

August 28, 2006 – Subject: Man.

Dear Friends: Mary Baker Eddy gave her students 26 subjects for weekly Bible Lessons, to be covered twice yearly. Flowing through the year in her order of the subjects, we hereby present fresh views of each one by outstanding Christian Scientists. In this way, we hope to partake with you of new unfoldments of her infinite revelation.

Our selection this week is from: A SCIENTIST OPENS HIS BIBLE by Clifford and Daisy Stamp.

THE THIRD DAY (I): THE RULE OF ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Finally we arrive at the verse whose meaning we know from our order of the symbols must be defined by the phrase Soul as Mind. Here Soul's purpose is climaxed.

The verse reads: "And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so."

Throughout this story of Soul we have seen developed the necessity of a true sense of identity, so that each of us may realize our own specific selfhood; and now in this section we are shown that we must give proper attention to all the detail of idea, which does so define it. And with the emphasis on idea the tone of Mind is naturally introduced. We cannot properly identify anything unless we are acquainted with the details which go to make it that thing – whether it be a great symphony or a simple implement; How much more must this be true of the identity of man.

We know that the waters typify the elementary or leading-up thoughts, which must be employed in reasoning before we arrive at definite conclusions. In this verse, then, we come face to face with another rule, which is emphatic in its demand upon us, and that is the rule of attention to detail if we would allow the appearance of the "dry land."

Tidiness in thought-processes is essential to the marshalling of evidence towards a clear-cut realization. Sensualism is intrinsically untidy and loose. Soul is inherently tidy in every detail, and fixed and definite in purpose. Soul operating as Mind demands a meticulous gathering of ideas into the focus of specific purpose, so that they become dynamic and irresistible in creative force. Sensualism scatters its fire; Soul concentrates down particular channels through

its activity as Mind. It marshals ideas into the platoons of an intelligence that carries all before it; the foe is dissipated by its inability to produce logic or reason and proves its own vacuity by that very inability.

We must cultivate the habit of letting all the “waters” or elementary thoughts be gathered together into the focus of idea in order that the idea can crystallize for us into some “dry land” certainty and conviction. If we ignore this intelligent method and try to establish conclusions by a haphazard procedure, omitting the detailed work, it leads only to “flashes in the pan,” those rocket-height attainments with their subsequent rocket-depth divings, which plunge the individual or the society into such mental turmoil. Truly does the Scripture promise, “he that believeth shall not make haste.”

The Master’s Attention to Detail

How vital in the light of this become the silent eighteen years of the Master’s life when after the brilliance of his intercourse in the temple at the age of twelve with the learned men of his day he went away to tidy his thought-processes in every detail. He gathered together the waters of his pure (although from the point of view of the final Science of all things, quite elementary) ideas, until when he did step forth before a needful humanity, the “dry land” which had appeared to him was dry land indeed, and he was immovably convinced in and by his Principle.

The power of his three-year magnificence was sustained at its high level by all the meticulous, intricate work of those eighteen years; during that period the delicate and beautiful detail was built into the almost completed structure of his great character, the earthly completion of which was not attained until his full overcoming of materiality in the ascension.

Because of this careful preparation, the final assault with all its supporting columns was assured of victory. From transfiguration to resurrection, and from resurrection to ascension, Jesus’ steps were taken with all the dignity and calm of a man who knew that not one unit of the supporting forces could fail, for they had all been tested and proved in the quiet happiness of attention to detail.

At the end of those eighteen years of patient work, God, Principle, commended its man, the youthful Jesus, for after his baptism and just as he was entering on his three years of unparalleled success,

we read, “And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

The Master was tidy in everything. His largesse never led to looseness. The feeding of the thousands was not complete until the seven or the twelve baskets had been filled with the fragments of a divine digest; all was gathered up for specific future use, and not one single lesson left aside as being unimportant because of the grandeur of the whole.

A sparrow, so insignificant to mortals that two of them were sold for one farthing, was patiently traced by him into the detail of his whole life’s masterpiece. Even in the tomb the garments of yesterday’s experience were gathered and laid tidily in one place.

Never Outdistance Your Supply Line

So here Soul ends or begins (whichever you like) its great theme by revealing one of the essentials of marching orders: watch the detail, love the detail. Even whilst the vast goal stretches before you, tend what you have, gather together the “waters” of all the elementary or leading-up thought-processes. Marshal even the least thoughts of goodness, and so by your fidelity you will “let the dry land appear.” And how much more dry and firm it will, be to him who has earned his way there, than to him who has tried to jump some detail and go ahead of his ability to stay the course.

To outdistance your supply line or build on a flimsy and unfinished structure is to take a terrible risk, for which we have no warrant and for which no possible commendation could come from a meticulous God who is Principle.

Peter was a disciple who had to learn this very truth. His imagination flew out beyond his ability to sustain in practice his vision of fidelity – hence his three denials after the boast, “Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.” And when later the Master asked him three times, “Lovest thou me?” and was answered three times in the affirmative, he went on each time to order Peter to tend his flock. Does that not indicate that the remedy for all hastiness lies in application to the detail of tending?

Emotionalism is the dangerous flickering of the flame, which must yield to a steady glow of true sentiment radiating equally in all directions. The best way to ensure this is to occupy thought with a

detailed and definite tending. You cannot be vague or up in the clouds if you are busy in a practical care – your thoughts must be precisely marshaled. And is not that just what this verse teaches through Soul, as Mind?

Soul as Mind stands over each one of us wherever we are and holds out a calm, reassuring, and restraining hand; to yield to its patience is to learn how to enjoy where we are at this moment and to start with heavenliness in order to finish with heaven.

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