

DISSOLVING BARRIERS

The Healing Work of Christian Science - Part I

John L. Morgan

INTRODUCTION

This booklet is an edited report of a series of talks given by John Morgan in South Africa in 1987. The talks were requested by Christian Scientists who were concerned to become more effective in their work for themselves and for the world. They also wanted to interest their friends in this world-healing work of Christian Science.

The form these talks took, and that this booklet follows, was:

PART I. Healing in Christian Science. This part focused on why spiritual healing is scientific and natural and not just an occasional miraculous happening.

PART II. Questions and answers. In particular these were concerned with how Christian Science enables us to face such fundamental questions as our apparent separateness from God. The burning question in South Africa today is known throughout the world by the name apartheid - a separateness that is enforced by legislation. By searching for the fundamental spiritual view of these questions we find the truth that naturally brings about a change of attitude. This inevitable change, which is impelled by Truth, gives reason for the 'good hope' for humanity that is expressed in the name the early settlers in the Cape gave to their country.

PART III. The Christian Science standpoint of starting with perfection has been scoffed at as being unrealistic. The so-called realistic view is that both good and evil have power. This assumption is not ignored in Christian Science but is fairly faced. The means by which these opposite views are resolved is called, in Christian Science, scientific translation. An introduction to this essential method forms the third part of this booklet.

PART IV. How can anyone learn more about Christian Science? The Christian Science textbook is Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures. The author, Mary Baker Eddy, tells us that the book contains "the complete statement of Christian Science" (Ret 37:2). Therefore an overview of the flow of the chapters in Science and Health completes this booklet. This last part could be read first by anyone who prefers to start his journey with an outline map and a preview of his destination.

The aim of the talks was to offer a clear and useful introduction to Christian Science; to be an encouragement to us all to experience that our lives are in fact interwoven with and governed by the divine Life; to help in the discovery of the immediate availability of the laws of God ; and to show that Christianity is Science. It is because Christianity is Science that we are able to be effective in our work, "for it is God that worketh in [us] both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil 2:13). This work therefore must have a healing effect on ourselves and the entire world.

The talks that were recorded in Johannesburg have enlarged to include important points made in Cape Town and Pretoria. The following pages are a faithful edited transcript of the talks as my husband gave them. It is my hope that this booklet may be a contribution towards dissolving barriers of prejudice and misunderstanding about Christian Science. God has set an open door before us, and the promise is that no man can shut it.

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PART I: HEALING IN CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

It is a joy and a privilege to have this opportunity to consider with you the subject of healing for we are concerned not only with our own well-being but we know it is also vital for the very survival of the world.

At the time Marjorie and I received the invitation to come to South Africa we were preparing for a seminar which was entitled, 'How we can help our world.' We had been asking ourselves whether our private study of Christian Science, of the Bible and of spiritual ideas, is simply for our own benefit or whether we should be aware of some other dimension or purpose. Is this purpose to benefit both ourselves and the world?

I would like to begin by exploring some points that have arisen in our own experience as Christian Scientists in the area of spiritual healing. You may then have questions or comments about Christian Science itself. Next it may be useful to consider the way we work in Christian Science. Finally I would like to offer an indication of the flow of the chapters of the Christian Science textbook. This textbook together with the Bible are our guides.

Just before we came away from England a friend telephoned from America and in the course of conversation said that they had watched a nation-wide television chat show in which a number of eminent doctors had been interviewed. All these doctors said that in the course of their medical practice they had seen every kind of incurable disease healed through prayer, in cases where medicine had not been able to effect a cure. These doctors went on to say that in their view the future of the healing art lay in prayer. It is remarkable for men in that profession to come out and say this. Of course, everyone has heard of many a case given up by the medical faculty that suddenly starts to get better for no apparent reason. It could well be that it is prayer that has helped to turn the tide by introducing into consciousness a new factor of hope or expectation, or the patient has found a conviction that he can recover, no matter what the medical books say.

True prayer is not pleading but is an affirmation of the onliness of God's law, the eternal laws of being. The Bible is full of the assurance that God is an ever-present help in trouble. The law of healing that Christ Jesus worked from is available for us too because it is "the Lord that healeth thee" (Ex 15:26). The Christ-Science textbook observes that "the central fact of the Bible is superiority of spiritual over physical power" (131:10).

There is a useful visual image that may help to show the attitude of what we will consider together. It comes in weaving with perpendicular warp threads and the horizontal weft threads, which weave in and out between the warp. Think of the warp threads as the divine laws of being, which intersect with the horizontal weft human experience. Divinity and humanity coincide, they are interwoven. This is the symbol of the Christian cross: the intersecting of the perpendicular and the horizontal dimensions. All of us, whether Christians or not, find that our experience lies at this point of trying to bring human life into agreement with the divine requirements. Our human experience is harmonious in the measure that we are in accord with these divine laws. Even though we may believe we have a long way to go, the laws are there for us all to be blessed by. It is we who have to recognize and avail ourselves of them.

Most people know instinctively that there is no solution to the human problem on the horizontal dimension, however diligently they may try. Unless the perpendicular dimension of the eternal laws of being is brought in, we have nothing reliable to relate to and we are trying to work out the problem from within the problem, and there is no permanent solution that way.

In the Gospel of Mark there is the story of a man who was paralytic, and his friends wanted to bring him to Jesus for healing. Because they could not get near the Master for the press of people they climbed up on the roof, removed the tiling and let him down on ropes into the midst before Jesus, and then the man is healed. But the symbol there is the man being let down in this perpendicular dimension.

We are here in the horizontal human experience because of the grace of God; we are held by those strong warp threads and not because of some human happening. We are interwoven with the divine source of authority and power.

Let us examine then some of these fundamental laws of being, which are the warp threads on which the strands of our life-experience are interwoven; how these laws are expressed in the Bible

The First Law

The first law, or warp thread, is where our thought seems to make the move from the physical to the mental. We are never really dealing with matter as such, but with states of mind, states of consciousness. Forty years ago the medical profession used to say that about twenty per cent of human illnesses were psychosomatic, that is to say, they were generated by an emotional or mental state, and that until that state was put right there was no permanent healing. Today they say the percentage is about eighty-five. Looking deeply into ourselves we know that our physical pains are very often the outpicturing of some mental state that we are going through - stress, or anxiety, or resentment, or fear.

When people consult a medical doctor they are usually given a pill to relieve the condition. The patient believes that there is some power in the pill he is taking, and this belief helps it to operate for him. Doctors often find that a patient may respond to a placebo more positively than to a drug. The trouble is that drugs do not heal the man, they just affect the symptoms. Unless I am changed within, unless my attitude, my life-response, changes in some way, I am not totally healed, even though I am grateful for what the doctor or the surgeon may have done for me to restore the physical condition.

This relation of mind and body, the mental and the physical, is very like the relation between figures in mathematics and the number written on a piece of paper. The number on paper is a very useful symbol, but you know perfectly well that the outline there is not the actuality, it is not the power. The power and the availability is in the idea, in the mental realm, in the principle. So even if you destroy the paper on which your figures are written, you have not touched the calculation itself. It is ever available, with fresh power to help you solve whatever comes up. So it is with turning to the mental.

It must be significant that in human language we talk about disease, or dis-order, or un-happiness, or dis-content. There are many substance of truth. As the Gospel says, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Then we are on the right track.

The apostle Paul tells us, "We have the mind of Christ" (I Cor 2:16). We do not have to be dominated by the carnal mind, which is "enmity against God," is full of mistakes and fears and errors, but instead we can put on that consciousness of truth that is "the mind of Christ." It is this that enables us to be "transformed by the renewing of [our] mind" (Rom 12:2).

We have a friend who is a professional nurse and she worked in a hospital where there were a great number of paralysis cases. This sight of paralysed patients presented before her eyes, morning, noon and night began to affect her own body; it began to seize up. The specialist she worked for told her he thought she had the symptoms of a paralyzing disease. She accepted this verdict and steadily got more and more locked up until she had to give up her nursing. At about the same time her husband changed his job and they moved. In the new area they came under a different local general practitioner. This man said, 'I think it is possible that you may be labouring under a false diagnosis. If you see a different specialist he may have quite another view of it.' She agreed. When she saw the new specialist he said, 'I do not believe you have what you thought you had; I think it is all in the mind. But you have so convinced yourself that you have the disease that your body is physically locked up. We will take you into hospital for a few days, put you under anaesthetic, and loosen your frozen limbs forcibly. But you will be all right.' This was what happened, and she was all right; she is totally released and she is an active, physically-free woman, still in the nursing world.

That is obviously not a spiritual healing, but you could call it a mental healing. She made the step from the physical to the mental, it was a vivid example, and valuable for her in nursing, to see the power of one's own mind over one's own body for ill or for good.

Mind is the power.

When you look at such a thing in the light of Christian Science, you realize Mind is the power, but it is not just the human mind, mind with a small m, it is not me thinking a strong thought for or against. The Mind that governs me is the Mind of God. We

learn to understand that God is the Mind of the universe, God is the Mind of man. It is like the electric current running through your house circuit: it is always there but we have to plug into it to receive the power. So Mind-power acts with authority, with law. It gives us freedom and dominion, it opens the mental windows, and it shows us new possibilities that we never dreamed of before. If we change from mind to Mind - the Mind which is God - it suddenly releases the limits of our own thinking and doors open for us. Our mind is renewed, transformed in fact, and we experience what Paul meant when he said "We have the mind [Mind] of Christ."

Many years ago a woman came to us who had hammer toes, all curled up. The surgeon had said that he would cut the ligaments of her toes to flatten them out. She thought, Do I have to? In the meantime she came along to see us. I said to her, 'Tell me about yourself.' 'Oh,' she said, 'It's my mother.' I said, 'Say that again.' She repeated, 'It's my mother.' Her hands and toes curled up at the mention of mother, who she said was very domineering. Whether she was or not I do not know, but that was her belief, so it affected her as if it were true. We talked about how, under God, each one of us is free whether we accept an impediment, as she regarded her mother, or whether we do not accept it. Each one of us is like a sunbeam coming direct from our divine source. No two sunbeams cross over each other or interfere with each other, or are parted from their source. Each one of us is directly God-governed, God-directed, God-informed. As we talked along those lines she caught the idea. She went back home and her toes opened out perfectly naturally and she never needed to have that operation. She had changed the basis of her thought, accepting the Mind that is God, and "that Mind governs the body, not partially but wholly" (S&H 111:28).

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