

## What Is It That We Are Nursing?

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One of the wonders of this movement is the selfless devotion we find in our nurses. Without regard for fame or self-enrichment they dedicate themselves tirelessly to the help of others. Their sole concern is that those within their care feel cherished, that by their care those suffering challenges are lifted above the mortal coil to behold the transforming power of Spirit.

Our nurses provide us on a daily basis evidence of the value of performance, the value of expression and the value of tender loving care so far above the utility of any quote alone from Science and Health that we can roll off the tongue. I am sure that these dedicated workers will tell you that care of the person alone does not furnish the healing effect that we see manifest in the practice of Christian Science. There have been many wonderful, kind people in this world who have not participated in the spiritual healing of a case of cancer.

Mrs Eddy however has given us this power with her wonderful discovery and provided us with the infrastructure needed for healing at the level of both principle and performance.

More than anything she has enabled me to understand, and I trust you will have the same sentiments by the end of this talk (if you don't have them already) that when it comes to the issue of principle the thing that we really need to nurse is our relationship with God and our understanding of God.

If we misunderstand both the nature of God and our relationship with God then we will not be blessed in our endeavours. We must care about this understanding. We must nurse it, cherish it, refine it and attend to it at all times because unless we have clarity on this issue we will be overlooking the very precepts and state of Mind which give rise to healing.

I would like to share with you a number of these essentials which need cherishing and nursing at all times

**PRECEPT ONE : The Science**

If there is one thing we need to be clear about it is the nature of the Science that we are practicing. And to be honest with you I studied Christian Science for nigh on 30 years without really understanding what the science was. Last year I felt sufficiently comfortable on this issue to get a piece published in the August 2013 Journal dealing with question.

So let me give you a résumé of this Science. As I mentioned in the article when Mrs Eddy started healing she did not know how she did it. As she said herself “ If anyone was said to be ill in the next room, I would not have to treat. I would just know the truth about them and they would be no more sick or dead than you are. I cannot tell you how I do it. ( page 539 of We knew Mary Baker Eddy Vol 11).

Being the wonderfully inspired and inquisitive person that she was, she then spent three years in the attic of her Lynn home , with her Bible, trying to figure out the rules and precepts involved.

What she realised was, that by force of circumstances, through everything that she had suffered and through the inspirations she had received from her own studies, her mind had started to operate at a divine level. She was seeing things as God saw them...but she just did not realise it until the healings started to happen. Her Mind was operating as the Mind of God.

Her three years of study in that attic allowed her to figure out the nature of this Science of the Christ. And the axiom which characterises it more than any other, to my sense of things, is that “If you think like God you must experience God”

We need to cherish this precept. We must really dwell on it constantly because unless we understand it we will not really understand what it is that we are trying to achieve as Christian Scientists.

The rule is very simple. If your consciousness is operating as the consciousness of God then it must follow that you will experience God . In other words, you will have such a sense of serenity and perfection that sickness and sin will not seem real to you and will lose their reality. To others it will look like healing but your sense will be that these exigencies of error have not persuaded you of their reality. Like a counterfeit note, you will discard such things as having no utility and no value.

But the scientific principle must be clear to us. We must be clear on this fundamental law which Mrs Eddy has given us and see its utility. Unless we see that this axiom is a

law then we are overlooking the fundamental power inherent in it. Spiritual laws enforce themselves and they must be seen to be enforcing themselves otherwise we will end up suffering from the illusion that we have power.

But just think of the tool that has been put in your hands to both understand and practice. We understand now the admonition of St Paul when he says “ Let that Mind be in you which was also in Jesus Christ” Philippians 2:5 There is a reason for allowing this Mind to be our Mind. It heals.

Could I also ask you to cherish this law even though it may seem strange to you? The world indeed will find it strange that there is such a law, this law that thinking like God leads to healing but there are many strange laws around. It is indeed strange that boats float but surely the issue should not be with the fact the law is strange. Surely we should concern ourselves with taking advantage of the law by going for a sail on the lake, not with sitting around debating why boats float.

So let us not concern ourselves with why this law which governs healing exists. Let us embrace this law and thank our leader for discovering this science which we can practice. The fact that she has discovered the law should be a cause for rejoicing not for trying to fathom why it even exists.

I would like to cite an instance of healing which supports this principle. A few weeks ago a practitioner gets a call on a Friday afternoon from a lady whose mother has had a stroke and is, to all intents and purposes, completely unfunctioning. The daughter advises him that she cannot get hold of the mother’s practitioner and asks what is to be done.

The practitioner, applying the science that he knows advises the daughter “we have a exclusive God. Exclusive in the sense of being unique and of very high quality like an exclusive hotel in town and exclusive in the sense that being an exclusive God there is no room for sin, sickness and death to make an appearance. God excludes them so the treatment we undertake is to know that Love and Life is the exclusive nature operating in our lives.”

At two o’clock the following Sunday the mother herself calls the practitioner to advise that she is completely healed.

### **PRECEPT TWO: Expression versus Experience**

When it comes to nursing and cherishing the right concepts of God and man let us consider how we can best emulate both Jesus and Mrs Eddy’s example.

In order to understand how to best do this I would ask you to consider why Jesus never wrote a book. After all seventy years after his death the great Roman historian Flavius Josephus wrote a very erudite account of the Roman Wars against the Jews which survives to this day. If Jesus had written a book I think we can safely say that it would have also survived.

However, he did not. And as strange as it may seem to you, this bothered me for years. However it finally led me to the conclusion that Jesus was more concerned with giving a performance and demonstrating the precepts he espoused than writing about them. It is the triumph of good works over good words we are admonished with so often in the bible. It is the fruit that matters. It is the demonstration of principle which really separates the sheep from the goats.

Now for us to get our relationship with God right and realize the importance of performing this Christ role we have to dispense with the Old Testament notion of God being a person. God is love, joy and serenity and like the tones of music these have to be actually expressed in order to have relevance in our lives. A musician plays his instrument in order to demonstrate the theory. But what is interesting about both music and mathematics is that they are not persons either. They are the infrastructure of sound and numbers but despite this fact both are intelligent, follows rules and are discernable. In music, mathematics and Christianity all three require exponents for their manifestation.

This must therefore show us “our” role in the matter of love and serenity. We, like Jesus and Mrs Eddy are there to be exponents of such things. Such things are not found unless we are there to express them. God requires our involvement. And I say “requires” advisedly.

To refine our understanding of this relationship I would like to recount for you a conversation I had a few years back with lady who had called me for help. At some point she complained that she never felt God’s presence and she never felt God’s love. To my surprise my mouth opened and I found myself saying to her: “You cannot do it that way, my dear. You can only experience God’s presence and God’s love as a function of your own identity. You cannot experience them as something separate from yourself. You experience God’s love and presence as part of your own sense of being.” All of which was a big surprise because until I had said I did not understand that to be case. But I did understand it after the idea had come to mind.

So now we begin to understand that we are the presence of God. This is what we are nursing in our bosoms. But that presence is only manifest to the extent that we are

loving, serene, pure and harmonious and after we have eliminated from thought ideas of fear, revenge, self pity, despair, desperation etc. The precept is easy to understand but the discipline required to keep the mind free of the darkness of personal sense is quite considerable. Loving is not that hard but refraining from gossip can be a very considerable challenge. Personal sense constantly interferes with our efforts at divine reflection.

But this effort to eliminate the garbage is essential if we are going to find the Christ within us, for us to be the Christ to any situation. It is clear that if our mind is free of hate, fear, etc. then what remains must be divine. We are operating as the presence of the Divine Mind. This is exactly what the Christ is, it is perfect Mind present as our consciousness.

Remember that this is what Mrs Eddy both achieved and understood. A mind so pure that it could not be distinguished from the Divine. Both she and Jesus lost sight of human selfhood. This just left God to be present.

We must cherish and nurse the same state of Mind because *then* we have God with us and the world feels the presence of the Christ again.

There is one instance in the Bible related in John 18 where we see the full impact of the immediate presence of God. When Jesus is being arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, he asks the soldiers whom they are seeking and they say "Jesus of Nazareth."

Then things get interesting. Jesus replied according to the original Greek "I am" not as quoted in the King James translation "I am he" whereupon the soldiers were thrown back and pushed to the ground. But who was declaring himself "I AM" in this instance. Surely it was God. The manifestation of God, the only "I AM" was breathtaking and profound. And we must see the significance of what is happening here. We see the full force of divine expression occurring and we understand it occurred when Jesus abandoned all human selfhood. All that was left was God expressing himself.

We must cherish and nurse this understanding and realize the Science of demonstrating the Divine mind in this manner. We are also here like Jesus and Mrs Eddy to allow a performance of the Divine Mind, to show forth the wonders of the eternal mind.

**PRECEPT THREE God has integrity**

We also need to nurse and cherish the understanding that the nature of the kingdom remains pristine and inviolate.

It is far too easy to fall into the trap of believing that we actually have to change something rather than realising that there is no truth to any manifestation of sickness and sin.

After all, our leader tells us “ It is mental quackery to make disease a reality- to hold it as something seen and felt- and then to attempt its cure through Mind” S&H 395

But we do need to ask ourselves how it is that we seem to experience constant tribulation and a plethora of unhealed problems?

If we are finding this fruit on our tree it is really because of two reasons.

First: We have not understood the inviolate nature of the kingdom. The kingdom of heaven, the Mind of God is just not capable of being violated. But if we seem to experience life at the level of personal sense with all its material accompaniments it is because we have taken on board the belief ( and it is only a belief ) that this violation has actually taken place. We seem to have cultivated the sense that “things have started to fall apart”.

Our leader does point out however on page 98 of Science and Health “Christ’s revelation of Truth, Life and of Love.... remains inviolate for every man to understand and to practise”.

It takes great humility to turn aside from the human picture of an inharmonious life to accommodate the divine principle which insists that the serenity and harmony of God’s kingdom remains intact. There is no logical human reason for doing it but if we are nursing and cherishing a correct understanding of God then we will be prepared to abandon our human prejudices.

The so-called human experience really is nothing more than the violated sense of being. If we want to taste heaven we must insist that the kingdom remains inviolate because unless we accept this and understand it we are basically saying that God has no power to maintain his own kingdom which, of course, would be nonsense.

Second: Personal sense operates on the basis of more than one selfhood , whereas Christian Science is asking us to accept the bible admonition “ Here O Israel, The Lord thy God is one Lord.”

One infinite God insists upon there being only one selfhood, that is the selfhood of God or good. There can, in the face of a unique selfhood be only a sense of Ego which is divine. Now, you can here in the background already the noise of personal sense asking “ Well what about me ?”

And herein lies the whole thrust of what we are nursing. We are nursing the sense that there is only one self-hood despite the fact that we cannot entirely define what that selfhood is. But we must accept that there is only one selfhood otherwise we are going to have to deal with the fruit of personal sense. Accepting that there is only one selfhood also means that we leave that selfhood to define itself. We can define it partially as life, truth and love, certainly but allowing this selfhood to define itself opens the way for Love to define itself in the most appropriate manner.

Accepting the reality of a personal selfhood is hardly loving God. It is loving ourselves. (South African lady at Principia)

There is a lovely citation in Prose Works on page 104 which I would love to quote here which resumes the issue for us. “Clothed and in his right Mind, man’s individuality is sinless, deathless, harmonious, eternal. His materiality, clad in false mentality, wages feeble fight with his individuality. - his physical senses with his spiritual senses. The latter move in God’s grooves of Science: the former revolve in their own orbits, and must stand the friction of false selfhood until self-destroyed.”

I think the point we have to see in order to get the ego in the right location is that we exist AS the presence of God. We don’t exist as entities in an orbit separate from God. That Word “AS” is terribly powerful, especially when we realise that simple being is denoted as the “IS” of being but immediately we understand the Alpha of God we put the “ A” into being and find ourselves “AS” the presence of God, with God defining what we are rather than we trying to define ourselves.

This correct sense of being has a very healing effect. If we simply think of ourselves as human beings we are going to find that sense of self very limiting. Last year a lady called me who was in such a state of distress that she indicated that she felt she was about to pass on.

I had just been considering this whole question of being before she called. So when she called, I just asked her one question “ At what point did you become human”? The question was enough to provoke a change of thought which resulted in her being healed within the day. She was able to see that she did not exist AS a human being but that she existed AS the presence of God.

**PRECEPT FOUR Only God has authority**

For anyone suffering from pain or distress or mental torment, it is rather trite to say “ Error is nothing”. Our leader asks us to have pitiful patience with the fears of others. In reasoning through such issues the other day, it become clear to me that we can hardly say that these challenges are not real, especially since most of humanity seems to be struggling with some challenge or another.

But what Christian Science does allow us to understand is that such challenges do not have any authority over us.

This is the important criterion.

If someone has written  $2+2= 5$  on the blackboard we can hardly say that the illusion does not exist. But we start to find our freedom when we realise it is only an illusion especially when we know the truth of it.

Lacking truth , the important thing to understand is that such things have no authority because God is not their author. It is only when something is conceived and authored by God that it can have any authority.

And we can all easily understand the issue of authority and authorship. Surely in our practice of Christian Science it is important for us to realise that such things are powerless because they have no authority.

In my own practice I find invaluable to be able to achieve that sense that the error being presented is totally fallacious and that it has no power. The understanding that sin , sickness and death cannot have any power because God has not authored them is certainly a pillar in our Science.

So let us nurse this sense that God is the only authority in our lives, after all we have Biblical authority in Isaiah 26 for this stance that we find in verses 13 and 14



“Lord, thou will ordain peace for us, for thou also hast wrought all our works in us. Oh Lord our God , other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name”

One reflection along these lines which really puts rubber on the road is the divine admonition “ If I am all in all, what are you trying to change”.

It is all too easy when confronted with the evidence of sickness to want to change it into a picture of health. But wouldn't that desire for change actually mean giving reality to matter? Surely the Allness of God would mean that there was no place for error to actually exist. But behold the zeal of belief that Mrs Eddy refers to , which would make a reality of error.

A friend of mine was confronted with this divine admonition a few years back. She was working as a practitioner in a camp for young Christian Scientists when one of the attendees fell into a coma and remained incoherent for three days.

And after three days of prayer these are the words she heard “ If I am all in all, what are you trying to change “? I should add that the young man , had not moved from his bed during this time, he was running a high temperature and his body was swollen. He had not taken any food or liquid in that period. When she heard those words, she stopped praying, read the newspaper and wrote a letter to some friends. After some 45 minutes the young man rose from his bed, called his mother and resumed his normal activities. The next day he went on a fifteen mile hike.

#### **PRECEPT FIVE Only One creation**

If there is one thing we really need to nurse, it is the sense that there is only one creation. It is terribly easily to fall into the trap of believing that there are two creations especially when the second creation has such alluring wonders as television, glossy magazines and smartphones. None of which helps us very much when we are confronted with cancer or pneumonia.

But when we understand that there is only one creation, life starts to get very interesting on the metaphysical front. We begin to realise that when we are confronted with the fruit of a second creation the thing we have to deal with is not the fruit but rather the second creation itself.

Mrs Eddy indicated in letter on December 22 1903 that one cannot actually deal with the fruit of error. She said “ The devil is larger and more powerful than you are. We

overcome it by seeing its nothingness". However we need to put this into some form of context.

Imagine that someone calls you with the belief of pneumonia and asks for your help. We may well indeed be able to share with him ideas that man cannot be touched by such things because there is nothing material about man.

However I would like to suggest another metaphysical approach which cuts right to the heart of the matter and deprives error of its reality as Mrs Eddy counselled. How about saying to your patient .." You are not suffering from pneumonia, you are suffering from arrogance"

It may be that your patient will be a little surprised. He may ask how that is. At which point you can ask him" Well, if you think there is more than one creation, surely you are being arrogant, since you know there is only one Creator".

Such reflection in my experience has been enough to heal someone of so called pneumonia almost instantly. I am not sure we would be so successful if we treated it as a case of pneumonia. But treating it as case of arrogance it becomes easy to handle. Anyone can handle arrogance.

This approach has really fleshed out the whole impact of Mrs Eddy's words " All that really exist is the Divine Mind and its idea and in this mind the entire being is found harmonious and eternal." S&H 151

#### **PRECEPT SIX      Dealing with Mesmerism**

If there is one thing that really helps in our practice of Christian Science it is being able to see how mesmerism operates to deprive us of our rightful sense of being. Mesmerism and animal magnetism being the same thing and bearing in mind that Mrs Eddy says we cannot heal unless we know how to handle animal magnetism I would like to share with you the revelation that allowed me to see how it operates.

A few years back I was watching a TV program about a farm in Africa. On the farm there was a young lion brought up with the pack of dogs but having been brought up with dogs he behaved like a dog. I suddenly had this bizarre vision of the lion visiting a therapist to complain that he was tired of being a dog and would really like to be a lion Whereupon the therapist indicates to him that he already is a lion.

"Look in the mirror" She cries.

But how is this change going to happen , asks the lion ?

"No change is necessary" replies the therapist .

And herein lies the whole thrust of animal magnetism. The darkness of materiality has convinced us that we are currently human and something needs to happen for us to be able to experience our divine identity.

But Christian Science is telling us that “ we have never left our high estate”.

This sentiment we have of being human and corporeal is one of pure illusion. We do not need to figure it out, we need to abandon it. It is not true. The only price required of us to gain this understanding is the price of humility. We have to have enough humility to look into the mirror of Science that Mrs Eddy has given us and recognise our true selfhood.

It is surprising how difficult it is for many to actually abandon the human for the divine. It all appears far too nebulous. And yet does not St Paul tells us that the “Earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God”.

The price may indeed be that we are considered a fool. But any man putting his hand to the plough looking back is not fit for the kingdom of heaven.

If we can be thankful to Mrs Eddy for one thing, is that she has demonstrated the Science of the Christ in a relatively recent time and left us with no doubt that this Science can be demonstrated. Without her example few would be prepared to accept the Science because it is so counterintuitive to human sense.

One of the most mesmeric influences we have to deal with these days is the mesmerism of materia medica. It is quite difficult to avoid since there are often times when some involvement seems wise.

A friend of mine ran into this dilemma recently when she about to give birth to her third child. The hospital requested her to pay a visit so that the birth could be induced. The system in Switzerland is such that when a pregnancy comes to term , if the child has not arrived on time the birth is induced for no other reason that beyond nine months the hospital’s malpractice insurance is no longer valid. All of which put my friend in a bit of quandary.

But the point in Christian Science is that we are not going to be mesmerised into taking the medical route if we have the example of Mrs Eddy to rely on.

And this was the point the practitioner made to my friend.

“ You know Mrs Eddy better than you know your own mother. You have read her books and read the various biographies about her. You know exactly what she would do in the circumstances”.

She took the point and phoned to hospital to indicate that she would not attend the hospital to have the birth induced. The baby arrived that night anyway, completely on time and without any inducements to labour.

#### **POINT SEVEN**

God does not need a reason or a goal.

This may seem like a rather odd point to want to cherish and care about in our study of Christian Science but it is a critical point with regard to the approach we need for effective healing.

There is out there a very great trap set for us by error and that it trap of only coming to Science for healing rather than for spiritual enlightenment. And the reason it is a trap is the approach involved in looking for healing.

If we are looking for healing we actually have a reason for doing our study. We are looking for an end-result. We have a goal in mind. We become very driven.

All of which is humanly very laudable but none of which is actually divine. It became clear to me in considering this issue, that the divine mind just does not operate on this basis at all. It never does anything for a reason apart from the desire of exercising its own nature. Love loves because it is in its nature to exercise that activity but it does not have a goal in mind when it does it.

We read in the Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures page 210 the passage which ensamples this notion of an “undriven” life. “Knowing that Soul and its attributes were forever manifested through man, the Master healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, hearing to deaf, feet to the lame, thus bringing to light the scientific action of the Divine Mind on human minds and bodies and giving a better understanding of Soul and salvation.”

So odd as it may seem, we cannot come to God looking for healing because this would deny the present perfection of God’s creation. It would also mean that we have some end in mind for making this approach which again is just not legitimate. We pray not with an end in mind but “ to receive more of his appearing and silently to commune with the Divine principle love” S&H 35

When Mrs Eddy talks about the mechanism of the human mind my sense is that she is speaking about this craving for results and “signs” which so characterise the ways of personal sense. This is seeking after human glory rather than acknowledging God’s ever presence. Jesus himself indicated that “ an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given it” Matt 12:39

You may ask yourself how this translates into healing. If you would allow me I would like to recount an incident that happened a few years back to a Christian Scientist who had not yet entered the practice. One week a client informed him that doctors had discovered a blood clot on the brain of his son which was making him epileptic.

With only the idea in mind that he was going to provide the son comfort this Christian Scientist wrote the son a fax in which he indicated that what really characterised him was not his body but his joy, his love and all those spiritual qualities he had from his Father-Mother God. There was absolutely no sense while he was writing that fax that it was being done for the purpose of “healing”.

That week they wheeled the son into a brain scanner at the Cedars Sinai hospital in Los Angeles in order to pinpoint the location of the blood clot before removing it and lo and behold it had disappeared.

So I say advisedly “ Let us not look for healing but let us acknowledge the very exquisite nature of our Father Mother” in whom there is no shadow of turning. Sitting around wondering when we are going to be healed or praying for a particular result is just not something you will find the Divine Mind doing. We are here to operate as Mind , not as personal sense.

#### **POINT EIGHT**

Nurse the understanding of only One Dimension.

Irrespective of whether we realise it or not, we have gotten ourselves into terrible trouble by accepting that there is more than one dimension to life. We need to cherish this sense that there is only One dimension.

The only dimension of Life is the dimension of goodness or God.

But personal sense has taken on board other dimensions such as time, matter, humanity, space, and error. It is this acceptance of other dimensions which reduces consciousness to the level of personal sense.

Why ?

Because the Divine Mind only operates with the dimension of goodness and love. It refuses to recognise any other dimension because it cannot. Mrs Eddy ask us to dismiss sin sickness with an abiding conviction that it is illegitimate. S&H 390 21. But how can you do this unless you realise that there is no dimension in which these things can manifest themselves ? Deep sea divers do not think of having a barbecue because the dimension in which they operate cannot accommodate it. We need to have the same sense about the dimension of Life we inhabit. It cannot accommodate sin, sickness and death.

By this simple rule in metaphysics we are able to recognise when we have moved out of the dimension of God , and then press the default button so that consciousness once again becomes anchored in the Divine Mind or the One dimension.

If you are operating with the sense that goodness is the only dimension in life it means that you are operating with the Divine Mind because that is the way in which this Mind operates

If evil has one talent, it is that of persuading mankind there is more than one dimension to life.

Your success as a Christian Scientist depends on your ability NOT to be persuaded by the lie that there are several dimensions to life. The great thing about this realisation is that because of this understanding we no longer need to concern ourselves with error or gaining dominion over it because it is no longer seen to be an entity because there is no dimension which supports it. The singularity of God abhors error irrespective of the form it takes.

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