



How can I understand ‘the scientific statement of being’ better?

Janet Clements interviewed by the Journal’s Rita Polatin

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In Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, Mary Baker Eddy poses the question “What is the scientific statement of being?” and provides this answer: “There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all. Spirit is immortal Truth; matter is mortal error. Spirit is the real and eternal; matter is the unreal and temporal. Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore man is not material; he is spiritual” (p. 468).

Recently on Sentinel Watch, a podcast of the Christian Science Sentinel, Rita Polatin asked Christian Science practitioner and teacher Janet Clements to share her insights on “the scientific statement of being.” The following is an edited summary of their conversation, including questions from Sentinel Watch listeners.

Our first question is from California: “Why is ‘the scientific statement of being’ called ‘scientific’?”

Well, why don’t we just open up all the words in “the scientific statement of being” and see what each one means, and then put it all together? For instance, *scientific* means “according to the rules or principles of science.” So this statement is a comprehensive understanding of truth. And here the term isn’t referring to a humanly scientific truth, but to the divine Science, the Comforter, or Holy Ghost, that Christ Jesus prophesied. In *Science and Health*, Mary Baker Eddy defines the *Holy Ghost* as “divine Science; the development of eternal Life, Truth, and Love” (p. 588).

Then, if we take the term *statement*, one definition is “a series of facts.” So we could say “the scientific statement of being” is an orderly, sequential unfoldment or appearing of Truth. And the word *being* means “to stand, to continue, to be present, now.”

Putting those ideas all together, we can say that “the scientific statement of being” is a sequential development, an unfoldment of divine Science, or the Holy Ghost, that remains continuously present, now.

Our next question is from Pensacola, Florida: “Is it reasonable to suggest that ‘the scientific statement of being’ is, or can be, the most important treatment for human ills?”

I think “the scientific statement of being” is the basis of any treatment for human ills, for it embraces the unbroken and eternal harmony of the universe of Mind, existing now and always. This truth renders impossible any ill or discord.

In the statement, we find a contrast between what is true and what is not. It’s like a line of demarcation and is specific in denying the unreal and affirming the real, culminating in the logical conclusion. And treatment that is properly concluded heals when it rests on the irreversible certainty that Mind, God, is the only power and is sustaining the perfection of each of His ideas.

This is really what “the scientific statement of being” does, and I have an example of this. A friend of mine had a problem she had been working on for some time, and her experience shows how bringing a treatment to a logical conclusion brought her healing.

So, what happened?

Well, she had prayed deeply, but there was no healing. Then she was led to just let her Bible open, and her eyes fell upon these words, which were from God to Moses as the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: “Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward” (Deuteronomy 2:3). To my friend it meant that the healing was now, at hand, final—no need to go round and round. And this realization of the completeness brought healing.

The Word of God declares that all of creation is finished, complete, as we read in the first chapter of the Bible: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them” (Genesis 2:1). Whatever an idea of God needs, it includes, so nothing is lacking or flawed or unhealthy. Nothing needs improving. Everything—the whole of creation—is at the point of perfection, wholeness, completeness.

But the human mind is always inconclusive, never admitting completeness. It would go round and round a problem, as with my friend, who vigorously affirmed truths of man's perfection and firmly denied evil. Yet, like a plane circling its destination but never landing, she hadn't reached a thorough conclusion in her thought.

So, treatment with affirmations and denials is not in itself enough; the human mind needs to move away from the supposed basis of matter, to the only real Mind there is—God. As we realize that God and His creation is complete, and we embrace man's oneness with that Mind, we naturally surrender the sense of having a personal mind apart from God. Then we rejoice in the completeness of the divine Mind, and this brings finality to healing. Really, the more humbly and quickly one yields to the allness of Mind, the less delay there is in healing.

Mrs. Eddy explains that when she writes, "Only by understanding that there is but one power,—not two powers, matter and Mind,—are scientific and logical conclusions reached" (*Science and Health*, p. 270). And "the scientific statement of being," declaring the allness of Mind, brings thought to the scientific and logical conclusion that man is perfect and complete.

That's very powerful, and practical. Our next question, from Washington, is about Psalms 46:6, which says, "He uttered his voice, the earth melted." The questioner asks: "On page 97 of *Science and Health*, Mrs. Eddy writes of the verse, 'This Scripture indicates that all matter will disappear before the supremacy of Spirit.' Could you explain that? It seems she is saying matter is unsubstantial, and Spirit is the real substance of identity. What do we deny when we deny the reality of matter? What exactly is Spirit?"

Good questions! Yes, to define what matter is brings clarity to the message of "the scientific statement of being." One way of describing matter is that it's all about measurement, or limitation. And when we say there is no matter, wouldn't that include the idea that there is no finiteness, no limit? Denying matter involves denying finiteness.

The whole phrase, "There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter," could be opened up to include the idea that there is no life that is terminal, no truth or reality that is contained, no intelligence that diminishes, no substance that wears out. Life, truth, intelligence, and substance have no shelf life, no expiration date.

Also, in “the scientific statement of being,” where we find “matter is the unreal and temporal,” *temporal* means “measured or limited by time.” So time, we could say, is a mortal measurement. We can see that mortal thought would try to divide ever-present Spirit into past and future. But there is no division of infinite Spirit, no measurement of infinitude. Spirit is always in the now.

It’s so interesting to see what the next statement is in “the scientific statement of being,” because it says, “All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all.” Instead of finiteness and measurement, this statement embraces the divine Mind’s infinitude and its infinite manifestation.

Wow! That gives us a lot to work with. The next question, from New York City, plays off of the previous one: “Since *to manifest* means ‘to make apparent,’ how can I better understand the manifestation of Mind, which has no material accompaniment? I’m asking because I’m praying for my sick dog, and his healing is protracted. I know Jesus gave thanks before he saw the healing, but it’s not clear to me how my dog’s manifestation of perfection should be seen and acknowledged before it becomes apparent.”

I’ll address the first part, and then I’ll give an example with my own dog that might be helpful. First, the Cambridge Dictionary says the word *manifestation* means “showing the existence of a particular condition.” So we could say that divine, infinite Mind is revealing the existence of the condition of its infinite, perfect expression. And we might ask, “What does Mind include?” Well, it includes ideas. So, infinite Mind is beholding its infinite ideas, or manifestations. And because we are one in being with infinite Mind, which is God, we behold Mind’s infinite, perfect ideas. So healing is that revealing in consciousness of what already exists—our oneness with Mind, as Mind’s manifestation.

Here are some thoughts about healing your dog. Healing, we could say, is all about perception. We’re not really changing God’s very good creation, that’s finished and complete, but we are lifting off the veil of material, personal sense that would attempt to hide or misinterpret its presence. Christian Science explains that what you see as symptoms of an illness are based upon personal sight, or sense, and this perception by the senses is mental and dependent on the beliefs a mortal embraces. So when the belief is changed, or removed through the Christ, Truth, all the physical symptoms change—because the belief and its manifestation as symptoms are one.

Science and Health says, “When one’s false belief is corrected, Truth sends a report of health over the body” (p. 194). And this change from a material to a spiritual basis is effected by the power and activity of the Christ, the divine message revealing the truth, as God knows the truth. It is the truth

that sets us free from the false beliefs by revealing our oneness with the divine Mind, which beholds its manifestation, perfect and infinite. This is really the healing impetus of “the scientific statement of being” that serves to correct the erroneous, unreal beliefs of matter with the allness of Mind.

The healing of my dog illustrates these ideas. We were gathered around as a family one evening, and I was affectionately scratching my dog underneath his chin, and there was this golf-ball-size growth under his chin. We don’t know when it appeared, but there it was. As a family, we decided to go back to our rooms and pray for our dear dog. So we did, and the next day the growth began to drain. But after a day or two, it stopped draining and got bigger.

So then we met together as a family, and I asked: “What thought is it that we need to handle here? What is the error?” And my son piped up and said, “Well, we could always take him to the vet.”

I got to thinking about that, and as we went our separate ways, I sat down and asked myself: “Do I believe there is more than one way to bring healing? Do I believe that God is All-in-all, and that the source of health and harmony is in God? Or do I believe we could take the dog to the vet or do other things to bring the healing about?” And the answer was clear: God is All-in-all. God is supreme.

So I started thinking about everything that the oneness of God implies. For instance, there’s just one law, and that’s God’s law. There’s not a medical law, or law of disease; there’s just the law of good, of harmony and health. There’s just one substance—the substance of good, the substance of divine Spirit, not matter. There’s just one action—the action of divine Mind, not the action of disease. And as I thought about all the things that are true of the one God, I came to that logical conclusion—that there is no other law, substance, or action but of God—and I just rested on that certainty. I had a wonderful sense of peace, that all was well.

The dog had been lying at my feet while I was praying, and I got up and took him to the park—about a ten-minute walk. By the time we came back, there was nothing under his chin. The growth was completely gone. And where did the revelation of Mind’s supremacy, the oneness and allness of God, good, take place? It was in thought, wasn’t it? My thought had changed from thinking there were many ways of getting health, to just the one source of health and harmony—and that’s God. That shift of thought, through the Christ, was the healing. And because physique is just thought manifested, when the thought is spiritualized, then we say, “Oh, we’re healed.” But, what’s really happening is that the manifestation of divine Mind is being embraced and is revealed as present here and now.

Our next question comes from Johannesburg, South Africa: “What does it mean to be ‘spiritual’?”

Well, we might start with asking, “What is Spirit?” The Glossary of *Science and Health* defines *Spirit* as “divine substance; Mind; divine Principle; all that is good; God; that only which is perfect, everlasting, omnipresent, omnipotent, infinite” (p. 594). And in the Bible, the word *spirit—pneuma* in the Greek—means “breath” or “vital principle.” So, Spirit is God, and it is the divine substance and Principle; the activity, power, energy, of God. This activity and substance of good is infinitely present and powerful—everlasting, perfect, and complete.

Man is the individual expression of God, of Spirit, so man is spiritual. And the substance, the essence, of man is good. It’s infinite, complete, and perfect, lacking nothing. The substance of man is everlasting; it operates unspent. It is as boundless and inexhaustible as infinity. The goodness of man is animated and empowered by the divine energy of Spirit, forever unfolding individually the activity of good. We have the opportunity to embrace our infinite capacities for doing good, because the source of the good that we express is Spirit, God.

Our last question is from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: “I have applied ‘the scientific statement of being’ for many years and have enriched its use and application by studying the chapter in *Science and Health* titled ‘Science of Being.’ What more can I do to deepen my understanding of this powerful gift?”

The chapter “Science of Being” is really an expanded version of “the scientific statement of being.” One of the opening quotes is from Martin Luther: “Here I stand. I can do no otherwise; so help me God!” (p. 268). Surely this chapter stands on the platform of the oneness and allness of divine Mind, and on almost all the pages in it the nothingness of matter is addressed in some way. Mrs. Eddy starts the chapter off with the two theories, that either everything is Mind, or everything is matter—which is it? And in the following pages she answers that question thoroughly. So keep studying that chapter, and the infinite meaning of “the scientific statement of being” will become clearer and clearer.

That’s something we all can do. Well, Janet, do you have anything you’d like to leave us with?

As we open our thought to the message of “the scientific statement of being,” we find it ever new and infinite in inspiration, and in its healing impetus. Mrs. Eddy wrote in *Retrospection and Introspection*: “St. Paul said to the Athenians, ‘For in Him we live, and move, and have our being.’ This statement is in substance identical with my own: ‘There is no life, truth, substance, nor intelligence in matter.’ It is quite clear that as yet this grandest verity has not been fully demonstrated, but it is nevertheless true. If Christian Science reiterates St. Paul’s teaching, we, as Christian Scientists, should give to the world convincing proof of the validity of this scientific statement of being. Having perceived, in advance of others, this scientific fact, we owe to ourselves and to the world a struggle for its demonstration” (pp. 93–94).

Countless healings have occurred by turning to the message of “the scientific statement of being.” Individuals have demonstrated, and will continue to demonstrate, in some modest way this scientific statement of all being. And the world will continue to be blessed by individual fidelity to its message.

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