

April 5 — SUBJECT: Are Sin, Disease, and Death Real?

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.

The first selection is from Mrs. Eddy's—THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST AND MISCELLANY. Our other selection this week is from John Doorly's TALK ON THE SCIENCE OF THE BIBLE—VOL 3-MOSES.

The First Church of Christ Science and Miscellany

What is the cardinal point of the difference in my metaphysical system? This, that by knowing the unreality of disease, sin, and death, you demonstrate the allness of God. This difference wholly separates my system from all others. The reality of these so-called existences I deny, because they are not to be found in God, and this system is built on Him as the sole cause.

Mary Baker Eddy

“I AM Hath Sent Me unto You”

“And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them?” (Ex. 3: 13). This whole story illustrates identity-Soul as Soul-and you see it all the way through.

“And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM:”—and that has often been translated “I will be that I will be,” and I love that translation. “And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you” (Ex.3:14). When you begin to understand God as Soul, and you begin to see that there is only one identity and that all things are identified with that one identity, you see that every operation of idea in any way at all is an effect of the I AM. “I AM hath sent me unto you.” Then your thinking, your life, your Christian Science treatment, becomes Immanuel, “God with us.” Then you will have no difficulty at all in burning the tares and burning them so that they don't hurt “the oil and the wine” (Rev. 6: 6), and you will have no difficulty in establishing the idea. It is a wonderful sense, this sense of Soul as Soul. You remember that Mrs. Eddy says, “The only intelligence or substance of a thought a seed, or a flower is God, the creator of it. Mind is the Soul of all Mind is Life, Truth, and Love which governs all” (S. & H. 1-1. 508: 5.8)....

The three signs

“And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor harken unto my voice — that sounds just like us. We say, “What is the use of telling them? They just won't believe me.” “For they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee”— it really sounds very familiar! “And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod”— the rod of the five physical senses, “And he said, Cast it on the ground, dust to dust,

nothingness to nothingness.” “And he cast it on the ground, And it became a serpent” (Ex. 4: 1-3) he saw that it was animal magnetism.

Jesus said, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8: 44). Jesus traced all evil back to the one evil the lie that there is something unlike God. In Mrs. Eddy’s household, when they talked about evil, whether it was a world calamity or a cold, she said, “It is animal magnetism,” and that is the only patient you have to deal with. Until you see that, you are never safe. “The basic error is mortal mind (S.&H. 405:1).

What we do is to pin evil on others hardly ever on ourselves. We are often artists at pinning it on others. But we’ve got to learn that all the evil there is, is the one evil. It claims to be many, but it is one: it is animal magnetism, So Moses’ rod became a serpent, the symbol of animal magnetism.

“And Moses fled from before it. And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail” (Ex. 4:3, 4). If you take a serpent by the tail it can sting you; if you take it by the neck it can’t sting you. But you must take the serpent of animal magnetism by the tail and know that it has no sting. Know that it has no cause, no effect, no type, no name, no nature, no being, no history, no substance, no reality, no personality, no voice, knowing will wipe it out. Take it by the tail and wipe it out— that is the only way to handle it.

Mrs. Eddy once said that we had better leave evil alone until we knew how to deal with it, and the way to deal with it is to annihilate it. The Scripture says, “Agree with thine adversary quickly” (Matt 5: 25). The whole gamut of evil is nothingness. It is the claim of a vacuum, and because Truth is positive there can be no negative. Truth is infinitely positive and that makes a negative an absolute impossibility. All the evil there is—all sin, disease, and death—is negative, and there is nothing positive in it. And so Moses was to take the serpent by the tail, and that is the way to handle it—to know its nothingness. “And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand” (Ex, 4: 4). You remember that the shepherd passes the sheep under his rod. The rod then becomes something of value. When you handle animal magnetism and you translate mortal mind out of itself, that experience becomes a rod that is of some value, for it corrects you. So that experience with the serpent was a symbol of how to handle sin. Now Moses is shown how to handle disease.

“And the Lord said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again;”—into his thought;—”and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh”—the disease was destroyed, and every disease is destroyed in that way.

“And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign,”—the overcoming of the physical senses,—”that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land”

(Ex. 4:6-9). Remember Mrs. Eddy's definition of river: "Channel of thought. When smooth and unobstructed, it typifies the course of Truth; but muddy, foaming, and dashing, it is a type of error" (S.&H. 593:14-17).

And so Moses was to "take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land," "the dry state of thought," and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood"—Life. We are face to face with that proposition in what we are trying to do today. I love the practice of Christian Science and I love the healing work, but when Christian Science began, the healing work was the sign that would convince men, but it won't do it alone today. In my own experience I have healed many people physically, but it has had not the slightest effect on some of them spiritually.

Today we live in a world in which hell seems to be let loose, the hell of the dry state of consciousness, that state of consciousness which has discarded God for the belief of physical science, that state of consciousness that is enthralled by what physical science is going to bring out next. That state of thought may not believe the first sign or the second sign, but it will believe the third sign, and unless we can present to mankind today the Science of Christ, the Science of Mind and Mind's ideas—the third sign—then it won't be convinced. If you can get a man or woman to see the Science of Christianity, he or she will be able to heal the sick and overcome sin. Jesus didn't stop at healing the sick. Healing the sick was "the outward and visible sign" he gave, but he overcame sin and death and showed all men the way of salvation. I love the healing of the sick, and whenever I see a good case of healing it is a great joy to me, but it will not establish Christian Science today without a scientific sense. It is the attempt to establish Christian Science merely through healing the sick that makes the man-in-the-street say, "Oh yes, Christian Scientists are the people who don't believe in doctors." Now, the main purpose of Christian Science is to prove that "there is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter" (S.&H. 468:9-10). Today what is the use of you and me healing a few sick people unless we can help the condition of the world? It is just side-stepping the issue.

If this wonderful Moses sense of things comes to us and we identify ourselves with God, when we come to the point of the Word as the Christ and we see Soul as Soul, and touch Soul as Principle, Soul as Life, and we begin to understand what it means, and to feel the touch of it, then this experience becomes more than a rod in our hands, or the healing of disease, it becomes living waters upon the dry land—all that constitutes power and being and attainment and realization and protection. It will manifest itself in the overcoming of the physical senses and in healing disease, but above all it will manifest itself in the "greater works," the ability to give the Truth to mankind, whereby all men will be "kings and priests unto God" (Rev. 1:6), "for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord" (Jer. 31:34).

We are going to see how the Joseph and Benjamin state of thought went on developing and developing until it fulfilled the picture of the children of Israel. You remember that Mrs. Eddy says, "The twelve tribes of Israel with all mortals,—separated by belief from man's divine origin and the true idea,—will through much tribulation yield to the activities of the divine Principle of man in the harmony of Science. These are the stars in the crown of rejoicing" (S. & H. 11-17). They are the stars in your crown of rejoicing. In this Soul sense there is joy

and bliss and freedom. Freedom from what? Freedom from personal sense, fear, hate, jealousy, envy, heredity, self-restriction, all these things that impose themselves on us. Instead we shall have a true sense of identity with God and identity with every other idea...

Woman Saves the Situation

And then you remember that the Pharaoh told the midwives that they were to kill every man-child (see Ex. 1:15, 16). Mrs. Eddy once wrote in a message that the Christian Science movement needed the man-thought very much. One of the dangers to Christian Science always has been that it is considered a woman's religion; it is the religion of woman, but not of females. And so the Pharaoh always sees—just as later on Herod saw—that if you can destroy the male child you destroy the beginning of everything. The man child represents the creative sense, "Let there be light," so if you can destroy the man child you will destroy everything. Eventually it is the woman sense that conceives and gives birth, but if you can destroy the man child, the creative sense, then there is no beginning whatever. The Pharaoh always sees that. Well, what saved the situation? The midwives—that is, the woman sense—saved the situation....

The Rod

All the way through this story you notice so much about the rod, and I want you to consider it carefully. The rod comes in a great deal in connection with Moses, and it is a means of measurement, and everything must measure up to it. Mrs. Eddy gives a beautiful sense of the rod when she says, "Sweet, indeed, are these uses of His rod! Well it is that the Shepherd of Israel passes all His flock under His rod into His fold; thereby numbering them, and giving them refuge at last from the elements of earth" (Mis. 9: 4-8).

You will see that at first, during the plagues of Egypt, Aaron used the rod, and then later Moses used it. That rod rises higher and higher as a symbol for each one of us, as we understand more and more. Its real purpose is to make things measure up. It is able to analyze the physical as the physical; it is able to lead you into the second degree, the moral; and then it is able to lead you even further—into the third degree, annihilation—because it makes everything measure up. It deals intelligently with the carnal mind. If you are not watching, your thought doesn't measure up.

When one stresses the scientific aspect of Christian Science, one sometimes hears people say, "Oh, it is making it so difficult, because it's making it so exact." Is it intelligent to believe that you must spend a lifetime consistently, persistently, and meticulously studying any human subject, such as mathematics or music, but that you can gush and be emotional about the Science of infinite reality, the vastest thing in the world? It is pathetic and childish to believe such a thing. That is the belief that must be broken down, and it is the rod that is going to break it down. "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Ps. 23: 4); as you use the rod, that measuring rod, it will become to you a staff, and it will comfort you.

The Three Signs

And then you remember how Moses was given three signs. He was first told to cast his rod

on the ground, and it became a serpent, and he fled before it. (see Ex. 4:2,3) When you begin to cast the rod of material sense, the rod which involves sin and penalty, on the ground, you see the enormity of physical; belief, and so you flee before it. But wisdom bids you come back and handle that belief, and nothing will tell you to do that but wisdom; evil wouldn't tell you to come back and handle it, because evil is always saying, "Let us alone."

Next, Moses put his hand into his bosom and it came out white with leprosy, and then he put it back and it was restored to its normal condition (Ex. 4:6,7). You begin to see that sickness and disease are just mental propositions. And then you come to the third proof, the wonderful third proof, where you take the water of life, and you pour it on the dry state of consciousness, and it becomes blood— becomes vital (see Ex. 4:9). "Yet in my flesh shall I see God" (J19: 26).

Someone asked me the other day why Mrs. Eddy didn't say anything about the third proof in her statement about this story. Well, as a matter of fact, she does. She gives a wonderful interpretation of it. Let's see what she says about all three signs.

"The Hebrew Lawgiver, slow of speech, despaired of making the people understand what should be revealed to him. When, led by wisdom to cast down his rod, he saw it become a serpent, Moses fled before it"—we all do. When we begin to see the physical as the physical, we begin to see the enormity of it, the hideousness of it, and how it must be gotten rid of, and then we are apt to flee before it." But wisdom bade him come back and handle the serpent, and then Moses' fear departed. In this incident was seen the actuality of Science. Matter was shown to be a belief only. The serpent, evil, under wisdom's bidding, was destroyed through understanding divine Science, and this proof was a staff upon which to lean. The illusion of Moses lost its power to alarm him, when he discovered that what he apparently saw was really but a phase of mortal belief." The rod which Moses had at that point was just beginning to be a measuring rod. The rod of mortal mind is that which beats us, that which is penalty and cruelty and so on, but the rod of God is the measuring rod that makes everything come up to standard. As Moses began to see that, he cast on the ground his old sense of the rod—"dust to dust, ashes to ashes"—and then he saw that it was a serpent. He saw that it was the first degree of mortal mind, the physical, and he fled before it, but you don't get rid of the physical by fleeing before it or by casting it on the ground: you get rid of it through analysis, and then you must go on to uncover and annihilate it.

"It was scientifically demonstrated that leprosy was a creation of mortal mind and not a condition of matter, when Moses first put his hand into his bosom and drew it forth white as snow with the dread disease, and presently restored his hand to its natural condition by the same simple process. God had lessened Moses' fear by this proof in divine Science, and the inward voice became to him the voice God, which said: 'It shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.' And so it was in the coming century when the Science of being was demonstrated by Jesus, who showed his students the power of Mind by changing water into wine and taught them how to handle serpents unharmed, to heal the sick cast out evils in proof of the supremacy of Mind" (S.&H. 321:2).

"By changing water into wine"—that was the third sign shown to Moses. Moses saw that he

was to take the water of the river and pour it on the dry state of consciousness till it became inspiration. Jesus changed the water into wine, which is also a symbol of Life, of inspiration.

Now Moses was given those three signs because he was tending his thoughts, and because he was tending his thoughts his rod became a measuring rod, and as his rod became a measuring rod he was not only able to cast the rod of material sense on the ground, but he was able to heal the sick, and to show signs—that is, give proof of his understanding. All the way through it was the rod which enabled him to show signs, but when we rise to the highest sense of the rod, it is the third sign—a sense of Science, that so measures things that there is nothing left but Science. If you have a measuring rod that is accurate, you can get rid of everything that is not accurate. It is not related, though, that Moses appreciated or used the third sign.



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