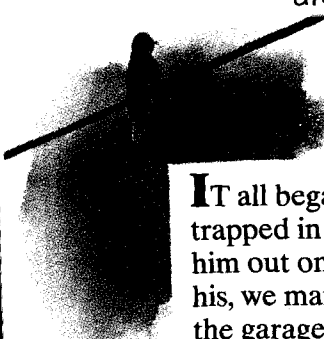


The door to freedom is open

Willingness to let go of fear, and expectancy of healing, are crucial elements in prayer.

Lynn G. Jackson



IT all began early on a Saturday morning. A bird was trapped in our fireplace. After a few attempts to shoo him out on our part and a couple of false flying starts on his, we managed to get him into the garage. But although the garage doors were open all day, he didn't move. He hid behind the lawn mower. By afternoon he'd succeeded in landing on the garage door springs. All day I wondered why he didn't escape. Certainly there was plenty of room to fly—there was an exit I felt he couldn't miss! In the evening we closed the garage doors and left him some food. The next morning when my daughter and husband went into the garage, the bird finally took flight for his freedom, soaring to the housetop across the street.

Rather than sit all day with his back to the open doors, why didn't the bird immediately escape when his opportunity for freedom was present? I didn't have an answer. But then the real thought-provoking question came: Do I ever sit with my back to the door of freedom? Do I give in to fear, disorientation, and limitation?

In my experience, I've found that many who believe in God

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frequently profess that God, good, is All, and that man, according to the Scriptures, is His perfect image and likeness, and then resign themselves to an inadequate income, sickness, or lack of opportunity. Some who study Christian Science may vehemently stick to the words, and yet doubt that a challenge will be healed quickly and fully. Why this gulf between what we profess to be true and what we practice? What is it that blocks our spiritual progress? In short, it's often fear.

Fear pulls our thought toward matter and away from Spirit, God. Unless we make a consecrated, prayerful effort, we find our thought resting on the limitations of matter rather than on the freedom of Spirit.

Freedom must begin in thought before it can be expressed in experience. Often the need is to deepen and expand our understanding of God and of man's spiritual being. We do this through consecrated prayer and decisive practice. Then our freedom *will* be manifested. As Christ Jesus taught his disciples, "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21).

Not long ago I was preparing to take a trip to another city when my telephone rang. As I turned to walk across the room, I hit my foot on a piece of furniture, damaging a toe quite severely. I could hardly walk, and the toe looked out of place.

I called a Christian Science practitioner to pray for me and told her of my impending trip, which couldn't be postponed. It was difficult to trust that I could be healed within the few days before I had to leave. In fact, I even spent one day searching for a pair of shoes for the trip that could accommodate the swollen foot. As I was doing this the thought came to me very strongly: "Do you doubt that this can be healed? Why aren't you expecting a healing?" This startled me because I felt that

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since I had prayed and called a practitioner, I did expect a healing—but obviously I didn't expect it immediately!

I went home and resolved to pray until I had the expectation that not only *could* I be healed before my trip, but that I *would* be. I promised myself that I would put truth into practice—that I would acknowledge only the presence of God and His power, and that I would no longer allow fear to pull my thought between the material picture and the spiritual truth of man. This took consecrated effort and trust, but in the middle of the day, as I crossed the living room floor declaring man's perfect, spiritual being to be intact, something in my foot snapped and the pain vanished. By the morning of the trip I was able to get a shoe on comfortably for the first time in several days. I had no problem traveling, carrying my luggage, or participating in my meetings. In fact, during my stay, I saw the practitioner I had called and shared with her (with walking proof) my newfound freedom.

I learned that God's kingdom—the divine Mind's perfect government of all things—is always at hand. Man, God's child, dwells within the reign of omnipresent Mind, God, and cannot possibly be shut out by fear or pain.

I also learned that God's presence is felt by those who actively *seek* His guidance and care. By searching for the *spiritual* solution to a problem—by turning our thought to divine Mind for the ideas we need—we find that the help we need is already present, within consciousness. It is the decision to let go of our difficulties that prepares us for spiritual advancement and freedom. Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, writes in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*: “Willingness to become as a little child and to leave the old for the new, renders thought receptive of the advanced idea. Gladness to leave the false landmarks and joy to see them disappear,—this disposition helps to precipitate the ultimate harmony” (pp. 323–324).

The pathway to freedom is well marked: genuine willingness to change our thought and to put truth into practice. Eagerness

to love more, to condemn less, and to be more grateful for good. Readiness to let God's thoughts be our thoughts. All of these lead us to healing. The Bible promises, “The Lord shall give that which is good” (Ps. 85:12).

Just like the bird, we often find that the door to freedom has been there all along. The answer to human troubles is always in an understanding of God and of man's perfect spiritual being as created by God, and in the consistent practice of conforming our thought and life to what we know is true of creator and creation.

The kingdom of God is ever present. God is good. And God's supreme government of man is our “open door” to freedom—and healing. Through prayer and deep-hearted searching we come to the spiritual understanding that man is always at the point of perfection.

With this corrected view you can “fly”—stretch your wings of spiritual understanding and claim your God-given freedom and usefulness.

