a point of opening our eyes to the amount of reliability, punctuality, and decency which we experience in our contact with those whose service we count upon, noting also the part we ourselves play in all this by the amount

of our own service to Principle. Instead of passing carelessly over all the responsiveness, we should take it in and trace it back to Principle, so that it throws out for us any suggestions of "how unreliable people are these days" which may be brought forward in conversation. We should gather it into our vessels of Science until its implications become real for us. We then accept in practice that we live in Principle's world with Principle's expressions. We discard the assumptions of a deteriorating society which the world throws at us, and it is "the end of the world" for the false insinuations as far as we are concerned. Not only that, for our experience is happyfied by the continual discernment of good as illustrated in the response on all sides to the laws of decency and service.

We should never be perfunctory about the good we see and experience. Mrs Eddy spent a great deal of time gathering into the vessels of her publications all the good she had found. If she had not done this and if Jesus had not gathered into the vessels of his words all that he experienced, where would we be? So the individual should see to it that he allows good to make a definite impact on his consciousness in its spiritually scientific import.

The Master was not merely saying that it is advisable to let good register, but showing us something vitally important. He was illustrating one of the ways in which we enter the kingdom of heaven, or the realm of harmonious and purposeful consciousness, daily and hourly, until it becomes quite natural. If we look at anything — an individual, an animal, a bird, a landscape, a flower, or whatever it may be — and regard it as material, we are living in a material world with all its limitations, and a material world is a mortal world, subject to sin, disease, and death. If we see it as a symbol which speaks to us of something beyond itself and we value it as such, we are no longer bound by the surface showing of things. The symbol is not reality itself, but the language whereby we become aware of reality. Mind makes the reality, but men see that reality through symbols. If we constantly take the symbol back to its Principle and so come into closer communion with Principle, we are not living in a finite world, but living in and discovering more of the spiritual and immortal

world. Moreover, we shall come to the point where we no longer have to trace the symbol consciously back to its Principle, because the symbol will not be there as matter at all, but only as the presence of Principle, speaking of Principle. If we look through the symbol to become more conscious of what has sent it to us and we continue to do that, the symbol will finally disappear to us as a symbol, for we shall have grown beyond it.

To play superficially with symbols is an offence against Principle and can cause weeping and wailing for those who indulge in it, just as a child looking at its slate on which someone has wiped off a lovely picture may cry, because he feels he has lost the whole thing and through innocent ignorance believes the symbol on the slate to be all-important. Any symbol is inert in itself and has to be interpreted from Principle to be interpreted rightly. "Nature voices natural, spiritual law and divine Love, but human belief misinterprets nature" (S&H 240:1-2); "The divine Principle of the universe must interpret the universe" (S&H 272:28-29). If we see a beautiful flower and interpret it materially and admire it as matter, we know that it will soon be dead and this may cause us sadness. We have gained no idea from Principle because we have not allowed Principle to interpret the symbol. If on the other hand we let Principle interpret it as an idea of God in its "expression, form, outline, and color" (S&H 247:23-24), then when that flower passes out of apparent presence, we shall have gathered from its symbolic expression a lesson in spirituality which endures beyond the symbol and its expression.

When Jesus praised the beauty of the lily of the field as surpassing in its simple but profound magnificence the grandeur of Solomon in all his glory, he went on to stop men from staying with worship of the symbol and having inevitable sorrow, for he pointed out that the flower would be thrown away the next day, but immediately directed thought to the ever-present sustaining and providing Principle expressed symbolically in that lily of the field: "if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" This

is an illustration of taking the contents of the net and magnifying the spiritual quality of what is found within it and then engraving that on "the understanding and heart 'with the point of a diamond' and the pen of an angel" (S&H 521:16-17). It also illustrates clearly how to dispense with any argument that matter in any form whatever can be identified as real. The symbol (in this case the lily of the field) must therefore never be worshipped in its symbolic form, but valued only for what it reveals. In this process the symbol actually becomes more beautiful to us. We never lose anything by turning from the symbol to what it symbolizes of spiritual truth; "nothing is lost, and all is won, by a right estimate of what is real" (S&H 360:2-3).

If we look at a beautiful flower and ask ourselves what effect it is having on our thinking, the response shows us that it is not merely having a good effect but is also bringing us into contact with qualities which are spiritual in their nature, qualities which are registering on our thought and which may well remain with us if we entertain them fully and properly. In that manner the symbol — in this case the flower, which in its symbolic form is finite — will have registered with us in qualities and realizations which are infinite, and we shall have made proper use of that symbol and its purpose in developing our spiritual awarenesses and responses.

A symbol can and must in every instance be found to point to spiritual fact, whether that symbol appears to be *pro* or *con* — that is, good (as in the case of the lily of the field) or bad (as in the case of lightning, which in his statement, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" [Luke 10:18] Jesus used not as a symbol of destruction, but of the swift self-destruction and complete elimination of evil belief through the all-presence of good realized, which is "heaven"). Whichever way the symbol appears to us to point, it still symbolizes spiritual truths and must be seen to do so. If we have a beautiful symbol like a flower, we must not be caught out by deifying that beauty as physical. When on the other hand we have an ugly or negative symbol, we should not fear it or be repelled by it, but see through its negative symbolization to the positive. Once we begin to make a habit of rejecting and reversing the surface impressions of

sense testimony, it will become so instinctive and quick with us that it will constitute a natural healing process.

All symbols are dangerous if cognized only in their symbolic form. If they are beautiful symbols, they lull us. If they are ugly, we fear them or want to avoid them. But if in every case we see what is *symbolized*, we shall find, as Jesus did, "the unity and the reality of good, the unreality, the nothingness, of evil" (S&H 269:6-8).

We need the ability to translate that which appears to be evil into that which it must in reality be in its symbolic value, for the "greatest wrong is but a supposititious opposite of the highest right" (S&H 368:1-2). "When examined in the light of divine Science, mortals present more than is detected upon the surface, since inverted thoughts and erroneous beliefs must be counterfeits of Truth. Thought is borrowed from a higher source than matter, and by reversal, errors serve as waymarks to the one Mind, in which all error disappears in celestial Truth" (S&H 267:19-25).

For instance, we may say, "There's been a storm today," and if we just accept the storm as something which has happened, our observation of it has done no good at all. But if we immediately say, "There is no storm, because there is no resistance to Truth; the flow of Truth is unable to know or experience resistance," then we are on our way to learning how to attain that same Mind which was also in Christ Jesus when he said to the perturbed mentality at the back of the storm on the lake, "Peace, be still" (Mark 4:39). He recognized that which claimed to be the cause of the storm — namely, the mental disturbance which his teaching aroused — and instantly realized that there could be no such disturbance. Since there is only one Mind, there can be no resistance to its ideas, for there *are* no other ideas. "All consciousness is Mind, and Mind is God" (Ret.56:18).

If we have this attitude of the Master in every situation, we shall see that all that the negative ever does is to illustrate its own powerlessness and thereby emphasize for us the positiveness of the positive and its power for good.

This parable, like all the others, was given for a purpose, but few

## THE DRAGNET

people obey what it asks of them. At the end of a day they do not usually ask themselves, "What have I experienced or thought or seen?" and sit down to separate the good from the bad. But any individual who will do this daily or even hourly will make great strides towards that ideal mental stature in which good is enhanced until it takes on its pure spiritual quality and evil or error is dissipated into its nothingness. Quickness in this work leads to the instantaneity and unlaboured motions of the true consciousness of Mind which is man. And to discover this is indeed the kingdom of heaven.

*Other booklets in this series, covering all the parables,  
will be published in due course.*

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