

September 15, 2003—Subject: Matter

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 first selection this week is from **DISSOLVING BARRIERS - THE HEALING WORK OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE** by John Morgan. (Published by Elmdon Publications - Elmdon, Saffron Walden, Essex, England - 1989 - In association with Christian Science Foundation, England.)

The Second Law

Let us consider a second area in the healing picture. The first step was from the physical to the mental, to the discovery that as we are consciously plugged in to the Mind that is God, to the law of good, we are actually partaking of that divine power. We learn that we are not merely taking strong human thought about our affairs or experiencing simply an improved mental state. The Bible is full of assurances about the absolute reality of God as the good, the power for good, and about the impotence of evil. Evil seems to be terribly real but in fact does not have either a source or a principle behind it, exactly as darkness has no source or power behind it. 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all' (I John 1:5). I saw a woman come out of an awful dark state of mental breakdown and when she was out and clear, I asked her what it was that had helped her so much. She said, 'I suddenly saw that there isn't enough darkness in all the world to put out the light of one little candle' - on the basis that light has a source and darkness does not have a source.

We are into the second warp thread of seeing the spiritual nature of good and health and harmony and blessedness because they have a divine source, an authority behind them, whereas illness and evil, distress and discord do not have a divine source; indeed they do not have anything behind them except ignorance. So no wonder the Bible says that we must "put off... the old man, which is corrupt...and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and . . . put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness" (Eph 4:22). We now need to make a conscious choice between the old man, which is what we are not, and the new man, which is what we actually are. We are all aware of the old Adam in us: self-condemnation, self-love, selfjustification, self-distrust, even self-hate sometimes. But we are free agents to turn away from that and to say, No, the Bible tells me that God made man in His own image and likeness, and I am free to choose that ideal as my real substance, my real nature. I begin to understand that the spiritual is real and this is the true me.

The word spirit is derived from spirare, to breathe - "there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). The mortal concept is a false conception of my true being and my true worth. I often find with breath complaints that all that is needed is for that individual to take a deep-drawn breath, fresh from God, letting this blow away the cobwebs of all the shallowness and littleness of our conventional thinking, and instead just to love to let the spirit of God, "the inspiration of the Almighty," come flooding in.

The two movements of breath are breathing in and breathing out, which have been defined as inspiration and praise. Inspiration is breathing in, naturally, but we are breathing in not just air, but the spirit. When you are relieved of some anxiety, you breath a sigh of relief and say, 'How wonderful that is,' don't you?

That is praise. You take a deep breath and a new fresh sense of hope and joy comes in. It is as though you have breathed out all the fog and fear, the old Adam, and have breathed in the new sense of being the man of God's creating.

In both the Old and New Testaments there are a number of healings of leprosy: Naaman was healed by Elijah, and Jesus healed lepers on several occasions. It is as though the leper is a symbol of the human individual thinking himself unclean, unworthy, I am a failure, I am not as successful as other people. We make ourselves lepers. We think we are untouchable, beyond the reach of God's grace. In one case a leper says to Jesus, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." The account goes on: "And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him"—touched him! The very thing most people would not do! "I will; be thou clean" (Matt 8:2). Bible healings are so often done with a simple command: Be thou clean; stretch forth thy hand; receive thy sight; Lazarus come forth! The Spirit, which is God, is commanding you and me and all humanity today to be clean, to be whole, to be joyous, to be full of hope for ourselves and our world. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). But if we do not feed our consciousness with the spirit of God and the spirit of good, we so easily do the opposite—we feed our consciousness with the poison of resentment, or fear, or anxiety, or worry, or indignation about some injustice in the past and we mull it over. We poison the system. The function of the kidneys is to cleanse the body of outworn substances which would otherwise poison us. We have seen kidney complaints healed when an individual says, I love to adopt the new, the great spiritual, facts about myself, and these truly cleanse the system and eliminate all the rubbish that I have been carrying along with me.

This law is true not only in the physical area. We can choose the good as the reality of our being in any area of our lives. We knew a lovely woman who was a great spiritual healer, and she was off on holiday. When she got to the railway station, she took her purse out of her bag to find some loose coins in the bottom in order to buy a newspaper. When she had bought her paper, she found her purse had gone. Her first impulse was to think, It has been stolen, I better inform the police. Then she said to herself, How can you go telling the police that you have lost something when your whole lifework is declaring to man that he has lost nothing of his divine substance, and can never lose it?

So she went to the public waiting room and sat down and just declared silently these truths: that in God man is made whole, and that "nothing can be put to it, nor thing taken from it" (Eccl 3:14). Because God made man whole no man can take from us what God has given to us. In a short while a man came into the waiting-room and came up to her and said, 'Excuse me, have you lost anything?' She almost blurted out, my purse, but she said, 'Thank you, I have lost nothing,' which was in keeping with her declaration. The man looked very surprised walked out.

She must have thought, What now? But she stuck her truth. In a minute the man came back again and said, 'Are you sure you have lost nothing?' She said, 'Thank you, I have every that belongs to me.' Again, he turned on his heel and walked out, but immediately he came back and said, 'Is this yours?' holding the purse. She said, 'Yes, that is mine, thank you,' and she took it. He said, 'You know, of course, I stole it. I had no money, but something would not let me keep it. Would you tell me why I had bring it back to you?' She said, 'Yes, I will. Sit down.' So he sat beside her and she told him about these healing truths found in Bible, these truths made practical again in the teaching of Christian Science. He was deeply interested. She went off on her holiday, and he went his way. A couple of years later, in a Christian Science church in London, on a Wednesday evening when in these churches they have testimony meetings, she stood up and recounted this story. At the end of the service a man came up to her and said, 'Do you remember me?' It came round full circle.

If we will really choose the good and stick to it vigorously as a spiritual fact of our being, —that God has endowed us with our good, our substance, our faculties, our health, our relationships, and that nothing on earth can take those things from us, —then we bless not only ourselves but also those around us who, as in this instance, believe they have need of our property. It is not our property, it is God’s property. It is yours and mine on trust, that is all. Everything belongs to God, which is the keynote of the spiritual.

Christian Science teaches that God is Spirit and man is spiritual. Man is born of the Spirit. As the Bible says, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Rom 8:16). Spirit is our real substance, our real nature. It focuses for us the real side of our consciousness and our character. It cleanses and separates us from all the unworthy, unspiritual, unlovely characteristics. We are all aware in the course of a lifetime of a lot of unpleasant things having passed out of our makeup very often without much conscious effort. That is because God is Spirit, and Spirit baptises, purifies and makes us new. The Christian Science textbook is full of this term Spirit operating in this way. For example: ‘We should strive to reach the Horeb height where God is revealed; and the corner-stone of all spiritual building is purity. The baptism of Spirit, washing the body of all the impurities of flesh, signifies that the pure in heart see God and are approaching spiritual Life and its demonstration... Through repentance, spiritual baptism, and regeneration, mortals put off their material beliefs and false individuality” (S&H 241:24). Baptism is defined in part as, ‘Purification by Spirit; submergence in Spirit” (S&H 581:23).



Our second selection is from [SCIENCE & HEALTH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES](#)
by Mary Baker Eddy.

SCIENTIFIC TRANSLATION OF IMMORTAL MIND

Divine synonyms

GOD: Divine Principle, Life, Truth, Love, Soul, Spirit, Mind.

Divine image

MAN: God’s spiritual idea, individual, perfect, eternal.

Divine reflection

IDEA: An image in Mind; the immediate object of understanding. *Webster*. SCIENTIFIC TRANSLATION OF MORTAL MIND *First Degree*: Depravity.

Unreality

PHYSICAL. Evil beliefs, passions and appetites, fear, depraved will, self-justification, pride, envy, deceit, hatred, revenge, sin, sickness, disease, death. *Second Degree*: Evil beliefs disappearing.

Transitional qualities

MORAL. Humanity, honesty, affection, compassion, hope, faith, meekness, temperance.

Third Degree: Understanding.

Reality

SPIRITUAL. Wisdom, purity, spiritual understanding, spiritual power, love, health, holiness.

Spiritual universe

In the third degree mortal mind disappears, and man as God's image appears. Science so reverses the evidence before the corporeal human senses, as to make this Scriptural testimony true in our hearts, "The last shall be first, and the first last," so that God and His idea may be to us what divinity really is and must of necessity be, all-inclusive.

Aim of Science

A correct view of Christian Science and of its adaptation to healing includes vastly more than is at first seen. Works on metaphysics leave the grand point untouched. They never crown the power of Mind as the Messiah, nor do they carry the day against physical enemies, even to the extinction of all belief in matter, evil, disease, and death, nor insist upon the fact that God is all, therefore that matter is nothing beyond an image in mortal mind.

Divine personality

Christian Science strongly emphasizes the thought that God is not *corporeal*, but *incorporeal*, that is, bodiless. Mortals are corporeal, but God is incorporeal. As the words *person* and *personal* are commonly and ignorantly employed, they often lead, when applied to Deity, to confused and erroneous conceptions of divinity and its distinction from humanity. If the term personality, as applied to God, means infinite personality, then God is infinite *Person*, in the sense of infinite personality, but not in the lower sense. An infinite Mind in a finite form is an absolute impossibility. The term *individuality* is also open to objections, because an individual may be one of a series, one of many, as an individual man, an individual horse; whereas God is *One*, not one of a series, but one alone and without an equal.

Spiritual language

God is Spirit; therefore the language of Spirit must be, and is, spiritual. Christian Science attaches no physical nature and significance to the Supreme Being or His manifestation; mortals alone do this. God's essential language is spoken of in the last chapter of Mark's Gospel as the new tongue, the spiritual meaning of which is attained through "signs following."

The miracles of Jesus

Ear hath not heard, nor hath lip spoken, the pure language of Spirit. Our Master taught spirituality by similitudes and parables. As a divine student he unfolded God to man, illustrating and demonstrating Life and Truth in himself and by his power over the sick and sinning. Human theories are inadequate to interpret the divine Principle involved in the miracles (marvels) wrought by Jesus and especially in his mighty, crowning, unparalleled, and triumphant exit from the flesh.

Opacity of the senses

Evidence drawn from the five physical senses relates solely to human reason; and because of opacity to the true light, human reason dimly reflects and feebly transmits Jesus' works and words. Truth is a revelation.

Leaven of Truth

Jesus bade his disciples beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, which he defined as human doctrines. His parable of the “leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened,” impels the inference that the spiritual leaven signifies the Science of Christ and its spiritual interpretation, an inference far above the merely ecclesiastical and formal applications of the illustration. Did not this parable point a moral with a prophecy, foretelling the second appearing in the flesh of the Christ, Truth, hidden in sacred secrecy from the visible world? Ages pass, but this leaven of Truth is ever at work. It must destroy the entire mass of error, and so be eternally glorified in man’s spiritual freedom.

The divine and human contrasted

In their spiritual significance, Science, Theology, and Medicine are means of divine thought, which include spiritual laws emanating from the invisible and infinite power and grace. The parable may import that these spiritual laws, perverted by a perverse material sense of law, are metaphysically presented as three measures of meal, that is, three modes of mortal thought. In all mortal forms of thought, dust is dignified as the natural status of men and things, and modes of material motion are honored with the name of *laws*. This continues until the leaven of Spirit changes the whole of mortal thought, as yeast changes the chemical properties of meal.

Certain contradictions

The definitions of material law, as given by natural science, represent a kingdom necessarily divided against itself, because these definitions portray law as physical, not spiritual. Therefore they contradict the divine decrees and violate the law of Love, in which nature and God are one and the natural order of heaven comes down to earth.

Unescapable dilemma

When we endow matter with vague spiritual power, that is, when we do so in our theories, for of course we cannot really endow matter with what it does not and cannot possess, we disown the Almighty, for such theories lead to one of two things. They either presuppose the self-evolution and self-government of matter, or else they assume that matter is the product of Spirit. To seize the first horn of this dilemma and consider matter as a power in and of itself, is to leave the creator out of His own universe; while to grasp the other horn of the dilemma and regard God as the creator of matter, is not only to make Him responsible for all disasters, physical and moral, but to announce Him as their source, thereby making Him guilty of maintaining perpetual misrule in the form and under the name of natural law.

God and nature

In one sense God is identical with nature, but this nature is spiritual and is not expressed in matter. The lawgiver, whose lightning palsies or prostrates in death the child at prayer, is not the divine ideal of omnipresent Love. God is natural good, and is represented only by the idea of goodness; while evil should be regarded as unnatural, because it is opposed to the nature of Spirit, God.

The sun and Soul

In viewing the sunrise, one finds that it contradicts the evidence before the senses to believe that the earth is in motion and the sun at rest. As astronomy reverses the human perception of the movement of the solar system, so Christian Science reverses the seeming relation of Soul and body and makes body tributary to Mind. Thus it is with man, who is but the humble servant of the restful Mind, though it seems otherwise to finite sense. But we shall never understand this while we admit that soul is in body or mind in matter, and that man is included in non-intelligence. Soul, or Spirit, is God, unchangeable and eternal; and man coexists with and reflects Soul, God, for man is God's image.

Reversal of testimony

Science reverses the false testimony of the physical senses, and by this reversal mortals arrive at the fundamental facts of being. Then the question inevitably arises: Is a man sick if the material senses indicate that he is in good health? No! for matter can make no conditions for man. And is he well if the senses say he is sick? Yes, he is well in Science in which health is normal and disease is abnormal.

Health and the senses

Health is not a condition of matter, but of Mind; nor can the material senses bear reliable testimony on the subject of health. The Science of Mind-healing shows it to be impossible for aught but Mind to testify truly or to exhibit the real status of man. Therefore the divine Principle of Science, reversing the testimony of the physical senses, reveals man as harmoniously existent in Truth, which is the only basis of health; and thus Science denies all disease, heals the sick, overthrows false evidence, and refutes materialistic logic. Any conclusion *pro* or *con*, deduced from supposed sensation in matter or from matter's supposed consciousness of health or disease, instead of reversing the testimony of the physical senses, confirms that testimony as legitimate and so leads to disease.

Weekly Lesson Citations provided by the Mary Baker Eddy Institute
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