

July 03, 2006 – Subject: Sacrament.

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: FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION
by W. Gordon Brown

Science as Christianity

Mind and Love

The section in the tone of Science as Christianity opens with the discourse on the “one fold, and one shepherd.” It ends with the prayer on behalf of all humanity: “Father... that they all may be one.” In Science, the Mind, which is Love, restores mankind to its true parentage, where one is all and all are one.

There is but one way to God, Jesus tells the Pharisees, and it is useless for men to try to climb up into the sheepfold by some other way. This way is first to come forth from God. The end and the beginning are the same. Only thieves and robbers try to climb up to God from a basis of matter. “I am the door of the sheep,” he says, “by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture... I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly... there shall be one fold, and one shepherd... I and my Father are one.”

We come to the story of the raising of Lazarus, and one wonders why John’s Gospel alone records this. It is as if Science only can explain it, and therefore Matthew, Mark, and Luke leave it for John to relate. This mighty demonstration of divine power and presence furnishes Jesus with the necessary objective proof of the nothingness of death, that must precede the final subjective proof, when he himself rises from the grave. Certainly, the two situations (Lazarus’ resurrection and Jesus’ resurrection) are remarkably complementary.

In the case of Lazarus, Jesus is on the outside of the grave, which is sealed with a great stone; later he will be on the inside. With Lazarus, the mourners take away the stone, which they themselves

have placed in position; later, he (Christ) will roll it away himself. Lazarus has lain in the grave “four days already;” Jesus will lie there three days. The total number of “days” required for the complete resurrection of the human concept is seven. As we have found, the first four of these (as confirmed by the first four thousand-year periods) accentuate the objective approach to life; the last three accentuate the subjective standpoint of life itself.

“And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always... And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes... Jesus saith unto them, loose him, and let him go.” Jesus does not wait for material evidence to change before acknowledging the deathless perfection of God and man. He knows that the demonstration is already made divinely, before it is reflected humanly- before it is objectified to human perception. In this case, sense evidence is compelled to change, and conform to the facts of Science.

After Lazarus is restored to life, Caiaphas the high priest wants not only to put him to death again, but to kill Jesus as well.

Lazarus’ sister Mary was represented in Luke’s Gospel as the Magdalen. Here, in John, she anoints Jesus’ body “against the day of [his] burying.” She prepares for his proof of the nothingness of death. This so enrages the priests that they entice Judas Iscariot to act as Jesus’ betrayer. Judas has the bag. He is a thief who would climb up into the sheepfold by some other way.

As Jesus enters Jerusalem certain Greek Gentiles express their desire to see him. The moment the outside world responds in this way to the presence of Truth he knows that his hour is come. “Now is the judgment of this world,” he says, “now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” Once the Christ appears in its Science it is lifted up from the earth and draws the world unto it. Priestcraft, the prince of this world, is then no more.

It is as if John alone understands Jesus’ meaning. At the Passover, this beloved disciple, the author of Revelation, the forecaster of Christian Science, leans on Jesus’ bosom and lies on his breast. John prefigures the womanhood of God, which reveals Christian Science to the world.

Science as Science

Principle

“That thou doest, do quickly,” Jesus bids Judas, who departs into the night. Jesus has washed the disciples’ feet. They must, like him, be pure and humble before God. With their right foot upon elementary, latent error, and their left foot upon error’s visible forms (S & H 559:2-8), they will have power over Judas, and prove man’s immunity from death.

The words, “Take, eat; this is my body,” (with the accompanying symbols of bread and wine) are not used in John as they are in the other three Gospels. John is concerned with what body actually is. Jesus, in John, tells the disciples about the Comforter, divine Science. This, he says is “the Spirit of truth” which (like himself) “proceedeth from the Father which “dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” The purpose of the Comforter is to teach the world all things and lead it into all truth. That which truly comforts mankind is the revelation of the motherhood of God appearing through a system of spiritual education, the workings of which is man himself as the Christ-body birthing his own being. The disciples are perplexed at Jesus’ explanations, and he has need to clarify his meaning. Accordingly, he makes a simple fourfold statement of how the Word, Christ, Christianity, Science solves the problems of humanity. He says: “I came forth from the Father [Word], and am come into the world [Christ]: again, I leave the world [the problem solved in Christianity], and go to the Father [Science].” “Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb,” is the disciples’ glad response.

This spiritually cyclic statement regarding the workings of Principle is the reality, in divine metaphysics, that lies behind the fourfold cycle in today’s science of cybernetics. Jesus’ overwhelming desire is that, first the disciples, and then the world, shall know that when truth speaks to humanity it is sent by its Principle and is not voiced personally. The disciples are convinced at last. They assure him: “By this we believe that thou camest forth from God.”

Perhaps the underlying principle of modern cybernetics (input-process - output-feedback), working in conjunction with the science of ecology, may come to serve as a teaching symbol of the Principle of divine Science. Certainly the prayer of intelligent twentieth century man is that the world may be one world, which is the prayer

offered by Jesus at the close of this section of the text. He pleads: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us... I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me."

If we cite Jesus' words to Mary and John from the cross, we touch, perhaps, the essence of the final, sixteenth section of the four Gospels, Science as Science, expressed through the term Principle.

The text reads: "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." It is as if Jesus says to his world: 'Humanity, take the matrix of immortality into your subjective consciousness; understand it, cherish it, love it; for then, as the calculus of God's ideas, you will rise universally from the dead.'

In John, the arrest, trial, and crucifixion, follow the same order as in the other Gospels. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth," Jesus says to Pilate. "What is truth?" Pilate asks. With the words, "I find no fault in him at all," Pilate answers his own question. Truth is indeed the Son of God in whom is no element of error.

The two angels who appear to Mary Magdalene at the time of the resurrection are surely the twofold truth that the man of God's creating has neither birth nor death. Though the mortal senses, viewing this man, may see him as a gardener, after the form of Adam, this does not make him mortal man. The man of the seven days of creation, whose body is (to the senses) temporarily rebuilt at the resurrection, is not a man who tills the ground.

"Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you," are the words with which the resurrected Jesus greets the joyous disciples. "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The timeless, spaceless fourth dimension of Spirit is in the midst of them, and they in the midst of it. It inspires them with the understanding of the order, harmony and unity of their world.

The final episode in the fourth Gospel is what Science and Health calls the "last spiritual breakfast." This takes place "in the bright

morning hours at the joyful meeting on the shore of the Galilean Sea.” Jesus’ resurrection is also his disciples’ resurrection. It raises them “somewhat from mortal sensuousness... into newness of life as Spirit.” The glorious truth dawns that life (small!) is Spirit (capital S)! This is indeed a new light.

Consciousness receives the holy Comforter, the Holy Ghost, or Christianity in its Science. The standpoint of the resurrection is the standpoint from which alone genuine Christian Science operates. In other words, this is “the morning meal which Christian Scientists commemorate” (S & H 34:29-12). Universal Christianity, which follows in the wake of Christ Jesus, is really the divine Science of Christianity - that is, Christian Science.

Hence Peter questions Jesus regarding the mission of the beloved John. Jesus replies: “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?” Spiritually recognized, John is the universal, unseen Science of Jesus’ own mission. It is John, therefore, who receives Revelation on the island of Patmos, and whose spiritual potential carries in world consciousness to prepare mankind for the Second Advent.

As we come to the Acts of the Apostles, and the spiritual leaven, which is John, starts to ferment the whole of human thought, the second phase of the Christ-mission can be said to have already begun.

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