

The Mary Baker Eddy Science Institute

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This month, we present the last three chapters of THE BIBLE FOR EVERYMAN by Rosalie Maas. Next month, will begin Gordon Brown's "Christian Science Non-Sectarian".

Enjoy!

CHAPTER FIVE

ISAAC and JACOB

MORE and more one appreciates the Bible as a teacher and guide and friend. It never loses the standpoint seven days of creation, which begins the Bible, we have something beyond all price: that which brings an understanding of God, the infinite, within our reach and so enables us to "take up serpents." Those "serpents" are the poisonous beliefs which bind all mankind so harshly to unhappiness, ill-health, fear of humanity. It never forgets the plight of man in a world which seems painfully contradictory, but shows him in a way he can grasp—that is, through illustration—how to educate himself out of that plight through understanding God.

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Eternal Law

The Psalmist says, "Blessed is the man . . . [whose] delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." The story of the days of creation might be called "the law of the Lord,"—the law of spiritual fact as it appears to humanity. If we are to meditate on that law "day and night," we have to ask ourselves constantly, "What do these seven symbols teach me about the nature of the infinite? What do they mean to me in my daily life? What tyrannical false laws do they annul?" Isaiah says, "And the Lord shall utterly destroy the

tongue of the Egyptian [materialistic] sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod." In proportion as we use the "mighty wind" of the seven days of creation to smite the "seven streams" of materialism, we can go forward unmolested.

The symbol of the first day of creation is light,—the light of wisdom. Why is it that we can let wisdom guide our thoughts and actions? Because the infinite is intelligence. As we ponder this fact in humility, we no longer let the darkness fool us into believing that some huge Goliath of a difficulty is holding us at its mercy; and instead of relying upon our limited human faculties to help us, we appeal to the one source of intelligence, with the result that wisdom makes itself heard. When one switches on the light in a room, the instrument receives and radiates light at once and without effort; Isaiah says, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come,"—we have only to let the light use our thinking. First, then, we have the law of wisdom, counteracting ignorance and belief in the brain.

The symbol of the second day of creation is the firmament between the waters above and beneath, representing that which separates between the Godlike and the un-Godlike. Why is it that we can have the strength to choose between that which is good and that which is less good or not good at all? Because of the absolute purity of spiritual reality, entirely un-contaminated by the material, the evil, the self-destructive. As we reflect upon this fact, we find ourselves increasingly choosing to be patient rather than impatient, refraining from frittering and criticizing, refusing to be taken in by the apparent substance and reality of some evil. In this way we become better men and women; we don't try to force our way fanatically towards the pure spiritual status which we know to be ours divinely, but we let our developing understanding of that status bring about our decontamination step by step and show us what is nearest good under the circumstances. Secondly, then, we have the law of discernment, of abiding good, nullifying the confusion of good and evil.

The symbol of the third day of creation is the dry land appearing and bringing forth, representing that which is definite and which grows up within us. Why is it that we never doubt that we have our own identity? Because of the definiteness of the infinite, which is always appearing in beautiful spiritual forms. As we think this out, we see that that which is essentially "us" must be permanent and lovely.

The result is that we become less and less absorbed in the physical body,—how it feels and how it looks; we become less self-centered, freer from either self-love or self-condemnation. We begin to see that the motley collection of beliefs which is labeled "us" is nothing more than a garment which no longer fits us or pleases us, and so we cast it aside for the "beautiful garments" which we are divinely entitled to enjoy. They are made up of the unique blending of spiritual qualities which forms the real "us." Thirdly, then, we have the law of definite spiritual identity, superseding corporeal selfhood.

The symbol of the fourth day of creation is the solar system, representing the one universal harmony. Why is it that we can understand anything of the infinite? Because there is only one infinite, which is perfectly systematic and always makes itself clear to the systematic seeker. The despotic so-called systems of the world, on the other hand, inculcate blind belief in and blind obedience to some personal authority. Again, why is it that we can enjoy happy relationships? Because there is one central Principle governing all its ideas in harmony. As we consider this carefully and humbly, we see that we are all "but parts of one stupendous whole." Then we stop trying to make things or people work together harmoniously; instead we try to harmonize our own individual understanding with the one Principle, and this brings about right adjustment. Fourthly, then, we have the law of system and harmony, disproving false authority and unhappy relationship.

The symbols of the fifth day of creation are the birds and fishes, representing the outsoaring of limitations. Why is it that we have a sense of existence at all? Why is it that we can have a sense of vitality and abundance? Because of the infinite I AM. When we let this fact inspire us, we see that we "live, and move, and have our being" in that I AM, and therefore we can go forward unburdened by fear of the future or regret for the past, and enjoying abundance of good here and now. Then life no longer descends pathetically into impoverishment of health and interest, but becomes enriched in every direction. Fifthly, then, we have the law of life, invalidating decay and deprivation.

The symbol of the sixth day of creation is man created in the image and likeness of God and given dominion over all the earth. Why is it that we can achieve anything worthwhile—whether it be in art, engineering, or character? Because of the fact that the infinite made man like itself and the infinite is conscious of all that is true. When we recognize this, however faintly, we begin to

have dominion, because we begin to be more conscious of the fundamental truth of things. That means that we can become masters of the situation, instead of victims of circumstances. The only way we can become masters is by using a full consciousness of God to quash, however much the resistance, everything which wars against the standard of man. Most of us let laziness prevent us from getting down to this work, but sooner or later we find ourselves forced to do it, and constantly. Sixthly, then, we have the law of dominion, setting at naught all subjection.

The symbol of the seventh day of creation is God resting, having fulfilled His purpose. Why is it that we manage to have moments of peace and entire satisfaction? Because of the completeness and perfection of the infinite. Whenever we have any gratitude for this fact, we have relief from fear. Instead of imagining that anything might happen and that it will probably be unpleasant or cruel, we rest in the fact that nothing can ever separate us from the infinite motherhood and that that motherhood will take care of every situation. Finally, then, we have the law of peace and perfection, forestalling fear.

These laws are eternal facts; we already catch glimpses of them in human experience, but we can bring them consistently into operation through "prayer and fasting,"—through affirming their truth and also rejecting the illegal beliefs which would oppose them by seeing their fundamental powerlessness. That is what Jesus did throughout his mission.

The Key to the Bible

The meaning of the seven days of creation is fresher than young leaves uncurling in the spring; more irresistible than a mighty waterfall; warmer than the sun ripening fruit on a garden wall; more firmly based than mountains. When we have a real understanding of it, we can use it as the key to the whole Bible. If we make no effort to think it out and assimilate it, we fail to recognize the illustrations of those seven days throughout the Scriptures, and we run the risk of being capricious and inconsistent in interpreting the various stories. When the fundamentals are clear to us, they enrich our understanding of everything we read in the Bible, and everything we read in the Bible enriches our understanding of those fundamentals.

A great deal of valuable and interesting research is being done into the historical aspect of the Old Testament. The more research there is, the more it is found that the Old Testament is a highly untrustworthy chronicle of historical events. But this only emphasizes the fact that when the prophets in captivity edited all the sacred writings of their nation, they regarded moral and spiritual truths as vastly more important than historical accuracy. Undoubtedly they were concerned with the history of their own nation, but their primary aim was to produce a textbook of life, not a historical textbook.

The Stories of Isaac and Jacob

Bible history is divided up into distinct thousand-year periods, each one illustrating its respective day of creation. The first four chapters of this book have given an outline of the first thousand-year period, where the "light" of the seven days of creation exposed the mistiness of the common notions of man's origin; the second thousand-year period, where the "firmament" enabled Noah to separate himself from the flood of disaster by building an ark; and the beginning of the third thousand-year period, where Abraham began to see the "dry land" appearing in his own experience and giving him a definite purpose. Now, in the stories of Isaac and Jacob, we see more of the third day sense of things. We begin to see something of the meaning of the verse in Genesis which describes what happens when the dry land has appeared: "And God called the dry land Earth;. . . and God saw that it was good." We begin to see that our essential selfhood is not only definite, but definitely good. Often we have as hard a struggle to prove this as Isaac and Jacob did, because good and evil seem so intermingled in our make-up. Jacob, for instance, was two-faced and sensual, and he suffered in consequence, but because he appreciated spiritual values he was blessed again and again. That is true of all of us, and the story shows quite plainly how we can bring into our lives more blessing and less suffering,—in other words, how we can stop sinning.

A Bride for Isaac

In Genesis 24 is told the story of how Abraham decided that a wife must be found for his son Isaac. He was determined that Isaac should on no account marry a woman of the Canaanites, who were idolaters, so he sent his eldest servant to the country from which he himself came, with instructions to bring back a bride for Isaac. Abraham said that God would send an angel before the servant to prosper his way.

The Abraham in each one of us is the fatherhood sense which wants the good that it has already achieved (symbolized by Isaac) to be carried even further, and it knows that the only way to ensure this is to find a bride for that Isaac. The "bride" is a sense of our ideal selfhood so beautiful that we never want to be without it. We therefore send out a servant to find that ideal selfhood, a servant who is willing to follow the definite leadings of the divine intelligence, without intruding human will.

Abraham's servant agreed to go on this mission and left with ten camels for Nahor. "And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water." This is one of those Biblical verses wonderfully rich in symbolic meaning. The ten camels symbolize a practical sense of spiritual fact; one's practicality is often measured by the amount one can do with one's ten fingers, and "ten" symbolizes a practical sense of things throughout the Bible, notably in the Ten Commandments. So we have to let our desire to improve our present sense of ourselves kneel down beyond the impatient hubbub of human demands ("without the city") and by "a well of water," whence we can draw fresh ideas of God; the time to do this is in "the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water,"—when thought is calm and quiet and ready to be refreshed and inspired.

The servant then prayed that of all the women who came out to draw water, the one who agreed to give him water to drink and also to give drink to his camels, should be the one destined to be Isaac's bride. "Before he had done speaking," Rebekah appeared. Rebekah was Abraham's great-niece; she was "very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her," and she agreed at once to let him and his camels drink of the water she had drawn from the well. When with real humility we wait on our understanding of God for a higher sense of ourselves as being like God, that higher sense comes to us spontaneously in all its beauty, bounty, and purity.

The servant then presented Rebekah with earrings and bracelets and asked if there was room for him and the camels and his men to lodge in her father's house. She said, "We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in." The servant was full of wonder at the divine provision, and when, on arriving at the house, he had told his mission and Rebekah's brother and father had said,

"The thing proceedeth from the Lord ... Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken," he was even more overjoyed at the certainty of God's workings. Rebekah's mother and brother wanted her to wait a few days before going with Abraham's servant, but when he said, "Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way," they agreed to let the decision rest with Rebekah herself; she immediately said, "I will go."

"And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. . . she took a veil, and covered herself... And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." Isaiah says, "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee."

"Bride" is used in the Bible as a symbol of joy and gladness, the very opposite of sorrow and desolation, and as a symbol of virginity and loveliness; fine raiment and jewels are often mentioned in connection with the bride. Isaiah writes, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, ... as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." Our spiritual self, the truth about us, is "altogether lovely," and "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." So, like Isaac, we can always lift up our eyes to behold the charms of our true being coming to meet us and to remain with us, bringing us tender comfort where before there has been a sense of emptiness. Rebekah never stops to wonder if Isaac is worthy of her— she comes in spite of every human deficiency. She comes to bring us "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Was ever symbolism so beautiful and so clear as that of the Scriptures?

The Birth of Jacob and Esau and the Selling of the Birthright

Genesis 25 records that Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac and then died and was buried with Sarah. "And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac." Rebekah was at first barren, but when Isaac entreated the Lord for her, she conceived, and bore twins. Before they were born, she felt them struggling together in her womb— struggling is a great feature of this story of Jacob—and the Lord told her, "Two nations are in thy

womb." When Rebekah first came to Isaac, she was veiled; our ideal self is often veiled to us, and that is why we seem to have "two nations"—good and evil—in our composition.

The first to be born was Esau, who emerged red and "all over like an hairy garment." Jacob was the second, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel. Esau stands for the Adam-man (made out of the red dust) with animal propensities—passion, revenge, fear, anger, hatred; Jacob for that which tries to hold them in check. The story goes on to bring out more of the contrast between the two brothers: Esau was "a cunning hunter, a man of the field," whereas Jacob was "a plain man, dwelling in tents;" Isaac loved Esau because he was fond of venison, whereas Rebekah loved Jacob. The Jacob in us is the progressive thinker, interested in the things of God; Esau is the lust for something to quench animal longings.

One day when Esau was faint with hunger and on the point of death, he agreed to sell his birthright to Jacob for the sake of some red stew; "thus Esau despised his birthright." The son who had the birthright was the son destined to fulfill the promise to Eve that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent, and the promise to Abraham that all the earth should be blessed through his seed. The Esau element never can be permanently satisfied and it sets no store by a spiritual mission. It may appear to be satisfied, because momentarily it exchanges a belief of emptiness for a belief of something which feeds its hunger, but it can never enjoy the lasting satisfaction of fulfilling a spiritual mission. If we look for satisfaction outside that, we never escape for long the aching emptiness which is hell. When the Jacob sees that the Esau has a greedy hunger which can only be an agony and a self-destroying thing, it wrests from it the "birthright." For instance, we can begin to see that some fierce appetite for physical possession—for sex, power, money, or whatever it may be—is not the "firstborn" in us, is not native to our essential selfhood, because the only permanent and developing thing about us is our spiritual longings and tendencies. In proportion as we see that, we have dominion over the animal element until it is completely supplanted.

Ezekiel emphasizes the same point when he writes of a prince of Israel, "Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same:"—Esau is not to be left with the birthright:— "exalt him that is low,"—

our little sense of spiritual things, our Jacob,— "and abase him that is high"—the Esau. "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him." If we are in earnest, our spiritual selfhood is forever revolutionizing our present sense of ourselves and impelling it to come into line, till there is no longer any gap between what we eternally are and what we seem to be at the moment.

Isaac Blesses Jacob

Chapter 26 tells of how the promise which God made to Abraham was confirmed to Isaac, and also of how Isaac began well-digging; he re-dug his father's wells which had been stopped up, and he dug four of his own —the first two amid opposition from the Philistines, the second two without opposition and with joy. There again we have a symbolic digest of the whole story of Isaac and Jacob, showing how the strife of opposing elements finally yields to unity, satisfaction, and harmony.

The story in Genesis 27 of how Rebekah tricked Isaac into conferring his blessing on Jacob, instead of on Esau, is very well known. But what concerns us is what it signifies to us to-day.

It is the dim-sightedness of the Isaac which makes it want Esau to have the blessing; it is so absorbed in the physical senses and their short-lived pleasures that it cannot see beyond them to spiritual values. The Rebekah, on the other hand, knows that spiritual vision is all that enjoys perpetuity and blessing, and realizes that at all costs Esau must be prevented from having the blessing. The Esau feels that it deserves something positive in return for its frantic pursuit of physical satisfaction, and so its rage and bitterness is intense when it finds itself deprived of blessing. But that is the inevitable fate of the Esau element: it can never find either blessing or satisfaction.

In Numbers 22-24 is told the story of how Balak asked the prophet Balaam to curse the Israelites for him, because they were about to invade his kingdom. Balaam agreed to come to Balak, but said, "The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak;" the result was that three times he blessed the Israelites instead of cursing them. He said, "Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he [God] hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the

Lord his God is with him." So not only do we have to acknowledge a sense of spiritual things as "firstborn" in us, but also that that sense is the only source of blessing. Nothing can reverse this.

Jacob's duplicity—symbolized in Isaac's remark, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau"—was punished by Esau's murderous hate of him, from which Rebekah told him to escape. Like Rebekah and Jacob, we often turn the Esau into an enemy to dread and fear and avoid because we try to wrench it violently out of our lives instead of letting a higher sense of ourselves render the Esau quite inoffensive. Jacob put first things first, but his human character fell far short of the ideal. He was a combination of good and evil elements, and throughout the story we find that the good elements prevailed, but at a price, because the evil elements brought fear and struggle and strife. Jacob's spiritual vision finally had to be wedded to a practical moral sense, instead of divorced from it. Jesus was trying to wed Peter's spiritual vision (which had enabled him to proclaim "Thou art the Christ") to a practical moral sense when he rebuked him for cutting off the ear of the high priest's servant.

Jacob's Ladder

Rebekah persuaded Isaac that it would be a good thing to send Jacob to her brother's house to find himself a wife, so Jacob set off for Haran. On his way he spent the night at Bethel with a stone for his pillow, and he dreamt that he saw a ladder set up on the earth and reaching up to heaven, with the angels of God ascending and descending on it. "And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; . . . and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest... I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." When Jacob awoke, he felt the presence of God as a living thing, but it made him afraid; he said, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Then he took the stone which he had used as a pillow, set it up as a pillar, poured oil on the top of it, and made a covenant with God.

Every time we flee from a condition of strife and hatred, we can turn that "stone," that stumbling-block, into a pillow,—something we can rest upon,—when we see that there is a "ladder" between heaven and earth, and therefore that the

sorriest conditions can be transformed. Our upward strivings are always met by the downward-coming impulses from the infinite, and then we see that they bring us abundant blessing and guide us through "the wilderness of this world." The Psalmist says, "I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears."

John tells in Chapter 6 of his Gospel of how Jesus came to his disciples walking on the sea. They were in a ship and it was dark, and the wind was raising the waves to great heights; then suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the sea towards them, and they were afraid. But he said, "It is I; be not afraid." "Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." What a wonderful symbolic picture of the operation of salvation as it appeared to Jacob and as it can appear to us whenever we set up the ladder of intelligent thinking about God and man. The answer comes to us, walking over the sea of trouble; we receive its blessing and it stays with us to revolutionize the situation; and finally we make it a pillar in our experience,—a pillar of demonstrated eternal fact.

Rachel and Leah

Jacob eventually reached Haran; Chapter 29 describes how he came to a well with a great stone upon its mouth which had to be rolled away before the sheep could be watered. He inquired after Laban, his uncle, and was told, "behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep." As soon as he saw her, Jacob rolled away the stone (in spite of the fact that it usually required several men to move it) and watered her sheep. Then he kissed Rachel and wept for joy, and Laban brought him to his house. No wonder Jacob could roll away the stone and release the waiting water of inspiration, after his vision at Bethel and when he beheld Rachel, his bride. When manhood finds womanhood,—when strength finds grace and acceptance in itself,—nothing can prevent the flow of the inspiration which is needed.

As his wages for serving Laban, Jacob asked for Rachel, and he said that he would work for seven years to gain her; "and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." One always has to work to win Rachel, and the way to win her is through the "seven years,"— through thinking out the spiritual meaning of the seven days of creation and trying to live in accordance with it,— but that is always a joy if we love Rachel.

On his wedding night, however, Jacob was tricked by Laban into lying with Leah, Rachel's older and less beautiful sister. Laban excused himself by saying that it was the custom of the country that the firstborn must be married before a younger sister. The result was that Jacob had to work another seven years for Rachel. Leah and Rachel are yet another symbol of the contention which haunted Jacob, for they were constantly jealous of each other.

Genesis 29:31-30:24 tells of eleven sons whom Leah and Rachel and their handmaids bore for Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons in all, but the twelfth, Benjamin, was not born until later. Some of his sons were good, others bad or even vile. They formed the twelve tribes of Israel, which constitute one of the main themes of the Scriptures. They symbolize the intermingled good and evil elements in each one of us and in the world; in proportion as the operation of God's nature is understood, the evil elements pass away, to make way for the perfect "twelve," symbolized in Revelation by the twelve gates of the city foursquare which were twelve pearls of pure perfection, with the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel written on them.

Jacob and Laban

Laban not only tricked Jacob into accepting Leah before Rachel, but also tried to take advantage of him whenever he could. Jacob undoubtedly suffered at his hands, although he succeeded in outdoing him when he had made a characteristically mean bargain over some cattle. So once again Jacob's spiritual vision, his sense that God was always with him, preserved him in a situation rife with greed and envy and suspicion.

In the account of the relations between Jacob and Laban are indicated profound truths as to the nature of sin. To sin is really to indulge any sense of that which is not of the divine nature. Because Jacob had by no means proved his own selfhood to be sinless, he constantly suffered for the evil elements not eradicated in himself by finding them very apparent in his experience with others. That is always so. If we allow meanness, for instance, to flourish unchecked in ourselves, we soon find meanness in those around us and find ourselves the victim of it. Eventually we cannot evade getting down to the job of realizing that the eternal law of infinite satisfaction forever precludes meanness and forbids it to attach itself to man. Mortals are so educated to accept the evidence of

material personality as solid fact—they believe, for instance, that someone is selfish or cruel—that it takes a great deal of patience to learn to untangle the poor sinner from the sin. That is only the first step, though, because the responsibility on us is always to go further and see the nature of sin itself as a mere spider's web; it vanishes at the touch of that divine law which allows only sinlessness to be permanent fact and shows that anything else is no more than a shifting label. Jesus said, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed,"—any understanding of the third day of creation, in which the seed first appears, showing that we can see reproduced within ourselves all that is divine,—"ye might say unto this sycamine tree,"—any deep-rooted sin,—"Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea;*"—the opposite of the dry land, and a name for the home of all evil;—"and it should obey you." We never get rid of sin by merely denying its possibility and trying to gloss over it, or by forgiving it in a rush of emotion, but only by specifically reversing it in particular instances and exchanging the sense of sin for some definite sense of God's nature. This always brings about genuine reformation. There was nothing superficial about the way Jesus forgave sin; when he said to the woman taken in adultery, "go, and sin no more," he knew that the sense of satisfaction he had introduced had shown her the pointlessness of sin.

The penalty for sin is really no more than the indulgence of sin, although theology has inculcated in most of us some such theory as that sinning on Monday is punished by suffering on Wednesday and Thursday! If you hate somebody, you are filled with feelings of disgust and irritation, and that dirt in your conscious being is the price you pay for hating. Immediately you lose the sense of disgust and irritation, because you learn to love, you no longer suffer. The suffering goes on only so long as we believe that anything which is not Godlike has definite identity. $2 + 2 = 5$ has no identity in arithmetic, and we pay no penalty for having allowed it into our calculations once we have corrected it with $2 + 2 = 4$.

In II Samuel 12 it is recorded that when Bathsheba bore a son by David, who arranged her husband's death in order to have her for himself, the prophet Nathan told David that the child would die, as a punishment. While the child was still alive, David fasted and wept; but immediately it died, he "arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and

when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat." The moment we have thoroughly expelled from consciousness all the uncleanness and misery of sin, we can anoint ourselves with the sweetness of being in God's presence again; with relief we can exchange our sin-filled sense for the "garments" in which we feel divinely at ease. Thus we are restored to the heaven of normality which is what sinlessness is. If we are wise, we never leave that heaven.

To return to the story of Jacob and Laban: when the tension between them was at its height, the Lord told Jacob, "Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee." Rachel and Leah agreed that Jacob must do as God directed, and in any case they felt themselves strangers to their father by then. They all left secretly, for fear of Laban, and Rachel (unknown to Jacob) stole her father's images. After three days Laban realized that Jacob had fled, and after seven days he overtook him. But God appeared to Laban in a dream and told him, "Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad," and so when he reached Jacob his main concern was with his stolen images; but he never found them, because Rachel sat on them. Finally, he and Jacob made a covenant not to harm each other.

Even the weeds of the relationship between Jacob and Laban could finally be rooted up, because Laban lost his false gods and Jacob lost his fear. They both saw that their real interests were the same, and not different, and that nothing was gained by trying to harm each other. It is basically the inferiority complex which produces division among mortals, because each wants to snatch as much as possible for himself and thinks he can fill his own bucket only by emptying someone else's, as it were. But that is all superseded when we learn to look away from materialistic reckonings and find our satisfaction in enjoying the things of God as free to all.

Jacob's Struggle

Jacob was now faced with the prospect of meeting Esau, and sent messengers to him to say that he hoped to find favour with him. But when the messengers returned, they announced that Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men, and so Jacob was "greatly afraid and distressed." He decided on a policy of appeasement by gifts. Often when we have some condition to meet which is full of terror for us, because we feel sure it will get the better of us, we adopt short-term conciliatory measures out of desperation. But the situation is never

fundamentally dealt with until we work it out alone with God,—until we face the issue in all honesty, alone with our understanding of the divine Principle. After that, but not before, we can always take the right step to meet the human situation. Jesus could meet the crucifixion with dignity and calm because he had already worked out the whole issue alone with God in the garden of Gethsemane; after wrestling with himself in the garden he could finally say, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

So at this point in the story of Jacob we have one of the greatest passages of Scripture: "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." We have a sense of wrestling with evil only because materialism would tempt us to resist the coming of a divine idea to our consciousness. The thing which breaks down resistance is that this divine idea causes us to feel the weakness and helplessness of that which is in opposition to it. Spiritual truth is inherently unopposable,—a fact which shows our folly in resisting it. If we are sincere, the "day" always breaks, but it would break much sooner if we didn't fight it for so long. When the light had begun to break on him, Jacob determined to get hold so definitely of the divine idea he needed that its blessing would always be with him. It is always the first step when we see the weakness of some mortal belief, but we have to go on to accept a specific spiritual fact in exchange and to make this a permanent blessing.

"And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." "Jacob" means "supplanter" or "contender;" "Israel" means "ruling with God." After grappling with the belief in something opposed to the divine nature, we at last feel that our own identity is not basically a mixture of good and evil, and we feel that Godlikeness is that which holds sure sway in us. This gives us a divine poise which can withstand any storm.

"And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And

Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." When a spiritual idea blesses us, and we feel the balm of it, we can never fully put our finger on it humanly, because it is something which cannot be confined in any way, being of the nature of infinitude. All we know is that we have "seen God face to face," that we have known ourselves "even as also [we are] known" by God. The Psalmist says, "And as for me, thou [that is, God] beholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever."

Jacob's Meeting with Esau

When it came to the actual meeting with Esau (recorded in Genesis 33), Jacob could face it with dominion and find great joy in it. He "bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept." From his hard-won new understanding, Jacob could look out and behold even Esau in God's likeness; he said, "I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me."

When we have seen the nature of God as definitely as Jacob did, and felt the satisfaction of seeing ourselves aligned with that nature, then we see that the only truth about anyone we come into contact with is that he is like God and can only afford us joy, and moreover, we can prove it. Esau was transformed till he was no longer the old Esau; greedy animality gave way to "I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself" —the old Esau could never have felt that. Jacob had to urge him to accept a present—"because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." So both Jacob and Esau felt "abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house." Jesus said, "whosoever hath,"—in this case, whosoever hath a sense of divine satisfaction,— "to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath."

The Rape of Dinah

In Chapter 34 follows the story of how Jacob's daughter Dinah was raped by Shechem, the son of Hamor, who was prince of the country. When Hamor asked Jacob to give her to Shechem as his wife, Jacob's sons agreed, on condition that all the men of the city of Shechem were circumcised. But instead of keeping their side of the bargain, two of Jacob's sons by Leah, Simeon and Levi, slew all the men of the city while they were still physically unfit after being circumcised. When

he heard of the outrage, Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land."

Simeon and Levi were two of Jacob's vicious sons. When he came to review their characteristics on his death-bed, he emphasized their cruelty and exclusiveness, their anger and self-will. Simeon and Levi come into operation every time we hotly resent someone else's sins and demand revenge. Our sense of superiority is entirely without any justification whatever, because at the moment when we are gloating over the nastiness of the sin, and feeling self-righteous about it, we are infected with sin ourselves and inevitably suffer in the process. Resentment means the retaining of feelings about something unpleasant. What we need is to lose those feelings, instead of letting them continue to chafe us. The only way to get rid of resentment is to exchange the unpleasant feelings for sensitiveness to the spiritual fact of which the sin is a reversal.

The Birth of Benjamin

Chapter 35 records that God told Jacob to make an altar at Bethel, where God had already appeared to him; so Jacob told all his household, "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean,, and change your garments:"—remove the "stink" of Simeon and Levi:—"and let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went." When Jacob had made this altar, and they left Bethel, Rachel's second son, Benjamin, was born. Rachel died in bearing him, but before she died she called him "Ben-oni," which means "son of my sorrow." His father, on the other hand, called him "Benjamin," which means "son of the right hand." The sense of sorrow and struggling and suffering passed away, and the sense of power was left to grow and prosper.

A Summary

At this point Joseph begins to take the stage, and the dramatic illustration of the third day of creation is carried even further. The Abraham sense of definite purpose,—the "dry land" appearing,—leads on to the Isaac and Jacob sense of finding one's essential selfhood to be sinless,—the "dry land" being called Earth and seen by God to be good. All the conflict of opposing elements is resolved into a sense of sinlessness and satisfaction. We shall find this in ourselves and

in our whole experience, in proportion as we understand and use the deep spiritual meaning of the third day of creation.

CHAPTER SIX

JOSEPH

JUST as the composer prolifically expresses specific ideas in musical language, so the Scriptural writers prolifically expressed their ideas of the Principle behind life and truth and love in the language of myths, songs, sermons, and historical records. Like the composer, the final compilers of the Old and New Testaments were able to give form to their copious inspiration, because they had a sense of the whole, with its one great theme of the relationship of God to man, developed in an orderly way. Again like a musical composition, the Bible is full of the beauty and warmth which speak to the heart as well as to the mind, and bring healing.

As we have seen in the first five chapters in this book, the story of the days of creation is the first announcement of the Science of the Bible, and its theme is developed through thousand-year periods of Bible history. The first thousand-year period, illustrating the "Let there be light" of the first day, was the creation period, in which the unenlightened view of creation was exposed in the story of Adam. Then the second thousand-year period, illustrating the "Let there be a firmament" of the second day, was the period of the "flood," from which Noah was saved by constructing an ark of understanding. The third thousand-year period, illustrating the "Let the dry land appear" of the third day, is a period rich in men with a purpose—Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua. Each was concerned with the journey to the "promised land" of true identity. Abraham sought a new country, which God promised should be his,—the "dry land" of definiteness about his God-given selfhood. Then Jacob wrestled victoriously with the belief of the dual nature of his identity (the dry land was seen as good) and was the father of twelve sons. Then Joseph, one of his sons, learned to define womanhood as well as manhood for himself and thus to bless his family. Moses then led those children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt and gave them a code of law. Finally, Joshua led them into the promised land.

Joseph was the necessary link between Jacob and Moses, just as Jacob was the necessary link between Abraham and Joseph. Certainly Moses could not

have carried through his great lifework without the foundation of womanhood and motherhood which had been laid by Joseph.

Joseph the Dreamer Sold into Egypt

Genesis 37 tells us that Jacob loved best his son Joseph, because he was "the son of his old age,"—the offspring of his mature understanding of God,—and so he made him a "coat of many colours,"—clothed him with his own sense of God. Joseph, however, was hated by his brothers; he gave a bad report of some of them to his father, and they were jealous of their father's love for him, and they also hated him because he told them two dreams which indicated that he was going to have dominion over them.

One of Joseph's dreams took this form: "we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf." Here was an echo of the third day, in which the dry land was called Earth and brought forth; that third day symbolizes the realization that what we understand of God's nature (the "dry land" of definiteness) is the truth about ourselves and must reproduce itself in our conscious experience. A sheaf is a good symbol of how our identity takes shape for us as we gather together the elements of perfection in our individual way. Joseph saw that his ripened spiritual sense would one day assert itself and that his brothers would be in subordination to it. His brothers "hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words."

One day Jacob told Joseph to join his brothers, who were feeding the flock in Shechem; "Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again." But Joseph was soon found "wandering in the field" by a certain man; this man asked him what he was looking for and told him where he could find his brothers. When his brothers saw him afar off, they plotted to kill him: "Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

Joseph here represents the idealistic dreamer who prophesies a rosy spiritual future, but is too vague to deal adequately with present circumstances. He is a Humpty Dumpty religionist sitting on a wall with a superior smile, both feet well off the ground as he admires the distant heavens, unaware of anything that could

possibly bring him to earth. Jesus was a spiritual idealist,—he said, for instance, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,"—but at the same time he was the most practical realist the world has ever known, because he proved his idealism completely. The story of Joseph is the story of how we have to make our idealism practical, or be engulfed. To disregard the general human predicament is to ask for trouble, and is in no way the ideal of Christianity. Our practice of Christlikeness will always be behind our ideal, but if we recognize this honestly it gives us humility and watchfulness.

Reuben suggested to his brothers that they should not slay Joseph, but cast him into a pit in the wilderness; privately he hoped to rescue him later. When Joseph reached them, they stripped him of his coat of many colours (if Joseph had made Jacob's understanding of God his own, he couldn't have been parted from it) and threw him into a pit, which had no water in it. Then they saw a company of merchantmen passing by on their way to Egypt, and they decided to salve their own consciences and at the same time make a profit on Joseph by selling him for twenty pieces of silver. They also had no scruples about dipping Joseph's coat in the blood of a kid and telling Jacob that Joseph had been devoured by an evil beast and without doubt rent in pieces. Jacob was desolated, and refused to be comforted.

If we choose to ignore evil, or the carnal mind (which includes every belief in a power opposed to God), it certainly doesn't ignore us; it soon casts us down into a pit of depression, cutting away the ground beneath our castle in the air. The pit is empty,—empty of the flow of inspiration. Then we are sold into Egypt as the slave of materialism. As we shall see, though, there was no need for Jacob to mourn Joseph as irrevocably lost, because spiritual sense is an irrepressible Jack-in-the-box; it profits by mistakes and turns what seems disastrous into a blessing.

Widow or Harlot?

At this point in the story (Genesis 38) comes an account of how Judah, another of Jacob's sons, had a son by his daughter-in-law. This son, Pharez, was in the direct line to Jesus, according to the genealogy given in the Gospels. The story goes that Judah's wife had three sons; the first son was married to a woman named Tamar, but was wicked and was slain by the Lord; the second son was then married to Tamar, but refused to give her a child, and so was also slain by

the Lord; the third son was withheld from Tamar by Judah, because he feared that he too might perish. But Tamar was determined to have a child, so she changed her widow's clothes for a harlot's and covered her face; when Judah saw her, he asked if he might lie with her, not realizing that she was his daughter-in-law. In return, he promised her a kid from his flock; Tamar then said, "Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it? . . . Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thine hand." He left these with her, but could not fulfil his promise because later she was not to be found.

Three months after, it was told Judah that Tamar was to have a child and he ordered her to be brought forth and burned. She said that the father of the child was the owner of the "signet, and bracelets, and staff" which she had in her possession. Judah then had to acknowledge that she was more righteous than himself, because he should have given her his third son as a husband. He never lay with her again.

One may ask why the compilers of the Old Testament inserted this story at this particular point. The Bible commentaries find it lacking in taste; one says that it seems "crude and indelicate ... to our Western sense of literary decorum," but the symbolism of it is clear and lovely. Among the Hebrews, widowhood was regarded rather as a matter for reproach; Tamar was therefore intent upon removing this stigma. If it had not been for her determination, Judah's name would not have been perpetuated and there might have been a break in the developing Christ-idea which reached its human fulfilment in Jesus. In lying with Tamar and later acknowledging his association, Judah became the means to an end far greater than he knew.

We often mistake the "widow,"—in this case that which longs for full expression,—for the "harlot,"—that which caters for and profits by the animal instincts in mortals,—and so we impute low motives to others and condemn a desire for some ideal just because it is crudely expressed. The time comes when we have to lift up that which we debased through misconception. The "harlot" is only womanhood perverted. Any sin is only an inversion of the longing, perhaps undefined, for some spiritual good. For instance, those who are sensual or dissatisfied are in their way blindly seeking to realize an ideal of satisfaction. When Judah sent a friend to find Tamar, in order to deliver the promised kid, he

asked, "Where is the harlot that was openly by the wayside?" The answer came, "There was no harlot in this place." Spiritual sense can always perceive that.

Jesus proved to perfection that point when he dealt with the woman taken in adultery, as recorded in John 8. He exposed the hideousness of condemnation, which from the highest point of view is always a case of mistaken identity. He himself wrote the woman's sin in the dust of nothingness, and he said to the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." This caused her accusers to go out one by one, until Jesus was left alone with the woman. When he "had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said . . . Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." Jesus used his spiritual understanding of sinlessness to lift up the woman to his own level; instead of condemning the sinner and making much of the sin, he proved that there is neither sin nor sinner in the Science of man. If we have Jesus' ideal of manhood and womanhood and live up to it ourselves as best we can, then we can lift others up to the same awareness and so heal them of the desire to sin.

What bearing has this story of Judah on the story of Joseph, which it interrupts? Joseph was to learn in Egypt what Judah learnt, to make the best of a bad job, to turn it into that which leads to a Jesus and so serves a spiritual purpose. Joseph was quick to translate the situation in which he found himself, and make it bear witness to the goodness of God. To the end of his life he admitted no causative factor but God. Later he was to say to his brothers, "ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good." Similarly, Jesus said to Pilate, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." God Himself doesn't institute or countenance evil, but an understanding of God translates everything into a blessing.

Potiphar's Wife

When Joseph was brought down to Egypt by the merchantmen, he was sold to an officer of Pharaoh's called Potiphar and soon began to make good. "And the Lord was with Joseph . . . And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand... and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field."

There was only one fly in the ointment: Potiphar's wife. She took a liking to Joseph and begged him to lie with her. Day after day she importuned him, but he refused either to lie with her or to be with her. One day she caught him by his garment and again said, "Lie with me;" Joseph fled, but left his garment in her hand. This was a trump card for Potiphar's wife, and she played it in such a way as to convince her husband that Joseph had tried to seduce her. Potiphar's wrath was aroused by this, and he had Joseph thrown into prison.

This was Joseph's second encounter with the so-called forces of the carnal mind. The first had pitchforked him, through his own vagueness, into a state of acute depression and emptiness; but he turned the experience into a positive blessing in Egypt, by actively using his sense that God was with him. Joseph's second encounter taught him the subtle, female persistence of evil, which makes itself attractive and hard to resist. But in making a bogey of it he gave it power, and so paved the way for it to rob him temporarily of his garment of Christlikeness and to imprison him in a sense of being unfairly victimized.

If we are all the time trying to maintain righteousness negatively, through steeling ourselves to resist wrong (and repression always breeds fear), we find that sooner or later our defences crack and we yield involuntarily to its malicious onslaughts. But as we accept the attractiveness of spiritual things, everything evil loses its power to attract us and we have no difficulty in making nothing of its blandishments. We are quite outside its apparent orbit of attraction. Every phase of evil is seen as a phase only of nothingness when we understand the divine nature, its actuality and allness.

The beginning of Acts 28 records that when a viper came out of the fire and fastened on Paul's hand, Paul just shook it off into the fire, and felt no harm. He didn't allow the "viper" of evil to cling to him in any way. How could the divine nature be touched by evil, infected by it, or poisoned by it? The third day teaches us that what is true about God is true about ourselves, so we need to shake the "viper" lightly but firmly into its own self-destructiveness; then we don't give it power to harm us and we feel no after-effects.

The Way Out of Prison

So Joseph found himself in prison, but once again, as recorded in Chapter 40, "the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper." The keeper of the prison recognized this and put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners. So Joseph once again turned a setback into a means of blessing, but this time he had to go further, in order to get out of prison.

In the prison were Pharaoh's butler and Pharaoh's baker, who had incurred their master's wrath. One night they both dreamed dreams, but were sorrowful because there was no interpreter of them. Joseph then said, "Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you."

The chief butler had dreamed of a vine with three branches; the vine budded and blossomed and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes; the butler took the grapes, pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and gave the cup to Pharaoh. Joseph's interpretation was that the three branches represented three days, and that within three days Pharaoh would reinstate the butler. What a wonderful symbol of the practical operation of the third day of creation! When an understanding of the first two days of creation has led us to the "dry land" of definiteness about God, that definiteness provides the right soil for "buds" and "blossoms" and "fruit" to spring up—in other words, our ideal begins to take shape in gradually maturing ideas. If we let the inspiration (the wine) of those ideas overflow into our best human sense of things, then life is restored to normal. Isaiah writes in the same vein, "the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose ... And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Jesus illustrated this practically when he restored the withered hand; he told the man to "rise up, and stand forth in the midst,"—to exalt his sense of himself as a son of God,—and then to stretch forth his hand, or exercise his God-given dominion, and the inspiration of his spiritualized consciousness naturally overflowed into the ability to use his hand normally.

The baker's dream was that he had three white baskets on his head; in the topmost basket were all kinds of bakemeats for Pharaoh and the birds were eating them. Joseph's interpretation was that the three baskets represented three days, and that within three days Pharaoh would hang the baker on a tree

and the birds would eat his flesh. The baker's mistake was that his sense of the first three days of creation was quite colourless, and his highest sense of them was as a means to material prosperity and security. Security in matter is a self-evident impossibility, and so if that is our first love it usually lets us down. Jesus gave a complementary sense in his parable of the man who sowed in his field a grain of mustard seed,— an idea of his real selfhood as being like God,—"which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air [uplifted thought, in this case] come and lodge in the branches thereof." A sincere desire to be Godlike grows till it is firmly based and becomes a resting-place (what would be called today a refueling base) for inspiration before it wings forward again.

How did these two interpretations help Joseph to understand better his own predicament and the way out of it? The baker's dream showed him that if his only motive in getting out of prison was to be restored to favourable material conditions, he was doomed to disappointment. But the butler's dream showed him that if his real love was his spiritual understanding and he let that bear fruit in consciousness and overflow naturally into his highest human sense of things, then he would find himself restored to normal happiness.

The Way to Forestall Famine

Chapter 41 records that Pharaoh dreamed two dreams which troubled him. In the first he saw "seven well favoured kine and fatfleshed" come up out of a river, to be followed by "seven other kine ... ill favoured and leanfleshed" such as had never been seen in all the land of Egypt for badness; the seven thin kine then ate up the first seven, but were just as thin as before. In his second dream Pharaoh saw seven ripe ears of corn springing up on one stalk, to be followed by seven thin ears blasted by the east wind; the seven thin ears then devoured the seven ripe ears. None of the wise men of Egypt could interpret Pharaoh's dreams, but the butler told Pharaoh of how Joseph had interpreted aright his dream and also the baker's dream. So Joseph was sent for out of his prison and his raiment changed. When Pharaoh said that he had heard of his ability in interpreting dreams, Joseph said, with the meekness which was his strength, "It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Joseph said that both dreams signified that seven years of great plenty were to be followed by seven years of grievous famine, so that all the plenty would be forgotten.

Pharaoh's dream represents the intelligent man's outlook when he is feeling pessimistic. He appreciates the fact that there would be no love if God were not Love, no life if God were not Life, and so on, but he also holds to the view that the forces of evil nullify the things which work for good, that barbarism outdoes civilization in every sphere. Human intellectualism cannot analyze or provide the answer to this conviction.

Joseph gave Pharaoh the answer: he suggested that Pharaoh should immediately appoint an intelligent man to store up corn in the seven years of plenty as provision for the seven years of famine. This plan commended itself to Pharaoh, and he asked, "Can we find such a one as this is [meaning Joseph], a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" So he decided that Joseph should be set over the whole land of Egypt and given supreme power under himself. Joseph immediately put his idea into operation. During the seven plenteous years "the earth brought forth by handfuls . . . And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number."

When thinking humanity, represented here by Pharaoh, sees that there is an intelligent method of forestalling disaster, it can then adopt it. Jesus said, "if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up." If we see evil forces threatening the things we love, and even civilization itself, or if in a simpler way we just see that troubles will come our way and try to cause a famine of health or happiness, then our only sure course is to build up our understanding of spiritual values in the "seven plenteous years," and then we shall always have the necessary forces to deploy as the need arises, instead of being caught unawares. Our spiritual reservoirs will be full even in times of drought.

The seven fat-fleshed kine and the seven ripe ears of corn are a symbol of the seven days of creation, the basis of the Science of the Bible. In that story of the seven days of creation the earth (our definite spiritual understanding) certainly does bring forth "by handfuls." There is no limit whatever to the amount we can enjoy its ideas; we can have as much as we like of them, and there is no end to the steady and abundant spiritual income which they supply. Jesus said, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few."

How do we store up the infinite facts about God, about the divine Principle of the universe? Through system. Without system and Science,— knowledge "reduced to law and embodied in system,"—our sense of God would be vague and stereotyped, instead of certain, exact, and inspired. System presents ideas in their inherent order and relationships, so that they can be learnt logically. Jesus was always ordering his disciples' consciousness of Truth—our biggest evidence of this is the Sermon on the Mount—and before he left them, he said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth;... he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you ... he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Only a sense of divine system can interpret and make forever available the Principle and rule of Jesus' life and works. That discernment of divine system is surely the Comforter and also the key to the Scriptures.

This key to the Scriptures was found by Mary Baker Eddy, who felt very deeply the spiritual power available in the Bible when she was healed of a serious injury by reading one of Jesus' healings. She then studied the Bible until she discovered its Science; she wanted to find in the Scriptures a positive rule, open to all. Her spiritual sense enabled her to discern the divine order of the Bible, and then she reduced her findings to system and embodied them in a textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, published in 1875. She epitomized her vision of the theme of the Bible in her answer to the question "What is God?" "God is incorporeal, divine, supreme, infinite Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love." Those seven names to define God summarize scientifically the teaching of the Bible as to the nature of the infinite. Mrs. Eddy's *Key to the Scriptures* consisted of an interpretation of Genesis and Revelation.

A key, however, is of use only when opening something. The Christian Science movement, founded by Mrs. Eddy, has tended to neglect the deep study of the Bible, although Mrs. Eddy's discovery was based solely on Scriptural revelation. The work of John W. Doorly, however, has done much towards remedying this position, and through his research into the Science of the Bible he showed *Science and Health* to be an indispensable help in interpreting the Scriptures. This research Mr. Doorly carried on individually, and not within the confines of any organization. His books, *God and Science*, in its exposition of the exact spiritual Science of the Scriptures, and *Christian Science Practice*, giving many examples

of its application, bring to light new fields of research for the spiritual seeker. By using the key provided by Mrs. Eddy, John Doorly opened the door for anyone to understand the Bible and prove for himself its practical value.

Mary Baker Eddy based her textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, on the spiritual meaning of the seven days of creation, which she realized underlay Jesus' words and works. *Science and Health* is not an easy book, because it is one which needs careful study, undertaken with humility and love. It is a book which will be studied for centuries before it is fully understood. One stands in awe before it, just as a mountaineer stands in awe before the mountain whose grandeur and beauty and inspiration he loves, even if he hasn't climbed to its summit and is still on its lower slopes. Mrs. Eddy's great achievement was that she took the spiritual ideas underlying the Bible and presented them as a coherent and comprehensive divine system of ideas, which she expounded in sixteen chapters. Anyone who wishes to judge *Science and Health* fairly and without prejudice does well to begin by finding out how Mrs. Eddy uses her seven synonymous terms for God—that is, what groups of ideas she associates with Mind, with Spirit, with Soul, with Principle, with Life, with Truth, and with Love. As he does this honestly, he will find how accurate her work was, and also how immensely flexible. A real lover of the Bible will find in *Science and Health* a most helpful complementary textbook, and will appreciate Mrs. Eddy as an exact thinker who was spiritually-minded enough to have revealed to her the Science of the Bible,—vast but ordered, absolute but so practical that it covers all human needs.

If we classify the ideas of the seven days of creation, as elucidated throughout the Bible and *Science and Health* we get something like this:—

1st Day. Light,—the divine intelligence revealing itself as true wisdom. Mrs. Eddy calls this aspect of God Mind.

2nd Day. The firmament between the waters above and beneath,—the purity of good enabling us to separate good from evil. This aspect of God Mrs. Eddy calls Spirit.

3rd Day. The dry land appearing and bringing forth,—the definiteness of the divine nature appearing to us as a growing sense of our real selves. Mrs. Eddy summarizes this aspect of God by the term Soul.

4th Day. Sun, moon, and stars to give light on the earth,—the divine system and harmony governing all teaching and practice and all relationship. Mrs. Eddy's name for this aspect of God is Principle.

5th Day. Birds and fishes,—the infinity of God felt in exploring the limitless realm of ideas, and in the multiplication of good in our lives. Mrs. Eddy epitomizes this by the term Life.

6th Day. Man,—God's awareness of Himself as a perfect whole, making us aware of our own God-given wholeness, bringing health and dominion. Mrs. Eddy calls this aspect of God Truth.

7th Day. God resting,—the fulfilment of God's ideal of perfection, causing us to lose fear and gain gratitude, peace, and compassion. This aspect of divinity Mrs. Eddy names Love.

The seven lean kine and the seven thin ears of corn are a symbol of the forms assumed by the carnal mind in its attempt to consume divine facts:—

1. Ignorance and belief in the brain.
2. Confusion of good and evil.
3. Corporeal selfhood, sinning and suffering.
4. Discord and false systems.
5. Depression, impoverishment, and death.
6. Disease and victimization.
7. Fear, hate, and war.

This famine is world-wide, but it is nullified in proportion as we bring out the specific spiritual facts needed to satisfy the world's hunger.

Joseph's Two Sons

Pharaoh gave Joseph a wife,—the daughter of a priest,—and she bore him two sons. Joseph called the firstborn Manasseh, which means "causing forgetfulness;" "For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house." The second son he called Ephraim, which means "doubly fruitful;" "For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

Jesus showed the importance of the Manasseh state of thought when he said to a disciple who asked to be allowed to go and bury his father before following Jesus, "Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead." We have to let go the burden and suffering of our past history,—let it return to its own home in

nothingness. If we think that we have something to bury, something to forget, we admit that that thing had existence at some time—which it never had in the light of the Science of being. "God requireth that which is past."

Jesus illustrated the Ephraim state of thought when he said, "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world."

Later, in Chapter 48, it is recorded that Jacob blessed Manasseh and Ephraim, but insisted on blessing Ephraim with his right hand, instead of the firstborn (Manasseh). When Joseph protested, Jacob said that he had done it deliberately, because Ephraim was to be greater than Manasseh and his seed would become "a multitude of nations." The Ephraim state of thought is positive, turning "affliction" into "fruitfulness," and therefore is greater than the Manasseh, "causing forgetfulness." Working out from the positive ideal and seeing one's experience transformed into blessing is always more potent than merely forgetting what lies behind.

Joseph Demands Benjamin

When the seven years of plenty ended, the famine "waxed sore ... over all the face of the earth." Then Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold the corn to those who asked for it. Among those who came seeking corn in Egypt were Joseph's brothers, with the exception of Benjamin, whom Jacob kept at home with him, for fear of losing him as he had lost Joseph. Joseph pretended not to recognize his brothers, and they didn't recognize him. He spoke roughly to them and accused them of being spies. As a proof that they were not spies, he demanded that they should fetch their youngest brother, Benjamin, and he kept one of the ten as hostage. When they heard this, the brothers said among themselves that this distress had come upon them because they had refused to heed the "anguish of his soul" when they cast Joseph into the pit. But Joseph sent them off with corn and provisions and also restored to them the money they had brought with them to pay for the corn; this generosity only made the brothers afraid, and they asked, "What is this that God hath done unto us?"

At first Jacob refused to send Benjamin with them, but was prevailed upon to do so when all the corn had been eaten up. The brothers still had such a guilty

conscience that when they arrived in Egypt and were invited to dine with Joseph they feared that he was going to take them as slaves because of the money which they had found in their sacks. But Joseph made them a great feast and was overjoyed to see Benjamin, whom he loved above them all. He still did not reveal his identity to his brothers and sent them away after the feast. He told his steward to fill their sacks with food, to return their money in the mouths of their sacks, and to put his silver cup into Benjamin's sack. Later he sent the steward to overtake the brothers and demand of them why they had taken Joseph's cup. They repudiated any notion of stealing, and so were much discomfited when the cup was found in Benjamin's sack; they all returned to Joseph, who cross-questioned them severely. Then Judah said, "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." Finally Joseph could not refrain from revealing himself to his brothers; he said, "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life ... And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt."

It is very plain that the ten brothers stand for the sense of sin and penalty, the shackles of "the law;" this sense was inculcated in Jewish religious belief by the Ten Commandments. Paul said, "I had not known sin, but by the law." Joseph, on the other hand, represents the grace of the "gospel;" he had the love which is true womanhood, the natural affection which reaches out to forgive and bless. But Joseph needed Benjamin to unite him to his brothers; only the vision of spiritual man intact bridges the sense of sin and the human longing to forgive. The law has to be fulfilled, and this takes place not through glossing over sin, nor perpetuating it, but through eradicating it. The way the motherhood of God appears to forgive sin and imperfection is by causing that imperfection to be given up, unto the "uttermost farthing;" perfection can never countenance imperfection, but it operates to show mortals the way out of accepting imperfection. Mere human forgiveness on the part of Joseph would not have taught his brothers anything nor destroyed the belief in sin. But there was no need for them to suffer once they obeyed what Joseph stood for, as he had seen in his early dreams that they would.

Joseph had his divining cup put into Benjamin's sack in order to bring about a change in the attitude of his ten brothers. Both he and Benjamin knew that Benjamin hadn't stolen the cup, but the ten brothers did not know this. The effect which the incident had on them was that they gave up all self-justification and attempts to conceal their guilt and offered themselves as slaves to Joseph,—they became willing to work to redeem themselves. Joseph had said to them, "What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?"—they realized that the demands of divine Principle are imperative and cannot forever be evaded by mortals.

In his healing work Jesus constantly showed the necessity of the Benjamin—the power and grace of a spiritual "breakthrough" which impels of itself a genuine transformation. For instance, it is recorded in John 9 that when they were confronted with a man blind from birth, the disciples asked Jesus, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" The disciples had the same sense of sin and penalty as the ten brothers,—that if there is suffering it must be because of personal sin. Jesus had the Joseph, or motherhood, sense when he said, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Joseph, too, recognized God as the only real Cause, and that the blessing of divinity must be made manifest in an improved human situation. But Jesus could not help the blind man without a Benjamin to bring the spiritual to the human,—without that full and complete acceptance of spiritual actuality which washed away the specific error of belief. So the record is that Jesus "spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent)." The man had to see that the blindness he was labouring under was not to be groveled before, but was just a phase of the belief that man can be conceived in blind lust. He had to wash away this belief in the full stream of realizing that man's real origin is in the Mind which is God and he is forever "sent" by this Mind with intelligent purpose. When this individual did so, he "came seeing" in more ways than one, as the rest of the chapter shows.

Again, when Jesus healed the epileptic boy, as described in Mark 9, the "Benjamin" was the spiritual influx which humbled the father. The epilepsy was due to the father's sin, but the father wanted to shirk his responsibility, and so first concentrated on blaming the disciples for not healing the boy at once. The

father then implored Jesus to save the situation: "If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us." He didn't see where he came into the picture. But Jesus turned the responsibility on to him when he said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Finally, the father said, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." When the father changed his attitude of mind, his son could be healed. The tears he shed symbolized that the spiritual inflow had touched his heart to self-knowledge, humility, and love.

Whether the mathematician is in a bad temper or whether he isn't, whether he loves his wife or whether he doesn't, he can still work out a problem in arithmetic, or put right a miscalculation, if he can think clearly according to the principle of his subject. But to work out a problem according to the Principle of divine Science demands the whole man, demands that he be one with his Principle in spirit, as well as conversant with the letter.

The Price of Corn

When the Egyptians came to Joseph to buy corn, they first of all paid for it with money. When they had no more money, Joseph demanded their cattle. When they had no more cattle to give in return for the corn, he demanded their lands and their persons for Pharaoh and gave them seed with which to sow the land.

Every time we want the bread of sustaining ideas, we have to give up more and more of our mortal beliefs. Higher and higher demands are made on us. First of all, we have to render our "money,"—give up regarding some difficulty as primarily physical, because we see that it is just an expression of mortal thought. Secondly, we have to give up thinking that our human behaviour can remain unaffected; cattle stand for such moral qualities as persistence and patience. Thirdly, we have to give up thinking that we can go on clinging to any sense of our real selves as being apart from God.

For instance, if it is home we are looking for, we begin to see that it is not a merely physical home we are seeking, because home is a desirable atmosphere of thought. Then we see that it demands the exercise here and now of the qualities of love and hospitality and unselfishness. Finally, it demands that we recognize that the eternal fact of home abides in our acceptance of God's love for us as His beloved sons; we see that we cannot ever lose that home, for it lies between us and God. In return, we get the ideas we need, symbolized by the

corn, in order to find a home which is a home physically and morally and spiritually. Jesus said, "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children,"— his most cherished human beliefs,— "for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come"—the recognition of spiritual reality—"life everlasting,"—an under-standing of his immortal status.

Joseph Provides and Cares for Jacob

Joseph showed a wonderfully tender motherhood (and fatherhood as well) in his provision for Jacob's last days. He told his brothers to go and fetch Jacob down into Egypt and said that he would care for him and all his household in the five years of famine which were still to come. He sent presents with them for Jacob, and Pharaoh sent wagons to fetch him. When the lonely old Jacob, who thought he had lost so much and was afraid of losing more, felt these touches of love, his spirits revived, he was persuaded to believe that Joseph really was alive, and he agreed to join him in Egypt. On the way down, God spoke to him one night in a dream and told him not to fear to go down into Egypt, "for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes." Joseph came to meet him and established him in Goshen, where his needs were fully met and where he was nourished against poverty. He could die happily because he saw that the spiritual journey to the promised land was going forward, in spite of the fact that his children were in Egypt.

The motherhood of God always forestalls our prayers by its free bestowal of blessings, and it gathers everyone into a sense of home. Isaiah writes of this divine motherhood, "the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child [saith the Lord], that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."

Joseph at this point was a real shepherd, for a shepherd is both fatherly and motherly to his sheep—he guides them and guards them and he also cares for them with the utmost patience and unselfishness.

When Jacob died, Joseph's brothers were afraid that Joseph would hate them, and so they begged to be forgiven. Joseph's answer was characteristic: "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good. . . . Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones." He then "comforted them, and spake kindly unto them." Like Jesus, Joseph never condemned poor humanity, but met its needs.

Jacob's Blessing on Joseph

Jacob's dying blessing on Joseph (Genesis 49:22-26) is a fit summary of Joseph's significance, of his motherhood and womanhood, based firmly on the understanding of the Science of being which experience taught him to acquire.

It begins: "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall:"—his source of abundance and abundant helpfulness was the bottomless well of divine ideas:—"the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb:"—Joseph's persecution by his brothers and by Potiphar's wife served only to strengthen his sense of spiritual power and to enable him to become a real shepherd, and finally to show forth an abundant measure of motherhood. The blessing ends: "the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren."

And so does not Joseph represent particular qualities of character without which none of us can turn our human experience into a blessing?

CHAPTER SEVEN

MOSES AND THE EXODUS

Thinking About God

THE basic error of the centuries has been the failure to think deeply enough about God,—to think out the divine nature and thence to try to live in accordance with it. No one would deny that there have been great achievements and wonderful lives in the course of the years, but there would have been less of a price to pay for them if there had been more recognition of the impersonal nature of good as based on the infinite Principle of the universe.

From time to time there are prophecies of the imminent end of civilization. Recently a winner of a Nobel Prize for literature has said: "There are no longer any problems of the spirit; there is only the question, When will I be blown up?" But the spirit of man is always potentially greater than anything he may encounter by way of obstacles. The reason why a man's spirit is often defeated rather than victorious is that he generally thinks of his sources of strength as limited and personal, rather than as infinite and impersonal (although expressed individually).

No one else can do our thinking about God for us. The fact that others before us have used their acquaintance with the compass of spiritual thought to make their way through difficult country is something that we can be very thankful for and something that we can take full advantage of, but we are never relieved of our own individual responsibility for going forward. Jesus Christ's example is, of course, the supreme one, but it is of no avail to us unless we take it as our model individually.

What part does the Bible play in our individual journey towards a realization of man's dominion, as proclaimed in the first chapter of Genesis? It provides us with an opportunity of making our thinking about spiritual truth systematic and vital, instead of haphazard and stereotyped. Then it is up to us to put that thinking into practical operation in our lives.

The First Three Thousand Years of Bible History

In this book we have traced something of the majestic story of the first three thousand-year periods of Bible history. We have seen how it illustrates the

workings of the first three days of creation—the searching light of the first day of creation exposing the dark sequence of materialistic thinking; the purity of the second day of creation demanding separation in an "ark" from the "flood" of mortal beliefs; and the definiteness of the third day of creation impelling the journey to the "promised land" of true identity as the sons of God. Abraham was forced to be definite about leaving Ur and about producing an heir by his wife Sarah; Jacob was forced to be definite in eradicating the evil elements in himself; Joseph was forced to be definite about turning every experience into a blessing, not only for himself but for others as well. Now we arrive at that great figure Moses, who sometimes seems forbidding, but whose qualities of leadership were magnificent. We shall see how his vision of God as I AM THAT I AM was the mainspring of his mission.

Moses' finest achievement was in the spiritual education of the children of Israel. He was the first of the great teachers, and had the struggles and heart-burnings of every teacher. He taught the Israelites the nature of God through the plagues, which freed them from bondage in Egypt, and later he gave them the Commandments as a further guide to their thinking and practice. He paved the way for Joshua to lead them finally into the Promised Land, the climax of the third thousand-year period.

The Children of Israel in Bondage in Egypt

The Book of Exodus begins with an account of the bitter bondage which the children of Israel suffered in Egypt. The reason for this was that the Pharaoh of Egypt was afraid of them, because they were greater in numbers and in strength than the Egyptians; they were "fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them." The Pharaoh in Joseph's time had been favourable to the children of Israel, but now there had arisen a new Pharaoh, who "knew not Joseph,"—who did not remember how Joseph had been the means of averting a terrible famine in Egypt. So the Egyptians made the lives of the children of Israel "bitter with hard bondage"; but in spite of this they still multiplied.

Pharaoh then thought that the only remedy was the desperate one of killing all the male Hebrew babies. So he asked the two Hebrew midwives to see that this was done. They, however, did not do as they were directed by Pharaoh, because

they "feared God,"—that is, they trusted in righteousness and eschewed unrighteousness. As a result they themselves were blessed.

The "midwife" in each one of us is that quality of womanhood which assists the birth of ideas. When ideas first appear to us, they need much tender welcoming and loving and encouraging if they are to fulfill their mission as strong and effectual. Without that initial cherishing they may die on us before they have a chance to mature. We need to "save the men children alive."

The Birth of Moses

When he found out that the midwives were disobeying him Pharaoh appealed to his people to cast every male Hebrew baby into the river. The story (told in Exodus 2:1-10) of how the child Moses was preserved is a charming legendary tale. When Moses' mother found that she had a "goodly child," she hid him for three months. "And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him." Pharaoh's daughter chanced to come down to the river with her maidens, and when she saw the ark she sent one of them to fetch it; when she saw the Hebrew child weeping, she had compassion on it. At this point Moses' sister ran up and offered to call a nurse for the child from among the Hebrew women. Pharaoh's daughter agreed, and so Moses' sister fetched their mother, who was paid to nurse her own child.

Moses became Pharaoh's daughter's son, and it was she who gave him his name, which means "drawn out;" because, she said, "I drew him out of the water." This is what we do every time we see the definiteness of some idea through our love for it.

Because Moses' mother was willing to give up her fear and to let her child go,—not unprotected, but in an ark,—she was rewarded with the opportunity to fill the office of mother still. We hide our "child" (an idea which has come to us and which we love) for "three months" when we think out its real identity according to the first three days of creation; we see it as an intelligent idea (first "month"), as a purely spiritual idea, uncontaminated by evil elements (second "month"), and as an idea which is definite and beautiful and safe (third "month"). We give up thinking of it as our own personal property, born of certain circumstances and

something for which we have personal ambitions, and instead we see it as something with an eternal life of its own. Then we put this child into a spiritual ark,—an ark of understanding of the spiritual fact as supreme,—and we put it by the river's brink,—by a sense of activity and progress. In this way the child is safe from all harm and can meet only more love and care, and we ourselves are not deprived of the joys of motherhood.

All motherhood is by reflection: it is a reflection of God's universal motherhood. A realization of this fact only makes better human mothers —less fearful, more encouraging of the good tendencies, more patient, more faithful to the spiritual ideal of sonship. A human mother is often separated from her child and therefore fears for it; but she need never fear if she sees that both she and it are inseparable from the divine Mother, who cares for all Her children with infinite tenderness.

When a wonderful idea is born to us, we mother it by appreciating to the full its perfection and completeness; that operates in human experience to give us the patience to make its appearing as unmarred by foreign elements as is possible. If we love the ideal, this gives us a quicker discernment of every approximation to it, however small, and also a quicker discernment of temporary imperfections in that approximation. The nature of true mother-love makes its effect as certain as the effect of $2 \times 2 = 4$ to dispel all notions of any other answer. This is why real mother-love for the spiritual ideal brings out the best in everyone and everything and literally makes nothing of flaws. If a mirror is dirty, it fails to reflect faithfully the picture in front of it. The sensible person doesn't rail at the dirt, but wipes it off, so that the mirror can fulfill its true function. A real mother does the same with the faults blurring the ideal image of her child which her love holds before her—she wipes them out in her thought as transient dirt, so that the image is once again perfect. The effect of this is that the child steadily advances towards the ideal.

Moses Kills an Egyptian

When he grew up, Moses became aware of the hard bondage which his countrymen were suffering at the hands of the Egyptians. One day he saw an Egyptian kill a Hebrew, so when he had made sure that there were no onlookers he slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. The next day he saw two Hebrews fighting and asked the one in the wrong, "Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?"

whereupon the accused man answered, "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?" Moses was then afraid that his crime was known; and, indeed, when all this came to the ears of Pharaoh, he "sought to slay Moses."

So Moses fled to Midian, where he sat down by a well. The story goes on: "Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock."

If like Moses we try through violent human action to free our fellows from the bondage of "Pharaoh,"—gross materialism,—we lay ourselves open to the accusation of being mere self-appointed moral bulldozers. Then we are wise if we seek the well of God's ideas, sit down there, and let there come to us a receptiveness of spiritual perfection (symbolized by the seven daughters). This receptiveness appeals to divine sources of inspiration, but needs the vigor of manhood to protect and preserve it against all attempts to deprive it of this inspiration.

In the incident of the midwives we saw that the "men children" need the help of woman qualities to keep them alive, and here we see that the receptivity of womanhood needs the strength of manhood to stand up for it. We can never do without both the manhood qualities of courage and intelligence and the womanhood qualities of acceptance and faithful love.

The priest of Midian, father of the seven daughters, was so pleased to hear of Moses' helpfulness to them that he gladly offered him hospitality. Moses lived with the priest for a time, and was given one of his daughters in marriage. She bore him a son.

Moses at the Burning Bush

The turning-point of Moses' career came with his experience of the burning bush which was not consumed, as recorded in the third chapter of Exodus.

One day he had led his father-in-law's flock "to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb." Then "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush:"—the creation of

bushes was included in the third day:—"and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt."

This experience of Moses symbolizes the point when the "desert" begins to "blossom as the rose" for us. The desert, or wilderness, is often used in the Bible as a symbol of a recurrent stage in our experience: a period when the outlook seems empty and drear and uncertain, but the doubtings eventually lead to a certainty which is deeply felt, rather than merely believed or accepted theoretically. The moment of certainty comes as we see that the eternal fact of our God-given selfhood, and indeed of everything, is indestructible, and remains intact in spite of the apparently consuming fires of sin, disease, or death.

Sometimes if we feel ashamed of things we have done or failed to do, we imagine that the good we have also accomplished is set at nought by our sins. But the truth is that our spiritual sense, which enabled us to accomplish that measure of good, is an eternal part of our essential selfhood, whereas sin is no part of it. A sense of sin is only a temporary, false view of our real identity, and that identity needs only to be discerned intact for the memory of sin or the desire to sin to disappear. The value which a coin represents remains the same even if the superscription becomes defaced or erased for any reason, and even if a new coin with the image clear once again has to be substituted for it in circulation.

Because our true selfhood remains untouched, in spite of all the nightmare storms which apparently sweep us away from it, we can always return home to it. That is why the prodigal son could be restored to his place in his father's house, in spite of his elder brother's theological sense that it was unfair that this sinner should be reinstated, although he had already suffered amply for his decision to leave home.

The well-known story in Daniel 3 of the three Hebrew young men who were cast into the burning fiery furnace, because they refused to bow down to a golden image, illustrates this same great fact. Nebuchadnezzar commanded the furnace to be heated "one seven times more than it was wont to be heated." The flames of the fire burned to death the mighty warriors who cast the three men bound into the midst of the fire, but soon Nebuchadnezzar got up in amazement and said, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They

answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God . . . And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them." The story is a marvellous symbol of how true identity remains unchanged and untouched by all the pains of sense, and of how we shall enjoy safety and a great sense of freedom if we realize this fact fully.

"I Am that I Am"

God now called to Moses out of the midst of the bush, and told him, "put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." God then announced Himself as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; in other words, Moses began to see that he personally had not stumbled on a new God, but that the understanding of God had been the inspiration of his predecessors. Moses saw that that understanding must now free the children of Israel from their afflictions and oppression in Egypt, and lead them into "a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey,"—not into a state of material ease and comfort, but into the joy and freedom of true identity. Moses saw that divinely everything is in line, in perfect accord, with the nature of God, but that humanly this has to be proved by exchanging the bondage of "Egypt" for the freedom of the "promised land."

The next thing was that Moses saw clearly his own God-given mission, —to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt. But another suggestion intervened, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" Then Moses' own sense of God answered, "Certainly I will be with thee. . . ."

Moses went on to ask by what name he should present to the children of Israel the God of their fathers. The answer came, "I AM THAT I AM." This has been translated, "I shall forever continue to be that which I am now being." It indicates the permanence of spiritual reality,—a haven from the noisy storms raised by physical sense. This great vision of God Moses elaborated through the plagues, which showed that the indestructible essence of all visible forms of good resides in God alone.

The Three Signs

Moses objected that the people would not believe him or listen to him, "for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee." He was remembering his daunting experience with the two quarrelling Hebrews. But now he was given three "signs" (Exodus 4:2-9).

First, he was told to cast down his rod, and the moment he did so it became a serpent, so that he fled from before it. God now told him, "Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail." When he did this, it became a rod in his hand again. Moses was made to see in this incident that if he relied on his human capacities,—symbolized by the rod, which represented his shepherd's calling,—they might at any moment demonstrate the danger of this by letting him down. He had to take this "serpent" by the tail,—handle fearlessly the belief that his God-given identity and purpose was something allotted to him because of his human abilities. Human abilities regarded as personal gifts, due to accidents of birth and education, are subject to all kinds of changes and perversions. But when we recognize particular abilities as individual expressions of God in some aspect, then they cannot change or decay. When Moses had taken this insidious "serpent" by the tail, he could use the rod again,—he could use his individual gifts with a sense of power and certainty, and without fear of their deserting him, because he had seen them to be derived from God.

The second sign which Moses was to offer in evidence of his divine commission was that when he put his hand into his bosom and took it out, he saw it as leprous, and when he again put it into his bosom, it was restored to normal. This symbolizes very simply that any distressing condition, however hideous it may seem to physical sense, is nothing but the outcome of mortal mentality; the evidence of it has no foundation in truth and so it can be changed in a moment through divine influence. The sheer oppressive weight of false education is really all that impedes our seeing this proved more often; that weight has to be lifted off through showing both its powerlessness and also the glory of spiritual facts.

The third sign was that Moses should take of the water of the Nile and pour it on the dry land, where it would become blood. This is what happened in the first plague, and it represents showing the deadliness of materialism and the consequent vitalizing of interest in spiritual reality.

If we want to lead lives that are worth-while, we need to see the significance of these three signs. We need to see that our destiny is God-bestowed, not man-bestowed, and therefore cannot be perverted; that there is no substance to the mortal picture presented to the physical senses, and that it can be transformed by divine power instantaneously, as Jesus proved time and time again; and that we must have the courage to show the deadly nature of mortal mentality. So we need a right sense of our individual selves; a right sense of what it is that enables us to help our fellows; and a willingness to expose fearlessly the whole gamut of materialism. Moses thus saw the individual, collective, and universal aspects of his mission.

"I Am Slow of Speech"

Moses' next misgivings were about his lack of eloquence. "And the Lord said unto him, . . . Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." Moses' sense of God showed him what Jesus was to show to his disciples: "it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Moses, however, was still fearful, and so God pointed out to him that he could use Aaron, his brother, as a mouthpiece.

Like Moses, we sometimes keep our Aaron, our helpmeet, who shoulders responsibilities which are really ours to our Principle, for too long, and then it becomes harmful to us, as Aaron became to Moses when he encouraged the people in their worship of the golden calf.

Moses now left Jethro and journeyed back to Egypt with "the rod of God" in his hand,—armed with the sense that he could now act "as one having authority." He and Aaron gathered together the elders of the children of Israel, and Aaron "spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped."

First Encounters with Pharaoh

Moses and Aaron now went in to Pharaoh and courageously demanded, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." Pharaoh made the expected reply: "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." Next he implied that Moses and Aaron were trying to

engineer a holiday and were preventing the people from working, and so he said, "get you unto your burdens."

The dictatorial "Pharaoh" element says, "Why should you imagine that you can be free to think about God and rejoice in God? It's nothing but an impossible Utopian dream. You've got more time on your hands than is good for you—that's what the matter is," and so "Pharaoh" imposes new burdens on us to keep our noses to the grindstone of mortality.

Pharaoh's instructions now were that the children of Israel should no longer be given straw to make brick, but that they must gather straw for themselves and yet at the same time produce the same number of bricks per day. This was, of course, impossible, and yet Pharaoh refused to lessen his demands. The officers of the children of Israel therefore blamed Moses, as they were to do many times in the coming years. Moses in his bewilderment asked God why his efforts to free his fellow-countrymen had resulted in a worse plight for them.

Moses' expostulations are not unknown to us, when our well-meant efforts seem at first to result only in an aggravation of the difficulty, and the physical burdens seem crushing. But, as with Moses, our understanding of God reassures us. The Lord told Moses to say to the children of Israel that He would certainly rid them of their bondage and save them "with a stretched out arm" and bring them into the Promised Land. The people were unimpressed by this, because of their "anguish of spirit" and their "cruel bondage." The Lord, however, still told Moses to speak to Pharaoh with authority, although Moses was now much discouraged and apprehensive. Moses was warned that Pharaoh would not allow the children of Israel to go until he was forced to do so by circumstances; in other words, the belief in materialism tries to stick to us for as long as possible. It yields only when we find ourselves forced to recognize the power and all-inclusiveness of spiritual facts, precluding the possibility of any real opposite, and this was to be the significance of the plagues.

In order to impress Pharaoh, Aaron was told to cast down his rod and let it become a serpent. But Pharaoh called in the magicians of Egypt and they did the same thing with their rods. Aaron's rod, however, swallowed up all their rods. Mere will-power can bring out "serpents" with ease, exhibit the subtleties of evil,

but it cannot get rid of them, because of its inherent powerlessness, since all power belongs to God.

But Pharaoh failed to be impressed, and refused to let the children of Israel go; the plagues were therefore set in motion.

The Plagues

What was the significance of the plagues? The general view of the commentaries is that they were events explicable as natural phenomena, but that the Biblical writers, recording the events hundreds of years after they had taken place, attributed them (in line with their didactic purpose) to the God of the Hebrews acting on behalf of His chosen people. The universal spiritual meaning of the plagues, however, far, far outshines their historical significance. They give a striking symbolic picture of how the "Pharaoh" element in thought, the tyrannical materialism, fiercely resists our entering into our heritage of freedom as the sons of God,—freedom from "Egypt" and freedom to demonstrate the Science of being,—but finally is forced to yield. "Let my people go, that they may serve me" was the demand made continually by the Lord through Moses, and it is the demand which our understanding of God is always forcing upon us.

Through the symbolism of the plagues we learn what man without God can expect. We see that the I AM of all good abides in God alone, that all the things we value in human experience come from God alone, because God is, and for no other reason. The very nature of matter renders it incapable of producing lasting health, lasting happiness, or lasting good, so a materialistic life-basis is necessarily a self-destroying belief.

On one occasion Moses told Pharaoh that the plagues came about that Pharaoh might "know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth," —the great central Principle upon which every manifestation of good depends. On other occasions the divine purpose was stated in these words: "that my name"—the identity of the divine nature—"may be declared throughout all the earth," and "that thou mayest know how that the earth is the Lord's." The earth appeared in the third day of creation and brought forth grass, herb, and fruit tree; it is "the Lord's" for this reason, that good is brought forth solely because good is of God and must appear to us continually as the expression of the true selfhood of everything.

The "Pharaoh" holds out as long as it can. It clamps down on us again just when we have won some measure of freedom from materialistic thinking, and so we have to go on to acknowledge yet more of the divine facts. The initiative may appear to lie with "Pharaoh," but fundamentally it is always the spiritual which holds the initiative and impels us on to learn more of God.

The commentaries refer to the Ten Plagues, but some of them indicate that there were seven, rather than ten, because three of them were different versions of the same plague in another document. It is thought that the lice and the flies constitute one plague, rather than two; that the cattle-plague and the boils also constitute one plague; and that the locusts and the thick darkness constitute one plague, since the locusts darkened the earth as they traversed it. Thus the seven plagues point to the basic facts first symbolized in the story of the seven days of creation,—the foundation for all spiritual education. In the previous chapter of this book we saw that Mary Baker Eddy epitomized the nature of God revealed in those seven "days" by the terms Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, and Love.

The First Plague: Water Turned to Blood

The first of the plagues indicated the same fact as the first day of creation, when the divine mandate was "Let there be light." The first plague (Exodus 7:14-25) was that all the water in Egypt, whether in the rivers or streams or ponds or vessels, was turned to blood. The Egyptians were unable to drink any water; also, the fish in the rivers died, and fish was a staple food.

This plague symbolizes the great basic fact that unless thought entertains ideas of God,—ideas which partake of the nature of the divine Mind that is infinite and perfect,—it can entertain nothing but harmful illusions. We imagine that we are thinking harmlessly when we entertain the common illusions of mortality; we are really laying up trouble for ourselves, because unless our thinking has its source in what God is, it is sooner or later productive of sorrow. Materialistic reckonings and conceptions are deadly, because matter involves death. The first plague showed that without the Mind of Christ, there is only mortal (symbolized by blood) mentality, which cannot sustain man.

Human intellect is arrogant, and likes to imagine that it can "think up" on its own a good idea, but no good idea is a personal creation because it must always

have existed in the Mind which is God. That Mind expresses itself universally, and so ideas are always flowing to us in the form which is most helpful. They flash spontaneously into thought (as every creative artist knows), when we have the humility to turn expectantly to the divine Mind.

In II Kings 2:19-22 we read of how the men of Jericho came to Elisha and complained, "The water is naught, and the ground barren." Elisha asked for a new cruse with salt in it and he cast it into the spring of the waters, and then said, "Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land." By casting salt (a symbol of perpetuity) into the spring of the waters, Elisha symbolized that the source of ideas is unailing. The flow of ideas does not depend on a personal flair or on educational background. The infinite intelligence supplies unceasingly that which really quenches man's thirst for something which will not leave him thirsty under any circumstances.

The water of thought is forever flowing, and it flows either towards illusions or towards ideas. Jesus made it flow towards ideas when he turned the water into wine at the marriage in Cana, as recorded in John 2:1-11. He transformed thought so that from being dull it became inspired. The marriage represented a good human condition, and so when he turned the water into wine Jesus was indicating that such a thing as marriage can always be "wine" if it is seen to symbolize a wonderful and enduring and vital idea of relationship, which exists in God. Then the human condition helps, instead of hindering, the journey up to the realization that the only real marriage is between God and His man, the divine Principle and its expression.

The newspapers try daily to quench the thirst of readers with "water" turned to "blood" whenever they "sensationalize" shortages, strikes, crime, divorce, the weather, rumours of war, fear and hate of other nations, and so forth. On the other hand, they quench thirst with "water" turned into "wine" whenever they direct it on to such ideas as intelligence, courage, individuality. For instance, they gave water turned into wine when they reported this from King George VI's 1950 Christmas message: "if our world is to survive in any sense that makes survival worthwhile, it must learn to love, not to hate; to create, not to destroy. We stand at the beginning of a new half-century. Man will have to decide between these two creeds—perhaps the most momentous choice that he has had to make in his whole history. It will be made not as a result of any abstract political theory, but

through the way of life, the way of thought, that each one of us practices at home."

Reading constantly about divorce, to take another example, thought unconsciously becomes more and more educated into thinking that an enduringly happy relationship depends on two personalities chancing to stay in a certain mood, and that whilst this may happen for a short period it will probably change and may deteriorate beyond repair. On the other hand, anything which points to the fact that happy relationships and happy homes are dependent on every individual's obedience to the great Principle of home and happiness, is water turned into "wine."

Instead of turning to the one God which Moses was showing to be the I AM, the Egyptians "dugged round about the river for water to drink."

Mortals go blindly scratching around trying to build something out of illusions, when they can always appeal to the one great creative factor, the God who is Mind.

Pharaoh's heart was hardened when the magicians of Egypt also managed to turn the water into blood. The "magicians" of to-day, too, can show the power of illusion. For instance, hypnotists constantly demonstrate it, and dictators can turn thought into channels destructive of individual freedom and life. Again, if someone habitually thinks of certain people or places as characterized by unpleasantness of some kind, "water" turns to "blood" in that his thought acts as a destructive agent to destroy (so far as he is concerned) all the good elements. Any psychologist would recognize that, but what the psychologists do not generally do is to show the positive power of idea to turn "water" into "wine." It needs a Jesus sense to do that. The psychologists are so intent on investigating mortal mentality that they do not turn their attention to the study of spiritual ideas, which alone can help humanity.

"And seven days were fulfilled, after that the Lord had smitten the river"—the fact that God is Mind was made perfectly clear.

The Second Plague: Frogs in the Bedchambers

Exodus 8:1-15 records that when Pharaoh refused to let the children of Israel go, a second plague came upon the land. This was an amplification of the second day of creation, when the firmament was made to divide the waters above from the waters beneath—the firmament of understanding by which to discern between the Godlike and the un-Godlike. The second plague consisted of frogs, which came out of the river and penetrated the houses, bedchambers, beds, ovens, and kneading troughs. Pharaoh was so distressed by this that he told Moses that he would let the Israelites go if Moses would remove the frogs to the river only.

This plague showed that if there is some semblance of order in human experience, it is only because God Himself is the Principle of order. Order has been defined as "a condition in which everything is so arranged as to play its proper part" (Webster). Clearly, frogs have a proper part to play in a river, but not in a bedchamber. Dr. Johnson said, "A cow is a very good animal in the field; but we turn her out of a garden."

There is no sense of order in our everyday lives if we allow our real progress—towards Godlikeness—to be interrupted at every turn by things unhelpful, by unimportant things crowding out more essential things, and so forth. Every element of good in our lives should have its fitting place. The Preacher said, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."

If we love the great spiritual fact of order, then we shan't allow ourselves to be "run around" by circumstances, nor shall we confuse order with the rigidity of a human programme, but we shall make circumstances servants to our highest conception of order; this always involves discerning what will bring us nearer to that which is of God. If in our lives there is a sense of divine order reflected, then there can be smooth procedure, whatever happens or fails to happen. Without order, there is always scrambling and jerking, hurrying and fussing.

The housewife doesn't put one sheet on a bed, hurry off to peel a potato, and then dash back to the sheet, but deals with the bed before proceeding to the potatoes. If she is disorderly, she fails to appreciate the best sequence of work, and so wastes time and effort. In other words, she has "frogs" in her "bedchamber." There is no real sense of home without an atmosphere of

order,—if we cannot find what we want without turning everything upside down, if we do not know whether or when the next meal will be provided, and if everybody's interests clash. Just so, there is no order in our thinking if we do not think out spiritual facts in an orderly way so that they are readily available as we need them, and so that they give us a standard by which to discern that which is best under particular circumstances.

Jesus drastically restored a sense of order and fitness to the temple when he purged it of moneylenders, sellers of doves, and suchlike. He saw the "frogs" of impurity (corrupt motives) entering "the house of God" and making it a den of thieves. If in our own consciousness we "sell doves," that means that we value spiritual truths solely in terms of what they will do for us by way of material improvement. In that way we lose a sense of the purity of the things of Spirit, uncontaminated by materialism, and so our progress is impeded. A false sense of values always confuses and retards, and this the second plague showed.

The Third Plague: Mosquitoes and Gnats

The third plague (Exodus 8:16-32) consisted of swarms of mosquitoes and gnats,—as the modern translations render the "lice" and "flies" of the Authorized Version. On this occasion, as distinct from the first two plagues, the magicians of Egypt could not perform the same miracle, and they were perceptive enough to say, "This is the finger of God."

This plague symbolizes that without the impress of God as Soul in human experience there would be nothing but the belief of sensation in matter. Mosquitoes and gnats were regarded as parasites which annoy the senses and are conveyors of dirt and disease. When the dust of the earth was smitten, mosquitoes and gnats came forth, symbolizing that whenever we fear the body or accept its every report on its sensations, we are giving the power of sensation to that which is really just "dust." We make dust sentient.

As mortals we believe that we see, hear, feel, taste, and smell matter through five physical senses and that they afford us a certain amount of pleasure and a certain amount of pain. The term Soul, symbolized in the third day of creation by the appearing of the dry land, indicates the changeless identity of all spiritual ideas and also the appreciation of those ideas in full detail. Obviously one cannot

appreciate a spiritual idea through a physical sense of things, but only through a spiritual sense.

If we see ugliness and pain and sorrow around us, we are seeing materially instead of spiritually. Spiritual sense reverses the testimony of material sense and identifies the definite spiritual truth of a situation as permanent and as unchangeable into anything else.

If God were not Soul, there would never be moments when we feel free from self-centredness, from the confines of the body and its sensations, and yet we often have this feeling of being "taken out of ourselves"— for instance, when our attention is absorbed by a play or a film, by an interesting conversation or train of thought, or by a piece of music.

What we need, then, is not more acute physical senses, so much as a more accurate understanding of spiritual sense. Jesus showed that, every time he healed a blind or deaf or dumb man. He frequently spat in these cases, to show his contempt for the belief of senses in matter. Jesus knew that man has spiritual senses, which enable him to appreciate accurately the beauty of the spiritual universe, and that they are forever intact, and it was this which enabled him to reproduce the normal human sense of seeing, hearing, or speaking. For instance, with the man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech (see Mark 7:32-35), one can see that Jesus opened and loosened that individual's thought, so that he began to use his God-given ability to listen for ideas and express clearly what came to him. This transformation of consciousness brought about a healing of what had appeared as a merely physical disability.

When the woman with the issue of blood came to Jesus (as recorded in Mark 5:25-34), she had to be healed of slavery to her body. She was seeking for healing and when she touched Jesus' garment "the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague." It was not the touch of a material thing which healed her, but the touch of the Christ-idea of man which Jesus habitually held. Those senses which she had been wrongly conceiving of as physical, and which informed her continually of pain in her body, now bore witness to the positive sense of health. Jesus felt the thought which had been reaching out and he knew that healing had taken place, but he wanted to make the woman see where her healing had really come from and the real

form it took, so he persisted in identifying her. Eventually she came up in fear and trembling, and "told him all the truth." Then Jesus said, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." He did not want the woman to think that the healing had come about through his personal sense of man in God's image, but through her own individual apprehension of the wholeness of man. The issue of blood symbolizes the belief of lack of creative manhood, of the draining away of vitality and inspiration. Jesus showed her that she had discerned her own manhood, and thus regained her full identity. An interesting point about the third plague is that it affected only the Egyptians, and this was true of all the subsequent plagues. If thought is safe in a sense that man's real selfhood is of the same nature as his Principle, then there is no longer victimization while errors boil over.

In order to see an end of the plague of gnats, Pharaoh agreed to let the children of Israel go three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to their God, but as soon as the plague was removed he hardened his heart again. "Pharaoh" does not like us to leave the conventional tramlines of materialism and go too far afield in a definite cultivation of spiritual sense, because this denies the beliefs of mortality specifically.

The Fourth Plague: Cattle-Plagues and Boils

On the next occasion that the demand "Let my people go" was refused, the fourth plague took place (Exodus 9:1-12). There were two aspects of this plague: one was cattle-disease among the Egyptian cattle, and the other was boils on Egyptian men and beasts. They both indicate the plight of man without a sense of God as Principle. Principle is that aspect of God which is elucidated in the fourth day of creation through the symbol of the sun, moon, and stars. God as Principle governs all spiritual ideas in one system and harmony; they do not have to keep themselves operating systematically and in harmony. Jesus indicated this great fact both when he said "I can of mine own self do nothing," and also when he said "I and my Father are one." Man has no underived power, but when he does his best to let the one Principle impel him, he can do "good works," because he expresses supra-personal good.

"Cattle" represent desirable moral qualities, but if such qualities are not seen as the outcome of the one universal Principle of goodness, they are liable to victimization by the so-called forces of malicious evil. Tabitha, for instance, was a

woman "full of good works and almsdeeds," but we read at the end of Acts 9 that she fell sick and died, whereupon Peter was sent for. When he arrived, he was brought into the upper chamber where the body lay, "and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them." But Peter "put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive." Peter's task was to show that Tabitha was not a personal generator of good, but expressed the universal and unfailing Principle of good. Jesus said, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." Since that divine Principle could not suffer eclipse or misfortune, its representative must also be free from the onslaughts of what are called cruel blows of fate. Because of man's failure to acknowledge this fact, people who do a great deal of human good often suffer inexplicably. There is no need for that suffering if the sense of good is impersonated.

A certain woman once cried out to Jesus, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked," to which Jesus replied, "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." The woman was tying Jesus down to a personal goodness which had its origin merely in heredity and environment—many people try to do this to-day. Jesus turned her attention to the universal availability of "good works" to anyone who is obedient to their Principle.

The boils on man and beast materialized when Moses took handfuls of ashes and tossed them up in the air so that they became small dust which produced sores breaking into pustules on man and beast. This was a very clear demonstration of the workings of evil. Evil is fundamentally nothingness (ashes), because it postulates the existence of something contrary to infinite good, but it appears to personalize itself, to attach itself to people, who thereupon are used as instruments of malicious purposes. Whereas the cattle-plague showed that the belief of personal goodness brings unnecessary penalty, the boils showed that the belief of personal evil also brings unnecessary penalty. All evil is the expression of the one liar, and if we silence that liar by realizing its fundamental impotence, then it cannot use us as a mouthpiece. In arithmetic the only thing which makes us let $5 \times 7 = 37$ enter our calculations is our lack of understanding of the principle of arithmetic. In the same way, if we are not living in accordance

with the divine Principle of man, whether consciously or unconsciously, we let ourselves be used by miscalculation. Once we get back to working according to our Principle, however, the mistake goes and has no repercussions.

Jesus once said, "It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!"—woe comes to anyone who allows himself to be used as a "carrier" of evil. We can be infected with evil only if we regard ourselves materialistically and not as ideas established in the divine Principle of goodness. Jesus said, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth"—Principle loves to interpret itself to all who approach it with complete meekness and obedience, and the result is that they bring harmony into human affairs.

The Fifth Plague: Hail

The fifth plague (Exodus 9:13-35) was one of thunder and hail, and fire mingled with the hail. It was a direct opposite of the fifth day of creation, in which the fact of Life was symbolized by the soaring birds and the prolific fish. This plague "smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field." What a good symbol this hail is of the so-called inevitability of decay and death. Nothing can stand before it, so it is claimed. Mortals live "in the valley of the shadow of death" from the moment of birth. Nothing, however, can kill an idea that is eternally present in the one Being. Mortals who do not see this pay the penalty with such cheerless beliefs as old age and incurable disease.

Hail is icy cold. The sense of old age as deprivation and deterioration and loneliness is a cold and cruel thing, but it cannot come where there is a real love of life, of living spiritual values which are warm and abundant, because such a love looks forward to greater and greater good, instead of longing for the past and fearing an end of everything. One of the Proverbs is, "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold." The real ploughman keeps his eyes well ahead and works steadily forward, in spite of the weather.

Whenever life loses for us its warmth and interest and adventure, we yield to the influence of death (even if it merely takes the form of depression). We may at some time seem to go through what is called death, but it will not bring suffering

to us or to those whom we love if we have a view of Life which is fresh and progressive and always with us. Death has no meaning, no reality, and no power for thought which is striding forward in the realm of living ideas, which looks to the everlasting "hills" and to the dawn of wonderful new ideas. Such thought is always "creating" good, and so finds more and more to love and enjoy, more and more opportunities for friendship and attainment.

In II Kings 2:23, 24 there is a story of Elisha which is incredible if taken literally, but which in its spiritual meaning is most significant. Some little children mocked Elisha, saying, "Go up, thou bald head." They were taunting him with old age, so he cursed them in the name of the Lord and there came forth two she-bears, who ate them up. Elisha saw that if we keep the idea of Life as warm as a mother-bear keeps her young, then the mocking "laws" of either old age or youth will not touch us, but will be themselves consumed.

"Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? . . . He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

The Sixth Plague: Locusts and Darkness

Chapter 10 records that when Pharaoh heard that his refusal to let the children of Israel go would lead to a plague of locusts, he tried to make another compromise, but Moses was an "all-or-nothing" leader, and so the sixth plague took its course. This counterfeited the fact of God as Truth, epitomized in the sixth day of creation by man in God's image and likeness, having dominion over all things.

Moses stretched forth his rod again, and the Lord brought an east wind, which brought the locusts. They "covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened," and they ate up every green thing. After the locusts came a plague of thick darkness, darkness which could be "felt," so that the Egyptians couldn't rise up from where they were nor see one another for three days. Meanwhile all the Israelites "had light in their dwellings."

These two plagues, or two aspects of one plague, indicate again the plight of man without God. They show that without God as Truth,— awareness of the spiritual truth of everything,—man would be deprived of full consciousness. Consciousness is a whole and includes our continual awareness of our whole universe. It is a compound thing; it includes what we understand of God, and our whole attitude to our experience, and our whole attitude to the body. If the highest level of our consciousness is without a proper realization of God, then our habitual attitude to life is adversely influenced, and our sense of our body also. For instance, if one day we think of ourselves primarily as persons with a great number of things to do, then our outlook on life is tainted by irritability and rush, and the body soon reflects this in tension or tiredness of some kind. If our overlying consideration is the fact that "God hath done all things well," then this will enter our lives as a sense of intelligence, order, definiteness, and so forth, so certain that it will regulate quite naturally our attitude to everything, and the physical will be to us merely a useful servant. When we find our moral sense becoming wrongly influenced, or jaundiced, then that is our signal for bringing our highest level of consciousness into line again with the divine ideal.

The locusts symbolize that which consumes the "green things," or vigorous elements, which form part of a healthy consciousness, and the thick darkness also indicates that which prevents our consciousness from including everything rightly. Every part of consciousness is essential to the whole, and no part is unimportant, just as every member of an orchestra must function rightly in order to produce the right whole effect.

What are these "locusts" which consume the ingredients which are essential to a healthy experience? They are such things as apathy, cowardice, selfishness, which confine the action of the divine ideal to the intellectual stratosphere, instead of seeing that it has a healing effect at all levels of consciousness and that we must demand proof of this. The "locusts" tell us that our human behaviour is of no account so long as we know the truth about the Principle of the universe, or they say that healing the sick or redeeming the sinner is of no importance because it is the spiritual fact alone which counts. It is, but we deny the wholeness of Truth if we deny that it has its effect at every level. Jesus said, "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house,"—a sense of Truth permeates all that is included in consciousness.

The parable of the wise and foolish virgins at the beginning of Matthew 25 shows that unless we are faithful over the "few things," which serve to replenish the oil in our lamps, those lamps of spiritual understanding will go out, and we shall be left in darkness. If steadfastly and faithfully we keep the lamp burning, we enjoy the marriage with the true idea of man,—"the fullness of the stature" of God's man. And so the sixth plague indicates how to forestall the clouds of "locusts" or of darkness from obscuring our vision of that man of God's creating, who is "every whit whole."

The Seventh Plague: The Slaying of the Firstborn

Pharaoh now offered to let the people go, so long as they left their cattle. But Moses refused this further compromise, and the last plague (Exodus 11; 12:1-30) thereupon assailed the Egyptians. This was the slaying of all the firstborn of Egypt—"there was not a house where there was not one dead." The seventh plague points by reversal to the seventh day, in which God rested—a symbol of God as Love, of the completeness and fulfilment of every idea in God's universe.

The angel of the Lord was to "pass over" the houses where the Israelites were, and therefore elaborate instructions were given them for seeing that their houses were adequately marked out. Each Israelite household was told to prepare a lamb without blemish, sprinkle its blood on the doorposts and lintel, and eat it with sandals on and staff in hand.

This ceremony symbolizes a willing sacrifice of a materialistic sense of things. If we make such a "sacrifice" in our thinking, then we never need fear separation from that which we love. We can give up our deep-rooted materialistic habit of reckoning only when we really appreciate the full perfection of God's ideas—the seventh day sense of things.

Only the Egyptians lost their firstborn—in other words, only that which clings to the physical can lose anything worthy of love. If we have an understanding of God as Love, we can never be without the presence of that which we can love. Such an understanding shows us that the only reason why something or someone appears lovely and lovable to us is that we are basking in the reflected glory of Love itself. This glory of Love casts a glow on something in our experience so that we rejoice in it, are grateful for it, and quite naturally express our love for it. So it is not things or persons intrinsically that we love, but that

which we love and that which loves is Love itself, and Love without a present reflection would be as unthinkable as the sun without its rays.

Human love is much intermixed with fear, which is at bottom a fear that death will overtake the person loved; the only remedy for this deep-lying fear is a greater and greater appreciation of the motherhood of God, which cares for every idea throughout eternity and at every moment.

The story of the Shunammite woman whose only son died is a wonderful illustration of this. It is told in II Kings 4:8-37. Because of this woman's provision for the man of God, Elisha, she had been able to conceive and bear a son. But one day the child said to his father in the field, "my head, my head." The father had him carried to his mother, but he" died soon after. She laid him on the bed of the man of God in an upper room, and then shut the door on him and went out. She was sacrificing her "lamb" in that she was refusing to acknowledge as truth the so-called "hard facts" of the case. She insisted on going to the man of God in spite of her husband's objection that it was "neither new moon, nor sabbath." She said to her servant, "Drive, and go forward; slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee."

Elisha sent his servant to meet her and to ask, "Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child?" Her answer was, "It is well." She rested in the perfection of her family as a fulfilled fact in the sight of God, and she held faithfully to that, in spite of all the material evidence pointing to a most bitter loss and a tragic mockery of the promise which Elisha had made.

Elisha told his servant to go and lay his (Elisha's) staff on the face of the child, but the mother refused to be satisfied until Elisha agreed to come himself to the child, with the result that he was restored to her alive. She had held faithful to a spiritual ideal, and she knew that the divinity of Love embraces humanity and so allows no vacuum, no sense of bereavement, and nourishes no fear.

The Plagues: A Summary

The plagues illustrate a great sevenfold process which is always going on. We may summarize them by saying that they show that

1. without the fact of God as Mind, as the infinite source of intelligent ideas, thought could entertain only mortal illusions;

2. without the fact of God as Spirit, as infinite divine order and purity, there would be nothing but disorder and confusion;
3. without the fact of God as Soul, as the changeless identity of all ideas and as infinite spiritual sense to appreciate that in full detail, there would be nothing but ever-changing corporeal sensation;
4. without the fact of God as Principle, as the basis of spiritual Science and universal harmony, there would be nothing but vulnerable personal good and a basis from which evil could operate to infect men;
5. without the fact of God as Life, as ever-present Being, decay and death would be the inevitable end for all;
6. without the fact of God as Truth, as the infinite divine consciousness aware of its own wholeness, there would be nothing but inroads on health at every level;
7. without the fact of God as Love, as the infinite perfection and completeness of all ideas, there would be nothing but fear and insecurity, and no assurance that we might not be robbed at any moment of that which we hold dear.

When we look at the record of the plagues in this light, it brings out wonderful spiritual facts in a way that is both systematic and living. Of course, that is the great achievement of the Scriptures.

The Departure from Egypt

After the slaying of the firstborn of Egypt, it was Pharaoh himself who told the children of Israel to go and serve the Lord, and he no longer imposed any conditions on their departure. Before they left, the Israelites were told by their God to ask the Egyptians for gold and silver jewels and raiment. In other words, when we prove our freedom from some bondage, we go forward much richer than before,—richer in the joy of spiritual understanding and in intimate experience of its redeeming power.

The people had to leave with such speed that they were forced to take their dough with them before it was leavened. Afterwards this incident was perpetuated in an annual Feast of Unleavened Bread, lasting seven days. Paul wrote, "let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." The learning of spiritual facts through the seven days of creation may seem to us at first heavy-going, but if our desire to understand them is sincere, they soon

become to us the "food" which we love above all and which we find the most sustaining.

On their journey out of Egypt God went before the children of Israel in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. To-day this means to us that a scientific understanding of God acts as a guide and assurance both in the "day" of unimpeded advance and in the "night" of difficulty and doubt. It never leaves us unattended, whether things appear to be going well or badly.

The Crossing of the Red Sea

Chapter 14 tells the very well-known story of the crossing of the Red Sea. Pharaoh soon began to repent of having let the Israelites go, and so he hurried after them with horses and chariots and a large army, and overtook them just as they were encamped by the Red Sea. The children of Israel were "sore afraid," and complained bitterly to Moses: "Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness." Moses' reply was magnificent: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

When some form of slavery from which we thought we were finally free makes its last stand, our only course is to stand firm by the divine facts which we have accepted, but which fear has temporarily blurred for us. Those facts do the fighting, and not we ourselves. God then said to Moses, "Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: but lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea." What does this mighty command signify to us when we are trying to cross the "Red Sea" from a situation from which there is no escape except in going forward through spiritual understanding? It points to the process epitomized in the first three days of creation. It demands that we appeal to the power of divine ideas—"lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea;" that we use our understanding of the second day of creation to discern the supremacy of those ideas over all material conditions—"and divide it;" and that we allow those ideas to become absolutely definite to us—"and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground

through the midst of the sea." When that happens, the waters become "a wall" to us on both sides—they serve only to intensify our sense of safety.

The Egyptians pursued the Israelites into the midst of the sea, but the waters came rolling back on them at the divine command, and they were all drowned—"there remained not so much as one of them."

So if we really use our understanding of God in some situation, however formidable it appears, we shall see the destruction of the whole "Egyptian army," for the same power which gives us a safe passage also destroys utterly all that would impede our freedom. Then like Moses and the children of Israel we shall "sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously."

Spiritual Education

Moses' achievement of the spiritual education of the children of Israel is of vital interest to us, because the only thing which can effectually help humanity is education in spiritual facts. Many responsible people to-day proclaim that the answer to the world's problems lies in the realm of the spiritual, but very few understand what they mean, because "the spiritual" is a vague concept to them. Yet the Bible has shown for centuries beyond a doubt that spiritual things are not vague, but orderly and systematic, and that they can be learned and proved.

What Moses had to get rid of was the indoctrination of the children of Israel by "Pharaoh," and our task is essentially the same. Jesus' prayer was: "Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was"—before the misconception of being temporarily gained the stage. Our "glory" is that we are the sons of God divinely, but we have to prove, as Jesus did, that "the prince of this world hath nothing" in us. This we can do only through a positive process of education in the eternal truths of God and man,—truths more wonderful and more powerful than anything which mortality can possibly offer.