

**Lynn House of Potomac Valley**

# **Healing: Our First Christian Duty**

**by Ralph Byron Copper, C.S.**

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Next year he will be giving his thirty-ninth Christian Science association address.

**A**s I look around this room, I'm impressed each time I see Christian Scientists come together to reaffirm the reality of spiritual existence. Given the many other things you and I could be doing on this beautiful, crisp Saturday afternoon, our presence here conveys a message more profound than any words said here today.

Rightly understood (which is to say, metaphysically understood), our attendance is a freewill offering, expressive of God's will—an offering that places the burdens and pleasures of this world on the altar of divine Science. Our coming together voluntarily, wholeheartedly, single-mindedly, is best summed up in one of the noblest words of the English language: "fellowship."

Ours is a fellowship in Christ, Truth—a fellowship "with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup> As in the days of Jesus' early followers, the strength of this fellowship is not in numbers but in a mutual love of the truth—and in a faithful practice of that truth. A mutual love in Christ quite naturally causes us to love one another, to embrace everyone here today as a sister or brother in Christ. But it does much more than this. It motivates each of us to love and obey the *same thing*—to have the same Mind which was also in the master Christian, Christ Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

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For us to have this same Mind is for us to abide by the same divine Principle Jesus adhered to. It is to value above the price of rubies the same spiritual wisdom expressed in our Master's teachings and practice. This mutual understanding you and I share, this common love we feel, is what enables us to join together, as Jesus' followers did on the day of Pentecost, "with one accord in one place."<sup>3</sup>

When I was invited to speak at this special gathering of the like-minded, the first thing I did was to go to the website of Lynn House to learn more about its history and progress. Undergirding the work of this healing institution is its official Mission Statement, which says: "We join together to cherish and support those practicing Christian Science, with its expectancy of quick and whole healing, and provide Christian Science nursing care that is in accordance with the *Manual of The Mother Church* by Mary Baker Eddy."

We've come today in the spirit of this Mission Statement to champion the practice of Christ-healing as elucidated by Mrs. Eddy in the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. This textbook tells us that healing was "our Master's first article of faith propounded to his students."<sup>4</sup> We're told also: "First in the list of Christian duties, he taught his followers the healing power of Truth and Love."<sup>5</sup> Hence the title of today's talk: "Healing: Our First Christian Duty."

This first Christian duty, this "first article of faith," is incumbent on each one of us—not just on practitioners and nurses listed in *The Christian Science Journal*. Mrs. Eddy is referring to *all* of her followers in every age when she says: "Christian Scientists are to 'heal the sick' as the Master commanded."<sup>6</sup>

Christ-healing gives positive proof of the validity and vitality of primitive

Christianity as practiced in Christian Science. The textbook declares: "Christianity is the basis of true healing."<sup>7</sup> In metaphysical treatment there is no other basis. Mrs. Eddy affirms that "the only perfect religion is divine Science, Christianity as taught by our great Master . . . . The divine Principle and rules of this Christianity being demonstrable, they are undeniable; and they must be found final, absolute, and eternal."<sup>8</sup>

### **Jesus practiced divine rules of healing**

One cannot follow fully and faithfully "the divine Principle and rules of this Christianity" without a working knowledge of the one book in the world that presents the *Science* of Christian healing in its complete statement. *Science and Health* identifies the underlying metaphysical laws utilized by the Master in his healing ministry.

With the aid of *Science and Health* you can find in the Bible the same ontological truth that Mrs. Eddy was the first person to discover in its pages: namely, the eternal Science of Christ. To identify in the Gospels the same spiritual precepts outlined in *Science and Health* convinces us that Christ-healing as practiced by the Master, and as reinstated by Mrs. Eddy, represents a safe, scientific system of cure, with which we can entrust the welfare of ourselves, our families, and all others.

Mrs. Eddy says of her own demonstration of the divine rules of Science: "They were submitted to the broadest practical test, and everywhere, when honestly applied under circumstances where demonstration was humanly possible, this Science showed that Truth had lost none of its divine and healing efficacy, even though centuries

had passed away since **Jesus practised these rules** on the hills of Judaea and in the valleys of Galilee"<sup>9</sup> (emphasis added).

Our Master practiced the exact same rules contained in our textbook. This point is vital to understanding that healing as Jesus demonstrated it and as Mrs. Eddy explains it in *Science and Health* is one and the same method. And this one is Christianly scientific. Christian Science is more than just a restatement of Christian teaching; it is a *reinstatement* of Christian living and healing as practiced by Christ Jesus more than two thousand years ago.

Now, it's true Mrs. Eddy also writes that Jesus "left no definite rule for demonstrating this Principle of healing and preventing disease" and that "this rule remained to be discovered in Christian Science."<sup>10</sup> But to say Jesus *left* no definite rule isn't to say he *practiced* no definite rule. He most certainly did!

Obedience to the fixed rules of Science enables the modern-day follower of Christ Jesus to confront disease with the same God-given authority our Master did. Mrs. Eddy assures the public: "The rules of Mind-healing are wholly Christlike and spiritual."<sup>11</sup>

### **Christianly scientific practice illustrated**

Jesus' healing of Jairus' daughter, as recorded in Luke's Gospel,<sup>12</sup> is a good example of how the oneness of Christianity and Christian Science is expressed in metaphysical treatment. It illustrates the truth of Mrs. Eddy's statement that "the Bible contains the recipe for all healing."<sup>13</sup> From Luke's account we find that the biblical recipe for healing consists of demonstrable rules of Science that are as practical today as they were in Jesus' time.

## Allay fear

According to Scripture, Jesus' first words to Jairus after hearing the reported death of Jairus' daughter were "Fear not." This statement—and especially the *thought* that prompted it—was not an idle or random expression. Jesus said those words in obedience to his Father—in obedience to the perfect Love that casts out fear.

Jesus' declaration "Fear not" expressed a rule in Science. Mrs. Eddy would explain the rule this way: "Always begin your treatment by allaying the fear of patients. Silently reassure them as to their exemption from disease and danger. Watch the result of this simple rule of Christian Science, and you will find that it alleviates the symptoms of every disease. If you succeed in wholly removing the fear, your patient is healed."<sup>14</sup>

Jesus obeyed the essence of this rule. Through divine revealing Mrs. Eddy discerned the spirit of this rule and defined the letter of it.

Why do we need to begin our treatment by allaying fear? Because fear, in belief, initiates disease. We begin our treatment at the point where error claims origin. "Fear," *Science and Health* explains, "was the first manifestation of the error of material sense."<sup>15</sup> So we deny first what material sense first attributes to itself.

To begin by denying fear is the quickest and most direct method in treatment to cure disease. It marks the beginning of the end of any ailment. We miss the point if we think handling fear is merely preparatory—an early warm-up—to the main event of healing sickness. To treat fear is simultaneously to treat the malady.

According to *Science and Health*, disease "is fear made manifest on the body,"<sup>16</sup> and fear "is an element of all

disease."<sup>17</sup> By human reckoning, then, there is no such thing as disease without fear. Hence there is no such thing as Christly treatment of an illness without removing fear.

But a pedantic approach to the rules of Christian healing will get us nowhere. It's not the *word* "fear," in and of itself, that demands our prayerful attention but the erroneous *concept* of fear in its various manifestations. "Fear" can mean more than just being scared—and often does. *Science and Health* identifies seven forms of fear in its Glossary definition of the word: "Heat; inflammation; anxiety; ignorance; error; desire; caution."<sup>18</sup>

It's possible to allay a fearful thought without once using the word "fear." For instance, to know for a patient who believes he has a contagious disease that sickness cannot be identical because it has no God-bestowed identity by which to transmit or replicate itself, and therefore lacks valid precedent, may be sufficient in that case to allay the patient's fear and heal him—which amounts to the same thing.

A friend one time came up with a rather novel way of applying the rule "Always begin your treatment by allaying the fear of patients." He read it to mean that he should begin to pray to overcome his fear of patients! He worried that someday someone might ask him for prayerful help.

Laughable as such a thought is, it deserves some attention. Even if we're not listed in the *Journal* as public practitioners (especially if we're not!), are we ready and willing, as scientific followers of Christ Jesus, to pray for someone—to give Christian Science treatment—if we're asked to do so? Or would fear hold us back—fear of failure perhaps or of false

responsibility or of personal inadequacy? If so, what does that say about our understanding that God, not person, is the ultimate healer?

In the early history of The Mother Church, members were allowed to list their names in the *Journal* as practitioners while they were still engaged in other vocations. In late 1904 a new *Manual By-Law* changed that.<sup>19</sup> Those advertising themselves in the *Journal* as practitioners were henceforth required to be free of other professions, except for official work in Christian Science.

This particular By-Law, however, does not obviate our need to be true to another *Manual By-Law*, in which Mrs. Eddy states: “I recommend that each member of this Church shall strive to demonstrate by his or her practice, that Christian Science heals the sick quickly and wholly, thus proving this Science to be all that we claim for it.”<sup>20</sup>

By definition, “each member . . . by his or her practice” necessarily makes each of us a practitioner—someone who practices Christian Science in the daily life. Now, my point isn’t to minimize the important ministry of those practitioners and nurses listed in the *Journal*. All honor and gratitude are due their selfless and tireless labors in healing the woes of mankind.

Rather, my hope is to elevate the view of every one of us to the vital role we each have in the healing work of Christian Science, not only in each one’s own daily practice of Science but also in one’s prayerful and practical and financial support for the healing work of Christian Science worldwide—especially for the healing work occurring in one’s own corner of the world, in one’s own backyard, as exemplified by the Christly ministry of Lynn House right here in Alexandria, Virginia.

No one is exempt from Jesus’ command to “heal the sick.” Hence the importance that we each identify ourselves, first and foremost, as being a practitioner rather than to keep thinking of ourselves as always being the patient! *Science and Health* states, “It is possible,—yea, it is the duty and privilege of every child, man, and woman,—to follow in some degree the example of the Master by the demonstration of Truth and Life, of health and holiness.”<sup>21</sup> Our Leader’s injunction for each of us to follow the Master’s example carries with it the promise that we each can do it. Seeing the fulfillment of that promise in our lives begins by allaying fear in ourselves and others.

The prayerful basis for denying fear of any kind is Scriptural and Christian. It involves an understanding of divine Spirit’s nature—of God’s allness, goodness, supremacy, and perfection. Prayer transforms how we view ourselves by identifying the divine nature in man as God’s own likeness. This correct view of how God has made each of us replaces fear with spiritual conviction. The Bible states an eternal, divine law when it says: “God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”<sup>22</sup>

When a trouble comes up suddenly or appears overwhelming, we may momentarily wonder “What should I do?” The answer is to adhere strictly to the same scientific rule that both our Master and our Leader practiced. *Science and Health* directs us down the right road of action when it declares: “Christian scientific practice begins with Christ’s keynote of harmony, ‘Be not afraid!’”<sup>23</sup>

## Meet a young child's case "mainly through the parent's thought"

After specifically addressing the argument of fear, Jesus required something more of Jairus. The Master said, "Believe only." Mind you, it was the twelve-year-old daughter who was in the mortal vale, but the father was the one asked to believe—to climb the mount of spiritual understanding. The word translated "believe" is related to the Greek *pistis*, of which one meaning is "conviction (of the truthfulness of God)."

By telling Jairus to "believe only"—that is, to have conviction in God's truth—the master Metaphysician was practicing another rule in Christian Science. Mrs. Eddy declares, "If the case is that of a young child or an infant, it needs to be met mainly through the parent's thought, silently or audibly on the aforesaid basis of Christian Science."<sup>24</sup>

No single issue in the court of public opinion today affects people's perception of the practical Christianity of Science more than does the quality of care we give our children. Because Christian Science doesn't employ the outward and more visible methods of worldly doctoring, the physical senses fail to perceive, and therefore to trust, that a child can receive proper help solely through prayer and through the practical wisdom of Christian Science nursing care.

General disbelief in scientific metaphysics, as well as open hostility to it, cannot stop the eternal operation of God's laws. The rules of Christ-healing apply equally to children and adults. We read in *Science and Health* of God's all-embracing care: "Mind regulates the condition of the stomach, bowels, and food, the temperature of children and of men, and matter

does not. The wise or unwise views of parents and other persons on these subjects produce good or bad effects on the health of children."<sup>25</sup>

In light of legal provisions, and given the glare of public scrutiny, it's generally wise in an urgent child case for parents promptly to call for the prayerful ministrations of a *Journal*-listed practitioner and, if needed, for the practical services of a Christian Science nurse. It's noteworthy, however, just how precisely our Leader recorded the rule of healing used by Jesus. When Mrs. Eddy says that the case "needs to be met mainly through the parent's thought," the word *parent's* is "parent-apostrophe-s"—indicating that healing can reach a child through the thought of just one parent if that is necessary or advisable—just as when Jesus' words were directed specifically to Jairus. Applying this rule in this way can relieve the fear of a Scientist who is a single parent or whose spouse doubts the healing power of God.

God's rules never vary. His laws are constantly and impartially available to all. A person who prays for a child in accord with the rules of Science knows that the same divine power which healed Jairus' daughter is equally present and active today to heal a young patient. One who prays can be confident that incorporeal Spirit is superior to every physical condition.

Some years ago I witnessed a healing that showed the reliability of these divine rules in an emergency. I was visiting some close friends—a young couple with their two-year-old son. One afternoon the child, without warning, became quite ill. At the first symptoms, the parents called a *Journal*-listed practitioner to pray for the boy, and the child started to respond to the

prayer. But suddenly the symptoms took an alarming turn. His breathing became irregular and faint, and the outlook appeared threatening.

The mother became so afraid that she went into another room to quiet herself. The father took the child in his arms and began to declare out loud scientific truths, affirming the boy's spiritual selfhood as the child of God, the manifestation of eternal Life. The father's voice could be heard in all parts of the house.

I was asked to call the practitioner to alert her to the need for more prayerful help. A Christian Science nurse was called to come to the house. Also, the father's parents, both class-taught Christian Scientists living nearby, were notified.

Now, the practitioner's exclusive Christly duty in this case was to pray for the young child, addressing the need primarily through the parents' thought. The distinctly separate duty of the other Christian Scientists was to cast fear out of themselves, thereby producing a surrounding mental atmosphere that would be in agreement with the treatment without encroaching upon it.

Soon after the Christian Science nurse arrived, there was a noticeable change for the better in the condition of the.....*parents!* Their fears began to abate. Soon the parents' mental improvement was matched by the boy's physical improvement. Within two days the child was fully recovered. This healing has been permanent, and today this boy is a father of two husky sons.

There's an important postscript to this experience. Later when the mother testified in a branch church about her son's healing, she also told of an important change in her own thought. While she had been brought up in Christian Science, at

times she accepted the notion that the Church of Christ, Scientist, instead of being devoted solely to the things of divine Spirit, should be more involved in social, or political, or humanitarian causes outside the church organization. But now, through her son's healing, she saw that The Mother Church had reserved its full strength and purity of purpose for that moment when it could offer her family what no one else could provide: a safe, scientific system of Christian therapeutics.

But now back to the healing of another child—Jairus' daughter.

### **Handle the belief of many minds**

Jesus knew that other mentalities besides Jairus' required specific attention. The Master produced a surrounding mental atmosphere for his patient that was more readily conducive to healing through the one divine Mind. By ejecting from Jairus' house all those who wept, bewailed, and scorned, Jesus employed still another rule of Christian Science practice.

Mrs. Eddy spells out this rule on page 424 of *Science and Health*: "It is equally important in metaphysical practice that the *minds* which surround your patient should not act against your influence by continually expressing such opinions as may alarm or discourage,—either by giving antagonistic advice or through unspoken thoughts resting on your patient. While it is certain that the divine Mind can remove any obstacle, still you need the ear of your auditor. It is not more difficult to make yourself heard mentally while others are thinking about your patients or conversing with them, if you understand Christian Science—the oneness and the allness of divine Love; but it is well to be alone with God and the sick when treating disease."



The effect of this rule, when obeyed, is to dismiss from your mental residence—and that of your patient—the ancient, idolatrous belief of multiple deities, or many minds. No matter if fearful, sickly thinking appears to be that of the patient, a family member, or the world’s general material-mindedness, metaphysical treatment emulates Jesus’ example and ejects as unwelcome interlopers the thoughts of any so-called mentalities that would doubt or oppose the truth of one Mind, one God.

A rule that urges us “to be alone with God and the sick when treating disease” is clearly monotheistic. Mrs. Eddy declares: “The act of healing the sick through divine Mind alone, of casting out error with Truth, shows your position as a Christian Scientist.”<sup>26</sup>

An article in *The Christian Science Journal* titled “Reasoning that rests in God’s wisdom” touches on this subject. I’d like to quote a couple of paragraphs from the article. I do so with the permission of its author—yours truly! What I said then, I say now:

A Christian Scientist prayerfully acknowledges only one Mind, the one universal, governing consciousness. He affirms this infinite consciousness to be the Mind of both patient and practitioner, the single source of all their true thoughts. Christian Science treatment is a law to the case and blesses the patient because the spiritual truths known in prayer are universal and impartial. This being so, Christian Science treatment can never rightly be regarded as thought transference from practitioner to patient. There is only one consciousness, and this divine consciousness is at once the Mind of us all.

The valid thoughts that belong to the practitioner and those that belong to the patient do not stem from two separate sources. Their thoughts, although distinct in spiritual expression, inhere in the same parent Mind. What to mistaken mortal view looks like two different mentalities—the practitioner’s imparting truth and the patient’s receiving truth—actually represents the infinite diversification of divine Mind’s knowing, of God’s own communication and comprehension of truth.<sup>27</sup>

Any spiritual truth we’re conscious of—whether we gain it by reading the Bible or *Science and Health*, by hearing others voice it, or by knowing it in our own prayers—however we entertain a truth, our consciousness of good is what is true of us now as the very expression of the one all-knowing Mind, the same Mind that was also in Christ Jesus.

**S**peaking of the master Christian, let’s express our heartfelt gratitude for his healing example by singing Hymn No. 221. (But don’t get your hopes up for a quick getaway afterwards; this hymn marks a respite from my talk, not the end of it!) I’ll read the first verse:

O Jesus, our dear Master,  
Thy works, now understood,  
Reveal their full effulgence  
Through love and brotherhood.  
Today Christ’s precious Science  
Thy healing power makes plain:  
With joy may all obey thee  
And cast out sin and pain.

## Jesus' "holy heroism and Christian example on the cross"

In every one of his healings Jesus practiced a rule in Science that determined what he did *not* do as well as what he did do. What he did was to heal by the power of infinite Spirit. What he did not do was to mix the divine method of cure with material ways and means.

Even when facing torture on the cross, our Master refused to accept an opiate he had been given to drink.<sup>28</sup> In rejecting the drug he was actually rejecting the *erroneous thought* symbolized by the drug—namely, the belief that there is a power apart from God (named mortal mind, alias matter) that's able to alleviate or cure the very suffering this false carnal-mindedness occasions.

Jesus' example on the cross shows what Christ-healing is all about: fidelity to God, the one eternal Life. Our Master's rejection of material aid was in fact an affirmation of the omnipotence of immortal Love to care for him at all times and under all conditions—as his resurrection from the grave so supremely demonstrated.

In a modern "medicalized" world, however—steeped in materialism, blind to the spiritual nature of man as God's likeness—total reliance on the Almighty for healing seems extreme. Yet despite the world's aggressive material-mindedness, Mary Baker Eddy faithfully recorded her discovery of Christ Jesus' healing method just as she found it practiced in the Bible. She states: "Jesus instructed his disciples whereby to heal the sick through Mind instead of matter"<sup>29</sup> and "He used no material medicine, nor recommended it, and taught his disciples and followers to do likewise . . . ."<sup>30</sup>

On the cross our Master remained true to the monotheistic worship of God as expressed in the Old Testament book of Psalms: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction . . . ." <sup>31</sup>

*The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* makes this important point in a section titled "Health and healing in the O[ld] T[estament]": "When disease occurred . . . the sufferer could only look to God, the Physician of his people, for healing and recovery. To postexilic Judaism, recourse to human aid was precluded on the ground that such a procedure would usurp divine prerogatives in this respect; only the exceptional individual such as Asa (II Chr. 16:12) consulted physicians [*A lot of good that did him!*]. . . . [B]ecause sickness was a spiritual matter, in the last analysis, healing could only properly be expected to follow a revival or revitalizing of the relationship between the individual and God."<sup>32</sup>

This great fact—the primacy of each one's spiritual relation to God—animated everything Jesus did, both individually in working out his own salvation and collectively in uniting his followers together as a church body in the worship of the one supreme Spirit. We read in the textbook that "Jesus established his church and maintained his mission on a spiritual foundation of Christ-healing."<sup>33</sup>

Following the example of Jesus' church, Mary Baker Eddy's Church is also maintained on a spiritual foundation of divine healing. Nothing else can maintain it. From the start, the Founder of Christian Science never wavered on this essential point. To give just one example: When signing the early tenets and covenant of

Mrs. Eddy's original 1879 Church members pledged: "We give no credence to Spiritualism or Mediumship, and object to mesmerism and medicine, never in any case using any oursel[ves]."<sup>34</sup>

The impact that Jesus' life-example had on Mrs. Eddy at the time of her dramatic healing and historic discovery in 1866 was profound. She writes:

Adoringly I discerned the Principle of his holy heroism and Christian example on the cross, when he refused to drink the 'vinegar and gall,' a preparation of poppy, or aconite, to allay the tortures of crucifixion.

Our great Way-shower, steadfast to the end in his obedience to God's laws, demonstrated for all time and peoples the supremacy of good over evil, and the superiority of Spirit over matter.<sup>35</sup>

"The superiority of Spirit over matter" is the reason why Christian Science practice follows Jesus' healing method of not using material medicine. While appreciating the humanitarian motives of the medical profession, the discovery of Christian Science offers the world a superior way—the unadulterated way of Christ—to heal the physical sufferings of humanity through obedience to God's laws.

Mrs. Eddy says that after her remarkable spiritual breakthrough in 1866 she devoted three years "to discovering a positive rule."<sup>36</sup> What our Leader discovered is what we her followers are in the process of demonstrating: a positive rule. Hence all real choice in Christian Science—every application of Truth to the treatment of sin or disease—is and must be essentially affirmative.

Admittedly, what's essentially positive or affirmative about a divine rule is often

translated, made comprehensible, to the human mind in terms of "Thou shalt not." But, according to Science, underlying a denial of error is an affirmative understanding of truth that has been *restated* to suit the mentality needing to comprehend it most.

The so-called mind of mortals, in its typically inverted way of judging things, always calls a partially filled glass of water half empty rather than half full. This way of seeing everything, including our choices, in a negative light characterizes the nature of mortal mind as negation, emptiness, nothingness. An alert Christian Scientist is too wise to let his religious practice be defined in strictly negative terms. Children in our Sunday School and friends in our neighborhood—indeed, people the world over—deserve to know more than just the fact we don't drink alcohol, smoke, or resort to material medicine and drugs (whether the drugs are labeled recreational or medicinal) in order to be happy and healthy.

A Christian Scientist is a true Protestant. His protest, his choice, is primarily *for Truth* and only in a consequent, secondary sense against error. Behind what the world calls a negative decision by Scientists—such as our choice not to seek medical aid—lies a positive reason: namely, a devout desire to let our lives bear witness to the immutable truth that God maintains all that He creates in a state of spiritual perfection. In the words of our textbook: "Truth is affirmative, and confers harmony. All metaphysical logic is inspired by this simple rule of Truth, which governs all reality."<sup>37</sup>

The crucial point is this: Christian Science treatment of the body isn't a negative, knee-jerk reaction to worldly

medical care. It is a heartfelt affirmation of God's preventive and preservative power. The Christ Science demonstrates that the only real "medicine," or curative substance, needed for healing is the divine Mind.

There's no equivalence between materia medica and metaphysical Science. The two systems are not simply different means to the same end. Starting as they do mentally from polar opposite standpoints regarding the substance and reality of existence—matter versus Spirit—they inevitably lead to divergent outcomes. St. Paul told the Galatians: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other."<sup>38</sup>

Whereas the aim of medical treatment is to employ matter to patch up a person's physique irrespective of his soul, metaphysical treatment can do nothing to a person's body without in some measure purifying his consciousness. That's because, according to Science, what the world calls a physical body is not so much a thing as it is a thought—a form of thought, if you will.

Just as a contaminated ice cube is actually tainted frozen water that needs to be reduced to its common element in order to be purified, so a sick body is essentially erroneous solidified thought in need of purification and spiritualization. "The body," Mrs. Eddy says, "is governed by mind [that's "mind" spelled with a small "m"]; and mortal mind must be improved, before the body is renewed and harmonious,—since the physique is simply thought made manifest."<sup>39</sup>

"*The physique is simply thought made manifest.*" Hence the only way in Science to be made better physically is to elevate one's thinking and conduct through moral

and spiritual regeneration. *Science and Health* states: "The Bible teaches transformation of the body by the renewal of Spirit."<sup>40</sup> To this end, a Bible verse instructs: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service"<sup>41</sup>—in other words, present your body and your life acceptable to, and in accord with, harmonious, incorporeal Spirit.

The next verse in the Bible tells how this Scriptural demand is to be met: "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."<sup>42</sup> This divine rule of Scripture, this Christian recipe for healing, calls for the dematerialization and spiritualization of thought—for a mental renewal that transforms and heals one's body and one's behavior through an understanding that one's actual, God-defined selfhood, or embodiment, is spiritual and not material.

The master Christian never deviated in his healing work from the truth he taught—that "the spirit . . . quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."<sup>43</sup> Mrs. Eddy affirms that it is Jesus' theology in *Science and Health*, and the spiritual import of his theology, that heals the sick and the sinner.<sup>44</sup> This joint-theology of Christ Jesus and Christian Science adheres strictly to the same healing precept: "With God all things are possible."<sup>45</sup>

### **The unformulaic theology of Christian healing**

**D**uring this past hour we've considered some of the divine laws that determined how Jesus healed—what he did and did not do. I've mentioned only a handful of these Christian rules of practice. Needless to say, there are still other scientific truths employed in Jesus' healing work that I

haven't touched on. I'm sure you can think of many more.

But please don't think so hard that you turn a perfectly good rule into a really bad formula! A God-given rule retains the spirit and spontaneity of divine Truth; it heals. A formula, on the other hand, is the lifeless letter of the law; it stifles inspiration. I'm sure we all know from experience that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."<sup>46</sup>

The fact that our *Church Manual* has a *Rule* forbidding the use of written *formulas* for healing the sick is no paradox.<sup>47</sup> It's a clear indication that our Leader did not equate the two as the same.

In what sense is a rule not a formula? In the sense that a formula prescribes a fixed worded pattern of thought that never varies, whereas a rule represents a fixed standard of practice, capable of unlimited application. As already cited, *Science and Health* instructs that in every treatment we first handle fear. That's a rule—a fixed standard of conduct for every metaphysician. But Mrs. Eddy does not dictate the exact wording or thought-pattern for each and every prayer. Christian Science has no prescribed litany to think or to say by rote regarding a particular disease or a specific moral, economic, or social problem. That would be a formula in the worst way because it would not be God's way. It is always the prerogative of divine Mind to unfold the inspired thoughts we individually should know at any given moment.

Mrs. Eddy expected Christian Scientists to be law-abiding but not dogmatic in their application of the rules of Science. They're to be radical in their reliance on God but never ritualistic in their worship of Him.

Some years ago I acquired a postcard with a handwritten note by Adelaide Still, who was Mrs. Eddy's personal maid during

our Leader's last three and a half years. The postcard cites a small historical detail that contains a mighty big truth. Miss Still quotes a sentence from a 1909 article in the *Christian Science Sentinel*. She then records Mrs. Eddy's *censure* of that sentence. (The accuracy of our Leader's statement has been verified by The Mother Church.)

First, from the *Sentinel*: "Liberty is opposed to slavery, subjection, or bondage of every nature whatsoever, and perfectly understood it means a complete independence from external causes or motives, wherein thought remains unbiased by rules and dogma."<sup>48</sup>

As you might expect, given all the good things said this afternoon about rules of Christian healing, this sentence did not sit well with Mrs. Eddy—not the least because the misleading statement had appeared in an authorized publication of her Church! According to Miss Still, our Leader wrote in the margin next to that sentence this sharp rebuke: "Then Science is lost; Science has a rule for all things, but it has no dogma."

"*Science has a rule for all things, but it has no dogma.*" You see, the *Sentinel* statement advocated a mental state "unbiased by rules." If taken literally, the statement would foster a disregard of the divine rules of healing found in *Science and Health*, not to mention the divinely inspired Rules of church government contained in the *Manual*.

By not specifying what kind of rules were meant—whether man-made decrees or God-ordained laws—the *Sentinel* article, in effect, left the way open for the possible loss of Christian Science and of everything that stands for it, including Mrs. Eddy's Church. *Without* rules or *with* dogma—either way Mrs. Eddy's discovery

would cease to be a union of Christian religion and metaphysical Science.

Our Leader was keenly conscious of the futility of trying to misuse the rules of metaphysical healing for a non-theological purpose—of trying to get the healing benefits of her discovery without the daily worship of God as the one and only Mind. *Science and Health's* essentially religious nature defines its healing method—the same one used by Christ Jesus in his worship of God as divine Spirit. “The method of Jesus,” Mrs. Eddy says, “was purely metaphysical; and no other method is Christian Science.”<sup>49</sup>

As far back as 1885, she warned an unsuspecting public: “Take away the theology of mental healing and you take away its science, leaving it a human ‘mind-cure,’ nothing more nor less,—even one human mind governing another; by which, if you agree that God is Mind, you admit that there is more than one government and God. Having no true sense of the healing theology of Mind, you can neither understand nor demonstrate its Science, and will practise your belief of it in the name of Truth.”<sup>50</sup>

Prayer in Christian Science does not share any mental ground with a New Age chant or a Zodiac sign, with a Wicca incantation or a yoga meditation. It is neither a form nor a formula of human mind-cure, of what has been dubbed “mind over matter.” Christ’s Christianity is fundamentally different from the world’s current fascination with humanly mental systems popularly known as spirituality, holistic medicine, mind/body connection. These mental systems disclaim any single religious character. Their menu is a stew of human beliefs, mixing Jesus’ precepts with an eclectic blend of matter-based modes of thought, such as will-power, theosophy,

astrology, psychology, physiology, spiritualism. To them, Christ’s Christianity represents just an aspect of reality, if that, and not the whole truth.

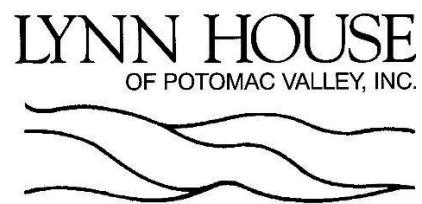
Earlier this year a columnist for *The New York Times* made this telling observation: “The emerging spirituality is a hodgepodge spirituality. Each person borrows practices from, say, Native American, Buddhist, Christian, Jewish and SoulCycle traditions and blends them in a way he or she finds moving.”<sup>51</sup>

Christian Science includes no such amalgamation. Mary Baker Eddy was absolutely certain that her discovery signified the reappearing of Christ’s religion, *pure and unadulterated*—the united system of theology and therapeutics taught and practiced by Christ Jesus. She declared: “Gain a pure Christianity; for that is requisite for healing the sick. Then you will need no other aid . . . .”<sup>52</sup> Our Leader’s declaration is a clarion call for Christian Scientists to show the world, by example, how adherence to this metaphysical precept transforms daily life in practical, healing ways.

Friends, when it comes to summing up any discussion of Christian Science, I’ve learned that the wisest way to do so is always to let Mrs. Eddy have the last word! And today that word is this: “Christian Science is not only the acme of Science but the crown of Christianity. . . . It demonstrates the divine Principle, rules and practice of the great healer and master of metaphysics, Jesus of Nazareth. It spiritualizes religion and restores its lost element, namely, healing the sick.”<sup>53</sup>

1. I John 1:3
2. See Philippians 2:5 and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (S&H) by Mary Baker Eddy, 497:24-27
3. Acts 2:1
4. S&H 145:32-2
5. S&H 31:12-13
6. *Retrospection and Introspection* (Ret) by Mary Baker Eddy, 87:15-16
7. S&H 192:29-30
8. *Message to The Mother Church for 1900* by Mary Baker Eddy, 4:16-22
9. S&H 147:6-13
10. S&H 147:24-29
11. Ret 78:15-16
12. See Luke 8:41, 42, 49-55
13. S&H 406:1 (only)
14. S&H 411:27-1
15. S&H 532:26-27
16. S&H 493:20-22
17. S&H 392:5-7
18. S&H 586:11-12
19. See *Manual of The Mother Church* (Man) by Mary Baker Eddy, 82:16-21
20. Man 92:7-11
21. S&H 37:22-25
22. II Timothy 1:7
23. S&H 410:29-30
24. S&H 412:28-31
25. S&H 413:7-11
26. S&H 182:1-4
27. *The Christian Science Journal*, October 1986, Vol. 104, 594
28. See Matthew 27:34
29. S&H 271:7-8
30. *Message to The Mother Church for 1901* by Mary Baker Eddy, 23:18-22
31. Psalms 103:2-4
32. *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: E-J*, 546
33. S&H 136:1-2
34. *We Knew Mary Baker Eddy, Expanded Edition, Volume I*, 49
35. Ret 26:3-11
36. S&H 109:11-15
37. S&H 418:20-22
38. Galatians 5:17
39. *Miscellaneous Writings* (Mis), by Mary Baker Eddy, 34:6-9
40. S&H 241:13-14
41. Romans 12:1
42. Romans 12:2
43. John 6:63
44. See S&H 138:31-2
45. Matthew 19:26 & S&H 232:9-13
46. II Corinthians 3:6
47. See Man 43:5-12
48. *Christian Science Sentinel*, July 3, 1909, Vol. 11, 866
49. Mis 170:22-23
50. Mis 58:25-4
51. David Brooks, "The Age of Aquarius, All Over Again!" *The New York Times*, June 11, 2019, p. A23
52. Mis 270:16-20
53. Mis 252:17-25

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