

A Science of Mind Primer

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The invisible passes into visibility through our faith in it... Happy are we if we see these things which, from the foundation of the human race, have been longed for by all aspiring souls.

In many of our CSL centers or churches, January lectures or sermons address the nuts and bolts of our teaching, often using as reference the first four introductory chapters of *The Science of Mind*, which we call our textbook, by Ernest Holmes, who was

our founder. If people are seeking a fresh spiritual path, right after the first of the year is a prime time to do it, similarly as we will set new goals in other of life's concerns. Those well schooled in our worldview may find the month's subject a welcome reminder, and greet some of Holmes's axioms like old friends.

Here, distilled "for pocket or purse," are those four chapters.

The Thing Itself.

The study of the Science of Mind is a study of First Cause, Spirit, Mind, or that Invisible Essence, that ultimate Stuff and Intelligence from which everything comes, the Power back of Creation, the Thing Itself. We accept this 'Thing' and believe in It. What we desire is to know more about It, and how to use It.

People will ask, by "Thing Itself," does he mean God? He means what he says he means — which may or may not be what one thinks of when the word "God" is employed. The Science of Mind thinks of God not as a personality but as all personality, not a power but all power, not a vast inhabitant of Its own creation but as every particle of that formed creation, plus all the potential back of every form. "Mind" is a good descriptive term, provided one includes matter, just as Holmes pairs Stuff with Intelligence. God, in our definition, is all

there is. Thus we use God in every action. But learning how to use It does not mean we suddenly start using It. Rather, we and the rest of our species have been using It all along, though mostly unawares, with mixed results. So we seek to learn what sort of power we're dealing with (infinite, immediate) in order to use it constructively in our lives. To say we "use" God does startle some. It may feel disrespectful to cast the Almighty in the same role as an appliance — but again only when It is thought of as a separate personality. What we are using, consciously and deliberately, is that "Power back of Creation." What good is a power that goes unused? What real good is a power that is only stumbled upon and not thoroughly understood?

Actually the use is reciprocal. Were we not in some way necessary for creation to unfold, we would not exist, or if we did, it would not be equipped with the complex self-awareness that gives us our capacity to wonder and question, and to so profoundly affect our environment and each other. One might argue that each grain of sand on every beach is not especially vital, and Holmes cites this as an example of universal abundance, yet the All is present in every part of Itself. Why we are here is unanswerable. Those who see God as person maintain He has a plan for each of us, that is our duty to discover and carry out. In the God-as-all concept, It expresses Itself in Its creation, or "outpictures" (Holmes's word), by means of localized agencies of Itself that possess co-creative abilities of mental and emotional intention. Other pieces of creation may possess these also, but we know that we do. Andrew Caraker wrote, "We are focal points of Infinite Intelligence." Being such, we should stay aware and in touch with the Intelligence that is using us and being used by us.

The Way It Works.

Our thought and emotion is the use we make — consciously or unconsciously — of the original creative Thing that is the Cause of everything. Therefore we shall say that the mind, spirit, and intelligence which we find in ourselves is as much of this original, creative God as we understand.

That the management of spiritual power is within us we may come to see by the process of

elimination: we have looked everywhere else for it, to no avail. Words and actions achieve their ends only when a committed inner intention precedes them. We get, more or less, what we expect. If we are not expecting anything, or more especially choosing anything, we tend to get pot-luck, whatever is up for the getting. In saying “get,” I mean worlds beyond merely acquiring material things — it’s about our overall quality of life, infused with meaning, purpose, and deep satisfaction. Spiritual law works through, and not in spite of, our thoughts and feelings. Thoughts and feelings, when aligned, may be called “beliefs.” We have probably heard that it is done to us as we believe. The admonishing corollary to this is that if we would have it be done any other way, we must first believe, before it can be done. Most of us initially learned to do quite the reverse, so as to not be duped by life: we learned to be clever to the point of cynicism, judicious to the point of pre-judging everyone and everything so that almost nothing and no one could climb into our souls. Holmes speaks of this as using our innate freedom to create bondage — that is, by using our spiritual power without conscious intention, we screen out available joy as we wait for inevitable conflict. We have learned to prepare for events as though they were bound to happen, and lost touch with the capacity we have within us to shape what happens.

Our belief sets the limit to our demonstration. We go as far as we believe we can. Even in extremity, outer conditions give way to one who believes. When an solid, durable condition yields, we say this is a “miracle,” but miracles are law-abiding events. The outcome may unexpected, astonishing, stunning, but it is natural. Holmes maintains there is no supernatural, only depths and heights of the natural that have not yet been scaled or plumbed, at least by us, in our daily life. Others before Holmes called Jesus’ biblically-accounted ability to heal, raise, precipitate things out of thin air, walk on water, and so forth, the “science of Christ.” It was not his spectacular personality or unique birthright that enabled him to do these things, but a principle with which he somehow became acquainted, and then deliberately used, in order to teach others in his time and down the years that they might use it.

You and I are among those others.

What It Does.

Love rules through Law. Love is the Divine Givingness; Law is the Way. Love is spontaneous; Law is impersonal. We should study the nature of Reality with this in mind, and in this way we shall avoid two grave mistakes: either viewing life as made up only of mechanical laws, or viewing it as made up only of spontaneous actions, irrespective of law and order.

There being a universal power that can accomplish great things of little interest if we are not engaged with It and It with us. In this section of his book, Holmes brings in a process we might use to “draw the Infinite Mind into our mentalities, for definite knowledge of some particular good.” This process he names “spiritual mind treatment.” Prayer as treatment of one’s own mind was known prior to Holmes; but he elaborates on the theme and promotes it as the keystone of anyone’s spiritual practice regardless of their theological position. If we are going to pray, he taught, then we should realize it’s a law that receives that prayer, and being a law has no ability of itself to pass judgment on the one who is praying. Here, we distinguish belief from personal ethics. Doing right by others as well as ourselves is its own reward. In one respect, no one does right enough, because we’re all human as well as divine, and in our humanness there is some measure of egotism and self-absorption in us all. If all our defects of character were held against us when we pray, no one’s prayer would ever have been answered, except perhaps Jesus’, though at times he did express sarcasm, condemnation, and anger, and that’s in three or so years we know about. Spiritual law is impersonal. Anyone can use it no matter what. It draws upon the contents of consciousness, and when those change, it’s a whole new day.

Now, divine love is the other side of the coin. It is not a demanding, controlling sort of love, or even a truly sweet parental sort of love, that the Creative Mind has for its own creation. This love will not intrude, or expect even the slightest requiting, since it does not emanate from a singular personality but — again — from all personality. Thus we may call it “unconditional.” Whole books could be, and have been, written trying to pin down this indefinable love, which is unlike anything

else we've ever experienced, because everything else has been a stepped-down version of it, even the greatest person-to-person love we have known. God's love may be felt as waves of good feeling coming apparently out of nowhere. It is more often felt as the kindness we encounter, and feel moved to extend from our own hearts, when abroad in the world. When we pray in faith believing for some comfort, or a bit of wisdom or guidance, or validation that we are really okay, we may notice how often the response to this comes via another human or other created entity.

How to Use It.

It is easy enough to rush about shouting that there are no sick people, but this will never heal those who appear to be sick. It is easy to proclaim that there are no needy. Anyone can say this... We should be able to look a discordant fact in the face and deny its reality, since we know its seeming reality is borrowed from illusion.

It may serve us to draw a distinction between truth, or supreme reality, and fact, or apparent reality. Sickness or neediness, for examples, are hard facts, as anyone can tell us who has been through them. Yet if they were absolute reality then all would be sick and needy. These states would be the norms, so much so that we wouldn't even have names for them, not knowing anything different to contrast them against. The assertion in the Science of Mind is that we were created to thrive. If we are not thriving, the universe is not coming unraveled, we have simply tended in consciousness toward an acceptance of suffering, most likely obliviously. It is not our fault we are sick. Nothing truly judges us except ourselves, and if handle the experience of suffering in a more self-supportive way, the more we allow the perfect blueprint after which we were fashioned to come forward and become the prevailing reality in our lives. Sickness or any undesirable state is giving us good information about our mental and emotional process. Like a dashboard light in the car, it's telling us something is out of whack under the hood. We can ignore the light, put duct tape over it if it refuses to go out, or chastise ourselves for being fools, or we can have somebody who knows what they're doing take a look. In terms of consciousness, we are the ones who know what we're

doing. We know what are our issues, our fears, phobias and resentments. Is all suffering due to mismanaged interior information? No, as Holmes points out later in the book. In many cases, we choose by not choosing. We go along to get along, as it were. We hear that there is lack and limitation and literally take these to heart, where they root and grow and crowd out everything else. On the surface, we have no idea we are doing this. Deep down, though, there is a feeling that things could be otherwise, that we were meant for better. Ironically, sometimes it's the people who have experienced the worst suffering who most dramatically one day change their minds and launch themselves into freedom, while others in lives of "quiet desperation" have mechanisms at hand to stay pretty much on the surface.

We use the Science of Mind like this: starting with the idea that the universe is one whole, benevolent, intelligent, purposeful system, we identify ourselves as expressions of that one, unified with it in every sense. From this realization we proceed to declare the reality we desire to inhabit, with no attachment to how this reality is supposed to come about, because we don't know and if we did, it would already be here. Instead, we imagine that it is here and how we feel about that, and bask in that feeling as long and intensely as possible. From this, there swells up a feeling of great gratitude for the new reality and for the joy of participating in its revelation in our lives. Finally, we release this interior journey and return to ordinary reality, except it just isn't ordinary anymore, nor are we just single mortal selves addressing the sky. We have taken up our divine inheritance.

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This article first appeared, in a slightly different form, in the January 2012 issue of "Science of Mind" magazine.