

Eternal Life

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Today I'm going to be discussing three aspects of eternal life. They will be: 1) Why we can never experience death. 2) Why we also cannot ever die or disappear from Being. And 3) Why we cannot actually lose touch with anyone or be falsely separated from anyone by the belief in a before-death and after-death plane. There are no "planes" of existence to infinite Mind – only one, infinite Being. We'll have an opportunity for questions afterwards.

A few years ago I was asked to give a talk for the Paul Stark Seeley Association in Portland, Oregon. I remember my Mom saying that she remembered Paul Seeley as a grey-haired lecturer when she was a little girl. I found out that this Association is apparently the only Association still meeting whose Christian Science teacher's certificate was co-signed by Mary Baker Eddy. Mr. Seeley was once asked what his age was, and he replied, "That's none of my business!" Well age is none of our business either!

So what is our business? Is it immortality? A minister was once asked, "What do you think of immortality?" and he replied, "I'm enjoying every moment of it!" So is immortality instead our business? You know, Christ Jesus did not say that he came to start a new religion. He did not say that he did healing works to impress people into a certain religious behavior. He did say, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10). So what is this life Jesus came that we might have more abundantly?

Would this life be organic, made of matter? Mrs. Eddy writes, "It is contrary to Christian Science to suppose that life is either material or organically spiritual." (*Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures*, p. 83: 21-22). And could our identities be based upon a material makeup? If God is Spirit itself, then His creation can only be spiritual. For those of you who are not Christian Scientists, the foundational idea of creation is not a historic event of the past – whether thousands or billions of years ago. It is an ongoing process.

Mary Baker Eddy, who discovered and founded Christian Science, writes of creation, "Infinite Mind creates and governs all, from the mental molecule to infinity. This divine Principle of all expresses Science and art throughout His creation, and the immortality of man and the universe. Creation is ever appearing, and must ever continue to appear from the nature of its inexhaustible source." (*Science and Health*, p. 507:24-29). So in Christian Science, creation is an ongoing event. Infinite Mind is, this very instant, thinking every idea of creation, including each of us, as a unique idea. How do I know we are each unique? Because there can only be one Creator-Mind if that Mind is infinite. You can't have two infinite Minds because if one Mind is thinking all of the ideas of creation, what is the other Mind thinking?

In Psalm 40:5 we read, “Many, O LORD my God, *are* thy wonderful works *which* thou hast done, and thy thoughts *which are* to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: *if* I would declare and speak *of them*, they are more than can be numbered.” So I can furnish a mathematically accurate proof that God’s ideas cannot be numbered. Would you like to hear it? Well, numbers are ideas, right? But so are oceans, trees, stars, honeybees, and lot of other things that are not numbers, but are ideas of God. So let’s start with numbering all the numbers. OK, we have finished that, and the numbers have taken up all the numbers, right? Now, let’s number the bees and planets, and other things. But, wait, the ideas of each number have already taken up all the numbers, so there are no numbers left for the things that are not numbers! So, I think that shows that God’s ideas really are “more than can be numbered!”

So if there are an infinitude of ideas in creation – and there have to be if God really is infinite Mind – then of what importance could we be? Well, glad you asked! And this will tie in with our theme today of eternal Life. I’ve heard people say that they don’t want to be treated as “just a number,” and I think they were thinking of something like standing in line or something like that. But there is no such thing as “just” a number. What would happen if a number were missing from mathematics? The whole system could not function without every number, right? No matter what the value of the number is – a little or big or gigantic number – all are needed or mathematics would simply not work.

Well, if we are ideas of God’s creation, and God is infinite Mind, then every idea in infinite Mind must be present or Mind would not really be infinite. In other words, the identity of each one of us is caught up in the infinitude of God’s thinking. We are God’s thoughts or ideas, which He/She is constantly creating. And if the infinite Mind ever forgot any of His ideas, then God would no longer be *infinite* Mind. The spiritual fact that God never forgets any of His ideas is why we are the forever spiritual and eternal and unique expressions of God, and right now. As we learn more about our spiritual nature and identity as God’s contemplation – His reflection of Himself – we understand how God can never forget us, or any of His creation, because He is infinite Mind thinking all ideas. He is saying about you constantly, “What a great idea!”

So what then is death? Why do we want to fear it or respect it or somehow question Jesus’ teaching on this subject? After all, if anyone knew about what to think of, and how to treat death, it was Christ Jesus. Jesus said, “Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, hath ever-lasting life!” In his book, *The Greatest Thing In the World*, Henry Drummond writes (pp. 50-52), “I was not told, when I was a boy, that ‘God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should have everlasting Life.’ What I was told, I remember, was, that God so loved the world that, if I trusted in Him, I was to have a thing called peace, or I was to have rest, or I was to have joy, or I was to have safety. But I had to find out for myself that ... whosoever loveth Him,...—hath everlasting *life*.”

Mrs. Eddy writes this under the sub-heading “Death but an illusion”: “The fact that the Christ, or Truth, overcame and still overcomes death proves the ‘king of terrors’ to be but a mortal belief, or error, which Truth destroys with the spiritual evidences of Life; and this shows that what appears to the senses to be death is but a mortal illusion, for to the real man and the real universe there is no death-process.” (*Science and Health*, p. 289: 14-20).

You know, light cannot see darkness – its appearance automatically and effortlessly dissolves darkness. For example, the Sun cannot cast a shadow, right? You can't, for example, go to the dark side of the Sun. There's the story of the silly astronaut that thought it would be safe to visit the Sun as long as he went at night. Well, of course, the Sun does not know any night. So the Sun giving off light is a symbol of God expressing Himself in creation. In the Glossary of *Science and Health*, Mrs. Eddy gives us this definition of "Sun": "The symbol of Soul governing man, —of Truth, Life, and Love." Jesus told us, "Ye are the light of the world." (Matthew 5: 14 to 1st .). He did not say "ye express light," he said, "ye *are* the light." You are God's very expression of itself. So one cannot actually see "dark." "Dark" and seeing are incompatible and mutually exclusive. This is born out also by physics, as there is no such thing as a particle of dark. In physics there are particles of light that are called "photons"—they can be detected, measured, and so on. But there are no particles of dark. This is because darkness is not something real. That is why you cannot actually see darkness. Mrs. Eddy writes, "We are sometimes led to believe that darkness is as real as light; but Science affirms darkness to be only a mortal sense of the absence of light, at the coming of which darkness loses the appearance of reality. So sin and sorrow, disease and death, are the suppositional absence of Life, God, and flee as phantoms of error before truth and love." (*Science and Health*, p. 215: 15-21).

So thinking of the Sun as a symbol of Life governing man, we can also begin to see why the darkness of death cannot be real either. No one can or has ever experienced death because life, or consciousness, and death are as incompatible. One can no more experience death than one can see dark. The most contradictory statement one can probably make is "I'm dead." Who can ever say that with any truth? If that could be true, then who said that? So if one can never say such a statement with truth, then one can never experience it. And nor has anyone else ever experienced—a so-called "death" process. So, if we think about it a bit, if one can never experience something—and you can never, nor has anyone else, ever experienced death—then can something that no one can ever experience ever be considered to be real?

Mrs. Eddy writes, "Man is not God, but like a ray of light which comes from the sun, man, the outcome of God, reflects God." (*Science and Health*, p. 250: 12-13). Being an astronomer, this automatically leads me to think of characteristics of the Sun and sunshine that might have spiritual lessons in it. For example, a ray of sunshine cannot be cut off from the Sun. Also, particles of light don't weight anything. Another point that might be of interest is that light is not subject to time at all. It may seem simple, but it is very helpful sometimes to think of oneself as a ray of light from God. You know the first thing God made, as stated in the book of *Genesis*, is light (1: 3), "And God said: Let there be light, and there was light." And God is constantly saying, "Let there be life, and there is life."

Spiritual qualities, like living, for example, or consciousness, or intelligence, do not come in limited amounts. If spiritual qualities came in limited amounts then physicists, for example, might be able to put units of measurement on them. One might, for example, be able to express as much as a mega-Lincoln of honesty. Or you could calm someone down with a few milli-Gandhis of peace. But spiritual qualities just do not come in limited amounts, and neither do you! God's spiritual ideas, of which you are one, are not

limitable, so they can't actually be assigned units. So why do we try to use units of "years" to characterize an eternal expression of Being? Years are orbits of the Earth around the Sun but no scientist has ever discovered a force transmitted by number of orbits around the Sun that affects the body. So, if there is no such force, why do we buy into the idea of aging? There is no such thing as a little bit of a Godlike quality, because Spirit and Its expression is unlimited. There is no such thing as a limited amount of life. It just doesn't work like that. No economy size—all of God's qualities are unlimited, infinite, and eternal — these are the only sizes available.

Did you notice that in the first chapter of Genesis, God creates by "letting"? (Genesis 1: 1-31). In this first chapter of the Bible, it is Elohim, translated as "God," who is the Creator. God says, "Let there be light, ...let there be a firmament, ...let the waters be gathered together, ...let the earth bring forth grass and trees, ...let us make man in our image and likeness, ...let them have dominion...."

However, it is an entirely different story in the second chapter of Genesis, where it is Jehovah, translated as "Lord God," who is supposed to be the creator. We note that Lord God, or Jehovah, creates not by letting, but by forming. (Genesis 2: 6-8, 19). We read that the "Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and he put "the man whom he had formed" into a garden called Eden, and then he formed "every beast of the field." Well in this second narrative of creation by forming, it is easy to see a beginning, and an ending to man. It is this very attempt at forming creation, actually, where things go wrong. The second Commandment reads "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,..." of God. (Exodus 20: 4 to 1st .). So trying to "form" the image and likeness of God in matter actually breaks the Second Commandment. Mrs. Eddy writes, "It would require an infinite form to contain infinite Mind. Indeed, the phrase *infinite form* involves a contradiction of terms. Finite man cannot be the image and likeness of the infinite God. A mortal, corporeal, or finite conception of God cannot embrace the glories of limitless, incorporeal Life and Love." (*Science and Health*, p. 257: 30-3).

Now in the first chapter of Genesis, Elohim or God creates by letting. Isn't "letting" a great way to describe the process of revealing something that is already present? Isn't it indicative more of unfolding, of an already and ever present, ongoing creation, rather than any beginning or ending? I looked up the word "let" and it means "to allow, permit." It's really a wonderful word to describe ongoing creation as a forever expression, and this applies to us too. Mrs. Eddy writes, "Genesis 1:1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 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, including the universe. The creative Principle — Life, Truth, and Love — is God. The universe reflects God. There is but one creator and one creation. This creation consists of the unfolding of spiritual ideas and their identities, which are embraced in the infinite Mind and *forever* reflected." (*Science and Health*, p. 502: 22-3).

"Jesus not only declared himself 'the way' and 'the truth' but also 'the life.' God is Life; and as there is but one God, there can be but one Life. ... Our Master said, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Then God and heaven, or Life, are present, and death is not the real stepping-stone to Life and happiness. They are

now and here; and a change in human consciousness, from sin to holiness, would reveal this wonder of being. Because God is ever present, no boundary of time can separate us from Him and the heaven of His presence; and because God is Life, all Life is eternal.” (Unity of Good, p. 37: 1-3, 6-13).

But you might say, “But I’d like to talk with someone who has passed on. I’d like to know they are already. But can we communicate with people who have passed on, who have seemed to have passed through the belief of death? Many people in Mrs. Eddy’s day, (and today, as well) believed communication with those who had passed on was possible, a belief known as “spiritualism.” Mrs. Eddy actually devoted a whole chapter in *Science and Health* to addressing spiritualism—the title of this chapter clearly setting forth the Christian Science standpoint. The chapter is entitled, “Christian Science versus Spiritualism,” and Mrs. Eddy writes in this chapter, “No correspondence nor communion can exist between persons in such opposite dreams as the belief of having died and left a material body and the belief of still living in an organic, material body. ... The so-called dead and living cannot commune together, for they are in separate states of existence, or consciousness.” (*Science and Health*, p. 74: 13-16, 30-32). But I have heard some people ask, “But doesn’t this put a limitation on infinite Mind?” Also, someone asked my Christian Science teacher at an Association meeting once, “But how about Jesus talking with Moses and Elijah? Is this an instance of spiritualism?” I thought this was an interesting question.

This incident is narrated in three of the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Let’s read the narrative from Matthew. “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.” (Matthew 17: 1-9, Mark 9: 2-8, Luke 9: 28-36).

So was Jesus talking with the so-called “spirits” of Moses and Elijah? Moses had been around 1300 years before this event, and Elijah about 900 years before Jesus’ time. Yet, here Jesus was, talking with them. No only this, but his disciples Peter, James, and John also saw Moses and Elijah, and recognized them, in spite of the fact that they had, of course, never seen pictures of Moses or Elijah. Is this incident in conflict with Mrs. Eddy’s statement that the “...so called dead and living cannot commune together,...”? Jesus was certainly talking with Moses and Elijah.

The Moffett translation of the Bible has it this way, “While he [Jesus] was praying, the appearance of his face altered and his dress turned dazzling white. There two men were, conversing with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in a vision of glory, telling how he must go through with his death and departure at

Jerusalem!" (Moffett translation, New Testament, page 86). So Jesus was talking with them about his upcoming demonstration over the belief in death. And perhaps the term "departure" might refer to his ascension as well.

Mrs. Eddy does say that people who believe that they have not yet died cannot communicate with people who believe that they have, already, died. This is because they are in different states of consciousness—sometimes people refer to being on different (seeming) "planes" of existence. But Jesus, Moses, and Elijah could communicate together because neither Jesus, nor Elijah, nor Moses believed in death, at all. They knew that, in Truth, there are no separate "planes" of spirituality in the creation of the one, infinite Mind. Absolutely speaking, there is only one "plane" of existence— that of infinite, divine Mind. They could not be separated by the belief of time or death because they did not believe it. They knew that they were not on any hypothetical "before" or "after" planes of belief. This is how they could communicate with each other. I think it is also interesting that, for a while, the disciples must not have believed in death either, for they also saw Elijah and Moses for a while. This is an example of the fact that Jesus had already demonstrated over the belief of death before the crucifixion experience.

Death always involves time; without time there cannot be any mortality, for mortality is only the belief that the creations of God exist only for a finite duration. God would have to forget some of His ideas for this to be so. But undermine the false belief of time and you undermine the belief in mortality. There are other instances where Jesus talked with the so-called dead, as well. Wasn't Jesus talking directly to Lazarus when he said, "Lazarus come forth!" (John 11: 1-44, especially verse 43). He clearly reached Lazarus because Lazarus heard him, obeyed, and came forth. Jesus clearly saw Lazarus as already alive—as he ever was as God's child—and thanked God for his Life audibly, so that everyone could hear him and know that God, his Father, which is Life Itself, had already heard him, and, he said, hears always. (verses 41, 42). Jesus reached Lazarus by knowing that they shared the same eternal Life. What could be a more apt name for God as Life than the name "Father"? Jesus' statement that his Father hears him always. In Truth, one idea of God can never be cut off from another idea of God. How could one idea in the infinite Mind ever have an existence separate from another idea in the infinite Mind? These demonstrations were a rebuke, not just to death, but also to time, as well. Paul even heard Jesus, who had already ascended, during his conversion. One might say Paul was "born again" as Jesus told Nicodemus he must be. Here "born again" would mean, "see that you were never born into matter in the first place." Jesus said to him, "Ye must be born... of the Spirit," not of matter.

Mrs. Eddy writes, "Man is deathless, spiritual. He is above sin or frailty. He does not cross the barriers of time into the vast forever of Life, but he coexists with God and the universe." (*Science and Health*, p. 266: 29-32 *Man*). You cannot experience death any more than you can see darkness. You cannot ever be forgotten of God because infinite Mind, being infinite, never forgets any of His/Her perfect, spiritual ideas. And one can never really be out of touch with fellow loved ideas of God since death is unreal and cannot therefore be any barrier to any of God's ideas. Are we helping to fulfill Jesus mission by accepting this more abundant life that is the expression of eternal Life, which is his and our Father? You do not have to wait until forever to discover your inherent immortality as one of the infinitely valuable completers of divine

Mind's infinite expression.

So happy born again day. When were you born? Just now! And how old are you? Forever! Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am." You can say, "Before the Big Bang, I am." So immortality – let's start right now enjoying every moment of it!

Mrs. Eddy writes, "Jesus of Nazareth was the most scientific man that ever trod the globe. He plunged beneath the material surface of things, and found the spiritual cause. □ (*Science and Health*, p. 313: 23-26).

So was Christ Jesus a scientist, as Mrs. Eddy states? From what Jesus stated about his own mission it certainly sounds so. Christ Jesus did not say that he came to start a new religion. When asked about his mission he said, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." (John 10: 24-25). So he said that he came to bear witness to the truth. If you lived 2,000 years ago and you wanted to teach the scientific method, -- the idea that experimental results are more reliable than human opinion -- how would you say it? Say you wanted to get this idea across to your disciples? How might you say it in Bible language?

The religious establishment of the time once asked Christ Jesus who bore witness for him? And he replied that it was not human authority that bore witness to the truth of what he taught. He said, "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye sent unto John [this is John the Baptist], and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man:... I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." (John 5: 31-33, 34 to :, 36-37). So Christ Jesus said that, rather than even the highest human authority, it was his healing works that were the true test of the truth of what he taught. So we have, perhaps for the first time in history, a statement of the scientific method – that experimental verification is more important and reliable than human authority. And healing is, indeed, the ultimate verification. Christ Jesus also added -- in case his disciples were not getting it -- "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." So now he was excluding human opinion altogether. Healing works are the experimental verification of the spiritual reality of God's creation.

In modern scientific language, one might say "You are not to blindly believe a theory without experimental verification." This is a tenant of the natural science community. Christ Jesus stated this in other ways as well. For example, he said: "By their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. 7: 20).

But if such Christian healing is really a science, then others should be able to follow Jesus' example in demonstrating healing also. Well, Christ Jesus taught this as well. Jesus said, (John 14: 12), "Verily, verily I say unto you, the works that I do shall ye do also, and greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto my Father." So Jesus taught that this spiritual understanding of healing could be applied by others – in

other words Jesus said it was not his personal charisma that healed. He said he was able to do these healing works because he went unto his Father, God, for the healings. He was not talking about leaving, he was talking about going to the Source, Creator, Principle of the universe, divine Love, for his healing works. This is what science is all about.

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