



CHRISTIAN SCIENCE
Sentinel

"THIS ORIGINAL MAN"

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From the April 7, 1951 issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

In her textbook, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," Mary Baker Eddy refers to Jesus as "this original man." On page 286 she writes, "Physical causation was put aside from first to last by this original man, Jesus." The entirely new and different conception of Jesus, ultimating in the virgin birth, did away with fifty per cent of the matter accompaniment and initiated a disregard of physical causation which to the last marked his unwavering course from cradle to cross to ascension and fully established his originality.

Indeed, of what other individual in all history can it be said that he put aside physical causation from first to last? That Mrs. Eddy in this statement makes no mere rhetorical declaration, but sets forth an exact coverage of facts, is substantiated by the closest study of the details of Christ Jesus' teachings and life as recorded in the Gospels. He never called any man his father, but always acknowledged God to be his source, and that source to be spiritual, not material. While acknowledging his material mother, he reminded her that he must be about his Father's business. His devoted attention to the things of the Spirit as primary enabled him to be a perfect son, and he showed his love of and loyalty to his mother and the family to the end.

His every healing and saving act, every so-called miracle he performed, his frequent escapes from men and forces intent upon harming and destroying him, the entire program he followed in fulfillment of prophecy, was a putting aside of physical causation. And it furnished indisputable evidence that the Christ, which came to the flesh in Christ Jesus, operates only through spiritual power and by disregard of physical cause and effect.

For this reason Jesus set no store by physical diagnosis. His nearest approach to it would appear to have been his query of the demoniac man, who replied (Mark 5:9), "My name is Legion: for we are many." But Jesus evidently destroyed the Legion without attempting to enumerate the detail of it. After all, where would one begin or end with the symptoms of Legion? Again, in the case of Peter's wife's mother Jesus stood over her and rebuked the fever, and she was at once healed.

He put aside the hypothesis of a physical cause of the fever and utilized the Christ, the spiritual consciousness of health, to remove the symptom called fever. His method showed his healing and saving power to be in all respects nonmaterial and hence purely spiritual, or divinely mental. Thus he proved his system to be entirely new to that age, and he himself an original in character and in action.

Mrs. Eddy's designation of Jesus as "this original man" is employed in the fullest meaning of the word original, but without time element. To be sure, he was the first and only one to demonstrate Christ completely, and the Christ is ageless. But Jesus was original in the all-important sense that he was not a copy, or reproduction, but was himself alone, an individual. Science and Health declares that the divine conception of Jesus furnished an illustration of creation. He did a peculiar work, which can never be copied, yet he was our example; and the steps he took, his followers, each in his own way, must take from a physical sense of existence up to the spiritual.

In these days when extreme emphasis upon sociology tends perilously away from the individualism furnished in the supreme example of the Master, in these days when the necessity of each of us to work out his own salvation is challenged and free agency imperiled, it behooves us to study deeply the meaning of originality as indicated in the above quotation. To originate is to produce as new. This dictionary definition makes originality synonymous with newness and shows that each idea or product of Mind, God, is not a repetition, but an original. Only so can the infinite variety or individuality of the unity and oneness of being be accounted for and objectified. Paul said, "For to me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1: 21). One might paraphrase Paul's utterance thus: "For to me to be is to be an original."

The image and likeness of God is infinitely varied, and that great fact not only accounts for identity and individuality, but also places upon everyone the indispensability and responsibility of originality. Even in the material counterfeit, originality is seen in each blade of grass, each leaf on the tree, and each grain of sand on the seashore. Each mortal is a counterfeit of an individual idea of Mind, an original man. Mortal man is seen only as individual mortal man, that is, individual false belief about man, as individual misrepresentation of man.

Now individual man, the original man of God's creating, does not exist alone. He illustrates the multifarious expression of Mind. Individual man, therefore, exists in relation to innumerable originals, each of which instances God's infinite newness. Just so in human life each individual is

seen against a background of his fellow men. And his responsibility to his fellow man and to himself may be stated in Christ Jesus' words of the law (Matt. 19:19), "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Originality calls for highest service in human relations. "This original man, Jesus," declared (John 15:13), "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." And Christ Jesus' true followers obediently follow the Master in laying out their lives in highest service. However, it is to be noted that the good which Christ Jesus did to his fellow men always released them, never enslaved them; always solved their problems, never aggravated, multiplied, or fixed upon them the error that plagued them. Christ Jesus' charity, for example, neither increased nor perpetuated want or distress.

If we are to be worthy disciples of Christ, we must deal with every sin as an original sin, every case of disease, discord, abnormality, limitation, or lack as new and as having never before presented itself in exactly the same way to human consciousness for acceptance or rejection. We must stamp every counterfeit presentment of mortal thought as like no other. There can be no chronic disease or disability. However stubborn and persistent a case may seem, be it disease, sin, or other abnormality, it presents an original aspect of the error in some degree; it presents some change in the mentality expressing the erroneous condition or in the vision of him beholding it. So any case, at any time, must be considered as a new, an acute, an original case, and be so healed individually and originally. That is why our Leader warns against the use of formulated treatment and the seeking of physical diagnosis, declaring that the latter actually induces disease.

In our work and lives as Christian Scientists, what is it to be original? Surely to think thoughts that have never before been thought; to live lives never before lived; to walk in new paths, paths apart from the former conversation. It is to dare to be oneself; to be different— as no one has ever been before. Surely it is to put on the new, the original man, the man expressive of the infinite variety of the divine Mind, the depths of which can never be sounded; the individual aspects of which can be stated only in terms of originality and without duplication.

Socrates turned philosophical thought rightabout-face when he said, "Know thyself." Here was a philosophy new to the mind of mortals. It changed humanity's course to introspection, where consciousness creates and reigns. It required the coming and the life of our Master to unite the concepts of religion and philosophy. Of "this original man, Jesus," Science and Health declares (p. 314), "Our Master gained the solution of being, demonstrating the existence of but one Mind

without a second or equal." If the one Mind, God, the only cause, is without a second or equal, His multifarious image and likeness, man, is individual, and each identity also must be without a second or equal. And so the philosophers' "Know thyself" finds completion in the Christian's "Be thyself."

What says our Leader to the point of this great theme of the infinite originality of God and man? In Science and Health we find this practical application of the Christly office (p. 571): "Know thyself, and God will supply the wisdom and the occasion for a victory over evil." In self-knowledge and the resultant self-control each of us will find self-preservation, that salvation which must eternally be the condition of original reflection of infinite Mind.

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