

**Clearview Home Annual Gathering 2023 Inspirational Talk by Scott Shivers, C.S.
Christian Science Healing – a fresh promise - a rich reward**

The talk focused on the richness of God's promises expressed through His loving care and the enduring power of the Word to bless and heal.

God's promises. They are intrinsic in every prayer, whether we're offering a prayer of affirmation where we acknowledge God's supremacy or a prayer of petition where we humbly reach out to the Divine for answers. The underlying foundation is that God is present and that His law always governs our lives. You might say God is giving us His word. And it is because of this trust in our Father that we pray. As the Bible assures us, "...God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he swore unto thy fathers: And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee." (Deut. 7:12 God).

That's such an important reminder. Our practice of Christian Science healing is based on this foundation of the living promise of God's love as a present and practical help. Far from mere human effort and well wishes it is the expression of a scientific law rooted in the power of the Word.

Each idea, each loved passage, each citation from the Bible and the textbook, is filled with the fullness of the covenant, this promise, God makes with His children. God has been making — and keeping — promises for eternity. In example after example throughout the Scriptures (from Genesis to Revelation) we see those promises made and kept.

It is helpful to remember the company we keep. We are journeying with Abraham and seeing all that God has given us. Humbly like Moses, we are coming to understand the "all power" of God. With our own set of smooth stones, we are running with David to face and defeat Goliath. Standing beside Elisha and his servant, we are surrounded by the horses and chariots of fire. And together with so many honest seekers, we are sitting in rapt attention on the Mount of Beatitudes listening to the Master. More than a mere historical record, the efficacy of those experiences empowers the spiritual fact of the ideas we are sharing today. The example of their lives and their struggles answered through turning to and trusting in God, shine as lights on our paths today, helping us to take those forward steps and recognize the present reality of God in *our* lives. As God was with them, so God is with us right here, right now.

More than nice ideas from a time long since lived, they are living truths — vibrant, relevant, present, and eternal spiritual ideas and facts. Because God loved those individuals enough to help them, to meet their very needs and to

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answer their questions and prayers, because of His love for them, He loves us just the same.

That same Love, that same Principle, that same Spirit, that same Mind is right here and oh that is such a rich promise with an even richer blessing. This present-day reminder of this rich promise elevates our perspective. The trials and issues we face, viewed from this lens suddenly don't seem quite as impressive. Are we lacking the resources, the people, or the inspiration we feel is essential for our work? Are we struggling to find answers, feeling alone and embattled? Do we feel the world is against us and that we just can't catch a break? At various times there's probably not one of us who has been exempt from those challenging thoughts and experiences. But it is well to remember this Scriptural record that affirms God's enduring care. So, it is we today can acknowledge His presence, humbly yielding to His grace, and meekly following that path of discovery, renewal, and restoration that helps us, like those who went before us, face these issues and through trust in God find answers.

This reminds me of a favorite passage from our textbook, "All that really exists is the divine Mind and its idea, and in this Mind the entire being is found harmonious and eternal. The straight and narrow way is to see and acknowledge this fact, yield to this power, and follow the leadings of truth" (SH 151:26).

Every real and true promise has its origin in Mind, but it serves us well to remember this fact, to pause and take notice. But more than just seeing this idea, as Mrs. Eddy reminds us, we also have to acknowledge it, yield to it, and then follow it. Far from something abstract, what we're seeing, acknowledging, yielding to, and following is that divine law, the very word of God establishing everything that was made to be in His image after His likeness and even further to be always and only very good.

The first step is opening thought, a "readiness to will" in the words of Paul (see II Cor 8:11) that enables us to better see. We must open thought to see the truth of God, His love, and the power of the one Mind. Thought stuck in the darkness of complaint, doubt, fear, always arguing for the error against the truth, to quote Mrs. Eddy, amounts "to nothing in the right direction and very much in the wrong" (see SH 172:3). We are always thinking so we might as well be thinking rightly. And as a first step let's be always ready to open thought to see the glory of God. The next step is to acknowledge just what it is we've seen. You might see someone across the room, but without acknowledging them you potentially come across as rude. We want to ensure we are paying attention and realize the

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importance of these facts of divine Science always coming to consciousness. The nature of God is to make Himself known to His ideas. God is not hidden or mysterious. It feels like that sometimes only because we either aren't looking or perhaps, we are thinking it should be a certain way and thus fail to acknowledge the reality of the answer right before us.

Have we ever thought it is so difficult to hold to the truths we are striving to know. From the standpoint of the dream, that may appear to be the case, but in truth, doing so is natural, beautiful, and easy as we acknowledge the fact that God is All, that His love embraces us, and is the only reality of our being. You might say while seeing is an openness and readiness in thought, acknowledging is the proof that we are actually paying attention and are ready to do something about it.

Next, in yielding, we are actually doing something. We might at first see something new in the teachings or hear something at a church service, but the question remains, what are we going to do about it? By acknowledging it we realize its value and importance. More so then, we aren't going to let it go. By yielding in thought we are going to stop and challenge ourselves to see it for what it is as an idea of God. In this way, we bring this promise to bear on our lives. Sometimes it's like that lightbulb experience and everything becomes crystal clear in an instant. But at other times, and perhaps more frequently, we learn the value of persistence.

This is the dedication to continue working, growing, and listening such that we gain a fresh perspective and are willing to continue to work to see an idea in a new light where in humility we approach it with a fresh perspective. You might say we take the idea into consciousness and mull it over, take it apart, put it back together, and working to reason through it, at which point it's not just some great idea "out there" that we've heard or read, it now is part of us, we've begun to make it our own. Those Bible stories aren't distant lessons and examples but present-day proof that we too are able to do the very same work and then some. And in this yielding in thought an essential point is our full and complete admission that the idea to which we are yielding is true.

Lastly, then we follow. What I love so much about this, is for us to follow, someone has already taken the lead — the Christ, that tangible expression of God's love for each of us right here and right now. Having seen, acknowledged, and yielded it is natural for us to be led in the right direction. This brings manifold blessings and along the way continues to strengthen our trust. In speaking of her

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own experience at demonstrating just these ideas Mrs. Eddy writes, "... when the spiritual sense of the creed was discerned in the Science of Christianity, this spiritual sense was a present help. It was the living, palpitating presence of Christ, Truth, which healed the sick" (see SH 351:11).

The talk then addressed the promise that moves our prayers beyond idle words to an active expression of faith.

Mere human effort isn't Science. Just spouting ideas we've memorized or heard, such as "God is Love, God is Love, God is Love" and other similar well-loved and often helpful citations and passages have little effect on thought without the conviction of spiritual understanding, but I do like to think of them as a starting point—a willingness to begin to look in the right direction and at least start to accept God's promises. That shift in thought from a fixation on the depraved sense testimony to even just a willingness to let it go is an important first step in breaking the mesmeric hold.

Mrs. Eddy writes in the textbook, "The utterance of truth is designed to rebuke and destroy error" (SH 233:29-30). And later she affirms, "Truth cannot be contaminated by error. The statement that Truth is real necessarily includes the correlated statement, that error, Truth's unlikeness, is unreal" (SH 287:32). By their very nature, by their very design, words of Truth rebuke and destroy the false claims of material sense testimony. This is because Truth is real, and error is unreal. Were the claims of the carnal mind to have any legitimacy, to have reality in God, Christ Jesus wouldn't have destroyed them. As the Master said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. 5:17).

Time and again, the Master recognized the power of a simple faith that had the courage to turn from the picture of discord or disease and seek out the Christ. Our willingness, with hearts full of faith, to speak the truth is akin to reaching out and touching the hem of his garment (see Matt 9:20-22). Words of truth uttered in humble acknowledgment necessarily include that same faith as those calling from the roadside seeking the power of the Christ (see Matt 20:30-34). Speaking of this faith, the Master instructs, "... If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matt. 17:20 If). Let us rest assured in the power of that promise. Even the tiniest bit of faith, "uttered or unexpressed" (see Hymn 284) includes the full power of God, the full might of

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Mind to reject and annihilate that which is not of God, that which could never be found in His creation.

Psalms 46 affirms, “Be still, and know that I am God:” (Ps. 46:10 (to :)). This is a helpful reminder. “Not human platitudes, but divine beatitudes, reflect the spiritual light and might which heal the sick” (SH 446:25-27). So, it is our stillness with God that gives impulse to our prayer — a holy state of consciousness that hears “the glad sound” and feels “the power of the Word” (see Hymn 298). It is the Spirit that necessarily informs the letter, wherein we feel that tenderness, that divine conviction, that angel whisper that inspires and heals.

So, whether from the mount of revelation or in the valley of despair, remember to take a moment and feel the powerful import of God’s promises.

O peace of the world, O hope in each breast,
O Bethlehem star that ages have blest,
A day of fresh promise breaks over the land,
Giant warfare is doomed, and God's kingdom at hand!
(Hymn. 236:1)