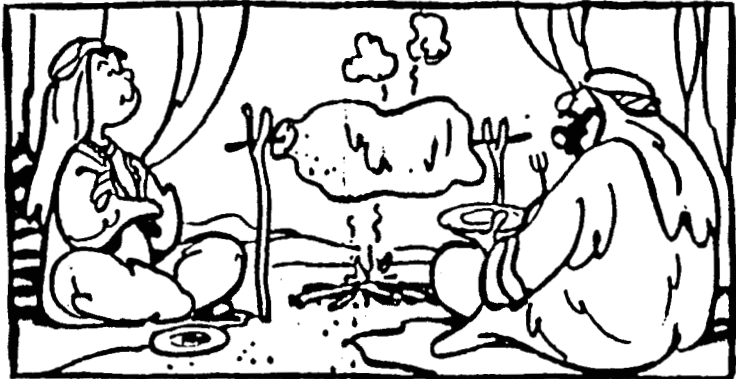


It's the waster. One of the spiritual lessons the parable illustrates to me is that when we apportion or separate life, mind, or substance from God, we waste it.

Thus, toward the end of the parable the assurance the father gives his older son reflects a forever and eternal fact of being: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." The more we understand this fact, the better we're able to demonstrate the preservation of substance and life. ■



"This is the third fatted calf I've had to prepare for you, my son. When are you going to settle down?"

Orlando Sentinel—Florida Magazine

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Thanksgiving's feast— and fast

Lynn Gray Jackson

THANKSGIVING, as a national holiday in the United States, has roots in a tradition that began in 1621. Called the First Feast, it lasted three days in 1621, as recorded in a letter by Edward Winslow, a pilgrim. It wasn't until much later, however, that Thanksgiving became a holiday of gratitude and prayer.

Today other countries also have thanksgiving celebrations, intended to be times of reverence, prayer, humility. Times of remembrance of all the good God has provided. They signify a feasting or gratitude for the harvest we have reaped throughout our lives.

Yet, Thanksgiving can be more. It can be a time of awakening spiritually to recognize that even though there are places where hatred, anger, and want run rampant, in reality each one of God's children is as free, as cared for, as blessed as another. This is true because no matter who you are or where you come from, you are in fact a child of God. This is true for everyone, and its basis is in the Bible. In Romans we read, "Glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, . . . for there is no respect of persons with God" (2:10, 11).

This truth, that "there is no respect of persons with God," has a lot to do with giving thanks. It teaches us that, contrary to what mortal eyes and ears may see and hear, God loves each one of us. He provides for all impartially. This is why, as we feast on the spiritual truths of man's relation to God, we learn that, in truth, God has already provided for our every need. So, whether we are seeking peace for our country, the destruction of evil, or more spiritual

vision in our home and community, it can be found through humble listening and alertness to thoughts from God.

This is true spiritual feasting. It is a watching for, and recognition of, God's provision for man, His beloved child. No one is forgotten in the kingdom of heaven, where God and man dwell.

Writing about Thanksgiving, Mary Baker Eddy says, "The dark days of our forefathers and their implorations for peace and plenty have passed, and are succeeded by our time of abundance, even the full beneficence of the laws of the universe which man's diligence has utilized" (*The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, p. 340).

■
*Good is going on
around us each day.*

The "full beneficence of the laws of the universe" tells us that the laws of God are good and ever available to mankind. And, through our spiritual watching and seeking, we utilize these laws and find God. This diligent seeking naturally leads us to a feast

of ideas and thoughts that are God-provided. With these spiritual laws, we are able to destroy whatever would try to take away the good that God provides.

At the turn of the last century, Mrs. Eddy was asked by a newspaper to give her sentiment on what the last Thanksgiving Day of the nineteenth century should signify to all mankind. In reading her reply I've found that many of her sentiments hold true today as we prepare for the next century. Her comments were reprinted in *The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*: "[The last Thanksgiving Day of this century] signifies that love, unselfed, knocks more loudly than ever before at the heart of humanity and that it finds admittance; that revelation, spiritual voice and vision, are less subordinate to material sight and sound and more apparent to reason; that evil flourishes less, invests less in trusts, loses capital, and is bought at par value; that the Christ-spirit will cleanse

the earth of human gore; that civilization, peace between nations, and the brotherhood of man should be established, and justice plead not vainly in behalf of the sacred rights of individuals, peoples, and nations" (p. 265).

Clearly, this woman was looking far beyond her own community when she wrote those words. And you and I, too, can learn to include not only our community but the world in our daily watch for our God-provided affluence and in our prayers of gratitude. Contrary to what we may see and hear, good is going on around us each day. This good is from God. It is abundant and ever available to all who wish to partake of it. This good is the feast of spiritual understanding that sees God as ever powerful and ever available. A God of true charity. A God who truly is Love. ■

Gratitude

Marjorie Scott Eichelberger

■
Sing praises, O wanderer, heartsore and weary,
Traversing the desert Despair;
Sing praises to God though your pathway seems dreary,
The burden too heavy to bear.

Sing praises, for gratitude brings healing waters;
Thus nourished, your desert will bloom;
Cast off now the load, O God's loved sons and daughters,
Your way gratitude will illumine.