

Who Healeth all thy Diseases

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Introduction

Ex. 3:11-15 contains a report of theophany in which the Deity defines its name to Moses, which is embedded in the prophetic call narrative of Moses. By observing Hebrew style, syntax, grammar and vocabulary it is possible to describe *Yhwh*. This definition can be contextualized in the healing practice of Christian Science. But even that context is not the first or only that I bring to this exegesis. I study Jewish liturgy, law and history, biblical translation and history, philosophy, and I am Caucasian, female and a citizen of the U.S. living in the Rocky Mountains. However, the really decisive context for this exegesis is one that I doubt anyone really escapes from, which is the subjectively experienced spirituality of the exegete. That is not a public context, but I am going to insist that my consciousness of God is a real context, not solipsism, and as such is a valid trajectory in the exploration of how contextualization interprets texts. Buber described this context with the primary word of relationship, *I and Thou*: “I become through my relation to the *Thou*; as I become *I*, I say *Thou*.” (Buber 1958: 11) This primary relationship which includes only two parties, God and oneself, is a genuine context characterized by reciprocity, mutuality and law, consequence and grace. It is the first of all contexts, conditioning how one participates in every other relation one shares with the rest of creation. Heschel argued that the hidden context of interaction with God properly returns the prophet to participate urgently, vigorously in the world from God’s perspective. (Heschel 1962: 2:88) I am not usually allowed to place my relationship with God in open dialogue with my academic work, but I have been invited today to be integral. So I will footnote how the primary word, *I and Thou*, has entered my exegesis of text. Even in the later discussion of how I’ve contextualized exegesis in Judaism and Christian Science, I will make clear that *I and Thou* is a primary context that shapes participation in religions.

I and Thou

In the winter of 1983 a still small voice spoke to me, saying "Galen, awake." In the spring of 1984 it continued, "My name is Love." Two summers later, in 1986, it caused me to see that, at that level of consciousness, I was always aware that Love was with me. Many things had taken place during those years, some good, some not, but Love was constant. It had been unerring about loving, so that I always *understood it as love*. I then saw in a wholly visionary way the righteous indignant act of Christ Jesus, overthrowing the tables of the money changers in the temple of my consciousness, through which my sins were annulled. Then Love appeared to be omnipotent. Immediately these words appeared, written in heaven, I AM WHO I AM, meaning that Love loves. I immediately recognized the God of Moses, and as I was already convinced, the still small voice immediately added, "I am God." The blue sky dissolved to reveal an invisible center around which revolves the hosts of creation in perfect peace. All this cannot have taken more than a few seconds. At its height, I was not aware of time or space as usual but was gazing at an immeasurable spiritual reality. Then it faded and I saw and heard as usual.

From that point forward, I unavoidably feel I stand before God. I think with a mind snagged on an invisible reality no one else shares; I unavoidably experience the terrific distance between God's perfection and my sin; I have been chastised and tried and purified so utterly I cannot even speak of it. Heschel's description of prophetic experience is the best description of myself I have ever found, but I well know that Heschel would be the first to tell me prophecy ceased 200 years before the Common Era. Nevertheless, the word of God came to me, so my work springs from such an intensely unworldly context that it corrects the world as well as me. I find myself arguing points no one else worries about. As a rule, folks don't like to rethink foundations unless they fail, but I do that for everyone because they have already failed for me. I am in a context no one else can participate in, which affects everyone. *But so is everyone else! I and Thou is a context, a primary relation, not an isolation.*

The first and most obvious problem has been that as God defines it, Love is farther from lust than even a Spirit causing a pregnancy can be. It is more like what stands before the mirror and its reflection, without any intermediary birth-giver at all. So the most obvious and popular context for the word is ruled out by how God has defined Love: Sex isn't God. There is a real distinction between generation and creation. The danger that my witness about God might disintegrate into sex-idolatry is acute in my conscience, so I carefully distinguish between humanity and divinity by identifying Love with creation rather than with generation. I read with interest Hisako Kinukawa's discussion of how Jesus' redefinition of family does not in principle exclude expression of sexuality in contexts other than heterosexual monogamy. (Kinukawa 2011: 147-170) I do follow her: Love is everyone's word, everyone's God. But for me, Love *is* God, a Spirit, a Speaker, and an invisible Mind. Spirituality governing sensuality, fidelity overcoming lust, are aspects of what God means by Love.

The best analogies I have are Ex. 3:11-15; I Kings 19:11,12; and Matthew 21:12, Mark 11:15, and John 2:14,15. It must seem hopelessly naïve to directly compare these texts to my own experience, but the very messy personal struggle between flesh and Spirit attending such crystalline words has made the facticity of the experience indubitable to me. Nor has it comfortably faded in memory, but grows more profound, more vivid, and more true as the decades accumulate. I am well trained to listen to and to draw out the voice of ancient texts, informed by what can be learned about history, archaeology and language. Nevertheless, the Bible is where I encounter the *Thou* who addressed me *outside of myself*, which is so important. The similarities between ancient and modern divine speeches have given me *co-texts*, parallel stories that illumine one another on a theological level. It is easier to think about these texts than my own experience, just as it is easier to read by sunlight than to look into the sun. They endure in the public domain to contextualize this modern event among similar events; they imply other people had quite similar experiences. They anchor what divine Love means in the word *yhwh*, so to keep it holy. Further, because Ex. 3:11-15 defined *yhwh* with the verb "to be", the intersection of "to

be” with “love” implies the two different activities are simultaneous and indivisible. The contexts in which the Word is spoken certainly do change, but the Speaker is single, the same. I work at translating the whole Bible because it helps me cope with an overwhelming event spiritually, rationally, morally, intelligently, even beautifully, and therein I am comforted. Biblical texts allow me to align both *I and Thou* in the context of what has come down the ages hallowed and tested in the crucible of many, many lives, and so to be responsible. I am now privileged to write of Ex. 3:11-15 *and* God.

Exodus 3:11-15

Exodus 3:11-15 is a central text in the biblical concept of *Yhwh*, which gives a constellation of the key words, “I am” or *’ehyeh* which build up the meaning of *yhwh* as if it was an unparalleled form of “to be”, or *hayah*. Other biblical authors associated *yhwh* with *hayah* in texts where “I am” is a divine name operating like a verb, in promises such as “I am with you” or “I am your God and you are my people”; and in covenant promises and creation settings where *yhwh* ordains “It shall be . . .” or “Let there be . . .” In Ex. 3:11, Moses asks who is he to confront Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt, meaning, how he will have the power to do such a thing. In v. 12, the Deity reassures him, “Because ‘I am’ with you. . . .” Remarkably, the verb here translated “I am” is Hebrew *’ehyeh*, the same word used three times in v. 14 for “‘I AM’ WHO ‘I AM’” (*’ehyeh ’asher ’ehyeh*) and “Tell them ‘I AM’, he sent me”. (again using *’ehyeh*) It is important to indicate this fact in the translation because that one detail is the key to divine name theology.¹ In v. 12, *’ehyeh* is usually translated “I will be with you”, but in order to indicate its identity with the divine name in v. 14 all four identical verbs should be done identically.

Commentators tend to think that God’s reassurance for Moses as the promise that when they got out,

¹ CONTEXT: What struck me when I noticed all four verbs are identical was the similarity to how I AM WHO I AM had been LOVE’s way of indicating it is named for what it does. From that point I thought that the form of Ex. 3:11-15 is comparable, and that *yhwh* was another form of “to be”. I do not think that the different verbs employed as names inherently contradict the coincidence of form, but that the word “love” expands the available data about God. The overall principle fits well with the ancient name theology that a divine name expresses the essence of the Deity, so it is not unreasoned or indefensible on historic grounds.

they would all worship God on that mountain. I do not think that in itself is any reassurance at all because Moses would still have no idea how they could possibly escape. Instead, the translator can properly render the prefixed form with a timeless “I am’ with you” so as to anticipate the divine name I AM. “I am” is not an ordinary verb, but the divine name, the presence of God with Moses, and this is the sign reassuring him that God sent him. I have added quotes for the sake of clarity, but the tiny detail of rendering all four verbs identically is the only way for the translator to indicate that *this half verse up to the athnak is the cornerstone of the Israelite tradition about how Moses had the power to get them out*. The Israelite tradition was that God was present with Moses through the exodus, the deliverance, the wilderness, and the giving of the law. In scene after scene, God’s presence with him is the sign that God sent him.² All of it points back to Ex. 3:12, the first statement of the ancient tradition that Moses did remarkable things because God was with him. The translation should therefore read: “Because ‘I am’ with you, and this is the sign unto you that I have sent you” and then as a result, “when you bring the people out of Egypt, you will serve God on this mountain.”

The theological message or *Botshaft* depended on repeatedly using “I am”, *’ehyeh* in slightly different ways. . (Buber and Rosenzweig 1994:110) In the first instance the syntax and vocabulary is unremarkable, and because anyone would say exactly the same thing, the divine presence is hidden in plain view. Other speeches by *yhwh* that use ordinary forms of *hayah* intensively in unremarkable, idiomatic ways transmit the theological association of *yhwh* with “being” by re-sounding the form of Ex. 3:11-15. When *Yhwh*’s speeches of ordination, creation or covenant were peppered with verbs for *being*, the name and verb were associated by sound if not actually by root. The theology that *yhwh* causes things to be or happen is both explicit in story and song, and implicit in poetic resemblance. Using the word only to name God further implies it is the *premier* form of being, without second or

² CONTEXT: Most commentators are not prepared to admit that a spiritual presence can be reassuring, which is not so difficult in the context of Christian Science. But even modern disciplines that marginalize the numinous and prefer to work with the concrete should admit that the presence of God was certainly a serious explanation for the works of Moses in Israelite text and tradition.

equal, and ultimately, it named the creator of all that is. Its Ex.3 definition was the root of a tradition which could ramble through and blossom in other contexts. All that was necessary was the common, durable consent to recognize and creatively develop a very important, even a Mosaic, tradition by re-employing its lexical form.³

Then Moses asks the name of the Deity, (v. 13). His doubts are rational, conditioned by the skepticism he rightly could expect to face, and his question implies, Who can do this impossible thing? The Deity replies, “I AM WHO I AM, tell them I AM sent me unto you.” The first *I am*, a verb hidden in ordinary discourse, is identical with the fourth *I am*, now a proper noun. The *I am* with Moses is *I Am*.

Ibn Ezra parsed *ehyeh asher ehyeh* I AM WHO I AM exactly along these lines. (Strickman and Silver 1996:64-68) He held that it simply states that the name is a verb, so the subject is the predicate.⁴ So *ehyeh* number two is the substantive sense of *ehyeh* number three, which is a verb, or as Ibn Ezra put it, an adjective—a predicate adjective describing the subject. I AM who I am. Just as Isaac is a verb meaning “he laughed” or Moses a verb meaning “he drew out” Hebrew verbal names characterize the character by naming the principle event of his life: So much the more for a divine name. This character is never out of character—it always can say I am—I exist, so it always is I AM. That means it is immortal for starters. Then again, there is no substantial basis sustaining I AM excepting for I am. So it is also a metaphysical entity. What it can do isn’t limited excepting that, in and of itself, it is never *not being*. So it is infinitely dynamic and durable. By thus playing with and drawing out what the words imply, it emerges that ‘I am’ is both subject and predicate, which is like gazing into mirrors reflecting one another

³ CONTEXT: Although I know this is debatable, I presuppose that Ex. 3:11-15 originated with Moses because there is no other way to explain how the idea could have the same structure in a biblical text. There had to be the same God, saying basically the same thing about itself to another human being over three thousand years ago. I simply concluded that Moses himself carefully preserved something God said to him, and thus explained why they were similar. How else could these details that structure an idea be so exact thousands of years later? In 1986 I knew only KJV’s I AM THAT I AM, and was so deeply relieved when I later found that RSV agreed with God by translating I AM WHO I AM.

⁴ CONTEXT: What LOVE had meant by I AM WHO I AM was that the entity named LOVE was always Love in deed, an unmixed identity defined by one perfectly consistent activity. I prefer Ibn Ezra’s grammatical explanation of I AM WHO I AM to all other comments I have read because he explained the Hebrew text in the same way.

into infinity. This type of contemplation of I AM WHO I AM is, I think, genuinely invited by ancient name theology in which the name of a deity is its essence. To know a deity's name meant having similar powers—so it is all designed in the ancient context that Moses has already been reassured with the divine name that he would have such powers and then enquires who has those powers.

Ex. 3:15 goes on—“Even more, tell them *yhwh* the God of your fathers...sent me unto you.” The new name has many of the consonants in *hayah*, so it sounds like a fifth way of being. It has a third person masculine singular prefix, and biblical Hebrew reserved it exclusively to name God. A number of modern scholars agree with Jewish commentators like Ibn Ezra that it is a causative form of *hayah*, meaning “to bring into being, to give life”.⁵ However, its vocalization in the Masoretic Text resembles *qal*, so another camp of scholars holds that it is a *qal* or ground form designating normal action. Its consonants can be conjugated either as ground or causative, raising the interesting possibility that it was pronounced in more than one way.

So, the God of Moses is at first an unremarkable verb plus prepositional phrase, but important because it is effectively *immanent divinity*. Secondly, *ehyeh* is both subject and predicate, so that the Being is being. In Aristotelian metaphysics I AM WHO I AM might be translated Being qua being. But much more imaginative and active, the Israelite image of a bush that burns without being consumed is an

⁵ CONTEXT OF THE TEXT: Evidence of the “yah” sound expected of *hiphil* or causative forms is attested in the Masoretic vocalization of its short form, *Yah*, early Greek transcription of its Hebrew letters such as Iaoue, Iaouai, Yave, theophoric names such as Eli-ya-hu (Hebrew pronunciation), and the modern pronunciation *Yahweh*. Classical Hebrew *hiphil* would expect *yod/hirik* in the second syllable (*yaqtil*) but the earlier causal form was *yaqtal*. Murtonon thought that the name was from Mesopotamia originally, and because Amoritic did not evolve *yaqtil* it retained the causative form *yaqtal*. (1952:63) From archaeological evidence of theophoric names using *yh* or *yhw* dated from 2000-1500 BCE in the region of Mesopotamia, he presented analogies from Amoritic, Akkadian, and Ugaritic to show it had a basis in Semitic languages where *hwy* was not a root. He was not satisfied that any archaeological analogies existed to support the idea that *yahwi/yawi* is a verbal form from *hwy* “to be” either in causative or ground stems. However, he did concede that the author of Ex. 3:14 thought that *yhwh* was pronounced as a 2 masculine singular ground form of the verb *hwh/hyh* “be, become, happen, befall” in classical Hebrew. The arguments of William Foxwell Albright lead the school of thought that *yhwh* is a causative form of “to be” *hayah*, “the One who brings into existence”. (*JBL* (1924:43) 370-378). The correspondents in this debate are too numerous to cite in a limited bibliography. Hebrew etymologies of names are notoriously imprecise, so the association of *hayah* with *yhwh* should be described as a *theology* of Israelite scriptures and literature derived from them.

indigenous metaphor for the divine name. *Ehyeh asher ehyeh* is like a flame that doesn't need to consume the bush to be burning. It just is. Finally *Ehyeh* is a proper name not even having the same person as the verb, i.e. "Tell them, I AM, he sent me unto you." Not just absolute Being actively being, it is a Being, Someone. One does have to imagine a transcendent, immortal, distinctive identity calling itself I AM. Extrapolating from the fact that *ehyeh* is both proper noun and verb, Ibn Ezra argued that *yhwh* is also a verb for what God does, a transitive verb that can take a direct object. He cited "H remembered the days of old, *he drew out* his people" in Isa. 63:11 where the verb *he drew out* is also the name *Moses*. The verse is like a hologram that can as well be read "He remembered the days of old, *Moses* and his people". (Strickman and Silver 1988: 46) Sentence names such as *LORD God*, or *LORD of hosts* can be read not only as nouns in apposition, or in construct, but as verb and direct object: *He creates angels; He creates hosts*.

Yhwh is the fifth way the Deity has of being in Ex. 3:11-15, and for a God that is immanent, subject, predicate and entity, the dimension of creativity alone really is necessary to be God. But Ex. 3:11-15 does no more than introduce *Yhwh*. Other texts drew out what the name does with plain statements that *yhwh* created heaven and earth and all their hosts, made and broke kingdoms, established the rule of law, pitied the poor, healed the sick, liberated the imprisoned, raised up the oppressed, judged the world with equity. Primarily because of the vast tradition that *yhwh* is THE causative Being, it is reasonable to read a causative form back into it in Ex. 3:15.

Now to sketch this five-fold way of being, which includes each "I am" or *'ehyeh* and the untranslatable *yhwh*: The self-existent, self-creative and eternal is the only entity or substance that exists in and of itself, without a cause outside of itself, and is self-causing, a Being causing being. There is no equivalent Biblical term just as there is no second or equal creative principle, or God. If it is the only self-causing reality, it is also the only substance because everything else depends on it to be at all. Rationally and

inherently, this five-fold definition is all that is necessary to create the heavens and earth, and even things of which humanity is not aware. It all depends on the one Being that causes itself as effect depends on cause. I am proposing that Ex. 3:11-15 defines a Biblical concept of God that packs into one word such a rich and full range of powers that it is an unequalled way of designating the Creator.⁶

I would like to carefully separate at this point the definition itself from all the contexts and theologies that might enter into an argument with me on how I am going to contextualize it. I do think the definition is correctly derived from the grammar, and this is the point I can defend in the academy. But the way it applies to Christian Science should be kept distinct and separate so that my exegetical work is about the text and not about a particular religion and its theology. In other words, I can see from this point many points of view being supported and informed by Ex. 3:11-15. I do not want to impoverish it by making it a Christian Science exegesis. I want it to be correct and responsible in the academy as an historical description of language that contributed to Biblical and post-biblical understandings of God. So I will continue with a discussion of how it applies to Christian Science without expecting people of other faiths to agree with *how it can be put to use in that context*. It is really greater than and important in more than just one context. The validation of how the exegesis applies in the context of Christian Science is whether it results in healings.

So from this point, I will discuss how it applies in the systematic theology of Christian Science. The first premise is that biblical miracles did happen, and it is possible to understand how and why, exactly as natural science observes gravity and describes its rules. For example, taking it as fact that Jesus was born of a virgin, *yhwh* is the one reality that I can imagine standing behind Matthew and Luke's annunciation scenes. For the Jewish Jesus *yhwh* would certainly have been the hallowed name of his

⁶ CONTEXT: It would not be truthful to say that the word *love* has this creative dimension which is exclusive to *yhwh*. Neither I do not think that *love* is a name that stands alone or apart from *yhwh*, but that it is like a crown, the perfection of being. I do not think that it can or should replace the historic name, but only further refines what is already known about God. On the other hand, the two words name one God, so they are not divisible.

God, but in all five ways it simultaneously is, this name is the only reality that could have been his Father, could have caused Mary to be pregnant metaphysically. In short, I think the Mosaic definition of *yhwh* is deeply embedded in the gospel portraits of Jesus and operative in his healings. It is the one actually existing substance or entity, generating images of itself, but none of its images have the power to live in and of themselves as *yhwh* does, and so can be no more than effects of this first and perfect cause. This is the fundamental fact that made Jesus' healings possible and possible for Christian Science to replicate. I will explain how this operates in metaphysical healing more fully as we go. *But first--*

A Problem in the Context of Christian Science

I must now do something very difficult to do because it is not acceptable in the context of the Church of Christ, Scientist. I have to critique an aspect of its textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, by Mary Baker Eddy. Wellhausen's *Prologomena to the History of Ancient Israel* was published in English 1885 (J. Sutherland Black and Allan Menzies). In 1886 *Science and Health* introduced remarks into Eddy's explanation of Genesis 1-3 that suggested Eddy's work on the nature of God's creation versus a universal error about reality inherent in mortal knowledge was corroborated by the hypothetical division of Gen. 1-3 into two documents, *Elohists* and *Jehovists*. (Eddy 1886:449) Rev. J. H. Wiggin, a graduate of Tufts College and Meadville Theological School, was copy editor for *Science and Health* in 1886, producing a major revision of the original work as to prose style and format. Because Wiggin once asked Eddy how she could know that there ever was a man such as Christ Jesus, Gill reasoned in her footnotes that he may have "moved through the New Biblical Criticism to a position of extreme religious skepticism." (Gill 1998:656-67, fn. 27-30) Before 1886, Eddy used the word *Jehovah* respectfully and her defense of the perfection of Deity included Jehovah. It is my guess that Wiggin informed Eddy about E and J, because from the theory that Gen. 1-3 consisted of Elohists and Jehovist documents began a snarl of small inconsistencies, errors of fact about Hebrew, and a little set of

sentences that are scattered throughout Eddy's work at which I am aiming this correction. The following definition from the Glossary of *Science and Health* is the simplest way to indicate how the documentary hypothesis influenced Eddy's ontology.

LORD GOD. Jehovah. This double term is not used in the first chapter of Genesis, the record of spiritual creation. It is introduced in the second and following chapters, when the spiritual sense of God and of infinity is disappearing from the recorder's thought, — when the true scientific statements of the Scriptures become clouded through a physical sense of God as finite and corporeal. From this follow idolatry and mythology, — belief in many gods, or material intelligences, as the opposite of the one Spirit, or intelligence, named Elohim, or God." (Eddy 1906: 590-91)

This glossary definition is misleading if only because the LORD GOD is not merely Jehovah, but Jehovah *Elohim*. Due to this minor factual error, many Christian Scientists naively occupy a double ground in which the LORD God is Jehovah, a clouded, finite, corporeal, physical sense of God peculiar to the Adam myth, *together with* statements like the following:

The Scripture declares, "The LORD he is God, (good), there is none else beside Him. Even so harmony is universal and discord is unreal." (Eddy 1906:414)

Christian Scientists who read only set texts have no way of knowing that the LORD in the above quotation is the same Jehovah or *yhwh* as the LORD God of Gen. 2,3. Jehovah, which is only a 16th century vocalization of Hebrew *yhwh*, acquired a category of its own, not clearly comparable to *yhwh*. The much more serious theological problem is that *Elohim* has become creator of a perfect spiritual realm — and Jehovah equivalent to Demiurge, creator of the corporeal world in gnostic parlance (Walker 1985:61-67). The resulting dual cosmology actually erodes the most elemental claims of Christian Science, which depends on the unity and allness of God to be practical. For Spirit to be all so that there is no *other* reality, one would have to begin with an essentially metaphysical cause such as the five fold ways of being from Ex. 3:11-15, and there could be no other God, actually no other *Elohim*. Then with one form of being that is self-causing and so the ground of all else, nothing else can come into being except by this one cause. This all agrees with John 1:3 "All things were made by it, and without it,

nothing that was made was made.” (Tyndale’s New Testament) That is basically necessary to the logic of Christian Science which then will go on to say that that whatever is not the effect of that cause is not real. But if Jehovah is a material creator and *Elohim* the spiritual creator there are two gods, two worlds, and two substances, Spirit and matter. This dualism works against healing because there is no way to say one is real and the other is unreal if they are both created. For the creature to be wholly spiritual, there cannot be a second reality or substance. For the logic to work properly, Jehovah would have to be Being causing being, the primal substance and no other god or *elohim* at all. This would make the creation entirely subject to the Creator, as in heaven, so on earth. In every other statement of *Science and Health*, these are the necessary conditions for healing. A third problem is that Mary Baker Eddy claimed that her theology was entirely derived from scripture. Israel’s testament primarily teaches that either the LORD is God (*yhwh* is the *elohim*) or else the god is an idol (also *elohim*). Neither does the Christian canon hold that the God of Jesus was a more perfect deity than *yhwh*—to have done so would have been to depart from Jewish Messianic expectations. That is a Christian construct that appeared very early in the history of the church, and is partially owing to Greek philosophy and polemics against Judaism. Christian scriptures often quote or imply Israel’s key theological premises and praises of *yhwh*. Greek authors did not transliterate *yhwh* but substituted *kurios*, Lord, probably because *adonay* had already replaced pronunciation of *yhwh* in the synagogue. Both Hebrew and Christian scriptures teach that the LORD is God, who made heaven and earth and all their hosts, creator of Israel, whose justice is universal, who heals the sick, who raises the dead, who makes and breaks kingdoms, who controls nature, the Father and Savior of Jesus Christ. It is *not* biblical to make Jehovah inferior to *Elohim*. That followed from dividing Gen. 1-3 by divine names.

Having studied divine names in the Bible for more than 26 years with a dedication born of the above experience, I do not agree that the history of Gen. 1-3 has been correctly described by assuming that *Elohim* belongs to one document and Jehovah *Elohim* to another. I think Gen. 1:1-2:3 is a prologue that

very carefully introduced the holy name of the key character of Israelite scriptures in 2:4. (Goldsmith 2007:5-7) So I think the tradition always very seriously intended the whole of Gen. 2:4 as a conclusion to the story of creation up to that point, and means what it says:

“These are the generations of the heavens and the earth in the day they were created, in the day the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.”

I am especially persuaded by the fact that Gen. 1:1-2:4 uses ordinary forms of *hayah* 27 times before introducing *yhwh*, (LXX has an additional “and it was so” in Gen. 1:6,20.) In an age when *yhwh* was pronounced aloud, it would not have been absent from the days of creation, but *was present to the ear* in every ordinary form of *hayah*. Scrupulous hedging of its holiness would have prompted delaying its introduction until it was fully defined by every act of creation, and thus it was coined a name for what the god does. Even the divine speeches of creation or ordination in the story of Adam and Eve use *hayah* intensively. Ironically, the insinuation of the serpent, “ye *shall be* as gods” and the final condemnation by God, “the man *has become* as one of us” define the dynamics of the fall with *hayah*. I find it fresh and profound to think about Genesis 1-3 as if it was all written in the tradition of Mosaic *Yahwism*. Its exegesis of Ex. 3:11-15 brings the potential abilities of *yhwh* so defined to full fruit; the LORD has become not merely the deliverer of slaves, but Creator of heaven and earth. It was a claim of international scope with which to open the Israelite archive, and Exilic prophets who taught that the LORD, God of Israel controlled kings and that all their gods were lifeless must have known of it. The same deity is the protagonist in the problem of sin and death, and would in other texts become the primary actor administering discipline, forgiveness and redemption. The leading words carried a coherent message through a multitude of changes. It does not seem plausible to me that there was ever an Israelite creation story in which *yhwh* was not the key word. Even a priestly document would have attempted to hallow *yhwh*, for the priests blessed the people with that name (Num. 6:22-27), and pronounced it on the Day of Atonement. As an historian thinking about the ancient context of Israel, I find it much more believable that the editors of the Hebrew bible opened with a composition crafted in

the tradition of Mosaic *Yahwism* than that Israel's cosmic etiology ever existed without the name of the god that distinguished Israel from all other nations.

Because of the weight of biblical testimony that the LORD is God, and because she had already defined the beginning of the Adam and Eve story at Gen. 2:6, Eddy included Gen. 2:4,5 together with the LORD God in her spiritual explanation of creation, *unlike* the literary critical division in the midst of Gen. 2:4. (Eddy 1906:520-21) Her reference to the documentary hypothesis was then added to comments on Gen. 2:6, where it resembles a footnote. There are only 41 sentences in *Science and Health* that use the word Jehovah. *Elohim* is used only 7 times, some overlapping. Of these, 13 incorrectly annotate "LORD God (Jehovah)" in quotes of Genesis 2 and 3; and about a dozen engage in polemics in which Jehovah is represented as an inferior Judaic concept of God, and *Elohim* as if it were a spiritual and perfect creator *instead of* Jehovah. There is a further tendency to emphasize that God is Love in contradistinction to Jehovah, so in one illustration, *yhwh* was replaced by *love* in the 23rd Psalm, "substituting for the corporeal sense, the spiritual or incorporeal sense of Deity." (Eddy 1906:577)

It is perfectly clear to me that *yhwh* is the God who says "My name is Love" The two are united, one God, indivisible, one and the same divine Mind. Jehovah is only one way of pronouncing *yhwh*, and *YHWH* is LOVE. Accordingly, I gave unsolicited advice to the responsible people not to use these few sentences in worldwide bible lessons, which are always announced in every Church as "a sermon undivorced from truth, uncontaminated and unfettered by human hypotheses, and divinely authorized." (Christian Science Quarterly) Nevertheless, the lessons routinely spotlight Eddy's reference to the hypothetical division of Gen. 1-3 and derivative remarks about Jehovah vs. *Elohim*, indicating that her theology is in line with the best scholastic assessment of biblical literature. Quixotically, I have tried to be among the best scholars of my day in order to supply better information from within the academy. Christian Science can be taught without using divine names to explain Eddy's assessment of Gen. 1-3, but misusing them cannot be helpful. *EI*, from the root for power, continued to be applicable to

mountains, men, idols, judges and angels in classical Hebrew. It was never the adequate signifier for Creator that *yhwh* associated with *hayah* is, nor was it ever hedged about to be exclusively used for that single purpose as *yhwh* was in Israelite scriptures. In Ex. 34:6,7 the divine attributes of *yhwh* are full of what I would call true and divine love.

But this is not even an argument about texts. This is an argument for a real God Who alone is actually being in all five ways attributed to *yhwh* in Ex. 3:11-15, and Who really is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and of great lovingkindness and truth; who keeps faith with thousands, and forgives every manner of transgression, iniquity and sin, but who does require atonement however long it takes, and who calls itself *love* in English. The identity of these two words is real, and very, very powerful and good. If we would heal, we should eagerly access that full reality.

Now the problem for Christian Science healing should be evident. Christian Science healing is only evidence of that which is true about God and God's creation—it cannot prove untrue propositions but fails to heal if its premises are incorrect. If *yhwh* is the only living God, and Christian Scientists are depending on God to heal them, *how can spiritual healing work without yhwh? It doesn't. Christian Science heals because the LORD is God, Jehovah is Elohim, not because Jehovah isn't Elohim; because yhwh is Spirit and He Creates Hosts, not because yhwh is a corporeal creator or Demiurge. Whether we admit it or not, we owe the operative principle of Christian Science, Jesus Christ himself, the work of Mary Baker Eddy, and every good work we do to the Mosaic yhwh, now calling itself love. Christ Jesus said "I can of mine own self do nothing." (John 5:30) Neither can we.*

Hallowed Be Thy Name: The Jewish Context

Jewish reverence for the name *yhwh* is a very good way to reach back through tradition to *yhwh* the Creator worthy of all praise. I was convinced while studying the translation techniques of the ancient versions of Ex. 32-34 that conservation of tradition—even of the several ways one word can be

translated—has long been a policy in Israelite and Judean circles. (Goldsmith 2000) The hedge about the name *yhwh* is so old that although pre-exilic prophets used it with a kind of zest, exilic Ezekiel as a rule wrote out first *qere* (*adonay*) and *ketib* (*yhwh*) in the body of his text, (translated Lord GOD.) I think it most likely that the way Jews hallow the name in prayer today is an unbroken tradition from long before the common era. For this reason, it should not be surprising that Jewish scholars like Cassuto objected to using divine names to distinguish between literary sources. In Hebrew idiom and the traditions of Judaic parlance, these names are used in ways that do not substantiate such divisions. (Cassuto 1961:59)

Jewish services and prayer books have been an invaluable context for me to take my burning sense of standing before God into, not because I could capitalize on charismatic appeal there—quite the contrary, I would not mention it to most Jews because I would not want to disturb their thoughts—but because the content of Jewish prayers continually honor and praise the name of God. I read in Hebrew like everyone else, but silently include the word *love* in the designation *hashem* or *adonay*—it is quite easily united with *yhwh*. There I find the God who spoke to me in Jewish prayers, and this is tremendously helpful and elevating. I think about my Christian perspective when a prayer uses the verb *yasha*, *salvation* or *meshiach*, *anointed* by carefully remembering that Jesus was the effect of *yhwh* the cause, disciplining myself to rationally think through how it was all possible. So I fully participate in the Jewish community for the sake of the name of God, all the while thinking like a Christian Scientist, and have attended Jewish services of every stripe since 1987. Thus began a tremendous theological effort to integrate ancient history and modern experience so that I can think outside of time and place of one God who is the same, yesterday, today and forever. This God is not neatly divided by divine names, but is the ultimate unity of one LORD and one name so that the tremendous reality of the Creator is with us right here on earth, right now. I have learned that even the chastisement of the LORD is evidence of divine Love, for chastisement does not kill me as sin would. I have appended a collage of favorite

snippets from an orthodox *siddur* which are helpful to me, all of which are perfectly suitable for use in Christian Science bible lessons.

I want to understand this Hebrew word in its native context more perfectly before I link it to the English word in a full portrait of God, so as to eschew immoral dimensions of what love ordinarily means from the description of God. I would like to discuss in detail just one text about *yhwh* that I find in Jewish liturgy, a paragraph from the *Amidah* or “standing prayer” which attributes to *yhwh* all of the abilities the Christian Scientist wants to find in God:

He revives the dead in great mercies, he uplifts the fallen and heals the sick and loosens those who are bound, and establishes his faithfulness unto those who sit in the dust. (Ben Zion Bokser 1957:52)

From this, I will discuss only, “He revives the dead in great mercies.” This is taken from conservative and orthodox *siddurs*, where it is repeated four times during the standing, silent prayer. Reform and Reconstructionist *siddurs* prefer “He gives life to all.” Both are set in a section that has to do with life and death, and either way of putting it still seems to invoke the rabbinic concept of resurrection. I would just like to think through this little saying with the definition of *yhwh* supplied from Ex. 3:11-15 to see if I can understand how it is that *yhwh* is a word that can be said to raise the dead. I will assume the statement is literally true, and ask what about the character or nature of God makes it possible? Because I am Christian, I will think of the resurrection of Jesus as a paradigm of how *yhwh* revives the dead, and see if the name holds the necessary and sufficient capability that would logically raise not only Jesus, but the dead—either immediately as was done in by Jesus and Paul in a few cases and is sometimes done by practitioners of Christian Science, or in eschatology which expects all the dead to rise incorruptible. *Is the name yhwh a good explanation of how and why the dead can yet live?*

I have already carefully indicated its place as Creator in the Hebrew Bible, and argued that it is credited with the creation of heaven, earth, seas, all plants, animals and man *and* presides over the drama of

Adam and Eve in Gen. 1-3. Returning to Ex. 3:11-15, *yhwh* is an immanent presence in 3:12. *Emmanuel*, I am is with Jesus. Although Christians say that Jesus is *Emmanuel*, he was with us because he was created, not because he created himself. 'I Am' was with Jesus. In 14 a, I AM (subject) WHO I AM (predicate adjective) is like a flame that does not consume the bush on which it burns, eternal, immortal, "the ultimate and predicate of being." (Eddy 1925:Miscellaneous Writings 103) Now an identity, I Am—Someone who is so purely being that it always can say, I am. In this little equation is no cause of death, actually no logical reason for life to end. But neither is life physical. This kind of being is metaphysical. Finally the name itself, defined by other texts as the creator, and so roughly *yhwh* is a Being who causes being, the sole and sufficient ground on which the Son might pre-exist as in John's Prologue, giving life in the beginning, bringing Jesus to birth in his time, and causing him to be even in his passion. If *yhwh* were the cause of his life, it would have been the reason for and cause of his resurrection also, the continuously creating and sustaining metaphysical cause of Jesus' being. Even while Jesus was crucified, died and buried, *yhwh* could be the vitality of his metaphysical cause that could shine in the pre-existent Son so powerfully as to revive Jesus' lifeless body. At this point, it must be said that his life depended on *yhwh*, not on his body: "for life and death could not dwell together, no, not for a moment. The immortal would triumph and death would yield to life." (Baker-Glover, 1872-75:[062] 31)⁷

In the timeless event of giving life to the dead in great mercies, the incorruptible transforms the corruptible into its own image, and the ancient Hebrew *yhwh* is transformed into the modern English *love*. I do not suggest that *hayah* is not its biblical explanation. Quite the contrary, I doubt that the bible can be explained in any other way. But in the abolition of death, being and love are one, a sun of righteousness, unsurpassable in grace and glory. Transcendent and yet with us in the minutiae of

⁷ To all of the quotations from the *Genesis Manuscripts* of Mary Baker Glover (Eddy) included in this paper I have added punctuation so as to create sentences out of rapid-fire notes on each verse of Genesis.

earthly existence to heal, bless and save, the unity of *yhwh* and love by its very nature militates against, and finally eradicates evil, sin and death. This portrait of the two words united is adequate for the biblical God, the *Israelite God*, the *Christian Science God—the only living God*.

Does it heal in a Jewish synagogue where mention of Christian Science would not be appropriate? Yes, I was healed of pounding in my ears during an orthodox service, sitting amongst the women and praying exactly as my companions did. I never enter such a service without leaving feeling deeply what a true and good kind of law and *love yhwh* has bestowed upon me. This one ancient and eternal God guides me through times of temptation, lifts my aspirations, sustains me when I am weak, relieves me of contention, is always with me. *Yhwh is my God, yhwh is love*.

Who Healeth All Thy Diseases: Christian Science

I have critiqued a few sentences from *Science and Health*, but it is not my intention to invalidate an elegant and useful religion. I would like to prevent the entire system from failing through two creators and creations, and instead, set it unequivocally on the biblical premise that the LORD is God. So, I will reorient its theology around the definition of *yhwh* from Ex. 3:11-15, substituting Mary Baker-Glover's (later Eddy) first efforts to expound Gen. 1-3 for the gnostic tendencies suggested by E and J sources. This adjustment is easily integral with virtually every other passage in the final edition of *Science and Health*, so I think world-wide bible lessons can be more effectively taught by avoiding the problematic and erroneous sentences and utilizing others that more nearly agree with the author's original definitions.

Returning to the primary word, *I and Thou*, I want to let Mary Baker Glover (Eddy) explain why the sky could become transparent so that I saw instead that God is the invisible but intelligible center from which the hosts of heaven emanate in perfect peace. For this, I will use her *Genesis Manuscript*, which

includes her first efforts to annotate Gen. 1-3. Without mentioning divine names at all, she began by describing a creative principle that basically coincides with the definition of *yhwh* from Ex. 3:11-15 on the point that there is one “ultimate and predicate of being” (Eddy 1883-96:103). This divine entity and reality is the only substance in the sense that it alone exists of itself, so it can only be reflected. The one God has manifold, perfectly orchestrated effects which are “reflex shadows” or images of its glory, immortal ideas of an immortal principle. “The Principle can hold the idea as a substance holds its shadow, and reproduces it continually” (Baker-Glover 1872-75: [595] 313)

It follows from this kind of single creative principle that it would be impossible for the earth or waters to bring forth life as commanded to do in Gen. 1:20, 24. Baker-Glover objected that a shadow cannot produce a shadow, either can earth give life because it has no life to give, and to believe that they do is clearly an erroneous belief in more than one god. The five-fold way of being that is *yhwh* from Ex. 3:11-15 continues to be fitting, for it is self-creative being, but its creations are not. By denying that elemental earth has life in itself, and so that it ever could bring forth any form of life, Baker Glover insisted that the entire creation is a direct emanation of the divine Mind, without any secondary substance, intelligence, life or truth.

If life were to inhere in an image of God, the image would be substantial. A good analogy is to imagine that, on looking into a mirror, one sees the reflection there as if it were not a reflection, but a real person. The erroneous assumption accompanying this illusion is that the image is substantial. She would call that substance “matter”. This line of reasoning allowed her to write with any truth: “There is no life, truth, intelligence nor substance in matter.” (Baker Eddy 1906:468) Her oft-used term *error* originally referred to the belief that one creation can produce another creation, which she clearly thought impossible because there is only one Creator and no other god. Arguments for the reality of Spirit and the unreality of matter in Christian Science treatment all depend on this way of understanding

what she meant by *error*, and so imply the supremacy of a single ground of all being, than which there is none else. Her concept of God resembles the constellation of ways of being held in the word *yhwh* so that all must subsist on a single basis, “an intelligence that had life alone in itself” (Baker Glover 1872-75: [052] 26).

On an ontological scale, to believe the creation contains the origin and source of life as God does is an error which is accompanied by the illusion that the creation is substantial. This explanation is a reasonable way to understand how the limit of earth’s atmosphere, the blue bowl of the sky, could dissolve as I gazed upward toward an unseen heaven Whence spoke the still small voice. What had happened is even the ethereal atmosphere of earth had ceased to be more substantial and real to me than God, and with that it disappeared entirely. Instead I saw God and the hosts of heaven, an invisible Speaker at the center of creation, and the hosts of creation are all emanating from that center in perfect peace. “All is one infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all.” (Eddy 1906:468)

This Speaker is the still small voice of Elijah; and the I AM WHO I AM of Moses. So I think that the view that Jehovah is a corporeal creator, or the Demiurge in contradistinction to the God of the *Pleroma* in some strands of Christian theology, is not true. It is just a way of representing the universal impression that the principle of life inheres in its effects. When the finite limits of earth’s atmosphere ceased to be substantial to me, the creative center, the God, appeared to be so substantial that the creation radiates therefrom, and that vision was the only reality. It wasn’t two worlds—it was one without second or equal—the substantiality of the “material” world was illusory, unreal. It was perfectly true that “Spirit is immortal Truth: matter is mortal error. Spirit is real and eternal: matter is unreal and temporal” (Eddy 1906:468) It was even true that there wasn’t any sin, any sickness, nor any death at all.

The crux of the biblical problem of mortal sin is then pinpointed in the Genesis Manuscript with the questions, “whether [sic which] is greater, the substance or shadow? And should the shadow control

substance?” (Baker Glover 1872-75: [048] 24) The biblical God is always contending that there is no other god. One can see the urgent problem here. The image cannot sustain itself, but if it is an image of *yhwh* it is as immortal as its original. God constitutes the real state of its image and likeness, and also has *apriori*, decisive and ultimate control over the outward and actual state of the patient.

Understanding united to the divine Mind is, was, and ever will be exactly like its original. “Spirit is God, and man is God’s image and likeness, therefore he is not material, he is spiritual.” (Eddy 1906:468)

With explanations of *yhwh* from Ex. 3:11-15 and the earliest notes that would become Eddy’s *Key to the Scriptures*, I have been able to explain what is known as the Scientific Statement of Being, which in full reads: “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 real and eternal: matter is unreal and temporal. Spirit is God, and man is God’s image and likeness, therefore man is not material, he is spiritual.” (Eddy 1906, 468) *The Hebrew yhwh is essential to the logic of Christian Science and should be integrated into it fully, because if God weren’t like that, it wouldn’t be true. There is one living God, the LORD, the immortal basis of being, and because there is no other, it is an error to believe that the creation has the power to be as a god with an inherent life of its own. As a shadow cannot produce another shadow, neither can the creation be a creator. Spiritual healing is possible because of yhwh. Having that mind that was in Christ Jesus, who “though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,” (Phil. 2:6, RSV) . When the pretention to be as a god is resolved into the Truth that the creation is only an image or idea of the Creator, so too, the human condition, even the body, is transformed through the renewing of our minds, from glory unto glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*