

“AS IN HEAVEN, SO ON EARTH”

(Finding life-changing, buried treasure)

by

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In March, 2008 the talk “As in heaven, so on earth” was given to the Nurses and Staff at Sunland Home Foundation, a Christian Science Nursing Facility just north of San Diego and ten minutes south of The Gardens in Carlsbad, which provides loving care for senior Christian Scientists. As Auriel spoke from notes, this is not a verbatim account of what was said and it has been expanded upon for, after the talk, some remarked that it would have been helpful to have spent the whole hour on the first section alone. That section will be the focus and topic of this mailing. The remaining three sections will be included in future mailings from The Gardens, Carlsbad.

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Good afternoon and what a joy to be with you today. As stated in my introductory letter, “The Bible and *Science and Health* contain beautiful concepts that could be classified as treasures or jewels. However, should any concept be overlooked due to misunderstanding, neglect or changing times, that jewel would become a buried treasure.” Today we’ll concentrate on a specific buried treasure which not only changed my life but others’ lives also. And if you haven’t already uncovered this treasure, I am convinced it will change your life and work as well. A Christian Science nurse is well outfitted for this treasure hunt having been *divested*, to a good degree, of the desire for wealth and fame so you have less baggage and won’t weigh down our exploration boat. And you are *invested* in the loving care of others, so you’re wearing sturdy life vests. Now, let’s begin by traveling down a stream of thought into a lush tropical area full of exotic birds and beautiful scenery.

We all want the same thing, to see more of heaven on earth, to experience harmony, health and joy in abundance. And we want that for everyone, – the whole world. So this is a legitimate quest and one for which Christ Jesus had us pray. It’s part of the Lord’s Prayer and here it is with the spiritual interpretation in *Science and Health* by Mary Baker Eddy.

“Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven”

“Enable us to know, -- as in heaven, so on earth, – God is omnipotent, supreme.”

Now, my husband Glen and I traveled this stream of thought and found out about this buried treasure right after Mt. St. Helens blew up in front of us as we were flying out of Seattle in 1980. Our steps of discovery are recounted in my book *Quiet Answers* but I’ll recap some points for you here. Having entered the public practice in the 60’s, by the time 1980 rolled around we’d had good experience giving Christian Science treatment. So when I tell you our buried treasure had to do with prayer you may wonder how that could be. But it’s true, and the treasure had been buried or covered up, not by layers of lava from a volcano, but more by the shifting sands of time and customs. However, the map to locate it was plain. So let’s begin by calling the treasure gold and set sail together.

Finding then testing our prayer. Is it true gold or “fool’s gold”?

We all take the meaning of prayer pretty much for granted so it might be worth thinking over how one would describe prayer to someone else and comparing our concept with how Mrs. Eddy uses that word. According to Concord, The Bible contains 513 references to forms of the word “pray,” and it appears that approximately two thirds of these are in the Old Testament. Now here’s the interesting thing. So many of them refer to asking someone for pardon or a favor “Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink...” (Judges 4:19) and the rest refer to asking God, “So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech...” (Gen. 20:17). The Old English polite form of asking was the word, “pray.”

In the New Testament the proportion changes and the majority of the references to prayer have to do with turning to God and asking Him: “O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me. . .” (Matt. 26:39). Nowhere does it appear that the asking, the desiring or requesting is taken out of prayer. That’s the basic meaning of the word,—“to ask.” And Mrs. Eddy prays the same way, “Each day I pray: ‘God bless my enemies; make them Thy friends; give them to know the joy and the peace of love’.” (My 220)

It became apparent on our quest (more exciting to us than “Raiders of the Lost Ark”) that our gold had taken on various forms so no longer carried the same value. Our gold standard had changed. Prayer had been so commonly used to refer to all kinds of spiritual thinking and speaking, from communing with God, to declarations of truth or even truthful arguments as in the practice, that the original meaning had been overlooked, even buried.

Now, at this point we are all possibly still together and our boat on an even keel but let’s try out just one sentence from *Science and Health* and see if it rocks our boat a bit. Mrs. Eddy has the paragraph heading “Aids in Sickness” beside three sentences. As nurses, you are all very familiar with the second and third sentences as to how the nurse should be and act but what about the first one? When I asked a Christian Science nurse about this she quickly admitted she had always wondered what it meant. Here’s the sentence on p. 395.

“Prayers, in which God is not asked to heal but is besought to take the patient to Himself, do not benefit the sick.” Now, it’s well to remember Mrs. Eddy’s times and that it was common for people (perhaps it still is for some) to ask God to take the sufferer to Himself. But that is more like an exit line than a healing one and obviously not helpful in Mrs. Eddy’s eyes so she basically warns us of it and shows the more beneficial way, which is to ask God to heal the sick. Here’s the pause point on our journey. It’s worth dropping anchor for a moment to ponder this question: How comfortable are we with asking God to heal the sick and how common is it among nurses, do you think? But Mrs. Eddy says it! Are you contemplating turning back right now? But wait, this really shouldn’t worry anyone because it doesn’t intrude on the practitioner’s work or treatment for that patient.

At this point there’s a glimmer of gold in the distance, so I’d like to skip ahead to a conclusion we reached about treating and the professional aspect of it. The public will sometimes question why we are charging for prayer. Actually we are not charging for prayer but for Christian Science treatment. Any professional who has followed a course of study

and applies the rules of that study – a lawyer or a medical doctor for instance – charges for his knowledge, his expertise, his handling of a case based on the system involved. He is not charging for prayer. (Though many a lawyer and doctor have prayed on the way into the court or operating room.) Likewise, the professional who is a student of Christian Science is applying what Mrs. Eddy referred to as her “metaphysical system of treating disease.” (S&H 111). Their knowledge of and work with this system on the patient’s behalf is what they are charging for. Prayer does not require the same amount of familiarity with or knowledge of her “metaphysical system” and we’ll go into that in a moment. Our own clarity on the subject will help the world to understand this system and why the application of it constitutes a profession (a most holy one, but still a profession).

Now back to nursing and our journey. The nurse is being paid for a profession because he or she can in the words of our Church Manual “take proper care of the sick,” and has usually taken a number of courses in this field. Obviously the nurse is further expected to fill the requirements of the only descriptive statement about nurses in our textbook – to be “cheerful, punctual, orderly, full of faith.” Add prayer for the patient, and you have a caring, effective professional there too. His or her prayer shows the nurse’s love for God and man. The first statement in the chapter “Prayer” explains the prayer, the asking, that heals. “The prayer that reforms the sinner and heals the sick is an absolute faith that all things are possible to God, - a spiritual understanding of Him, an unselfed love.” (S&H p.1)

The elements of this prayer, this asking, require no deep understanding of Mrs. Eddy’s “metaphysical system of treating disease.” The closest it may come is the mention of a “spiritual understanding of Him.” But many have approximated that spiritual understanding if we read the literature of our day and their prayers heal. The leaven of Christian Science has been at work for well over a century and references to God as Spirit, as divine Mind or divine Love are quite frequent as are statements that God does not send ill-health.

In her Message to The Mother Church in 1901 our Leader speaks of the Christians and clergymen of her day and not only approves of but loves their doctrine of prayer: (p. 18)

Christians and clergymen pray for sinners; they believe that God answers their prayers, and that prayer is a divinely appointed means of grace and salvation. They believe that divine power, besought, is given to them in times of trouble, and that He worketh with them to save sinners.

I love this doctrine, for I know that prayer brings the seeker into closer proximity with divine Love, and thus he finds what he seeks, the power of God to heal and to save. Jesus said, "Ask, and ye shall receive;" and if not immediately, continue to ask, and because of your often coming it shall be given unto you; and he illustrated his saying by a parable.

Here is the crux of the matter, the point of the gold. Mrs. Eddy never takes the asking, requests or petition out of prayer. That would be like taking the ice out of the ice-cream!

But there is a reluctance to asking which was humorously illustrated in a Christian Science Sentinel cartoon of Moses' Moving Co. which depicted a caravan of moving vans and a bejewelled woman saying to the driver, the bearded man beside her, "It's been 40 YEARS! Maybe we should stop and ask for directions." And I can testify, as someone who went by train in the wrong direction to Paris, asking takes humility. Asking our divine Principle, Love, indicates humility and also that we trust God. We don't doubt that He knows. Rather, it implies that *we* don't know. In other words: He knows. We don't. We ask!

It should be as simple as that but it isn't. Mortal thought has ingeniously come up with all the reasons we shouldn't ask from "It's not metaphysical, so simply declare what you know" to "If God knows all then I shouldn't need to ask because He is already supplying my need." Yes, God is supplying our need but the problem is we don't see it so that's why we ask, even as Elisha prayed for his servant's eyes to be opened to the truth. Jesus knew all good is as ever present as God is. "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him." (Matt.6:8). So why did Jesus tell us to ask? It wasn't for God's sake or to test Him, but for our sake. To bring us closer to God, to hear the answers we need.

Through prayer we see more of heaven on earth. Asking God to heal the sick is basically asking for the heaven of health to be made evident on the human scene, "Enable us to know, – as in heaven, so on earth . . ." Because prayer is addressed to God and not to anyone's thought it needs no permission. Arguments regarding another's well being tend to put one in the lawyer's shoes and this does need permission even as a lawyer doesn't argue a case without being hired to do so. Prayer, asking God, is the safest way to make sure one is not invading another's mental territory.

The solution of clearing one's own thought will often come up as the best way of helping another and people often call this prayer. Strictly speaking it does not fall into that category. Oh, there's no doubt about it that someone's consciousness, filled with the divine facts of being, such as perfect God and perfect man, will benefit others. But those facts must be kept general. If one becomes specific in this knowing it borders on treating a case. This is where prayer comes to the rescue and allows us to aid anyone, anytime. We can pray for a loved one, for their health, their well being, their joy and success. And of course, we can pray for our enemies too.

But how do we know if our prayer is right? Is there a litmus test for prayer? Yes, there is and I faced that test in a Laundromat of all places. What's more I was flunking. Here is what happened. It promised to be a peaceful time as I tackled my laundry. No one else was there so I could think and pray. But then a mother with two little ones came in. The baby in the stroller seemed very uncomfortable and was crying pitifully while the toddler yanked on the stroller now and then which didn't help matters at all. Grumbling a little over the disruption, I came to the conclusion that I should at least pray for the baby's peace, so I began, "Dear Father, may this child feel Your peace. . ." or words to that effect.

Then suddenly in the middle of my request I stopped and realized that I wasn't praying for the child's peace at all. I was the one who wanted the peace and quiet and that's when I knew my prayer was failing the test. It was actually "fool's gold" – prayer that seemed

genuine but wasn't. I was simply fooling myself. How did I know that? Because of what page 9 says. "The test of all prayer lies in the answer to these questions: Do we love our neighbor better because of this asking? Do we pursue the old selfishness, satisfied with having prayed for something better, though we give no evidence of the sincerity of our requests by living consistently with our prayer?" (Notice, how Mrs. Eddy classes not just some but *all* prayer as asking or requesting.)

What a sobering thing to find that my so-called prayer would only have me loving myself better but not my neighbor. So more humbly I prayed again, "Dear Father, may this child feel the peace and health that are present right here and now. May no material circumstance rob it of any of the good You have provided. . . ." Suddenly all was quiet for the baby was peacefully asleep and remained that way for the rest of the time there. However, it wasn't the child's reaction that tested my prayer but the love for my neighbor. My consciousness of good would undoubtedly have blessed that situation but I could do more. I could do something very active for the child – I could pray! This prayer was the desire to see "As in heaven, so on earth" for that sweet child. And it was so!

What about all the knowing we do, the declaring of truths and the arguments we make that we have learned in Christian Science? Well, they too are facets of spiritual thinking that is turned Godward and, whether mental or verbal, each one varies to some degree from the other. So how does prayer fit in here? Perhaps we could consider these activities to be like a variety of rings such as class, friendship, engagement or wedding rings, which all have a different purpose. Let's liken "knowing the truth" to a topaz class ring which, in our case, signifies a class of thinkers. The friendship ring, perhaps a ruby, could be worn when arguing a case as in giving Christian Science treatment. When requested, we become someone's advocate and what a good friend that is! The engagement ring (given or worn) might be a diamond of beautiful declarations of the truth we make to ourselves or to others. Mrs. Eddy referred to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount as "the diamond sermon." And it's often said that marriages fail due to lack of communication, so how important that through prayer we can be "allied to the deific power" and in this way "man weds himself to God." (Unity of Good, p17). The beautiful gold wedding band is like a prayer or communication which weds us to our heavenly Father.

Though the topaz, ruby and diamond rings are all distinct from each other and the gold band, these jewels should all be set in the gold of desire (prayer). This way we avoid the "vain repetitions" that Jesus warned his disciples of before telling them how to pray.

Jesus paid a ransom, as the Bible puts it, for a spiritually-kidnapped world when he demonstrated by his life that our connection to God is spiritual sonship. He left the world a gold ring containing seven powerful petitions called the Lord's Prayer meant to be worn forever so we could pray to our Father. However the Dark Ages descended and the ring was lost. The world had to be reborn and reformed (the Renaissance and Reformation) to restore it. In this New Age era mortal mind would again try to bury our gold ring and persuade us by pseudo metaphysics not to ask God. "Just affirm what you want and you'll get it" is what the public is being told. But prayer is our vital link to our Maker. Let's keep the ring safe by maintaining "the asking." Let's continue to pray for ourselves and others!

Now the full impact of this is not going to hit you all at once. In fact you may even wonder why so much is being made of asking God. It sounds so simple doesn't it! But it takes work to draw our concept of prayer into line with Mrs. Eddy. "Think prayer, think petition." This will help. Glen and I knew finding this treasure would somehow change everything. And it did! And you too will be amazed at what takes place in your life.

To really appreciate the scenery, it would be helpful to dig further into prayer in the Bible and everything Mrs. Eddy has to say on petition and asking. Perhaps list all the do's and don'ts in the chapter "Prayer." Then ponder the Daily Prayer and the five petitions in it. Miscellaneous Writings page 127, which speaks of asking importunately, provides a large clue for our treasure hunt and prepares us for what is around the bend as we continue to travel down this stream together and begin to apply or use our gold.

We'll see why asking importunately as Christ Jesus told us to do and which Mrs. Eddy reiterates is quite different from pleading with God to do something for us. We'll view the wonderful results of this, also how and why petition works, in the next section "Our connection to God through prayer." In section three we'll explore the powerful way of "Blessing others through prayer," while section four rounds out the discussion with a forty-year lesson in "Understanding life's lessons through prayer."

It's true we don't ask a corporeal God; we don't try to change the Mind of God; we don't ask for frivolous things or to be forgiven while we go on sinning, but let's be sure of one great fact. . . we do ask! We're not timid explorers mooring our boat to the dock, reluctant to travel the stream of petition, for there's a great and beautiful journey ahead. We'll have many experiences of heaven on earth on the way to the new heaven and new earth. So, humbly we make four requests, "Thou, Soul, inspiring — Give us vision clear, Break earth-bound fetters, sweep away the veil, Show the new heaven and earth that shall prevail. Alleluia! Alleluia! (Christian Science Hymnal, 66)

To be continued. . . .

(Watch for the next installment of this talk in the Carlsbad Gardens' winter newsletter)

Notes of interest for our readers about Mountaintop Publishing.

Auriel Wyndham Livezey set up this company to publish the true story *The Ultimate Freedom* by John H. Wyndham, CSB. Since 1994, this book has been traveling the world in four languages and on CD, introducing people to the "divine adventure" found in the Bible and *Science and Health*. Other books and CDs including *Quiet Answers* are on the website: www.MountaintopPublishing.com. Email at mtntop1875@yahoo.com or call 760-720-0000.

The song "It's Forever that I Love You," which is part of the musical play "Numberland" and is also on Auriel's CD "Something Bright and Beautiful," was sung by Julia Wade, soloist of The Mother Church for the service on August 3, 2008.

Boxes containing 38 *Numberland* books (allegorical tale for thinkers in this scientific era - no math required) are available to be donated to youth groups, camps, classrooms or college organizations. Please contact us for details.