

Dissolving Barriers

The Healing Work of Christian Science --John L. Morgan

PART III: SCIENTIFIC TRANSLATION

In considering together this subject of healing we have seen that what we thought to be miraculous happenings are in fact the experience of the laws of God in operation. If this is so, then how do we account for the evidence before our eyes that says we are material and therefore subject to the laws of matter? Laws of God and laws of matter are opposites, and this appears to present us with a dilemma. The way this is resolved in Christian Science is called scientific translation.

Clearly our method needs to be scientific for any resolution must be according to principles or laws. But what is translation? One use of the word is in the area of language where meaning is conveyed from one language to another. If I am speaking in English and you understand only French, then what I say is incomprehensible to you. I need to translate in order for you to understand me.

Mrs Eddy says, "The great difficulty is to give the right impression, when translating material terms back into the original spiritual tongue." She continues: "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'" (S&H 115:9, 117:10). The healing practice is the signs following and it is an important part of Christian Science. Another use of the word is illustrated in the Bible when Enoch was translated and walked with God - he did not experience the transition called death. We shall find that both senses of the word are essential in Christian Science. In an article called 'One Cause and Effect' Mrs Eddy makes two statements that focus on these uses of the word: "Christian Science translates Mind, God, to mortals," and "Science, understood, translates matter into Mind" (Mis 22:10, 25:12).

When a healing takes place it looks as though unhealthy matter has been changed into healthy matter, or an unhappy or discordant situation has become harmonious. Everyone seeks and naturally expects these changed states because health and harmony are normal. Health means sound or whole. This normal state is where everything is working in balance whether it is in the body or in relationships, physically, socially or politically. To bring about the change from discord to harmony, a balance or equilibrium has to be rediscovered or re-established.

A term that describes the true state of balance or health that we are seeking is coincidence. To coincide is to correspond exactly. What we seek is the coincidence of the human and the divine. Two things are necessary for this coinciding to be experienced: first we must understand something of the divine, which is God, and second we must re-evaluate the human, which is usually equated with the mortal. Mortals appear to have minds of their own, whereas God is the only Mind there is and this Mind is immortal.

Before we turn to Science and Health to find out more about scientific translation it is helpful to note where it comes in the book. It is found on pages 115 and 116, in the sixth chapter, "Science, Theology, Medicine." On these pages are two tables: 'Scientific Translation of Immortal Mind' and "Scientific Translation of Mortal Mind."

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We have been led and prepared through the previous five chapters to begin to question this persona called me, a mortal with a will of its own. This will is so often in conflict with the deep desire of the heart to be in accord with its divine source. Science now shows us how to resolve this conflict by making plain our starting point.

Near the beginning of this sixth chapter Mrs Eddy asks, "Is there more than one school of Christian Science?" Her answer is not yes, or no, but "Christian Science is demonstrable." She goes on, "From the infinite One in Christian Science comes one Principle and its infinite idea, and with this infinitude come spiritual rules, laws, and their demonstration, which, like the great Giver, are 'the same yesterday, and today, and forever'" (112:3,16). Again: "In Science, Mind is one, including noumenon and phenomena, God and His thoughts" (114:10). This focus on "the infinite One" is essential, for in no other way can we resolve what appears as conflict or opposites.

Now let us examine these tables of translation:

SCIENTIFIC TRANSLATION OF IMMORTAL MIND

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

MAN: God's spiritual idea, individual, perfect, eternal. *Divine image*

IDEA: An image in Mind; the immediate object of understanding — *Webster. Divine reflection*

SCIENTIFIC TRANSLATION OF MORTAL MIND

First Degree: Depravity.

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

Second Degree: Evil beliefs disappearing

MORAL: Humanity, honesty, affection, compassion, hope, faith, meekness, temperance.
Transitional qualities

Third Degree: Understanding

SPIRITUAL: Wisdom, purity, spiritual understanding, spiritual power, love, health, holiness. *Reality*

Both these tables are concerned with Mind - understood as God it is immortal, perceived as separate from God it is mortal. Next we observe that both these translations have three elements: in the first is GOD, MAN, IDEA, and in the second there are three degrees. But look at the marginal headings in the first: divine synonyms, divine image, divine reflection. Clearly there is one common denominator, the divine. The divine is God and is explained through synonyms;

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God has an image, man; and the form of that image is reflection. The marginal headings for the translation of mortal mind are unreality, transitional qualities, reality. Again this is not really three but one—this one is reality, and either it appears in transitional qualities or if it is not comprehended, it appears unreal.

Each of these two tables is reduced to one element: the divine and reality. From this it follows that the two tables themselves are really one, revealing that the divine is the only reality.

Immediately following these tables is a paragraph headed "Spiritual universe." Universe means literally, turned into one, uno and vertere, where everything is gathered back into what it actually is in God. This paragraph reads: "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."

Our starting point is God and God is defined through divine synonyms as "divine Principle, Life, Truth, Love, Soul, Spirit, Mind." At the beginning of this chapter in Science and Health we were told that the discovery of Christian Science was the discovery of the "divine laws of Life, Truth, and Love;" it was a "revelation of the absolute divine Principle of scientific mental healing." This divine Principle of scientific mental healing with laws of Life, Truth, and Love, is translating itself through Soul, or spiritual sense, and so comes to thought as the spiritual reality, as Spirit, and is manifested as the only Mind there is.

With this view of the divine synonyms we can begin to see man as the working of these synonyms, the divine image: he is "God's spiritual idea" of Himself, "individual," - indivisible from God, "perfect," - not going to be, but is now, and therefore "eternal."

Then idea itself, as defined by Webster, is first, "An image in Mind;" capital M, Mind! How often do we pause to remind ourselves that really we, man, are an idea in the Mind of God? We are much more inclined to think that we are sitting here outside on earth with separate minds of our own, and somehow God has to come to us and do something, or that we are dependent solely on ourselves. Then the definition of idea continues: "the immediate object of understanding." Immediate, no medium, no intermediary, no gap of time or space. The immediate object of God's own understanding. So this image then is really divine reflection, the image in Mind.

From that premise of the translation of immortal Mind, immediately a second — the translation of mortal mind — starts to operate. You know how on a cliff railway the moment one car starts to come down the other car starts to go up. They work absolutely as one motion, because they are on the same cable. The same thing happens here; the divine coming into consciousness, and human consciousness responding to the divine, is all on the same cable!

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First Degree: Depravity.

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

The translation of immortal Mind coming into consciousness has this immediate effect of showing us that what we call the physical is not really physical. The terms given in this first degree are negative thoughts or states rather than pertaining to the physical body. The heading is "Depravity." This word is derived from de, completely, and pravus, distorted, crooked. We have a bent or distorted view of reality. Isn't this what "evil beliefs, passions and appetites, fear, depraved will,' etc. really are?

We also note that the terms given are defined as "unreality." In our human judgments we have right and wrong, good and bad, justice and injustice, and so on, and in making these evaluations we have produced two opposing realities. But here the problem is redefined: it says you are not dealing with two things, with good and bad, but only one, which is reality, and anything else is unreal. This important point gives us a tremendous sense of power over our circumstance and over our little peccadilloes.

I knew a man who was an absolute terror with anger, and, as often happens, he poured it out on his long-suffering wife. This unbridled anger was like a disease, it was very destructive. When we worked together we began to translate anger, and to see it as a kind of love of the truth as he saw it; it was really spiritual strength, but so distorted, so misperceived that it seemed like something else, called destructive anger. But by looking at it from the divine viewpoint it transformed that ugly human trait, and he turned round and came back to his normal human relationship. Incidentally, the man was also an alcoholic. Whether that produced the anger or whether the anger made him an alcoholic, I do not know, but when he was healed I asked him what it was that had really tipped the scales for him. 'Oh,' he said, 'I just saw that it wasn't intelligent.' As simple as that! He had been entertaining a distorted view of his own worth and his place in the family of man which was not intelligent, and a distorted view is not the reality.

It is becoming more and more accepted, and certainly the medical people are aware of it, that emotions and characteristics like these build up physical problems. It is important that they are uncovered, self-seen, shown up as a distorted view of reality and finally destroyed.

Let us always remember that we are not working up from the physical, from depravity, but what is happening is always the Christ impulsion coming in from above. If you want to clean out a bottle, you put it under the tap and as the clean water comes down from above the dirty water rises up and over the top until there is only clean water. That is just what is happening here. We have this dirty bottle of the mortal concept of humanity and we let the clean Christ water come pouring in, and it brings the dirty water up making the translation of mortal mind look as if it is an upward emphasis. It is like the cable car, the rising up is only in response to the divine coming in. It is neither up nor down really, but just a figure of speech.

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Our own divinity, our own marvellous Christ-self as God-idea, is quite irresistible. It breaks up these physical beliefs and releases their stranglehold on us and shows them to be unreal so that we can then let the Christ eliminate them.

So into the second degree:

Second Degree: Evil beliefs disappearing.

MORAL: Humanity, honesty, affection, compassion, hope, faith, meekness, temperance.
Transitional qualities

Something is happening - evil beliefs are disappearing. We are not stuck in this state of the physical, we are moving. Is this second degree therefore an improvement on the first degree? What is happening on a very dark moonless night when the dawn comes? Is the night getting less black or is it getting more light? It is not something to argue about since there is only one factor at work and this is the light. So the second degree is not really an improvement on the first; it is not that mortals are becoming better, but are being discerned in a new light.

This degree is called "Moral." The moral has not been very fashionable in recent years. Moral values and moral behaviour are regarded by some as outmoded and arbitrary. Perhaps it is our sense of what moral really means that is outmoded. If the moral is a thing in itself, we appear to have the choice of accepting or rejecting it. But if the moral is the Christ actually translating and transforming consciousness, then it is something not only extremely desirable but irresistible and it becomes the evidence that spiritual progress is being made.

If you want to be cynical about the moral qualities listed here, you could say, well, humanity is just being nice to your fellow-man, and honesty is merely not telling lies, or not stealing. This would be viewing them at a low level. But they also have a very exalted sense; they are spiritual strength and not merely do-gooding on a human base. So with all these qualities we need to express temperance - the last of the words in this degree. For example, we need to temper our sense of compassion so that it is not just pity for the suffering, but a longing to bring the divine to remove the suffering. The moral has to be tempered so that on the one hand, we are not overwhelming and, on the other hand, we are not cold, but we have a warm, balanced sense of the moral qualities. They are not ends in themselves but are symptoms of change and progress.

A reference that bears that out is in Miscellaneous Writings (100:22), where Mrs Eddy is talking about such qualities as humanity and faith. "Pure humanity, friendship, home, the interchange of love, bring to earth a foretaste of heaven. They unite terrestrial and celestial joys, and crown them with blessings infinite." Then she goes on: "Who remembers that patience, forgiveness, abiding faith, and affection, are the symptoms by which our Father indicates the different stages of man's recovery from sin and his entrance into Science?" Symptoms are transitional, they are not things in themselves but absolutely vital as indications that the translation is happening. The marginal heading confirms this, it calls them transitional qualities.

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We are making the transition, we are going across, trans and ito. We are passing over from unreality to reality. Glorious, and it is happening not because we are working our way up but because of the irresistible Christ-power coming into human consciousness to do its marvellous, powerful work of transforming our estimate of what humanity really is. Working from the divine, from God, that is what we love to do.

Now we have arrived at the third degree:

Third Degree: Understanding.

SPIRITUAL: Wisdom, purity, spiritual understanding, spiritual power, love, health, holiness. *Reality*

We note that there are seven terms here. Is it possible that they can be identified with the seven synonymous terms for God?

Isn't it Mind that relates to wisdom?

Purity clearly belongs to Spirit.

Spiritual understanding defines Soul.

Spiritual power is Principle.

And love, with a small I, the love which loves to give, which loves to lay down the mortal sense, is Life.

Health describes the synonym Truth.

Holiness is surely Love.

Thus, in the third degree, 'understanding,' we have arrived back at the nature of God, and it was from God that we first came. Understanding stands under. Another word with the same derivation is substance, sub, under and stare, to stand. What we are understanding here is the actual substance of man's being and the terms are wholly spiritual characteristics. They are the reality of man. But let us always remember we do not arrive at this understanding only at the end of the journey; we have in fact come from that status as God's own spiritual idea, the "immediate object of [God's own] understanding," which we have been since before time began.

Jesus used this cyclical statement, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" (John 16:28); I come forth from reality, and am come into an apparent world of dualism, but by continuing to come forth from reality I am translating dualism by degrees and arrive back at this unbroken reality of being.

It is actually what we do all the time whether we are correcting a huge mistake as to the meaning of life, or whether we are correcting a little fault in a calculation on the back of an envelope: we are coming forth from the infinite perfect Principle of good right to the point where there seems to be a mistake, and then the Principle resolves the mistake and we are back in the Principle of good. We have never really left the cycle; it is God's own understanding operating as us.

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This is the coinciding of divinity and humanity. We are proving to ourselves that humanity is not mortal, but is the living experience of divinity. "The divinity of the Christ was made manifest in the humanity of Jesus," (S&H 25:31). "John saw the human and divine coincidence, shown in the man Jesus, as divinity embracing humanity in Life and its demonstration, — reducing to human perception and understanding the Life which is God" (S&H 561:16).

I love to think that it was not a man called Jesus who demonstrated the Christ, rather was it the Christ-fact that brought Jesus into human expression. Similarly it was not somebody called Mary Baker Eddy who discovered and founded Christian Science, but it was God's own Christian Science that produced that phenomenon called Mary Baker Eddy. It is just the same with us. It is not each one of us trying hard to be Christian and to achieve godliness, rather is it the fact of Christhood that is producing us, and shaping our lives, and spiritualizing our consciousness; it is God-power producing the transformation of human character.

Although we have looked just at the surface of scientific translation, yet it has wonderful depths and marvelous import for us. It is a glimpse of the method by which we go about redeeming or changing some ugly situation. We lift our concept of the human so that it is redeemed from being mortal and instead is found to be the living experience of the divine. We still look like a human, we still act and function as a human, but the way we arrive at it is totally different. Is a cloud black or white? If we look at it from below, it may appear to be black, but if we look at it from above it is white. The same with humanity; if we look at it from below, it appears to be mortal; if we look at it from above, it is seen to be divine, it is immortal.

The world is full of legends about the king's son who is kidnapped and taken away to a far country. Through tribulations and adventures he eventually gets back to his father's house. It seems that every society has stories like that. Humanity, if it thinks of itself as just mortals, is really in a state of kidnap. The son has been stolen from his father's house. But as we seek our way back, there is a golden thread by which we can get there because something in us knows that we belong to the Father's kingdom. Something in us knows that we are not mortals. Then when we touch the great truths of our being, something in us says, Yes, I know that is true, that is what I am. It is a recognition of what we eternally are. We reclaim our true and original heritage.



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