

CORRELATING CHRISTIAN SCIENCE WITH ACADEMICS

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First of all, I want to express my gratitude to each one of you for your part in supporting this Student Center. You have perceived an ideal here and are working to bring it out in a form that is tangible and helpful to others. I have to congratulate you for the success with which this is being achieved. I feel that the Student Center here at Madison is not only making its contribution to the University in general and to the students connected with it but is also presenting a model of what can be achieved with Christian Science as its impelling force.

Each of us here has accepted the teachings of Christian Science, We've accepted that there's one creative divine Mind, that this Mind is entirely good and intelligent and that we, in our true being, reflect

that Mind as a consciousness including all of the ideas this Mind conceives. We also identify each other person in his or her true being as reflecting this Mind completely. This is the metaphysical basis we start with. The world is continually challenging us to accept a material view of creation and to base our reasoning and our actions on this view. I think this is particularly strong at a university because the students are being compelled to think actively about many fields of human knowledge. When these are approached from a merely intellectual standpoint, there can be a real shaking of the spiritual foundations. But this isn't all that bad. Human thought is crying out for answers. It may not always realize the type of answers it's crying out for, but humanity deserves to have these answers, and that's where Christian Science is such a help. It enables the individual to uplift his view of academics, his view of relationships, and to see more clearly his

real purpose for being. As a person does gain these clearer views, he not only progresses himself but also is in a position to help others progress too.

Jesus expected his disciples to deal with the world's material viewpoints. He didn't think in terms of their withdrawing from the world but rather that they should overcome their false beliefs about the world. His words were (John 17:15), "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." In other words, good was to be experienced and expressed right where they were, and as they gave attention to this through the enlightenment of the Christ, they would continue to progress and they would help others to progress, too.

Mrs. Eddy saw that the purpose of Christian Science is to bring benefit to the individual and to humanity in accord with the mission of the Christ. In one place in Science and Health, she makes this plea

for scientific religion. She says, "Let our pulpits do justice to Christian Science. Let it have fair representation by the press." And she concludes (141:30), "Give to it the place in our institutions of learning now occupied by scholastic theology and physiology, . . .".

Now there isn't any provision in the Manual for Christian Science as such to be taught in institutions of learning. If Christian Science isn't to be taught as a subject, how then can it find a place in our institutions of learning? I don't know what the future will hold, but at present it can certainly find a place through the thinking of students and professors who are Christian Scientists and also in the thinking of each of us who are interested in seeing Christian Science represented in our institutions of learning. This means, of course, seeing how Christian Science can be related to what might be viewed as strictly material academics. I know this is a question I had to work out because

the teachings of Christian Science seem to contradict the material view of the world that we learn about in school.

I'd been raised in Christian Science, and I really loved its teachings. I was well acquainted with the stories in the Bible and appreciated how the power of God had helped people when they were in trouble or had healed them when they were sick. I knew the Commandments and the Beatitudes as well and I valued their guidelines. I accepted the truths of Christian Science that God was the Creator and that man was spiritual and perfect, and I applied this effectively if I had physical difficulties or other problems. It was very natural for me to think in terms of Christian Science.

I have to admit I did challenge every new Sunday School teacher with the age-old question, If God created everything and it was good, where did evil

come from? I didn't get my answer to this right away but gradually grew into a sufficient awareness of the substantiality of good so the question no longer disturbed me in the same way. I also found some other forms of reasoning on the question that were helpful.

But there was another question that was perhaps even more important for me to deal with. That was the question of the reality of matter. I know I would deny matter's reality when I was sick or had hurt myself in some way, but I guess I sort of deferred addressing that question directly, probably because I didn't have the feeling that matter and Christian Science could be reconciled. And, of course, they can't if one just takes a superficial look at the question. On the surface, it would appear that if we're to accept reality as entirely spiritual, then everything we study about matter has to be false. And Mrs. Eddy says, (312:1) "How true it is that whatever is learned through material

sense must be lost because such so-called knowledge is reversed by the spiritual facts of being in Science."

As I say, I didn't especially try to resolve this particular question. I had school subjects I had to study and examinations to pass in all the basic human skills as well as material history, physics, literature, and so on. Somehow, this didn't seem to conflict with my understanding of Christian Science and, in fact, even though I couldn't explain why, I found it very natural to work as intelligently as I could with these various school subjects.

I had many wonderful Sunday School teachers - very intelligent, practical, and spiritually-minded people. One in particular was a research chemist. Some of you may have known him. He is Dr. Ernest Lyons. Later he taught chemistry at Principia and still later went into the full-time public practice and wrote some most enlightening articles on the relationship

between Christian Science and the physical sciences.

I think what impressed me most at the age of fifteen was that besides his owning a four-door Ford convertible¹⁹³⁹_{which I admired,} he was able as a dedicated Christian Scientist to work in the field of physical research. I couldn't have explained how he was able to reconcile this with Christian Science, but I had so much regard for his spiritual understanding that I at least opened my thought to believing that it was possible.

Up to this point, I hadn't faced any serious challenge to my conviction of God's presence and controlling power. But when I entered the university, I came into a mental arena where the intellectual and academic elements were very forceful. The reasoning of the human mind was dominant, and the concept of God as I had learned to know Him wasn't very evident. At least it wasn't evident to my understanding at that time. I continued to value the guidelines of Christian

in my personal life
Science /and was very happy to be supported by its standards, though my attention was pretty much occupied by the academic and social and athletic activities I was involved in.

However, Christian Science was continuing to exert its leavening effect in my thought all through this time because my graduation from college was accompanied by another form of graduation. It was a graduation into a truly intense study and deepest appreciation for Christian Science. I saw more than I ever had before the potential of this Science. I saw that it contained the answer to every question about human life. But more than this, it revealed the reality of true being. Well, I was hungry for it. I studied and thought about Christian Science. I didn't go into some kind of seclusion. I was having a wonderful and happy time in my life, and Christian Science was giving me a focus and a purpose to a

greater degree than I'd ever experienced before. In fact, it became so paramount in my life that it took me right into the full-time public practice of Christian Science. This combined for me what I found most fulfilling. It was a total dedication to learning more of this profound spiritual Truth plus an opportunity to serve others through helping them apply this Truth. It was a service I felt was most deeply needed and a service I could pour myself into without any reservations.

I might add here that this same attitude of hungering for more spiritual understanding and application of the Truth in service to others is by no means restricted to the public practice, though this is form it took for me.

My liberal education continued in those early years because the public practice is a liberal education. It's not a cloistered life. You find yourself working with

people in all kinds of professions, in all kinds of human situations. In school, I ^{id} had to study and analyze the thoughts of many people - writers, professors, and so forth. This wasn't so much different except that I was being asked to mentally elevate the thought onto a spiritual level. In school, I had to learn about various technical and business procedures, and I'd had to become acquainted with the physical sciences. In the practice, people had brought me problems in these areas, so here I was expected to identify and elevate these situations to a spiritual level in order to find healing solutions.

Now what was all this leading up to? Wasn't it leading up to a uniting of what appears to be a present human experience with the absolute divine reality that God has established. Mrs. Eddy refers to it as the coincidence of the human and the divine. Jesus stated it in the Lord's Prayer - "Thy will be done

in earth, as it is in heaven." Mrs. Eddy gives the spiritual interpretation - "Enable us to know,-- as in heaven, so on earth,-- God is omnipotent, supreme."

In my early study of Christian Science, I had been taught that God was omnipotent, supreme, and I had accepted this. This Truth healed me, sustained me, and enlightened me. But I needed to see more clearly the relationship between this absolute, perfect spiritual creation and my present human experience which seemed so material, and therefore needed to be denied. Well, I gradually learned how to see the divine more clearly right where the human sense was presenting existence as material. Of course, there were many spiritual waymarks along the path, but I think the point where it crystallized, where I felt the unifying of the academic with the spiritual, occurred when I had a chance to go back to school for some additional classes at the university.

I'd been lecturing for four years and was scheduled for a sabbatical. The Mother Church encouraged us, if we so desired, to use that year for additional academic study. This was back in 1972 and 73. I can still remember laying aside my coat and tie and putting on boots and a jacket to re-enter the world of the student.

But this time my academic experience was very different from my earlier one. I saw the lessons in the classroom in a very different light. I could probably describe it this way. Earlier I had looked at academics in a somewhat negative light because I felt that from a Christian Science standpoint, they were talking about what was false. I realized that I needed to learn the subject, but I still regarded this knowledge as having a somewhat temporary value.

Now I saw academics not just as temporary knowledge but rather as describing mankind's present view of reality. Mrs. Eddy speaks of "the divine

influence ever present in human consciousness."

(S&H Pref. 11:16) I was able to see the divine influence in the world of thought and government and technology. I understood Mrs. Eddy's statement in the textbook much better where she says, (195:19) "Academics of the right sort are requisite." She doesn't say they're desirable here; she says they're requisite. She explains their benefit. She continues, "Observation, invention, study, and original thought are expansive and should promote the growth of mortal mind out of itself, out of all that is mortal."

I saw academics as registering the progress that mortal thought had made in growing out of itself.

Of course, I recognized many spiritual qualities that are developed in the academic experience. There's diligence, thoroughness, exactness, persistence, originality, intelligence, punctuality, alertness, to name just a few. These are useful in our study of

Christian Science, and they're useful in every aspect of our day-to-day living.

But as much as I valued this training, what really excited me was the contribution academics could make through my understanding of Christian Science. Yes, I saw them as registering mankind's present view of reality. On one level, this is necessary and progressive for humanity. But on another level, I saw mankind's present achievements as pointing to the nature of God as all-intelligent Mind and as infinite, divine Love. Every effort to throw off limitation, every effort to communicate more accurately, to be more efficient in technology point to the intelligence of Mind. Every effort to overcome inequality and to meet the needs of others points to the presence and power of divine Love.

So this was the first major difference between my later intensive academic study and my earlier study. I didn't see the academic as simply describing the

material, but rather I saw it as concepts that were tending away from the limits of matter-based thinking.

Two statements of Mrs. Eddy's describe my feelings at that point. In the chapter on Prayer, she asks (3:22) "Are we really grateful for the good already received? Then we shall avail ourselves of the blessings we have, and thus be fitted to receive more." I was able to appreciate enlightened academics as not merely describing matter but as describing progress out of its limitations.

This is brought out in another statement from the textbook (95:19), "We welcome the increase of knowledge and the end of error, because even human invention must have its day, and we want that day to be succeeded by Christian Science, by divine reality."

This leads into the second difference between my latter and earlier academic experience. In addition to learning to recognize the progress of human thought

out of matter and appreciate it, I was actively looking for the divine reality that the human scene was counterfeiting. For instance, if we were discussing the history of a particular political event, there would be many human opinions, many human actions and influences involved in that event. I would then ask myself what was going on spiritually in that time.

"What is the spiritual reality that was being counterfeited in these human opinions and actions? "

This took my academic study way beyond the merely humanly intellectual. It stimulated my spiritual thinking and contributed to a deeper spiritual understanding. *It made me look for spiritual truths.* It was also helpful academically because I was able to remember the human details much more clearly through this deeper analysis and through contrasting them with the spiritual facts. This same approach would apply to technical studies where you're working with numbers

or with chemical formulas. You'll be affirming the orderliness, the usefulness, the accuracy of God's perfect ideas. You'll be looking at the spiritual original that is being counterfeited or misrepresented by the mist of human thought. As you do seek and affirm this spiritual original, the mist is less dense and you're able to see the order and efficiency on the human scene just that much more clearly.

This second major difference where I looked for the spiritual fact behind the human event or conditions we were studying wasn't just an abstract, metaphysical exercise. It was the basis for the third major difference in my approach to academics. The third major difference was that I was thinking actively in terms of healing. Whenever you affirm a spiritual fact about any human situation, you're correcting the limitations or abnormalities of that situation. This is the activity of the Christ. It's a holy activity and gives true

purpose to whatever you're doing.

A few months ago, a young woman called me who had been working on her doctorate but had switched to one of the leading law schools. Her first year had gone well, but she said she was feeling depressed. She studies Christian Science, and I told her to try to think of every effort she makes in terms of service and benefiting others. This shouldn't be that strange a concept, but I could see that she was deeply engrossed in her own world of self-interest and self-pity even though she had many reasons to be grateful. This attitude had been a pretty deep-set pattern, so it was really significant when I talked to her the next time and she said to me, "I did what you said, and you know, it made a difference."

Many people feel the urge to serve and to benefit others, and they gear their lives along this line. This higher human motive is helpful, but Christian Science

gives this motive a dimension that human reason can't provide. It gives the dimension of spiritual sense, which enables us to see the divine reality of what the material senses are telling us. This helps us to break loose from the limitations of material belief and help others to break loose from these limitations, too.

When I went back as a regular day student during my sabbatical, I ^{also} worked to see my fellow students as reflecting the enlightenment which divine Mind brings to human concepts. This enlarged my sense of mission even more and helped me to feel that this was another way I could be giving to Christian Science a place in our institutions of learning.

Now why have I gone into this subject of correlating Christian Science with academics so extensively? Well, we're meeting here in the interest of the Christian Science Student Center at the University of Wisconsin. Many people have contributed

a great deal of effort and time and money to provide this beautiful facility. We all want to see it accomplish the great benefit it was intended to give. The original thought behind the Center was to provide a place where students of Christian Science could live and feel supported in their efforts to apply Christian Science in their academic work, in their social life, and in their participation in the mission of the Christian Science church.

The more we can keep the vision of what Christian Science has to contribute in the academic work, the more we'll see how valuable this Student Center is as a base for those who wish to pursue their academic studies in the light of Christian Science. Up to this point, I've tried to provide a few insights into how Christian Science contributes to the elevation of academics. I know divine Mind will supply you with many more insights and will continue to supply the students with many more insights as well.

Of course, the purpose of the Center here includes much more than support of academics in the light of Christian Science. It's a home for the students while they're here at the University. Although the material senses might say this home is a very pleasing arrangement of structure, texture, and color, the real home we live in is always our consciousness. The students here at the Center, because of Christian Science, are being helped in their efforts to develop this consciousness in a way that will bring out the highest elements of home.

For instance, one of the primary elements in a home is utility. That means the practical needs of shelter, food, and the amenities to carry on our every-day living in a productive, satisfying way.

We may not find ourselves consciously translating all the material details into spiritual terms, but because we do worship God as intelligent Mind and caring divine Love, we do inevitably look to see these

expressed in all the human details of orderly and attractive surroundings, appreciation of thoughtfully prepared meals, and consideration of each other in regard to punctuality, quietness where needed, and any other forms of practical helpfulness.

Someone taking a superficial look at Christian Science might feel that since all of these things are material, they aren't as important as more spiritual considerations. Well, all you need to do is ignore some of these practical, human details to find out what a mess can develop -- not only in the surroundings but in irritated feelings.

The home is a practical workshop for realizing spiritual qualities and translating them into every-day actions and attitudes.

When we read the statistics about broken homes today, we can well see the value of what Jesus called being faithful over the few things and then becoming

rulers over the larger areas of spiritual harmony and happiness. The students with their focus on Christian Science can provide a support to each other in developing the qualities of home that make for harmonious, functional living.

As important as this is, the most treasured aspect of home is the feeling of belonging, of being with people who care, and having a sense that others are appreciating you and that you in turn are appreciating them. If we place this on a merely human basis, there are all kinds of possibilities for things going wrong -- differing opinions, misunderstandings, some people dominating, others feeling shy and inadequate. Through Science, though, all of these currents of thought can be identified and healed. It's like I was discussing in regard to uplifting our view of academics -- there's a spiritual reality behind every human appearance. The more clearly we discern that spiritual reality, the more

nearly the human corresponds until the limitations and abnormalities are entirely done away with and we have the total coincidence of the human with the divine.

Home provides shelter from material weather conditions but even more importantly home as spiritually based consciousness provides shelter from the mental storms that would try to bombard the student. Of course it's not the material structure that accomplishes this protection. It's the thinking of those in the home and in this case it's also the thinking of those who are connected with and supporting the Student Center.

Ultimately it has to be the individual student who establishes his or her

consciousness in line with what is real and satisfying. But the atmosphere of thought surrounding the student can make a tremendous difference in countering the storms of animal magnetism.

Animal magnetism is the supposed action of the carnal mind that would distort everything that is good and worthy. It would distort academics and make them a record of matter and brain-based thinking. It would distort human relations and see them as controlled by sensuality and selfishness. It would distort the view of the body and make health uncertain and dependent on drugs rather than Spirit. In that same category it would use drugs in another form to alter thought for stimulation or escape.

The whole thrust of Christian Science as

expressed in the Student Center is to neutralize this effort of animal magnetism so the students can progress in a normal, happy way.

A powerful factor in counteracting the distortions of the carnal mind is the Christian Science College Organization which is housed right here in the Student Center. This is a Manual-based activity that directly confronts materialism. It's the one form where Christian Science finds a specific, recognizable place in an institution of learning. The College Org stands for the pure presentation of spiritual Truth and relates this to every kind of human need.

The Org is a precious spiritual resource for the individual student but it also provides the channel for the Christian Scientist to

reach out in making the Christ, Truth available to others. In this way the student is preparing for the continuing service later on that everyone is committed to who has seen the vision of what Christian Science can do.

You are people who have seen the vision, you're supporting this activity and again let me say how grateful I am to every one of you.