

# Christian Science ~ A Reason for Christian Healing

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There is no doubt that everyone would do well to consider earnestly Paul's advice to the Thessalonians to "prove all things." It is true that one does not really believe that which he has not proved; true that only that faith which is founded on actual demonstration will survive the ordeal of human experience. Paul was not satisfied with a mere acceptance of his teaching. He well knew that, unless his statements were proved to be true beyond the possibility of a doubt, his instruction had been of no avail. So he depicts the trial of faith by which Noah was able to overcome seeming impossibilities; and Abraham could offer up Isaac, believing "that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead." Throughout the ages the truth of the Word has been attested by "signs following." Although, as it is written, God "called" unto Moses, and bade him bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt, his hesitation was only overcome by two great evidences of spiritual power, — the handling of the serpent, and the healing of leprosy. This manifestation of divine authority lessened his sense of personal responsibility, and assured him of the confidence of the people; for he had the explanation from God that if the people would not believe the first sign, they would believe the latter sign which indicated the power of God to heal disease. The opposition to Moses' leadership operated most actively through his sister Miriam; but when he healed her of leprosy, and yet others of serpent bites, their doubts were overwhelmed by the attestation of God's protecting care.

Centuries later, a sign was demanded of Jesus by certain scribes and Pharisees who did not believe his testimony, and he answered, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:" which is repentance. But when the messengers of John the Baptist questioned him in perfectly good faith, he said, "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

## Healing Attested in Christian Science

The Christian Science Church adopted a like method of answering honest inquiry. Our church provides a testimonial meeting where members of the congregation may bear witness to the healing power of God which they themselves have seen or experienced. They may describe cases of healing like the one which brought my own family to Christian Science. For thirteen years my mother had suffered from a difficulty said by physicians to be inflammatory rheumatism. Her joints became distorted and she gradually became a helpless cripple and a great sufferer. Finally the physicians told her that she had but a short time to live. As a last resort, we sought the aid of a Christian Science practitioner, and after two weeks' treatment, my

mother regained her health; her joints were restored to their natural condition, and she enjoyed perfect health thereafter.

The healing of my mother was so obvious that it could not be ignored. It was just as evident to her friends and neighbors as to herself. It convinced us that Christian Science is that Science of Christianity which Jesus demonstrated, for her healing could no more be disputed than the healing of the blind man as reported in the Gospels. To those who doubted the possibility of his healing, he replied simply, "Whereas I was blind, now I see." He could not tell how this change had been wrought, but he knew that the healing of his blindness could not be denied. Christian Science provides the explanation of that healing, and it is the purpose of this lecture to present that explanation to you.

### Healing Methods Contrasted

An epidemic seldom attacks more than twenty per cent of a population. When confronted by such an epidemic, it is customary for physicians to study the cause of the calamity from a physical viewpoint, — carefully analyzing, the while, the former physical condition of every afflicted individual. It does not occur to them to question what made the eighty per cent immune. The physician painstakingly diagnoses the disease, because he is governed by the belief that health is a condition of the flesh. He supposes it to be a personal possession, humanly circumscribed, and the body to be a kind of storage battery generating the vital current. The Christian Scientist in such a case, studies just as thoroughly the origin of health, for it is evident to him that health and not disease is the object of his search. He knows that Jesus presented the only perfect system of healing known to men, and he taught his disciples how to restore health by starting with the proposition that God is the creator of it.

### Health a Divine Right

When the framers of the American Constitution admitted that life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are creations of God, and not of man, their task was wonderfully simplified. They recognized the fact that they were not required to create any rights but simply to interpret those that were already created. The success of that instrument, the Constitution of the United States of America, depended upon the correctness of their interpretation of that which was fundamentally right. The result has been a model of democratic government.

When men are willing to concede that health, as well as life, or liberty, is a divine right, divinely bestowed upon man by his creator, they will cease to believe in, or fear, the so-called laws of health which originate in mortal opinion, and will become interpreters of that inherent right. They will cease to be autocrats in the government of their own bodies, and their health will increase in proportion to their understanding that in God we all "live, and move, and have our being."

### God Instructing Moses

The first exhibition of healing recorded in the Bible came by looking away from the body into the true nature of God. For forty years, Moses had been governing the flocks of Jethro, his father-in-law, with autocratic power. The sign or symbol of that autocratic power was a

shepherd's rod. When, by the direction of God, the rod was cast down and became a serpent, Moses was afraid. He had never learned that human will was the serpent in the Garden of Eden. Nor did he understand how to gain supremacy over it. But obedience to God's command established that supremacy. That lesson enabled Moses to learn two great facts, — that human will and personified sin are interchangeable, and that obedience to divine guidance gave him the mastery over sin. The divine supremacy has been expressed in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Doubtless Moses believed that health is a condition of the flesh, and when he thrust his hand into his bosom and withdrew it leprous, there was the evidence of his erroneous belief. The healing that followed taught him to turn from the body to find power and health in the will of God.

### Healing Law Discovered

The power of God had been recognized for a long time, but not His healing nature. It will be remembered that long before, God had revealed Himself to Abraham as the Almighty, the one supreme power governing the universe and man. But it was a mere abstraction. There was no mode by which human consciousness could approach this truth. Consequently all that Abraham could do was to entertain a supreme faith in the omnipotence of God. The faith of Abraham has been referred to throughout the Bible.

The works of faith continued as God said to Moses, "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them," indicating that there was more to learn about the nature of God than the one fact of His supreme power. When finally Moses discovered that the supreme power of God reaches individual human experience through law, it ceased instantly to be an abstraction and became a concrete power with a well-defined mode of approach, and for this discovery of Moses that the supreme power of God reaches to the individual human experience through law, he has been known as the law-giver. When it became known that divine power reaches individual human experience, not through any form of idolatry, not through any graven image, but through well-defined law, the secret of divine healing was disclosed. Moses could then be guided by divine intelligence, and thus heal leprosy and serpent bites with mathematical certainty and precision. The nature of God had been proved in human experience to be a power of health and purity. It reached beyond faith and appealed directly to reason and understanding.

Therefore, "Acquaint now thyself with him [that is, with God], and be at peace." One who is sick is not at peace. One who is distressed in mind or body with sin, disease or fear, is not at peace. Nevertheless acquaintance with the divine nature endows one with the power of peace, which necessarily rules out all disturbance, whether mental or physical. Therein is presented in a brief statement the precise method of Christian healing, — acquaintance with the truth about the nature of God. Mrs. Eddy has reiterated that in her book, "Science and Health, with Key to the Scriptures" (p. 72), as follows, "Not personal intercommunion but divine law is the communicator of truth, health, and harmony to earth and humanity."

## Truth Healing Scientific

That which is unchanging, and which also operates through law, is Truth. So we find Moses declaring, "Thou art a God of truth, and without iniquity." When therefore Jesus declared, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," he explained the operation of a Christian Science treatment. To know the Truth is to understand the unchanging nature of God as a power of health and purity operating through law. Whatever one really understands, he can express. When one understands that two and two make four, he can express that fact. Then to understand the healing and purifying nature of God, enables one to express that nature. Such is the power of freedom in mind and body.

This explanation of Christian healing will, I think, leave no impression that we ignore difficulties, although some aver that a Christian Scientist endeavors to heal by trying to imagine that the condition is not there. It is evident that this is a misapprehension; for imagination is a state of ignorance; and ignorance never healed anything and it never can.

Disease is unquestionably evil and, therefore, it cannot be the truth of being. Inasmuch as Christian Science is a Science, its method of dealing with error is precisely as it is done in mathematics. If a mathematician is confronted with the misstatement that two and two make five, he does not study that mistake; for a mistake could not be understood. Only that which is true can be understood. That is why David in the psalm asks the question, "Who can understand his errors?" No one can; not one. Consequently an intelligent individual will never try to do it. He will study more thoroughly the rule of truth that governs the problem, and act in obedience thereto. Then the error disappears, just as ignorance disappears before intelligence. And where has it gone? Into its native unreality. The only reality the error ever has is in the individual's ignorance of the truth. It ceases to exist to his intelligent understanding. Consequently an error is real or unreal only to the degree of the individual's ignorance or intelligence concerning the truth. It is the Truth that makes free.

## Disease Mental

A Christian Scientist learns that disease is essentially mental in its cause. As long as he believes it to be entirely physical, he may well feel helpless before it. In fact there could be no such thing as Christian healing if disease were actually physical. The medical schools of today have been employing experiments which indicate the mental cause of disease. There can be no doubt that in every case it is the result of wrong thinking. Medical experiments have proved conclusively that the individual's thinking seriously affects the circulation of the blood, and some interesting conclusions have been drawn from the observation of the effect of wrong thinking on the body. Perhaps the most common observation is the flushed or pallid face that results from anger. People have been known to die in a fit of anger and also from extreme fright. Since the discovery of the X-ray, physicians have been able to learn the effect of thought on the digestive system. The method is simple enough. Some harmless, opaque substance like bismuth is mixed with the food. Then as one eats the prepared food, the entire process of its digestion may be observed with the X-ray. By that method, physicians have proved that the digestion of students taking a severe examination, in great fear, has been retarded fully two hours. Anger also hinders

digestion and poisons the system. The results of other experiments might be presented, but these are sufficient to indicate the necessity of correcting thought when dealing with disease.

Suppose, for example, one has eaten something and soon after is seized with distressing pain in the stomach. The pain is a distinct physical sensation which cannot be ignored. A Christian Science practitioner is summoned and he immediately remembers the testimony of Christ Jesus, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man," a saying which once offended the Pharisees.

The disciples sought an explanation of the parable from Jesus, remarking on the offense which it gave to the Pharisees. Surprised at their lack of understanding, Jesus proceeded to explain that "whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught. But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man." Regardless of what thought or act may occasion the pain, if the patient would only refuse to admit it into his heart or mind, it could not defile him. But when one begins to take it into his heart or mind, giving to it a supposed cause or reason, that defiles the man.

"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man." When the testimony of the flesh is overbalanced by the peace, joy and power of God's ever-presence, then the truth will indeed make us free.

### Contemplating Truth a Corrective

Christian healing has nothing in common with the will of the flesh. On the other hand, it is in complete agreement with the will of God. For that reason it can never be divorced from Christian theology. To meditate on the nature of God, in the full expectation of gaining a better understanding of Him, is generally considered a distinct mark of devotion. To meditate thus in full sincerity must feed and satisfy one with His health and holiness.

One may behold a beautiful field of flowers. As he stops to contemplate their rare beauty, his thought is fed and satisfied. He has taken nothing from them, but he has gained much that is enduring. Thus thousands of people, devout in their thought of God, have turned to Him to meditate on the beauty of His goodness, on the strength of His meekness, and on the nourishing thought of His purity and health, and they have been healed of dire afflictions. Those satisfying thoughts have corrected the proclivities of the flesh, and the truth has made them free.

### Footsteps to Mrs. Eddy's Discovery

Mrs. Eddy was long a member of the Congregational church, and the devotional culture she received there and at home fitted her to understand and demonstrate the Principle of divine healing. When a child she was taken with a fever, her mother talked to her of God and assured her that God would surely answer her prayers, if she would only turn to Him. As the little girl prayed fervently, the fever left her and her mother rejoiced over the speedy recovery. Later while she was attending a neighboring school, a man escaped from an insane asylum, approached the children at play, holding a club threateningly in his hand. Mary Baker walked up to him fearlessly and naturally, imbued with a religious sense of God's presence and power. The man became subdued and gentle, and departed at her request. The following Sunday he

appeared at her side during the morning service in the church. There he permitted himself to be taken in charge by an officer and led away. Some years later, when grown to womanhood, she healed a child of severe eye trouble by her fervent prayers to God.

The direct cause which led to the discovery of Christian Science was Mrs. Eddy's own healing in 1866. She had received a very serious injury by falling on the ice. The physician who attended her at the time believed that her injury would prove fatal. When she knew that nothing material could save her, Mrs. Eddy turned to her Bible for consolation. Reading its sacred truths with singleness of purpose and the faith that spiritual understanding could save her, she witnessed the immediate operation of the truth. Her healing was complete. She arose, dressed herself and startled the family by her sudden appearance. Nothing but the power of God could produce such a sudden transformation, and with joy and gratitude Mrs. Eddy gave all the glory to Him.

### Scriptural Interpretation

It is by no means an uncommon occurrence for devout people to be healed by their study of the Bible. But Mrs. Eddy could not be satisfied with the physical healing alone. She must know the Science or Principle of that healing. Indeed she believed she had a right to that knowledge, inasmuch as Jesus had promised another Comforter, which, he defined as "the Spirit of truth." If "the Spirit of truth" was not to be understood and obeyed then one might, perhaps unwittingly, obey error. But the truth had made her free and it was her right to know the explanation of that experience. Scriptural study took on a new meaning in her search for an explanation of Christian healing. Step by step spiritual law was interpreted in a new light. Her conclusions were systematically recorded and fairly tested in the healing of disease and sin. That elucidation of the scriptures formed the basis of her more complete work known as "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," first published in 1875 — nine years after her discovery. Ever since the publication of Science and Health, disease and sin have been healed through the study of it. As one ponders the explanation of scriptural texts with which it is filled, mind and body are refreshed and painful misconceptions are corrected. It has in other words brought a return of primitive Christian healing. In recognition of her distinguished service as interpreter of the Bible, the French Government has honored Mrs. Eddy by making her an officer of the French Academy.

For nearly twenty-five years I enjoyed a personal acquaintance with Mrs. Eddy. Twice she was a guest in our home, and I have been honored with invitations to her home. I have been familiar with her home life and with the members of her household; have had considerable correspondence with her; so that I have an actual knowledge of the purity and consecration of her life. But the testimony of men is barren as compared with the record of her achievements. That she has written a book, the mere reading of which will heal morally and physically, proves more accurately than can any other thing the nature of her true character.

Only an exact science can solve every problem. Experimental knowledge would necessarily omit some problems because of the limitations of human thought. But Christian Science has been tested with every human problem and found sufficient for them all, because it interprets the fundamental rights of man to life, health, and the pursuit of happiness. Mrs. Eddy did not

create those rights. She simply interpreted that which is already created. The success of Christian Science has been entirely dependent upon the correctness of the interpretation.

## Church Organization

When the framers of the American Constitution, wrote their interpretation of man's inalienable rights they saw the wisdom of protecting the integrity of that interpretation by the organization of an army and navy. So Mrs. Eddy saw the wisdom of protecting her interpretation of the scriptures by the organization of a church. That in turn requires a code of laws for its government. The membership of the Christian Science Church is virtually a record of those individuals who have been benefited by its teachings and have enlisted in their defense. The institutional work of the church is therefore essential to the proper protection of its teachings. The first Christian Science Church was established in 1879 with twenty-six members. Ten years later the congregation had increased to about 250, and today there is a regular congregation in Boston of over 4000. In addition to the central organization, there are two other Christian Science churches in Boston, and fifteen or more in the suburbs, all within a radius of ten miles. Meanwhile the movement has spread throughout the civilized world. In fact, there is no religious movement known that has attained to such proportions in so short a time. Every Christian Science church throughout the world can trace its origin to the healing of some disease or sin. It is like the parable of the sower and the seed. Someone in need of help has begun to turn longingly to God. That is the good soil. He gets some Christian Science literature and reads it. That is the planting of the seed. The result is the healing, which is the harvest. In the joy of his freedom, he hands the literature to a friend. Benefits begin to increase; little groups gather for discussion; and soon there develops a Christian Science church. All because the seed of Truth is in itself. It is like leaven, "which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." It propagates itself, cares for itself and brings in the increase.

## Wheat and Tares

Sometimes an enemy may sow tares among the wheat. Then let them grow together until the harvest, when the difference becomes perfectly apparent. The tares are, in outward appearance, just like the wheat. The tares have a stalk, spike, husk and all, just like the wheat. But the husks are barren of fruit, and "By their fruits shall ye know them." The seeds of the tares are considered poisonous, and the plant is said to have an intoxicating quality akin to infatuation. The modern tares are the seeds of hypnotic suggestion and the will of the flesh. They are poisonous and produce that intoxicating quality which is akin to infatuation, inflaming the animal propensities. They are hypnotic suggestions and human will and are the products of the carnal, sinful mind, which is enmity against God. They are the polar opposition of the spiritual Mind which Christ Jesus manifested, and we are specifically enjoined by the scriptures "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

## Conclusion

The Christian Scientist must, therefore, examine his thoughts and learn their origin. He learns to make the distinction between good and evil; for evil operates through suggestion or impulse and appeals to the nerves or flesh; whereas the power of God operates through good alone, never through animal magnetism. The power of God is communicated to individual human experience through divine law, and appeals to the reason or spiritual understanding. It operates, in other words, exactly like honesty, from Principle. There are not as many different kinds of honesty as there are different human opinions. There is just one honesty, and everybody may have it, because it is everywhere and operates through law. Then as one yields his obedience to the power of its government, because of its reasonable rightness, he gains the power of its Principle. It will correct all dishonest tendencies and establish him in the government of the one Mind, which was also in Christ Jesus. By looking to this Principle for health and purity, and yielding loving obedience to its corrective government, Christian Scientists are proving the truth of Mrs. Eddy's assertion on line 29 of page 97 of the Christian Science textbook: "Christianity is again demonstrating the Life that is Truth, and the Truth that is Life, by the apostolic work of casting out error and healing the sick."

[1917-1929. The Hempstead Sentinel of Hempstead, New York, Feb. 16, 1922, published a short summary of a Bliss Knapp lecture, omitting its title. After recounting the healing of his mother in that lecture, Mr. Knapp added: "Here was a case of healing that could not be explained away. It was just as self-evident to my mother's friends and neighbors as to herself. The promised Comforter was actually revealed and from that time my father and mother began seriously to study Christian Science. Mrs. Eddy became their teacher, pastor, and friend, and for many years they were closely associated with her in their work."]