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**ONLY SCIENCE
REVEALS**

MAX KAPPELER

Abbreviations for the works of Mary Baker Eddy:

- S&H** Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures.
Mis. Miscellaneous Writings.
'01. Message to The Mother Church 1901.
My. The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany.



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ONLY SCIENCE REVEALS

In all cultures, throughout all time, man has been stirred by the deepest and most fundamental questions of being. First: What is the primal origin and source of all being? Second: Is there a purpose in being, towards which everything leads? Third, and of greatest importance to human existence: What sense does it all make anyway? These are not theoretical questions that concern only metaphysical philosophers or a few aesthetes, but questions that concern everyone; every individual must find concrete, satisfying and compelling answers. Why? Only as we know the origin of being are we able to perceive the aim that guides and moves all things; and only as we are able to entrust our life to a plan which is directed towards a definite purpose do we gain a positive answer to the question of the meaning of life.

The answer and its right interpretation

Only divine Principle can interpret the universe

The answer in the Bible. The answer to these questions is indicated in the first two verses of 'Genesis' in the Bible: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." (1:1,2) This simple statement focuses that which is most essential about being: its origin, its aim and its fundamental meaning. However, we see how this statement answers our questions about being only when we gain its right and divinely scientific interpretation. Only through the correct method of interpretation can the "so-called mystery and miracle, which subserve the end of natural good, [be] explained by that Love for whose rest the weary ones sigh when needing something more native to their immortal cravings than the history of perpetual evil." (S&H 501:13) This right interpretation is found in the Christian Science textbook, 'Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures' by Mary Baker Eddy.

Material sense contains no answer. Why is the divinely scientific interpretation so necessary? Without a right method of interpretation, the answers

revealed in such a simple statement remain hidden, obscured by false methods with their false premises. Material thought, for example, proceeds not from “immortal cravings” but from “the history of perpetual evil”. From this mortal history, it seeks answers to questions based on false beliefs: How does evil arise and come into the world? Where does it lead man? Why does God permit evil (war, poverty, sickness, suffering, etc.)? And perennially: Is there any meaning to it all? However much we may be tempted to ask these questions, we must realize that all such questioning arises from the limited world of material sense, a world peopled by sense-perceptions and the phenomena of mortal experience. From this limited basis, material sense would have us seek explanations for things that, in the reality and truth of being, simply do not exist. Thus, because its point of departure is not that which is but that which is not, the method of material thought leads further and further into a net of inescapable contradictions. Just as we cannot answer the question, ‘Why does $2+2=5$?’ so we cannot answer the false questions posed from the standpoint of material sense.

Humanly subjective interpretations cannot provide a right answer. As an alternative, many seekers realize through spiritual sense that the deepest questions about being can be answered only by Being itself, by God. Accordingly such seekers for Truth often go to the Bible, feeling that the revealed Word of God alone can provide the answer to life’s questions. Furthermore they see that the Bible does not yield its treasures through literal interpretations but must be understood spiritually. The question is: How? What method enables us to gain a spiritual interpretation of revelation? Without any reliable method, everyone studies the Bible in his own manner and relies on his own personal inspiration. Because everyone believes that it is legitimate to find a different answer — whatever answer appeals to him — everyone interprets the Bible differently. This approach has led not only to great fragmentation within the Christian religion but also to a bewildering multiplicity of mutually contradictory interpretations of the Bible, even though all such interpretations base themselves on one and the same revealed text. What are we to conclude from this?

If we approach the Bible with our own humanly-based questions or according to our own personal inspiration, we find not the truth about the reality of being but only an endless array of differing interpretations — all based on human and personal concepts. Personal interpretations never

give information about Truth itself, as revealed in the Bible, but only reflect whatever conception of truth the specific interpreter may entertain. Every human concept — even when it proceeds from deep, inspired thinking — is limited. True, such concepts often offer individuals a certain measure of comfort, encouragement, hope and edification, but they can give no valid answer to the fundamental questions about the purpose of life or the deep spiritual meaning pervading all being.

A change of standpoint is necessary. What we need is a scientific method of interpretation, enabling us to discover through exact divinely scientific means what the author or true origin of the revealed texts intended to reveal. The author of both the Bible and the Christian Science textbook is God; God dictated these texts (see My. 115:4; and '01. 4:12). Thus the question is: How do we gain that interpretation of the Bible and the textbook which coincides with God's own interpretation — with the idea which God had in view in calling these texts into existence?

To find the divine meaning, we must undergo a change in standpoint. The authority for interpretation must not be the narrowly limited, human and subjective standpoint of a personal interpreter but the standpoint of God, divine Principle. The issue is therefore not how *we* conceive of the text of revelation, for *we* are certainly not its author. Instead we must ask: What does God itself know about itself? How does Principle interpret itself through the text? What, for example, does God's declaration of the true creation in 'Genesis' mean when we consider it from the standpoint of divine Principle?

The right interpretation. The textbook states unmistakably that the riddle of being can be solved only through Science and its divine method of interpretation. Under the marginal note "Right interpretation", the textbook says: "The universe, like man, is to be interpreted by Science from its divine Principle, God, and then it can be understood; but when explained on the basis of physical sense . . . the universe, like man, is, and must continue to be, an enigma." (124:14)

Divine Science is the Comforter. The Science of all sciences, that which is alone able to interpret the entire universe "from its divine Principle, God", has been revealed to our age through Christian Science. With this discovery of the Science of God, Jesus' promise was fulfilled: ". . . he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16). Mary Baker Eddy says in reference to these words: "This Com-

forter I understand to be Divine Science.” (S&H 55:28) Why is this so? Science is the Comforter because of its fundamental Christ-aspect, coming to us to interpret the enigma of the universe. The more we are able to abandon the personal standpoint and take the standpoint of Science for solving all questions of existence, the more we have the Comforter and Helper with us, opening our eyes to the reality of being.

The prerequisite: understanding the Word of God. However, before we can experience the Christ-activity of Science, we must take a first and absolutely necessary step. Because the Word always precedes the Christ, we must know what the Word of God is before we can experience its workings as the Christ Science. Only as we know the nature and essence of God and understand God through God’s self-explanation (Word-standpoint) can we take the divine standpoint and consider all questions of existence from God and God’s nature (Christ-standpoint). To what effect? The more we follow this method of interpreting everything from God, the more it demonstrates itself as the healing, saving and redeeming aspect of Science. The Comforter, or divine Science, establishes in us a new understanding, not only of our individual life but also of the spiritual meaning pervading revealed texts.

Accordingly the exegesis of the first two verses of ‘Genesis’ given in the fifteenth chapter of the textbook — exemplifying the right method of interpretation — presupposes this necessary step of the Word. How? Mary Baker Eddy addresses her Bible-interpretation to those who have studied the textbook through the fourteen chapters. The fourteenth chapter, ‘Recapitulation’, provides the foundation for the right method of interpretation by explaining being through the system of scientific metaphysics. Through its 4 x 6 questions and answers, the fourteenth chapter offers a systematic exposition, schooling thought in those categories of Science which make the divine Principle of being accessible to human understanding. Only as we clearly grasp the spiritual meaning of this Principle through its system of categories — its Science — can we interpret the revealed text from the standpoint of these categories of divine being — from Science. By following the fifteenth chapter’s scientific interpretation of the first two verses of ‘Genesis’ with the tools of Science that the previous chapter, ‘Recapitulation’, has given us, we are able to hear divine Science speaking as the Comforter, interpreting all things “from its divine Principle, God”. How?

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” (Gen. 1:1)

A great truth. Through the simple statement of the first verse of the Bible, we can see by example how Science alone can give us a right and meaningful interpretation. The mere statement — “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” — in a sense says everything to be said, but in another sense tells us nothing. It states a truth so vast and all-encompassing that everything is included in it; the Bible could actually stop after this first verse. Yet at the same time, this truth per se — unexplained and unqualified — has little meaning for the reader. Although it states that God made the whole world, it does not tell us what kind of world this is, when the beginning was, the nature of the God that created it, how creation has taken place or how long it will last. In this sense, we still do not know much more than before. The stated truth — as vast as it is — does not help us solve the riddle of the universe.

Only a scientific truth is meaningful. Consequently, for such a statement to be meaningful to us, it must be not just true but scientifically true. What does this mean?

The philosopher and theorist of science Karl R. Popper explains the difference between a mere truth and a scientific truth through a simple example. Let us consider the statement: ‘It will rain’. This statement is irrefutably true, what logicians call ‘tautologically true’, meaning true by definition and by its logical form. The point is, this statement alone says nothing, nothing specific enough to help us, even though it is completely true. Why? The statement is too general, too sweeping; it lacks differentiation. The only way this statement comes to mean something definite to us is when we introduce the relevant categories of place, time, duration, quality and quantity. Only as we specify or qualify this general statement do we learn what we need to know: e.g. where it will rain, when it will rain, how long it will rain, how hard it will rain and so on. Thus the statement ‘It will rain’ becomes meaningful to us only when, by means of introducing categories, we consider the general statement in a more differentiated way.

This method of specifying the meaning of a statement by introducing the appropriate categories also applies to statements of truth in the Science of being. As a great, all-encompassing statement of truth, the first verse of the Bible is nearly meaningless to us. What can we really conclude from

it? The only way to find its deep content of meaning is to introduce those categories that differentiate and explain the subject. To do this, we must choose not just any categories but those that are appropriate to a divinely authored statement; in other words, to interpret the statements of God's revelation, we must use the categories of the Science of God. This is precisely what the textbook does.

The interpretation in the textbook. Unlike the many Bible interpreters before her, Mary Baker Eddy interprets the first verse of 'Genesis' in the light of the Science of being through the categories of divine metaphysics. In this way, the simple statement of truth — "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" — does not serve, as it has for so many others, as a mere springboard for personal interpretations or speculative thought-associations about creation. Rather her exegesis distinguishes itself by its use of a completely different method — the method of Science. Through this method, the divine Word can be understood in its divinely scientific content. By interpreting a vast statement of truth through its inherent categories of divine reality, we are able to perceive its specific and exact spiritual meaning. As in Popper's example, here too, general truths become meaningful to us only as we see them in a more differentiated way. Only then are we able to see how such statements provide the answers to those questions that most stir us.

To illustrate this method of Science, we will investigate how the textbook's scientific interpretation of the first two verses of the Bible presents the categories of divine being implicit in the revealed text itself.

The four levels of Science

The textbook interprets the first sentence of the Bible through the four levels of spiritual consciousness, that category of divine being which scientifically explains the infinite One in all its fundamental dimensions. Specifically the four levels of Science show how the one Being translates itself from the level of Science itself to the levels of divine Science, absolute Christian Science and Christian Science. These levels of Science show not only how the infinite One appears simultaneously on different levels of consciousness and experience, but also how the one Being can be understood and interpreted differently according to each distinct level.¹

¹For a comprehensive explanation of the levels of Science, see: Max Kappeler, 'The Four Levels of Spiritual Consciousness'.

In other words, the four levels show us not only what the Principle of being is as it operates on each level of spiritual consciousness, but also how this Principle provides a spiritually scientific method for understanding God and interpreting texts of God's revelation.

With respect to the first verse of 'Genesis', the full tone, evident in the Bible text, of God as the infinite, all-inclusive creator, the origin of all existence, yields its spiritually scientific meaning only as it is interpreted according to these four levels of spiritual consciousness. Through this method, the explanation given in the textbook transforms the biblical statement from a vast but indefinite truth to a statement which carries practical, scientific validity, revealing the exact, divinely lawful nature of being. What specifically do the levels of Science show us through the textbook's interpretation of the Bible, both of what God is and of how the categories of God provide a right method of interpretation?

The level of Science itself

"The infinite has no beginning. This word beginning is employed to signify the only . . ." (S&H 502:24).

The level of Science itself presents the highest and most comprehensive concept of God. From this standpoint, God is recognized as the infinite One, which in an infinite manner knows itself as the infinite. This infinity "has no beginning". It makes no sense to ask when God began to be God. God is the timeless isness of being, and this isness, by its very nature, can never be in a state of not-being. Actually various Bible translations, including the Latin Vulgate, do not even speak of a beginning. There the verse is translated to read: "In principio", that is, "in principle", or "fundamentally", God created the heaven and the earth. In other words, fundamentally, everything that is — the heaven and the earth — belongs to God, for God is the Only, and there is nothing besides God.

What does this imply for our method of interpretation? Since God is the Only, our investigation must always proceed from the consciousness that all there is is the infinite One, from the fact that this infinite One is the only interpreter of its own infinite being. This right beginning brings a great liberation. Our job is not to be shrewd or clever in interpreting revelation but rather to be ready to receive the answer from the divine Word alone. This Word speaks to us as if to say: Let go of all human thoughts and cares, all mortal conceptions; put all human concepts behind

you and turn to that which God itself knows about itself. What does God know of itself from the standpoint of Science? The infinite declares: I know only myself as the divine Principle of all, for I am the Only; all that you do not comprehend — all that seems contradictory and painful to you — resolves itself the more you go out from God as the Only and take nothing else as a factor in being.

Reading the text with the Mind of Christ. The question is: How can we have this right consciousness? What kind of consciousness is able to hear the great explanation of divine Principle? A consciousness based on the material is neither prepared nor in the position to receive such a wholly spiritual message. Instead we experience the deep spiritual meaning inherent in the revealed text only when we read it with the Mind of Christ, not with our own human mind. The divine Mind that authored the text is alone able to read it — to interpret it aright. This willingness to ‘have the Mind of Christ’ (Paul) provides the crucial turning-point in our method of approaching revealed texts. Since the Mind which is God revealed the text, we must have the same Mind which is God to understand its revelation. The self-expression of God and the interpretation of this divine self-expression must come from one and the same Mind. What is the result?

The level of Science itself includes all levels. The more we investigate the Bible and the textbook with the Mind of Christ, the more we realize how fully these revealed texts answer all our questions on every level of experience. Because the infinite One knows only itself, the infinite One demonstrates itself as the Only, comprehensively and universally, making the reality of being clear and understandable from every level of conscious experience. For this reason, the textbook goes on to show how God as the Only demonstrates itself as such on all levels of consciousness.

The level of divine Science

“... that is, the eternal verity and unity of God and man, including the universe.” (S&H 502:25)

When we consider the onliness of God (Science itself) from the level of divine Science, we see that God is forever one with its own idea. The focus is no longer on God as the Only, but rather on how the onliness of God includes God’s universe: the oneness of Principle and idea stands in the foreground. Thus, on the level of divine Science, the onliness of God appears as the “unity of God and man, including the universe”.

This unity of Principle and idea — God and man, creator and creation — guides the seeking thought to realize the great and full implications of this fundamental unity. For example, because Principle is conscious of itself, it is also conscious of man and the universe. Further, because the infinite One is an all-inclusive One, the true man and the spiritual universe belong to God; their being consists wholly in their unity with God. Equally, the infinite One and Only fulfils itself through its necessary and indivisible unity with its universe. As a result, there is no creation that once was created but after the creative act was separated from its divine origin. Instead the true universe including man exists wholly because it is indivisibly one with its creator, just as the creator exists wholly in its unity with its creation.

Again, what does this imply for our method of understanding? Because God is inseparably one with God's universe, we cannot find an explanation of being outside of God and God's nature. The interpretation of God's self-expression must be one with God, included within what the divine Principle of being itself is. This means that it is entirely pointless to try to introduce human concepts into the process of understanding by clinging to ungodly beliefs, opinions, situations or conditions. What is not divine has no part of being — no origin or existence — and so cannot explain the truth or reality of being. Our method must therefore be not only to work from "the eternal verity and unity of God and man", from man's oneness with all that God includes, but also to separate ourselves from everything not born of God and God's nature. In this way, we work from the oneness of Principle and idea and do not try to use something additional — some human belief, category or concept — to understand what God reveals.

The level of absolute Christian Science

"The creative Principle — Life, Truth, and Love — is God. The universe reflects God. There is but one creator and one creation." (S&H 502:27)

The level of absolute Christian Science presents a further aspect of the infinite One. From this level, the relationship of divine Principle to its specific ideas, as well as the infinite interrelations among ideas, come into focus. What is the nature of these relationships? The answer given in the textbook is impressive: "The universe reflects God." All relationships in being rest on this principle of reflection. The oneness of God and its creation (level of divine Science) is expressed through an infinite reflect-

ion, in which the entire universe reflects God (level of absolute Christian Science). Through this infinite reflection, God demonstrates itself as the creative Principle — Life, Truth and Love — constantly bringing forth an ever-new reflection or divine creation. What constitutes this creative activity?

Contrary to the traditional misconception, creation is not the process of bringing forth previously non-existing facts but is rather the infinite revelation of what already is, revealing constantly new forms of one divine Principle. Considered scientifically, creation is the ongoing process of restructuring the elements of being; it involves a continuous re-forming through the infinite reflection going on within the infinite One itself. As a result, every idea reflects the entire Principle, for each idea of Principle expresses the wholeness of Life, Truth and Love. Through this pure and complete reflection, each idea is free from all error, for nothing unlike God can enter the self-reflection of Principle.

What does this imply for the scientific method of understanding revealed texts? In the unity of creator and creation, origin and expression, these texts reflect their divine origin. The structure of Being is reflected in the structure of its self-revelation. On the level of absolute Christian Science, this structure is seen as the infinite interreflection of ideas, all uniquely reflecting one Principle. The more we acquaint ourselves with this ideational universe, the more we see how this ideational structure not only underlies revealed texts but also establishes in us an ideational understanding of their deep spiritual meaning. We read the texts with a consciousness of ideas, not with our personal beliefs and human concepts. The oneness of Principle and *idea* (level of divine Science) becomes specified as a universe of *ideas* reflecting Principle (level of absolute Christian Science), enabling us to understand Principle's revelation through Principle's own system of ideas.

In this way, the text has shown us how God as the infinite One (level of Science itself) is an all-embracing Principle, including its own universe (level of divine Science). This universe exists by reflecting the unity of Principle with its ideas; the all-inclusive One is thus revealed as the creative Principle, constantly manifesting itself as an ever-new appearing of specific ideas (level of absolute Christian Science). Once we know where creation comes from — namely, from the eternally active, creative Principle, demonstrating an ever-new universe through its infinite self-reflection

— we can then ask about the nature of creation. The answer emerges when we consider the infinite One from the level of Christian Science, as the textbook goes on to show.

The level of Christian Science

“This creation consists of the unfolding of spiritual ideas and their identities, which are embraced in the infinite Mind and forever reflected. These ideas range from the infinitesimal to infinity, and the highest ideas are the sons and daughters of God.” (S&H 502:29)

The level of Christian Science shows how the infinite One reveals itself as the divine law of creativity, presenting the ordered unfoldment of ideas. With this level, we touch the human, relative standpoint, which perceives the absolute reflection of ideas as a step-by-step process of creation. Infinite *being* comes to us as divine *becoming*. The question is: How does the unfolding process of creation — the becoming — present itself? What are the orderly stages of this divinely lawful process from the point which looks like a beginning up to completion?

To answer this question, Mary Baker Eddy writes: “In its genesis, the Science of creation is stated in mathematical order, beginning with the lowest form and ascending the scale of being up to man.” (Mis. 57:27) Clearly there is nothing mystical about the spiritual order of creation; it is no incomprehensible, arbitrary or unpredictable process, able to hold us at its mercy by a capricious nature. Quite the contrary, the order of creation is as lawful, understandable and reliable as any “mathematical order”.

From the level of Christian Science, this order is presented through seven distinct steps, comprising the spiritual law of unfoldment symbolized by the Word-order of the seven synonyms for God: Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love. These seven steps of unfoldment also correspond to the seven days of creation in ‘Genesis’, as the text under consideration suggests. What are these seven steps?

First, creation is constituted of spiritual ideas (Mind); second, these ideas unfold in an order (Spirit); third, as they unfold, ideas gather their divine identity (Soul). Fourth, behind this divine order stands the one Principle of creation, ensuring the unfoldment of spiritual ideas (Principle). Fifth, on the foundation of the Principle of creation, creation exists forever (Life); sixth, it is reflected infinitely and, through this total reflection, gains its full form, its true gestalt (Truth), until seventh, we realize that

this whole process is contained in the infinite Mind from the beginning (Love). Creation is therefore always included in the Principle of its creator, embraced within the infinite Mind.

This law of creativity holds for every event of divine creation from the “infinitesimal to infinity”. We discover the divinely scientific law of creation, which, from the least to the greatest concerns, always works as the same fundamental law but always in a way perfectly adapted to each situation. We no longer feel helplessly exposed to situations, wondering whether things will develop harmoniously or into a catastrophe. At all times and under all circumstances, the divine law of creativity enables us to recognize the order of divine creation at work. Because the process of creation is explained through lawful steps of spiritual unfoldment, it is possible for us to understand this process in an exact, scientific and supremely practical way. This understanding gives us spiritual mastery over every human situation.

What then does this imply for our method of understanding revealed texts? Because infinite being presents itself to us in an ordered way, we must realize that texts of revelation reflect — and therefore can be understood only through — spiritual order. This fundamental perception of the importance of spiritual order challenges ages of religious belief that would have us approach revealed texts in a random, atomistic, aphoristic and unstructured way. As we see in every field, random and atomistic methods yield no coherent understanding; how much less are such methods adequate or appropriate for that subject which is supremely and divinely ordered. Ordered creation — whether this creation be the universe or a revealed text — can be understood only through order, through divinely ordered means and methods.

The scientific interpretation of the Bible

As we can see, the spiritually scientific interpretation of just this first verse of ‘Genesis’ shows impressively how much an understanding of God through the categories of divine being transforms our comprehension of revealed texts.

Material thinking, by contrast, takes this first verse of the Bible literally. For material sense, the statement, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”, means that God created the material universe, the material heaven and material earth. However, this material interpretation

of divine creation leads to inevitable contradictions, for the subsequent account of creation does not agree with the prevailing concepts of natural science on the subject. By contradicting natural science, the Bible loses credibility for those who try to interpret its message through material concepts.

Spiritual sense leads us to accept the interpretation which the textbook gives. Through spiritual sense, we are both drawn to the concise declaration and deeply moved by it. However, we must also ask ourselves honestly: What does this actually tell us if we do not pursue its Christianly scientific interpretation — if we do not interpret the comprehensive declaration of truth according to those categories which reveal its divinely differentiated explanation? What do we gain when we fail to consider the sentence scientifically and instead are satisfied only with how the great statement addresses our spiritual sense? The text is sublimely beautiful, bringing a great sense of power and reassurance, and naturally has a positive, elevating effect on us. But is this enough to solve the problem of being or answer our fundamental questions in any systematic or coherent way? Does it really help us beyond the moment? If we were to close the book at this point, many vital questions would remain unanswered. For example: Do we understand both the answer that God gives and what this answer means for us? Have our doubts been resolved? Has our everyday life been changed or transformed as a result? Can we handle our problems from a higher, diviner standpoint? Certainly, this is scarcely the case. Without its spiritually scientific interpretation, the text conveys only a vague, blurred, although beautiful, feeling.

The spiritually scientific interpretation, in contrast to both the material and merely inspirational methods of interpretation, takes us much further. As we have seen, it opens the revealed texts of the Bible and the textbook by interpreting them scientifically through the categories of divine being. The meaning emerges from the categories of what God itself is, instead of from the superimposition of human and material concepts. Through this method, the resulting interpretation is absolutely unique. Mary Baker Eddy's interpretation of the biblical account of creation does not offer just one more human interpretation to the countless number that already exist. Rather her interpretation is unique precisely because she does not take her own person as the basis, origin or authority for interpreting the text. As she expressly emphasizes in the introduction, the textbook gives the

“spiritual interpretation according to the teachings of Christian Science” (S&H 502:19). By putting aside her own personal views and relying wholly on the impersonal categories of divine Principle itself to interpret the revelation, she gave the world that interpretation of the Bible which alone is founded on the Science of God. As a result, the outstanding characteristic of this interpretation is that it is an interpretation which Principle itself dictates. Its explanations of divine revelation spring from the Mind of Christ — from the agreement between the Mind that wrote it and the Mind that interprets the text. This divine and impersonal standpoint of interpretation leads to a further important point.

The method of scientific interpretation unfolds further divine revelation. This method of interpretation based on the divine Principle itself does not merely explain the text in the usual sense but rather unfolds further divine revelation. Through this method, the divine Principle explains itself to the present period in a form adapted to the advancing age. Far more than merely reinterpreting biblical symbols into metaphysical concepts, the text of ‘Science and Health’ expands on the Bible text to reveal the categories of divine being underlying the biblical message. What was presented thousands of years ago by the prophetic writers of the Bible as a simple, linear statement comes to be understood in the 20th century as a statement of the entire dimensionality of the one Being. Only through this scientific interpretation, enlarging on the Bible message but always according to the categories of divine reality, can the biblical text be revealed in its full spiritual depth. Further, only through this method are we able to discover the outstanding significance of the text for answering the fundamental questions of existence.

The need and method of scientific Bible-interpretation. To summarize the main point of Mary Baker Eddy’s scientific interpretation of the Bible, we can see that if we had only the Bible statement “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”, we would face one of the greatest statements of Truth but would nevertheless be unable to determine its exact and divinely scientific meaning. What does the Bible mean by “the heaven and the earth”, as well as by “God” who made them? Without any reliable means for specifying the meaning, every reader can imagine what he wants, rendering the Bible nothing more than a means for justifying his own beliefs. Accordingly an interpretation of this divine declaration is only meaningful divinely and scientifically when it reveals that which the

divine Principle itself intends to reveal. To learn this, we must go out from Principle. How?

Principle does not interpret itself primarily through words, for these can be interpreted variously and thus misinterpreted; rather Principle interprets itself fundamentally through the categories of Science inherent in Principle itself. In the example of the first verse of the Bible, Principle interprets itself through the category of the four levels of Science. Therefore, by working from the categories of divine Principle, we gain not *our* interpretation but the interpretation of divine Principle itself — the divinely scientific interpretation. This interpretation, because it is not based on human concepts, has no element of ambiguity: it is not susceptible to the speculations and interpolations inevitably introduced by the personal standpoint of a human interpreter.

This absolutely new method of interpretation taught by the textbook clearly shows the great importance of Mary Baker Eddy's contribution to the development of the divine idea. Whereas the biblical writers had only simple, rough symbols at their disposal to explain divine Principle, Mary Baker Eddy was able to make use of the scientific symbols emerging in her age. These symbols are abstract and consequently much more precise. Therefore, to interpret the Bible scientifically, it was not enough simply to reinterpret the biblical symbols into metaphysical ideas; instead she had to go further to the Principle underlying the biblical text and interpret the symbols through the scientific categories of divine being. As a result of this method, her interpretation goes far beyond a mere clarification of Bible verses to reveal a new and advancing understanding of divine Principle. By working directly from the categories of Science to interpret the text, she brought forth a further revelation and unfoldment of Principle from Principle itself, not from her own personal inspiration.

Summary of 'Genesis' 1:1

Interpretation through the four levels of Science. Through the spiritually scientific interpretation of the first verse of 'Genesis', we see how everything essential about being is succinctly stated. Following the category of the four levels of Science, we start by turning once and for all away from the material world's beliefs and concepts and let God reveal its divine idea to us. Prayerfully, we remain in the Mind of Christ, realizing and acknowledging that all that exists is the infinite One, which is the Only (Science

itself). From this right starting-point, we no longer try to introduce categories or concepts foreign to the divine to understand God's creation but persist in the consciousness that the onliness of Being is all-inclusive, embracing man and universe (divine Science). This oneness of being includes an infinite and eternal reflection of ideas; the One manifests itself as the eternally creative Principle and so continually brings forth a new becoming, the dynamic restructuring of ideas which constitutes creation (absolute Christian Science). As a result, we discover how this eternally new creation translates itself to human thought (on the level of Christian Science) as an ordered process of becoming, as the step-by-step development of an ever higher understanding of God. Through the spiritual order of Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth and Love, true creation is established in us, unfolding from Mind as the divine origin of all being to the point of fulfilment in Love. From this standpoint of Love, we realize that all creation is eternally contained in its divinely creative Principle, bestowing the peaceful consciousness that we live in a universe in which everything — "from the infinitesimal to infinity" — expresses only God's ideas. Yet how does this category-based interpretation answer our fundamental questions?

The answer to all questions. At the beginning of our inquiry, we identified three fundamental questions. First: What is the primal origin and source of all being? Second: Is there a purpose in being, towards which everything leads? Third: What is the meaning of it all? These questions can be answered only when we understand divine being in its entire dimensionality. Actually, on the levels of Science itself and divine Science, such questions about the origin, aim and meaning of life simply do not arise. Accordingly the great statement — "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" — only offers satisfying answers to our questions when we begin to pursue its multidimensional message through the category of the levels of Science. Only then can we see — as the textbook shows through its interpretation of this simple statement — how the infinite One translates itself to that level of consciousness from which the questions continually arise, namely, the level of Christian Science.

Since the level of Christian Science explains how the isness of the creative order of Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love comes to us as a step-by-step process of unfoldment or becoming, we gain on this level the means for understanding the fundamental aspects of the be-

coming-process as we experience it in our life. First, regarding the origin of all things, all being comes from God, the infinite Mind, which creates the spiritual creation of ideas. Whatever is not created by Mind has no existence. Second, regarding the aim or purpose of life, everything in being is led through this divine order of creation to its fulfilment in the plan of God, Love. Creation thus has only one starting-point, namely God, the infinite Mind, and only one purpose, namely, the perfection of Love, which gives everything its divine mission. Third, regarding the meaning of life, the divinely bestowed purpose of creation shows that life's meaning is derived from the fact that creation is forever contained and included in its creative Principle, in God, the infinite Mind. Thus, by giving all being its divine meaning and purpose from its eternal oneness with God, Love leads thought back to the divine standpoint underlying all demonstration: to the eternal "verity and unity of God and man, including the universe," established on the level of divine Science.

Yes, but . . .

The question of error. However, in the face of the presentation of all that is true, human thought and feeling nevertheless react spontaneously with the question: Yes, but why then is there error? Why do I suffer under so many erroneous beliefs? The second verse of 'Genesis' deals with these questions, for it is the inherent nature of divine revelation to come to mankind at whatever level of conscious experience mortals may find themselves. Divine Being itself requires no revelation, for it is fully conscious of its own spiritual harmony. However, for the searching thought caught in the illusion of error, the explanation of that which is must be complemented by the explanation of why that which does not exist in reality — error — appears at all. Error must be explained as that which arises only from the standpoint of mortality.

Herein lies the grace of Science as presented in the textbook. Because divine Science comes to mankind as the Comforter, it does not leave the question of error — so important to mortals — unanswered, but goes on to resolve it from within the divine system itself. In this way, the divine standpoint is never abandoned in an effort to battle it out with error. Instead the divine forever preserves its own standard, not only by excluding every belief of error, but also by translating itself to mankind in a way that makes the nothingness of error practically and scientifically under-

standable, showing it to be only an illusion in human thought. How then does the textbook's scientific interpretation of this second verse of 'Genesis' explain the method by which the categories of divine being resolve the question of evil? Once again, the category of the levels of Science provides the textbook's standpoint for interpretation.

“And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” (Gen. 1:2)

The textbook's exegesis does not deal with this verse from the level of Science itself. Why? The level of Science itself presents the infinite Principle as the Only, as the self-knowing, self-conscious Principle; from this exalted divine self-consciousness, the human question of error simply does not arise. Since the question of error is unknown on this level, no answer is required.

Divine Science

Only when we come to the level of divine Science do we begin to analyze what the onliness of being implies for the question of evil. From this level, all true being is included within the realm of divine Principle, a realm established through the inseparable oneness of Principle and idea. In this oneness there is only harmony. However, from this simple fact we can consider not only what belongs to this oneness of Principle's spiritual harmony but also what is excluded from it. For the first time, the question of error, evil or matter arises. From the level of divine Science, this question is answered by showing that whatever is unlike God, error, cannot be included in God. Because error never belongs in the oneness of God and its universe, error is not a factor to be taken into consideration. How does the exegesis in the textbook explain this answer to the question of evil?

“The divine Principle and idea constitute spiritual harmony, — heaven and eternity. In the universe of Truth, matter is unknown. No supposition of error enters there.” (S&H 503:9)

Here the textbook presents as its starting-point a statement that perfectly reflects the tone of the level of divine Science. It speaks of “the universe of

Truth”, in which the divine Principle and divine idea comprise “spiritual harmony”. Furthermore it immediately adds that in this universe matter or error is unknown. All error is categorically excluded, in both its concrete and latent forms; not even the “supposition of error enters there”. The only answer that spiritual harmony gives to the question of error is this: besides the oneness of being, nothing else exists; error therefore finds no admittance in the oneness of being, not even as a supposition, and so is unknown. Herein lies the secret for the solution to all error. By going out from divine Principle only and letting our consciousness be permeated with the fact that the universe is filled with nothing but the ideas of this Principle, we cannot experience a disharmonious or ungodlike universe. Our experience is always a reflection of our consciousness. Thus, if we consistently and consciously hold to the standpoint of scientific oneness, error loses every possibility of expressing itself, and we inevitably experience the spiritual harmony that fills our consciousness.

The textbook’s exegesis goes on to elaborate this fundamental statement of the harmonious oneness of Principle and idea through three points, introducing the category of the operational sense of being.

Divine Science as Word

“Divine Science, the Word of God, saith to the darkness upon the face of error, ‘God is All-in-all’ ” (S&H 503:12).

Beyond the confusion of mortal thought and the void of ignorance moves the spirit of God. Untouched by the darkness pervading the realm of human illusions, the Word of God forever declares: “God is All-in-all”. In other words: God is the Only, the All, and contains everything within itself; everything is included in the All that is God. Even in the face of error, only the divine Word is true. Because error has no power to declare itself, error can say nothing that has any validity next to the Word of God. What God does not declare does not exist. As a result, all the subtle and blatant suggestions of evil that error would like to whisper to us mean nothing, for if God has not spoken, nothing has been said.

This explanation helps us enormously in the situation in which Christian Scientists so often find themselves. Specifically we cannot deny that we as mortals perceive error, the darkness; however, we also know that we are not at its mercy. Why? Because we can turn to the divine Principle which knows no error. Over the waters moves the spirit of God;

the ever-present Principle remains forever what it is, unchanged despite error.

This answer to the crucial question of how the Word of God handles error may well surprise us. We might expect the textbook to show us here how God, good, rebukes every error and then destroys it, yet it says nothing of the sort. The text does indeed deal with the question of error, of the darkness, wilderness and void described in the Bible, but not by analyzing what the wilderness and void of error are. Furthermore, since divine Science does not concern itself with explaining why nothing is nothing, the textbook at this point does not show why error cannot exist or why it is completely nothing. The level of divine Science is concerned not with healing nothingness but rather with demonstrating the All-in-all. Accordingly the textbook wants to show us that, insofar as we stay in consciousness with the level of divine Science, we perceive only the allness of Principle and its ideas, enabling us to regard every situation from the superabundance of Principle's ideational universe. Then, at all times and under all circumstances, this divine consciousness perceives only the universe of ideas, enabling us to say to every situation: God is All-in-all.

This answer from the level of divine Science clarifies another important point. The solution to the problem of error does not lie in simply closing our eyes to error in the manner of absolutists, nor can we do away with error by making the empty assertion "There is no error". The mere belief that there is no error, far from solving the problem, simply ignores and avoids it. Instead it is not only our job and responsibility but moreover our privilege to face the question of error squarely and to meet it with the answer established on the level of divine Science. From this standpoint, we can understand the nothingness of error not as a mere assertion but rather as our lived and practical experience. The divine Word becomes our living consciousness, filling the suppositional realm of error's void and darkness with the superabundance of divine ideas, as the Christ-aspect of divine Science shows.

Divine Science as Christ

"... and the light of ever-present Love illumines the universe." (S&H 503:14)

The divine self-declaration of the Word of God is inseparably one with its dynamic Christ-activity. God not only declares itself by stating "I am

All-in-all” but also possesses an irrepressible operational power. God reveals itself as the light of ever-present Love, through which the All-in-all enlightens the universe.

This divine fact carries great implications for answering the question of evil. How? We usually seek a solution that enables us to combat error’s suppositional activity. Yet again, the real solution lies in lifting thought out of this narrow, limited view of things and in being willing to follow the logic of divine Science. As the Word-aspect of divine Science has already shown, God is not concerned with error or darkness but instead is always conscious of its own self-declaration: I am All-in-all. The Christ goes on to show how this Word expresses itself universally. Through its inherent Christ nature and activity, Being is not only divinely enlightened being (Word) but also ever-enlightening being (Christ). The light of Love — the operational power of Christ — forever illumines the universe.

In this way, Christ awakens thought and leads it to an entirely new way of understanding. We realize that there is only one Being, only the one Word of God, and this one Word is All-in-all. Furthermore there is only one Christ-activity, only one divine power of manifestation, and this always expresses itself universally as light. Besides this power of manifestation, there is no power that could either obscure the light or create darkness. As a result, divine Science precludes such questions as: How can we be rid of darkness? How does the light disperse darkness? From the standpoint of light, there is no darkness to be dispersed. Thus the more consciousness is in accord with divine Science, the more we realize that there is only the All-in-all of divine being (Word); from this standpoint of consciousness, there is no error — no darkness — to be overcome; every situation is flooded with the light of divine ideas (Christ). This leads us to see a further aspect of the spiritual harmony depicted on the level of divine Science, as the textbook shows.

Divine Science as Christianity

“Hence the eternal wonder, — that infinite space is peopled with God’s ideas, reflecting Him in countless spiritual forms.” (S&H 503:15)

Christianity presents the realm of divine ideas, God’s universe. It is “infinite space”, filled with a constant reflection of divine ideas continually taking place and bringing forth “countless spiritual forms”.

This sense of Christianity leads thought to pursue more deeply the truth

underlying the universe. Specifically, that which we perceive from the human standpoint as the “history of perpetual evil” (S&H 501:17) — as the human world of illusions — is shown to be, through the lens of divine Science, the infinite universe of ideas. In this true universe there is no source of error, no possibility of bringing about false images, for everything reflects God. Since there is only one Being, the All-in-all (Word), and since there is only one power at work (Christ), there can be only one universe, infinite space, peopled not with human illusions but with God’s infinite ideas (Christianity).

As we are inwardly willing to accept this divine logic and conform to its requirements, in other words, as we are willing to meet the problem of error from and through the categories of being, we gain the compelling answer to the question of evil as the textbook gives it. In short, how is this question resolved? In the oneness and allness of being, not even the supposition of evil has a chance to arise: error cannot exist even as the suggestion of an illusion. Through the operation of the Word, Christ and Christianity, the nothingness of nothing is proved from the level of divine Science. As we let our consciousness rise to flow along the tone of this level, we are filled with the sense of awe and wonder at the all-encompassing grace of divine Science. From this divine consciousness, we realize that there is only the All-in-all of God, declaring itself infinitely despite error (Word). This divine self-declaration possesses the dynamic Christ-power of self-expression, manifesting itself as the light of ever-present Love and flooding the universe with light (Christ). From this dynamic Christ-power comes the realm of divine ideas, the “infinite space”, peopled only with ideas and revealing the “eternal wonder” of an ever-operative, infinite reflection of ideas (Christianity). Yet how does this universe of unbroken spiritual harmony translate itself to us? What does the divine consciousness of one ideational universe bring forth?

Absolute Christian Science

And God said, “Let there be . . .!” What the level of divine Science reveals about Principle’s universe continually translates itself to the level of absolute Christian Science. The infinite oneness of Principle and idea, creator and creation (divine Science) includes an eternally creative process, constantly bringing forth the newness of infinitely restructured being (absolute Christian Science). We witness this creative activity as the

workings of one creative Principle — Life, Truth, Love — the creative impulse which always says: Let there be . . . (Life), and God made . . . (Truth) and God saw that it was good . . . (Love). This threefold creative Principle operates to impel into being each of the seven days of creation. What does this mean?

As our consciousness is permeated by the universe of spiritual harmony presented on the level of divine Science, we realize that this divine universe operates on the level of absolute Christian Science as the law of Life, Truth, Love. This law eternally declares: I am Life, Truth, Love; as the creative impulse of Life, I constantly bring forth new ideas; I, Truth, make these ideas factual, establishing them as spiritual actualities; and I, Love, ensure their fulfilment. We can always rely on this self-creative law of God to bring forth all that is needed in any situation, to manifest itself continually as the creative (Life), the factual (Truth) and the fulfilled (Love). This eternal law of God works out of itself — out of its own infinite resources — and never has to be set in motion by mortals.

Christian Science

What is the effect of this divine law of creative impulsion, of Life, Truth, Love? The divinely creative order of the Word appears, corresponding to the order of the seven synonyms for God presented on page 465:10 of the textbook. Therefore the first two verses of 'Genesis' are followed by the record of the seven days of creation whereby the spiritual order of creation is revealed to human thought. In other words, under the impulsion of the creative Principle — Life, Truth, Love — the divine order of creation breaks in on human consciousness, transforming the formless void into the definite order of spiritual reality. We hear the divine Word of creation continually declaring: Let there be Mind and Mind's ideas; Let there be Spirit and Spirit's ideas; Let there be Soul and Soul's ideas; Let there be Principle and Principle's ideas; Let there be Life and Life's ideas; Let there be Truth and Truth's ideas; Let there be Love and Love's ideas.

The symphony of divine revelation

Summary. If we consider what the textbook has shown us altogether about these two verses of 'Genesis', we realize that what is presented is a complete spiritual symphony, comprised of the many instruments given to us by the categories of Science. Through the four levels of spiritual

consciousness, we hear the complete but also divinely differentiated truth of God's revelation. How? First, from the *level of Science itself*, the infinite Principle declares: I, God, am the infinite One, the infinite Principle of being. Second, from *the level of divine Science*, Principle declares: I, God, am the eternal harmony of the oneness of Principle and idea, the All-in-all, pervading all being as infinite light and filling the universe with divine ideas. Third, from *the level of absolute Christian Science*, Principle declares: I, God, am the creative law of Life, Truth, Love, impelling through Life the factual (Truth) and fulfilled (Love). Fourth, from *the level of Christian Science*, Principle declares: I, God, am the creative impulsion of Life, Truth and Love, which always says: Let there be Mind. Let there be Spirit. Let there be Soul. Let there be Principle. Let there be Life. Let there be Truth. Let there be Love. And through this order, I make myself known to human understanding.

“He that openeth, and no man shutteth”

If we listen to this spiritual symphony with a scientific, divinely differentiated consciousness — with a consciousness on which the categories of being are engraved “‘with the point of a diamond’ and the pen of an angel” (S&H 521:16) — we have the “key of David” referred to in the Scriptural text for the ‘Key to the Scriptures’ (S&H 499). This key opens the door to understanding by giving us the divinely scientific interpretation of revelation according to “the teachings of Christian Science” (S&H 502:19). The more we use this key, the more we recognize the futility of trying to investigate the “eternal wonder” of infinite being with our limited human logic. We more and more strive to solve the fundamental questions of existence through the categories of divine being and by this method are enabled to receive the deepest insights into reality. As a result, such a consciousness finds itself worthy of the message that John the Revelator brought by divine dictation to the church in Philadelphia: “Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it” (Rev. 3:8).

Nonetheless the question inevitably arises: How can we ever keep this door open within ourselves? Both the Revelation of St. John and the text-book give the method for answering this query. In the epistle to the church at Philadelphia, the book of ‘Revelation’ says further: “For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.” This is precisely the issue for us: we must adhere to the Word, to the self-

revelation of God through its own divine categories, and thoroughly and consistently school our consciousness according to these categories. Only in this way can we be sure that we ourselves do not “deny God’s name”, in other words, abandon the spiritual standpoint in the face of error. Instead we learn to judge error from God and what God declares of itself through the categories of Science, as the interpretation of the second verse of ‘Genesis’ shows. “Hold that fast which thou hast”, the Revelator continues, “that no man take thy crown.” (Rev. 3:11) The moment we deviate from reasoning in the categories of divine being, we lose the crown of spiritual dominion. On the other hand, in the measure that we stay with the Science of God and what it declares about the universe — no matter what happens — nothing can ever again shut the door of our understanding.

As we have already seen, the fourteenth chapter of the textbook, ‘Recapitulation’, explains the categories of scientific metaphysics, from which the textbook’s interpretation of the Bible derives its impersonal and divine authority. Not without reason, therefore, does Mary Baker Eddy choose the words of Isaiah to set the tone for the chapter: “For precept must be upon precept, . . . line upon line, . . . here a little, and there a little.” Even if we have only “a little strength”, what counts with God and its Science is the love, esteem, wonder, expectation, devotion and persistence we have for the categories of divine metaphysics. By holding fast to these few things, we assuredly gain the crown of a divinely scientific understanding of God.