

# Peace Haven Annual Meeting 2025

## “The land of Christian Science”

“Where fetters fall and the rights of man are fully known and acknowledged.” (S&H 226:29)

By Robert Van Der Like (November 8, 2025)

Good afternoon, dear ones! How delighted I am to be here today. I would like to share some interesting ideas I’ve discovered this past year in the research I’ve been doing. I’ve been studying a phrase Mrs. Eddy uses, “The land of Christian Science,” and how it relates to the “kingdom of heaven ... on earth.”

Mrs. Eddy, the discover of Christian Science, writes in our textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*,

“I saw before me the awful conflict, the Red Sea and the wilderness; but I pressed on through faith in God, trusting Truth, the strong deliverer, to guide me into the land of Christian Science, where fetters fall and the rights of man are fully known and acknowledged.” (S&H 226:29)

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the proposition I bring to you today:

The phrases, “kingdom of heaven on earth” and the “land of Christian Science are synonymous.” Right now, at this very moment, we are dwelling in the “land of Christian Science, where fetters fall and the rights of man are fully known and acknowledged. We are living in the kingdom of heaven ... on earth. Where, as in heaven, so on earth, God is omnipotent, supreme. [S&H 17:2].

And, as we are living in the land of Christian Science, engaged in honest toil, there is to be no penalty, no harm, and no suffering [S&H 385:15]. Because the absolute laws of Truth exist in heaven, they must also exist on earth, in the “earthly experience” [S&H 202:17], also called the “human experience” [S&H 99:23]. It is in the land of Christian Science where “Science” is being applied to humanity, which is Mrs. Eddy’s explanation of the term “Christian Science.” (S&H 127:14–16)

Now, in this presentation I’m going to be talking a lot about humanity and the human experience – one might say, “the human and divine coincidence.”

But before we start, let’s first be clear about the absolute truth concerning where we *do* “live, and move, and have our being.”

We *are*, always *have* been, and ever will be God’s beloved children, complete and whole. We are at one with God (and you can’t get any closer to God than that). We are living in the kingdom of heaven – where we are right now and will always be, held perfect in God’s love. The beautiful, good, and pure constitute our only ancestry. And we are *conscious* of this eternal truth of our being right now and forever.

These are the facts of our true and only identity ... in spite of ... the scientifically impossible experience of being conscious of these truths and, *at the same time*, being conscious of its opposite. Intellectually and rationally, we know the impossibility of two opposite natures existing in the same place at the same time. Mrs. Eddy describes this “unreal” condition of the human experience when she writes,

“... the only reality of sin, sickness, or death is the awful fact that unrealities seem real to human, erring belief, until God strips off their disguise.” (S&H 472:26)

In this talk, we will, first, explore some of the statements that Mrs. Eddy makes about the kingdom of heaven on earth and how it relates to the human experience. Second, we’ll explore some ideas about our “rights” in the land of Christian Science and consider a specific example of how these rights apply to the everyday human experience. Third, we’ll dive into handling bald impositions and impersonalizing error. And fourth, we’ll conclude with ideas on ways we can pray in an impersonal manner.

So now, for our first topic.

### **1. How does the kingdom of heaven “on earth” relate to the human experience?**

Let’s start with these excerpts from our text book in the chapter on “Prayer.” (S&H 16:30-3)

“Thy kingdom come.”  
“*Thy kingdom is come; Thou art ever-present.*”

“Thy will, be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”  
“*Enable us to know — “as in heaven, so on earth, — God is omnipotent, supreme.”*”

So, in the Lord’s Prayer, how would we define “earth?” What is that earth, to which, we pray every day, in the Daily Prayer, that the kingdom of heaven should come (like it’s not there yet), or, *has* already, come? Let’s look at how Mrs. Eddy used the word “earth” in another place in her writings. Such as this citation about “earthly experience,”

“The days of our pilgrimage will multiply instead of diminish, when God’s kingdom comes on earth; for the true way leads to Life instead of to death, and **earthly experience** discloses the finity of error and the infinite capacities of Truth, in which God gives man dominion over all the earth.” (S&H 202:17)

In Mrs. Eddy’s spiritual interpretation of the Lord’s Prayer she affirms “Thy kingdom *is come*.” She then, in reference to God’s will being done on earth as it is in heaven, offers us one more petition (yes, in the spiritual interpretation), which could be the single most popular prayer in Christian Science of all time ... “Enable us to know!” “*Enable us to know, — as in heaven, so on earth, — God is omnipotent, supreme.*” (S&H 17:2) Enable us to *know* that all the power of God in heaven, every single one of His governing laws, His complete authority, His jurisdiction, His divine supremacy is in full operation, right here, in the human consciousness, the human experience, in the “Land of Christian Science.” As Mrs. Eddy explains “*Christian Science*” to be “Science” as especially applied to humanity!

Mrs. Eddy writes,

“Immortal Mind, governing all, must be acknowledged as supreme in the physical realm, so-called, as well as in the spiritual.” (S&H 427:23)

As an aside, let me say that when looking for Jesus’ ideas about the kingdom of heaven, I became engaged in an interesting study of Matthew, chapter 13. It is specifically devoted to “The Parables of the

Kingdom” – you know, “the kingdom of heaven is like ... (etc.)”

Soon after you begin to study this chapter, you start to realize that Jesus is really talking about the kingdom of heaven *on earth*! There are seven parables of the kingdom in that chapter and a couple more in other chapters. I encourage you to take a look at this chapter when you get a chance. And think about how he is describing the kingdom of heaven.

So, in concluding this topic on how the human experience relates to the kingdom of heaven on earth, let’s review. There is only one place we live and move and have our being, and that is in the kingdom of heaven. The human experience is that impossible state of human thought where we *are* conscious of the true realities of being, the kingdom of heaven, and, at the same time, we seem to be also conscious of its opposite, error, the unrealities that are trying to appear real. Yet, even in the midst of the so-called human experience, the laws of God expressed as the Science of Christ are ever-present, all powerful, and ever governing all – ever knowable and demonstrable. We never left the kingdom of heaven.

Which brings us to our next topic, concerning the rights we have in the land of Christian Science.

## 2. We have rights! God-given rights.

According to our textbook, we have human rights, moral rights, inalienable rights, and divine rights. Let’s now look at these rights by considering a specific example – our labor rights! But the labor I’m talking about is not just leaving home in the morning, performing the physical work of a job, and coming home in time for dinner. I’m talking about the everyday, full-time work of a Christian, ... a student of Christian Science.

Most of us here have heard about the *song* of Christian Science. You know, the one that goes, “Work — work — work — watch and pray.” (Message ‘00 2:7–8)

Judging by “our song,” one might get the impression that there is a lot of work to do! In fact, every student of Christian Science knows that we have work to do. We learn from our textbook, if we are sincere, we labor for what we ask. (S&H 13:10–12) Mrs. Eddy is also quoted as saying, “Our life consists of good, our health

and happiness all come from thinking rightly and acting rightly.” (MARY BAKER EDDY, *Christian Healer* (Amplified Edition), p. 228) Isn't this is our work to do, every day?

And, do we, as Christian Scientists, have labor rights here? Let's hear what Christ Jesus has to say about this.

From the book of Matthew:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28–30)

Here's a correlative passage from our textbook:

“Constant toil, deprivations, exposures, and all untoward conditions, *if without sin*, can be experienced without suffering. Whatever it is your duty to do, you can do without harm to yourself.” (S&H 385:15–18)

This sounds to me like, even though there is a yoke (a discipline to be observed) and work to do, the labor that Jesus is talking about is not supposed to be a heavy load or a grievous burden. It sounds like we have a right to do whatever is our duty to do without suffering or harm. We have a right to experience the easy yoke even in the midst of very challenging situations.

In the research I did on this topic, I found the word “self-abnegation” to be a very interesting word. Mrs. Eddy uses this word in relation to Christian Science, when she writes:

“Self-abnegation, by which we lay down all for Truth, or Christ, in our warfare against error, is a rule in Christian Science.” (S&H 568:30–32)

I looked through a lot of dictionaries, finding a lot about self-sacrifice, until I found this very insightful definition of self-abnegation (1974 Funk & Wagnalls' Standard Dictionary, International Edition):

“Forgets that there is anything to surrender. A mother will care for a sick child with complete self-abnegation, but without thought of self-denial.”

Would not this be the idea behind the phrase, “a labor of love?” Of course we would not be burdened when we are busy spending untold hours doing something we love to do. Christ's holy work is what we love to do.

Wouldn't it be, that the expression of that love by each and every one of us would include the feeling of vitality, grace, joy, inspiration, a sense of fellowship, expressed in the feeling of love for mankind? What could possibly interfere with that? What could possibly interrupt the promise that Jesus has given us of the easy yoke? ... Why do we sometimes feel uninspired, or overburdened?

So as Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel together and admonished them to choose this day whom they will serve, the people responded, “God forbid that we should *not* serve the Lord our God.” We too have been choosing this day and every day whom we shall serve.

“Know, then, that you possess sovereign power to think and act rightly, and that nothing can dispossess you of this heritage and trespass on Love.” Mrs. Eddy writes (Pul 3:7-9). It is the moral power of Christian Science. As free moral agents we have the right to choose and the moral power to act on that choice. It is our inalienable right of self-government ... on earth as it is in heaven.

“Citizens of the world, accept the “glorious liberty of the children of God,” and be free! This is your divine right.” (S&H 227:24–26)

And as Mrs. Eddy further writes,

“God never punishes man for doing right, for honest labor, or for deeds of kindness, though they expose him to fatigue, cold, heat, contagion. If man seems to incur the penalty through matter, this is but a belief of mortal mind, not an enactment of wisdom, and man has only to enter his protest against this belief in order to annul it.” (S&H 384:6–12)

So, right now, let's take a moment to establish for ourselves that we have a right to be free of a false sense of burden when doing holy work. Divine Love has called us. We have lovingly answered the call. We love this work, we have chosen this work, and nothing can take away our joy in the healing ministry of Christian Science.

This leads us to our next topic:

### 3. How do we handle “bald impositions” and impersonalize error?

Mrs. Eddy writes,

“The calm, strong currents of true spirituality, the manifestations of which are health, purity, and self-immolation, must deepen **human experience**, until the beliefs of material existence are seen to be a bald imposition, and sin, disease, and death give everlasting place to the scientific demonstration of divine Spirit and to God’s spiritual, perfect man.” (S&H 99:23)

What does a deeper human experience do for us? What are we supposed to be experiencing? One day I was reading through the book of Psalms and found this scripture, “Many are the afflictions of the righteous.” (Ps 34:19) When I first read this scripture, the first part of it, I thought to myself, “What! That’s not fair. That doesn’t seem very just or merciful for *righteous* people.” Then I continued reading the rest of the verse, “but the Lord delivereth him from them all,” and suddenly I noticed a lessening of fear within me. I realized the afflictions were not there to harm, nor could they harm, but for the opportunities to experience God’s deliverance, from every one of them. Remember, this too is an aspect of the land of Christian Science, where fetters fall.

Examples of these afflictions, which I am now calling “bald impositions,” that we might typically face when caring for others can sometimes come to us wrapped in emotions. Strong human emotions and feelings, such as grief, guilt, a false sense of obligation, fear of failure, and anger, to name a few. These emotions, if ignored, or accepted by us, would be *sinful* to us. It would be “missing the mark.”

Remember that one little caveat, “if without sin?” It was in that quote from Mrs. Eddy,

“Constant toil, deprivations, exposures, and all untoward conditions, *if without sin*, can be experienced without suffering.” (S&H 385:15–17)

If we give in to these emotions, they will try to turn our easy yoke, our labor of love, into a heavy burden. But by knowing and asserting our moral and divine rights,

in the land of Christian Science, we have some simple ways to handle these claims (which is our last topic).

This is where our metaphysical role comes into play – uncovering these hidden impositions and rejecting them, annulling them, with the help of the calm, strong currents of true spirituality. This allows us to see them as “bald” impositions. The definition of “imposition” is “an unfair or unwelcomed demand or burden. (Oxford Languages) And remember, we have to see them as “bald” impositions. The definition of “bald” being “uncovered, without dignity or value.” (1828 Webster’s Dictionary). So, let’s now take a look at our approach to this metaphysical part of our work.

One of the most important aspects of our metaphysical role is to impersonalize error – handling the impersonal error and not a person.

In a letter to one of her students recorded in the biography, *MARY BAKER EDDY, Christian Healer* (Amplified Edition) [p. 229], Mrs. Eddy wrote,

“If you dwell in thought on any person it will hinder you from overcoming personality in your healing and casting out sin. There is no personality, and this is more important to know than that there is no disease.”

How do we, then, *pray impersonally*? Mrs. Eddy explains this type of impersonal or indirect treatment as follows:

“The spiritual power of a scientific, right thought, without a direct effort, an audible or even a mental argument, has oftentimes healed inveterate diseases.” (Rudimental Divine Science 9:21)

This metaphysical approach to handling false impositions has been called “indirect prayer,” “impersonal prayer” or “impersonal treatment,” or simply, “spiritualizing one’s own thought.”

So, when the picture of a poor, suffering, or sinning mortal imposes itself on our own consciousness we can ethically and morally treat that “imposition to *our* thought” with the spiritual power of a scientific, right thought; and to expect it to have a healing effect.

There is no need to wait to get anyone’s permission for

this kind of prayer. You don't have to wait for anyone to call you for prayer. We already have the authority, right now, to immediately handle impositions to our *own* thought. That is another one of our rights. This is the ethical metaphysical work of all students of Christian Science who have been called to care, but not called to directly treat another person.

The metaphysical approach, indirect or impersonal prayer, which I have just been talking about, impersonalizes error in our own thought. Which greatly helps in another category of bald impositions. The feeling that we can be harmed, erroneously influenced, distracted from our post, or just merely annoyed, in anyway, by a person.

This error, held in thought, even unconsciously, is what tries to make what we love to do, a heavy burden. These are the impositions that can show up in the human experience, in our relationships. So, now, ... let's take a moment to think about our human relationships.

We have our family relationships, church relationships, social, and work relationships. In our work relationships we have a boss, possibly subordinates, patients, and family members of patients. So, we have to ask ourselves, "Would there be any errors trying to hide in any of these relationships?"

We must *know* that whatever burden that seems to be coming from a person is not coming from a person, it is only a bald imposition of mortal mind, disguising itself as a person. We are not to treat a person, only the claim of mortal mind, the impersonal error – rebuking it, reversing it, and replacing it with the truth that "all is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation" and other specific truths that relate to the situation.

Through the metaphysics of impersonal prayer – handling the error only, not a person – pouring in truth through flood tides of love (S&H 201:17), we are demonstrating our knowledge of Christian Science practice. This is a very important part of our work.

But, let's face it, impersonalizing human emotions is not so easy, perhaps impossible, from a human perspective. It only becomes easy with the help of divine Love guiding us – the calm, strong currents of true spirituality, "Letting the reign of divine Truth, Life,

and Love be established in us." Letting divine Love be the basis of our motives. This is where self-abnegation becomes most important. And, this is where we find the easy yoke.

So, now, let's look at:

#### **4. What are ways we can pray in an impersonal manner?**

Well, we learn from the Bible and from Science and Health that there are many ways to pray. But there are four I would like to highlight here. Remember, we are not helpless bystanders! We are faithful witnesses to the power and presence of God.

Let's start with the prayer of:

**Compassion** – It begins with the feeling of sympathy toward "our neighbor" upon an awareness of a difficulty they might be going through (a concern for the welfare of the "brother we see" [and the sister], as defined by Mrs. Eddy in our text book in the chapter on "Christian Science Practice." (S&H 366:12) When that feeling of sympathy is immediately followed by a desire to help, that is the definition of compassion. This sincere desire might find itself as a prayer of petition, such as, "Father, let me be used by Love." Mrs. Eddy writes in Science and Health under the marginal heading "Compassion requisite," (partially abbreviated here)

"... if the unselfish affections be lacking, and common sense and common humanity are disregarded, what mental quality remains, with which to evoke healing from the outstretched arm of righteousness?" (S&H 365:7)

This could be thought of as Mrs. Eddy's definition of compassion. The mental qualities of unselfish affections, common sense, and common humanity are what calls out for healing. You might say, these mental qualities are what gets the healing ball rolling!

Compassion, as a prayer of desire, a desire to help, is often expressed in the form of a petition. But Mrs. Eddy also notes that if the prayer of petition is not full of sincere *desire* for what we ask, it is just so many empty words. When the prayer of petition is the prayer of sincere desire, "hungering after righteousness,"

then it aligns with Jesus' precept, "Ask and ye shall receive."

Here are some examples of the prayer of compassion in the form of a petition:

"Let the "male and female" of God's creating appear." (S&H 249:5)

"Let us feel the divine energy of Spirit, ..." (S&H 249:5-6)

"Enable us to know, as in heaven so on earth, ..." (S&H 17:2)

"Give us grace for today ..." (S&H 17:5)

It is recorded several times in the Bible that Jesus was first "moved with compassion" and then the healing works followed! So, in a nutshell, the prayer of compassion is the prayer of sincere desire that calls out for healing, "and," as Mrs. Eddy writes, "it does not return unto us void."

One day it was reported to me that a small infant in my extended family had been negligently abused resulting in a broken bone. I was crushed! I could feel the deep sorrow creeping into my thought. I metaphorically dropped to my knees asking God to open my eyes to see what he sees and knows about this innocent little babe. Soon, uplifting thoughts began to come. As negative thoughts about who was to blame, the tragic psychological effects on the babe for the rest of his life, and the injustice and cruelty of it all were met one by one, by addressing my own thought. My compassion was calling for healing and I was going to ensure that my thought was to be an influence for good in the atmosphere of thought. Over time, it all unfolded as a blessing for all.

The second type, is the prayer of:

**Affirmation** – It often begins as a protest of truth, addressing impersonal error, declared with understanding, poured in through "flood-tides of Love," and spoken with authority. It continues as we put to use the two cardinal points of Mind healing – the understanding of "the nothingness of material life and intelligence and the mighty actuality of all-inclusive God, good." (S&H 52:19-23)

Affirmations can be made both directly or indirectly. One way to ensure that our affirmations are always

impersonal, always use the first-person plural as the pronoun.

For example – we, us, our, etc. Like in the Lord's prayer. In fact, the Lord's prayer is a great example of an impersonal prayer. It is specific and inclusive.

Here is an example of the prayer of affirmation using a well-known Bible verse (with the pronoun substitutions that I just mentioned).

"There shall no evil befall US, neither shall any plague come nigh OUR dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over US, to keep US in all OUR ways." (Psalms 91:10, 11).

Back in my college dormitory days, I was getting ready for Sunday School when I heard my roommate, in the next room, groaning over flu symptoms. Having recently completed class instruction, I instinctively began to pray about the picture I was witnessing. I did not treat my roommate, but I did begin right away to deny the impersonal errors and affirm the truth of the man of God's creating. I handled the errors not the person. Upon returning from Sunday School, all the lights were on, my roommate was fully dressed and moving about with various activities. I really didn't notice the change at the time and simply began to do my homework. He came into my room twice to tell how much better he felt, before I realized he had no more symptoms.

The third type, is the prayer of:

**Reflection** – It begins with self-reflection and listening. Then, moves on to self-examination, perfecting, spiritualizing our own view of God and man. It is casting out the beam in our own eye, ensuring that there are no thoughts of stereotypes or prejudices hidden there. This way of praying very closely relates to the spirit of our communion prayer. As Mrs. Eddy would say, "[We] bow before Christ, Truth, to receive more of his reappearing and silently to commune with the divine Principle, Love." (S&H 35:12-14) Communing with divine Love and listening for the "still, small, voice" needs no words at all, but only to "feel the unspeakable peace which comes from an all-absorbing spiritual love." (S&H 264:24) Mrs. Eddy writes:

"We should examine *ourselves* and learn what is the

affection and purpose of the heart, for in this way only can we learn what we honestly are.” (S&H 8:28–30)

Here is an example of the prayer of reflection.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalms 139:23, 24)

Several years ago I was working on a project and problems began to arise between myself and another team member. This continued for several months. I finally became so tired of the acrimony over what I felt was the unjust behavior of this person that I decided to examine my own thought more deeply. I read and studied Mrs. Eddy’s article in Miscellaneous Writings, “Love Your Enemies.” After two hours, I felt great joy! I realized that I had control over my own thought about this person and that I could chose to see the man of God’s creating right then. After this revelation, I immediately received a text from this person calling for a meeting the next day. I began rejoicing at that moment because I wanted to apologize and was trying to figure out how to connect with that person. We had the meeting and I was able to commend the person for their courage and persistence in wanting to clear up the conflict. I gained a completely new perspective about the person and no further conflicts ever appeared after that.

The fourth type is, the prayer of:

**Encouragement** – It begins with hope (the word “hope,” from the *Bible* means expectancy of good). Mrs. Eddy talks about “the tender word,” “Christian encouragement,” “patience,” and the “removal” of “fears.” (S&H 367:3) In the role of a caregiver, we should be patient with ourselves and work to remove our own fears.

The prayer of encouragement then moves on to gratitude, the acknowledgment of God’s promises and blessings. Our praise and gratitude to God establishes in thought that all things *are* possible to God and that we can avail ourselves of His promises. These prayers of encouragement often sound like the benedictions we hear at the end of our Sunday services. Such as, “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these *things*, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by

names by the greatness of his might, for that *he is* strong in power; not one faileth.” (Isaiah 40:26)

Mrs. Eddy writes, “Gratitude is much more than a verbal expression of thanks. Action expresses more gratitude than speech.” (S&H 3:25) Think of this, our own Christian ministry of love and caring for others, is our prayer of gratitude, in action! It is the tender word, the helping hand, the prayer of Christian encouragement, that gladdens the heart, and blesses all whom our thoughts rest upon.

Here is an example of the prayer of encouragement.

“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:” (II Cor 9:8)

One morning I got a text from a young family member that was visiting our home. It read please come see me, now! I had just completed my daily metaphysical work and was feeling very uplifted and inspired. So, I carried that loving feeling with me to the room. The youngster had been brought up in another religion, so I didn’t feel it appropriate to offer Christian Science treatment at that time. However, I sat on the edge of the bed and just communed with divine Love – feeling the unspeakable peace that comes from an all absorbing spiritual love. I just felt the sense of God lovingly governing all, a calm assurance, a gentle confidence. In a short moment, the young one got out of bed, went to the bathroom, and upon returning exclaimed, “false alarm!” There was no more pain.

As a way to help you remember these four types of prayer, think of the word “care,” C. A. R. E. The letters of the word CARE form an acronym using the first letter of each word, (C for compassion, A for affirmation, R for reflection, and E for encouragement). I call them:

### **The C – A – R – E Prayers!**

So, in conclusion,

1. Always remember, you have never left the kingdom of heaven, not even to temporarily have a human experience. You are always where Christian Science, the laws of God, are in operation and being applied, in spite of the opposite picture that may appear.

2. We have God-given rights. Let's make sure we know what they are and assert them. And that what blesses one is blessing all.

3. All the afflictions that we seem to experience, or see others experiencing, are to be seen as bald impositions to our own thought, which have no power to harm. They are only opportunities to experience God's law of deliverance. And the afflictions that we

see others are facing, imposed on our own thought, can be ethically handle through impersonal prayer.

4. There are many ways to pray in an impersonal manner. The C. A. R. E. prayers are some ways to pray that help us to dig deeper into our own thought and behold the man and woman of God's creating. We are not helpless bystanders! We can be faithful witnesses to the presence and power of God. We all can do it, as we are living in the Land of Christian Science.

And here's my closing benediction:

"My prayer, some daily good to do for Thine, for Thee;  
An offering pure of Love, whereto God leadeth me." (Hymn 253, v7)

Amen!