

**July 11, 2005 – Subject: Life**

**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 – A TALK ON THE GOSPEL OF MARK by John Morgan.

**LIFE**

(Chapters 2:1-3:35)

The ideal ever at one with its Source

What does Life in the Christ sequence tell us? It is simply the tone of, from Principle. Coming forth from Principle we live: from Principle is the only Life. “In Him we live and move and have our being.”

“I know no life divided. “It presents the Life, which is God, and living the Life, which is God. Many times in the Bible and the textbook we read that God is Life, but some twenty times Mrs. Eddy puts it the other way round and makes it much more dynamic by saying that Life is God. The fact that God is Life is a Word sense of things, but the fact that Life is God is a Christ sense of things for it starts with the origin, the source. The first is a fact that you can read and learn and talk about, but the fact that Life is God is something that you can only live. It’s no longer on paper but is a matter of living and of being.

So with Life in the Christ we get this symbol of the fountain of Life, – “For with Thee is the fountain of life;” the Source. The chief feature of a fountain is that it is continually flowing, and similarly Life here is not only the fact but also the perpetual flow of all being. Fact and function are one, and when we speak of the Source and the fountain, we are there in that picture as the flow, – Life living itself is our life. So it is that Life closes the gap, this sense of separateness that there might be between the Christ story and ourselves. It names us as the livingness of this picture, the flow and the vitality of it, and in the measure that we be it, even in this present sense of things, we’ve touched the Life which is God. We read on Paul 4:24, for example, “Reflect this Life, and with it cometh the full power of being.”

Also very strongly brought out, through all these Life tones, is the inseparability or indivisibility of Principle from its idea, the indivisibility of Life from the living of Life. In the “Sermon on the Mount” Matthew’s text corresponding to this point is the salt and the saviour; that is oneness in quality, salt and saltness, the life-line, the life-link, the unity of being. “For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself” as it is put in John 5:26.

## Individuality

The word with which we’re most familiar that defines Life in the Christ is individuality, and we’re going to think a lot about individuality in these tones because it is so tremendous and dynamic. It deals with the indivisibility of Life from Life’s expression. The moment we make the assertion that Life is God, that applies right here. So we get this closeness, this indivisibility of my life from the Life divine, and therefore that little “my” of “my life” dissolves away, and whether I think of Life as my life or as God, it is synonymous. Life is God, hence indivisibility, undividedness, – and inseparability.

S. & H. 55:27-30 “Our great example, Jesus, could re-store the individualized manifestation of existence, which seemed to vanish *in* death.” This is a familiar reference with most of us by now; *it* is such a clear, pure sense of individuality. What could Jesus restore? *H* i s life? No. His body? No, nothing like that, not even his own individuality, but the individualized manifestation of existence. Isn’t that a colossal sense of one’s life, of one’s individuality? It isn’t ours, but is the one Life individualizing itself through infinite manifestations. The *in*-dividualized manifestation of being. It’s such a sweet and sure sense of oneness; it never was severed, never separate in quality, *in* time or space or person or experience or in any other way. Individuality, then, is going to be the keynote running through the Life sections.

S. and H. 20 2:3 “The scientific unity which exists between God and man must be wrought out in life-practice...” That scientific unity which exists between God and man is really the Principle story, where we saw that there is the One, the causative One, the beloved One, and so on. But now Life makes clear that this scientific unity, which does exist, must be actualized in life-practice, and moreover *it* inspires us and enables us to do it. What we call Life; spelt with a big L and life spelt with a little l aren’t two, separate lives. The little life is simply our

individualized sense of capital Life. It is not less in quality; it seems to be less in quantity or scope, but in quality it is absolutely the same, and so we can work out this unity *in* life-practice. I don't know anything that gives us a sweeter sense of life than that simple statement that Life is God, rather than – that God is Life. Starting with the quality is somehow much nearer than starting with the, magnitude of the term God.

Misc. 103:24-23 By the way, the article from, which this reference comes – the Address *in* Chicago called “Science and the Senses,” has no less-than twenty-five references to individuality in half a dozen pages; it is all to do with individuality and the fact that each man's individual mission is inseparable from God's Being; each man's life and quality derives from the divine. All the way through it is dealing with how man's individuality is never wrong; how man's individuality is free from sin, because it isn't man's individuality but is the divine being particularized. The reference is too long for us to read now, but briefly Mrs. Eddy says, “(Jesus') individualized being, the Christ, was at rest *in* the eternal harmony. His unseen individuality, so superior to that which was seen, was not subject to the temptations of the flesh. In Science all being is individual; for individuality is endless in the calculus of forms and numbers.” Again, “In obedience to the divine nature, man's individuality reflects the divine law and order of being.” Isn't that a clear sense that there is no escape from divinity? We're held in bonds, we are yoked to Principle, and our individuality reflects the divine law: and order of being.

Through these Life sections, we shall move away from the old sense that human life is made up of experiences. It isn't experiences but is life, and because Life is God, even our existence is not a succession of isolated events. We often say that an episode was a peculiar experience, or a healthy experience; but it wasn't just an experience, all is one continuous flow. Life is continuity; it is that, which flows, and we tend to chop up whatever happens and look at it as an isolated experience, but truly it is Life living itself as us. We simply see the highlights of it, or the shadows of it, – and so are conscious *of* it spasmodically, yet really it is more like an escalator than a staircase. Life lives itself as you and me, and therefore it will not allow any isolated being any detached or segregated entity.

## **LIFE as SPIRIT**

(Ch. 2:13-22)

The Individuality of Life brings new vision and new circumstances.

Life as Mind told us that individuality is the flow from the one Source and is therefore sinless. Now Life as Spirit explains how this flow of Life brings new values, new mission, and new circumstance. I think that “circumstance” should be in the singular here, to be nearer the sense of Life. If we have circumstances in the plural it is, like experiences, – an event here and another one there. Yet even human life isn’t a succession of happenings, but is one continuous flow. So it is that Life as Spirit tells us that the individuality of Life brings new vision and new circumstance.

Vv. 13,14. And he went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and *he* taught them. And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, “Follow me”. And he arose and “followed him.” The very first sentence there sets the note – “And he went forth again.” New vision is wonderful, but unless we go forth with that new vision, we tend to put it back into yesterday’s old bottles, and then it dies.

It’s of paramount importance in life that when new vision comes to us we hang unto it, and let *it* take us where it will; we must go forward with that new view and not attempt to take it and bring it back to apply to yesterday’s problem. If we do, we don’t go forward. New vision comes to us continually because the nature of Life is Spirit or perpetual spiritual unfoldment. If we’re wise we will so love that new vision we will be caught up by its, fiery chariot, so that by the time we come to earth again it won’t be the same circumstance we left: it will be fresh and will have unfolded as something new. Do let us watch that in Life as Spirit we don’t grasp the new vision with one hand and the old problem with the other; if we do we get pulled apart. This is so clearly brought *out* all the way through the tone of Life as Spirit. As Blake put it,

“He that bends to himself a Joy  
Doth the winged life destroy?  
But he who kisses the Joy as it flies  
Lives in Eternity’s sunrise.”

An example comes from the record of a woman who lived in Mrs. Eddy’s household in her later days, when she was getting them to see that the overcoming of negatives and ills is a very minor part of Christian living, but that the major purpose *of* Christian Science is to show us

how to live above the so-called normal human requirements, such as writing a letter in *one* minute instead *of* needing ten for it. In order to show this higher kind of demonstration, Mrs. Eddy once handed one of her vests to this helper and said, "Take that away and shorten the sleeves for me." The woman said, "Yes", but hesitated. When Mrs. Eddy asked her what she was waiting for, the woman said she wanted to measure her arm. Mrs. Eddy took back the vest brusquely, and said, "Give it back, you've missed the lesson!" It sounds a bit fierce, yet the point is that the human would love to take a new vision and do it all over again in the human way: to alter the garment on a human basis instead of going on demonstration. Now we're all guilty of that, more perhaps than we ought to be, but it is a wonderful thing in Life as Spirit to go forward with our vision. If we don't, the Life as Soul section shows us what happens – the right hand of spiritual power withers.

So Matthew, - a great and wonderful character, - saw that this divine way was what he wanted. He would go after it regardless of the cost, for this was real substance and true values. It was the only thing he really wanted. The name Levi means "attached to" so it would seem that when he was Levi he was attached, anchored down in yesterday; then when the new vision came he was no longer attached, no longer Levi but Matthew, which means the gift of "Jehovah," "the gift of Jah." Like the first four disciples, he changed his father and worked no longer for wages and profit, but for Principle. He arose and followed Jesus. When we follow the Christ vision, it makes us rise: we don't stumble after it, we rise because it lifts us up.

V. 15. "And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. It sounds as if Jerusalem was full of undesirable types, nothing but publicans and sinners; but the word "sinners" should be translated there "outcasts." The human sense of purity has such a false standard of values; it holds that some people are outcasts and some are not. By sitting at meat with them, Jesus is showing that no matter what you did yesterday, *or* what appeared to be the human truth about you yesterday, if you will take up your anchor and move forward, it can't hold you any more. Move forward with your vision.

Vv. 16,17. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? When Jesus heard it,

he saith unto them, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." In other words, the Christ comes to show men how to hit the mark, how not to miss the divine mark by being an outcast *or* a sinner *or* staying back in yesterday. You see there the false human sense of purity, which would judge man by reading *from* matter. Jesus' assessment of purity was by reading from motives and from the values of a man.

Vv. 18-20. And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days."

That bridegroom is, of course, the Old Testament symbol of being wedded to Principle; what he is saying is that we're not just wedded once and for all. That wedding is a spiritual at-one-ment which is a perpetual wedding, a perpetual renewal of the marriage.

It is a matter of being wedded in substance and in quality, not just in quantity or in time. The bridegroom is never taken away from us if we go on being wedded, for it involves this continuity and progression. In chapter 33 Ezekiel says that if a man has been righteous for years and years and then makes a mistake, it's no use his asking, Why should this happen to me? He says there is no accumulated merit in having been righteous for years; we have got to go on being righteous. If we drop off that pinnacle of being wedded to righteousness, we're penalized just the same as the fellow who was off the mark all the time; and rightly so, for being Principled is a perpetual thing.

Life as Spirit gives us this word perpetual, – perpetually new rather than eternal newness. "Eternal" somehow has the connotation of going on and on, whereas perpetual newness invites a sense of now and new. Fresh every second, every instant. Mrs. Eddy has a wonderful reference about perpetual individuality.

No. 11:5-7 "Man has perpetual individuality; and God's laws, and their intelligent and harmonious action, constitute his individuality in the Science of Soul." God's laws in action constitute his individuality. Now,

God's laws in action, like Life itself, are perpetual, not made once only, and we have to preserve this fresh sense of our true individuality. That is the bridegroom who is never taken from us. If, however, we were to acknowledge that Life is spiritual and yet let our obligations to it lapse, then the bridegroom is taken from us and there's mourning. You see the thing about a bridegroom is that it is merely a momentary title we give to an individual when he is actually going through the marriage ceremony; before that he's a young man, or a fiancée, and after that he's a husband; the bridegroom is that split-second instant of *popping* the ring on her finger; so it is perpetual, and is something that has to be continually renewed.

Now that deals with this question of fasting. If our wedding to the newness of Life is perpetual, then it does away with a laboured sense of having to fast and abstain from materiality, and to make up with ritual the spiritual morale of divine marriage. Here is an opposite reference: "Is it such a fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen?"

To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?" (Isaiah 58:5-8). Isn't that a wonderful sense of weighing anchor and no longer being tied *up* to yesterday? Life as Spirit always unfolds new vision and new circumstance in which to clothe that vision, yet it is the course that the human in us is so reluctant to follow. We love new vision, but then we always want to bring it back here to make this experience a little happier or a bit nicer, whereas if we have that moment of courage to hang onto the chariot of vision, like Elijah going up, it will lead us into something quite new and fresh.

A person we knew, who was not very contented in his work, had spent a period in hospital; but had made a remarkably quick recovery in the circumstances. While lying there in bed, he had had the leisure, for the first time for years, to think out afresh some of the fundamental issues of life, and had enjoyed wonderfully new vision and outlook. Immediately on coming out of hospital the opportunity came to enter into a new life, which would have lifted him right out of all the old atmosphere that had caused the physical trouble, but he couldn't quite make the grade, for lack of a progressive spiritual outlook, and so slipped back into where

he had been for the past many years. That's a sad story, isn't it? Yet it is what happens if we don't step forward with our new vision. This person had it in his hands to let his new vision lead him into a new life, and had one or two little stiles been climbed he would have been well situated. Well, it will come round his way again, and the next time he'll be able to profit by it. So it is that Mark shows how, if we follow the advanced idea, it resolves the withered hand of frustration and conservatism, and unfolds new possibilities, and horizons.

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