

February 10, 2003—Subject: Soul

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 Peggy Brook's booklet — **GOD'S NATURE AS SOUL**. We are using here the first and last few pages of the booklet. Please click [here](#) for a short biographical sketch on Peggy Brook.

“My soul doth magnify the Lord.” “Bless the Lord, O my soul.” “He restoreth my soul.” What is meant in these passages by the word “soul”? Surely the spiritual sense of a man, that which is innately conscious of the spiritual identity which lies behind all things. Spiritual seekers, thinkers, leaders, throughout the ages, have been keenly aware of the tangibility of soul or spiritual sense, and this has been the source of their strength, of their comfort, of their ability to accomplish the mighty purposes of good. It has brought to them freedom from the limitations of a sense-bound estimate of man and the universe Christ Jesus, whose life and works stand as a prototype of the ideal man, prized this quality above all, for he declared, “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” When a man has experienced the certainty, the changelessness, the freedom, the feeling of satisfying poise and balance, and the joy that none can take away which comes from Soul itself, the source of spiritual sense, his heart echoes and re-echoes these words of Jesus.

To most people the term “soul” used in relation to man means his spiritual core, that which has nothing to do with his physicality or even his human personality, though dwelling within it; it is his spiritual essence, which men believe can be good or bad, but is nevertheless untouched by finiteness and therefore is immortal and continues after death. This concept of soul, purged of its duality, can serve as a pointer to its pure, deep, and fundamental character in relation to Deity and the true man.

Soul As God

Soul, as a term for God, refers to the great Soul of all things, the infinite spiritual identity which is purely good and which lies behind all creation. It is in this sense that Mrs. Eddy uses the term.

In Webster's dictionary under the definition of “Soul” there is the heading “Christian Science” and it reads, “A synonym for God. Soul or Spirit signifies Deity and nothing else. Soul is the substance, Life, and intelligence of man, which is individualized, but not in matter. Mary Baker Eddy.”

Mrs. Eddy lifts the whole concept of Soul out of the personal sense of a soul in the body, and therefore a multiplicity of individual souls belonging to different people — souls which can be sinless or sinful — and uses it in its unique signification as God, infinite good. She writes in *Science and Health*, “Science reveals Soul as God, untouched by sin and death, —as the central Life and intelligence around which circle harmoniously all things in the systems of Mind” (310: 14-17).

Of the seven terms Mrs. Eddy uses to define God, it is only of Soul that she says specifically that human thought has adulterated its meaning. This may be because the common concept of soul so nearly approximates the truth and yet this concept is impure in that it mixes Spirit and matter, sinlessness and sin. Mrs. Eddy writes in this connection, “Human thought has adulterated the meaning of the word *soul* through the hypothesis that soul is both an evil and a good intelligence, resident in matter. The proper use of the word *soul* can always be gained by substituting the word *God*, where the deific meaning is required. In other cases, use the word *sense*, and you will have the scientific signification. As used in Christian Science, Soul is properly the synonym of Spirit, or God; but out of Science, soul is identical with sense, with material sensation” (S. & H. 482: 3-12).

So when we come to think about Soul we can first of all gain a pure concept of it, by realizing it to be the one infinite identity which lies behind everything in the universe, —the one Spirit, God.

Soul Reverses Material Sense

In Mrs. Eddy's writings, more than with any other term for God she defines the positive nature of Soul by saying what it is not. For instance, she says that Soul is not *in* the body, it is incorporeal; that it cannot sin, for there is no such thing as sinful Soul, since Soul is God; and there is no loss in Soul, and no change in Soul. It would seem that the intact and pure nature of Soul impels the reversal of material sense in order for Soul to be found as the one infinite identity of the universe. Because of this fact one experiences that in proportion as one sincerely seeks to understand and feel the nature of Soul, the testimony of material sense is irresistibly dealt with. One cannot find Soul through anything but pure spiritual sense. Incorporeality, sinlessness, the safety of spiritual identity, the permanence and changelessness of spiritual reality, can be found in all their loveliness only through Soul's reversal of sense testimony. Soul, the one spiritual identity of all things, consistently operates to translate consciousness out of a material sense of man and the universe into the reality of spiritual sense, true identity. Moreover it cannot help but do this specifically, because the very nature of Soul is definiteness. There is nothing so sure and definite in all the world as Soul-sense.

Soul Is The "Dry Land" That Is Fruitful

In the Genesis record of creation the third day is illustrative of God's nature as Soul. After the light of the first day, —symbolizing the one Mind, divine wisdom and intelligence, —and the firmament of the second day, which divides the waters above from the waters beneath (a symbol of the purity of Spirit), the record declares in the third day, "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear." This "one place," this "dry land," symbolizes the definiteness of the one infinite Soul which underlies all creation. It deals with the uncertainty of "tempest-tossed human concepts advancing and receding," as Mrs. Eddy defines the sea (see S. & H. 536: 6-7), and presents a symbol of a firm basis of God-given identity, something that is definite, something we can stand on, something that never lets us down.

The Scriptures show through saga, history, and allegory how the divine nature works itself out in every man's experience, and in the third thousand years of Bible history, which illustrates the third day of creation, the great symbol is correspondingly that of "land." The story is one of journeying, migrating from an old land to a promised land, —from a confined, mortal sense of self to the unconfined yet firm land of God-given identity.

The very first character in this third thousand-year period, Abraham, came out of Ur of the Chaldees, a place rife with beliefs of chance and superstition, and "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Later in this period his grandson, Jacob, had to flee his land because of Esau's hatred, and to find his true identity in a new land. Joseph, Jacob's favourite son, was forced out of his land, —sold into Egypt by his brethren, —and had to prove his God-given identity in a new and strange land. Finally the great exodus of the whole body of Israelites took place under Moses' leadership, whereby he led them out of the land of Egypt, through the wilderness, and eventually, under Joshua, into the Promised Land, where they found their identity as a nation.

All these instances are illustrative of the “dry land” appearing, and symbolize man’s individual spiritual journey, through varying experiences, to find and understand his assured and God-given identity. Also, the third day of creation declares that the earth brings forth grass, herb, and fruit tree—the land is fruitful. There is nothing so fruitful as definite, understood identity. It is the same in any subject; when we gain a definite understanding of arithmetic, for instance, or of music, these subjects begin to bear fruit for us in all kinds of ways. So directly we stand on the dry land of definite spiritual understanding and become conscious of our true identity, we find it to be fruitful. Moreover, the grass, the herb, and the fruit tree have seed within themselves. This speaks of the natural reproducing power and permanence of specific identity throughout all creation, and illustrates that man’s God-given identity quite naturally reproduces itself in Godlikeness continuously, persistently, and effortlessly.

To seek and find our Godlike identity is to realize the kingdom of God within. It is the only thing in the world that matters, for in spiritual idea—and only in spiritual idea—man finds real and enduring health, happiness, supply, friendship, everything that makes him complete, and when he finds these things in God, he can never lose them. Man can never lose anything of good so long as he keeps his spiritual lamp trimmed and burning. Once more the Master’s words come to mind, “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” One can have material plenty and yet feel poor and mean, one can be materially healthy whilst still remaining dissatisfied and incomplete, one can experience longevity but still feel lifeless and purposeless. On the other hand, with spiritual sense aroused and awake, one can appear to be in the midst of poverty and find a sense of real substance and richness in the facts of Soul, one can be tempted by disease and find the unfailing testimony to man’s health and wholeness in Soul, or be faced with death and find the changelessness and eternity of true life in Soul. Moreover, remaining with these living, spiritual facts will always ultimately translate the sense picture. So the one and only thing that it is vital never to lose is one’s own soul, and this man can never really do, for it is his very identity which sooner or later must assert itself.

A Summary

Let us now recapitulate this sevenfold reflection of Soul, letting our spiritual sense feel the deep reality and fundamental nature of spiritual identity, just as Mary must have felt it when she accepted her important mission.

Soul as *Mind* is the *spiritual understanding that knows*.

”And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord.”

Spiritual understanding is always conscious of God. Soul-sense *hears* God speak.

Soul as *Spirit* is *spiritual sense*, which discerns *reality* and is *sinless*.

”And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.”

True spiritual sense can always discern the good and rejoice in it. Soul-sense *sees* God in all His creation.

Soul as *Soul* is the *one changeless identity*, which *identifies all with God*.

”For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.”

To lay off false identity and become aware of the one infinite identity irresistibly blesses man. Soul-sense *touches* God, the one identity.

Soul as *Principle* is the *incorporeality*, which *unites all in one body*.

”For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.”

To recognize that there is one infinite body is truly a “great thing.” It lifts man out of a limited concept of isolated, separated, personal bodies into the holiness or wholeness of the divine nature. Soul-sense *tastes* or tests this conception that there is only one infinite body, and finds it wholly satisfying.

Soul as *Life* is the *immortality which resurrects*.

"And his mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation."

The unconfined and eternal nature of identity is continually resurrecting man out of mortality into immortality. The *perfume* of Soul-sense is always fragrant and fresh, for it is unconfined and limitless.

Soul as *Truth* is the *certainty which brings man's birthright of freedom*.

"He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away."

The certainty and rocklikeness of spiritual identity frees man to be what he is and consequently brings dominion.

Soul as *Love* is the *calm and balance of Soul, which satisfies and keeps safe*.

"He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever."

Spiritual sense alone satisfies man, bringing his fulfillment in Love as expressing both manhood and womanhood, "eternal bliss."

...What can one say about Soul in conclusion? To write so many words about Soul is almost contrary to the true nature of Soul, for it is, in fact, essentially that which is above and beyond words, —it needs to be felt. It is said that "as we rise, the symbols disappear," and Soul is really the constant disappearing point of the symbols, being "reality at its deepest level, at which subject and object are one."

To understand and feel the meaning of Soul is to bridge the gap between "absolute" thinking in metaphysics and thought which maintains that there is also the problem of the belief in life, substance, and intelligence in matter to be seen through and disproved. Soul, or spiritual sense, reveals the spiritual facts of being as the only identity of man and the universe, but of necessity its very depth and definiteness pierces through the veil of material sense, reversing its presentations and so translating them that there is no longer any twofold sense of being, even in belief. To be truly aware of Soul, the one identity, whereby we can say with understanding, "I am the being of Being" is to remove forever the cry, "I can see spiritual facts intellectually, but I cannot prove them," for Soul-sense is aware of only one universe, one identity, and this actively and specifically translates out of all material sense to prove this one spiritual universe to be the only universe.

A true sense of Soul makes possible of fulfillment in our own experience the Psalmist's certainty, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."



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