

June 3, 2002—Subject: God the Preserver of Man

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.

Our first selection this week is from —SCIENCE AND HEALTH WITH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES by Mary Baker Eddy.

Our other selection is from—FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION BY—W. Gordon Brown
For a brief biography of Mr. Brown, [click here](#).

“Spiritual teaching must always be by symbols.” (S. and H. 575:14)

Abraham Isaac Jacob Joseph

“Before Abraham was, I [the Son of God] am,” said Jesus. What is before Abraham? Biblically, the first and second periods of Adam and Noah, underlying which is the twofold idea of the Son of God.

Science and Health says that the third day of creation, “the third stage in the order of Christian Science,” is “an important one to the human thought, letting in the light of spiritual understanding” (S & H 508:28)—letting in the light of the first day, and the spiritual understanding, or the firmament, of the second. Correspondingly, in the third thousand-year period, human thought identifies itself with the twofold idea implicit in the first two periods, in order that, like the children of Israel, it may inherit the land of spiritual identity.

The third period as a whole ranges from Genesis 11:26 (the birth of Abraham), through the remainder of Genesis, through Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, and Judges, to the end of the book of Ruth. It is about the spiritual upbringing of the children of Israel. Impelled by the infinite as Soul (the third synonym in the divine order, and the name for God which gives the true idea of body and identity) the narrative unfolds through the five subtones of the third day of creation: Soul as Mind, Soul as Spirit, Soul as Soul, Soul as Principle, and Soul as Life.

The first two tones, Soul as Mind and Soul as Spirit, cover the Patriarchal period in Israel’s life. These also bring the book of Genesis to a close. With the patriarchs, the idiom changes from myth to saga. The tales of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph are generally regarded as sagas, or folklore. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are Israel’s three fathers, or patriarchs, the God-inspired architects of her identity. Israel herself, conceived of generically, is represented by the fourth figure, Joseph. In the Jacob saga the birth of Joseph leads to Jacob himself being renamed “Israel.” In the fourth period, when the kingdom divides into Judah and Israel, the house of Joseph becomes the leading house of the kingdom of Israel, thus identifying Israel especially with Joseph.

Soul as Mind pertains to the Abraham and Isaac sagas, where Israel is at the point of origin; Soul as Spirit pertains to the Jacob and Joseph sagas, where she is actually brought to birth. The spiritual significance of these four sagas is that the seed of the idea underlying the first two periods is sown by the divine Patriarch, or Father, in the soil of human consciousness, where it is destined to develop with power and grace until it conquers the whole earth— that is, until it constitutes the whole of man. The idea itself is the manhood and womanhood of God, represented initially in the life of Israel by the two foremost sons of Jacob, Judah and Joseph.

In the tone of Soul as Soul, at the beginning of Exodus, Moses' identification of Israel's true I AM frees her from Egyptian servitude. In Soul as Principle, he reduces God's law to a comprehensible system of laws and leads her to the promised land. In Soul as Life, under the leadership of Joshua, Israel enters and possesses the land; she accepts her sinless, deathless selfhood as her natural divine inheritance.

From the time of the patriarchs onwards, Israel's progress (the progress of the idea of one absolute God) towards ultimate world supremacy is the subject not only of the remainder of the Old Testament but of the New Testament as well. According to Paul in Hebrews, Abraham, from the beginning, looks for "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." He is already seeking the city foursquare in Revelation as the true identity of himself and his world. The seed which the Father sows in the womb of world-consciousness, at this point, is thus a seedlike understanding of this ultimate world-city—the embryonic idea of the Word, Christ, Christianity, Science. Hence the sagas of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph give us our first touch in the Scriptural story of the significance of these four terms. Abraham, the creative father, introduces us to the first side of the holy city, the Word; Isaac, his son, introduces us to the second side, the Christ; Jacob, with his twelvefold family of sons, symbolizing the universal brotherhood of man, introduces us to the third side, Christianity; while Joseph, lord of the land of Egypt and nourisher of all mankind, introduces us to the fourth side, Science. Thereafter, the idea of this universal matrix-city grows and develops in human consciousness until it constitutes heaven and earth. The word city is from the same root as citizen, signifying government and social order. Mary Baker Eddy wrote of the twelve tribes of Israel that they stand in type for "the whole human race" (CSJournal April 1895). What Abraham is looking for — the idea which is speaking through the folklore of the patriarchs — is the ultimate order of world society, the goal of all civilization. In the language of the third day of creation, it is indeed an idea "whose seed is in itself." "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," is God's promise in turn to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

So precise is Bible ideology in respect of this mighty promise, that the four patriarchal sagas hold within them, as a seed, the whole of the ensuing development of the story including our present age. The Abraham saga relates to the unfoldment of the Old Testament, the Word; the Isaac saga points to the Gospel part of the New Testament, the Christ; the Jacob saga relates to all that unfolds as the history of Christianity up to and including the founding of Christian Science; while the Joseph saga points to the revelation that is taking place today, namely, Christian Science as the universal, nonsectarian Science of being—the true identity of "all the families of the earth."

As discussed in the Introduction to this book, Luke says of Jesus, after the resurrection, that “beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” Accepting the interpretation that “beginning at Moses” means beginning with the story of Exodus, where Moses first appears (rather than beginning with Genesis, the authorship of which is attributed to Moses), we might ask ourselves the question, Why beginning at Moses? Why not beginning at Abraham?

Beginning at. Moses indicates beginning with Israel’s deliverance from Egypt. In the gospel, Joseph takes Mary and Jesus down into Egypt. This is prefigured in the story of the patriarchs when Jacob’s son Joseph takes all Israel down into Egypt. In the Bible, it is said of **Jesus** as it is said of **Israel**, “Out of Egypt have I called my son” — an utterance which will, in due course, be found equally applicable to **Christianity** and to **Christian Science**.

Egypt is a symbol of organic birth. Hence Israel, Jesus, Christianity, as well as Christian Science, must each be delivered from Egypt — freed from belief in mortal origin. Jesus is identified with virgin conception. God, not man, is his Father. To the faithful patriarchs, God is the Father of Israel too. It must be established from the beginning that the Christ-idea is of spiritual not organic parentage. The period of the patriarchs, in relation to Israel, corresponds to Mary’s conception, in relation to Jesus. In Christian Science it corresponds to our conception of the absolute spiritual reality of our world. Explaining Scripturally his life experience, and the way he has been freed from birth and death, Jesus therefore begins at Moses.

In our journey through the Bible (corresponding, as this does, to our spiritual journey through life), our thought, like that of Mary, must find itself overshadowed by the Holy Ghost, the development of eternal Life, Truth, and Love (S&H 29:24, 588:7). Remember that the idea underlying the first two periods is this very idea of Life, Truth, and Love. In the two opening tones of the third period, humanity’s identity as this idea is sown in the womb of consciousness, to come to fruition in the fifth period of Life and in the sixth and seventh periods of Truth and Love, through the ministries of Jesus and Christian Science, the manhood and womanhood of God.

Let us discern the relationship between the first two periods as a whole and the first two tones of the third period with which we are now concerned. The first period develops the tone of Mind up to the point of Soul (Mind as Mind, Mind as Spirit, Mind as Soul); the second period develops the tone of Spirit likewise up to the point of Soul (Spirit as Mind, Spirit as Spirit, Spirit as Soul). Now it is that the seed of what these two periods stand for divinely is sown and conceived in consciousness through Soul as Mind (the first tone of the third period) and Soul as Spirit (the second tone). The balance and harmony of the ideas involved is like music in its precision.

Soul in the aspect of Mind covers the sagas of Abraham and Isaac, where the idea of **manhood** predominates; Soul in the aspect of Spirit covers the sagas of Jacob and Joseph, where the idea of **womanhood** predominates. The two together become the compound idea of God which, in Soul as Soul (the third tone of the third period), holds its own development irresistibly within itself. In the terms of the foursquare matrix-city which Abraham himself is seeking, the Abraham saga, accentuating the Word, unfolds, as we shall see, in tones of the Word as the Word, the Word as the Christ, the Word as Christianity, and the Word as Science; the Isaac saga, accentuating the Christ, unfolds through Christ as the Word, Christ as the Christ, Christ as Christianity, and Christ as Science; the Jacob saga, accentuating Christianity, unfolds through Christianity as the Word, Christianity as the Christ, Christianity as Christianity, and Christianity as Science; the Joseph saga, accentuating Science, unfolds through Science as the Word, Science as the Christ, Science as Christianity, and Science as Science. (See Appendix p.383).

1st tone of 3rd period— Soul as Mind—

Abraham's foremost qualities are fidelity and trust (S&I-H. 579:10-14), and they must be our starting-point too. Without these qualities we cannot begin our spiritual journey. It is well to note, therefore, how the textbook's first chapter, "Prayer," opens on this same note of absolute faith, and on the need for trusting God with our desires.

Seeking the matrix of man's true identity, Abraham trusts God with his desires "that they may be moulded and exalted before they take form in words and in deeds" (S&H 1:12). Note how this elementary spiritual attitude identifies our thought with the first tone of the third day of creation, where "Spirit, God, gathers unformed thoughts into their proper channels, and unfolds these thoughts, even as He opens the petals of a holy purpose in order that the purpose may appear" (S&H 506:18). Through Abraham (standing for the creative Word) the petals of the holy purpose open; but it is in Isaac, his son (standing for the manifest Christ), that the purpose itself appears. Hence the sagas of Abraham and Isaac both come within this opening tone.

ABRAHAM SAGA

Three geographical locations, forming on the map a kind of isosceles triangle, illustrate the symbolism at the beginning of the Abraham saga.

These are Ur of the Chaldees in Babylonia in the south east, Haran in Syria (Padan-aram) in the far north, and Mamre in Canaan in the south west. Abram (as Abraham is first called) journeys from the first to the second and then to the third. Figuratively, he ascends from Ur to Haran, then descends from Haran to Canaan.

The name Ur means "light." Ur of the Chaldees stands for the light (so-called) of astrology and horoscopy, based on belief in the material nativity of man. Ur is Abram's mortal birthplace from which he must be separated. As prospective patriarch of the children of Israel he must cease to be identified with Babel, or Babylon. In company with his father Terah (whose name means "delay") Abram, with the rest of Terah's family, migrates from Ur to Haran. There Terah dies.

Haran means "exalted, elevated." It becomes the country of Abram's kindred, the land of the pure Hebraic strain. Later, Abram insists that a bride for his son Isaac be brought down from Haran; and Isaac himself insists that his son Jacob goes up to Haran to find himself a wife. With the exception of Benjamin, who is born in Canaan, all Jacob's sons, the founders of the Israel nation, originate in Haran, or Padan-aram. Haran, it would seem, represents the exalted idea of spiritual origin (in contrast to astrological Ur) from which thought must proceed in order to inherit the promised land. For only in the land of Canaan is the life-problem solved. Only when divine Science is reduced to the system of ideas which is Christian Science does divine Science solve the problems of humanity. Hence the command to Abram: "Get thee out of thy country [Haran] and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." Without Christian Science, divine Science would be an abstraction. In the promised land, divine Science and Christian Science are one.

Journeying south, Abram settles in Mamre. The name means “fully assimilated, abundantly supplied.” Jerusalem will one day be built near Mamre. We must not forget that Abram is looking for the city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God — that is, New Jerusalem. What the Christian Scientist is looking for is the system of ideas that has rocklike fundamentals, and is of divine not human origin.

Abram’s wife Sarai (later Sarah), and his nephew Lot, accompany him to the land of Canaan. Paul explains the symbolism of Abraham and Sarah when he writes of Abraham as the “father of us all” (Rom 4:16) and Of Sarah as the “mother of us all” (Gal 4:26). In this latter reference, Sarah is none other than “Jerusalem above,” the holy city itself. Interpreted spiritually, Abram is already wedded to what he is looking for. So it is with the Christian Scientist; he is already one with the divine ideal which, humanly speaking, is his goal. The tone is Soul as Mind, the one parental source of all spiritual identities.

Lot means “dark, concealed, veiled.” He is the sensuality in Abram’s thought which Abram hides and does not want to part with. Thus there is a famine in Abram’s land, and he resorts to Egypt for sustenance. In doing so he fears for the purity and safety of his ideal. But Sarai is under divine protection, and Pharaoh cannot harm her.

Abram profits greatly from his Egypt experience. It teaches him that he and Lot can no longer dwell together, that the land cannot bear them both, and so they part company. Lot identifies himself with the fertile plains near Sodom and Gomorrah, but Abram stays in Mamre. Immediately they are separated, Abram is given the joyous assurance; “Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever.” His longed-for goal is seen to be the present reality of his being.

The Word as the Christ

After parting from Lot, and realizing in consequence that his Christ-selfhood is already his, Abram is shown what this selfhood consists of and what he must do to experience it. In the tone of the Word as the Christ he meets Melchizedek. According to Paul, Melchizedek is king of Jerusalem — king of the very city which Abram has been seeking, but which he now knows is at hand, Melchizedek is “King of Salem ... King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God” (Heb 7:2). Melchizedek gives Abram bread and wine, as Jesus does with the disciples. Meichizedek is pure Christly at-one-ment with God, as represented in the second chapter of the textbook.

But before Abram actually meets Meichizedek, and partakes of the eucharist, he must comply with conditions of atonement. Mere separation from Lot does not necessarily mean that he has solved the problem of Lot.

Hence there is a battle in Abram’s experience. This is between five kings who come from inside the land, and four who come from outside. The five kings include the king of Sodom; they represent the five physical senses with which Lot is identified. The four kings are mortal beliefs which assail the body from outside, and hold it in bondage. In spite of the fact that the five kings rebel against this servitude, they are smitten and routed by the other four, and Lot is taken prisoner. The battle is between what is objective in Abram’s thought and what is subjective.

It is imperative for Abram to vanquish the four kings and rescue Lot. Aided by his “trained servants, born in his own house” he succeeds. He employs those cultivated ideas which, although they are born in his own consciousness, are still objective to him, but which nevertheless heal his body.

Once the four kings are slaughtered, and Lot is rescued, the birthless, deathless Melchizedek greets Abram with bread and wine— that is, with the true idea of body. “Take, eat; this is my body,” Jesus says to his disciples when he imparts to them the understanding of what identity is.

The king of Sodom wants Abram to pay him homage. But Abram will not be tempted. He has glimpsed the reality of selfhood in Christ where subject and object are one. “I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich,” is his answer. Abram is made rich by the Christly ministrations of Meichizedek, not by the subtle enticements of the king of Sodom.

Abram is overjoyed with what he and his servants have achieved. So much so that when this band of helpers is represented by his one faithful steward, Eliezer, he concludes that he has found his rightful heir. “To me thou hast given no seed,” he says to God, “And, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.” But this is not the Christ way. However helpful they may be to us, ideas which we have adopted objectively must be superseded by revelation which comes from within ourselves. “This shall not be thine heir,” God tells him, “but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.” Abram’s real heir is as the very stars of heaven for number. The promise continues: “Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.” Coming from God and returning to God, the heir to whom Abram will himself give birth is the idea of the wholeness and immortality of man that lies at the back of the birth-death concept.

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