

**February 28th, 2005 — Subject: 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 first selection this week is from **SCIENCE AND HEALTH WITH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES** by Mary Baker Eddy. For a brief biography on our featured authors, click [here](#).

**FLESHLY FACTORS UNREAL**

*Question.* - What is man?

*Answer.* - Man is not matter; he is not made up of brain, blood, bones, and other material elements. The Scriptures inform us that man is made in the image and likeness of God. Matter is not that likeness. The likeness of Spirit cannot be so unlike Spirit. Man is spiritual and perfect; and because he is spiritual and perfect, he must be so understood in Christian Science. Man is idea, the image, of Love; he is not physique. He is the compound idea of God, including all right ideas; the generic term for all that reflects God's image and likeness; the conscious identity of being as found in Science, in which man is the reflection of God, or Mind, and therefore is eternal; that which has no separate mind from God; that which has not a single quality underived from Deity; that which possesses no life, intelligence, nor creative power of his own, but reflects spiritually all that belongs to his Maker.

And God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

**MAN UNFALLEN**

Man is incapable of sin, sickness, and death. The real man cannot depart from holiness, nor can God, by whom man is evolved, engender the capacity or freedom to sin. A mortal sinner is not God's man. Mortals are the counterfeits of immortals. They are the children of the wicked one, or the one evil, which declares that man begins in dust or as a material embryo. In divine Science, God and the real man are inseparable as divine Principle and idea.

**MATERIAL BODY NEVER  
GOD'S IDEA**

Whatever is material is mortal. To the five corporeal senses, man appears to be matter and mind united; but Christian Science reveals man as the idea of God, and declares the corporeal senses to be mortal and erring illusions. Divine Science shows it to be impossible that a material body, though interwoven with matter's highest stratum, misnamed mind, should be man, - the genuine and perfect man, the immortal idea of being, indestructible and eternal. Were it otherwise, man would be annihilated.

**THE KINGDOM WITHIN**

When speaking of God's children, not the children of men, Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is within you;" that is, Truth and Love reign in the real man, showing that man in God's image is unfallen and eternal. Jesus beheld in Science the perfect man, who appeared to him where sinning mortal man appears to mortals. In this perfect man the Saviour saw God's own likeness, and this correct view of man healed the sick. Thus Jesus taught that the kingdom of God is intact, universal, and that man is pure and holy. Man is not a material habitation for Soul; he is himself spiritual. Soul, being Spirit, is seen in nothing imperfect nor material.

**IMPERISHABLE IDENTITY**

Learn this, O mortal, and earnestly seek the spiritual status of man, which is outside of all material selfhood. Remember that the Scriptures say of mortal man: "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."

**MORTALS ARE NOT IMMORTALS**

Error, urged to its final limits, is self-destroyed. Error will cease to claim that soul is in body, that life and intelligence are in matter, and that this matter is man. God is the Principle of man, and man is the idea of God. Hence man is not mortal nor material. Mortals will disappear, and immortals, or the children of God, will appear as the only and eternal verities of man. Mortals are not fallen children of God. They never had a perfect state of being, which may subsequently be regained. They were, from the beginning of mortal history, "conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity." Mortality is finally swallowed up in immortality. Sin, sickness, and death must disappear to give place to the facts which belong to immortal man.

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Our second selection is from —SCIENTIFIC TRANSLATION— by John L. Morgan.

### **Descending and Ascending**

The essence of Christian Science is the understanding of God and the true understanding of man as God's expression. For us to begin to understand man as God understands him, transforms our view and consequently our experience. But with what is that 'understanding' achieved? When we make five times five twenty-five, who is doing the making? It must be the principle's own knowledge or science, which likewise works in us. The golden thread whereby we retrace our way to unity with source — whether it be with God, or with music or with the principle of a science — is the same thread by which it has first come to us. The process is one, yet twofold in operation, like the flow and return of an electrical circuit. This concept has been the core of truly spiritual teaching from the most ancient times. The Bible abounds in examples. In Jacob's vision he sees the archetypal ladder set up between heaven and earth, with the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. Or we find Paul describing it in Ephesians 4:8-13: "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first...? He that descended is the same also that ascended up..." If we take as an analogy the hands continually revolving on a clock face, the way they get to twelve o'clock is by starting out from twelve o'clock.

Preeminently, Christ Jesus states the principle: "no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven ... (John 3:13). He is speaking on behalf of all humanity as well as for himself, declaring that the ascending way and the descending way are but two phases of the one cycle of being. As though to show that the departure and return happen only in consciousness and that real being remains a steady state, he completes his statement with "...even the Son of man which is in heaven." The urge to rise in understanding and achievement would be in vain unless it had been preceded by the fact that we have already 'come down from', that in reality we *are* forever the Christ-idea in its Principle.

This cycle of spiritual translation is entirely different from the conventional religious belief, in which spirit is said actually to become matter at our birth, this matter then having to die in order to release us to become

spirit again. In complete contrast to this theory is the cycle of divine metaphysics, which explains away matter.

Here, the 'descent' is the coming of heavenly things into human consciousness, while the 'ascent' is human consciousness gradually recognizing that it is reflection, not mortal counterfeit. Scientific translation, therefore, sheds an entirely different light on the nature of the human.

A very simple illustration of the descent causing the ascent is seen in washing out a bottle under the tap: the clean water pours down, forcing the dirty water up, and before long all the water is equally clean.

### **Our Goal and Source One**

Our goal is also our source. We carry within us the imprint and code of our destination. We are, so to speak, on a circle, and it does not matter where one gets on to the circle because all points are equally spiritual and equally valid. The important thing is to know that one is on; then all the requisite spiritual education can begin its work in us. The student who says despairingly, 'I'm not there yet,' will never know that he has arrived, because his state of mind keeps him outside. Like an exponential curve he will get nearer and nearer, but because he starts from without, his goal is forever just beyond his reach.

Fortunately for humanity, the way in spiritual Science is not like this. Being is not really linear, it is cyclical. It does not begin, as do academic disciplines, with an unenlightened mortal who has to be gradually instructed in a linear progression towards his goal. Rather, it begins with the fact that "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." Right from the beginning of his awakening, what we call man is already complete with all the divine qualities and characteristics of the God-being which is his goal. He simply seems not to be aware of it, and Christian Science is the orderly method of removing his ignorance; it causes him to make the admission to himself that man is God's own likeness, and consequently it sets him free to master this infinite idea (S & H 90:24-32). As the poet T.S. Eliot says, in his *Four Quartets*,

"In my beginning is my end ..." and,

"In my end is my beginning."

In the Apocryphal Gospel of Thomas we read that the disciples ask

Jesus, "Tell us how our end will be. " He replies, "Have you then discovered the beginning so that you inquire about the end? For where the beginning is, there shall be the end. Blessed is he who shall stand at the beginning, and he shall know the end and he shall not taste death." (The Gospel of Thomas, translated from the Goptic by A Guillaumont & others; Harper; p 13.)

Nowhere is there a clearer or more perfect statement of this cycle of being than in Jesus' statement in John 16:28, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." He is speaking to his sad and uncomprehending disciples about his imminent disappearance from their material sight, and this declaration satisfies their puzzled thought. They appear to grasp the truth that he can return to the divine source because he first came from it, which is correct, but perhaps they have personalized and belittled the real meaning. What Jesus is actually saying is that his being partakes of God's Being, that man comes out of God, and to understand this is to 'leave' the worldly sense of a material origin. If he is understood to come from the divine, retaining the divine nature, it must translate the human and so deliver it from the belief that it is mortal. The only way *towards* the translation of the human (second translation) is to work out *from* the divine (first translation).

It seems paradoxical to say that the way to get there is to come forth from it, but a paradox may appear contradictory and nevertheless be true. The way to learn to paint is by painting. The way to swim is to swim. The only way to get to Truth is to come from Truth. We could paraphrase Jesus' great cyclic statement, 'I came forth from the divine Principle of oneness and am come into the world of opposites, into the appearance of dualism. But by adhering to the oneness of being, dualism is resolved or translated and I rest in the Principle.' We do not so much return to the Father as find that we were never actually separated.

While the Christian Scientist loves the spiritual and knows it to be the only power, he is constantly confronted with the problem of evil. How do we account for sin, wars, disasters? What about pain, disease, death? How do we tackle personality defects and poisoned relationships? These are the bogus realities that Christian Science groups together under the terms "animal magnetism" or "mortal mind," and which are classified as error or misconception. As he comes forth

from the principle of his subject, the mathematician, the engineer or the musician is not dismayed when faced by challenges. He instantly retraces his reasoning out from the principle. He sees the problems not as hostile actualities but as what his principle is not, regarding them as opportunities to prove that his science not only exists as pure being but also operates to refute mistakes in its own domain. To him the word 'problem' has no negative overtones but has its original meaning — of being simply some proposition thrown up by his natural progression. As with mathematics, Christian Science is both 'pure' and 'applied,' and these twin aspects are parallel to Jesus' twin declarations "I came forth from.... and go to..."

This means that to "go to the Father" demands that we prove in practice our oneness with the divine by the disproof of all that seems to stand in the way, — the disproof of twoness. The supposition that there could be an existence detached from the Principle of being takes form in a further supposition called life, substance and intelligence in matter; destroying the fantasy of twoness therefore means causing the discordant material concept to give place to the spiritual reality. Writing of Jesus, Mrs. Eddy says, "His mission was to reveal the Science of celestial being, to prove what God is and what He does for man" (S & H 26:16). Metaphysically speaking, he was bilingual. He translated the absolute ideal into language that humanity can understand, and, using the divine mother tongue, translated humanity out of the dead language of mortality.

### **...Retranslating the Mistranslation**

Why translation? Why not reversal? Why not the destruction of error? Why not the application of divine law to the problem? The answer surely is clear: the error is not a thing in itself, not self-existent. It is but the truth misstated. There never were two realities. 'Mortal man' is spiritual man misunderstood; he's not another man. The only satisfactory answer to a mistranslation is to translate it correctly.

The textbook gives us the underlying reason for adopting this divine technique for problem solving. Writing of the revelation to St John of a new heaven and a new earth, Mrs. Eddy tells us that the heavens and earth to one human consciousness, that consciousness which God bestows, are spiritual, while to another the unilluminated human mind, the vision is material" (S & H 573:6) Note that *it* is only the vision that is

material, not the heavens and earth themselves. Nothing has to be done to them. They need no treatment; but we do need to ‘treat’ or translate the human consciousness so that it is found to be the illumined one, which God bestows. In this divine light, there is no problem. The whole translation process takes place within our own consciousness.

A fellow-student of Christian Science told the writer of an experience that illustrates the point. She and her husband owned some hotel property on the Texas coast. Over the radio there came a warning, hurricane imminent. At the time she was too busy with some domestic nursing to be able to take any precautions, but the voice said to her, ‘Wind! Go and look up ‘wind.’ Immediately she paused in her task, fetched the textbook and read from the “Glossary,” “WIND. That which indicates the might of omnipotence and the movements of God’s spiritual government, encompassing all things. “ ‘Wind,’ she said out loud, ‘If you are wind, that is what you are. If you aren’t that, you aren’t anything. ‘ The hurricane came, and swept through the town, but not a particle of their property was damaged. She had handled the situation not by denying it or by reversing it, but by *translating* it scientifically, — by knowing what wind is, in its original spiritual meaning.

The illustration shows that in Christian Science we do not try to translate the material sense back into reality by starting out from the misconception. Reasoning from matter is illegitimate. We cannot reason intelligently from a mistake. For instance, it would be grotesque to attempt to gain the true idea of man or of body by reading from the corporeal personality. Is there some kind of spiritual stomach behind the physical organ? We have to abandon the material premise and reason out afresh from revelation. It has to be ‘new speak.’ Sometimes Mind tells us directly, by inspiration; sometimes we find the idea we need in the Bible or in *Science and Health*, the textbooks for the “pure language” promised by Zephaniah.

Trying to perceive the healing idea by reasoning from the basis of the problem would be like trying to work in the second translation only, without the prior inspiration and understanding of the first translation. Although we appear to come to it last, the language of Spirit is in fact mankind’s original tongue (Mis 188:3-19). So, in the practice of Christian Science, we do not laboriously have to translate the mortal concept piecemeal, mistake after mistake. Instead we can immerse our thought in the spiritual language; its vocabulary, its grammar and structures are

the actualities that replace and heal the false sense, as we saw with the wind.

An instructive parallel is to be seen in the methods employed in teaching a foreign language. The traditional approach involved translating from the grammar and vocabulary of one's own language into that of the other. The result would frequently be a stilted, literal English-French, for example, and not the fluent, idiomatic language spoken in France. In recent years the old grammar/translation method has been giving way to the direct method, in which the learner is plunged into hearing and speaking the new tongue without relying on the structures of the old. Like a child, he uses it in real-life situations. From the very beginning he is learning the new language, not merely learning about it. Once some fluency is attained, he can study the rules of grammar and syntax that lie behind, so that he understands what it is that he is doing.

The educational system of Christian Science employs the same approach as that of the direct method in language teaching. It is total exposure to the things of God. The student rapidly discovers that this 'God-speak' is his rightful 'man-speak' also; a spiritual view and vocabulary and idiom quickly become natural. More gradually he will realize that this inspirational "new tongue" — or new-old tongue, — has clearly-defined system and structure, rules and laws. The direct method illustrates starting from the first translation, while the 'grammar/translation' method would be like working from the second translation as one's starting-point.

Plunging into the experience of the new language, thinking and talking and living it, one is overwhelmed to find the true meaning of ideas. Man, substance, mind, body, life, and a thousand other familiar terms are found to mean something far more substantial, divine and grand than our previous conception of them. As we perceive what they really mean as vital spiritual concepts, we can no longer work from what we used to think they were. For many Christian Scientists, body is a four-letter word. Yet once we have seen that *mind* can only be the divine Mind or intelligence of the universe, or that *body* must properly mean the embodiment of all God's activities and functions, how could we ever go back and reason from the mortal misconception of the terms?

The beauty of studying *Science and Health* is that, like the direct method in language teaching, it fills our thought with the realities of our being

without reference to the 'old language' of mortality. For instance, we find ourselves reading about intelligence governing everything, about action and movement and control, about vision, inspiration, feeling and functioning, about power, and ability, and progress. They are all ideas, which we associate with body. These spiritual concepts *are* body, the body of God, and therefore our authentic body. In a thousand ways, the textbook is teaching us what body really is through the 'anatomy' and 'physiology' of the body of being. By entertaining these ideas, accepting — and loving them, they immediately begin to alter our mistaken — corporeal — concept of body. From having thought of it as a mere object of sense, we realize that it actually represents mental and spiritual functions, As a result, even our present physical sense of body becomes freer and more active; it becomes our servant instead of our master. Then consciousness awakens further, beyond simply changing our thought about it, to healthy belief must yield to the spiritual ultimate, — that body is understanding the spiritual facts of being. Even the improved and really Godlike identity, the instrument of divine selfhood. Man is My own subjective spiritual conception of Myself,' says Spirit; the harmoniously functioning coordinated universe is My body, of which each individual is a reflection in miniature.'

Naturally it could be objected that when the Bible speaks, for instance, of "the right hand of the Lord," or "the breath of the Almighty," such phrases are but figures of speech, metaphors arrived at from the physical body. From a material standpoint this argument would be reasonable. But Christian Science explains that it is no more logical to reason from matter than it is to reason from a mistake in arithmetic. The language of Spirit, as in *Science and Health*, gives us the original spiritual ideas. It seems that material sense has stolen the terms and reproduced them materially. Material sense treats language like an occupied country, taking over its institutions for the purpose of enslaving the people. Life is then misrepresented as organic, as the span between birth and death, and substance as that which can be weighed and counted.

Christian Science redeems the whole universe of ideas from the bogus language of materialism by means of scientific translation, and reinstates the spiritual sense as the real meaning. Mrs. Eddy explains it precisely when she writes that "...every creation or idea of Spirit has its counterfeit in some matter belief. Every material belief hints the existence of spiritual

reality; and if mortals are instructed in spiritual things, it will be seen that material belief, in all its manifestations, reversed, will be found the type and representative of verities priceless, eternal, and just at hand.

“The education of the future will be instruction, in spiritual Science, against the material symbolic counterfeit sciences (Mis.60:27).

The Bible and the Christian Science textbook between then furnish these “verities priceless, eternal, and just at hand,” sometimes actually employing the same word as the material counterfeit, such as body, home, nature or universe, so that a direct conversion is achieved.

The purpose of Science is to explain the noumenon and phenomenon of being. It reveals that the noumenon is God, the divine Principle, and that the phenomenon is Principle’s own self-expression or spiritual idea. Inevitably, therefore, Science operates to translate the mistaken notion that the noumenon is material energy, or chance, and that the phenomenal universe is material. By degrees it demonstrates that man and the universe are indestructible, harmonious, and spiritual.

What does this mean in practical terms? For a simple example everyone knows what it is to translate a negative experience into a blessing. We all can translate our stumbling blocks into stepping-stones. Jesus translated the crown of thorns into the victor’s crown, — the crown of twelve stars. The Christ translated Saul from a persecutor into Paul, the champion of Christianity. In manner, Christian Science translates the basis of life from mortal, material premises to the divine platform of spiritual fact and function.

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