



## When the Shepherd Leads

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Extracts from a talk given at Chariton Manor Open Day, 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2015

You can listen to the full inspirational address at [www.charitonmanor.org/talks](http://www.charitonmanor.org/talks)

### Readings

John 10:14,27 "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine....My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:"

Matt. 4:20 "And straightway they left their nets, and followed him."

John 7:17 "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

John 18:37 "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

James 1:19 "Wherefore my beloved brethren, let every man be **swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.**"

I Kgs. 4:29 "And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore."

S&H 232:26-27,9-10 "In the sacred sanctuary of Truth are voices of solemn import, but we heed them not." Scripture informs us that "with God all things are possible," – all good is possible to Spirit;"

S&H 284:28-32 "According to Christian Science, the only real senses of man are spiritual, emanating from divine Mind. Thought passes from God to man, but neither sensation nor report goes from material body to Mind. The intercommunication is always from God to His idea, man."

MW 58:13 MBE points out a very important lesson: She states, "I read the inspired page through a higher than mortal sense...I may read the Scriptures through a belief of eye sight; but I must spiritually understand them to interpret their Science."

Then on the next page (MW 59:12) she spoke of the rightness of healing prayer "...if we pray Scripturally, with the understanding that God *has* given all things to those who love Him."

Many a Christian Scientist pauses regularly to ask if any suggestion or thought entertained may in any way question the Greatness or Goodness of God, if it is even the subtlest suggestion of fear, or questions if God is that powerful or whether he is less than infinitely loving. To accept anything less must be corrected because such impositions would "dishonor God," and couldn't be a spiritual and right sense of a situation, or person.

S&H 91:5 "Let us rid ourselves of the belief that man is separated from God, and obey only the divine Principle, Life and Love. Here is *the great point of departure for all true spiritual growth.*" (emphasis added) Speaking of our Master she said, S&H 315: 5-7 "His better understanding of God was a rebuke to them. He knew of but one Mind and laid no claim to any other."

Spiritual sense may at times be the very reverse of what appears to be the case. As a teen I was so shy I could rarely look another human being in the eyes. I decided I needed a more spiritual sense to meet the challenges of junior high school. I was led to read a page from the Bible each

night as well as a portion of “Footsteps of Truth” in S&H. One night I was crying, feeling sorry for myself about some mean things I heard fellow students say about me. I started to pray and what I heard was not what I had expected at all. A stern rebuke in consciousness declared very vehemently, “This is nothing more than selfishness!” Only then did I realize that if I thought everyone was constantly criticizing my modest dress and unusually small stature, then, I was selfishly thinking everyone was looking at me and I was the subject of everyone’s attention. That broke the mesmerism; I grew to be as tall as the second shortest girl in my class and I was shocked when the end of year elections announced I had been elected vice president of my class; student council representative and a cheerleader; all positions that were normally held by only the most respected and well known persons in the class.

This lesson helped me resist seeing anything less than God’s child regardless of the initial human opinion presented. I supervised a new chaplain assistant in Korea that the leadership told me would need to be eliminated from the Army because she was mentally retarded. None of us on our team accepted the commonly accepted assumptions about the woman; we all united in a more spiritual approach. We could only acknowledge the reign of spiritual sense. We chose to pursue a more sincere evaluation and relationship with her.

S&H 258:21 “The human capacities are enlarged and perfected in proportion as humanity gains the true conception of man and God.” What we found was she had never been socialized or taught anything; (i.e. not even how to brush her teeth, simple cleanliness etc.) We had her speech analysed and worked with her to overcome what they considered a speech impediment. We all spent time with her each week teaching her some new things. By the time I left Korea she was teaching the files course in the Administrative course at the Division. She even gave me a witty cartoon of her and I when I was leaving Korea.

Ezra 8:28 “Ye are holy unto the Lord;”

A TV newswoman giving a talk at the Pentagon told us, “The highest compliment you can pay someone is – to pay attention. Studies estimate we hear only 10% of all said around us. When listening to the Lord we would certainly want to improve that success rate.

None of our [WFX] communications systems were working. A young private ask me, “Chaplain would you think it sacrilegious if I ask you to pray over the single channel tactical satellite? Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not unto thine own understanding, in all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy path. Within a few minutes all the equipment came on line and functioned perfectly.

In the early 1970’s I inadvertently slammed my hand in the car door when I was a summer recreation counsellor while in college. I immediately had to silence the lie and silence any other voice around me. I sternly told my co-counsellor to stop screaming at what she saw and to please be quiet so I could pray. I had to silence mortal mind completely. I did so, so instantaneously I had not a single moment of pain. There was no room in my thought for it as I was only listening to divine Mind and passages that came to my thought from S&H 67:27-28 “*Spiritual*, not material *consciousness* is **needed**” (emphasis added). And very importantly I realized at that moment that was my **only need**. I remembered Mary Baker Eddy explains (S&H 384:3), “We should relieve our minds from the depressing thought that we have transgressed a material law and must of necessity pay the penalty.” Let us reassure ourselves of the law of Love. God never punishes man for doing right, for honest labor, or deeds of kindness...” I knew I had only wanted the little girls in the back seat to be safe. Their mom hadn’t intentionally left that at the wrong location for that day’s program. There had been a pure motive and no sin therefore there could be no harm for any of us involved.

The Shepherd has the exact truth for the situation. Only after we had shown the first reel of a reel-to-reel film did my co-counsellor demand to see my hand. We couldn’t find a mark on either of my hands.

MW 95:20-21 “...the divine Mind reveals itself to humanity through spiritual law.”

One summer I was returning from a series of talks. I had gotten up at what we call in the Army “O dark thirty” (about 5:30am) I had a two and a half hour bus ride, then a three hour wait in my first Airport and then a change of plane in a second terminal. I was impressed with the pilot’s recognition on the sound system that we had gotten a tremendous tail wind that allowed us to arrive 45 minutes early. I was originally thinking I’d have a four-hour lay over in the second terminal then a two and half hour flight and another three hours to get to my home in Florida. Yet, I remembered there had been an earlier flight to Orlando that the airline wouldn’t book because it left only 10 minutes after our original estimated arrival time in the change of plane terminal. On the first leg of the trip I had prayed knowing that God governed and that he didn’t require things of his people that were unreasonable or unnecessarily taxing. What was true was that he governed by a perfect law of harmony. I had a very sweet sense of what that harmony felt like.

As I was getting off the plane this thought came to me. “God can get anyone on a plane he needs to...” I looked up and noticed that the boarding gate for the earlier flight to Orlando was directly across the terminal from our arrival gate. The tail wind had gotten me there just as they were finishing boarding. I only had carry-on luggage and I ask if they would allow me to switch to the earlier flight so I wouldn’t have a four and a half hour wait for the later flight.

The gate attendant laughed at me and said there was already a wait list of over 20 other names. Immediately I fought off the suggestion of disappointment and the imposition of exhaustion. I wouldn’t get home until about 11:30pm on the original flight. And it was very clear to me I wouldn’t want my harmony to come at someone else’s expense, because God would never design it that way. I initially thought, I’ll just go get something to eat. But divine Mind urged me not to leave the gate but to sit down and let the man call the names on the wait-list. Only one of twenty some people answered the wait list call. He admitted there were three open seats near the front. I told the attendant I would gladly pay the \$100 change fee. Where he had been rather brusque before that, he laughed and said no. It’s not your fault. He gave me a boarding pass and I sat in the front row.

Just a few minutes after I sat down, a woman called down the jet way as the stewardess was trying to close the plane door. Surprisingly they pushed back the door and let her board. She sat down next to the man beside me. He immediately lit into her verbally. He was obviously her boss. I heard him detail all the things that would have been messed up had she not made that flight. It dawned on me that this prayer wasn’t just about me! She described sitting down and closing her eyes for a moment at the food court. She didn’t realize how tired she was and had fallen asleep. She described that a few minutes ago a voice spoke loudly in her consciousness telling her to wake up and run to the gate for the plane.

My place on the plane was just the gravy of recognizing the voice is often speaking to more than just me. It spoke to the gate attendant boarding people, the woman who fell asleep and the flight attendant attempting to close the airplane door, etc.

“In the order of Science, in which the Principle is above what it reflects, all is one grand concord.” (S&H 240:10-11)

Because two retired Army Chaplains had an unforeseen crisis (just as one went on a cruise the other went in the hospital) I got a call on a Saturday evening to preach a sermon for a UCC congregation. They had known me as an Army chaplain and that the congregation knew me from a talk I had shared on praying with the casualties on September 11<sup>th</sup> in the Pentagon. I chose to preach a sermon on forgiveness. I was shocked when a group of people ran up to the pulpit afterward and begged me to please become their pastor...My friend Lamar Hunt, a Methodist Army Chaplain had come unexpectedly when the hospital had released him early that morning. Although he could hardly talk, he explained with no small amount of emotion, “Do you have any idea what you would be asking of a Christian Scientist? No one values Church more than the Christian Scientists. You don’t realize what you’d be asking her to give up.” I’d known him for many years and had never heard him make such a recognition in that regard to his own denomination or any other. He remarked himself that he thought that was the best sermon he had ever heard and

that he was glad he did make it there that day because it was just what he needed to hear. I would add that his praise was no small compliment, as he was considered one of the very best preachers in the Army chaplaincy when we served.

What we come to understand is that the divine Mind, can enable us to spiritually perceive the Truth in any situation. A couple of years later I was asked to preach a sermon in a small town in Florida, (Micanopy) and to speak as a Christian Scientist to an Episcopal congregation. I explained how I taught my team of chaplains and lay leaders in Europe to pray specifically and scripturally for the safety of our soldiers in an important exercise. There were some spectacular healings and not one significant injury in the entire nine weeks.

Afterward a woman told me she wanted to let me know that she was touched by what she heard me say. Then, she went on to explain she hadn't been able to hear anything else in the service. She wasn't able to hear the Muslim or Buddhist presenters nor her own Episcopal Priest nor had she ever heard anything in previous regular services she'd attended. She explained that despite hearing aids she seldom heard anything. She asked me to explain why she had heard everything I said? (I might add that this historical structure had no electronic microphones but prided itself on the fact that its unique structure enable all the other members to hear without the aid of a microphone.) I told her I felt I had spoken from the heart and it would indicate she had heard with hers. She smiled and gave me hug.

MBE states in MW 262:10 "When the heart speaks, however simple the words, its language is always acceptable to those who have hearts."

In S&H Mrs. Eddy notes (209:31-32), "Spiritual sense is a conscious, constant capacity to understand God." Such spiritual sense can't be interrupted, cease to exist or be altered in any way.

When I think of heeding the Shepherd's voice I think of the line from Hymn 298, "*Heard* ye the glad sound?" It makes me ask myself if in any given situation I am obeying gladly or reluctantly or with any trace of disbelief? It brings into question what type of will is being expressed in the situation. I evaluate whether I am yielding and agreeing, "Thy Will be done!" meaning of course God' will. Or am I giving into any degree of personal wilfulness and wanting my own will to be done. When our Father-Mother reveals the divine will in a setting, I've found it may even at rare times defy human logic. Yet if the inner voice is very persistent and firm with you there can be a blessing beyond what you can humanly discern in some situations: Easter morning a persistent and stern voice kept urging me to get potatoes. I argued with it because I knew I had gotten two bags of potatoes the day before. Yet I appealed to God to tell me why, yet the voice sternly said, because I told you to go get potatoes. Obedience in Divine Command Morality is simply and purely – Hear and Obey – don't ask questions, don't try to wiggle out of it or justify not obeying. I did so. It was a very moving experience.

I had potatoes on the checkout counter waiting behind the person ahead of me. Two counters over, a young man was urgently insisting a woman should try to valid his check in the machine a third time. He insisted he and his wife had balanced the cheque book carefully to make sure enough money for Easter dinner was in the account. I could see an Easter basket for a little girl was on the conveyor belt with potatoes, ham and green bean casserole items etc. I knew then and there that those were the potatoes I was there to buy. I left my lane and put some twenties on the counter and told the young man that this happens to everyone at one time or another. I explained that when I went in the Army women weren't allowed to have children so I was very grateful that God let me spoil other people's children. I told him it would mean so much to me if he'd let me treat them to Easter dinner. He seemed incredibly shocked. Every single other person in the store at the time were completely silent as they listened to the exchange between the young man and me. He sheepishly accepted my offer after I continued to insist I want to do this. I assured him some time in a future moment he might be the one helping his neighbour in their time of need. He quietly gathered his groceries the woman had quickly bagged for him. Everyone waited for him to exit the store, and ten numbers of people cried and expressed their shock because they had never seen

anything so sweet. I left the other potatoes in the store and went on to church, although I felt as if I had already been to church in those moments.

S&H 321:24-26 "God had lessened Moses' fear by this proof of divine Science, and the inward voice became to him the voice of God..."

There are so many dimensions of spiritual sense. It's truly a multifaceted jewel.

S&H 242:26 "Mere speculation or superstition appropriates no part of the divine vesture, while inspiration restores every part of the Christly garment of righteousness."

No 46:19 "Man has a noble destiny."

I shared this quote with prison inmates after a prayer by the full time institutional chaplain referred to them several times as the "great unloved" in a brief benediction at a chapel gathering. They ran to us CS Volunteers and emphasized that they were learning in our services that they were God's loved children. I shared with them a healing I heard of about a Christian Academy playing a reform school team. The team arrived with not one spectator, family member or cheer leader and one person who seemed to be acting as their coach. The head of the school asked half of their cheerleaders and fans to move to the other stands and cheer on the young men so they would have supporters. They made a formation to cheer them as they entered the field. The students were obviously awe struck; afterward they remarked it was the first time they'd scored a touchdown or field goal. They felt they'd played their best game, and for the first time they felt they had been beheld as people of any value. Everyone met at the centre of the field and embraced as many of the people on both sides wept.

In 1977 the military was attempting to be more responsive to families. For many years sergeants would joke that if the army wanted you to have a family, they would have issued you one. The chaplains at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, offered workshops on family support for the basic trainees' wives. It was there I decided a truly exceptional case would be that rare time I'd lend someone money.

Officers in the very public battalion parking lot laughed at me when they saw a woman family member asking me for \$20. She approached me explaining that she had put water in her gas tank, thinking that would make the gas go farther. I explained how bad that was for the car and not to do it again. She told me she had no money for the baby's formula or food for the children until her husband would get his first pay cheque in a week or so. I took her to get diapers and formula from a military food closet and told her I would lend her the twenty. I suggested she might return it only if they could. If not, I would consider it a gift.

When I re-entered the battalion headquarters, the officers and NCOs who saw me give her the money laughed at me and told me to kiss the money good-bye. I countered with authority that I didn't wish to be any part of stealing anyone's God given dignity nor did I wish to bear false witness against my neighbour. I mentioned that I only knew of one Creator, so this family must really be God's children. I continued that I was trusting that God was helping the family, who were simply new to the army. What they needed was an opportunity to get on their feet financially. I had been struck by the sincerity of this woman who insisted so vehemently that she and her husband always paid their debts.

It was a number of weeks before the young private graduated from basic training and had finally gotten his first few pay cheques. He came to the battalion headquarters walking hand in hand with his daughter and son, while his wife held their baby. Because he was so new to the army, he didn't realize he could've talked to me in the privacy of my office. So he simply sat down in the crowded battalion clerk's office in full view of many officers and NCOs and took out a baby's sock. It was the kind you see with the little lace edging on it. This caught everyone's attention. He began to dutifully count out his first instalment of \$5 towards paying their debt. He carefully stacked coins in piles.

They were mostly nickels and pennies. He kept insistently proclaiming, "I always pay my debts!" There was not a single dry eye in the hallway or surrounding office areas.

I choked back my tears and told him I understood he and his family were only starting out. Because he was very insistent, I agreed I would accept this first payment. Then I made a suggestion on how to pay the other payments. I told him he could save the five dollars in the sock three more times. The first time he could buy something the baby needed. The second time he could buy something his daughter needed and then something his son needed the final time. If he would consider each one a gift from me, then I would consider the debt paid. Only after I was very insistent, did he agree that he could accept those terms. I hugged his wife and the kids and they left.

NO matter how personal the error feels in a human situation, evil is not a person, a place or a thing. It is not personal in any regard (not an individual identity, not a regional identity, not a seeming power of nature as a forces etc, disease, wind, water etc.)

CS has an infinite number of intelligent recognitions to offer the world. It may even include, how *not* to think of God. Even an Atheist who gets in very heated debates with nearly everyone, is able to talk to me patiently, kindly and was even immediately responsive to my request to take a less than accurate reference to our Church off his web site.

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