

eye had been made under the old dispensation, Jesus says it failed to reveal as much, and as clearly, as he revealed. "Verily I say unto you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not: and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not, Hear ye then the parable" . . . in all its inspiring attractiveness.

Think, too, of the *conciliatory efforts* of it. Jesus had enemies. Every public teacher has enemies: but so weak is human nature that few can be hard pressed in an argument without betraying annoyance, without manifesting positive resentment towards their opponents. Jesus knew nothing of that feeling. Never for a moment did he lose sight of his unique mission as a Revealer of the Father: and his use of the parable shows it. It may have been—indeed we need have no hesitation in saying it *was* as much for the good of his enemies, as for the good his friends, that he began to speak in parables. The direct presentation of the truth had become so offensive to them that they were fast becoming unwilling to listen to him at all. They listened, as it was, only for the purpose of expressing their detestation of him. But instead of complacently regarding the situation and allowing his message in its directness to to repel, he sought a more conciliatory method, and found it in the parable. The truth was still pres-

ented: but it filled the eye and in that form proved less repellent. Many a sneering Pharisee must have listened on the outskirts of the circle: listened almost in spite of himself: listened, too, at quite a length to the gradual development of the fascinating narrative before he realised that it was all shaping itself expressly to rebuke his own false satisfaction with empty formalism. But though he may have gone away scowling and muttering, he would come again. The method had a charm for him. He had grown familiar with it in the rabbinical schools. He knew how to use it himself. Well then: if he had eyes at all for the living truth, this was the way to convey the living truth to him. And if he closed his eyes, if he deliberately refused to see what was evidently brought before them—this is what happened: he deprived *himself* of the living truth but in so doing could not keep it from those around him who had spiritual discernment.

"Therefore speak I unto them in parables because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand . . . But blessed are *your* eyes for they see, and *your* ears for they hear."

But besides being attractive and conciliatory, the parable is conspicuous for *its illuminating power*.

Seeing is believing. So the saying goes. It is not strictly true, but is an exaggerated embodiment of truth. People do not believe