

Bible Characters for Your Weekly Bible Study

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For week of March 15 - 21, 2010

Dixon, Frederick (CSB and Acting Editor), "**Matter**," EDITORIAL, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.23 (2 July 1921), p. 820.

--FOR twenty-three centuries the thinkers of the world have disputed as to the substance and origin of matter.

- From the days of Plato and Aristotle downward two great schools have contended, the one that matter was the subjective condition of mind, the expression of force or energy, and the other that it was the only substance existing.

--"As named in *Christian Science*," Mrs. Eddy writes, on page 103 of *Science and Health*, "*animal magnetism or hypnotism is the specific term for error, or mortal mind*," and she goes on, a little later in the same paragraph, "*This belief has not one quality of Truth*."

- In other words, this mortal mind, which gives rise to matter, is itself a mere counterfeit of the divine Mind, and as such as unreal as [is] the matter it produces.

--The struggle, then, of the Christian Scientist is to realize the unreality of matter, essentially to recognize the nothingness of its pleasures, for in the pleasures of matter, necessarily rather than in its pains, exists its attraction.

RESPONSIVE READING: Daniel reveals the dream to Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2: 1, 19 [to 1st.], 20, 27, 28 [to ;], 31 [to ;], 32-35)

TIME LINE AND AUTHOR: Written by Daniel between 536 to 530 BC. The events described in the Book of Daniel begin in 605 BC when Babylon conquered Jerusalem.

"Promotion of the four Hebrews [Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego] after three years (1:5,18) agrees with the year of promotion after the dream of the 'second year' [v.1]....In the time of revelation, God spoke through the interpretation of dreams that He induced (cf. v.29)." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

"The characterization of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel's interpretation of the dream is strikingly positive." (Theological Bible Commentary)

"*There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries* [v.28]: these words express the essence of apocalyptic. In the context the point is twofold: first to make a contrast with the magicians, who cannot reveal the true mystery, second to lead up to the revelation itself." (Peake's Commentary)

King **Nebuchadnezzar** of Babylon

[Neb you kad nez'ur] ("O god Nabu, protect my son" or "Nebo, defend the boundary")

Nebuchadnezzar was "the powerful king of the Babylonian Empire who captured Jerusalem three times." (Baker Encyclopedia) He was the son and successor of Nabopolassar, who delivered Babylon from its dependence on Assyria and laid Nineveh in ruins. "Before his reign began, he

developed a considerable reputation as a field commander." (Anchor Bible Dictionary) He was "the most powerful and longest reigning king of the neo-Babylonian (625-539 B.C.) period. (HarperCollins Bible Dictionary) He married the daughter of Cyaxares, and thus the Median and Babylonian dynasties were united.

In 586 BC Jerusalem fell to the army of Nebuchadnezzar. Under cover of darkness, Zedekiah and many of his men fled through a break in the city wall. But they were overtaken by the Chaldeans in the plains of Jericho and brought captive to Riblah, a city in the land of Hamath where Nebuchadnezzar was camped.

"He greatly expanded and beautified Babylon, including the erection of handsome temples and the restoration of the Great Ziggurat in the middle of the city (which tradition says was the Tower of Babel)." (All the People of the Bible)

"Nebuchadnezzar made an arrogant boast about all that he achieved (Dan 4:30)." (Who Was Who in the Bible) After the incident of the "burning fiery furnace" into which the three Hebrew boys were cast, Nebuchadnezzar was afflicted with some peculiar mental aberration. "As a punishment for his pride and vanity, that strange form of madness was sent upon him which the Greeks called Lycanthropy, wherein the sufferer imagines himself a beast, and, quitting the haunts of men, insists on leading the life of a beast. (Dan 4:33)" (Smith Dictionary)

"Little is known of the last thirty years of Nebuchadnezzar's rule. The tale of his madness may be a pejorative account of a period in the reign of his successor Nabonidus" (Oxford Guide to People & Places). However, a remarkable confirmation of the Scripture narrative is afforded by the recent discovery of a bronze door-step, which bears an inscription to the effect that it was presented by Nebuchadnezzar to the great temple at Borsippa as a votive offering on account of his recovery from a terrible illness.

He died in 562 BC, after a reign of forty-three years.

Daniel

[Dan'yuhl] (Heb. "God is my judge/Judge of God")

(Abbreviated)

Daniel is the hero of the Book of Daniel, represented as a Jew in the Babylonian exile who is skilled in the interpretation of dreams and is miraculously preserved in the lions' den. He was descended from one of the noble families of Judah, and was probably born in Jerusalem about 623 BC, during the reign of Josiah. "Although some stories about Daniel might date to earlier centuries, the book of Daniel was completed in the 2nd century BC." (Eerdmans Dictionary)....

"In addition to his wisdom, he was skilled in dream interpretation." (Holman Dictionary) This "earned him a high place in the court of Nebuchadnezzar." (Mysteries of the Bible) Some years later, the king had a most disturbing dream. When his magicians and wise men could not interpret it he flew into a rage and ordered their death.

In a vision the king's dream was revealed to Daniel. Next morning he was brought before the king and told him that he had dreamt of a great statue. Daniel explained that the golden head of the statue was Nebuchadnezzar himself, and the silver, bronze, iron, and clay parts represented lesser kingdoms that would succeed the Babylonian one—until all of them were swept away by the kingdom of God that would last forever.

“Nebuchadnezzar was so impressed with Daniel that he made him the governor of the province of Babylon and head of all the sages in the kingdom.” (All the People in the Bible)....

“the wise men...astrologers...magicians...soothsayers”

Wise men: Wise men, first mentioned in Daniel, included three classes, (1) astrologers, (2) Chaldeans, and (3) soothsayers. The word in the original (hakamim) probably means "medicine men." In Chaldea medicine was only a branch of magic.

Astrologers: "Mesopotamian and Egyptian stargazers practiced what moderns would call both astronomy and astrology, and their skill was sophisticated enough to allow accurate predictions of eclipses and construction of calendars. The Neo-Assyrian monarchs (743-612 B.C.E.) in particular were eager patrons of astrologers throughout their empire, and much of their extensive correspondence survives." (Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible)

Astrology is the "belief that the celestial bodies, especially the moon, sun, planets, and stars (in Greek collectively called 'stars'), influence the sublunar world." (Ibid)

Magicians: A magician is "a man who pretends to have preternatural powers, which he has obtained by the study of an occult science or the practice of a black art in connivance with evil spirits, and which he calls magic.

"Magic is based on the assumption that one can receive desired results through the recitation of proper formulas or by the performance of certain prescribed actions." (Oxford Guide to Ideas & Issues)
"In the Hebrew Bible, magic can be associated with disbelief in the power and purpose of Yahweh." (Oxford Guide to Ideas & Issues)

Soothsayers: "one who foretells events. The word has a negative connotation in the OT, where soothsayers are classed with sorcerers and with magical practices and are forbidden to Israel." (HarperCollins Bible Dictionary)

Sindell, Rev. Martin, "**Nebuchadnezzar,**" Christian Science Journal (April 1910), p. 9.

--Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, a vivid, strange dream.

- This meant much to the Babylonian monarch, for the heathen laid great stress on dreams.

--Homer, in a well-known passage in his "Iliad," says that a dream is from Jupiter, and tells us that the mind of Jove was communicated to Agamemnon in a vision.

- Little wonder, then, that Babylon's mighty potentate gathered unto him the wise men of his kingdom, that he might learn the meaning of his dream.

--But "*flesh and blood*" wisdom was insufficient; therefore, as on a former occasion, the prophet Daniel was called, and made known to the king the interpretation of his dream.

- The prophet, now somewhat advanced in years, does not have an altogether pleasant task.

Leishman, Thomas L., "**The Contribution of Jonah and Daniel to Prophetic Literature** [Part II]," THE CONTINUITY OF THE BIBLE, Christian Science Journal, Vol.88 (September 1970), p. 481.

--Traditionally believed to have been written by Daniel himself in the sixth century B.C. and called by one early twentieth century authority "a genuine literary product of the exile" (*Guidebook to the*

Biblical Literature by John F. Genung, p. 281), the book of Daniel is generally taken today to belong to a much later date, probably about 164 B.C.

- Despite certain historical inaccuracies in its account, it covers a period of wide historical interest, from the sixth to the second centuries B.C.

--When the king was disturbed by an ominous dream, Daniel alone of all his wise men was able to report it and interpret its meaning.

--Daniel interpreted the head of gold of the image seen in the king's dream as Nebuchadnezzar himself, whose power and influence had come from "*the God of heaven*" (2:37).

Jennings, Alice, "**To and For One God, Indivisible Good**," *Christian Science Journal*, Vol.19 (March 1902), p. 758.

--Work for Christianity is for the spiritualization of the world, towards the final elimination of sin, disease, and death.

- Our felicitations in mortals or mere mortal hopes are of such evanescence and disappointment as should turn us quickly from the dream.

---The finite can never become the infinite, nor the mortal the immortal, but mortality is swallowed up in immortality, and the finite is lost in the infinite by the understanding of the Mind of Christ.

- Only the eternal is real.

---As ephemeral as "*the flower of the grass*," or as "*a dream of a night vision*," is the human belief of life in matter.

- Only in Truth, in Spirit and Love, can we view and interpret man aright.

Dixon, Frederick (CSB and Acting Editor), SELECTED ARTICLES, *Christian Science Sentinel*, Vol.16 (23 May 1914), p. 747. (in *Camberly News*, Aldershot, England)

--As the Pentateuch, or Torah, began to be studied, there grew up the books of the earlier and later prophets, as the rest of the Old Testament came to be called, and the struggle between monotheism and polytheism, between idealism and materialism, began to develop among the Hebrew people.

- The schools of the prophets produced the great defenders of monotheism. On the other hand, there grew up those other prophetic cults which took the side of polytheism and all its works.

---The struggle between the two was incessant and uncompromising. When the kings were on the side of the great prophets, the altars to other gods were overthrown, and the groves which covered all the licentious rites of polytheism were cut down. In the ranks of the prophets of polytheism there sprang up the whole race of astrologers, necromancers, enchanters, diviners, *et hoc genus omne*. These wonder-workers claimed to heal through the medium of the human mind, through some process or another of suggestion. Thus, throughout all the days of the kings there went on the struggle between the prophets who relied on suggestion and the prophets who relied solely on the divine Mind or God.

Haskell, Olcott, "**Casting a Stone**," *Christian Science Sentinel*, Vol.21 (22 February 1919), p. 485.

--In the second chapter of Daniel's prophecy is presented "*a great image*," evidently representing the mortal concept of man, the head being of fine gold, part of the body of silver and brass, and the feet being composed of iron and clay. We are then told that "*a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces*." We further read that the brass, the silver, and the gold, as well as the iron and clay, which metaphorically represented mortal man, became like chaff when struck by the stone, and the wind carried them away. We also read that "*the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth*."

• To the Christian Scientist this stone represents the truth of being, and when it smites the mortal concept the error vanishes into its native nothingness.

---Here we must not forget that in Daniel's vision the stone "*became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth,*" showing that the scientific destruction of evil is always accompanied by a more universal manifestation of the power and presence of good.

SECTION II: The confusion and dispersion of nations at Babel (Gen 11: 1-9)

AUTHOR AND TIME LINE: Ascribed to Moses, written after the Exodus (c. 1445 BC), but before Moses' death (c. 1405 BC). The event occurred three centuries earlier.

"BABEL. Self-destroying error; a kingdom divided against itself, which cannot stand; material knowledge. The higher false knowledge builds on the basis of evidence obtained from the five corporeal senses, the more confusion ensues, and the more certain is the downfall of its structure." (S&H p.581)

“The stories of humanity’s and Israel’s ancestors in Genesis provide no simple standpoint or doctrinal principle for viewing ethnicity and diversity.” (Theological Bible Commentary)

"God, who made man as the one creature with whom He could speak (1:28), was to take the gift of language and use it to divide the race, because the apostate worship at Babel indicated that man had turned against God in pride (vv.8,9)." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

McCandless, Ethel M., "One Universal Family," Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.41 (25 November 1939), p. 243.

--The word "family" expresses the human concept of a precious spiritual fact, even the relationship of the Father-Mother God to His spiritual offspring.

--"*Creation is ever appearing,*" writes Mrs. Eddy, "*and must ever continue to appear from the nature of its inexhaustible source. Mortal sense inverts this appearing and calls ideas material. Thus misinterpreted, the divine idea seems to fall to the level of a human or material belief, called mortal man*" (Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, pp.507,508). To grasp, even in a degree, the tremendous significance of the above statement is to experience a measureless satisfaction and peace.

--In the eleventh chapter of Genesis we find an interesting account of the confusion of tongues.

• We read that "*the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.*"

---Then it seems that ambition, fear, and self-will crept in, and the people said, "*Let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.*"

• Mortal mind usually offers a plausible excuse for its doing. The narrative goes on to say, "*The Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.*" The human mind, when motivated by fear and self-will, unwittingly brings upon itself the very thing it would avoid.

Walters, Winifred Fields, "Babel and Pentecost," POEM, Christian Science Journal, Vol.89 (November 1971), p. 580.

At Shinar people settled down
to build a towered city
and glorify themselves,
but were confounded
and divided,
no longer understanding one another.

Met to honor Christ,
men at Jerusalem
received the Holy Ghost,
scaled barriers
of race and tongue
in glad communication.

Though unity of purpose keyed both events,
it was motive that determined the result.

SECTION III: The ‘false prophets’ to be avoided (Matt 7: 15, 16, 18, 19, 24-27 *whosoever*)

TIME LINE: This was part of the Sermon on the Mount, delivered during the Year of Popularity and Fundamental Principles (Jesus’ 2nd year of ministry, 28 AD.

The term “false prophets” was familiar to the little group of disciples who listened to Jesus that day. All the Old Testament prophets from Moses to Zechariah had spoken of them.

“false prophets”

“False prophet is a label given to a person who is viewed as illegitimately claiming charismatic authority within a religious group.” (Wikipedia)

"The mention of the Holy Spirit in 3:24 prompts John to inform his readers that other spirits [*believe not every spirit*] exist (i.e., demonic spirits) who produce false prophets and false teachers to propagate their false doctrine." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

“Fruit inspectors,” Christian Science Monitor (1 February 2000), p. 20.

--My father-in-law was a factory shiftworker. A Korean war veteran. A church soloist. He loved everyone he encountered in the small Wisconsin town where he lived.

--If anyone hinted, especially in his tight-knit community, that people should be careful not to judge others, my father-in-law would counter with a wry grin, “OK, but there’s nothing to stop us from being fruit inspectors!”

--“*Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?...A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit*” (Matt.7:16,18).

--This scripture makes it clear that we will bear the type of fruit consistent with our nature.

- It suggests that we should be able to expect growth and good fruit from those who follow the teachings of Christ and live a spiritual life.

--My father-in-law expected to find evidence of the fruit of the Spirit in others.

Farlow, Alfred (CSD and CoP), **“Beware of False Prophets,”** IN *BOSTON TIMES*, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.5 (1902), p. 148.

--There is much taught in the world in the line of theories and Biblical interpretations, so that it becomes necessary that there should be a test in order that we may be able to divide between truth and error, and it can be readily seen by all that the plausibility of any particular belief or doctrine is not a safe and conclusive proof of its truthfulness.

- Neither is it a proof of the genuineness of a particular creed that it can be established by certain Biblical interpretations.

---The worth of a religious belief is known by its fruits.

- The only test which Jesus gave was that of reforming the sinner and healing the sick.

---True, there are many methods of producing such results, and each particular religionist may be able to point to some fruits and thereby claim a Scriptural endorsement of his peculiar faith, but only a perfect way can eventually bring perfect results even when in course of time it becomes perfectly used.

SECTION IV: Jesus heals “one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb,” and the Pharisees claim that Beelzebub is the source of Jesus’ healings (Matt 12: 22-28)

PARALLEL GOSPELS: Mark 3: 22-30; Luke 11: 14,15

TIME LINE: The Year of Popularity and Fundamental Principles (Jesus’ 2nd year of ministry), 28 AD.

"Evil is often spoken about by demonizing the behavior or the person who does it, which is what the scribes seek to do with Jesus. The word *báal zebul* literally means 'lord of the house,' *báal* being lord or ruler; in Jewish reality, this was not God but a source of power used to do evil." (On Your Mark)

"one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb"

“The healing of the possessed man (12:22) initiates a dispute over whether the origin of Jesus’ power to exorcise and heal is divine or demoniac. The narrative assumes that evil spirits are real and powerful and can cause illness such as the man’s blindness and deafness and that only superhuman power can overcome them. When the crowds wonder if Jesus is the 'son of David,' they may refer to Jesus as both a Messiah like David and as a successor to Solomon, the son of David, who possessed the power to heal and exorcise according to [extra-biblical] traditions. In contrast, Jesus' opponents attribute his power over demons to the most powerful of demons, Beelzebub....Jesus refutes the charge that he is allied with evil spirits using three arguments, that Beelzebub would divide his kingdom if he gave Jesus power to expel other demons (vv.25-26), that other Jewish exorcists accepted by the Pharisees cast out demons (v.27)....and that Satan's (the strong man's) house can be plundered through exorcism only after he is neutralized. ” (Eerdmans Bible Commentary)

This miracle records that the reaction of the religious leaders of Israel (the prejudiced Pharisees) was against Jesus not only because he healed on the Sabbath, but also because when he cast out demons the people called him “the Son of David” or the Messiah of prophecy. They reacted against him with definite accusation.

“This...story consists of:

An exorcism (v.22)

The positive (if inadequate) response of the crowd (v.23)

The dissenting and polemical reaction of the Pharisees to the crowd (v.24), and

Jesus’ extended response. This last consists of three rebuttals and a warning (vv.25-30).” (Oxford Commentary)

“The ridiculous charge of the Pharisees is strong evidence of the genuineness of Christ’s miracles. They would have denied them if they could, but this was impossible, so numerous and notorious were they. They reacted against him with definite accusation; they started the flimsy theory that Christ was in league with the devil, not really believing it, but out of malice.” (Dummelow Commentary)

“Famous rabbis and their disciples professed to cast out devils by magic and exorcism, and their success was attributed to the power of God. Why then, asked Jesus, are my miracles, which are much more striking than theirs, and are not worked by magic, but by a mere word, not regarded as coming from God, and why do I not receive from you, the same honor as your own exorcists?” (Ibid.)

Pharisees

[Fair’uh see] (Heb. “to separate,” Gr. “separated one”)

(Abbreviated)

The Pharisees were a small legalistic sect (about six thousand) of specially observant and influential Jews, mainly in Palestine, from the second century BC to the second century AD. They were probably the successors of the Assideans (i.e. the “pious”), a party that originated in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes in revolt against his heathenizing policy. “For the doctrines and beliefs of the Pharisees our main source is...Josephus.” (Interpreters Dictionary) The first mention of them is in a description by him. “According to Josephus...[he] calls the Pharisees ‘a choice [of life]’ and a ‘philosophy.’ He gives some general characteristics of the Pharisees in contrast to the Sadducees and Essenes, recounts some of the activities and influence of this group, and mentions occasional influential Pharisees.” (HarperCollins Dictionary) “The Pharisees were the successors of the ‘Holy Ones’ who had fought for religious freedom during the Greek occupation of Palestine from 332 BC.” (Who's Who in the New Testament)) Josephus wrote for non-Jews in Greek of the three sects (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes) or schools into which the Jews were divided during the Hasmonean period (145 BC)....

They "were the most numerous and influential of all the religious sects of Jesus' day. They were strict legalists. They stood for the rigid observance of the letter and forms of the Law, and also for the Traditions. There were some good men among them. But in the main they were known for their covetousness, self-righteousness, and hypocrisy." (Halley's Bible Handbook) They constituted the most important of the groups opposed to Jesus. “The Pharisees were a group that interpreted Torah so that its meaning could be applied to everyday life. Their name means 'interpreters,' but it can also mean 'separatists,' and they were called that by their opponents.” (Complete Bible Handbook) "The synagogue was the peculiar institution of the Pharisees as the Temple was for the Sadducees." (Funk & Wagnalls Dictionary) “Luke’s portrayal of the Pharisees recalls portraits of the Sophists in Hellenistic texts: the respected teachers of the common people, who come out to scrutinize Jesus’ activities (Luke 5:17).” (Eerdmans Dictionary) “Jesus continually denounced their external observance of the Law, their multitude of petty traditions, and particularly their self-righteousness.” (Who’s Who in the New Testament)....

Beelzebub

[Bee el’zi buhb] ("lord of the flies")

Beelzebub is the Phoenician god at Ekron "from which the Israelite King Ahaziah sought help after injuring himself in a fall," and was worshipped by the Philistines. (Holman Dictionary)

“Scholars have been fascinated with trying to find an etymology for this preeminent satanic being.” (Anchor Bible Dictionary) “The original form and meaning of the term are unclear. Originally, it may have meant ‘lord of the lofty abode’; then, because this god was considered by the Hebrews to be an unworthy rival to Yahweh, it may have been revised to ‘lord of the flies.’ Later, it was altered even further to Beel-zabul, meaning ‘lord of dung.’ In the intertestamental period, when numerous names were used to designate the leader of the forces of evil, one of the names selected was Baal-zebub.” (HarperCollins Dictionary) “The word ‘baal’ was a Canaanite term for ‘lord’ and the whole word meant ‘Lord of heaven.’” (Who’s Who in the New Testament) "During the Greco-Roman period,

Beel-zebul came to be used for a leader among the demons opposed to God." (Oxford Guide to Ideas & Issues)

Beelzebub is a "name for Satan, "and is found only "in the New Testament spelled differently in Greek manuscripts." (Holman Dictionary) "In the NT Beelzebub is equated with Satan, not only by implication through the title 'ruler of the demons' but explicitly in Mark 3:23." (Eerdmans Dictionary) In the Gospels, Jesus denies that he casts out demons by "Beelzebub the chief of the devils." "John does not use the name at all." (All the People in the Bible)

Gregory, Louis A., "**The Blind See**," Christian Science Journal, Vol.36 (May 1918), p. 91.

--The promise that the blind shall see is prominent in Jewish prophecies of the works of the Messiah.

- The Messianic era was foretold as a period of general enlightenment. In that connection the Scriptural references to the healing blindness have rich figurative as well as literal significance.

---Jesus completely fulfilled the prophecies.

- He opened many blind eyes, but his supreme accomplishment was the correction of seeming spiritual blindness or sin. Following Christ Jesus as the Wayshower, Christian Science heals both physical and mental blindness through the power of God, and proves that the restoration of physical sight is inseparably connected with increased spiritual discernment. The physical healing of this Science is, as Mrs. Eddy tells us (Science and Health, p.150), "*to attest the reality of the higher mission of the Christ-power to take away the sins of the world.*"

Knapp, Ira O. (CSD, Bible Lesson Committee, and Director), "**The Adversary**," Christian Science Journal, Vol. 13 (February 1896), p. 447.

--WHO or what is the adversary of all mankind?

- In Scripture Satan is called the adversary.

---Webster defines Satan as the grand adversary of man; the devil or prince of darkness; the chief of the fallen angels.

--This adversary is unwittingly mentioned in Matt. 12: 24, as "*Beelzebub the prince of devils*," which is supposed to be capable of casting out devils (one error over another error).

- And in their ignorance of the power of Truth to expose and destroy evil as a lie, the Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out devils by this method which seemed to be in their false knowledge as the only conception of his mighty works.

---But Jesus agreed with this adversary quickly, as he had taught others to do: that is, he saw and acknowledged their false and unscientific material conception, and rebuked them by saying, "*If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand.*"

Tabor, Margaret Wellford, "**Who is today's Pharisee?**," Christian Science Journal, Vol.107 (December 1989), p. 6.

--Where a "Pharisee"—an unredeemed mortal—appears to mortal mind, in reality the Godlike man is.

- We must cast out the belief that we or another is unredeemed, mortal, egotistic, and see instead God's idea, spiritual man.

---We must awake from the mistaken view of man as a struggling, material composite of good and evil.

--We never feel the presence of God, never appreciate the example of our Master and the teachings of Christian Science, more than during those periods when the beam is removed from our eye, allowing clearer spiritual vision.

--As we awake spiritually from a false sense of man as separate from God, we will find no Pharisee present.

- Instead man in all his true glory will be seen—perfect, at one with God and all creation, the infinitely unfolding expression of omnipresent Mind.

“**Logic and Religion**,” Christian Science Journal, Vol.11 (July 1893), p. 153.

--Christ said, in that discourse which is the most fundamental of all his utterances, the spirit of which the world — Jews, infidels and all adore, "*Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father.*"

- And yet the laws made to compel Christian Scientists to hire doctors and which are demanded by a persecuting, jealous, sectarian spirit, a spirit that suspects devils are cast out by Beelzebub, their prince, sounds rather strange when contrasted with the text.

---Sparrows can't fall without the will of God, but infants may and doubtless do perish without your family doctor.

- Moreover, the usual accuracy of mankind is uttered by the babbling, clamorous press which infers that each death under the Christian Science practice is caused by negligence, while the eyes are closed to the enormous list of hourly perishing folk under the tender mercies of the regular faculty.

---Here are logic and religion combined. — *St. Joe Herald*.

Price, Mrs. Naomi (CSB and Associate Editor), “**The Touch of God’s Finger**,” EDITORIAL, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.74 (22 July 1972), p. 1301.

--When Christ Jesus healed a man who was dumb, there were people who wondered how he did it.

- They even accused him of casting out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils.

---But Jesus assured them that his healing works were not done through mortal means but through divine power—a power that would bring them much more than mere physical relief.

- He said, “*If I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.*”

--God’s touch had long been recognized as an inspiring as well as a healing power—a touch that not only would heal but would also spiritualize human thought and lead to the Promised Land.

--God’s healing touch is gentle as the dawning sun, and just as imperative in its demand to awaken and see the universe in its true light of Love.

SECTION V: Jesus and Peter walk on water (Matt 14: 22-32)

PARALLEL GOSPELS: Mark 6: 34, 45-52; Luke 9: 11; John 6: 1-4, 16-21

TIME LINE: April, 29 AD, on the Sea of Galilee. The Year of Opposition and Development (Jesus’ 3rd year of Ministry)

After a while, as Jesus was praying for his beloved disciples, he looked over the moonlit lake and saw that a sudden windstorm, common in that region, was springing up. Waves soon mounted high; and, in spite of desperate rowing, the weary disciples could make no progress.

This event "reveals Jesus more clearly as a divinely sent and empowered emissary who is intimate with God in prayer, can rule the sea and winds, and evokes recognition as the Son of God from his disciples ([Matt 14]v.33)." (Eerdmans Bible Commentary)

"This wording [*immediately the ship was at the land* (John 6:21)] indicates that another miracle occurred besides walking on the water, i.e., the boat miraculously and instantly arrived at its precise destination as soon as Jesus stepped into the boat." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

“Matthew’s version of this story includes the distinctive element of Peter’s walk with Jesus on the sea.” (Theological Bible Commentary) “Jesus accuses Peter of ‘little faith’ ([Matt 14:]31), a frequent failing of the disciples in Matthew (6:30; 8:26; 16:8; 17:20), which persists even to the end of the Gospel (28:17).” (Eerdmans Commentary)

Peter

[Pee'tuhr] (Gr. *Petros*, a "rock")

(Abbreviated)

Simon Peter was the most prominent of Jesus’ twelve apostles. The Bible gives a more complete picture of Peter than any other disciple, except Paul. He is often considered to be a big, blundering fisherman and is attractive for his constant mistakes and forgiveness, his boisterous and impetuous enthusiasm, and for his good intentions and self-confidence that so soon seemed to disappear. He became one of Jesus’ closest friends and was the first to recognize Jesus as the Messiah....

“The prominent role of Peter is reflected where Peter is singled out and the other disciples are mentioned as a group associated with him: ‘Simon and those who were with him’ sought out Jesus when he left Capernaum for prayer (Mark 1:36)...Peter is prominent in the Gospel of John, but he does not hold the unrivaled position among the disciples which he does in the Synoptic gospels.” (Interpreter's Dictionary) “Peter’s ardor, earnestness, courage, vigor, and impetuosity of disposition marked him from the first as the leader of the disciples of Jesus” (Westminster Dictionary). Peter is the first named in every list of the twelve Apostles, and was apparently the strongest individual in the group. “He was the natural spokesman of the apostolic band” (Ibid). “Typical of Peter’s dominant personality, was his readiness to walk to Jesus on the water (Matt 14:28).” (Who Was Who in the Bible) “He often understood Jesus’ teachings more quickly than the rest, and he had insights that clearly demonstrated an innate grasp of the nature of his master (Matt 16:16).” (All the People in the Bible)....

Streblor, Norma, “[Quieting the Wind](#),” Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.29 (11 June 1927), p. 805.

--In the fourteenth chapter of Matthew we read, “*And when he [Jesus] had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray.*”

- The Master had just fed the multitudes with the loaves and fishes; and may we not believe that after he had made this demonstration he went into the mountain to refresh his thought in order that he might still further demonstrate the truth of being?

---For when we read a little further on, we find that he walked on the sea!

--The disciples were in a ship on a storm-tossed sea.

- Do not we also sometimes find ourselves on a troubled sea, with the wind contrary, and error shrieking, screaming, for recognition?

---But even in the midst of our troubles we can hear Christ, Truth, saying, “*Be not afraid.*”

Wagner, Mary Boyd, “**Even as Peter**,” POEM, Christian Science Journal, Vol.78 (February 1960), p. 70.

The night how dark! Helpless little ship
To battle winds that pounded like a flail.
Against the tide, the toiling oars, how frail
As sense of storm intensified its grip!
Impotent human courage to prevail,
To staunch their fear, till the disciples saw
And knew the truth, then watched with joyous awe
As Jesus walked the water, stilled the gale.

And now, as then, the raging winds blow raw;
Even as Peter, I would come to thee:
Stretch out thy hand, dear Christ, and steady me
To stand before the fiats of false law.
Hold firm my faith! O Love, gentle the sea
As I walk over waves of adversity.

SECTION VI: Paul warns the builders of the church in Corinth that they will be tested by fire (I Cor 3: 9-14 *ye*)

TIME LINE AND AUTHOR: Written by Paul to the Corinthians in the first half of 55 AD from Ephesus during his third missionary journey.

“a wise masterbuilder”

“In chap. 3 Paul likens himself and Apollos, his apostolic colleague, to gardeners who plant and cultivate....Switching to architectural metaphors in 3:10, Paul is the ‘master builder’ in the Corinthian congregation.” (Theological Bible Commentary)

The *ye* in v.9 refers to "Apollos, Peter, and all ministers [who] are equal workers in the field, but the spiritual life from that field is entirely by God's grace and power." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

“Apollos and others [*another buildeth*, v.10] carried on the work begun by St. Paul.” (Dummelow Commentary)

Loveland, Mary Hoyt, “**The Master Builder**,” Christian Science Journal, Vol.36 (January 1919), p. 484.

--Ever since error sought to explain the theology of Jesus, the Bible itself has been to most people a closed book.

• In "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" our beloved Leader has uncovered this purpose of error to make void the purpose of good; she has revealed, too, its impotence— its nothingness, because error seen as error is nothing; thus she has made it possible for each one to see in his own life and in the lives of others the divine plan, and to demonstrate it.

---On page 561 of our textbook Mrs. Eddy says: "*The understanding of Truth and Love, the Principle which works out the ends of eternal good and destroys both faith in evil and the practice of evil, leads to the discernment of the divine idea.*"

- It is indeed a momentous experience in the life of any individual when he first discerns, however faintly, a power at work in his consciousness, sees a hand not his own shaping his career, and realizes to some extent that existence is not the result of mere chance.

Bergenheim, Richard (CSB, Editor-in-Chief, Director, Contributing Editor, and President), “**To build a better world, you need a solid foundation,**” TO BUILD A BETTER WORLD, Christian Science Journal, Vol.121 (June 2003), p. 6.

--It doesn't make a lot of sense to invest a lot in something if the foundations aren't sure.

- One may be striving to make a better world, or to rebuild a house or a life, but in either case, the foundational work is essential.

--The Bible emphasizes the fact that God's work is done.

- And when it talks about God's work, it stresses this feature: “*His work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.*” [Deut 32:4]...people need to depart from a flawed, discordant view of the world, and to seek out the perfection, harmony, and unity of all that God has made.

--Experience shows that taking “the world is a mess” as a motivation for improving the world, is like restoring the farmhouse without replacing the rotten foundation. A lot of improvements can be made, but the flawed foundation will prove to be a fatal weakness.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

The Bibliography is provided only in the notes of the first Sunday of the month.

*The weekly Bible Lessons are made up of selections from the King James Version of the Bible and the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science.