

June 2, 2003—Subject: God the Only Cause and Creator

DEAR FRIENDS: We plan to use this spot on our web page to bring you a different set of citations each week—expanding on specific citations from the “Weekly Lesson.” A paraphrase can so often open thought to new insights of familiar statements. In this way we hope to share with you some of the wonderful work that has been done in Christian Science over the past fifty years and in to the present by authors you may or may not have yet met.

Our selections this week correspond to the Responsive Reading and Section 3 of The Lesson.

The first is from John Morgan’s — VERBATIM REPORT ON THE GOSPEL OF MARK— Given at a FELIXSTOWE SUMMER SCHOOL in 1955.

The other is from — TALK ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES — by Peggy M. Brook.

MARK

Vv. 13-17. “And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees...to catch him in his words. And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true., and carest for no man:for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar,or not?... But he,knowing their hypocrisy, said,...bring me a penny...Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar’s. And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s...”

Here the sub-tone of Truth,in Love as Truth, fulfils all things rightly and justly, eliminatiing a barren sense of the mere letter of the law. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil” (Matt. 5:17). There’s no conflict whatever between our divine loyalties and our human obligations. It appears sometimes as if there is, but that discrepancy will always resolve itself if we are first loyal to Truth, for Truth has a Christ or modus operandi,and will open up a way, either enabling us to fulfil the human requirements, or by changing the circumstances themselves. Jesus,for example,paid his taxes promptly and effortlessly, although he knew that the Son is exempt.

In this section we see the man is based upon a divine idealism, and, as Mrs. Eddy says, he is therefore pre-eminent among men, standing at the head of all reform; he sets the tone for a higher standard in social, civil, criminal, political and religious codes. (See Ret. 70:26-6;S and H. 34O:23-29.) You see that so clearly with the headmaster of a school or the head of a business: if that man has integrity and ideals, and is self-disciplined, he leavens and ennobles the whole of that school or business; everyone’s character rises to measure up to the example set. Now if that’s true in a little mortal way, how much more so is it in the case of Love’s divine ideal of man! Our divine ideals will not be in conflict with our human obligations; we can conform to both, without breaking the law or hurting our conscience. Do you feel the sense of Truth? It makes whole,it keeps whole,it preserves the sweetness and balance of the whole. Truth,in Love as Truth enables us to fulfil all obligations honestly, wisely and humanely, not by coming down to those things, but by lifting them and ourselves to a diviner basis.

**** ACTS **** SOUL (Chapters 3:1-4: 37)

Fundamental spiritual identity, the fact of Soul, irresistibly demonstrates itself under all circumstances.

SOUL as Life (Chapter 3:1-26). The fundamental identity of Soul brings to light (demonstrates) man's eternal individuality. Through the realization that every man's fundamental identity is in the divine plan "before Abraham was," we prove the active, vital, living presence of true individuality.

Here in this tone of Soul we have the first instance of individual healing in the Acts, and it comes through the realization that fundamental spiritual identity is a vital, ever-present reality. None of us can ever get away from our fundamental spiritual identity. Christianity is always taking every idea back to its Principle, and Soul in Christianity means that our fundamental spiritual identity is the only thing we can ever return to. Mortal mind's argument is that people may improve for a bit, but that they lapse again; or it says that certain people are incurably allergic to certain things, and so forth. But if we ever do go back, it is only to our spiritual identity—that all we can ever return to. Soul is changeless, and therefore our fundamental spiritual identity is changeless. So if mortal mind says that there is a going back or a reversal, "agree with thine adversary" in the sense of knowing that all that you can ever return to is your fundamental spiritual identity. That is true practically, if we love Science; whatever the experience, it can only take us closer to our Principle, back to Principle. That was true of Jesus at the crucifixion—it set him forward, not back, because he got nearer to Principle as a result of it. Of course, the absolute truth is that man, as the idea of Principle, can never leave his Principle. But in human experience, Soul translates every happening into a blessing which shows us more of Truth; what we have to remember is that it was our understanding of Truth which exposed the error in the first place. There is only God. Mortal mind never has the initiative; in reality there is no such thing as mortal mind, and so everything leads back to God inevitably. All roads lead to God," you might say. There is only God going on, and so everything leads us back to God if we love Science and feel the reality of it.

CHAPTER 3

VERSE 1, "the ninth hour"—that's rather wonderful, because "nine," or 3 x 3, seems to symbolize here the multiplication of identity, which is the abundance of identity manifesting itself, the spontaneity of identity manifesting itself, and that's exactly what happened in this incident, which has the tone of Soul as Life.

VERSE 2. "a certain man lame from his mother's womb"—that would seem to indicate that what the apostle had to see was that the identity of this man had never been born into matter, or why should it mention "from his mother's womb"? The apostles had to see that this man had never been born into matter and had never lived for a certain number of years in matter, because his identity had always been in Life. Therefore his identity was in eternity, in oneness, in the "open firmament of heaven"—it had never been in a material womb. So Peter and John identified this man as living in Life—in the spontaneity of oneness, with all the movement and individuality of Life.

"to ask alms"—the true sense of asking alms is the prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," which is the fifth statement of the Lord Prayer.

Verses 2-4. I always imagine that this man was a bit apathetic, because he had got into the habit of lying daily at this gate. Day in and day out, he was in the same old place waiting for alms-I think that he had just got used to it and it had become his life. And then when Peter and John came along and didn't give him anything, but said, "Look on us " that must have roused him somewhat. It startled him and woke something up in him. Peter and John were inspired to make this definite statement and to rouse that man to expect something more than alms. Mrs. Eddy says; "If it becomes necessary to startle mortal mind to break its dream of suffering, vehemently to tell your patient that he must awake. Turn his gaze"-this is what Peter and John were doing-"from the false evidence of the senses to the harmonious facts of Soul and immortal being" (S. & H. 420: 28-32). It was the scientific fact of Soul as Life operating-not Peter and John as persons-which turned this man's thought away from the evidence of the senses. So Mrs. Eddy says that you've sometimes got to startle mortal mind, and you can startle mortal mind by doing all sorts of things-it all depends what Principle tells you to do!

I've often found that if I really pray earnestly to know what to say and do in a case of healing, I'm sometimes quite surprised at the answer that comes. It isn't always the voicing of a lot of metaphysical statements which is needed. Sometimes it comes to you to do something which you may feel is just a human impulse, but which is nevertheless the way the Christ needs to be expressed in a particular situation. If you let your spiritual sense guide you spontaneously, -if you let Soul operate as Life, -you will accept what comes to you to do in individual cases. For instance, I remember that a long time ago I was helping somebody and it suddenly came to me to ring up this person. At first I thought to myself, "I don't want to be one of these practitioners who rings up all the time to find out how everything is going," but then I thought, "No, I'm not ringing up for that reason; I just feel that it would be right to ring up-I'm sure of it." So I rang up that girl and we said a couple of words to one another; I don't know that anything very metaphysical was said, but I learnt a long time afterwards that at that point there was a change in the whole condition and it began to clear up. It was a contact which seemed to be merely human, but Principle impelled me to make it, and I've often found that if I'm awake, Principle impels me to do something which might seem to be the outcome of a mere human impulse, but if I'm sure it's of Principle, then I know it's the right step to take.

VERSE 6. "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk"-we shall find healing "in the name of Jesus Christ" taking place again and again in the Acts. What does that phrase mean? It really means that the apostles were identifying their spiritual authority with the same divine power which enabled Jesus Christ to demonstrate his dominion at all times and under all circumstances. You see, what must have been uppermost in those apostles' thoughts was Jesus' crowning demonstration over death, because it was unique. Jesus had told them that he would rise again on the third day, and he had done this, and they had all witnessed it. Naturally it coloured their whole thought. What Jesus proved was that man's spiritual identity is deathless and that his life is in spiritual identity, not in a material body. This he proved beyond a shadow of doubt. He said, in effect, "Take what you call my body and hang it on the cross and do what you like to it, and I'll show you that that isn't me. Moreover, *I can reproduce that human concept because it's just the outcome of thought, it's just a mental proposition.*

...So this phrase, "In the name of Jesus Christ," implies that the apostles understood that Jesus' demonstration proved that man's identity is not in a material body, but in Soul, and therefore that his life is not at the mercy of whatever this material body is manifesting or saying, but is safe in Soul. Don't you think that those disciples must have realized that fact about this man who was lame from his mother's womb? They must have thought, "What a lie that this man was ever born into matter. Jesus proved that man does not live in matter," and this was so natural to Peter and John that they could say to this man, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth"-in other words, "by reason of the nature of the demonstration which Jesus Christ made"-rise up and walk."

Verses 7. "immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength"-I love that "immediately." I wish that healing was always immediate. It was the spontaniety of Life, the identification of Life at that split second, which the apostles were proving here. They proved that *there is no mortal history and rherefore no time*, and we shall experience quick healings when we too really see that.

Verses 8. This gives a wonderful sense of what Mrs. Eddy meant when she said, "The sinless joy,-the perfect harmony and immortality of Life, possessing unlimited divine beauty and goodness without a single bodily pleasure or pain,—constitutes the only veritable, indestructible man, whose being is spiritual" (S & H. 76: 22-26). Those loyely words, "walking, and leaping, and praising God," give such a sense of well-being,—abundance of well-being. It wasn't just a little demonstration, so that instead of lying at the gate the man sat in a chair at the gate, or something of the kind; it was a case of him seeing the perfection of true identity and expressing it immediately in a vital, active way.

VERSE 10. "the Beautiful gate of the temple"—I like the gate being called Beautiful, because it gives a sense of Soul,—of the joy and the beauty of Soul. It's interesting to realize that that man had apparently never before gone on into the true temple—he had stayed outside at the Beautiful gate and had never gone through that gate. Mrs. Eddy's definition of "temple" reads, in part: "Body; the idea of Life, substance, and intelligence; the superstructure of Truth; the shrine of Love" (S. & H. 595: 7-9). That temple, or true body, is not a corporeal thing, not a bodily organization or an organization of people; it is entirely a spiritual thing. Here Soul as Life operated through Peter and John to enable this man to see his true identity as spontaneous in Life,—never born into matter, never living in in matter,—so he entered the true temple, the true sense of body. "and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him—"I'm trying hard these days not to be "filled with wonder and amazement" when someone gets healed quickly, because it's divinely natural, and the more we can see that it's natural, the more these so-called miracles will take place. When one feels that one hasn't had anything at all to do with a healiing, because God has done it, one usually isn't filled with such wonder and amazement and it does seem perfectly natural. Mrs. Eddy says, "It was the consummate naturalness of Truth in the mind of Jesus that made his healing easy and instantaneous. *Jesus regarded good as the normal state of man, and evil as the abnormal*; holiness, life, and health as the better representatives of God than sin, disease, and death" (Mis. 200: 1-6). The "consummate naturalness of. Truth in the mind of Jesus"! If we could see that it was natural. to be well, natural to be healthy, natural to be happy, natural to have dominion, natural to love, and so forth, those things would come to us so much more easily. It's Science which is going to let us see that, too, because Science is exact and Science is harmony and there's no penalty in Science.

Sometimes if you've been healthy for a very long time, you begin to wonder what might happen to you! Or if things have been going swimmingly, or well and happily, you're apt to think, "This is too good to last!" That's just superstition, and if we accept Science, there's got to be good, because good is exactness, harmony, perfection, and if we are working from Science we should expect these things, and we shouldn't be "filled with wonder and amazement" at them. Glorifying in the goodness of God as supremely natural is a lovely thing to do, and it's something we've all got to learn.



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