

May 7, 2007 – Subject : Adam and Fallen 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.

Our selection this week is from THE CORNER-STONE, A publication in England in the 1990's.

NAPHTALI

This is the sixth in a study series, which is looking briefly at the leading articles in the first twelve volumes of the Christian Science Journal (1883-1894) in relation to the twelve tribes of Israel and what they mean to us today. How do the tribal beliefs of mortality “yield to the activities of the divine Principle of man in the harmony of Science” and so become “the stars in the crown of rejoicing” (S. & H. 562)? If the mission of Mary Baker Eddy represents that “great wonder in heaven,” the woman in the Apocalypse, then we should look to that mission for way marks; and the aim here is to observe one or two avenues of thought worth pursuing. It has already been noted that there are twelve volumes of the Journal from its inception to the dedication of The Mother Church in January, 1895 – the church which Mrs. Eddy called “my church.” We have also noted the relation between ‘temple’ and ‘body’ (S. & H. 576 and 595). It has been assumed that the leading article in each volume of the Journal sets the tone for the year, and if it is read as symbol and not as applicable only to a certain time in the last century, it points to the way each one comes to the recognition of the kingdom of God within as his individual life journey - the true sense of church, or body, in its widest sense. There has also begun to appear a common underlying theme between these particular Journal articles as they throw light on the spiritual values behind the twelve tribes, and the sixteenth chapter of Science and Health (The Apocalypse), and the chapters of the textbook as a whole.

What is this theme? In the words of Revelation it is “that great city the holy [New] Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

Having the glory of God... and... twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel” (Rev 21). This city is also described as “the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” The first twelve sections of The Apocalypse in Science and Health present in developing stages the idea of this city foursquare with its twelve gates, at the end of which it stands revealed “in this present state of existence” (S. & H. 573). The first twelve chapters of Science and Health expand on the idea in greater detail. Whatever the symbol, it is the same idea that is being presented.

The starting point is the recognition that man springs from Spirit, not matter. As the false sense of mortal origin (Reuben, behold a son) begins to be translated, we go through the first gate of the city. The first Journal article, Prospectus, states the goal as the resolution of the Adam legacy. How to achieve it is stated in the first section of The Apocalypse when we are told to read the little book of divine Science from beginning to end, ponder it digest it thus partaking of the nature, or prima elements, of Truth and Love” (S. & H. 559). The first chapter of Science and Health, Prayer, starts with the absolute standpoint that in reality all is already done, and then goes into the practical details of how to drop the dualism of material thinking which prevents our seeing that it is done.

The gates of the city open within and without and our task is to see that what seems to be without is really the reflection of what is within. So the Christ is ever active in translating and redeeming thought which is alert and listening (Simeon, ‘hearing’), coming out from the “city set on a hill” to guide it back to its divine origin, as is clearly depicted in An Allegory. This Christ standpoint is described in the second section of The Apocalypse, where the woman state of consciousness, having eaten the little book and partaken of the primal elements of Truth and Love, sees, through the “true estimate of God’s messenger” the coincidence of the divine and human, God and man coexisting, and therefore having total dominion over matter. Atonement and Eucharist shows the only practical way for everyone to achieve this coincidence, through the example of Christ Jesus,

the Way-shower.

The third tribe, Levi, means joined, and as the false sense of Reuben and Simeon is translated back into its spiritual meaning through life experience, we see that we are, and always have been, truly joined to our divine origin. The third chapter, Marriage, shows what is involved in giving up a false sense of separation for the realization that man is forever wedded to God, the human to the divine. This is the birth beginning in the third section of the Apocalypse. The false sense of Levi, defined in the Glossary as ecclesiastical despotism, is what has to be handled most specifically in the third Journal article Veritas Odium Parit (Truth engenders hatred).

The profound article, The New Birth, opening the fourth volume of the Journal, (the fourth son is Judah), completes a circle when it defines the goal in the words of Paul as “the redemption of our body” (Mis 15), which was stated first in Prospectus as the Adam legacy to be seen and subdued. It is “the awakening from the dream of life in matter, to the great fact that God is the only Life” (Mis 16). The fourth section of The Apocalypse presents the “belief that substance, life, and intelligence can be material” as the serpent to be overcome (S. & H. 563). This belief is the veil of the temple, which was rent by Jesus, the “Lion of the tribe of Judah,” at the time of the crucifixion. The fourth chapter, Christian Science versus Spiritualism, exposes the impossibility of Spirit and matter coexisting, confirming and expanding on the same theme in greater detail. One can perhaps begin to feel that the article itself follows the same pattern that is starting to emerge as we go through each gate of the city, each of its paragraphs hinting at the same idea which is coming through in the Journal articles, in The Apocalypse, and in the chapters of Science and Health.

The fifth volume starts with Truth-healing, and the statement that the “spiritual elevator of the human race, physically, morally, and Christianly, is the truism that Truth demonstrates good, and is natural;

while error, or evil, is really non-existent, and must have produced its own illusion” (Mis 259). Dan, the fifth tribe, is defined in the Glossary in part as animal magnetism, which the fifth section of The Apocalypse exposes, forecasting its doom; and the fifth chapter, Animal Magnetism Unmasked, shows it to have no reality - a suppositional lie. (It is worth noting that the fifth of Mrs. Eddy’s other writings, Unity of Good, was first published as Unity of Good and Unreality of Evil.)

The sixth son of Jacob was Naphtali, the second by Bilhah, Rachel’s maid, and his name means wrestling. Mrs. Eddy says of Jacob that he “was alone, wrestling with error, - struggling with a mortal sense of life, substance, and intelligence as existent in matter with its false pleasures and pains, - when an angel, a message from Truth and Love, appeared to him and smote the sinew, or strength, of his error, till he saw its unreality... but [he] did not loosen his hold upon this glorious light until his nature was transformed” (S. & H. 308). The Bible records merely that Jacob wrestled with a man (Gen 32:24), where Mrs. Eddy identifies it as the dragon belief of “life, substance, and intelligence as existent in matter.” There is no definition of Naphtali in the Glossary (Simeon and Zebulun are also omitted). At his birth Rachel said, “With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed” (Gen 30). Alice Orgain points out that Rachel’s sister, Leah, represents law, and that at this point Love (Rachel) must overcome the restriction of human law and redeem it. At the beginning of the sixth chapter, Science, Theology, Medicine, Mrs. Eddy says she discovered the “divine laws: of Life, Truth, and Love, and named my discovery Christian Science.” “The root meaning of wrestle is to turn or bend; and in the same chapter appears the Scientific Translation of Immortal Mind which turns back and reverses the unreality of mortal mind and embraces it within the divine Mind. One could say that the chapter wrestles with the human sense of science, theology, medicine, and emerges at the end triumphant: “the forever fact remains paramount that Life, Truth, and Love save from sin, disease, and death.” “When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality [divine Science], then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory’ (St. Paul)” (S. & H. 164)

In the sixth section of The Apocalypse, where the woman brings forth the man child who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron, under the marginal heading “The conflict with purity” we read “the material lie made war upon the spiritual idea; but this only impelled the idea to rise to the zenith of demonstration, destroying sin, sickness, and death, and to be caught up unto God, – to be found in its divine Principle” (S. & H. 565).

The sixth volume of the Journal contains signs of the wrestling that is going on at this point within the movement wrestling with personality, and the desire of rebellious students to assume control. In the course of the year Mrs. Eddy went to Chicago to attend the convention of the National Christian Scientist Association. A condition of her going was that she would take no part in the proceedings; but she found herself on the platform and expected to speak. She gave the impromptu address Science and the Senses (Mis 98); but she later told a student that that occasion was when she had most evil in her life to meet. During her absence from Boston ambitious students staged a revolt, and she returned to find only twelve students remaining loyal. (See Mary Baker Eddy’s Six Days of Revelation, p.237 and The Story of the Chicago Addresses, by Richard Oakes.) “Christian Science and the senses are at war. It is a revolutionary struggle... for the freedom of health, holiness, and the attainment of heaven.” “Science speaks when the senses are silent, and then the evermore of Truth is triumphant” (Mis 101,100). Mrs. Eddy meets the challenge of personal sense by gradually withdrawing from all her public offices, leading in the following year (1889) to the closing of Church and College. In January 1889 the Department of Animal Magnetism in the Journal closes.

This sixth volume starts with an article entitled A Few More Sparks by A.M.C., and it is the first that has not opened with an article by Mrs. Eddy. Initially one is rather disappointed; but if the discovery of Christian Science reveals the divine laws of Life, Truth, and Love, then the Principle which they present must be available to all, and that Principle, not person, must be trusted to voice itself. At this point the child is caught up unto God and must be released by the mother. In the opening paragraphs of the article one can feel that the underlying theme of the sixth chapter has been caught somewhat. For example:

“Science has been defined as a collection of facts, relating to any subject, arranged in systematic order. Now, if we have invariable laws of right, and if these laws are found in Christianity, then Christianity, properly understood and stated, is Scientific; and there you have Christian Science.

“The reverse must also be true. If there is no Christian Science, then there is no law of right; and we have, in morals, nothing stable, on which we can depend. If religion is true, it is scientific, when properly systematized. True religion is the highest Science, and must also be the exact Science.”

The article continues with a call for a change of base; it points out the futility of looking for life in matter, that as long as we do so we never arrive at the truth even when we look within for the answer. “The man will be right, if the thought is right” but that thought must be seen to come from Mind, which is all.

The articles which then follow the first one are all ‘wrestling’ with false beliefs of science, or theology, or medicine: An Index of Belief; Triune Principle; Theology of Christian Science; Light; Christian Science: What Is It?, all touch on the same theme. Mrs. Eddy’s own contribution to this issue of the Journal consists of three questions and answers, which are all germane. The first of these, not published elsewhere, is reproduced here. The other two may be found in Miscellaneous Writings (71:11-73:21).

“[Question]’Science reverses the testimony of the senses, and by this reversion mortals arrive at Truth’ [see S&H 120:7] Now if these senses, declare a man in good health, does it follow that he is sick?”

[Answer] Health is not a condition of matter, and the material senses can bear no testimony. The Science of Mind-healing shows it to be impossible for aught but Mind to testify, or to exhibit the real status of man; hence Science, reversing the testimony of the senses, reveals man’s habitual harmony, and overthrows the false evidence and syllogism. Science is mental not material. Any conclusion predicated of sensation in matter or affirming matter to be conscious, either

of health or disease, instead of reversing the testimony of the senses, confirms it as legitimate. Science rests on fixed Principle, not a false sense.

“Both the major and the minor propositions of a syllogism may be true, and the conclusion false. Science affirms no such discords. Reverse the testimony, pro or con, of the material senses, and you have the opposite spiritual fact in Science” (see Six Days, p. 230).

At this point, then, “Naphtali” is showing us that we must wrestle with the ‘serpent of sin,’ or the testimony of the senses; with a personal sense of things; with knowledge received from a material sense of the universe; and that no one else can do it for us. Unless we do this we shall not be able to progress to a higher demonstration of the one Mind evidenced in a more spiritual sense of relationship with our fellow man, which will be the subject of Gad in the next article of this series.

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