

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 section two and three of the Lesson. They are from TALKS GIVEN BY JOHN DOORLY AT HIS OXFORD SUMMIER SCHOOL— 1949.

September 17th — Subject: Matter

MATTHEW 4:1

VERSE 1. “Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil” — he was “led up of the spirit,” he wasn’t caught napping. Once and for all, let’s put aside the fairy story that Jesus was compelled by any human force — the rabbis, Pilate, or anyone else — to do something he didn’t want to do. Jesus mapped out every part of the way he travelled. He knew where he was going, he decided the way it was going to be done, and he worked out every step of that way. Jesus’ demonstration — whether as recorded in Matthew, in Mark, in Luke, or in John — was a complete demonstration of spiritual order. When we recognize that, it will do a great deal of good. For one thing, it will lift off the Jewish people that hideous belief of a curse because they crucified Jesus. At all times Jesus had power to lay down his life in the flesh for his spiritual identity, but he never turned aside for one moment from the way he had chosen. Jesus’ demonstration was a positive demonstration of the victory of Life over death, the victory of Christ, truth, over error the victory of manhood over the false sense of manhood. The world has regarded that demonstration negatively, and so people think, “What a hideous experience he had to go through,” and they dwell on the suffering. Yet Jesus’ demonstration was a wonderful illustration of victory from start to finish, and we’ve got to regard it as such. He purposely went the way he was going, and he did it for mankind’s sake, to prove that the physical man is not the real man and is at all times subordinate to the spiritual sense of manhood. We’ve got to come to the point where we see these four Gospels as records of positive spiritual and scientific happenings, and not as records of how Jesus was victimized and crucified and so forth.

You and I are “led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil” time and time again. Often and often we feel that some step has to be taken in our spiritual development, and we decide to take that step. So we’re “led up of the spirit into the wilderness” — “the vestibule in which a material sense of things disappears, and spiritual sense unfolds the great facts of existence” (S. & H. 597 17-19) — “to be tempted.” The time comes in the experience of every single one of us when something that is clogging the wheels of our spiritual progress has to be seen and got rid of. Now, what makes us see it and get rid of it? It is that which we symbolize today as Soul as Mind, from the standpoint of Life. The fact of Life — the fact of the creative, operating as definite action, power, and light — impels this development. Life, Truth, and Love as the Word of God is forever revealing itself, and so inevitably the creative must operate, it must reveal the factual, and that factual must be fulfilled. And so you and I find ourselves being “led up at the spirit into the wilderness,” where we are forced to face issues which we have been side-stepping for a long time, just fooling ourselves that we need not bother with them at moment. The time comes when, if we’re honest, we know perfectly well that we’ve just got to deal with them, and that there is no alternative. The wilderness experience is a wonderful experience.

VERSE 2. “he had fasted forty days and forty nights” — he had denied the physical senses by dwelling in the calculus of reality. “Forty” is often used in the Scriptures as a symbol of the calculus of reality applied to the human.

“he was.., an hungered” — not physically hungry, but he had great spiritual longings. The carnal mind was to tempt him to satisfy those longings through some human expedient, — some human belief or condition, — but Jesus knew that nothing gives man permanent satisfaction but divine ideas.

MATTHEW 4:1 (cont.)

VERSE 3. “If thou be the Son of God” — if God is your Father, Life is the creative force impelling you. The temptation was, “Don’t make your demonstration on a wholly spiritual basis, mix it up, be satisfied to work it fifty-fifty. Forget that God gives you His spiritual ideas, in turn, they give you daily supplies (Mis. 307 1-2). Don’t identify your sense of the creative as wholly spiritual. Just let the material have a little place in it.” But there is no life in matter, because the only creative factor is wholly spiritual. The temptation comes to us to use our Science to get ourselves something material, like a new motor-car. We are tempted to try to create through Mind on a material basis. But the truth is nothing can be created but ideas, and those ideas give us our daily supply in God’s own way...

VERSE 4. Man lives wholly by ideas, and those ideas have their origin in Life, the one creative cause. And so if we’re going to work out the problem of life, we’re going to do it on wholly spiritual basis. We’re going to do it by identifying the creative force, the one creative force in all the world, as the creative force of Life. That creative force impels thought to identify the operation of the one Mind as the All-in-all.

SOUL AS SPIRIT (Life)

(Chapter 4 5-7)

The Word of Life, expressed through Soul, names and blesses man, thus preserving him from the pride of life.

References: S.&H. 506 22-24 507 6-10

2nd temptation — to cast himself down from a pinnacle of the temple.

VERSE 6. “If thou be the Son of God” — again the temptation came, “If Life is your Father, if Life is the creative faculty impelling you, dash thy foot against a stone — against the material so-called calculus.” The one creative force, Life, impels thought, through Soul as Spirit, to identify as substantial only one thing, — divine order, divine purity, reality. Time and time again you and I begin to realize that there is only the one creative force of infinite Life ever going on, and we begin to realize in some measure that “Beloved, now are we the sons of God.” Then mortal mind will tempt us to work from some other basis than the reality, purity, and substance of that idea. It will try to get us to force fruit that is not the fruit of the Spirit. It will try often and often to cast ourselves down from the pinnacle by adopting the processes of materia medica, false theology, or intellectualism, commercialism, and so on. And so the temptation comes to us, not to identify the fact that we are the sons of God, not to see that Life and Life alone impels our ordered development.

Sometimes when we see spiritual things operating in our lives, we are tempted to force our demonstrations, instead of developing along the straight line of Spirit. We try to walk on the water before we can even swim. We push and pull humanly, instead of working through spiritual means alone, because we think “I’m the son of God, and nothing is too good for me,” before we have begun to prove that position. And so we mix the human and the divine. That is the pride of life, and it’s disastrous. Jesus worked out everything through Spirit alone, and therefore he never had to go back. We often have to go back, because we try to mingle Spirit and matter and so we make mistakes. If we let ourselves be jockeyed by ambition and the pride of life, we very soon find ourselves “strangers in a tangled wilderness.” But Soul as Spirit, from the standpoint of Life, identifies our true spiritual selfhood in the divine order. The individuality of Life fulfils our demonstration at the right time.

The temptation which came to Jesus to put his sense of Truth into the rich and well-established Jewish temple must have been very great. Today we are sometimes tempted to work out our development in Christian Science through some material “temple,” but thank God we are beginning to learn that every time we try that, it fails. We can work out our demonstration as the sons of God in Christian Science on one basis only, — the basis of individuality, inspiration, and exaltation, on that which is called Life, — and on no other basis. The impulsion of the one Life operates to identify the only way, the ordered way of Spirit, the substantial way, the way of real development. The only development is that of eternal Life, Truth, and Love.

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

THE WORD AS THE CHRIST
(Chapters 4 8-9 : 38)

SOUL AS SOUL (Truth)
(Chapter 4 : 8-11)

In the Word as the Christ, Truth makes definite man's identity with God, and so translates matter into Mind.
References: S&I 507:11-14, 28-3 (to "all") 508 6-8

3rd temptation — to possess "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them."

The first two temptations were turned back by argument, but at this point, where thought touches the Word as the Christ, Jesus could say, "Get thee hence, Satan," because Christ was All-in-all to him. He identified Truth, the factual, as the rule of Soul, the sinlessness of Soul.

The third temptation was to believe in matter as intelligent, and it is a pretty big temptation. But the only intelligence Jesus recognized and used was the divine power of translation. Remember Mrs. Eddy's definition of intelligence in "Recapitulation;" she says, "Intelligence is omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. It is the primal and eternal quality of infinite Mind, of the triune Principle — Life, Truth, and Love, — named God" (S. & H. 469:8-11). The carnal mind comes to each one of us and it takes us up into "an exceeding high mountain," which is the so-called calculus of mortality, and shows us the whole picture of mortality, and then it says, "Now, if you will only use material intelligence, — human ways and means, corporeality, — you can attain to so much, and you can satisfy all your lust for power and domination and wealth and so forth." Then is the time for us to say to the carnal mind, from the standpoint of the Christ-idea, "Those things don't amount to anything. Through Christ I can analyze those things, I can uncover them, and I can annihilate them, because intelligence is the primal and eternal quality of infinite Mind, of the triune Principle, — Life, Truth, and Love, —named God."

The sense of translation is climaxed in that lovely statement, "Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him." In divine translation, metaphysics "exchanges the objects of sense for the ideas of Soul." (S&H 269: 15-16), and like Jacob we come right through our struggles. That which impelled Jacob's struggle was Truth, the fact of the Christ at the point of Soul: it impelled Jacob to translate his belief of himself out of fear, jealousy, envy, hate, and so on, into some sense of what constitutes the divine idea.

MARK 4 30-41

TRUTH AS SOUL (Life)
(Chapters 4 : 30-5 43.)

Christ, Truth, translates its own idea as immortal and incorporeal, and so stills the tempest, casts out the "legion" of mortality, and establishes the divine rule of true gender.
Reference: S.&H. 273 :16-20, 21-28

The parable of the mustard seed.
Jesus stills the storm.
The Gadarene swine.
Woman with issue of blood healed.
Jairus' daughter raised.

Truth as Soul shows, from the standpoint of Life, how the divine translation identifies man with God and silences animality and sex. As we have seen, Truth indicates the essence or substance of spiritual things but it is Life which accents the expression of that substance.

VERSES 30-32. Jesus was symbolizing to them his own mission.

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MARK 4 30-41 (cont.)

TRUTH AS SOUL (Life)

(Chapters 4 : 30-5 43.)

VERSES 33, 34. Mrs. Eddy makes a very definite statement about the time and thought which Jesus gave to endowing his disciples and apostles with a cultivated spiritual understanding. She writes, "In this simplicity, and with such fidelity, we see Jesus ministering to the spiritual needs of all who placed themselves under his care, always leading them into the divine order, under the sway of his own perfect understanding." In the same passage she also says, "When he was with them, a fishing-boat became a sanctuary,... the grove became his class-room, and nature's haunts were the Messiah's university." (See Ret. 91 17-27.) Jesus was always leading his disciples into the divine order, and remember that divine order is infinite. As we go on, we become conscious of the infinite categories of metaphysics. The word "category" simply means "a classification within a classification." For instance, compound fractions is a category of mathematics; but that classification includes within itself other classifications such as numerals, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and so on, all operating together in an ordered way. Just so, the categories of metaphysics indicate the infinite order of Science.

VERSES 35-41. This story is a lovely illustration of the calm of Soul and the balm of Soul. Jesus could still the tempest because in his own thinking he had silenced the storms of hate, jealousy, envy, condemnation, criticism, fear, lust, greed, and everything else in the way of animality. When we can still those, then we too shall be able to still the tempest. The tempest is only a magnified sense of those beliefs, that's all. It is also literally true that we shall be able to still the tempest. I personally have seen very marvelous demonstrations of the weather.

Don't forget that the whole tone is now translation. Truth as Soul is showing the expression of the Christ, and how this operates to translate the storms of sin into incorporeal and sinless being.