

Wednesday, January 1, 2014
Seventeenth Church of Christ, Scientist, Chicago

TOPIC: What do we expect in the new year?

HYMNS

THE BIBLE (J.B. Phillips translation)

Roman 5:2-4

... through our Lord Jesus Christ ... we have confidently entered into this new relationship of grace, and here we take our stand, in happy certainty of the glorious things he has for us in the future. This doesn't mean, of course, that we have only a hope of future joys - we can be full of joy here and now even in our trials and troubles. Taken in the right spirit these very things will give us patient endurance; this in turn will develop a mature character, and a character of this sort produces a steady hope, a hope that will never disappoint us.

Acts 12: 1-19

It was at this time that King Herod laid violent hands on some of the Church members. James, John's brother, he executed with the sword, and when he found this action pleased the Jews he went on to arrest Peter as well. It was during the days of unleavened bread that he actually made the arrest. He put Peter in prison with no less than four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover. So Peter was closely guarded in the prison, while the Church prayed to God earnestly on his behalf.

On the very night that Herod was planning to bring him out, Peter was asleep between two soldiers, chained with double chains, while guards maintained a strict watch in the doorway of the prison. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared, and light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side and woke him up, saying, "Get up quickly." His chains fell away from his hands and the angel said to him, "Fasten your belt and put on your sandals."

And he did so. Then the angel continued, "Wrap your cloak round you and follow me." So Peter followed him out, not knowing whether what the angel was doing were real - indeed he felt he must be taking part in a vision. So they passed right through the first and second guard-points and came to the iron gate that led out into the city. This opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and had passed along the street when the angel suddenly vanished from Peter's sight. Then Peter came to himself and said aloud, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent his angel to rescue me from the power of Herod and from all that the Jewish people are expecting." As the truth broke upon him he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John surnamed Mark where many were gathered together in prayer. As he knocked at the door a young maid called Rhoda came to answer it, but on recognizing Peter's voice failed to open the door from sheer joy. Instead she ran inside and reported that Peter was standing on the doorstep. At this they said to her, "You must be mad!"

But she insisted that it was true. Then they said, "Then it is his angel."

But Peter continued to stand there knocking on the door, and when they opened it and recognized him they were simply amazed. Peter, however, made a gesture to them to stop talking while he explained to them how the Lord had brought him out of prison. Then he said, "Go and tell James and the other brothers what has happened." After this he left them and went on to another place.

But when morning came there was a great commotion among the soldiers as to what could have happened to Peter. When Herod had had a search put out for him without success, he cross-examined the guards and then ordered their execution.

Romans 8:12-17, 8:18-21, 8:25-28, 31

So then, my brothers, you can see that we have no particular reason to feel grateful to our sensual nature, or to live life on the level of the instincts. Indeed that way of living leads to certain spiritual death. But if on the other hand you cut the nerve of your instinctive actions by obeying the Spirit, you are on the way to real living.

All who follow the leading of God's Spirit are God's own sons. Nor are you meant to relapse into the old slavish attitude of fear - you have been adopted into the very family circle of God and you can say with a full heart, "Father, my Father". The Spirit himself endorses our inward conviction that we really are the children

of God. Think what that means. If we are his children we share his treasures, and all that Christ claims as his will belong to all of us as well! Yes, if we share in his suffering we shall certainly share in his glory. In my opinion whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has planned for us. The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own....the hope is that in the end the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay, and have its share in that magnificent liberty which can only belong to the children of God!

if we hope for something we cannot see, then we must settle down to wait for it in patience.

The Spirit of God not only maintains this hope within us, but helps us in our present limitations. For example, we do not know how to pray worthily as sons of God, but his Spirit within us is actually praying for us in those agonising longings which never find words.

Moreover we know that to those who love God, who are called according to his plan, everything that happens fits into a pattern for good.

In face of all this, what is there left to say? If God is for us, who can be against us?

I Peter 3:15

And if it should happen that you suffer "for righteousness' sake", that is a privilege. You need neither fear their threats nor worry about them; simply concentrate on being completely devoted to Christ in your hearts. Be ready at any time to give a quiet and reverent answer to any man who wants a reason for the hope that you have within you.

II Cor 13: 11

Set your hearts on this maturity

SCIENCE AND HEALTH WITH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES

By Mary Baker Eddy

SH 40:31-41:10

The nature of Christianity is peaceful and blessed, but in order to enter into the kingdom, the anchor of hope must be cast beyond the veil of matter into the Shekinah into which Jesus has passed before us; and this advance beyond matter must come through the joys and triumphs of the righteous as well as through their sorrows and afflictions. Like our Master, we must depart from material sense into the spiritual sense of being.

SH 317:6-15

Whosoever lives most the life of Jesus in this age and declares best the power of Christian Science, will drink of his Master's cup. Resistance to Truth will haunt his steps, and he will incur the hatred of sinners, till "wisdom is justified of her children." These blessed benedictions rest upon

Jesus' followers: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you;" "Lo, I am with you always," — that is, not only in all time, but in *all* ways and conditions.

SH 41:22-28 (to 1st .)

Jesus foresaw the reception Christian Science would have before it was understood, but this foreknowledge hindered him not. He fulfilled his God-mission, and then sat down at the right hand of the Father. Persecuted from city to city, his apostles still went about doing good deeds, for which they were maligned and stoned.

SH 76:32-77:1, 5-6

The recognition of Spirit and of infinity comes not suddenly here or hereafter. Existence continues to be a belief of corporeal sense until the Science of being is reached.

SH 569:3-5

Every mortal at some period, here or hereafter, must grapple with and overcome the mortal belief in a power opposed to God.

SH 22:3-10

Vibrating like a pendulum between sin and the hope of forgiveness, — selfishness and sensuality causing constant retrogression, — our moral progress will be slow. Waking to Christ's demand, mortals experience suffering. This causes them, even as drowning men, to make vigorous efforts to save themselves; and through Christ's precious love these efforts are crowned with success.

SH 66:11-16

Spiritual development germinates not from seed sown in the soil of material hopes, but when these decay, Love propagates anew the higher joys of Spirit, which have no taint of earth.

Each successive stage of experience unfolds new views of divine goodness and love.

SH 167:20-3

The "flesh lusteth against the Spirit." The flesh and Spirit can no more unite in action, than good can coincide with evil. It is not wise to take a halting and half-way position or to expect to work equally with Spirit and matter, Truth and error. There is but one way — namely, God and His idea — which leads to spiritual being. The scientific government of the body must be attained through the divine Mind. It is impossible to gain control over the body in any other way. On this fundamental point, timid conservatism is absolutely inadmissible. Only through radical reliance on Truth can scientific healing power be realized.

SH 318:18-21

Weary of their material beliefs, from which comes so much suffering, invalids grow more spiritual, as the error — or belief that life is in matter — yields to the reality of spiritual Life.

SH 365:31-366:2

The poor suffering heart needs its rightful nutriment, such as peace, patience in tribulation, and a priceless sense of the dear Father's loving-kindness.

SH 178:18-22

Mortal mind, acting from the basis of sensation in matter, is animal magnetism; but this so-called mind, from which comes all evil, contradicts itself, and must finally yield to the eternal Truth, or the divine Mind, expressed in Science.

SH 125:12-20

As human thought changes from one stage to another of conscious pain and painlessness, sorrow and joy, — from fear to hope and from faith to understanding, — the visible manifestation will at last be man governed by Soul, not by material sense. Reflecting God's government, man is self-governed. When subordinate to the divine Spirit, man cannot be controlled by sin or death, thus proving our material theories about laws of health to be valueless.

SH 90:27-32

The understanding and recognition of Spirit must finally come, and we may as well improve our time in solving the mysteries of being through an apprehension of divine Principle. At present we know not what man is, but we certainly shall know this when man reflects God.

SH 45:16-21

Glory be to God, and peace to the struggling hearts! Christ hath rolled away the stone from the door of human hope and faith, and through the revelation and demonstration of life in God, hath elevated them to possible at-one-ment with the spiritual idea of man and his divine Principle, Love.