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LIFE
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(This sermon, the manuscript of which is in possession of the Christian Science Board of Directors, was prepared by Mrs. Eddy, evidently for oral delivery, over thirty-five years ago; hence its literary style differs somewhat from that of her later writings.)

In order to preserve to the fullest extent the power and originality of this important statement, the text of the original manuscript is printed below exactly as written. Punctuation has been added, Scriptural references verified, and capitalization made in accordance with Mrs. Eddy's rules. A few words that had been omitted are supplied within brackets, and in two cases where the reader is referred to Science and Health, obvious omissions in the manuscript have been supplied, with the authorization of the Christian Science textbook. – Editor)

John 14:6, *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

1st. What is the "I" referred to in the text?

2nd. Is Life both matter and Spirit?

3rd. What is Life?

4th. What is death, and what is the condition of man after death?

1st. The "I" referred to in the text is not a person, it is a Principle. It is not a man, it is God. Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself." Jesus was a man; he first became obvious to the personal senses as a babe whose infant wailings blent with the bleating of the goat and the lowing of the kine. In the remote Judean province.

In Josephus' time there were several individuals by the name of Jesus – (the fleshly)* Jesus was not Christ; Christ was but another name for God, and it was an honorary title bestowed on Jesus for his great goodness-*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, 333:32 In the original texts the term God took its origin from the word good,--hence the term Christ Jesus, a good man.

In the passage "I am the way, the truth, and the life," the "I" alluded to is God—the divine Principle of the man Jesus and was that which guided his way in Science. To this divine intelligence the different periods have affixed the terms Deity, Jehovah, Christ and God. These terms should be understood to express God as divine substance and intelligence that belong not to man neither to a person; but are an infinite Principle. The gross materialism at the commencement of the Christian era, required a very spiritual man to teach a divine Principle and to show by his own demonstration what this Principle is and the results of understanding it.

Jesus was the man for the age; he could best explain Life as God, but his rules and their illustration was misinterpreted. The God-Principle of the man was not understood; had it been, they must have admitted that Jesus' demonstration proved his Principle, and his Principle explained his demonstration. Truth and Life understood cast out error, heal the sick, raise the dead, and this demonstration brings to light the Truth of Life and the Life of Truth. One fact in Jesus' history is clearly apparent, namely, that this Principle, rule and method of healing were Mind not matter, that he required not drugs, dogma, or doctrine to aid his work.

He only insisted on making the fount pure to make the streams pure; he argued that mind must first be right to set the body right, that we should know the Principle of man, and better understand God—yea, that we should have the Science of Life, for without it the demonstration of Life or Truth can never be made. Science demands a healthy mind and a healthy body,--and mind healthy because it is imbued with Truth, and the body healthy because it is governed by this mind. The entire tenor of Jesus' teachings were first to set thought right with the Truth of being; 2d,

To learn how to govern the body by this Truth; 3d, To govern the body by it. Believing that God is a person, hinders the understanding of this divine Principle and its demonstration. We cannot demonstrate a person, therefore a person is not the power that heals the sick in Science; we can ask a person to doctor our sicknesses and to forgive our sins, and that is all we can do, but we can do more than that with a Principle, we can work it ourselves to this result, and following its divine rule, with (it) we can destroy sickness, sin and death, and this is in accordance with the Scripture, "Work out your own salvation...For it is God which worketh in you." Truth destroys error even as light destroys darkness. Sin, sickness, and death are error; they are beliefs and this fact found out will at length destroy them. Truth evolves life as a result of itself, for Truth is immortal, and the truth of Life would destroy death. But this understanding comes slowly; even to learn that matter has no sensation is quite a task, although this simple proposition is self-evident.

In the text, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me," we naturally ask, What is this way referred to? The way to harmony and the demonstration thereof is through the understanding of its Principle by which we can produce the harmony. A person believed in is insufficient,-- the way, therefore, for this is Science and no man cometh to the Father, that is, can understand the Principle of being except through Science. Through Science alone can we learn Life and demonstrate our understanding of it with Life and not death.

The Scriptures tell us that, "Perfect love casteth out fear," but this first commandment is our very last resort; we are even taught to fear God, when it is Science to so love goodness that we possess the power of good to heal and save. If we understood God, we should have no cause to fear Him; we should know that He never punished a man for doing good; never made a law to produce softening of the brain because of overmuch humanity, or perfect love, and the fear of such a law and the consequences thereof, would be cast out by a correct idea of God. We may talk to you of

metaphysics, its divine Principle, rule and application, once every week, but this gives you little insight into the Life through which we learned metaphysics and through (which) you must learn it. This weekly service, however, may point the way like a milestone,— that is all. The apostle says, “How shall they hear without a preacher and how shall they preach, except they be sent?” Paul knew that a theoretical drill, and the grinding of scholastic mills, are not the preparation for a moral teacher. He knew that inspiration cometh from Truth, from the Spirit, and not the letter. A child God-driven is more capable of uttering the Truth in its sweet simplicity and the power of Love than a merely manufactured theologian; hence the Scripture. “Out of the mouth of babes...thou hast perfected praise.” We all shall know when Truth is at work in Science, for it will heal our sicknesses and stop our sins. In the exact proportion that we understand Truth will it heal us mind and body, and in the proportion that we adopt error will it produce sin, sickness, and death.

2d. Is Life both matter and Spirit? Life is so considered; even the Scriptures referred to it thus in the dark ages of burnt offerings and sacrifices. See Genesis 9:4, “But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.” But this was ritualism, a materialistic religion which deluded the earth with blood. In the gospel of the more spiritual Christianity, we learn Life oppositely. In Romans 8:6 we read, “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Isaiah 38:16, “O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit.” Romans 8:2, “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” I Timothy, “...Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

Our conceptions of Life as Spirit comes of Science, and they exalt the aims, consecrate the motives, and purify the affections; but our conceptions of life as matter debase, subjugate, and make mortal. The only evidence we have of material life is furnished by the five personal senses, and what are these senses, but matter?

Nerves and brains are as directly matter as a shoe-string, or a jelly. Through optics, olfactory, or tympanum, we can obtain not the slightest sense of deity; we can neither see, hear, taste, nor smell Life, therefore it is self evident that Life dwells not in that through which it is impossible to gain the least idea of Life.

Anatomy would have it that blood and nerves inform us correctly regarding a man's life, when it is plain that Life is Spirit, and that matter can take no cognizance of Spirit. Again, we say nerves recognize life and life is organic, but how can nerves feel or recognize life more than a stone or any form of matter can feel it or take cognizance of it? The only life the personal senses recognize is through mortal mind and a belief of structure that accident may destroy according to another belief. Life is Spirit and never matter, nor can it be structural, since it is infinite. Again we say, nerves recognize as beginning and ending, even from the fading flower to the falling world, from the death of the grass to the death of a man. But while nerves are thus falsely testifying of life and death, something is ever saying, "I live, I am, and what is more I am learning that Life is Mind and not matter, and that Mind forms its own ideals of all things; that mortal mind peoples the vegetable, animal and mineral kingdoms with creations of its own, giving to each and all its own mortal outline, form and color, while the formations of immortal Mind or God are indestructible, harmonious and eternal."

The side of nature which seems to the senses to be matter is but the veil that hides the reality of being; the visible universe is but the picture of the mind's ideas, the expression of thoughts, the hieroglyphic record of the art and meditation of Deity. In the words of Starr King, "There is not a planet that wheels a tiny circle around its controlling flame, not a sun that sheds its steady radiance upon the dark depths of neighboring space, not a comet that rushes through its eccentric track, not a constellation among all that hangs like fantastic chandeliers upon the dome of heaven, that is not visible statement of a conception which dwells in the omnipotent Mind. It is through the silent command of Mind that

the morning light bursts like a wave of glory over the orderly universe.”

3d. The materialist feels the ground to be solid beneath his feet, but the Scientist feels with more certainty the solidity of Truth. The eternal permanent side of things is unseen by the senses. A man may have just as much life as he pleases, if he goes to work right. By understanding life we accumulate it even as the muscles grow by use; we have just as much life as have of Truth, goodness, virtue, etc. What is Life? It is Spirit. What is Spirit? God. What is God? Mind,--unerring, infinite, and eternal Mind. But is God the life driven like an insensible nail in and out of matter? Does matter master Life, God, and Life, God have nothing to say for itself? Do we ask the consent or refusal of Mind to be born a babe, or to die an old, decrepit man? Is not the protest or acquiescence of mind on such important events heeded less than the whine of a dog at your door? But Science does not thus reckon the prerogatives of Mind; rather hath it crowned Mind with Life, might, majesty, and immortality.

I am not a Pantheist to believe that God is in matter, when the less material a man is, the nearer he is to Spirit, God, and when divested of all matter, and never until then, this divine Principle will enfold him in bliss and glory. Health, life and morals will never reach their maximum until we relinquish the belief that matter has aught to do with Life. In physics we say, life is imprisoned within its own formations, that life is subject to germination, growth, maturity, and decay; but here the ancient question presents itself, Which is first, the egg or the bird? The flower or the seed? If the egg is first, whence came the egg, and if the bird is first, what is the origin of the bird? If there were no flower, whence came its seed, for you say without the seed there can be no flower; although the Scripture informs us He made every plant before it was in the ground. Mind, and Mind only, is the creator. Science impresses deeply the lesson that there is a causal power and stability in the world of Mind, and its creations, of which the material is only the transitory show; everything we touch

or see is but the shape and color of a thought that lies behind. We learn in metaphysics that life is in the thought instead of the thing it has expressed, and that this thought hath immortality only in proportion to its correctness; that Life never enters its own formation, for Life is infinite; that Mind never enters the limits of its own thoughts, for Life and Mind are one.

I am glad there is but one God, but one Life, and this one is shadowed forth in order, beauty, and goodness. I am glad that evil hath no life or immortality, that mortal pain-giving sources are but the things of belief, dreams and not realities, the vagaries of the mortal, and not the immortal thought; and that this shall sometime be learned and the body be free as the pinions of a bird, and every sense of weakness or of pain shall disappear.

4th. What is death and what is the condition of man after death? This question* has met with its reply in the foregoing answers to other questions, but if metaphysics are made more apparent by a treatise on death, by dealing with nothing as if it were something, we will allude briefly to this unexplored mystery of sense. Do we need a more impressive revelation of the fact that Truth and thought alone are permanent, than the bare conception of the death of matter? For we know there is in reality no death, that Mind cannot die, and all that is eternal is Mind and its ideals. But the age may not be ready to accept this fact, it never is ready to accept at first the first facts of a Principle. But for all this, we must repeat the facts all the same, until they are understood. The pains and pleasures of the body are but beliefs entertained by mortal thoughts, for matter can neither suffer nor enjoy. If mind says, I am happy, the result will be happiness and vice versa, for nothing can talk above mind. The clay cannot reply to the potter. Why has thou made me thus? Matter cannot say, I am weak; I am sick; I am wretched; I am dying, or I am dead. True, erring or mortal belief can say this of what it names matter, but matter cannot say it. Matter is as much alive when we call it dead as it ever was, and as dead when we call it alive,

There is no death, mind cannot die, and matter has no life, hence there is nothing left for death to claim. Paul saw this and said, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law." He regarded the pangs of death as merely a mortal belief, a suffering of the thought, and not of the body, and that mortal thought had made this law of suffering.

Some loving heart hath said, Shall we know each other there?—and where is that radiant shore, shall we not seek it and weep no more? Since ever we investigated metaphysics and traversed in freedom the realm of Mind, we have been careful not to overrate our discoveries, or to state what we had not first understood. We have not demonstrated the actual state of man's existence beyond the limits of the observation of our senses, and only as we reason from deduction is it possible to define this state. Any hypothesis beyond this conclusion, presupposing the condition of the departed, is fully understood is a vain conjecture, unsupported by reason or revelation.

From facts apparent to the understanding and gathered from the Science of Soul we know that man is immortal, and that the shadow we call death is but a phase of mortal belief. No change has been wrought when we say, "My friend has just died;" that friend is saying in the full consciousness of existence and with its same surroundings,—"I never died. It was but a dream I had; for life is going on with me the same as before. I am not spirit yet I am as much flesh and bones as I ever were (was); the only change to me is, I cannot communicate with my friends,—and why? Because they do not understand me now. They call me spirit, but I am not; they say I died, but I did not; they do not know what I am, where I am, or what I am pursuing. I shall not be spirit until I lose all limits; they have lost their evidences of me through their personal senses, because they have said I changed, I died; their mistaken views of life have parted us; their belief that life ended with me, or took upon itself a new form, has prevented their understanding the reality of my present existence,—hence our

separation through these opposite beliefs and our opposite conditions as the result thereof. Further communication between us is impossible, until their belief changes through the footsteps that mine has done and becomes like mine. This change will be named death, but that is their belief of it, not ours who have rent the veil that hides the mystery of a moment.”

Yes, we shall know each other there; we shall love and be loved; we shall never lose our identity, but find it more and more in its order, beauty, and goodness. Men claim to know that pain is a fact, although it is unseen; they need to know that peace and bliss are greater facts and that this world is the veil of brighter glory that lies beyond it.

So flit before memory the different stages and states of existence, the error gradually disappearing and Truth coming to be understood. Let us rejoice that Life like an opening bud is unfolding to our consciousness the bliss of being, for Thine are all holy things, O Life, strong and divinely free, bearing the bereaved the gifts of wisdom and of chastened love; still brooding o’er them with a dovelike wing, immortally endowed for liberty. Patiently wait all ye who have parted from some earth-idol, remember that naught but broken music flows from joy that is sublunary, but hope hath its higher goal. We shall know each other there. A happier oracle, a clearer understanding, an unwavering light will friendship then become. Life’s fuller music will give forth rejoicing tones when heart meets heart, where all lovely gifts and pure are laid upon befitting shrines. Joy hath a living fount, a bliss forever. The heart hath vainly signed, What shall the future be? This is the future: heaven will be thine, but when its Life shall come no man knoweth, not “the son but the Father.” Our sins are not forgiven (until forsaken),* here or hereafter; for every sin there is a just measure of misery, and death cannot advance our joy, nor make us wiser, better, or more pure. The Science of being must be learned ere this is won. Bliss is not the boon of one brief moment. After the veil has dropped, we have to learn the same as now our way to

heaven, by slow and solemn footsteps, for no man cometh to the Father but through Truth and Love.

***Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, 201:20, 497:9**