

CLIFFORD STAMP AND ROSALIE MAAS

“Without a parable
spake he not unto them”

No. 2

The Pharisee and the publican

The lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son

Putting in the sickle

The rich fool

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHORS
5 CANFORD COURT, CLIFF DRIVE, CANFORD CLIFFS,
POOLE, DORSET, BH13 7JD, ENGLAND.

First published in 1981

BOOKS BY CLIFFORD AND DAISY STAMP:

(published by The Foundational Book Company Limited)

How Divine Love Meets the Human Need

Revelation and Demonstration for You

A Scientist Opens His Bible

Satellites, Science, and Peace

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>

Extracts from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible, which is Crown Copyright, are reproduced with permission.

The Pharisee and the publican

(Luke 18:9-14)

“And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

This is a parable about our approach to God. Until every vestige of egotism, self-justification, and pride in our own understanding of God has gone, and there is just the equivalent of the publican's heartfelt reaching out, human thought “has little relation to the actual or divine” (S&H 297:30-31).

“When the Publican's wail went out to the great heart of Love, it won his humble desire” (S&H 448:3-5). That shows the quality of its genuineness. The implication is that the publican felt small before the immensity of Love. Any man who is in earnest and measures himself against the wonderfulness of what God is and against the vastness of Science is bound to feel that he has missed the mark in many directions; but that is not a miserable state of mind, for it signifies a mentality ready for correction and progress. The Pharisee by his attitude made certain that in no way could he be tutored or taught.

No human science or system can explain why it is that an attitude of mind such as the publican's could win for him such commendation

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

as Jesus gave, since it is generally thought that a poor opinion of oneself is a sign of mental weakness. But the fact remains that in everyone's experience there have been times when, having felt abject at his own mental state and performance, there has come somewhere along the line not only a sense of comfort, but also a surge of new confidence. If it is true that false egotism has always blinded men, it must also be true that when this egotism is unseated by the awakening of the individual to its inadequacy, this opens the gates for the true ego of man, based on dependence on that which men call God, to take its rightful place.

At first sight the publican sounds like a wailing weakling, but the point is that he was empty of all self, and this allowed the divine to flow in. The more of self there is, the less room there is for the influx of the divine. Into the vacuums of sense comes the flow-in of Soul, but without those vacuums recognized and laid at the feet of divine Love Soul cannot operate for men. There is a constant necessity to heed Mrs Eddy's words, "A self-satisfied ventilation of fervent sentiments never makes a Christian" (S&H 7:21-23). Science is divine, and that is why every human reliance has to go.

When we think of the publican beating his breast and feeling empty, we need to realize that Jesus' finest hour was when he momentarily felt this emptiness and uttered the cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" The mood was similar, the need as openly expressed. Standing before the throne of grace, he spelt out to the great heart of Love his own tremendous need; and this need, thus spoken, must have been met immediately — the temporary human vacuum was found filled with the presence of God, and this sustained him with wonderful power. At the same time egotism was blinding the Pharisees to such an extent that they were priding themselves on doing their duty in ridding the community of a dangerous troublemaker.

Jesus says that the Pharisee "stood and prayed thus with *himself*" — it was only himself he was communing with, only himself he had faith in, not God, and he was surrounded by his self-centred complacency with regard to his personal performance in every direction in which he

looked.

In contrast, the publican had no opinion of himself. This is a desirable preparatory stage, though not a lasting or final one. We cannot fill vessels already full or even partially full, and they must be emptied of egotistical self-completeness. Nevertheless they cannot stay empty, for there are no vacuums to Principle. The reason for getting rid of self is to allow the truth of Principle's presence expressing itself in our individuality to be revealed and rejoiced in. Anything with self in it closes the door to the unselfed purposefulness of that true nature.

When we honestly empty our vessels of egotism in all its degrees, this permits the inflow of our true selfhood, unknown to egotism but always present and ready to manifest itself when egotism does not overlay it. The publican had opened his consciousness to that which is unfailingly waiting to fill such a state of thought, and that is Principle expressing itself as the individual. Whenever we let ourselves be denuded of self, we immediately find a flow of creative purposefulness, as Mind takes up its rightful position as *our* only Mind. Principle is ever present in consciousness and as consciousness, and the only thing which obstructs this is egotism, so whatever removes a false sense of self allows the true to become visible. It is not a question of us creating Principle's presence, for Principle is perpetually present. The perfect man is forever there. That which hides it is only error, and that is effaced either through Science or through suffering — in this case through the suffering of egotism.

Part and parcel of Bartimaeus' healing of blindness was that he not only recognized the Master for what he was and stood for, but also cast away his old garment, his old sense of self, and came before him no longer contaminated by egotism, but ready to receive the answer to his plea, "Lord, that I might receive my sight." (See Mark 10:46-52.) We have to be naked in order to be re clothed, and when we are naked of self, we find ourselves in our proper clothing as Principle's idea. Paul expressed this when he said, "not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon."

True humility does not deflate the ego or deprive man of individu-

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

ality. This humility was expressed by Jesus when he said, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise," and this led him to make the greatest statement of humility ever made, "I and my Father are one." Mrs Eddy speaks of the Ego-man as the reflection of the Ego-God. (See S&H 281:10-11.)

Jesus kept himself constantly refreshed with the sense, "I can of mine own self do nothing." In human experience it is common that the best achievement comes when there has been such a feeling of personal inadequacy and emptiness that there has been a reaching out of the heart to something higher for inspiration. This indicates that Principle is the only presence and that all other claimed presence has to go for this fact to be realized.

The Master paints a picture of a man who saw that he was nothing without God and who felt the magnitude and wonderfulness of Principle. Because there were no self-opinionated thoughts, but a completely sincere and humble acknowledgment of the greatness of God, his consciousness would justifiably be illumined with all that this would lead him to, as the recognition of the perfection of God has always accomplished for anyone. Mrs Eddy wrote that "an acknowledgment of the perfection of the infinite Unseen confers a power nothing else can" (Un.7:20-22). The Pharisee, on the other hand, made all his claims for perfection to himself and of himself, leaving God out of the picture. "Whatever holds human thought in line with unselfed love, receives directly the divine power" (S&H 192:30-31), and you have unselfed love when self is *out* of the picture and God very much *in* the picture.

We soon despise the other fellow if we have a high opinion of ourselves based on egotism, and the fact that we look down on others as inferior should prove to us that what we have thought about ourselves is not much good. The Pharisee thanked God that he was a superior being, that he was "not as other men are," just as a Christian Scientist may sometimes express self-righteous gratitude to Science for saving him from being "as other men are;" but the fact is that we are all "as other men are" in truth, because there is only

one Mind and it is expressed universally. The only real proof of being a Christian Scientist is that we love our neighbour as our true self and therefore discern and acknowledge his unique expression of the one Mind.

Mrs Eddy says, "Cherish humility," and she describes humility as "the genius of Christian Science." "One can never go up, until one has gone down in his own esteem. Humility is lens and prism to the understanding of Mind-healing; it must be had to understand our textbook; it is indispensable to personal growth, and points out the chart of its divine Principle and rule of practice" (Mis.356:30,23-29). There are two effects of humility. One is that we gain immediate results in proofs of Principle's presence, and the second is that we have at last a "lens and prism" clarified of anything which would hide the Science of that presence.

The publican opened his door of consciousness through humility. The Pharisee closed it through complacency. The Christ-idea is forever saying, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me," but if no one listens for or hears the voice and opens the door, that Christ-idea cannot come in to human cognizance and so its ever-presence is not apparent. Awareness of the divine is what counts — it does not matter what a man says or writes apart from that. *With* that awareness, everything he says or writes is transfigured.

"Beholding the infinite tasks of truth, we pause, — wait on God. Then we push onward, until boundless thought walks enraptured, and conception unconfined is winged to reach the divine glory" (S&H 323:9-12). It is that pause which counts. That pause is the moment of the loss of egotism, because it is the moment of honesty. The moment of honesty is when a man feels nothing of himself and everything of God, and that is what this parable shows.

The lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son

(Luke 15:1-32)

Each one of Jesus' parables is a masterpiece, and they are treasure-troves of Science. They show us "more clearly than we saw before, what we already have and are; and most of all, [they show] us what God is" (No.39:22-24).

They show us the real Jesus, who always "plunged beneath the material surface of things, and found the spiritual cause" (S&H 313:24-26), and therefore we must plunge beneath the surface of each parable in order to find its spiritual cause, or underlying Science. We must never be content with the first comforting impressions of the parables, but discern a deeper meaning through the penetration of Soul.

If the parable of the prodigal was merely a story to encourage someone who had gone off the rails and decided to come back, it might be helpful in a good Christian way, but if we realize the character-structure and habit of deep spiritual analysis of the man who spoke it, could *he* have meant just that? The man who spoke these parables was not just a good man; he was a supreme Scientist.

In Chapter 15 of Luke there are two short parables followed by one long one, and the basic scientific point in each of them is that there is no such thing as loss, whether it is a lost sheep, a lost coin, or a lost son. The finding is only a discovering that it was not lost, and this is a matter for great rejoicing. That point is underlined at each restoration of what appeared lost.

Jesus' parables were always aimed at bringing home the Science at the back of everything, and so here the point is not the human relief

THE LOST SHEEP, THE LOST COIN, AND THE PRODIGAL SON

and happiness at finding what was lost, but the proof that it was never lost or it could never have been found. It was found because it was not lost! All that was lost was the error, the ignorance, which hid the truth from view. The word "loss" cannot be found in the vocabulary of Principle, for in Principle nothing can possibly be lost, and therefore the true meaning of loss is given by Mrs Eddy when she tells us, "loss is gain" (Mis.389:17).

How often the thing we believe we have lost takes on a greater value to us than before we believed it lost, indicating that this process may be necessary to establish true values and in any case showing that the thing has special value and purpose for us.

"Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

The scribes and Pharisees misinterpreted Jesus' whole outlook by endeavouring to downgrade his work by making out that he was consorting with sinners. Jesus never saw it that way. He saw individuals with receptivity to the fore of their character who were willing to listen to him and who as a result of actively exercising their capacity to reverse the claims of error doubled the value of the truth

they found. And so he replied to the accusation of the scribes and the Pharisees by showing them by means of these parables the joy he received through contact with those so-called sinners who responded to his reasoning and thus were able to reach the divine fact behind that reasoning and find their own joy.

The Science at the back of these parables is that what we honestly feel we have lost or lack is actually special to us or we would not have felt a sense of loss over it or felt it specially lacking. It is that specialness which is stirring our consciousness to throw out the sense of loss and realize that we have it. Mortal mind is merely reversing the very truth which spells out true wealth and happiness for us. That is why "loss is gain" (Mis.389:17), because what mortal mind says we have not we really have and it is more important to us than anything else and we have it in greater purposefulness than anything else. That is why we want it in its brilliance and feel the need of its expression. So what may seem to us a big problem is something wonderful surfacing. That which is special and unique to us is crying out to us to acknowledge it, be it, and use it.

The scientific fact is that whenever the term "loss" occurs, it is a bugle-call to realize that in that very direction is our greatest gain, and it is ours for the taking. We have only to search diligently to find it, as in the case of the sheep, or sweep out the errors and doubts, as in the case of the silver coin, and it is ours for the taking and we can thereby rise to the full stature of what we are and bring it into magnificent portrayal.

Sheep have always symbolized following the leadings of Principle. The Master said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." Mrs Eddy wrote, "I will listen for Thy voice, Lest my footsteps stray; I will follow and rejoice All the rugged way" (Mis.398:1-4).

Jesus uses a man in the first parable (and a woman in the second) because the male element in thought, whether in a man or a woman, finds it hard to follow. The curse on man in the Adam-dream is that he must sweat it out on his own. So the male element wants to be egotistically creative and form its own interpretations of Principle

THE LOST SHEEP, THE LOST COIN, AND THE PRODIGAL SON

according to its own opinions, instead of seeing that directly reflecting the one creative Principle and following the flow of ideas which issues from that Principle is far better and brings out the true male, the full stature of manhood.

The devil, or mortal mind, may tell a man that there is something in him which will always obstruct his following of Principle. It tells him that he does not want to learn, from books or from any other individual, but only wants his own opinions. He feels he cannot take a leading from someone else and therefore stubbornly resists accepting anything that he does not believe originates in himself. He must do everything off his own bat without anyone telling him. Not being a good listener, he is not a good follower. This is his "lost sheep." But what is also clear is that the very opposite is true and that his particular strong point is following the leadings of Truth. The one sheep which appears lost always stands for the most valuable facet of our whole individual expression of being.

So many great men have gone wrong when the false male sense took charge and they refused to listen and instead pushed and forced their own way. On the other hand throughout history the greatest men have been those with tremendous creative purposefulness who learnt to accept the leadings of Principle and listened to those sent by Principle. Therefore anyone dogged by feeling unable to listen and follow should realize that he is dogged for the very reason that this ability is the finest point of his character. So his best course is to take up the challenge to his true manhood and say, "Right, I will go straight for this one lost sheep. I will not listen to the devil which says I can't listen and accept. I will know that I am a good listener and accepter. I am open to reason and revelation. I can listen and learn and I will see to it that I do. I love to take Truth from others and make it my own." His finding of the one lost sheep will cause all the other ninety-nine, such as his ability to understand and to clarify thought, to come into line for him. There will be great rejoicing as he realizes that the apparently lost sheep was never lost, but was always there to be released into activity.

Peter was a man with a quick and brilliant grasp of the spiritual,

but he had not learned to follow in complete adherence and loyalty. If he had, everything the Master did would have caused him to praise it and stick by it. He denied him because what he was doing did not seem right to him. It was because of this "lost sheep" in Peter that Jesus showed him how to find what he had mislaid. His request to him in that joyful meeting on the shore of Galilee was fashioned in a threefold manner in order to overcome forever the threefold denial which had previously possessed Peter, but it reveals that Jesus knew that Peter *had* that ability and would find his lost sheep by obeying what he was now asked. Here are his words, so lovingly shaped, so lovingly calling to Peter that later in life he became one of the great founders of Christianity as we now know it: "Feed my lambs . . . Feed my sheep . . . Feed my sheep."

To take another illustration: Mrs Eddy defines "sheep," in part, as "those who follow their leader" (S&H 594:12-13). To the student the "leader" is embodied in the teachings of the Master and Mrs Eddy. The general teachings of Christianity embrace ninety-nine per cent of goodness, but have lost that one important sheep indicated by Jesus in his words, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also" and "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." Therefore we should surely seek this lost sheep and faithfully endeavour to follow fully the teachings of both Jesus and Mrs Eddy with regard to the application of Science to the human need. By so doing we shall find for ourselves that lost sheep and experience the joy of accomplishment. But say we read in "Science and Health" some passage which rouses in us a sense of objection — such as the words "Never record ages" (S&H 246:17), or the paragraph about the washing of babies (S&H 413:12-23), which annoys some people — we have thereby lost the full one hundred per cent following of what this great leader says. This may at first seem unimportant, but we can see the dire consequences of clinging to personal opinions, instead of responding to the divine expression of requirements made by those equipped to make it, when we reflect that if mankind had simply accepted that statement of Jesus, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also," we should

now have a medicine based on Mind; without doubt this would be more influential in the purposes of good and thereby beneficial to mankind than the medicine which we do have today. "We must have faith in all the sayings of our Master, though they are not included in the teachings of the schools, and are not understood generally by our ethical instructors" (S&H 429:27-30).

We should therefore forsake all our other followings, all the other sheep, and diligently find that we *do* accept everything that both Jesus and Mrs Eddy taught or said. In correcting one apparently small shortfall we shall find that the other ninety-nine per cent following comes into its full fruition. A young man being trained to be a soldier may become fully proficient in the methods of soldiery, such as the use of arms and their deployment in battle, but if he felt that he did not agree with walking in step when on the march, that one apparently insignificant disobedience would ruin his career.

Jesus is showing that what appears lost becomes the opportunity of real gain, because we find that it is forever ours as Principle's endowment; and this recognition brings greater rejoicing than the recognition of all those other qualities (the ninety and nine) which we have, but which are not in the forefront of our unique character-expression.

So when we feel keenly what seems to us a loss or lack or inadequacy in the one thing which matters most to us, we should see that it is Principle's way of showing us that we have it fully. The reverse of error is true, and therefore we can reverse the error, seek diligently the truth which is shown us by that reversal, and see that we bring that truth into expression.

If someone comes to the point where he says, for instance, "There is no purpose left in life for me, I have lost everything I most value," let him realize that this would not seem so unless he had a *great* purpose. If that did not belong to him, he would never feel its loss. And because it is his, he can never lose it, any more than a fish can lose the ability to swim. So the right course for such an individual is to say, "I will accept the Science at the back of this and I will follow that Science and see it fulfilled in my finding of that purpose and

carrying it through.”

There can be few masters in the field of the arts, for example, who did not at some time or another in their career become convinced that they no longer had what it takes. They did not lie down under this, however, but went ahead and determinedly searched and found what animal magnetism tried to tell them they had lost. Through this process came an outstanding contribution to their fellow-men in some particular sphere.

In the second parable the “ten” of the ten silver pieces indicates, as it does throughout the Bible, practical application, as with the ten fingers. Silver is a currency, and it has exchange value and purchasing power, and so it is a symbol of man’s ability to purchase what is right and good through his spirituality and his study. If Jesus had lost this silver coin or had not recognized its importance, there would not have been a single healing. We can lose the whole purpose of our study if we do not see that it gives us purchasing power to enjoy health and harmony in immediate experience.

Peter said to the lame man who was begging at the gate Beautiful, “Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.” What he had was real purchasing power and he demonstrated this to the man. (See Acts 3:1-11.)

In this parable Jesus uses a woman because — again according to false education — woman has been taught to accept suffering or defeat with resignation. The curse on woman in the Adam-dream is “In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children.” True womanhood (whether expressed in a man or a woman) sweeps away all such suggestions and therefore leads to the finest demonstrations. True womanhood rejoices in being subject only to Truth. That which would destroy true womanhood is the acceptance of suffering and deprivation and the unwillingness to claim all that man is entitled to in the Science of being.

The female often endures sacrifice without expectation of any reward. The lost coin is her feeling, “I love Science and I value it and know that it is wonderful, but it doesn’t work for me and I don’t

really mind." That is the devil talking, because she does mind and the true womanhood in her is not prepared to lose that silver coin. With the wealth she has built up in spiritual understanding she has the currency through which to purchase the reward of healing both for herself and others. The devil is making the suggestion of loss only because she is better able to demonstrate clearly and definitely the fruitage of her spiritual culture than someone who has not given so much time to it. She should therefore say, "I know that Science is effectual, and I am going to see that it is for me. I love to purchase with my understanding the things I want, such as health, harmony, and the demonstration of freedom, and I am not going to forego such things. I am not merely going to love Science for its spiritual value and loveliness and leave it at that, because health and harmony are its natural expression." She should rouse herself to sweep away all doubts and arguments to the contrary and thereby find that one lost coin to which she is entitled.

We should never allow any female resignation to the suggestion of our own inability or unworthiness to remain in thought, but should rise in the strength of true womanhood (that is, devotion and fidelity) to see that we can and will practise Science in its purpose of healing. We can be helped in this if we make a little demonstration to ourselves right away. If we realize, for example, that an outburst of temper has disturbed our day and possibly brought on some physical disturbance, this realization should enable us to see that we do understand where healing lies and how it is brought about, and if we understand it in that simple instance, we should accept that by devotion to the rules revealed in the simple case we must be able to make similar demonstrations in *every* direction of health and the betterment of the human condition. Mrs Eddy emphasized this point when she wrote, "My conclusions were reached by allowing the evidence of this revelation to multiply with mathematical certainty and the lesser demonstration to prove the greater, as the product of three multiplied by three, equalling nine, proves conclusively that three times three duodecillions must be nine duodecillions, — not a fraction more, not a unit less" (S&H 108:12-18). In other words, if healing is

possible to us through the correct application of the process of Christian Science in some small instance, it must be possible to us throughout the entire range of healing, and therefore we should diligently seek the lost coin on the basis that in truth we have it and need only rouse ourselves to find it.

Mrs Eddy suffered for a great many years and yet she knew it was wrong to do so. She therefore sought unremittingly for the lost coin, because she wanted the demonstration of freedom and knew it to be a legitimate desire. True womanhood liberated her from the female belief of suffering.

“There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” Angels are “God’s thoughts passing to man; spiritual intuitions, pure and perfect” (S&H 581:4-5), and if anyone lets ideas from Principle sweep away the arguments of mortal mind, he experiences a flood-tide of exalted thinking. In his work he has been “entertaining angels unawares,” and those same angels bring all the joy of victory.

There is more joy in the one person who by entertaining ideas from Principle cancels out and proves the unreality of suggestions of loss he has previously entertained than in someone who has not been working to obliterate such suggestions. But that joy comes to him not because of his own recognition of victory, but because the Principle-impelled ideas he has had the wisdom to entertain and which now possess his thinking are themselves filled with joy and so cause him to experience it. “In Thy presence [in the presence of ideas of Principle] is fulness of joy.”

Now comes the parable of the prodigal son: “A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.”

Mrs Eddy says that the father stands for the perfect and eternal Principle of man. The younger son indicates the more active human thought of the two sons. If an individual has what is called “guts,”

those very qualities are going to try to run him off the rails, but the "yes man" is not always the better man. The elder brother was a "yes man," but he never did anything that "yes" really means and requires.

The special point about the so-called prodigal was that he was not parochial in his outlook. He responded to the instinct of universality which, being the province of Principle, is also the province of man. But here he temporarily misinterpreted it, believing that one can radiate in experience by departing from Principle, whereas (as he learnt) the way to radiate in a universal sense is from the centre of all radiation — namely, Principle itself and ideas derived from that purely spiritual Principle. Jesus expressed this concept when he said, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father," which he continually did. So the true lesson which the prodigal learnt was that his instinct and desire were right, but that he had wrongly interpreted the way to fulfil them by thinking that he could pick up everything from Principle, take it in a bag, and go off on his own.

The sunbeam searches in all the spaces of earth and heaven, but never loses contact with its source, and indeed it would be impossible for it to do so. In the same way man can reach to all things, and rightly, provided he never loses contact with his Principle. The tendency in human nature, and especially with those who yearn for this bigger and truer sense of being, is to endeavour to break away from that Principle which gave them this instinct and which alone enables them to fulfil it. Mrs Eddy says of Jesus, "Out of the amplitude of his pure affection, he defined Love" (S&H 54:3-4). The amplitude was there and he expressed it, but the source which it defined to all men and which it never left was Love.

The younger son's understanding, as far as it went, caused him to think that there was a more attractive mode of expressing himself in a universal way than that set down by the mandate of Principle and its teachings. He tried to turn or correct the universal Science of being into a means of satiating his own egotism and earning worldly esteem. Jesus had proved for himself the impossibility of this when

he rejected the three temptations put forward to his thought as means and methods of being universal. (See Matthew 4:1-11.)

The prodigal was like a student of Christian Science who, after coming to its teachings, learning from them, and being enriched by them, decides that he can give a simpler version more attractive to the senses. Mrs Eddy referred in her 1901 Message to a critic who wrote that he looked "to see some St. Paul arise among the Christian Scientists who will interpret their ideas and principles more clearly, and apply them more rationally to human needs." She said in part in her reply that her works were the first ever published on Christian Science, "and nothing has since appeared that is correct on this subject the basis whereof cannot be traced to some of those works." She also said that she did not know of anyone as yet who had healed hopeless cases, such as she had done in one to three interviews with the patients. (See Message 1901, 27:3-21.) It is wise to remember James' words, "shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works," and apply this measuring-rod to ourselves and all others who may be legitimately expressing their views on Science.

The inclination in the human mind is to make the universality of what is purely scientific, spiritual, and Christlike into something more palatable to the human senses. This tendency has always existed and in every walk of life, and those influenced by it have often gone through a process similar to that of the prodigal. They have turned on their Alma Mater and later regretted it.

The human mind is prone to take what it has been given in Science, then discard what actually gave it and endeavour to put it another way round which contravenes the whole Principle, such as in some way making matter or evil real and necessary.

There have been many individuals in the history of Christian Science who have set out to do better than Mrs Eddy and make her discovery more tailored to human needs. It is animal magnetism which operates through them as a belief that they can improve Christian Science and that by so doing they are benefiting mankind. Before anyone criticizes such people, let him remember that it is

possible that he himself in his earnestness has sometimes wished or endeavoured to translate Christian Science into a form more attractive to himself, more indulgent to his own wishes, thus like the prodigal taking what he has learnt from the wealth of Science and going down to spend it in what from Principle's point of view is "riotous living," or a departure from its normal standards. Who has not said to himself, "*This* doesn't matter very much" or "Principle doesn't apply *here*" as he goes off in a direction which he knows to be contrary to the letter and spirit of Christian Science? Who does not do this every time he tries to twist Principle into what *he* wants it to be? If any of us contradicts ideas which belong intrinsically to Principle and endeavours to take those ideas and translate them in our own way in a direction so different from their true purpose that we go with them into a far country away from Principle, then we shall experience what the prodigal experienced: those ideas will become mere husks, devoid of true inspiration and therefore unsatisfying to man's intelligence. They may possibly just sustain us on the dogmatic path we are taking, but will certainly not yield any real reward.

"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want." The areas into which the young man felt he had gone — the areas of defying the facts and methods of Principle which were yet known to him and inherent in his being — were areas where famine was bound to reign. Indulging in any departure from Principle and its established truths is sure to lead to a famine, because all sense testimony is finite, just as everything to do with Soul or spiritual sense as it operates in our immediate experience produces a feast of goodness.

We all make the mistake of departing from the high standards of Principle in some form of human living, but it is when we blatantly challenge Principle and decide to ignore its mandate that we suffer. The lesser mistakes, which are not made of our own initiative but are part of the "suffer it to be so now" of human living, do not cause a disturbance to our mentality and are grown out of as we progress Spiritward. It is the outright evasion, ignoring, or twisting of the established facts and requirements of Principle, as clearly set out for

us by the teachings of Jesus and Mrs Eddy, which leads us to where there is a famine of all joy and the barest ability to sustain existence. Even so, that is only the dream; it never happens in reality and so merely requires our awakening for it and all its claims to disappear.

“And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.” He became a slave to the standards to which he had lowered himself. A man who is not working for Principle, but for methods not founded in Principle, always works harder and with less satisfying results than the faithful follower, and so is a slave indeed. A slave has lost his own free will and is dominated by the particular phase of animal magnetism under whose influence he has allowed himself to be.

“And he [the citizen of that country] sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.” When we try to feed our thought on the husks of materiality and so-called intellectualism, we find in effect that they have no feeding quality at all — we are no better off and they have left us emptier than when we were led to think they had some quality of sustenance.

The prodigal endeavoured to feed himself on that which was impossible food for him, although it was wholesome for the level of thinking to which it belonged, symbolized here by the swine. A would-be universal thinker can find himself coming down to the level of thinking based on the evidence of the human senses to such an extent that he becomes so worried and anxious that he feels worse about the whole situation than before he tried to be universal in his outlook.

The old saying, “One man’s meat is another man’s poison” applies very much to the student progressing in Science. He will find that things of this world which satisfy and give pleasure to others, because they are at that level of thinking, are empty husks as far as he is concerned and give him no joy or sustenance in thought. If pursued, they leave him worse off than if he had left them alone and not tried to come down from levels of thinking which were native to him and from which in reality he could never depart.

The revelation that came to the prodigal was that he just did not

belong at the level where he now found himself. He saw that he had made a mistake in his interpretation of the instinct of universality, and he was not going to hold on to it. That is a wise and healthy outlook for anyone to arrive at, for we can all make mistakes, but they can be turned to true benefit by our realization that we are not at home there and by our quickness in returning to where we already know we are. This, then, is not returning, but finding out where we have always been, the plane of thinking from which we can never depart.

It is the Mind of Science, which makes us and controls us, which causes us to see the emptiness of material thinking and methods and to recognize more strongly the attractiveness of Principle's ways and Principle's world. Hence our apparent return is only the revelation of where we really are and have to be and have always been.

"And when he came to himself [recognized that he had never really left home], he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" He realized that those who are not so foolish as to indulge in means and methods unknown to Principle, but remain in service to Principle, always have plenty to feed their thought and an abundance of inspiration.

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." He no longer wanted merely a privileged position, but wanted to serve Principle in Principle's way.

"And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Often when *we* feel we are "yet a great way off" from "homing" with Principle, Principle is on its way to "homing" with us in the sense that humility, in losing self, has made way for Principle to be expressed in newness of spiritual understanding.

Jesus is showing here the difference between divine Principle and all other principles, which are illustrations to us of that one and only

Principle, but are not in themselves alive or creative and do not embrace the whole of being. We are told that the father ran to meet his son. It would appear that Jesus is bringing out that God does come to man whenever man turns to God and that we should expect this to happen, as he himself did. He had a personal Father in the right sense of Person — “the infinite scientific sense” (Message 1901, 6:22) — and he expected that Father to care for him. Throughout the whole span of his teaching it is unmistakable that Jesus was conscious of God as Father and of himself as His son. It is obvious that he clearly understood that this Father operated in a divine way but with the same love and care that a human father would have for his son. Where could the love and care felt by a human parent originate except in the divine Father-Mother? It is wise to keep the same attitude of mind towards our heavenly Parent as the Master did, for otherwise in the necessary recognition that we have to play our part by learning the requirements of Principle and obeying them we fall into a state of thinking that the divine Principle is as cold and distant as any lesser principle of a subject or science. If we remind ourselves of the conviction held by both Jesus and Mrs Eddy as to the impersonal presence of an ever-loving Parent, we shall receive naturally the blessings which flow from such a conviction. This will in no way lessen our appreciation of the fact that to be a son to such a Father we need to pay continual attention to the requirements of such a son and obey them in our actions and even more in our realization of what this sonship means.

“And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” This was actually his recognition of his foolishness in challenging Principle with regard to his own perfection. There is no greater sin than the sin against the Holy Ghost, against the establishment and development in the individual of his own expression of Life, Truth, and Love. (See S&H 588:7-8.) This expression is forever going on and therefore to endeavour to avoid it is to sin against heaven and against the Principle which fathers us and fathers that whole expression in us. Such an attitude causes us to feel that we are no more worthy to

THE LOST SHEEP, THE LOST COIN, AND THE PRODIGAL SON

be the son of Principle. But as Jesus said of all such thinking, it is "a liar, and the father of it," and we should never indulge one lie unless we want it to breed a family of lies hiding the established truth about us which cannot actually be shaken or moved.

"But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."

The son had merely wanted to serve Principle for its own sake, but it is true that if you become the servant of Principle, you will find yourself its son; you will discover for yourself that no sense of servitude is involved, but only the greatest joy and sense of dominion.

The prodigal had dissipated the wealth of Science by playing with it for personal ends and taking it down to the levels of sensual living where it becomes poverty-stricken. But any man who tries to misuse Science in this way comes to the point where he sees he has been led astray. He wakes up to its true value and begins to serve it, to practise what Principle requires of him. The moment he does this, Principle endows him not with servitude, but with the sonship which has always been his to enjoy.

When the father set the standard of rejoicing because, as he said, his son had been dead and was alive again, he meant that his son had not been alive to the truth of his being, but now had wakened to that truth and found himself in consciousness and experience where actually he had always been. Sin is an illusion, not something that has happened or is happening. If it were a fact, we could never get out of it. Therefore the happy attitude is symbolized here in the rejoicing of the father and in the son finding himself clothed with the garment of his true self.

"The relations of God and man, divine Principle and idea, are indestructible in Science; and Science knows no lapse from nor return to harmony, but holds the divine order or spiritual law, in which God and all that He creates are perfect and eternal, to have remained unchanged in its eternal history" (S&H 470:32-5). That enshrines

the truth of this parable. It is a truth we should hold very much in consciousness if we wish to reverse the claims of the senses that we have fallen from a position which to us was nearer to goodness than our present state, or have departed from a standard to which we now long to return. That longing and the activity towards fulfilling it show that in effect we never left it.

It is not a blind statement of Christianity that man has never departed from perfection, but a fact of Science. A fallen man is impossible to Principle and in Science. Had man once departed from perfection, he could never return to it, any more than the adult could return to the mentality of childhood, the butterfly return to the chrysalis, or the oak to the acorn. No one who has seen that $2+2=4$ can return to thinking that $2+2=5$. Once you have learnt to ride a bicycle, it is hard to fall off. There is no return to a position truly left, therefore the instinct of man towards perfection proves he has never left it, and that is the Science at the back of this parable. This scientific fact should be borne in mind against all arguments to the contrary — arguments which are not scientific and therefore not true. So the return of the prodigal spells out one fact — that he had never left. He woke up to where he really was and had always been.

We may think we have left perfection, but what we sometimes think has happened has no bearing at all on the facts of our being and what Principle is expressing through us. However, if we think we have left a certain level of consciousness and then we find that we never really left, that finding gives us greater joy than if we had not believed we left.

As with all Jesus' illustrations there is the element of comfort, and here in this parable the comfort lies in realizing that more often than not it is only after we have left home (either through a difference of opinion or through some necessity) that we truly seek to return to it and we appreciate its real value. The process of departing and returning, although unnecessary, is nevertheless often requisite to human thought in order to establish true values more permanently than would otherwise be the case. In this manner men learn very surely that Principle is Love. That is why homing is one of the loveliest

THE LOST SHEEP, THE LOST COIN, AND THE PRODIGAL SON

experiences a man can have and why we should allow no sorrow or self-condemnation to accompany our returning, but let our whole thought be focused on the joy of this returning and what we are returning to — the truth which has always been true of us.

As humans we value everything by contrast and so the prodigal's joy in finding his true self was increased in measure and reality by the very depth of the shadows he had now thrown aside. To someone who emerges from a dark tunnel the light is radiantly more beautiful than if (like the elder son) he has stayed in that irradiance without any appreciation and even with a grumble that it is too bright for him.

In responding to the Principle which is universal, the prodigal had merely misinterpreted universality. He had wanted to get out of the parochial home circle, but he had wrongly interpreted the whole meaning of universality by thinking of it as something which can be achieved on a material basis, as when people feel they can help humanity while still believing in the reality of matter. On that basis they may find it initially giving egotistical gratification, but soon it yields them only husks. They find nothing but problems and a dimming of their own spiritual sonship, which becomes confused and weakened. Man has to find universality in order to find happiness, but he cannot find it through that which is finite and small in its very nature. By this discovery the prodigal was awakened to the purely spiritual Principle of universality whence to derive all his ideas and to direct his expression of himself. This Principle gave him the ring, symbolizing the consummation of his marriage to Principle and *its* ways. The fatted calf represented the unlimited spiritual rejoicing which comes to any man who finds and feels his true selfhood and realizes what truly satisfies it in those expanding avenues of thought and expression which are special to him.

Looked at rightly, Jesus' concept of the prodigal was that he was not a repentant mortal but an individual who had discovered the key to progress.

"Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said

THE LOST SHEEP, THE LOST COIN, AND THE PRODIGAL SON

unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.”

The elder son represents that type of thought which stays in Science, but does not value it and does not compare it with anything and therefore becomes static, until it is roused in envy of those who through experience have a higher revelation and a greater value made known to them. The rebuke of Principle to the elder son was along the lines which tried to wake him to the *value* of spirituality. The elder son never did anything to broaden his outlook, whether right or wrong. Jesus loved the Mary Magdalenes and the tax-gatherers because they *did* something and therefore woke up more quickly to the error of their ways than someone who lives an apparently blameless life. An attitude of self-righteousness is a narrow cell, and you never have a feast in that cell. “Self-love is more opaque than a solid body” (S&H 242:15), therefore if you are enclosed in self-love, you cannot see what is really going on or what there is to rejoice about. With Principle present there is always a feast prepared for yourself and your friends and you are right there in any rejoicing that is going on.

The fault in the elder son was that he was not responding to the breadth of thinking and cognizance which is the privilege and necessity of manhood. “Universal Love is the divine way in Christian Science” (S&H 266:18-19) and to stay too safely in the sanctimonious spheres of our own self and its interpretations can produce the sort of envy and disturbance which came to the elder son. But the father’s reply uncovered the demand on that son and also the fact that he

had the means of fulfilling it, for it was merely lying dormant, ready to be called into being or found as never lost. The father, or divine Principle, said (and says to all men), "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." That term "all" has a universal sweep to it which can settle the restlessness of any man as he feels the necessity to respond to the fact that he is a universal being as the expression of universal Mind.

The parable has this great message for us all — that we should watch diligently that we do not go into a "far country" of personal opinions. The farthest thing from Principle is personal sense, and it is personal sense which makes any of us take the understanding of Science given us by Principle and interpret it with opinions based on personal judgments and theories which are foreign to the nature of that very Principle. Because these have deviated from Principle and are of our own making, they soon become nothing more than "theoretic husks" (Mis.369:22), empty of sustaining quality. But finally all this leads us to recognize our own departure from Principle. When we return with only one desire — to be a servant to Principle — we find ourselves properly robed with a true personality, or expression of individual character.

If we are alert to the danger of egotism overtaking an active mentality, we shall search our thinking to see if it conforms to the rules impelled by Principle and given us in the teachings of Christian Science. Mrs Eddy was emphatic about the need for this. She says, for instance, "Strict adherence to the divine Principle and rules of the scientific method has secured the only success of the students of Christian Science" (S&H 456:5-7). She continually warns of the dangers of being led along a by-path which in some way deflects us from the mandate of Principle — the allness of Spirit and the nothingness of matter. A lively mentality can go off into a "far country" and try to feed itself on theories which allow an infiltration of elements foreign to the dynamic requirements of Principle, but because it is active it will be quick to admit the wrong course and return to Principle with a truer vigour and devotion than when it left.

There is no need to be disheartened when we acknowledge our

departure from Principle, but only a need for a quicker and more certain return to Principle to guide us in all our conclusions. If the "greatest wrong is but a supposititious opposite of the highest right" (S&H 368:1-2), we should never worry about our wrongs, but be concerned to find the highest right; and the highest right for anyone is when he is in full accord with and governed completely by Principle in all his thinking, in all his statements, in all his endeavours.

All three parables bring home the great lesson that there is no loss and that rejoicing comes as we awake to be satisfied with what we already have and are. "Mortals may climb the smooth glaciers, leap the dark fissures, scale the treacherous ice, and stand on the summit of Mont Blanc; but they can never turn back what Deity knoweth, nor escape from identification with what dwelleth in the eternal Mind" (Un.64:15-19).

The encouraging aspect of all three parables is that it was the amount of the positive which the individual expressed in each case which caused him to be aware of the slight shortfall from perfection and to alert himself to make good at once the apparent loss.

A golfer who is a ninety-nine per cent exponent of the principles of golf through his following of those principles becomes very much aware of where he has fallen below standard in some small point in his play. He determinedly seeks that "lost sheep" and causes himself to come into line on that specific point. The elimination of the one small error gives him special joy. A poor golfer would not even be conscious of the imperfection. Keen sportsmen and artists practise to eliminate any small fault in their performance which has become clear to them. They do not do it with any sense of condemnation, moroseness, or dejection, because they are conscious that they have the other ninety-nine sheep. We have all observed this, but we may not have realized that the same thing applies to Life and its demonstration. Jesus is pointing out for us that we feel a loss because of the immense amount (the ninety-nine per cent) of perfection expressed. The three parables underline that it is because we *are* perfect that any slight divergence from that perfection becomes very apparent and very important to put right. It is because of man's actual full comple-

ment of perfection that he feels any loss so vividly; but this also ensures that he can set things right at once with specific attention to whatever needs it. If you lose one sheep, you do not delay, but seek it at once, and then your flock is once more complete.

In the parable the man left the ninety-nine sheep "in the wilderness" while he sought the missing one, and it is a matter of experience that we are in "loneliness; doubt; darkness" whenever we find some apparently little error spoiling the whole picture for us. We feel the loss of harmony and happiness when we are harbouring the least little disturbance, dislike, regret, etc., just as the malfunctioning of one little nut or valve can stop the smooth running of a car, or the bad performance of one player in an orchestra can ruin the whole effect. If we regarded this rightly, we should see it not so much as a stringent demand as a sign of the wonder of perfection. Perfection is the purpose of Principle, and nothing less. Even the slightest flaw shows us that perfection has no flaw. But as soon as we recognize this, the other side of the definition of "wilderness" comes into play, for we are led to "spontaneity of thought and idea" and into the vestibule through which we enter the realm of perfection. (See S&H 597:16-19.) That is where the real rejoicing comes in — not just at the recovery of the one lost thing, but at experiencing the wonder of perfection.

Very few of us realize the profound simplicity of the Master's command, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" or of the statement in "Science and Health" that "perfect Principle and idea, — perfect God and perfect man," — must be "the basis of thought and demonstration" (259:12-14). It is not good enough to have the "ninety-nine" but not the "hundred."

The case of the woman and the one lost coin out of ten illustrates that it is the strength of true womanhood already present in us which causes us to search diligently for the shortfall in acceptance of perfection and gives the ability to bring that search to a fruitful conclusion.

Again, it was the riches of the young son which made him quickly aware that he had wasted them and also made him determined not to

THE LOST SHEEP, THE LOST COIN, AND THE PRODIGAL SON

lower his standard and remain eating the husks of materiality. Had he not had the riches and known their value and also their source (his father), he would not have roused himself. This should encourage the individual when he finds a shortfall in some part of his expression of Principle, for how much he feels that loss defines for him the much larger wealth he has through reflecting the qualities of Principle. In this manner the loss can at once result in a rejoicing of gain and (as with that golfer) a tremendous rejoicing when he has overcome the small point of deficiency.

We should recognize too that Jesus is showing us, as Mrs Eddy puts it, that "the superabundance of being is on the side of God, good" (S&H 201:11-12). It is the preponderance of good in ourselves which can cause us to recognize and correct any shortfall. Therefore there is no place for depression, but a call for rejoicing, first of all in the amount of the perfection given us by Principle and secondly that we can utilize this to come into the full expression which Principle asks. The call upon us is only to demonstrate that nothing has been lost. It is all there to be made manifest, and must be made so. We have the one hundred per cent and have but to demonstrate that we have.

The man must have counted the sheep to find that one was missing, the same with the woman with the coins, and it was the awareness of the naturalness and attractiveness of good which caused the prodigal to see his departure from it. When therefore we take stock of our goodness — for instance, how much we love another or love our family — we may become aware of a lost sheep which often mars that love, such as the expression of impatience at apparent slowness. If then we realize the ninety-nine per cent of love, we shall more easily see to it that we bring into play that one quality of patience which is an important factor in our affection. If in all honesty we would only admit how wonderful we are as the expression of Principle, the showing up of a small shortfall will only awaken the expression more brilliantly of the truth which the recognition of that shortfall brings to light. Rejoice in the ninety-nine sheep, the nine coins, and the naturalness of the home of Science and when as a

result a small deficiency is uncovered, our rejoicing in what we are as Principle's expression will quickly find that apparent lost sheep, lost coin, or lost home of Science and will find it more valuable, more real, and more "us" than ever before. It is wise to count the sheep, the coins, the naturalness of Science as our home, and then how wise to enhance the activity of any little expression of character where a shortcoming becomes apparent through that very counting.

In this human experience the recognition that we have fallen short in character-expression "according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" — that is, according to the standard of Principle as revealed by Science — is necessary, but it is even more necessary to realize that of the one hundred sheep and the ten coins only a small percentage made up the claim of a loss and so our awareness of a shortfall really constitutes the recognition of some quality so special to us that it is as if error, recognizing this, tries to frustrate us in our expression of it. It should be encouraging that Mrs Eddy wrote in a letter to Calvin C. Hill, "Goodness such as yours is a sure pre-text of success in all struggles to be 'better.' If a single sin remains — and who is destitute of all sin — be of good cheer, for the victory over it is a foregone conclusion" ("We Knew Mary Baker Eddy," Third Series, page 25). How small one sheep is against a hundred, and yet if we believe it to be lost, how precious is the finding that this was never so and that all that has happened is the movement of Principle in us to enhance its value and enhance also our natural ability to express it.

Putting in the sickle

(Mark 4:26-29)

“And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.”

At first sight it may seem that this parable merely embodies a piece of worldly wisdom; any active business man, for instance, would tell you not to neglect opportunities. But there are many things to which the business man is alert of which the Christian needs to remind himself. The Master knew that the trouble with the Christian is that his overriding guide is faith, faith in a higher Being outside himself, and this tends to dull his alertness to seize opportunities. So he used as an illustration the farmer who plays his part by preparing the ground and sowing the seed, and then his alertness makes him ready to use the sickle when the intelligence to which he has already responded in his preparatory work reveals to him the right moment for applying that sickle — at that point he does not hesitate.

A superstitious faith in Principle is almost worse than no faith at all, because if a man has no faith in Principle he will at least set about “clouting his own cloak,” and through that activity will become the servant of Principle without knowing it. On the other hand a superstitious faith in Principle which stays inert and merely waits for God to bring fulfilment (and in that very act is not waiting for God because God has no waiting in Him) stands every chance of losing the opportunity for good. Mrs Eddy makes the forthright statement, “No risk is so stupendous as to neglect opportunities which God

giveth" (Mis.213:10-11).

Jesus' attitude was defined in his statement, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." In that there was no superstition, "no weakness, no emasculation, no illusive vision, no dreamy absentness, no insubordination to the laws that be, no loss nor lack of what constitutes true manhood" (Mis.206:13-16). He knew that Principle always produces a perfect expression of itself — clear, specific, totally right for this instant — and this is Principle's work perfectly done; *his* work was to see that no argument of mortal mind was allowed to prevent that perfect expression of Principle from becoming manifest, first in his own thinking and then in the full coincidence of the divine with the human.

The Master, of all people, knew that the harvest is always at hand, but because men have to work their way through the human, he had to show the best paths and make plain that which would interfere and must be watched against. The aim was that men should take the straight line of Spirit through strong, clean admissions which counter the procrastinations and delays they are inclined to allow.

As Jesus watched the processes of nature around him, they illustrated unmistakably the persistent, patient purposefulness of good as it comes through to human apprehension. What men love is the breakthrough to "the full corn in the ear," but there would have been no such fulfilment without the continuous quiet development leading up to it. The farmer knows that he does not create the corn or its process of ripening, and men have to acknowledge that everything is in the hands of Principle and cannot be interfered with. We sometimes try to interfere, but it makes no difference to Principle and there is only "the smile of the Great Spirit" as Principle brushes aside our clumsy hand.

This parable shows that the only Mind there is is the divine Mind, outside the realm of what is termed the human mind. The proof of this lies in the fact that a sincere thinker is continually sowing seed in consciousness and continually experiencing that without any tending on his part the seed springs up; he becomes aware of the formation of ideas along the lines of his longing and seeking. "First the

PUTTING IN THE SICKLE

blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.”

It is Mind alone that gives the seedlings of ideas which *we* feel as longings. Those seedlings have for us small beginnings, but they mature and come to full fruition without our influence. At that point it is vital that we put in the sickle and gather to ourselves those ideas of Mind. Only through this activity do we enjoy the experience called here “the kingdom of God.”

So many people let the moment of fruition drift by without “harvesting” it. The genuineness of their desire to learn of Truth leads to answers coming to them, but often the answers are treated too lightly and allowed to pass. Jacob in his sincerity wrestled until the ideas of perfection matured for him, but at that point he was wise enough to hold to them until they cleansed his mentality of all previous notions and brought him to the pure realization of his true identity. (See Genesis 32:24-30.)

If anyone longs to understand Principle, God, and lives continually with this longing, letting it unfold and lead him on, even while he lives his ordinary life, that longing is bound to come to fruition. It will not develop in a way which can be humanly arranged, but there will undoubtedly be illumination and revelation — in small beginnings, but gradually ripening — and it will be symbolized in his immediate experience. At that point he must not remain with the first pleasant or fruitful impressions of these ideas and rest content. He must set to work with the sickle and do the harvesting, or else the inspiration will be lost. Sometimes the fruit is so pleasant — in the form of healing or revelation — that he leans back, instead of going forward to the harvest. “Joy over good achievements and work well done should not be eclipsed by some lost opportunity, some imperative demand not yet met” (My.134:10-13). Spiritual ideas are given to man with one overall purpose — that he takes them and stays with them until they translate his consciousness into the levels and certainties for which they are the symbolic language.

It is a present necessity for a complete sense of manhood that we identify ourselves with the ideas of Mind which have unfolded to us, and thereby become conscious that we are part and parcel of the

divine Mind's reflection of itself. The Master knew that until a man identifies himself and his whole consciousness with the truths given him by divine Mind, he does not take on the character and expression of that Mind. Jesus "made himself the Son of God," the expression of God, by putting in the sickle and becoming conscious of that sonship. This brought him strength, power, and certainty, because it was God operating through him and as him. So we must use the sickle of our ability to understand. Mrs Eddy speaks in "Christ and Christmas" of "understanding, dearly sought, With fierce heart-beats."

Jesus had a wonderful birth through the virgin thought of Mary, but he did not leave it there. He must have asked himself, "Why did she conceive as she did? What enabled material so-called law to be set aside?" He wanted to see the Science behind it and he set to work to discover it. Answers came to him through individual revelation, through the Scriptures confirming such revelation, and through demonstration in his own experience. Then he gathered those ideas and saw that he must be about his Father's business. He did not let go the inspiration that had come to him, but acted on it, and consequently there was blessing for all mankind.

This parable tells in essence the life-story of Mrs Eddy too and of all sincerely longing thinkers. From her childhood Mrs Eddy yearned to understand Truth, and this seed was sown "in the soil of an 'honest and good heart' " (S&H 272:6). It unfolded and unfolded as she investigated one subject after another in her search for Truth. She realized through her experiences in homeopathy that the mental is the only healing factor, and she was led on and on until suddenly there was the momentous breakthrough from the human to the divine. All her longings and her unselfed desire to serve humanity burst into fruitage. She tells us that she caught a glimpse of the great fact of Life in and of Spirit, "this Life being the sole reality of existence" (Mis.24:17-18) and she was healed of an injury that had been pronounced fatal. But at this point of supreme illumination after all those years of living a life of human goodness, she thrust in the sickle and gathered from "the full corn in the ear" the Science at the back of it. She did not remain merely content with the healing.

PUTTING IN THE SICKLE

When the breakthrough came, she proved herself the seer for this age. She wanted to know what was behind all she had experienced and glimpsed. She writes, "I knew the Principle of all harmonious Mind-action to be God, and that cures were produced in primitive Christian healing by holy, uplifting faith; but I must know the Science of this healing, and I won my way to absolute conclusions through divine revelation, reason, and demonstration" (S&H 109:16-22). She gathered the purely spiritual ideas which had dawned on her, until they formulated themselves in scientific purposefulness and gave her the stability of absolute certainty. She experienced what is called here "the kingdom of God" when she did thrust in the sickle, because she says that her search was "sweet, calm, and buoyant with hope" (S&H 109:15-16). Later she wrote in "Science and Health": "Spirit, God, gathers unformed thoughts into their proper channels, and unfolds these thoughts, even as He opens the petals of a holy purpose in order that the purpose may appear" (S&H 506:18-21). In "Unity of Good" she speaks of applying "to the waiting grain the curving sickle of Mind's eternal circle" and of binding it "with bands of Soul" (Un.12:4-6).

So the main lesson of the parable is that when one is sincere about anything, the seedlings of thought and desire which were given by Principle will be impelled towards their full development by that very Principle. Then the warning the Master gives is that we must be ready to put in the sickle and gather the harvest — take the ideas to ourselves, identify ourselves with them, and fulfil their demands upon us in our daily living right where we are.

Much has been lost to history and to individuals through not putting in the sickle. Ideas are presented to someone and even when they take definite form for him, he still does not take them up and accept the responsibility of identifying himself with them in expression. People often say, "I wish I had done such-and-such. It came to me quite clearly that I should do it, but I didn't act on it." They did not put in the sickle. Frequently the idea grows to the point where it forms a complete picture of possibility, but through doubt, fear, or laziness they turn away and do not gather it and identify themselves

with it. So the parable is a warning against the loss of opportunities presented to us.

To take a simple human illustration: a couple have the desire to give a dinner-party and they go about their daily business, but that idea grows on them and at last takes shape. They decide that they would like to entertain certain friends up to a particular number and give them certain food, and so on. Everything becomes clear, but then so often they feel it is all too much bother and they turn aside. All those ideas that came to them are wasted, and instead of experiencing the joy of accomplishment, they omit to take the opportunity which was present.

Again, with a business you often see ideas flowing freely and brought to completion on the drawing board, but there is then a failure to clinch them in the commercial field, with the result that the ideas come to nothing in a practical sense. This would not happen if the people concerned alerted themselves to this habit of mortal mind and roused themselves to ensure that the ideas *were* brought to full fruition both for themselves and for the business. If anyone watches the process of success in business, he will note that the putting in of the sickle at the right time and with the clean cutting of true purposefulness has always taken place.

The moment an idea comes to maturity in our thought, the best course is to identify ourselves with it and follow it right through. If someone has a great and genuine desire to write a book, for instance, he will find that seed starting to sprout and leading him forward, and as soon as it bears fruit, it is up to him to use the sickle and not let the opportunity pass.

To those who have missed an opportunity and who have acknowledged this, the following words are not only encouraging, but also subjugate and dismiss any self-condemnation: "Tireless Being, patient of man's procrastination, affords him fresh opportunities every hour" (Hea.19:18-19).

So the rule is: when through a continual longing the way opens, we must grasp the opportunity and harvest the possibilities which are not of our own creating any more than was the original desire.

The rich fool

(Luke 12:16-21)

“And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

Jesus is dealing here with much more than the obvious error of trust in material riches. He is exposing something far more subtle, a form of materialism that is “spiritual wickedness in high places” — the disease of intellectualism, with its endless storage. The Master could get on with so-called materialists, such as prostitutes (like Mary Magdalene) and tax-collectors, because they stored nothing and what little they had they threw over the side as useless, which led them to a state of mind ready to receive Soul’s impressions. But a false sense of intellectuality never acknowledges Spirit and Truth. It actually increases belief in matter — worshipping material history, for instance — while at the same time congratulating itself that it has discarded a crude concept of matter. All that it builds up is based on knowledge and memory gathered from the senses.

In using this term “intellectualism” we should acknowledge that true intellectualism is essential and advances the detailed understanding of God as All-in-all and man as part and parcel of that All-

in-all. False intellectualism enlarges egotism. It ranges from highly developed, highly sophisticated forms of physical belief to down-to-earth physical beliefs adamantly and even obstinately held. But whatever the level there is the same false basis — belief in the reality of matter and its would-be laws, even though there is nothing to matter but what mortal mind believes. And the processes are the same — a continual pulling down of the old barns of previous convictions and a constant building of new barns of fresh convictions which seem in advance of the old, all in the attempt to dispense with the spiritual and find personal security in dealing with what life presents. The aim of false intellectualism is to “eat, drink, and be merry” with its own determined opinions.

Jesus was symbolizing in this parable the disease whereby a man’s intellectual proficiency catches hold of him and inflates his egotism to such a degree that he wants nothing else but to enlarge continually that intellectual capacity and output, even to the extent of pulling down the old barns of his accumulated knowledge in order to take up a higher and (by the standards of that world) more fruitful theorizing, with still more storage.

Soul is forever expressed in man in his desire for answers, for definiteness, for certainty, but the individual may be misled or mistaken in his choice of the channels through which his intellectual capacity is directed. If he chooses delusive material for the exercise of intellectual energy, he is bound to be unsatisfied in his searches, however much he goes on developing his egotism with the products of mortal mind’s reasoning and does everything he can to bolster up his fallacious theories. Jesus is showing that this is foolish because he is attempting to build up that which has no substance and trying to do it by means of methods which continually let him down. But because he is a Soul-being who must inevitably “home” to Principle, his true identity does finally overtake him and draw him to what he is. Principle through his Soul-sense requires of him either here or hereafter that he employs his intellectual ability in the right direction and comes to the consciousness of the spiritual through using materials and methods which are intrinsically spiritual and not tainted by

THE RICH FOOL

any form of belief in matter. Soul-sense with its true certainties eventually enters his experience because he has been actively seeking certainty all along the line, though seeking it in directions which by their very nature can never yield what he yearns for. Jesus is telling us by inference that we should not indulge in waste of intellectual energy, but should have the wisdom to seek progress and certainty through accepting the resources of Soul itself.

An outstanding example of this is seen in the case of Saul, who was pre-eminently intellectual according to the world's standards but was led to become a truly intellectual being, able to spread Christianity with all its appeal to common sense and reason. The lesson must be to begin aright and therefore proceed along a path that is right, rather than start wrongly through egotism, only to be eventually ejected from opinionated reasoning, either through suffering or the sudden illumination of Science (as was the experience of Saul when he took on the new identity of Paul).

Intellectualism if allowed sway will always either make the individual self-satisfied and blind to further progress, or else lead him along a path which will never bring him to a revelation of Truth, but leave him always fishing for some further point along a road that he hopes will one day bring him to a conclusion, but which it will never do. In Science the conclusion is first admitted and the proof follows. Intellectualism builds up and up and reaches a conclusion and then throws it aside and builds up again, repeating the whole process over and over. It breeds continual unrest, which is a sign that what is being sought is not true substance, therefore men discard one thing and try another, never satisfied. The true riches of Soul's giving build up steadily into ever deeper convictions. Nothing of Soul is ever pulled down or destroyed, because all is rightly founded and immovable in Principle. One can grow so self-satisfied through intellectualism as to become blinded to pure and therefore apparently simple truth. That is the way to bury the soul, the touch, and the feeling of Science "in the grave-clothes of its letter" (S&H 367:2-3).

All along the line egotism makes a man feel that he can arrive at a point where he can lean back on the aggregate of intellectual knowl-

edge and “know it all,” but that very attitude takes away the heart and soul of Science. If he feels he knows a great deal, he may eat, drink, and be merry with it all day — that is, be immersed in complacency — but the danger of that attitude is clearly revealed in this parable. It is “minus the unction of divine Science” (S&H 164:13), and so avails nothing. If ever a man feels that spiritual healing, for example, is a matter of routine and formula because of everything he knows, he has lost the whole soul of it.

“This night thy soul shall be required of thee.” In the fear-filled “night” of error’s apparent reality, whether as sin, disease, or death, it is not mere intellectual knowledge which is required of us, but only our “soul” (our spiritual sense) conscious of the certainties of Soul itself, attuned to the very atmosphere of the divine. Nothing else avails. The “night” comes down so quickly if we look at sense testimony and say, for instance, “That poor man is ill and I must help him,” but only Soul can bestow the calm conviction, “He thinks he is ill, but that cannot be true, and Soul will give me the ideas whereby I can prove to myself and to him that there is no illness for him to experience.” Intellectualism cannot produce Soul-sense. Its whole quality and feel is alien to that Soul-sense so wonderfully brought out in the Beatitudes, for example. Soul alone produces the mood and spiritual state depicted there.

“Soul has infinite resources with which to bless mankind” (S&H 60:29). Those infinite resources come into focus as we lay our “earthly all on the altar of divine Science” (S&H 55:23-24), enter the presence of God through sincere devotion and love for all that Science teaches, and affirm the fact that we are the specific presence of God in the particular situation.

The processes which sense requires are entirely contrary to the revelations of Soul. Sense has to store; it has no ability other than to grab something, try to contain it in something and keep it. Soul is the opposite. Therefore above all what we need is a state of thought attuned to and prepared for Soul’s impressions, and this comes in the ratio of our turning from what the senses say and dwelling with the things of Spirit. There has to be “a famine of sense” to have “a feast

THE RICH FOOL

of Soul" (My.263:6-7).

Just before giving this parable Jesus said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," for being the reflection of God, Principle, he has no power of possession. What he can have is the continual unlimited joy of reflection, which means not the storage of knowledge, but the use of all his intellectual capacities to keep him supple and prepared to let go the manna of yesterday, pick up through reflection the new ideas forever being expressed by Principle, and enjoy the perpetual newness they bring in his life. The so-called intellectual feels unable to let go and let God stream through him with the joy of inspiration based on Principle alone. But nearly everyone has had an experience where preparation either for speech or action has produced something which proved wholly inadequate for the occasion as it arose. Every minute brings its own fresh challenge and new demand, so we can never rely on what we have stored. If we try to do so, we close the door on the inspiration which would otherwise have flowed direct from Principle. That is why Jesus said, "ye shall be brought before governors and kings [before beliefs trying to dominate us with their so-called authority] for my sake . . . but when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."

It could be said that the storage of knowledge is the death's head to its usefulness, whereas the development of one's capacity to become aware of Principle through its symbolic expressions is the development of the truly intellectual, as against that form of intellectualism which is based on matter, material knowledge, and material history. The storage of knowledge can become useless; the daily practice of spiritual understanding (however small or great) never does.

The storage of knowledge in the scribes and Pharisees had so clogged their mental capacities that they could not accept Truth in its pure expression as given them by the Master. The criterion of true intellectualism will always be the simplicity with which it voices

Truth, and here we see the difference between Jesus and the intellectuals of his day.

If we tried to store daylight, we would have to shutter up all the windows to keep it inside and then we would only have darkness. We cannot store light or life or anything spiritual. We can express it, reflect it, *be* it, but it will always be in the movement of life. The spiritual is a flow of ideas and will not stay for storage. It is, as John says, “a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb,” and it has never been contained or stored.

The instruction of the Master was not only to take no thought for the future as regards food and clothing, but also no thought as to our ability to meet any situation which may arise, for it must be obvious that only Principle could place a man in that position and therefore Principle has endowed him through reflection with the means of fulfilling Principle’s part in that position. If water finds its own level, so does man always find himself at the level equal to his capacity to maintain himself in it through reflecting the ideas given him by Mind.

Jesus was “the most scientific man that ever trod the globe. He plunged beneath the material surface of things, and found the spiritual cause” (S&H 313:23-26). If a man uses his so-called intellectual ability as a tool for that purpose and then drops the tool in adoration of what it has shown him — the “adorable One” (S&H 16:29) — then he will never be egotistical, however highly gifted, and will never lose sight of the fact that the tool is only a tool, even at its best, and must not be endowed with the purpose which it merely serves. The purpose it serves is to move consciousness into the spiritual sense of being and speak to it of Soul. So what we need is the admission that beyond the letter is the presence of Soul and that this is what we are going to enjoy. All that Principle “requires” of us is that the symbolic language used by the Mind of Christ drops away to leave with us only that which it symbolized. “Soul must be God; since we learn Soul only as we learn God, by spiritualization. . . . Whatever cannot be taken in by mortal mind — by human reflection, reason, or belief — must be the unfathomable Mind, which ‘eye hath not seen, nor ear

THE RICH FOOL

heard' ” (Un.28:17-22).

The Master was certainly an intellectual in that he knew his Scriptures and the history of his race, but every aspect of it was to him but the story of Principle expressing itself through man and therefore taught him how to improve his own present performance in that expression. But his intellectual capacity both as regards the Scriptures and the so-called law of the Jews exceeded that of those who had so stored it that it had obstructed their ability to discern its spiritual purpose and momentum.

Mrs Eddy too was undoubtedly someone whose intellectual scope and breadth was of the highest quality. We cannot read her works without realizing this, and yet all of it lies at the feet of the divine Principle which she had discovered and so scientifically adored.

We need to be alert that we are not drawn into the mazes of mortal mind through egotism. The following paragraph in “Science and Health” reveals some of the paths to which we should be awake so that we do not pursue them but reject them out of hand, for in Science Jesus’ instruction, “let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” is essential: “Material substances or mundane formations, astronomical calculations, and all the paraphernalia of speculative theories, based on the hypothesis of material law or life and intelligence resident in matter, will ultimately vanish, swallowed up in the infinite calculus of Spirit” (209:25-30). If that is so — and it is — then it is this spiritual calculus whose reasoning we should always follow. There is infinite scope in Science for the student to pursue a path continually filled with fresh spiritual realization, much of which may be entirely new to him, and this will become more and more spontaneous in the exact ratio that he becomes more and more conscious of God’s presence in all things, especially in the ideas which are given to him.

The parable ends: “So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” To be “rich toward God” is to be rich in understanding of what God is and does. Therefore the lesson is to keep ourselves constantly rich in realization of what Principle is and does and our relationship to Principle as its expression. This will

immediately dissuade us from any sense of having to store up knowledge in order to become rich. If we cultivate the ability to have always a rich appreciation and understanding of what God is and does, and our relationship to that, we have real riches, ready for any call which may be made upon them.

The richest man on earth kept himself determinedly poor in both personal capacity and responsibility, but was always "rich toward God." He said, "The Son can do nothing of himself [note the word "nothing"], but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." We are safe when we use our intellectual capacity to affirm and reaffirm our conviction through every fresh channel that God is the only Mind and that all true consciousness emanates from that Mind — and when we are as clear as Jesus was that we can of our own selves do nothing and also as clear that we can accomplish everything which Principle sets us to do, for the reason which he gave on another occasion: "the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works."

The memorizing of passages from the Bible and from the writings of Mrs Eddy cannot of course be classified as the storage of knowledge based on egotistical theory and un-Principled assumptions, for when referred to these passages give ideas which are clearly not of our own making, but are sources from which we gather inspiration, causing our continual gratitude as they lead us to acknowledge that their origin must be God. They therefore lead us away from self to the Principle which gave them to those who spoke or wrote them for the benefit of mankind. Our attitude is one of partaking of what *they* have to say, and this very attitude keeps us clear of egotistical theory which lacks Principle. Whether through reading, through memory, or through speech we are safe if we keep on the path which Mrs Eddy followed and of which she tells us in her verse:

"I will listen for Thy voice,
Lest my footsteps stray;
I will follow and rejoice
All the rugged way" (Mis.398:1-4).

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

© Copyright by Clifford Stamp and Rosalie Maas, 1981

*Printed in Great Britain by
Crown Press (Keighley) Ltd, Chapel Lane, Keighley, West Yorkshire*