

Christian Science in the 21st Century
Talk for Desert View, November 12, 2016
Laurance R. Doyle

Today, let's talk about the role of Christian Science in the 21st Century. In the natural science community the really greatest scientists are the ones that have unified two apparently separate fields. For example, Isaac Newton unified the terrestrial mechanics of Galileo Galilei with the celestial mechanics of Johannes Kepler in the theory of gravity. James Clerk Maxwell, who has been called the Einstein of the 19th Century, was ten years younger than Mrs. Eddy and he discovered that electricity and magnetism were the same thing, giving us the equations for all modern electrical systems. Einstein, of course, showed that space-time and gravity were the same phenomenon – that is, that gravity was not a magic force (which Newton said he could not explain) but instead the result of the warping or bending of space-time itself.

Mary Baker Eddy, who discovered Christian Science in the 19th Century, was also a great unifier in the scientific sense. Christianity is really about unconditional Love. And Science is about unconditional Truth. Mrs. Eddy discovered that Love and Truth were identical and are actually names, or synonyms, for God, the infinite Creator, the Source of all Being. I think in the 19th Century Mary Baker Eddy was recognized as a revolutionary in theology. She disputed notions of predestination – that God could sanction eternal punishment, for example. She overturned the idea that God could make mistakes, as another example. She saw infinite Love as just that – infinite, meaning no other source or quality of creation but Love. In the 20th Century, it was shown (for anyone paying attention) that Mrs. Eddy was also a revolutionary in medicine, in healing. For example, she fully explained the placebo effect in which a change in the thought of the patient results in a faith healing. Today the name “placebo” is invoked, but remains wholly unexplained in schools of allopathic medicine. Now, in the 21st Century, we can begin to see that Mrs. Eddy was also very much ahead of her time in science – the discovery of the underlying nature of things – as well. In his book *Mary Baker Eddy: Years of Trial* (Appendix B) Robert Peel writes, “Only after the successive emergence of relativity and quantum theory could even the most rudimentary conceptual bridges be thrown between, for instance, Mrs. Eddy's explanations of mind, matter, and causation and those of the more philosophically-minded natural scientists.”

Mrs. Eddy states that Christian Science is based upon Christianity as Christ Jesus taught it more than 20 centuries ago. So let's start with Christ Jesus to discuss the premise of Christianity being Science. Mrs. Eddy has written about Christ Jesus (S+H 313: 23-26), “Jesus of Nazareth was the

most scientific man that ever trod the globe. He plunged beneath the material surface of things, and found the spiritual cause." What did Jesus say of his mission? One thing he said was "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 10: 24-25). So he did not say that he came to start a new religion. He said that his purpose was to bear witness to the Truth.

He was asked, Who bears witness for you, John the Baptist? He said, essentially, There is no greater human authority than John. "But I receive not testimony from man:... I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me" (John 5: 31-33, 34 to :, 36-37). So Christ Jesus said that, rather than even the highest human authority, it was his healing works that were the true test of the truth of what he taught. So we have, perhaps for the first time in history, a statement of the scientific method – that experimental verification is more important and reliable than human authority. And healing is, indeed, the ultimate verification. Christ Jesus also added -- in case his disciples were not getting it -- "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." So now he was excluding human opinion altogether. Healing works are the only experimental verification of the spiritual reality of God's creation.

But if such Christian healing is really a science, then others should be able to follow Jesus' example in demonstrating healing as well. Well, Christ Jesus taught this also. He said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, the works that I do shall ye do also, and greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto my Father" (John 14: 12). So Jesus taught that this spiritual understanding of healing could be applied by others as well. In other words, Jesus said it was not his personal charisma that healed. He said he was able to do these healing works because he went unto his Father, turned to God, for these healings. He was not talking about leaving, he was talking about going to the Source, Creator, Principle of the universe, divine Love, for the demonstration of his healing works.

So Christ Jesus sounds like a scientist to me. He came to bear witness to "the Truth." He may have been the first person in history to state that works – one might say, in modern language, experimental verification – is more important than any human authority. And he recommend that we all follow him in doing even greater works by turning to the Principle of the universe, which he called "Father." Mrs. Eddy re-discovered this Science of Reality that Jesus taught and reunited the concepts of Christianity and Science. She writes, (135:21-32), "It has been said, and truly, that Christianity must be Science, and Science must be Christianity, else one or the other is false and useless; but neither is unimportant or untrue, and they are alike in demonstration. This proves the one to be identical with the other." Note, again, the scientific statement that if these

two are alike in demonstration (experimental verification) then this is the proof of their being identical.

When starting a new science one often has to introduce new terms. Mrs. Eddy did this. She writes in *Science and Health*, (S+H 483: 13-16), "After the author's sacred discovery, she affixed the name "Science" to Christianity, the name "error" to corporeal sense, and the name "substance" to Mind." In *Mary Baker Eddy: Years of Authority* we read in one of her letters to a minister, "Christian Science like all Science must be discovered or learned. It is not a native of the senses and cometh not with observation....Indeed the testimony of or the evidence before the senses contradict it but not more flatly than they disputed the facts of astronomy and then accepted them through the understanding....It is only more difficult to understand Christian Science than astronomy because the former [Christian Science] wars against the whole mortal man and the latter [astronomy] against only a part of him." Then she says, "I never know where to stop on this subject." (*Mary Baker Eddy: Years of Authority*, Robert Peel, p. 112).

So this brings up an interesting point! What is science about anyway? A lot of folks seem to think it has to do with believing the evidence of the senses, but this is the opposite of what science is about. Bertrand Russell, the mathematician and philosopher once said, "Physics is based upon the assumption that things are as they appear. Then it proceeds to prove that things are not as they appear." Mrs. Eddy had already written about this: (S+H 195: 16-22), "Through astronomy, natural history, chemistry, music, mathematics, thought passes naturally from effect back to cause. Academics of the right sort are requisite. Observation, invention, study, and original thought are expansive and should promote the growth of mortal mind out of itself, out of all that is mortal."

So science is not about believing the evidence of the material senses. It is about the evidence of intelligence being regarded actually as more reliable than the evidence of the senses. About 400 years ago this idea really took off with the realization that, in spite of the "obvious" evidence to the contrary, the Earth went around the Sun, rather than the other way around. This took a while to catch on, as one can imagine what a farmer who had plowed his field that morning might have thought of it going around the Sun at 18 ½ miles per second! We still use the terms "sunset" and "sunrise" today. But science had shown that the evidence of intelligence was a more reliable indicator of reality, or the truth, than the evidence of the so-called material senses. This resulted in the idea that the Earth was not in the center of the universe – where Hades was beneath and heaven above -- but rather Earth was within the universe, one of the many planets and the Sun one of many stars. Rather than be at the bottom of creation, Earth became a participant in the universe. And this led to our understanding of the size of the stellar universe vastly expanding by more than ten million trillion times in the next four centuries!

Today, an even more radical scientific revolution is under way. Mrs. Eddy writes, (S + H, 310: 12-17), "The sun is not affected by the revolution of the earth. So Science reveals Soul as God, untouched by sin and death, — as the central Life and intelligence around which circle harmoniously all things in the systems of Mind." So today there is a revolutionary idea that we are not the center of our own little mind with heaven elsewhere. Mrs. Eddy states that God, infinite Mind, is the only Mind and that we are the ideas of this Mind which "circle" it "harmoniously." This is still quite a radical thought because it means that all creation is really infinite divine Mind and its ideas. Since a mind cannot think thoughts unlike that Mind, it must be that all of divine Mind's ideas are its image and likeness. We find this description in the first chapter of Genesis (Chapter 1) in the Bible, where God – translated from the word "Elohim" -- creates by letting – "Let there be light, ... let us bring forth trees bearing fruit, ...let us make man in our image and likeness..." Here God creates by letting, and creation is God's image and likeness. Jacob when he saw his brother -- after overcoming fear of him -- said, "I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me." This would be Bible language for Jacob seeing his brother as God's image and likeness. In the second chapter of Genesis a different concept of God, called "Lord God" -- translated from the word "Jehovah" – is seen in which Lord God creates now by forming. God forms man of the dust of the ground – in other words, a limited version of man. The definition of "let" generally means "to allow," while the word "form" generally implies a limited frame or mold.

So Mrs. Eddy started a revolution in both Science as well as in Christianity in the 19th Century way ahead of the knowledge of natural science we have today of the underlying metaphysical nature of things in the field of, for example, quantum physics. To put things in some perspective, Mrs. Eddy was born the same year that Napoleon Bonaparte passed on. This same year the scientist Michael Faraday invented the first electric motor. Queen Victoria once asked Faraday, "Of what use is electricity?" and he replied, "Your Highness, of what use is a baby?" When Mary was five years old, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams passed on. When she was eighteen years old, photography was invented. When she was thirty seven, Charles Darwin wrote "The Origin of Species." She would know about the first successful flights of heavier-than-air aircraft invented by the Wright Brothers, and her household would take a keen interest in going to some of the air shows. She would certainly be well read about discoveries in science including, the unexplained energy source of atomic force, discovered by Madame and Pierre Curie in the mid-1890s. By 1898 this would even become a topic, "Is the Universe, Including Man, Evolved by Atomic Force?" in the weekly Bible lesson!

But now in the 21st Century, how do Mrs. Eddy's scientific discoveries – her statements about the nature of consciousness, matter, and reality – foretell the current and future discoveries of natural scientists? I should say that spiritual healing is the ultimate experimental verification of the truth of

Christian Science, as Christ Jesus and Marty Baker Eddy both proved. But what these proofs say about reality – the goal of the scientist to discover – is interesting. We will find that in the natural science community, the nature of reality today is being most fundamentally investigated by the quantum physicists. In the early 20th Century Earnest Rutherford discovered that alpha particles shot at gold foil indicated that the Victorian concept of solid matter was totally incorrect – he would show that matter was mostly empty space. But with the discovery of the quanta of energy by Max Planck in the year 1900, things were to take a much more radical turn. Albert Einstein would win his Nobel Prize in physics for formulating the particle nature of light. A discovery as initially innocent as light coming in little packets or quantities would lead to the main-stream conclusion that matter does not exist until it is observed (this is called the “Copenhagen Interpretation” of quantum physics). It would also lead to an underlying connectedness called “entanglement” which Einstein discovered but couldn’t quite believe. He called it “[instantaneous] spooky action at a distance.” The interesting part was that it could be demonstrated that various particles, for example, could be shown to be in instantaneous touch with each other regardless of their distance apart. Light travels about one foot every nanosecond (billionth of a second), and the current record is that entangled particles 143 kilometers apart have been shown to effect each other within a nanosecond, clearly much faster than even light could have traveled between them. So this instantaneous spooky action has already been demonstrated over significant distances.

Today I do hear people talking about matter being “mostly empty space” using analogies such as: if an atomic nucleus were the size of a pea, then the nearest orbiting electron would be over a mile away, and so on. But what has occurred in quantum physics in the last century is a whole lot more radical than this. It seems that the days of objective matter are over – “There is no local reality to matter” is a way that quantum physicists would put it. The way Mrs. Eddy put it is, “There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance, in matter.” (S+H 468: 9). And this is because, “All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all.”

As one of the founders of quantum physics, Werner Heisenberg in the first half of the 20th Century, concluded this from the experimental results at the time: “Some physicist would prefer to come back to the idea of an objective real world whose smallest parts exist objectively in the same sense as stones or trees exist independently of whether we observe them. This however is impossible.” So there appears to be an inseparability of material sense observation and the very coming into existence of matter. And yet this is not the underlying reality – that is infinite, divine Mind.

This illusion of material substantiality is admitted in the quantum physics community but is also recognized as not necessarily very easy to overcome. As another famous quantum physics founder, Irwin Schrödinger wrote, “Discoveries in physics cannot, in themselves—so I believe—have the authority of forcing us to put an end to the *habit* of picturing the physical world as a reality.” [My emphasis] So picturing the physical world as a reality is simply a habit which apparently physics alone cannot, by itself, put an end to. Mrs. Eddy writes (S+H 270: 29-30), “Hence the fact that the human mind alone suffers, is sick, and that the divine Mind alone heals.” I think Christian Science has the key to putting an end to this “habit of picturing the physical world as a reality.” It takes the next stately step—that there is only one, infinite, divine Mind. The famous astrophysicist, Sir Arthur Eddington, was the first to experimentally confirm Einstein’s Theory of General Relativity with a solar eclipse observation, which made Einstein famous overnight. Eddington observed this about science: “It is difficult for the matter-of-fact physicist to accept the view that the substratum of everything is of mental character. But no one can deny that mind is the first and most direct thing in our experience, and that everything else is remote inference.” That’s a pretty metaphysically insightful statement!

So 21st century physics has arrived at the point where it is saying that matter is not substantial, long after Mrs. Eddy—with great courage in the midst of Victorian objective materialism—already stated and demonstrated this. Today, according to the most popular interpretation of quantum physics (the “Copenhagen Interpretation” again), the elementary particles that are supposed to make up matter do not even exist until they are measured in the sense of being consciously observed. I might add that there are other interpretations possible from the experiments, but this is considered the most conservative, which should give you an idea how interesting things are right now. One of the big questions now is, “What, then, constitutes an observer?” In a way this is asking, “Who, then, is the Creator?” Well, this also depends on what creation is, of course. The few physicists that have tried not to avoid this question generally say that consciousness has to be involved in the explanation of what a measurement is at some level. So we have the interesting situation, for example, that biology is saying that the electrons in the brain synapses produce consciousness, while the quantum physicists are saying that some sort of consciousness is needed to produce the electrons in the brain synapses to begin with. Interesting situation...still is.

More and more, it seems that consciousness is coming into play in the quantum physics of the 21st Century. I was just at a Foundational Questions in Physics (FQXi) meeting in August, -- which is by invitation only, -- a group of about 100 of the top theoretical physicists in the world. Session topics included topics like: What is consciousness? What is reality? Who is the observer? and so on. So how interesting it is to read what Mrs. Eddy wrote over one

hundred years ago in *Unity of Good*. She wrote, "The material atom is an outlined falsity of consciousness, . ." (Un. of Good 36: 26-27 to ,). It essentially took the whole 20th Century for physicists to begin to catch up with what Mrs. Eddy already wrote about the nature of reality as Mind. Mrs. Eddy wrote about reality, "Infinite Mind creates and governs all, from the mental molecule to infinity." (S+H 507: 21-28).

Mrs. Eddy has a chapter in *Science and Health* entitled, "Science, Theology, and Medicine," and I think her contributions to science, specifically, will be more recognized in the 21st Century. Again, Mrs. Eddy has written, "Observation, invention, study, and original thought are expansive and should promote the growth of mortal mind out of itself, out of all that is mortal." (S+H 195: 19-22). So why should we be surprised that this is happening in our day? Thought has been unfolding in the direction of the reality taught by Christ Jesus and re-discovered in Christian Science by Mrs. Eddy. Mrs. Eddy has stated this science clearly and scientifically, and we have only to really practice it. Thank you!