

Constructive Work

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*"The 'still, small voice' of scientific thought reaches
over continent and ocean to the globe's remotest bound.
The inaudible voice of Truth is, to the human mind,
'as when a lion roareth.'"*
— Mary Baker Eddy

CONSTRUCTIVE WORK

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POSITION

WITH the entire structure of society in a state of uncertainty, with the permanent apparently lost in flux, with old positions being abandoned through the compulsion of the hour and new positions being constantly created, the fetish of efficiency may assume a warrant for affirming that the materially efficient shall be the dominant; although the very upheaval of the old is compelling the conclusion that it is not mere material efficiency, but spiritual law, which provides a right place for every individual and causes the individual to come into his place. If the old order had wrought out the harmony and equality of man, there would have been no need of a readjustment. Tottering governments and false systems, however, indicate the immense need of an understanding of divine Principle, an understanding wherein every individual is seen to be a necessary and perfect unit in the whole, and all equally entitled to all that is good.

The understanding of this law enables a man to govern himself correctly and know that he cannot at any time be forced or kept out of his right position in accordance with Principle. It demands, at the same time, as scrupulous a regard for the rights and happiness of others as for one's own; for one's own sense of good can indeed be stabilized only through the understanding that good is universal. It is just this endeavor to conform one's thought and conduct to the law of impartial divine Love, that brings the proof of the government of Principle in one's individual affairs; for, as Mrs. Eddy writes on page 106 of *Science and Health*, "Man is properly self-governed only when he is guided rightly and governed by his Maker, divine Truth and Love."

Now the position of any material thing can be conceived of only by thinking of its relation to other things. It is certainly more necessary that man's true position should be conceived of as a spiritual actuality and considered in the light of his relation to divine Principle. It was the understanding of this spiritual relation between God and man that made Jesus the Christ so certain of his position and his power. "The Son can do nothing of himself," he said, "but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." Man's activity

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and position are sustained by Mind alone. When a man understands this spiritual fact and applies it to his human problems, he will free himself from the belief either that there is no place or position open to him, or that he, through his own efficiency, has found his place; for both material success and failure are alike due to the belief that man is an entity apart from God.

No matter how efficient a mortal may be, according to the world's standards, until he scientifically knows that man's sufficiency is of God, he has not proved his position in the spiritual economy of being; and no one, who learns this truth of man's relation to divine Principle, need fail to realize his right place and activity. He need only apply his understanding of Principle to the erring human beliefs of inability, misfortune, or whatever obstructive fear confronts him. Jesus declared of his true individuality, "I and my Father are one." Exactly, then, in the degree that a man understands man's unity with Principle, will he realize that his individual position is determined by Principle, and that he can no more be prevented from finding and filling it than can the courses of the stars be obliterated. A mortal, who is limited, discontented, out of his right place, failing to reflect the majesty of man in the image of God, is an unreal concept, the outcome of a mistaken sense that man is separated from God.

So the first step in demonstrating the truth of position is to consider one's concept, whether it be material or spiritual. What is one allowing to be the reality, Spirit or matter? Is one submitting to such errors of belief as self-depreciation, timidity, discouragement, lack of efficiency? Then he is basing his thought and endeavor on the belief that man is material and limited, and his concept of position will be contracted by this limitation. But if, through spiritual understanding, he is resisting and overcoming these false beliefs, his concept of position and activity will expand to correspond with his larger conception of man, and he will find his powers and abilities correspondingly increased. A man cannot take a half-hearted attitude in regard to Truth and error, the real and the unreal, and expect to work out harmonious results in his human affairs, for, as Mrs. Eddy says on page 274 of *Science and Health*, "Divine Science is absolute, and permits no half-way position in learning its Principle and rule — establishing it by demonstration."

When it is known that Christian Science teaches that supply is

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spiritual, not material, it will be seen how imperative it is that position should be considered from a spiritual standpoint. It must be seen that man's relation to God can never be interrupted, and that because man is constantly in perfect unity with Principle, he is in perpetual connection with his eternal source of supply. Material supply, as material position, is but a counterfeit of an unchanging spiritual truth. As a man learns to depend less and less upon matter, upon material opportunity and personal influence for his position and supply, he becomes more and more the master of adverse circumstances and increasingly certain that his right place and activity await him and that they will be shown to him and every intervening obstacle removed.

To know that there is a perfect position for each one in the divine reality of being, and to work to the end of realizing it, does not mean that a mortal should neglect the task at hand, or despise "the day of small things." Rather does the knowledge of the spiritual fact enhance one's care in performing all things well, since it is the quality of faithfulness in the "few things," that can alone fit one to be made "ruler over many things." Progress out of the material into the spiritual is indeed a matter of steps, one at a time. But if one is obedient to Principle in each step, one is assured that, as Mrs. Eddy has so well said, "In Christian Science there is never a retrograde step, never a return to positions outgrown" (Science and Health, p. 74).

Nellie B. Mace.

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WORK

THE subject of work and working hours is occupying so large a place now in the world's regard that every one is obliged, willy-nilly, to pay some attention to the matter. Hitherto it has been part of the accepted state of things that there should be a working class and a leisured class, and the majority have been content to leave it at that, but such a condition of nonchalance is no longer possible, and for many reasons a large number of persons not without surprise find themselves not only having to think about it, but actually having to do work that had formerly been done for them. What is still more of a surprise to many is, that once having learned the joy of work, they dread returning to their pre-war state of idleness or leisure.

Now, in the first place, what is this thing called work, and why is there such a tremendous upheaval about it to-day? Work is the energy of production, and the reason of the trouble about it to-day, is that the carnal mind, or mortal mind, as Mrs. Eddy calls it, has misunderstood and misinterpreted the nature of work, just as it has misinterpreted everything else in human experience. Instead of work being considered the privilege of every human being, the whole question has been debased onto the plane of drudgery, and we have the melancholy pictures of slaves, and bondmen, and misery, and depression, all down the ages until this hour. Now, however, through the action of the spiritual idea, or Christ, everything existing in consciousness is being forced into the light for the purpose of readjustment, and that the readjustment of this particular thing, work, is part of the trouble foretold by Jesus as a necessary purging before the second coming of the Son of man, there can be no doubt, when we see, as we are forced to, that it touches the very foundations of human society.

That work, or the energy of production, is a normal condition and need of the average human being, is evident, for if one leaves a child of four or five years old to amuse himself, in a few minutes he will be making a train, or a cart, or a motor car, out of an old box and a bit of string, and be busy inventing imaginary wheels and levers for any length of time. A child dislikes being idle more than anything else in the world and is always asking for "something to do." The story of the woman whose idea of heaven was "a place where one would do nothing for ever and ever," only

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serves to show how entirely perverted the idea of work has become by custom.

Originally, of course, every primitive man had to work in order to live; but gradually, we must suppose, one who proved to be more energetic or fearless than others, accumulated possessions and gradually let the devil of indolence mesmerize him into paying others to do his work for him, and so the whole of our present civilization with its overwork and underpay, or underwork and overpay, as the case may be, its classes and masses, has crushed out the natural, wholesome instincts with a superstructure of false values.

In the allegory of Genesis, when the man had eaten of the forbidden fruit, the curse and consequence of his sin was not that he would have to work for his bread, but that his toil would end in dust, nothingness, death. As the Preacher subsequently found, all his labor in which he labored proved to be vanity. Is not that really the trouble in the labor world to-day, — not that men dislike work, but that the fact of the vanity of it all, the drudgery, the monotony of all this materialistic labor, has been recognized in all its nakedness, and finally, the turning of all this labor by working men to the destruction of millions of other working men has caused a reaction which is finding its inevitable expression?

In every newspaper almost, we find proposed remedies for labor problems. Christian Science, however, knows but one, — that is, a wider, a universal understanding of Principle. On page 340 of Science and Health Mrs. Eddy writes, "One infinite God, good, unifies men and nations; constitutes the brotherhood of man; ends wars; fulfills the Scripture, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself;' annihilates pagan and Christian idolatry, — whatever is wrong in social, civil, criminal, political, and religious codes; equalizes the sexes; annuls the curse on man, and leaves nothing that can sin, suffer, be punished or destroyed." This is only another way of expressing what Jesus said when he gave the two great commandments as being love of God, and love for man. There are many working men, even now, who are practicing Christianly scientific application of this golden rule to their labor problems, and finding that as they put self on one side and look not to man or to matter for the reward of their work, but to Principle or Mind, — envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness fall away from

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their experience, their work ceases to be drudgery, their conditions improve, and they become free men in the best sense of the word, for they are living in obedience to that law which means freedom. "God rests in action. Imparting has not impoverished, can never impoverish, the divine Mind. No exhaustion follows the action of this Mind, according to the apprehension of divine Science" (Science and Health, p. 519). There can be no inaction in the divine Mind, it must be eternally producing ideas. It is, in its essence, the energy of production, and man is the likeness of this Mind. Idleness is stagnation, death.

The Apostle James knew something of these troubled conditions when he wrote, "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

So long as men believe that they can cure injustice by injustice, that they can enrich Peter by robbing Paul, so long will there be confusion and every evil work; but the moment they allow Mind, Principle, to hold the control, and work through love, and not through hate, at that moment they will begin individually, and therefore collectively, to reap the fruit of righteousness, in peace, health, abundance, and freedom.

Mabel S. Thomson.

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RECONSTRUCTION

WHEN Paul wrote that the way to know and to prove the perfect will of God was to cease conforming thought to the ways of this world and to transform it by the "renewing" of the mind, he was calling attention to the necessity of reconstruction; for if there is one thing more than another which is in need of reformation, regeneration, and general reconstruction, it is the human mind. Now the difficult problem in dealing with the human mind and in attempting to improve it in any way is that it is lazy and disinclined to make any serious effort to improve itself. However, transformation and reformation never come until there has been a shaking-up process, as witness the world conflagration; and happy will that man or that nation be that shall grasp Truth sufficiently to escape the sword which Christ Jesus came to bring.

To break away from the age-long mesmerism of following after the habits and customs of the world, requires courage, energy, and initiative. Jesus, of course, had these qualities in greater measure than any other individual, and yet we must all express them if we desire to know and to prove the will of God. It is God's will that man, His child, be and express perfection as the image and likeness of infinite Principle. Mortal man is not that likeness. Mortal mind cannot express this perfection because mortal mind is the "carnal mind," which "is enmity against God" and which is not and cannot be "subject to the law of God." Man, however, is subject to the law of God for the reason that he was made by God in His likeness. God is Mind and man in the reality of his being is Mind's infinite idea. As such he possesses or reflects the Mind "which was also in Christ Jesus."

As a matter of spiritual fact or scientific truth, man has always been, is now, and always will continue to be this image and likeness of God, and he never has been actuated by any other mind than the Mind of Christ. Consequently he is not in any need of any salvation, reformation, or reconstruction. Yet, true as this is, the fact will be of no help to the individual unless and until he can and will arouse himself sufficiently to realize the truth of his being and take steps to conform, or rather transform, his thinking and living in accord with this truth. Hence the need of courage, energy, and initiative: courage, because most of us have an

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inherent dislike to being thought peculiar, and it requires courage to separate oneself from one's cherished beliefs; energy, because all individual activity is the result of individual volition; and initiative, because mortals are so mesmerized by habits and customs that no one but the individual can take the first step toward his own reformation.

Reconstruction depends upon understanding, — thus it is a thinking process. We must make our way into better living and doing through the demonstration of the truth of being. We must cut ourselves loose from old mental habits and make our way into harmony of mind, body, and estate. This requires the sacrifice of old habits of thought, and means the rejection of belief in the pleasures as well as the pains of matter. Mrs. Eddy writes in the Preface to "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" (p. vii): "The time for thinkers has come. Truth, independent of doctrines and time-honored systems, knocks at the portal of humanity. Contentment with the past and the cold conventionality of materialism are crumbling away. Ignorance of God is no longer the stepping-stone to faith. The only guarantee of obedience is a right apprehension of Him whom to know aright is Life eternal."

Reformation and reconstruction therefore naturally start with a right understanding of God, because He is the origin and source of all existence. The world will never be a better place to live in, the affairs of men will never be harmonious, until humanity acquaints itself with God, until mortals are willing to conform all their thoughts and acts to a correct, and therefore scientific, understanding of divine Principle. This requires an ability to define Deity in accurate terms and inevitably turns a man to the only sources where accurate definition may be had, — namely, the Scriptures and "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures." What do we find there? We find that God is Spirit, Soul, Mind; that He is Life, Truth, Love; that He is the source, the origin, the Principle of all existence. We find also that God made man in His image and likeness. We learn, too, that material man cannot be that likeness. What else do we find? These two imperative commands: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve;" "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

There is only one way to worship and serve God, — that is, to know Him as He is and to make every thought and every act subservient to the

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divine will. There is only one way to love our neighbor as ourselves, — that is, to know man as God made him and to conform our thoughts and our acts to this knowledge. We never can love and serve God while we believe Him to be that which He is not; we never can love our fellow man while we believe man to be anything but that which God made him. God is absolute good; He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent; He is the divine, infinite Principle, from which the universe, including man, emanates and by which all being is governed. The infinitude of Spirit, or Mind, is so vast and so inclusive that there is no possibility of there being an opposite or equal to God and necessarily, therefore, there is no room for matter or evil. Man is the image, the idea of God; in Mrs. Eddy's words, "Man is the expression of God's being" (Science and Health, p. 470); he is the likeness, the emanation of the infinity of God's self-containment; he is the expression, the full representation of all that God is, and has, and knows. God and His whole creation, including man, always have existed, exist now, and always will exist in a state of spiritual perfection. And in the reality of eternal, harmonious being (and there is no other) nothing has ever happened, nothing is happening now, and nothing ever will happen to change this state of perfection because God, infinite Principle, is the only power, presence, and intelligence.

As these truths become apparent to the human being he begins to change his habits, he begins to reform. He ceases to believe in evil and therefore begins to cease to be the servant of sin and disease. As each individual, through the scientific knowledge of God, puts off the old man, with his deeds, there will take place in human consciousness a reconstruction that will make impossible the recurrence of war, famine, pestilence, want, and woe, and man will be cognized only as the son of God, living in complete obedience to the one Mind and loving his neighbor as himself.

Warwick A. Tyler.

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WORKERS AND WORK

IN Exodus is the story of Bezaleel, of the tribe of Judah, whose name signifies, "in the shadow of God." Of this Bezaleel Moses declared that God had filled him with His spirit "in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship. . . . And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he, and Aholiab . . . Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver . . . and of the embroiderer, . . . and of the weaver, even of them that do any work." And the story continues that Bezaleel and Aholiab, yea, and "every wise hearted man, in whom the Lord put wisdom and understanding to know how to work . . . even every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it," wrought for the service of the sanctuary; and so came that transcendent experience, repeated in our day, that the offering brought by the people for the tabernacle was "much more than enough for the service of the work . . . So the people were restrained from bringing."

Here in the second book of the Bible is set forth the sacredness of many kinds of work now termed secular; and it is made plain that not only one or two but every "wise hearted man" is privileged to enter into this sacredness. What if in these days the embroiderer, the weaver, the goldsmith, the lapidary, the wood carver, the engraver, the carpenter, the spinner, the metal worker, each wrought as for "the service of the sanctuary"? Could there be any poor or slipshod work? Could there be any people underpaid or unemployed? "It is sad," our Leader observes on page 40 of "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," "that the phrase *divine service* has come so generally to mean public worship instead of daily deeds." Says Ruskin, "Alas! unless we perform divine service in every willing act of our life, we never perform it at all." It may seem to the worker of to-day that immense business enterprises and complex business organization tend to dwarf individuality. In many cases the daily task of the worker may not seem to call out the best in him, and may seem to possess but little relationship to the higher faculties of imagination, invention, intuition. Conversely, it may be regarded by him as a means to an end; a drudgery which he is compelled to perform in order to secure the necessities of life; something to be got rid of, or got out of, as quickly as possible. Consenting to this false view, how different the status of the

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worker from that of Bezaleel, the patient craftsman, the Jewish artificer of the fifteenth century B.C., who lovingly fashioned the ark of shittim wood and overlaid it with gold.

Many there are in the world who see the vision but fancy themselves so hampered by circumstances that they cannot carve that vision upon the enduring surfaces of "the things which remain." Many eager ones there are, men and women who put love into their work and crave excellence above reward. Many disappointed ones there are who feel as though a cheapening process in the world's activities dooms their efforts to be unappreciated. To all such Christian Science comes uplifting the true standard, the unalterable standard of perfection. It presents to the worker the true concept of substance and leads him to see that the only real activity is God's, and that if he reflects this activity his work is valuable and sure of proportionate reward. It shows him the relation between work and service and sets before him the open door of escape from the sense of servility in the task performed "grudgingly, or of necessity," into the realm of the thinker and designer who fashions forms of beauty because he loves his work and his work expresses love. It heralds the day when no false sense will come between the employer and the employee, because it will be understood that all work is the Father's business and that He it is who gives wisdom and understanding to every one whose heart stirs him up "to come unto the work to do it."

The quaint Bible phrase, "service of the sanctuary," is more significant when one considers the various meanings of the word sanctuary. As most commonly understood, it means a holy place; therefore all true work is holy. It also means a throne; therefore all true work is noble. It also means a place for keeping sacred things; therefore all true work is sacred. It also means a shelter, refuge, place of protection; therefore all true work is safe. It also means a consecrated spot; therefore all true work is consecrated. Whatever our employment, whether humble or seemingly responsible, we may all work, as did Bezaleel, "in the shadow of God." What cause for gratitude that through our Leader's spiritual perception we are enabled to rise above all suggestions of discouragement or limitation and may engage in true service, reaping its abundant and sure reward.

Beatrice Clayton.

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THE SALT OF THE COVENANT

THE ceaseless human activity in a material universe as visualized by Shakespeare was pictured thus: —

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.

What the poet expressed in verse Mrs. Eddy set forth in prose when she wrote (Miscellaneous Writings, p. 224), "We should remember that the world is wide; that there are a thousand million different human wills, opinions, ambitions, tastes, and loves; that each person has a different history, constitution, culture, character, from all the rest; that human life is the work, the play, the ceaseless action and reaction upon each other of these different atoms." In the same paragraph this wonderful woman with spiritual vision counsels students to go forth into life with large patience, a genial temper, a settled equanimity, "a charity broad enough to cover the whole world's evil, and sweet enough to neutralize what is bitter in it."

To-day broad-visioned students of Christian Science see the peoples of the earth emerging from four years of conflict, and the world's stage is reset for another act in the swiftly moving drama of human affairs. Men are learning to think internationally. A sense of personal domination, which was believed to be possible through the exercise of human will, threatened the peace of the world. As Christians we have enlisted to correct this evil, to remove the danger by bringing to the minds of men a better concept of what constitutes greatness. World reconstruction is the watchword, — reconstruction of a character which calls for the exercise of all the capabilities of our best thinkers in every walk of life.

Confusion arises from the false belief that substance is material. Envy, hatred, resentment, injustice, lack, covetousness, are phases of the universal claim of evil, which would raise barriers between men and nations and provoke class strife. Mortals are misled through a wrong sense of what constitutes substance. Here it should be remembered that the mission of Christianity is one of healing. Our endeavor must be to learn to think constructively. To avoid entangling alliances with evil we must "agree to

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disagree" with the claims of the adversary, rise above them and prove their nothingness. Steadfastly refusing to enter into this erroneous compact and firmly establishing our covenant with God, good, we avoid this false alliance and become a law unto ourselves. The universal sense of evil's reality is due to a wrong concept of God and man.

A better sense of God as Love and of Spirit as true substance, also of man's spiritual perfectibility, is needful in order to gain a right sense of love for man. Having a spiritual sense of substance, we help to unfold whatever belongs to all men as God's children. In order to gain a new recognition of his relation to God and be of greater service to humanity, one must have greater spirituality. Love for our fellow men provides a foundation for this service. Taking a spiritual interest, we shall be mutually helpful. The warming smile, sincere handclasp, kindly interest in others, the friendly word or counsel given opportunely, may carry healing. One should aim to be helpful in all departments of life, loving in attitude, courteous in the consideration of others, prompt to meet their seeming needs without ostentation or waste of words. As our Leader says in her beautiful poem (Poems, p. 7): —

Thou to whose power our hope we give,
Free us from human strife.
Fed by Thy love divine we live,
For Love alone is Life;
And life most sweet, as heart to heart
Speaks kindly when we meet and part.

In the epistle of James we find practical and wise counsel on many subjects. The fifth chapter contains a warning against oppression. "Grudge not one against another," he wrote, and he urged that peace and patience be preserved. It is interesting to ponder on the manner in which James would have dealt with present day problems of capital and labor, but it is safe to say that much of his practicability would apply at the present time in preserving harmony between employer and employee. In connection with this thought, the term salt may be profitably considered.

In the eighteenth chapter of Numbers we find that God's covenant with Aaron stipulated, "It is a covenant of salt for ever before the Lord unto

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thee and to thy seed with thee." Salt was considered symbolic of the binding nature of a covenant. In the ninth chapter of Mark we read, "Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another." Right thinking, prudence in speech and action, a sense of kindliness and of the joy of life, constitute the salt that heals the troubled waters of dissension and strife. If we lack a desire to preserve peace and harmony in our covenants with men, then our salt has lost its saltness, and the opposite disturbing quality is worthy only to be cast out. The Bible contains numerous references to salt, some of which are emblematic. It was employed as a type of purification or healing by Elisha when he cleansed the spring at Jericho. "And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land."

Salt was required with sacrifices, being used in a clarifying, tempering sense. In the second chapter of Leviticus we read, "And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt." Again Job asked, "Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt?" One Bible dictionary defines salt as a preservative, a symbol of incorruption and perpetuity and of the mutual obligations to fidelity and hospitality which, according to Oriental ideas, rested upon host and guest. This latter thought is conveyed in the preparation for the entertainment of Abraham's three guests, described in the eighteenth chapter of Genesis. In the baking of meal cakes and breaking of bread, salt undoubtedly has a certain significance. It was symbolical of the fidelity due from servants to their employers. Among the Arabs salt is still a symbol of fidelity; and among the Persians and East Indians, being in the service of another is termed, "Eating his salt."

Anciently the breaking of bread by two persons often comprised the figure of a covenant, and salt made it more binding. It had therefore an important significance in this ceremony. That Jesus was familiar with its use in this connection is too well known to require amplification. "And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread." Mrs. Eddy understood the practical import of these things. She urged Christians to preserve with meekness, gratitude,

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patience, and purity their harmonious relations with mankind. Present day relations between men should be seasoned with the salt of fair play and a right concept of man. These are the questions about which Christians are called upon to do right thinking. During the period of mental readjustment, and until the question of capital and labor is conceived of in a new and higher light, this seasoning quality is essential. Therefore, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." There is no monopoly in the practice of Christian healing. Each individual is afforded opportunity to think, write, and voice healing truths. All who are endeavoring to practice right thinking and acting have their share in the universal healing work; for did not the Master say to his faithful followers, "Ye are the salt of the earth"?

Charles F. Southworth.