

Seeking First the Kingdom

What is the ruling motive in our thought as we go to our work each day?



Louise Wheatley Cook Hovnanian, CSB

Since the process of making a living has always been attended with difficulty ever since the day when Adam began to get his supply from matter and to earn his bread in the sweat of his face, it is not surprising that quite as many persons seem to be struggling with what is popularly termed "the business problem" as with any other phase of human experience. We are all busy at something, and we want that something to be successful, and if it is not successful we want to know why. "Why?" is the cry of the ages; and to humanity's appeal Christian Science makes compassionate reply, for it teaches that if anything seems wrong or unjust or unsuccessful, we have a right to know why. Hence it is as proper and legitimate to bring our financial problem to Christian Science for solution as it is to bring one which is called purely physical.

To the young student of Christian Science, however, some perplexities often arise along this line. It matters not what his business may be, whether it be selling groceries or running a bank, or financing a new business, or driving a streetcar, he who enlists the services of a Christian Science practitioner to help him, usually finds that his former theories about business must undergo a radical readjustment before he can hope to make any progress in solving his problem metaphysically. Whatever he may have been doing, the first thing he has to learn is that in reality there is just one business, and that is the "Father's business," of which Jesus spoke, and it is never in matter at all.

Another thing which the student quickly learns is that he cannot come to Christian Science to "put through" any specific business deal. The man who fancies he can turn to this religion to make money is laboring under a grave mistake. Although a lack of anything which is good, desirable, and essential is not in accord with God's government, and can be and should be overcome by right thinking, yet to attempt to utilize metaphysical treatment for the purpose of material gain is seriously to misunderstand the nature and purpose of this pure and undefiled religion. It is not the business of Christian Science to accumulate matter for any one. A treatment is not given in order that a small supply of matter shall straightway become a larger form of the same thing. A correct treatment, on the contrary, would include the realization that since "all is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation" (Science and Health, p. 468), there is no matter, and hence no material business.

Reprinted from
The Christian Science Journal,
November 1916

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To the man, for instance, who has a stock of hardware to sell, it is not always easy at first to make clear the fact that his real problem is purely spiritual, since Christian Science deals with thoughts and not with things; yet it is obvious that it can not deal with matter in what is termed a financial problem any more than in one which is called physical, if there is no matter to start with. When a mortal believes he is sick, one does not treat sick matter so that it shall presently become well matter. We must look away from matter altogether, to behold the imperishable, indestructible, changeless perfection of God's spiritual creation; and when this is done, the false belief calling itself a man who is sick, disappears from consciousness. What is the difference between a sick man and a sick business? Metaphysically speaking, there is none whatever. A false belief is never anything but a false belief, whether it names itself lack of health or lack of money. It is only a lie, an illusion, "nothing claiming to be something" (Science and Health, p. 330), and the truth destroys it.

Mortals, however, sometimes seem to love to continue in the footsteps of their progenitor, and to look to matter to supply their needs, even though it has failed them time and time again. Instead of saying: "I need God. I need to be good. I need to grow more to the 'measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,'" mortal mind says: "I need to sell this piece of real estate. I need a position. I need a music pupil. I need proper recognition of my services. I need five dollars." Manifold, truly, are the specific forms of human need, each clamoring for consideration! And yet there is but one need, and that is to know God.

The wise practitioner understands this, but the so-called patient does not; in fact he heartily disagrees with it. He wants the five dollars first, and to know about God afterward. This is not, however, in accord with the method which Christ Jesus pointed out when he said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." They are added just as a sick man's restoration to health is "added,"—as a natural and inevitable result of his better understanding of God.

There was once a marriage feast at Cana of Galilee when the wine gave out. Jesus was told of it, but was it his business to provide wine? Not at all. The moment this seeming sense of lack was brought to his attention his realization of his Father's limitless spiritual abundance was so perfect and complete that whatever called itself the material need of the moment was instantly supplied.

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It was not Jesus' true business to turn the water into wine; it became wine because, according to the marriage customs of those days, wine was the need of the moment, and no human need, in the bright light of that spiritually illumined consciousness, could remain unsupplied. Wine was not, however, the real point at issue; it was simply "added" as an incidental. In like manner so will all that we need today be added when we apply scientific right thinking, as did our Master, to all the emergencies of daily life. Whatever the need may call itself, we may safely trust its fulfilment to God, whose boundless love is amply able to supply all good.

In the mean time, while we are waiting to see this eternal, ever-present good made manifest, suppose we stop outlining what we should have. Some one has written,—

So weak is [mortal] man,
So ignorant and blind, that did not God
Sometimes withhold a mercy which we ask,
We should be ruined at our own request.

How can we, how dare we, outline our path and then implore divine intelligence to permit us to walk in it? Our Leader has reminded us that "the wisdom of man is not sufficient to warrant him in advising God" (Science and Health, p. 3). Prayer which demands a specific answer is not prayer at all, as Christian Science understands it. Prayer is the joyous acknowledgment of perfect God, perfect man, and a perfect universe, wherein there is nothing left undone, unfinished, unsupported, or unsupplied. Prayer is the glad realization that God has already done all. Can we not trust Him to care for His own work? Would it be in the nature of Love to make a world and then go away and forget it?

Instead of worrying over the future, let us rise each morning to greet the coming day with a heart full of gratitude for its radiant possibilities. Was yesterday dark and dreary? Do storm-clouds seem gathering for tomorrow? Let us be glad that we live in the eternal now, and see in each new dawn only a thing of fresh hope and promise. Let us drive out the dark shadows of fear, anxiety, discouragement, and human responsibility, that in their place may shine the rainbow tints of joy, gratitude, patience, and a glorified trust which is ready to cry out as did Jesus, "Father, I thank thee," even before Lazarus came forth.

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In those sweet, stilisha once asked the woman of old in her time of need, "What hast thou in l moments before the work of the day begins, let us ask ourselves, as the prophet Elthe house?" Let us take a mental inventory, and discover what we are holding in consciousness. Are we sufficiently grateful for what we already have? Are we making as good use of it as we can? Are we sharing it with others? Are we overlooking present opportunities in longing for new ones? Are the channels open for God's abundance to reach us, or are we ourselves unconsciously closing them by indulging in self-pity, pride, bitterness, resentment, envy, and condemnation of others? Is self looming large in our daily walk and conversation? Are we much more concerned about getting than giving?

What is the ruling motive in our thought as we go to our work each day,—the desire to make money that we may fancy ourselves rich, or the desire to share with others our rich spiritual blessings, that nobody may be poor? In short, are we seeking first the kingdom, leaving all else to be added in God's own time and way?

Let us endeavor to get a better estimate of values, to see things in their right proportion. One may hold a copper cent so close to his eyes that if the most beautiful sunset in the world were just beyond, he would never see it. Sometimes we sit staring so long at our so-called business problem that we become self-mesmerized and are able to see nothing else. Suppose we turn it over to God for a while. Have we not been standing long enough at a certain window, looking wistfully out for the thing which never comes? Perhaps the reason it has never come is that we are looking out of the wrong window. Suppose we walk away altogether, just for a little while, and give it a chance to get in from whatever direction God sends it. Suppose we remember that other people seem to have problems too. Why not help them a little? Let us see what we can do for some one else. There are so many sweet, simple, unselfish things which we can do while we are waiting on God, things which cost not always money, but only love and compassion and a tender brotherly-kindness. It sometimes happens that while we are doing these things our own problem takes advantage of our absence to solve itself while we are not looking.

Then let every weary heart staggering along under the belief of a business problem take courage, for the problem is not his at all, but God's. Does everything seem to be going wrong? Let him remember that nothing can go wrong, since God is All and does all. God, divine Mind, governs, guides, controls, maintains, supports, and supplies His spiritual universe, including man. His creation is finished, perfect, complete.

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He made all "in the beginning," and His work, His business, so to speak, is to maintain this allness in its original perfection. He impels, inspires, and directs every action of His every idea, controls every emergency, and is the cause of every real effect.

Since every idea was created as a part of God's all-inclusive plan, there is not an idle, useless, or superfluous idea in existence. Each was created to fill its respective place and to do its allotted work. Its position is the place it occupies in divine Mind, from which it can never be displaced, misplaced, or replaced. As God's spiritual reflection, man has boundless opportunities, infinite capabilities, ceaseless occupation. His capital is Mind's resources, unlimited and ever available. Since the reflection of good can never lack anything which is good, man already possesses all he requires to conduct his business harmoniously, uninterruptedly, and perfectly. His business, being the reflection of God's business, must be active, progressive, productive, prosperous, and successful now.

What, then, has man to do, if God has already done all? Man's work is to stand as a grateful witness of this allness, to rejoice each day more understandingly in his unity with God. Mrs. Eddy says: "God, without the image and likeness of Himself, would be a nonentity, or Mind unexpressed. He would be without a witness or proof of His own nature. Spiritual man is the image or idea of God, an idea which cannot be lost nor separated from its divine Principle" (Science and Health, p. 303). This, then, is the divine copartnership, God and His idea (the only partnership which really exists), and in this indissoluble spiritual union each takes a part. God's part, or business, is to maintain His universe, and man's business is to know that He is doing it.

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For more than a century, people have been searching for answers and turning to Christian Science. Today, more than ever, honest seekers for Truth are joining together to share ideas and contribute to a growing Movement that has brought healing and comfort to countless individuals and communities worldwide. Christian Science Today, a non-profit organization, offers a comprehensive library of Christian Science materials for study as well as public and private workshops that reinforce the original teachings of Mary Baker Eddy.

P.O. Box 18304
Denver, Colorado 80218-0304

info@christiansciencetoday.org
phone: 303.292.3439
toll-free: 800.352.7612