

July 14, 2003—Subject: Life

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 corresponds to the Subject as a whole with the first and last two pages of Peggy Brook's Booklet— GOD'S NATURE AS LIFE. For a short biography on the featured author, [click here](#).

God's Nature as Life—"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Thus did Jesus define his mission, the greatest life-giving mission the world, has ever known. His life-giving mission was demonstrated to humanity in healing the sick, reforming the sinner, raising the dead, and finally in his own resurrection and ascension.

This poses the question: What, then, is the life abundant of which Jesus spoke? Does it consist merely in an abundance of physical health, which can so easily change to disease, or an abundance of wealth, which can disappear overnight? Is it merely length of days, during which a man may contribute much or little that is of permanent value? No. From all Jesus' statements it is clear that, though such fruits were the outcome of his understanding of Life, the substance of that Life was spiritual. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing", he declared. And "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

This abundant life, which Jesus presented, therefore, was spiritual,-an unlimited universe of spiritual good flowing from the understanding of man's divinity, from an abiding consciousness of man's forever oneness with his spiritual Cause, shown in such statements as "I and my Father are one" and "Before Abraham was, I am."

Here is a definition of Life in the chapter "Recapitulation" from the textbook of Christian Science, a definition written after many years of experiencing the living reality of the spiritual:"Life is divine Principle, Mind, Soul, Spirit. Life is without beginning and without end. Eternity, not time, expresses the thought of Life, and time is no part of eternity. One ceases in proportion as the other is recognized. Time is finite; eternity is forever infinite. Life is neither in nor of matter. What is termed matter is unknown to Spirit, which includes in itself all substance and is Life eternal. Matter is a human concept. Life is divine Mind. Life is not limited. Death and finiteness are unknown Life. If Life ever had a beginning, it would also have an ending.

Jesus proved every statement in this definition to be valid. For instance, he justified his reliance on Life as the divine Principle of the universe, and showed this Principle to be Life only, never death. He declared that Life eternal was to know God and "Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent,"—in other words, Life is divine Mind, and the true life lies in knowing or understanding ideas, in putting on the Mind of Christ. He demonstrated Life to be the Soul, the identity, of man,—that life or being could never change to non-being; and that "the spirit giveth life" because the very substance of Spirit is unconfined and indestructible. All that Mrs. Eddy writes further in this paragraph about the eternity of Life Jesus supremely exemplified by overcoming death and the grave. That "Life is neither in nor of matter" he showed unmistakably through raising Lazarus, Jairus' daughter, the widow of Nain's son, and in his own resurrection.

“Life is not limited” meant to him not only that man’s identity is eternal and infinite, but that everything connected with him is limitless also. On that basis he multiplied the loaves and fishes, he drew money from the fish’s mouth, wherever he needed to be he was— immediately — without the limitations of time. All these works prove what life really is when lived from its divine Source.

A SUMMARY

Now let us go through these tones, taking them one by one in connection with the Lord’s Prayer, and letting the spirit of Life speak to us as we ponder them.

Life as Mind is the one Father, which is the parent Mind. “Our Father which art in heaven, Our Father-Mother God, all-harmonious.”

Life as Spirit is inorganic being, which is the new birth. “Hallowed be Thy name. Adorable One.”

Life as Soul is the eternality that is timeless and changeless. “Thy kingdom come. Thy kingdom is come; Thou art ever-present.”

Life as Principle is the one I AM which is demonstrable. “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Enable us to know, as in heaven, so on earth, —God is omnipotent, supreme.”

Life as Life is unlimited Being. “Give us this day our daily bread; Give us grace for to-day; feed the famished affections.”

Life as Truth is the steadfast inspiration that beholds the true man. “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And Love is reflected in love.”

Life as Love is the loving Father-Mother that preserves and blesses. “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; And God leadeth us not into temptation, but delivereth us from sin, disease, and death.”

Then the Lord’s Prayer ends, “For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.” “Forever” seems to climax this Prayer in Life. Mrs. Eddy interprets this, “For God is infinite, all-power, all Life, Truth, Love, over all, and All.”

The “kingdom,” the “power,” and the “glory” are all traced back to God, the great First Cause, the Creator. Again, this is the sense with which we started. It seems almost as though in the Lord’s Prayer Life, in keeping with its eternal nature, manifests itself as a circle without a beginning or end. Life as Mind declares that divine Life is the First Cause, the Creator, the “Father-Mother God, all-harmonious.” This Life is spiritual, timeless and changeless (Life as Spirit and Soul). The one Life is the Principle of the universe, unlimited, unfailingly inspired and uplifted, and capable only of preserving and blessing its creation because its very nature is Life, Truth, and Love, —the great “Father-Mother God”, all-harmonious.

Let us open our thought to what Life really is as Jesus taught and exemplified it and as spiritual sense cognizes it, —Life that is forever flowing free, without beginning and without end, an unlimited expression of good. From this higher understanding and reckoning of Life as fundamentally our life and the life of all creation, we find the limitations of human existence fading, so that we take on our true liberty as the sons of God.

Do not these words of John the Revelator then have a new significance and reality to us as we rise in thought to accept God's nature as Life? "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."



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