

PREFACE

The value of *Life Understood from a Scientific and Religious Point of View* is not to prove that all disease is mental, as medical men are rapidly coming to this conclusion; nor is it to prove that matter is mental phenomena, and can be caused to appear and disappear by thought, although the scientific difference between the two methods in which this can be done is given; one, the harmful and exhausting way in which witches and sorcerers of old worked, and the way in which black magic workers and hypnotists of the present day work, namely, with the human mind, which inevitably leads to sin, disease, and death; the other, the marvellous and inspiring way in which Jesus the Christ worked, namely, by turning in thought to God, thus steadily revealing perfect health, holiness, and happiness.

The value of *Life Understood* is to enable the reader to demonstrate daily what true prayer is. It shows demonstrably what God is. It lays bare and scatters to the winds the mistaken theories of natural science. It sets out exactly the difference between the right and wrong methods of working mentally, as now proved by thousands of workers. It gives the scientific proofs of this difference, and shows clearly how every one can work in the right way. This is of vital importance, as in a few years' time every intelligent person will be a mental worker. Advanced thinkers of all classes are now investigating the effect of thought and getting wonderful results, and the reports of their investigations soon will be made public, confirming beyond a shadow of doubt the most important of the statements put forward herein.

There is a hard and fast line drawn between the two methods of working mentally, and Jesus pointed out the difference more than once. If, when you are praying you are thinking of reality, that is, of God or heaven, of the Christ or the spiritual man, you are helping your patient, yourself, and the world. If, on the contrary, you are thinking of the material man or the material world—whatever you may be thinking about them—you are harming your patient, harming yourself, and doing no good to the world. Even by strong, determined thinking, or will-power, you can neither destroy the evil thoughts that attack you or others, nor purify the so-called human mind; you merely alter the electrical tension of what is scientifically spoken of as the lines of force of which the ether is composed. Troubles invariably follow. God, namely, Truth and Love, the Principle of all good, alone heals, and this by destroying the so-called cause of the evil, under its name of the devil in theology, the ether in the scientific world, and mortal mind amongst the metaphysical sects. Although few recognise it, these are the same as the unconscious or subconscious mind, subliminal self, etc., of the modern psychologist.

A great change has taken place since the first edition of *Life Understood* was published. The recognition of the pseudo-mental power of mortal mind and of the truth that sets man free has been increasing with great rapidity. Mental working is now used in a large number of hospitals; in

fact, an official statement sent out by the Ministry of Pensions says, "what may almost be called 'ten-minute cures' of disabled men by psychotherapy at Seale Hayne Military Hospital, Newton Abbot, are described by Mr. William S. London in the *War Pensions Gazette*." At the same time, 5 some of the most advanced workers who have been using mental suggestion for a long time have found that it is not satisfactory. The London *Times* criticised the Government action above mentioned, saying, "No good purpose is likely to be served by propaganda of this kind."

The Churches are also awakening to the fact that mental healing is 10 possible, and in Great Britain several associations of Church members have been formed for the practice of divine healing. Most of the workers, however, are using the human mind—are, in fact, unconsciously curing by hypnotism. At the same time, many spiritually minded clergymen and ministers, recognising the error of that method, are healing their fellow- 15 men of sin, disease, and trouble in the way taught and demonstrated by Jesus the Christ, namely, by the realisation of God.

The world in general has now recognised that we are on the eve of a great change, and the only question is what that change will be. We know that the only real change must be fundamental, and one that can only 20 be effected through the recognition by the majority of mankind of the effects of true prayer. Our great need is to know what constitutes true prayer. For countless centuries man has endeavoured to solve the mystery of life, and for nearly two thousand years he has struggled to know the truth, the truth that Jesus declared would set man free. This knowledge 25 of the truth is knowledge of God and leads to true prayer, conscious communion with God. God is the great I AM, Life, Truth, Love, Mind, Soul, Spirit, all substance, and intelligence, and therefore the Principle of good.¹ This divine Principle, omnipotent and universal, inevitably and instantly works, destroying evil, if even for a moment a man stops thinking wrongly and thinks rightly. God, being no respecter of persons, hears the prayers 30 of a sinner just as much as those of a saint, if only the sinner prays rightly, that is, in accordance with divine rule, or Principle. I have to thank many readers of *Life Understood* who have written to me, giving me details of how, by putting into practice the truths stated, they have, to their great 35 joy, been able to help not only themselves but their fellow-beings, in a number of instances and in a great variety of ways. This is the natural outcome of true religion, when wedded to true science, and should be our sole aim in this world of agonising suffering. There is no proof of any theory but results.

All the prophets and all modern leaders of thought have foretold the troubles, in fact, the horrors, that are coming as a prelude to the end of the belief in matter. The signs of some are so evident that they are now being foreseen by scientific men and experts. They will affect us if, instead of obeying the covenant set out by Moses, and having only one God, absolute 45 good, and being constantly in conscious communion with God—thinking of good—we think wrongly, being attacked by devilish thoughts, which we intensify instead of destroy. Hitherto, fortunately, the thoughts have not

¹ See *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 587, l. 5, Mary Baker Eddy.

been strong enough for the results immediately to follow. When everyone recognises the effect of so-called thought, conditions entirely change, and a thought of evil is instantly followed by dire punishment.

We cannot hasten or delay the final end of all evil by even a day, but what we can do is to reduce the amount of suffering. What is of still greater importance, we can bring others to a knowledge of the truth that sets us free. They, then, in their turn, not only can help to reduce the suffering around, but can start others on this mission of mercy, and in this way, like a snowball, the knowledge of truth grows until "they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:34). "The night cometh when no man can work," and if a man allows too much time to pass before he learns how to think rightly, the golden opportunity appears to have been lost; and, when he wants to learn, the evil is too intense. He then has to suffer, unless someone more fortunate comes to his aid. Even now, a mental worker, when the evil is too great, cannot properly protect himself, and has to seek help. At the end, so busy will all true workers be in relieving the suffering around them, that the sluggard may have to solve the problem himself, suffering until he reaches the true idea of the Principle at work.

What each of us has to do is to learn how to think rightly, systematically, that is to say, how to pray in a scientific manner, in the way that Jesus the Master taught and demonstrated, which way is clearly set out herein. In this way, not only can we protect ourselves, and those who are near and dear to us, when the evil time comes, but as wide a circle of others as possible.¹ Love it is that enables us, in fact, causes us to do this. Love is, and always has been, the only power. This recognised and demonstrated, is the solution of life.

The Bible refers, under different names, to the two-edged sword of truth, by which we can protect ourselves against these fiendish thoughts. One edge is what is called "the denial"—the denial of the existence of the evil in heaven—whereby the wrong thoughts causing the trouble are destroyed. The second is "the affirmation"—the realisation, or dwelling in thought, on the opposite good in heaven—whereby the so-called human mind is purified by the action of God, so that each time it becomes less susceptible thereafter to the action of the wrong thoughts until, ultimately, they have no effect whatever.

I have been interested to see that those most ready to adopt the view that I have taken, have been advanced mental workers who by their results prove their understanding of the effect of thought, and good business men who are, as a rule, logical thinkers, although until recently it has been difficult to get them to give the necessary time to prove the facts for themselves, and come into the firing line.

After a laborious day in her hospital, the rest of Sister Dora was con-

¹ The Society for Spreading the Knowledge of True Prayer was formed with the object of helping people to understand the difference between prayer by supplication to God—regarded as a person or distant potentate—to do something which would often be harmful if brought about, and prayer by the realisation of the perfection of God and man.

stantly broken by the sound of a bell which rang at the head of her bed when any sufferer required her. On that bell was engraved: "The Master is come and calleth for thee." Our Master is calling now. "The Father seeketh such to worship him," "in spirit and in truth."

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5 The following remarks would come more naturally in an addendum, but I have inserted them in this Preface as they are more likely to be seen.

The first and most important fact is that there is nothing but God and His manifestation; the only wisdom, the only power, the only activity, the only consciousness, the only movement, is that of God. The material
10 man is a mere dream man, and is best expressed as a series of mechanical cinematographic pictures, having no life or intelligence, flashing by and hiding heaven from us. It looks as if an effect was always preceded by a cause, but this is only because nearly always the cinema pictures were fixed
15 without rhyme or reason. The same cause is not always, or even often, followed by the same effect, as it would be if there were true cause and effect.

It can be conclusively proved that the material man has no free-will of any kind or description, and when a man grasps this fact there are many
20 advantages therefrom. The most important is that he gives up trying to do things materially, and relies upon true prayer to bring about what is good, knowing that it is only through the action of God that any improvement in what is otherwise predestined can come about. Another great
25 advantage is that he does not blame other people for doing what is wrong, however bad it may be, but treats, and so mitigates the punishment that such wrongdoing must entail on the wrongdoer, although there is no
method by which the victim can avoid the wrongdoing except by true prayer. Man cannot cause evil or increase evil. All the evil in the material
30 world, past, present, or future, was there at the so-called beginning of the material world, and all that takes place is the steady self-destruction of evil through the action of God.

Shortly, the proofs that man has no free-will are as follows:—

1. St. Paul, in the New Testament, teaches that predestination is a fact; fatalism, however, is not true, because every time a man turns in thought
35 to God some of the evil disappears, and *must* disappear. This, however, is due to the action of God, not to the action of the human being. Ultimately, the whole of the cinematograph pictures, otherwise the mist of matter that hides heaven from us, will disappear, and man will appear to
be found as he is, always has been, and always will be, a perfect being in a
40 perfect world governed by a perfect God, a part of God's infinite consciousness, by means of which God knows and thinks and works.

2. Prophecy and clairvoyance, and the many different ways of foretelling the future, are demonstrable.

3. The thought that a man is going to think at any given moment can
45 be calculated out mathematically.

4. Astrology is a science, and from the position of the stars what is about to happen can be foretold, although they themselves have no effect.

5. A conclusive proof is that there is no such thing as time. Therefore, everything takes place at the same moment, and no succession or sequence of events is the result of a person's free-will. Philosophers have always taught that there is no such thing as time. Solomon says, "That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been" (Eccl. 3:15), but until recently no one has been able to prove that this is true. This can now be done, as set out on page 78 herein.

6. Lastly, and most important of all, if God is All-in-all, or if matter is not a reality, how can a material man possibly have any free-will? The only will is the will of God, and the spiritual man's will is this perfect will of God. Nothing can come to the real man but the one perfect combination of ideas, which is the exact link required in the chain of the perfect sequence of combinations of ideas which partly constitutes the spiritual man.

Turning again to the consideration of the material world, not only are the thoughts, which are purely material things, bound to come at their appointed time, unless destroyed by true prayer, but a material man cannot even seem to pray unless the action of God takes place. This is clearly shown in the Bible, and is spoken of as "the Holy Spirit" or "grace." "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:26).

At the so-called commencement of the world, the date when each man was to come to a knowledge of Truth, and commence to pray in the right way, was predestined, and could be—in fact, has been—seen in the cinema pictures. Further, the number of times he was going to pray, and when he was going to pray between then and the end of all matter, was also pre-determined. Directly he began to pray, however, the position altered, and the number of times he was going to pray became increased, and as he continues to pray the number of times in the future increases. This is because the result of true prayer is that the mist of matter that hides the real man from us, which we see as a material, counterfeit, human being, is dissipated by prayer, and the spiritual man is seen more as he really is. As the spiritual man is the knowledge or thinking of God, he can think of nothing but God and His manifestation. When the material man prays in the right way, by realising or thinking of God, thus communing with God, he is seen more like his spiritual self, namely, the thinking of God.

It might be said that putting this forward has a tendency to prevent a man from working as hard as he otherwise would to obtain a knowledge of God and thereby help his fellow-men. But, clearly, this cannot be the case, because, whether he is going to work hard or not is already settled, and can only be altered by the action of God improving him, when he, or someone for him, prays.

On the other hand, I have found by actual experience that when a man has grasped this position as a fact, life at once becomes easier. He has no regrets, but knows that what he has done—even when he has sinned—is not his fault, but his misfortune. A man cannot sin without punishment following the sin, and this punishment can only be avoided by prayer.

When a man knows that he has no free-will of any kind, he loses all thought that *he* can do anything, and when in difficulties he relies absolutely and solely on God. Instead of using human will-power, and trying to force into manifestation what he considers best, he takes no material action of any
5 kind, but treats and watches the action of God taking place.

The effect of this knowledge is well typified by the first result that I noticed. A very nice Army man came to my rooms on three consecutive days to learn more of Truth. On the first day he could not see that he had not free-will to pray when he desired; on the second day he began to
10 understand the proofs of it; and on the third day he admitted that it was true. On his calling upon me a little time afterwards, I asked him what difference this knowledge had made in his life. His reply was, "A great deal. Often I have not been able to treat for an hour at a time, although I wanted to, and tried hard. I now see that this was simply the action of
15 my human will-power, which helps no one. Now, when I find that I cannot treat, I realise that it is God's business to make me treat, and simply turn in thought to heaven and quietly try to realise some aspect of God. In a moment or two I am treating satisfactorily."

It is the human mind that is causing all our troubles. All the great
20 teachers have taught that we have to be selfless. If you force a certain line of conduct with the human mind, you may be intensifying the very thought that the treatment has to destroy, so making it more difficult to obtain your demonstration, whereas, if you treat, what your human mind thought was best disappears, and you find that you have something better
25 and more satisfactory.

Remember that there is nothing really true about the evil in the material world, and nothing can be said about it that is true, except that it does not exist. This means that it has no reality, no permanence. One can say what is correct and accurate, that is to say, true as far as anything can be true
30 of the material world, but what is absolutely true, or eternal fact, can only be said of the spiritual world, and the good belonging to it, which shines through the mist of matter, together with the matter forming the material world. The many relative statements which appear in the following pages merely constitute a system of *memoria technica*, enabling us to give an
35 answer at once to numbers of questions, the answers to which we could not possibly recollect, and enabling us to arrive more rapidly and accurately at our conclusions. The only object in answering questions with regard to the material world is to satisfy the questioner, so that he ceases to trouble his head any more about the matter which is perplexing him, and turns
40 back to the only thing that is of any use, namely, the study of God and God's world.

All that we have to do is to be happy and to make other people happy, and the best way of arriving at the first state is by carrying the latter into effect. This we do by keeping our thought, as Isaiah says, "stayed" on
45 God. As the Bible expresses it, "Be still and know that I am God." (Ps. 46:10) for as the prophet again says: "I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour" (Isa. 43:11). He shows the method of salvation when he says: "Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. 45:22).

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

During the eventful years that have elapsed since first this work was published (in 1912), the world has been passing through those phases foreshadowed by the author in *Life Understood*, whose object in giving the book to the world was that it might serve in the awakening of humanity not only to the comfort and consolation of prayer but also to its immediately practical value, and to the knowledge of the way of overcoming the difficulties that beset mankind, whether these find expression in intimate personal affairs or on the larger stage of international or of world-wide events.

In preparing this edition its general usefulness to the student has been kept in view. A new and fuller Index has been compiled and the former prefaces so re-arranged and abbreviated as to form one representative Preface. In regard to the many appendices and notes which were added to the work by the author from time to time, the issuing of this new edition has afforded the opportunity to embody much of these in the main part of the book where the various subjects had already been dealt with. The former Appendix One dealing with British-Israel has not been reprinted here, as this was at one time enlarged by the author and published as a separate book. The Appendix to the present edition will be found to contain the principal remaining appendices, with additions from the main part of the book which were of a supplementary character.

It is with a deeply sincere appreciation of its freeing value that The Society for Spreading the Knowledge of True Prayer presents this, the seventh, edition of *Life Understood from a Scientific and Religious Point of View*, by F. L. Rawson.

April 1946.

The S.S.K.T.P.