

FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

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SUBJECT: Sacrament – January 8th, 2017

Unspotted

James 1

27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

It is interesting how succinctly this verse shows me that true purity isn't locking myself away from the world, but to do my God-directed work for mankind without being tainted by the material world. Certainly Christ Jesus and Mary Baker Eddy were amazing examples of working for the world without becoming worldly. They never fought fire with fire — they fought evil and error with Truth and Love.

Taken from the 1828 Webster's Dictionary:
Religion

2. religion as distinct from theology, is godliness or real piety in practice, consisting in the performance of all known duties to God and our fellow men, in obedience to divine command, or from love to God and his law.

"Pure religion" is "godliness or real piety in practice." Only the Christ's Christianity of authentic Christian Science has ever felt to me like godliness in practice. Everything else just felt like ritual and busy work. I am so grateful for Christian Science!

Also from the 1828 Webster's:

Unspotted

- 1. Not stained; free from spot.**
- 2. Free from moral stain; untainted with guilt; unblemished; immaculate; as unspotted reputation.**

I am grateful to learn that it is God who saves. It was a hard lesson that I couldn't save everyone I knew, and a great example of God's mercy that

allowed me to find that part of unspotted is to be "untainted with guilt" about that fact.

All I can do is whatever God is asking me to do, to the best of my ability. For this, I am so grateful to Christian Science, this church, and my practitioner, because on my own I had no idea how to do this, or even that I needed to learn to do it. Thank you! ***

Bridleth Not His Tongue

"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." (James) We are counseled here to "keep our conversation in heaven." It is very easy to lay a stone on another's heart by speaking critically, speaking doom and gloom and not watching one's tongue. Our words should, for the most part, be encouraging and loving — even when an error needs to be rebuked, love should always be the basis of that rebuke! Our words also are indicators of our thoughts. What are you thinking? Do you speak words of truth to yourself, or are you your own worst enemy?! Remember always — "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer." (Psalm 19) *****

Thank you for this great reminder to "keep our conversation in heaven." I've come a long way from a time when I had a pretty unbridled tongue, and I'm grateful for this progress.

To "bridle": 1. To restrain, guide or govern; to check, curb or control; as, to bridle the passions.

I know I can be my own worst enemy if I don't keep my thoughts in check before they become words. Mrs. Eddy tells us to "Stand porter at the door of thought". It's so worth the effort to watch in this way! *****

Slow To Speak, Slow To Wrath

James 1:19 "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."

Aside from this caution, allowing the discipline to listen to God first, it also means I am recognizing more readily how unreal erroneous claims are!

I have found that often a quick negative reaction to something means I do not see the complete nothingness of the lie yet. *****

This statement made me realize that I can't react to situations. I need to hear what God is telling me. Don't just blurt out words and don't get angry. I must stay poised and express God, Love, at all times, whether it be in a strong rebuke or in a gentle word. Taking these steps I will be "obedient to the Mind that makes them." *Science and Health*.

Putting New Wine Into Old Bottles

"No man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles." When I first came to this church and received help from the practitioner here, I was full of "old wine" – a lot of erroneous beliefs even about or maybe especially about Christian Science. It took me awhile to realize this and not to argue for the old ways. Then, to have the humility to see and correct the error that was holding me in bondage. I had to admit I didn't know it all and to humbly listen and obey. Until this was thoroughly done – all the "new wine," all the fresh inspiration given to me by this practitioner had no room to enter my thought. It was a very good lesson and one I have never forgotten. Cleansing thought of the old ways is a continual process! *****

Walk Humbly With Thy God

Below is part of a sermon by Spurgeon on walking humbly with God. What stood out most to me was the underlying importance of watching thought. Spurgeon includes important qualities in living this out in our daily life. I see this is really feeling

God's presence.

"Progress- Go forward, advance, not with a proud desire to excel your fellow-Christians, not even with the latent expectation of being more respected because you have more grace; but still walk, go on, advance, grow. Be enriched with all the precious things of God; be filled with all the fullness of God; walk on, walk ever. Lie not down in despair; roll not in the dust with desperation because thou thinkest high things impossible to thee; walk, but walk humbly."

Spurgeon adds other qualities such as, Constancy - it doesn't say, "Bow humbly before God now and then;" also the importance of confidence, pure motives, thinking rightly of thyself, gratitude! Certainly, the opposite of fear, pride, hate and other negative thinking.

"dare to have Him as your daily Friend."

"It ought to show itself in every act of life...think only of your Lord's glory."

"Walk humbly with thy God." *****

It Is Love Which Heals

Science and Health, p. 350. When we lose faith in God's power to heal, we distrust the divine Principle, which demonstrates Christian Science, and then we cannot heal the sick. Neither can we heal through the help of Spirit, if we plant ourselves on a material basis.

What a comeback it is to the false suggestions that come to say we cannot heal, or I cannot demonstrate. It is Love the Divine Principle of Christian Science that does the work. In a 1954 letter from Kimball to some of his students he writes that: "Our persistent declaration of Truth acts as a ray of sunshine dispersing the darkness of error. When we have denied this error and have declared God's power and presence, knowing the universal reality of that power and presence, your responsibility is over. LOVE DOES THE WORK."

Our declarations must be backed by our faith and trust in the might of Spirit. *****

"...Religion will then be of the heart and not of the head. Mankind will no longer be tyrannical and

proscriptive from lack of love, — straining out gnats and swallowing camels.” Wow!

I remember Mrs. Evans stressing that it was more important to FEEL the love in our hearts, than to just know everything in our heads. I now often ask God to teach me to love more! Because I want to always feel love in my heart for my fellow man—and there is always room to love more.

SUBJECT – Life – January 15th, 2017

Life Reflected In Existence

In *Science and Health*, it states “God fashions all things after His own likeness. Life is reflected in existence, Truth in truthfulness, God in goodness, which impart their own peace and permanence.” Everyone will admit that they exist, but how many will acknowledge that this existence is tangible evidence of the vital force that brought all creation into existence. What an awesome thing it is to realize that God Himself brought you about, animates you, and propels your activities. This definitely gives a glimpse into the model to hold in thought while going about your day. *****

And what a wonderful thing this is—that God fashioned us after His own likeness. It is so humbling, and realizing this is heaven on earth. ***

And because of this Truth we can “...looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”! ***

No Separation

“Let unselfishness, goodness, mercy, justice, health, holiness, love – the kingdom of heaven – reign within us, and sin, disease, and death will diminish until they finally disappear.”

Here is the perfect recipe for living a healthy and satisfying life. Jesus said that the kingdom of God is within us. There is no separation between God and us. We don’t have to try to be something we are not. We just have to let the natural God-like

qualities that are already our being, govern us. Let unselfishness instead of selfishness govern me. Let goodness instead of envy govern me. Let mercy instead of indifference govern me. Let divine justice instead of revenge govern me. Let health instead of disease govern me. Let holiness instead of lust govern me. Let love, instead of hate, govern me.

These are all natural qualities, because they are God within us. We only have to let them rule our thoughts and behavior. The world is telling us that it is OK to be selfish, or lustful, or jealous, to seek revenge. But these are sins (mistakes), and, if indulged, they breed disease and death (also mistakes). It is very liberating to know that we don’t have to go there; and that it is perfectly natural (and healthy) to let God govern our lives. *****

Thank you for this post! Adhering to these practical instructions can assure “self-government” at its best; the fruits of which would be peace, health, love, all that belong to God and we have by reflection. *****

The Labour Of the Righteous Tendeth to Life

GOLDEN TEXT: PROVERBS 10: 16

“The labour of the righteous tendeth to life.”

RESPONSIVE READING: James 1

22. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

We just had this verse from James in last week’s lesson, but it wasn’t until being paired with the Golden Text this week that it really struck me. Our God-directed labors are tending to Life, so that means that godless labors are tending and trending toward death. Certainly, I have already proved that myself, as everything I did before coming to Plainfield seemed to be pointed toward increasing pain and a certain and pointless death.

Now, with the understanding and work that Christian Science is giving me, I can feel this constant trending upward. Everything is hopeful, and joyous, or with that promise of joy just on the other side of a challenge. Because of that, all

challenges are no longer seen as problems, but opportunities to learn more and demonstrate my way through, with what I am learning here and practitioner support.

Doing this work, I no longer have to tell myself stories of an eventual future where things will be better. I don't need fairy tales to get me through, because the daily mission that God is blessing me with is better than those stories ever were. I am so grateful for this practical Science, and how loving our Father is. *****

There is something about having a purpose and working for it sincerely that gives a vital energy to thought and action. God put each of us here for a purpose. To find our purpose and work for it gives quite a sense of satisfaction, the sense of life that comes from God. *****

Turn Our Gaze

“...we must first turn our gaze in the right direction, and then walk that way. We must form perfect models in thought and look at them continually, or we shall never carve them out in grand and noble lives.”

When I read this in our lesson, I was immediately reminded of our discussion during last Sunday's Roundtable about the Bible statement from Isaiah 45:22, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” and the wonderful story of how this transformed the life of Charles Spurgeon before he became a preacher. The most wonderful part is God wants us to look. He draws us with love.

The simple thought to look to God is very powerful. I must look where I am going and what I look at is most likely what I am thinking about. It can be hard to take your eyes off something that captivates or captures your attention, so the importance to look to God. The more I look, the more natural it will be. The more I look, the more I will get to know what I am looking at. I found that looking is active. As we are told here, either you are moving forward or backward, there is no drifting. *****

I wanted to know how I might be saved The

minister did not come that morning; he was snowed up, I suppose. At last, a very thin-looking man, a shoemaker, or tailor, or something of that sort, went up into the pulpit to preach. He was obliged to stick to his text, for the simple reason that he had little else to say. The text was,—”LOOK UNTO ME, AND BE YE SAVED, ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.”

He did not even pronounce the words rightly, but that did not matter. There was, I thought, a glimpse of hope for me in that text.” *****

From 1828 Webster's Dictionary, LOOK: to watch, to expect, to seek, be directed, to see, to apply understanding, to excite attention.

James 1:25. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

Science and Health, p. 248 Do you not hear from all mankind of the imperfect model? The world is holding it before your gaze continually. The result is that you are liable to follow those lower patterns, limit your life-work, and adopt into your experience the angular outline and deformity of matter models.

These citations go with the constant reminders we get here to check where we are looking or ask Consciousness where art thou? A great deal in the world today can turn us looking the wrong way and thinking wrongly. I love as part of daily protection what Bicknell Young writes about day: This is God's day. The present moment and every moment of this day is one of **CONSCIOUS CONTACT** with infinite good. 1937 College, p.20 (Emphasis added). We are all benefited if we each stay the course of “looking rightly!” *****

Life is Love

Everyone wonders at some point, “What is the meaning of life?” It's all here.

The last citation in *Science and Health* says: “We all must learn that Life is God.” I wrote down, “Life is God ... God is Love ... Life is Love.” That kind of sums it up for me. As we've been taught here at Plainfield, “If we're not loving, we're not really living.”