

June 27, 2005 – Subject: God

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 – TALKS GIVEN BY JOHN W. DOORLY ON THE SCIENCE OF THE BIBLE VOL SIX.

The Purpose of the Temple Identified: Soul as Soul (2)

“Then spake Solomon, The Lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness” (I Kings 8:12). Often our sense of God is attended by darkness, because to mortal sense God does “dwell in the thick darkness.” Our approach to God has to be through symbols, through the symbols of Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, and Love, and our symbols only *represent* the infinite. Some day, however, as thought becomes more spiritually cultured, the nature of God will come pouring into our thought through the harmony of divine ideas, through inspiration, and that will be the descent of the Holy Ghost. At present we have to learn through symbols. As you remember, Mrs. Eddy says, “Apart from the usual opposition to everything new, the one great obstacle to the reception of that spirituality, through which the understanding of Mind-science comes, is the inadequacy of material terms for metaphysical statements, and the consequent difficulty of so expressing metaphysical ideas as to make them comprehensible to any reader, who has not personally demonstrated Christian Science as brought forth in my discovery. Job says: “The ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat.” The great difficulty is to give the right impression, when translating material terms back into the original spiritual tongue” (S. & H. 114:32-11). And so it is true that to mortal sense God dwells “in the thick darkness.” We have to approach God through symbols because the light of pure Science hasn’t really broken on us, because we haven’t yet found ourselves in God’s image and likeness, where the infinite progression of God’s ideas is the scientific fact, and where “infinite space is peopled with God’s ideas, reflecting Him in countless spiritual forms” (S. & H. 3:15-17).

But thank God that we have ordered symbols by which we *can* approach God, and so rise to the true consciousness of being.

“I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever” (I Kings 8: 13). If you touch the Temple sense in thought and it gives you the true idea of body, which is consciousness, and that true idea reveals to you in some degree the nature of Life, Truth and Love, then that sense will be to you a “settled place,” and *you* will abide in it forever. It will grow and grow, it will merge into Church – into the highest sense of manhood – but at the same time the true idea of body, revealing Life, Truth, and Love to you, will abide with you forever, it will never leave you.

“And the king turned his face about, and blessed all the congregation of Israel: (and all the congregation of Israel stood;) and he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which spake with his mouth unto David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled it, saying, Since the day that I brought forth my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build an house, that my name might be therein; but I chose David to be over my people Israel” (I Kings 8:14-16). David had a glimpse of true manhood, and his main concern was to establish that vision, not to build “a material superstructure, where mortals congregate for worship” (S. & H. 595:9-10). The development of the spiritual idea is often traced back to David for the very reason that he saw something of true manhood. Today, because we know something of God – and from knowing God we know man – we begin to see this Bible record of manhood in a subjective way. Because we understand Mind, we know that man is idea; because we understand Spirit, we know that man is spiritual idea; because we understand Soul, we know that man is identified idea; and so on with all these synonymous terms. As we understand true manhood because we know God, we shall appreciate the value of every symbol, but we shall not exalt the symbol at the expense of the spiritual idea. One can see that the building of a material superstructure was uppermost in Solomon’s thought, although the Temple symbolized a spiritually scientific conception of a most exalted kind. After his vision of true manhood, David could no more have built a material temple than we could today start organizing churches after seeing the spiritual significance of Church as the “structure of Truth and Love.”

“And it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel” – but the “house” which David had in mind was consciousness, or true manhood. “And the Lord said unto

David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart” – in his thinking. “Nevertheless thou shalt not build the house; but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name” (I Kings 8:17-19). Mrs. Eddy says that she “has bluntly and honestly given the text of Truth. She has made no effort to embellish, elaborate, or treat in full detail so infinite a theme” (S. & H. x:12-15). Today you and I are trying to embellish and elaborate that infinite theme, and in proportion as we are doing that, we are doing what Mrs. Eddy envisaged. The danger lies in materializing Mrs. Eddy’s spiritual conception of Science by submerging it in human organization.

“And the Lord hath performed his word that he spake, and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised, and have built an house *for* the name of the Lord God of Israel” (I Kings 8:20).

Obedience Brings Demonstration: Soul as Principle (1)

At verse 22 of Chapter 8 we come to the tone of *Soul as Principle*, which we have summarized like this: Solomon identifies the power of obedience and demonstration. Here we see a wonderful blending of Soul and Principle. Solomon sees that without obedience prayer is useless, but that out of the prayer which is obedience there comes demonstration, no matter what the circumstances may be. The term “obedience” in Mrs. Eddy’s writings is used in connection with Principle, and it is about time that we began to see that demonstration is never the result of a little human good overcoming a little human bad but that it is the outcome of understanding that God is divine Principle, Love, and that man is God’s idea. Principle couldn’t operate as anything but idea, and because Principle is, Love, it couldn’t operate as anything but perfect and fulfilled idea. When we really understand Science, we shall stop trying to demonstrate Christian Science through a little human good, and we shall stop condemning ourselves for a little human bad. We shall see that the grace of God from everlasting to everlasting is the scientific fact that being is perfect, that man is, forever has been, and forever will be idea, and that nothing else is true. When we see that we shall not think that a little human good will attain the kingdom of God, or that a little human bad will give us hell, but we shall work from the standpoint of one cause, one Principle, the nature of which is God, life, Truth, and Love, and then we shall be real Scientists. We shall

trace all evil, materiality, mortality, back to animal magnetism and we shall see that nothing has ever been going on but infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation.

So remember that today Mrs. Eddy's discovery has enabled you and me to interpret the picture of Science from God's point of view, and it is therefore subjective to us. We are now learning about man from what we know of God. The story of the Bible is the story of how the nature of God was revealed through an ascending sense of manhood. Now that we know in some measure what God is, we can go back to the Bible and learn from it, but we could never have understood the Bible without that understanding of God, which Science has given us. Today the answer to that question "What is God?" is burnt into our thinking, and we know that it is the most scientific statement in the world, and that it embodies the Science of the Bible. The Bible reveals Science from the standpoint of the days of creation, but now we are looking at Science from the standpoint of the synonymous terms as they operate through the Word, the Christ, Christianity, and Science, and so our sense of the Bible is much higher. As we go on, I do want you to fill your thought with the sense of the development of manhood. Today we are seeing it clearly, but we could never have seen it without Mrs. Eddy's revelation, which has enabled us to see the picture subjectively from God's point of view.

Jesus could "open" the Scriptures to his disciples, because his thinking was subjective, because it was from the divine standpoint.

So this tone of Soul as Principle illustrates a wonderful combination. It defines the prayer that is the prayer of obedience, because it is based on Principle. Obedience to Principle doesn't involve a human decision, an "I will" or an "I won't," but it means constant listening to, understanding, and abiding by the demands of Principle. Steadfast, unflinching, unremitting spiritual understanding, through which Principle forever interprets itself, constitutes the only true obedience.

Solomon's Dedicatory Prayer: Soul as Principle (2)

"And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven: and he said, Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and

mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart”– Solomon was identifying God through Soul-sense – ”who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him: thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day. Therefore now, Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight” – God’s man – ”to sit on the throne of Israel;” – nothing but God’s man can “sit on the throne of Israel,” since Israel means “a prince of God,” and nothing but God’s identified idea can be established on such a foundation; – ”so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me. And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David, my father” – you see how the writer is stressing the significance of David, and it is because David understood true manhood. “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?” (I Kings 8:22-27). Soul can never be *in* anything. Solomon was identifying the nature of God as Soul; just so, if you begin to understand God as Soul and to touch the hem of Principle and to see that Principle is Life Truth and Love, then you too are identifying the true temple, or body, which can never enclose or limit God in any way.

“Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee today:” – Mrs. Eddy says, “The Lord’s Prayer is the prayer of Soul” (S. & H. 14:22-23), and all prayer is associated with Soul – ”that thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place” (I Kings 8:28, 29). If you have the true sense of Temple, and if you know how through Soul, identified with Principle and demonstrated as Life, Truth, and Love to enter that Temple, then the eyes of God – the consciousness of divine Principle, Life, Truth, and Love – will be “open upon this house (this understanding) night and day,” because it is Immanuel, “God with us”.

“And hearken thou to the supplication of my servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive.”

As we understand the Temple as “Body; the idea of Life, substance,

and intelligence; the superstructure of Truth; the shrine of Love,” we enter into communion with Principle, and then whatever is unlike Principle is inevitably blotted out.” When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house:” – remember through-out that this “house” symbolizes the right idea of Temple – ”then hear thou in heaven, an forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers. When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain,”– no “raindrops of divinity” (S. & H. 288:17), and Mrs. Eddy also says, “infinite Principle... is the father of the rain, ‘who hath begotten the drops of dew’” (S. & H. 257:18-20), – ”because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou affiicest them: then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel” (I Kings 8:30, 33-36) – an understanding of Soul takes away all sense of penalty. The minute we understand the nature of God as infinite Soul, sin, and consequently the penalty for sin, is wiped out, and thought becomes eternally identified with Life, Truth and the human being who believes in penalty doesn’t understand God as Soul. Soul is sinless, and therefore there is no penalty in Soul, because it wipes out all sense of sin. So we must enter this house of Soul, where Soul translates, where Soul identifies every idea with divine Principle, Life, Truth, and Love. As we do that, we are using the Word of God as it reflects the Christ...

The Real Value of the Bible

As we have already seen, the story of the Bible is the story of the revelation of true manhood, rising through Mind, Spirit, Soul, and Principle into the realm of Life, Truth, and Love. The whole story of the Bible presents the Science of man, and the highest sense of that Science comes when we enter the Church and see manhood climaxed in Truth and embosomed in divine Love from everlasting to everlasting.

I look forward to the day, which is going to come before very long, when we are so familiar with this Bible story that we can recognize, as Mrs. Eddy recognized, that “Christ’s Christianity is the chain of scientific being reappearing in all ages, maintaining Its obvious correspondence with the Scriptures and uniting all periods in the design of God” (S. & H. 271:1-5).

This Bible story has got to become to us one complete picture, and so we need to be persistent in our study of it, because we have as yet touched only the fringes of it. What we've got to see is the development of the spiritual idea through Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, and Love, in both the history of mankind and in individual thought. When the light of revelation comes to each one of us, it always comes at the point of Mind, then Spirit develops it, then Soul identifies it with Principle, and then Principle demonstrates it as Life, Truth and Love. And that is just what has been indicated in the history of mankind. As we see the story of the Bible as one complete whole, one infinite idea revealing one infinite Principle, all the details will just gleam with spiritual significance, and we shall be able to use them constantly in our daily life. Just as the musician repeatedly goes back to the musical compositions of every age, and they satisfy his musical sense abundantly, so we must always be going back to these Bible stories and seeing them as the appearing of the divine idea, either as the Word, or the Christ, or Christianity, or Science.

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