

September 8, 2003—Subject: Substance

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 JOHN LAWRENCE SINTON'S—HARROGATE SUMMER SCHOOL—1952. For a brief biography of John Lawrence Sinton, [click here](#).

“Purse” and “Substance”

Then there is the term “purse.” The Glossary definition reads: “Purse. Laying up treasure in matter; error” (593: 6).

I have selected a number of references from the Bible:

Proverbs 1:10-16 Luke 10:4, 22:35,36 Matthew 10: 9 Mark 6: 8

The reference from Proverbs gives us an amazing picture of the process of animal magnetism, which Mrs. Eddy also describes in her article “Ways that are Vain” (My. 210-213), “...let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause” illustrates the operation of hidden mental evil or animal magnetism. And so we see that “laying up treasures in matter” is a snare and a delusion. I have seen people live in so miserly a fashion where income and saving of money are concerned, that in the course of years it runs them into acute physical trouble. What is the answer? To see that man’s life is not contained in matter, that his substance is not in matter; and when we understand that our substance is not in matter, we cannot be robbed of substance. When we have a spiritual concept of substance and we live by it, we can be as independent of a country’s economy as Jesus was. He did not depend on the economy of Palestine. If he needed tax money he could produce it; if he needed to feed five thousand or four thousand he could do so; he had such a concept of substance that he could cause the human manifestation of it to conform to the demand made upon him. His was an economy that was in-dependent of matter, country, government, or revenue, because all the way through, he was demonstrating the substance of Spirit.

If we will make this our rule, that we demonstrate the substance of Spirit, we shall have a measure meet for every circumstance. Let us see that our substance derives from Spirit, from the willingness to put our whole being into Spirit and that neither a national nor any other economy has anything to do with it. It brings us back to this position: that quite apart from human relationships, each one of us is individual, and sooner or later we have to discern that fact and see that our economy is determined by our relationship with Principle. Then Principle so governs our own consciousness and that of the others who constitute our world, that from the basis of one universal government operating throughout all identity, the inter-relationship of one with another is not a personal manifestation, it is determined by Principle. On that basis of impersonality the human economy patterns the divine and we become a mutual blessing to each other. Your demonstration of substance is a blessing to me, and my demonstration of substance is a blessing to you; and these are all so inter-related and inter-dependent that if we will keep them wholly in Principle and wholly impersonal, then all our human transactions with each other will be harmonious and can never cause discord or in harmony. When money transactions in business or between friends are the source of action or trouble, there is only one way out, and that is to put our whole concept of ourselves and of each other right back into Principle and work out everything from Principle, thus allowing Principle to be its own law of adjustment.

When we work by that standard, we shall not be tempted to lay up treasures in matter. And in certain types of physical trouble we find from experience that the root error is not really rheumatism, or accretion, or stones in the bladder; the root error is dependence on matter and the belief in this dependence. The intense human thrift that goes to abnormal lengths in order to provide for a rainy day is a form of fear, and one sees here that spiritual sense alone can dissect and uncover the trouble at it's root.

When we come across types of thought in this category I have described, we have to Christianize them, unself them pointing out that the unselfing of human consciousness does not induce any loss, but it opens the way to true gain and true substance, which means dependence on Principle; it means the substance of Spirit flowing naturally and without hindrance, which puts life on to a new basis. So let us see they do not lay up "treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal" (Matt. 6: 19).

In connection with "purse," let us take the term "substance," and here the Glossary refers us back to the chapter Recapitulation. It is as if these two terms "purse" and "substance" were the inverse of each other.

SCIENCE AND HEALTH 468:16-24. Lines 17-21 give us the New Testament concept of substance. Substance is eternal, it lies outside of time, and therefore it is incapable of discord and decay; it has no time factor, time element, or time constituent, and because of that it is imperishable.

We notice that in the first edition of *Science and Health* the term was capitalized, and then in later editions it was given a small "s." In different texts Mrs. Eddy still uses it broadly to cover both noumenon and phenomenon; in some she associates it with the synonymous terms with God, the infinite and eternal; and in others she associates it with man and the universe as a quality. Why? I conclude that Mrs. Eddy reduced the term from a capitalized to an uncapitalized status because she saw that while it expresses one of the prime characteristics of being, like intelligence, which in earlier editions she also capitalized, it does not hold the office of a synonymous term for God. On the other hand, because it does express one of the prime characteristics of all being, it therefore characterizes cause and effect, creator and creation, noumenon and phenomenon.

The meaning of lines 21-24 is brought out elsewhere in such a passage as this: "Christ presents the indestructible man, whom Spirit creates, constitutes, and governs" (S&H 316:20-21). If Spirit "constitutes" man, he must be con-stituted of substance, the substance of Spirit. Of what other substance can he be constituted if Spirit constitutes him? There we have an example of the idea of substance characterizing man, just as in another text it characterizes Spirit. So it is a term used broadly to cover creator and creation, nonmenon and phenomenon.

If we take those two terms "purse" and "substance" in conjunction with each other, we see how one exposes the fallacy of supposed substance in matter, whereas the other shows the imperishable, permanent, indestructible nature of spiritual substance. And so this question of substance is one that calls for our greatest wisdom and love in the right use and distribution of it throughout the vast relationships of the human family. When Love is the governing Principle, then the impartation of substance from Spirit, the division and the sub-division of it, is within the divine economy, and it is never personal, and on that basis is always a blessing.

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