

February 25— SUBJECT: Christ Jesus

Our first selection this week—based on Luke 7:1-10— is from THE GOSPEL OF LUKE A VERBATIM REPORT OF JOHN MORGAN'S COLWYN BAY SUMMER SCHOOL– 1953.

The other selection is from an essay by W. Gordon Brown titled IN SEARCH OF AUTHORITY.

Soul as Life... is identification with the fatherhood of God, and Jesus here demonstrates the rule of Soul spontaneously and individually.

CHAPTER 7

Vv. 1-10. You all know this story of the centurion's servant. The thing which caught Jesus' attention there, and the mental attitude which enabled the centurion to procure a healing for his servant, was the fact that he accepted the divine authority. He said, "For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it."

The centurion was a member of the army, just as each individual is a member of the body of man. So he was used to the discipline of the army where authority is generic. Authority isn't vested in persons but in the office: it's in the office-holder, whoever he may be. The centurion knew from his experience that wherever an individual representative, of that authority was to be found, authority could flow; anybody could say, Do this, and they'd be obeyed because it is all part of the system. The generic authority would carry weight. So with the case of his servant that centurion could see, Oh yes, this man Jesus is showing that there is just one man, who has one compound identity, and if I accept that from him as authoritative, that one compound idea can be manifested here and there and everywhere. The one generic nature of Soul can be individualized in Life.

A generic fact always individualizes itself. You see, each individual member of this compound idea, — this compound identity in Soul, — carries within himself the seed of Life, Truth, and of Love. I've known a man get up off a sickbed when the doctors had given him a dose of the wrong medicine and all but killed him, simply because we saw that each individual's identity reflects the fatherhood of Life, and that each individualization of the great idea man carries within himself the resuscitating law of Life.

This is what Mrs. Eddy calls "the patient's spiritual power to resuscitate himself" (S. and. H. 365:29). The patient's spiritual power to resuscitate himself is the very essence of Soul as Life. That patient is your human sense of man, but what man is is the generic idea which includes within itself the resuscitating law Of Life, the dominion of Truth and the perfection of Love.

We've seen something recently in the practice of how individual people or things become damaged or infected in some way, and it isn't humanly possible to do anything about cleansing them. If you turn to the fact that the idea behind that thing, — whether it is man or home or animals or even your garden, — if you see that it is generic, then there is only one man, one home, one dog, one garden. And then because that generic idea carries within it the activity of Life, it resurrects itself and rises into newness of Life.

(S&H 180:5-10) "The patient sufferer tries to be satisfied when he sees his would-be healers busy, and his faith in the efforts is somewhat helpful to them and to himself; but in Science one must understand the resuscitating law of Life. This is the seed within itself bearing fruit after its kind, spoken of in Genesis." You remember that the third day presented the picture of identification with the one Life. So we get the sense there of Soul as the generic idea, and Life as the immediate individualization of everything that is true about the generic idea. And I told you about that man who had been given a dose of one of these modern magic medicines which heals everybody bar one in a thousand and it jolly nearly killed him. And they said, "We're awfully sorry, it just happens like that!" Well, that situation was reversed because within the one generic idea man lies the fact of the resuscitating law of Life, available for every individual.

Happy, Troubled, Happy

I am quite sure that every single student sooner or later feels the great need to dig deep for scientific Christianity. It is quite natural that we should all be content for a time with a surface kind of Christianity; until the wind blows a bit, one's superficial sense of metaphysics doesn't let the draught through and we don't feel the need of wrapping our garments close about but the wind will blow and it is right that it should, because as Christian Scientists we have no right to expect to be at peace with mortal mind. As Christian Scientists the only peace we have a right to find is when we have turned mortal mind out.

One hears it said, "I never had a day of trouble in my life, but when I took up Science all sorts of things started to happen." Science shakes the foundations of mortal belief and makes us dig for a lasting foundation, so we can always translate this disturbed time into a blessing. It seems to me we all pass through three stages in our development, and that these three stages are happy, troubled, and happy again. We start out by being reasonably happy in mortality because it is quite an interesting oyster and offers all sorts of things. And then we begin to realize, through Science or through suffering, that that happiness is very precarious if it rests only upon personality and mere beliefs. So we pass through a time of transition, which may be a little troubled if we resist it, during which we are translating our sense of love and joy and relationship out of a merely human context onto a divine basis. That time can be tough or it can be something we sail through, but the mortal has to be discomforted so that the scum of the old wash shall pass away. And then we awaken; thank God, to the third stage of being happy and untroubled again, but with what a difference! It is the kind of poise and happiness which you know can't shake or shift because you've proved it through the troubled time.

Someone was telling me beautiful thing just now. They said that if the Lord had quenched the fire in the fiery furnace for those Hebrew boys there would have been no demonstration. The demonstration was that they stuck it out and came through. That is a wonderful point. So in our journey we have a happy time in matter, and then we go through a time of tribulation when matter isn't quite so happy, and that is a healthy thing; and then if we stick to it we come out into the calm of divine sunshine once again; but the second happiness is divine happiness, and is based on the rock.

So we began on Soul as Life which is the tone of how identity reflects the divine fatherhood, and had read the story of the centurion's servant and how he was healed through the faith of the centurion. Of course, that word faith means a great deal more than we are accustomed to give it. It means here that the centurion could recognize that an idea of Soul was generic, like the idea of generic authority in the army, which is obeyed wherever it is voiced. He saw that Jesus could individualize that generic rule of Soul, and the result was a resurrection of the centurion's servant. We noticed that Mrs. Eddy described that activity as the resuscitating law of Life, the seed within itself; we saw that each individualization of the one generic man carries within itself the seed of its own resuscitation.

The Practitioner

When you are laid out flat with some problem and you work through it, either by yourself or with help from someone else, where does that resuscitation come from?

It comes from within; maybe somebody helps you over the stile, but in the final analysis that resuscitation was the seed within itself.

If that hadn't been so, no amount of knowing the truth by a wonderful practitioner "over" could have induced a resurrection "here." What we call the practitioner simply invokes the law of resuscitation for they are really calling into expression in your own experience the fact that man is identified with Life. That institution called a Christian Science practitioner one of these days is going to fade out; there won't be "authorized" teachers, either. As Jeremiah said, "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know I the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord:" (Jeremiah 31:34.)

Mrs. Eddy left provision for the authorization of teachers and practitioners which plainly won't meet the needs if the laws are to be obeyed; quite evidently she intended that the textbook should be our only teacher and practitioner. If we folk, who have come out of one kind of organization into a wider and purer sense of scientific Christianity, are really going to progress right out of those things which were swaddling clothes to us, we must take up our individual responsibility to be our own practitioner, our own priest and, our own teacher. It doesn't do always to be looking to someone else to help us with our difficulties; that's like looking up the answers at the end of the book. If we don't take up our own responsibilities to prove and explain Principle for ourselves, we don't grow as we should. Naturally, we love to help each other along the way and there will always be opportunity for "the rich in spirit (to) help the poor in one grand brotherhood," but it's not healthy to remain poor in spirit and think of others as rich. You remember that in Ezekiel the Lord said, "Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee" (Ezek. 2:1).

IN SEARCH OF AUTHORITY

Not as the Scribes

Never, surely, in the history of civilization was there so much rebellion against authority—against the status quo of established society—as is seen in the world today. This is particularly evident in the exploits of the younger generation. A Students' Revolt is taking place on a world scale.

On every hand the old way of life is in dire fear of being overthrown. In general terms, youth today is in a state of rebellion against what it feels is the hypocritical, artificial, way of life provided by the older generation's methods of education—against its predetermined, war-prone ways of indoctrination and control, and its apparent inability to communicate in-depth with the new generation.

The Spirit of the divine Science of man, moving today on the waters of world consciousness, is nowhere more evident than in the demand that is taking place for a different approach to education, for spontaneously subjective self-revelation, self-realization, a deeper and freer sense of inclusiveness and the interchange of ideas, as against preconceived theories, and predigested knowledge superimposed and built up from outside.

Much of the overturning which we see taking place today is reality appearing in counterfeit form. Jesus gives the reason for such phenomena when he cites the nature of reality itself! He says: "The kingdom of God is within you." In Latin, the verb "to educate" meant originally "to lead out." Today's involuntary, universal urge is that what is already within man shall be freely and spontaneously led out into expression through a new understanding of education and a new attitude to life.

The New Testament establishes the "New Covenant." The inevitability of this was foreseen by the prophet Jeremiah in the Old Testament. "The author of the epistle to the Hebrews, the most 'educated' of the New Testament writers, quotes Jeremiah's words in "his own treatise on the New Covenant." He writes: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah ...after those days... I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest" (Heb 8:8-11). The New Covenant implies a new responsibility on the part of individual and collective man—a new educational order, a new and vital inner contact with the divine, such as the young today are instinctively seeking in their attitude to education. The time when mankind actually begins to experience what the New Covenant promises would seem to be very close at hand.

It is true to say, on the surface, that the new generation is seeking to overthrow the old systems of values without having found better ones to take their place. There is an awareness that an all-powerful impulse towards spontaneity and self-expression is at work in world-consciousness, but instead of this being understood spiritually it is too often equated with psychedelic drug-taking, dangerous excursions into the unconscious psyche, religious self-hypnosis, and instincts of mass relationship stimulated and liberated by beat music. It is believed to be manifesting itself also as the so-called New Left, Black Power, and so on.

Assessed at a deeper level, this rebellion against parental and hierarchical authority is a shadow that precedes its own substance. It is really a search for a true authority—for an altogether different kind of authority. It predicts the gradual return on the part of humanity as a whole to man's original, impartial governmental authority—to the Principle that rules everlasting reality irrespective of the mythological "fall."

Science versus Mythology

Mythologically speaking, the concept of a fallen, sinning, self-destroying human race originated in a primordial rebellion that is supposed to have taken place in heaven against the authority of God—that is, against the status quo of the deific Establishment. In response to bombardment by an outside force called evil, man is supposed to have said “I will” independently of, and in opposition to, the governing Principle of the universe. The “nucleus” of infinity was supposedly split in two. Mythologically, man fell from grace and his mortality began. In present day jargon he “dropped out.” Thereafter, through a process of continuous self-discovery and self-education called civilization, fallen man’s necessity was to try to struggle his way back towards that original authority in the effort to reinstate himself under its government, and so reestablish the unity of being.

When Jesus says, in effect, “I come from the Father (the universal Principle which is Love) and go back to the Father, and in so doing I solve from beginning to end the problem of rebellious, fallen man,” he is pointing to the timeless Science of man’s true being, in which coming from Principle is the opposite of the mythological fall and going back to Principle the truth behind the arduous struggle which is taking place today to attain world harmony and peace.

Without understanding why, thought today is turning more and more to what psychology calls the “collective unconscious” as the source of spontaneous experience and life. In psychoanalysis this ‘bottomless pit of the unconscious” is closely associated with the archetypal gods of mythology. As time goes on, this counterfeit concept of the collective unconscious will begin to be replaced by an opposite divine reality, namely, the fathomless depths of the Mind which is God. When, through spiritual understanding, men begin to identify themselves with this Mind, it will be found to yield to them life and happiness and spontaneity infinitely more desirable and infinitely more satisfying than that offered by its poor mythological counterfeit, approached through hypnotism and drugs.

Real education is like the process of birth. For man’s true identity to come from within himself is for his identity to come forth from God. Jesus knew this when he said that he came from the Father; that he was the light of the world; that man has within him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The world’s present agony is really the throes of a new birth. According to the prophecies of Buckminster Fuller, the American scientist and engineer, human conditions before and after this rebirth will be as different as those experienced by the babe when he emerges from the dark confines of the womb into the light and freedom of the world outside (Lecture given at the Chicago Institute of Technology 1965).

Time will show that it is not against the authority of Principle and its method of education that the present revolution is directed. The logic of events in the civilization development reveals that, deep down in the heart of humanity today, the authority and government of the Principle which is Love is being desperately, agonizingly sought after.

The Present Epoch seen in Perspective

In the second of his two epistles in the New Testament, Peter makes a statement which implies that there is a correlation between the so-called "days" of creation with which the Bible opens its teaching and the "thousand-year" spans in which it unfolds its story. He says: "...one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (II Peter 3:8).

Were it not for the book of Revelation, with its apocalyptic prophecies, the Bible itself, completed in the first century of the Christian era, would pertain only to the first five of these spans, or periods, and therefore only to the first five days of creation. For the Old Testament, from the fall of Adam to the birth of Jesus at the beginning of the New Testament, covers exactly four of these periods. Historically, the new Testament concerns the early days of the fifth period. Revelation, however, looks far beyond the beginnings of the fifth period to the cataclysmic happenings of the sixth (which corresponds to the sixth day of creation) and beyond this again to a seventh (which corresponds to the seventh and final "day" of creation). Today, historically, humanity is passing through the closing stages of the sixth period, the "scientific age," and stands on the threshold of the seventh millennium.

The correlation between the present sixth millennium and the sixth day of creation is that, in the sixth day, man is created in the likeness of God and has dominion over all the earth (Genesis 1:26). The sixth period, dominated by the advances of Western civilization, and of a consequently Westernized world, is one in which this maternal Western society has developed and worshipped its physical science more than its religion of Christianity from which it originally stemmed. Feeling instinctively that his ultimate status is dominion over all the earth (as recorded in the sixth day of creation), Western man has turned to his manifold material sciences, with their naturecontrolling technologies, to give him this dominion. But it is not physical science which, in the sixth day, makes man supreme over his environment, it is universal divine Science. Inevitably, therefore, in the closing stages of the sixth period, timeless divine Science has revealed itself to a Westernized world, reduced to a calculus of comprehensible ideas which has been called Christian Science. Properly understood, this revelation makes the material sciences servants instead of masters, symbols to be translated rather than substance in danger of destroying itself.

The term "Christian Science" means, simply, the Science of original Christianity, the Science of Jesus' dynamic understanding which gave him his Christly dominion, and which caused it to be said of him: "He taught them as one having authority, and not as the [established] scribes" (Matthew 7:29). A comprehensible Science of Life enables this same measure of understanding and authority to be experienced at last by the rest of mankind.

A Falling Away First

But according to Paul “that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first...” (II Thess 2:3). Regarding the present rebellious generation, it is comforting to realize that, in terms of human history, this is the generation which is destined to live through the transition from the sixth to the seventh millennium. This generation will witness in full the merging from what is now called the Scientific Age to the Ecological and Cybernetic Age—the age of the total interconnectedness of all things, or the age of universal Love.

Those who truly seek will find. It is the law of God that old things pass away and all things become new. This “falling away first” of the old is the logical necessity before the new can openly reveal itself. It is the closeness and self-assertiveness of the new spiritual idea, not the activities of disillusioned new generation, which is really causing the old to fall away. The desirable thing is that the falling away should take place peacefully and safely not violently and destructively—that the status quo should not be overthrown but should pattern increasingly the irresistible new idea of life that is impelling itself. This happens naturally in the measure that the idea itself is foreseen, welcomed, and understood in advance of its visible appearing.

Three interacting elements in the human scene thus need to be evaluated. There is the rebellion against authority (either peaceful or violent) which seems to play the role of a catalyst, there is the present state of the Establishment and its resistance to being overturned and transformed, and there is the activity of the new spiritual idea, whose work throughout the length and breadth of consciousness is for the most part unseen and unknown. All three are universal in their scope. Both the first and second find the answers to their divergent and highly dangerous problems in the third. Under the compulsion of the third, the second is not overthrown, but manifests that degree of malleability and change which eliminates the apparent need for the first. Then it is seen that it is not the first which is the catalyst but the third. (A catalyst is a substance accelerating reaction and change in a situation but is itself found not to be changed by the reaction.) In the kind of chemicalization brought about by this third element there is no violence, no overthrow, no anarchy, no vacuum, only peaceful transition and progressive translation until such time as the third factor reigns supreme and is all.

In divine metaphysics the so called younger generation is not really an age proposition at all. Everyone must sooner or later be identified with continuous new generation—that is, with new life generated freely and spontaneously from the infinite depths of the Science of Mind. This understanding will surely break down the “middle wall” of the generation gap and replace it with the truth behind the words of the prophet: “Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?” (Malachi 2:10). In divine Science are we not all timelessly contemporaneous one with another?

There can be little doubt today that fragmentation and self-destruction are virtually synonymous concepts. Only totality, reciprocity, and wholeness are in line with the Principle of a universal Science of Life and its original and ultimate authority. This Science shows earth and heaven, subjective and objective, one in identity, thus reversing the mythological fall.

View by "Apollo"

The wholeness of man "on earth" and "in heaven" at the same time is marvellously suggested today by the new astronomical view of the total earth televised to us from outer space while we remain part of the earth itself. The purpose of a symbol is to teach the reality which lies behind the symbol. Earth's recent view of its own wholeness, seen from the frictionless realm of outer space, is a most powerful and prophetic symbol. Spiritually speaking, for man "on earth" to see himself in his totality and integrity is for him to see himself "from heaven"—that is, to see himself in and of the Principle of the total universe and subject to its government and authority. "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," runs the line in the Lord's Prayer. "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42), Jesus said, as he neared the end of solving the problem of fallen man—of proving the intactness of the nuclear centre of infinity, and therefore of reversing the mythology of independent human will. What would be thought in music of a will that operated contrary to that of the principle of music? The musician asks only that the will of music itself be done.

Truly the myth of a primordial rebellion of man against the authority of God is turning full circle on itself and is yielding to the Science of the oneness and indivisibility of being.

