

Metaphysics
and
Science
in
Christian Science

Max Kappeler

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Kappeler Institute Publishing

PO Box 99735, Seattle, WA 98139-0735

Phone: (206) 286-1617

FAX: (206) 286-1675

E-mail: mail@kappelerinstitute.org

Website: www.kappelerinstitute.org

Abbreviations for the titles of works by Mary Baker Eddy:

Mis. Miscellaneous Writings
My. The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany

Also:

Coll. Course in Divinity and General Collectanea of Items by
 and about Mary Baker Eddy. Published by R. F. Oakes,
 London, 1958.

All quotations from 'Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures' by Mary Baker Eddy are put in parentheses and indicate only the page and line number.

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modifications.' 'A speculative science, which soars beyond the bounds of experience,' is a further definition" (Mis. 68:21).

Ordinary metaphysics is the study of the human mind. As these definitions indicate, metaphysics considers that which lies beyond the physical, including an analysis of those concepts and categories which we use to interpret things and appearances. Exactly what lies beyond and which categories are adequate for explaining it account for the different schools of metaphysics. Ordinary metaphysics reasons that whatever is not physical must be mental or a mental construct. It therefore studies the human mind, investigating mental causes and how the mental affects the physical. Modern versions of ordinary metaphysics include the many 'new-age', positive-thinking and mind-over-matter schools of thought.

Homeopathy. The metaphysical step out of the exclusively physical and material concepts of existence is very important and one which Mary Baker Eddy took early in her development. Finding no real remedies in material medicine, she began to investigate various alternatives, which led her from allopathy to homeopathy. Homeopathy, for example, teaches the attenuation of drugs to such an extent that the mental element in the healing process can no longer be ignored. "Homeopathy mentalizes a drug with such repetition of thought-attenuations, that the drug becomes more like the human mind than the substratum of this so-called mind, which we call matter" (157:19). Thus homeopathy gives evidence that the human mind plays a major role in both the cause and medical cure of disease. Typical of ordinary metaphysics, homeopathy relies on a strong belief in the power of the human mind over matter, challenging the view that the problems of the body can be handled only through material means.

The power of mortal mind over mortal body. This step out of matter to ordinary metaphysics is inevitable. Of this stage, the textbook states: Our laws must "eventually take cognizance of mental crime and no longer apply rulings wholly to physical offences" (105:16). We should realize that "a change in human belief changes all the physical symptoms, and determines a case for better or for worse" (194:6). Otherwise, "by not perceiving vital metaphysical points, not seeing how mortal mind affects the body, — acting beneficially or injuriously on the health, as well as on the morals and happiness of mortals, — we are misled in our conclusions and methods" (397:1).

To illustrate the power of the human mind to generate its own phe-

nomena and to affect the body, the textbook cites various case-examples. To illustrate that "it is a law of mortal mind that certain diseases should be regarded as contagious, . . . calling up the fear that creates the image of disease and its consequent manifestation in the body" (154:4), the textbook cites the case of a man who died merely from occupying a bed which he believed had been occupied by a cholera patient, even though no cholera patient had ever lain there (154:9-15). In another case, a woman died merely from inhaling ether, because she believed it would kill her. The textbook comments: "Had these unscientific surgeons undertook metaphysics, they would have considered the woman's state of mind, and not have risked such treatment . . . The sequel proved that this Lynn woman died from effects produced by mortal mind, and not from the disease or the operation" (159:14,20).

From ordinary metaphysics to the metaphysics of Christian Science

Ordinary metaphysics is a step out of materialism, but it is by no means the end of the development from metaphysics to Science. Its insights into the nature of the human mind, and the interdependence between the mental and the physical, are important and should not be ignored. However, its contribution to the development serves not as a solution, nor even as a means to a solution, but merely to alert us to the nature of the problem. Why?

Ordinary metaphysics brings positive and negative results. The premise of ordinary metaphysics is that the human mind governs the body. Yet the human mind can be constructive or destructive, calm or fearful, confident or insecure, benevolent or resentful, etc. Any of these mental conditions can affect the body, as the textbook points out in the illustrations cited above. Fear of cholera or ether can kill, even when there is no physical or material basis for fear; a negative mental condition has just as much power over the body as a positive mental condition. Because ordinary metaphysics bases itself on the human mind, it reaps the fruits of the nature and power of the human mind, whichever direction the human mind takes. Today, the findings of psychosomatic medicine support this fact, showing that a diseased psyche brings forth a diseased body.

This raises the questions: If the human mind causes disease and disharmony, how can it also bring their cure? If the human mind is the problem, what heals the human mind?

Ordinary metaphysics has no Christ. Because ordinary metaphysics bases everything on the human mind, it has no Christ, no saving power. It looks to the human mind for a solution, even though it acknowledges that the human mind can also cause disharmony. For this reason, the textbook denounces ordinary metaphysics. "Works on metaphysics leave the grand point untouched. They never crown the power of Mind as the Messiah" (116:13). The Mind that is God, not the human mind, is the one and only saving power in Christian Science. Therefore "willing the sick to recover is not the metaphysical practice of Christian Science" (144:16). In order to find the solution to the problem of being, we must go beyond not only matter but also the human mind, of which matter is simply another form.

The basis: the human mind or the divine Mind? Herein lies the great difference between ordinary metaphysics and the metaphysics of Christian Science. Whereas ordinary metaphysics bases itself entirely on human mentalities, the metaphysics of Christian Science bases everything on the Mind that is God. Along these lines, the textbook states: "Metaphysics, as taught in Christian Science, is the next stately step beyond homeopathy. In metaphysics, matter disappears from the remedy entirely, and Mind takes its rightful and supreme place" (156:28). "Christian Science . . . heals the sick on the basis of the one Mind or God. It can heal in no other way, since the human, mortal mind so-called is not a healer, but causes the belief in disease" (482:27). Elsewhere Mary Baker Eddy states: "The difference between metaphysics in homeopathy and metaphysics in Christian Science consists in this forcible fact: the former enlists faith in the pharmacy of the human mind, and the latter couples faith with spiritual understanding and is based on the law of divine Mind. Christian Science recognizes that this Mind is the only lawgiver, omnipotent, infinite, All" (My. 108:10). Thus the metaphysics of Christian Science shows, not the power of the human mind over matter, but the power of the one divine Mind over all, mortal mind and matter included. Yet how can we distinguish between the results of ordinary metaphysics and the workings of the metaphysics of Christian Science?

"By their fruits ye shall know them . . ." This statement from 'Matthew' (7:20) raises considerable questions for many students of Christian Science. Observing that often severe physical problems can be alleviated and even reversed through positive thinking, they wonder, why are these

improvements not considered divine? If something has a good effect, is not this the ultimate? After all, the Bible says, “Ye shall know them by their fruits” (Matt. 7:16).

Various considerations must be raised to answer such questions. First, what are good results? We cannot assume that we can define humanly what ‘good fruits’ are for any specific case. Good is whatever is of God and serves the divine purpose. However, divine good may or may not coincide with what we envision as an ideal solution. To judge if a result is truly good, we must consider its origin: Is a result an object of human conception? Or is it brought forth through the power of the divine Mind, independent of human concepts?

If the result is achieved through the human mind and positive thinking (ordinary metaphysics), we must beware, for as we have seen, the human mind is dualistic and works both good and evil. Insofar as the human mind governs us, we get a full share of all that it includes. By contrast, if we strive to found our life on the metaphysics of Christian Science, the effects are always good. Because Mind is God, all that proceeds from Mind is constructive and serves the divine purpose. Thus, the more we base ourselves on the redeeming power of the Mind that is God, the less we are subject to the negative and destructive influence of the human mind and its dualism.

A second point challenges us further to analyze what we call a solution. For example, do we call a solution that which manipulates effects but leaves the cause unchanged? A true solution tackles the problem at its root, restructuring the entire basis, so that the same problems do not reappear in new forms. Ordinary metaphysics explains the false cause; it shows clearly that the mental governs the physical. On this basis, it actually makes little difference whether cures are sought through humanly subjective (e.g. positive thinking) or objective (medical or material) means, for both are manifestations of the human, mortal mind. Such means can alleviate symptoms and help us in extreme circumstances, but they can never provide a solution. A true solution must challenge the human-mind basis, thereby correcting the origin from which all problems arise.

The textbook takes up this very point, posing the question: “How do drugs, hygiene, and animal magnetism” (i.e. working through mortal mind) “heal? It may be affirmed that they do not heal, but only relieve suffering temporarily, exchanging one disease for another . . . Nothing

but Truth or Mind can heal, and this Mind must be divine, not human” (483:1). “If animal magnetism seems to alleviate or to cure disease, this appearance is deceptive, since error cannot remove the effects of error” (101:26). Healing means correcting the belief that existence is governed by the human mind — by a mind other than God. Ordinary metaphysics cannot do this, because belief in the human mind governing everything is the basis of ordinary metaphysics. It can exchange effects ad nauseam, but it can never correct the false cause. For a true solution, we must investigate the metaphysics of Christian Science, which looks to the divine Mind as the source and means of every right effect.

The metaphysics of Christian Science

The Principle of divine metaphysics is God. The metaphysics of Christian Science proceeds from a basis entirely separate from human thinking. The textbook states that, whereas ordinary metaphysics is based on “a law of mortal mind” (154:4), “God is the Principle of divine metaphysics” (112:32, also 111:11). “Divine metaphysics . . . shows clearly that all is Mind, and that Mind is God” (275:20). Therefore divine metaphysics alone can bring the solution to the human mind, removing the false effects by correcting the false cause. “Christian Science . . . succeeds where homeopathy fails, solely because its one recognized Principle of healing is Mind” (157:1). “Christian Science . . . rests on Mind alone as the curative Principle, acknowledging that the divine Mind has all power” (157:8). Through the metaphysics of Christian Science, we gain the divine basis from which to challenge belief in the human mind and to correct its illusions. What does this mean for our life-practice?

Working from the divine basis only. The fact that the metaphysics of Christian Science proceeds from Mind as All separates it from ordinary metaphysics, not only in its basis but also in its method. In the practice of ordinary metaphysics, we define the problem. Disease and disharmony are considered real problems, which must be changed or healed by human means or through human thinking. By contrast, the metaphysics of Christian Science involves an entirely different method. For example, through divine metaphysics, we know that the corporeal senses cannot testify truly, neither can they reveal the true status of a situation. Therefore we can never allow human perceptions or material evidence to define the problem. Instead, we must turn away from the human and material picture of things and let Mind, i.e. the one saving power, define

what has to be healed and the way in which healing must unfold. All attempts to solve life's problems in ways that are not governed by a divinely principled standpoint — be they material or mental — have nothing to do with the metaphysics of Christian Science. How then can we describe the metaphysics of Christian Science?

The metaphysics of Christian Science: divine, scientific, Christian. The textbook uses exact terminology to present its subject in a divinely ordered and differentiated way. With regard to the term “metaphysics”, the textbook refers to divine, scientific and Christian metaphysics, depending on the context. These different aspects of metaphysics bring out the essential dimensions of metaphysics in Christian Science.

With ‘divine metaphysics’, Mary Baker Eddy refers to that metaphysics which comes from God and expresses the divine nature. “Divine metaphysics . . . is the divine nature of God” (My. 109:23). “Divine metaphysics concedes no origin or causation apart from God. It accords all to God, Spirit, and His infinite manifestations” (’02 7:1). Thus divine metaphysics refers in its essence to God, the divine Being. “Divine metaphysics is that which treats of the existence of God, His essence, relations, and attributes” (Mis. 69:1).

Yet occasionally the textbook uses the term “scientific metaphysics”. In these instances, the accent is on showing that divine metaphysics has exact, scientific foundations. It rests on the categories of Being — not on mystical or atomistic human concepts. As such, scientific metaphysics shows how the metaphysics of Christian Science meets the demands of a science by revealing the system and structure of being. The textbook states: “Divine metaphysics is now reduced to a system, to a form comprehensible by and adapted to the thought of the age in which we live” (146:31). Scientific metaphysics presents a unified and coherent system for expressing absolute Christian Science, as the introductory paragraph to ‘Recapitulation’ indicates: “Absolute Christian Science pervades its statements, to elucidate scientific metaphysics” (465:4). In this way, scientific metaphysics distinguishes divine metaphysics from all unscientific and semi-metaphysical systems, systems which “are based on the false testimony of the material senses as well as on the facts of Mind” (268:16).

Finally, the metaphysics of Christian Science is also referred to as “Christian metaphysics”. The accent here is to show how metaphysics has a healing, elevating effect. Because the metaphysics of Christian

Science is not only divine and scientific but also Christian, it provides a steppingstone to support the development of thought to a higher, more spiritual basis.

Scientific metaphysics was the starting-point of John Doorly's teaching. John W. Doorly was the first to discover how important scientific metaphysics is for a right understanding of Christian Science, not only by stating its importance but also by systematically researching the fundamentals of Christian Science in the textbook. Through this research, he showed how false concepts about God must be consistently corrected and exchanged for the true idea that Science establishes through its system and categories.

This was a great breakthrough in the development not only of Christian Science but also of all thought seeking to know God. For ages, theologians and philosophers have been stymied by the question: How can we distinguish between a human concept about God and the divine idea of what God itself is? Scientific metaphysics offers a method for answering this question. It is to make a thorough textual study of the fundamentals presenting the nature and operation of God: the seven synonymous terms for God and the four modes of divine self-operation as Word, Christ, Christianity and Science. As we do this, the system of divine metaphysics in its divine meaning is established in understanding. We become thoroughly drilled in the divine system of reference, which alone reveals the true idea of God. Thus scientific metaphysics shows that only as we base ourselves on Science and its revelation of God through the system and structure of the fundamentals presented in the textbook can we build on a divine basis.

Otherwise, without this systematic spiritual education in the categories of Being, we introduce our own human and personal concepts about God. *We* determine what is an idea and what is an illusion, and thus fall back into the ordinary metaphysics of the human mind. Though we speak all about 'Mind', 'Christ' or 'Science', we refer only to our own human concepts of these terms and our own sense of what they imply. Unless we school ourselves in the system of the fundamentals and investigate thoroughly how they are revealed throughout the text, we can 'study' Science endlessly, while actually doing nothing more than ordinary metaphysics.

The possibility that we could spend a lifetime believing ourselves to be students of Christian Science, when in fact we have built everything on

our own human and personal concepts, should awaken us to the great importance of scientific metaphysics. Only through scientific metaphysics — and the exact research into the categories of Being which scientific metaphysics requires — do we find a way out of the otherwise all-pervasive influence of the human mind and its beliefs. Through the metaphysics of Christian Science, we gain the method of systematically studying the fundamentals, enabling us to lay aside human misconceptions and to ground ourselves on a divine basis. Any approach to the textbook which does not build on this systematic study of the fundamentals has no way of proving that its findings are not simply another interpolation of the human mind — the offspring of ordinary metaphysics.

From scientific metaphysics to the Science of Christian Science

The step to the Science of Christian Science in John Doorly's work. In his last summer school, John Doorly began to indicate a further step in the development by stressing the difference between the metaphysics of Christian Science and the Science of Christian Science, urging students to see the importance of taking the higher standpoint. "My aim at Oxford will always be to lift thought higher and higher into the realm of metaphysics, and then into the realm of Science." How did he describe this difference? "Metaphysics", meaning the metaphysics of Christian Science, "involves the contemplation of ideas, whereas Science involves the contemplation of the infinite One, forever including within itself its own ideas" (John W. Doorly, 'Oxford Summer School Talks', 1949, Vol. II, p. 132).

In scientific metaphysics, we think about God to discover what God is. Scientific metaphysics teaches that God cannot be grasped through human beliefs but must be understood through the system of divine ideas, which corrects human and personal misconceptions and exchanges them for a spiritually scientific understanding of God. Through the categories of Being, we seek the divinely objective rather than the humanly personal or subjective interpretation of what God is. Yet even this endeavor is not the pinnacle of the development. Sooner or later, we ask: Who or what is ultimately conscious of ideas? Wherein lies the power to know the idea of God? These questions push us forward to the standpoint of Science.

In Science, there is only the one infinite Being, which is infinitely conscious of itself. Being knows itself as its own infinite system and

structure of ideas — as Science, which represents the holistic, divinely structured self-conception of God. Because Being is the indivisible whole, there is no other Mind, therefore no other conceiving of the nature of being as idea. Far from making metaphysics obsolete, Science includes metaphysics, i.e., the contemplation of God through the infinite calculus of ideas, but from the higher standpoint of the divinely subjective awareness which Being has of itself. In this way, metaphysics is exalted in Science, for it is embraced in the consciousness which Being has of its own infinite being.

From the contemplation of ideas to the contemplation of the infinite One. This necessary step forward from metaphysics to Science involves a fundamental change in the standpoint of consciousness. The contemplation of ideas is not discarded but is reconceived from a higher standpoint and placed within a broader frame of reference. Whereas in metaphysics we ponder the ideas of God to gain a conception that approximates the divine, in Science the infinite One is infinitely conscious of itself as idea, and this divine self-awareness brings forth the divine infinite calculus. Ideas are known and operative within the consciousness that Being has of itself; they are not dependent on human thinking in order to be known or to have their effect.

The window-pane analogy. An old and often used analogy for the metaphysical approach is that of a window pane, through which the sunlight shines. The window pane represents human consciousness, which is clouded by human beliefs and illusions and must be cleaned by scientific metaphysics, until it becomes transparent to the light. Through this process, thought is more and more cultivated according to the calculus of ideas. Because the spiritual calculus is based on God and reflects what Being itself is, this ideational structure of understanding enables the light to shine through. Metaphysics exchanges human illusions for spiritual ideas, and the light appears. Yet having a clearer and clearer window pane is neither the aim nor standpoint of Science. Science proceeds from the infinite One's own divine self-knowing — from the light itself. The light knows no window pane, for to the light, all is light. Light, not window panes, becomes the focus.

True, for us to see the light, we need scientific metaphysics, which makes all the difference. Without it, the light would still be there, but we would never know it. However, we must also realize that having a transparent window pane is not the ultimate, not the aim. The more the

standpoint of Science gains precedence and informs our work in scientific metaphysics, the more our focus rests on the light as such — on how Being is conscious of itself through its own categories to bring out its own idea. This divinely subjective standpoint automatically clears away the darkness of human beliefs, but without making it an issue or central concern. The accent is not on the comparative transparency or opaqueness of individual window panes, but on the nature and workings of the light itself.

Christian Science focuses on God, the whole. The subject of the textbook is Science — the light and its constituents — and not primarily metaphysics. From beginning to end, it presents its subject from the standpoint of God itself, which is All-in-all and which is conscious of itself as an infinite system of ideas. This high standpoint of the textbook is indicated by the extent to which the terms ‘metaphysics’ and ‘Science’ are used. ‘Metaphysics’, used positively, occurs only about 70 times, whereas ‘Science’ is used more than 1000 times. The contrast shows clearly where the textbook places its emphasis and what it intends to teach. Metaphysics is an important step along the way, but it is not the main subject.

The standpoint of Science in the New Testament. The great change of standpoint from metaphysics to Science was already indicated in the New Testament by Jesus. For instance, Jesus did not say: ‘I can show you the way, the truth and the life.’ His standpoint was of that consciousness which comes from God, is one with God and operates from the divinely subjective awareness. Thus he said: “I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). Jesus took the standpoint of Science and thought, not *about* God, but *out from* God. This is the great step forward. Whereas metaphysics shows how human thought must be cultivated and disciplined to think about God in ways that are scientific, Science presents God’s consciousness of itself, including within itself the infinite operation of its own idea.

The standpoint of Science presents a new aim. Most students of the textbook have a deep desire to think about God and man in a right way, a way informed by spiritual ideas. They want their window panes clear, so that they can be good transparencies for the light. In short, they want to be good metaphysicians.

But the time comes in each one’s development when this aim is no longer satisfying. It becomes a burden to be continually correcting mor-

tal illusions and exchanging them for divine ideas. We find that the demands for spiritual progress and for the development of understanding which the textbook requires cannot be fulfilled through the metaphysical approach, neither can the practice of Christian Science go forward on this basis. One asks, is not the one infinite Being infinitely conscious of itself? And is not divine self-consciousness — that one infinite consciousness which Being has of itself — infinitely more powerful, more present, more active and compelling than human thought about God can ever be? If so, why settle for the lesser when we can have the greater?

Slowly but surely, a new aim breaks into our life. This new aim is to accept all that scientific metaphysics teaches about God, not from the standpoint of how it makes us better metaphysicians, but from the standpoint of how the infinite One is infinitely conscious of itself, translating this divine self-knowing to human understanding through the categories of scientific metaphysics. Being is infinitely conscious of itself, and for this reason alone, God is understood — from God and through Science, which includes divine, scientific and Christian metaphysics. But how do we arrive at this exalted standpoint?

II. The Ascending and Descending Ways

The ordered ways of understanding and demonstration

Understanding and demonstration. Science requires both understanding and demonstration, not as static quantities which we either have or lack, but as evolving stages of spiritual consciousness. There is an ordered way of understanding, opening the subject, not just to those few who seem especially gifted in spiritual things, but to all who are willing to follow its way and adhere to its order. However, with each step forward in understanding, there is a higher basis for demonstration. The understanding gained automatically has its impact in evolving a higher life-practice. Thus understanding and demonstration are integrally linked in their development and cannot be separated.

On one hand, *understanding* leads thought up to God through ordered steps of spiritual development and so involves an ascending way. This ascending way causes us to go beyond the merely human and material worldview of ordinary metaphysics to cultivate the metaphysics

of Christian Science, an ordered understanding of the system of ideas. From there thought is led higher to the standpoint of the Science of Christian Science, in which consciousness proceeds from God and is one with the divine self-consciousness.

On the other hand, *demonstration* shows the spiritual power of all that proceeds from God and so presents a descending way. This descending way goes out from God. Starting from the standpoint of Science, it shows how divine self-consciousness operates through the metaphysics of Christian Science to prove the power of Mind over both mortal mind and its phenomena, e.g., matter and body.

The different role of metaphysics in the ascending and descending ways. Metaphysics has an important but different role in both directions, for both ways include scientific metaphysics. In the ascending way, the role of metaphysics is to school thought in the system of ideas, explaining the fundamentals and how they encompass the infinitude of being through the simplicity of a few basic categories. Metaphysics serves the purpose of spiritual education, exercising thought in the fundamental elements of Christian Science. By contrast, in the descending way, the purpose and role of metaphysics is quite different. Here, the whole system comes to bear on the specific case, showing which specific calculations within the whole of scientific metaphysics are necessary to correct the illusions of mortal mind.

The distinction between the different roles of metaphysics in the ascending and descending ways can be compared with how we learn and use arithmetic. In the way of understanding, students systematically learn the elements, the ten digits, and how they combine through the operational modes of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Only by thorough exercise in the categories of the science — in Christian Science, only by being drilled in scientific metaphysics — can students come to understand the subject as a whole and unified system. Neither arithmetic nor Christian Science could ever be understood correctly without such an ordered and careful grounding in the system.

However, when someone encounters a situation in which he must use arithmetic in daily life, it is useless to start going through numerical exercises. What the situation demands is a specific calculation, one he has most likely never done before but which is fully included within the system he has mastered. To arrive at the right calculation, he must work from an understanding of the whole system of arithmetic and how it

operates — in Christian Science, from the standpoint of Science. Only an understanding that proceeds from the whole system can reveal which specific computation is needed in an individual case.

To summarize the two different lines of activity in Christian Science, the ascending way of understanding represents the divine *law of unfoldment*. Pondering the ideas of God in their system (metaphysics) unfolds understanding in an ordered way, leading to that awareness which Being has of itself as an indivisible and coherent whole (Science). Thus, on the way of understanding, the metaphysics of Christian Science serves as a steppingstone to the Science of Christian Science.

Yet understanding always has an impact, a descent. Thus the descending way of demonstration shows the divine *law of translation*. The whole translates itself to the necessary specific truth, giving us what we need to know. From the understanding of the whole through its system (Science) comes one of the infinite truths, namely, that truth which is right for and adapted to the individual situation (metaphysics). Thus Science operates through scientific metaphysics to show which specific idea is necessary to solve a specific problem. Because these two ways are so important to the issue of metaphysics and Science, we should consider each more closely.

The ascending way of understanding

The way of understanding leads from ignorance about God to the consciousness which God, the one infinite Being, has of itself. Each step in the ascending order is necessary and cannot be sidestepped. What is this ordered development?

The first step. The ordered way out of the darkness of materialism to the light of spiritual understanding begins with the perception that the material world and outward appearances are not what they seem, for there is a mental realm which is above the physical and governs it. The physical is not a self-existent reality but rather an objectification of the mental — an outward manifestation of individual, collective and universal mortal beliefs. This step to ordinary metaphysics shows that the material, outward and visible world is governed by thought and thinking. However, the issue of what to think — what standard we should use to determine what is good and bad — is not included within the scope of ordinary metaphysics. At this point, all we know is that thought governs experience. If thought is good, experience will be positive and constructive; if it is bad, experience will be destructive.

The second step. The step to the metaphysics of Christian Science brings the realization that the universe is based on a system of spiritual ideas, which can be understood only through their order and Science. This system of ideas governs human thought. On one hand, it sets the standard for what is good; on the other hand, it guarantees that whatever does not reflect this standard will be ultimately self-destroyed, for it has no principle to sustain its actions. Because ideas are only good, only constructive, scientific metaphysics gives us the tools to correct the illusions and self-destructive tendencies of human thought. The window pane is cleaned, so that we can begin to approach the real subject of understanding, namely, the light itself —the structure of Being and its laws.

The importance of this step cannot be stressed enough. John Doorly's investigations into the Science of Christian Science started with scientific metaphysics and could not have gone forward without it. Only as we cultivate, in a thorough and consecrated way, the synonyms for God and their fourfold system of operation can we gain an understanding of the whole through the fundamentals of its Science. We gain a scientific method for understanding God as God is and so can go forward on a divine basis. Where does this way lead?

The third step. The more we cultivate consciousness according to the categories of Being, the more these categories constitute our standpoint. The sense of working our way up to God yields to the divinely subjective awareness which Being has of itself. John Doorly described it this way: "The categories of the days of creation, the synonymous terms, the Word, Christ, Christianity and Science, and Christian Science, absolute Christian Science, divine Science have led us up to the point where we appreciate and understand the infinite One in some measure. Now we are beginning to look out from the infinite One, and every one of those categories is becoming subjective to our thought" ('Talks on the Science of the Bible', Vol. VII, 1949 p. 108). The standpoint shifts, for the accent is no longer on thinking about God but on accepting that consciousness which Being has of its own infinite being.

The standpoint of Science is not mysticism. Is the third step a leap into mysticism? Far from it. Divine self-consciousness is not undefined, nor is it without order and differentiation. The order, structure and laws of being exist only because they express the way Being is conscious of itself. Science and its categories of differentiation are not human concep-

tions. Rather, they reflect that consciousness which is of God and from God. They represent Being's own infinite self-consciousness, though translated to the level of human understanding through symbols.

Consequently, the third step seems mystical only insofar as we are not grounded thoroughly in the metaphysics of Christian Science. In other words, without the second step, which explains the nature and operation of God through the divine system of ideas, the way of understanding is not followed. Instead of being understood, God is merely eulogized according to the speculations of mysticism and the conjectures and sentimentalism of human belief — none of which are Science or represent the standpoint of Science.

Therefore, though mystics often state that they have gone beyond symbols and can bask in the undifferentiated consciousness of God, they have no proof that the consciousness which they accept as divine is not just a flood of collective, conscious and unconscious, human, personal and religious beliefs. And even if they somehow could be sure that such a consciousness was divine, it would be no help to anyone else, for there would be no reliable method by which it could be taught. It is not a step forward to deny the ordered way necessary for development, neither is it right to claim the goal and throw away the ladder prematurely. Quite the contrary, if we really want to go forward and be confident in the progress being made, the method is to ground ourselves ever more thoroughly in the metaphysics of Christian Science, for this alone ensures that we build on a divine, not a human, basis.

We cannot stop with the second stage. Just as we cannot skip the second step of thoroughly grounding ourselves in the metaphysics of Christian Science, we cannot stop there either. Cleaning the window pane is only a step towards the real subject, namely, of understanding the light itself. Our aim is to be one with what Being itself is and to let this divine consciousness transform all levels of experience. For this, we need to go beyond the metaphysics of Christian Science to the Science of Christian Science. Only then do the categories of Being cease to be objects of human thought for us and instead gather their divine meaning as the power and presence of the infinite One and its infinite self-awareness. Why is this step forward so necessary?

If we do not go forward from metaphysics to Science, we run the risk of building our concept of Christian Science on the basis of ordinary metaphysics. Divine metaphysics explains God's nature and operation.

But it does not yet answer the question of who or what can actually be conscious of what God itself is. If we do not answer this question from the standpoint of Science, we invariably answer it with ordinary metaphysics — our thinking; we think about God, and this thought helps us. In Christian Science, if we do not go forward, we fall back, for there is no standing still.

Spiritual development cannot be forced. At the same time, we must also realize that the great step from metaphysics to Science cannot be forced or achieved merely by deciding humanly that we should have such a standpoint. Indeed, to claim this consciousness for a person or any human mentality is a self-evident contradiction. Instead, the consciousness which goes out from God breaks on us gradually, and only as the human sense of having a mind separate from God yields. In other words, it comes as a result of genuine spiritual growth through the ascending order of understanding. Our role in fostering this development is to cultivate each of the ordered steps with an eye to the goal, not taking the steps as ends in themselves but as stages which continually lead us higher. We should therefore not exclude the standpoint of Science by thinking that it is too high or too abstract, for only as this standpoint rules in us does the meaning of the categories become divinely subjective to us, therefore practical and transforming. For human understanding, there can be no descent without an ascent. This means that we must have the openness and courage to go forward to Science — to see what the universe looks like from the standpoint of the light itself — and not stop with scientific metaphysics.

The seven synonymous terms for God viewed from metaphysics and Science

To see the importance of the ascending way from metaphysics to Science, we can consider this development as it pertains to each of the seven synonymous terms for God. First, we can consider the synonyms from the standpoint of the metaphysics of Christian Science. Second, we can consider them from the standpoint of the Science of Christian Science. And third, we can bring in a touch of the descending way by seeing how the higher standpoint of Science includes metaphysics, the contemplation of ideas, but from the all-encompassing consciousness of the infinite One itself.

Mind

a) *Mind from the standpoint of scientific metaphysics.* In divine metaphysics, we learn that Mind creates all as idea and that ideas constitute man and the universe. Being has to do only with ideas, which dissolve illusions and false concepts about God. Thus our job in metaphysics is to think more and more in terms of ideas and to let go of human and material beliefs. We must think about God and entertain only divine concepts.

This is a great step forward, but it is not the end. In metaphysics, it is still we who think about God. The understanding of being depends on what we know about God and the extent to which we fill our thought with ideas instead of illusions. The scope of metaphysics is limited by what we hold in our consciousness.

b) *Mind from the standpoint of Science.* From the standpoint of Science, Mind eternally knows itself through its own infinite idea. Mind is all-knowing and includes the consciousness of all ideas within its infinite self-conception. This divine understanding which Mind has of itself and its ideational universe encompasses infinitely more than any human thought about God could ever include, no matter how cultivated it might be. Human thought is always limited, whereas Mind is unlimited and has an unlimited awareness of its own creation. Mind knows itself infinitely and knows nothing but itself.

c) *Science includes metaphysics.* As the unlimited and all-knowing intelligence of Mind becomes our basis, rather than our own limited human thought about God, we find that this includes all that we need to know with regard to any specific case. Because Mind's infinite self-knowing includes all ideas, it includes each individual idea that is right and needed in any given situation. The idea is known of Mind by virtue of Mind's infinite self-knowing and is no longer bound by the narrow human concept of it.

Spirit

a) *Spirit from the standpoint of scientific metaphysics.* In metaphysics, we learn that Spirit is the line of demarcation between the real and the unreal, causing all that is true and good to unfold in us, while at the same time causing all that is false and unlike God to be destroyed

through the warfare between Spirit and the flesh. Our job in metaphysics is constantly to distinguish between what is right and wrong, good and evil, etc., and then to overcome the evil in a continual warfare against it.

True, it is a great step forward to see that we must adhere to spiritual order and reject whatever is unlike Spirit. The question is, in any specific situation, how do we know what is good and what is evil? Can we, with our thinking, make the great separation which Spirit requires? Can we say for ourselves or others what expresses the working of an idea and what is evil? In metaphysics, we would decide, and then we would struggle to overcome that which we call evil.

b) *Spirit from the standpoint of Science.* Science shows that Spirit is the only, against which there is no other, no duality. Spirit unfolds only its own spiritual nature, which is never mingled with anything contrary to Spirit. Through the spiritual order of unfoldment, the onliness of Spirit and spiritual reality causes the claim of unreality to disappear, not through struggle, but because Spirit knows no other reality. Struggle means there is an opposite. Because Spirit neither has nor knows any opposite, in Science there is no struggle, no fight against error.

c) *Science includes metaphysics.* As the onliness of Spirit constitutes our standpoint, Spirit and not our thinking separates the real from the unreal. Spirit is the line of demarcation. Humanly, we cannot and even need not know what needs to unfold or what should be destroyed in any specific situation. Only Spirit and the understanding of the whole which Spirit imparts can tell us how to draw right distinctions and what should be separated. Because Science includes metaphysics, there is a right and ongoing separation always at work, but not according to the categories of human thought.

Soul

a) *Soul from the standpoint of scientific metaphysics.* When we learn about Soul in metaphysics, we see that we must identify ourselves with ideas and so define ourselves divinely. To do this, we must go the way from sense to Soul and see that our thoughts are controlled by the higher rule of spiritual ideas. Everything must be identified rightly, so that whatever does not conform to Soul is changed. In specific cases, this means that we must identify what the problem is and then find the definite answer.

The question is, how can human thinking perceive what needs to be changed? True, metaphysics teaches that Soul changes everything unlike Soul. But in any given situation, we cannot be certain whether we witness the Christ in operation, which need not be changed, or whether we face the effect of animal magnetism, which should be handled through Soul. We are not God and therefore cannot define even the problem correctly, much less the solution. Only Soul knows the true identity of being. Thus the metaphysical concept of Soul, though a necessary beginning, points further to the standpoint of Science and what Soul defines as its idea.

b) Soul from the standpoint of Science. In Science, it is Soul, not we, that defines everything, for only Soul can identify all things rightly according to its own unchangeable identity. Because Soul is infinite, Soul controls all. Soul is sinless, so that in Soul there is nothing which needs to be reformed. Nothing can touch Soul, for Soul is what it is and remains what it is eternally.

c) Science includes metaphysics. Because Science includes metaphysics, Soul causes the true identity of all things to appear, so that it becomes evident what should be welcomed as the Christ-activity and what should be handled or changed. Thus, as we start from Soul and what it knows, we cannot fail. Why? Through Soul-sense, Soul defines everything with a scope and precision that cannot be matched by any human analysis of a situation. Working from the standpoint of Soul, we find that whatever does not belong to us divinely is exchanged. We and the whole situation are transformed according to Soul's divine intention, entirely independent of any human or material sense of things.

Principle

a) Principle from the standpoint of scientific metaphysics. Metaphysics teaches that Principle requires demonstration through its system and Science of ideas. Our job in metaphysics is to use the spiritual power of Principle in order to bring out harmony.

The question is, can we with our concepts demonstrate the infinite Principle of being? Divine laws cannot be made subject to human desires. We cannot dictate when, how and in what way harmony should translate itself to human experience. After all, what is a harmonious solution? What we deem harmonious in our immediate situation may be

disastrous in the long run. What we deem a right demonstration for ourselves may be detrimental to others. These are thoroughly human and not divine concepts of demonstration. Time and again, we want a situation changed because we suffer from it, when what is actually occurring is divine Principle's own demonstration, bringing to the case exactly what is needed. Thus, rather than attaching ourselves to a certain concept of what needs to be demonstrated, we must see that true demonstration consists in accepting the demonstration of Principle's own idea — what the infinite Principle itself purposes to accomplish.

b) *Principle from the standpoint of Science.* In Science, Principle demonstrates itself as itself. God demonstrates the whole of God. Accordingly, the aim of divine demonstration is not primarily to overcome latent or concrete error, for in the realm of Principle and its harmony, error is unknown. If we consider Principle and its demonstration solely within the context of solving human problems and healing the disharmonies of the mortal, we belittle the infinite Principle, making error and disharmony the starting-point. If the purpose of the infinite Principle were only to demonstrate power over error, error would be necessary for Principle to achieve its purpose, which would destroy the coherency and unity of being.

From the standpoint of Science, Principle's power of demonstration is focused, not on error or disharmony, but on a much higher concept of demonstration, namely, on generating and solving positive problems. This involves a continual expansion of the frame of reference to bring out the higher range of Principle's power and activity through Science. The aim is to detect the prime categories, to see new relations within those categories and thus to explore the possibilities of structuring and restructuring within the subject, all of which promotes spiritual progress.

c) *Science includes metaphysics.* The system of Principle (Science) encompasses the infinite calculations of ideas (metaphysics). Consequently, it includes not only the ability to pose and solve positive problems but also the capacity to correct negative problems, namely, breakdowns that arise from a misinterpretation of Principle and its system. Principle's divine demonstration operates on all levels to accomplish its purpose, both to advance the development of the idea of Science and to resolve misunderstanding. Yet no matter what aspect of demonstration comes into focus, the fundamental standpoint and aim of demonstration is governed by Science, not by human intentions. We seek only that

demonstration which proceeds from Principle and serves the divine purpose.

Life

a) Life from the standpoint of scientific metaphysics. In metaphysics, we have the great desire to live the idea, to live Life and to practise Christian Science. We are impressed that Life requires a living example — works more than words. To do this, we must go the way of Life. Jesus said, “Follow me.”

The trouble is, if we live Life, we live only *our* concept of Life, which is always narrowly conceived compared to what Life itself is. According to the metaphysical concept of Life, we live only what *we* know about God. As a result, we practise not the Science of God but merely our concept of it. Even our best conceptions of Life are limited and can be mistaken. If we formulate the image of Life that must be lived, we live in the narrow ruts of human concepts and are not open to the kind of progress that comes by mutation to entirely new dimensions and possibilities. With our best intentions and highest hopes, we actually close ourselves to the infinite and boundless expression which Life includes for its own idea.

b) Life from the standpoint of Science. In Science, Life is infinite and lives itself infinitely. The impulse and spontaneity of being inhere in Life itself and what it expresses as an infinite and unlimited self-conception. Life lives Life itself, not a human or metaphysical concept about Life. “Life demonstrates Life” (306:7). Further, “Life is reflected in existence” (516:9). This corrects the false concept that, although Life is divine being, human thought has to reflect Life in order to bring it into existence. Life is infinite being and existence. There is no other Life than the Life which is God. Therefore Life lives only itself. It cannot and need not be poured through the narrow sieve of human and metaphysical concepts in order to express itself fully.

c) Science includes metaphysics. As Life itself and not our concept of Life constitutes our standpoint, we become open to a much higher sense of life-practice. We stop trying to live the divine with our limited human abilities and instead let Life live us in the way of God’s appointing. Life has its own ideal and operates according to its own divine conception. True, we may at first feel insecure in this approach, for humanly we do

not know where the way leads or what Life has in store for us. Yet we can know that Life always brings new and higher vistas into our experience, for Life is spontaneous, irresistible and impels mankind forward. At the impulse of Life, we go the way, not according to human concepts of what the way should be, but as Life precipitates itself on our entire life-experience. Life presents a way of fullness and infinite progression, which not only answers the concerns of metaphysics but far surpasses them from a broader and more encompassing standpoint.

Truth

a) Truth from the standpoint of scientific metaphysics. In metaphysics, we learn that Truth destroys error. Therefore, when problems arise, we must handle each situation with the specific truth which offsets the specific error. To do this, we fill our thoughts with truths we have learned and then apply them to our problems.

The inescapable question is: How can we know which error must be corrected? Error always has its disguises. And even if we could know the error, the method is wrong, for divine metaphysics never proceeds from the problem. However, this knowledge still does not bring the solution, for how do we know which specific truth is needed? Filling our thoughts with truths is no more effective than filling our thoughts with random arithmetic calculations whenever we are faced with a specific sum to calculate. The method is wrong.

b) Truth from the standpoint of Science. From the standpoint of Science, Truth is the whole, which not only encompasses all specific truths but also is conscious of the infinite truths within one coherent structure. Truth is the one infinite Truth and therefore presents each specific truth not in isolation but through its gestalt, its whole-structure. Because Truth-consciousness, not human thinking, knows Truth infinitely, each specific truth is operative within its divine and scientific context, for it can never be separated from the whole which is Truth itself.

c) Science includes metaphysics. Because Science includes metaphysics, Truth provides the standard which uncovers all that does not conform to Truth. Thus Truth, not the human mind, exposes the specific error which needs correction. Of this the textbook states: "Let Truth uncover and destroy error in God's own way" (542:19). As error is uncovered, Truth brings to light that specific solution which is perfectly adapted to solving the problem.

This introduces an entirely new and scientific method of practice. Working from the standpoint of Science, we no longer try to handle error with some specific truth we have learned in metaphysics. Why? A truth out of context is not a scientific truth, for it is not seen within its proper system and categories. Science demands that we rely on the whole, on Truth-consciousness itself, for only from the whole can we discover which specific individualization of Truth is right and needed. In this way, that individual truth appears which alone is the scientific truth — namely, that truth which is right within the whole.

Whereas metaphysics without Science tries to make a single truth work according to the needs of a so-called part, in Science the individual truth is empowered by the whole system and structure of being to accomplish the divine ideal, namely, that ideal which God has in view. It is a truth which comes from the whole, represents the whole and works within the whole-structure to bring a whole-solution. Thus a scientific truth not only comes from God but always works in God and for God. It never leaves the whole to enter the service of finite human concepts.

The effect of this higher method of practice is not the addition of one more truth to the human mind but rather the complete transformation and restructuring of human thought out of itself on the basis and from the standpoint of Science. Truth demonstrates the whole structure of divine consciousness through scientific metaphysics. That truth is known which Truth has in consciousness, for Truth is Mind and knows only through Mind, not through human thinking. Thus the specific truth is known, not because of the human mind, but in spite of it and with the effect of dissolving the human-mind basis entirely. As a result, the practice of Science solves the problem of existence at its root, correcting not merely those problems which bother us, but even more importantly, those problems which most need correction — problems of which we may be totally unaware.

Love

a) *Love from the standpoint of scientific metaphysics.* In metaphysics, we learn that Love is perfection and that we can partake of Love's perfection the more we are aware of ideas. To this end, we must build up a consciousness of ideas and watch that no illusions or mortal misconceptions are allowed to enter. This metaphysical approach to Love is based

on accretion, on adding as many ideas to our thought as possible in the hope that someday we can have enough ideas to gain heaven, perfection.

However, understanding can never be achieved through collecting isolated insights, no matter how many or how exalted. Understanding is not based on addition or accretion but on the awareness of the structure of relationships and how they operate within one whole. Thus, though metaphysics provides the framework through which we learn about Love and its ideas, we cannot gain Love's consciousness of perfection by stopping with metaphysics. Human thinking will never be able to conceive of the whole of being, neither is it our role to do so, since human thinking itself is limited. The finite can never encompass the infinite. To know and work from perfection, we must go forward to Science.

b) *Love from the standpoint of Science.* Love is the great unifying and integrating power in being. Love is all-embracing, all-inclusive and never without its full manifestation as the universal plan of perfection. Thus Love has its own idea and its own means for bringing this ideal into complete expression. Love imparts its own idea of perfection, not as a quantity in human thought, but as the quality of spiritual consciousness which reflects Love's consciousness of itself and can never be separated from it.

c) *Science includes metaphysics.* As we take the standpoint of Science as our standpoint, we see that the unfoldment of Love's perfection has nothing to do with how many ideas we hold in our thought. Instead, we accept that Love alone can encompass the universe of its self-expression and thus include all ideas within the consciousness of perfection. This attitude makes us open to the law of Love, which out of its superabundance supplies us with just what we need. Because Science includes metaphysics, Love comes to us on the level of human thought as a growing assurance that Love is present in every situation as an ever-present help, redeeming all that is good, while at the same time delivering us from whatever is unlike God. "Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need" (494:10).

The step from metaphysics to Science is brought out very clearly in a statement by Mary Baker Eddy: "Now can't you all get out of addition? You do not have to stay in addition all the time. If you have the same principle it is just as easy and in fact easier to multiply than it is to add. You *must rise* out of the addition of Christian Science and let God, divine Mind, multiply through you." (Coll. p. 176) Addition is burden-

some and an approach that cannot achieve its aim. From the standpoint of metaphysics, perfection can never be fulfilled. By contrast, Science fulfils the aspiration of metaphysics for perfection but from the higher standpoint of Love and its all-embracing consciousness of itself and its universe. The whole realm of Love multiplies through us to bring out its own perfection, namely, that perfection which is planned and purposed of God, not of finite human concepts.

The contemplation of the ideas of the synonym for God vs. the consciousness of the synonym for God itself. These comparisons through each of the seven synonyms for God illustrate the great differences between metaphysics and Science in standpoint, method and consciousness. Whereas metaphysics involves a way of climbing up the ladder, so to speak, adding and adding new insights and information, Science proceeds from the entirety of the synonym for God itself — from the whole that is God, which includes the universe of ideas in their order, structure and right relationships. Whereas metaphysics has the role of correcting human thought and pointing it towards the divine, Science proceeds from the infinitude of divine self-consciousness, namely, that consciousness which God has of itself as its own infinite idea. In short, whereas scientific metaphysics deals only with the computation of specific ideas and the contemplation of individual truths, Science starts from the whole, from Truth as such, which naturally includes all specific truths. Science reveals the fullness and superabundance of the synonym itself, which sees only its own being, while including within its scope the universe of divine self-awareness.

The descending way of demonstration

Science uses the redundancy principle. From the standpoint of Science and the fullness of the synonym-consciousness comes the way of demonstration. This descending order, because it proceeds from the whole, brings to each situation all that the whole includes, but in individualized form. Herein lies the redundancy principle, which Science employs as its higher method of practice. With the redundancy principle, far more is included than is required in order to ensure that the specific need is optimally met. Science brings to each situation the whole structure of being. This whole-structure lifts everything onto a higher basis, not only by defining what needs to be solved, but also by demonstrating those

solutions which bring the greatest progress and the most all-encompassing blessing.

Thus Science works out the entire proposition of demonstration and practice from a higher level. From the standpoint of Science, each situation is flooded with the consciousness which proceeds from the whole and has access to the infinitude of being. Whereas metaphysical practice presupposes perceived lack and tries to fill this lack with a single idea, Science operates from present fullness and the consciousness of the superabundance of being. Science embraces the infinite realm of ideas from the start, involving a complete mutation in the method of practice. What is the descending way of demonstration?

The descending way of Science contrasted with metaphysical practice. Whereas the ascending way of understanding leads from metaphysics to Science, the descending way presents the reverse order. Demonstration proceeds from the standpoint of Science, the consciousness of the whole, and lets divine consciousness define what is needed in the individual case. In the ascending way, metaphysics shows us how to calculate correctly with spiritual ideas, so that we can come to know reality. But Science alone can show us which among the infinite possible calculations is right in any given case. Thus Science provides the basis and starting-point for the right use of metaphysics in practice. In the descending way, metaphysics is not the first step, but rather is that which follows from the whole and the divine power of the whole to individualize itself. The starting-point of practice must always be Science, for only from the consciousness of the whole (Science) can the specific truth crystallize (metaphysics).

This descending way of demonstration distinguishes the method of practice in Christian Science. Whereas most methods rely on the human mind and its analysis of a case, the method in Christian Science bases everything on God, crowning Mind alone as the Messiah in the healing work. "God is the power in the Messianic work" (27:8). The redeeming and healing power lies wholly in God (Science), not in what we think about God (metaphysics). Thus healing occurs as the result of the divine law of translation, which translates the harmony and perfection of the whole to each specific situation. The power of demonstration comes from the standpoint of Science, not from our thinking, for metaphysics per se cannot be a savior.

The descending order of demonstration cannot be sidestepped. For

example, we cannot start with considering individual ideas or specific calculations in the healing work. Why? With such an approach, we try to apply what *we* know to something which *we* think should be healed. Rather than letting the situation be defined according to the standpoint of God — the Principle of being through the categories of Science — we try, with our thinking, perceptions and single truths, to dictate what is wrong and what the solution should be. Yet this method is really no different from ordinary metaphysics, which at least admits that it relies on the human mind and sense-perceptions. By contrast, divinely scientific demonstration operates according to the descending order from Science to metaphysics, from the whole to the individualized aspect, from Mind to its idea. Without this order, there is no divine basis for practice, hence no divine demonstration.

The descending direction is indicated very clearly in the statement by Mary Baker Eddy: “God gives you His spiritual ideas, and in turn, they give you daily supplies” (Mis. 307:1). The starting-point is the whole, God and its consciousness of the infinite realm of ideas, not some particular idea of God which we have learned. Because God includes all, from God alone flows all that we need. The saving power is based on Science and its revelation of the specific spiritual calculation needed. Only then do we have the right use of metaphysics, which makes us receptive to the specific truth that Science reveals.

In short, metaphysics is no less necessary for demonstration than it is for understanding, but only if it takes its right place in the descending order. In practice, metaphysics is no longer the steppingstone to Science, as it is on the ascending way of understanding. Instead, it is the outcome, or result, of the standpoint of Science. Science translates the whole to the point of scientific metaphysics. Science, the consciousness of Being itself, demonstrates scientific metaphysics; it brings forth the awareness of what is specifically and individually right within the whole.

How the textbook defines the role of metaphysics in practice. The textbook is very clear about the role of metaphysics in the descending way of practice. However, we must learn how to read the textbook properly. Otherwise we unwittingly interject our own concepts, beliefs and attitudes into its statements and thereby miss what the textbook itself teaches. The main difficulty is that many students read single sentences, or even single phrases, imputing to such phrases a meaning that is unrelated and even contrary to the given context. Such an isolated,

fragmented approach to subjects always leads to misunderstanding. Largely for this reason, the practice of scientific metaphysics and its right place in the descending order have not been understood. Perhaps the easiest way to correct the false method of approaching the textbook atomistically is to consider an example — one that especially illustrates the importance of understanding statements in their context.

Example: metaphysics exchanges the objects of sense for spiritual ideas. A well-known and often quoted statement on metaphysics can, out of context, lead to a great many misunderstandings about the right method and order of practice. The statement reads: “Metaphysics resolves things into thoughts, and exchanges the objects of sense for the ideas of Soul” (269:14). Indeed, the practice of ordinary metaphysics begins with the “objects of sense”. It starts with the human or material sense of a problem and then reasons from “things” to find a solution. But is this the practice of Christian Science? If it were, there would be no difference between Christian Science and ordinary metaphysics.

The marginal heading, “Divine metaphysics”, indicates that the statement clearly refers to the metaphysics of Christian Science and not to ordinary metaphysics. But should we conclude that the practice of divine metaphysics begins with the objects of sense? This is what many Christian Scientists believe. When faced with a problem, they very often turn to the situation and deduce from the material or mental circumstances which ideas are needed — a method absolutely contrary to the teaching and practice of Christian Science. Divine metaphysics never starts from appearances — from human, personal or material sense-evidence. It starts, not from the problem, but always from the Principle of being, from the standpoint of Science, which alone includes the solution to all problems of existence.

How then are we to understand the statement in the textbook, which would seem to express the very opposite approach? The only way to understand the statement correctly is to consider it in its context.

The paragraph opens by stating that, since Christian Science is of God and makes man Godlike, divine metaphysics is wholly spiritual in its basis and conception: “Metaphysics is above physics, and matter does not enter into metaphysical premises or conclusions” (269:11). Here the text states unmistakably that divine metaphysics never starts from matter or the “objects of sense”. Instead, it excludes matter from all its reasoning. Why? The answer is given in the next sentence: “The catego-

ries of metaphysics rest on one basis, the divine Mind” (269:13). In Christian Science, metaphysics rests on God and operates from Science. Material sense and human perceptions provide no basis for practice in the metaphysics of Christian Science. Only when this point is clearly established does the text present the statement: “Metaphysics resolves things into thoughts, and exchanges the objects of sense for the ideas of Soul” (269:14). Divine metaphysics starts from one basis only, that of God, the divine Mind, which knows neither matter nor mortal mind. Only from this divine basis does metaphysics resolve whatever appears to us as the “objects of sense”, so that the one and only reality is brought to light and understood through the “ideas of Soul”. The order of demonstration is clear and unmistakable.

Another reference to divine metaphysics further emphasizes its place in the descending order of practice. We find the statement: “Matter, examined in the light of divine metaphysics, disappears” (274:31). Once again, the starting-point of the paragraph is the standpoint of Science: “Divine Science is absolute, and permits no half-way position in learning its Principle and rule” (274:23). “Science and understanding, governed by the unerring and eternal Mind, destroy the imaginary copartnership, matter and mind” (274:27). As we have seen, the false sense of metaphysical practice begins with the human mind as a legitimate standpoint from which to work out the problems of existence by using a knowledge of God and its ideas. By contrast, the true practice of metaphysics proceeds from Science, which operates to resolve the human-mind basis entirely. Only then does the concept of matter as a thing or reality finally disappear, and all healing rest on Mind. Coming from Science, divine metaphysics resolves the human-mind basis. Things are resolved into thoughts, the objects of sense are exchanged for the ideas of Soul, and matter as such disappears from consciousness. Because the order proceeds from Science, the basis is wholly divine, excluding matter from both premise and conclusion.

III. The Implications in Practice

Science shows the limits of metaphysical practice

Scientific practice cannot start with metaphysics. Unfortunately, when it comes to practice, the false method of starting with metaphysics, not

to mention ordinary metaphysics, is prevalent among Christian Scientists, even though such practice is the very opposite of what Christian Science teaches. It may be helpful, therefore, to analyze this incorrect approach more specifically in order to show why it brings neither real solutions nor real progress.

Basically, the tendency of metaphysical practice is to use Christian Science as a servant to fulfil human desires. Science, by contrast, demands adjustment in the opposite direction. True practice in Christian Science causes all our thoughts, feelings, perceptions and desires to be molded divinely and formed anew, so that they are subordinated to serving the universal idea of Science. Practice follows the direction of true prayer, which "cannot change the Science of being, but . . . tends to bring us into harmony with it" (2:15). This is the premise and starting-point of the textbook. Man must come into line with God in order to experience God's harmony — the only harmony there is. Science does not show us how to make God adapt itself to us. The difference is clear and simple. How then do we slip back into the metaphysical approach?

Human thinking defines which question has to be solved. As we have seen, only Science can define what the problem is or what question has come into focus. However, instead of starting from the whole, the metaphysical practitioner starts from single problems, which he tries to handle with single truths. His metaphysical analysis is limited and humanly contrived, therefore spiritually wrong. There are always vital factors unknown and unseen by the human mind, otherwise the human mind would be God, all-knowing. Often, the very thing that we want most turns out to be the worst for us. Conversely, those experiences which we deem full of trials and suffering in the end may bring the greatest spiritual growth — far more than if we had remained comfortable and complacent in our beliefs. Such lessons should teach us once and for all not to rely on the human mind nor to trust what it tells us about a situation.

Solving isolated problems. Another common pitfall that leads straight back to ordinary metaphysics is the tendency to regard life as one long string of isolated problems, each of which demands an immediate and specific solution. Even if we are successful in solving single problems, we may come to the end of our life and find we have missed the boat as a whole. What do we really achieve by running after countless single truths? More than ever, our age needs whole-solutions — solutions which proceed from the whole and work with the whole, solutions which

take into account all aspects and integrate them with the larger picture. The method of patching isolated problems with partial solutions, conceived and contrived by human thinking, proves itself to be destructive in both Science and life. Its results are short-lived and in the end break down. To go forward, we must use a holistic method, one that proceeds from God through Science. Only then can we address the problem at its root and find real solutions.

Solving only negative problems. In metaphysics, practice centers around the fact that ideas dissolve illusions — specific truths solve specific problems. Although not untrue, if we take this aspect of Christian Science as our starting-point, it can pervert the practice of Christian Science into the narrow channel of always correcting negative problems. For many, the aim of Christian Science is primarily that of solving the ills of human existence. With this approach, the *raison d'être* of Christian Science would hinge on the presupposition that something has gone wrong. Accordingly, the whole of God would be reduced to the limited purpose of fixing our mistakes and serving our wishes.

From the standpoint of Science, the healing practice is not the only nor even the most important aim of demonstration. For example, the demonstration of Principle also includes the preventive practice, which corrects mortal beliefs and misunderstandings before they are objectified in experience. This kind of practice not only heals the error which we see and feel but, even more importantly, protects us from latent error, removing the cause before it erupts in crises or breakdowns. In addition to the curative and preventive aspects of practice, Principle's demonstration reaches further to include higher aims, such as the demonstration of the advancing idea of Science, bringing successive stages of unfoldment in understanding. Finally, all these aspects of demonstration serve the highest aim, namely, to demonstrate Principle's own harmony. The highest demonstration reveals the omni-action of divine Principle itself, which not only knows no problem but excludes even the possibility of problems arising.

Christian Science practice is based on divine Mind-reading

Nowhere in her writings did Mary Baker Eddy denounce the metaphysical approach to healing, for she regarded it as an important step beyond the methods of exclusively physical healing. However, she never referred to it as an aim or end in itself but always in the context of

“suffer it to be so now”. Metaphysical arguments for truth and against error “are only human auxiliaries to aid in bringing thought into accord with the spirit of Truth and Love, which heals the sick and the sinner” (454:32). It is the spirit of Truth and Love, not the mental argument, which heals. To believe otherwise is to render practice thoroughly mentalistic, based on the human mind, and thus to shut out the practice based on God and divine Mind-reading. Since divine Mind-reading is central to the practice of Christian Science, separating it from the practice of ordinary metaphysics, we must be clear about what divine Mind-reading is and how it operates.

The definition of immortal Mind-reading. The textbook explains both immortal Mind-reading and mortal mind-reading. “There is mortal mind-reading and immortal Mind-reading. The latter is a revelation of divine purpose through spiritual understanding, by which man gains the divine Principle and explanation of all things” (83:25). From this explanation alone, we can see that immortal, divine Mind-reading includes four factors: 1) the revelation of the divine purpose; 2) the means through which the revelation comes, namely, spiritual understanding; 3) the outcome of this revelation, namely, that man gains the divine Principle, a sense of the whole; and 4) the interpretation of the whole Principle, which has within itself the translating power to give us a right “explanation of all things”.

Divine Mind-reading is based on Science. This definition of immortal Mind-reading indicates the descending way of practice. At each point, divine Mind-reading works from the whole, from God, and lets the whole define the specific. It shows how Science leads to scientific metaphysics as the proper direction of practice, presenting an order that cannot be reversed. Here, just as Science operates from the whole of the synonym for God, divine Mind-reading reveals the divine purpose, that purpose which is right within the whole, not a purpose which fulfils human aims. From the whole, we gain a spiritual understanding of Principle’s whole structure and system of relationships, not merely knowledge of a specific but isolated idea which we then apply to our problem. Only from this spiritual understanding of the whole (Science) can we gain the right “explanation of all things” (metaphysics).

Correcting misconceptions about divine Mind-reading. With this definition of immortal Mind-reading, we can correct some of the basic misunderstandings about the descending way and its method of practice.

For example, immortal Mind-reading does not mean that we, with our human thinking, learn to read the divine Mind. Instead, it means that Mind reads its own being as idea. The human mind is brought into line with what Mind knows of itself; Mind is not brought into the realm of human thinking. Thus Mind, not human thinking, causes all things to be analyzed rightly. Naturally, this method requires that we are open more to Mind's revelation of the divine purpose than we are to our own desires, opinions and judgments. There is a saying, "Seldom is there a heart still enough to hear God speak." For this, we need to be well drilled in the letter and spirit of the categories of Being, so that they swell into great tones of reality that operate with power and fullness in consciousness — a power that far outweighs even the best intentions of human thought.

Another common misconception about immortal Mind-reading is that we expect the divine Mind to tell us specifically what is wrong in a situation. This is not Science. Divine Mind knows only itself and is conscious only of its own ideas; it knows no error, whether in the form of persons, bodies, situations or any material condition. Mind cannot inform us of anything which does not exist in its realm. Instead, immortal Mind-reading brings to light the true identities of being and the reality of spiritual ideas. Only then, through the law of opposites, do we become aware of the counterfeit claim — the specific illusion to be corrected. That truth which is known by Mind uncovers the error and causes it to be replaced with the facts of being. Thus the correction takes place with the unfoldment of understanding and through the awareness of the universe which Mind knows. This is the only scientific method by which Mind 'reads' the human mind. "Science enables one to read the human mind, but not as a clairvoyant" (87:15). The realm of knowing is wholly from Mind and of Mind; Mind never goes outside the realm of its own infinite self-awareness.

Mortal mind-reading. What then is mortal mind-reading? Simply speaking, whatever is not the result of immortal Mind-reading is mortal mind-reading. The textbook describes it as follows: "Mortal mind-reading and immortal Mind-reading are distinctly opposite standpoints, from which cause and effect are interpreted. The act of reading mortal mind investigates and touches only human beliefs" (83:29). Here again we see how necessary it is to take the standpoint of Science. Whenever we try to investigate cause and effect from any basis other than Mind,

we fall back into mortal mind-reading. We revolve in the realm of human beliefs, thereby closing the door on the divine purpose which Science otherwise reveals.

The role of solving individual problems. Yet questions immediately arise: Is it not right that I should find solutions to specific problems? Do we abandon the healing of individual cases? Certainly not. The Principle of Christian Science practice most definitely includes the solution to every specific problem, demanding that we work out our life on the basis of the one divine Principle of being and its scientific method of practice. To this end, the textbook makes full allowance even for specific metaphysical argumentation, though only as a step along the way, never as the ultimate (for example, see pp. 411:3-12, 412:10-15, and 418:16-25). The isolated-problem, specific-argument-for-truth approach to practice is always treated as a transitional phase for the student. Sooner or later, we must have the courage to go beyond this exclusively metaphysical concept and to work more and more from Science.

This does not mean that we should force the human mind to give up its legitimate desire for help in urgent cases. As we have seen, the standpoint of Science grows in us slowly through spiritual order and as the result of spiritual progress; it is not something that can be forced or decided humanly from one day to the next. Therefore we need the greatest patience with ourselves and the greatest tolerance for others as we work out of old habits and methods. Even the faintest recognition that metaphysical healing is not the highest aim sets thought working in new channels and makes it more receptive to the idea and practice of Science.

Only Science can solve today's problems

As we consider the problems of today, we see more and more that the old method of solving single problems is no longer adequate. Indeed, on a world scale, such an approach has given rise to the most critical problems we face today. What is needed is not more or better single solutions but a complete mutation in standpoint and consciousness. We need a new, divinely holistic method for arriving at solutions. Truly divine solutions bring not better things, bodies, societies, etc., but a complete restructuring of consciousness. Once the cause of a false consciousness is removed, the destructive effects disappear, having no basis to support them. Thus the great challenge of today is to go forward to a completely

new standpoint of consciousness, one that is governed by Science and is not at the mercy of dualistic human thinking.

From the standpoint of Science, consciousness is clothed with the complete garment of Truth, bringing to each question the entire structure of being as the basis for its answer, but in a perfectly adapted and individualized form. The focus shifts from constant concern with negative problems to the far greater and more important question: How is the divine idea, the divine purpose, revealing itself to the present age? This positive question makes us open to the standpoint of Science, which includes the solution to the many specific problems of human existence. Only the idea which is known and purposed by God can show us what should be demonstrated and how it should be achieved. Humanly and metaphysically, we cannot know; therefore we only make things worse by meddling and interjecting human judgments and opinions. Only through Science are we open and receptive enough to welcome the universal idea of God. Then, with a consciousness governed by Science, we are not tempted to interfere with Love's plan of universal redemption, for we no longer circumscribe the fullness of scientific demonstration within the limited aims of metaphysical thought.

