

Are We Making Decisions or Discoveries?

A workshop by Bruce Jeffrey
at Desert View, November 18, 2023

BIBLICAL MODELS FOR DECISION MAKING

Moses

- Num. 26:33 (to :)

And Zelophehad the son of Hopher had no sons, but daughters:

- Num. 27:1-5

THEN came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph: and these *are* the names of his daughters; Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah.

And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, *by* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons.

Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us *therefore* a possession among the brethren of our father.

And Moses brought their cause before the LORD.

Samuel

- I Sam. 16:1, 6-12

1AND the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

¶ And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD's anointed *is* before him.

But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.

Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.

Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these.

And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all *thy* children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

And he sent, and brought him in. Now he *was* ruddy, *and* withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this *is* he.

□

Elijah

- I Kings 17:1, 8-16

AND Elijah the Tishbite, *who was* of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which *belongeth* to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman *was* there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

And as she was going to fetch *it*, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I *am* gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go *and* do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring *it* unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day *that* the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.

And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat *many* days.

And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah. □

Jonah

- Jonah 1:1-7, 15-17; 3:1-5, 10

NOW the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.

But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that *were* in the ship into the sea, to lighten *it* of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.

So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.

And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil *is* upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging.

Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows.

Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

AND the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying,

Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.

And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did *it* not.

Joshua

- Josh. 24:15 choose (to ;)
choose you this day whom ye will serve;

More from Moses

- Deut. 28:1, 2
AND it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe *and* to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:
And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.

Jesus

- Matt. 6:33 seek

seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

- [John 5:30](#)

I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

- [John 8:28](#)

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

From our Leader, Mary Baker Eddy

- [SH 195:11-12](#)

The point for each one to decide is, whether it is mortal mind or immortal Mind that is causative.

"Unhesitating decision"

- [SH 463:21-24](#)

To decide quickly as to the proper treatment of error — whether error is manifested in forms of sickness, sin, nor death — is the first step towards destroying error.

Decision left to Christian Science

- [SH 383:31-5](#)

If mortals think that food disturbs the harmonious functions of mind and body, either the food or this thought must be dispensed with, for the penalty is coupled with the belief. Which shall it be? If this decision be left to Christian Science, it will be given in behalf of the control of Mind over this belief and every erroneous belief, or material condition.

The Trial of Liver Complaint

How it starts

- [SH 430:19-20](#)

The patient feels ill, ruminates, and the trial commences.

How it gets decided

- [SH 440:30-32](#)

I appeal to the just and equitable decisions of divine Spirit to restore to Mortal Man the rights of which he has been deprived.

- [SH 441:25-27](#)

The Supreme Bench decides in favor of intelligence, that no law outside of divine Mind can punish or reward Mortal Man.

- SH 441:19-20 Spirit

Spirit decides in favor of Man and against Matter.

- SH 441:25 (only, to ,)

The Supreme Bench decides in favor of intelligence,

Example of Mary Baker Eddy

- Mis. 158:19 As

As of old, I stand with sandals on and staff in hand, waiting for the watchword and the revelation of what, how, whither. Let us be faithful and obedient, and God will do the rest.

We Knew Mary Baker Eddy, Volume II, Expanded Edition

Mary Baker Eddy Making choices

P 429

I do change my mind frequently, but when I do, it is always God that changes me. Sometimes I will be headed in one direction, like a weather vane, and will stay that way for several days. The next time you see me, I will have turned completely around and am going the other way, but in the meantime God had given me additional light and has led me to make the change. There have been times in working out a problem when I have not known just what step to take, and finding it necessary to make a move of some sort, I have taken a step as nearly as I could in the right direction. Perhaps I would find out shortly that it was wrong, but this step gave me a new point of view that I would not have had, had I not taken it as I did. I would not condemn myself, therefore, for what seemed to be a mistake but would include it as part of the working out of the problem.

Obeying before Understanding

From Clara Shannon

PP188-89

One day I wanted to have some proof of which I could speak concerning God's guidance of the Cause of Christian Science, and I had the following proof, which left no doubt whatever. One night the Directors of The Mother Church wished to have guidance as to the wisdom of taking certain steps in something concerning The Mother Church which was of great importance. Late that night some letters were brought from them telling Mrs. Eddy about the circumstance and asking advice. At that hour Mrs. Eddy had

retired and was sleeping, so we thought it best to wait until the morning, or till she wakened, before bringing them to her. In a short time she wakened and rang her bell, asked if any letters had come for her from the Directors, and wanted to see them at once, as she said there was a great need of wisdom. After reading them, she told us what it was, and she said, "I don't know what is best to do, but Love will show me the way." She told me to get her block of paper and pencil and to write.

I sat on the carpet beside the hot-air register and wrote at her dictation. She said, "God *bids* me to do so and so, but I don't see the reason why." Several times she corrected that manuscript, saying "The does not make the meaning clear enough. I must put better words to express what God meant," and she dictated for hours, and as I finished writing each sheet, I passed it on to Mr. Frye for him to copy on the typewriter. At about 2 or 2:30 a.m., I said to her, "Mother, why don't you wait to write this till tomorrow?" She said, "And what would become of our Cause if I waited? This will be on its way to Boston at half past five, ready for the Directors' meeting at eight o'clock."...And in the morning, at five-thirty, it was on its way and arrived in time for the meeting.

Later in the morning after she had been for her walk on the veranda, she said to us, as she came into her room, "Love has shown me the reason why," and she explained to us the reason. Then she said very seriously, "I want you always to remember that Mother had to obey God before she knew the reason why." Afterwards, when the news of the result reached her, she had the proof that all was well and that she had acted rightly, and God's directions were carried out. That was a heavenly lesson in obedience to spiritual direction..."

OBSTACLES

1. Self-justification

Rolling Away the Stone, by Stephen Gottschalk
PP 307-308

The one thing Eddy most abhorred and rebuked was self-justification, which she saw as a mental state of acute resistance to genuine spiritual progress. In the words of Hermann Hering [a worker in Eddy's household and the second First Reader of TMC], when workers failed to accomplish something they had been asked to do and had to report to Eddy, she would "not permit them to make any excuses," to justify themselves or even apologize; "she never stopped questioning them or talking with them until they admitted that error had made them do this or fail to do it. She said that unless you made this admission that error made you do it, you can't be healed of it."

Caroline Foss

Her position is evident in the case of Caroline Foss, a New York practitioner whom Eddy called to Pleasant View to serve as her personal maid. Foss later wrote of her initial feeling of humility at the possibility of being with Eddy, but found that she was frequently rebuked for her resistance to correction.

...Foss reproduced in her reminiscence a letter sent to her by Eddy after she had returned to New York saying: "I have begged you to quit telling me why you did a thing wrongly, but you have not obeyed me. I have told you it is like the sick excusing sickness—tell *why they are sick*, and you do know that this would tend to make it real and to *justify sickness*."

John Lathrop

He was called to her study at Pleasant View and asked if he was doing his mental work. He replied that he was trying to do it. Eddy repeated the question and he replied as before. His account continues:

She said, "Stop, stop!" and gave me one of her penetrating looks which went right through me. "I asked you if you were doing what I gave you to do. You replied, 'I am trying to do it.' Now you are either doing a thing or you are not doing it. Were you doing it?" "No, Mother, I was not doing it," I replied.

She said quickly, "When are you going to do it?" "Now," I replied. "Let me see you do it now," she said sternly. I returned to my room. I knew that if I did not do the required mental work now, I would soon be taking a train to my home.

Lathrop quickly gained the needed spiritual realization—and just as quickly, Eddy called him back and gave him more work to do.

2. Being Surprised

- [SH 70:1-2](#)

Mortal existence is an enigma. Every day is a mystery.

- [SH 390:12-13](#)

When the first symptoms of disease appear, dispute the testimony of the material senses with divine Science.

- [SH 563:1-7 \(to ?\)](#)

Human sense may well marvel at discord, while, to a diviner sense, harmony is the real and discord the unreal. We may well be astonished at sin, sickness, and death. We may well be perplexed at human fear; and still more astounded at hatred, which lifts its

hydra head, showing its horns in the many inventions of evil. But why should we stand aghast at nothingness?

3. Not Graduating

Earth is a school

- [SH 486:9-10](#)

Earth's preparatory school must be improved to the utmost.

We must graduate

- [SH 74:29-30](#)

In Christian Science there is never a retrograde step, never a return to positions outgrown.

- [SH 233:1](#)

Every day makes its demands upon us for higher proofs rather than professions of Christian power. These proofs consist solely in the destruction of sin, sickness, and death by the power of Spirit, as Jesus destroyed them. This is an element of progress, and progress is the law of God, whose law demands of us only what we can certainly fulfil.

FINAL THOUGHTS

- [SH 44:10-12](#)
- Step by step will those who trust Him find that "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

- [SH 467:13](#)

Having no other gods, turning to no other but the one perfect Mind to guide him, man is the likeness of God, pure and eternal, having that Mind which was also in Christ.