

June 23, 2003—Subject: Christian Science

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 *The Pure Science of Christian Science* by John Doorly, please [click here](#) for a short biography on this author.

PART I

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE BASED ON DIVINE SYSTEM

Is Christian Science truly scientific according to the real meaning of the term “science,” or is it merely loosely called “Science”? Does Christian Science comprise one complete system of divine metaphysics in which every part combines with every other part in perfect accord and harmony? Can it be definitely understood and demonstrated? Can it be systematically learned so that it may be taught and practised? Or is Christian Science merely another religious denomination founded on faith and religious sentiment? These are pertinent questions, on which the future of Christian Science largely depends.

Mrs. Eddy’s discovery, which she based on the Bible and named Christian Science, is not only scientific in the purest sense, but it is also the only really scientific system in the universe, for the simple reason that nothing can be truly scientific unless it pertains to reality, to the wholly spiritual. Paul writes “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (II Cor. 4 18) ; that great Christian thinker was writing to convince humanity of future ages that the one factor that matters and is truly scientific, is the spiritual, always tangible to inspired thought, though intangible to the physical senses.

THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST

Spiritually-minded men and women realize that the one important fact in religious and ethical matters is God Himself,—that is, divine Principle, Life, Truth, and Love. The summit of religious and scientific thinking is the spiritual awareness of ever-present Life, Truth, and Love. This spiritual awareness or advanced spiritual understanding the Scriptures illustrate by the descent of the Holy Ghost, and Christian Science interprets the Holy Ghost as “the development of eternal Life, Truth, and Love” (S. & H. 588: 7-8).

This understanding has always come throughout the ages to those who have been willing and able to discern the divine oneness and allness. It is evident that such thinkers must first, however, have turned away from the things of materiality and must have grasped definitely and subjectively the infinite reality of Spirit. This divine happening— the descent of the Holy- Ghost—may also be described as the abiding consciousness of Immanuel, or “God with us.” It is clear that the few inspired thinkers who have reached this point of spiritual culture and awareness are the only ones who have caused mankind to pause and consider seriously the things of God.

Millions of religionists, seeking to find God in a human way, have conferred much spiritual good on men, but only the few who have so lived and thought as to be in a measure God's own messengers and reflections have become the great milestones to mankind on its way to salvation. Moses, Elijah, Christ Jesus, John, Paul, John Wesley, Mary Baker Eddy, and many others, have in varying degrees pierced the veil of materiality, and have taught and proved the immortality and supremacy of the real, the spiritual.

Then is not this same attainment possible for all mankind? Were these achievements in the nature of and in accord with divine law, or were they accidental and phenomenal? Men have called such attainments supernatural, but they were really the natural operation, through inspired thought, of absolute divine law and power.

Intelligence, experience, reason, and revelation all declare and prove that men can express the nature of the infinite One whenever they are willing to consecrate thought and endeavor to this end.

PERFECT CAUSE AND PERFECT EFFECT

The majority of mankind accepts the fact that there is one great infinite all-inclusive First Cause. Consequently, the important thing is to understand and be in obedience to this First Cause. Since this Cause is infinite, it must forever express itself as infinitude of divine ideas, and these ideas must reflect the very nature and essence of this Cause. Is not this what the Scriptures imply when they declare that "God created man in his own image" (Gen. 1 27), also when John states, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God" (I John 3 2), and when Jesus demanded, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5 48)? If there is a perfect and infinite First Cause, then there must be a perfect and infinite effect, and that effect, to be perfect and infinite, must be of the nature of spiritual thought or idea, since materiality is avowedly imperfect and finite.

Then what is the way for the individual to learn and to put into practice the things of reality, the perfect and spiritual? Undoubtably it is to know God aright. hut how can we know God aright?

SCIENTIFIC BIBLICAL SYMBOLS AND THE "NEW TONGUE"

It is cause for satisfaction that the mystical theory of God as a humanly conceived Person has given place to an intelligent desire to know and to prove the great First Cause, the creator and sustaining power of all being. Men are now willing to accept the fact that the infinite Cause, or divine Principle, Life, Truth, and Love, cannot be known as a whole, for to include the infinite in thought is impossible. Consequently, God, divine Principle, Life, Truth, and Love, can be intelligently understood only through the infinite ideas which express God,—that is, through ideas of Life, of Truth, and of Love. Christian Science teaches that in order to grasp and use these ideas in human experience, there must be a definite, ordered system of metaphysical Interpretation and symbolism. This system can be found in the Bible and in the Christian Science textbook, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures."

Mrs. Eddy states specifically that "Spiritual teaching must always be by symbols" (S. & H.575:13-14). A symbol may be an object, a figure, a sentiment, a thought or idea, and it may be expressed in a word, a sentence, or a paragraph. At this point it would be well to consider the real meaning and purpose of the term "symbol" as given by the best dictionaries.

Mrs. Eddy understood and appreciated the symbols employed by the Old and New Testament writers to interpret spiritual teaching. They used all manner of things,—the sky, the sun, the moon, the stars, the rain, wheat and tares, the birds, trees and leaves, tables, chariots, candlesticks,—in fact, practically everything by way of symbolization, in order to make clear the Bible teaching. Perhaps the least evident and least known aspect of this symbolism in the Scriptures is the exact and methodical use of mathematical symbols by the inspired writers. To illustrate, the Bible begins with seven so-called “days of creation,” recording the ordered development of spiritual thought as it grasps reality. This ordered symbolism culminates in Revelation with the “city foursquare,” typifying a four-dimensional calculus of thought and demonstration. In our period, Mrs. Eddy has used as symbols not only Biblical language and objects, but also many facts and functions of the natural sciences—of music, mathematics, optics, astronomy—to explain the system of Christian Science. (See My. 345 25-30.)

Will it not be a marvellous thing as the future proves that the highest spiritual idealism of the Bible is based on pure Science, and that Mary Baker Eddy discovered and revealed this fact to our scientific age, so that all men can know, understand, and demonstrate the eternal perfection of God and of man? It has always been recognized that the great thinkers who compiled the Old and New Testaments revealed the ideas of God, in a religious and mystical way, through a multiplicity of familiar and much-loved Scriptural symbols, but is it not also true that hidden beneath this portrayal of deep religious sentiment there lies an absolutely scientific and metaphysical system of defining God? It is well known to students of the Bible that in the prophetic age many inspired writers were forced to hide the things of spiritual vision in symbolism that would not be understood until thought was prepared to accept it. Indeed, Jesus himself spoke of “. . . leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal” (Matt. 13 33).

Mrs. Eddy’s textbook, “Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures,” is the most metaphysically scientific book in the world. In it she not only employs a vast range of terminology in its highest and most exact sense, but she also uses the pure and infinite language of Spirit, the “new tongue,” to interpret divine Science. In order to understand the Bible and the Christian Science textbook, we must learn to appreciate the Biblical method of symbolizing spiritual ideas and also the “new tongue” of Spirit. The consecrated and intelligent study of Science through definite and exact symbolism, in which the Bible and “Science and Health” abound, will lead us through the letter into the spirit, and indeed we need both. If we believe that we can do without the letter, we are mistaken.

SPIRITUAL SENTIMENT versus EMOTION

Mrs. Eddy once put this question to a class: “Which did Christendom retain,—the letter or the spirit ?” They all replied, “The letter:” But she said, “Why no, if they had, they would have been able to heal. What they retained was the sentiment and emotion.” No Christian Scientist would condemn a pure sentiment, but let us demand sentiment which is the outcome of spiritual and scientific understanding. Most thinkers love good sentiment, but sentiment must be the outcome of understanding, or it is merely emotion, which adores God, good, at one moment and blasphemes at the next. (See S. & H. 88 20-25.)

The letter at first leads to the spirit. Later, the letter becomes that through which we use the spirit. Indeed, the pure letter or word melts into the spirit. So the letter and spirit are both essential. (See S. & H. 495 25-28; 330 8-10.)

Some people seem to be rich in the gift of the spirit. Through the ages there have been many men and women who have felt the touch of both Science and Christianity. It remained, however, for Mary Baker Eddy to reveal divine Science, and to state its exact letter, also to reduce her revelation to a system by which all mankind could learn and use this Science.

SPIRITUAL RESEARCH TRULY INTELLECTUAL

It has been claimed that the study of the letter is merely intellectual. Mrs. Eddy writes of Christian Science that “its medicine is intellectual and spiritual” (S. & H. 460 :9). Of course it is intellectual in the truest sense. Webster defines “intellectual” as follows
 “INTELLECTUAL... (1) Belonging or relating to, or performed by, the intellect or understanding; . . . (2) Apprehensible by the intellect alone; hence, of a spiritual nature; perceptible only to inspired vision or by spiritual insight. (3a) Endowed with intellect; having the power of understanding; having the capacity for the higher forms of knowledge or thought; as, an *intellectual* being. (4) Suitable for the exercise of intellect; demanding study and thought. ...”

In one instance, Mrs. Eddy states that the student of Christian Science does not need “intellectual proficiency” (S. & H. x :30). Webster defines the “proficient” as “an expert.” Therefore, when Mrs. Eddy says, “No intellectual proficiency is requisite in the learner” (S. & H. x: 30-31), she indicates that the learner does not need to be an expert. When she speaks of “intellectual” in a merely human sense, she always qualifies her use of the word. The fact is that the word “intellectual” may be used to give a positive spiritual sense or a relative human sense. That the term “intellectual” should be used to refer to human thinking alone is a distortion of its meaning, as the dictionary proves.

Mrs. Eddy clearly indicates that one of the purposes of evil is to prevent “intellectual culture” (My. 211: 31). Wise Christian Scientists would do well to ponder this warning at the present hour.

In her writings Mrs. Eddy uses a vocabulary of over 18,000 words. Shakespeare is the only English writer who has used a greater number. The ordinary man’s English vocabulary consists of about 1,500 words. There is no need to remind anyone of the fact that Mrs. Eddy uses her terminology with the greatest possible accuracy. To her a word had its basic meaning, and “Science and Health” is a textbook, its every word being used to bring out its own real value.

“PRINCIPLE AND PRACTICE”

Mrs. Eddy’s revelation lays great stress on two words understanding and demonstration. (See S. & H. 279 19-21 ; 355 2-9; Manual, 19 1-6.) The title of her textbook, “Science and Health,” proves this fact to be basic. Without “Science,” there is no “Health”.

One cannot be too emphatic in asserting that the successful way of demonstration is the way of spiritual understanding. It is not the way of belief. Along the upward way, belief changes to faith in God, but until faith becomes spiritual understanding, the goal of divine Science cannot be reached. (See S.&H.297 28-31. Until...” Many have attached great importance to Mrs. Eddy’s last statement to her Cause, contained in the article, “Principle and Practice.” (See Christian Science Sentinel, 1st September, 1917.) Mrs. Eddy gave this important statement to the Christian Science movement through her secretary, Mr. Adam Dickey, a few months before she left us. Mr. Dickey stated that in all the years spent in serving Mrs. Eddy, he had never known her so serious as when she dictated this message.

Mrs. Eddy evidently foresaw what the future of the Christian Science movement might be without spiritual and scientific metaphysics. In this article she writes

“The nature and position of mortal mind are the opposite of immortal Mind. The so-called mortal mind is belief and not understanding. Christian Science requires understanding instead of belief; it is based on a fixed eternal and divine Principle, wholly apart from mortal conjecture; and it must be understood, otherwise it cannot be correctly accepted and demonstrated.

“The inclination of mortal mind is to receive Christian Science through a belief instead of the understanding, and this inclination prevails like an epidemic on the body; it inflames mortal mind and weakens the intellect, but this so-called mortal mind is wholly ignorant of this fact, and so cherishes its mere faith in Christian Science.

Belief in Christian Science, Mrs. Eddy says, “weakens the intellect.” To understand God,—divine Principle,—so that one can demonstrate health, holiness, and happiness, and overcome sin, disease, and death, can hardly be a matter of vague emotion and mysticism, but must necessarily be the consecrated, intelligent, spiritual, and scientific understanding of the one infinite divine Mind. Mrs. Eddy particularly warns against what she calls a “trifling sense” of Christian Science. (See Mis. 43 : 9-12; Hea. 14: 15-24.) When are we Christian Scientists going to realize that “The education of the future will be instruction, in spiritual Science,...?” (Mis 61:4-5) With this instruction will come intelligent consecration and consequent demonstration.

Mrs. Eddy further states in “Principle and Practice”

“In this very manner some students of Christian Science have accepted, through faith, a divine Principle, God, as their savior, but they have not understood this Principle sufficiently well to fulfill the Scriptural command, ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel.’ ‘Heal the sick.’ It is the healer’s understanding of the operation of the divine Principle, and his application thereof, which heals the sick, just as it is one’s understanding of the principle of mathematics which enables him to demonstrate its rules.

“Christian Science is not a faith-cure, and unless human faith be distinguished from scientific healing, Christian Science will again be lost from the practice of religion as it was soon after the period of our great Master’s scientific teaching and practice...”

“Christian Science is not a faith-cure.” Millions of men and women have had wonderful faith during the last nineteen hundred years, but they could not demonstrate divine Principle, because they did not understand its Science. (See Ret. 54 :1-55:8.)

To-day divine Science is revealed, and everyone can understand and demonstrate both its divinity and its consistency. Science is not dependent on any temperamental religious flair. We demonstrate Science through “absolute consecration of thought, energy, and desire (S.& H16).

Would that every Christian Scientist possessed a copy of this article, “Principle and Practice,” and that he considered it earnestly at least once a week.

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