

Weekly Lesson Citations

Our selections this week correspond to sections four and five of the Lesson. The first is from John Morgan's, Verbatim report on, THE GOSPEL OF MARK, given at a 1955 Felixstowe Summer School.

The other selection is from Gordon Brown's book, FROM GENESIS to REVELATION.

April 30, 2001

Subject: Everlasting Punishment

PHILEMON

The little epistle to Philemon is in the tone of Christ as Science. It concerns a slave who having been converted to Christianity, returns home to his Roman master from whom he ran away. This illustrates the way in which Christianity absolves man from the sin of having supposedly rebelled against God, and restores him to his Master. Thus Jesus presented "his material body absolved from death and the grave" (My 218:14) prior to being restored to the Father. Restoration to what is called "the right hand of the Majesty on high" is the subject of the last of Paul's epistles, Hebrews, which comes after Philemon.

If (as taught in the Pastoral Epistles) the requirements of a temporarily instituted religious organization are properly complied with, then penitent humanity is forgiven its rebelliousness, and the result is regeneration.

The slave is Onesimus, his Roman master is Philemon, Paul is responsible for having converted both master and slave to Christianity. Paul urges Philemon to receive Onesimus back into his household, and in so doing forgive him utterly.

The name Onesimus means "useful". Philemon means "loving." "Useful" is an attribute which Mary Baker Eddy frequently employed with reference to material organization. She speaks of organization as being "useful to the Cause" she tells her church officers to retire to "higher usefulness in this vast vineyard of our Lord" (Ret 85:7, My 250: 10) and, as already noted, she writes of organization's "uses and abuses". Organization serves a useful purpose only if it fosters that degree of spiritual development which dissolves organization. Otherwise it becomes abusive.

To Paul, Onesimus is "my son". Onesimus typifies Paul's own self returning to God absolved from sin, and so reborn. The lawless heretic which, to mortal sense, has desecrated its Lord is organic life. But once this rebellious sense of life dissolves in true baptism of Christian conversion, restoration is assured and the wayward servant is restored to God absolved from death and the grave.

Of course, nothing really returns to God but that which first comes from God, namely, Christ in its eternal Science, the tone determining this epistle.

The relation of Paul to Onesimus is evident in Paul's words to Philemon "I beseech thee for my son Onesimus whom I have begotten in my bonds... thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels... he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever; Not now as a servant, but above a servant a brother beloved, especially to me, but how much more unto thee... If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself".

In its spiritual signification Paul's letter to Philemon is of far greater consequence than a mere plea to a Roman nobleman on behalf of a rebellious slave. It is a prayer to God, in Christianity, on behalf of the human race. The spiritual dissolution of the organic sense of life, simultaneous with the absolution of penitent humanity from the sin of heretical secession, brings about the restoration of mankind to his original home, or heaven. Hence the subject of Hebrews is man's final restoration to the Majesty on high.

This lesson courtesy of the Mary Baker Eddy Institute <http://www.mbeinstitute.org>

LIFE as MIND - (Oh. 2:1-12)

The individuality of Life is the flow from the one Source, and is therefore sinless.

Ch. 2:1-12. "And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth is man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easierto say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, we never saw it on this fashion."

Now what has this story got to do with Life as Mind? It is evident that this man was suffering from some physical disability, some paralysis or palsy of the physique, which he connected with some sin, because Jesus deals with it entirely from the standpoint of sin. As Mr. Doorly points out, the chances are a thousand to one that the man was suffering from locomotor ataxia which is the effect of venereal disease. Now when we talk about venereal disease, let's get away from the unclean sense of it that the human concept of purity holds. Let's rather think of it as the one original sin, and therefore all disease and all sickness and all trouble that arises from a false sense of man's origin is fundamentally venereal disease. Now I hope that doesn't make it sound too unpleasant, but radically it is so. Everything that goes wrong springs from a false sense of man's source and origin. The true, spiritual creation gets clouded over, and in the darkness mortal belief imagines that it recreates man upon its own plane. Interestingly enough, many things which afflict us physically are the fruits of venereal disease somewhere in the human strain, maybe generations back; they represent this false sense of origin and of heritage.

S. and H. 262:27,28 "The foundation of mortal discord is a false sense of man's origin. To begin rightly is to end rightly." Our true origin is that we come forth perpetually from God, from the infinite One; that's the only Cause and Source and origin, and we are wedded to that basis. Therefore there never was a second when man broke away from that unity and tried to be a creator or a cause in his own right. Mortal man is beguiled by the rampant egotism of the carnal mind and believes that he can be a creator when God has already created all. That breaks our immortal covenant and leads to original sin. All these tones of Life are showing us the wedding with Principle, the state of being wedded to the divine Cause, reflected as our inseparability in all things. Continuing with that reference, Mrs. Eddy states, "Every concept which seems to begin with the brain begins falsely. Divine Mind is the only cause or Principle of existence. Cause does not exist in matter, in mortal mind, or in physical forms.

"Mortals are egotists. They believe themselves to be independent workers, personal authors, and even privileged originators of something which Deity would not or could not create. The creations of mortal mind are material. Immortal spiritual man alone represents the truth of creation. The fact is so interesting that there were four men carrying this paralytic, - Mark alone says that he was. borne of four. Now the four, of course, truly represents the divine infinite calculus, the four processes through which we learn to reckon man in Science, how to calculate man from his divine origin and basis. In an inverted sense, however, the four represents the material calculus of human birth, growth, maturity and decay.

Frequently in the Bible and Science and Health we find a sequence of four terms which illustrate the false material calculus. For example, on S&H 450:29-32 "Knowing the claim of animal magnetism, that all evil combines in the belief of life, substance, and intelligence in matter, electricity, animal nature, and organic life, who will deny that these are the errors which Truth must and will annihilate?" Again, the sequence of sin, sickness, disease, death. Or, "Fear, hygiene, physiology and physics" is another, on page 222. "Atheism, pantheism, theosophy, agnosticism" (page 139) represents a calculus of false, material systems of thought which start away from the divine.

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One which is very telling is on Misc.352. Mrs. Eddy is writing about the sense of evil which is supposed to have spoken to Adam and Eve in the garden. "What is this sense? Error versus Truth: first, a supposition; second a false belief; third, suffering; fourth, death." What a picture of the material calculus! This is what we are dealing with here in Life, with the supposition that existence is separate from Deity. It never was interrupted; the flow of living, the flow of the fountain, is without interruption or hindrance or stoppage of any kind, and that flow is man's exalted and sinless life. And because man knows it, he also knows that he can not step out of the flow in order to be a creator of good or of evil on his own account.

This man in Mark must have had such a sense that the Christ-cause was his healing and his answer that he forced those fellows to carry him, to break up the roof, and to bring him before Jesus in the midst of the condemnatory and critical people sitting around. The courage and the vision of that man were just tremendous; very often the person who gets into severe human trouble is the one who has strong characteristics which have yet to be put into the right channel and so transformed. Here, then, we see how that divine impulsion of Principle individualized itself to drive that man to seek salvation.

How did Jesus heal him? It was the address, "Son," that restored him. Only on this one occasion in all the Gospels does Jesus heal anybody by the word Son, and that is in this healing of the paralytic. The virtue in that appellation, Son, which heals the belief of original sin, lies in the fact that the nature of son is that it is that which is derived. The term son doesn't make sense by itself but only in relation to the father, without father there's no son, and vice versa. So as we rise to discern man as the Son of divinity, that links man sinlessly with his Maker, closes the gap, establishes his proper origin, and restores his unfallen status. You remember that in the Glossary Mrs. Eddy quotes "Son of a year," referring to the Old Testament way of regarding a month as the son of a year. What is meant is that the month by itself is nothing but is only a sub-division of one whole year; the year is the unit. And similarly, son has no value except in relation to the father; so father-son is one unbroken, continuous relationship, and the serpent never did or could divorce that unity.

S. and H. 150:4-17 Starting at line twelve. "Now, as then, signs and wonders are wrought in the metaphysical healing of physical disease; but these signs are only to demonstrate its divine origin, - to attest the reality of the higher mission of the Christ-power to take away the sins of the world. Isn't it a marvellous sense that life gives us here of our unity with our divine origin? Man is never born of the flesh, never born of blood, never born of the will of man, but of God, as we read in that article in Miscellaneous Writings which we have all been pondering I think it is a usual experience in the practice that a merely superficial sense of Science does not heal those things connected with false origin and false birth,- venereal disease, idiot children, and so on,- things one would more dearly love to heal radically than almost anything else. It is only one's own sense of purity and of oneness with the Source that really dissolves the fruits of original sin, because it means laying off this belief that I am the son of my father and being the son of the Father.

Un. 53:21-28 Man's individuality is not a mortal mind or sinner; or else he has lost his true individuality as a perfect child of God. Man's Father is not a mortal mind and a sinner; or else the immortal and unerring Mind, God, is not his Father; but God is man's origin and loving Father, hence that saying of Jesus, "Call no man your father upon the earth: .for one is your Father, which is in heaven. One is your Father; that enormous concept of One, that is our father, not just the alternative to a human parent. We come forth from the infinite One, the divine One".

So when Jesus recognized in that man the sinless Son, it provoked the criticism and condemnation of those around. Life as Mind exalts and sets free; its opposite condemns and holds down. The living Christ always goes to the roots of sin and makes it clear that man never sinned and cannot sin, because the continuity and flow of being is uninterrupted. Sin could only be real if it ever had a starting-point. Life as Mind shows that there is no starting point outside the divine Source. Remember that the false calculus is, First, a supposition; second, a false belief; third, suffering; fourth, death. It begins with the supposition that there is some origin, or thinking-point other than the divine. "Clothed, and in its right Mind, man's individuality is sinless, deathless, harmonious, eternal." (Misc. 104:14-23)

No. 23:28-2 . "...man's individuality is God's own image and likeness—even the immeasurable idea of divine Mind. In the Science of good, evil loses all place, person, and power." There is no measure or limit to the Son. What should really count with us is, What is my Christ being, what is my divine status, how near can I live to the divine? That then overflows as the Son of man, and that transparent mentality then uncovers all the sin that needs to be uncovered and is able to put the picture straight.

It is very interesting that in this healing Jesus first forgave the sin. - verse 5, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," - then there was an interim period of argument, and subsequently the man was physically healed (in verse 12). Normally we expect that when the sin is absolved the physique is restored, but it seems that there was some reason for this delay. Partly, of course, it was designed to emphasize the truth that the Son of man does have power to obliterate sin, but it also serves to illustrate that man needs to rise and consciously adopt his divine sonship before he can enjoy the heritage. On S. and H.404:12-15 we read, "If the evil is over in the repentant mortal mind, while its effects still remain on the individual, you can remove this disorder as God's law is fulfilled and reformation cancels the crime." So it was that the man had to arise and reinstate himself as the sinless idea of the one Father.