

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE: The Power of Endless Life

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minds—simple seekers for Truth, weary wanderers, athirst in the desert—are waiting and watching for rest and drink. Give them a cup of cold water in Christ's name, and never fear the consequences. Such an offering was extended to me something over 30 years ago, when in my distress over the physician's verdict of 'incurable' pronounced on a member of my family who was seriously ill.

"My family and I accepted the offering, and through the ministrations of this wonderful teaching the patient was restored to health.

"Since that time we have witnessed a number of healings of various physical troubles amongst the members of our household and for these blessings we are profoundly grateful.

"I have pleasure in introducing to you Peter V. Ross, C.S.B., of San Francisco, California, a member of the Board of Lectureship of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Mass."

Dr. Dunlop presided at the piano for the meeting.

Few studies are more inviting than a race's idea of the Supreme Power that fashions the universe and directs the destiny of man. Primitive people incline to think of Deity as a patriarch or king. He walks in the garden in the cool of the day. He leads His flock by the still waters; the earth is His footstool, the heaven His throne. While these words from Scripture, taken literally, picture God as manlike or kinglike, poetically they hint the never-departing presence of God as undeviating Principle. So that in the very beginnings of Hebrew literature are intimations of a Supreme Being too big to take on corporeal form, too gracious to mete out vengeance to His creatures; a Supreme Being without whose light and love gardens were wastes and human lives purposeless.

This benign concept of Deity, gradually clarifying and expanding with the advance of Hebrew culture up through the ages, reached its culmination in Christ Jesus' pronouncement to the woman of Samaria, God is Spirit. They were talking at the time by Jacob's well in the highlands midway between Jerusalem and Nazareth. He had stopped there to rest on his journey from Judea north to his native Galilee. She had come to draw water. Glancing down the long Roman road toward the Holy City, then up the rocky hillside where they sat, she said: "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." "Ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father," he replied. "God is a spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Fictitious Perils

It was quite natural, in the face of such teaching, for New Testament writers to speak of God as Spirit, Life, Love; and more or less definitely they did so. Thus was Christianity based on the concept of Deity as incorporeal rather than anthropomorphic. This enlightened conception is of tremendous significance. It means that man and the universe, genuinely, must be spiritual and incorporeal, since they cannot differ in quality from their creator. It means, further, that the limitations and dangers of human existence are fanciful and fictitious, for, were they actual, they would dispute the reign and permanence of divine Mind and Life.

For ages the Bible in its highest inculcations has declared that God is Spirit and that man and the universe are spiritual, and for centuries multitudes of people

have accepted the Bible as their chart of life, but the full import of the Biblical teaching dawned upon mankind only a generation or so ago through the discovery and presentation to the world of Christian Science by Mary Baker Eddy. What the Scriptures had portrayed in colorful oriental imagery she set forth in her direct unmistakable language and logic of the Occident. She did more. She swung her high idealism into relation with the affairs of everyday life, and thereby made Jesus' instructions immediately available to alleviate human distress.

Disease and danger have their basis in the mistaken assumption that man and the universe are material. They are therefore beliefs which disappear with the understanding that man and the universe are spiritual. To spiritual man in the unobstructed realm of Spirit there can be no perils, no impediments to health. Thus it is seen that sickness is a mental rather than a material condition, an appearance rather than an actuality; and thus is it obvious that a correction in thought, an enlightenment of mentality, will externalize in improved health and longer life. Inevitably will the transformation of the human mind result in a renewal of the human body. And this change is wrought, with certainty, in one who accepts the truth of existence and rejects the deceptive semblance; accepts the facts that the world is a place of security and that man is an indestructible expression of the everlasting Life called God.

Moods and Emotions

Here it is well to note that the human body, after all, is part of the human mind. It is, as Mrs. Eddy says, "the substratum of mortal mind" (Science and Health, page 371). Hence its sensitiveness to moods and emotions. Alarm, anger, depression, as everybody recognizes, react unfavorably on health; while faith, hope, confidence induce a favorable reaction. The fact that the body is mental explains why it responds to scientifically mental treatment. Indeed the effect of a drug depends upon faith or belief in its powers rather than upon any inherent virtue. The universal expectation supplies the supposed energy when an individual takes a drug unwittingly.

Over and over again does Mrs. Eddy declare in her famous book "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" that God is divine Mind, Life, Love, Principle, fortifying her declaration both with reason and with revelation. No more heartening pronouncement was ever made. It is a law of annihilation to the discord and disorder apparent in the world. Again, speaking more specifically, Mrs. Eddy writes: "Life is a term used to indicate Deity; and every other name for the Supreme Being, if properly employed, has the signification of Life" (Retrospection and Introspection, page 59). In all the wide universe, then, there is only one Life, and that Life, ageless and diseaseless as divine Life must be, is the life of the real man; indeed the real man is the tangible representation of that Life. Here is the truth which makes for freedom, because, to quote Mrs. Eddy once more: "For man to know Life as it is, namely God, the eternal good, gives him not merely a sense of existence, but an accompanying consciousness of spiritual power that subordinates matter and destroys sin, disease, and death" (Miscellaneous Writings, page 189).

Of the Earth Earthy

Anciently the Hebrews were too much disposed to regard man as a material mortal. Their race would endure indefinitely, they were persuaded, but its individual members were as grass. Yet as far back as Job and Deuteronomy are to be found occasional assur-

ances of man's spirituality and permanence. "There is a spirit in man," argued Elihu, "and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." "The Lord thy God is thy life, and the length of thy days," proclaimed Moses to his followers.

Centuries later Christ Jesus met this issue squarely. Luke, in that charming style which places his Gospel among the most beautiful books in literature, tells the story. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem from the north country shortly after the transfiguration there. Certain Samaritans, through whose territory he would pass, refused to receive him into their village when they saw whither he was bound. James and John, disciples whose impetuosity had already won for them the title "Sons of Thunder" asked: "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and destroy them?" "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of," he answered, "for the son of man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them."

Of what manner of Spirit did Jesus imply that man is? Obviously, of that Love which knows no impatience or boasting or bitterness; of that Mind which endows the individual with ability for success and usefulness; of that Life to which alarm and disease and age and dissolution are strangers. Here is the spiritual and eternal man of God's creating as distinguished from the supposititious mortal of the earth earthy.

Exemption From Disability

Christ Jesus did not content himself with making assertions. He accompanied his teaching by definite demonstrations of man's exemption from disability. Sometimes he taught and practiced on the hillsides, sometimes in the synagogues, as he went about the country. In one synagogue which he entered on a sabbath morning was a man with a withered hand. Not by chance, can it be supposed, was the stage there set for the dramatic scene about to be played. On the one side sat this shrinking man whose sense of life was incomplete, cramped; on the other side stood Jesus conscious of life, as life really is, unfettered and uncorrupted; while in the congregation Pharisees, their hearts filled with hatred, watched to see if he would heal the obtrusive infirmity and thereby add sabbath breaking to the charges they already held against him.

Jesus was not long in sizing up the situation and determining upon a course of action. In one swift moment would he rebuke both the maddened thought which plotted to slay him, and the frightened or mesmerized thought which crippled the man. To the man he said, "Stand forth." It was not easy in the tense atmosphere of the place, but the sensitive unfortunate arose and came forward. Turning with flashing eyes upon the Pharisees Jesus demanded: "Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?" His purpose was to save; theirs, and he read it in their thoughts, to destroy. They could make no answer. Again to the man he said, "Stretch forth thine hand." He obeyed; and the hand was whole as the other.

Miracles Exposed

Through searching study of the Scriptures Mrs. Eddy came to understand the spiritual law which Jesus invoked in relieving human suffering and in breaking human limitations. This she was prepared to do because she was a spiritually minded woman and a profound student of the Bible. In writings of rare literary merit she stated that law in terms intelligible to others. Thereby did she take Jesus' remarkable achievements out of the category of miracle and place them in the category of Science. Moreover, she confirmed her discovery and conclusions by healing disease as Jesus did, that is, by purely spiritual means. Students of her writings are today doing likewise. In fact people in these times are being healed of all sorts of difficulties by reading Science and Health and other Christian Sci-

ence literature, by attending Christian Science church services, or by listening to Christian Science lectures.

The development of the Christian Science movement in the past 60 years has been remarkable. Unfriendliness toward it has given place to friendliness and appreciation. In estimating the growth and influence of Science, however, one must not stop with numbering the churches and the persons attending church services; because Christian Science now has permeated universal consciousness to such an extent that people everywhere, at least in the western world, are talking, yes practicing, pretty good Science without knowing that they are doing so. Perhaps they never have read its textbook "Science and Health." Possibly they disapprove what they suppose Science to be. Yet they are voicing its teachings and enjoying its benefits, and this in no small measure. Thus has Mrs. Eddy become one of the world's foremost benefactors.

An Example of Courage

For one to defend one's convictions in some trivial affair in opposition to a few friends requires courage, more indeed than many possess. But for one to stand up in the face of all mankind and challenge its convictions in fundamental matters of theology and pathology—to maintain, for example, as Mrs. Eddy has done, the unreality of disease and evil—requires a most extraordinary order of courage. She would not have been equal to the undertaking had she not already proved, in her own experience and in the experience of others who turned to her for help, the soundness of her propositions. This demonstration demanded faith and spiritual discernment of a type rarely if ever surpassed. Then, with discovery and demonstration consummated, she must, with her love for mankind which was the outstanding feature of her life, make Science available to suffering humanity. To this end she established the Christian Science church with its periodicals and other instruments for disseminating the truth. In thus placing Christian Science on a workable, enduring foundation she exercised a degree of acumen, resourcefulness, and consecration that has become the admiration of thinking people the world over.

No circumstance of Jesus' colorful career, perhaps, was more striking than the frequency with which he resorted to prayer and the importance which he ascribed to it. Prayer, as Mrs. Eddy insists at every turn, is the Christian Science method of healing. Not simply the prayer of petition, for prayer is composite. It includes desire and request, certainly, but above all, prayer, as invoked to lift an individual out of the slough of sickness, to nullify debasing tendencies, or otherwise to promote his growth and well-being, consists in the recognition that man, as the son of God, is of omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience. Away with the suggestions of evil that would intimidate and disable man!

Overthrow of Limitations

Prayer, in other words, is the declaration and realization that man, as the image and likeness of God, has that Life which is painless and permanent; that Mind which supplies the impulse and intelligence adequate for every legitimate human venture; that Love which puts littleness and envy and injustice outside the pale of reality; that Principle which silences and overrules every unprincipled urge or threat; that Spirit which abolishes the heaviness and restrictions of matter and accords to the real man existence limitless and unassailable.

For one faithfully to dwell in these sublime truths, and humbly to lend himself to them, is for one to feel life expanding into completeness; in brief, is to discover, little by little, and perhaps, in the presence of impending catastrophe, become at once aware, that man "is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life."

Prayer consists, then, not so much in asking for the things necessary to human happiness as in admitting that already God has supplied man generously with everything requisite. For God cannot, in His very nature, withhold His affluence. All that He has, His Life, His intelligence, His bounty—is man's. One should say this, recognize it, admit it; and do so intelligently, unreservedly, gratefully, expectantly. This is the effectual fervent prayer, which availeth much.

Paul in his graphic style speaks of man as the "temple of the living God." Certainly there can be in man, therefore, no disease, decrepitude, or other suggestion of mortality. Man must be, and he is, the expression, throughout, of irrepressible and unconquerable Life. To voice these truths is to pray. Mrs. Eddy reminds us that Jesus' prayers were "deep and conscientious protests of truth—of man's likeness to God and of man's unity with Truth and Love" (Science and Health, page 12).

Man Cannot Be Victimized

Man, endowed as he is with divine intelligence and eternal Life, really cannot become the victim of disease. No more can he fall a prey to idleness or failure. He has some fine purpose to fulfill. That purpose lies in the line of wholesome endeavor and activity. It will not permit him to rest in ease or end in defeat. The ideal state or heaven is not a place from which problems have been removed. Rather is it a place where pain and stress have been taken out of problems. Why his equipment of strength and ability, if there be no work for man to do, no adventures to run, no heights to climb? Satisfaction is not found in ease or repose but in service and achievement.

There is opportunity wherein to employ one's powers. There is plenty wherein to satisfy one's wants. No other conclusion can be reached when it is remembered that the creator and governor of the universe is Love and Principle. But there are seeming forces at work in human experience, among them rivalry and greed and dishonesty, which would deprive man of the abundance divinely provided. They would divert from him those good things God expects him to enjoy. One should take intelligent account of these hostile forces, look them squarely in the face, and recognize their impotence. They are impotent, when confronted masterfully, because they are unprincipled, quite helpless to interrupt the reign of Principle which has been established in man and in his affairs. They cannot operate to deprive man of what is justly his.

Intelligent Self-Defense

While in Science good is the real and only, one should not ignore the devices of supposititious evil. One should be quick to detect and resolute to extinguish sinister schemes to undermine one's business or to keep one out of employment. Nor can one afford to ignore contagion and other supposed laws of disease which would jeopardize health. They, too, should be reduced to nothingness; and this through a realization that they have no place or power in a world where inextinguishable Life is All-in-all. One should not be indifferent, either, to insidious suggestions which would tempt one to depart from the path of integrity. They possess no attraction for him who recognizes that true selfhood is under the direction of Principle and who fills his life with wholesome work and recreation.

The earth swinging in its orbit furnishes a graphic picture of the operation of law. It cannot depart from its fixed course because gravity holds it there. God has set man in an orbit—an orbit of security, of usefulness, of abundance, of opportunity. Principle holds him there. No power, no influence can swerve him from his path. Mortals may seem to take excursions into the realm of want or disease or danger, but these excursions are dreamlike or mesmeric. Actually man never

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