

# “No change my heart shall fear”

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**W**e live in a world with so many changes taking place at such a rapid pace, it is almost breathtaking! In considering the line from our familiar hymn that set the topic for today, I found it helpful to note that the phrase, “No change my heart shall fear” is not debunking change, but rather the fear that springs from a limited, mortal viewpoint, which attaches itself to the thought of change (*Christian Science Hymnal*, Hymn 148).

Many people love change and can hardly get enough of it—even looking to initiate it whenever possible. Some approach change hesitantly, afraid it will bring instability and chaos. Others live with the hope that change will move them onto better circumstances and conditions.

What are we to make of “change”? If our starting place is to reason out from God (and it always is), we can welcome change. God, divine Mind, is the all-acting, divine intelligence, responsible for His universe including man. The possibilities of change entrusted to creative Mind are as infinite and as good as God is. And the best part is that the vitality inherent in action coming from God operates without our having to initiate it.

In pondering the concept of change, it occurred to me to turn to Jesus’ pivotal forty-day-and-night experience in the wilderness and his encounter with the devil, alias Satan, evil, error, animal magnetism, personal mortal sense, and matter. It was here, at the very beginning of his ministry, that Jesus taught the way to guard the treasures that God gives man; treasures that are untouchable and unchangeable by suggestions of error. He did this with a thought so watchful that the devil’s attempts to challenge him to substitute matter, personal sense, for Spirit, as a force in bringing about changes, was not allowed a hearing—even in a moment when Jesus arguably might have been vulnerable.

Jesus’ spiritual viewpoint, always determined by divine Mind, gave him assurance of his spiritual nature, changelessly responsive to his God, in which appetite, vanity, or pride of power could not be reproduced. This set a standard for all mankind, a standard of trust in God to provide the impetus for change; change that is welcome, and where fear of change is not an option. Each of us, as children of God, can claim inheritance to a heart that feels divine Love’s presence, a heart that doesn’t know how to be afraid, and that can resist the pull of change based on personal, material considerations.

On what authority did Jesus refuse to engage with the devil and accept change on the devil’s terms? The authority of the Word of God! Receptivity to the Word of God always gives man spiritual power to demonstrate the facts of being, some of which are as follows:

1. God, being ever-present Spirit; man, His idea, can never be separated from Him.
2. God, all-powerful infinite Life, has established His design for His own creation. He maintains it; and there is no power apart from God that can alter it.
3. Man, God’s expression, God’s very outcome, is not a medium or an instrument that can be manipulated as a puppet pulled by the strings of a personal manipulator.
4. Man, God’s idea, has a spiritual nature that does not include a shred of substance that can attract, react to, or correspond with the suggestions of limited, mutable, mortal thought in any guise or to any degree; or that can be enticed to honor or be made afraid of a supposed evil power.

These facts, as surely as Jesus’ victory over the devil, enable us to maintain an alertness that detects and avoids the many ways personal, mortal sense attempts to engage us, be they ever so subtle

or flagrantly aggressive. Issues of personality cannot initiate healing change, nor will entering into discussion with mortal mind. Jesus kept his thought strictly in line with the divine will. Demonstrating a heart unafraid of matter's ultimatums, he triumphed over the devil's suggestions by means of divine power.

Let's examine how Jesus responded to the temptations presented by the devil:

- "No!" He would not change stones into bread. He was alert that catering to the demands of physical beliefs would curtail his mission, which was to prove the everlasting nature of Life, and of man's right to partake of that Life by reflection.
- "No!" He would not cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, (that place that represented a high and pure spiritual consciousness that would not be mocked by human theories). He knew that to take a humanly willed step that would signal nothing more than a public display of personal power would forfeit, not gain, divine help. Jesus knew he always had divine help and could count on it.
- "No!" He would not be mesmerized by the suggestion that matter, even all the kingdoms of the world, had any potential to add to man's already complete, satisfied, and spiritual stature (Matt 4: 1-10).

Jesus called the devil's bluff. He proved that the only power of error is to destroy itself. When man refuses to be the devil's vehicle, the devil has nothing to drive. The devil always retreats in the face of a heart that is unafraid, because the devil or error is a coward when faced with Truth (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, Mary Baker Eddy, 368:4-5). Later in his ministry, Jesus reaffirmed the lesson of his initial triumph over the devil with these words: "...the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30).

Mary Baker Eddy explains: "When tempted to sin, we should know that evil proceedeth not from God, good, but is a false belief of the personal senses; and if we deny the claims of these senses and recognize man as governed by God, Spirit, not

by material laws, the temptation will disappear" (*Miscellaneous Writings*, Mary Baker Eddy, 198:13). We know the rest of the story: the devil left Jesus, and angels came and ministered unto him (Matt 4:11).

Angels have a beneficial effect in our lives. In her definition of *angels*, Mrs. Eddy tells us they counteract all evil, sensuality, and mortality (SH 581:4). Angels give us the ability to withstand the pressure of initiating change by getting us involved with the ways and means of personal, mortal sense. To believe in angels, to hear what they have to say, and then to follow their advice, requires a great deal of humility. But the rewards are certain: angels inspire with a spiritual view that transforms our experience, bringing it into conformity with that which is, and has always been, divinely true. In the presence of angels, we are assured of a heart that cannot be made afraid, because they make us aware that God surrounds us; and in His presence there is abundant means to accomplish whatever is right and needful.

Mrs. Eddy gives clear instructions on this point. For instance, in the chapter "Physiology," Mrs. Eddy points out the foolishness of trying to produce change in a patient's condition through manipulation. She points out, efforts that involve human will and human control, either mental or physical, are fruitless. Mrs. Eddy instructs that in order to succeed in healing, one must be equipped in two ways: first, be able to handle the baneful effects of magnetism; and second, be sufficiently spiritual to depend on Spirit (SH 181:14-20).

And just what does *baneful* mean? The *Students Research Dictionary* defines it as coming from the word *bane*, which means "poison of a deadly quality." Notice that Mrs. Eddy's first demand is to handle "the baneful effects of magnetism"—magnetism meaning a deluded, mental state of mortal thought. She is not speaking of matter substance, only the mesmeric motions and thoughts that produce hypnotic results. There can be no toxic elements in God's universe—no mortal thoughts can either crowd out or corrode good, or target or inflict God's man, because God is omnipresent. And because God is omnipotent, no claim of a power protesting God's all-might

can produce destructive action, malfunction, or weakness.

And because God is omniscient, nothing can present itself to our thought that can negate or dim what God knows and what He is consistently imparting to His idea.

Secondly, Mrs. Eddy demands that we be “sufficiently spiritual to depend on Spirit.” How do we do this? Think of Jesus, who urged his disciples, struggling to keep pace with his spiritual vision, to stop looking “here and there” for the evidence of peace, harmony, and health. Trying to rouse them from their fruitless matter-tinged view, he commanded them: “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 4:17).

The word *repent*, comes from the Greek root word that means “to think differently, to reconsider.” Nothing less than a complete renewing of how they were looking at things, a *reconsideration* according to the spiritual view Jesus was demanding, would make room for the blessings of his revolutionary teaching. Jesus healed because he resolutely challenged the limited world view of the material senses. His command “to repent,” and the acceptance of the conditions that make repentance possible, always enables man to feel the renewing, regenerating presence of divine Spirit right now, giving immediate access to the kingdom of heaven—“the atmosphere of Soul,” where “Soul is supreme” (SH 587:25 and 590:1). In Soul, there is zero affinity with the limited material, personal senses.

Jesus’ keen Soul-sense enabled him to view man as governed harmoniously by Soul—and so must we. Imagine it! From this viewpoint, we can demand and expect to see the following evidence:

- Lives full of order, balance, stability, and grace; free from confusion, tumult, pressure, and tension.
- Lives demonstrating a pure affection and a patience that remove resistance, fear, criticism, thoughtlessness, abuse, prejudice, suspicion, and misunderstanding.
- Lives in which humility melts self-will, self-righteousness, and hypocrisy.

- Lives lived so purely that decay, deterioration, and the effects of superstition are antidoted.
- Lives full of joy and gratitude that cancel depression, hopelessness, darkness, and doubt.
- Lives showered with blessings and fruitage, filling spaces that had appeared cursed and barren.

Every healing effected by the influence of the Christ operating in human consciousness is proof of the life-changing presence of a heart unafraid of change, because it feels God’s power and presence. In some respects, we could say the Christ operating in human consciousness is the only *real* change-agent. It is a divine stimulus that changes, in healing ways, all that our thought embraces including all beliefs having to do with the body, systems of government, economics, and the human institution of church, to name a few. Its effect is always cleansing.

We can count on the irresistible energies of the Christ, Truth, to change entrenched material beliefs. This was illustrated recently by a woman whose experience I’d like to share with you.

After two days of Christian Science treatment, this woman realized with great joy that she wasn’t dealing with a painful, life-threatening matter-condition that she had been hoping would change. Hope for change, she began realizing, was a denial that God was already present, meeting all her needs, sustaining and maintaining her as He created her. She saw that health is not a condition in or of matter that needs to be improved. Health is a condition of divine Mind that needs no improvement, but that can be realized immediately.

It became obvious to her that she was dealing with only a lie, the false belief that she was a mutable mortal. She knew she desired a change of consciousness, a spiritualization of thought, more than an easing of discomfort from a physical condition. She acknowledged that she was tributary to the transforming power of the Christ, Truth. Affirming her spiritual status, she declared that she was, always had been, and ever would be a spiritual idea conditioned only by self-sustaining, self-existent Spirit. She refused to be tempted to look to matter for comfort or remedy.

Her prayer became not one for changed matter, but for evident health gained by a heart spiritually unafraid. She recognized that animal magnetism, the belief that matter is intelligent, could not cause her to be unconscious of God's ever-presence and power. She was bolstered by Mrs. Eddy's comments: "Prayer can neither change God, nor bring His designs into mortal modes; but it can and does change our modes and our false sense of Life, Love, and Truth, uplifting us to Him. Such prayer humiliates, purifies, and quickens activity, in the direction that is unerring.... [Prayer] makes new and scientific discoveries of God, of His goodness and power. It shows us more clearly than we saw before, what we already have and are; and most of all, it shows us what God is" (*No and Yes*, 39:11-16, 20-24).

As she prayed, she felt a renewed confidence in the practical power of the Word of God. The mesmerizing testimony of the false material senses broke; and she was unafraid of matter's propositions. Her heart felt the power of God's presence. She was healed!

Who would not welcome this kind of change? Who, when touched by the Christ, would not willingly give up devilish suggestions claiming to block harmonious functioning, stagnate vitality and vigor, or dim clarity of thought? The restorative effect of the Christ, Truth inevitably brings thought into conformity with the spiritually real. The simultaneous result is always a changed experience, one that is in consonance with the viewpoint that the Christ, Truth reveals. No longer hemmed in by false mental concepts, who would not welcome this liberating change?

Divine Mind produces real thoughts, and these thoughts constitute man's true consciousness and substance. What man does not hold in thought

he cannot experience. Spiritually understanding our oneness with divine Mind, we are freed to demonstrate that there is no point of contact between us and evil. Awakened by the Christ, Truth, we no longer have to deal with the dream pictures of mortal mind and the desire to change those pictures.

When we are awake through active spiritual knowing, we become aware of the changeless nature of Truth, and consequently, the changeless nature of Truth's idea, man. The Psalmist saw this when he sang, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (Ps 17:15).

Mrs. Eddy writes, "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" (*First Church of Christ, Scientist and Miscellany*, 5:7-10).

The encouraging words of Hymn 148 from the *Christian Science Hymnal* sum it up beautifully:

In heavenly Love abiding,  
No change my heart shall fear;  
And safe is such confiding,  
For nothing changes here.

The storm may roar without me,  
My heart may low be laid;  
But God is round about me,  
And can I be dismayed?

Go forth with renewed joy, accepting your ability to demonstrate unchanging Life, that Life that is your life—invariable and abundant in its expression of goodness. You have the right to a heart unafraid of change, a heart that knows and feels the presence and power of Almighty God.



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Thank you.