

Weekly Lesson Citations

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.

We start this week with a quote from Mrs. Eddy given in Unity of Good (page 9) where she asks “What is the cardinal point of the difference In my metaphysical system? “And answers -”This: that by knowing the unreality of sin, disease, and death, you understand the allness of God. This difference wholly separates my system from all others.”

Our only other selection is from John Morgan’s talk on The Gospel of John given at a Colwyn Bay Summer School in 1952.

April 9, 2001

Subject: “Are Sin, Disease, and Death Real?”

JOHN-CHAPTER 20

Now this glorious resurrection morning. Do you have a feeling that there is a hiatus a gap, between the laying of the body in the tomb and the resurrection morning? One has a sense that we close the record at chapter 19, and open it afresh at chapter 20; something seems to have happened in between. That is exactly what the carnal mind would have us believe—that there is a veiled mystery about it.

Material belief would say that Jesus lived in a body, died out of a body; and then came back to live in a body again, thus making resurrection to spiritual life dependent upon its opposite, death. Now in Science there’s only one factor, the divine, and this sense of a gap is illusion. Jesus lived the Life that is God before, during, and after his “death.” He went straight forward from Life to Life cognizant of no gap, no sharp moment of severance, and no re-awakening. It is our limited, view that sees a gap there; in reality, there was none, nor ever could be. (See S. and H. 305:1-7; 295:28-3.)

Was Jesus “dead” during those three days? Then how did he work out the problem? Was he alive? Then he lived because God is Life and for no other reason; so he could have had no sense whatever of a break in the continuity of Being. “After Jesus had fulfilled his mission his stature in Christ, the eternal Son of God, that never suffered and never died. And because of Jesus’ great work on earth, his demonstration over sin, disease, and death, the divine nature of Christ Jesus has risen to human apprehension, and we see the Son of man in divine Science; and he is no longer a material man, and mind is no longer in matter” (Mess.’01..10:30-7).

Chapter 20 gives us the tone of Principle subjectively, - from Love; and it is presenting the picture now as Jesus saw it, One Being omni-active as one being.

Verse 1.

It was dark to her; she came to the sepulchre because she was looking down. Why was it Mary Magdalene? Mark says that out of her “he had cast seven devils;” and Mrs. Eddy says, “The mortal mind through which Truth appears most vividly is that one which has lost much materiality—much error—in order to become a better transparency for Truth” (S. and H. .295:19-22). I think the Magdalene here is really a generic symbol of all the Marys; it is that Mary who is purified of sin to the extent that she yearns to find her Christ, even if sometimes she looks down instead of up.

Notice that it says, “and seeth the stone taken away” - all the other Gospels say that the stone was rolled away. It seems as if our thought develops through the Word, the Christ, and Christianity, and those processes roll, away the stone of mortality for us. But when we come to Science, there’s no rolling of the stone to be done, it is found to be taken away—because it was never there in fact. “Rolling” suggests a process in time, while “taken” is plain fact.

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

Verses 2-6.

Here an understanding of the Greek words for “to see” is extremely helpful. (See pp.31,32) When it says in verse 5 that John looked in and saw the linen clothes lying, the Greek word there is *blepo* which means merely observed; it is physical noticing. And when it goes on and says that Simon Peter went into the sepulchre and seeth the linen clothes lie, the Greek word is different: there it is *theo* meaning to gaze intently. It is more than just observed, but still does not give the connotation of understanding.

Verse 7.

The napkin is the veil of matter, which would hide the form of Being. Referring to the linen clothes lying “wrapped together,” the Companion Bible has an illuminating note:- “Wrapped together = rolled, coiled round and round. Greek *entullisso*. Used elsewhere, only in Matthew 27:59. Luke 23:53, of the linen cloth. Here it implies that the cloth had been folded round the head as a turban is folded, and that it lay still in the form of a turban. The linen clothes also lay exactly as they were when swathed round the body. The Lord had passed out of them, not needing, as Lazarus (11:44), to be loosed. It was this sight that convinced John (v.8).”

Now that really indicates what Jesus was doing. Jesus was resurrected and translated and ascended in his own consciousness before the Gospel comes to this point, and I believe that if we want to understand this resurrection morning, we have to carry with us the fact that man is eternally resurrected, eternally translated, and eternally ascended.

If that is our subjective standpoint, then we can look at this story and recognize that to them it looked like resurrection from mortality; but to Jesus, he was never in it. Let us be clear that resurrection does not mean resurrecting a physical body out of a physical death. It means, primarily and in Science, resurrecting our sense of man out of a physical body and its limitations, and when that becomes truly subjective to us that fact will operate even to the point of apparently raising our own dead physique, so-called, out of a tomb. It will appear like that to the outsider; it will appear to him as if our dead body has been resurrected into life in matter once again, but to you and me it will be knowing that man was never in matter to die out of it. Then resurrection means something that is so attainable and possible at this moment to all of us.

So Jesus left those clothes because he had to fulfil all things. He left those clothes in the form of a body in order to conform to mankind's concept of coincidence. The human mind had to have Jesus' example as the Wayshower. How could he possibly show that man can't die? Not by sidestepping the crucifixion; all right he must go through the crucifixion. Then if he were to go through it and something “miraculous” should happen, such as his dissolving of himself, it still would not leave real evidence that the body is untouched by death. Very well, let them think that they had buried the “dead” body in that tomb, and he would show the tomb and the clothes left untouched and yet vacant; then perhaps men would discern that that body never had been him anyhow, but was simply the place where they thought they saw him.

Does that mean something to you? When we look at the body of our fellow-man, let us see that we are not looking at a body, but at the manifestation of God at the point where that physical body appears to be. I believe that that is the beginning of resurrection in us; and then we can discern what John and Peter discerned. They came and saw the napkin and the linen lying as if the body were there, just as we look at the flesh as though the individual were in it, but really they are not localized there at all; being is everywhere. That napkin is simply the veil of the flesh.

“The last appearing of Truth will be a wholly spiritual idea of God and of man, without the fetters of the flesh, or corporeality. This infinite idea of infinity will be, is, as eternal as its divine Principle. The daystar of this appearing is the light of Christian Science - the Science which rends the veil of the flesh from top to bottom. The light of this revelation leaves nothing that is material; neither darkness, doubt, disease, nor death. The material corporeality disappears; and individual spirituality, perfect and eternal, appears - never to disappear” (Misc. 165:7-16). It will still be a man whom we can apprehend and understand, because Science has a Christ and abstractions always have their correlatives.

Verse 8.

"Then went in also that other disciple," - that's John. " ...and he saw..." The word "saw" there is eidon (see p.32), meaning full perception. One can imagine that John would discern the full implications of the sight, because he had such a great sense of womanhood and loved the spiritual for its own sake, not merely for its human representative. Therefore when John went into the sepulchre and saw those graveclothes in the form of a man and yet empty, he grasped the fact that in reality Jesus was never in them. He saw that Jesus had represented the presence of God despite the flesh, "and he saw, and believed."

Now that is something which you and I are learning to do every day; it is not something vast and beyond our comprehension, but is what dawns in thought right at the moment when we see the other person not as the-Son of man, but as the Son of God in terms of the Son of man. We see that man isn't "man" but is God's Being expressed.

Jesus' statements about resurrecting the body can never be understood if we think that that means just living in a matter body, then a dead matter body, and then life in that false matter body again. That is not resurrection but is an assumption built on the premise of gross materialism. (See Misc. 76:4-11) Now I think that it is absolutely and literally true that what the disciples saw, actually happened: they saw Jesus "in" a body, and then they saw him "dead" and then they saw him in a live body again.

You and I have every right to believe that, from the basis of our own experience. When we have seen a "sick man" who later appears as a healthy man, there certainly has been a change in the evidence, but we know in Science that it can't be done from a false premise. If we are asked to go and help someone who is sick, we don't go to heal or resurrect a sick mortal into health, it just doesn't work that way. Sickness is a lie about God and man, a lie to be reversed in consciousness; all that is healed or resurrected is our human concept. When that human concept no longer images forth on its body the delineation of sickness, then the everpresent health is manifested. It may look to the other chap as if he was sick and now he's better, but we know that he never was in a matter- body that could be sick anyhow. Now magnify that example into existence itself, and it must ultimate in the resurrection, to human sense, of the whole human physique.

"Our great example, Jesus, could restore the individualized manifestation of existence, which seemed to vanish in death" (S. and H. 555:27-30). The key point is that Mrs. Eddy doesn't say that Jesus could restore his physical body, but that he could restore the individualized manifestation of existence. If my consciousness is fully spiritualized, "this thing" isn't a physical body but is my individualized manifestation of existence. Jesus could do it not because physical life meant anything to him, but in order to fulfil his earth-mission in the language that mortals could appreciate.

Verse 9,10.

They had been able to appreciate the effects of what Jesus had done without understanding it subjectively. They saw the correlative without the abstraction, but even that convinced them.

Verse 11.

She wept because she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre, which is the only reason we ever weep. (See My. 119:12-15.)

Verse 12.

"Sitting" indicates the idea at rest in its Principle. In some of the other Gospels it says that the angels were standing; the others are all given differently. Mr. Doorly says of that passage, "in Science, the idea is crowned by Principle and based on Principle" (Oxford '49 V.B. Vol II p.120).

Verse 13.

She was beginning to see that "it is the purpose of divine Love to resurrect the understanding..." (Misc. 292:14-19) so that mortals can discern the Christ itself and not simply its manifestation. (See also Misc. 292:14-19.)

Verse 14.

We often look so diligently for the manifestation in-stead of for the divine ideal itself, that when the Christ is standing at the door of consciousness we do not recognize it, and turn ourselves back to the human concept.

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

“The real man being linked by Science to his Maker, mortals need only turn from sin and lose sight of mortal selfhood to find Christ, the real man and his relation to God, and to recognize the divine sonship” (S. and H. 316:3-7). “linked by Science”—the bond of union between the ides and its matrix, the true umbilical cord.

Verse 15.

”Whom seekest thou?” He yearned to have someone understand the incorporeal, impersonal Christ, and was calling on her to resurrect her ideal.

“the gardener” - that fundamental concept! We don’t find the Christ by tilling and cultivating mortal belief, but by starting out from Principle. Evidently Mary’s first thoughts about the possibility of resurrection were on the lines that Jesus might develop spiritually from matter. Really she was being the gardener, whereas Jesus rested on the Science of being. (See S. and H. 517:30-4.)

I think, too, that the gardener might represent any old mortal; for example, when perhaps we fail to recognize the presence of the Christ and ‘mistake it for Bill or Mary or the gardener, because of our personal sense. If we can’t discern the divinity in folk, they might as well be “the gardener” for all the Christ we see there.

Verse 16.

”Jesus saith unto her, Mary.”

That was all that he said to her, “Mary.” When you are willing, like Mary was, to turn away from the corporeal sense of person and to accept the Christ as that which is forever risen, then the Truth comes and touches your thought, calls you by your individual name. Jesus called for her Maryhood, as once he had called upon Martha to produce her own Mary. “Mary had risen to discern faintly God’s ever-presence, and that of His idea, man; but her mortal sense, reversing Science and spiritual understanding, interpreted this appearing as a risen Christ” (Un.. 62:27-2).

You notice that Mary had risen, not Jesus; but even so, all she could see was a risen Christ. Naturally she did; he was there again, just as your health is there again after a sickness. She failed, though, to see the real nature of resurrection. You and I will understand and demonstrate these things if we will start out from the basis of eternal resurrection; for we cannot hope to resurrect the physique out of death into physique in life once again if we think that the body is man or is life, and that is as clear as crystal. The reference continues to line 11. (See also Misc.276:20-23;Ret. 88:4-9.)

“To the woman at the sepulchre, bowed in strong affection’s anguish, one word, ‘Mary,’ broke the gloom with Christ’s all-conquering love. Then came her resurrection and task of glory, to know and do God’s will” (My. 258:9-12). “Then came her resurrection” - and that is what has been happening all this week: it has been our resurrection, our translation, our ascension—the way we understand One Being being one. The One Being is two to us half the time, and will be one to us as we willingly and lovingly understand that we are resurrected, translated and ascended, and comply with the demands of those facts in human experience.

Verse 17.

What did Jesus say to them when Lazarus came forth? “Loose him, and let him go.” This account in chapter 20 is the parallel of the Lazarus story: the subjective sense of it, understood from the divine standpoint.

“Jesus saith unto her, ‘Touch me not’ —don’t try to hold the spiritual idea in the grasp of matter. Be content to love the idea for its own sake, as spiritual values, and spiritual ideas. Our resurrection is to let go the symbol and to seize the Spirit. Jesus was bidding her cling not to personality but to Principle.

“I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” He wanted her to see that his resurrection was also their resurrection and to understand the universal implication of his demonstration. ‘He referred to his disciple’s not.’ as disciples or even as friends (15:14), but as brethren, which makes the basic concept of One Being really live. “Not more to one than to all, is God demonstrable as divine Life, Truth, and Love.” The one Principle is ever with its idea—One Being is being one—and that was his message to them. (See S. and H. 573:13-18; Ret. 94:21-24.)

Verse 18.

That was the beginning of her resurrection—that she could go with conviction and courage and tell those unbelieving men that she had seen the Lord. Often one's "resurrection and task of glory" is to have the courage of one's convictions and to act up to what one understands to be true, whether it is in the spoken word, or in some other way of taking a stand on Principle. In Mrs. Eddy's case, when she found her own risen Saviour, she discounted the mockery and went ahead with her "task of glory," and gave the world Science and Health as we know it today.