

March 1 — 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 selection this week is from: **TALKS ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES** by, Peggy M. Brook. [Click here](#) for a brief biography on our contributing authors.

LOVE as TRUTH (Acts Chapter 10).

Love's ideal includes all ideas—generic man.

As we understand the universality of Science, we shall recognize all men as ideas in Love's plan and grant them their status as such, whoever they are.

In this tone of Love as Truth we see the idea spreading farther and farther afield, and the inspiration of that expansion was the sense of universal manhood. Do you remember that it was in the tone of Truth as Love that we first saw a more universal sense of manhood—in the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch?

CHAPTER 10

VERSE 1. “a centurion”—it's interesting to remember that the first Gentile whom Jesus came in contact with in his healing work was a centurion.

Verse 2. I always feel that if we can only detect in others what they already reflect of Life, Truth, and Love, we can then lead their thought back to Principle. And I think that this verse here gives a sense of how Cornelius was reflecting Life, Truth, and Love. He was “one that feared God with all his house”—in other words, he had that sense of looking to God, of laying down the mortal concept and turning to God, which Life inspires. He had a sense of the brotherhood of man, which Truth brings. And he “prayed to God alway”—in other words, he had that sense of Love which consistently acknowledges God's power and accepts that God is the one universal God.

VERSE 3. “about the ninth hour of the day”—Cornelius' thought was resurrected.

VERSE 4. “Thy prayers and thine alms”—that's rather interesting, because we saw that Cornelius' prayers had the tone of Love and that his alms gave the sense of Truth, and we're considering the tone of Love as Truth.

VERSE 7. There were three of them, you notice. This story is full of symbols of Life, Truth, and Love in various aspects.

VERSE 9. “Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour”—Peter's thought (like Cornelius') was lifted up, and it was being resurrected to true manhood. He was beginning to see the spiritual truth about universal man.

VERSES 10 - 12. Don't you think that what Peter saw was a symbol of the fourfold calculus of man? That calculus contains the truth about everything,— about man and beast and all things. In the vessel which Peter saw were symbols of the fifth and sixth days of creation,—fowls of the air and beasts of the earth, indicating Life and Truth. Mrs Eddy says, you remember, "Christianity is again demonstrating the Life that is Truth, and the Truth that is Life" (S&H 97:29-30). It seems to me that Peter in his exalted state of thought was now going to see that man is universal,— that the calculus of Truth embodies all ideas, and that that constitutes man. The manifestation of God called man isn't anything to do with a physical body, or with a merely moral sense, but is a spiritual calculus of ideas.

Peter was very hungry when this vision came to him, and I think that it could be interpreted in this way: sometimes we are hungry for spiritual vision and we have a great desire for spiritual things, and we perhaps think that if we closet ourselves with our books and just pore over them, that will feed us, when sometimes that may not be the food we really need; it may be that the food we need is to expand in some direction and to give out what we've already got of spiritual vision. I'm sure that Peter had to learn that here, because as a result of this experience he went to the Gentiles for the first time — it hadn't entered his consciousness to do so until that moment. So when we feel empty and hungry and we think that what we need perhaps is to go to some talks, or something of that nature, it may be that what we need more is to give of what we already have. They were actually "making ready" for Peter to eat, but the very thing that was really going to feed him was to go out and give of his spiritual riches to others in ways that he had never done before — that was the command which came to him.

I think it's lovely that it was when Peter was up on the housetop that he became more universal in outlook. Being up on the "housetop" doesn't mean getting so "metaphysical" that you can't be understood. The higher you go, the more you can understand the other fellow and meet his needs. Sometimes we're apt to think that the more spiritually-minded we are, or the more we pursue spiritual things, the more that may cut us off from others. But that isn't true. The more spiritually uplifted your thought is, the more universal it becomes, because you are getting closer and closer to the one universal source, and so your thought must inevitably become more universal, in the sense of seeing that all ideas everywhere reflect in some measure the facts of Science, because there's only one Being. As you touch the one plan of Love, you irresistibly begin to see everyone and everything as part of that one plan—you can't help it. So Peter's thought was impelled to be more universal than it had been. He began to see that everyone is within the calculus of man and that no one is outside. Remember, this is the tone of Love as Truth, —universality seen as irresistible Truth.

VERSES 13-16. You can either take that three-fold message as symbolizing the analyzing, uncovering, and annihilating of Peter's false sense of manhood, or from another angle you can take it as symbolizing that Peter had to understand the three degrees which Mrs. Eddy elucidates on pages 115 and 116 of her textbook. The voice first said to Peter, "kill, and eat"; in other words, "Kill your physical concept of man, your sense of man as a physical entity, and take in the true concept of man as a calculus of ideas." The second time, the voice said, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." There, it seems to me, Peter had to see that he couldn't despise moral qualities, second-degree qualities, because when seen in their right light they represent the cleansing of the mortal concept of man so that something of

the divine concept shines through. He mustn't despise those good qualities that were in evidence all around him, —in the Gentiles as well as in the Jews, —because those qualities represented some measure of the disappearance of evil beliefs and the appearing of the divine. The third time, the vessel was received up again into heaven, indicating that the only true man, the only real man, is the man who has never left heaven—the spiritual idea of God.

So first of all, before he went to Cornelius the Gentile, Peter had to see that man isn't a physical proposition and then he had to see that all there is to moral qualities, — to humanity, honesty, faith, and so forth, — is some measure of the divine cleansing away ignorance and shining through; he had to take those qualities back to their source in Principle. And then he had to see that the only reality is that third degree of spiritual consciousness, which shows that this calculus of manhood is in and of divine Principle, and that there is nothing going on but the operation of Principle and its infinite idea; there is nothing to anyone or anything but God's idea.

You know, this story symbolizes in some degree what we're trying to do in our publication, *Ideas of Today*; our thought has expanded to discern the manifestation of Principle in all kinds of different spheres, and we're seeing that wherever there's genuine good appearing in human experience, wherever there is any light shining through, that is something that God has cleansed, some measure of Truth's appearing. And we're trying to trace this appearing back to the one Principle, and thus show the oneness of being and the universal nature of Truth.

The collective sense which comes out in this story is most interesting; for instance, Cornelius was inspired at the same time as Peter, and when you consider that we're in the tone of Love as Truth, that's so natural, because Love as Truth means that the universal plan of Love is coming to all men everywhere —irresistibly. It's really nothing to do, with us—it looks as if we go out and convert people, but all we've got to convert is our own sense of manhood, and we've got to convert it into the true sense of man. The ideas of God are reflected everywhere, and what we've got to do is to recognize those ideas of God. So it isn't so much a question of taking Truth out to people as of drawing Truth out of people—it is already there. And if we can see that more and more, as we are trying to do with *Ideas of Today* and as I think we are all trying to do with our own individual lives, we shall find that Truth is universal, and we shall see how impersonal it is and that it is nothing to do with ourselves as persons.

Peter saw the truth about the sixth day of creation when he saw this great sheet let down from heaven “knit at the four corners,”—the calculus of Truth; he saw that man is idea, — “the compound idea of God, including all right ideas” (S&H 475: 14—15). He saw that “All of God's creatures, moving in the harmony of Science, are harmless, useful, indestructible” (S&H 514: 28-30). He also saw this, and it's another extract from Mrs. Eddy's commentary on the sixth day: “The substance: Life, intelligence, Truth, and Love, which constitute Deity, are reflected by His creation; and when we subordinate the false testimony of the corporeal senses to the facts of Science, we shall see this true likeness and reflection everywhere” (S. & H. 516: 4-8). That's what we're doing: we're subordinating the false testimony of the corporeal senses, which says that man is mortal, and we're seeing that the fact in Science is that man is God's idea. Whatever God is, man is, by reflection. We're seeing one infinite

man—not lots of separate human beings dotted about, but one infinite man. We're all “members one of another,” and that was symbolized by all those beasts and birds contained in the one great sheet. Mrs. Eddy says, again in her comments on the sixth day, “The world believes in many persons; but if God is personal, there is but one person, because there is but one God. His personality can only be reflected, not transmitted. God has countless ideas, and they all have one Principle and parentage. The rich in spirit help the poor in one grand brotherhood, all having the same Principle, or Father... All the varied expressions of God reflect health, holiness, immortality — infinite Life, Truth, and Love” (S&H 517:15-19; 518: 15-17, 21-23).

So in this tone of Love as Truth, the universal sense of brotherhood is coming to light, and we're seeing that “infinite space is peopled with God's ideas, reflecting Him in countless spiritual forms” (S. & H. 503:15-17). That's man, the one man.

VERSE 19. “Behold, three men seek thee”— the “three” of Life, Truth, and Love is always seeking you, always calling to you to recognize this one infinite man.

VERSE 20. Remember that Peter was on the housetop and had seen this vision of the one universal man, but he didn't yet know what that vision was going to lead him to, or bring to him. He was again told, “Arise,” but this time he was told, “and get thee down”; the Christ both lifts us up and also enables us to come down to meet every type of thought.

VERSE 23. “Then called he them in, and lodged them”— Peter at once took these “three men” into his consciousness; he accepted the universal sense of relationship which an understanding of Life, Truth, and Love brings.

“certain brethren ... accompanied him” — in verse 12 of the next chapter Peter says, “these six brethren accompanied me,” and that symbolizes that he took with him his true sense of manhood.

VERSES 25, 26. Throughout Acts and the Epistles there is this wonderful sense of nobody being superior and of everybody seeing that it was God alone who was operating. Nobody wanted to be worshipped or to be thought important, because everybody was much too intent on doing his job to bother about what other people thought about him, or whether he was more important than somebody else, or what his position was. It was Christianity, the one infinite man, which was impelling the apostles, and so they didn't care a bit about themselves as persons—they couldn't. In Christianity you learn to take, all good back to God and all evil back to animal magnetism.

VERSE 28. Mrs. Eddy says, and remember that we're considering Love as Truth: “With one Father, even God, the whole family of man would be brethren; and with one Mind and that God, or good, the brotherhood of man would consist of Love and Truth, and have unity of Principle and spiritual power which constitute divine Science” (S. & H. 469:30-5). The “brotherhood of man would consist of Love and Truth,”—would consist of a sense of the one infinite plan of Love, manifesting itself in one infinite ideal or Christ. This understanding of scientific oneness would certainly bring a demonstration of Principle and spiritual power, which would be humanly astounding but divinely natural.

I am sure that as this sense of the one infinite man becomes real and vital to us, it's going to enable us to accomplish the most wonderful things for humanity. It doesn't matter how small and insignificant you seem to be as a person, it doesn't matter if you're not known at all, because what you are spiritually as God's idea is the most powerful thing in all the world. When you come to think of it, it was amazing that that little band of apostles, hardly known by anyone in their time, was the nucleus of a world-embracing Christianity. Well, today too we may be a small bunch of people and nobody may know much about us, but that doesn't matter at all, and it's in quietness that great ideas grow. I feel that it's of the utmost importance that we're beginning to catch a glimpse of this one infinite man, because it's completely revolutionary. I often think to myself, "Do you realize that when we say that there's one infinite man we are touching something that, is revolutionary from a human point of view?" It's perfectly natural from God's point of view and from our point of view as God's image and likeness, but revolutionary to the world.

VERSE 29. "came I unto you without gainsaying"—a wonderful spontaneity! Notice that verse 33 shows that Cornelius also had this sense—"immediately therefore I sent to thee."

VERSE 30. It's interesting that Cornelius should have been fasting and that Peter was hungry; they were both eager for a new vision, and they must have felt that it was about to burst upon them.

VERSES 30-33. Cornelius recognized the power of God. We are sometimes so surprised when we find some individual recognizing the power of God and going forward with spiritual sense, when, in our ignorance, we didn't think that that individual thought anything about God or knew anything about God! But when we understand universal man, we're bound to see God manifest everywhere and to hear all kinds of people putting the things of God into words. Today they may not use the term "God," because it is associated with so much mysticism and superstition, but they speak rather of "fundamental values," "the nature of reality," or something of the kind.

VERSES 34, 35. Peter had seen the one infinite man.

VERSES 37, 38. Here we find a little seven-fold sequence in the order of the Word, — "that word... which was published throughout all Judaea," the creative Word, the sense of Mind; "and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached"— it went to all pure thought, all thought touched by Spirit; "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth"— Jesus was identified by Soul — "with the Holy Ghost and with power"— he was identified with the power of Principle; "who went about doing good"— that enabled him to go about and multiply good to all men; "healing all that were oppressed of the devil"— there's the tone of Truth, which is always to do with the health, or wholeness, of man; "for God was with him"— because he was one with Love. You find these little instances of the four orders time and time again in Acts.

VERSES 44-48. I think that Mrs. Eddy is here saying the same thing as Peter: "God is universal; confined to no spot, defined by no dogma, appropriated by no sect. Not more to one than to all, is God demonstrable as divine Life, Truth, and Love; and His people they that reflect Him — that reflect Love" (Mis. 150:25-29). She also says,

“Christian Science is not only the acme of Science but the crown of Christianity. It is universal. It appeals to man as man; to the whole and not to a portion; to man physically, as well as spiritually, and to all mankind. (Mis. 252:17-21).

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