

Mrs. McKenzie's Student's Association

10 Concord Avenue

Cambridge, Mass

November 28, 1939

THE CONTINUITY OF LIFE

In my letter of invitation to you, I asked you all, as a preparation for our Association meeting, to read again with reverence and prayer, Mrs. Eddy's autobiography "Retrospection and Introspection" and her article on the Christian Science textbook. I had a special purpose in doing this. It is my deep conviction that we are in the midst of a great renaissance in our movement, the animus of which is a rebirth of understanding and appreciation of the spiritual leadership of Mary Baker Eddy, not only as the Leader of the Christian Science movement, but as the spiritual Leader of the world. In the days before her human personality disappeared, we had a very near sense of her presence and guidance. She was at hand to rebuke our shortcomings, heal our differences, guide our actions, comfort our sorrows, rejoice in our victories. Then came the cloud which received her out of our sight, and I have felt that unconsciously we have accepted the world's attitude in regard to this occurrence. Even though we knew she was not dead, we may have admitted that she had gone somewhere else, - was not with us as vitally as she had been. Old theological teachings and impressions about death are not easy to discard, and it has taken some years to be ready to grasp the teachings of Christian Science on this point. In 1889 Mrs. Eddy wrote a letter to Judge Hanna, saying, in effect, that in fifty years the world would be ready to understand her leadership. It is just fifty years since that letter was written. How unerring was her prophetic sense. She knew that in exactly that time mortal mind would be ready to grasp the facts of her relation to this age. The question is, is she the Leader in exactly the same way as when we could see her with our human eyes. (Mrs. Wright - I think we will have to achieve this degree of understanding

to get through what prophecy outlines – I think it amounts to transfiguration).

After Mr. Kimball's passing away, Mrs. Eddy wrote: "My beloved Edward A. Kimball...is here now as veritably as when he visited me a year ago. If we would awaken to this recognition, we should see him here and realize that he never died; thus demonstrating the fundamental truth of Christian Science." Had Mrs. Eddy a purpose in writing this, beyond the mere statement regarding her student? I believe she had. I believe she would expect us to say, "If this is true about one person, it is true of others,--it is true of our Leader." She is as veritably here today as when she sat in her study, and if we would waken, we should see her here and know that she had not died. Is this spiritualism? No, it is the very opposite. Spiritualism teaches that persons pass on into the spirit-world and then come back to materialism again to talk with us. See Science and Health 74:3-10, 19-21, 29,30; 75:8-11. Instead of this backward step taught by spiritualism, our Leader, in the passage we have read, says that it is we who must waken and progress into spirituality until the mists of false belief melt away and we see that those who have gone beyond are alive, untouched, individual, just as before.

In Misc. Writings (p 42) we find this: "When we shall have passed the ordeal called death, or destroyed this last enemy, and shall have come upon the same plane of conscious existence with those gone before, then we shall be able to communicate with and to recognize them. If, before the change whereby we meet the dear departed, our life-work proves to have been well done, we shall not have to repeat it; but our joys and means of advancing will be proportionately increased."

As Jesus had not passed through death when he conversed with Moses and Elias, he must have overcome the belief in death in his consciousness in order to have experienced the transfiguration and have communed with them on this very subject, no doubt receiving from them

wisdom and strength for accomplishing his outward victory and proving the nothingness of this last enemy.

In the same way, Science and Health tells us that St. John had not passed through death when he saw what the human eye cannot see (S.& H. 572:23-12 and 573: 23-28). This brings us to the consideration of an important point. Christian Scientists have often called attention to the fact that the Christian churches, while accepting Jesus' command to heal sin, have ignored that of healing sickness. Now we must ask ourselves whether we are fulfilling all the command ourselves by including the injunction to overcome death as well as sickness and sin. True, it is said that it is "the last enemy to be overcome," but we shall never arrive at that victory unless we begin right now to understand its claims and meet them with absolute denial. Mrs. Eddy calls sin, sickness and death "a triad of errors", inseparable in their false claims and all equally unreal. Let us examine ourselves and see whether we are making just as earnest an assault upon the belief of death as we are upon the beliefs in sickness and sin, or are we putting off this denial of death to some future time? Mrs. Eddy once said, "The Christian Scientists must absolutely abandon their belief that all must die".

Jesus' victory over death seem to have awakened his disciples in some degree to its nothingness, since it enabled his guidance to reach them long after his ascension. Let us see what evidence the Bible has to offer us as to the presence of Jesus among his disciples, not only after his resurrection but after his ascension. It was difficult at first for Jesus' disciples, even the most spiritually-minded of them, to credit the fact that he had not gone anywhere,--witness the refusal to believe those who had seen him, and also the inability to recognize him on the walk to Emmaus, but later they seem to have become awake to his presence and to be not at all surprised when the "angel of the Lord" guided them. The first appearance of Jesus is recorded in Matt. 28, Mark 16:9 and John 20. This first appearance was to Mary Magdalene, and the textbook tells us that it was "the self-same Jesus" and that to Mary he was more than ever the idea

of life, substance, and intelligence, because he had proved that the arguments of death were unable to affect his individuality and the substance of his being. Soon after, Jesus appeared to two of his disciples (Mark 15:12) and then to the eleven "as they sat at meat". He also appeared to the disciples on the walk to Emmaus and later, probably the same night, to the disciples at Jerusalem "where they were assembled for fear of the Jews." They were frightened, -- the Bible has it "terrified and affrighted," thinking that they saw a ghost or spirit, but Jesus tenderly reassured them, saying "Why are ye troubled?" showing them the scars in his hands and feet and partaking of food before them (see also Science and Health 45:28-31). Other accounts are found in the twentieth chapter of John, and in chapter twenty-one occurs the most detailed account of the meeting and communion of Jesus and his followers, the morning breakfast on the peaceful shores of Galilee where, in the sweet words of Science and Health "His gloom had passed into glory, and his disciple's grief into repentance,--hearts chastened and pride rebuked."

These incidents are familiar to us all but perhaps we are not so apt to contemplate the appearance of Jesus to his followers *after his ascension*. The most familiar to us is of course St. Paul's conversion. After the great influx of light Paul heard Jesus' voice and received an answer to his question "Who art thou Lord?" in the words "I am Jesus. In the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, St. Paul enumerates the appearances of Jesus up to that time, and includes his own meeting with him. Indicating that it was no more unusual than the other appearances. In verses three to six he says "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried and that he arose again the third day, and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that he was seen by about five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present....After that he was seen of James, then of all the apostles, and last of all he was seen of me as one born out of due time." Here St. Paul tells us that Jesus was seen of him as well as heard. This would prove that it was no more unnatural to

see Jesus after his ascension, than after his resurrection, requiring only a greater spiritual vision. Jesus' interview with Moses and Elias was many long years after their demonstration over death, proving the nothingness of time to affect man or his individuality.

In the Acts of the Apostles the appearances of Jesus to guide his children are often phrased as the appearance of "the angel of the Lord" defining "angel" as a spiritual message. The "angel of the Lord" would be unquestionably a guidance from Jesus, since he was known as "the Lord" by all of his disciples. Peter said at the morning meeting "It is the Lord" and elsewhere Jesus said "Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye do well". In some cases, however, the angel message to guide and encourage was accompanied by the appearance of a man, as we shall see. In Acts 8:26 "The angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise and go toward the south...unto Gaza". This guidance resulted in the conversion of the servant of the Queen of Ethiopia. After the account in chapter nine of Paul's meeting with Jesus, there is a remarkable narrative of the appearance of Jesus at Damascus to the disciple Ananias. It is said (verse ten) that the Lord spoke to him in a vision. This word "vision" so often used in the Bible, has sometimes been taken to mean a mere night dream, but the word vision has a direct relation to human conduct and is a definite spiritual guidance as to human procedure. Also in some cases the word "dream" has the same significance, as when (Matt. 2) the wise men "were warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod," – valuable advice and practical guidance. In this instance the Lord said to Ananias 'Arise and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one, Saul of Tarsus, for behold he prayeth.'" Ananias is humanly afraid at first and questions his mission. He says "Lord, I have heard by many of this man how much evil he hath done, and he hath authority to bind all that call on thy name". And the Lord said, "Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me". As further confirmation that Ananias had a definite message from Jesus, he said to Paul, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me that thou

mayest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost.” The result of Jesus’ appearance in this instance was the healing of St. Paul.

In Acts, chapter 10, the angel of the Lord appeared to a Roman centurion named Cornelius, directing him to send to Joppa, where he should find Peter, and “he will tell thee what thou oughtest to do.” (verse 6) Peter too had been guided “to call no man common or unclean”, and he returned with the messengers. He found Cornelius, who had gathered together his kinsmen and friends, waiting to hear what Peter could tell them. Peter asks Cornelius why he sent for him, and in explaining Cornelius said “Four days ago I was fastingI prayed in my house, and behold a man stood before me in bright clothing and said “Cornelius, thy prayer is heard”. Send therefore to Joppa and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter.” Then follows that remarkable address of St. Peter’s, resulting in the conversion and baptism of all who were gathered there. The result of this specific guidance from the Lord Jesus, resulted in the great forward step of admitting the Gentiles to the fellowship of Christ, shown in the words: “And they were astonished that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost” (chapter 10, and 11:18). In the eleventh chapter of Acts the general statement is made “And the hand of the Lord was with them and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord.” This implies that the guidance of the Master was a general experience.

In the twelfth chapter of Acts is the marvelous experience of St. Peter in prison. In spite of being bound with two chains, and held between two keepers, Peter was peacefully sleeping, an instance of superlative serenity and faith. An angelic visitant appeared to him, giving him specific advice, “Rise and bind on thy sandals.” Peter was in a state of wonder and “wist not that it was true” as the ninth verse tells us, but he followed the angel and was set free. When he came to the house of Mary, the mother of Mark, he found the disciples gathered there, and Peter “beckoning unto them with his hand to hold their peace, told how the Lord had brought him out of prison” (verse 17). This guidance of the Lord Jesus delivered this great apostle to labor for the cause of Christianity for a long lifetime.

In chapter eighteen during Paul's persecution at Corinth, it is recorded "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision Be not afraid to speak, and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city". This guidance and inspiration of Jesus encouraged Paul and he remained in Corinth, teaching the word of God and converting many, including Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue and all his house.

In chapter twenty-two, St. Paul again rehearses the narrative of his conversion, and adds to it an account of a meeting with Jesus, in these words, "I saw him saying unto me, make haste and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat ... those that believed on thee. And he said unto me, depart for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." This appearance of Jesus brought about the great appointment of St. Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles.

In chapter twenty-three, there is a further account of the consolation afforded by our Lord. St. Paul was in great danger in Jerusalem, and these are the Bible words: "And the night following the Lord stood by him and said, be of good cheer, Paul, for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so shalt thou bear witness also at Rome." This intervention of Jesus delivered Paul from a deep conspiracy and saved his life.

Of all the records we have of the appearances of Jesus to his followers, in the years following his personal disappearance, the most marvelous is, of course, and must always be, the Book of Revelation. Until I studied Christian Science I had never thought of this book as other than the writing of St. John, the Evangelist. This may be on account of the fact that in the Scripture the Book is entitled "The revelation of Saint John the Divine." This title might be considered as somewhat misleading in view of the introduction to the first chapter. John was, of course, relating his spiritual experience when he was "carried away in the Spirit," but my surprise was deep, when one day I became awake to the exact reading of

the first and second verses of the first chapter. They read as follows: "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John; who bare record of the Word of God and of the testimony of Jesus Christ and of all things that he saw." St. John then was a scribe. His great spiritual growth enabled him to receive this greatest of guidance from Jesus, and the prophecy which our Leader tells us contains, with Genesis "the deep divinity of the Bible." A careful reading of the Book will show that the "angel" who revealed to John these things of so great spiritual import, was Jesus himself. In the concluding chapter, as John's spiritual appreciation led him to fall down and worship the Being who had revealed these things to him, he was told, "See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow servant and of thy brethren the prophets ...worship God." This identification of himself continues through the following verses until, toward the end, he plainly declares himself saying, "I, Jesus," His concluding words are "Surely I come quickly." And John replies to his Master "even so come, Lord Jesus."

On page 72 of Science and Health, under the marginal reading "Scientific phenomena" occur these words: "In Science, individual good derived from God, the infinite All-in-all, may flow from the departed to mortals; but evil is neither communicable nor scientific." Here is indicated another vital difference between spiritualism and the scientific communication of good from the departed to mortals. Spiritualism teaches that evil, as well as good, may be imparted from those gone before, showing the personal and materialistic basis of such communication. Our study of this subject is not to indicate in any way the scientific method by which this individual good may reach us, as that remains for each individual to demonstrate for himself as he gains in spiritual discernment. It is simply to avail ourselves of the evidence which the Bible affords of the truth of our Leader's statement, and to open our minds to the possibility of its fulfillment today.

Mrs. Eddy once said to a member of her household, "When I ascend you will see me." We know that she is daily ascending in the scale of spiritual understanding and demonstration, and her consecrated followers already see the results of that ascension in the continuous spread of our Cause and an ever widening influence in human consciousness of her teachings. Our continual prayer should be that we shall be ever awake to the individual good derived from God, that is constantly flowing to us from her demonstration and her uninterrupted leadership of this movement.

In the last two verses of Mark's Gospel are these words: "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following. Amen."

The following references are intended to be studied in connection with the above address: Acts 1:1-3; John 20: 11-31; 21:1-14. Acts 9:1-20; 10:1-5, 17-23, 30-33, 44; 12:5-17; 18:9-11; 27:21-25. Rev. 1:1-6; 21:5, 6, 10, 15; 22:1-16, 20. Science and Health 426:23-28.

Address read at Association Meeting July 1, 1939