

THE HEALING CHURCH

During countless ages, humanity has tried to worship God. In its endeavor to do this in one Mind, human kind has organized itself into groups. Each of these groups has had an orthodox form of government of its own. Inevitably, however, someone has appeared whose ideas have run counter to the ideas of the majority. Such a one may have been called a sinner, or he may have been called a heretic.

In the first instance, if guilty, he committed an offense against society; in the second instance, he committed what was assumed to be an offense against God. Whichever it was, the attempt to eradicate it was invariably the same.

The person who was deemed to have sinned has always been demoted, or excommunicated; the person who was thought to be heretical, even though the so-called heresy was but a higher sense of God, or Truth, unperceived, or not yet risen to, by the majority, has always been demoted, or excommunicated, also. Sometimes he has been burned at the stake, or otherwise tortured physically and mentally, all under the guise of righteousness, or doing evil that good may come; always using the religious sense to perform the most atrocious evil under that same so-called reverent, false sense of what religion is. The endeavor to eliminate the error, however, has always been that of condemning and punishing some person.

The futility of trying to destroy sin by attacking the sinner is comprehensively dealt with by the great revelator to this age of the Word of God: "It [evil] is neither person, place, nor thing, but is simply a belief, an illusion of material sense." (*Science and Health*) Therefore, it must be clear that to be rid of a person will not destroy the evil.

On the other hand, if the offense be a higher, but unorthodox, sense of Truth, demotion, or excommunication, will not prevent the ultimate triumph of that Truth. Did the crucifixion of Jesus prevent the due establishment of the Truth, which is taught and practiced today, 1900 years after the attempt to destroy that Truth? Did the burning at the stake of Ridley and Lainer prevent the then unorthodox facts from later coming into consciousness?

As a matter of fact, the attempt to rid any organization of sin or heresy by attacking a personality is wholly futile. It is a form of autocracy, in that it is an endeavor on the part of the governing body to continue in power along adopted lines. This is a form of error which can never be tolerated in the ultimate. It must ever be overthrown by that spiritual animus in human consciousness known as democracy. Evil of whatever kind can be destroyed, and must be, by and only by spiritual means.

The Church of Christ, Scientist, as an organization is far in advance of similar organizations. It stands pre-eminently for the promulgation of the undivided garment of spiritual preaching and healing. At times, it has followed along the lines of least resistance, a sort of "suffer it to be so now," and has resorted to demotion, or excommunication, of persons. The result has been that the evil has reappeared in a more aggravated form from time to time. Had the evil been scientifically eradicated under God's direction, and not

under the “opinions of men” — for “the opinions of men cannot be substituted for God’s revelation” (*Retrospection and Introspection*) — by directing the attack against the evil instead of against personalities, the organization would have progressed by this time to a marked degree beyond its present standpoint.

It may thus be seen that the dismissal of a person from an organization, or office, brings about no lasting benefit; it only lulls one “asleep upon the hill-tops of Zion.” (*Message to the Mother Church for 1901*) The excommunicated person may disappear, but the Truth itself (for all Truth is God Himself) persists, until eventually it takes its rightful place in consciousness; or the evil mental condition remains to be destroyed by the awakened consciousness at some future time.

We hear it said, “But suppose the person is guilty of some evil deed? What then?” All the greater reason for standing by that person and healing him! The very foundation of Christianity cries out to all the world: “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her,” for only the sinless Christ can cast the stone of spiritual understanding.

This lifting up of the Christ, heals the person while it destroys the evil. In any event, guilty or not guilty, heretical or not heretical, to demote, or excommunicate, persons is utterly worthless as a means of healing. At best, it only gives a breathing spell to the government in power; but it must be remembered that, at the same time, it also gives a breathing spell to the evil, of which it takes full advantage and returns with redoubled energy, until finally and scientifically it is rooted out by the presence of God, the Father.

Everyone can recall in ages past, and even in our time, the dismissal of members of prominence in ecclesiastical bodies. These members offended in some way or another. Many no doubt were guilty of some evil act, but the greater number whom we call to mind were those who had received some new and higher light, in answer to “the universal need of better health and morals.” (*No and Yes*) Those who have received this new and higher light of *Him* who is *all light*, though tortured in various ways, have since been canonized, and more than one monument stands in the world today as a silent witness and gracious tribute marking their awakened sense of everlasting and omnipresent *good*. We all know that “the heretic of yesterday is the hero of today.”

In almost every instance, the attack on persons, in the endeavor to destroy that which offended an autocratic government, resulted in the disruption of the organization, and not infrequently there arose a new sect which carried forward a higher sense of God and man, for “Truth crushed to earth springs spontaneously upward, and whispers to the breeze man’s inalienable birthright — *Liberty*.” (*First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*)

Should not the church heal, rather than excommunicate? Yes. The church should heal, but is it not a fact that excommunication still obtain? But the question is asked, “What shall be done, for if the unfitted (?) persons are not removed, will not the Cause suffer?” The answer is that the Cause will never suffer so long as we take our stand, and make an honest endeavor to heal according to the teachings of the Christ. The only way the Cause can ever be injured, is by the cessation of the healing, not by its continuance. For, what is cause? God Himself. And the effects of that *one and only* cause are always, and forever will be, *good*. “The uplifting of Spirit was the upbuilding of the body.” (*Miscellaneous Writings*)

We all know by experience, extending over centuries, that if this plan of excommunication be carried on, there will be enough eventually of the excommunicated, with their friends, to start another "protest" uprising, for unless the Word of God placed in one's care is used rightly, it is taken away and given to that one who will use it as it should be used. Thus a new church comes into being. This organization will also prosper and forge ahead until it too comes to the same old stumbling block. Then, unless it meets the evil by spiritual understanding and ceases excommunication, it too will become a dead church.

The Christly way to work out obstacles of this sort is recorded in the New Testament writings. The followers of Christ were banded into a group, and governed through a smaller group of twelve, called Apostles. Two of these were, to say the least, unorthodox. It seemed to be a self-perpetuating group too, for after the crucifixion and the evil (Judas) had destroyed itself, the remaining eleven filled the vacancy by voting in another man; that is, Jesus obliterated evil, but the twelve still being "asleep upon the hilltops of Zion" had to elect that same evil presence as one of them — only in another form. Did Jesus make the slightest attempt to excommunicate these two? Did he try to demote them? Did he even try to restrict their activities? No, emphatically no! Jesus knew that Peter would deny the Christ, yet he gave to him the "keys of the kingdom of heaven."

He knew that Judas was to betray him for thirty pieces of silver and that he was a thief (evil thoughts are always robbers and thieves), yet he actually permitted him to be the treasurer! He even went so far as to say to Judas, immediately prior to his betrayal of him, "That thou doest, do quickly." He did not even tell the other apostles, or the disciples, that it was Judas who was about to betray him. Moreover, he was careful not to attach evil to the personality of Judas, for did he not say, when betrayed with a kiss, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?"

Who won the victory? Jesus or Judas? Jesus or Peter? Judas was automatically removed from his position by his own act, while Jesus returned, even through the grave, triumphant! Peter was healed and continued as one of the apostles, and again associated with Jesus so long as it was possible.

Just how was this all done? How can it be done today? For done it must be, if it is true that "*I am the way.*" (John) Why did the unworthy remove himself while the worthy one remained, the one honored, the other dishonored? We find the answer in the teachings of Jesus, in the Christianity which he gave us, and in the teachings of Christian Science, founded on the same Christianity — a purely spiritual foundation. In Christian Science, we learn that conditions are not adjusted by material methods, or the ways of men; by human opinions; by intolerance, cruelty, retaliation, unbrotherliness, or unkindness towards others; but by, and only by, spiritualizing our own individual consciousness. True healing, of whatever it may be, is accomplished on no other basis; always from within one's own consciousness and never from without, by demoting, or excommunicating, or otherwise.

How then will this affect the persons who are seemingly the avenues for evil? Will it heal them? It most certainly will if they desire the healing. Judas did not wish to be healed, for he would not face the consequences of his dastardly act, and would not make reparation for his wrong doing. So when the last vestige of belief of life in matter

disappeared from Jesus' consciousness, Judas, clinging to the evil rather than to the Christ, disappeared with the evil.

On the other hand, Peter, willing indeed to face the consequences, willing to make reparation and desiring to be healed, was, of course, healed, and rose higher in his human apprehension of the ever-presence of the Christ. For, similarly, when the belief of flesh or corporeality disappeared from the consciousness of Jesus, Peter, clinging to the Christ rather than to the evil or physical, remained.

The incident was closed and practically forgotten, for it is common knowledge that he continued an honored member of these "awakened ones," the apostles.

Jesus spiritualized his thought, or did his work within his own consciousness, for well he knew that "the kingdom of God is within you." He let the expression of evil severely alone, but, eventually, and without resorting to demotion, or excommunication, or any material action, such as human dogmas, creeds, points enforced, he won the victory. Our business is the same today. We cannot adjust the world, the environment, or our body, by meddling with any or all of these, or by attacking people. It must all be done according to Principle. Each one must do the work within his own consciousness.

Does the world, the church organization, or the body appear drunk, or discordant, or dying? Then go *within* and change the standpoint. Replace evil thoughts with good thoughts, or with Christly thoughts. If this is faithfully done, sooner or later will better conditions appear in all church organizations, and in our bodies as well; difficulties will be overcome, and the unworthy will give place to the worthy.

Evil is like a balloon. Left to itself a balloon will float off into space. If one is so unfortunate, voluntarily or involuntarily, to become entangled in the ropes attached to the balloon, if he be enmeshed in the entangling influences, he will be carried off into space with the balloon. If he lets go of these ropes, or lets go of the evil, he will remain where he is while the balloon itself disappears, as illustrated admirably by John, when he sets forth a law of God that evil "passeth away." "The world," he says, "passeth away," or floats away like a balloon into its "native nothingness" (*Science and Health*); and John follows it up by saying, "and the lust thereof." His meaning is clear enough. Evil "passeth away" according to divine law, and whoever lusts after evil or worldly things, whoever entangles himself or clings to evil, "passeth away" with that evil.

Then he adds a most significant statement, to wit: "But he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever;" or, he that uses and recognizes spiritual sense only, does not lust after error, the world, the flesh or the devil, or is not entangled in the meshes of evil, but remains forever, or abides forever, in that God consciousness which is ever supreme and everywhere present.

Judas was entangled in the ropes of evil and would not let go. Therefore, when the evil passed out of Jesus' consciousness, or floated away, Judas disappeared with it; while, by recognizing and using the spiritual senses only, or by doing the will of God, and only he who is worthy is given that will to do, Peter severed himself from the evil and remained in that Kingdom of God, or the God-consciousness.

It is the same today. No one can apprehend rightly anything of the Christ, no one can have recognition of Life as Life, unless one has at least a moiety of the Christ, or spiritual sense.