

## QUESTIONS:

Following the example set by the question-and-answer columns in the early *Journals*, when Mary Baker Eddy was Editor, this column will respond to general queries from *Journal* readers with responses from *Journal* readers. You'll find information at the end of the column about how to submit questions. Readers are also encouraged to go to Chapter III of *Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896* by Mary Baker Eddy — “Questions and Answers.”

**Are all material objects simply ideas, or is matter altogether nonexistent? If matter doesn't exist, how can material objects express beauty, or be reflections of ideas?**

— FROM A PARTICIPANT AT THE PORTLAND, OREGON, YOUTH SUMMIT

**A** The relationship between material objects and spiritual ideas is clearly delineated in Mary Baker Eddy's answer to a similar question posed on page 60 of her book *Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*. There she says, in part: “. . . every creation or idea of Spirit has its counterfeit in some matter belief. Every material belief hints the existence of spiritual reality; and if mortals are instructed in spiritual things, it will be seen that material belief, in all its manifestations, reversed, will be found the type and representative of verities priceless, eternal, and just at hand.”

Understanding the relationship between what appears as matter and the divine idea that it counterfeits has profound implications in the healing process, for it encourages a movement from preoccupation with the material appearance to an appreciation of spiritual reality. As this movement is done in thought, one becomes focused on the spiritual reality, and holding that reality in thought consistently brings renewal, regeneration, and healing.

This understanding also shows us that while ma-

terial appearance has no true substance of its own, it does in fact hint at something far more substantial. In that regard, we might say that the material appearance acts as a waymark to the divine fact, inviting, by reversal, a translation from matter to Spirit and its ideas. As this scientific translation is done in thought, “man and the universe will be found harmonious and eternal” (Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 209).

This is more than an academic exercise; in a sense, it is the way we should be engaging our world daily. Jesus pointed out that his mission to the world was not one of destruction but fulfillment (to bring out the full potential of something). Like our Master, we can be dedicated to bringing out the full spiritual potential of what we see in our world.

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Editor's Note: Ron Ballard, our dear friend and frequent contributor to the *Journal* and the *Christian Science Sentinel*, passed on recently.