THE BURNING BUSH

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**THE** study of the Bible is to a student of Christian Science an unfailing source of inspiration and profit, for he has learned to look beyond the merely literal meaning of the text and to seek the spiritual message that is conveyed throughout the sacred pages. Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, has drawn attention to the spiritual meaning of the Bible where she has written in "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" ([Science and Health, p.320](https://concordexpress.christianscience.com/?query=The+one+important+interpretation+of+Scripture+is+the+spiritual.&book=tfccs.main.sh)), "The one important interpretation of Scripture is the spiritual."

An example of the light which Christian Science throws upon the Bible may be found in its illumination of the account of Moses and the burning bush, as given in the third chapter of Exodus.

Moses had fled from Egypt to Midian after killing an Egyptian who was maltreating one of his own, Moses', countrymen, and was tending the flock of his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, in a remote part of the desert. We may be sure that Moses was thinking spiritually at that time; for it is recorded that he "came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb;" and in Scriptural metaphor a mountain is often typical of uplifted spiritual thinking. We read, further, "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed."

In connection with this passage it is interesting to recall that Mrs. Eddy has defined the word "fire" in part as follows: "Affliction purifying and elevating man" ([Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures *ibid.,*p.586](https://concordexpress.christianscience.com/?query=Affliction+purifying+and+elevating+man&book=tfccs.main.sh)). May we not gather from this that Moses found that the affliction he was enduring in exile and separation from his own people, far from destroying him, was purifying and elevating his thought; preparing him, in fact, for the great task of leading his people out of bondage?

At the same time the affliction that the children of Israel were enduring in Egypt was not destroying them either, but preparing their thought to receive Moses' leadership and to accept in some measure the vision of God that he was to bring them.

When Moses sought the reason why the bush was not destroyed, he was told by God that he was on holy ground, this experience showing that his immunity from despair and destruction was realizable only as he stood mentally in the place where the indestructible nature of Spirit was apparent to him. After this experience of spiritual insight and understanding Moses was soon prepared to accept the call of God to lead the children of Israel out of bondage.

In a later period of persecution the three young Hebrew captives found that the fire of affliction was unable to destroy them in the Babylonian furnace; but, on the contrary, the elevation and purification of thought resulting from this experience actually showed them the Christ, the spiritual idea of God, which was apparent even to King Nebuchadnezzar; for he said, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, . . . and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

Mrs. Eddy did not escape the fire of affliction and persecution, but she found, likewise, that the experiences she underwent destroyed neither her nor her Cause, since her vision of the Christ sustained her under all circumstances. The fiery trials she endured but showed her more clearly the subtle nature of animal magnetism; for not only did she herself overcome this false claim, but she was able to show her followers also how to destroy error through a right understanding of God.

Today the nations seem to be passing through a fiery trial, but already it is being learned that a change of thinking is needed if peace and prosperity are to come to the world. Such false qualities as national pride, selfishness and fear are mental condition that need to be destroyed; and, indeed, they are even now in process of destruction.

This purification does not mean the consuming of nations, for every country has good and helpful qualities that are needed both for its own sake and for that of others. While the chaff of error is being consumed, the good and useful qualities will remain, and nations be compelled to purify their thinking and rise to a better sense of things. With this happy assurance we can remain calm in the midst of seeming trouble, remembering that it is only ills and errors that are being destroyed.

Turning to our own personal experiences—do any of us seem to be having a difficult time? Are we feeling the fire of affliction mentally, physically, or financially? Then let us remember Moses and the burning bush, and take heart. Even if we should be undergoing what seems an afflictive and disagreeable experience, we are being compelled to turn away from material sense testimony and to realize and find our spiritual completeness in unity with God.

Material sense might even try to suggest the burning up of the spiritual idea of Truth in our thinking to the extent of making us believe that the sense of want and lack has such a hold on us that we cannot think spiritually and rightly. Christian Science shows that conditions of limitation are unknown to our heavenly Father, who recognizes only the abundance of right ideas; and so they do not belong to His image and likeness man. Thus, even in the face of material evidence to the contrary, we should take a strong mental stand for the unreality of error and lack, and know that aggressive suggestion cannot prevent us from thinking spiritually and realizing our rich inheritance as sons of God.

It is well to remember that the false testimony of material sense cannot force itself upon us: all it can claim to do is to suggest itself to our thinking. And as students of Christian Science we know enough to reject false testimony, since in some degree we are seeing the universe as God sees it. As we do this, a measure of God's love and abundance is proved to be ours here and now.

It has been seen that the fire of affliction appertains only to false material sense, while nothing that is real can be consumed. Christian Science shows clearly that our health, our faculties, and our supply are really spiritual and are not in matter to be destroyed. So what we need to do is to hold to the true concept of them in our thinking, to see them in Mind, and keep them there. Then it will be found that they are safe and secure from the consuming beliefs associated with material conditions.

Like Moses and the three young Hebrew captives, we have nothing to fear from a fiery trial; for if the truth is sought, and the lesson is properly learned, purification and elevation of thought will be the outcome.

In Science and Health ([p.565](https://concordexpress.christianscience.com/?query=This+immaculate+idea%2C+represented+first+by+man+and%2C+according+to+the+Revelator%2C+last+by+woman%2C+will+baptize+with+fire%3B+and+the+fiery+baptism+will+burn+up+the+chaff+of+error+with+the+fervent+heat+of+Truth+and+Love%2C+melting+and+purifying+even+the+gold+of+human+character.&book=tfccs.main.sh)) we read in reference to Christ, God's idea, "This immaculate idea, represented first by man and, according to the Revelator, last by woman, will baptize with fire; and the fiery baptism will burn up the chaff of error with the fervent heat of Truth and Love, melting and purifying even the gold of human character."

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