

**On October 22 and 29, 2007 the Subjects are “Probation after Death” and “Everlasting Punishment”.**

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 is from “MARY BAKER EDDY A LIFE SIZED PORTRAIT” by Lyman Powell. (The First edition put out by Macmillan Press in 1930) – Our second selection is from an article in “Unity of Good” by Mary Baker Eddy.

To Mrs. Eddy, Easter had one overwhelming meaning. and one only: “Mortality’s thick gloom is pierced. The stone is rolled away. Death has lost its sting, and the grave its victory. Immortal courage fills the human breast and lights the way of Life.”

One of the faithful reports the substance of the little Easter sermon she preached to her household. Though the text has slipped from memory, the context would indicate that it was from Ephesians IV : 22-24 :

That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts: And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Mrs. Eddy said:

*You must get rid of the “old man,” the old woman: you cannot make them better and keep them. You are not getting rid of the old man if you try to make him better; you should succeed in making him better, he would stay with you. If you patch up the old and say it is good enough, you do not put it off, but keep it. If you try to make it satisfactory, you are preparing to keep it, not to put it off.*

*We have but one Mind; and to abide in this perfect freedom of individuality is the resurrection, - is to have risen above material or lower demands. The resurrective sense is positive; it is “yea, yea and nay, nay.” The resurrective sense does not listen compromisingly to error. It is always about “its “Father’s business,” - reflecting Principle. Jesus’ whole life was*

*resurrective; that is, his life was a constant conscious rising spiritually above sin, sickness, death; and his resurrection from the grave was to sense a type of divine Love's triumph over the human belief that matter is substance, or has power to impose limitations to Mind or man.*

### **From Unity of Good**

*by Mary Baker Eddy*

### **IS THERE NO DEATH?**

JESUS not only declared himself “the way” and “the truth,” but also “the life.” God is Life; and as there is but one God, there can be but one Life. Must man die, then, in order to inherit eternal life and enter heaven?

Our Master said, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Then God and heaven, or Life, are present, and death is not the real stepping-stone to Life and happiness. They are now and here; and a change in human consciousness, from sin to holiness, would reveal this wonder of being. Because God is ever present, no boundary of time can separate us from Him and the heaven of His presence; and because God is Life, all Life is eternal.

Is it unchristian to believe there is no death? Not unless it be a sin to believe that God is Life and All-in-all. Evil and disease do not testify of Life and God.

Human beings are physically mortal, but spiritually immortal. The evil accompanying physical personality is illusive and mortal; but the good attendant upon spiritual individuality is immortal. Existing here and now, this unseen individuality is real and eternal. The so-called material senses, and the mortal mind which is mis-named *man*, take no cognizance of spiritual individuality, which manifests immortality, whose Principle is God.

To God alone belong the indisputable realities of being. Death is a contradiction of Life, or God; therefore it is not in accordance with His law, but antagonistic thereto.

Death, then, is error, opposed to Truth, — even the unreality of mortal mind, not the reality of that Mind which is Life. Error has no life, and is virtually without existence. Life is real; and all is real which proceeds from Life and is inseparable from it.

It is unchristian to believe in the transition called *material death*, since matter has no life, and such misbelief must enthrone another power, an imaginary life, above the living and true God. A material sense of life robs God, by declaring that not He alone is Life, but that something else also is life, — thus affirming the existence and rulership of more gods than one. This idolatrous and false sense of life is all that dies, or appears to die.

The opposite understanding of God brings to light Life and immortality. Death has no quality of Life; and no divine fiat commands us to believe in aught which is unlike God, or to deny that He is Life eternal.

Life as God, moral and spiritual good, is not seen in the mineral, vegetable, or animal kingdoms. Hence the inevitable conclusion that Life is not in these kingdoms, and that the popular views to this effect are not up to the Christian standard of Life, or equal to the reality of being, whose Principle is God.

When “the Word” is “made flesh” among mortals, the Truth of Life is rendered practical on the body. Eternal Life is partially understood; and sickness, sin, and death yield to holiness, health, and Life, — that is, to God. The lust of the flesh and the pride of physical life must be quenched in the divine essence, — that omnipotent Love which annihilates hate, that Life which knows no death.

“Who hath believed our report?” Who understands these sayings? He to whom the arm of the Lord is revealed. He loves them from whom divine Science removes human weakness by divine strength, and who unveil the Messiah, whose name is Wonderful.

Man has no underived power. That selfhood is false which opposes itself to God, claims another father, and denies spiritual sonship; but as many as receive the knowledge of God in Science must reflect, in some degree, the power of Him who gave and giveth man dominion over all the earth.

As soldiers of the cross we must be brave, and let Science declare the immortal status of man, and deny the evidence of the material senses, which testify that man dies.

As the image of God, or Life, man forever reflects and embodies Life, not death. The material senses testify falsely. They presuppose that God is good and that man is evil, that Deity is deathless, but that man dies, losing the divine likeness.

Science and material sense conflict at all points, from the revolution of the earth to the fall of a sparrow. It is mortality only that dies.

To say that you and I, as mortals, will not enter this dark shadow of material sense, called *death*, is to assert what we have not proved; but man in Science never dies. Material sense, or the belief of life in matter, must perish, in order to prove man deathless.

As Truth supersedes error, and bears the fruits of Love, this understanding of Truth subordinates the belief in death, and demonstrates Life as imperative in the divine order of being.

Jesus declares that they who believe his sayings will never die; therefore mortals can no more receive everlasting life by believing in death, than they can become perfect by believing in imperfection and living imperfectly.

Life is God, and God is good. Hence Life abides in man, if man abides in good, if he lives in God, who holds Life by a spiritual and not by a material sense of being.

A sense of death is not requisite to a proper or true sense of Life, but beclouds it. Death can never alarm or even appear to him who fully understands Life. The death-penalty comes through our ignorance of Life, — of that which is without beginning and without end, — and is the punishment of this ignorance.

Holding a material sense of Life, and lacking the spiritual sense of it, mortals die, in belief, and regard all things as temporal. A sense material apprehends nothing strictly belonging to the nature and office of Life. It conceives and beholds nothing but mortality, and has but a feeble concept of immortality.

In order to reach the true knowledge and consciousness of Life, we must learn it of good. Of evil we can never learn it, because sin shuts out the real sense of Life, and brings in an unreal sense of suffering and death.

Knowledge of evil, or belief in it, involves a loss of the true sense of good, God; and to know death, or to believe in it, involves a temporary loss of God, the infinite and only Life.

Resurrection from the dead (that is, from the belief in death) must come to all sooner or later; and they who have part in this resurrection are they upon whom the second death has no power.

The sweet and sacred sense of the permanence of man's unity with his Maker can illumine our present being with a continual presence and power of good, opening wide the portal from death into Life; and when this Life shall appear "we shall be like Him," and we shall go to the Father, not through death, but through Life; not through error, but through Truth.

All Life is Spirit, and Spirit can never dwell in its antagonist, matter. Life, therefore, is deathless, because God cannot be the opposite of Himself. In Christian Science there is no matter; hence matter neither lives nor dies. To the senses, matter appears to both live and die, and these phenomena appear to go on *ad infinitum*; but such a theory implies perpetual disagreement with Spirit.

Life, God, being everywhere, it must follow that death can be nowhere; because there is no place left for it.

Soul, Spirit, is deathless. Matter, sin, and death are not the outcome of Spirit, holiness, and Life. What then are matter, sin, and death? They can be nothing except the results of material consciousness; but material consciousness can have no real existence, because it is not a living – that is to say, a divine and intelligent – reality.

That man must be vicious before he can be virtuous, dying before he can be deathless, material before he can be spiritual, is an error of the senses; for the very opposite of this error is the genuine Science of being.

Man, in Science, is as perfect and immortal now, as when "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

With Christ, Life was not merely a sense of existence, but a sense of might and ability to subdue material conditions. No wonder "people were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

As defined by Jesus, Life had no beginning; nor was it the result of organization, or of an infusion of power into matter. To him, Life was Spirit.

Truth, defiant of error or matter, is Science, dispelling a false sense and leading man into the true sense of selfhood and Godhood; wherein the mortal does not develop the immortal, nor the material the spiritual, but wherein true manhood and womanhood go forth in the radiance of eternal being and its perfections, unchanged and unchangeable.

This generation seems too material for any strong demonstration over death, and hence cannot bring out the infinite reality of Life, – namely, that there is no death, but only Life. The present mortal sense of being is too finite for anchorage in infinite good, God, because mortals now believe in the possibility that Life can be evil.

The achievement of this ultimatum of Science, complete triumph over death, requires time and immense spiritual growth.

I have by no means spoken of myself, I *cannot* speak of myself as “sufficient for these things.” I insist only upon the fact, as it exists in divine Science, that man dies not, and on the words of the Master in support of this verity, – words which can never “pass away till all be fulfilled.”

Because of these profound reasons I urge Christians to have more faith in living than in dying. I exhort them to accept Christ’s promise, and unite the influence of their own thoughts with the power of his teachings, in the Science of being. This will interpret the divine power to human capacity, and enable us to *apprehend*, or lay hold upon, “that for which,” as Paul says in the third chapter of Philippians, we are also “apprehended of [or grasped by] Christ Jesus,” – the ever-present Life which knows no death, the omnipresent Spirit which knows no matter.

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