

The search for spirituality

"Isn't this something that we're all really looking for in spirituality—a practical understanding of our relation to God?"

BY LYNN
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THERE'S NO DOUBT of a growing quest for spirituality. Polls record today's seekers as feeling spiritually barren. A majority are seeking various modes—new cultures—including megachurches, evangelical movements, and New Age thought. The blending of the Eastern and Western mystical religions is evolving, and as one newspaper reports, "While very different, both New Age and evangelical spheres share a common 'this world' emphasis on personal growth and experience of the sacred" (*The Christian Science Monitor*; August 19, 1996).

Reports also suggest that as a result of this search, the traditional, mainline Christian churches are losing—losing adherents as well as attraction. Theologian David Wells points

out that one reason for this may be that "the message of redemption and understanding the character of Christ is something that has to be worked at and struggled with" (*ibid.*).

Yet, understanding the character of the Christ redeems us, and the more we learn of Christ Jesus' ways, the more we're able to conform our own lives to them. While it can be a struggle, the result—a relationship with God that is satisfying, calming, and healing—is well worth the work.

Perhaps Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer of Christian Science, recognized and foresaw the pull between the opposites of pantheistic theosophy, the new culture, and the quest for spirituality as found in traditional Christian churches. Her search for healing of invalid-

ism took her through many different religious and material theories. But all these different theories and means, including homeopathy, allopathy, and other methods, didn't heal her. However, she did find permanent healing through the Scriptures. She explains: "The world was dark. The oncoming hours were indicated by no floral dial. The senses could not prophesy sunrise or starlight.

"Thus it was when the moment arrived of the heart's bridal to more spiritual existence. When the door opened, I was waiting and watching; and, lo, the bridegroom came! The



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character of the Christ was illuminated by the midnight torches of Spirit. My heart knew its Redeemer. . . . Agnosticism, pantheism, and theosophy were void. Being was beautiful, its substance, cause, and currents were God and His idea. I had touched the hem of Christian Science" (*Retrospection and Introspection*, p. 23).

"My heart knew its Redeemer." She would spend the rest of her life clarifying and elucidating what she perceived, writing down the laws of God that had saved her. Through her

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textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, she explains just who the Redeemer is. Rather than a person to worship or an idol, the Redeemer is divine Truth, revealing the spiritual understanding of God and man—the understanding we can all seek as we walk the road of spirituality. It can be gained by all who sincerely search for who they are, what they are to do, how they are to be. In fact, Mrs. Eddy has devoted this book to "honest seekers for Truth" (*Science and Health*, p. xii).

Her writings indicate that she expected those who adhere to the teachings of Christian Science to apply what they learn to their everyday life. Otherwise her teachings, which are founded upon Christ Jesus' method of healing, remain theoretical. And isn't this something that we're all really looking for in spirituality—a practical understanding of our relation to God?

The practicality of Jesus' teach-

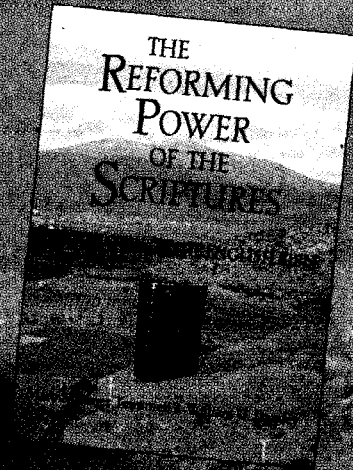
ings is found in the Science of Christianity, where spiritual truths are systematically applied to human lives and theory gives way to demonstration. This demonstration begins with God and is included within our thought—our own spiritual understanding of God and man's relation to Him. Then it needs to be practiced, *lived*. Jesus made practical the laws of God through healing. He didn't leave the laws of God to theory—nice thoughts, hopeful wishing, the mere calming of one's consciousness. He used the laws of God to prove God's power, presence, wholeness. His demonstration of spirituality culminated in his resurrection and ascension.

Religious worship is sidelined if left at church. Spirituality for an hour or two a week does little or nothing to help us progress, especially if it's forgotten when church is over. Spirituality that is lived, however, is useful twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year. It doesn't sit on a shelf withering away; rather, it grows and grows until it blesses everyone it touches.

The world's search for spirituality isn't new. It began when individuals first realized that they weren't self-made. The search has taken many detours and side roads over many centuries. But today, thanks to Christianity and its Science, there is a systematic, practical means for cultivating spirituality. It takes sincerity to follow this path. It takes a willingness to listen and to learn. But the rewards are ample for any sincere seeker.

The Reforming Power of the Scriptures

A Biography of the English Bible



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