

## “Know thyself”

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The ancient counsel “Know thyself” has been expressed in many ways over the centuries. But it has new meaning for us when we realize true self-knowledge draws us nearer to God, man’s creator.

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TO know man as created by God is to understand that God created *each* of His children spiritually—free, happy, and complete. The more we learn of man as spiritual, the more we are able to lay off the material beliefs of existence in matter—and the ills that accompany them. We come to see that all good is from God and that this good is given freely to His idea, man—our true, spiritual identity. God brings only goodness and harmony to His child, but we can’t know ourselves as the man of God’s creating or love good without first knowing God and loving Him.

As we study the Scriptures and Mrs. Eddy’s writings, we find the instruction “Know thyself” in many forms. We see that the demand to understand our spiritual nature includes detecting and casting off whatever contradicts it. Then we reap the promise: the good works and regeneration that follow our understanding. Mrs. Eddy writes in *Science and Health*: “At all times and under all circumstances, overcome evil with good. Know thyself, and God will supply the wisdom and the occasion for a victory over evil.”<sup>1</sup> As we begin to know, to understand, our spiritual selfhood better, each of us can be obedient to the instructions Titus was given: “Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine . . . . In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good

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works.”<sup>2</sup> We can then speak with the authority of understanding, and the fruits of spiritual goodness will follow us.

To learn of our spiritual nature is to bring forth good works. Knowing that God made man spiritual—full of integrity and free—looses the material fetters of lack, hatred, insecurity. We can today begin changing false concepts of our identity as material for the true understanding of man as God made him. In fact we must do this, for *Science and Health* tells us, “Even though you aver that the material senses are indispensable to man’s existence or entity, you must change the human concept of life, and must at length know yourself spiritually and scientifically.”<sup>3</sup>

As we learn that we are not imperfect mortals trying to battle our way through dim, numbered days, but God’s loving children, we find ourselves better able to meet our challenges with dominion, peace, and confidence. Each day becomes a new opportunity to express spiritual love, joy, self-sacrifice, hope—a new opportunity to experience good. And as we break away from falsely thinking of ourselves as limited, living in matter, we find our true, spiritual identity: man created in God’s image and likeness. This newfound understanding enriches our nature and uplifts our lives. Seeing the good in our brother man becomes natural when we understand that the source of good is God, who has created all. Because God is the endless source of good, we can never lack the spiritual love, purity, truthfulness, and harmony that are inherently ours.

Expressing man’s Godlike nature, and seeing it in others, is the outgrowth of understanding that God loves His idea, man. We learn in Christian Science that because God is Love, man is loving; because God is Spirit, man is spiritual; because God is Truth, man is truthful. And when we see our fellowman expressing these spiritual qualities, we can be sure that he’s reflecting them from his Maker—our Maker. There isn’t any other

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source. Our unlimited opportunity, then, is to understand our relationship to God better—to know man spiritually.

Breaking away from the false concept of ourselves as mortals living in matter to come to the true understanding of spiritual man doesn't have to wait for tomorrow or until the children are off to school or until our spouse has gone to work. Understanding our spiritual self—the only self we have—can begin right now. And it begins in thought. But such spiritual rebirth also takes persistence. As Mrs. Eddy writes: "The new birth is not the work of a moment. It begins with moments, and goes on with years; moments of surrender to God, of childlike trust and joyful adoption of good; moments of self-abnegation, self-consecration, heaven-born hope, and spiritual love."<sup>4</sup>

This new birth has already begun in each one of us. We nurture it by turning to God to learn more of our true, spiritual identity. Knowing ourselves in this way enriches our nature. Although our nature may seem to need a great deal of enlarging and enriching, the needed expansion of our love, joy, and beauty takes place as we recognize God as the source of all genuine poise, grace, and loveliness. Broadening our understanding of our true, spiritual nature, we will express this nature more consistently. Such spiritualization of thought and aspiration brings our lives into harmony with God.

At one point in my own experience, for example, I felt I lacked proper companionship. As I prayed to learn more of my true spiritual nature, I began to understand something of my God-given completeness. As my understanding that I had all good from God grew, I realized that my true spiritual nature was joyous, truthful, pure, loving, and free. As I saw that I was already the reflection of God and that I didn't need "someone else" to make me complete, this enrichment of my understanding opened new avenues to meet people. And, in a very natural way, I met the man who later became my husband.

During this experience my prayer showed me more clearly that God's man naturally expresses the fullness of his spiritual

nature; and that because God is divine Mind and man is God's creation, God and man can never be separated. I realized that *this* was the companionship I had been yearning for—a better understanding of God and of my relationship to Him. And I saw that the qualities I had been searching for are found in our experience as we begin to see God's children revealed in the light of spiritual creation. I had discovered that praying to enrich our own nature and to understand man as spiritual brings joy and affection into our experience.

Being obedient to the spiritual demands of the instruction "Know thyself" enlarges our perspective of God and His idea, man. It opens the closed, hard doors that would seem to imprison us in lack and reveals the brightness of spiritual understanding. We find our spiritual completeness already intact.

<sup>1</sup> *Science and Health*, p. 571. <sup>2</sup> Titus 2:1, 7. <sup>3</sup> *Science and Health*, p. 359.  
<sup>4</sup> *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 15.

*I have called upon thee,  
for thou wilt hear me, O God:  
incline thine ear unto me,  
and hear my speech. . . .  
As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness:  
I shall be satisfied, when I awake,  
with thy likeness.*

Psalms 17:6, 15