

FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

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ISSUE 44

SUBJECT: MORTALS AND IMMORTALS

5/17/15

For, Behold, He Prayeth

2. Acts 9

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

What a time these three days must have been for Saul. In a very short time, he had his false beliefs about Jesus, his role and identity as Christian hunter, and his eyesight taken from him. And after all that, he was praying. What proof that Saul was a worthy "chosen vessel" since he didn't spend those three days weeping, complaining, or depressed. He prayed!

The entire story of Saul becoming Paul is uplifting to me, as it shows that God gives up on no one. This little portion of it, though, with Saul in prayer, shows he didn't give up either. There have been a few times in my life I wanted to give up, after feeling like I lost everything, yet finally I was shown here at this church that God was and is always with me.

These weekly lessons always impart so much, but one important point I've been learning is that when adversity comes, I can't cope by escaping into movies or books anymore—I need to pray to God

and ask Him to show me the path. Any other move is just delaying that. I am so grateful to be a member of this church, learning how to actually live! Thank you. *****

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Paul's story IS truly awe-inspiring. What an example that anyone's life can be turned around, and quickly!

My life was turned around, but in my case not so quickly, probably because I thought I was doing OK! But things didn't seem entirely right and I couldn't figure it out on my own (even with C.S.!). It took coming to Plainfield and starting the "renewing of my mind" through unadulterated C.S., learning obedience, being set straight, having the veil lifted, giving instead of just taking, so that I could let God work in my life! And what a change it has been, a completely new life, all for the better, in ways I could never have imagined. *****

Saul had a lot going for him. Although he was a terror to the early Christians, he had an honest conviction that he was doing the will of God. And he was civic minded. He honestly thought he was helping mankind by his actions. These three qualities, -- honesty, humility, and un-selfed love for mankind, were of great use to God. And, yes, it is quite remarkable that it took only three days to break him. Most of us require more than three days to be broken, but here Paul shows that it can be done. And what a record he left that is an inspiration to us all!

In *Science and Health*: "The death of a false material sense and of sin, not the death of organic matter, is what reveals man and Life, harmonious, real, and eternal." Saul was willing to let his false material sense and sin die, and die quickly. That is the example I find to be most inspiring. *****

False Individuality

“Through repentance, spiritual baptism, and regeneration, mortals put off their material beliefs and false individuality.” Humanly speaking, we have all been labeled with certain lousy personality traits. Some being weak and timid, others strong willed and arrogant etc. – whatever mortal mind says about you, it is never good! Saul was a brilliant scholar and religious zealot who had no problem killing off Christians until he was transformed by the grace of God. The grace of God does wondrous things! We see it happening in our church.... the prideful becoming humble; the slow to speak becoming eloquent; the sick becoming well.... There is nothing that cannot be achieved for the good of all mankind as we put off our “material beliefs and false individuality.” These words of Mrs. Eddy have always stirred me, “As Mary Baker Eddy I am the weakest of mortals, but as the Discover and Founder of Christian Science, I am the bone and sinew of the world.”!*****

What a comfort to come to the Forum and find such uplifting writings. My little pity party of resentment has faded... a weak mortal, but an eager student willing to learn the Truths offered and taught here at Plainfield. *****

When something starts to handle me, as soon as I recognize it, I assert that God is the only Mind, and anything else that seems pertinent from what I have learned here. I also give myself a little punishment, because I can't be going around without my armor on.

For example: If I am driving and become upset, I slow down or pull over to let everyone go. When I first started, I was pulling over every day. Sometimes twice! Now, it is once a month, maybe. As time goes on, I hold myself more accountable by pulling over for longer. No part of how I used to drive was a blessing for anyone! *****

There is never a hopeless situation. It doesn't matter how long we have done wrong or been disobedient, when we open our hearts to God and repent. By the grace of God, we are transformed. Mortal mind tells us we have made too many

mistakes, we have done terrible thing etc., but like Saul we are given another chance to reform and be a blessing and serve God. *****

Watching Point 37

This week's Daily Watch, from 500 Watching Points by Gilbert Carpenter: 37 —WATCH lest, in your efforts to see God's perfect man, the contrast between the spiritual ideal and poor sinful mortals cause you to be "overwhelmed by a sense of the odiousness of sin and the unveiling of sin in your own thoughts" (Science and Health, p. 366:22), so that you believe mortal man to be more of a sinner than you ever did before, be tempted to drop your good work through sheer discouragement, and end by dubbing man hopeless, because of the sin that claims to be using him. Sin must be uncovered in preparation for its destruction. Our Leader tells us that the aggravation of error foretells its doom. Thus, may we not believe that just when the mortal vestments which hide the real man look the darkest and blackest to us, they are most ready to part and release the Christ idea to our gaze?

Thank you for this, as it seems so perfectly suited to this lesson. If God could look past the "darkest and blackest" of Saul—and all of us—certainly we can do that for ourselves, each other, and all mankind.

A New Spirit

"A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you..."

A Bible commentary offers this: "A new disposition of mind, excellent in itself, and vastly different from what it was before; a frame of soul changed from sinful to holy, from carnal to spiritual; a heart in which the law of God is written; a sanctified spirit, in which the almighty grace of God is victorious, and turns it from the world to God, and from all sin to all holiness; a state of mind which is the gift of God, and not wrought in any man by his own power."

This is a beautiful description of the change that is beginning to take place in me since finding

Plainfield. Although I have been a Christian Scientist for many years, I never understood what it really meant to live in obedience to God and how absolutely crucial this is to our spiritual growth. This has come about through a deeper study of the Bible. Thank you for your wonderful Bible Lessons and Saturday Bible studies. What a difference they are making in my life. *****

SUBJECT – SOUL AND BODY 5/24/15

Be Silent O All Flesh Before The Lord

Golden Text: Zechariah 2:13

“Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.”

“O all flesh” really struck me today. This includes those thoughts about ourselves that keep nagging that we can’t do this or that, can’t understand or learn, etc. Is God saying this? NO!! Then smash these lousy lies and dig in and DECLARE THE TRUTH, as this week’s watching point #87 says to do. Don’t wait another moment! “Be silent, O all flesh.” *****

The Pagan Idolater

“We bow down to matter, and entertain finite thoughts of God like a pagan idolater. Mortals are inclined to fear and to obey what they consider a material body more than they do a spiritual God.” It is a sobering thought to think of myself as pagan idolater, or of our society in general as pagan – but when most of the day is spent in thinking about the human body – what to eat, how to exercise, how to make beautiful, watching out for every little pain or abnormality etc. at the grave expense of neglecting the things of God, neglecting spiritual development, what else can you call that - but pagan? And the more this obsession with body takes hold, the more fear kicks in – all of the focus being on matter instead of on God! It is really a vicious cycle and I thank God for Mrs. Eddy and for Christian Science, which exposes this lie and this stranglehold and teaches us how to worship, to love and to obey the one God and thus find

freedom! *****

This is very important to think about and face..... all this body watching and fear must be replaced with prayer, gratitude, and radiating what we have been given through the Christ. There can be no greater freedom than freedom from fear. *****

The Vail

Why did Moses put a vail on his face? He had just come down from the mountain with the Ten Commandments and his face shown brightly. Was the vail for his benefit? Was he being modest? No. He was dealing with the fear of those around him who couldn't handle the brightness of the spiritual message he was carrying. He had just received a radical message from God that shook the Hebrews from a very bad place (mentally). Their materialism and human thinking was an impediment to their accepting this message, and it caused them to fear what they saw in Moses.

In the New Testament, Paul states that the vail was still over the reading of the Old Testament in his day, but that the vail was "done away in Christ." That same materialism and human thinking was causing the Hebrews of his time to fail to see the great spiritual message brought by Moses, and the Christ came through Jesus to lift that vail, and to bring about a higher spiritual understanding of God and man.

For centuries after, there was a vail over the Bible. The so-called Christian church translated it poorly and even insisted that it be read only in Latin, which most people could not understand. It remained a mystery full of fear and superstition for most of the world's population until Mary Baker Eddy wrote Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures and unlocked the higher meaning of the Bible to mankind.

Today, we sometimes talk about the vail that is over the Christian Science textbook. For me, this story of Moses is helpful in understanding what that vail is. This textbook is a radical explanation of the Truth's in the New Testament, of Jesus' life and teachings. And, as in Moses' time, the materialism of the world

today and popularity of human thinking puts a veil over the book. It's not what is in the book that creates the veil, but, rather, the fear of those who cannot handle the brightness of the great spiritual message the book contains. The book does not need to be changed or re-written into "modern" language. It needs only to be studied and judged on its merits as represented by the lives of those who truly live a Christianly scientific life.

Lifting The Veil

The letter to the Corinthians was a wake up call for me. Am I under a veil not really obeying and listening to the Gospel of Christ demonstrating the new law of Love? This is a good reminder to check my thinking and actions. And I love how Paul said, "And such trust have we through Christ to Godward." *****

Look Upon Zion

Isaiah 33: 20 Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.

This verse brought to mind a passage in Science and Health about "the calm, strong currents of pure spirituality (pg. 99:23). To me, this verse said that no one's connection to God can ever be removed or broken. I can trust God to care for me and all. This verse gives such a wonderful sense of God's Love and protection for His children. And in return, I owe Him my reverence, trust, and obedience. ****

Form You Anew

I love in the lesson where Mrs. Eddy states, "Correct material belief by spiritual understanding, and Spirit will form you anew." What false beliefs do you have in your life that need correcting – a pain in your body, lack of funds, an unhealthy relationship? As we gain the correct understanding of God and of His creation and faithfully obey His

laws and principles – all things become possible to Him. He will form you anew! *****

"Correct material belief by spiritual understanding, and Spirit will form you anew."

Yes, this beautiful sentence stood out to me too. It is one of the many, many treasures embedded in Science & Health! Put this way, it certainly seems easier to trust myself to Spirit, to strive for spiritual understanding, than to try and "fix things" through all the many different and often confusing material methods and theories out there that constantly beg for attention. (Everything always works best in any event, when we've done our spiritual homework first!).

I was essentially a Christian Scientist in hiding. I certainly have been "formed anew" since coming to Plainfield! *****

An Image, An Idea, NOT Physique

Science and Health p 475 ...Man is spiritual and perfect; and because he is spiritual and perfect, he must be so understood in Christian Science. Man is idea, the image, of Love; he is not physique.

Our textbook, as Mrs. Eddy says, has everything necessary to reveal to us our true nature. I remember struggling to understand how I am a spiritual idea. Praying and asking God for understanding helped me to gradually gain the clarity that it is a concept which is very logical and the humble acceptance of it, because God is Spirit, brings it into the heart.

Animal magnetism would try to make this important concept confusing, as impossible to understand! We cannot accept its lies. Man as a spiritual image means a whole lot; it is what makes us free and evil cannot stop us from knowing this Truth if we do not let it!

Just think, an image of Love; that excludes all the woes material laws would attach to us. Sickness, fear, worry, pain, lack; none of these belong to an image of LOVE!! The question is do I accept it?