

EDITORIALS

The ultimate answer to the plaintive "Why?"

Everybody looks for answers to the hard questions of human existence. Christian Science helps with answers and—most important—leads to healing.

True metaphysics—Christian metaphysics

What Christ Jesus brought to the world was so much more than a mental technique for "altering" consciousness. It was the saving truth of God, which redeems and transforms our whole life.

FOR CHILDREN

Staying with God

By *Camille H. MacKusick*

Can we really feel God with us?

TESTIMONIES

Accounts of contemporary Christian healing. Individuals from all walks of life give specific examples of ways the power of Spirit has brought physical healing, freedom, and greater commitment to God into their lives.

LECTURES

A current list of public lectures on Christian Science, including places, dates, and times.

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Founded in 1898 by Mary Baker Eddy, author of the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*

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Taking our steps with God

Confused? Undecided? Turning to God in prayer brings spiritual guidance to decisionmaking.

Lynn A. Gray Jackson

A CLOSE friend of mine had been receiving calls from various personnel agencies offering him new jobs with various companies. Each agency seemed to be making its offers unceasingly, and my friend became confused about whether he should accept any of them. He began to pray to understand better the truth of man's spiritual nature, his inseparability from his Maker. He prayed to learn how to listen, and follow God's messages. He prayed to let God's will be done and to hear His will clearly and understandably.

My friend had been praying for a few days when the answer came, "Don't accept these offers!" At first he doubted this was the right message. Because the answer didn't fit in with his preconceived ideas of how the decision should work out, he felt fearful. But as he prayed more he began to understand that God is ever present and that he could always hear the divine message. He learned that he didn't have to be influenced by indecision, fear, or stagnation, because God made him intelligent, unafraid, and active. He no longer felt helpless, but able to express

control, competence, and God's authority over his thoughts and actions, in short, over his life. Unhappiness and depression were replaced with happiness and spiritual advancement. He was listening for God's voice and could trustingly follow His guidance.

My friend felt confident in declining the job offers he was receiving. He knew it was right to stay where he was. Within two weeks of his decision he was offered a promotion with the company he worked for. More quiet prayer and listening led him to accept the promotion the certainty that this was indeed the right step for him.

There are times when all of us find ourselves faced with critical and difficult decisions to make. At such times we may feel the weight of the decision resting heavily upon our shoulders. Worry and indecision may be so insistent that it seems there's no room for quiet listening and childlike trust in God's direction. It seems at these times that fear would overshadow all we have learned about God and about man's relationship to Him. Many times there's the desire to have someone else tell us what to do. Or we may turn to a companion or confidant, finding a sincere concern, perhaps, but no answer.

How can we learn to listen to God in order to make the right decisions? In situations like this it's helpful to understand that indecision is a false belief that there are two—or many—minds. It claims that there's our mind—a limited, mortal mind subject to indecision—and the one divine Mind that is God. If we were to believe the lie that there are two opposing minds, indecision could never be resolved and we would be hopeless, helpless, without God. But in Christian Science we learn that there is only one Mind, one God, and that man reflects this Mind. We learn, however, where true wisdom comes from—from God. Because God is the source of all intelligence and action, man, who is God's perfect reflection, knows because God knows, understands because God understands.

Because we have God to guide us in making decisions, we could never make them incorrectly. And since we are in truth God's image and likeness, we have everything we need to make the right decisions. When we understand that our true identity is God's spiritual reflection, man, we find ourselves expressing the qualities that we need to make right decisions: qualities such as humility, quietness, obedience, trust.

Christian Science teaches man's oneness with God, his inseparability from the divine Mind. We learn that there's never a moment when we can't hear the Word of God. There's never an instant when God isn't guiding us. We read in Isaiah: "Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go" and "The Lord shall guide thee continually."¹

As we pray for God's guidance in our daily experience, He shows us His way; He shows us how to listen for His thoughts and how to implement them in our everyday lives. God is a God of love. He is Love; and man, as His perfect child, spontaneously and naturally obeys and follows this one God. We learn of our ability as man, God's child, to listen spontaneously and naturally for His message, His direction, His command, and to follow swiftly that command. Following God's command is just as important as hearing it. There's no use hearing His command if we don't intend to follow it. Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, writes in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, "Adhere to the divine Principle of Christian Science and follow the behests of God, abiding steadfastly in wisdom, Truth, and Love."²

When we quietly and humbly pray to God we are indicating a willingness to listen to Him. Unfeigned listening to God, when rightly practiced, will never lead us wrong. But many times the

If we believe there are two minds—ours and God's—we may never resolve indecision. But true wisdom starts with having one Mind, one God.

message we hear from God does not fit our preconceived plan of how things should work out. It may not fit in with our human sense of logic. What can we do in a situation like this? How can we be sure we are hearing God's message and not just following our own human will?

If we are not sure that the message we are hearing is from God, we can keep on listening to the "still small voice," the divine message, until we *are* sure. By following as much of the divine message as we're able to perceive, by putting full trust in God and His ability to lead each of us to the right solution, and by leaning on and listening only to Him, the All-knowing Mind, we will receive the message clearly, understandably, and vividly. When the message from God is clearly received, it's best to follow the message unreservedly. And if we are persistently listening and following, persistently petitioning to the divine loving God, our prayers will be answered. *Science and Health* poses this question: "Are we benefited by praying?" It then assures us, "Yes, the desire which goes forth hungering after righteousness is blessed of our Father, and it does not return unto us void."³

Although it may seem sometimes that in deciding we may take many detours, many side roads, many forks, in the end—when the conclusion is reached—it doesn't matter how many side roads we took, or how many forks we came to, or how many times we may have detoured. It only matters that we are in our right place, where God has led us. We can be sure God is at the helm.

In our daily life we can pray to be firm in our understanding of God and His guidance. Prayer is effective. It enables one to be certain, resolute, calm, fearless, and attentive to God's voice in making a decision. Decisions can be made with direct, unerring precision because we are daily becoming more acquainted with the unerring divine Mind that leads and governs us each hour. To know what to do is natural to the man God made. Prayer teaches us to listen attentively and respond quickly and obediently, taking our steps with God, not before Him nor after

Him, but with Him. As Mrs. Eddy writes: "The disobedient make their moves before God makes His, or make them too late to follow Him. Be sure that God *directs* your way; then, hasten to follow under every circumstance."⁴

We can wait and listen to hear God's direction: "This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."⁵ And then we are able to follow with assurance.

¹ Isa. 48:17; 58:11. ² *Science and Health*, p. 495. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 2. ⁴ *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 117. ⁵ Isa. 30:21.

But God

If you want a wonderful experience, take your New Testament and use a concordance to look up the two little words, "but God." See how many times human resources have been brought to an utter end; despair has gripped the heart and pessimism and gloom has settled upon a people; and there is nothing that can be done. Then see how the Spirit of God writes in luminous letters, "But God," and the whole situation changes into victory.

Ray C. Stedman

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