

Contemporary Mystic Christianity **Bible Self-Study Supplement**

The Parables Of Christ's Ministry

The Parables of Christ Jesus have been termed the finest literary art of the world, combining, as they do, simplicity, profundity, human emotion and spiritual intensity.

St. Augustine says that Christ's miracles are acted Parables and that His Parables are miracles of beauty and perfection.

The Greek meaning of Parable is to place beside for the purpose of comparison. Those who assert that there is no secret or inner meaning in Christianity must forego entirely a study of the Parables, for the Saviour explicitly declares as their purpose, "seeing, they may not see and hearing, they may not understand."

One of the distinctive characteristics of St. Luke's Gospel is the importance he accords the Parables. Of the thirty or so which are most familiar to the Bible student, eighteen are narrated only in the Lukan Gospel. For purposes of esoteric interpretation we have grouped the Parables into sections as they relate to one or another of the specific aspects of the Christian Mysteries.

Parables of the Old and the New

The great wisdom of the Supreme Master caused Him to emphasize the necessity of embracing the pioneer truths of each new age inaugurated by the precession of the Equinoxes from one zodiacal sign into another. This brings an ever-recurring conflict: The conservatives cling to the old. Those ready for advancement accept the new. That it is the part of wisdom to accept the new the Christ makes plain in the Parable of New Wine and Old Wine found in Luke 5:37-39, Matthew 9:17, and Mark 2:22; also in the Parable of Treasures New and Old in Matthew 13:52, and Parable of the New Patch on the Old Garment in Luke 5:36, Matthew 9:16, and Mark 2:21.

The life and teachings of Christ Jesus are a constant protest against so strict an adherence to form that it becomes stereotyped and causes the spirit to be obscured. "Before Abraham was, I am, was His challenge to His own age. New cloth must be fashioned into new garments; new wine, if it is to remain pure and unpolluted, must not be poured into old wine skins, but into new.

The Piscean Age, influenced by Pisces and Jupiter, has established churchcraft founded upon creed and dogma. The religion of the new Aquarian Age under Uranus will be untrammelled. As the Master observed:

Matthew 13:52

"Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the

kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

If any man is born in Christ he is a new creature, asserted Paul, speaking from his own personal experience.

St. John, from the exaltation of his high Initiate-consciousness, declared: "Behold, I make all things new" for "the former things are passed away."

The mystic Tennyson sings in his inspired song of Initiation, *The Idylls of the King*:

*The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfills Himself in many ways.*

Preparation For Discipleship

Parable of the Pearl of Great Price. Matthew 13:44-46

Parable of the Hidden Treasure. Matthew 13:44-46

Parable of the Mustard Seed. Mark 4:30-32, Luke 13:18-19

Parable of the Leaven. Luke 13:20-21

The Pearl of Great Price and *The Hidden Treasure* are twin Parables. Each recounts the same truth, namely, the necessity of entire and complete dedication to the quest of the spiritual life. This full allegiance is the primary requisite

of the Path of Discipleship. Nothing less will suffice than that the whole energy of mind, soul and body be sent in one direction.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed teaches us once more that we are all Christs-in-the-making, and that each one of us must, in a small way, make our lives a replica of the life of the Christ. The mind is the path; therefore the beginning of the resurrection within our own lives must be accomplished by establishing within ourselves a new mind through the creative power of thought. The Master knew this truth and gave it to His Disciples and to the multitudes gathered around Him. He likened the attainment of the kingdom (within) to the planting of a seed in the ground. As the seed lies embedded in darkness, hidden away from the light for a time, apparently inert and lifeless, so it is with the aspirant when he begins to live the spiritual life. For a time it may seem that he is making no progress. He is beset with trials and temptations and enveloped in darkness, and knows not how it is possible for the seed of the Spirit to spring up.

Jacob Boehme describes this place on the Path so aptly that it finds an echo in the heart of everyone who has passed this way. He says: "It is not so easy a matter to become a child of God as men imagine ... To turn the mind and destroy self there is a strong and continued requisite,

and such a stout and steady purpose that if the body and soul should part asunder by it, yet the will would persevere constantly and not enter again into the self. A man must wrestle until the dark center that is shut up close breaks open, and the spark lying therein kindles, and from thence immediately the noble lily branch spouteth — as from the divine grain of mustard seed, as Christ saith. A man must pray earnestly, with great humility, and for a while become a fool in his own reason and see himself void of understanding therein until Christ be formed in this new earth incarnation."

If we possess ourselves of this strong and continued earnestness of purpose we may rest assured that we shall come to know the truth of the Master's words: "The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

The power of the Christ-life that is within the seed causes it to push its way up through the darkness until at last the tender, green blade breaks through the earth and finds the sunlight. The power of the mind being renewed may be likened to the new blade in that it is but a small beginning, and shows but little promise of its future wondrous attainment. As we grow in Christ power, there comes the ear or the fruit. "By their fruits ye shall know them," said the Master. And finally comes the full corn in the ear, or the

wondrous fulfillment of the Christed mind, the powers of Initiation, producing a man whose light shineth, as Jacob Boehme put it.

Again we may liken the seed planted in the ground to the student who is just beginning a study of esoteric Christianity; the green blade to the novice who has begun to demonstrate power through good works or the apprentice in Masonic ceremonialism; the ear to the disciple who has progressed even farther upon the Path, or the fellow craftsman of the Lodge; and the full corn in the ear to that lofty attainment we call Initiateship, which makes a man a Master.

The Christ likens the kingdom to a grain of mustard seed which when sown in the earth is less than all the seed that be in the earth. Here He is telling us that the gateway to the kingdom of the new consciousness, the kingdom of heaven within, is humility.

Again Jacob Boehme, that disciple of true humility, tells us from his own experience: "When the outward reason (concrete mind) triumpheth in the light, saying, 'I have the true child,' then the will of the desire must bow itself down to the earth and bring itself in the deepest humility and say, 'Thou art foolish and have nothing but the grace of God.' Thou must wrap thyself up in that belief with great humility and become nothing at all in thyself, and neither know nor

love thyself. All that thou hast or is in thee must esteem itself as nothing but a mere instrument of God."

This is the lesson that Gethsemane holds for each neophyte. It is only as he forgets self, and thus makes himself a fit instrument through which the Christ power may work, that he may be lifted to know the joys of the resurrection.

Christ Jesus said, "But when it is sown, it groweth up and beareth greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it." And many such parables spake He unto the people as they were able to bear them, that is, as they were able to understand His meaning; but when He and His disciples were alone, He explained all these things to them.

The farther we progress upon His Way, the more illuminating do His words become and the more able are we to understand His mystic message.

In the Parable of the Leaven the great Teacher is treating of the far-reaching power of transmutation, the most subtle and the most potent of all forces.

Leaven is a silent agency, its workings are unseen and unobserved, by outer sight until the manifestation is completed. "Three measures" was an ephah of flour, the

amount ordinarily used for the family baking. In order that the bread be of the required consistency and lightness the leaven must penetrate the entire mass. The three measures, spiritually, refer to body, mind and soul which must each one become infused with the light of Spirit before the transmutation processes can be effected.

Paul gave in a few words an arresting description of what happens to the disciple when "the whole" — namely, body, mind and soul — "has been leavened, in the statement, "In Him we live and move and have our being."

The Christ leaven is at work in the world and its activities will not cease until all mankind walks in the light as He is in the light and all nations come to know the glory of one vast fellowship together.

— ***Corinne Heline***