

Twelve
Parable-Miracles
of
Answered Prayer

GLENN CLARK

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FOREWORD

FROM the moment that the first chapter of "The Soul's Desire" appeared in the form of an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* in August, 1924, until now, I have been continually asked for examples of answered prayer as drawn from my own life and experience. One day I started to make an extended reply to this request in the way of a long list of concrete examples, but I had not gone far before I realized that I was giving only one portion and that, the smallest and least important portion of the "miracles," the outside portion, the portion which I was the least interested in having my readers get. It was like giving to men who had come seeking seed corn the mere outer shells or husks. All those who have read my little book, "The Soul's Sincere Desire," will know that to me a miracle of any kind is merely the external manifestation of something very precious that has transpired within the most sacred chambers of the inner soul. The greatest difficulty which I have had to face when sharing my experiences with others is in making the general rank and file accept this viewpoint and make it central in their lives.

From time immemorial, the moment the inner spirit clothes itself in tangible, objectified, externalized form, that moment the vast majority cease to look at the True Reality—the Inner Essence—which is the real *cause* of all, and turn their attention to the External Appearance, which is merely the *effect*. It is easy to forget that the life is more than the food and the body more than the raiment. The true glory and majesty and magnificence attends not the loaves and fishes, but the compassion with which the Christ looks upon the multitude. And yet how rarely does one hear the word *compassion* discussed when a group of good people get to-

gether to discuss the miracle of feeding the five thousand. How often the attention is centered entirely upon the word *multiplication*. Yet put those words side by side and how thin and tawdry the latter word sounds before the first—how mechanical, cold, and trivial! The world could very easily have lived a thousand years without knowing the word multiplication, but it could not live one day if compassion were taken out of it. *The real miracle, the greatest miracle, in this world is that a man can love another.* Indeed, is not the word *multiplication*, as applied to the biological unfoldment of our human race, dependent upon the word *love*? And turning from the biological to the artistic, educational and religious developments of our race—how increasing great the word *love* looms before our lives! Yes, the life is more than the food, and the body more than the raiment.

How much effort Jesus expended in cautioning His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, who were always looking for an outward sign! Ye can read the signs of the times, but ye cannot read the greatest sign of all—the sign of love written large in the human heart.

And when the disciples came back enthusiastic after their first missionary tour and all began to talk at once, so eager were they to tell of the wonderful external concrete results of their prayers for the sick and the sinning, He quickly rebuked them, saying, "Rejoice not that the devils are subject unto you, rejoice rather that your names are written in heaven." Rejoice not that you have effected union with the things that perish; rejoice, rather, that you have established union with Love that is eternal. The wonderful thing that has happened to you is not that you are able to bring to pass miracles in the external world, miracles that you can apprehend and prove to yourself with your five senses; the wonderful thing that has happened to you is that you have at last found that your God is a God of Love and Compassion whom

you may passionately love with all your strength and with all your soul and with all your heart and with all your mind.

External results from prayer have a value only as figures in a bankbook have a value in informing the world that you have gold deposited in the bank. If you did not have the gold in the bank, the figures would mean nothing. And if you have the gold but can't recall the figures, the gold will still be there. If the miracle did not happen, God would still be in His heaven. Bankbooks and miracles are not the only way to prove there is gold on earth and a God in heaven. They just happen to be convenient and, for some people, exceedingly popular ways of conveying this information. Even Jesus recognized their practical importance when he said, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

However, Jesus Himself was very reticent about spreading abroad the reports of the external results of His inner prayer life. How often we read after something especially striking had happened, "He cautioned them that they should tell no man!" His reason for this, it seems to me, was His deep inner intuition that all people are not at the same time at the same level of spiritual unfoldment. The kind of treatment necessary for the growing grain is not, for instance, what is needed for the ripened corn. The food for the grown-up may be too strong for the little child. Most of the people about Him were in the childhood of spiritual evolution, not ready yet to see through the outer husk to the inner spirit. Therefore He must dole out very carefully the outer miracles or clothe them in forms that would be more easily assimilative to their souls.

The form He used most frequently to convey spiritual truths to the unripened mind was the parable. By this method He could keep the inner experience concealed from those whose hearts were hardened and unprepared like untilled soil is hardened and unprepared for the planting. Yet

at the same time the parable shell was adapted for holding all the essence of the truth hermetically sealed, so to speak, and as safely preserved as a grain of corn preserves within itself the germ of new life, ready for instant immolation and growth the moment the soil opens to receive it.

When requests come to me to tell some of the miracles of answered prayer that have fallen within my own experience, I naturally turn to this vehicle which was so frequently used, and so blessed in its use, by Jesus the Christ. The twelve "parable-miracles" that follow may be read by those who so desire as so many pretty little fairy stories to gladden the heart and brighten an idle hour. To others they may be accepted for just what they are—true accounts of actual happenings, in which the events have been minimized and understated rather than overstated. But for all who read them they are intended as seeds to be planted as rapidly as the soil is made ready to receive them. It is trusted that from this simple planting may come forth a harvest of grain either now or in the days to come—grain that may furnish food for the very bread of life, bread that may be assimilated unto oneself and become bone of one's bone and flesh of one's flesh—bringing additional strength to some who may need it, some who may be facing long days and nights of weary travel along life's hard pathway.

I

The Parable of the Stars in Their Courses

One evening there were gathered together some men, all of whom were interested in the virtue of prayer, and one of them told to the others this incident:

I had been standing on a street corner, waiting for a bus, when it occurred to me that when one has nothing else to do, power, instead of being dissipated by impatient longing, might be stored up by turning the thoughts to God and realizing the Kingdom in all the changing aspect of things.

So, standing there, I looked about me, ready to see in the varied pictures passing before me the perfect harmony of God's perfect unfolding plan.

I saw then two middle-aged women on the other side of the street, coming from opposite directions and destined to pass each other right opposite me. "As truly as God governs the stars in their courses," I thought to myself, "just as surely will He keep these women in their courses so they will meet and pass without collision and without accident." I watched them pass each other and I let my thoughts pass on with them as they disappeared into the "infinite space," realizing that each was going on a real and necessary errand, perhaps for her loved ones, and that each errand would be fulfilled with perfect joy and harmony, without accident of any kind.

But as I turned my eyes in another direction I beheld a different sight. A little girl in the yard was saying sharp and angry things to a little boy on the sidewalk and he was retaliating with still more angry vigor. "How does this harmonize," I asked myself, "with the harmony with which the stars are governed in their courses without collision or discord of any kind?" Then I realized suddenly that such discord did not belong in the picture at all, either in infinite

spaces or in our smaller space. I found myself watching them with surprise, astonishment, and unbelief, placing them in my thoughts with the stars in a benign pattern of infinite order. As I was thinking this, the boy turned on his heel and slowly crossed the street, and as he did so a look of the tenderest remorse that I have ever witnessed on a child's face came over it. I looked back to the little girl, and on her face almost the same transformation occurred. She started to reach out her hand as though to call him back, but let it fall reluctantly to her side and, with eyes on the verge of tears, turned back to her play. The little boy had now reached the opposite side of the street and he too had turned and was looking back at the girl, whose attention now was on her play. He stood there with those deep, sad eyes for several minutes as though hesitating whether to cross over and make amends for what he had done or said. But I, who had seen it all, knew that he had already been forgiven. He turned then and passed on.

"It is all well," I thought, "they are in God's hands. They will meet again at school or in play and the deep lesson of co-operation and comradeship and self-control will bear fruit, perhaps a hundredfold, giving them lasting protection against such clashes for the rest of their lives."

For myself, I had learned a lesson as great as they. For I knew now that to vision infinite order is to create finite order, for we are patterned after the stars, and woven in the warp and the woof of their being and take our order from them, wearing here below miniature designs of a great pattern so that the smallest atom is a little sun, partaking of the virtue of its parenthood. As the atom builds itself upon the infinite wisdom of the planetary system, so would we use the law to create for ourselves a finite order which in the scope of its perfect action would be infinite.

My bus came, but the time had passed as quickly as though I had been standing on the threshold of the Kingdom of Heaven.

II A Parable of the Positive and the Negative Ray

That same evening another spoke to the same men and related this experience:

A friend of mine had for sale two little cottages. She had need to dispose of these cottages, for her happiness lay elsewhere, so she had proceeded in the usual way and had put the matter into the hands of real-estate agents. A buyer was found, but in the end he would not pay the one thousand dollars down which was required by my friend.

"How do you know," I said to her when she expressed her disappointment to me, "how do you know that this prospect would be happy in buying your property?" For I thought that for the property there must naturally be buyers. So I spoke further to her.

"The physicists maintain there there is no negative-poled atom in the universe but has its corresponding positive ray somewhere in infinite space, even if it be a million miles away, and that nothing in heaven or in earth can prevent their ultimately finding each other out. Is it not reasonable to believe that there is some similar law prevailing in the relations of man to man, and that when one has a beautiful thing to dispose of, another, somewhere, even though he be thousands of miles away, can be made happy by that very thing; and that, if we but trust all to God, we might find that nothing on land or sea could prevent the supply and the need from finding each other?"

She was much struck by my talk and let the matter drift for a few days while she thought what was best to be done.

It was only a few days later that a friend of mine who lived some two thousand miles away came to my door. He was enthusiastic about the little city and exclaimed almost

immediately, "If I could secure a position on the city newspaper, I should like nothing better than to buy a few little cottages to rent and settle down here for life."

A week later he told me that he had been successful in getting the position on the paper and asked me then to help him find a couple of cottages which might be for sale.

When I showed him the cottages of my friend he was delighted with them. When I told him the price he protested that it was too small. When I asked him what he could pay down he replied without hesitation, "One thousand dollars."

I brought the prospective buyer and seller together and as I sat in the room I was witness to one of the most extraordinary business conversations that was ever held. They argued, the buyer wanting to pay more, the seller to take less! At last a settlement was reached. They both took up their lives, each benefited by the mutual transaction. I felt somehow as if in the exchange even of that piece of what is commonly called "real estate," there had been an exchange of some subtle and penetrating law of need and fulfillment, through which their lives became more blessed.

III

A Parable of the Light That Shone in the Darkness

One day a man received a letter. And this is what the letter said:

"Because something you have said helped me to see the light and because it brought me great comfort when trouble was thick upon me, I am coming to you again for help. This time my little daughter, my only child, is attacked by illness which the doctors say cannot be stopped, but will prove fatal. In my anxiety and despair, I am turning to you for help. I trust all to your prayer."

For a little while this letter troubled the man. Here was one leaning upon him for something he knew he could not give. Nevertheless, knowing that the need was great he sat down and wrote the man as follows:

"Step off the top of a ten-story building and give yourself without question to the air, knowing that the parachute will open and save you. As the air is all about you and is sufficient to support the parachute, so God's love is all about you and is sufficient to support my prayer. I shall pray for you. Love will be in my prayer. Step into the atmosphere of divine love and give yourself unresistingly to its power."

As he wrote, and even as the carrier went off with the letter, the man ceased to think of the stranger who had written him, but thought rather of the infinite trust which could fill a man's soul, who would have written him for help as this one had done; and as he thought, it seemed to him that the one who had written him faded out of sight and where he had stood before, nothing but light remained, the clear, bright light of Trust, and then he knew that Trust was one of the greatest things in all the universe. For Trust is something which no manner of evil can hurt, for it is just like the air: when the sword cleaves it, it gathers together again; when one would destroy it, he finds it cannot be touched. Trust cannot be exhausted, for the more it is used, the stronger it grows; and the more it is reviled the more impervious and indestructible it becomes. No impurities or weaknesses can find a lodgment in Trust any more than darkness can find a foothold in light. When light enters a room, darkness runs out of the door. When Trust fills a man, evils flee out from his being—yes, out through his very pores. Trust is impenetrable by anything which is unlike itself, just as light is impenetrable by darkness. It is impervious to all thrusts of those who would destroy it, and yet it enslaves and binds and limits no man who surrenders himself captive unto it.

Thus the petitioning friend faded out of the man's vision and in his place he saw only Trust. Where he stood all shadows of darkness had vanished and there stood only light. And thus having written and thus having sat and thought awhile the man was interrupted by pressing demands and went off and forgot the matter entirely. A few days a letter came from the one who had been in trouble saying that his daughter had miraculously become that very hour both sound and well, that other beautiful blessings had come into his home, that his business had commenced to prosper, and that his God had commenced to do his thinking for him.

Then it was that a great wonder came to the man, for experiences like this were at that time new to him. Is escape from the evils that beset us as simple as that? he asked. Can a man be made whole by his faith alone? Can all darkness vanish from a room by the simple act of turning on the light?

IV

A Parable of Daniel in the Lion's Den with His Hands Tied, the Doors Locked, and the Wild Beasts upon Him

A man who was in great trouble said to his wise friend, "I do not know which way to turn. I am without hope. Every misfortune has come upon me."

And his friend said to him, "You are Daniel in the lion's den, with your hands tied, and the ravening beasts about you. But take courage, for it is in such moments that God is most imminent, His power most marvelous and the answer to prayer most certain. For so long as there remains one door which our human eyes can light upon as a means of escape, then we, in our arrogance, act in our own willfulness rather than through God's will. You who are in despair abandon yourself to God, you cease to speak for yourself in arrogant

manner but become as a child and give yourself over as a child to the divine Father. Thus your hopelessness gives you liberty. So it is with a child who falls from the highest place and breaks no bones while a man falling from the same height is crushed and mutilated. With the one it gives itself to the air, knowing no fear, and is unhurt and well, while the other, being conscious of himself rather than of God, thinks as he is falling, 'I will cleverly save myself,' and thus he is dashed to pieces below.

"You are only wounded in so far as you resist. For nothing exists in the universe to harm you save as you oppose yourself to it, making it alien to you; on the other hand the wildest beast is but a sheep of your Father's. Put your trust in that Shepherd and you and the beasts that threaten you will dwell together in His bosom."

And he ended, saying, "Go now and you will be taken care of, we do not know when or how it will come but it will come."

And the man went and the next day came again, but this time with a face radiant and cried out joyfully to the wise man that as if by miracle the tangled skein of his troubles had overnight been unraveled and put again in perfect order and that he had indeed been saved as Daniel from the wild beasts that had beset him.

V

The Parable of the Man Who Found the Elixir of Youth

A man came to another and said, "I am growing old. My limbs are not as supple as they used to be. My mind is becoming stiff and ideas no longer come easily to me as they used to. I dread old age. Why cannot we stay forever young?"

"We can," said the other.

"Tell me how," exclaimed the first one, "for if you have an elixir of eternal youth I would share it with you."

"When you were young, did you ever admire a teacher?"

"I did," replied the other.

"Did you ever admire a teacher so much that you tried to walk like he did, talk like he did, form your opinions like he did?"

"Yes, many teachers I admired like that."

"And after you walked, talked, and thought like him for many days, did you grow more like him or less like him?"

"More like him."

"And were all your teachers older than yourself?"

"Yes, all."

"So in becoming like the older people you admired, and took for your models, you grew like those you admired. In the past you admired age and took it for your guide. Now go and change teachers awhile."

"What do you mean?"

"Go and take a little child for a teacher, learn of him. Turn and become like a little child. Look out upon life as though you had never seen it before. Let every sunset be the first sunset you ever saw, and every sunrise be for you the beginning of a New Day of marvels and miracles. Look out upon life with eyes of wonder. Don't use over and over again old, worn-out opinions that thousands have used and discarded before you. Form a new spontaneous conception for every joy that comes to you. Don't define and catalogue each experience—live and enjoy every experience."

And the man went on his way, and he took children for his playmates, and his joints grew more supple and his mind more pliant and keen; but the greatest good fortune of all that came to him was the discovery that he could now see the little child in every man he met; in the most confirmed sin-

ner he could see the innocent soul; through the deepest blackness he could catch the glimmer of Light. Thenceforth he knew that never in this world nor in the world to come would he ever know what old age was. For he had found the spring of eternal youth, and he would never again let it get away from him.

VI

Parable of the Three Men Who Lost What They Wanted

There came three men to the home of an old man, and they said, "We are all very unhappy because we lost what we wanted." One of them was especially bitter as he spoke.

"I am through with prayer," he said, "I prayed hard for a victory and instead of coming to me it went to my bitterest enemy."

The old man replied, "Was it a victory you needed?"

And the bitter friend said, "Oh, I didn't *need* it, but I *wanted* it."

The other asked, "Did you want the victory perhaps that you might give to those you love?"

But the man answered, "No, I didn't want it for that. I wanted it so that I should take it from my rival. I prayed for that and my rival won it. I am through with prayer."

The older one said, "But I always thought, myself, that prayer was the asking for a gift in love. I should think that hate and rivalry would blight the prayer as the cold does the flowers, that it would kill the precious gift of the spirit as Herod killed the infants in order that he might slaughter the one with the divine spirit."

But the man was a closed door and a barrier to these words and only answered more bitterly, "I am through with prayer. After this when I want a thing I'll go out and get it."

And then because his business was pressing and his mind was filled with many things to be done, he said farewell to his friends and hurried on his way.

And the gentle one knew that the other was closing the door against all that might help him and that from henceforth he would have to fight, alone, the bare and brutal physical world without the ointment of the divine upon him, for he knew that now he was a wall and not a channel for a message to pass through him. So he turned to the two, leaving the other in the hands of his Divine Father who touches the blind as well as those who see; and the man was at peace, for he knew that in the mysterious ways of divinity that which is a wall will become a door, that which is closed will open, and the barrier will become a channel.

Then one of the two who had remained said, "Tell me further of this. I too prayed for a victory which was denied, but I prayed not for myself alone but for one I love. Tell me why my prayer was not answered."

"I have yet to find when a prayer is asked in love," replied the other, "that a door ever closes but there is a sign upon it, if one can but see it, pointing to a better door further on ahead. I never yet found a road obstructed where there was not another and a better road if we turn to the right. When the door to the Senatorship was shut for Abraham Lincoln, was it not merely a sign that the door of the Presidency was ahead?"

"But," asked the man, "how can one be sure he can *SEE* that other door?"

"I shall explain that to you by a parable," replied the other.

"Upon the day when she was seven, a little girl was given a party to which were invited twelve of her friends. As they all sat around the table before the dainty refreshments

and the cake with the seven candles, the little girl's father, thinking to surprise her, brought in a plate of gingerbread. But the little girl soon saw that there were only twelve pieces of gingerbread and she set to wondering avariciously how these would go around to thirteen people, and it occurred to her that as she was the hostess her father would probably pass her by, and being a selfish little girl she became full of stinging jealousy and she even thought dark thoughts about her father for providing only twelve pieces of gingerbread instead of thirteen. She became so jealous and angry that she soon began to cry.

"She had forgotten that her father knew very well that she did not care at all for gingerbread. Her thoughts were so taken up with the slight she had received from one to whom she looked always for what she wanted that she did not see her father come in with a heaping plate of angel food cake. Her father, always thinking of her, knew that instead of gingerbread his little girl dearly loved angel food cake. But the foolish child was so blinded by tears over her imagined wrong that she had no eyes for her real good, so that after a while the other children, thinking she did not care even for cake, divided her piece up among themselves and ate all to the last crumb."

And he who had asked, rose to his feet.

"I understand," he said, and went on his way.

Then the only one who remained turned to the old man and said, "It is easy for one to see this with one's mind, but it is hard to see it with his heart. Can you help my heart to see?"

"If I could only make your heart to see," replied the old man, "then when your prayer is not answered in exactly the way you want to have it answered, you would actually *re-joice* that you had been denied."

The young man, being incredulous, asked him how it was

possible to rejoice when he had been denied, and the old man instructed him further:

"When I pray, there are limits to what is possible to my eyes. When my small prayer is not answered in the way I would expect it, I know that the answer will be without limit, boundless, beyond my asking, coming only from the power whose beneficence is beyond imagining."

And the young man said, "But there are certain things one wants. And one wants them one's own way."

And the old man with patience spoke further, "I am old and my physical eyes see but a little way. You are young and you see great distances in the world. But because I am old, with the dimming of my outward sight has come the brightening of my inward vision. And I see that prayer cannot be answered except as you give yourself to its will and abide in joy by its fulfillment. Prayer is the gift of divine love, it is the sacrament between God and man. You do not take ruthlessly of your human love but you give to it abundantly and abandon yourself to its will; then neither can you take and command divine love but must abide in its will and give yourself wholly to its ever beneficent power.

"So sure has become my faith in this love of God that I abide in it without question. When my human prayer is not answered in the way I would expect to have had it, I am exalted, for I know I have submitted to a will greater than my own and capable of infinitely more goodness.

"When a man is in love he does not then exist alone. How much more it is true, then, that if a man dwells in divine love he cannot exist alone but is dependent and interdependent upon that love. I live upon it as I live upon the air; and with as much faith, for I know it will keep me with life even after the air of our earth has become nothing. I ask of it and I know that I ask not of my enemy who is separate from me, but that I ask of my Father.

"I have faith in His wisdom. It may appear to my eyes hard, but I know how little vision the eyes have. For He said unto us, 'Rejoice little children that you have a heavenly father who when you ask for a stone will give you bread, and when you ask for a scorpion will give you meat.'"

And the young man said, "Thank you for speaking to my heart. Now I too understand." And he arose and went on his way.

VII

A Parable of the Fountain That Was Eternal

There was once a teacher of young people. He spent his days telling them of the craft of writing, but it seemed to him that he failed. He did not know the reason for his failure. But it seemed to him that he had before him great treasures and that, through blindness or ignorance, he could not touch them deeply enough, that he could not find in them the living fountains of creation.

After they had all gone away he would sit alone wondering how he could mine deep enough to strike the living waters in them. He remembered the earth, so heavy, upon which they all walked. He remembered how they knew, and their very lives depended upon the knowledge, that far below the thick crust of soil was flowing, secret and powerful, the living waters of the earth. And while he was thinking there came to him visions of his boyhood. It happened that where he lived there were two ways of gaining access to these vital waters—one was by a pump, which had to be primed, and gave forth water only after great exertion—the other was by an artesian spring which never needed priming but gave of its water freely from the depths of the earth.

And it seemed to him as he meditated that he had been priming pumps and that that was the reason of his failure.

At the same time he knew that, as in the earth, so in his pupils there must be deep founts of living waters of creation, which if only discovered would yield up vast riches. He took new heart and determined to find if he could, the access to these waters.

He no longer went to the shallow surface water which needed priming, for he was in search of artesian wells. He hunted long and he wrote down all his observations on the way so that others might follow him and found their works, like the cities of old, by the deepest wells. He put these things into books and other teachers who alone and weary had searched also, read them and went too in search of deep wells.

His students became creators of living works. The wells when found became no longer wells but actual fountains and an eternal flow of living water sprang up around him.

VIII

The Parable of the Man Who Gave Away the One He Loved

A young man came to a friend he could trust and said to him, "The girl I love has asked to be set free; what shall I do?"

"Let her be free," replied the other quietly.

"But I love her so," cried the other, "how can I bear to give her up?"

"How much do you love her?" asked the other.

"More than any woman has ever been loved by any man in all the world."

"Even then you do not love her enough," replied the other, "otherwise you could give her up when she asks it. What you call love is mere attachment. When a mother loves a son so much that she cannot bear him out of her sight far enough for him to go away to college, or go away to the

Senate, or go away to find his great life plan, then she does not love him enough. When a wife cannot let her husband take a journey that will bring to him his great opportunity, it is not her love that holds him, but her attachment. Let your love be colossal enough to give your loved one away to her great destiny, her great life plan. Give her to anything which will make her happier than you can make her—if there is anything in the world that can do it. Can you love her enough—in your heart of hearts—to do that?"

And the young man bowed his head, and his lips moved as though in prayer. Then he said, while his eyes gleamed with a new sad brightness:

"I CAN."

Months rolled by, and again the young man came to his friend, and this time his face was shining, and his eyes had a new and deeper radiance in them than his friend had ever seen before.

"Share my happiness, dear friend, for I am in Heaven," he said, "I gave my beloved away. I gave her to her destiny, I set her eternally free. She went her way and entered into that freedom. A few days later she came back to me, and this is what she said:

"All my life I have been seeking for such a love as you have just been giving to me, and I knew it not—a love that is great enough to forget itself in seeing its loved one completely happy. That kind of love is the kind I thought only the angels could give. I did not know there was such love anywhere outside of heaven. Had I known it I should have sought it long ago. Now that I know it exists I cannot cease till I find it and make it my own. So take me, keep me forever."

And he went his way, and as his friend watched him go he thought in his heart, "There goes the Love that holds the planets in their places."

A Parable of the Well in the Seashore Sand

There was once a man who lived in a great city where, as every one knows, the spirit of "take" rules stronger than the spirit of "give." This man followed the ways of his time. He was very diligent in getting from the wealth of the city all that he could for his family. He spent many hours over the evening light figuring on his accounts in hopes he would find a way he could get more, but the many hours he spent in such figuring reaped as many hours of doubt and fear. For this man lived in a city where people were always afraid. They were afraid others would take from them all that they so diligently tried to take from each other. And he, like the other citizens of that city, went round and round within this fear like a squirrel on a wheel.

One day his wife, who was also very thrifty and never bought what would throw them into debt and so commit them to the mercy of the other "takers" of the city, came to him and said, "While our children are small we should have a small car, but I have figured our income carefully and find we would need just a hundred dollars before we could with safety undertake to buy one."

Now the man wanted to do all that he could for his children, so it happened that when his wife thus presented him with their need, he caught a glimpse out through the cage of fear that held his city captive and answered her more wisely than he then knew, "I'll tell you what we will do," he said. "When our little child with his tiny hands dug a well upon the seashore, was he afraid that the well would not be filled? No, but instead he sat down beside it, and frail, but with faith, he waited for the ocean, miles wide and miles deep to stir through and through to its deepest fathoms and fill it for him. We shall be as wise as the child."

But his wife said, "I do not understand."

And he found great difficulty in explaining to her since it had but that moment come to him. But he said, "If we have a well, the great tides of God must fill it. If we have not a well but only think that we have, then there is nothing to be filled. In other words," he continued, "if we have a need, then that need must be filled. It draws its fulfilment to itself inevitably. It becomes a great vortex, pulling to itself just the amount and kind to fill it, the exact fulfilment for the need, in right proportion with no more and no less. It cannot be otherwise."

So firmly did the man hold to his new vision that he and his wife agreed to leave it entirely to God whether they should have their car by the spring. Still one hundred dollars was needed before they dare venture. But the man did not lose faith. Instead he said to his wife. "Our child did not lose faith when he sat by his well on the seashore. Perhaps the tides did not come as soon as he had builded the well, but the tides came and he knew they would come. We shall have as much faith as he." And they waited.

Then through the mails came a letter which when opened dropped at their feet one hundred and eight dollars. They looked at each other in astonishment. When they turned to the letter which accompanied it they found that no fabulous person had sent it but they themselves twelve years previous had *given it* to an endowment fund. Now as the need which they had filled was no longer imperative, the tide had turned, their gift had come back to them when their need called. The man and the woman looked at each other thinking the same thoughts. All they had taken had given them nothing. What they had given now returned to them made rich by their present need.

Thus the man came to know and it was borne out in his future dealings with his fellow men, that what he took profit-

ed him nothing, but all that he gave bore fruits with a thousand seeds, each seed to bear a many branched tree which would in turn bear more fruit laden with more seeds so that the abundance thus generated could never be reckoned.

When he came to know this he left off fearing and spent his evenings no more at mean figures. He thought no more of what he could take, for he had no need to take anything, for he gave so much and the body of those gifts bore such abundant fruit that his family seemed to live then on the shores of a great sea which bore up to them according to their need and never once after that failed them.

X

The Parable of the Oak That Drew Sustenance from the Elements

"Here I am," said a man, "getting along past the meridian of life, and have nothing to show for my efforts.

"All these years I have striven to give a true account of myself before God and my fellow man and have failed. Having had the best preparation in college and professional school that money will buy, and having had ample opportunity to show my ability in at least three different lines of work, here I am left stranded high and dry, like a miserable piece of worthless flotsam on life's wide sea. There seems to be no work for which I am adapted."

"Sit on the bench beside me," said his friend, "and look at yonder giant oak before us. See how it drinks through its leaves the same air that the little plum drinks in yonder. It draws nourishment through its roots from the same soil. The same rain blesses them with its showers, and the same sun shines its benediction down upon them both. From all these elements in nature the oak draws substance, just as does the plum. And yet the oak does not become a plum, nor the

plum an oak. Each is governed by the inner law of its own being which takes from each element exactly that which its own peculiar nature and genus demands, and rejects that which it cannot use. Look carefully, friend, at the oak—it is especially like unto you, for it, too, is late in arriving.

"You cannot, by taking thought, add one inch to your stature. But you can, by being true to the law of your own being, by giving yourself—even as the tree gives itself to the air and the sunshine—in perfect trust to the great Father who governs all things, both the lilies and you—draw unto yourself exactly the opportunities, the environment, the friends that you need—and your success will be measured only by the dreams and desires which are rooted within your own integrated, unified self."

And the friend walked away, but the man still sat there and stared at the oak, until it became no longer a fancy or a dream, but a living fact—that the law which governed the oak also governed him, and that which was his could not ever escape him, and that which was not his could never really belong to him.

And days went on and a great quietness came into his soul. He could not understand it, because always before he had been unrestful at heart. Neither could his wife understand it, nor his friends. And then one day a man came to him with a wonderful offer which became the door to a career of true usefulness and happiness. And how and why it came he knew not, neither did his friends, nor did he ever meet anyone who could tell him. But as he passed the oak tree one day, he suddenly knew why it had come to him. For he knew that within the oak there was a power which was continually creating that which its inner nature craved from the silent elements without. And great calmness henceforth stayed with that man, a calmness that to others seemed colossal when those about him seemed lost in inconsequential things.

The Parable of the Noisy Station and the Meadow by the Brook

The man and the woman were on a train with their three children, waiting at a station before they could go on to their home from which they had been away the entire summer. The woman had met her difficulties bravely. The three children had been ill all the summer; new labors, unexpected difficulties had come upon them until the tangle had become inextricable.

Then the man and the woman had sat down opposite each other for they had come to the end of their endurance and now knew that they must come together to find some courage.

The man said, "We must change our inner consciousness. Something is the matter within since the reflection is so distorted. We must put ourselves in order." They did not know clearly what the man meant by this. It was simply that despair made them humble and very simple and the man said, "That is all that I know to do in our predicament." And the woman agreed with him. So they had set about it together.

And no sooner had they done it than everything began to change. Letters came postponing important meetings which had been pressing upon the man; others bearing good tidings telling of problems which they had anticipated meeting in the future but that had now been settled for them. And finally, to their astonishment and much beyond what they had hoped, the children grew so strong and well that their very exuberance and vitality and good cheer seemed to bring good health to all within the home.

The man and the woman pondered and wondered over what had happened to them.

Months had now passed and they were going on another journey. They sat in the great train shed in a metropolitan Union Station. The heat about them was stifling. Men were shouting at each other, children were crying. Thick smoke moved slowly in the heated air. They heard the shrieking whistles and the movement of the steel trains. Hot, tired people crowded down the aisles trying to get into the next coach. All this noise, dirt and ugliness was pressing down upon them like a nightmare, a darkening pall. They wished that this dirty, noisy station were not there, that they might be put into green meadows out under the sky.

Their wish had no sooner been expressed than a strange thing happened. The train next to them began to move. All the trains in the station seemed to be moving. The station itself seemed to be mounted on wheels moving past them and was also speeding away. Everything moved. Suddenly the open sky came rushing in, the green meadows passed them, and they smelled the sweet grasses. That which they had wished for had come.

Did their wish move away the unhappy surroundings? It had merely synchronized with the schedule of the engineer up ahead. And the wonderful thing about prayer, as Jesus taught it, is that it has always synchronized with the schedule of the Master Engineer up ahead, always carrying one from stifling quarters out into the open country, from places of want to places of abundance, from stations of ugliness to meadows of beauty and love and joy. For the schedule that the train of our inner consciousness goes by is a schedule not made by hands, but is made of the spirit, eternally woven of God's eternal purposes, a schedule which, if followed, will never bring destruction, but always carries those by the right track to greatness, joy and beauty.

"And now," said the man, "we still do not know if the troubles moved away from us, or we moved away from the troubles."

"What does that matter," asked the woman, "just so long as we know by turning to God we may be eternally separated from all that is bad and be eternally united with all that is good? But," she added with sudden assurance, "I did not have to wait until this happened to find out that merely to change the inner consciousness can change the aspect of the entire world outside."

"And when did you find it out?" asked the man, looking at her.

And she answered him shyly: "When I first loved you."

And the man was astonished and very happy.

XII

The Parable of the Rain Drop That Gave Itself to the Sun

A wise man was sitting by the turn in the road, when a man all bowed down with troubles came and sat down at his feet.

"You are in trouble," said the wise man, "I can see it in your face, and by the way that you walk. If it will bring release to your captive soul, tell me what it is that besets you. Don't be afraid to speak."

The man just sat in the road, stared hard at the ground and replied, "But my story is such a long story and my troubles are even like the grains of sand which lie on the sides of this pathway. I am without money and without work and without friends. Things have come to such a muddle that no one possibly could unravel them. What more need I say?"

"My friend," replied the wise man, "there is no need to tell more. There is one way of escape which, if you find it, will be just as effective whether your troubles are one or legion."

"But," interrupted the man, "you do not understand. There is something in my situation which complicates it. It is founded on misunderstandings and on mistakes and on sin."

"Little does it matter," said the wise man, "what it is founded on, for the way I shall show you will be as easy to travel as the unresisting air, and as sure as the passage of light. True, there will be a yoke that you must bear and a burden that you must carry, but the yoke will be easy and the burden will be light."

"Show me this way," said the man, "for I am weak and heavy laden, and if I go much farther along the road I am traveling I shall drop in the dust, and there will be no one who will mourn me."

"Do you see that little mud puddle over there by the side of the road?" said the wise man. "In that puddle are drops of water that were once just as clear and pure as the water which is carried in yonder cloud above. The little raindrops in that puddle are crying out for escape and what will you do to help them? Will you tell them to strive and struggle? No. The more they struggle, the more the water will be disturbed and the more sediment will arise from the bottom. Will you put an antiseptic or purifying solution in the water to cleanse it of its germs? That would only exchange one form of impurity for another. Will you put your hand in the puddle and press down the mud and try to confine it tightly to the bottom and to the sides? No, that would not bring release. There is only one way and that way is always open. You will tell the drops of water to turn away from the sediment that lies at the bottom and look toward the sun. You will tell them to give themselves unresistingly to the drawing power of the sun's rays. Then, no matter how much or how little are the impurities in the pool, how black or how thick is the mud, the escape is easy and the

effort required is light. For remember this, that no matter how your pathways are hindered and blocked here below the way that leads upward is always clear and free and open."

And the man who was seated by the road ceased to stare down at the dirt, but turned his face upward and with eyes all shining, looked full and clear into the eyes of the wise man and in those eyes he saw nothing but love, for the wise man looked upon him and had compassion upon him. "Now," he said, "I know what you meant when you said to look toward the light."

And he went on his way and the wise man never saw him again, but there came back in the years to come, many rumors from a far, far city of a man who arrived one night in rags but with a face that shone like the sun. And everything that came to that man brought him good fortune, and all those who became associated with him received good fortune as well. For no one henceforth could associate with him without catching something of the spirit which he carried in his soul. And that spirit was like the spirit of one who has arisen in the morning and is beholding the sun.

The Love Way

What is my method of helping others?

That question was asked me and because it was asked me I promised a group of students that I would meet them and try to tell them.

The meeting was to be on Friday and I was wondering what I should be able to tell them. On Wednesday I was going downtown—my time was limited, and I had much to do—and at the corner I just missed a car. This gave me time to go to the college for my mail. While there I was delayed a moment and missed the second car. Strange that when my time was valuable I should be missing cars.

Finally the third car came along. I got onto the third car. A student followed me in, stuck close to me, and when I sat down sat down at my side. He had something to thank me about and I found I had something to explain. I found myself unconsciously explaining to him the *secret of my power to help people*. It came out easily and naturally and unselfconsciously. He thanked me fervently when he left.

There was a quality in his approach to me—an unselfishness and trustfulness that unlocked the inner secret within me. He was so very *pure* and *clear*. The quality of his consciousness was rare.

I went downtown and, to my surprise, did all my business in shorter time than I expected. I had time left over on my hands to do something extra which I wanted to do.

I saw then why I had missed the first and second cars and got the third. My consciousness drew that third car with its occupant to me. Here is an amplification of what I said to him:

We help more by what we *are* than by what we *do*.

Our *being* consists of our *loving*.

Show me what and how you *love* and I shall tell you what you *are*. Love is like electricity. It presupposes a positive

and a negative pole—it requires two—one to love and the other to be loved. To draw out the best love, one must want to be loved.

When one comes to me wanting to be helped, I *love* him. Thus I help him. If he comes wanting me to love him, I can help him still more. I do not try to convert anybody; I do not try to save any soul. I do not try to do things for anyone. I merely give my love to him. That is the biggest thing I or anyone possibly can give. But I find that I cannot make my love reach him unless he wants it to, unless he is eager for it, is hungry and thirsty for it. If he comes for help and doesn't want love I can't help him. If he asks to be saved or converted I cannot help him if he despises me or doesn't care for my love. But if he wants my love this is the way I love him:

I *love him for himself*, not for what I can get out of him. I do not mix my love for him with any alloy whatever, either the desire for him to admire me, praise me, increase my wealth, or in any way benefit me whatever. If he can be made happier, my wealth will be sufficiently increased. If he can find greater reason to praise God or the power of God's love, I shall be sufficiently praised. I love him with an unmixed love. Unmixed love is a pure love. Power is in such love. Sir Galahad loved with such love and it was said that he had the strength of ten because his heart was pure.

In my thought I take each one who gives himself and give him to the Father. I give him to the Eternal Plan which God has in store for him. I give him to his destiny—not to my little fancied image of his destiny. Everyone who comes to me and lets me love him in such a way, I do not keep for myself—I unbind him and let him go. I give him to a larger mastership than my own personal wishes and needs. I have the power to so give him because he gives himself to

me. Loving is a giving. We cannot love another without giving ourselves to that one. Our lives are made up of giving ourselves to others. One who loves me but is afraid to be possessed by me does not truly love me. For perfect love is founded on perfect trust. We sometimes repent of our gift and withdraw ourselves from the receiver and give ourselves to someone else. That is because we find those we give ourselves to keep us for their own private, personal aggrandizement. It is such keeping of our friends that leads to all the jealousy, tyranny, suffering and tragedies in our human relationship. But no one cares to withdraw himself from one who never abuses this trust, who never uses one for personal, selfish ends.

Thus, as quickly as one gives himself to me, or gives his life to me, or seeks my love—for it is all the same thing—I give him at once to God, to the Larger Self—the self without limits, without bounds, the One Great Infinite One who is *all in all*.

One who loves in this way, who does not want to possess his loved ones for selfish purposes, finds that he does, however, possess them for larger purposes. For he who giveth shall receive, and he who loseth his life shall find it. One who loses his friends in this greater Love will always keep his friends. For one who finds that he is possessed by a love which is limitless and boundless does not ever want to cease to be possessed by that love. Such a love he finds sets him free, such a love removes all limitations to his growth and enables him to grow to meet any need. For such love is not our own little loving, but the Holy Spirit loving through us.

And now listen to a great and eternal truth—a truth which will abide as long as the earth shall last, and which will stand throughout eternity as one of the doors through which we may enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Everyone wants down deep in his soul to be possessed by

a great, towering, unselfish, unselfseeking, colossal love. That is the chief end and aim of his whole journey through life. To find such a love is to find the very Kingdom itself, for it ushers one into the Kingdom of Heaven right on earth, here and now. To rest in and abide in such a Love is to rest in and abide in the Father—for God is Love.

For just one moment of such a love one would give all the rest of his life. That is why Orpheus looked back at Eurydice, that is the theme of Browning's "Last Ride Together." To have just one moment of such a love a man would give up his very hope of eternity. Why? Because such Love is Eternal Life. To know such a love is to know what eternity is. To be possessed by such a love, or to possess another with such a love, is to be in the Kingdom.

And when one is in the Kingdom he is separated from all trouble, all discord, all evil. That is why Christ did not pray when people came to be healed. He simply loved them.

Everyone craves freedom. Everyone craves enlargement. At heart we want to be free from the things that would keep us small, and we want the opportunity to become colossal. We want free lives and large lives. This love gives both of these because it gives one to the Father, to Truth, to Love, to Life, to your Destiny, to your perfect Life Plan. If you want to save a soul, do not try to make him good—try to make him happy. And by setting him free and by making him large, you make him happy. First of all, give forth an unselfish, colossal wish for his perfect happiness, regardless of what comes in return to you. Such a wish gives him to the Kingdom.

But the one who comes for help must want your love. That is why Christ said, "O Jerusalem, O Jerusalem . . . how often I would have gathered you as a hen gathers its chickens and ye would not!" He was thinking of the colossal, unselfish love he was ready to give when he cried: "Come

unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." For I am meek and lowly in heart—and my unselfseeking love will bring rest unto your souls. The power lies in the *quality of that kind of love.*

There is as much difference between the selfseeking love and the selfgiving love as there is between a bucket full of water standing stagnant by the sink and one striking against the mill wheel. One is the same old gallon in the same bucket. The other we see hitting the wheel is every instant renewed, is every second of time a new gallon. One has no power, the other has infinite, unmeasured, endless power—power that will last as long as the stream lasts, as long as the mountain from which it comes lasts, as long as vapor continues to be drawn up and comes down in the form of rain.

Christ looked upon the young man and He loved him.

Christ looked upon the multitude and had compassion upon them.

Christ wept and those about Him said, "Behold how He loved him."

Love suffereth long and is kind, love is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked. This kind of love is God in manifestation, for God is love. This love is the power of the Holy Spirit working in man. "I go so that this power of loving will come more fully to you and the works which I did ye shall do and even greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto the Father."

To help a man then *love him unselfishly.*

To save a man *love him unselfseekingly.*

To keep a friend forever give him away to the Father.

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