

## “AS IN HEAVEN, SO ON EARTH”

(Part three – Blessing others through Prayer)

by

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This is Part Three of the talk, “As in heaven, so on earth” delivered 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, Carlsbad, which provides loving care for senior Christian Scientists. As Auriel spoke from notes so this is not a verbatim account of what was said and it has been expanded upon. Part four will be available on The Gardens’ website the end of May.

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### **Healing 101**

We’ve traveled the short distance from finding the gold of prayer (Part One) to spending it on ourselves (Part Two). It takes longer to reach the next bend of the river – to reach the point of helping others with our gold. So, do we have any provisions on our boat? Oh yes, we have a simple and rather underrated one which is so potent it will feed everyone with just a few crumbs. It’s appropriately labeled *comfort*, because the Comforter, Divine Science, comforts. Let’s dip into “crumbs of comfort” as we paddle along.

“If we would open their prison doors for the sick, we must first learn to bind up the broken-hearted” states *Science and Health* (p. 366). So, there’s a prerequisite for healing the sick – binding up the broken-hearted – and this requires the ability to comfort which includes both compassion and sympathy. These two terms, used by Mrs. Eddy, are very similar and involve having kindly feelings towards another and their plight, but compassion appears to have the added ingredient of wanting to do something about it. And, according to the above quotation, it not only *can* but *must* be learned!

Just a kind word or act can be powerful enough to prepare the way for healing or even bring about the healing. However, platitudes or mere repetitions of spiritual truths, are not helpful, as the teachings of Christian Science make plain. Now, in some instances the broken-hearted and sick could be one and the same person. Glen told me about a man who came to him for help with a physical problem, but he was also broken-hearted at the plight of people in far-off countries (and this was decades ago!). Glen didn’t simply tell him that all those adverse human conditions were divinely unreal. True as it is, that wouldn’t have comforted him. Instead, Glen’s compassion allowed for the man’s compassion, so he said something to this effect, “You can’t deal from an empty bucket. If you want to help others, you’ll have to fill up first yourself.” That paved the way for the man’s healing. Though we may not always be asked to give Christian Science treatment, we can always pray. And comfort – binding up the broken-hearted – is still a prerequisite for the prayer that heals.

So, shall we begin Healing 101 by asking our divine Principle for help on the subject? Mary Baker Eddy wrote many poems but ended her slim historical volume *Retrospection and Introspection* with one by A. E. Hamilton that surely epitomized her life.

Ask God to give thee skill  
In comfort's art:  
That thou may'st consecrated be  
And set apart  
Unto a life of sympathy.  
For heavy is the weight of ill  
In every heart;  
And comforters are needed much  
Of Christlike touch.

Let's add to that another poem, "Teach Me to Love" by Louise Knight Wheatley. It was republished in the *Anthology of Classic Articles* by The Christian Science Publishing Society in 2007. From beginning to end this beautiful prayer reminds one of a statement by Mary Baker Eddy, "True prayer is not asking God for love; it is learning to love, and to include all mankind in one affection" (No 39). We can always ask to learn how to love.

The Psalms are rich in petitions to God, as are many of the hymns in the Christian Science Hymnal. There are requests to God both to give and take away. "Create in me a clean heart, Oh God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps. 51:10). "Cleanse thou me from secret faults" (Ps. 19:12). "Give us vision clear, break earth-bound fetters, sweep away the veil" (Hymn 66). "Take from us now the strain and stress" (Hymn 49). "Give me, O Lord, an understanding heart . . . And thus from sinful bondage be set free" (Hymn 69). Let's allow for both the giving and the taking away when praying for others. It's important!

### **Blessing Others through Prayer**

#### **Hearing calls for help**

A Christian Science teacher, formerly an editor for the Christian Science periodicals, lived in Boston and was quite well known. He told my dad and me the following story. One Sunday he was sitting in The Mother Church listening to the service when the thought came to him, "Get up and leave." He said he smiled at that, knowing it had to be a devilish suggestion trying to get him out of the service. Once more it came and again he resisted. But when it came again and very forcefully, he got up and walked out. He realized that people might suspect he was in the throes of some kind of problem, but he obeyed anyway.

As he descended the church steps, he saw a parked car out front. A man was sitting inside peering up at the Church, so he asked the stranger if he could help him. The man replied he had always wondered what that Church was about but never felt he could go in. Then our friend got into the car and for the rest of the Church service he explained Christian Science to the stranger. He heard the call and answered it. We could conjecture it was a good thing only he heard the call, otherwise there might have been a mass exodus from that edifice. But obviously, this was his work to do.

When the woman with “an issue of blood” touched the border of Jesus’ garment in the crowd, he heard that mental call for aid. Likewise, Mrs. Eddy wrote, “From the interior of Africa to the utmost parts of the earth, the sick and the heavenly homesick or hungry hearts are calling on me for help, and I am helping them” (My. 147). We can also hear voices calling more plainly now as we round the bend in our river of thought. So, let’s secure our craft and consider three ways of helping others by visiting the House of Light.

## **The House of Light**

Perhaps it’s fair to assume, no matter what one’s taste in art may be, that the paintings of Thomas Kinkade speak to us all. He paints houses with light streaming from the windows. Our House of Light has three porticos or main points. First is the power of right thinking and how it naturally blesses others. Secondly, prayer is directed to God regarding a situation or person. Thirdly, we are invited into another’s mental home to aid them.

### ***1. Light emanates naturally and effortlessly from the windows.***

The light issuing from a clear consciousness does heal. There have been many accounts of this, such as one I read of a man on a streetcar being healed due to the correct knowing of spiritual facts by the woman sitting opposite him. She was unaware of his need but the light of the truth she was knowing enveloped him. Mrs. Eddy explains it this way. “The spiritual power of a scientific, right thought, without a direct effort, an audible or even a mental argument, has oftentimes healed inveterate diseases “(Rud. 9). This discussion could be developed further, but for now it is the next point of the House of Light that requires our attention and careful thought. It’s the very important area of actively praying for someone else and is a high point in our travel.

### ***2. The occupant of the well-lit house goes to another’s aid.***

The occupant of the house sees someone stumbling in the dark across the street and prays, asks, that the individual see the light God has for him. To me this is similar to the following situation. When my children were young we lived across the street from their elementary school. The small parking lot on that side became the gathering place for older rowdy teenagers, especially on weekend evenings. There was no proper lighting so activities were carried on, cloaked by darkness. The next morning beer bottles and other unfavorable items awaited the school children.

Something should be done to protect the school children and the teenagers too! So, I called City Hall and asked for lighting for that parking lot. It wasn’t too long before a very large truck carrying a long pole light arrived on the scene. My joy and gratitude as I thanked the driver were surpassed by my surprise when he asked, “Where would you like it?” So, I picked the best spot and there it was put! The wrong activity ceased immediately.

The government of our universe, our divine Principle, Love, is certainly as responsive as City Hall. Of course, the two can’t really be compared but that incident may serve as a

symbol or illustration. We can ask our Parent, God, to meet others' needs – to shed light on another's path – and we will receive an answer. But then an interesting query emerges. A young woman I met said she didn't feel it was right to pray for someone else because that would be like admitting the person had a need or lack in their lives. Let's consider this.

Humanly there are needs. Divinely there is only supply, no lack. That's why, "Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need" (S&H 494). By reflecting divine Love we play an active part, ". . .and blessed is that man who seeth his brother's need and supplieth it, seeking his own in another's good" (S&H 518). Our heavenward gaze doesn't overlook the human need. The old saying, "You can't be so heavenly minded, that you're no earthly good" rings true. There's also this important fact: divine metaphysics is not compromised by applying its rules to the human scene, anymore than the principle of mathematics is compromised by applying those rules to the numbers on the chalkboard. Being scientific simply means we understand the rules enough to apply them.

"Prayer for Country and Church" by Mrs. Eddy in *Christian Science versus Pantheism*, urges us to *pray* for our country's government – to pray for our Chief Magistrate, Congress and for our military. This is in line with Paul's exhortation to Timothy that prayers be made "for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty"(1Tim. 2:2). Part of the definition of "Heaven" in *Science and Health* (p. 587) is: "Harmony; the reign of Spirit; government by divine Principle." So again, we not only *know* the truth but we *pray* (ask) to see it on earth, reflected in our human government.

**Knowing and asking** ("As in heaven, so on earth," especially in blessing others.)

**The knowing:** "God, Spirit, is indeed the preserver of man." (Pan. 4)

**The asking:** "Oh, may their love of country, and their faithful service thereof, be unto them life-preservers!" (Prayer for our military, Pan. 14)

**The knowing:** "We have no enemies." (Mis. 10)

**The asking:** "God bless my enemies; make them Thy friends; give them to know the joy and the peace of love." (My. 220)

**The knowing:** "Spirit blesses man, but man cannot tell 'whence it cometh.'" (S&H 78)

**The asking:** "Divine presence, breathe Thou Thy blessing on every heart in this house" (Dedicatory Sermon delivered at The Mother Church in 1895, Pul. 10).

Mrs. Eddy's form of metaphysical treatment includes using knowing – what one knows of divine law – to argue a case in order to prove a patient innocent of a disease, much as a lawyer would argue according to laws he knows to prove his client innocent. In the early days of Christian Science questions about this arose, such as, "Is not all argument mind over mind?" This is found on page 59 of *Miscellaneous Writings*. Mrs. Eddy dispatched that in a few sentences by showing that the divine Mind, God, is the only true healer. But also on the same page appeared, "Is it wrong to pray for the recovery of the sick?" Evidently, at that point in history the terms *prayer* and *treatment* were not used interchangeably but were still

clearly distinct and different as one will find by tracing these words through Mrs. Eddy's writings and in the letters of those healed included in her works.

Perhaps the early students felt somewhat perplexed. Mrs. Eddy had discovered a new method of treating disease through a metaphysical system which included arguments regarding the truth of man made in God's image – arguments which also refuted the falsity of what the physical senses tell us of a sick or sinful being. And while **no** restrictions were placed on prayer, Christian Science treatment was to be given only with the permission of the individual being treated. This new system worked, but what about the age-old custom of praying for the recovery of the sick? Was this no longer admissible in Christian Science?

Mrs. Eddy's reply to this shows clearly that petition or prayer for another is still viable but it has to be on the right basis – that God's goodness has always been present and never been lost, no matter what appearances tell us. No room for doubt! Here's how she replied to the question, "Is it wrong to pray for the recovery of the sick?" (Mis. 59)

Not if we pray Scripturally, with the understanding that God *has* given all things to those who love Him; but pleading with infinite Love to love us, or to restore health and harmony, and then to admit that it has been lost under His government, is the prayer of doubt and mortal belief that is unavailing in divine Science.

When Mrs. Eddy was asked why President McKinley didn't recover from a gunshot wound despite all the prayers uttered on his behalf, she gave the same kind of reply (My. 293).

Had prayer so fervently offered possessed no opposing element, and President McKinley's recovery been regarded as wholly contingent on the power of God, – on the power of divine Love to overrule the purposes of hate and the law of Spirit to control matter, – the result would have been scientific, and the patient would have recovered.

In answer to a newspaper item accusing Mrs. Eddy of being prayerless, she replied, "Three times a day, I retire to seek the divine blessing on the sick and sorrowing, with my face toward the Jerusalem of Love and Truth, in silent prayer to the Father which 'seeth in secret,' and with childlike confidence that He will reward 'openly.'" (Mis. 133)

Jesus' petitions – such as the one for his disciples (John 17:15) that God would not take them out of the world but would "keep them from the evil" – were prayers of deep understanding, based on spiritual fact. With this and the many other examples in mind from our Daily Prayer, from the Psalms and hymns we too may pray that way. We may ask that error, sin, disease or sickness be ruled out of our own or another's experience. This prayer, addressed to God, is not an argument for a patient, nor is it intended to rearrange someone's thinking. It goes to God and is left with God.

## **A healing prayer**

It was in the fall of 2000, around eight on a Friday morning, that I received a call from my daughter at work. In hushed tones, she asked me to pray for the son of a woman in her office. Having been injured in a high school football game the night before, the boy had been rushed to the hospital and there given the diagnosis of a concussion and a broken neck. My daughter didn't know the son or even his name but was very concerned for the mother and the situation she might be facing. Her compassion was deep and genuine.

Prior to 1980 I would simply have cleared my own thinking by knowing that man in God's image could never be injured and other spiritual truths to that effect. But now I had gold to use – the well-tested gold of prayer. First I mentally reviewed the spiritual nature of man created in God's image and likeness. A spiritual idea cannot be broken or damaged in any way. Then, on that basis, I began my prayer and asked God to take away the fears surrounding that young man, including his own, his parents and those of the hospital staff. I asked for the sense of God's love to pervade his room and the hospital. I asked that the material laws in this situation be annulled and God's law be seen as supreme and that the physical evidence of injury be removed. I asked that no counter influence might prevail, but that he could recognize his God-given freedom and harmony. These requests were not only for harmony to be given the boy but for anything opposed to that harmony to be taken away. My petitions finally ended with something unusual for me. I found myself asking for this healing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as I understood them in Christian Science, ending with, "Thank You, Father!"

You may notice that the petitions were all addressed to God and no arguments were made on the boy's behalf. Then I released it until about eleven that morning when the thought came I should pray again. Immediately I heard mentally, "Don't. It's already done!" So I didn't. Later that evening I heard what happened. Prior to the operation, which was scheduled for 4 p.m., more tests were taken. These tests showed no concussion and no broken neck! There being no reason to keep him longer, the boy was discharged. He went home that Friday evening and back to school on Monday. I am convinced that my daughter's compassion paved the way for that healing.

A few years later I saw the boy's mother. She told me of her son's high school graduation, then looked at me earnestly and said, "I don't think I ever thanked you properly." So, that experience ended on a very happy and grateful note. There are other inspiring details to this healing, which will be given when these newsletters are published in book form.

### ***3. The occupant of the House of Light is invited to help***

A neighbor asks the occupant to throw light on a problem he has in his own house and invites him in. The occupant may have formerly prayed for his neighbor but being invited he may now give him Christian Science treatment – more on this subject later.

To be concluded in Part Four, "Understanding Life Lessons through Prayer."  
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