Blindness

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[John IX.](https://concordexpress.christianscience.com/?query=John+9)

**From** early childhood Jesus was about his Father’s business; proclaiming the kingdom of heaven, and preparing for the mighty works of later years. While ever faithful to the Father’s commands, he did not meet the world’s approval either as to time or manner in which his great blessings were bestowed; hence, of his works there were always two views taken. As in the present case, there ever seemed to exist a division of thought; some reaping the blessing of confidence in him, some declaring him a sinner because he kept not the Sabbath after the custom of the scribes and Pharisees. His worship, works and teachings were spiritual; the world’s, wholly material.

*And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?*

From this first question presenting itself to the disciples, we can plainly see that their thought had not yet reached beyond the plane of materiality; that they were still held by the literal and material interpretation of the writings of Moses and the Prophets. How tenaciously does the claim of error still hold to the doctrine that disease or discord is sent of God, while our Bibles so plainly teach that “God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man”! Surely sickness or disease is an evil; consequently, when presenting itself to us, we know it must be a temptation to be firmly resisted as such: that is, with the understanding we have of Christian Science we should declare God to be the only Creator, knowing that all He created was “very good.”

The universal belief then, as to-day, was that sin, sickness, and discord of any description were sent by God to try, purify and reform mankind; while the truth is the exact opposite. All discord is the result of blind belief in a false supposition which *claims* to exist as a reality, but which we now know to be wholly without a Cause. Earnestly and faithfully Jesus worked with his disciples, trying to make clear to them the unreality of evil, and the falsity of their doctrine concerning it; yet not until after his crucifixion did the disciples even begin to understand his teachings: while none of them reached *beyond* the high plane of thought attained by Paul. Although never a student of Jesus, how readily he grasped the *true spiritual fact of Being*, by means of which he handed down to us those beautiful words of cheer and comfort found in his Gospels! How he urges all *on*, to the higher plane of thought where we will be “absent from the body and present with the Lord.” Most beautifully do Paul’s writings bring out the spiritual and eternal side of existence, making clear Jesus’ own teachings.

Paul as fully demonstrated Jesus’ teachings as did any students who had the benefit of his personal instructions; proving clearly that we indeed have the Christ Principle *always* with us, if we will, but listen to the words of truth constantly being whispered in the attentive ear, for guidance of the faithful follower to the Principle of Life.

*Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*

Were we to read this verse, alone, making no connection with other sayings of Jesus regarding the matter, we could only conclude that this affliction was sent in order to show to the world Jesus’ power over disease; which would surely make God appear less kind than a human parent. We would not—we could not,—consider either loving or just any father who would or could cause one child to suffer for years, that another might be glorified, or that his own power might be proven. Surely God cannot be less loving, less just than man! In this connection let us turn to the last three verses of the chapter which will give us some light as to Jesus’ actual meaning:

*And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.”*

We can here discern how far asunder were the thoughts of Jesus from those of both his disciples and the Pharisees. He acknowledged no blindness except blindness to spiritual Truth; while they were holding to the material manifestation of blindness, as expressed in the afflicted. The Pharisees who, beyond the requirement of the law, were strict observers of external rites and ceremonies, placed the traditions of the elders on an equal footing with the written oracles. They were exclusive, formal, self-righteous, proud of their uninterrupted, unperverted descent from Abraham; were firmly adhering to land, language and proud self-satisfaction of the ancient Hebrew race,—yet had partaken freely of the tree of knowledge of *both good and evil*. We all know how Satan induced Adam and Eve to partake of this same tree, offering the subtle promise that in the day they ate thereof their eyes should be opened and they should be “as gods, knowing good and evil.” This tree is the belief of life in matter; its fruits, the dogmas and ritualisms of material worship, resulting in sin sickness and death to all who partake thereof. In laying claim to spirituality while submerged in materiality, the Pharisees were indeed blind to Truth, and their sin remained unto them. This is the thought that Jesus was trying to make clear to all mankind over eighteen hundred years ago, and this same thought Christian Science is earnestly endeavoring to place before the world today—not as a new discovery—but simply as an unfolding of the old Truth ever new to those striving to rend the veil of matter, and to enter the “holy of holies.”

*I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*

Jesus’ work was finished in a little over thirty years, and his demonstrations of Truth were known to but a comparatively small part of the earth’s inhabitants. Was the *Christ*, then, with us but thirty years? This very question was presented during Jesus’ ministry. When he told the Jews that their father Abraham rejoiced to see his day, how they ridiculed the assertion; declaring him to be not yet fifty years of age, and asking how Abraham *could* have seen his day! Hear his answer: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am”—after which, they took up stones to stone him! How could their material thought make any distinction between the all inclusive Christ-Principle, and the manifest, personal Jesus? They were clinging to personality, while he referred to the eternal Self co-existent and co-eternal with the Father, (they two in one) and therefore without beginning and without end. As long as *he* is in the world, he *is*the light of the world—and that is forever. This is the kingdom of God in our midst; the only Light leading mankind from the darkness of mortal belief into the glory of Divine understanding wherein *none* can be blind to the reality of Being. This same Christ-Principle is being made manifest to-day in Christian Science.

*When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.*

We often hear it said by those condemning the teachings of Christian Science, that even Jesus used material remedies; and this very case of the blind man is most frequently cited as proof of the assertion. Was the healing power either in the clay or in the pool? Rather, were we to ascribe any power to the material, we would credit it to the saliva; but, we have to remember that every act as well as word of Jesus contained deep significance—on this, as well as on other occasions. He invariably taught by parables and symbols; then, since his teachings had ever been after this manner, is it singular that he should rebuke also by symbol? Verse six says: “he spat on the ground.” This being the Jewish manner of showing the utmost contempt, it was indeed a deeply significant act, portraying Jesus’ contempt for every material remedy, and his recognition of the utter futility of the world’s faith in such means. The clay itself is a type of the mortal; man believing himself to be made of the dust of the ground. This being the universal belief, Jesus places it before the darkened eyes, thus symbolizing the first cause of blindness to spiritual Truth, *viz*: a belief of life or power in matter. He knew that the disciples themselves were blinded by the material; and, in order to show them how this blindness was to be overcome, after first having given evidence of his own contempt, he placed the clay upon the eyes of the blind, *and then commanded that it be removed*—as it must ever be before man can discern the true Light that lighteth the whole world. This was a rebuke to the material thought expressed in the disciples’ question.

To both disciples and people believing that sight was dependent upon certain conditions of the eye, or upon the physical organism, he had just declared that he was “the light of the world.” They could not accept his testimony that sight was a spiritual and *not* a physical sense, one therefore which could never be impaired; hence the Truth of this testimony had to be demonstrated to the world by restoring to the blind man the sight supposed to have been lost from his birth. He mentally imparted to the afflicted a consciousness of the spiritual fact of ever-present Light that never can be dimmed. To every one afflicted in like manner, this conscious realization will come in just the way symbolized by Jesus in the “anointing” followed by the direction “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.”

The name Siloam signifies “Sent,” or “outlet of water”; and water, again, is a symbol of purification. The only means that can remove the clay of materiality from the eyes of each and every one, is the purifying water of spiritual Truth. This is the only outlet from matter to Mind, from sense to Soul, from death to Life. The pool of Siloam is also typical of the river to which St. John the Revelator refers: “And he showed me a pure river of water of life clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” ([Rev. xxii. 1, 2.](https://concordexpress.christianscience.com/?query=Rev.+22%3A1%2C+2))

The right understanding of God, Truth, is ever the purifying water removing every vestige of materiality from thought, and disclosing the eternal Light which is never dimmed; and when we each have washed the clay of materiality from our eyes in this purifying, spiritual thought of Light, we also will behold the Tree of Life as never before; and will know that in its leaves only (in the unfoldings of Truth) can be found the healing power for the nations. Moreover, when willing to do Jesus’ bidding, to follow him from the Gethsemane of matter to the Harmony of Mind, we will surely find that the light no longer “shineth in darkness” while the "darkness comprehendeth it not”—for then we will see the ever present Christ as he is, the Saviour and Redeemer of the world.

*The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, ls not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. Therefore, said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered, and said, a man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.*

Jesus came teaching man how to live and to realize *in full* the blessings given of the Father. Christian Science is bringing this same thought to the world to-day; and when, by means of it, we have reached a point where the beauties of spiritual Reality are beginning to be apparent to our consciousness, we have—as did this one restored—to meet the questioning “neighbors.”

Who has opened our eyes to the falsity of mortal claims? We know that of ourselves we can do nothing; but, when the awakening has come through earnest guidance of one spiritually near the Father—one who by faithful study of His Word, by self-sacrifice, by demonstration, has gained discernment of the Truth of Being, and imparted this thought to others for humanity’s benefit — we also are willing to acknowledge the blessing conferred, and to give due thanks. The way has been demonstrated and pointed out; it is the privilege of each to accept or reject.

*They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed and do see. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.*

Jesus’ works of love were ridiculed and condemned by the acknowledged religious powers of his day; and History is repeating itself to-day. Those who have felt the healing power of Truth, when honest enough to acknowledge it, and to give Christian Science the credit due, have had to meet the same accusations so graphically portrayed in this chapter. The world to-day refuses to accept the testimony of those made whole. By one and another is it claimed: “It is not of God.” “The works of Satan are beguiling you from the true way;” but, indeed, “by their fruits ye shall know them.” Christian Science, or the teaching of Truth, has brought harmony into many an hitherto discordant household; while from every side we hear expressed heartfelt gratitude for health restored, as well as for true happiness of home revealed through the workings of Divine Truth. Who is better fitted to give testimony than those restored? Can another answer for them? “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”

*They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath, opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet. But the Jews did not believe, concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?*

How persistently does error strive to find one loose stone in the masonry of Mind, whereby to undermine the whole spiritual structure! When a seemingly defective spot has been found, how powerfully is it assailed! From every side come the enemy’s darts; but we know they must fall powerless before the majesty of Spirit; that God careth for his own; that no mortal assailant can ever cause to totter this Temple of Truth, not made with hands—wholly a creation of Mind—with God the builder, Christ the foundation, and the perfect Idea, Man, the worshipper.

The world had ever been looking for a sign—yet was never satisfied when the sign was given. From the commencement of his wonderful work of healing, Jesus had been obliged to meet this material thought, and to overcome it with spiritual understanding.

*His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.*

What brought forth this answer? The one stumbling-block every new beginner in Truth has to meet, *viz*: Fear. In this case, fear of what? Let us read on:

*These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.*

Fear of the world’s opinion, and especially of opinion of the religious sects of the day, is indeed a rock of offence. Because of fear of displeasing the church, dare we not hold to our, honest convictions? Did Jesus approve of yielding thus? Hear him: “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” ([Luke ix. 62.](https://concordexpress.christianscience.com/?query=Luke+9%3A62))

Some ask: “How are we to know which is the highest form of worship? If we listen to any new doctrine, are we not in danger of being deceived? The Bible says there will arise false teachers and false prophets; when we have been so plainly warned, ought we to listen to any new theories?”

Friends, this is not new; it is the same old truth Jesus taught. If Christian Science does take away our gods of materiality, it replaces them by bringing to our consciousness the *One God*—Spirit—and declares His supremacy; then ought we to murmur? Truly we have nothing to lose, but all to gain. Those in the vineyard of the Lord who are laboring *with signs following as the Master commanded*, must be worshipping in spirit and in truth; otherwise the signs would not follow.

In mental work there is no opportunity for hypocrisy, for we well know that every thought we send out, in the fulness of time returns to us laden with a harvest of its kind. A good, pure thought sent forth by the desire to benefit mankind, having gathered to itself an hundred fold of blessing, returns to us and must be expressed to the world in our increasing love for all humanity—in every act of charity; for charity is Love, and Love is God. If, on the other hand, thoughts of discord or malice are sent forth, we reap our harvest of these. Surely our lives shall testify of us. In the following reply of the restored blind man, the whole is fitly expressed:

*Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened my eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.*

Some may not readily comprehend the teachings of Christian Science, and at first may seem to be lost amidst the intrinsic wonders of mentality; yet, if faithful and true to the stray gleams of Light, each will find this indeed the straight and narrow way—notwithstanding general belief to the contrary—and will surely be able *in time to* testify with the blind man: *“One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.”*