

November 17, 2003 - Subject: Soul & Body

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.

We thought it might be of interest to see how our authors have depicted the “transfiguration” as it appeared in each of The Gospels. Noting that Matthew is the Gospel on The Word—Mark on The Christ—Luke on Christianity and John on Science.

For *Matthew*, we have John Doorly’s talk on *The Gospel of Matthew* given at his Oxford Summer School in 1948. For background information on Mr. Doorly please [click here](#).

MATTHEW 16: 25-17: 1 CHAPTER 17

Now we come to the transfiguration, one of the most perfect illustrations of translation. Let’s consider it as Scientists and see its true spiritual meaning. In doing this, we must always remember to “take off our shoes,”—lay aside our “material appendages” (Mis 17:9), —because the place whereon we stand is “holy ground.” We need to let go of a material sense of existence, including all sense-impressions of the past, so that we can attend the new birth of the Christ-idea as Science.

VERSE 1. There were four of them in the mountain—Jesus, Peter, James, and John.

VERSE 2. “his face did shine as the sun”—his identity was seen as the “representation of Soul outside the body” (S. & H.510: 16-17). “his raiment was white as the light—the light of Truth was identified in true manhood.

VERSE 3. Moses symbolizes “the law,” and Elias symbolizes “the prophets.” Jesus did not present Moses and Elias to the disciples as human personalities, but in the mountain of exalted thought he was explaining to them the significance of “the law and the prophets.” Remember that Luke’s Gospel says of Jesus that after his resurrection, “beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”

VERSE 5. In Science, Principle has one idea or Christ—there is one “beloved Son”—and that fact was here identified.

For *Mark*, we have John Morgan’s talk on *The Gospel of Mark* given at a Felixstowe Summer school in 1955.

MARK 9:2-5 LOVE as MIND (Ch. 9:2-13)

The ideal as the image in Love.

Ch. 9:2. “And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.” Six days after what?

After what we've just seen in Truth as Love, and what did we see there? We had seen with Peter, in Truth as Truth, Thou art the Christ, and then at once we learnt to say, That being so, I'm completely willing to let go the human concept attached to that Christ, and so my vision is open; now evermore what I see is divinely transfigured: what I look at is no longer men, persons, things or events, but Love's transparency through which I see God, albeit in terms of human life. A transfigured idealism now comes about.

V. 3. "And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them." That is Mark's way of saying that the whiteness and translucence of divinity is so divine that no human sense of purity or attainment can ever match it. It's totally divine –Love as Mind; the divine idealism now transfigures thought and life, and man is a transparency for Love.

Vv. 4,5. "And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." Peter is quite irrepressible, isn't he? No matter how often he gets his ears slapped back he is always popping up again; a great quality of resilience. Man is like a rubber ball: the further he drops, the higher he bounces. Peter always got up again after his rebukes and reverses.

Vv. 6-8. "For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves."

The Transfiguration

The transfiguration is of the most tremendous significance, and there are many ways in which we can interpret it together. The particular tone in which it speaks to me is that it is showing how Love's transfigured ideal presents the law and the prophets combined in the present.

Moses represents the moral law, and corresponds to the Old Testament and the past. Elias represents a visionary spiritual conception, and corresponds to the New Testament and the future. Love fulfils the law and the prophets, as qualities, and gives us a transfigured sense of them both, so that they appear as present spiritual characteristics in the living Son of God. As we glow with this transfigured vision, we realize that the only past and the only future are alike the present truth. Man is, was, and always will be Love's image.

Our immature sense, however, still holds the three as separate; so the disciples were beclouded and could see neither what lay behind nor what lay ahead. We are accustomed to thinking that the requirements of the moral law have to be fulfilled before we can gain the crown of spirituality, which in a sense is true. But what is it that enables you and me to conform to the moral law in the face of animal nature? It is the divine impulsion, –the Elias, – which has been eternally Christianizing and spiritualizing mankind since before time began. So he goes on and explains this.

Vv. 9-11. "And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?" Malachi had prophesied, "Behold I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." So they had some idea of Elias, which we know to be the spirit of Prophecy or Christian Science; they thought of it as a person.

Vv. 12,13. "And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him." Let's turn to the definition of Elias in the Glossary on S. & H. 585:9-14. "Elias. Prophecy; spiritual evidence opposed to material sense; Christian Science, with which can be discerned the spiritual fact of whatever the material senses behold; the basis of immortality..." We glimpsed something of the senses in the, Truth sections, and now Elias presents spiritual sense itself.

Now, *how* do we rise to this transfigured vision that comes here in Love as Mind? We can't ever do it from the Moses, –by rising from a human basis; we can only do it if we admit that Elias has already come and restored all things. Think back for a moment to those Two Translations (S., & H. 115,116). The first Scientific Translation corresponds to Elias, because it states God, man, idea. Elias is the spiritual fact which underlies all phenomena, and he always has come first. The second Scientific Translation corresponds to Moses, and represents the effect of the first Translation upon mortal ignorance, characterized by moral awakening and human improvement. Elias precedes the Moses, and working from Elias you can no more avoid the Moses than you can avoid having to correct mistakes in arithmetic. Moses is the discipline of working out the Three Degrees, through which man finds himself back in God, where he belongs.

So if we were to regard the first Translation as Elias, and the second as Moses, –the conformity to the moral law which has been impelled by Elias, –the effect of putting the two together and making a circle of them would be the Jesus state. Jesus' life illustrates the coming forth from the divine, working out the dualism of the human, and dissolving the human so that there is nothing left but the divine. The Jesus is therefore that which stands between Elias and Moses. This is what the disciples saw. Right where the Jesus stands, behind it lies the impulsion of the Elias, and ahead of it lies the conformity to all that is good and right (the Moses). With this transfigured vision one can look out on life and see that everything is illuminated. Persons and things are now transparent, and what we had thought of as things now appear as the timeless activity of divine Love. This is the essence of what most of the mystics of the ages have always seen.

On Misc. 330:16, we read, "...looking through Love's transparency, behold man in God's own image and likeness." This image in Love is no longer a man, but is manness, –a wonderfully translucent quality. No fuller on earth, –no human Concept, –can give us much idea of it; but through Love's transparency, behold man in God's own image and likeness!

S. & H. 503:13,14 "God is All-in-all,' and the light of ever-present Love illumines the universe." That's the transfiguration; it takes up those three concepts we call Moses and Jesus and Elias and shows that they are not three isolated entities, but they all co-exist in ever-presence. So the voice says, This is my beloved Son, hear him, –and the "him" covers all three, and you and me also. In this supreme and delicate and beautiful picture of Love as Mind, Love envisages its own ideal as the transparency of divinity, out of time, out of space, out of person, and this glory is shed on every one of us. Now on that note, we'll finish for today.

For *Luke*, we go again to John Morgan, this time to his talk on *The Gospel of Luke* given at a Colwyn Bay Summer School in 1953.

LUKE 9:28-31

Vv. 28.29 As we go up into that mountain of spiritual apprehension to pray, the fashion of our countenance will change because our identity will no longer be this thing: it will be the reflecting of the divine One. It does change, even physically; if people in love can look quite different, why should not that same radiance transform us when we are in love with our divine identity? That should go on until this thing is entirely transfigured and the material senses can behold us no more. (See Misc. 68:2-6.) That word “glistening” apparently should be “effulgent,” which means “light from within.” That is the tone here of our new transfigured identity; in Spirit as Soul we are the light from within. Now a reflector doesn’t have light from within but only on its surface, whereas a reflecting is light from within. As we take ourselves right into the picture, we have to *be* it. It is pure reflection illuminating true identity.

V. 30. As you will probably have recognized, the two men signify Life and Love. Moses, as the law, indicates the sternness of manhood, while Elias, or the gospel of grace, is the figure of womanhood.

V. 31. That word “decease” should be “departure.” Much nicer than deceasing! Only Luke has the details in this verse.

“which he should accomplish...” Which he should accomplish; he was going to bring it about, himself. No, one was going to impose it upon him. And so Moses and Elias, the manhood and the womanhood of himself, appeared and spoke to him of this wonderful thing that he was doing, of simply letting his false self depart from consciousness. And it was something that he was accomplishing: *he* was working it out in life-practice. “at Jerusalem.” We shall come to Jerusalem in the next tone of Spirit as Principle where we see it as the critical point of his demonstration.

Vv. 32,33. “not knowing what he said”—it wasn’t spiritual apprehension; it was human conjecture which would like to have a past and a present and a future, and would like to celebrate the three of them *as three*.

V. 34. The clouded past and the dreaded future. That cloud is sometimes what we have not done—sins, of omission. And the fear is the fear for what is going to happen. Actually, all our past is Principle, Mind, Soul, Spirit, and all our future is Spirit, Life, Truth, Love.

V. 35. “This is my beloved Son: hear him.” *This* is the one present identity, the one reflection, including past, present and future, including Moses, Jesus and Elias.

V. 36. “Jesus was found alone”—all one; the *only* man. At this point of Spirit as Soul we begin to see the structure of Christianity both ways. As Job said, “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee” (Job 42:5). First we stand at the point of Spirit and say, What do I know about God? That is looking back along the way we have come—hearing of thee by the hearing of the ear. Principle has declared itself to us through Mind and Soul and the early stages of Spirit, and how we pause we turn and say, Oh yes, I see now I’ve got to reflect that, and we do so through Spirit, Life, Truth, Love; that is when “mine eye seeth thee.”

So halfway through this Spirit tone we can see both ways; we see both where we come from and whither we are going; we know even as we are known, and that is pure reflection.

There is another small point here, and that is that those two ways of considering Christianity correspond to Moses and Elias. Moses represents Christianity in the way we are taking it, following the demands made upon us to be a Christian; whereas Elias is the proofs that will come to us as we obey. At the moment of transfiguration the human mind sees those things as two and wants to build two separate tabernacles, but spiritual apprehension sees them as *one*. Christianity says, "This is my beloved Son: hear him." In a sense, our taking of Luke this way is rather the Moses attitude, while taking it as Mr. Doorly took it is Elias; but the "two" are not two, at the moment of spiritual apprehension they are one. When the fruits of demonstration fall into our lap, it is simply because we are doing our best to be Christians, and the fruits and the effort coincide.

TALK FIVE—THURSDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 3rd.

Someone tells me that they are beginning to find the answer to the "Why?" which they've been asking for years. The human child in us says, "Why? Why should I do this? Why should I obey that?" But as we learn to obey, the motherhood of Christianity says, "Well, *because* it is right, *because* I tell you; *because* it is unavoidable." And we learn that the "why" and the "because" coincide at the point of Spirit; up till then we've been seeking our way into demonstration, but at that point one finds that one *is* the demonstration.

"Spiritual apprehension unfolds, transfigures, heals." That reference, we saw, carries the tone of this section on Spirit as Soul.

Spiritual apprehension unfolds: first it unfolded to Peter Jesus' divine identity as the Christ of God, and second it unfolded, through Jesus' statement, that the Son of man has to go. Next, spiritual apprehension transfigures, and we saw that the divine identity of Jesus as the Christ immediately transformed the human picture of a *becoming* into *being*. It transfigured the Moses and the Jesus and the Elias out of the sense of persons in a time-space concept and presented them as, "This *is* my beloved Son,..." putting them all into the one present identity.

For *John* we have Mr. Morgan again, in his talk on *The Gospel of John* at a Colwyn Bay Summer School in 1952.

John

You will have noticed that John gives no account of the transfiguration. We must consider these points in order to appreciate John's standpoint. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all give that wonderful picture of the transfiguration, when Jesus took Peter and James and John to the top of the mountain, and there gave them such a picture of one being that the mortal concept faded, and instead their thought was alive with the past, (Moses,) and the present, (Jesus,) and the future, (Elias,) all illuminated in light and glory in front of them at one point. We call that incident "the transfiguration," which is, as it were, something that took place at one particular moment in time. The clouds of sense parted for a moment, and they suddenly saw. They saw the glory which Jesus had had before the world was. But as an event, it was something that took place in time. Now John's Gospel *does* give a transfiguration, but it's one continuous transfiguration right the way through from beginning to end.

John's picture of Jesus is really the story of the man whom God knows, not the man who is trying to get up to God, or the man who is trying to abide by the Christ, or the man who is trying to demonstrate what he has learnt: it's the man whose being is the same as God's Being. It's the story of the man who is not making a journey, the man who is wholly in idea, in metaphysics.

I believe that there's something dawning in thought today to all of us which is going to open the gates in a way that few things have done, and that is to understand what it means when we say, "I am idea." I think John will elaborate that for us as we go through, as John the Evangelist's picture of Jesus was Jesus as the divine idea. You might almost say that John wasn't interested in Jesus as a man in writing his story, he was interested in the divine idea, but to write about the divine idea in its purity would be too abstract, so he told the story of God's idea in terms of the man Jesus, and thus established the divine and human coincidence. John is writing of metaphysics, but he symbolizes his metaphysical teaching of Science in the person of the man Jesus; eventually the man Jesus goes out of the picture and the teaching, –the idea, –remains. So do let's remember all the way through this Gospel that it's not a human history. It's the story of the relations of Principle and idea told *in terms of* human history.

You know, supposing we did that for ourselves; supposing we saw, "My goodness, all this business of my birthdays and my past and my present and my future, that's nothing to do with me at all! Really all that my experience has been, has been the infinite interpretation of *Principle* speaking direct to me, in terms of human experience. So it hasn't actually been *human* experience at all, –it's been Principle's interpretation of itself." Mrs. Eddy says, (Science & Health 547:25-27) "The true theory of the universe, including man, is not in material history but in spiritual development." Now that's John's picture of Jesus, and so all the time his emphasis is on the divine side, on the right side. It's *from* the divine. And so this Gospel unfolds for us one long transfiguration.

Resurrection, Translation, Ascension, and One Being

It occurs to me that not only does the transfiguration in John take place out of time—it takes place right the way through—but so also do the resurrection and the ascension. That's something that has thrilled me beyond words, and I've only seen it recently. The four great sections of the Gospel are Life and Soul illustrating the Word sense of things in Science, Truth and Spirit illustrating the Christ in Science, Love and Mind illustrating Christianity in Science, and Principle speaking of Science from its own aspect. I feel that those four are really resurrection, translation, ascension, and one Being.

You see, humanly, resurrection invites a picture of man buried in mortality, and then somehow getting out of it; translation invites a picture of a real divine and a real human and then that real divine coming and doing something to this real human and translating it out of itself, –again, twoness. Ascension, even, invites the picture of a man ascending right out of a mortal concept in which he was once confined. But John's Gospel doesn't give us that sense of coming and going. It is one Being from start to finish. And so we are all going to find that a more spiritual conception of what resurrection means will reveal it to us right at the beginning of the Gospel and not near the end. There are some wonderful passages that will build that up for us. Mrs. Eddy indicates many times that the so-called appearing and disappearing and reappearing of God's idea are just the fluctuating mortal pictures of ever-presence. (Un. 63:7-11.)

You know sometimes when you are specially inspired, you can glimpse these things that have been true about you since before the world was, and it's so clear and so steady, and then it would seem to fade a bit, and so you experience appearing and disappearing and reappearing; and yet in your heart you know that that eternal fact which you've glimpsed is the only fact about you, and all this other is the mist that is sometimes thinner and sometimes thicker, but always dissolving.

Now that appearing and disappearing and reappearing is what the early disciples thought of as Jesus' resurrection, translation and ascension. But to Jesus nothing of the sort was going on. He was always working *with* the Father, *from* the Father, and, as well as he knew how, *as* the Father, because he was based on one Being. Do let's see, therefore, that this story of John's isn't a history of a man called Jesus who resurrects himself out of matter, and translates matter, and ascends beyond matter. The whole story is the *disappearing* of that mortal man called Jesus, in the degree that he demonstrated his preexistence. He knew that "before Abraham was, I am,"—as you and I know at heart. And this whole Gospel is the story of the disappearing of the man Jesus, as Mrs. Eddy's definition of "Jesus" in the Glossary indicates. Now don't be frightened of that, because no one is going to take your Jesus away from you. You'll always have a human symbol as long as you've got a human problem to deal with. As someone once said, all mortals are reluctant to lay down the mortal concept because they are afraid they will disappear down the bath plug. We might be afraid that as we dissolve this mortal picture of ourselves there's nothing left. But there is. What's left is pure idea, —true humanhood, "a state of mortal thought, the only error of which is limitation" (See Science and Health 585:16-2). You'll be left with true humanhood. You'll be left with that state of being that Jesus had between what we call the resurrection and the ascension, which is the normal state of man.

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