

Jan 5, 2004—Subject: God

Our first selection this week is from JOHN LAWRENCE SINTON'S HARROGATE SUMMER SCHOOL 1952—A *Verbatim Report of Classes on THE GLOSSARY OF "SCIENCE AND HEALTH WITH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES"* by MARY BAKER EDDY.

### God as Creator

Now let us take the Infinite as creator. The term "creator" is used sparingly in the Old Testament. It appears by implication in the first record in –Genesis 1, through the use of the corresponding verb; it does not appear in a direct way.

GENESIS 1:21, 27. "And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, ... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; ..." The sense of creator is implied there through the use of the verb. Ecclesiastes 12:1 "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; ..." Let us link up with this Mrs. Eddy's remarkable passage in *Miscellaneous Writings*, 57: 11-13. "Jesus said of error, 'That thou doest, do quickly.' By the law of opposites, after the truth of man had been demonstrated, the postulate of error must appear –not "may appear" but "must appear." Why *must* it appear? It must appear in order that we may have a complete concept of demonstration and proof. It must appear so as to demonstrate the nature of that which is, together with the fallacy or the nothingness of that which is not. Here the recorder in Ecclesiastes is taking the earlier and less mature conception: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth" refers to the period when we are learning to assimilate, to gather the nature of good through spiritual sense; when good is objective to our thought and we are apprehending the nature of the one Infinite as creator. "While the evil days come not," on the other hand, implies the scientific sense of what Mrs. Eddy has put here in *Miscellaneous Writings*: "By the law of opposites, after the truth of man had been demonstrated, the postulate of error must appear." The very fact that we accept an idea as having real being, the very fact of our acceptance that it *is*, implies the denial of what it is *not*. Until one's thought is schooled in logical processes this may at first appear rather abstract, but a little consecrated thought on the matter soon makes it clear and simple. Until this question of opposites is satisfactorily solved in our own consciousness, evil would still claim to mystify and generate problems. But when we have cleared up the problem of opposites and our thought is poised in the oneness of being, then no longer can the problem of opposites baffle, mystify, and desolate human experience.

So clearly the prophetic writer here is speaking of spiritual sense in its early phases of development where it is still accepting good, learning the nature of good; but when the "evil days" appear to come, that does not mean that evil is inevitable; rather does it mean that a complete conception of proof is inevitable; and a complete conception of proof which is inevitable naturally implies the appearing of the postulate of error, only that this postulate may be handled and reversed and thereby serve the purposes of good, consolidating all the more permanently one's understanding of the oneness of being.

Direct references to “creator” also appear in Isaiah.

ISAIAH 40: 25, 26, 28. “To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high,”—there again is the lifting up of one’s vision,”and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth. ...Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.” Here we have Isaiah recognizing the Lord as the Creator of the ends of the earth.”

ISAIAH 43:15. “I am the Lord, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.”

Let us now turn to the Glossary definition of “creator,” and as we take these Old Testament terms in the Glossary, we see how the revelation of Science comes and lifts the concept of the Infinite out of the Old Testament atmosphere of limitation and sets it forth for us in the language and the scientific sense of today.

“CREATOR. Spirit; Mind; intelligence;

I have often wondered why Spirit appears first. As we consider the term in the Old Testament we find that, possibly for lack of an adequate vocabulary, the nearest that the early Hebrews could conform to the conception of God as Spirit was through their word for breath or air, the breath that one exhales, and that word was *ruach*. That was the nearest their vocabulary could approximate to what we to-day mean by the term “Spirit.” Since this term “creator” is basically an Old Testament term, I think Mrs. Eddy defines it for us in the first place through the Old Testament word which to the Hebrew mind best explained it, hence as Spirit. You and I to-day, because of further enlightenment, realize that Mind, or intelligence, is the starting point, but the early Hebrews had not yet gathered that. Their nearest approximation to the incorporeal and invisible was through *ruach*, meaning breath.

Then notice how Mrs. Eddy lifts the term:

“...the animating divine Principle of all that is real and good; self-existent Life, Truth, and Love; . . .”

You see, the early Hebrew thought was not entirely free from the animism and pantheism of primitive civilizations; animism as a type of primitive thought precedes even pantheism. Here we have an example whereby Mrs. Eddy lifts the term “creator” above primitive animism and sets it forth as “the animating divine Principle.” What a step in advance that is! She takes this early Hebrew searching for God, burdened as it was with animism and pantheism, and lifts it right out of that primitive setting and now brings it forth as “the animating divine Principle of all that is real and good.” And, of course, the moment she sets it forth as the “animating divine Principle,” it becomes correlative with the creative Principle which appears in the first day of Genesis, the creative Principle which is Life, Truth, and Love (S & H 502: 27-28). Not only is it “the animating divine Principle,” but also “self-existent Life, Truth, and Love,”—that is, existent in its own right, its infinitude precluding any comparison or contrast.

And so from the early Hebrew *ruach*, meaning breath, we rise to a conception of the Infinite as Spirit. Then we see that that Spirit, because of its omnipresence and incorporeality, is of necessity the one divine Mind or intelligence. Then the definition rises higher to the “animating divine Principle,” until finally it becomes the “self-existent Life, Truth, and Love,”—the one trinity of good.

Continuing, Mrs. Eddy appears to bring her definition down to the human need again by setting it forth through qualities and attributes:

“... that which is perfect and eternal; the opposite of matter and evil, which have no Principle; . . .”

You see, that is stated in terms of what is and what is not.

God, who made all that was made and could not create an atom or an element the opposite of Himself”(583: 20—25).

So all there is in real being to atom or element must be like God Himself, and not only like Himself but in and of Himself. In Miscellaneous Writings we have the unqualified statement that “atomic action is Mind, not matter” (190:1). So that with which the physicists are working to-day, and which, in all human experience, is the most potent, the most poisonous thing the world has ever known, when reversed becomes the atoms and elements of the divine being. What those infinitesimals are in their divine right we do not know; we only know that they exist, and being in and of the one Infinite as the substance and constitution of it, they are of necessity perfect, imperishable, indestructible, harmless, containing no destructive element, but all serving and constituting divine order. The apparent opposite, that which is not, would appear to be external to this one Infinite, and because of an apparent externality it must of necessity be an inversion. If it were not an apparent external to the one Infinite, it would partake of it, but because it is apparently external to it, its basis is supposition, its substance is suppositional, its existence is hypothetical. So our task, if we are to save humanity from the desolations of animal magnetism, is to take what the world today regards as atomic energy, nuclear physics, and so on, and see that those subjects and those elements are but a supposed inversion, supposed opposite, supposed externalization of that which is found within the one Infinite, and which is the constitution of that one Infinite in terms of atoms and elements as God knows them.

And so, as with the term Lord God, we see what a tremendous range of thought is implied by “creator,” in its development from the animism of the early Hebrews, whereby they began to conceive of God as no more than ruach, to the point where it is lifted and exalted to express to us “the animating divine Principle ...self-existent Life, Truth, and Love”—the trinity of good, within which are to be found all there is to atom and element without a single destructive property. If there were within this one Infinite a single destructive property, being would disintegrate. Perfection, which “is the order of celestial being” (S & H 337: 17-18), would be inconceivable and there would be nothing but darkness, chaos—that primitive darkness and chaos over which the Spirit of God moved (Gen. 1:2). Can we see from those first three propositions of the Scriptures how this tremendous conception of the Science of the Scriptures evolves? We might even say that the whole of the remaining Scripture from Genesis 1:3 is a development of how the Spirit of God moves on the face of the waters. The whole Scripture, and we may also say our whole textbook, derive from those first three propositions set forth in the first two verses of the first chapter of Genesis. Is it any wonder that, although the Elohist record came centuries after the \*\*\*\*\* prophets put it right \*\*\*\*\* forefront; and opened the Scriptures with those three leading propositions? It is the most wonderful thing in the Bible to see that they had the vision to do this; they were acting as scribes under orders; they couldn’t help but place those three propositions right in the forefront; and if they had not done so, the Scriptures would not have been possible as a scientific textbook.

We see, therefore, how this term “creator” rises from primitive animism right through to the conception of the Infinite as self-existent Life, Truth, and Love.

## God as Father

Then another conception appears of the Infinite as Father. Examples are found as follows.

PSALM 89: 26. "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Notice that in that one brief verse we have three Glossary terms,—"father," "rock," and "salvation." We notice how this conception of the Infinite as Father develops from the time of Abraham onwards. Then, running parallel with it, but in a much more obscure way, is the gradual emergence of God as Mother. That is implied through the Hebrew *El Shaddai*, which I mentioned earlier.

ISAIAH 9:6. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Even the spiritual idea must be characterized in reflection by the property of fatherhood.

ISAIAH 63:15, 16. "Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained? Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting."

Now let us take the Glossary definition of "Father":

"FATHER. Eternal Life; the one Mind; the divine Principle, commonly called God" (586: 9-10).

The theological use of the word God is far below the scientific conception of fatherhood as "eternal Life"—even this conception does not advance beyond Life.

## God as Mother

Inseparable from Father is Mother, and although the direct Scriptural references to the term are more sparing than to "Father," the idea is frequently hinted by *El Shaddai*. Let us consider the term in the Glossary, where I believe we have the high water mark of all definition where the Infinite is concerned. Notice how much more subjective it is:

"MOTHER. God; divine and eternal Principle; Life, Truth, and Love" (592: 16—17).

I always associate this definition with the seventh paragraph of the Platform, where Mrs. Eddy writes: "Life, Truth, and Love constitute the triune Person called God,—that is, the triply divine Principle, Love" (S. & H. 331: 26—27).

## Principle as Life, Truth, and Love

It might be opportune to mention here a point which I shall make later concerning Principle as Life, Truth, and Love. Principle is the one term which more than any other denotes the absolute oneness and indivisibility of the Infinite, but unless we take diversified conceptions of that one Infinite it still remains inadequately defined. Here we learn that Life, Truth, and Love constitute it. Now let me take these three terms Life, Truth, and Love and consider them in a fourfold way—we shall take the fuller development of them later, this is but introductory. As the divine Principle in terms of Life, Truth, and Love breaks on our thought, that breaking of the light comes to us as the Word of Revelation; hence we define the divine Principle in its creative nature through the Word of Life, Truth, and Love.

When we take that constitution of Principle in the Christ sense, Life, Truth, and Love constitute the ideal or highest conception of divine Principle, which comes to you and me, and is embodied within us, as the divine idea. When that same conception comes to us in terms of Christi-anity, we have a diversified sense of it through Father, Son, and Mother; we have, as it were, the family concept of divine Principle in which the Infinite is Father—the creative concept; in which it is Mother; and in which man and the universe as a whole constitute the compound idea, or the son of God. But when we come to the fourth, to the Science concept, we go as far as language can possibly take the question.

Let me repeat: the constitution of divine Principle through the Word comes to us as the Word of Life, Truth, and Love, — the revelatory concept of it; Life, Truth, and Love in terms of the Christ is the divine ideal; Life, Truth, and Love in Christi-anity is the divine family amplified as Father, Son, and Mother; but when we go into the fourth or the Science concept, the family concept of Christianity becomes so subjective that the term “Son” disappears and becomes only “sonship.” Why? Because the idea in the Science concept is so wholly subjective that it is in and of its divine Principle as a constituent of its very being. This is indicated in the seventh paragraph of the Platform: “Life, Truth and Love represent a trinity in unity, three in one, —the same in essence, though multiform in office: God the Father-Mother; “—that which in Christianity was Father and Mother, in Science, is now hyphenated to be “Father-Mother,” one conception; —” Christ the spiritual idea of sonship; “—that which was “Son” in Christianity, the individualized concept, is now “sonship,” implying the gathering or aggregate of everything included in that term from the standpoint of Principle;—”divine Science or the Holy Comforter “—that is the third of the trinity.

All this requires deep and consecrated meditation, and that is why I am bringing it in now, so that in the next few days you can ponder it. We will come back to it from time to time, and you will see the underlying logic of these four conceptions. This paragraph from the Platform is, I believe, one of the most profound statements in *Science and Health* concerning the divine Principle as Life, Truth, and Love. It epitomizes the Science conception, and it is recorded that Mrs. Eddy regarded it as the most important in her whole textbook.



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