

**June 11, 2007 – Subject: God the Preserver of Man.**

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

On May 14<sup>th</sup> we used a selection from John Morgan's book – SCIENTIFIC TRANSLATION – this week we go again to this work the Author based on Mrs. Eddy's Scientific Translation of Immortal Man, found in SCIENCE AND HEALTH WITH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES, pages 115 and 116.

**SCIENTIFIC TRANSLATION**

*Second Degree*

“When false human beliefs learn even a little of their own falsity, they begin to disappear” (S. & H. 252:7). Their falsity has begun to be apparent because we have been looking at error from the viewpoint of Truth and have not taken it at its own face value.

There now lies before us an improved concept – “Evil beliefs disappearing. “

To mortal sense, humanity appears to be evolving upwards from the physical, through the moral, and hopefully is heading for the spiritual. But when we perceive the situation in spiritual sense, the direction is reversed, for “the last shall be first, and the first last. “ Starting out from the Third Degree, the reality of spiritual man as God's image begins to neutralize the physical concept of man (First Degree), resulting in “Transitional qualities.” We therefore have a choice as to how we view the Second Degree: it appears either as an improvement on mortality, as a moral state desirable for itself; or it is seen to be the evidence of the spiritual dissolving the mortal. The mist doesn't get better but becomes less; it is we who characterize the resultant visibility as improved moral qualities.

Our assessment of this degree has to be finely balanced, for the moral is both ineffectual and vital: On the one hand, humanly moral values will, of themselves, never achieve the kingdom; on the other, the things of Science operate as a spiritual and moral force, so that morality is the 'working dress' of spirituality. It is essential for humanity to understand

how we derive our moral values: do we arrive at them 'from beneath' or 'from above'? Of necessity, then, everything said in this section will hinge upon this question, differentiating between the conventionally moral and the spiritually moral, – that is, between the mortally human and the divinely human.

### **Second Degree: Evil beliefs disappearing.**

MORAL. Humanity, honesty, affection, Transitional qualities compassion, hope, faith, meekness, temperance.

#### **Evil beliefs disappearing**

At one time this caption read, "Evil disappearing," but it was altered at the same time that those First Degree errors were exposed as evil beliefs. As we saw, even "death," the last belief, lost something of its actuality, leaving us with a transfiguration. There is a Shakespeare sonnet which finishes:

*So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,  
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.*

We may say, therefore, that this Second Degree has a tone of resurrection about it. In accordance with Jesus' promise, we shall not taste of death; the "transitional qualities" indicate that consciousness is already making the transit from the First Degree without dying. Moreover, each one of these moral qualities is itself being resurrected or translated, as we shall see.

If the evil beliefs disappear simply because human beings behave better, such improvement can easily be reversed, as the sad history of mankind illustrates. Turning bad mortals into good ones is but a cosmetic change that leaves the real problem untouched, for the subterranean error is animal magnetism's claim to make its man mortal. A radically different view is called for if goodness in human experience is not to be forever threatened by human bad. Evil beliefs disappear solely because the spiritual facts of Science are working in consciousness, and our concept of man is being translated. Because of this, goodness is apparent in man, but it is by no means good on a human or material basis, for good is not in elements which are not spiritual. (S & H 492:7-12; 275:17-19; 309:18,19)

Confirmation of the fact that human worth is the reflection or outcome of the spiritual facts of the first translation is found in the Bible, where in both the Old and the New Testaments this relationship is "commanded."

The Ten Commandments (Exod. 20), traditionally given to Moses on two tables of stone, comprise first our duty to God and then our duty to man. Again, when Jesus is asked, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" he gives a twofold answer. The first is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart..." And the second is like unto it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt 22:36). Clearly we have here the first and the second translations, – the latter focused at the point of the Second Degree. The lesson is that it is the loving understanding of God that provides the loving understanding of man.

Mrs Eddy shows how this spiritual grace is what constitutes goodness in man, whether we are consciously making an effort to improve ourselves or not: "This action of the divine energy, even if not acknowledged, has come to be seen as diffusing richest blessings. This spiritual idea, or Christ, entered into the minutiae of the life of the personal Jesus. It made him an honest man, a good carpenter, and a good man, before it could make him the glorified" (Mis 166:26). We may not even be aware of this leavening work of Truth, yet it is going on anyway. "Spirit blesses man, but man cannot 'tell whence it cometh.' By it the sick are healed, the sorrowing are comforted, and the sinning are reformed. These are the effects of one universal God, the invisible good dwelling in eternal Science" (S & H 78:28). Thus the Second Degree is seen to be the workings of the Third, transposing human values from positive evil and negative good to negative evil and positive good.

Instead of judging our world from the basis of "What's wrong?" we assess it from the viewpoint of "What's right?" The human sense of good is all too often merely anti-First Degree, and this explains why good people frequently seem to suffer unjustly: their principle is a divided one, in which good and evil are equally real. In proportion as we understand that all real goodness is God and therefore invulnerable, our right efforts are undergirded by the ideas of the Third Degree, overflowing into every area of our experience and translating our present sense of values. The caption "Evil beliefs disappearing" shows that this degree is a stage and not a state of being.

### **Moral**

Morality by itself has little power; moral goodness, without the sanction of spiritual reality behind it, cannot redeem man. The woman bowed together, whom Jesus healed, "could in no wise liftup herself" (Luke 13:11), and neither can we when we are bowed down by a sense of

personal failure, guilt or condemnation. But – when touched by the Christ, humanity is transfigured: we straighten up, finding a divine dominion. Moral qualities, then, are not ends in themselves but are the confirmation that the human is in transition. “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6): if we are consciously coming forth from the spiritual facts, we shall experience a spiritually-based morality that has power. Whenever the textbook lists the physical, the moral, and the spiritual in the same passage, we find the moral and the spiritual” allied together in contrast to the physical. (S & H 62:4-7; 124:3-10; 170:34; 197:11-15; 370:18-22; 375:17-20; 381:8-12; 460:8)

We could liken morality in its lower sense to the human running on battery power, while morality flowing from the spiritual Third Degree is the human plugged in to the mains. For a time, the two performances seem indistinguishable, but not for long. Morality "from beneath" tries hard to improve the mortal, and, needless to say, this has its place; but morality 'from above' is Science itself working changes in personal character (S. & H. 238:3), – changing our concept of what human character is. Then, when our Second Degree is based on the Third, there is no disparity between the spiritual facts and the human character (My 246:10-18).

While a scientist is governed by laws, a Christian is concerned with ethics. A Christian Scientist, however, sees the ethics of life as flowing from the laws of being. According to the textbook chapter “Teaching Christian Science,” he discovers a divinely “scientific system of ethics.” Conforming “to God’s requirements” he finds the divine laws operating in him as ethical human behaviour (S. & H. 444:31-1; 464:27-29). This is a very different kind of morality from personal goodness, which makes us sanctimonious when it works and guilty when we fail.

### **The Moral, not ‘Merely the Moral’**

From this perspective, ethics are all part of Science, not outside it or beneath it. We realize that the moral cannot be discounted as of little importance, for it is in fact the Christian requirements of divine Science (S. & H. 234:31-13). Not that the sincere Scientist is inclined to dismiss the moral, but he does not usually see it as working from within the spiritual, feeling that it operates on another level; however valid this may be for personally-based morality, it is certainly not true for the divinely moral. There is no such thing as a Christian Scientist so advanced that the ethics and the Christian morality do not matter, for there are not two independent realms. The criterion of whether we really

understand Science is that it heals and Christianizes us; the purpose of the teaching is that the human shall be found as reflection of the divine, and not something detached called a mortal.

The textbook abounds with passages where the moral seems to be given equal force with the spiritual: “The intellectual, the moral, the spiritual, – yea, the image of infinite Mind...” “Moral and spiritual might belong to Spirit...” “In order to heal by Science, you must not be ignorant of the moral and spiritual demands of Science nor disobey them.” “God is Truth and the forces of Truth are moral and spiritual...” “All true Science represents a moral and spiritual force...” (S. & H. 171:17-22; 192:17-19; 483:8-12; Un 35:13-18; Rud 4:10,11. Also; S. & H. 235:7-13; 448:19-23; Mis 257:6-10; My 252:24-29)

It is because Science regards the moral as the workings of the spiritual, and not as ‘just the moral,’ that the textbook insists we pay attention to moral factors in the healing practice: “... every broken moral law should be taken into account... “for” a moral offence is indeed the worst of diseases.” “A single mistake in metaphysics, or in ethics, is more fatal than a mistake in physics.” (S & H 392:4,5; 395:30-1; Mis 264:18-31. Also; S & H 366:3-7; 418:26, 27 & MH 419:1-7.) Broken moral laws are not truly healed simply by altering our behavior, but by entertaining the appropriate spiritual facts (ideas) which contain within themselves both the requisite morality and the power to bring it out in life.

### **Second Degree as Symbol**

As we noticed, the three degrees should be seen as counterfeit, symbol and reality. The transitional moral qualities are really symbols of the spiritual realities of the Third Degree, but if we were to mistake them for actualities in their own right we should at once have made them counterfeit. The same goes for a whole range of second-degree concepts such as ‘human’ or ‘world’ or ‘body’. The key to distinguishing between counterfeit and symbol is that the latter is always translatable. We can readily read back from a symbol to the idea it represents as it makes no pretence to being the thing itself, whereas the carnal mind’s hope is that we shall accept its counterfeit concepts as realities. Man as mortal is counterfeit; man as human is symbol; man as divine is reality. When the human is reflecting the divine it is truly symbol, otherwise it is counterfeit. All the time, therefore, we are living at the hinge of translation, looking upon everything in human experience either as something valid in itself or as a transparency for God’s being. The window ought to be full of light even though it is not the source.

Naturally when we say that a thing is symbolic we don't necessarily mean that it doesn't really exist. The great events described in the Gospels, for instance, undoubtedly happened literally, but their validity and importance lie in their symbolic value. What was Jesus illustrating when the water was turned into wine at the marriage feast at Cana? Does not the marriage itself symbolize the wedding of the human and the divine? In that case, can the human be a static, uninspired thing like water in pots? Must it not be, in reality, inspiring and sacramental, – the symbol of "the Christ-spirit"? The water did not have to be poured away before the pots were refilled with wine, but in the pouring out the water was found to be wine. This is a symbolic way of saying that we do not have to discard the human before we can taste the divine inspiration, because it is not in the vessels but in the using that life is found to be the flow of God. In sharing and living these moral qualities of the Second Degree, our sense of the human is transfused with spiritual meaning and becomes a living symbol.

A particular characteristic of these transitional qualities reveals their divine purpose: whereas the First Degree errors are mostly individual, focussed on the mortal ego, the emphasis throughout the Second Degree is on the collective, on qualities which become operative in a relationship. As everyone knows, living with one's mortal self is hard enough, but to achieve really harmonious relationships with others calls for a measure of demonstration. Only by the divine means do we make the transition from sense to Soul, because we are equipped now not only to overcome bad with good but to handle and translate human good itself.

In considering these eight qualities, each will be discussed first in its material and then its spiritual sense, so that the human has an improved mortality yields to the human as the demonstration of divinity.

## **Humanity**

Humanity, representing the step out of ruthless animality, indicate, that the true human is coming into the picture As a quality, humaneness is specially related to treating others with kindness. Kindness, in turn, has its roots, in the word 'kin'. We are kind to one another because we are of the same kind. The implication is that we have begun to recognize the interrelatedness of all being, – which is where the Second Degree begins.

To start with the lower sense, humanity can often be doing good to people on the basis of their mortal need. We respond to someone in

trouble, but in helping him we may not prevent him slipping into it again; sometimes our well-meant help may actually discourage him from finding the answer within himself. There is also the point that if we are always filled with indignation at the world's wrongs, and pity for its innocent victims, we may be helping to perpetuate those errors, and we ourselves risk losing our vision and the spiritual power to help. Naturally we respect and admire the selfless humanitarian people and institutions who are forever taking care of lame ducks; they surely represent the working of the Christ at a specific level; but ideally we would all prefer to help by healing rather than by patching up the human condition. Peter and John responded beautifully to the beggar's call for alms by healing him of his lameness so that he literally stood on his own feet (Acts 3:1-8).

When she published *Miscellaneous Writings*, which is perhaps the most practical and helpful of all her other writings, Mrs. Eddy opened her Preface with this caution: "A certain apothegm of a Talmudical Philosopher suits my sense of doing good. It reads thus: 'The noblest charity is to prevent a man from accepting charity; and the best alms are to show and to enable a man to dispense with alms'" (ix:1).

The quality of humanity, then, is an ambiguous one. Setting aside now the somewhat disparaging sense of it, there comes into view the humanity of Jesus, which flowed from the divinity of the Christ. True humanity begins with the acknowledgement that man has the mind of Christ and is not a helpless mortal. It rests on appreciation for what man is spiritually, rather than on pity for what he is not; thus being humane is quickening and calling forth the individual's own ability, for "I can" is the son of "I am." We, shall be kind and helpful still, for we love to help him to help himself, – to avail himself of the power inherent in being the idea of Mind. By throwing upon mortals the truer reflection of God. Jesus lifted their lives higher than their poor thought-models would allow (S. & H. 259:7-11). This was a spiritual endeavour to bless others, to liberate the human race from all its miserable imprisoning beliefs. Surely it is this divine sense of humanity that underlies all the grand humane achievements of noble men and women down the ages, and which empowers every little effort to help one's neighbor?

Frequently it is said, when people have misunderstood each other or made mistakes, that there has been a lack of communication. On the surface, this may be true. But the real problem is not lack of personal communication, – mind with mind – so much as lack of communion, for when all commune with the one Mind they therefore communicate with

each other. To help one another to achieve this communion is the” higher humanity which unites “all interests in the one divinity” (S. & H. 571:19-21).

When Mark records Jesus healing Peter’s wife’s mother of fever, it says that” he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up” (1:29-31). Perhaps our reaction might have been to fetch her blanket. Both acts would be classed as humane; the lower sense of humanity regards the human need; the higher sense the idea which meets that need. In this contrast we perceive how all the Second Degree qualities are in constant transition.

Further references: S & H 365:7-14; 407:6-16; Mis 184:29-1; My 179:21-23; 287:15- 288:20.

*[NOTE; At this point the Author introduces the seven other transitional qualities—honesty, affection, compassion, hope, faith, meekness, temperance but we will now go to the end of this part of the discussion where he sums up the second degree as follows]*

### **True Humanhood**

Under the transforming power of the Christ Science, the conceptions of mortal, erring thought have been giving way to the divine ideal (S. & H. 260:7-12). In this transition, ‘the moral’ has changed its aspect; like an insect changing from a caterpillar to a chrysalis to a butterfly it yet remains the same individuality. So it is with the moral qualities: in their lower sense they crawl, in their higher form they fly.

As the saying goes, the Second Degree is where the action is. Where else could we experience the translation but here, in human character and life? The operating power is the spiritual idea entertained in consciousness, but the arena where the maverick mortal ‘I’ is gradually resolved in practice is the area of morals and relationships. (S. & H. 272:19-25; 283:24-31.) Everything happens in thought; but the mental does not necessarily touch the spiritual. The only evidence we have that thought is really making the transition is by Christianization of our values, as we have seen throughout this Second Degree.

There is a particularly illuminating example of this true human-hood in the account of the three sons of Noah, – Ham, Shem and Japheth, – who feature in Genesis 9:18-27 and in the “Glossary.” Ham means dark or hot, Shem means character, renown, while Japheth means enlargement, expansion, – the three degrees. It is said that Noah was drunk and naked in his tent, and Ham told this to his brothers: he reported the claims of physical origins as if they were bare facts and not false

beliefs. Shem and Japheth, unwilling to accept this as reality, “went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father.” when Noah awoke and knew what his youngest son had done, he said, “Cursed be Canaan [Ham]; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. “Notice that Canaan is to be a servant for both the moral and the spiritual, meaning that the physical is not to be self-governing but is to be brought under the dominion of the moral and the spiritual. Notice, too, that the moral is not blessed directly although the spiritual power behind it is, – Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; whereas the spiritual has its own direct blessing, – God shall enlarge Japheth. The more we exercise spirituality the more it expands. The point of the story which most concerns us here is that Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem, meaning that the spiritual” is not a dweller apart in royal solitude” (My 3:13) but is found in the ethics, morals and relationships of life - the tents of Shem – and giving to our experience a divine sanction. Confirmation of this Japheth presence is seen in the way the textbook sometimes uses the word ‘human’ in a transparent sense. (S. & H. 52:24; 200:4; 95:31; 85:4.)

We have seen, then, that the function of the Second Degree is to resurrect our conception of what ‘the human’ actually is. This has been illustrated by the way we changed our view of the moral qualities. That is, viewed from the physical, morality tends to be a matter of “Thou shalt not. “ Viewed from the spiritual, the moral is “Blessed are ye,” – the spiritual bonus that flows from understanding reality. The effect of the Third Degree on the First is that understanding dissolves evil beliefs in a moral transformation. The resultant morality is not imposed on us from without, nor full of disapproval, but is the instrument of divine power and grace, with healing in its wings.

Without Japheth living in our consciousness, human nature (Shem) appears to be a product of biological evolution; the primal animal instinct (Ham) then determines individual behaviour, which the moral Shem tries to control. But when we have Japheth, the spiritual, dwelling in the tents of Shem, we are not setting out to replace bad qualities with better ones, nor attempting to establish an impossible world of good and harmonious mortals. Instead, consciousness is illumined, informed and guided in quite a different way, so that ordinary daily life is no longer ordinary but inspired, and human relationships are no longer person adjusting to person but are seen to be Christ’s Christianity in action.

Morality on a human basis (Shem) is the same as humanity on a person basis. Until the Japheth standpoint is adopted It can prevent one from making spiritual progress, because it sets up arbitrary codes of behaviour. Working from the spiritual is not being rigid about morality, – nor lax, either; it allows the spiritual facts to manifest themselves in ways adapted to the need. “God gives you His spiritual ideas [Japheth], and in turn, they give you daily supplies [Shem]” (Mis 307:1). “Sooner or later the whole human race will learn that, in proportion as the spotless selfhood of God is understood, human nature will be renovated, and man will receive a higher selfhood, derived from God, and the redemption of mortals from sin, sickness, and death be established on everlasting foundations” (Un 6:4). As this reformation takes place, we discover that we too can say, “The more I understand true humanhood, the more I see it to be sinless, – as ignorant of sin as is the perfect Maker” (Un 49:8).

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