

**April 25th, 2005 — Subject: Everlasting Punishment**

**DEAR FRIENDS:** Mary Baker Eddy gave her students 26 subjects for weekly Bible Lessons, to be covered twice yearly. Flowing through the year in her order of the subjects, we hereby present fresh views of each one by outstanding Christian Scientists. In this way, we hope to partake with you of new unfoldments of her infinite revelation.

Our selection this week is from the book titled: LECTURES AND ARTICLES ON CHRISTIAN SCIENCE by Edward Kimball.

### **CONCERNING THE PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE**

MRS. EDDY clearly indicates that Christian Science practice should be improved, not only in the way of results, but also in the way of processes, or modus operandi.

The progressive practitioner will naturally learn to give treatments on a higher plane. He, himself, will be in a higher altitude of appreciation and discernment. He will more clearly perceive the nature of error, and be more correctly discriminating in his estimate of it and its claims, and particularly concerning its claims of good, or its claim to be in some respects relatively good. He will learn to be less personal in his estimate of error and will gradually grow in the perception that he does not have to deal with person, but with belief, which is always without a believer, — always without person.

As he gains a better sense of pure metaphysics, the entire trend of his thought changes, and the whole aspect of his work, and of the work to be done, takes on different form. He finds that he must work differently — that he must move higher or farther along — that he must graduate from former methods which will appear to be inadequate. Mrs. Eddy covers this ground specifically in a recent admonition to pay more attention to her teaching of today than to that of twenty-five years ago. Her changes in the textbook show that she is trying to advance the thought of Scientists, so that they may keep pace with the progress she is making — and that the public mind may accustom itself to a more correct theology. She has been obliged to make many Concessions to current religious thought, rather than to upheave it too violently, but it cannot be doubted that

she hopes that we will *push* forward to the appreciation of higher statements. She attempts to reach many different stages of thought through “Science and Health,” but it seems to be sensible to assume that we will not do well to cling to the lower plane of statement or appreciation that has in many instances been presented for the beginner. It has long been recognized that Science reverses old methods. It discloses the fact that the Way of salvation is different from that prescribed by old theology.

I shall refer to some of the important differences and thereby show why some of us fail to procure the desired results through our practice. The old theological plan of salvation included the continuous refrain that we must give up all for Christ that our lives should be a process of renunciation, and of giving up everything that is in sight, The result of this kind of inducement has been that people have begun a prodigious onslaught of the human will against everything included in the environment of human life; but this sort of struggle generally results in a destructive career. It seems clear that the advanced Scientist needs to change his standpoint of thinking. He needs to stop the many declarations about “giving up” and to cease the effort to progress by means of a “giving up” process,

The actual service which Christian Science exerts in our behalf is a purely educational one. Our deliverance from the belief of evil is to be accomplished, not by giving up, but by *gaining*. The statement “Seek ye first the kingdom of God” is scientifically and literally correct, that is to say: the one to whom Christian Science is becoming substantive, needs to seek or desire the right idea about everything because the right idea silences the false concept or belief.

I am convinced that many scientists procrastinate their own deliverance by working at the wrong end of the problem. The Bible says that “The government shall be upon his shoulders,” meaning thereby that the right idea does the work — asserts itself and conversely disposes of the belief. It is certain that an erring belief does not know enough to give itself up. It is also certain that an erring state of human consciousness does not know enough to give *itself* up. It follows, therefore, that a purely human giving up endeavor does not give up, but does involve the scientist in a sense of greater fear. Evil is never disposed of as though it were something. It cannot be given up as though it were something. It can only be disposed of by the activity of

right ideas, which resolve the evil claim or temptation as though it were nothing. I recommend to you the great value of an affirmative condition of thought at this point. Try to realize that through Christian Science, you are constantly gaining that which will do everything for you, and that you will succeed according to the gaining process. This will open your mentality and make it more receptive of the right idea — “whereas a contrary policy of thought, which is ever contemplating a process of giving up, narrows its own scope and curtails the capacity to acquire the *true* idea of salvation.

It is, of course, true that all forms of erring belief are to disappear and that the so-called human consciousness is to be divested of all that claims to be something as error or sin, but all this is to be accomplished by the influx of pure knowledge or a correct estimate or appreciation of being.

There is another incorrect thought in line with this same thing. It is in the declaration that mortals must *suffer out* of the flesh, *now*, inasmuch as there is no flesh, and man is not in flesh and never was in the flesh, it follows that the thought that we must suffer out of the flesh would admit all that is claimed for the flesh. If we really are in the flesh, we would better stay there, because if we are actually in it, we belong in it and cannot get out by suffering or otherwise. If we are not in the flesh, we have *not* got to suffer out of it.

The supposition that we are in the flesh is merely a belief. We are not to get rid of the flesh, but of the belief that we are in the flesh and that life and body are material. The poorest way to get rid of that belief is to suppose there is any virtue in applying suffering as a remedy, or to suppose erring belief can be corrected by another equally erroneous belief called suffering.

It is plain that the thought, which is poised at the expectation of suffering out of the flesh, is being greatly hindered and arrested. Such an expectation is wholly irrational and destructive. The only way out of the flesh is the way, which dispels the belief that substance and man are material. The only thing, which will do this, is the understanding that body is spiritual — suffering cannot do it and is not the way to do it. All this is absolutely correct notwithstanding the claim that a material and erring sense of life seems to punish itself; but suffering, which seems to be the way whereby to get into trouble, is not the way out of it.

Another bad fault has grown out of our old theological belief of condemnation and penalty, and the belief that God devises, institutes, and bestows the punishment that is incidental to condemnation. The fact is that the divine Mind knows no evil and does not know that any one is perpetrating any evil. The supposition that God condemns and punishes sin and other forms of error would, if it were possible, involve God in evil and would confirm every claim concerning the reality of evil. Such assertions as these are frequently met by the arguments that God is not evil, but that he knows enough about it to punish it, and the result has been that the ordinary religious belief has been to the effect that penalty and punishment have been of divine bestowal and are therefore indispensable concomitants of the divine plan. By thus making a connection between God, and penalty and suffering, mankind has involved itself in terror, and in fear of a vengeful and wrathful God. This fear constitutes a continuing belief of causation and induces the belief of disease and other evils.

Science discloses the fact that in belief, mortal mind creates a mortal man for the purpose of killing him. Before killing him, it condemns and sentences him. It is this condemnation of man that I want you to recognize, and I want you to know the necessity of canceling it and of adequately protecting yourselves and your patients from it. It is more important than we have been in the habit of thinking it is.

In order to show to what extent false theology has involved itself in the condemnation of man, I quote one statement, namely "*The wages of sin is death.*" We know that everything that is called sin is but a manifestation of mortal mind. We know that everything that is called matter is a manifestation of mortal mind; indeed, we know that every kind of materiality or corporeality belongs in the unit or unification called mortal mind. For a man to breathe, steal, sleep, to lie, or eat food, or to believe that two times two is five, all these are manifestations of the one error. God knows nothing of *any* of them. All that is included in them is error — all the laws, decrees, penalties, threats, and predictions have been devised and put forth by mortal mind.

If it were true that the only legitimate wage of the one error is death, then it would be the fact that Christian Science practice is illegitimate. It would mean that the man who breathes and eats food is entitled to death and that the only proper thing to do to him would be to procure his death. If you will analyze this subject thoroughly, you will find that

what is called theology, philosophy, and physical science, instead of uncovering the error that is involved, have formulated the condemnation, not of error — including breathing, but the condemnation of the man who breathes. Throughout the ages of religious beliefs, you may find that it is the man who must be punished and who must die.

You may discover that every man and woman is under the rule of a supposedly divine, universal, theological, philosophical, scientific, and *self* damnation, and that this universal condemnation is one of the most important things for you to recognize and annul in every claim or patient you have. It must be clear that there is no God in it and that as a rule and law of mortal mind it is always wrong.

The only thing that God does for humanity or needs to do, is to bless mankind; and it is blessing, correction or enlightenment, and salvation that we really need, not punishment.

First of all, then, remember always that suffering is never procured by God as a penalty or consequence or as an educational process for any purpose whatever. Then remember that the entire network of materiality, sin, sickness, pleasure, or death, is the output of mortal mind, which is always wrong. Then know that the supreme need of humanity is not of suffering, but of enlightenment and that it is entitled to enlightenment.

Cease forever the declarations like this: “Well, I suppose I must suffer out of it” and “the patient must suffer out of it.” Is there any curative efficacy in a treatment, which includes the mental provision that the patient must suffer for any reason? The mission of Christian Science is to deliver, to save, to redeem. It has no punishment and no condemnation for a mortal man. Inasmuch as mortals are defrauded and imposed upon by mortal mind, it follows that the worst sinner is the greatest victim and that what he needs and is entitled to is instant salvation instead of eternal punishment.

Many scientists have a bad habit of holding their patients under the ban of condemnation, thereby frustrating a cure; whereas nothing but righteous judgment will heal the sick.

The wages of sin or materiality is not the death of a mortal. That is to say, the natural and inevitable consequence of being imposed upon is not death — such a provision would not be even ethical. The only proper

sequence of sin or error is salvation or deliverance through the activity of real knowledge. Watch carefully against the disposition to join in the universal condemnation of mortals.

Christian Science operates wholly to release the victim, — not to condemn him; and this is done by condemning the error, but not the man; and error must always be condemned as nothing, not as something. You need to beware of the Bible references, which are made to appear as though they condemned man instead of error. No such conclusion concerning the Bible is correct. You are never warranted in condemning a mortal; never warranted in condemning yourself. Truth uncovers error as nothing; it does not condemn the man or require the suffering which error alone bestows on mortals. Some time ago, I rescued a patient, a scientist, who had had much treatment, by knowing that she was not under penalty because of a belief in matter — or because of a belief that she was a woman with a material body, or that she was a mother. That she was not under penalty for the infraction of any law of error or for anything that she ever did or did not do. That she was not under penalty according to any rule or belief of mortal mind, and that there was no penalty, consequence, or suffering in mortal mind. This treatment, which knew enough to know that the penalty was unreal, knew enough to make an unreality of suffering and she recovered.

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