

May 21, 2007 – Subject: Soul and Body.

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 an excerpt from Martha Wilcox's 1937 Association Address.

BODY

Body the Expression of One Mind

The student of Christian Science recognizes the supreme value of a correct sense of his body, because the body identifies or gives evidence of his mind. The individual's mind would be unexpressed or unknown without his body. The physical body, or one's physique, is simply one's thought made manifest. The body, or the expression of the mind, is as mental as the mind and is coincident with the mind.

There is just one body. This one body is not made up of parts. It is one whole, just as Mind is without parts and is whole. There is just one body because there is just one Mind, and it is as important for Christian Scientists to know there is but one eternal, unchangeable body, as it is to know that there is but one eternal, unchangeable God.

This one body is enough for everyone, just as the bark of the tree is enough for all the branches of the tree. This one body - the body of Soul, the body that God is being - is reflected to human sense as an infinitude of bodies, or as the body of each of us. It is essential to understand that each individual mind and body is an individual expression or continuation of the one inseparable Mind and body, just as each individual branch of the tree is a continuation of the inseparable tree and its bark or body. The multiplicity is seen in the reflection.

We do not have a material body to be changed into a spiritual body

– the body of Soul. What appears to be body at the present moment is the one divine body - the body of Soul - eternally present and perfect. As we let this divine Soul-body – one inseparable being - take possession of our thought, we improve the human concept of body.

Body is spiritual, and is spiritual right where it appears to be material. We cannot overcome a material sense of body while we still believe the material sense is real and present. It is through metaphysical process of thought that we transcend the sense of body as being material and imperfect, and as we do this, automatically we experience an improved concept of body. It is impossible to die out of body, but it is demanded of us as Christian Scientists that we live above a material sense of body through ascending stages of scientific thought.

As we, through spiritual enlightenment, deliver body from the bondage of material sense, our understanding of body undergoes radical change, but we shall never be without body. And in the proportion that we overcome the material sense of body, we find at hand the body of Soul. When Paul referred to “our vile body” it was the material sense of body of which he spoke, and he immediately visioned its displacement with “His glorious body” - the body of Soul (Phil 3:21). This body of Soul is intact and forever at hand, and it is this body that the misconception is all about. The body of Soul never changes, but we dispel from thought the misconceptions about the body of Soul. When we fully understand body, we find it to be perfect in God, indestructible in Life, hid with Christ, where the material sense of body is inconceivable.

We never destroy the highest human concept of ourselves. We never destroy our present body or the human being that we seem to be. But, little by little, we replace the imperfect “object of sense” body, with divine Mind’s perfect body. We make active in thought the fact that perfect God and perfect body are unchangeable and eternally at hand, and we let this fact of real being swallow up the misconception of our divine body.

Bodily Conditions Mental not Material

Before the revelation of Christian Science, nearly everyone believed that their mind was mortal and was confined in a matter body; that a mortal mind and a mortal body constituted a human being; that their mind was mental and their body was physical, and that the physical body governed the mentality. Nearly everyone believed that all sin, sickness and death were physical experiences. But with the coming of Christian Science to world thought, we soon learned that all bodily conditions are mental conditions expressed. As our Leader tells us in Christian Healing, “All physical effects originate in mind before they can become manifest as matter” (12:10). Also: “Man thinks... that when he is sick, disease controls his body... But the fact remains, in metaphysics, that the mind of the individual only can produce a result upon his body” (6:18). And from our textbook we read: “Mortal mind creates its own physical conditions” (S. & H. 77:8).

Our body has nothing to do with originating disease. Our body shows forth the educated beliefs that we accept in thought. A positive statement from our textbook is: “There is no disease” (S. & H. 421:18). Then when disease seems to be attached to our body, we understand that it is an image of so-called mortal mind that we have accepted as our thought and reflected as body. Body has nothing to do with the sensation of disease. This sensation formed by so-called mortal mind is wholly mortal mind belief –nothingness. It does not exist unless we believe in it. But as long as we seem to experience in the body the images of mortal belief, we believe that disease is in the body.

Are we aware how much of the time our mind is fretting itself, or is in a state of fear or anxious thought; how much of the time our so-called mind is disturbed and dissatisfied; how unaware our mind is of the spiritual facts that make up our present existence? All these mental conditions are expressed outwardly as physical or bodily conditions.

Mrs. Eddy says, “A sick body is evolved from sick thoughts” (S. & H. 260:20). But the human mind often reverses this statement of fact,

and assumes that we experience sick thoughts and sick feelings because of a sick body. Students of Christian Science are very prone to correct their physical inharmonies by correcting them in the body - just as materia medica does. They believe their physical inharmonies are formed in and of the body, because they see in their body the image of the mind, and they think these images have their source in the body instead of in the mind.

Body acts only as a mirror to give back to Mind the images that Mind, itself, is being. A rule from our textbook states: "Detach sense from the body, or matter, which is only a form of human belief... [and fix] your gaze on the realities supernal" (S. & H. 261:21). And as we detach the belief of disease from the body and understand it as belief only, therefore nothingness, we are in a position to replace the false belief with spiritual substance - the body of Soul. As Christian Scientists we know that the physical conditions seen in our body are formed by our own mind, and that in order to have a harmonious body it is necessary to have a harmonious mind. And this is true of each higher concept of mind and body that we entertain in thought.

We who are students of metaphysics understand that the body is governed by the mind, not partially but wholly, and that the only way one can improve the mind and thereby improve the body is by knowing the truth about both mind and body. As we hold the vision of the grandeur of reality, we renew our present body by the transformation of our mind. Mrs. Eddy says, "Mind governs the body, not partially but wholly" (S. & H. 111:28). Then the only way we can correct so-called bodily conditions, is to let this Mind, true consciousness, break through material beliefs and reveal the one ever-present, spiritual body - the body of Soul.

All facts that we know humanly are summed up in the perception of the one fact that when we see, know, or understand anything that pertains to our human body or present world, it is the unfolding spiritual ideas and their identities.

It is well to remember that it is "the spiritual which determines the

outward and actual” (S. & H. 254:22). It is the unfolding spiritual ideas and their identities, and not organs, which determine the outward and actual of my present so-called human body. These unfolding spiritual ideas act upon the false beliefs in my thought about body, until these false beliefs yield to the truth of the unfolding ideas. Conscious unfolding ideas are the substance of my heart and my stomach and of every organ I know humanly, and this substance is the outward and the actual of my human body, when determined by these unfolding ideas and not by material beliefs.

As we let God’s spiritual ideas of strength, health, activity, perfection and dominion – ideas eternally present and powerful – take possession of our thought, these spiritual ideas act upon the beliefs that we entertain about body, until these beliefs yield to the truth of these eternal ideas. As it is with body so it is that these conscious unfolding spiritual ideas, when accepted in thought, determine the outward and actual of business, home, nation, human efficiency – or anything of which I am conscious – that make up the body of Soul in its universal sense.

Spirit is the Only Substance

Edward Kimball gave the following statement in his first Normal College Class: “The universe is spiritual because all cause is Spirit, Mind. The flower, bird, landscape, rock, house, stomach, eye, hand, arm, leg, head, all are spiritual. Mortals, placing substance, cause, law, as matter and material, of necessity view things from a material point of view. And this is all that ever makes them seem sick and dying.

“When mortals change their viewpoint, we will have flowers that cannot fade, birds, animals, and men that cannot sicken and die, and stomachs that cannot be disturbed, legs that cannot be lame, eyes that cannot be blind.

“As matter, animal, tree, flower, bird, stomach and man are governed by so-called laws of matter – beliefs only – which, if not broken by the apprehension of Spirit and spiritual law, will go on being governed wrongly to ultimate discord and destruction.”

Mrs. Eddy tells us that “Spirit is the only substance” (S. & H. 335:12). Then the most important requirement in Christian Science practice is to gain an understanding of the fact that the substance of all things is Spirit. Since Spirit is the only substance, then Spirit is the substance of man and the universe; therefore man and the universe are immortal, perfect and indestructible as Spirit. For example, in Science and Health we read: “Bones have only the substance of thought which forms them” (S. & H. 423:29). And through the understanding that bones are spiritual thought formations, we prove that bones are not broken. Bones are indestructible, since their life, substance and continuity are in and of Spirit.

When we understand that Spirit is the substance of man and the universe, then everything pertaining to our body, such as heart, circulation, elimination, eye, and stomach, everything pertaining to nature such as trees, flowers, and crops, all things of the universe such as government, brotherly kindness, environment, achievement can be proved whole, active, perfect and permanent. These ideas do not function in and of themselves; they are governed by the law of Spirit. Spiritual ideas do not change or fail in the realm of Spirit; therefore their corresponding identities - man and the universe - do not change or fail. All ideas live, move, and have being in Spirit and, their spiritual identity is man and the universe.

I shall relate an instantaneous healing of a withered helpless arm that took place when the seeming condition of witheredness and helplessness was detached from the arm and dealt with as belief only, therefore nothingness. In belief, because of an accident, this woman had carried around this withered, helpless arm for seven years. She had exhausted the resources of all local practitioners, and whenever a lecturer came to her city, she talked her case over with him, had some treatments, but received no help. Her husband travelled and she often went with him, and whenever they stopped in a large city, she hunted up the leading practitioner, rehearsed her case, had some treatments, but to no avail.

Each practitioner tried to help her understand that the trouble was not a condition of her arm; that her arm was not material, but was of the substance of Spirit; that her arm was a divine idea, even though

imperfectly conceived; and that false belief could not attach itself to what Spirit was being. They tried to help her understand that this seeming condition must be detached from her arm, which was of the substance of Spirit, and handled as a mistaken sense or false belief. They emphasized the fact that for her to admit an error produced the error, and was all there was to the error. But, unconsciously, she held to the belief that the witheredness and helplessness were conditions attached to her arm and were something that had to be healed.

On one of their trips they arrived in New York City, and as soon as they were settled in their hotel she got out her Journal, found the name of a practitioner, and made an appointment. Above everything else, she wanted her healing. As she sat waiting for the interview, she thought, "I will not tell about this arm another time. I am so tired of repeating it over and over, and it is only belief anyway." For the first time there dawned upon her conscious thought the nature of belief – belief was no thing, no presence, but simply an illusion held in her thought, therefore nothingness.

When she entered the office she said to the practitioner, "You know that God heals, don't you? You know that God can heal anything?" The practitioner replied: "Why, yes! God, or Mind, heals by revealing to us that any seeming imperfection is, in its reality, a divine idea of Spirit and is already whole. False belief cannot keep us from knowing things as they are – perfect and whole." The practitioner gave the woman a treatment and showed her out of the office. When once outside, she found her arm restored in size and activity, and as perfect as her other arm. What had taken place? She had let go of her belief of witheredness and helplessness as being the substance and condition of her arm, and her first step in that direction was taken when she resolved not to acknowledge it again. So-called mortal mind had yielded to the truth of divine Mind. She had replaced her belief in an object of material sense with a fact of Soul. Her arm, all those years, had nothing to do with the sense of witheredness and helplessness. All those seven years her arm was of the substance of Spirit, therefore incapable of discord and decay. So-called mortal thought formed the condition of witheredness and

helplessness and they were present only as mortal thought. With the disappearance of belief from her thought, the substance of Spirit was revealed in its ever-present wholeness.

The all-knowing Mind does not believe. The all-knowing Mind knows eternal perfection and reflects this eternal perfection as man and the universe. In all practice work, we let the truth that Mind knows take possession of our thought and this truth dispels any seeming belief. At no time are we confronted with anything but the real- the eternal substance of Spirit.

The things of our world and the people of our world may appear to us as material and with material accompaniments, but as we progress in metaphysical understanding, there appears in our world a corresponding identity of this higher understanding, and the things of our world and the people of our world appear in their true nature - expressions of Spirit. In her Message to The Mother Church for 1900, Mrs. Eddy has written: "Man and the universe coexist with God in Science, and they reflect God and nothing else" (S. & H. 4:26).

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