

December 24, 2008 – Subject: Christian Science

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 an article in **CHRISTIAN SCIENCE ITS CONTINUOUS EVOLUTION.**

THE LINE OF LIGHT

Peggy M. Brook

At certain stages in the development of the vast complex of unfolding Truth, it is of value to trace its main line of development from the point when it dawned on the human scene until the present moment. To itself Truth always has been and always will be infinitely complete and fulfilled but to human sense it unfolds along a definite line of light.

We are concerned here with the line of light, which made itself visible through the Old and New Testaments in the Bible, through Christianity, and in our age through the Science of Christianity, which its discoverer, Mary Baker Eddy, termed “Christian Science.” Naturally, Truth is infinitely vaster than these channels, but nevertheless a distinct line of light can be seen patterned and interpreted through them, its changing form being reflected in universal thought and experience.

The Old Testament, which began to be compiled in the fourth century B.C. from earlier documents, is a record composed of myth, legend, saga, tribal history, and poetical and prophetic books. It was edited in such a way by inspired men of that time that a line of spiritual unfoldment can be clearly seen, impelled by the divine Principle of the universe whom they called “God.”

As the line of light developed, it produced eventually a type of the ideal man, Christ Jesus, and his words and works were recorded in the New Testament. It was a “new” testament because, for the first time, it revealed God and man one. The divine Principle that had impelled the spiritual unfoldment of the Old Testament was now seen as manifested in human experience through its ideal reflection, man. Jesus declared, “The works that I do shall ye do also,” and the inception and development of Christianity was the outcome of the inspired spirit of the Christ, which aroused many earnest seekers of Truth to take part in and share with others the Gospel message.

Jesus left no definite rule of operation, however, no detailed teaching except the Sermon on the Mount, some inspired words and sayings recorded by those who heard him, and his tremendous living example in reforming the sinner, healing the sick and raising the dead. He prophesied that another Comforter would come, for he knew that the line of light was bound to go forward, impelling advancing thought and taking care of it as it has always done, since “human skill but foreshadows what is next to appear as its divine origin” (Mis. 232:12-14). Many were the contributions made towards this advance, but the light came to a focus again as it had done with the prophets and with Christ Jesus and Christianity, and in the nineteenth century deep study and research of the Bible by a spiritually-minded woman, Mary Baker Eddy, revealed to her age the Science of Christianity - Christian Science. Her discovery was based simply and squarely on the Scriptures; she discerned within its inspired pages the operation of a spiritual Principle, whose nature is Mind, Spirit, Soul, and whose essence is Life, Truth, Love.

Mrs. Eddy expected that the religious bodies of her time, the clergy and alert theologians, would welcome her discovery of the Science of Christianity - the Science of the very teachings which they themselves were following and preaching - but such was not the case, and so she was forced to start a separate Christian Science Church. Perhaps because it was a religious age, and perhaps because she had to present Christian Science in the form of a church organization, very few of her followers saw that it was truly the Science of Christianity which she had revealed - not a religion in the generally accepted sense of the term, but Science. Because of this, there has been the unconscious attempt to hold the teachings of Christian Science in the restrictive and limited bonds of religious organization. This is an impossibility with an ever-advancing line of light or with that which is of the nature of science.

Meanwhile, though, the line of light has gone steadily on, and is destined to bless and never to harm any of its “useful surroundings” or temporary channels. Mary Baker Eddy discovered and set forth Science, and one of those who saw this most clearly in her day was a pupil of hers, Edward Kimball. His teaching made a great impression on Christian Scientists. He taught that Principle can be understood only through its idea, and in explaining the universe of ideas, he showed that “Metaphysics resolves things into thoughts, and exchanges the objects of sense for the ideas of Soul” (S. & H. 269:14-16). This was a very helpful step, but it was only one step in the unfoldment of scientific understanding, for Mary Baker Eddy had revealed a whole and integrated Science.

The next development in the line of light came mainly through Bicknell Young,

a teacher in the Christian Science movement, who was a pupil of Mr. Kimball. His emphasis was on the oneness of being - that there is only one Being. From the resolving of the objects of sense into the ideas of Soul, this teaching stressed the fact that man is one with the ideas of Soul. He is not a mortal mentally entertaining ideas of Soul. – He *is* those ideas in operation. There is only subjective being. In the main, this is the accent in thought today with the majority of progressive Christian Scientists. There are many independent metaphysicians, both in and outside the Christian Science organization, who are propounding this wonderful and vital theme of the oneness of Being.

However, the line of light always goes on. No matter how much one is conscious of the oneness of Being, It cannot be conceived of as merely one unit, nor as if it were an amorphous whole. The very constitution of a scientific whole is that all parts fit in to one another and operate in harmonious relationship with one another. For instance, there is one mathematics, but in order to appreciate its oneness, one must understand its fundamental factors and how they are related to each other; otherwise mathematics is fragmentary in one's thought and not a whole.

This oneness of Being, therefore, was sooner or later bound to be understood in its Science, for it was what Mary Baker Eddy had seen and set forth in her textbook, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures." The evolution of pure Science and system came, naturally enough perhaps, through a pupil of Bicknell Young, John W. Doorly, who was also a teacher in the Christian Science movement. He had seen and accepted the great fact that Being is one, but he had pushed on further to find the answer to the natural question, "Of what is this oneness composed?" His research into the Bible and the Christian Science textbook revealed to him that Mrs. Eddy had been led as she said, to reduce divine metaphysics to a system (S. & H. 146:31-1) moreover, John Doorly discerned that this system was contained in the spiritual and infinite meaning of the seven synonymous terms which she employed to define the nature of the infinite, and their relationship to one another in a fourfold calculus of operation. This was no invention of Mary Baker Eddy's, but a revelation that came to her from her study of the Scriptures," Therefore the second part of her textbook, entitled "Key to the Scriptures," sets forth this key, which she found in the opening chapters of Genesis and the closing chapters of Revelation. Here it is seen that the purpose of the record of the seven days of creation, which opens the Bible, is to present in symbolic form an ordered unfoldment of God's nature, whilst the city foursquare, with which Revelation ends, is another symbolic presentation of divine consciousness, in which spiritual values continuously operate. In more up-to-date terminology Mary Baker Eddy called these seven days the "numerals of infinity" and showed that the spiritual ideas, which

they bring to light, reveal God's nature as Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love. She gave to the four sides of the holy city the terms - the Word, Christ, Christianity and Science. The operation of these sides constitutes a "divine infinite calculus" (S. & H. 520:14) - four divine processes of operation in time and eternity. Christian Science is based on this ordered revelation of God's nature and its forever operation of a divine infinite calculus.

Once the fundamentals of Being are grasped and begin to be understood, the student continues to be taught by the divine Principle itself unfolding in his own consciousness. There may still be a need for teachers of these fundamentals. The student will also be blessed by progressive interchange of ideas – the expressing of truth to one another in true spiritual reflection – for all are parts of one whole. But just as when a mathematician or a musician begins to understand the fundamentals of his subject and the subject from that instant unfolds to him from within, so, it is with Christian Science. Men become what they fundamentally are – "kings and priests unto God."

With the revelation of the pure Science of Christian Science which John Doorly was impelled to focus in the developing line of light the key is put into every student's hand to unlock for himself the door of infinite revelation, and the door is already being unlocked in an increasing measure. In this enfoldment there is no room for mere intellect, the mingling of spiritual and material values, self-seeking, personality, pride of position, human will, or love of anything but Truth. Many are finding that as they exercise their God-given right of freedom to seek and pursue Truth under God's guidance alone, and are following this all-embracing revelation of the pure Science of Christian Science, a certainty and a peace has come to them, coupled with a great sense of adventure as Truth unfolds new and ever new facets to them. Moreover, though never deviating from the deep study of the Bible and "Science and Health," they are also finding that the understanding of the universal Science impelling these books is broadening their thought to discern the facts of Science at work everywhere in the universe. It seems as though this is gradually making possible of realization the deep desire in the hearts of men today, namely, spiritual unity. It will be unity stemming from and found in the eternal spiritual fundamentals of Being, and therefore a unity with purity at its heart - not a superficial unity that breaks under opposition for lack of purity at its core.

What of the future of the line of light? Will Christian Science continue to develop? No science can help developing, but it always develops in thought from a deeper understanding of its fundamentals. A superficial sense of it, a flair for it, a belief or a mere faith in it is incapable of development. Only

understanding develops, and develops infinitely. Moreover, to use this understanding to be aware of the line of light, to trace its forward movement and to be one with its increasing clarity is to ensure its development and to be part of it.

Never were the words of Mary Baker Eddy in the Preface to her textbook more true than today, a hundred years after her discovery: "The time for thinkers has come. Truth, independent of doctrines and time-honored systems, knocks at the portal of humanity. Contentment with the past and the cold conventionality of materialism are crumbling away. Ignorance of God is no longer the stepping-stone to faith. The only guarantee of obedience is a right apprehension of Him whom to know aright Life eternal. Though empires fall, 'the Lord shall reign forever'" (S. & H. vii:13-21).

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