



# PRE-EXISTENCE

ASSOCIATION ADDRESS 1975

By

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## 1975 Association Address

of

**Daniel Jenson**

### Introduction

Just think: it was over one hundred and twenty-one years ago *this* month! that Mrs. Eddy first began to have regular meetings of her followers, and to refer to them as “Christian Scientists.” Consider what an enormous effect this movement has had on man’s thought. Nuclear physicists, the high priests of matter, are now openly referring to matter in their speeches as “crystallized thought.” The recent widespread interest in occultism and Orientalism, misguided and mistaken as it is, is the result of man’s turning from gross materialism and reaching out for the spiritual. Even in *materia medica* the intense interest in, and development of, psychosomatic medicine demonstrates an increased recognition of the mental nature of all things. It has become “respectable” for even such reputable organizations as the Stanford Research Institute and the Menninger Foundation to conduct scientific experiments with E.S.P. and other elements of parapsychology. [Interestingly enough, they refer to it as the “Science of Consciousness.”] It is all the “leaven” at work, and, fermenting and stirring as it may be, the ultimate turning to the truths taught by Christian Science is inevitable. It remains the only viable and workable answer to the self-destroying turmoil of material existence.

This is why the purity and sanctity of this Science of the Christ must be protected and sustained against dilution and adulteration. These association meetings are a period for renewal and rededication to this holy purpose of rededicating ourselves to the purity of Christian Science, *as taught by our Leader*, since Christian Science is truly the “hope of the world” and man’s salvation.

When you are tempted to turn from even a part of the Christian Science movement and look at it as unnecessary, outgrown, outmoded, inconvenient, overly strict, or limiting to a “free-living” life style, stop and think about it carefully. Consider how it evolved — through inspiration and prayer. Consider what it has accomplished: the untold thousand upon thousands of healings, of lives remade, of its *results!*

Mrs. Eddy uses the word *system* over two-hundred times in her writings, for truly Christian Science is a system, a complete system. And all of it is necessary — *all* of it,

not just the part that we find easily acceptable and comfortably agreeable. So today we are going to speak of *spiritual radicalism*, for we are charged with the awesome responsibility of maintaining the *purity* of our Leader's vision and passing it on to a hungering, waiting world — and we shall.

### Pre-Existence" or truly, "Co-existence

*"In atmosphere of Love divine,  
We live, and move, and breathe;  
Though mortal eyes may see it not,  
'Tis sense that would deceive.*

*The mortal sense we must destroy,  
If we would bring to light  
The wonders of eternal Mind,  
Where sense is lost in sight."*

[*Christian Science Hymnal*, No. 144]

Where were you 5,000 years ago this morning? What were you doing? A consideration of possible answers to these questions leaves one with kind of a vague, unsettled, mysterious feeling, doesn't it? It's something we just don't give much thought to. We have all given much *more* thought to the hereafter — where we're going, what it will be like, who will be there, what we will be doing, and so on.

Contemplating pre-existence seems humanly to be much like looking in the rear-view mirror, at where we've been; while the "hereafter" is like considering the road out ahead of us. It seems much more practical to think of it. But is it, when you are dealing with immortality? "Never born and never dying . . ." [*Science and Health* 258:27-28] "To him belongs eternal life" [*Science and Health* 258:26-27] Mrs. Eddy says. But is it practical to be concerned with this, we ask. She replies, "The human capacities are enlarged and perfected in proportion as humanity gains the true conception of man and God" [ibid. 258:21].

Now who doesn't want his or her "human capacities enlarged and perfected?" And we can, she assures us, in proportion as we gain "the true conception of man and God." And that's our search, which leads us to today's discussion of: *Pre-existence*

Now, for the purposes of comparison, let's briefly review the *mortal* picture of existence: its origin, its nature, its normal human expectations and limitations. As you recall, there are three stories of creation in the Bible. The first, Genesis 1:27: the true story of man's creation — spiritual, the "image and likeness" of immortal God. The second, Genesis 2: the Adam and Eve allegory. And then this third story of creation, Genesis 4:1: "And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord." The biological story of creation. This is the story of

man's beginning that is accepted by the entire world, isn't it — conception, pregnancy, and birth? For the most part, mankind's inquiry doesn't get beyond this account. Why? Why for untold centuries have we failed to go beyond this in our thinking? Because it is mortal mind's holiest of holies. It's the sacred cow. It's the very premise, the foundation of mortal man's existence. Look at the insulation, the barrier upon barrier that discourages an honest questioning of this account of man's origin: customs, taboos, rules, laws, ceremonies, traditions, fears, pleasure, pride, the *social* security and *financial* security of the family.

Now we all recognize the importance in our society of the institutions of marriage, parenthood, family, morality, and the like. Without them no human civilization has ever prospered or even long endured. They are *most* important and must be protected and maintained diligently. But they must also be *redeemed* through a spiritualized consciousness, for we can't let these humanly necessary institutions keep us from incisively cutting through the misleading mental covers of mortal mind and seeing the basic, the fundamental, error in precept that says that we began, that life begins — and that it begins in conception, pregnancy, and birth. Mortal mind uses these fine human institutions to keep us from seeing man's real origin, his *actual* parent — Father-Mother God.

Now you're going to hear a lot today about "Father-Mother God" because unless we begin to look to this as the source of our parentage we'll continue on in the long dream of mortality that has kept man enslaved down through the centuries. And that dream starts with the ovum, a tiny egg about the size of the head of a pin that becomes fertilized. Then, through a process that we call "pregnancy," the cell division continues, and after a prescribed time the egg becomes a recognizable body. It is then separated and starts its existence under its own name. That hallowed event is reverently referred to as "birth." There is even a certificate issued and recorded, and its anniversary is almost fanatically celebrated and observed ever afterwards.

That's what occurs, and *it's the fundamental error that keeps us enslaved*. I want you to bear that in mind throughout today's discussion. There is *no way* that dealing with this basic error can be avoided.

Three years ago in our association address on "Genetics" we dealt in considerable detail with the so-called "laws of inheritance," Mendel's laws of ancestry, the nucleus of the cell, its D.N.A., and other things that, it is claimed, determine absolutely our body structures, our mentalities, our temperaments, our life-spans, and even our susceptibility to some 2,000 diseases. They now say that approximately 60% of the diseases are genetically originated. In other words, they are now claiming that your *susceptibility* to these diseases was born into you. What a curse this whole package is when you consider it in that light. Yet I've heard it said that nothing is so apt to cling to the family tree as the sap!

Much of the address on Genetics was based upon an excellent, very comprehensive study prepared by a group of PhDs for the Board of Directors of the

Mother Church — and then made available to the teachers. It deals at length with the widely-held deceptive claims relating to birth and how to deal with its connected beliefs of aging, limitation, disease, and death.

The world has largely been sleeping the sleep of mortality, undisturbed except for the insights of a few spiritual radicals who awoke and then wakened others to see what man's true nature has always been.

The premise of man's so-called "material" origin, from human birth to all of the laws attached to it, has gone on practically unchallenged, hasn't it? And when you have accepted a false premise, all reasoning thereafter just can't be right. Let me illustrate with a little riddle. Suppose that some chickens were perched on the sharp crown of a roof where the right side sloped at 45 degrees, and the left side sloped down the other way at 45 degrees. If an egg is laid by a rooster on the very crown of the roof, which side will it roll down — the right side or the left side?

Well, of course, here too we started with the wrong premise: of a *rooster* laying an egg. When we *start* wrongly, we *end* wrongly. The false premise of material birth will always entail sin, disease, discord, and death, and yet mortals are so loathe to challenge the conservative premise of birth and all of its accouterments. But, as Christian Scientists, we must awake from the sleep of mortality, and, as radicals, *spiritual radicals*, we must challenge this false premise and reason from the correct starting-point of man's spiritual origin.

"Radicalism" has grown to have a rather dubious connotation in today's society, but, if you go to its original meaning, it is a very *desirable* state of mind — one of going to the very root of things. This is particularly desirable when considered in relation to spirituality, and this is the sense in which we are using it today.

Jesus, our wonderful Exemplar, turned from the conservatism of material origin early in his ministry when, at the wedding feast, he said to his mother, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" [John 2:4]. And later, "Call no man your father upon the earth" [Matt. 23:9]. And, "Who is my mother, or my brethren?" [Mark 3:33]. It wasn't easy then, and it isn't easy now; but Jesus knew that he couldn't *heal* unless he did turn from this conservatism of concessions to matter in this most important of all concepts, man's origin! And thank goodness he had the courage to do so, or we wouldn't be seeing the Truth as clearly today, perhaps. If he, for a second, had gone along with his mother or other well-wishers, or enemies, and admitted or conceded even a little on this point, do you think he could have raised the dead Lazarus? Jesus saw that unless God was of supreme importance, He was of no importance! And so he remained a true radical in all ways — and healed because he did.

It is interesting to note that "radical" stems from the word "root." Webster defines a "radical" as: "one who advocates a decided and often extreme change from existing, usual or traditional views, habits, conditions, or methods." I guess you would say that this definition fits Jesus, and then his followers; and hopefully we, as Christian Scientists, can qualify as "radicals." When you see what absolute, unmovable, uncompromising stands

Jesus took in the face of the most intense pressures of every kind — sometimes sly, subtle, ingratiating; sometimes harsh, bitter, violent, fearful; but always standing, even at what appeared to be the expense of his own life — standing in radical contrast to the conventionality of the priesthood and their spiritual adulteration and tyranny. And because of his radical stand, Jesus had more of an effect upon men's thinking, and thereby their lives, than anyone who has ever trod this globe.

Then, nearly two thousand years later, Christian Science explained the Science of Jesus' work, and did its part to mark the end of the centuries-old concepts of religion and matter. Science, as taught and proved by Mrs. Eddy, meant "radicalism," and it must continue to mean "radicalism" in its best sense. She sets forth this concept well in her *Miscellaneous Writings*, and its demand that we give all for it: "Admiral Coligny, in the time of the French Huguenots, was converted to Protestantism through a stray copy of the Scriptures that fell into his hands. He replied to his wife, who urged him to come out and confess his faith, 'It is wise to count the cost of becoming a true Christian.' She answered him, 'It is wiser to count the cost of *not* becoming a true Christian.' So, whatever we meet that is hard in the Christian warfare, we must count as nothing, and must think instead, of our poverty and helplessness without this understanding, and count ourselves always as debtors to Christ, Truth" [281:12].

A wise dad overheard his son praying, and cut in to say, "Son, don't bother to give God instructions. Just report for duty!" And that's what we've got to do.

The human history of reformatory movements is that the radicalism of today becomes the conservatism of tomorrow. This disposition to become conservative has repeatedly set back the clock of human progress, and *today* this very reactionary tendency threatens the Cause of Christian Science, and would engulf it. The very life-blood of this movement is enthusiasm, deep-caring, striving, and these can exist and flourish only in the atmosphere of *spiritual radicalism*.

Don't ever let your right desire and true spiritual radicalism be perverted by the subtle suggestion of animal magnetism that you turn away from church or from organization. Go to Mrs. Eddy's spiritual definition of "Church." Talk about radical! Just consider that definition in contrast to the conventional concept. Analyze it, savor it. No wonder she shook the ecclesiastical world and incurred their violent resistance and reaction, just as Jesus did centuries before. Mr. Wuth asked us at a teacher's meeting, "Are we 'caretakers' or 'apostles?'" This church was built by apostles, with spiritual vision! We can't become just caretakers.

Our textbook refers to "radical reliance" [S&H 167:30] upon Truth in a passage that deals chiefly with the non-use of material remedies. But read on. There are far more important reasons for this reliance upon Truth set forth, and you will acquire eyes that see them. At our present state of development, we breathe air, we eat food, we drink water, we clothe ourselves, we wash and groom, and transport what we mistakenly consider to be our bodies. These are now unavoidable concessions, and necessary. They may even appear to be the legitimate outcome of Truth demonstrated. But they need not interfere with your radical reliance upon Truth in the innermost core of your being, in your heart.

All the time that you feed it, and sleep it, and bathe it, and clothe it, remember what "body" truly is. Know that body continues perfect whether you see it or whether you don't. It's perfect, no matter whether you think of it rightly or wrongly. All your right thinking or wrong thinking, all your fears and doubts — no matter what you think

about body, it's not going to affect it. Body is indestructible, immortal, perfect, and it goes right on being so whether you know it or not. Stop and consider. When you have a dream about your body at night, does it affect the body that's lying there in bed asleep? Of course not. Does that body lying in bed know anything about the dream or its "conditions?" Of course not. Well, neither does *our* body. I'm not even going to call it our "real" body, because that would infer that there's another body, and there isn't. In fact, there's only one body, just as there is one Mind. Listen to how George Shaw Cook explains it in his *Journal* article titled "Mind and Body" [Vol. 57 p. 278]: "As Paul said, 'There is one body, and one Spirit.' Thus it will be seen that, in reality, all have one body, just as all have one Spirit, Mind, or Principle. There is, therefore, no more basis for believing in the existence of many bodies than there is for believing that there are many minds.

"However, mortals have been taught for ages that each one has his own body, separate from the one universal body, and that each body has its own mind, apart from the one infinite Mind. The actual fact is that all individuals consciously reflect, and, in that sense possess, the ideas that comprise the only body or infinite manifestation of Mind. This body is the universal expression of God, Spirit. . . ."

There's just "body," and that spiritual body remains totally unaffected by anything you're going to think or do about it anyway. Isn't that an enormous comfort to know, that in spite of what we do, our perfection continues? As we grow in Christian Science, our practice of this spiritual radicalism is largely one of degree rather than Principle. The more our thought is evangelized, refined, purified, the more spiritual conviction and assurance are gained. Jesus dealt liberally with the woman taken in adultery, for his spiritual awareness enabled him to see that the healing had already taken place. He didn't condone adultery; quite the contrary. He was never soft or "mealy-mouthed" in his radical stand against unrepentant, unhandled error, you notice. Observe his handing of the money-changers and the merchants in the temple, or the publicans, or Pharisees. He even rebuked severely his own disciples. Mrs. Eddy comments on this when she refers to the record of a certain magistrate who lived in the time of Jesus as saying, "His rebuke is fearful." She goes on to comment, "The strong language of our Master confirms this description" [S&H 6:30]. So our radicalism must be one of spirit, then we shall know, unmistakably know, what our human stand in certain situations must be, and we'll take it.

Mrs. Eddy said in her address to the National Convention in Chicago: "Men and women of the nineteenth century, are you called to voice a higher order of Science? Then obey this call. Go, if you must, to the dungeon or the scaffold, but take not back the words of Truth. How many are there ready to suffer for a righteous cause, to stand along siege, take the front rank, face the foe, and be in the battle every day?" [*Miscellaneous Writings* 99:12]. I remember, when talking to one of the early workers in the movement, I caught such an inspiring glimpse of this spirit. A little white-haired lady, not even 5 feet tall (but Goliath in conviction) told about some of the early days in the introduction of Christian Science to England. It was not easy, there in the very stronghold of conservative religion and the glorification of materialism and of great self-righteousness. But these dauntless followers of this radical, "healing cult" [as it was known] went forth. She said that in treating children, particularly, it was hazardous, to say the least, because of the very adverse laws and customs. "But," she said, "we went forth," [and quoting

Mrs. Eddy] “prepared to go to the dungeon or the scaffold.” Then she threw back her head and laughed with such joy and confidence. “But we didn’t have to, because we *healed* them!” They didn’t go beyond their spiritual conviction in their radicalism. They didn’t overdrive their spiritual headlights. It wasn’t an exercise of will-power or fanaticism. It was demonstration of true spiritual radicalism.

Well, how will I know if it is will-power or spiritual conviction? Just ask yourself, how much self is there in my concept? Really look carefully and honestly at your innermost feelings. Maintain the purity of your outlook — the spiritual purity uncontaminated by pride, envy, resentment, hurt, limitation, or any other aspect of animal magnetism. It’s the purity of your thought. And understand, folks, that “purity” has far wider application than strictly morals. Is there purity of thought if you’re being envious, or fearful, or critical? Stop and think about this aspect of purity in the guarding of your thought, and don’t settle for a limited, narrow view of it. Don’t be satisfied just because you’re not breaking the laws of the State. We have to go far beyond that to be spiritually pure.

We need to maintain the consistent basic radicalism of Truth and Love, and not criticize or condemn — even to ourselves — those who may be tempted to waiver. Don’t forget the story we shared in class about the two men chased by the bull. Remember? The tall one swung up into the tree, so the short one had to jump into the cave. He kept bouncing in and out of the cave every time the bull would run over the top of it. The tall man in the tree kept telling him, “Stay in that hole! Stay in that hole!” When the bull finally got tired and went away, the tall man asked the little fellow, “Why did you keep jumping out of the hole?” Remember? He said, “There was a bear in that cave!” You never know what’s in the other man’s cave, do you? Never forget this. Review what Mrs. Eddy says about this on page 444 of *Science and Health*. It will be well worth your while.

The following two basic statements of Mrs. Eddy lead us into an area of spiritual radicalism that is one of the most important and demanding of all. Like the First Commandment, all the rest are subsidiary. The first statement: “‘There is no matter’ is not only the axiom of true Christian Science, but it is the only basis upon which this Science can be demonstrated” [*Miscellany*. 357:22].

Now that is basic. At a very trying time, that is what our Leader wrote to one of the New York churches. It is probably the most radical statement that anyone can make in a material society. And second: “The foundation of mortal discord is a false sense of man’s origin” [S&H 262:27-28]. Now, you’re going to hear that again and again today, because, you see, it relates to birth. And that’s what she said about it in *Science and Health* on page 262: “The foundation of mortal discord is a false sense of man’s origin.”

These statements are as radical and challenging as any that can be posed to material existence. So let’s see their complete support of the basic doctrine of man’s immortality and spiritual pre-existence: man as never born and never *dying*!

Mrs. Eddy tells us that, “Sleep and mesmerism explain the mythical nature of material sense” [S&H 490:28-29]. And she more specifically applies the analogy of sleep when she writes: “Now I ask, Is there any more reality in the waking dream of mortal existence than in the sleeping dream? There cannot be, since whatever appears to be a mortal man is a mortal dream. . . . But the spiritual, real man, is immortal” [S&H 250: 22-25, 27].



Mrs. Eddy's use of the comparison of the *sleeping* dream and the *waking* dream is extremely helpful, so we're going to consider it now.

Is there a single thing, location, condition, feeling, sensation, action or reaction which you can see or experience in your waking state (or waking dream, as Mrs. Eddy refers to it) that you can't and don't feel in a sleeping dream? Is there? Is there a single thing you can think of that you can't dream about? If this sleeping dream, and its shifting scenes, *continued* during the ordinary period of human existence, would it not be equivalent in every respect to this waking dream (which we mistakenly refer to as actual life, living)? Would it not appear to be positive existence, when we're in the middle of it?

The body, lying passively in bed, without movement, takes absolutely no part in the apparent activities or sensations of the dream, does it? How much more real or actual is this earthly existence [the *waking* dream] than the incidents of the *sleeping* dream? Now that's a big step, because we're so convinced of the actuality of this waking dream. But mind you, *we're in a waking dream this very instant — right here, right now*. This is not actuality. And we are afforded a unique opportunity, as she noted, for careful comparison and a means of gaining insight into our waking dream not otherwise obtainable. You see, we can look at our sleeping dreams with a degree of objectivity that we can't with this waking dream. So we're going to take advantage of that today, and we're going to look at that sleeping dream, which she says is no less real than this waking state. And, if we'll admit certain things about the sleeping dream, it becomes obvious that they *must* apply to this waking dream. It gives us an insight into how Christian Science healing takes place. It is the clearest explanation that I have ever seen, and it's been one of the most exciting.

Now let's say that when you went to sleep last night you had a dream, and in that dream you were told that you had been born in a certain place, at a certain time, and that certain people were your parents. In your dream you went about your business, working and playing, laughing and crying, rich or poor, sick or well, young or old, hot or cold, wet or dry, in good weather or bad, walking, running, crawling, riding, silently or audibly, in darkness or light, in love or in hate, leisurely or in haste, experiencing the entire spectrum of conscious existence. But I ask you: Could you, during any moment of this, even once, see yourself lying there in quiet repose in the darkness, just as you were when you kicked off your slippers and climbed into bed? Not for a moment, could you? You could not see yourself in that state. All you could see was that which was taking place in thought, in the dream. Absolutely all. Now why? Because of an interesting phenomenon that occurs in a dream; and remember this, because it applies to the waking dream also. Let's call it "**Dream phenomenon #1.**"

It's just as if there is a wall — a high, impenetrable invisible wall — that is erected completely around the dream so that all you can see is what is taking place within the dream. What you are apparently experiencing within the dream seems to be all that is existent. That's why we cry out in pain or pleasure, joy or fear, etc. etera. We just can't see over the mental wall of that "**Dream phenomenon #1.**" And yet that phenomenon does this: immediately upon awakening it drops. The instant you awaken, the mental wall goes down and you look around and you see what you consider to be reality — your waking experience. Now remember, that's "**Dream phenomenon #1.**"

Now look at "**Dream phenomenon #2.**" Let's say that in your sleeping dream a boogie-man is after you, and you have been running and running, but you can't escape

him. He is just about to grab you when, in your extreme fear and excitement, you wake up — and your eyes open and you look around. There for a moment you see yourself just as you were *before you went to sleep*: safe, secure, in the quiet of your room. You say to yourself, “Oh, that was just a dream. What I’m seeing now is reality; this is what is actually going on. This is me. Whew! What a relief! No boogie-man!” You relax, your heart quiets down, you smile a bit, and you realize, “Why it’s not real. It’s only a dream.” And with that you quiet down and may well slip back into your dream again. But here another important phenomenon occurs, and this is “Dream phenomenon #2.” I wish to call it to your *particular* attention because it too applies to the waking dream. The scene may appear to be the same when you slip back into your dream (same location, doing the same things), but one thing’s changed. No boogie-man! It’s gone. And that’s what’s important. The same, dream, but changed somewhat by what you glimpsed when you awoke.

Or let’s say that you were experiencing a physical problem in the dream; say you thought you were going blind, and you awake. Doesn’t “awaking” simply mean becoming aware of what we were before we dreamed and what we are at that very *instant*, at that very *moment*? Isn’t that all we do when we awaken — become aware of reality, or what we consider to be reality? That’s really the definition of awakening, is to *become aware of reality*. We open our eyes just a slit and we look around and we see the light filtering through the window, or something, and we say to ourselves, “Whew! I’m O.K. I can see. It’s only a dream. Oh boy!” And if you slip back into the dream you may find that it’s the same in every respect *except* you are no longer blind. Why? Because you got a glimpse of what you consider to be reality, and your dream image changed accordingly, changed in direct proportion to your admission of the reality of what you glimpsed when you awoke; that is, when you became aware of the truth about yourself.

Now remember what Mrs. Eddy tells us: that there is no more reality in the waking dream than in the sleeping one! So, by observing what appears to be occurring in the *sleeping* dream [which we can view more dispassionately and objectively] the mysteries of its parallel, the waking dream, and its entirely mental nature, begin to be revealed. Then we sing:

*“O dreamer, leave thy dreams for joyful waking,  
O captive, rise and sing, for thou art free.”*

[*Christian Science Hymnal*, No. 412]

And it has a new meaning all of a sudden!

Now, when the question is asked, “If I was never conceived nor born, and if all there is to this is a dream, then why can’t I see what I really am? For your answer we can look to the parallel situation found in the *sleeping* dream to see what occurred *there*. Remember the “phenomenon #1” we spoke about, of the high mental wall erected completely around the dream so the dream seemed to be all that was existent? Well, that is exactly the phenomenon that occurs in the waking dream. That’s why we can’t see ourselves as we really are, at this moment. It’s that mental wall, a wall that disappears only as we awaken. And “waking up,” remember, is simply becoming aware of yourself as you were before you slept.

Well, why does this waking dream of materiality, this belief of material bodies, seem so real to us? Largely because of the almost total acceptance of "birth." This is the false premise that the whole fabric of human existence, and therefore human discord, is built on. Remember how Mrs. Eddy put it? "The foundation of mortal discord is a false sense of man's origin." Could it be put more succinctly? There is absolutely no room for interpretation of this statement.

Yet, in spite of this, the celebration and glorification of birth continues in its many forms, even by Christian Scientists. It's winked at, with a little witticism perhaps, but it's deadly (and I do mean deadly!). Its implications are largely ignored. But when we begin to see man's spiritual pre-existence, and when we realize what it means to awaken, then we will accept that anything, *anything*, that keeps us tied to birth has got to go. If we're ever going to wake up, if we're going to apply the truths of Christian Science, we must grow in our willingness to put off the old and put on the new. You can see that every healing is simply dream-changing, can't you? That's all it amounts to — waking up to a glimpse of reality long enough that the mental dream image disappears. The body never has to be changed, ever! It goes on being perfect immortally, and it always will. When did "body" come into being? When the morning stars sang together! When did God come into being? See, man is His reflection. When does a reflection come into being? When the original does.

Not we don't have to worry that we're going to lose our individuality and identity. In *Miscellany*, here's what Mrs. Eddy says: "Is God infinite? Yes. Did God make man? Yes. Did God make all that was made? He did. Is God Spirit? He is. Did infinite Spirit make that which is not spiritual? No. Who or what made matter? Matter as substance or intelligence never was made. Is mortal man a creator, is he matter or spirit? Neither one. Why? Because Spirit is God and *infinite*; hence there can be no other creator and no other creation. Man is but His image and likeness.

"Are you a Christian Scientist? I am. Do you adopt as truth the above statements? I do. Then why this meaningless commemoration of birthdays, since there are none?" [235:15-27]. And then she goes on to say, "Let us have no more of echoing dreams" [*My*. 236:1-2]. In *Science and Health*, on page 246, she says this: "Never record ages. Chronological data are no part of the vast forever. Time-tables of birth and death are so many conspiracies against manhood and womanhood" [lines 17-20].

I'd like to see you work your way around that! She says it. What else do you want to take out of her system, and just because of the false beliefs and false laws that you see around you — the acceptable social standards. What about being spiritually radical? Now is that too big a thing to do? Think what it does, what it does in our own thinking, when we begin to see that we never had a birthday! It really goes to the core of this concept of our spiritual pre-existence, and that's why it's so important.

But let's continue with the insights that a consideration of the sleeping dream gives us, of its parallel, the waking dream — because there is really no difference in their illusory natures, is there? When you see through the one, you begin to see through the other.

We spoke of the important phenomenon of the sleeping dream, how the boogie-man, or the belief of blindness, vanished from the dream when the dreamer awoke, even momentarily, and got a glimpse of reality, of the truth about himself or the situation. The dream appears to change *proportionably* to the acceptance of the facts seen during the

awakening. So now comes the *application* of this “phenomenon #2” to the parallel, the waking dream — which to us in the human experience is probably the most important of all, because it concerns *healing*.

A discordant physical condition appears. We can see right at the outset that it is not a physical condition, but simply a wrong belief, a wrong thought that must be dealt with. You see, that’s why we put this “b-o-f” in front of it. It means the “belief of.” We “bof” it. That’s why we do it. We don’t take a chance for a single moment in dealing with our patients, or ourselves, of considering the problem to be a physical one. Do whatever you need to do to remind yourself instantly that no matter how alarming or real the picture appears to be, you’re only dealing with thought. That is fundamental, because the minute you start trying to fix matter, you’re out of the ball game. Right then. And nine times out of ten, patients that come to a practitioner want some good thoughts so that they can change their matter bodies. But that’s just a Christian Science brand of psychosomatic medicine — it’s nothing else. Don’t be fooled by it. *There is no condition to change*. If you think there’s a condition, you’ve begun dealing with matter. Catch yourself instantly! You’re only dealing with thought from beginning to end, so keep it there, or you’re not practicing Christian Science.

How can we remain convinced of the mental nature of all disease? Well, for one thing, we know that everything, absolutely everything, that we see or experience in our *sleeping* dreams is all mental. No one disputes this, do they? *Everything*. No matter what the condition is, no matter what the problem appears to be, it’s all a mental picture. The white Cadillac you drive in the sleeping dream is known to be totally thought — just like the green Volkswagen. All thought; nothing else. And, as in the sleeping dream, so in the waking dream. There is no matter — no “things” — only *thoughts* of things, that we call by names. That’s all. They’re *thoughts* of things that we’re calling by names.

Do you remember the statement by William Kilpatrick, the lecturer, that I shared in class? It’s from one of his lectures, on this thing of “resolving things into thoughts.” I’d like to read it here:

“On page 269 of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* Mrs. Eddy has written: ‘Metaphysics resolves things into thoughts, and exchanges the objects of sense for the ideas of Soul.’

“In resolving a thing — a material thing — into thought we simply recognize that matter is really a mental concept or an object of wrong thinking, or material thinking. And is not that exactly what our physical science brothers are now doing — resolving things (matter) into thought? In resolving things, or matter, into thought, we, of course, have not accomplished anything along the line of spiritualization. We have simply seen matter for what it is — erroneous thought. The thought of the thing is the thing. Things are thoughts; and no less material than the so-called thing itself. We have not made the metaphysical, or spiritual, correction of the material condition simply by resolving the thing or the condition into thought. The thought which creates the material thing or material condition is just as erroneous as the thing or condition itself. So, by resolving things into thoughts, we have not accomplished the spiritual ultimate. We have simply gotten the thing or condition into the realm of thought, whereby we proceed to the spiritual conclusion of Mrs. Eddy’s statement and exchange ‘the

objects of sense,' that is, for the right idea, which corrects the so-called material condition or thought. There is not a spiritual idea of the thing which we resolve into a thought. The thought into which we resolve a thing is strictly carnal. So do not be misled into thinking that by resolving a thing into thought you have accomplished the spiritual. You have simply gotten the thing into the realm of the mental, where it may be replaced by, or exchanged for, 'ideas of Soul,' or right ideas. God must take possession of consciousness before spiritualization of thought can be accomplished. We cannot spiritualize thought by the process of substitution — by exchanging, and not by changing.

It is perfectly obvious that all of this is done through the process of right thinking, through casting out of consciousness those thoughts which emanate from the so-called carnal mind, and substituting therefore the ideas which emanate from the divine Mind, or God. God never created matter, does not know or recognize matter, and therefore matter exists only as a false mental illusion retained in the minds of mortals, to be replaced by right thinking, or that Mind which was in Christ Jesus." (Excerpt from a lecture by William Duncan Kilpatrick, C.S.B. entitled, "*Christian Science: Its Demonstrable Application.*")

Now to consider again any discordant belief that presents itself to our consciousness, we must awaken, even for just a moment, to the true state of man's perfection, his spiritual pre-existence. We find that as we do, as we become aware of our real selfhood, as we catch a glimpse, so to speak, of our spiritual nature, of what constitutes our spiritual body, actuality, reality, then our waking dream is proportionately changed. The discordant belief [or condition] will have disappeared, and we say, "Oh, I'm healed!" All that happened was that our dream changed when we got a glimpse of reality — when we knew the truth about ourselves, about man, and this truth that you knew (even temporarily) awakened you to some degree. Mrs. Eddy puts it another way: "Become conscious for a single moment that Life and intelligence are purely spiritual, — neither in nor of matter, — and the body will then utter no complaints. If suffering from a belief in sickness, you will find yourself suddenly well" [S&H 14:12-16].

Now stop and think: what happened to Mrs. Eddy when she slipped on the ice, was picked up and carried into a neighbor's house? The doctor diagnosed it as fatal, and her relatives and minister were called. She regained consciousness and asked for her Bible. In reading the account of the healing of the palsied man she got a little glimpse, just a *glimpse*, of the truth of God and His creation. Now it's just like in the night dream when you awake and you get a little glimpse of the light around and you say, "Oh, I'm not blind." She got a little glimpse of her true body, her true existence — the body that was intact all the time, her spiritually pre-existent state. We call it reality when we wake from a sleeping dream and catch a glimpse of something. Well, that's what *she* did. She got a glimpse of reality, of the truth about herself at that moment. You see? She looked around and she said "I'm healed." Her dream had changed. Or more importantly, to some small degree she had awakened. And this appeared to change her waking dream. But the significant part was that she had awakened!

Now that's all that takes place in any healing. Isn't that simple? Isn't that logical? You know, we go searching and searching for all of these things and we try to make

Christian Science so complex. It isn't. She's got it all right there; she says it all. Time and again she talks to us about the waking dream. And we continue, because of a false premise of birth [or a rooster laying an egg], to think that we're in something here and we refuse to accept the simple fact that all the while we live in God, in Spirit.

In a letter to Joseph G. Mann [in *We Knew Mary Baker Eddy*] we read again what our Leader saw of the sleeping and waking dreams. She said: "It seems to the material senses that pain etc. are in the lungs or elsewhere *in matter* but the fact is that pain or suffering of any sort is no more in the body or matter in our waking state than it is in our *night dream* for both states are *dreams* and not the reality of being." [*We Knew Mary Baker Eddy*, Calvin Hill reminiscences, p. 175].

From beginning to end it becomes, does it not, increasingly clear that there simply is no matter, no physicality to be healed? It's only a dream — a real-appearing waking dream to be aroused from for a glimpse of the Christ, Truth, to a view of God's image and likeness, Man.

As we sit here this morning *all that we think we see as material* is simply part of the dream. Then we see that in the waking dream, as in the sleeping dream, all that is necessary to change the dream image is to awaken and glimpse what we were before we slept, before we dreamed the dream of mortality, what we have been all along (like the body lying in the bed).

In the often misleading nomenclature of a material language we refer to this state as "pre-existence." But to refer to something as happening before or after an event that never took place is rather ridiculous, isn't it? And no material birth ever took place in the history of mankind! But suffer it to be so now, and for want of a better term we shall continue to refer to our true, our real, our actual, our spiritual substantive existence as "pre-existence." But we really should be referring to it as "existence," because you can't be "*pre*" to that which never happened! But we're going to use it anyway because it's just as handy as any other term, and it does get us to think beyond this so-called material beginning. It gets us to think in terms of a life, an existence, that has never been interrupted, that has never become less than spiritual. How could it, if man is God's reflection? So just remember that what we really mean when we say "pre-existence" is "existence," or "*co-existence*," for we have always existed as God's reflection. Listen to these beautiful statements from Proverbs that convey this sense of man forever coexisting with God: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him" [Prov. 8:22, 23, 30]. Isn't that beautiful?

Just so long as we accept the belief of a material birth we will never concern ourselves very deeply with a spiritual concept of man. That's why a study of the references relating to pre-existence is so very, very important — and I recommend to you that after this Association meeting you re-read these references in the light of what we have covered today. I think that you will find them to have a new and very practical meaning. And I recommend as well the pamphlet entitled "I Was There" in this connection. It's excellent! "I Was There" (Note: This pamphlet is no longer available, but it contained the following article which may be found in the bound volumes: *I Was There*, Violet Hay, 57S837)

So we see that insofar as the waking dream goes we must awaken to what we were, what we are, what we shall be; that is, our timeless state of pre-existence, or “coexistence,” as an immortal, perfect, spiritual idea of God: as God’s Man, the image and likeness of God. That’s what we’re awakening to; that’s what we’ve got to come to see. So bear that in mind throughout our discussion today.

When we are alerted to man’s true existence and begin to actually look to this picture of man — of ourselves as the child of God — it opens up new possibilities as to his capacities and potentialities: no birth, no immaturity, no aging or death, but with immortal, ageless, harmonious activity, intelligence and tranquility; all seen as a part of man’s normal pre-existent and intact perfection.

Now maybe we’re not ready yet to stay out of the waking dream altogether, but we can *begin* to wake up if we will just turn from birth and all its attendant limitations and begin to really think about ourselves in terms of pre-existent perfection. You see, you really always were. You’ve always coexisted with the Mind that formed you and continues to maintain you.

If you think about pre-existence in any kind of material terms it leads to a kind of duality, and you’ve got to get into such nonsense as reincarnation and so forth: the Orientalism, living through countless thousands of lives, one after another — thinking that you existed before as a monkey or a cow or something else. Literally, you know, there are hundreds of millions of people still entertaining these beliefs.

But instead of thinking like that, really begin to realize that you have existed always *as a spiritual idea*; and look how much less impressed you will be, then, with the comings and goings of this waking dream. The headlines aren’t that convincing are they? All of a sudden we see it’s a dream and maybe we make a little bigger effort to wake up, and help others to awaken as well. What you do with your life, in this so-called “waking dream,” depends on your view of pre-existent man, doesn’t it, on your acceptance of your *present* perfection. It’s that simple. If you hold that model of man before thought, your dream will change, and there isn’t anything you can do about it. As we view spiritual reality *we cannot stop healing* because we cannot stop dream-changing. Dream-changing, “phenomenon #2,” will occur whether we like it or not [not that we’re going to fight it!]. Our dream *has* to change, the healing *must* occur when we turn from that false view of man’s beginning and continuation in matter and play host to a spiritual view of creation.

Now does that mean we have to walk on water before we can heal? No, it doesn’t. Mrs. Eddy says that “proportionably,” “proportionably to their occupancy of your thoughts” [S&H 261:6], will the good and the true come into your experience. So if we only open our eyes just a little and get just a slight glance, just a moment’s glimpse of this, it will proportionably better our experience.

Mrs. Eddy didn’t see the whole picture at first; but it was enough that it healed her. She didn’t even understand what she had seen, or experienced. You know that. The next three years she set her whole time aside to find out what occurred. She didn’t understand it, but it began to be revealed to her. Here’s her explanation of it in

*Retrospection and Introspection:* “My immediate recovery from the effects of an injury caused by an accident, an injury that neither medicine nor surgery could reach, was the falling apple that led me to the discovery how to be well myself, and how to make others so.

“Even to the homeopathic physician who attended me, and rejoiced in my recovery, I could not then explain the *modus* of my relief. I could only assure him that the divine Spirit had wrought the miracle — a miracle which later I found to be in perfect scientific accord with divine law.

“I then withdrew from society about three years, — to ponder my mission, to search the Scriptures, to find the Science of Mind that should take the things of God and show them to the creature, and reveal the great curative Principle, — Deity.

“The Bible was my textbook. It answered my questions as to how I was healed; but the Scriptures had to me a new meaning, a new tongue. Their spiritual signification appeared; and I apprehended for the first time, in their spiritual meaning, Jesus’ teaching and demonstration, and the Principle and rule of spiritual Science and metaphysical healing, — in a word, Christian Science” [24:12-9].

Now it’s not likely that mankind can or will turn from the belief of birth until he has a rational substitute for it, and only an expanded, clear concept of his pre-existent spirituality will provide this for him. You know that’s true. We don’t drop a cherished concept until we have something better to replace it with. That’s the nature of human thought. You will not drop the belief of birth until the idea of pre-existence, or spiritual co-existence, really comes to you; because rational thought requires that there be an answer to the common question, “Where did I come from?” So, until you get that spiritual glimpse, you’re going to continue to hold to the world’s explanation, found in the story of material birth. And vice-versa, as long as you continue to hold to birth you won’t get the spiritual idea. No way; it is impossible. You cannot believe that 2 and 2 is 5, and 4, at the same time. You can’t believe that the earth is flat, and round, at the same time. They are opposites, so only one can be held as true.

Mrs. Eddy’s statement on page 550 of the textbook disclosed the logic of the situation. She says: “Error of thought is reflected in error of action. The continual contemplation of existence as material and corporeal — as beginning and ending, and with birth, decay, and dissolution as its component stages — hides the true and spiritual Life, and causes our standard to trail in the dust. If Life has any starting-point whatsoever, then the great I AM is a myth. If Life is God, as the Scriptures imply, then Life is not embryonic, it is infinite” [lines 15-23]. She ends the statement with “An egg is an impossible enclosure for Deity” [lines 23-24]. Isn’t that significant? That disposes of the ovum if we are to consider man as the image and likeness of God, doesn’t it?

Now you can follow this through with your study when you go back home; and you’re going to see that every single thing I’m saying today is supported in the writings of Mrs. Eddy. It’s all there. So let’s consider man’s true origin, for we now know that we do not originate or create ourselves, and it is evident that we came from *somewhere*; and that a being or intelligence infinitely greater than ourselves had to do with our making.



The human belief of creation was plainly so far from the divine, that Jesus said that one needed to be “born again” [John 3:3] before he could enter the kingdom of heaven.

The word “Father” was the term which Jesus seemed to prefer as the most intimate and endearing name for God. It not only signifies origin and source, but protector and provider of the needs of His family. We give the name God to the divine Principle which is the origin and source of all-enduring life, power, substance, intelligence, beauty, individuality, harmony, and so forth. And so the Scripture asks, “Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us?” [Mal. 2:10].

Then man, as we call him, is the son; and I am using the term “son” in the generic sense as meaning daughter as well — the offspring, the outcome of God the Father, the original and only source and condition of being. To be begotten of that eternal, divine Principle, to be united inseparably to it, to have no different consciousness, naturally carries with it certain inalienable rights, which cannot be taken away or rendered void. They must continue eternally the possession of all men, and they bestow upon the recipient the power to exercise these rights. Since God, the Father, is omnipotent, there is none to dispute or disqualify these rights. So remember, your rights (as the child of God) are created, supported, and protected by omnipotent God. You couldn’t lose them if you wanted to.

Recognition of the divinity of man’s primal and present origin establishes his position as a son and confirms his right to all that God bestows upon His children. An unquestioning acceptance of this relationship is inseparable from genuine Christianity, since Jesus said that *his* Father is *our* Father also. Well how close are *we* to our Father? When we say “our Father” just how fully and literally do we mean the words? Does it ever become to us a meaningless phrase as applied to our individual life? Or is it alive and active in our daily consciousness as a dependable fact, as something we can live by and draw upon as does a young child upon his human parents through all the ups and downs of the mortal dream?

Now bear in mind that what we are now dealing with is the means, the metaphysical steps, the words or processes by which we can gain a clearer view of our rights, our position, as a child of God — our pre-existence. Why? So that we can awaken from this dream; so that the absolute reality of our true state will become vividly clear and actual to us. That’s why. Mrs. Eddy once said, “Many sleep who should keep themselves awake and waken the world [’02 17:12-13].

What can be the object in calling ourselves sons of God, children of the Father, unless we are willing, and even anxious, to *act* that way? Are we really ready to let that relationship be known to the world by our lives? Do we want to take the spirit of divinity into our environment, and in a degree to be consciously what we *say* we are? There may be a certain sense of comfort in saying that we are God’s children, but that is not equivalent to *being* His children. Every day of our lives there is a point of attainment in that direction which we have the ability to reach. By living it we attain more certainly than by any other means our true conviction, the realization of what we were and are in our true state of pre-existence.

When you pray, and you say “Our Father,” start thinking about that. Think of God as your Father, as your originator, as your source, as your origin, as the original that you reflect. As Mrs. Eddy advises, “Keep distinctly in thought that man is the offspring of God, not of man;” [S&H 396:26-27]. Keep your status as His offspring *distinctly* in thought! You know how Jesus talked about his Father? Why it was like it was his best friend; I mean there was a closeness, a living actuality in that closeness. And what that did for him! It’s absolutely beautiful how that permeated every part of his life — the trust, the confidence in all that he knew his Father to be. It was closer than I think most of us have ever felt about our human fathers. Now *we* ought to begin to think about our Father in that respect, and starting with the Lord’s Prayer is a good way of doing it, isn’t it? When we say, “Our Father,” our “Father-Mother,” stop and think *just that*.

We are, in a measure, responsible for our own limitations, and to that extent it is possible for us to remove them. So instead of deploring or excusing our limited sense of God’s allness, could we not be more active in increasing that sense — in being more willing to be genuinely good, and in opening consciousness to a larger sense of the divine grace and good will? The demand to be Godlike is the inescapable necessity of our divine origin and nature; and if we will be true to that, and be happy in *it*, the limitations will disappear and we will gain the freedom to be our divine selves.

The work is ours. In the divine consciousness, Man has existed from the beginning as God’s likeness; but the conditions, which to human sense obscures that likeness, are the product not of Truth, but of a continuing false view of things. The task of removing these falsities naturally rests upon those who have consented to have them there. And who’s consented to have them? This is evidently what Paul means by working out our own salvation; and it is God, he says, who works *with* us — but only as we consent to work with Him. The power and ability are His, but the work is ours; that is, it is *our* part to use or apply the power. This is where and how our work progresses. As Mrs. Eddy says, “The rule is already established, and it is our task to work out the solution” [S&H 3:5-7].

The belief which is laid on mortals of being physically conceived and born bestows no rights of birth higher than the sense of material existence. It obviously provides no link between the human and the divine, and only allows mortals the problem of *maintaining* their sense of existence. The belief of material birth confers only the right to suffer, to be enslaved by appetites and passions, with death as its ultimate conclusion. That’s all you get with the belief of birth.

What about your individuality 100, or 1,000, or 10,000 years ago? Were you nobody then? If so, could nothing ever grow into something? Is not that an impossibility? For even omnipotence cannot make something out of nothing. Then you must have been something or someone at that time, and God must have known you then, as now, as an expression of His own eternal being, as reflecting His own divine nature, and carrying out the conditions of being His son or daughter.

It is self-conclusive that Life and consciousness could not begin with their opposite, any more than Truth could originate with error; and this fact makes a perception of the truth of one's spiritual pre-existence absolutely essential to the overcoming of evil and mortality. It concerns so vitally the solution of our everyday problems, whether they're large or small, much more than we can now realize. And we should watch that we don't become careless or apathetic about a realization of our pre-existent state — because it is *practical*. It applies to our everyday problems like absolutely nothing else does.

You know that the truth of immortal being and of your own individuality lies outside of and beyond the physical sense of things entirely, and that's where we must look for it. It is inimical to one's progress to continue to think that we had no conscious existence before we had these physical bodies, as if these ever-changing bodies could constitute a single element of true being, or constitute one iota of the consciousness of eternal Life.

We've talked before about the fact that the molecules in the human, material body come and go. No molecules in your body now are the same as they were five years ago. Well then, why do you still look the same? What does that tell you about your identity? Well, obviously, it's not caused by or maintained by the molecules because the molecules that were you several years ago aren't around any more. And yet your identity is maintained. What does that say about your spiritual pre-existence? Doesn't that help us see that we exist independent of matter, now and forever, and that it is Soul (*here and now*) that determines our identity?

We should know, and should keep knowing, that matter never began to live, matter doesn't live now, and matter cannot connect us with a past, present, or future sense of life. Life never entered into matter; it doesn't activate matter; it can never leave matter, *because it was never there to begin with*. See the freedom it gives you when you begin to think in this realm? Spirit and matter never mix. That's all. They cannot!

Our Leader tells us that the body is "incapable of supporting life" [S&H 325:6]. Because of this, we should leave a belief of material identity, of material body, out of our consideration altogether, for it is this very belief of sensuous existence, of an identity that originated in birth, that denies our knowledge of any former spiritual life and consciousness. You cannot believe that you were born into matter and ever believe that you're a spiritual idea. See, the old theological doctrine of duality that says that at some unknown period, at some point, life entered into matter and matter became a living being — the dust man — that's the concept that is generally held by the world. And then it says that at some other instant life *left* matter. At that point we look down at the shell and we say, "The nut's gone." There's nothing in it. But the question is: was there ever any life in it? Well, of course not. Our life was never in it, so how can we be afraid of losing it? And what can it tell us of ourselves, or of our individuality, at this moment? And why should we be persuaded that we had no existence prior to birth simply because matter does not tell us anything about it? The phenomenon #1 of the high wall surrounding our dream makes it abundantly clear why we have never known about it.

Mrs. Eddy tells us in *Science and Health* on page 598 that the discernment of Life as spiritual would, “bridge over . . . the interval of death, and man would be in the full consciousness of his immortality and eternal harmony, where sin, sickness, and death are unknown” [lines 26-30]. “Bridge over!” Would not the same spiritual understanding of eternal Life bridge over the interval of *birth* and reveal life, yours and mine, as untouched by the finite and material conditions which make up the “birth-dream” of existence? It certainly does not seem consistent with the infinite nature of God to think of His creation as only partially complete, and as containing countless vacuums waiting to be occupied by newborn children. *God creating an incomplete creation?* Isn’t that ridiculous, when we know Him to be omniscient!

To the educated sense of other human beings who have been taught the same material theories of creation, we may seem to have come out of nothingness into this realm of physical belief; but not so to our *own* sense. There is nothing in our own conscious being to reasonably convince us that we have not *always* existed. How could you possibly reconcile the fact that you have the capacity for conscious thought — that you can perceive something of the infinity of Mind, that you have some consciousness of being at one with God — how could you reconcile these things with the belief that before conception you were just so much unconscious nothingness, a blank? Stop and think: how can you reconcile those things?

You see, we accept openly that there’s a hereafter. There may be a few people who try and argue that on death a curtain goes down, but innately most of us realize that there’s something after this experience. Down through the centuries the natives in the jungle have had some kind of a spirit world; down through the centuries the Egyptians have built their traditions and practices on this sense of knowing that life goes on; that it doesn’t end with death. Well, we’re saying thereby, aren’t we, that man is immortal?

Alright, if it’s immortal out *this* way, how about back *this* way? You say to the average person, “What were you before you were born?” “Ooooh, ooooh.” How much time have they spent thinking about that? Almost nil. Why? *Because they are so convinced that they started with birth.* You put this question to the average person and they say, “Well, I began with birth.” O.K. *Then* we say, “Oh you began with the little ovum — flesh, a little bit of protoplasm — and that bit of matter somehow became immortal?” Well, my friends, how’d that happen? What process caused that? Did they have sauerkraut for breakfast some morning? What happened? *Something* must have occurred that caused matter to become immortal. When it was fertilized? That’s ridiculous. You see, when you begin to look at it reasonably it becomes clear that it is impossible for matter to somehow or another *become spirit*, that a mortal existence could suddenly change in nature and become immortal. It has to be the other way: there *has* to have been immortality all along, there *has* to have been a pre-existent state of spirituality. There is no rational explanation without that premise. None at all. Why doesn’t mankind see this? What prevents them from thinking it through? You see, all of these things related to “birth” — the barriers, all of the things related to family (motherhood, fatherhood, all the relationships) — are built and honored in such a way that it keeps us from looking beyond it. Who among us would ever want to stop and think in such a way

that seems to threaten the institution of family? Well, doesn't the elimination of material birth appear to eliminate all the safeguards of human family?

Now it may sound like I'm saying something against family and marriage and all that. *I'm not*, and I want you to know that. These are necessary human institutions, and as they are redeemed they can be very loving provisions in our growth spiritward. Did you hear that? *These are necessary human institutions, and as they are redeemed they can be very loving provisions in our growth spiritward.* But the important thing is how we view them in our daily work. Do we see them as Love's provisions, or as part of a material package including good and evil? All the time we're saying to ourselves, "There is no life, truth, intelligence, or substance in matter" [S&H 468:9-10]. And yet at the same time we're not only feeding and caring for the body, but we find ourselves facing many family demands of one kind or another. But as we *think* about it correctly we will be less distracted by the *unnecessary* demands, or by feeling that we have to give such an inordinate amount of time to these things that we neglect to feed ourselves, and others, spiritually. Remember how in class we said, "You *speak* in the relative to be understood of men, but you *think* in the absolute to understand God." Well, that's what we have to do in this instance. All the time that we are making the legitimate concessions to family, to marriage, to normal daily living, we can be busy knowing, knowing underneath, that man is immortal and that his Father and Mother is God. Therefore there are no "birth" days, and nothing discordant can follow as a result. This mental work must underlie everything we do.

Because man's spiritual pre-existence is the absolute truth of being, does it follow that one should begin to wipe out, or step away from, all family relationships? Absolutely not! Until one's consciousness of being rises above the human sense of things, these relationships will continue; and they will find their proper place and cease to interfere with spiritual growth as a higher sense of man's origin occupies thought. It is not too soon to observe Jesus' injunction to look upon no man as father [or mother for that matter], or to think of ourselves as the creators of our children's lives. Their origin is in Spirit, not the flesh; and we stand with them, in the same relation to God. They are as old as we are. How "old" is that? Immortal!

It is important to remember that no matter how much you love your children they are still not *your* children; and no matter how much you may love and/or honor your human parents (and it is right to do so) they are not your parents. The fatherhood of God is a basic teaching of Christianity. We must accept all that it means, and it must become a practical, powerful factor in our work and in our lives. The belief of human generation is a barrier, a limitation that we shall sometime have to remove before we can grasp the full import of our relationship to God, as His sons and daughters. Think of it: *His* sons and daughters!

It is not sensible to claim that we came from God and then think and act as if we came from something quite the reverse. Is it because of this tendency towards vacillation that our Leader appeals to us for more steadfastness? She writes: "Either Spirit or matter is your model. If you try to have two models, then you practically have none."

[S&H 360:17-18]. An early article in the *Christian Science Series* makes clear the danger of having two models. It says: "It is for us to set forth the beauty and excellence of Jesus Christ, and not to exhibit the follies and blemishes of human nature. For in either case we shall be unconsciously assimilated to the image of that on which we dwell. 'I do not allow myself to look at a bad picture' said Sir Peter Lely, the artist, 'for if I do my brush is certain to take a hint from it.' It is so, likewise that caricaturists of human nature come at last to represent very bad specimens of human nature in their own characters. They learn unconsciously to exaggerate their own pictures, and to exemplify their own exaggerations. Take now and then a sorrowful look at human nature; but for one look in that direction, take ten towards the perfect Christ. Hold him up steadily and faithfully and all the while you will be growing into the same image from glory to glory — to conform men to his glorious example, 'warning every man, teaching every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ'" ("Thoughts are Things," *Christian Science Series*, August 15, 1989, p. 11. For background on this publication see *Historical Sketches* by Clifford P. Smith, pages 200-201)

If you perceive the truth of your pre-existence as the child of God, then "walk that way" [S&H 248:26]; that is, base your thoughts and lives upon that fact and consistently hold them there. They can accomplish no good unless you do. You can make no more significant or profound statement than that you are the "son" or "daughter" of God. But are you prepared to stand by it in all that it signifies? Is not this of infinitely greater importance than whose son or daughter you are in the flesh? Have you reached the point where it is more important that you are the son or daughter of God than of whose son or daughter in the flesh you are? Do you ever talk with your heavenly Father-Mother as intimately and dependably as you do, or have done, with your earthly parents? Is not our attitude and practice in such things a test of how real the divine is to us? We read in *Miscellaneous Writings* that God is "man's only real relative on earth and in heaven" [p. 151:14-15]. Have you progressed far enough to find yourself willing to take a stand for that truth? Consider it carefully. See how this truth can remedy the problems of human relationships (or do any of you ever have any of those?). It does this by replacing the false sense of personal relationships, which is an unhappy mixture of good and evil, with the spiritual fact that God is "man's only real relative on earth and in heaven." If this is true, do we not all, as the children of God, share the inheritance of this birthright? Do we not all share the same Mind, the same source of identity — that is, *Soul*? What has been conferred upon us by virtue of our divine origin, our birth in God? Nothing in all the earth is comparable to what we are entitled to as God's children. And when we say that this is who we are, we consciously or unconsciously accept the rights and responsibilities which are inherent in a knowledge of that relationship.

How often do you pause and consider what it means to be, in all truth, a "child of God?" How often do you consider in what *practical* ways you are acknowledging it as your present individuality? Too often we perfunctorily accept that we are the children of God, yet believe that we have to wait until we get to heaven to experience it, or to know just what it means. This mental reservation keeps us from expressing and exercising our God-given rights in our present experience. But surely of all times and places here and

now is where and when we most need to demonstrate who we are (for I doubt that we will need this anywhere near as much in “heaven” — so to speak — as we do “here”).

The all too common tendency, even among students of Christian Science, is to play a sort of teeter-totter in one’s religious affairs, going up and down between the spiritual and material viewpoints. This may give one a sense of motion, but it does not take one anywhere. We must make a choice between a human and a divine beginning. The tendency to accept both, or to vacillate between the two, will leave one stranded between them. Mortals lose their place on their upward path, with their eye on their spiritual birthright, when they turn to consider a sonship with the flesh. It is not possible to have two origins. And we will not make much progress in the understanding of Christian Science until we recognize clearly and finally that we find our origin in Spirit alone and cease wandering indecisively between the real and the unreal. All that stands between us and the realization of our pre-existence, to material sense, is the belief that we were born of the will of the flesh.

Let me point out again that it is impossible and inconceivable to impart consciousness and intelligence to nothingness. To admit that immortality, *immortality*, could *begin* is to admit that it could also *end*. Could that finite concept of eternal Life have any appeal for thinking people? Anyone who has felt some living experience of goodness and love, and the higher aspects of human experience, must shrink from the thought of having no continued existence after what is called death. The suggestion of possible extinction hereafter is unthinkable to one who has known something of the joy and freedom of real living — spiritual living. Could *you* be satisfied with the belief that you were nobody before your so-called birth? Or would you be content to dismiss this dilemma as having no intelligent solution? Those who *do* argue for some sense of pre-existence frequently mean that man has a previous existence *in the flesh*, and their beliefs usually fall under the doctrine of “reincarnation.” All the gobbledygook of this further confuses the picture.

Christian Scientists should know that they have *never* lived in matter — in any *form* of matter, at any time: past, present, or future. Why? Because they know so certainly that there is no matter. There never has been! Our Leader writes: “Had Jesus believed that Lazarus had lived or died in his body, the Master would have stood on the same plane of belief as those who buried the body, and he could not have resuscitated it” [S&H 75:16].

Jesus’ injunction, “Call no man your father upon the earth” [Matt. 23:9], if obeyed and understood, would certainly break the habit of dating one’s life from a birthday. In the context of the teachings of Christian Science, a “birthday” is as scientifically incorrect and unreal as a “death-day,” or a “sick-day,” or an “old-day,” or a “cripple-day,” or a “blind-day,” or a “discouraged day.” For all of them relate to matter! None of these days should be accepted as limitations of one’s life experience, or honored as a celebration of a mortal beginning, or ending.

It is taught in the Scriptures that God is Life; and by the same token it can be said that in Him is no death at all. In eternal Life there are no blank moments, no unfulfilled promises or vacuums, no absence of living, no dreary emptiness, no broken-down lives, no beginning, and no end. To be what He is, God must be universal in time and in space; and in this divine ever-presence all of His creatures live in freedom from death and danger; but it is not possible to grasp the truth of man's pre-existence with the Father, or to comprehend its significance and application, on the basis of physical sense. We *must* turn absolutely from matter to Mind as the source and condition of being if we would rightly possess the idea of man's immortality, of his pre-existence. *It just can't be understood through matter.* No way! We must lift our vision of things to recognize and acknowledge man's spiritual, unbroken relationship with God, and to hold to it as the original and continuing reality of our lives. We must "Keep distinctly in thought that man is the offspring of God, not of man;" [S&H 396:26-27]. Our Leader even suggests that we *picture* such a creation. She asks: "The Revelator tells us of 'a new heaven and a new earth.' Have you ever pictured this heaven and earth, inhabited by beings under the control of supreme wisdom?" [S&H 91:1].

In absolute Truth there is, of course, no place for unreal persons and things; but in the illusions of human belief, deceived by its own misconceptions, there seems to be [there *seems* to be!] a sensuous universe, inhabited by personalities of flesh and blood, under the domination of certain assumed physical laws. But the true selfhood of man is found in the likeness of his Creator, having no part or place in this dream universe. The man who is fathered by God has pre-existence as His reflection. Pre-existence in a human sense of life would be a meaningless farce. It would simply be a history of the coming and going of material concepts, embodying qualities and propensities the opposite of the divine. Such a history would be a record, for the most part, of events and conditions based on a material view of creation, a record of opinions and theories and speculations which are the outcome of physical testimony. It's a record of wars and conquests and jealousy and hatred and greed, simply a story of misfortunes which have been inflicted on humanity. To have pre-existed in that perverted sense of life would be of no advantage and would contribute nothing to one's progress out of it. So pre-existence can have nothing to do with the mortal dream. This would be a real perversion of the spiritual reality that we mean when we say "pre-existence."

Jesus introduced teachings that said that mortals must be "born again" [John 3:3], not of matter but of Spirit, if they would regain this *consciousness* of immortality. This teaching plainly indicated that physical birth is not the truth of creation and must be rejected and superseded with the spiritual idea of being, *before* one can see the kingdom of God; that is, he must see his spiritual pre-existence. Jesus' insistence upon God's universal fatherhood and the Scriptural references pertaining to the new heaven and earth, as well as St. Paul's counsel to put off the old man and to put on the new [Eph. 4:22-24], all point to the unreal nature of material things, the material dream, and direct thought to the unchanged perfection and co-existence of God and His creation. *Co-existence!* That's a much more accurate term for what we're talking about. We *co-exist* with God.



Many find it difficult to discern the facts of pre-existence because of their failure to separate their thoughts of life from the sense of physical personality. Seeing one's self from day-to-day, taking part in a dream of mortal existence, one is apt to become deceived by its apparent naturalness and to let it pass for the truth. It's a deceptive show that the Scriptures *repeatedly* refer to as a "sleep," from which one must awaken to find the reality of life. Notice that in your Scriptural study — its widespread use of the word sleep. There was a realization in those days of the nature of this human experience as a dream. The very experience of awakening from sleep implies that there was a consciousness preceding the sleep to which the sleeper normally belongs. *There was a consciousness, preceding the sleep, to which the sleeper normally belongs.* If this "birth-sleep" of materiality constituted the reality of the sleeper's existence, it would be his native condition, and there would be no awakening from it; that is, it would constitute his original and only sphere of life and consciousness. He would be at home in it. David could well say in the midst of his problems, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" [Ps. 17:15]. David saw this; he saw what the dream was, and to some extent that reality was to be found in God's likeness.

Because of the human being's ignorance of any other state of being than his present sense, and because he is convinced that he began with birth, pre-existence appears abstract. But as man's spiritual *c-oexistence* is accepted as reality it is found to be extremely practical in its application to human problems; and this everyday practicality takes it from the realm of the abstract and the theoretical.

A *Journal* article makes a good point on this thing of the practicality of a spiritual viewpoint. The author writes: "Being scientifically absolute or spiritually positive in our thinking is not visionary or abstract. Such thinking is very practical when properly understood and intelligently applied, for it is seeing by reflection what God sees, and rejecting the concepts of error. Let us be what we want to live with, be what we want to work with, be what we want the world to be like. Let us cherish spiritual qualities, love them, and live them, and we shall find them expressed everywhere. This living blesses the whole world. Let us be joyous; let us be the man God sees" ["Being What We Wish To See Expressed," Grace Channel Wasson, 76J569].

Seeing pre-existence is even more important to the practice of Christian Science than seeing the unreality of death. Its importance to students of Christian Science, and to all humanity, can be seen from the following statement, and it cannot be overemphasized. Mrs. Eddy writes: "Mortals will lose their sense of mortality — disease, sickness, sin, and death — in the proportion that they gain the sense of man's spiritual preexistence as God's child; . . ." [Mis. 181:25].

Now isn't that hopeful? Even if you don't see it altogether. "Proportion" is the term she uses! So we start out, little by little. And we find in our everyday experiences, " that we have immediate opportunities to apply this principle of spiritual pre-existence that we're talking about today. And when you go back and go over these citations you're going to begin to find that they're absolutely applicable. You're going to really begin to think: "What was I? What *am* I?"

You know, folks, this really is a dream. I don't care how real it looks, or how it feels. I don't see the preciousness of it any longer. You know how excited we get in a sleeping dream: we cry and strike out and so forth because obviously it appears so real to us. We wouldn't cry and struggle and scream if it *weren't* looking real to us, if it weren't *feeling* real to us. Well, that's why we struggle and strike out in *this* one, because we allow it to become so real to us. But the moment we begin to understand our true state of pre-existent perfection, and how awakening from this dream causes the whole falsity of it to fade, we can say, "Big deal!" You'll really begin to feel that way about it.

We comfort the sorrowing thought with the assurance that there is no death, no bereavement; that that belief at its worst is but a mental shadow that cannot touch the life of anyone, and which has nothing in itself to fear. Then why not comfort and strengthen thought with the assurance that there has been no *birth* that can usher one *into* the realm of disease and death; and therefore we are not under any of the formulated laws which are included in that story of man's creation. Thus the facts of man's spiritual pre-existence establish his absolute independence of so-called physical life-laws; they annul the curse of Eden on man and woman and eliminate the belief in age as well as the fear of disease and death. They give an abiding confidence with which to meet these suggestions (and there's no other way you can!). It should be intelligently recognized that since man is not *born* of matter and does not live because of it, he is simply not subject to its supposed laws of existence or conditioning. Can you think of anything that frees us from the laws of genetics, of fleshly inheritance, of medical laws, like knowing that we're pre-existent, and that the only body we really possess is going on perfectly all the time? That no matter what we think about it, no matter how much in error we may be about it, it isn't going to touch us in the slightest.

It is plain from the Biblical citations, which you read of Jesus' statements as to his own pre-existence, that he meant that he was returning to the state of conscious being that he possessed before his advent in the flesh-dream. Jesus had such a clear consciousness of the immortality of man as the son of God that he could say with assurance and of experience, "Before Abraham was, I am" [John 8:58]. That is, before the mortal concept appeared, my body, my identity, was intact. In Moffat's translation it is rendered, "I have existed before Abraham was born." Again, Jesus said, "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]. It was his life with the Father, in his life as God's reflection, that Jesus found his identity and knew himself as without beginning of years. And didn't every healing he accomplished (including, certainly, his own resurrection) demonstrate the fact that man's body, his identity, was *intact* and had remained untouched by the experiences of the waking dream?

Mrs. Eddy tells us that it was a consciousness of his pre-existence that gave Jesus his power of the claims of evil; and it will do the same for all who arrive at the same realization. She made a most significant statement in referring to Jesus. We read in *Miscellaneous Writings*: "His physical sufferings, which came from the testimony of the senses, were over when he resumed his individual spiritual being, after showing us the way to escape from the material body." [p, 105:8].

When Jesus said, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father;" [John 20:17] he placed us in the same relation to God, having the same origin as himself — thereby plainly implying the truth of *our* individual pre-existence. This statement alone should establish our divine origin and free us of the belief of having begun life materially, or of being linked to any mortal ancestry. According to Jesus' understanding of immortality, neither material living nor dying had any relation whatsoever to the actual life of man, and could not limit or interfere with it. Yet we are not following him while we continue catering to the physical senses. These senses have proved themselves to be the "avenues and instruments of human error" [S&H 293:32] as Mrs. Eddy says. They are the product of error and belong exclusively, *exclusively*, to the human dream of creation — for without the senses we couldn't even *have* the dream of material creation!

It is in this dream of the false, personal senses that all human struggles and failures and disasters appear to be taking place; and it certainly is not the consciousness where men learn to know themselves as the sons and daughters of God. It wouldn't be a very inspiring picture to think that we have come from such a mortal discordant dream, or that we're going to continue in it indefinitely hereafter. Stop and think of it: would anyone really want to go on and on and on in this mortal (dream) existence? Who would really want to do that? The work of Christian Science is to lift consciousness to something better than what the carnal senses provide us; not to prolong our stay in the flesh.

Now remember that. The purpose of Christian Science is not to improve and so prolong our stay in the flesh. And how do we stay in the flesh? By continuing to believe in matter. Our job is to grow out of that concept through our daily spiritual education. Why is a practical knowledge of man's pre-existence as a child of God absolutely essential to human salvation? Because, so long as mortals believe themselves to be the product of matter, and let their lives be governed by that belief, they will find no escape from its discordant conditions. Just so long as men believe themselves to be material and their consciousness to be dolled up with the good and the bad of materiality, they will continue to seek satisfaction, riches, and power in what that belief has to offer, and thereby they will condemn themselves to suffer its disillusionments and disappointments, torment, and fear. The belief of having been born into a material world includes nothing which blesses mankind. Jesus taught his disciples that they were *not* of this world, even as *he* was not of this world; and we as Christian Scientists today must learn the same lesson and find our origin in the world of Spirit. We read in *Science and Health*, "When man demonstrates Christian Science absolutely, he will be perfect. He can neither sin, suffer, be subject to matter, nor disobey the law of God. Therefore he will be as the angels in heaven" [S&H 372:14-17].

Is not that our original state and status? Haven't we *always* lived there? And isn't that what we see with our spiritual perception, with the eye of faith, when we look "back" to our pre-existence? We must either see ourselves thusly, or think of ourselves as blanks. And when you think of God as what you say He is, can you conceive of Him as establishing your identity as anything less than that which the angels stand for? You see,

you don't get any choice in it. You really don't. You accept this mortal belief and all of its inherent problems, or you take Jesus at his word and accept what he proved man to be — the perfect child of a perfect God. We must begin to really think about this and not just give it lip-service while we go on furtively chasing the illusions of the dream. Rather, if we'll turn *from* the dream — even occasionally, just occasionally — we'll find that what it does in our lives is just unbelievable. It *changes* the dream, proportionately. If you're just interested in having a nice dream it might make sense to do it. But, of course, that can't be your motive for it misses the whole point. It's just like in loving. If you're loving in order to be loved you've missed it all. The joy comes in the loving, not in being loved. And the same way here. If we turn to Science just in order to have a better human existence we've really lost the ball game. We've missed the joy and the peace and the satisfaction that comes with discovering what belongs to Spirit. It's so much better than what matter has to offer — there's no comparison.

Eventually we've got to turn from the human scene utterly; but in the meanwhile, let's strike out and start. Let's take the steps that we can, and are willing to take. And proportionably, "proportionally to their occupancy of (our) thoughts" she says, we'll begin to awaken from the dream in spite of ourselves. Then the long night of materiality begins to come to its end. We're the leaders of the world in doing this. Who else, *who else* is going to do it? Continually the search for the basis of matter goes on. They thought they found it with the molecule; then they went further and got something a little smaller and they said, "Oh, it's an atom. That does it." Then the electrons and protons, and they said, "Aha! That's the basic building-block that it's all made out of." But as time went on they began to say that wasn't it. Now they're into the "quarks" — Q-U-A-R-K-S. Nobody's ever seen one; they've never taken a picture of one; there is no material evidence of it. But they are talking about it as a building-block. And under their "bootstrap theory" they're beginning to ask themselves, "How do we know *that's* it?" Maybe there's something beyond the quark — a "quirk," or something else! You see how the search goes on, constantly, to try and find the answer?

They say, "Where did the universe come from?" Well, the predominant theory today is the "Big Bang" theory. It says that there was this enormous accumulation of gases, an "implosion," powerful pulling of gravity with such force on itself that it exploded in a tremendous nuclear explosion that drove these things out in all directions in a universe. And our spaceship, the earth, is a part of this — one of those little particles, it says. And they're still expanding at enormous velocities out into space. But they fail to ask the next question, "Where did the gases come from?" Mrs. Eddy makes this same point in regard to Newton and the law of gravitation. She writes: "A falling apple suggested to Newton more than the simple fact cognized by the senses, to which it seemed to fall by reason of its own ponderosity; but the primal cause, or Mind-force, invisible to material sense, lay concealed in the treasure-troves of Science. True, Newton named it gravitation, having learned so much; but Science, demanding more, pushes the question: Whence or what is the power back of gravitation, — the intelligence that manifests power?" [*Mis.* 22:28-4]. You see, there's no explanation materially, for, as she says, the real cause lays concealed "in the treasure-troves of Science." And that's where we are privileged to look for the *real* answer.

Whenever you take existence back to matter — just as we've done with the ovum and sperm — rational thought accepts that it cannot be the answer to life. No way! Man had to exist “before that,” or rather, *apart* from that. And so the whole false concept of birth that keeps us tied to matter has got to be relegated to the status of fallacy. It's a fairy-tale. Mrs. Eddy, I understand, said of Darwin's theory, “Well, it's as good as any other.” It hasn't anything to do with man's existence, does it?

We've got to turn and begin to mentally stand for our spiritual pre-existence, or co-existence. For the realization and acceptance of this truth, understood and utilized, is an absolute guarantee of our freedom from the evils of this present world; and it will lift us out of the belief of human heredity or blood inheritance and free us from sin, disease, and death, and all of the evil influences included in its dream. It is the way to freedom from the laws of belief that are imposed upon mortals on account of birth, and thereby from the fear of death, and from all the discords and unhappiness which lie between those two events.

You know, practically all of the experimentation today in the field of cancer is in genetics. It's another one of these things that claims that we're born with or without immunity. Well, what an awful thing to sentence ourselves to. It says that our pre-existence is our progenitors — some horse thief there in the background. See, we cannot base our lives on these misconceptions. We have to see Father-Mother God. All that we can inherit is from our Father-Mother God. Think of the purity of our source, our origin — the freedom that it guarantees. When we begin to realize this, the laws of inheritance will not touch us, even in our human experience. Rather, this realization will free us, it will heal us — for what *is* our human experience except the objectification of what we accept and entertain mentally? All we can see on a movie screen is what's on the roll of film. All we can see on our body is what's being entertained in thought. Once again our Leader puts it very succinctly: “Because the so-called material body is a mental concept and governed by mortal mind, it manifests only what that so-called mind expresses” [S&H 376:18-21]. I have seen time and again, when people got a glimpse that they did not inherit anything from a father or a mother but turned from that and saw God as their creator — I've seen even a glimpse of that bring a healing of the belief of cancer. And why not? It's just Truth destroying error, light destroying darkness.

Now I'd like to point out something that I think is very important in our study and work in Christian Science. Our progress is not so much a movement forward, of going somewhere, as it is an experience of being *restored* to the consciousness of one's original being or identity. Now isn't that an interesting concept? It's being restored as opposed to progressing, or becoming something new and different. You see, material beliefs have just temporarily obscured what you've always been. So seeing your pre-existence is actually just restoring your true *sense* of existence. You don't have to climb up somewhere; you just realize where you already are. Now ain't that easier — *ain't it?* If you'll think about it that way then you don't have to, by brute force, climb out of some muck. You just realize the truth of where you are, where you've always been. It's restoration. It's a process of spiritual restoration until one clearly perceives the truth of his pre-existence in God's likeness. It's such a help to see that we're not raising man up,

we are merely *revealing* man as he already is, revealing ourselves as what we already are. Isn't this what the immediacy of Jesus' healing proved — life-long illness healed instantly? And it all makes sense if you accept that he was simply bringing the truth to bear on the situation — the truth of man's eternal and undisturbed perfection. Isn't that a comforting thought to realize, that we don't have to change man, we have to simply let the Christ reveal him in consciousness by turning from the obscuring false concept originated and sustained by an inaccurate view of man's origin.

We should understand that we cannot make ourselves more than we are. Nothing within the scope of human knowledge or accomplishment can *add* to the perfection of God's creation, or take anything *from* it. Man was divinely brought into being and needs nothing, nothing, to make him more than he is and always has been. The Bible says, "Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created" [Ps. 104:30]. Now remember that when you're in the midst of a problem. You don't need anything more to make you perfect. You are what God causes you to be at every moment! I don't think about healing as restoring something in a physical sense, restoring health for example; it's *revealing* what you already are. If you think of restoring, think of it as restoring your *view* of what you already are. You're dropping false beliefs that have obscured your freedom and perfection, governed by God without interruption — **ever!**

Our work as Christian Scientists is to intelligently acknowledge our present perfection and to demonstrate it as the truth about ourselves. The consequence of this attitude would be to repudiate and abandon, as quickly and thoroughly as possible, all the evil things which false belief has attached to the mortal concept of man. And so Mrs. Eddy writes: "We cannot remake ourselves, but we make the best of what God has made" [My. 288:29-30]. You see how she said it all? That's why our textbook and her writings are so marvelous; and when we open them we go in for a visit with her.

It should be our goal to be daily increasing, in some degree, our sense of what God made us to be; and, in doing so, we correspondingly decrease our sense of what He has *not* made. Our own self-interest should be prompting us to do this. It means whether we awaken and live, or dream on. If we have reached the point where we intelligently recognize and admit to ourselves that the source from which we come is divine, we shall not hark back to the old belief of originating in the blood of mortals or of being endowed with animal natures and instinct. But unless we cut ourselves lose from the false teaching of a human beginning, we shall keep an open door by which errors of all kinds will find entrance! Sooner or later we must throw off this curse of human parentage if we would not be burdened with the trouble which Job said accompanied that beginning. It is this which he referred to when he said, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not" [Job 14:1, 2]. It is not a very appealing view, is it? The Bible is full of such passages. Is there anything that can deliver human consciousness from that troubled mortal experience except the truth that man is born of God alone, and that he had his perfect being before the supposition of a time and matter world cast its shadow across the thoughts of mortals?

Do any of us fully realize the significance of Mrs. Eddy's statement: "The foundation of mortal discord is a false sense of man's origin." [S&H 262:27-28]? You're going to hear that, and hear it, and hear it; because it's so fundamental. We have referred to it repeatedly today, and for a very good reason. Do you see that all of the discords, large and small, which so trouble this mortal sense of existence *do* have their foundation in a mistaken sense of man's origin? Here everything that can trouble or harass you has its source and its basis. So doesn't it strike you as something worth thinking about, and taking into your careful consideration? Most students of Christian Science freely admit the truth of their pre-existence, but in kind of a theoretical way, and they devote much, much more of their attention to denying their mortal *discords* rather than denying the *fountain* from which they spring. You see, in your work you're really not down at the roots and you should include the roots if you're going to get the weed out. You must continually acknowledge as an existing important fact your spiritual pre-existence, your coexistence with your source. This should be an integral part of your daily treatments.

Most people are intensely interested in what they will find on the other side of death. Yet a consideration of their existence prior to birth is of infinitely more importance in establishing their present well-being and success. This is probably true because of the prevailing belief that we were nothing and nowhere until our eyes opened on this material world. That's why we don't spend time thinking about it. But how inconsistent this is with our teaching of immortality. It would mean that our entire consciousness or experience is confined to the brief interval between what mortals call birth and death. What an unsatisfying prospect! Why not "eat, drink, and be merry," rather than making the most of earth's preparatory school if this is all there is?

The belief in time seems to be the great obstacle in understanding this subject of pre-existence, — the belief that our lives are measured by the revolutions of the earth around the sun; that is, by time instead of by the consciousness which we derive from God. Every mortal's belief in finiteness begins, does it not, with an acceptance of his own birth? The fact is, as we learn in Christian Science, that time has nothing whatever to do with Life. As time goes, the earth may have revolved around the sun for millions of years before you and I came into the human picture; but just what does that have to do with our spiritual experience or existence? Nothing whatsoever! In the divine truth of things, one's life has no measurement at all — no measurement at all. It just *is*, and always has been. Now remember that; it just *is*. There's never been a beginning.

In our narrow little concept of a world that's finite we have to think of things beginning. But in truth, Life *is*! And the moment one attempts to apply time to his thought of life, he has stepped over into the dream [the dream of material sense] only to learn later, to his consternation, that there is no life there at all; that it is an illusion. We learn that "past" and "future" are purely material terms and have no spiritual significance. The present holds all that really is, or ever was, and that can never run out. From that viewpoint it is pointless to talk of a past to life as if it is not all here now; and, of course, looking at it that way the truth of man's pre-existence becomes very natural, simple, and inevitable.

Nothing, absolutely *nothing*, that is real can be explained by the material senses, for these relate only to the ephemeral and erroneous. Stop and think; can you understand the simplest truth in Christian Science on the basis of matter? Can you think of one thing that can be understood in Christian Science on the basis of matter? Of course not, so why should we look to it for confirmation or enlightenment concerning the larger question of life? If we accept, without question, the infinite nature of Life, it *must* mean to us, if it means anything, that we have lived from all eternity, or not at all. In the “infinite” there could be no finite sense of existence as beginning and ending. Mrs. Eddy says: “Immortality is not bounded by mortality. Soul is not compassed by finiteness” [S&H 301:32-1]. It is self-evident that Life cannot spring from non-existence. Therefore, if we are living now it must be that we have always lived, else life would be finite and incomplete.

Another question which some find troublesome in seeking an understanding of pre-existence is that of “place.” Where did we come from before we were here, it is asked. What kind of a place was it, and so on. These, and similar questions, cannot be answered to comply with the human sense of locality. Jesus did not come to this world from some circumscribed spot in space, but from a condition of consciousness which he described as his “Father’s house.” Then he said, “I go to prepare a place for you” [John 14:2]. He did not mean a house or condominium, as we think of it, but was evidently referring to a state of conscious being which infinitely transcends the physical. Mortals think in such *relative* terms and speak of a “place” always as something one could build a fence around; but even human thought would rebel at such a restriction in reference to what Jesus was speaking of. And since, because of its divine nature, divine Mind or God is universally present — omni-present — can there be any *other* “place?” Therefore, in thinking about *your* “right place” hold thought to the divine sense of it — to a type of consciousness, of heavenly-mindedness — and, of course, the more this is done the easier it will be to solve the problem of one’s right place and position here.

It may be asked, “Why is it important or necessary to gain a knowledge of man’s pre-existence in God’s likeness since we are in the world the same as others, and are meeting much the same material conditions? But *is* it true that we are in the world quite the same as those who still think of themselves as begotten of the beliefs of the flesh and in subjection to them? Have we not discerned enough of divine Science to have changed our thought regarding our birth and to have a new and higher sense of ourselves and our origin? Just what has Christian Science done for us, or what are we doing with it? Are we not thinking more and more of the divine source of our being and finding our individual existence there? It may be that at present we have to see with the eye of *faith*; but if that faith is based on an intelligent grasp of Christian Science, it will grow into real understanding.

Do you know that by virtue of being God’s children we inherit the right to use His power over the illusions of the physical senses; over the beliefs of fear, disease, lack, unhappiness, and all the et ceteras of evil? Our job is to acknowledge this heritage, to accept it as ours, and to govern our lives by it. We are actually “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” [Rom. 8:17] as St. Paul expresses it. Think of it, we are His heirs by



process of divine law and nothing can disprove or dispossess us of this heritage. This calls for more than mere mental ascent or verbal acquiescence. It means taking possession of it as you would in the case of a *human* legacy which you have been given. Can you imagine receiving word that someone had left you a million dollars, and then failing to claim it? It's the claiming of it that makes it useful and practical. What is it that argues against claiming and possessing our *spiritual* heritage? Would anything intelligent cause us to fail to claim our health, freedom, and abundance? Is it anything other than mental suggestion? Isn't it just unbelief in the allness of God and our own divine status as His children?

An important point to remember is that this heavenly birthright carries with it the power and the wisdom and the courage to *exercise* it. The gift would mean nothing if we couldn't make use of it. Money in the bank means nothing if we can't use it. No problem or condition is too small or too large to be mastered by these truths, by man's knowledge of his pre-existence. To him who sees this, there can be no other road and no other activity in life, regardless of what our daily occupation might be.

Jesus talked to and of his Father with such an open confidence and closeness; with such a depth of love and assurance and recognition of himself as the son of God and therefore entitled to everything that was his as God's heir. *Why can't we?* We are in truth His children, and only His children. Is this relationship becoming as real and as close to us as it was to Jesus? This heavenly Parent, this Governor of the universe remains with us when even the closest of human relationships is absent or out of reach. *Why should we not be gaining this realization instead of puttering around with the things of this world so much of the time and giving so much of our attention to things which are not worth the breath to talk about?* We should be thinking of the divine realities as though they are real, here and now, should we not? For they are! Then why do we, so much of the time, hold fast to the things of this world and let them crowd out our vision of the better and higher things which we might see if we looked for them? Does not the Bible make clear that it is a matter of seeing, of having our eyes opened? In Genesis we read that Hagar's eyes were opened, enabling her to see the well of water that saved her child [Gen. 21:19]. When Elisha's servant was overcome by the appearance of horses and chariots threatening him and his master, Elisha's prayer was that his eyes be opened [II Kings 6:17]. And indeed they were, enabling his servant to see the chariots *of fire* that were surrounding and protecting them. And, of course, in Revelation we read of John's ability to "see" a new heaven and new earth [Rev. 21:1].

We trust the words of our human friends, even acquaintances, without question, while we find it difficult to really rely upon the words of Jesus. We say that we are children of God, that He is our only Creator, but at the same time cling fast to the belief of earthly parentage, and talk about ages and birthdays. These things should not continue among Christian Scientists, and they would not if our thoughts were rising above materiality and its illusions. Why not take a definite stand *now* for the truth of what we are, and hold to it in the face of all that the false senses can present?

As students of Christian Science, we might very well call our “birthday” the day when we had the first real glimpse of our completely spiritual nature as children of God. We read in *Science and Health*: “Human codes, scholastic theology, material medicine and hygiene, fetter faith and spiritual understanding. Divine Science rends asunder these fetters, and man’s birthright of sole allegiance to his Maker asserts itself” [226:18].

Now let’s take an overlook at what we have dealt with today.

### **Man’s Origin**

Do we accept the conventional view of man’s *biological* beginning, referred to in the third story of creation? If so, we must agree that it is in this account, this myth, this belief, that we find authority for the claims of fleshly inheritance, genetics, Mendel’s law of ancestry, Darwin’s laws of environment and conditioning. It is here that we read of a life that has a material beginning, a continuing dependence upon matter, and an ending.

Or do we begin *rightly*, with Genesis 1:27? Here we learn of man as made in the image and likeness of God: spiritual, immortal. This man is never really born. He no more has a “beginning” than does God. Rather, as Mrs. Eddy says, “The infinite has no beginning. This word *beginning* is employed to signify *the only*, — that is the eternal verity and unity of God and man . . .” [S&H 502:24-26].

This man of Genesis 1 never matures, undergoes atrophy, or dies. He pre-exists, he COEXISTS, with God; he is immortal. It is from this correct premise of man’s spiritual origin that we must reason, for as Mrs. Eddy assures us, “To begin rightly is to end rightly” [S&H 262:28 only].

### **Spiritual Radicalism**

We saw the importance of “spiritual radicalism” in our individual progress as Christian Scientists, as well as its place in the continued health and growth of our Movement. Christian Science is a radical religion and cannot be practiced while making conservative, timid, safe concessions to mortal mind, but by refusing the subtle arguments of cause, effect, or remedy in matter. When Mrs. Eddy announced that,

“‘There is no matter’ is not only the axiom of true Christian Science, but it is the only basis upon which this Science can be demonstrated” [*My.* 357:22].

she cut herself loose from all of the ties of materialism and old theology and its doctrines of duality. We can’t take a halting or half-way position when it comes to Christian Science. If we do, it inevitably becomes a lukewarm “philosophy” of psychosomatic medicine that does little or nothing for us or anybody. Just consider how the radical stands of Jesus and Mrs. Eddy have blessed and uplifted the lives of untold millions. So we too must live a radicalism of Spirit. As Mrs. Eddy puts it, “Go, if you must, to the dungeon or the scaffold, but take not back the words of Truth” [*Mis.* 99:14-15].

Christian Science is a *radical* religion. It's not an *easy* religion, but its rewards are commensurate. So we stand radically in every way we can [even when it's *necessary* that we make a concession] secure in our conviction that we are the sons and daughters of God.

### The Waking and Sleeping Dreams

Next we saw that a consideration of the parallel of the *sleeping* and the *waking* dreams that Mrs. Eddy gives us in the textbook begins to provide an answer as to what we were before we were “born” and enables us to see through the veil of mortal existence.

In “**Dream phenomenon #1**” a mental wall goes up, both in our “sleeping dream” and in our “waking dream” — a wall that prevents us from seeing what we were before we slept, and what we continue to be during the very dream itself. Of course, the wall goes down when we awake, enabling us to see ourselves as we were before we slept, and *while* we slept.

Well, even so in the waking dream: although this wall seems to keep us from seeing our true present state of perfection, it comes down as we awaken to our pre-existent state and begin to understand our spiritual pre-existence, our forever *coexistence* with God. We endeavor to see through the lens of spiritual sense rather than the lens of material sense.

And because of “**Dream phenomenon #2**,” when we do awaken to what we were before we slept and get a glimpse of reality, the dream changes — changes proportionably to this glimpse of our pre-existence. In the *waking* dream this change looks to us like a *physical* change, and we call it a “healing.” But did man, did body [our only body] change in this process, one iota? Of course not.

As we begin to experience some of these “dream changes” [the side-effect of spiritualization that we call “healing”] the temptation may come to just coast for a while and continue in a more pleasant dream. But a continuation in materiality, even if it is a *better* sense of it, is still illusion. Only as we hold single-mindedly to our true nature — our present, spiritual, real, intact identity as God's child [and not of human parentage] — do we find ourselves willing to turn increasingly from the waking dream and take a step closer to ascension. The purely spiritual state of consciousness that this signifies is our ultimate goal.

### Conclusion

Now just a word or two in conclusion. Our Leader writes: “Life is, like Christ, ‘the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever. Organization and time have nothing to do with Life. You say, ‘I dreamed last night.’ What a mistake is that! The I is Spirit. God never slumbers, and His likeness never dreams” [S&H 249:18-22].

“God never slumbers, and His likeness never dreams.” After talking so much about the waking and sleeping dreams it may seem a little surprising to end with this

statement. But it is my hope, my dear friends, that the message today will cause you to see that man's existence as a child of God has never been interrupted. For she also says, "The dream has no reality, no intelligence, no mind; therefore the dreamer and dream are one, for neither is true nor real" [S&H 530:26-29].

Our premise, our starting-point in thinking and working as Christian Scientists, must always be perfect God and perfect man. And I hope that a consideration of pre-existence has led you to a clearer realization that man and God have forever *co-existed*. What we call this human experience is a dream that does not belong to man, and our status as perfect and whole ideas of God pre-existed the belief of material birth and continues forever. Man has never been, and will never be, less than the perfect expression of a perfect God.

Was the identity — the individuality, the substance, the intelligence — of Moses altered, decayed, or ossified one iota in the 3,000 years that elapsed between the time of his death until the day on the mount that he talked with Jesus in the presence of Peter, James, and John? Of course not. Man is, he just is. We read in Proverbs: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way," "When he prepared the heavens, I was there:" "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;" [Prov. 8:22, 27, 30].

Our pre-existence is included in our immortality, and neither can be found outside of our *spirituality*. Never born and never dying — that is the truth regarding man. And to understand and demonstrate it we must go back to man's pre-existence and claim all that has ever belonged to us as God's idea. To begin rightly is important — all important! And only in proportion as we turn from a belief in a material origin can we accept and acknowledge our spiritual origin. We can't believe in both — no way — for at the very moment that we *accept* a material account of birth we *deny* our spiritual origin.

It is said that every journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step; so we "strike out," go as far as we can, do what we can now. We *live* the truths of Christian Science so devoutly and consecratedly that our example becomes an eloquent sermon to the world. Live as you would if you knew, as a certainty, that "before Abraham was" *you were* — in other words, that you had and do pre-exist the experience called "birth;" that God is your Father, a Father with whom you are on as close and intimate terms as Jesus was. See yourself as His heir, in full possession of all that your heavenly Father, your *only* Father, possesses. Ponder and consider your spiritual causation, your *coexistence*, and with awe and joyful gratitude demonstrate what an understanding of man's spiritual origin means to us. When? Why right now, this very moment — and throughout eternity!