

November 28, 2005 – Subject: God the Only Cause and Creator.

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 on THE SCIENCE OF THE BIBLE – VOL SIX by John W. Doorly.

Elijah Challenges the Prophets of Baal: Truth as Principle

And so now we come to the tone of Truth as Principle, which we have summarized: Elijah determines to prove the availability of Truth and also the inability of error. Some of the commentaries feel that the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel was really an epitome of Elijah's lifework - not just one incident. But whether that is so or not makes no real difference, because the appearing of the spiritual idea at a particular instant is no difference in essence from the appearing of the spiritual idea in the lifetime of an individual or in the whole of humanity's history.

“And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim. Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table” (I Kings 18:17-19). The prophets of Baal numbered 450, and 45 may be considered as the product of $3 \times 5 \times 3$, thereby giving a sense of false identity (“three”) and false individuality (“five”). You remember that in the story of Noah the record is that “fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail,” and we saw there too that “fifteen” symbolized the false sense of identity and of individuality. The prophets of the groves numbered 400, symbolizing the so-called calculus of materiality “So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered

the prophets together unto mount Carmel”-”Carmel” means “a fruitful place.” “And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal’s prophets are four hundred and fifty men” (I Kings 18:20-22). It is an excellent thing when each one of us accepts the position which Elijah accepted – when each one of us sees that it is our own individual responsibility to demonstrate our Principle. Real progress is impossible until the individual is ready to base himself on Principle, even though everything else is against him. “One on God’s side is a majority.” After all, the only problem, which you and I have, is our own belief in materiality. Jesus arrived at the point where he saw that there was no material universe; if he had believed that there was a material universe to be healed, then he would have stayed here to heal it, and he would not have ascended. So this experience of Elijah comes to everyone of us; we come face to face with an issue, which demands that we demonstrate that “Principle and its idea is one” (S. & H. 465:17). Remember that we are considering the tone of Truth as Principle-manhood operating in Principle.

“Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many: “ – materiality always seems to be “legion;” – ”and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under” (I Kings 18:23-25). Elijah had no fear whatever of Baal’s prophets; he said, in effect, “Go ahead, and try anything you like. Do your worst.” When we come to the point where we can challenge material sense in that way, then it will disappear, and we too shall be prophets. Material sense inevitably disappears “before the conscious facts of spiritual Truth.” Every single one of us has had that experience with disease or fear or something of the kind. In my own experience I can think of many

cases where that has happened. When we really are prophets, spiritual seers, then the “disappearance of material sense before the conscious facts of spiritual Truth” does take place, and the outcome is a sense of government, authority, dominion, in every situation, and the outcome of government is the demonstration of true manhood, the operation of reality itself.

“And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded” (I Kings 18:26-29). That surely was the “disappearance of material sense before the conscious facts of spiritual Truth.”

Here the tone of Truth as Principle ends. Elijah determined to prove the availability of Truth, and also the inability of error. Remember, he had seen that only through manhood could there come the dew and rain of inspiration, and then because of that he saw that he must meet the widow’s need. Then he resurrected her son, and saw that he must take a stand against Ahab and the worship of Baal. Here we have seen how he took that stand.

Victory over the Prophets of Baal: Truth as Life (1)

Now we come to the tone of Truth as Life, which illustrates how Truth individualizes God as the Infinite one, and forces the laying down of all that is unlike Truth. You all know that Life involves oneness in that it shows the individuality of being. “An Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down.” He had revived the widowed sense, fed and nourished it, and now he repaired the altar of the Lord. “And Elijah took twelve stones,”— a

symbol of Life, Truth, and Love operating as the Word, the Christ, Christianity, and Science, – “according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed” (I Kings 18:30-32). In connection with this trench, it is interesting that the brook Cherith, in which Elijah had earlier been told to hide, also means “trench,” and that later on, when Judah and Israel were warring with Moab and they were short of water, they appealed to Elisha and he told them to dig ditches and the next morning “the country was filled with water” (I Kings 3:20).

“And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.” Those four barrels of water symbolize the elements of mortal mind – paganism, hate, death – operating as a so-called calculus. Elijah was saying, as it were: “Pour the beliefs of the so-called calculus of materiality on the demonstration of Life, Truth and Love as the Word the Christ, Christianity, an Science, and it will just have no effect whatsoever.” And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time - he translated the whole situation through analysis, uncovering, and annihilation. He translated the elements of the carnal mind into the elements of divine Mind. “And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water” (I Kings 18:33-35).

“And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word” (I Kings 18:36). That phrase, “Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel,” means so much to us today. You remember that Mrs. Eddy defines “Abraham” as “Fidelity; faith in the divine Life and in the eternal Principle of being. The patriarch illustrated the purpose of Love to create trust in good, and showed the life preserving power of spiritual understanding” (S. & H. 579:10-14). Mrs. Eddy gives no definition of Isaac, but she defines the

“Children of Israel,” in part, as “the offspring of Spirit, who, having wrestled with error, sin, and sense, are governed by divine Science” (S. & H. 583:6-8). When we bear in mind spiritual significance of these names, a phrase like this comes alive to us.

“Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.” Before an understanding of Life all that is unlike Life inevitably disappears. “And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God. And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there” (I Kings 18:37-40). Truth as Life postulates the destruction of false prophets—a false sense of manhood...

The Coming of the Rain: Truth as Life (2)

“And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain”—the multiplication of true manhood. “So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, there is nothing. And he said, go again seven times” (I Kings 18:41-43). We must always do that, because our God is Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, and Love, and we need a cultivated spiritual sense of everyone of those synonymous terms and of how they reflect each other infinitely in one infinite system. Without a sense of how those seven terms symbolize the infinite one there will be no abundance of demonstration.

“And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man’s hand.” Often, in dealing with a case, you go “seven times,” and sometimes “seventy times seven,” and then you see a little improvement - you see a “little cloud,” “like a man’s hand,” a symbol of power. “And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that

the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel” (I Kings 18:44-46).

That story is a most marvelous symbol of the operation of Truth as Life. It illustrates how Truth individualizes God as the infinite One, and forces the laying down of all that is unlike Truth. It shows that there is one infinite. It should never for one moment leave our thought that there is one infinite, infinitely diversified, classified, and individualized, infinitely expressed and infinitely manifesting itself in an infinite Science of ideas, but still one infinite. That is what makes the laying down of all that is unlike Truth an irresistible process.

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