

Spiritual Plenty

A Christian Science Lecture by Richard H. Strain, C.S.

Good afternoon. I was told I could come and talk to you about any subject that would be helpful. And as I've been thinking about it, it seems to me that the thing that would be most helpful right now, in view of our present economic situation, is to talk about some of the metaphysics that can offset some of the beliefs that this country and individuals are facing. And by doing this, possibly we can all have a better frame of mind about life today and that will make us all better workers in Christian Science. And so the subject of my talk is *Spiritual Plenty*.

In Second Kings we read, "And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life" (2 Kings 25:30). Now when we understand that metaphysically and really see that God's loving care is available for man, we can offset any claim of lack that mortal mind might try to present to us.

I know a woman who a few months ago suddenly found herself facing severe business reversals. And she was without funds at a time when she was moving into a larger apartment which she had signed a lease for six months previously. She needed a thousand dollars to pay the first month's rent, and she didn't have it. Prayer in Christian Science resulted in her receiving the payment of a debt that she had long forgotten about. It was for exactly a thousand dollars.

I know a businessman, the president of a large conglomerate, who needed a million dollars to take care of the expanding operations of his firm. Up until this time, he'd always received his money from a bank that he'd been dealing with for many, many years. But this bank had suddenly gone out of business. He said, "I don't know where to find a bank that might have a million dollars available, and if I did find one, I'm not sure it's wise to borrow at the current interest rates." Prayer in Christian Science resulted in the unfoldment of an ingenious idea whereby he was able to find his financing from within the resources of his own companies. As far as he's been able to find out, this idea is so ingenious that no other company has ever thought of doing it this way.

Now here we have two people. One needing a thousand dollars and another needing a million. Did it take any more praying to produce the million than it did the thousand? No! Both were the result of thought. Each individual gained the understanding that they were supplied by God, and then that which thought said was necessary appeared.

Jesus proved the same thing. At one time he fed four thousand men plus

women and children. At another time he fed five thousand plus. And after both of these events, he later questioned his disciples, and he said, "How is it that ye do not understand?" (Mark 8:21). For what they needed to understand was that all Jesus had to do was to know that God supplied the needs of man, and then that which thought demanded, which thought required, appeared. Through Christian Science we can remove our doubts, our fears, our uncertainties, and then the positive concept of substance held to objectifies. And that's why we can see the evidence of abundance appearing. Not just a little bit - abundance.

Now why do I say abundance? Because when God created man, He created him out of His spiritual infinity, and the man that He created knew no form of limitation. The mind God gave him was aware only of God's inexhaustible abundance. And there was never any other mind coming into God's allness to present any opposite condition. And therefore, God's reflection dwells forever in a permanent state of abundance. That's his natural and only state. Now for you and I to prove that, we've got to turn completely away from material senses and gain a clearer concept of the fact that man is purely a spiritual reflection and that he's filled with every quality and idea that God contains. Man could no more be separated from a single quality than could God. And he couldn't run out of a single quality because each quality is infinite, it's inexhaustible, it's ever present. All these qualities together make up man's substance, and therefore he lives in a permanent state of abundance.

But now today we're facing what seems to be a condition of inflation, recession, and possibly depression. But what is recession? It's the belief one has only a certain amount of money and that the demands upon it are getting bigger and bigger, and that possibly the demands will get so big that you're not going to have enough money to take care of them. But is this the condition of man and his substance? It would be impossible because Mrs. Eddy says, "God expresses in man the infinite idea forever developing itself, broadening and rising higher and higher from a boundless basis" (*Science and Health* 258:13-15). Now this idea of being which is growing bigger and bigger in the consciousness of man knows no limitation. It just keeps on ballooning. And I see it like an atomic cloud. It keeps getting bigger and bigger in thought, and it never stops. Now the individual who knows clearly that he is spiritual, and that his sense of supply is constantly increasing, would never be tempted to be phased by the belief that somebody is making a bigger demand on him than he has income to take care of.

When Roy Garrett Watson was treasurer of the Mother Church [The First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts], he once said that for the normal demands of the Mother Church the supply appeared invariably before

the demand. Now if we reason that out, here is God pouring into the consciousness of His individual reflection man, all of His qualities. And then here's this same Mind saying, "I want you take those qualities and use them here and here and here." If God, the only Mind, is making the only demand upon man's supply, then there can never be more of a demand than there is supply to take care of it. In fact, God would always unfold more of supply than what intelligence would say was necessary to express a normal, full life, because God is Love. And if you accept the fact that this is law, that supply first appears and then the demand, and you open up your thought and expect it to happen that way, it will. But if you get tempted to believe, "I can go out, and I can charge all these things this month, and maybe I'll have enough money to take care of them next month," you get caught in the human belief of economy. A charge account is only a convenience. But if we see that God supplies us first, then we will always have what we need before we go out to buy it. And if you make a demand for that and *thought expects it*, it will appear that way.

The belief of inflation is trying to suggest that we must sacrifice, do without. And as we start doing this, we can even fall under the belief of false theology that says that this is in line with spirit. And we start spiritually justifying it. But Christian Science tells us that the only sacrifice we have to make is of a false sense of self. And with this sacrifice we'll gain a clear, spiritual view of the fact that man dwells in spiritual plenty. And we'll see that things unfold that intelligence says are right and necessary for a full, normal life. Now these may not necessarily be the things that mortal mind, customs, habits, wants, and lusts have said are necessary. But they will be the things that will bring a complete sense of satisfaction and let you realize that you are living in a state of abundance.

Now to offset the belief of depression in our thought (and the only place it can exist is in our thought), we have that same statement "God expresses in man the infinite idea forever developing itself,...." It says nothing there of receding or being depressed. It just goes one way - up! And if there isn't any mortal belief that can influence the mind of man and depress, then we can't be affected. Within the infinitude of Mind, all of God's qualities and ideas circulate universally. And these qualities could never be touched by an opposite belief, because where Mind is, there is no opposite belief. So there's nothing halting the circulation of ideas and qualities within Mind. To God there is a steady, constant, prosperous economy. Therefore in God's universe there are only individuals who have. There's no belief of haves and have-nots. It's the belief that good isn't universal, constantly circulating in its fullness, that creates the belief of a depression. If you take it in, you get fearful, you start withholding instead letting

wisdom dictate how you should spend your substance. And this reluctance to give out on the part of individuals and governments builds up until finally there just isn't enough money circulating to keep things in normal balance. And therefore we have to listen to let God direct our lives and the use of our substance and tell us exactly what to do with what He's given us.

I knew a woman who, during the depression of the 1930s, found herself suffering from severe limitation. She was a good working Christian Scientist, and she'd been praying about this for quite some time, but nothing changed. And one day she was having some people for dinner, and she went to the butcher and asked the price of a certain cut of meat. And she said the suggestion of limitation immediately said to her, "That's too much money." Now her study had uplifted her consciousness to the point that she was sensitive to the presence of abundance. And when this limited suggestion came to her, she recognized it as something trying to hold her in bondage and say that she was a limited mortal. And she turned on it, and she said to herself, "Just for that, I'll buy chicken!" Now in those days chicken was the most expensive item. But her refusal to be obedient to that suggestion, broke her situation. Two days later her husband suddenly received a very large raise. And he worked in a depressed industry where raises weren't thought possible. And they lived very comfortably for the rest of the Depression.

Right now the fears of inflation and depression are trying to operate like a contagious disease. It's going from one person to the next, and every businessman is hearing every other businessman say how bad things are. Now if you take that suggestion in, and believe that it is true, then the first thing you know, it becomes true for you. But if you hold on to the fact that you are spiritual, dwelling inside the Mind of God, where God's economy is under perfect control, the beliefs of inflation and depression can't affect your experience. By preserving a sense of unity with your source and letting only God's thoughts be your thoughts, you can't have an experience opposite to what God is having. It's through the realization that abundance is the only possible state that man can ever be in that you can heal the false belief that's trying to present itself to you that you and the world might be in a bad condition.

And speaking of the world, it's not enough that we pray just for ourselves. We've got to see that the truth about man's abundance is being manifested everywhere for everyone. You can't be believing that there are bad times going on around you and expect to see freedom from the claim yourself. Mrs. Eddy writes, "God is at once the centre and circumference of being" (*Science and Health* 203:32-1). Now if we're expressing God fully right here, automatically we're going to see the evidence of God's abundance all around us. But if we see mortality around

us and we see the evidence of lack there, then we're going to see it here. And so our job is to work for ourselves first and see that we are only a spiritual reflection but then that we're in a spiritual universe filled with only other spiritual reflections, where there's only God's perfect economy circulating. And we need to do it both ways.

Man deals only with love; he doesn't deal with money. Even on the human plane, it isn't money that we're dealing with. When you go to the grocery store, and you buy ten dollars worth of food, and you give the grocer the ten dollars, you're expressing love to him in a form he can recognize. The more we think about our currency as love and not money, the more evidence of it we'll have. If ten people came to you all needing a smile and a pat on the back, if you had a consciousness filled with love, you would readily give it out. But if these ten people came and each wanted a hundred dollars, your false education that makes you think that money is something different might keep you from being able to see that you could give it out to them. It's only another form of thought. If we have a consciousness filled with love, we can see that love expressed in every form we need to express whether it's a smile or it's money. We don't think anything about the smile - it just happens automatically. And if we lose the concept of money as money, it'll happen just as automatically so that we can give it out as God directs us.

If we keep thinking about love and not money, the form of love that we need will *always* be present. We don't get love by manipulating a deal on the stock market. We don't get it from a bank account or from a paycheck. We get it *directly* from God. And there are no limits to the amount of love that you can have. And that is why you never should allow yourselves to be mesmerized into believing that, "I make only \$200 a week, and I have to live on that," or "I get a check once a month for \$500 and that's all that I have." You live on love! And if you turn completely away from the belief that the material senses are trying to present and see that the infinitude of love is present and that all we have to do is to receive it into consciousness, we can have the forms of that love that we need as thought demands.

God pours into each man His continuous flow of love. It radiates out of man, back to God. In the process it may reach many other ideas and bless them. But it's like a recirculating fountain - it goes from the source, into man, out of man, back to the source. Now if there isn't any negative thought in consciousness, then there isn't anything keeping you from realizing that this love is constantly circulating in this way, and it is always available for you to use. However, if you have thoughts of irritation, resentment, annoyance, criticisms, self-righteousness, then you aren't able to see the evidence of that love and you're

not expressing that love. You're expressing something that's *the opposite* of love. And the opposite of Love, God, is nothing. And those that express those qualities may very well find that what they've got to use in the way of currency is nothing. But those that express kindness and sweetness and tenderness and joy and happiness and unselfishness may very well find that what they've got to use in the way of currency is abundance because they're using what God has given them. And then it will come in all the forms it needs.

Because love is so important to the demonstration of supply, one really needs to understand what love is all about. I'm sure that you all know the synonyms, the qualities, of love. But it's not a matter of just knowing them intellectually. It's a matter of imbibing them, spiritually, and letting them express themselves as you. And that requires study and lots of study. Mrs. Eddy says, "...the heart and soul of Christian Science, is Love" (*Science and Health* 113:6 (only)). And therefore if it's the heart and soul, it's the most important thing, and we should concentrate our study, to a great extent, to acquire that love so that it fills our thought and expresses itself as us.

Mrs. Eddy has a letter in the Archives in Boston in which she says that if one *really* wants to progress in Christian Science, they should spend a minimum of *five hours a day* studying. Now this sometimes shocks somebody. But if you'll do it, it'll really pay off. Years ago when I was in business, I was on a job. I was working eighteen hours a day, and I was ill. And I called my [Christian Science] teacher for help. And all that he said to me on the phone is, "If you're not putting in those five hours, you're not doing your job." That was a Sunday night. And I thought, well, now if I'm working eighteen hours and I've got to study five hours, that's going to give me one hour's sleep. I thought, all right! I'll do it! By Friday, by doing this I was back to a normal eight-hour day for the first time in weeks. I was back in my home office. I had ten more years of business experience before I went into the [Christian Science] practice. But never during those ten years did I have one single moment of overtime, because I'd kept those five hours up steadily all that time. It took care of *everything*. If you put God first, you'll find that everything else will follow. And to demonstrate this sense of substance that we need in the world today, a great deal of those five hours could *profitably* be spent in gaining the understanding of it and getting the sense of love.

I knew a woman who lived in a very exclusive suburb of Chicago, and her husband went bankrupt. Now the people in this community were very indignant that anybody there would do such a thing, and her friends started shunning her. And if she walked down the street and they saw her coming they would cross to the other side. If they saw her in a market they'd turn away from her. She was a good working Christian Scientist, and she understood love. And she thought, "I

don't have any money, but I do have love. And I'm going to give that love out under *every* circumstance." And so she didn't react. She didn't get resentful. She didn't criticize. She just kept loving. And by that constant outpouring of love, she restored her family to a much greater position than they had ever been in. We need to get so clear on what this love is that we can use it right in the face of every phase of hatred that mortal mind might try to express through us. And when I say hatred I'm talking about everything that is unlike love - the criticism, the reacting, the resentment.

I had a woman come to me once who had a condition of cancer. And she was *filled* with resentment at something some friends of hers had once done to her. And she wanted to talk about it all the time. And she thought about it all the time. And she couldn't get off this treadmill of thinking about this fact. I prayed with her and nothing happened. And finally one day I said to her, "You know, nobody would ever do anything unkind to you if they understood love. So what their doing when they do something unkind is they're saying, 'I don't have love.' And they're asking you to give them *your* love. So instead of sending back what they've done to you as resentment, give them love!" Now she saw this, and she was a good Christian Scientist. And she started *actively* expressing love to these people realizing that she was filling a need for them by doing so. And in a very few days she was completely free of the physical claim.

Love is what the world needs. Love is what God has given us. And love is what we can give out. Every time we criticize, we are denying the fact that we are an expression of Love. Criticism is your open acknowledgement of your inability to see God's perfect man. It's also an expression of self-will. It's thought saying, "I don't like what somebody did. They're not doing it the way I want them to do it." Now, we can get rid of criticism by loving ourselves. And the clearer we see what we are as a spiritual reflection, the easier it is to see everybody else in that same light.

One time I was trying to get a clearer view of what I was as God's man, and Mrs. Eddy says that man is an "individual, stupendous Godlike agency" (*Miscellany* 14:8). And I was trying to really establish this in my thought, to really see that that's what I was. I used to walk over the UN building in New York (which happens to be a building that I like, but you could do this with anything), and I would translate that building into qualities. It stands for symmetry and beauty and loveliness and simplicity and stateliness and so forth. And I thought, "Well now, these qualities that that building expresses came from God. They came to the mind of an architect, and he put them down on paper. But they originally came from God. And if they can take the appearance of that building, then think of what a much greater appearance they can take in me, since man is

the *highest* idea that God ever conceived." I also thought of the mountains out west that I love so much. They stand for ruggedness and beauty and grandeur and stability and strength. But man is much *greater* than the mountains! And those two concepts gave me a slight understanding of how tremendous my real being really was. Now as you see that your being is splendid and magnificent and wonderful and that it's filled with nothing but perfect active qualities of God, then it would be impossible for you to have any concept of somebody over here that wasn't in that same condition. The only thing that makes us criticize is a sense of not really loving and appreciating *ourselves*, and mortal mind objectifies it over to somebody else. But the really the criticism is of ourselves. And that cuts us off from a consciousness of love. And therefore for our own sakes, we can't afford to let criticism be expressed through us.

When William McKenzie, who some of you may know was the original [Christian Science] lecturer and an early member of the [Christian Science] Board of Directors, first got interested in Christian Science, he went to Mrs. Eddy and said, "Mother, why was it that a *woman* had to discover Christian Science?" Mrs. Eddy smiled and she said, "Well, the discoverer was going to have so much error thrown at him or her, it had to be somebody who knew how to take it." She says, "It was the nature of a man to fight back. It's the nature of *true* womanhood to bow her head and let the arrow pass over." Another time she compared man to a mighty oak that broke in the wind. But a woman, true woman, was like a willow tree - it bends and then comes back.

Some years later, Mr. McKenzie was practicing [Christian Science] in Toronto, and he lost a case. And in those days there was nothing to protect the [Christian Science] practitioner, and the family sued. It got into the headlines of the paper and the whole city got incensed against Christian Science, and he got ill. As he was praying, he suddenly remembered this conversation with Mrs. Eddy. And he thought, "I'm fighting back. Now my true womanhood can bow its head and let the arrow pass over." And he did. He let his consciousness get filled with love, love that knew nothing *but* love. And so he forgot all the errors that were going on around him. He was instantly healed and the court case was dissolved. We need to get that sense of love so that no matter what is presented to us, we don't react to it, we don't fight back. If somebody came in the back door with a bow and arrow and they shot the arrow at me, if I duck my head, the arrow's just going to go over it. It hasn't done any harm. But if I see the arrow coming and I get indignant and I come up and I say, "You can't do that to me!" I might get hit, and then I've got a problem. Now what creates the problem, the arrow or my reacting to it? We've got to learn to see the allness of love so clearly that we don't react. Like the woman in Chicago, no matter what her friends did, she kept

pouring out love. If she had reacted, if she had expressed indignation or resentment or annoyance, she would have been expressing a *lack* of love. She wouldn't then have seen the restoration of the family's fortune, because it is the evidence of love expressed and used in consciousness.

Mrs. Eddy tells us that a departure from principle prevents us from demonstrating love. We've always got to make sure that we are staying with our concept of principle and always living from our highest point. I read a testimony some years ago by a young fellow that I've never forgotten. He said that he was raised as a Christian Scientist and associated with Christian Scientists all the way through school so I assume he went to Principia [College]. But when he graduated he went into a large business firm in a training program with men from a number of other colleges, none of whom were Christian Scientists. He liked them and they were very fine people, but they were smoking and drinking, gambling and carousing. He said they had such a good time doing it, he thought he'd like to do it too. And so he started doing it. He said the first thing he knew he lost his health, his job, his money, his friends. In desperation he had to turn back to Christian Science. And after a struggle, he regained his health, he got a new job, he had money, and he made new friends. And then he thought back on the old situation. He thought, "Why could all of those fellows have done all those things, and they were successful. And I did it, and I fell flat on my face." And he said the answer came to him very clearly. They had been living up to their highest sense of principle. But he hadn't been living up to his highest sense. He had lowered his sense to theirs. And that had been the fall. Now as we study Christian Science, we gain a higher understanding of being day by day. And therefore we're gaining a higher sense of principle. And we've got to live *always* at the *highest* point. What we understand today is what we have to demonstrate. If we do that, then the love in our consciousness stays constant. And no problem will enter our experience. But when we don't willingly follow our unfoldment, and express that which is coming to us, then we get into trouble whether it be physical or financial or sometimes just family discord. Therefore we have to stay *very alert* to live with principle. We've got to make sure that we push out of consciousness *every* suggestion and temptation of sin no matter what it might call itself.

And today in the world we're having an attack, or storm really, of sensuality. We have to protect our thought against it. And we've got to make sure that we're never obedient to it and lower our sense of principle and act accordingly. We've got to always stay with our highest sense of purity. And this will enable us to express our substance in a way that is going to be right.

And another thing that we need to defend ourselves against right now is the

thinking of the country right now about the economic situation. It's clouding thought. And you might never hear anybody talk to you about how bad things are, but the thinking is in the atmosphere. And if you stay a mortal then you *might* be touched by that thinking, and then it will come to you as your own thinking. The first thing you know things are bad and it's going to be bad for you. But if you are clear that you are inside the mind of God where only God's thinking of prosperity and success is unfolding, that's your protection and you can't be touched. But you need to stay alert to it and handle it.

The first place that Christian Scientists need to express this love that God gives them is to their church. Our branch churches, the Mother Church, and institutions like Tenacre depend to a large extent for their support upon the contributions of members. The more we see that church is "the structure of Truth and Love" (*Science and Health* 583:12), the more we'll see that the love within the idea supports that church in every way that thought says is necessary. As we turn away from money and endeavor to let the love of the idea to express itself to each one of us, that love will supply everything that's needed. And it will inspire us to see that we can give, abundantly.

When I was a very young man, I belonged to a church that suddenly found it needed a lot more money than what it had been receiving. As I prayed about it, it came to me to tithe. Now I was on my first job. My salary was small and was all going out every week for what was needed. And this city was a city of great distances and one needed a car to get around in. And I was just about to buy a car. And I thought, "Now, if I tithe, I won't be able to have the car." But I also thought, "I need the church a lot more than I need the car, and therefore, I am going to tithe." Three weeks later I was suddenly offered a new job that doubled my income. Therefore I could have the car and increase my tithe to the church again. Now let's not be superstitious about that. The job didn't come about just because I gave money. But undoubtedly in being willing to give the money I opened my thought to a clearer sense of God's presence and His qualities. And those qualities expressed in thought made a greater opportunity for their own service.

At the end of World War I, the country of Poland found themselves on the brink of financial disaster. And they hired a Swiss economist to come and to work out a financial plan to save them. He hired a staff of experts, and they went through all the ramifications of getting a plan ready. And on the day before it was to be presented to the heads of government, it was assembled, and he read it through. He put it down, and he turned to his staff and said, "This is not going to work." And he needed a plan for the next day. And this had taken weeks to get ready. Fortunately he was a Christian Scientist, and he started praying. He

prayed all afternoon, and he prayed all evening. Nothing came to him. He finally got sleepy, and he told his wife, "I'm going to bed, but wake me at five o'clock." Sometime before that, he awakened and the plan was unfolding. It was very simple, very direct. This is the plan he presented. All those pages of intellectuality, he put aside. But this plan was accepted, and it was put into operation. And it did the job. This man was knighted. At this time he publicly acknowledged that it was his prayers through Christian Science that saved Poland.

Now through *our* prayers we can save our own financial situation. We can heal the conditions that present themselves to our churches, to our country, and to our world. It may take more study than what we've done up till now. It may take the acceptance of increased understanding and a deeper sense of living it and more praying. But it *will work*. Why don't we do it?