DIVES AND LAZARUS

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**Through** Christian Science the Scriptures are illumined, and the parables and sayings of Jesus unfold in clarity and meaning as the student turns in thought from the material sense of creation, commonly accepted as real, to the spiritual sense, based on the first chapter of Genesis.

In the textbook, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" by Mary Baker Eddy, the chapter headed "Glossary" enables one to translate material terms into their spiritual meaning, which, when apprehended, furthers progress.

The parable of Dives and Lazarus, as found in the Gospel of Luke, presents a striking contrast between the belief of life and pleasure in matter and the improved state of thought which results from the acceptance of the spiritual idea of being. These two characters might be thought of as representing different stages of human consciousness—the corporeal belief of selfhood, which is fed and clothed sumptuously and carefully tended, and the spiritual idea of life, which often is neglected, starved, and granted only a meager allotment of our time and interest.

Material belief, with its false view of man as having a sense of beginning and ending, includes limitation; hence it dies and comes to an end, because it has no mind or intelligent power to sustain it. It has no relationship with God, who alone is Life eternal, without beginning and end. The belief in material wealth as substance, in sin and self-indulgence as pleasurable, leads to inevitable suffering and destruction and is buried in regret and remorse.

But the beggar thought also dies—passes from our experience—through the transforming power of Truth, which replaces the false sense of limitation and suffering with the joy and freedom of spiritual harmony and bliss. The sense of poverty, the "too little" belief, is replaced with an understanding of Spirit as the only substance, and of God's infinite abundance reflected by His son in dominion, liberty, and righteous activity. The spiritual idea, unfolding in wisdom and progress, is supported by the angels, defined in our textbook (p. 581) as "God's thoughts passing to man; spiritual intuitions, pure and perfect; the inspiration of goodness, purity, and immortality, counteracting all evil, sensuality, and mortality." These angels guide our unfolding thought to the haven of protection, faithfulness, and love, indicated in the definition of "Abraham" in the Glossary (*ibid*., p. 579): "Fidelity; faith in the divine Life and in the eternal Principle of being. This patriarch illustrated the purpose of Love to create trust in good, and showed the life-preserving power of spiritual understanding."

When the Dives of suffering material sense realizes how far removed it is from peace, joy, and satisfaction, it cries out for relief. It would have the spiritual idea relieve its discomfort and pain. It cries out for help in Science, yet is not ready to yield up the belief of false selfhood. But Lazarus was not sent to Dives, nor can Christian Science be used merely to ease physical discomfort, for the spiritual idea never knows or associates with material belief. Dives expressed compassion for his five brethren, and requested that Lazarus be sent to them.

Material sense would, if it could, use the spiritual idea to do its bidding. Material sense begs for its own preservation and the gratification of its sensuous desires. It would gladly make terms with Christian Science to have it descend to the level of matter's claim to reality and power. But just as Dives was told, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them," so the answer must ever be "No" to all such demands of mortal mind. Christian Science teaches us to hear and obey Moses. It teaches that we must obey the Commandments and replace all false material sense of self with the consciousness of spiritual identity.

We note how Dives implored Abraham still further, "If one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." Yes, we still hear this cry from mortal mind, for is it not sometimes said today, "I would accept Christian Science if I could see someone raised from the dead"? But just as Jesus refused to descend to the level of mortal mind by changing stones into bread at the bidding of the tempter or by casting himself down from the pinnacle of the temple to satisfy boastful material sense, so Christian Science today cannot be exploited or exhibited to gratify some doubting or incredulous thought. Of course Jesus did prove his Father's protective power in many instances, even his dominion over death itself, and he multiplied a few loaves and fishes sufficiently to feed a great number of people, but it was not done to satisfy mortal mind, but to demonstrate the supremacy of God's provisioning law, which he came to teach.

Christian Science today is proving God's power to protect His children and to supply their every need, but these proofs come when we are willing to heed the spiritual demands of divine Principle.

We may have our Dives and Lazarus experience, but the way of salvation must ever be that charted by Moses, the prophets, Christ Jesus, and Christian Science.