



When a life is transformed

Janet Heineman Clements

The Bible gives many examples of individuals whose lives were completely transformed once they were awakened by Christ to see their Godlike identity. Zacchaeus, a tax collector, gave up his dishonest taxing practices and even recompensed fourfold all that he had collected unfairly. Saul changed from being a persecutor of Christians to being one of Christianity's most ardent disciples. An insane man, the Gadarene, was completely healed. (See Luke, chap. 19, Acts, chap. 9, Mark, chap. 5.)

There is a folk story about a prince who was kidnapped as a baby by gypsies. He grew up believing he was a gypsy—living and acting just like them. Later a certain man recognized him as the prince and persuaded the young man to go the king and claim his sonship. The king saw that he was indeed his long-lost son, and the prince then received all that was due him as the king's son. His life was entirely changed through correct identification.

This story is an analogy for the deeper transformation of a life that comes from discovering one's actual, spiritual identity. All the while we think that we are a mortal with various limitations and difficulties, our real identity as God's beloved child is always intact. And it is the Christ, Truth, which Jesus proclaimed, that impels us to claim our spiritual identity.

Such spiritual transformation of character is going on today. An example is the case of a young fellow I knew who had lost his father. When his mother remarried and the family moved to another city, the security anchors of his life began to be pulled up one by one. First, the friends that he had made in his new city withdrew their friendship. Then a debilitating illness set in and severely limited his activity. His grades began to slide.

The young man had the love, support, and prayers of his family and a Christian Science practitioner. There was some progress, but no immediate healing. Then one day, after an especially challenging bout with the illness, he realized that he should not rely solely on his mother, family, or practitioner, but he should demonstrate the Science of Christ for himself. He could discover, *claim*, and live his sonship with his Father, as Christ Jesus did. He was like the gypsy-prince being impelled to make claim to his right identity.

The awakening thought of the Christ set him on a new path. His consciousness was so aroused that from then on he made vigorous strides to put off ungodlike traits that had nothing to do with his true, Godlike nature. He began to replace deep-seated resentment with understanding; self-righteousness and self-pity with selfless, Christlike grace. Anger and abrasiveness gave way to actively expressing spiritual poise and patience. He committed to praying for himself daily, hourly, even minutely sometimes. A natural step along the way was that he joined his branch Church of Christ, Scientist, and began serving. He felt the tender embrace of the church as he took new steps in his spiritual growth.

This healing did not occur overnight nor was the going always easy. But my friend was building the foundation of his life in accord with the blueprint of the Christ—in accord with the understanding of man's inherent goodness and purity. Like the cleaning of a grimy old masterpiece painting, the activity of the Christ began to wash away the young man's mortal sense of himself and reveal the wonderful presence of the man of God's creating.

The illness that had left him debilitated from time to time was healed through prayer. It required the unyielding conviction that, as the reflection of God, he did not have a consciousness separate from God that could be taken over by evil, fear, or sin. When the illness would come suddenly and seem frightening and unyielding, he steadfastly put down material laws by understanding and affirming that God's law was supreme and infinite. The Bible statement "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts" ([Jer. 31:33](#)) enabled him to see that God's law of harmony was permanently governing every aspect of his real being and holding it in perfect balance and health. Standing firm on Truth finally eliminated the illness completely.

The young man also began to understand that as God's son, at one with Love, he could never be deprived of the companionship that evidences that Love. New friends were found, and old friendships were renewed. The grades that had dropped dramatically were improved to the point of his completing the last years of high school with a perfect record. His teachers were amazed at the transformation taking place before their eyes. They were aware that this student was practicing Christian Science in putting off his limitations and problems. Two teachers who were looking for solutions to their own problems were given copies of *Science and Health* by Mary Baker Eddy so they could learn more about what had brought such healing and progress to the young man. The light that shines from spiritual regeneration blesses and uplifts all who are within its presence.

The Bible states, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" ([II Cor. 5:17](#)). My friend's life became new because he embraced the Christ message of who *he really was*—the son of God, richly endowed with health and holiness.

Such transformation awaits each one of us. Mankind's awakening to the fact of spiritual being will continue until the whole earth is transformed, revealing God's perfect creation right where we are.

ROMANS

Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Romans 12:2