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STUDY

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In the lexicon of the Christian Scientist, a word very often used is "study." And perhaps no word is so inadequately understood. Careless use of the word "study" has tended to restrict it to the mere perusal of what someone has written. This results in a concept of study as the acquiring of knowledge at the hands of another or through the mere reading of a text. The latter is too often entirely fruitless, while the former falls short of the full significance of study. The importance of study surely justifies a comprehensive grasp of what it should mean to that numerous body known as students of Christian Science.

To consider the study of the Bible and of the textbook, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" by Mary Baker Eddy, as limited to what one can get from these books, is to consider them an end instead of the means to an end. It is to worship words, or even ideas, instead of the one Mind, God, which produces these ideas. Such consideration of study would rob one of the value of the books, just as the overestimate of words or symbols robs them of their true worth and utility and turns one's feet out of the true path. Is it not quite evident then that if we are to be students of Christian Science, we must enlarge our concept of the word "study" to include all its significance?

Now if one is to acquire knowledge in metaphysics, he cannot escape the absolute fact that there is no getting without giving. Also that giving and getting are one, and that one is giving. Our Leader, Mrs. Eddy, says (The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany, p. 5), "Wholly apart from this mortal dream, this illusion and delusion of sense, Christian Science comes to reveal man as God's image, His idea, coexistent with Him—God giving all and man having all that God gives." Study cannot be restricted to receiving scientific instruction, whether from a teacher or from a book. It must include giving, primarily. Paul quoted Christ Jesus, who said (Acts 20: 35), "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and surely it is more instructive.

Thus we find that study can be analyzed somewhat graphically as (1), an acquiring, and (2), a giving. Under acquisition we can place reading. But reading alone does not define study. Indeed it can, and often does, describe a perfunctory, shallow, and quite unprofitable time killer. To acquire knowledge of God through reading the Bible, Mrs. Eddy's writings, and the authorized literature of Christian Science, one must make use of faculties in study which are available and usable apart from those utilized in reading. Two such faculties are pondering and awakening. Together they bring the unfoldment of real knowledge. If then in reading or thinking, one ponders and awakens, he comes into the acquisition of knowledge. That is true study, but not the whole of study.

The second qualification of study is giving. We fulfill the whole of study by giving what we have acquired. Here we face not only opportunity but necessity to comply with true metaphysics, for, as we can agree, there is no getting without giving. Have you ever considered that whatever you study through reading is the product of what the author has received through giving, and that you have profited by his producing? If we are to have the benefits of the authorized periodicals of Christian Science, we shall have to contribute our share. Study, then, has this great significance to each of us—that each shall study through producing. We need only ponder and awaken to produce as naturally as to acquire.

A recent issue of *The Christian Science Journal* carries an article from the pen of a notably prolific writer. Aside from its value metaphysically and practically to all who read it, there is the fact that this individual has through the years contributed scores of articles to our periodicals and is still going strong as a student with his pen. He is by no means a rarity. Many students of Christian Science study with their pens, making their contributions available to the Christian Science periodicals. It would be well if there were more.

Our Leader has designated it a moral obligation to furnish reading matter for the periodicals. In "Miscellaneous Writings" she says (pp. 155, 156), "If my own students cannot spare time to write to God,—when they address me I shall be apt to forward their letters to Him as our common Parent, and by way of *The Christian Science Journal*; thus fulfilling their moral obligation to furnish some reading-matter for our denominational organ." She continues, "Methinks, were they to contemplate the universal charge wherewith divine Love has entrusted us, in behalf of a suffering race, they would contribute oftener to the pages of this swift vehicle of scientific thought; for it reaches a vast number of earnest readers, and seekers after Truth."

Study with the pen is a highly cultural activity and brings untold rewards to the writer as well as to the reader. For off the point of the pen one ponders well and awakens to know. Such study complements reading. Thus the inherent oneness of giving and getting in study is demonstrated through pondering and awakening, when we read and when we write.

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