

The Authority and Humility of Christian Science Healing

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Introduction

Our theme today is health. The vast majority of the world measures health according to what the material senses tell us about the condition of a material body and a material mind. Christian Science offers an entirely opposite view. Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, states in her textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, that

Health is not a condition of matter, but of Mind; nor can the material senses bear reliable testimony on the subject of health.” (SH 120:15–17)

In fact, health has nothing to do with matter, but is an entirely spiritual condition - a condition of consciousness. It is the greater realization of that spiritual condition that transforms what we experience in our day-to-day lives, including not only our health, but our supply, our happiness and our sense of purpose.

But where does the authority for that realization come from and how can we better realize it in our own lives?

Our authority for demonstrating health

Let’s first consider the authority for this realization of health. Don’t we find it in the complete statement of Christian Science as set forth in *Science and Health*? The word “health” is right in the title. And we find the authority for it not just in the words of that book, but the application of those words that has resulted in actual proof of that authority through countless healings over a century and a half since Mrs. Eddy’s discovery of Christian Science. We also find that authority in the structure for how we live those words as set forth in the *The Manual of The Mother Church*.

I love how both *Science and Health* and our *Church Manual* are stamped with the Christian Science seal on their covers. Consider the relevance of that and the authority

it represents. We all know that a seal is used to preserve or separate good from bad. For example, wax seals were used for centuries by those sending written messages to protect against tampering of the message. Food is preserved using containers - jars, cans, bags - to seal out things that would affect the quality of the food. Organizations use seals to offer their statement of approval for a product or idea. Even a trademark is a type of seal that allows someone to verify that a name or symbol is official and protected by law from being misused.

There are many types of seals, and ways in which seals are used, but don't they all have that common denominator of serving to protect the authenticity and purity of something?

The most significant seal of all time was referenced by Mrs. Eddy in *Science and Health* when she wrote:

The lonely precincts of the tomb gave Jesus a refuge from his foes, a place in which to solve the great problem of being. His three days' work in the sepulchre set the seal of eternity on time. He proved Life to be deathless and Love to be the master of hate. He met and mastered on the basis of Christian Science, the power of Mind over matter, all the claims of medicine, surgery, and hygiene.
(SH 44:5)

You might recognize part of this passage as one of only three quotations from Mrs. Eddy which she permitted to adorn the walls of Christian Science branch churches (see *My* 213:28-14). So it must be a pretty important message. And it clearly was unparalleled as far as seals go.

It's no surprise then that the seal of Christian Science - the cross and crown which Mrs. Eddy selected to grace the cover of all her published works, including *Science and Health* and *The Church Manual* - directly relates to this seal of eternity set by Jesus. The cross, the crown, and the words of Jesus framed within the seal that command us to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead and cast out demons, all represent the authority behind the proper demonstration of health in our practice of Christian Science.

Historically, a cross and crown symbol would have been familiar to Mrs. Eddy growing up in the Congregational Church in Concord, New Hampshire, which had a cross and crown symbol on the cover of its book of church rules. Other Protestant and Catholic churches were also known to use it. So after purchasing her house on Broad Street in

Lynn, Massachusetts in the mid 1870's, Mary Glover (as she was known at the time) had a sign made which read: "Mary B. Glover's Christian Scientists' Home" framed by an image of an open book on one side, and a cross and a crown on the other. At that time, the cross and crown were separated, with the crown hovering above the cross.

One woman reminisced that, as a little girl, it was the gold cross and crown symbol on Mrs. Eddy's Broad Street house which drew her to Mrs. Eddy for healing. Having taken on a sudden illness with severe pain in her side, the woman described:

In visiting a relative on Broad Street, I had often noted a house on which was a sign decorated with a gold cross and crown. A woman doctor lived there, it was said, and in my desperation, I reasoned thus: 'If I must have a doctor I will go to the lady on Broad St. The sign shows she is a Christian, and a Christian woman--even if she is a doctor--wouldn't hurt a little girl.' Accordingly I ran away and went to see Mrs. Eddy.

I have never forgotten Mrs. Eddy's gracious womanliness as she met me and led me to a seat, saying 'dear child, did you wish to see me?' After a few generalities she closed her eyes for a brief period. She asked me no questions as to symptoms, ailment, etc., but taking my hand said, 'if you are not better tomorrow, come and see me again.' As I rose and asked the fee, she simply said--'nothing, dear.'

I could not understand it. It was so unusual. No questions asked--nothing done to my body--no medicine and no money, and yet--the pain was gone! I knew nothing whatever about Christian Science, and nothing was said regarding it either by Mrs. Eddy or her husband, who met me at the door. I was filled with wonder at the loving kindness of the people who were so good to a little girl, but I no longer wondered at the beautiful cross and crown over the door and in my heart enshrined them as true Christians. *Mary Baker Eddy: Christian Healer (Amplified Edition)*, Y. Fettweis and R. Warneck, The Christian Science Publishing Society, pp. 115-116 (2009).

I find that to be such an inspiring example of both Christian Science treatment and Christian Science nursing, and what both bring to our experience to help us see more of what we already are.

What was it about that symbol that called this innocent child to healing? While there was no power in the symbol itself, it clearly served as a beacon for what Christian

Science represented. It was something that even a little child could identify, even if its precise meaning was unknown to the viewer.

As Mrs. Eddy's church evolved, so did the symbol which represented it. In 1881, Mrs. Eddy revised the symbol which appeared on the cover of her 3rd revision of *Science and Health*. This version for the first time reflected the crown circling the cross, and included the words of Jesus recorded in *Matthew* 10:8 which were placed between concentric rings which bordered the cross and crown. One other change to the symbol was made in 1908, when it was felt that a better representation for the crown could be used.

The crown represents the authority and majesty of Christian Science. Like the little girl who was attracted to the gold cross and crown on the signage of Mrs. Eddy's Broad St. house, how could anyone not be drawn by the authority and majesty of the gold crown that is earned by each of us as we demonstrate our obedience to Jesus' commands.

Of course, we don't wear the crown until we have carried the cross. Mrs. Eddy once wrote to a student, "And you, dear one, as well as I will be led to the crown after the cross and never before it." (L14174, The Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity) The cross is the universal symbol of Christianity, and its use in the Christian Science seal unequivocally aligns Christian Science with Christianity. Mrs. Eddy tells us in *Science and Health*:

Christian Science and Christianity are one. (*SH* 372:17–18)

But to most Christians, the cross represents little more than the willingness of Jesus to suffer and die for the sins of man, symbolizing sacrifice and loss. It is often perpendicular to the ground - ironically anchored in the dust from which mortal man was made, and suggesting that man is inextricably grounded as a member of the Adamic race. To Christian Science, the cross symbolizes work and growth. It is tilted - not fixed in the dust of the ground, but carried by the man of God's image and likeness over the dust of the ground - possibly representing the effort necessary on our part to overcome the claims of mortality - sin, disease, and death.

The cross by itself is often where people's sense of Christianity ends. It is not associated with a golden crown, but a crown of thorns, as was mockingly placed on the head of Jesus prior to his crucifixion. It has come to be known as a symbol of martyrdom and suffering. But Mrs. Eddy's understanding of Christianity was so much deeper than one of martyrdom or suffering. She saw the importance of not letting the

practice of Christianity end on the cross, and requires of us to see our demonstration through to the resurrection. She saw that the crown of thorns isn't our final head piece, but is traded in, when she writes in *Science and Health*:

Truth and Life must seal the victory over error and death, before the thorns can be laid aside for a crown, the benediction follow, "Well done, good and faithful servant," and the supremacy of Spirit be demonstrated. (*SH* 43:32)

So while the Christian Science seal includes a cross, and the importance of taking up the cross should never be overlooked, it also includes a crown - a golden one, not one of thorns. The crown in our seal is not one of martyrdom. It is one of triumph. It is a confirmation that we have the authority to meet any of the demands of the cross, and overcome any suggestions of evil. With the authority of the crown behind our practice of Christian Science, we have the right to resist this suggestion of life in matter. It serves as the acknowledgement of our demonstration - our triumph in healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead and casting out demons. It represents authority over all the claims of mortal mind.

Let's consider one more idea about the Christian Science seal - the two circles that border both sides of the four commands of Jesus that surround the cross and crown. Some might look at them and think they are just a nice border. But a circle represents infinity. And here we have two circles surrounding Jesus' commands. I like to think of these as symbolizing one of the ways in which our Leader uniquely described God as the "All-in-all." She capitalizes and hyphenates this into a single label or name for God. Although the term isn't used in the King James translation or any other Bible in quite this way, Mrs. Eddy states several times that the *Bible* "implies" that God is All-in-all. (*SH* 331:11; *Rud* 5:4-6) She explained this term further in *Unity of Good*, where she wrote:

God is All-in-all. Hence He is in Himself only, in His own nature and character, and is perfect being, or consciousness. He is all the Life and Mind there is or can be. Within Himself is every embodiment of Life and Mind.

If He is All, He can have no consciousness of anything unlike Himself; because, if He is omnipresent, there can be nothing outside of Himself. (*Un* 3:20-26)

Mrs. Eddy made this superlative title for God the centerpiece in the Scientific Statement of Being, where she says

All is infinite Mind, and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all." (*SH* 468:10-11)

In *Science and Health*, Mrs. Eddy describes the term All-in-all as

the starting point of divine Science. (*SH 275:6-9*)

She further explains:

If God, the All-in-all, be the creator of the spiritual universe, including man, then everything entitled to a classification as truth, or Science, must be comprised in a knowledge or understanding of God, for there can be nothing beyond illimitable divinity. (*SH 127:4*)

The term “All-in-all” isn’t just a cute phrase with some hyphens stuck in the middle, but a deliberate statement concerning the infinite, eternal character and nature of God and the full expression of his creation encompassed within that infinitude.

The commands to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons and raise the dead are encompassed within this All-in-all. I like to think of the two rings surrounding these commands as representing the divine influence of the All-in-all on our practice of Christian Science, supporting it from underneath, and protecting it from above. That divine influence of the All-in-all includes the completeness of God’s provision in our practice of Christian Science.

As we all know, a seal is just a symbol. There is no power in it. But it serves as a reminder of the authority behind our healing practice and the provision that Mrs. Eddy made for us to experience health.

Our humility for realizing health

Let’s shift to the second question that I raised at the outset: how we can better realize health in our own lives? If health is simply the greater realization of our spiritual condition, what is it that causes us to experience a lack of health? Wouldn’t it be the opposite of that - what you might describe as an “unrealization” of our spiritual condition? I don’t think “unrealization” is an actual word, but for sake of our discussion today, let’s make it one. Do you notice the root of our pretend word - unreal? And isn’t that the root of any seeming lack of health - unreal?

So is it as simple as that? We just call it unreal and presto, we are well? When we awake from a dream, we usually notice pretty quickly that it was just a dream - that it really wasn't going on. It was just something we were imagining. Can experiencing health be as simple as awakening from a dream? An awakening from something we are only imagining? Well, it can! What if I told you that it can always be as simple as that?

God as divine Mind always knows our healthy state. It's pretty easy for us to assume that God is not a dreamer. Therefore, if we are the image and likeness of God, as the Bible tells us we are, then we are not dreamers either. It is natural for us to be awake to know our healthy state.

If health is the factual truth about us, it is always true. It's not something we have to wish into existence. It already is, whether we realize it or not. And it is always within our capacity to realize truth.

So what do we do if we aren't realizing the truth of our health? Well, the first step is to be able to recognize when we are dreaming. If we don't recognize we are dreaming, we typically continue on in the dream. And that can seem to go on for some time if we don't wake up from the dream. Too often, it seems, we get mired in the dream - the sense of a lack of health - the dream of an unhealthy self. It's not true, but how do we wake up from the dream of an unhealthy self?

It starts with knowing that right thinking is directly derivative of divine Mind. God is our source. It's not something we create. God is the creator. And knowing that is the beginning of the solution. Because a sense of self - a material sense of an unhealthy self or even a healthy self - always distracts us from God as our source, God as our creator. Of course, we don't mind the healthy sense of self. But if we don't detect when a good sense of self seems to be happening, it becomes a slippery slope towards a bad sense of self. A healthy sense of self always leads to an unhealthy sense of self. Mrs. Eddy tells us in *Science and Health* that:

Material sense expresses the belief that mind is in matter. This human belief, alternating between a sense of pleasure and pain, hope and fear, life and death, never reaches beyond the boundary of the mortal or the unreal.
(SH 298:15-18)

Through a material sense of health, you can't have a good sense of health without a bad sense of health. The problem isn't with feeling healthy, but looking for it through a

sense of self. We might call this a sense of selfishness. We don't want to be selfish do we?

So to correct that false sense of self, or selfishness, our thought needs to become less focused on self, and more focused outwardly toward God and all of His creation. One of the best ways to promote this progression out of a sense of self is through gaining a greater sense of humility. You might liken humility to a lubricant that you use to quiet a squeaky door hinge. Dust and other particles build up on the door hinge, creating friction, and gradually become louder and louder, until it becomes a disruptive noise. How often do we hear that noise beginning to build, but we don't do anything to address it? If we don't address it, it doesn't get better - it only gets louder and louder. Isn't the same true when we don't address a sense of self? It only becomes louder and louder until we address it.

That's when we need to pull the can of WD-Humility off the shelf. It is the quality of humility which silences the noise and prepares our thought for healing. St. James said:

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. (*James 4:10*)

In her article "The Way", Mrs. Eddy describes humility as

. . . the genius of Christian Science,

and

. . . lens and prism to the understanding of Mind-healing. (*Misc 356:22*)

In her article "Fallibility Of Human Concepts, she explains that humility is

. . . the first step in Christian Science, wherein all is controlled, not by man or laws material, but by wisdom, Truth, and Love. (*Misc 354:22*)

Elsewhere in *Miscellaneous Writings*, Mrs. Eddy speaks of humility as "the stepping-stone to a higher recognition of Deity" and explains:

The mounting sense gathers fresh forms and strange fire from the ashes of dissolving self, and drops the world. Meekness heightens immortal attributes only by removing the dust that dims them. Goodness reveals another scene and another self seemingly rolled up in shades, but brought to light by the evolutions

of advancing thought, whereby we discern the power of Truth and Love to heal the sick. (*Misc 1:15*)

The Authority and Humility of Christian Science Nursing

So how does all of this relate to Wide Horizon and Christian Science nursing? One thing we can be assured of is that Mrs. Eddy's revelation of Christian Science for this present age included the complete means by which to experience health. And included within that provision was Christian Science nursing.

Christian Science nursing is provided for in our *Church Manual*, and we can't underestimate the role of the *Church Manual* in our demonstration of health. Every provision in our *Church Manual* governs and promotes the right action and care that is necessary for the proper demonstration of health in our practice of Christian Science, including the available support from Christian Science practitioners and Christian Science nurses.

We know Mrs. Eddy first made provision for Christian Science nursing in the *Church Manual* in 1908. And as with each provision in our *Church Manual*, this was far from a personal opinion or edict. In an extract of a letter from Mrs. Eddy, she explains:

The Rules and By-Laws in the Manual of The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston, originated not in solemn conclave as in ancient Sanhedrim. They were not arbitrary opinions nor dictatorial demands, such as one person might impose on another. They were impelled by a power not one's own, were written at different dates, and as the occasion required. They sprang from necessity, the logic of events, — from the immediate demand for them as a help that must be supplied to maintain the dignity and defense of our Cause; hence their simple, scientific basis, and detail so requisite to demonstrate genuine Christian Science, and which will do for the race what absolute doctrines destined for future generations might not accomplish. (*Man 3:1*)

Of course, the provision for Christian Science nursing in the *Church Manual* necessarily comes under the authority of the Christian Science seal that we spoke of earlier.

Despite the revelation to Mrs. Eddy of each provision in the *Church Manual*, including her provision of Christian Science nursing, do we ever talk ourselves out of calling a Christian Science nurse or of going to Wide Horizon when there might be a need? Why

is that? Consider this statement from our Leader about the *Church Manual* in *Miscellany* when she states:

Its rules apply not to one member only, but to one and all equally. Of this I am sure, that each Rule and By-law in this Manual will increase the spirituality of him who obeys it, invigorate his capacity to heal the sick, to comfort such as mourn, and to awaken the sinner. (*My* 230:9)

Don't those words naturally extend to the *Manual* provision for Christian Science nursing? If we are ever feeling resistant to the need to call on Christian Science nursing for support, know that the resistance isn't coming from God.

In those situations, are we viewing Christian Science nursing as a provision from God? Are we appreciating it to be an act of compassion that supports the human and divine coincidence - our working out of the human condition in a manner consistent with relying on spiritual means for healing? Are we accepting Mrs. Eddy's vision that occasion requires the provision of Christian Science nursing and that it springs from necessity? Are we understanding it to be scientific and requisite to our progress of demonstrating genuine Christian Science? And do we realize how it serves to maintain the dignity and defense of our Cause? Mrs. Eddy clearly would not have provided for such care as a necessary element in our *Church Manual* if she didn't feel it was necessary to our reliance on Christian Science for healing.

Why might Christian Science nursing be necessary to someone relying on Christian Science for healing? Well, we all strive to experience instantaneous healing. It is always the high goal in our practice of Christian Science. But what about when we may not be experiencing instantaneous healing? Does that present any less an opportunity to experience healing through Christian Science? Of course not. But it does require a little more realization on our part. And we must do so with practicality and responsibility in a manner that not only helps us progress in our practice, but helps humanity to see and accept Christian Science for what it is.

Mrs. Eddy doesn't leave those practicing Christian Science teetering on an all or nothing cliff of instantaneous healing. Rather, she knew that we had much to learn in "earth's preparatory school." She even goes so far as to describe the method of treatment through mental argument when we are not yet healing instantaneously. Mrs. Eddy

explains in *Science and Health* that this mental argument is a human auxiliary that aids us

. . . in bringing thought into accord with the spirit of Truth and Love, which heals the sick and the sinner. (*SH* 454:31)

And she expected us to use mental argument in our treatment until we experience instantaneous healing.

In her article “The Way,” Mrs. Eddy speaks to the practical unfoldment of Christian Science healing in our experience, explaining that you should:

. . . continue the mental argument in the practice of Christian healing until you can cure without it instantaneously, and through Spirit alone. (*Misc* 359:5)

Much like this human auxiliary of Christian Science treatment through mental argument, Christian Science nursing is nothing more than a human auxiliary that aids us in bringing thought into accord with the spirit of Truth and Love, practically supporting our healing in a manner consistent with the practice of Christian Science.

It is only natural to turn to Christian Science nursing as needed in our healing practice until we experience healing instantaneously. Too often, we get tricked into thinking that we don’t need Christian Science nursing. But isn’t that just pride talking? And if pride is making noise, it’s going to be a lot harder to hear what we need to address the problem. The sooner we get out WD-humility to silence the noise of pride, the sooner we will be experiencing that God-given ability to realize our spiritual perfection.

Aren’t the qualities of humility and selflessness natural elements of Christian Science nursing, whether on the giving or receiving end of this care? It is the patient’s letting go of ego or self-will that might be getting in the way of healing, and yielding to God’s provision. It is the clarity of the Christian Science nurse to not see a flawed material condition. It is the compassion of washing another’s feet and our willingness to allow another to wash our feet. It is our consensus that God’s healing omnipresence is not limited to a particular place or condition. It is the recognition that God’s infinitude meets every need.

And turning to Christian Science nursing when we are honest with ourselves about the need is consistent with following the instruction of our Leader. Of course, Mrs. Eddy instructed us to follow her only so far as she follows Christ. We might consider an

example of Christian Science nursing that Jesus gave us in the healing of Jairus' daughter who was reported to be dead by the time Jesus arrived at the house. Sensing the tumultuous environment created by the wailing of those in the room, followed by their laughing and scorn when Jesus assured them that she was not dead, but sleeping, Jesus had them removed. He cleansed the mental environment so that there was a proper atmosphere for this healing to take place. This is one of the key contributions that Christian Science nursing brings to our healing experience - ensuring that there are no distractions in the form of friends and family, to do lists, social engagements or other elements competing for our attention.

And most importantly, Christian Science nursing introduces to our experience a witness, which, together with a Christian Science practitioner, strives to see us as God sees us. In our toughest moments, we need that witness, especially when we are having trouble seeing it for ourselves. Jesus instructed us that

. . . where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. (*Matt 18:20*)

The Christian Science practitioner, Christian Science nurse and patient each have their own roles, but all work together as witnesses that gather in the name of Christ to witness the divine presence in our lives.

Don't ever allow yourself to be fooled into thinking that you are above or beyond the provision for Christian Science nursing. We can't take Christian Science nursing lightly or think it doesn't apply to us. It directly applies to each of us.

As we move forward in our healing practice, and we all need to be moving forward, let's not forget the authority behind our healing practice, and the humility that advances us to the highest sense of health one can possibly experience under this authority.

Thank you!