

July 9, 2007 – Subject: Sacrament.

Dear Friends: Mary Baker Eddy gave her students 26 subjects for weekly Bible Lessons, to be covered twice yearly. Flowing through the year in her order of the subjects, we hereby present fresh views of each one by outstanding Christian Scientists. In this way, we hope to partake with you of new unfoldments of her infinite revelation.

Our selection this week is from: HUMANITY'S DIVINITY by Helen M. Wright.

PRAYER BRINGS US INTO AT-ONE-MENT

REJECTING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS IS PRAYER

The aim of the chapter on Prayer is to bring us into oneness with Infinite Good, our real self. Here, as we have seen, thought is all-important. A negative thought must instantly be rejected. Give it the ax and turn thought to Infinite Good's omnipresence. Daniel speaks of the "abomination of desolation standing in the holy place." The holy place is your consciousness, and the "abomination of desolation," means any negative thought or belief that Infinite Good is not present where it is needed. Prayer means working earnestly to see the presence of infinite good right where error confronts us.

The "/" and the body are one. The "/" must be changed in order to change the body. . . We must see all false claims as conditions of mortal mind [alias hypnotism] entirely distinct from the person...

Ignorance is the one great error, and this is only another name for unconscious mind [hypnotism]. When this is removed, harmony or the conscious Mind governs. When teaching music or mathematics we remove the ignorance on the subject" (DCC p. 187-188).

All things which are termed. material are actually mental. MATTER IS MERELY THOUGHT OBJECTIFIED. Disease held in thought may project itself on to the body. Divest thought of it by knowing: "I and God are one." I can't think anything Infinite Good could not think, I cannot see anything God does not see or I would be bigger than God. Can God see a sick man or a sick animal? See as God sees. When looking at a man or an animal, see intelligence, companionship, joy, love, movement, action, faithfulness. None of

these are material. As we go higher we see there is no material man or animal – there is no flesh, blood and bones man, since all is Mind manifested; and Mind does not manifest itself as matter to be healed. Hypnotism, alone, makes the body look and feel material.

When the Dr. Kildaire series was on television, and a disease with its symptoms was minutely described, doctors all over the country were inundated with calls from patients reporting they had all these symptoms. “A minutely described disease costs many a man his earthly days of comfort” (S&H 197:5). We can vehemently drive out thoughts of fear, heartache, loss, and build into consciousness what Infinite Good, what Love, knows about us. We never deal with anything except our own thoughts, and we have the power to select and control our thoughts. Our destiny is never in the hands of other people or circumstances. Victory is ours when we work spiritually, because we are applying infinite power to the situation. What we sow in thought we reap in experience. We can switch immediately to what we know to be the Truth of being. Let’s start now to select carefully all day the kind of thoughts that are constructive, remembering any mental activity that enables us to rise to the spiritual standard of Soul – of our true identity – is a form of prayer.

TELL ERROR, “GET LOST!”

When error steps up its assaults, just give it the cold shoulder, derail it and “take no prisoners.” It’s time to storm the beaches. Get the subterranean stuff out on the table and deal with it. Any error trying to gain entrance should be sacked immediately. The first five seconds are most important. We instantly know $2+2=5$ is incorrect; just so, we should immediately know the error coming to us for life is nothing but hypnotic suggestion. Too often we shoot ourself in the foot with negative thoughts that don’t put us on the fast tract to health and wholeness. In today’s vernacular tell error: “Scram! Beat it! Bug off! Shut up! Get lost!” Or, in Jesus’ words, “Get thee behind me Satan... Ye are of your father, the devil... he was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.” Such instant slamming error to the mat, is honoring God, and is de rigueur now and forever.

Reminding ourselves constantly that Infinite Good is omnipresent, and that our real self is the presence of God here and now, is true prayer. It will make sweeping cutbacks in the nonsense we so often entertain – we entertain it because of the thousands of years of

traditional thinking which is the great hindrance to accepting our divinity. But when Christian Science is better understood, “doing unto others as you would have them do unto you,” will become a cosmic law and work like the law of gravity. Claiming constantly that Love is working through us, is prayer. The type of thought we allow to become habitual will find expression on the plane of action.

While in reality we are perfect now, we don’t understand it; so, “the ages must slowly work up to perfection.” The spiritual facts about ourselves are gained step by painful step. “Though the mills of reform grind slowly,” we do finally become “good stewards” concerning the mess we inherited with human birth. Our task is “to begin aright and continue the strife,” dropping the indulgence in a material sense of things. This assures us that when the roll is called up yonder we will wear the crown of the faithful

With wisdom – the perfect blend of intelligence and love – there is no limit to the conquests that divine intelligence working in mankind can achieve. Jesus, in reference to our divine destiny, quoted the Scripture, saying: “Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods [God] unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken. . .” (John 10:34-35), then what are we as we understand our oneness with God? Having the Mind of God are we not God incarnate? God made visible? God in disguise?

As human nature is exchanged for the divine, then patience combined with a gentle unhurried expectation of success will bring about the necessary healing. Patience and persistence are indispensable elements in successful work. Patience, as it abides through the long watches (untinged by resignation) is a steadfast spiritual quality that crowns us with the joy of demonstration.

“THE PRICE OF ONENESS

The question is, “Where is your heart?” The story of the rich young man “[who] ...went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions” (Matt. 19:22), is really mankind’s sad story. Because we have great possessions of preconceived ideas – pride born of academic distinction, material or sentimental attachments, habits we have no intention of renouncing – these mortal traits keep us chained to the rock of suffering, chained to that which keeps us exiled from oneness with Infinite Good, and its revelations.

In her chapter “Atonement and Eucharist,” the Eucharist part tells us that the price we must pay to experience oneness with God is the evangelization of the human self – the development of the transitional qualities: “Humanity, honesty, affection, compassion, hope, faith, meekness, and temperance.” Studying these qualities with the Concordances we find each is rooted in God. They constitute the passover from the dream state to reality. They rid us of the leeches keeping us from seeing: “entirely separate from the belief and dream of material living, is the Life divine” (S&H 14:25; see also Un. 49:8).

The transitional qualities constitute true human identity, true humanhood, that is coincident with Infinite Good. They are required to meet error head on, working, watching, praying. Mrs. Eddy warned us that she could not continue to do the work for us. We must do it for ourselves, and “if it is not done the Cause will perish and we will go along another 1900 years with the world sunk into the blackest night” (Dee 251).

Will the world enter a new dark age, or will there be a brave new world full of understanding and promise? Mrs. Eddy assures us of “the divine, influence ever present in human consciousness” (S&H xi). “Human” here is very significant: On the shoulders of the 20th Century Christian Scientist is placed the task of averting a second downfall of genuine Christianity. Read Mrs. Eddy’s warning in her Message for 1902.18:25. The cardinal, vitalizing element in this demonstration is our “noble” conduct toward Mary Baker Eddy.

“God demands a more Christian, zealous and persistent effort to resist evil and overcome it,” she admonished, “or our Cause will again be covered by the rubbish of centuries” (Dee 50). It is foolish to think we don’t have to make a conscious effort to learn this great Truth that was revealed to Mrs. Eddy. Just as in mathematics, God only works as we work. The only thing error asks is to be let alone.

When we frequently forget this, we are like the absent-minded professor, of whom the manager complained:

“Professor Schmaltz has left his umbrella again.”

“He’d leave his head if it was loose,” observed the waiter.

“That’s true,” replied the manager, “I just heard him say he was going to Switzerland for his lungs.”

HOW DO WE REACH GOD?

How do we reach God? We become aware of the infinite good called God – that we already are one with – through exercising the qualities of God. Spiritual growth comes from putting into practice the knowledge we already possess. We must remind ourselves constantly that the infinite good called God is omnipresent and that our real self is the actual presence of God here and now. To this end our Leader stressed the importance (as she wrote Judge Hanna) to “keep a time for meditation every day to ponder in thought your infinite, harmonious, Christ-expressing selfhood, and claim it as you. Drink in its perfection, its moral beauty, its integrity, worth, its unspeakable safety [it is as safe as $2 \times 2 = 4$]; all the truth and beauty of God's creation is yours and you...”

Mind, our own right Mind, is the divine Principle, Love, and can produce nothing unlike Itself. Christian Science is based on the Principle that “God is All-in-all.” This is its entire basis. Everything else is a deduction from this Principle, and “to keep consciousness in constant relation with the divine, the spiritual, and the eternal is to individualize infinite power.”

Mrs. Eddy makes it clear that Christ is making the atonement. Her definition of an individual spiritual man is, that he is Christ, the Son of God. “The atonement of Christ reconciles man to God, not God to man; for the divine Principle of Christ is God, and how can God propitiate Himself?” (S&H 18:13-15 & Mis. 96:17-23. See also S&H 24:15-19).

THE KINGDOM, THE POWER AND THE GLORY

Prayer is the affirmation that brings us closer to the understanding that ushers in the millennium. The last line of the Lord's Prayer, “Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,” which has mistakenly been thought to be the truth about a God apart from our own true Mind, is actually a declaration about our real selfhood, which is always at one with God, the kingdom of God within.

Shouldn't prayer then be a hymn of gratitude for this kingdom of infinite good that is now and forever established within our real being, our God-consciousness, and needs only spiritual education to gain the realization, the awareness of it?

As we live a life of prayer – that is, as we take to heart Mrs. Eddy's

statements of the divine truth about ourselves and experience their power – the realization comes to us that the infinite good we name God is the solution to every problem. We turn away from the problem that appears, and go within, convinced that this is a spiritual universe. It must therefore have a spiritual solution to what appears to the lying material senses as inharmony of any kind.

Reading our textbook with expectancy, the kingdom of God within us is able to receive. We begin by knowing we already have, for the kingdom of power is within us. An unselfed love within us yields up the mortal sense in order that demonstration may be the outcome of divine law.

VITAL INSTRUCTION FROM OUR LEADER

Nearing the end of her long sojourn on earth with us, Mrs. Eddy gave us this cardinal instruction on how to go within: “Unless you fully perceive that you are the child of God, hence perfect, you have no Principle to demonstrate, and no rule for its demonstration. ...You can never demonstrate spirituality until you declare yourself to be immortal and understand that you are so” (My. 242:8 & 3). This is the truth about ourselves as it was openly, unreservedly set forth in her first edition, and it should be taken seriously.

Remembering Jesus’ answer to Pilate: “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36), takes us out of this world and lifts us into “My kingdom,” where we are in “at-one-ment” with the infinite good called God. Then Mrs. Eddy states, “the marvelous unity of man with God [is] shadowed forth in scientific thought” Remember there is nothing more powerful than thought. She adds, “Sooner or later the whole human race will learn that in proportion as the spotless selfhood of God is understood, human nature will be renovated [the human race will understand its true identity] and man will receive a higher selfhood derived from [Infinite Good], and the redemption from sin, sickness and death will be established on everlasting foundations” (Un. 6:4 & 5:24).

THE LORD’S PRAYER

THE LORD’S PRAYER IN THE FIRST EDITION-REVISITED

We now come to the Lord’s Prayer in the first edition. In Mrs. Eddy’s first edition of Science and Health, the “Prayer” part of her chapter “Prayer and Atonement,” ends with her interpretation and spiritual significance of the Lord’s Prayer, as follows:

(Note: Many readers will not need the bracketed explanations. I put them in because as Shakespeare says, "the good is oft interred with their bones," that is, many of us are so buried in materiality that, as Mrs. Eddy once said, the word "God" fails to influence us as it should. Nevertheless in her day she had to use it. Hopefully our continuous explanations will not offend the spiritually brilliant who have no need of explanations).

Harmonious and eternal Principle of man,

Nameless and adorable Intelligence,

Spiritualize man;

Control the discords of matter with the harmony of Spirit.

Give us the understanding of God [our true Mind],

And Truth will destroy sickness, sin, and death, as it destroys the belief of intelligent matter,

And lead man into Soul, and deliver him from personal sense

[hypnotism, the belief in a personality apart from God],

For God is Truth, Life, and Love [which on the preceding page she has stated we in reality are since we are God's presence] forever."

Mary Baker Eddy clearly shows us the way in her explanation of the Lord's Prayer. But before we look at "The Lord's Prayer" let's say a few words about its author, Jesus.

St John knew he could not begin his Gospel with the birth of Jesus, as Matthew, Mark, and Luke had done. Why? Because Jesus denied human birth. He claimed God (infinite good) as his Father and knew that when he had finished his ministry Infinite Good would "glorify" him "with the glory I had with Thee before the world was" – before this dream of human birth overtook him.

St John knew also that he could not begin his Gospel as Mark had done, when he opened his Gospel with the ministry of Jesus. Why? Because John couldn't record what Jesus taught without making clear who Jesus was.

Thus, St John starts out: "In the beginning was the Word [the logos which means communication]. And the Word [the communication] was with God, and the Word [the communication] was God." All this was later explained as "I and the Father [infinite good, Mind] are one [thing]." Jesus was the communication between God and man. He

was the only way whereby Infinite Good or God could be known, in that age.

“As many as received him; to them gave he power to become the sons of God. . . born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12-13). Jesus was called the “only begotten son,” because until Mary Baker Eddy came, no one was ever found who fully shared Jesus’ conviction that man is not born of the flesh.

Notice her characterization of God as Principle, which in the first edition she has stated we are. Notice also that here in her interpretation of the Lord’s Prayer she defines evil as “personal sense,” alias hypnotism, the belief we have a personality, apart from God. What a heavenly light these illuminations bring us!

This celestial light is in accord with Jesus’ prophecy to St John regarding the “little book”: “And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire; and he had in his hand a little book open. . .”

Regarding the appearance on earth of the “little book” clothed with a cloud, Mrs. Eddy explains: “To mortal sense Science seems at first obscure, abstract, and dark.” Then she interprets the prophecy “and his face was as it were the sun,” saying: “When you look it fairly in the face, you can heal by its means. . . for God is the light thereof (S&H 558: 10).

What is this heavenly light leading to? What is its ultimate goal?

Answer: It is leading us to the spiritual understanding that in reality we never left the Father’s house - that we are forever one with Infinite Good, namely, that “Principle and its idea is one” (S&H 465:17). Mrs. Eddy has taught us we are the Principle when free of hypnotic suggestion - when we are awakened from the Adam dream. ..The heart of the Lord’s Prayer is: “Give us the understanding of God” so we become aware of our true identity, since “metaphysical Science teaches us there is no other Life, substance, and intelligence but God” (Hea. 16:4).

PRAYER GIVES US THE UNDERSTANDING OF INFINITE GOOD

True prayer shows us more clearly than we saw before what we

already have and are, and most of all, shows us what the infinite good, called God, is. Mrs. Eddy did not just pick up her pen and romp briefly into the subject of prayer. Rather, she saw the Lord's Prayer as a statement of the perfection of being.

Her spiritual interpretation of the Lord's prayer in the first edition pleads for God's spiritualization of man; it pleads for God's control of the "discord of matter"; for God's leading "man" into Soul," and for deliverance from "personal sense" alias mortal mind, alias hypnotism. The vital sentence in the prayer is: "Give us the understanding of God." Every thought in this interpretation leads man to God, and we have the rainbow of promise upon the head of the angel that is bringing its message to the human consciousness.

The import of this message is to unite Life with Love, "for Love alone is Life." Whose life is to be united with Love? Our Life. This is why Jesus, our great Exemplar, could say: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." He knew his Mind was the Principle, Love.

Thought which is in accord with Principle is allied to omnipotence. Both Jesus and Mrs. Eddy make it clear we can't just think about Mind; we must think as Mind. If, or when we accept the Infinite Good as our Mind, wouldn't thoughts then have their source in Infinite Good? Wouldn't thoughts then be Mind's utterances - the utterances of this infinite good we call God.

From this interpretation of the Lord's Prayer in the First Edition to the final changes in Science and Health we can see how Mrs. Eddy lifted the Lord's Prayer beyond the point of Jesus' first announcement of his mission as "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," to her declaration of the new birth, HEAVEN HERE, THE STRUGGLE OVER" (My. 158:12).

Sibyl Wilbur, in her book, The Life of Mary Baker Eddy, tells that Mrs. Eddy stated "she had a mission from God to complete the work of Jesus Christ on earth" (See her chapter entitled, "The First Edition of Science and Health".)

What has Mrs. Eddy accomplished by her progressive changes in the Lords Prayer?

For nearly 2000 years, the Lord's Prayer had remained static. Mrs. Eddy, forbidding formulas, showed that prayer must be progressive

and active, meeting the needs of the time, the need of the moment, or it will be like yesterday's manna.

Prayer is here and now. The "I" that I am is God, as Mrs. Eddy defines your "I" or Ego" (S&H 588:9). She declares this "I," that is your "I," as "Divine Principle; Spirit; Soul; incorporeal, unerring, immortal, and eternal Mind."

As we persistently maintain the truth about our oneness with Infinite Good, this, to human sense, externalizes itself as our experience and we find heaven right where we stand. This is what is meant by "prayer and at-one-ment."

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