



“Hey, Serpent, we’re not falling for your lies!”

Sunday, October 30th, 2022

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“Hey, Serpent, we’re not falling for your lies!”

Metaphysical Application Ideas for The Christian Science Quarterly Bible Lesson on

“Adam and Fallen Man”

for October 31 through **November 6, 2022**

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Recent media reports make it seem as if the very existence of truth is at stake. Politicians, news reports, medical doctors, nutritionists, and social media posts seem to state bold lies with no repercussions. Fortunately for us, this week’s Bible Lesson is all about exposing and overturning lies through prayer.

As I see it, this Lesson reminds us not to wear the “Adam costume.” I’m using the term “Adam costume” here to symbolize the mental acceptance of the Adam-and-Eve creation myth that we came from “dust” and thus inherit the flaws and sins of mortality. A costume, while fun for Halloween and necessary for musical theater productions, is also a deception, a lie about who someone is. The “Adam costume” is a lie that we don’t want to wear. And, like many Halloween costumes, this one come with accessories. The accessories of the “Adam costume” are shame, guilt, inadequacy, and fear. We don’t want to carry these around!

The Adam-and-Eve-in-the-garden story is one of many creation myths that suggest that man had a start point that is flawed and full of suffering, and that man is separate from infinite Mind. When we accept the general world belief about a start point to life and accept a start-and-stop view of our existence, we are—in effect—wearing the “Adam costume.” In truth, there never was a first moment to life. There never was a moment in the universe in which there was no life and then *poof*, now there is life. Life is beginningless.

The “Adam costume” is not real—we cannot really choose to have a start point. There is no start point to life, just as there is no start point to time. Life is eternal. But since much of the world tacitly accepts some form of mortal-origin story to life, we need to reject the costume daily. Rejecting the costume means affirming that we are co-existent and eternal with divine Life, and results in freedom and ever-unfolding views of goodness and love. Wearing the costume seems to come with many side effects...suffering, sorrow, despair, and so forth. We don’t want to wear this metaphorical “Adam costume”... it wouldn’t be comfortable. For one, a fig leaf does not offer much protection from the cold, and—at least, here in Colorado—we’re already seeing some freezing temperatures overnight. But also, the side-effects of accepting the myth that life has a start point sets us on a trajectory of decline and deterioration. Instead, we can refuse to wear the costume, and thus be free.

In the **Golden Text** of the Lesson, an anthropomorphic Jehovah asks Adam, “...Who told you that you were naked?” (Genesis 3:11) Reading this question led me to ask, “What is the

difference between the words “naked” and “nude?” Most often, “nude” means without clothes, and is often used in the context of paintings and sculptures and is seen as beautiful. The word “naked,” however, connotes shame, weakness, and ugliness. While nudeness has a connotation of beauty, nakedness often implies vulgarity and vulnerability. When the anthropomorphic Jehovah asks Adam, “...Who told you that you were naked?” – it is as if Jehovah is asking Adam how he found out about mortality, about the myth of limited existence, suffering, and sorrow. “Nakedness” is a term used throughout the Bible in connection with shame. The opposite of shame, and the solution to this false sense of nakedness, is worthiness. We are each worthy of love.

The **Responsive Reading** shows how Isaiah labels as “lies” the myth of mortality, and says “we have made lies our refuge and under falsehood [the “Adam costume”] have we hid ourselves.” (Isaiah 28:15) But then Isaiah reminds us that we can take off this false costume, and writes “Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.” (Isaiah 52:1-12) The promise to us as we let go of this false myth is revealed by the prophet Joel: “And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed.” (Joel, 2: 26, 27) In other words, Joel’s prophecy is that as we reject the “Adam costume,” we will never be ashamed, and we will feel our worthiness and the promise of abundant life.

In most of the Bible Lessons throughout the year, a word or concept repeats as a theme throughout the sections. In this week’s Lesson, I’m noticing that there are 30 questions, and even the Golden Text is a question. (For reference, the Bible Lessons in the two weeks before and two weeks after this week’s include between 4 and 6 questions each.) Together, the questions throughout this week’s Bible Lesson serve as a reminder to question and reject the lies of the Adam-and-Eve myth and the sneaky serpent in all its forms. At the end of each section of this Met, I’ll include a bullet list of questions that stand out to me. My sense is that rather than rushing to quick-and-easy answers to these rhetorical questions, we can ponder them deeply and allow them to ignite spiritual curiosity. Pondering these questions humbly is a form of prayer.

SECTION 1: NO BUTS

The first section of the Lesson contrasts two views of creation presented by the first two chapters of Genesis. (citation S2, 523:14) In the first chapter of Genesis, God says, “Let there be light, and there [already] was light.” And we read that man is made in the image and likeness of divine Truth, Life, and Love...and that all creation—the unfoldment of what always has been known by divine Mind—is “very good.” (cit. B3, Genesis 1:3-31)

Genesis 2 contradicts the first chapter with a limited and distorted view of creation, and starts with the word “But.” It reads, “**But** there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.” (cit. B4, Gen 2: 6, 7) This symbolic mist would seem to obscure the goodness and harmony of infinite Mind, cloud our sense of beginningless life, and cause sorrow and suffering. We must see through the mist-myth. The “but” and “mist” of Genesis 2 have no basis because they have no real origin. No “buts” about it, life is beginningless.

The “but” of Genesis 2 is like any negative suggestion trying to interrupt joy and health. Here are examples of a Genesis 2 “but”: “I am full of gratitude and love, but I get grumpy when I don’t get my way” or, “I love the concept of studying my Bible Lesson, but sometimes I feel like I’m just going through the motions.” The words after the “but” are like the Genesis 2 myth-mist that try to distort joy and health. We can say “no” to the “but” of Genesis 2 and claim freedom from the mist-myth.

Here is a list of rhetorical questions included in Section 1:

- “...having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (cit. B5, Galatians 3:3)
 - “Does God create a material man out of Himself, Spirit?” (cit. S1, 356:24)
 - “The standard of perfection was originally God and man. Has God taken down His own standard, and has man fallen?” (cit. S7, 470:18)
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SECTION 2: SAY “NO” TO THE TRICK-NOT-TREAT SERPENT

The story in the second section of the Lesson continues the theme of the “but” in Genesis 2. It introduces the mythological talking serpent, the sneaky snake that tricks Adam and Eve, resulting in their “fall.” This story is a myth to explain the origin of evil and the origin of our separation from goodness, from God. (cit. B8, Genesis 3:1–5, 9–13) The sneaky serpent represents “false prophets”—false suggestions of any kind that would try to trick us into wearing the “Adam costume.” (cit. B6, Matthew 24:11) The metaphorical talking serpent tries to trick us into thinking we have a start point and therefore must suffer mortality and decline. The tricky serpent tries to get us to wear the metaphorical “Adam costume” and thus accept shame and guilt and inadequacy.

The second section repeats the question from the Golden Text, when the anthropomorphic Jehovah asks Adam, “Who told you that you were naked?” (Genesis 3:11) In other words, where does the suggestion that we should be ashamed and feel vulnerable to suffering come from? The suggestion comes from the metaphorical talking serpent, the false prophet, the snake-talker. The suggestion comes from a misty-mythical-mistaken-misshapen view. It has no basis. It is an error.

Mary Baker Eddy describes the scene with the talking serpent as the “beguiling first lie.” She writes, “Here there is an attempt to trace all human errors directly or indirectly to God, or good, as if He were the creator of evil. The allegory shows that the snake-talker utters the first voluble lie, which beguiles the woman and demoralizes the man.” (cit. S9, 533:10–14, including marginal heading)

She explains that shame—the false sense that we’re unworthy—comes from the false belief that we are separate from God. In other words, shame comes from the mist-myth that we are sinners. Sin is the mistaken belief that we are separate from divine Love, divine Truth and unworthy of Love’s love. Mary Baker Eddy explains that “shame is the effect of sin.” (cit. S10, 532:17–4) We eliminate shame as we discover our inseparability from divine Truth.

The purpose of the Adam and Eve story is not to explain how evil became real. No. The purpose of the Adam and Eve story is to teach us “never to believe a lie.” For me, this is the core theme of this lesson so bears repeating here: The purpose of the Adam and Eve story is not to explain how evil became real. No. The purpose of the Adam and Eve story is to teach us “never to believe a lie.” (cit. S11, 540:21)

Here are questions posed in Section 2:

- “Whence comes a talking, lying serpent to tempt the children of divine Love?” (cit. S8, 529:21-22)
 - “Is Mind capable of error as well as of truth, of evil as well as of good, when God is All and He is Mind and there is but one God, hence one Mind?” (cit. S10, 532:17-4)
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SECTION 3: TRUTH “TRAMPLES” THE SNEAKY SERPENT

Section 3 tells us how to “trample” the serpent—the sneaky suggestion of limitation, lack, shame, fear, and unworthiness. Please note that I admire snakes for their beauty and utility. Mary Baker Eddy did too. She wrote, “The serpent of God’s creating is neither subtle nor poisonous, but is a wise idea, charming in its adroitness, for Love’s ideas are subject to the Mind which forms them, — the power which changeth the serpent into a staff.” (SH, p. 515:5) The serpent of Genesis 2 is a beguiling mythological construct not based in reality.

The sneaky serpent is intolerable and must be trampled. Mary Baker Eddy defines serpent as, “Subtlety; a lie.” (cit. S14, 594:1–2) Sneaky serpent suggestions seem to slither into thought in the form of a distorted view, a limited view, a nagging inner voice that is not actually our voice, an opinion from another limited view, a mesmeric world belief, and so forth. Once exposed—brought to the surface—Truth tramples the serpent easily. (cit. B10, Psalm 91:13)

As I understand it, the mythological sneaky serpent that first appears in Genesis 2 to deceive Adam and Eve, snakes its way through the Bible until the Revelator describes it as a “great red dragon” that is cast out. The sneaky snake appears in the Garden of Eden, in Exodus when Moses grabs the tail of the snake and it becomes a staff, in Matthew when the Sadducees and Pharisees are described as a “brood of vipers,” in the form of the devil tempting Christ Jesus (see Section 4), with the snake that bites Paul (see Section 5), and the great red dragon in Revelation. In Revelation we see how the great red dragon, or “old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world” is cast out, along with all its forms of deception, and we find salvation (another word for “health”), and strength and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, our awareness of God’s presence. (cit. B11, Revelation 12:1, 3, 9, 10)

For me, every time I overcome the sneaky serpent—false suggestion of shame or inadequacy or despondency—it is evidence of Revelation’s truth. I don’t see the inspiration of Revelation as a one-time event, or a promise of future salvation happening sometime down the road. Revelation is a present promise. Healing is revelation; Revelation is healing. Revelation describes the constant availability: of Truth to overcome the false suggestion of a lie; of Harmony to overcome discord; of Love to cancel hate; of health to overturn sickness; of Spirit to correct apathy; of Soul to rectify a false sense of blandness. Revelation is now. Each glimpse of Truth is Revelation. Christ is our awareness of Truth, and it is Christ-Truth that tramples the sneaky serpent, and annihilates the great red dragon.

As Mary Baker Eddy explains, “Throughout all generations both before and after the Christian era, the Christ, as the spiritual idea, — the reflection of God, — has come with some measure of power and grace to all prepared to receive Christ, Truth.” (cit. S12, 333:19–23)

Christ-Truth is our awareness of the power of Truth to overturn mistakes and lies. It is only the “supposed power” of the sneaky serpent that would try to undermine Truth, but an awareness of Truth corrects this instantly. As Mary Baker Eddy explains in her exegesis of Revelation, “That false claim — that ancient belief, that old serpent whose name is devil (evil), claiming that there is intelligence in [a limited and mistaken view] either to benefit or to injure men — is pure delusion, the red dragon; and it is cast out by Christ, Truth, the spiritual idea, and so proved to be powerless.” (cit. 15, 567:18–23)

Each time I study Revelation, I get a new insight, and I believe Revelation contains infinite—unending and endless—insights. Instead of becoming frustrated by not understanding enough of Revelation, I strive to use it to catch new glimpses of Christ—an awareness of Truth’s power over lies. I believe that this type of study—always finding fresh inspiration—is what Mary Baker Eddy modeled for us in “The Apocalypse,” which is the chapter title of her exegesis of Revelation at the conclusion of *Science and Health*. For example, under a heading called “bruising sin’s head,” she described the role of the “woman” in Revelation, she reveals her inspiration on how to understand the way in which the woman—“the spiritual idea of Love”—bruises, or overturns, the “head of lust,” the belief that the five limited senses give us

an accurate perception of reality. She then compares the analogy of the woman overturning lust—Love overturning false sense—to the parable of the chaff and the wheat. In the parable, chaff and wheat may seem to grow side by side for a while, but ultimately, the chaff is exposed as chaff and easily separated and destroyed, just as the sneaky serpent's lies are exposed as lies and easily separated and destroyed by Truth. (cit. S16, 534:24)

After reading that paragraph, we might ask, "What does 'bruising sin's head' mean?" Great question! I'll be pondering this question this week, and by the end of the week, I expect I'll have new insights.

Speaking of questions, here are questions included in Section 3:

- "What is this supposed power, which opposes itself to God?" (cit. S13, 224:32)
- "When will mankind wake to this great fact in Science?" (cit. S17, 430:11)

SECTION 4: JESUS SHOWS THE WAY TO OVERCOME THE SNEAKY SNAKE

The fourth section includes the account of Christ Jesus overcoming the temptation of the devil. The "devil" here is symbolic of the mythological sneaky serpent. In this account, the sneaky serpent tries to tempt Christ Jesus in three distinct ways: 1) tempting him to display his power by turning stones into bread, 2) tempting him to "cast himself off" the "pinnacle of the temple" to prove that he is worthy, and 3) tempting him with the offer to rule over the vast kingdoms of the world if only he will worship the devil. Christ Jesus denies the devil—sneaky serpent—three times, after which "angels came and ministered unto him." (cit. B14, Matthew 4:11)

Mary Baker Eddy describes angels as "...God's representatives. These upward-soaring beings never lead towards self, sin, or [a *limited view of existence*], but guide to the divine Principle of all good, whither every real individuality, image, or likeness of God, gathers." (cit. S18, 299:11–15) As I understand it, not only did the angels—"the guide to the divine Principle of all good"—minister and tend to Christ Jesus's needs after he rejected the devil, these angels were with him all along, enabling him to deny the devil, or sneaky serpent.

Understanding the trickery of the devil, or sneaky serpent, helps us expose and reject its lies. Note that when the devil—sneaky serpent—attempts to tempt Christ Jesus, it tries to lure him by referencing part of Psalm 91: "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." (cit. B14, Matthew 4:6 is a direct quote of Psalm 91: 11-2) But the devil-serpent stops short of including the very next line in Psalm 91. The next line of Psalm 91 reads, "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder [small venomous snake]: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet." This citation opened the previous section of the Lesson (cit 10, Psalm 91:13). Its notable that the deceitful devil would leave out the this part of Psalm 91 when he's trying to tempt Christ Jesus. Leaving out a crucial part of truth can be as deceitful as a lie. Many critics of Christian Science do this, misquoting Mary Baker Eddy or taking sentences out of context. We can outsmart this sneakiness with alertness to Truth.

Note that the references to the lion—just like the references to cobras, adder, serpents, and dragons—are symbolic. In the second section, the devil is described as a roaring lion. Here's the citation: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (cit. B7, I Peter 5:8)

The various symbolism of the devil—sneaky suggestions of evil—enable us to be alert to the many forms these suggestions seem to take. People have asked me if Christian Scientists believe in the devil. Good question! My sense is that while Mary Baker Eddy did not teach about a man-like devil with any real power, she did understand that the sneaky lies of

discouragement, doubt, fear, shame, and inadequacy try to sneak in like the Genesis 2 serpent to steal our dominion.

Mary Baker Eddy defines devil: DEVIL. Evil; a lie; error; neither corporeality nor mind; the opposite of Truth; a belief in sin, sickness, and death; animal magnetism or hypnotism; the lust of the flesh, which saith: "I am life and intelligence in matter. There is more than one mind, for I am mind, — a wicked mind, self-made or created by a tribal god and put into the opposite of mind, termed matter, thence to reproduce a mortal universe, including man, not after the image and likeness of Spirit, but after its own image." (SH, p. 584:17)

Being alert to the deceitful devil or sneaky serpent may sometimes seem confusing and overwhelming. But it isn't. It is simple. Truth always wins. Truth corrects error. Christ—our active awareness of Truth—always destroys the hateful lies of the devil-serpent. We can all tune in to the simplicity of the Christ, our awareness of Truth. Paul was alert to the need to tune in to Christ. As he wrote in a letter to the Corinthians, "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." (cit. B13, II Corinthians 11:3)

Christ is our protection against the lies of the serpent. We must, therefore, be crystal clear in our understanding of Christ. Mary Baker Eddy offers this definition of Christ: "Christ is the true idea voicing good, the divine message from God to men speaking to the human consciousness. The Christ is incorporeal, spiritual, — yea, the divine image and likeness, dispelling the illusions of the senses; the Way, the Truth, and the Life, healing the sick and casting out evils, destroying sin, disease, and death." (cit. 21, 332:9-15) To protect ourselves from the mist-myth of the devil we need to tune in to the "simplicity that is in Christ."

Here is an article on "the simplicity that is in Christ" by Ella Hoag:

<https://sentinel.christianscience.com/shared/view/19hcbu1ymd0?s=e>

Here are a couple of questions from Section 4:

- "...what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?" (cit. B12, Luke 9:25)
- "Art thou dwelling in the belief that mind is in matter, and that evil is mind, or art thou in the living faith that there is and can be but one God, and keeping His commandment?" (cit. S22, 307:31-4)

SECTION 5: SHAKE OFF THE DUST-SNAKE

Section 5 includes the account of Paul shaking the venomous viper into the fire and suffering no ill-effects from its bite. What a practical example of shaking off the serpent-lie, the lie that man originates in dust. We can all do this. As it says in Isaiah, "Shake thyself from the dust." (cit. B15, Isaiah 52:2) We needn't tolerate even a speck of dust.

Paul was alert to the Adam-myth. As he put it, "For in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (cit. B16, I Corinthians 15:22) As Mary Baker Eddy explains, "As in Adam [error] all die, even so in Christ [Truth] shall all be made alive." (cit. S29, 545:31-32) In other words, when we accept the Adam-myth of a beginning to life, we are also accepting an end to life. When we align with the Christ-Truth that we have beginningless existence, we truly live. Paul's refusal to accept Adam-myth and his ability to shake off the sneaky serpent enabled him to heal effectively, as he proved with Publius's father on the island of Malta. (cit. B17, Acts 28:3-9)

Each of us has access to the healing light of Christ. As Mary Baker Eddy instructed, "Cast out all manner of evil. 'Preach the gospel to every creature.' Speak the truth to every form of error.

Tumors, ulcers, tubercles, inflammation, pain, deformed joints, are waking dream-shadows, dark images of mortal thought, which flee before the light of Truth.” (cit. S28, 418:27)

Here are a couple questions from Section 5:

- “Is there no divine permission to conquer discord of every kind with harmony, with Truth and Love?” (cit. 24, 394:25)
 - “Before deciding that the body, matter, is disordered, one should ask, ‘Who art thou that repliest to Spirit? Can matter speak for itself, or does it hold the issues of life?’” (cit. S27, 180:31-6)
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SECTION 6: TRUTH MAKES US FREE

The sixth section opens with the rhetorical question from 1st Thessalonians, “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?” (cit. B18, I Thessalonians 2:19, 20) As I understand it, the author is prompting us to find genuine joy, hope, and victory as we tune in to Christ-Truth. Christ Jesus, who understood Christ most clearly, taught the way of Truth and showed us the way to see through the lies of the sneaky serpent. Christ-Truth tramples the serpent, overturning and silencing forever the false suggestion of the Adam-myth that we have a start-point in dust.

We are free of the mist-myth and dust-lies to the degree that we tune in to Christ-Truth. As Christ Jesus announced, “...ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (cit. B19, John 8:32)

Throughout this Bible Lesson are questions that prompt us to reject the creation myth in Genesis 2. In the sixth section, we find Mary Baker Eddy’s question to us, “Dear reader, which mind-picture or externalized thought shall be real to you, — the material [*the limited and distorted*] or the spiritual [*the unlimited and clear*]? Both you cannot have. You are bringing out your own ideal.” (cit. S30, 360:13-16)

This question is like asking whether we want to wear the Adam-costume along with its accessories—shame, guilt, inadequacy, and fear. We don’t actually have a choice about reality. Reality is reality and Truth is true. Even if we did wear the Adam-costume, it would just be a costume, a lie. It isn’t the truth of our being. No costume, no matter how convincing, can change the truth of our being. And no lies, no matter how convincing, can make truth untrue.

Limited human belief may seem to close us off from Truth. But Christ—our awareness of Truth—is always present, and we cannot exist outside of Truth. It is axiomatic that there is no truth outside of Truth. As Mary Baker Eddy states, “Through discernment of the spiritual opposite of materiality, even the way through Christ, Truth, man will reopen with the key of divine Science the gates of Paradise which human beliefs have closed, and will find himself unfallen, upright, pure, and free, not needing to consult almanacs for the probabilities either of his life or of the weather, not needing to study brainology to learn how much of a man he is.” (cit. S31, 171:4)

Truth sets us free. Through Christ—our awareness of Truth and Love—we expose the serpent-lies and see through the mist-myth of the Adam costume. We can find our freedom from shame, guilt, inadequacy, and fear. We can find freedom from lies. As Mary Baker Eddy proclaims, “Citizens of the world, accept the ‘glorious liberty of the children of God,’ and be free!” (cit. S32, 227:24-25 and quoting Romans 8:20-22).

GEMs of BIBLE-BASED application ideas from COBBEY CRISLER & others were POSTED and EMAILED on Monday. so check your email or junk mail for them. You can

always check the *current GEMs* at [CedarS INSPIRATION website](#), *whether or not you have SUBSCRIBED here to receive this offering.*

Ken Cooper is back from holiday, so later in the week, look for his “POETIC POSTLUDE” contributions related to this Bible Lesson.

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