

October 30, 2006 – 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 BIBLE AS OUR LIFE BOOK 1
– By Peggy M. Brook

The Great Overture of Creation (Genesis 1:1 - 2:3)

The Two Records

THINKING about the two records of creation which begin the Bible, one is suddenly struck with the contrast between them in their symbolism, atmosphere and range.

The first record presents us with a majestic account of the light, the firmament of the heavens, the earth with all its fruitfulness, the immense celestial system, the prolific life in the waters and in the open firmament of heaven, man and woman made in the image and likeness of their great creator with dominion over the whole earth, and the peace and rest and glory of it all.

And then, the second record - a tawdry story taking place within a little circumscribed piece of the earth called the garden of Eden. A garden consisting of a few trees and a river and populated by two people and a talking serpent!

In contrast with the first account this story seems quite ludicrous. And yet, is it not within the scope of that little garden that most of us mortals are trying to live – within the scope of the personal senses and their limited outlook? The two people seem to represent the tendency we all have to divide creation into two, - ourselves and others. And the serpent? The constant depressing whisper of negative thinking and living which makes us dissatisfied, unsure of ourselves; that which gets us to “eat” of some theory whose fruit only makes us more and more conscious of the nakedness of material existence and of its frustrations.

But what of the first record of creation, which opens the Bible? In contemplating its vastness, one’s whole being expands and we can

see why people gain so much real satisfaction from conquering fear, accomplishing the so-called impossible, pitting themselves against great odds and winning through – descending to depths never before thought possible and ascending to heights never before attained. In so doing they are really finding some measure of the man that is referred to in this first record, – the man with dominion over all the earth. This surely is the man that we must represent, for is it not true that whenever we find something native to our aspirations there is a satisfaction of achievement and a sense of fitness that has no superfluous element? It is the key in the lock, so to speak.

If we compare these two contrasting accounts of creation step by step we can see how the symbols of that first creation story present us with certain great fundamentals in the design for living, rather as an overture often presents the main themes of a musical work; whilst the second shows the dreary results of reckoning life from a premise of matter, the “dust of the ground.”

“Let There Be Light”

And so we can take the first day of creation and thoughtfully contemplate the vastness of light, the beauty of it, its usefulness, and its impersonality. It brings colour and warmth. Everything grows because of the light. There is light for the rich, light for the poor, light for the old and for the young, light for the Indian and the African, the European and American - it is “no respecter of persons.” Moreover, when it is daylight, it will come in freely wherever it is allowed to do so.

“God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” – “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light” – “Arise, shine; for thy light is come” – “I am the light of the world” – “In thy light shall we see light.” How the Bible teems with the presence of this light! And the writers could surely not be referring to physical light. The feeling one gets from pondering this light, as it permeates the Scriptural narratives, is of the presence of a supreme intelligence that is available to every man as he turns his thought for guidance towards the boundless warmth of an intelligence outside himself.

By contrast with this, the second record of creation begins with a miserable, wet mist. The darkness, the obscurity, the smudged outlines, the confusion, the restriction that one commonly associates with mists seems leagues apart from this glorious light. But

nevertheless it is a realistic symbol of unenlightened gropings based solely on matter and the human brain.

A Symbolic Account?

We could ask ourselves whether we have a right to take this record in such a symbolic way. Surely yes, for the light, the waters, the earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars are all used in a symbolic way throughout the Scriptures. Moreover, was not this record written by men whose lives were spent in the contemplation of the spiritual? And would they have been interested in recording merely a physical story of how the world began? Was there not something far more fundamental and spiritual in this record than is generally seen? Frank Spiva writes in an article entitled "The Bible and Astronomy":

The fact that the Bible and its account of creation has stood the length of time it has proves that its existence has a purpose, but in that its account of creation does not parallel the scientific findings, then the account of creation must of necessity have some meaning beyond that which we have hither to for thought it to have. Can it be that with these scientific findings we will be compelled to re-analyse the Bible and find therein truths as astounding as those we have discovered in the sky?

Yes, astounding truths, but maybe very simple truths, if we are willing to challenge materialistic theories and seek primal and perpetual cause in intelligence and ideas rather than in matter.

The Firmament

And so we can turn in thought to the second day, with its symbol of the firmament to divide the waters above from the waters beneath. That great dividing of waters which follows the breaking of the light is surely a tremendous symbol of a great separating process that immediately takes place once the light breaks in any sphere of activity. How true this is, for one has often experienced a singular clarity of vision and out of many ways one distinct path has been, as it were, "separated" out, as one has turned unreservedly to the light of a superior, unlimited intelligence.

And now, by contrast, what is taking place in the garden of Eden? Man made of the dust of the ground with the spirit of life breathed into him. No clarity there. Literally – just mud and air! An apt

description of what our thinking resembles when we are trying to get clear on some issue with a limited and material sense of our ability.

“And God called the firmament Heaven,” the first record declares, and what heaven it is to be able to turn here and now to an intelligence that is so ordered and pure that it continually operates as a great separator of order from chaos, clarity from confusion, strength from weakness – “the waters above from the waters beneath.”

The Earth and Its Fruitfulness

And then we come to the dry land, formed on the third day by the gathering together of the waters, the dry land which brings forth grass, herb, and fruit tree – abundant fruitage. What of this dry land? Is it not a symbol of certainty, something to stand on, something that never lets you down? And from such certainty fruit must always spring. To stand on fact assures propagation in any sphere. Touch ever-operative spiritual fact and we unleash undreamed-of fruitage.

But how can we be certain of spiritual things? Only by experience, as in any realm. No one knows the real satisfaction, safety, and fruitage in any subject until they have put their whole selves into it, and no one can do it for them. As we put our whole selves into any activity, be it golf, music, or art, we just feel ourselves to be a part of that activity, and a satisfaction, a safety, and a feeling of identification with its rhythm comes to us.

Not so if we are creeping about in the Adam mist. Here the story tells of a man confined in a garden full of restrictions. Not standing free on the wide earth with the firm ground of spiritual fact beneath his feet, but unsatisfied, surrounded by animals, with no help meet for him. How like our mortal experience this would seem to be, when we are beset by uncertainty, hedged in by self-imposed limits, and finding no lasting satisfaction in the animal qualities of this mortal man parading before us.

The “help meet” for man surely lies in certainty and safety, that inner poise which is so fruitful. From experience we inevitably learn that the natural fruit of an inward peace is always the best help meet for any of us, whether we are married or single or whatever our relationships. But search how we may, we find this inward peace only as we feel ourselves to be identified with a great primal cause whose nature, is altogether good and purposeful.

The Sun, the Moon, and the Stars

And so this leads us on to the contemplation of the fourth day, with its vast symbol of the solar system – the sun, the moon, and the stars. What a magnificent symbol to indicate the operation of a supreme Principle! It is the central day of this creation story, – the hinge, as it were.

An observatory with its vast yet intricate calculations involved in the observation of the stars, and a sense of coordination and system springs to mind in contemplating this day. The Bible speaks of the morning stars singing together, and we can almost hear this paean of joy as we ponder the harmonious interrelation of the solar system.

If this is a symbol of the Principle of all things and its government of being, then why are we not availing ourselves of such a Principle? This is telling us of a universe of light – of ideas – working in harmony with one another to rule over the day of well-being and happiness, and even over the night of darkness, doubt, and fear. Why are we not availing ourselves of it? Because, as mortals, we have lazily accepted the mist as reality, and at this point in the second record a deep sleep falls upon Adam. He sleeps, a rib is taken out of him, and from this act of separation the division into sexes emerges.

May this sleep symbolize the mesmerism that would keep us from finding and using a spiritual Principle of harmonious government? We shut our eyes to the possibilities of such a Principle being available to us here and now. Closing our eyes to this robs us of a feeling of completeness, and gives rise to the tendency to divide creation into two, – ourselves and others.

How often one has found conflicting interests, misunderstandings, and quarrels solved, when instead of reckoning individuals as isolated units, each operating under the influence of a separate personal will, one has reckoned relationships from a higher standpoint. Such a standpoint acknowledges one governing Principle, moving every part of its creation in harmony with every other part, and thus molding even human will in accordance with its purpose. The wonderful results from such calculations open our thought to the possibilities which a deeper research of the spiritual meaning behind this day opens up, particularly in the field of international relations.

From this story of the creation up to this point, one can see that an intelligent Presence, a pure and ordered Presence, a definite and

satisfying Presence, and a Presence that operates in a systematic and harmonious way is being revealed through these great symbols. It is leading now in the fifth day to a sense of prolific life, and then on to its climax in the sixth day with a man made in the image and likeness of God and equipped with absolute dominion.

No wonder this creation leads to such a man, for it contains no limits except the natural flow of true classification and order which bind only discord and chaos. Throughout this entire creation the “seed is within itself,” like reproduces like, and there are constant reiterations of its being “good,” climaxing with the statement, “And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.”

The determination of many of us to live as confirmed believers in the Adam record of creation seems to resemble the attitude of Plato’s cave-dweller who doggedly sat in the entrance to his cave with his back to the sunlight, believing that the shadowy figures he saw on the opposite wall were real and living.

The Waters Bring Forth

Returning to our journey through these “days,” we come to the fifth day with its creation of abundant life in the sea and fowl flying in the “open firmament of heaven.” We can recall the sense of unlimited possibilities and the feeling of the prolific good that is ever-available to us whenever we begin to reckon ourselves consciously as an integral part of harmoniously operating being, as seen in the fourth day.

Because Jesus understood the fact that “I and my Father [the Principle of all being] are one,” he could also say with conviction, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” As proof of this he fed the five thousand, found money in the fish’s mouth, took the limits off Lazarus’ sense of life, and raised the daughter of Jairus.

Had Jesus thrown his weight into the Adam counterfeit at this point, there would have been no such convincing signs of limitlessness, for here Eve listens to the serpents whisper and partakes of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; the result is an awareness of nakedness and shame. Jesus’ consciousness of existence remained above earthy whisperings. He never came down to argue with limitation or impossibility, nor did he indulge in the kind of

broadmindedness that takes in a mixed standard of good and evil, and the result was that he was able to “clothe” every situation with richness. He showed forth to all men the bounty and abundance of real living.

These are the true values of life. We don't have to suffer nakedness of friendship, nakedness of supply, or nakedness of health. “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” If Jesus was drawing mentally on a spiritual law of abundance to prove these things, and even to destroy the “last enemy” of limitation in his own experience, where is that law now? It must be still available; and it seems as though the prophetic writers wisely hid the dynamic fundamentals of Life in the great symbols of this grand story of creation. What wonderful symbols to use, for they are so vast and embrace such a multitude of detail that they can be expanded and developed in all kinds of ways throughout the Bible record.

Man with Dominion

And so we come to the sixth day with the living creatures on the earth and the climax of all creation – man, made in the image and likeness of God with dominion over everything. Yes, that is the man we feel to be when we have found ourselves as living in the light of an ever-present intelligence, utilizing a “firmament” that is ordered and clear, standing on the “dry land” of tangible spiritual fact, conscious of moving in a harmoniously operating system of being, and thus experiencing a richness, an abundance, and an unlimited sense of existence that must truly make us exclaim, “This is being man, the man that is blessed and fruitful and is conscious of dominion!”

What a contrast between this picture and the Adam man at this point! With him and those around him it is just a succession of curses. The serpent is cursed, the woman is cursed, Adam is cursed and turned out of Eden, and Cain destroys Abel. How true are the words of the Psalmist, “As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.” And how sensible was Isaiah to command, “Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?”

But is this the man whom Jesus exemplified? No, he realized his quality as image and likeness of an unlimited power that is infinitely

good and whose creation is declared to be very good also. From that standpoint he never moved. This may have necessitated his spending many hours in a quiet and exalted mountain of thought. Not as a recluse, but just as any man who is wedded to his lifework devotes hours to it in order to accomplish anything, and loves to do so.

And God Rested

No wonder the fulfilment and seal of this creation in the seventh day is “And [God] rested.” The feeling this gives us is akin to the feeling a mother must have when she beholds the beauty and loveliness of the child she has just brought forth. Indeed the dawning of these days through a number of evenings and mornings is to us rather like a birth – the birth of the nature of our fundamental cause and therefore, surely, the birth of our true nature. We all feel the touch of this day of rest when we really wake up to our birthright as given in this first record of creation. As we do, we experience the constant presence and comfort of the motherhood of our cause drawing us to the fulfilment of our manhood – sometimes tenderly, sometimes imperatively, but always irresistibly. Jeremiah expressed the activity of this motherhood when he wrote, “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.”

Down in the Adam story Cain is expelled into the land of Nod, “a fugitive and a vagabond.” There is no warmth of inclusion in a plan of creation, no tender mothering for Adam and his progeny. But there is no need to experience this sense of exclusion and unsatisfied restlessness; we can experience rest if we turn towards the light of a spiritual intelligence and let it ‘lead us step by step to ultimate fulfilment.

Indeed, in the Adam record of creation – which occupies the first thousand years of Bible history – there are flashes of light, such as the tree of life in the midst of the garden and the river that leads out of the garden. These symbolize how the light of spiritual values, as illustrated in the opening chapter of Genesis, brings men out of a limited material sense of existence.

Thinking these things over, one realizes that to build on certain fundamentals, to follow a proved principle, and test it out for oneself is essential in any human subject. This must also apply to the working out of life itself. Does the Bible present the fundamentals of Being

in its opening chapter, illustrate their use throughout its pages, and tell, the story of the greatest demonstrator of these living fundamentals, so that it is a real scientific textbook for our practice of life today? It surely does...

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