

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 selections this week correspond to the last section of the Lesson. The first is from —Talks given by JOHN W. Dooley on THE SCIENCE OF THE BIBLE - Volume Seven.

The other selection is from -GOD'S NATURE AS LOVE- by Peggy M. Brook.

July 30: Love

Isaiah 40

If these writings do not all illustrate a divine system of metaphysics, as we believe they do, then they are just a jumble. But it is true that the great prophetic writers laid out a “seed-plot” for the Bible, seven days of ordered revelation, and put that key at the very beginning of the Bible. It is true that the story of the whole Bible follows that “seed-plot,” and is climaxed in Revelation as the Word, the Christ, Christianity, and Science, in the “city four-square.” Eventually, when men understand this divine system which the Bible presents, and understand it exactly, scientifically, and on a spiritual basis, it will become the most wonderful, valuable, and dynamic force in the lives of all men, as it is becoming in our lives.

“Comfort Ye, Comfort Ye My People”: Principle (1)

In these remaining chapters of Isaiah, therefore, we have the four aspects of the Christ illustrated, and instead of the tones being illustrated in one or two verses, they are now much more extended. At chapter 40 Isaiah gives the tone of Principle. He shows that divine Principle forever interprets itself anew as the Comforter, “the development of eternal Life, Truth, and Love” (S. & H. 588: 7-8). Principle always interprets itself as the Comforter, as the ordered development, forever going on, of eternal Life, Truth, and Love.

You know, there is no mistaking these tones. I go over and over these chapters to see where one tone ends and the next begins; I say ends and begins, but that is not really the best sense, because one tone slides into the other, so to speak. One tone works up to the next and melts into it; they aren't in watertight compartments.

So here Isaiah is illustrating the Christ reflecting the Word, and he begins with the tone of Principle: “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: “-tell her that divine Principle is operating:-” for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God” (Isa. 40: 1-3). Isaiah is symbolizing the coming of the Christ as Life, Truth, and Love, as the manifestation of Principle.

“Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever” (Isa. 40: 4-8). The grass symbolizes the Word. If you are interested in the Science of the Christ, and you only gain a sense of the Word and stop there, it will wither. You can't demonstrate Principle fully if you only understand the Word; it would be like trying to understand and demonstrate mathematics through addition only, which is impossible, because mathematics is one complete system. However, when you fully understand the Word in its own aspect, the Word reflecting the Christ, reflecting Christianity, and reflecting Science, and you see how these four orders blend with each other and reflect each other, then you have reached the point which the prophet refers to when he says, “the word of our God shall stand for ever.”

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Isaiah 40 (cont.)

Now, take an illustration of that. The understanding of God which men gained and recorded in the Old Testament was just the Word, it was the grass. It was good, but it only went just so far, and relatively speaking, it was only a faint spiritual sense, and so it had to be developed. Even today very few people read the Old Testament, they don't see the point of it. But, on the other hand, remember that Jesus said, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me;" and Mrs. Eddy writes: "The divine Science taught in the original language of the Bible came through inspiration, and needs inspiration to be understood" (S. & H. 319: 21-23). So the Old Testament, which is the Word of God and the beginnings of the Christ, by itself fades, but when considered subjectively and on an inspired basis, it can be truly understood, and will stand forever; and moreover you cannot understand the New Testament unless you understand the Old Testament. You could no more understand the New Testament without understanding the Old, than you could understand mathematics if you cut out addition and the beginning of subtraction. It would be hopeless, you could not do it. So a merely fleshly or human sense of the Word fades, "but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

"O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him"-the demonstration of Principle. Divine Principle is forever interpreting itself as the one Life, one fatherhood; the one Truth, one sonship; the one Love, one motherhood; it is forever interpreting itself as the one relationship, the one infinite Person; and that interpretation is understandable and it is demonstrable.

"He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" (Isa. 40: 9-11). We are "with young" because the divine idea is young in our thought. The idea of pure Science-of the fact that the Bible is spiritually scientific, and that Science and religion can be wedded through the teaching of the Bible-is a very young idea, so we are all with young.

Then it goes on to give a sense of the exactness of Principle: "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counselor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?" Isa. 40: 12-14).

God's Nature as Love

John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, declared in his Epistle, "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Surely to know and feel what love really is is one of the deepest desires of the human heart. Love has been called "the greatest thing in the world." St. John also wrote that "perfect love casteth out fear." What is that perfect love? Does not every one of us long to know such a love,-a love that has the power to cast out fear?

Let us therefore turn our thoughts towards the contemplation of God as Love and listen together for Love's revelation of its own nature. Of course, no one can give a full picture of divine Love. It is such a vast conception and yet so detailed. Moreover, the actuality of divine Love is something one must be spiritually convinced of and deeply feel in one's own consciousness. It is also a power and a presence that lives more nearly to us through our very living of it. Let us realize, though, that as here and now, wherever we are, we open our thought to the nature of God as Love, every one of us will experience a new and living consciousness of Love. And the essence of that consciousness has nothing to do with words. I may be speaking words to you, but at the same time you are entertaining spiritual ideas in your individual way, just as I am. So as we, with spiritual sense, open our thought to God's nature as Love, we shall all be listening in our own unique way to what Love is revealing to us of its very being.

God's Nature as Love (cont.)

In contemplating Love, many statements of Mrs. Eddy's have poured into thought, -such statements as "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Mis. ii: 3). Does not that mean that in working from Love we can have no sense of restriction or negative thinking-of "Thou shalt not," which is the standpoint of the law-but instead we work and think from the standpoint of everything being fulfilled here and now? We work out from God, from the perfection of God's universe, instead of straining to get there. Elsewhere Mrs. Eddy asks, "How shall we reach our true selves?" And her answer is, "Through Love" (Mis. 104: 23-24). Just that simple statement. What does it imply? Surely that divine Love impels us to find ourselves in the image of Love. And in finding this we learn to love ourselves aright-not our personal material selfhood with all its mortal mistakes, but our true self; what we really are as God's image and likeness. Then we begin to love and appreciate our neighbour also. Loving our true selves is indissolubly linked with loving our neighbour; because we are expressions of one undivided consciousness.

Here is another interesting point in Mrs. Eddy's references to Love. Although she speaks of Life and Truth as "the way," she very often associates Love with "the way" as well. Sometimes when one cannot see the next step to take or the way one should go, it is helpful to turn to these passages that refer to "the way." In doing so, one is surprised to see how much Love enters into them. We read, for instance, "Love is the way alway" (Mess. '01, 35: 10); "Universal Love is the divine way in Christian Science" (S. & H. 266: 18-19); also, "love inspires, illumines, designates, and leads the way" (S. & H. 454: 18-19). And so at these times one should ask oneself: Am I conscious of Love? What is Love? Am I expressing the love of Love in my life? To feel deeply and to express the Love that is God invariably "inspires, illumines, designates, and leads the way" for us.

In a slightly different vein we also read, "The way to extract error from mortal mind is to pour in truth through flood-tides of Love" (S. & H. 201: 17-18). It is useless to pour in truth in a hard way, forcefully, with little sense of love. Truth must always be poured in "through flood-tides of Love." As we recognize that Love has fulfilled everything, our declarations of truth, when faced with some error, will have no element of condemnation; nor shall we ever believe that we are pouring truth into a spiritual vacuum. From the standpoint of Love's completeness truth will overflow and find ready acceptance in the heart of man as native and natural to him. It is interesting that this reference continues, "Christian perfection is won on no other basis."

And so we have come right through to the home of Love where we have always been and always will be. Mrs. Eddy writes of the seventh day of Love, "The depth, breadth, height, might, majesty, and glory of infinite Love fill all space. That is enough!" (S. & H. 520: 3-5). And it is.

A SUMMARY

Let us now take these tones through briefly and see how logically they follow one another. Love as Mind is the Motherhood that is wise; it gives us the ideas we need in every situation, at every point on our journey. Love as Spirit says, "And the conception of every idea is pure. These ideas that come to you are pure ideas and give you a pure conception of your fellow man." Then Love as Soul says, "And that is constant, because Love is Soul, and its constancy demands translation of the human." Love as Principle then says, "This unchanging conception is impersonal. It is based on Love as Principle, and because it is based on that, it operates with power." Then Love as Life says, "But it grants to every idea true individuality. It isn't so impersonal that it is just coldly systematic. It is Love as Life, warm and individual. Every idea has a place in the one undivided plan." Love as Truth then says, "And that plan is one. All these individualities make up one manifestation. They constitute one man." And finally they are all found in the home of Love, in the design of Love. Let us sum up how we have taken these tones and then let us continue to think about them, so that we begin, to have a full sense of Love and how the twenty-third Psalm gives a rich and rounded conception of Love.

A SUMMARY (cont.)

I think that this whole Psalm, and the way we have been considering Love, is mainly from the standpoint of Christianity. There are hosts of things one could say about Love, but we have been taking a Christianity aspect, a sense of true relationship.

Love as Mind is the Motherhood that is wise.

"[DIVINE LOVE] is my shepherd; I shall not want."

Love as Spirit is the conception that is pure.

"[LOVE] maketh me to lie down in green pastures: [LOVE] leadeth me beside the still waters."

Love as Soul is the constancy that translates.

"[LOVE] restoreth my soul [spiritual sense] :"

Love as Principle is the impersonal wholeness that is power. "[LOVE] leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."

Love as Life is the unity that is indivisible, individual.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:for [LOVE] is with me; [LOVE'S] rod and [LOVE'S] staff they comfort me."

Love as Truth is the universality that recognizes only one man. "[LOVE] prepareth a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

[LOVE] anointeth my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

Love as Love is complete oneness.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house [the consciousness] of [Love] for ever."