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Inspiration That Stirs Action By Elise L. Moore

What is your purpose in reading this magazine? Curiosity? A search for a welcome feeling of calm and peace that you've found before in reading Christian Science literature? Some who read the *Sentinel* are searching for specific answers to specific challenges. Others want to learn more about God and the spiritual nature of man. Some want to heal. Others yearn to be healed.

Is your reading fulfilling your purpose? Are you being freed from fear by your study of the Bible and the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health* by Mrs. Eddy?

The answer is yes if you are inspired by your study to act in a wholly new way. Some meanings of *inspire* are to guide by divine influence, to animate, to have an enlivening effect. Our reading and study fulfill their purpose when we are inspired by God to put thoughts into action.

It isn't hard to see that falling asleep while studying is the opposite of being inspired! But so is reading page after page without consciously yielding one's thought to a new spiritual idea and apprehending it, without willingly letting go of fear, and without actively striving to live our inspiration today.

The human mind would limit the effectiveness of spiritual study by claiming that it is an armchair activity with little relation to daily experience. At best, some might say, it offers a momentary uplifting of thought. But Christ Jesus rebuked such a view by requiring his listeners (and that includes us as readers) to be truly inspired – to live vigorously what he taught.

In Matthew's Gospel, Christ Jesus concludes his Sermon on the Mount by comparing one who does his sayings to "a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." When trouble arose, the wise man's house stood firmly on the rock. One might say he built on the rock of Truth *demonstrated*.

Those who hear but do not alter their way of thinking and daily living were compared to the foolish man whose house, built on the sand, crumbled before a

storm, “and great was the fall of it.”¹ To me it seems that the sand is human apathy and blind faith and the storm a storm of fear.

The wise man builds his mental house on the unchangeable foundation of God as Spirit, present and all-powerful here and now. He recognizes that inspired thought comes from Spirit and reveals to him what is true and specifically applicable to his need. He persistently struggles to put aside fear or any other resistance to God’s power until his nature is radically changed – until it conforms more closely with the spiritual idea. This spiritualization of thought and action is the putting off of the old man and putting on of the new man described by Paul.² It is absolutely essential for individual progress.

Perhaps you have experienced the certainty of divine inspiration; one such instance has been especially memorable to me. One day while I was reading, Mrs. Eddy’s statement “God is All-in-all”³ stood out to me. I was familiar with this name for God, which she uses frequently throughout her writings. But instead of reading over it, as I had always done before, I felt impelled to ponder more deeply what God as All-in-all meant. This spiritual curiosity can be a first step toward inspiration.

The term *All-in-all* gave me a sense of God, Spirit, as infinite. But the concept seemed so immense that I felt insignificant. How could one love All-in-all?

One thing was clear; the word All-in-all did not mean “Spirit (All) in matter (all).” As Jesus’ parable of the tares and wheat shows, such opposites cannot mix.⁴ This recognition brought me another step toward inspiration, discerning between the tares and the wheat or between human reasoning and spiritual ideas.

I saw that the thought of God’s including both matter and Spirit was of human origin rather than divine. God is all-powerful Spirit, not a superhuman being, and man is entirely spiritual, created in the image and likeness of God. Spirit could not possibly include or be included in the opposite of itself, matter.

I turned to the Concordance to *Science and Health* and began to look for other references to God as All-in-all. In response to the question “What is the scientific statement of being?” part of Mrs. Eddy’s reply is “All is infinite Mind and its

¹ Matthew 7:24, 27

² See Ephesians 4:22-24

³ See, for example, *Science and Health* 113:16

⁴ See Matthew 13:24-30

infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all.”⁵ These familiar words shone with new meaning. I had always loved to think of God as divine Mind, the source of all good ideas, wisdom, and intelligence, and of myself as expressing the infinite divine Mind. Now I realized that the infinitude of Mind meant that Mind is all-inclusive. Mind includes its creation, spiritual man. I don’t just think God’s ideas; I am God’s idea, included within the All, God! The divine Mind and its idea, man, are not two separate entities. One supreme God embraces His creation, His manifestation, within His infinite being, and God’s allness is expressed by all He creates.

Gone was any self-satisfied intellectual agreement with a too-familiar phrase; it was replaced by an alive awareness of God’s encircling love. What a wonderful sense of closeness to God, of permanent safety! I felt enveloped within God, the all-powerful divine Love.

An inspired idea is, in a measure, the appearing of the Christ in individual consciousness. As we raise thought above mere human reasoning to perceive the divine idea, we are able to prove that Christ, Truth, removes ignorance, fear, and sin, thus healing and freeing mankind. As Jesus instructed, it is not enough to hear, we must live the divine inspirations that come to us. This is an indispensable step in inspiration: being more Christlike.

How did I live a more inspired sense of God as All-in-all? I recall one example. I was marching down a hallway to work, determined to berate a fellow employee for a frustrating and damaging mistake. On the way I noticed the sunshine streaming in a window at the end of the hall. The sunshine reminded me of God’s presence, and this gentle idea melted the stubborn resolve. I began to think of the all-embracing love of God, and of how God protects each of His children. Understanding this, I knew I was safe from another’s errors, and the other person was safe from any anger or self-righteousness on my part.

To live this inspiration I had to express love, not just think about it. I realized that infinite Mind already had a solution to the problem at hand and that this experience was simply another opportunity for me to live the inspiration of God as All-in-all.

Chastened by the Christ, I entered my colleague’s office calm and assured of our unity of purpose, not just as fellow employees but as God’s children. The problem was quickly and harmoniously resolved. Such small opportunities to demonstrate,

⁵ Science and Health, p 468

or put into practice, the inspiration of God as All-in-all were occasions for building a “house upon a rock.”

So, when a storm of fear came, I found I could safely stand, confident in the presence and power of God, the All-in-all. A man I knew stopped by my apartment after work one evening. When it came time for me to walk him to the door, he suddenly locked and chained it. Then he turned and pulled me toward him.

This man was quite strong; he had been a professional football player. His intentions were frightening. I had nowhere to turn but to God, and I instantly reached out to Him for help. By now, the surety of God’s all-presence and of man as included within His care was a permanent part of my thought and actions. I was freed from fear and also from ignorance as to what to say or do. While I don’t really recall the words now, I was able to speak calmly to the man. I felt the presence and protection of God with us both. Within moments he left. Both of us were safe.

Such an experience clearly shows that our study of the Bible and *Science and Health* and our reading of articles in Christian Science literature are not intellectual exercises to soothe us. Study and reading inspire us to challenge fear, limitation, and mere intellectual agreement with what we read. We will feel the truth of spiritual ideas as we separate, in our thought, human opinions from spiritual revelation and persist until our natures are actually changed by living our inspiration in practical experience. Then we are truly fulfilling the purpose of study. Our lives are made new by the light of the Christ, shining ever more clearly through our actions.