

August 14, 2006 – Subject: Mind.

Dear Friends: Mary Baker Eddy gave her students 26 subjects for weekly Bible Lessons, to be covered twice yearly. Flowing through the year in her order of the subjects, we hereby present fresh views of each one by outstanding Christian Scientists. In this way, we hope to partake with you of new unfoldments of her infinite revelation.

Our selection this week is from: GOD'S NATURE AS MIND – by Peggy Brook.

God's Nature as Mind

“For all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.” “The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.”

These declarations of Paul imply that God can be known, that God is not a distant, vague power that a man approaches unthinkingly through belief or mere faith; He can be known by all men intelligently. But how? Not by means of the brain or mere human intellect, but only through the “Spirit of God,” that seed of spiritual intelligence, which is the birthright of all, and which, if loved and cultured, grows naturally, sturdily, and perpetually, for it is the true and essential nature of man. This was the Mind “which was... in Christ Jesus,” and which enabled him to have dominion over sin, sickness, and death. He was “equal with God” in the sense of being the inseparable expression of this Mind, the perfect reflection of his divine Cause. And every man has the right and the ability to let this Mind express itself through him and as him, for it was not only Jesus who was the Son of God, but “Now are we the sons of God,” as the apostle John declared.

In his time Paul caught the vision of God as Mind. He regarded Christianity as the true knowledge of God for everyone, whether Jew or Gentile, and because of this he did much to free it from the bonds of a narrow, sectarian concept and take it out into the world. In the terms of his day, he threw the light of intelligent reasoning onto the things of the Spirit. He realized too that all men have the ability to reason divinely and to know spiritual reality through the one spiritual intelligence, which they reflect. He made this plain in Athens on his second missionary journey. He accused the Athenians of

superstition, saying to them, "For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." The Athenians were a cultured, intelligent people, alert thinkers, and so he continued to appeal to them through reason, saying, "For as much then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (that is, to think again on a new basis). Paul was pointing out to them here that man is the offspring of God and man is obviously intelligent; how, then, can he believe that the cause from which he springs, the Godhead, is a non-intelligent image? An intelligent creation must be the outcome of an intelligent First Cause.

It would seem that religious thought has been tempted continuously, either consciously or unconsciously, to foster superstition about the nature of God, but through the centuries there have always been thinkers who have trod the narrow path of reason wedded to revelation in their pursuit of spiritual reality. At the time when Mary Baker Eddy was inspired to use the term Mind as one of her seven synonymous terms for God, she was merely crystallizing and raising to the level of spiritual Cause, that essence which was becoming more and more familiar to the advancing thought of her age as supreme and fundamental power.

Mary Baker Eddy's initial discovery was the Science of Mind-healing; she speaks of it often as such, and in her textbook she uses the term Mind more frequently than any other term for God. The great revelation that came to her was that Mind is All, that Mind is the cause behind all phenomena and thus fundamental to man and the universe. She writes, "During twenty years prior to my discovery I had been trying to trace all physical effects to a mental cause; and in the latter part of 1866 I gained the scientific certainty that all causation was Mind, and every effect a mental phenomenon" (Ret. 24:7-11).

The story is well known of how for years Mrs. Eddy sought to find the motivating cause behind all physical effects. She had been a

sick woman, trying various cures, remedies, and medicines that were offered her, only to find their limitations, and so continue her search. She had always loved the Bible and been a woman of prayer, and in 1866 she recovered from an accident pronounced fatal through reading one of Jesus' healings in the Bible. She realized that it was entirely a mental power that had healed her, but a mental power that was spiritual; she wrote of this experience that she was "near the confines of mortal existence, standing already within the shadow of the death-valley," when she learned "that all, real being is in God, the divine Mind..." She went on to say, "My discovery, that erring, mortal, misnamed mind produces all the organism and action of the mortal body, set my thoughts to work in new channels, and led up to my demonstration of the proposition that Mind is All and matter is naught as the leading factor in Mind-science" (S. & H. 108:19-3).

Today the fact that the basic power behind everything is mind is quite common knowledge; most thinking people recognize that mind is fundamental to the whole of existence. It always has been, but in the nineteenth century this discovery was beginning to gain ground with many open-minded thinkers. Pioneers such as Mesmer in Austria and France, James Braid in England, and later Phineas Quimby in America had preceded Mary Baker Eddy. Though not metaphysicians, they were all moving towards the discovery of the mental nature of disease through their investigations and practice, but to discover the pure Science of Mind (with a capital M) was something new, and to interpret God scientifically was unique. Mrs. Eddy wrote in her textbook at the beginning of the chapter "Science of Being": "Belief in a material basis, from which may be deduced all rationality, is slowly yielding to the idea of a metaphysical basis, looking away from matter to Mind as the cause of every effect. Materialistic hypotheses challenge metaphysics to meet in final combat. In this revolutionary period, like the shepherd-boy with his sling, woman goes forth to battle with Goliath" (268:6-13). She goes on to describe the nature of the battle that she herself was fighting: "The theories I combat are these: (1) that all is matter; (2) that matter originates in Mind, and is as real as Mind, possessing intelligence and life... Matter and Mind are opposites. One is contrary to the other in its very nature and essence; hence both cannot be real. If one is real, the other must be unreal. Only by understanding that there is but one power,— not two powers, matter and Mind, are scientific and logical conclusions reached" (S. & H. 269:29-31, 270:5-10).

In considering Mind as a term for the First Cause or God, an important fact begins to dawn on one, namely, that Mind is not primarily concerned with thinking or mere thoughts. It is the primal intelligence that lies behind the whole universe and which manifests itself in ideas, ideas that are the “power-units” of Being, entities that exist in their own right in the eternal Mind; they are not just thoughts. This we shall see very clearly as we ponder the nature of Mind.

MIND IS THE INFINITE INTELLIGENCE

The outstanding fact of Mind is its power as the infinite intelligence of the whole universe. The rhetorical questions which God asked Job in the Old Testament drama of that name may profitably be asked of men today. For instance, “Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? ...Who provideth for the raven his food?... Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth?... Does the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south? Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?” None of this order of nature has man originated, nor can he control it.

“The world would collapse without Mind, without the intelligence which holds the winds in its grasp” (S. & H. 209:10-11). The world gives abundant evidence of an intelligent force at work, a force, which has qualities of order, balance, harmony, purposeful movement, form, plan. The supreme power governing the universe cannot be a blind, unintelligent, brute force, crude and blundering in its operation. The intricacies of leaf and flower and the detail of their propagation, the earth bringing forth fruit “in its season,” the manifold provisions for the animal kingdom and the infinite range of man’s consciousness hint at an intelligence behind all creation. The fact that all these phenomena are still beset by calamity, accident, and the beastliness, which made Tennyson term nature “red in tooth and claw”, is because man has not yet realized his true estate and that of the universe as ideas of the one Infinite intelligence. From having a superstitious, religious belief of being one with and governed by God, man in general then became a passive observer of a supreme intelligence at work. Now the time has come when he is realizing the wholeness of the universe, and that his life, his being, and his observations cannot be divorced from the whole. Accompanying the dawning of this integrated concept of man and the universe will be the awakening to the fact that there must be one Mind or intelligence, and it is All-in-all; that therefore all is Mind and its infinite manifestation. In this

realization man will find his true status and that of all creation as the compound idea of the infinite Mind, the representation of infinite good.

The prophet Isaiah foresaw such a state of being, and that when this Christ man is realized – the man on whom “the spirit of the Lord shall rest. ...the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord” – then “the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them... the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

This prophecy of the universal knowledge of God, or a living consciousness of Mind’s government of the universe including man, also burned within Paul, as we have seen, and indeed within many other progressive spiritual thinkers, and has continued to gather momentum. In spite of religious knowledge still being held in some measure in the bonds of mere creed and dogma, and materialism attempting to cling to its strongholds, inspired, unlimited, progressive, and intelligent thinking about the things of the Spirit has forged its way ahead wherever thought has been open to receive it, until today the possibilities of realizing Isaiah’s vision are nearer than we may estimate. A new era has dawned, an era when reason has become uppermost, and this true reasoning is leading men away from the clumsiness of a matter basis to the infinite possibilities of reckoning from a non-material basis. Moreover, this seems to be taking place freely, with great willingness on man’s part, and also with an increasing acceptance today of true intuition and revelation. Man is no longer being frightened into paying lip-service to higher realms by superstitious fear of punishment from an anthropomorphic God. He is intelligently facing up to reality, analyzing the religious and moral beliefs presented to him, and if at present this is turning his world and the world in general upside down, a much more stable and progressive basis of idealism will evolve, where nothing that is good and of value will be destroyed, but will be better fulfilled by reason of a deeper, more thinking, more intelligent and living spiritual awareness. If there is one Mind or intelligence behind the universe,

then do not let us hold back from allowing the light of this Mind continually to illumine reality; do not let us cling to outworn beliefs about reality through apathy, fear, or conservatism.

“LET THERE BE LIGHT”

The outstanding symbol of Mind or spiritual intelligence throughout the Bible is light. J. B. Phillips, the well-known Scriptural translator, in his little book *Ring of Truth*, which he calls a translator’s testimony, reminds us that we are so accustomed to artificial light today and take it so for granted that we do not realize that “in the world of the first century A.D. ...light create [d] a much greater impression of divine presence or divine happening than speed or size of physical power.”

One of the definitions of “light” is “mental or spiritual illumination or enlightenment or its source” (Webster). The first day of creation in Genesis with its opening verse, “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light” is a specific presentation of God’s nature as Mind. As this record unfolds, the light is separated from the darkness and is called “Day.” This first day is followed by six more “days,” or “numerals of infinity” as the Christian Science textbook calls them. When spiritually interpreted, these days or “numerals of infinity” reveal the nature of God in an ordered unfolding of spiritual enlightenment. They are a step-by-step revelation of the ideas of divine Mind or Truth.

As the Bible story continues, light, as a symbol of Mind, constantly reappears. One of the most familiar stories in which supernatural light is emphasized is that of the conversion of Saul when he was on his way to persecute the Christians at Damascus. It is recorded that “suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven.” It may have been a physical light, but in any event at that moment in Saul’s experience he received an influx of “mental or spiritual illumination” which impelled him to face up to his motives and actions, to question them, to think again, and to have his eyes opened as to what it meant to be an intelligent Christian.

The Old Testament teems with the symbol of light. The Psalmist frequently uses it: – “The Lord is my light;” “God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light;” “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path;” “The entrance of thy words giveth light.” Also Isaiah: – “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light... upon them hath the light shined,” and “the light of the moon shall be

as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days.” Obviously these references are not to physical light, but to the light of divine ideas, which enables us to see and understand spiritually and comprehensively.

We can mentally and spiritually say, “I see” in the light of Mind’s illumination and can know and understand the way out of a limited and material sense of ourselves and our universe. This is the spiritual meaning of the mythical story of the first thousand-year period of Bible history which illustrates the operation of this first day of creation. The story is that of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, a symbol of mortal man believing himself to be imprisoned in a limited mortal body, propagating only physical and moral concepts (Cain and Abel), the former able to destroy the latter. But there is a way out of this through enlightened spiritual thinking, through divine ideas, and the “tree of life” which stands “in the midst of the garden” offers salvation through partaking of its life-giving ideas. There is also a “river of life” that leads out of the garden, a symbol of the flow of divine, inspired ideas, and because the woman thought (Eve) is spiritually alert enough to see that what has to be dealt with is the serpent of sense whispering its insidious lying suggestions, this awakened thought eventually gives birth to a spiritual seed (Seth). Through the line of Seth came the Saviour, Christ Jesus. So the mist which goes up from the ground, or earth-bound thinking, and which gives rise to this limited sense of creation, is step by step dispelled by the light of Mind, the divine intelligence, which in reality is always shining and is all-in-all. The purpose of these Bible stories is to explain metaphysical processes in symbolic form. They are not intended as a record of actual human history...

A SEVENFOLD ASPECT OF MIND

Now let us take a sevenfold reflection of God’s nature and begin to see something of the fullness of Mind along these lines:-

Mind as Mind is the divine intelligence of all creation

Mind as Spirit is the allness of Mind, and therefore the only

Mind, entirely spiritual

Mind as Soul is the definiteness of idea, which precludes mere thought or belief

Mind as Principle is the one control governing all

Mind as Life is the activity of ideas that is spontaneous and eternal

Mind as Truth is the unerring and whole nature of consciousness, which is health

Mind as Love is the ever-fulfilled and restful activity of Mind as All-in-all

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