

CHAPTER I

The Indispensable Human Footsteps

Love for God and Man Advanced Civilization

The human footsteps leading to perfection are indispensable," wrote Mary Baker Eddy. The history of the United States of America shows how God, infinite good, controls history, and how it is love for God and man that advances civilization.

Why was the founding of this nation such an essential step?

Because America is not just some material territory between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans; America represents "the love of God encircling the universe and man" encircling all creation.

America's coming into being to provide the cradle for the second coming of the Christ had been foreseen by prophets for thousands of years. Consider St. John's Revelation concerning the "angel with the little book," the "woman of the Apocalypse," and the "great red dragon" that would persecute "the woman which brought forth the man child," Science and Health, the second coming of the Christ. This prophecy continues, "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness into her place.... And the earth helped the woman" (Rev. 10:12; 12:13-16). Indisputable evidence shows Mrs. Eddy understood "'the great eagle' that helped the woman, and the place on earth that nourished her 'from the face of the serpent' was (and is) the United States of America" (The Individual Christian Scientist, Vol. XII, No. 1).

The invisible power of the divine Mind is constantly at work to achieve universal salvation. From the beginning, even before the first European colonist set foot on its shores, America was being prepared to be the cradle for the second coming of the Christ.

The Magna Charta, 1215

Let us for a moment look back to the year 1215 in England. King John was treating his subjects cruelly, when a group of courageous, caring men rose in a body to formulate laws intended for all time to remedy the evil suffered at the whim of overbearing or unscrupulous rulers. The result was the Magna Charta, the Great Charter of England, signed by King John at the insistence of the nation's barons, who, in the spirit of love of justice for the people, undertook to free men of the inequities that were being imposed on them by their king.

Of sixty three provisions of the Magna Charta, two show distinctly the spirit of justice which the barons sought to have adopted:

- (1) No free man shall be imprisoned or proceeded against, except by his peers or equals, or the law of the land.
- (2) Justice shall not be sold, denied nor delayed.

The Magna Charta, now nearly eight centuries old, still stands as a protecting arm for England's people. It also became a foundation for the rights we as Americans hold so dear. By insisting that the king be obedient to the laws of men and the dictates of justice, the Magna Charta paved the way for America's Declaration of Independence and the Constitution with its Bill of Rights guaranteeing freedom of religion and freedom of expression. This in turn opened the way for the founding, in this nation, of Christian Science, which demands obedience to divine Principle, and also made possible its expeditious dissemination. It may be truly said: That which is born of love endures forever.

What Made Progress Possible?

In the story of the Magna Charta, as will be true over and over again, we see men whose hearts were filled with compassionate love for those who suffered intolerable injustice.

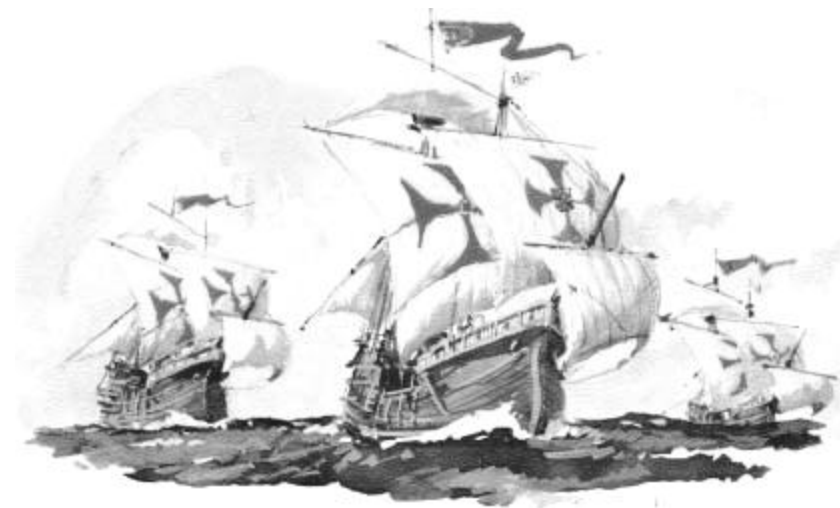
Each forward step in man's affairs and in world affairs is the direct result of harmony brought about by the spirit of love, and trust in God. Lacking this spirit, discord and destruction arise and set back the wellbeing of mankind. Progress usually starts with one individual or a small group of wise thinkers. God puts it into their heart to act. "A rock pile ceases to be a rock pile the moment a single man contemplates it, bearing within him the image of a cathedral."

I Timothy 4:14 admonishes, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy.... Meditate upon these things: give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all."

Devotion of thought by the individuals concerned, and the energy to act, made possible the discovery, settling, and building up of America.

Columbus: The Impulsion Behind His Voyage

The immediate history of the preparation that enabled America to be the cradle for the second coming of the Christ begins with the voyage of Columbus.



Columbus sets sail with his three ships, the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria.

(The author is indebted to The American Vision of Atlanta, Georgia, and to others for a portion of the following early historical data.)

What caused Columbus to undertake a voyage of such portentous solemnity?

When Queen Isabella asked Columbus if he was ready, he answered: "Yes, your Majesty, God is with me. I could not be more ready." He then explained:

It was the Lord who put it into my mind. I could feel His hand upon me...There was no question that the inspiration was from the Holy Spirit, because He comforted me with rays of marvelous illumination from the Holy Scriptures, for the execution of the journey....I did not make use of mathematics or maps. It was simply the fulfillment of what Isaiah had prophesied. No one should fear to undertake any task in the name of our Savior, if it is just, and the intention is purely for His holy service. The fact that the gospel must still be preached to so many lands in such a short time this is what convinces me. (The Book of Prophecies by Christopher Columbus. Writings of Christopher Columbus, Part 1, Volume II)

There was within Columbus a divine presence which he felt, whose voice he listened for, and whose promptings he acted on. Columbus could see something his companions could not. He showed faith where his critics showed fear.

After seventy days Columbus came to the Bahamas. He christened the island "San Salvadore," which means "Holy Savior." Then he led his men in prayer.

Christopher Columbus's voyage had opened the door to America spiritually as well as geographically.



Christopher Columbus kneels in prayer upon landing at San Salvadore, now known as Watling Island, in the Bahamas. 1992 represented the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the new world.

Europe Challenges Church Practices

About the time America was being discovered, other thoughtful people were like Columbus listening to the voice of the divine presence within their consciousness. At its prompting they too were discovering a New World a world of deepening spiritual understanding.

In this, the leading of the divine Mind was clearly discernible. The Bible had long been the exclusive province of the church. Copies were rare and only people schooled in Latin could read them. Then John Wycliffe (1320-1384) was led to translate the Vulgate Bible into English (and was excommunicated for

his efforts.) Not long after, Johann Gutenberg (1397-1468) developed a movable-type printing press, allowing the Bible to be printed in quantity so that people could finally read it for themselves.

The new understanding this fostered prompted people like Martin Luther to challenge practices of the established church, culminating in a wave of reformation which swept across Europe, eventually reaching the shores of England.

In 1534 King Henry VIII of England broke away from the Church of Rome to found his own church. But it was not long before there were also those who disagreed with some of the practices of the Church of England.

America--the New World--the Only Place for Dissenters

By this time most countries of Europe had adopted their own official religion. People who disagreed with the government-mandated doctrine were persecuted. For those dissenters with deep Spirit-led conviction, there was no place to go except to the New World. Here we can see divine Love at work, forcing those with a higher vision to obey the Scriptural admonition: "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate.... For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth to be thine inheritance."

God's plan for world salvation was being implemented.

Ultimately, "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate" means in Christian Science to come out from believing there are two powers at work; realize instead that GOOD alone is real, and evil or even belief in good and evil is illusion, universal hypnotic suggestion.

In Christian Science we learn that what appears to us as material person, place, things, human laws, circumstances, positions, are all illusion all that the mortal eye beholds is illusion. The eye cannot see reality. The false testimony of the eye deludes judgment and induces false conclusions.

In the 1600s this understanding was still in the future. The spiritual understanding that would engender this realization needed careful nurture. It needed to grow in new ground, separated from the materialism of the age.