

Weekly Lesson Citations

DEAR FRIENDS: We plan to use this spot on our web page to bring you a different set of citations each week—expanding on specific citations from the “Weekly Lesson.” A paraphrase can so often open thought to new insights of familiar statements. In this way we hope to share with you some of the wonderful work that has been done in Christian Science over the past fifty years and in to the present by authors you may or may not have yet met.

Our only selection this week is from TALKS GIVEN BY JOHN DOORLY ON THE SCIENCE OF THE BIBLE — VOL. NINE.

May 21, 2001

Subject: Soul and Body

The Word: Mind-The Breaking of the Light

First, we have the tone of Mind, and we have captioned it like this: The light of Mind is unailing. That light never fails. Mrs. Eddy says, “Mind is not necessarily dependent upon educational processes. It possesses of itself all beauty and poetry, and the power of expressing them” (S. & H. 89: 18-20). In order to give the tone of “darkness was upon the face of the deep ... And God said, Let there be light,” the writer goes right back to the time when Nebuchadnezzar sacked the Temple in Jerusalem, and the people were scattered, some of them being taken down into captivity in Babylon.

“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand”—that was the breaking of the light, you notice that it says “the Lord gave.. .” We know that Ezekiel, and some of the other later prophets, saw that Jerusalem had become thoroughly corrupt—its religion, its standard of morals, its ethics, had become rotten to the core—and there seemed to be no way out. If ever it was true for the Hebrew people that “darkness was upon the face of the deep,” it was true at that time. And so when Jerusalem was desolated, these prophets believed that God was using Nebuchadnezzar to correct the situation, and they saw that out of that fire of desolation and suffering would come new vision. That may not always be the highest way for spiritual development to take place, but remember, God once used Balaam’s ass. “Immortal Mind, governing all, must be acknowledged as supreme in the physical realm, so-called, as well as in the spiritual” (S. & H. 427: 23-25). Mind can use anything, because it is omnipotence and omnipresence. The new light came when the prophets re-wrote the Pentateuch in the light of the divine system, and wrote the days of creation, that “seed-plot,” which they placed at the beginning of the Bible. “And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god. And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king’s seed, and of the princes; children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom,—the wisdom of Mind,—and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king’s palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans” (Dan. 1:1-4)—there the king, Nebuchadnezzar, seeks the light; he asks Ashpenaz for children, or ideas, of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.

So here the writer of Daniel is saying, “Look what happened when every material possession was desolated and we were taken down into Babylon. The light of Mind broke in a way it had never done before.” The “Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light.” Remember, it is generally recognized that Daniel is an apocalyptic book; historically it is valueless, except for one or two statements. For instance, Nebuchadnezzar did take many of the Hebrews down into captivity, but that fact is being used here primarily to symbolize the breaking of the light of Mind.

The Word: Spirit—The Need for Purity

Then we come to the tone of Spirit, and this is our caption for it: The development of Spirit Involves absolute purity. You can't gain the development of Spirit if you are trying to mingle Spirit and matter. The development of Spirit, the birth of Spirit, only takes place as thought is spiritualized and recognizes that Soul is the only substance. The light had broken; the way was opened, through the operation of Mind, for the light to develop, and become substantial and real. The way will always be open where there is spiritual consciousness. For instance, the light which came through Jesus, which has shone and shone and will shine throughout eternity, was wholly due to spiritual consciousness. Nothing has substance but spiritual ideas. Materially Jesus had nothing—he had no big following, a few thousand followers at most, and very little influence—but he had the Mind of Christ, the only truly substantial thing in the world..

“And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king” (Dan. 1: 5). The writer is saying something which may quite possibly have happened, but his primary interest is to show that there is only one way of true development.

Now, the tone of Spirit always involves divine order, and order means all order, infinite order. Every order in the divine plan, all the categories of divine metaphysics, are included within the tone of Spirit, and the highest symbol of the order of Spirit is the four dimensional calculus of reality, which the writer introduces here through a symbol of four Hebrew men. “Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:” there were four of them. Throughout Daniel we shall find the “four,” the “seven,” and the “ten”—the four-dimensional calculus operating through the numerals of consciousness, which are sevenfold, and touching the human through analysis, uncovering, and annihilation unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego” (Dan. 1: 6, 7).

“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself” (Dan. 1: 8). The light of revelation is always shining. If we are seeking that light, then every once in a while it breaks on us, but can we truly say that we purpose in our hearts that we will not defile ourselves with material things? That is the all-important point. If we don't do that, then the new birth won't begin, and we won't have development in divine order. When the light breaks upon us and we see it, and in the divine order of the Word we touch the hem of that which is Spirit—that which is real substance, birth, development, purity, order, the strength and the rhythm of Spirit—then the question is: Are we really striving to turn aside from the nothingness of matter and work from the basis of the onliness of Spirit, which we have glimpsed?

The Word: Soul—The Certainty of Safety

So we come to the tone of Soul, which shows that the safety of Soul is always definite and known to spiritual penalty or something of the kind—but it couldn't enter because Daniel dwelt in the “haven of Soul.” I gain such a sense of comfort through the term Soul, because the hell of material existence is the physical corporeality. We all go through more hell through the belief that we have a personal mind dwelling in a personal body—a personal selfhood of our own—than we do for any other reason. We don't seem to accept that man is forever God's reflection.

Day after day I bathe my thought in the fact that, from everlasting to everlasting, I am an idea of Soul outside the body. Because Soul can never be in anything, I as an idea of Soul cannot be in a material body. As an idea of infinite Soul, God, I am forever identified with divine Principle, Life, Truth, and Love, and with nothing else. I am sinless, because Soul is sinless. I know no change that can harm or defile in any way, because Soul is changeless. As an idea of Soul I live in the realm where the fact of infinite Soul forever “exchanges the objects of sense for the ideas of Soul” (S. & H. 269:1 5-i 6)—where Soul forever translates. As an idea of Soul I live in the infinite rule of Soul, which destroys the misrule of sense; I live in the safety, the sanctity, the satisfaction, the salvation of infinite Soul. I am eternally free from anything that is unlike God, because I have the freedom, the bliss, and the joy of Soul. So every day I bathe my thought in the fact that I am an idea of Soul, because that frees me from the belief that my physical body governs me completely and entirely, tells me whether I'm happy or whether I'm sick, whether I can get up in the morning or not, whether I'm hot or cold, and so on.

Weekly Lesson Citations provided courtesy of the Mary Baker Eddy Institute (www.mbeinstitute.org)

The Word: Soul—The Certainty of Safety (cont.)

Only an understanding of Soul can do this. God does everything, and God is Soul. When we understand infinite Soul, we see that it is never in anything, and therefore man, as an idea of Soul, is wholly outside the realm of physical sense. Man lives in the realm of infinite spiritual sense. We should always be bathing our thought in that sense of Soul.

A man once told me that he asked Mrs. Eddy which synonymous term for God handled malpractice and diabolism—direct and specific hate, jealousy, envy, and malpractice. She replied that the term was Soul, because Soul is sinless, and malpractice of every kind is the worst kind of sin. She said, “Know for yourself every day that you live, and move, and have your being in the realm of infinite Soul, where, mental malpractice does not operate and cannot touch you.” Using the action of the human mind deliberately to hurt another, through hate, jealousy, envy, or malpractice of any kind, is the worst sin a mortal can commit, and it can only be handled through the sinlessness of Soul.

“Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days ;”—see if they can prove their understanding of the sevenfold nature of God in the human intelligently and scientifically through analysis, uncovering, and annihilation;—’ and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king’s meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days” (Dan. 1: 11-14). Principle rules “over the day and over the night” and it operates in the human through analysis, uncovering, and annihilation, the “ten days.”

Mrs. Eddy writes, “The relations of God and man, divine Principle and idea, are indestructible in Science”—the belief that you have to heal a sick mortal is a human belief. The truth that man always was and always will be God’s idea, which disperses the lie that man was ever unlike God, is Science. The only patient you ever have is the carnal mind. It is a liar, its belief of a sick, sinning, or dying mortal—whatever it is—is nothing but a lie, and it is dealt with through Truth and Science. Mrs. Eddy goes on, “and Science knows no lapse from nor return to harmony, but holds the divine order or spiritual law, in which God and all that He creates are perfect and eternal, to have remained unchanged in its eternal history” (S. & H. 470: 32-5). In arithmetic, $2 + 2 = 4$ is always true, it never becomes $2 + 2 = 5$. So Principle is ever demonstrable under all circumstances.

Now, you can see the way this great writer is telling his story: he tells of how the light of Mind began to break, of the purity of Spirit which ordered and developed that light, of the identity of Soul which made it definite: “God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.” Then he brings you to the point of proof through the words, “Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days.” Every one of us has that ordered experience. The light breaks upon us and we begin to see the nature of God as Mind—the one intelligence, the one power, the one wisdom, the one creator, the parent Mind. As that develops, we begin to see the nature of God as Spirit—the divine order, divine reality, divine progress, divine birth, and absolute purity. Then we begin to see the nature of God as Soul, which is absolutely definite, sinless, and incorporeal, it is divine identity. Then the nature of God as Principle begins to dawn on us, and we see that Principle is forever proving its own selfhood as its infinite idea.

The Word: Life—The Father that Sustains

Next we come to the tone of Life, and we have captioned it like this: Life, the one Father, maintains and sustains all being. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king’s meat”—a clear picture of the abundance of Life, of the waters bringing forth abundantly. “Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse” (Dan. 1:15, 16)—a wonderful sense of that fifth day of creation, which Mrs. Eddy gives in the term “love” (with a small “l”), and which Jesus described when he said, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” If we have that love, it means that day by day we are willing to lay down the mortal concept of being because we see the Christ. Now, that isn’t a hard thing. When we see the Christ, the mortal concept becomes a very poor thing by comparison, and we are only too glad to lay it down. Moreover, the appearing of the Christ leaves no vacuum when we give up mortality. The Christ becomes wonderful and beautiful in spite of the mortal—not in the mortal or through the mortal or because of the mortal; it seems to touch the mortal, but it touches it as the light touches the darkness, only to dispel it.

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The Word: Life—The Father that Sustains (cont.)

As we understand the nature of God as Life, therefore, we see that Life forever maintains and sustains all being, that Life is eternity (it knows no beginning and no end), that Life is infinite multiplication, infinite progression, infinite exaltation, infinite inspiration, infinite resurrection. As we touch the hem of Life, the way is opened and the things of the flesh drop away from us, because we have no need of them. I know this is true because in some very definite ways I have proved it. I know that if you begin to see the one and only Life, the infinite fatherhood which is infinite sustenance and infinite maintenance, and you begin to bring it into your experience and realize that it means individuality, indivisibility from God, it means exaltation above the mortal, it means immortality, then the mortal begins to drop off and you begin to find your being in the Life which is God. But remember, you lose nothing through that process. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"-in seeking and finding Life eternal, which is the only thing worth having, you don't lose anything.

Mrs. Eddy writes, "Wait patiently on illimitable Love, the lord and giver of Life. Reflect this Life, and with it cometh the full power of being. 'They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house'" (Pul. 4: 23-27). You remember that Daniel and his friends were "fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat." They received a great spiritual incoming, the multiplication of divine ideas; the writer isn't referring to any physical condition.

The Word: Truth—True Manhood Established

And so we come to the tone of Truth, and we have it captioned thus: Truth establishes the calculus of true manhood.

"As for these four children,"-symbols of the calculus of true manhood,-"God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hnaniah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king" (Dan. 1:17-19). As you understand something of the compound idea man, the truth about all God's ideas operating in the divine infinite calculus in Science and system and order, you are man having dominion over all the earth, and you stand before the king.

Mrs. Eddy writes, "The absolute ideal, man, is no more seen nor comprehended by mortals, than is his infinite Principle, Love. Principle and its idea, man, are coexistent and eternal. The numerals of infinity, called seven days, can never be reckoned according to the calendar of time. These days will appear as mortality disappears, and they will reveal eternity, newness of Life, in which all sense of error forever disappears and thought accepts the divine infinite calculus" (S. & H. 520: 7-15). Today the Christ ideal, revealing true manhood, is coming to us as the divine infinite calculus of ideas-the ideas of Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, and Love, blending and reflecting each other in perfect system. For instance, through that blending we see the law of Mind operating as divine order in Spirit, as the rule of spiritual sense in Soul, as divine government in Principle, as true method in Life, as the form of Truth, and as the design of Love. As we understand this divine infinite calculus, therefore, we find all these terms blending and blending. That is "hearing the angels sing"-it is the coming of God's ideas to man in the most wonderful divine music. Those ideas may seem to come at first through enlightened human thinking, but as thought advances, you see that they come divinely, because you have the Mind of Christ. So as you study thoroughly the letter, you thereby imbibe the spirit. You study the letter because it gives you the tools and enables you to understand them, but the fact that from everlasting to everlasting you are the son of God is what really gives you the power and enables you to do something.

The Word: Love—The Fulfilment of All Things

Finally we come to the tone of Love, and we have epitomized it like this: Love fulfils all things.

“And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm. And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus” (Dan. 1: 20, 21)- a perfect sense of the fulfilment of divine Love. Mrs. Eddy writes, “Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need” (S. & H. 494: 10-11).

So in that first chapter you have a most perfect story of the divine idea operating as the Word of God. You remember that the caption we gave for the tone of the Word was this: The breaking of the light comes through divine wisdom and order, and these are fulfilled as the Word of God. And we saw that the tone of it is given perfectly in that statement of Mrs. Eddy’s in which she describes how the children of Israel were guided through the Red Sea. It is a wonderful example of how, when the light breaks, we should take no chances by trying to work on a material basis, but should always let that light be developed on a spiritual basis.