

## October 2 Subject: “Are Sin, Disease, and Death Real?”

DEAR FRIENDS: We plan to use this spot on our web page to bring you a different set of citations each week—expanding on specific citations from the “Weekly Lesson.” A paraphrase can so often open thought to new insights of familiar statements. In this way we hope to share with you some of the wonderful work that has been done in Christian Science over the past fifty years and in to the present by authors you may or may not have yet met.

We start this week with a quote from Mrs. Eddy given in *Unity of Good* (page 9) where she asks. “What is the cardinal point of the difference in my metaphysical system? “And answers—“This: that by knowing the unreality of sin, disease, and death, you understand the allness of God. This difference wholly separates my system from all other.”

Our only other selection is from John Morgan’s talk on *The Gospel of John* given at a Colwyn Bay Summer School in 1952. Please click [here](#) for background material on John Morgan.

### JOHN 5: 1, 2

Verse 2. I think why John mentions the sheep market is because mortal thought is like a flock of sheep, idly following whatever leads and having no individual initiative. We tend to follow idly what the papers say, or what custom says, or what our nationality says, or what the weather says, or something like that. “All we like sheep have gone astray” (Isaiah 53:6). Well, we don’t have to be like sheep; and so it would appear that the impotent man had not at this time grasped his individual initiative as the Son of God.

“Bethesda” means, “house of kindness” or “house of mercy.” It is like Jesus saying to the woman at the well, “If thou knewest the gift of God,” or like Mrs. Eddy’s “priceless sense of the dear Father’s loving-kindness” (S. and H. 366: 1, 2). Even the impotent man had been dwelling in that house for thirty-eight years, yet he hadn’t recognized it.

“having five porches”—they, of course, represent the five physical senses. Like sheep, we follow what the physical senses say, without reasoning spiritually; the physical senses are the basis of material reasoning. Science and Health 274: 12,13; 17-20. “The senses of Spirit abide in Love, and they demonstrate Truth and Life.... When what we erroneously term the five physical senses are misdirected, they are simply the manifested beliefs of mortal mind, which affirm that life, substance, and intelligence are material, instead of spiritual.” If, instead of naming them erroneously, we identify them truthfully, what are they? They are the infinite senses of Spirit; one infinite spiritual sense.

### JOHN 5: 3-6

Verse 3. We all lie waiting, hoping for chance to produce something out of a hat for us. Perhaps we think, “I’ll just read, the scientific statement of being and go to sleep, and maybe I’ll be all right in the morning.” The time to be all right is *now*, but mortal belief is always waiting, always putting it off.

Verse 4. This angel is the divine idea which comes from Truth and stirs up human thought until it will accept the spiritual fact. Angels are always symbols of God’s ideas, and their office is “to stir the human mind to a change of base on which it may yield to the harmony of the divine Mind” (S. and H. 162: 9-11). Until, thought is stirred onto a different basis and is found to be divine idea, then that angel stirs the waters in vain, and we don’t get down to it and receive the benefit.

Science and Health 540:6-16. “.. the prophet referred to divine law as stirring up the belief in evil to its utmost, when bringing it to the surface and reducing it to its common denominator, nothingness. The muddy riverbed must be stirred in order to purify the stream. In moral chemicalization, when the symptoms of evil, illusion, are aggravated, we may think in our ignorance that the Lord hath wrought an evil; but we ought to know that God’s law uncovers so-called sin and its effects, only that Truth may annihilate all sense of evil and all power to sin.”

Verse 5. Thirty-eight years was the period of the wanderings of the children of Israel in the wilderness. We refer to it as forty years, but actually they traveled from Egypt to the borders of the Promised Land in two years. That would be Mind and Spirit leading one to Soul, which is the promised land; and then we are frightened by the price that mortals have to pay to enter, - that is, to lay down the mortal concept. They said, “Oh no, not just yet,” and so they turned back and wandered for thirty-eight years until a new generation had arisen. We don’t have to do the same; that story is included in the Bible for our instruction.

### **Salvation**

Verse 6. Jesus wanted to see how much real desire for wholeness that man had, - for spiritual wholeness. He might have said “Do you really love the spiritual, or do you just want a healing?” Now it’s a thoroughly right thing to want a healing, but to love the spiritual is divine. Jesus was really trying to get him to see that salvation is salvation from the belief that we need salvation.

Unity of Good 59:19-3. “Jesus came to rescue men from these very illusions to which he seemed to conform: from the illusion which calls sin real, and man a sinner, needing a Saviour; the illusion which calls sickness real, and man an invalid, needing a physician; the illusion that death is as real as Life. From such thoughts - mortal inventions, one and all - Christ Jesus came to save men, through ever-present and eternal good.” That is ultimately, what we all need salvation from: have a real condition requiring salvation. (Yet this point must be approached with sincerity and humility if we are to avoid hypocrisy.) And so when Jesus asked the man, “Wilt thou be made whole?” he just wanted to see where his thought was. Was he just hoping for something to turn up and ameliorate his physical condition, or was he longing to see that the fact is that man has never been born into this status?

### **Initiative**

Verse 7. He admitted that he hadn’t got that sense of manhood which has initiative; initiative is one of the great qualities of manhood, which we all need to culture in order to progress in Science. Peter in the Gospel exemplified initiative. He rushed in, perhaps, where angels feared to tread, but thank God for Peter: he did something, and whether he made mistakes or not doesn’t matter. “Have a go,” and that’s how you learn; that’s initiative. Peter was the one who had the initiative and the courage to say to Jesus, “Thou art the Christ.” He might have been wrong, but he said what he thought, and there’s much credit in that. Look at the initiative that the great characters in the world have had: the initiative that Jesus had, that Mrs. Eddy had, that John Doolittle had. Without initiative we don’t have the ability to grasp the opportunities that present themselves. Initiative is the counterfact of apathy. Mrs. Eddy says, “mental idleness or apathy is always egotism and animality” (‘00. 8:14-17).

So the man had not, at this point, that sense of initiative which would grasp the opportunity, and because he hadn’t got it, he said, “While I am coming, another steppeth down before me,” – which is a very poor excuse indeed. I remember once when I had a bad school report and I came out bottom of the class, my father asked me what I was doing at the bottom. I thought I had the perfect answer, and I said, “Well, someone has to be bottom,” but it wouldn’t wash; he said, “And somebody has to be top, and why shouldn’t it be you?” “Another steppeth down before me,” –that’s just the human mind.

We regard Science as a race, and we think that someone is making much more progress than we are. But it isn't a race, it's the gift of God, individually, collectively and universally, and it's to be accepted and loved. So Jesus didn't bother with this excuse.

### **JOHN 5:8, 9**

Verses 8,9. Jesus' answer was to state the calculus to him in a way which he could follow. "Rise"—the Word; you rise in thought. He said, in effect, "Resurrect yourself out of that mental apathy, lift your vision above the mist, because that isn't the truth about man. Your identity is identification with the one Life, which is activity; and power, and living. Come on, come out of it, it isn't you."

Then the Christ tone: "take up thy bed" —reckon man in Science; spiritualize your ideals. You are not lying on a lot of mortal beliefs, you are dwelling in the realm of spiritual idea."

Christianity: "and walk"—walking is always a lovely sense of Christianity. Go forward, keep in step with the whole of mankind, express the activity which is yours to express.

(Verse 9, to "walked"): that was obedience, and obedience is the tone of Science. "the same day was the sabbath"—and from then on in this Gospel Jesus uncovers the hypocrisy of mortal theological belief; but we'll talk about that sabbath in a moment.

### **Waiting**

We saw that the impotent man had been waiting for years and years, and we must consider this a little more. Sometimes we have to wait; it isn't always a bad thing. I think, even Peter had to learn to wait: he had to temper his initiative with wisdom, because rushing in blindly isn't always desirable—it may be blind zeal. But there are two senses of waiting, and I think that impotent man was waiting in the wrong sense. He was lying apathetically waiting for mortal mind to produce something for him, in a negative attitude. On the other hand, there is the waiting which is positive spiritual expectancy. Mrs. Eddy says, "Wait patiently for divine Love to move upon the waters of mortal mind, and form the perfect concept. Patience must 'have her perfect work'" (S. and H. 454:22-24). What Jesus did for this man was to translate a negative sense of waiting into a positive one. When you wait "for divine Love to move upon the waters of mortal mind," it's an intelligent waiting, —resting in action. It is being alert, it's listening; it's saying, "Not my will, but Thine be done," and it's being ready to move when you hear what Principle wants you to do. The other state is insidious, —chronic procrastination, — and we can't even hear the clarion call of Truth when we should get up and be moving; so if you find yourself in that negative sense of waiting, translate it and recognize that you are not waiting like that but are waiting for divine Love to move upon the waters of mortal mind.

Mrs. Eddy says also that "the human footsteps leading to perfection are indispensable" (S. and H. 254:1,2). Those human footsteps are not just going about making human arrangements so that the thing will work out the way that you want, but are purification of sense and self, purification of motive, self-searching. So we should translate, as Jesus did, this whole sense of waiting. We saw that when Jesus had lifted the man out of the belief that he had to wait for something, the healing took place immediately. "Immediately the man was made whole." "Immediately" is a wonderful Science word because it means no mediator, no intermediary between Principle and its, idea, no intermediary of space or of time or of person.

In verse 9, we noted that John says, "and on the same day was the sabbath." This marks the beginning of open hostility towards Jesus in the Gospel. Truth and Spirit reasons from the spiritual, and as we reckon from the spiritual, we have at once made an enemy of so-called mortal belief, which reasons from the evidence of the senses. It means that one has to be more positive.

Verse 10. John shows that what Jesus had done in healing that man was to uncover scholastic theology, or old theology, which is “the determination to hold Spirit in the grasp of matter” (S. and H. 28:6-8). Verses 11-13. You notice that this man doesn’t seem to have advanced very much. He had not even then accepted the initiative of his own sonship, and apparently was not interested in discerning the Christ. One may ask how it was that Jesus could have healed him, in that case, and I feel that the answer is that Jesus knew the Truth, and knew that it proved itself with or without the sanction of the human mind. It was *Jesus’* demonstration, rather than his healing of someone else; and that is always so in any practitioner-patient relationship. Of course, the man would have had to acknowledge his new-found sonship consciously sooner or later, if his healing was to have been permanent; but I feel that the point of most of these stories is to show the absolute and dynamic power of Truth itself. In this instance he was healing, not a man, but the belief that Truth could ever be impotent.

Someone points out an interesting thing in regard to Jesus finding the man in the temple, and that is, that in only two of the signs which John records in his Gospel does Jesus reveal himself as the Son of God. The two are the woman of Samaria (John 4:36), and the man born blind (John 9:37). Jesus identified himself as the Christ only to thought which was absolutely honest and which had wholeheartedly accepted the divine ideal; not that he didn’t want to say it to the others, but simply that they couldn’t have heard it if he had. Perhaps when we first read Science and Health we couldn’t hear it. We couldn’t hear it because we hadn’t developed to that point. So Jesus didn’t tell this man much about Truth, he merely dealt with him on the more relative side, at the point of Spirit.

Verse 14. You might wonder what a worse thing could be, but might we say that a belief in good health is nearly as bad as a belief in bad health? If it buries thought in the physique and leads to satisfaction in matter, it is nearly as bad. *Sometimes* bad health may be a better state to be in than good health, if it drives one out of it, whereas good physical health *may* be a state of somnolence. (See misc. 208:17-23; 209:15-23; 210:19-26; 325:13-30.) So always, in Science, translate every good experience as well as every bad experience and lift it into the realm of divine idea, into the realm of spiritual fact. Then if one is enjoying good health it is not because of the physique but because of the Son of God, and for no other reason whatever.

So Jesus saw the man in the temple, –he had got into a nice sense of body, it was a better body then it had been, –and he was saying to him, “Now, don’t stick there! Behold, you are made whole: sin no more, move forward, be active. Don’t stay in that state, but reckon yourself spiritually.”

Verses 15,16. The blindness of mortals’ theological belief holds good down into space and time, and so leads to the supposition that Truth can be guarded or humanly protected. The Jews may have believed that they were doing what their sense of God wanted them to do, and so perhaps were sincere, though their premise was faulty.