

SUBJECT: PROBATION AFTER DEATH - 10/27/13

Christian Science commands!!

If we are dabbling in resentment, sensuality, revenge, dishonesty - watch out!!! There follows an army of conspirators! CS COMMANDS! This is urgent, no? Why? Because it follows as night follows day. This is a Science. Resentment and dishonesty today, followed by asking for forgiveness, only to be followed with more resentment and dishonesty, etc. This brings awful consequences.

The good news is that we are empowered by God to master these propensities. We would never be required to do what we are not able to!! God loves us and intends that we be free to express Him. Only the adamant of error would hold us back - self-will, self-love, self-justification, self-righteousness. The solvent of Love is ours for the adamant. The ball is in our court. *****

As we rule them – sin, sensuality, dishonesty, hatred, revenge, resentment, hypocrisy, etc. -- out of ourselves, we include all men in that prayer. These evil propensities are not true for anyone. What is true for me is true for all. No one is subject to a lie. I can't fight against those encroaching errors in my thought and then accept hatred as real 'over there in that person or country. *****

Oh no! More talk about sin!

Last week Doctrine of Atonement - this week Probation after Death! Next week Everlasting Punishment, and then Adam and Fallen Man - Ouch! What was Mrs.

Eddy thinking? Perhaps it would have been better, if indeed we must talk about these things, to spread them out a little. Divinely inspired you say? Well then, what was God thinking?? I thought God is Love? Hmmm*****

"For every man shall bear his own burden." Gal. 6:5. Well, if we're all bearing our own burdens (and as we learned last week, Christ didn't relieve us of a single responsibility) then I guess we need to keep examining ourselves and talking about "sin" until it's completely handled. Otherwise it becomes a tremendous burden. I feel like I've been carrying around 40 years of that burden and it's only at this church that I'm slowly grasping the concepts of self-immolation and learning the "practical repentance" that chips away at and destroys that sin. *****

And what a freedom to be free of the perennial guilt hidden under the facade of "I am a perfect child of God" when referring to the "mortal self!"

Yes - Mrs. Eddy saw the danger from the beginning, as did Paul: "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." Gal. 5:13. These tough lesson subjects, one after another, are intended to get our attention so that we do not drift off into the quicksand of impractical metaphysics, into selfish, self-centered harmony. *****

That great gulf

"Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." Luke 16:26 Seems pretty hopeless if you're on the wrong side of that gulf! But God does not condemn. So, what is this gulf?

In Luke, "No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Luke 16:13. The great gulf must be the gulf between materiality and spirituality; between love and hate; between selflessness and selfishness. One or the other rules your heart. There is no grey zone here. No connection between the two opposite states of thought. Hence the need for constant self-examination. I am either in a selfless state of divine love, or I am way over on the other side of that great gulf in the hell of selfish materialism and the hatred that goes with it. Great lesson! *****

It has been said that this is not a parable, since Jesus never used actual names in parables. Luke 16:19-31 Rather he was recounting what he saw "on the other side" - past the veil of matter. The rich man was in a bad way - looks like he was being punished for being such a selfish man, and that it was eternal damnation. But Mrs. Eddy explains: "... the belief in sin is punished so long as the belief lasts." (*Science and Health* 497:11-12) We may be sure that the rich man was crying out for help, but without a modicum of repentance. When we are struggling with a hellish situation, we would do well to remember this. Feeling sorry for ourselves does not constitute repentance!! *****

What a very important point. The rich man seemed to get that it was his actions that put him there which is why he wanted to send warning to his brothers but he did not repent or ask forgiveness. Just listened to the excellent Hezekiah "Bible Study" and the discussion of how he repented and wept sore. The rich man didn't like being in pain but there was no change of heart and no break in his pride whatsoever. Loving how these lessons weave together to reinforce teachings. Beautiful. *****

I find this story the most disturbing, because the rich man does understand the concept of repentance, is thoughtful in asking that Abraham save his brothers, rather than wishing that they share his hell, but Abraham says the great gulf is "fixed" between him and the good. He seems to have no hope for repentance himself, as if he is lost for eternity. It is perhaps the most arresting of all the examples Jesus gave of the need to progress and live righteously. Thank goodness for Mrs. Eddy's wonderful help. But the challenge is great.

EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT - 11/03/13

Such an uplifting lesson!

This morning I was really inspired by the lesson that points out so many ways to watch out, to repent, to make amends. We really are given the freedom to make choices and we must make the right ones. We can either choose the heavenly path or temptation that turns into a living hell.

When David admitted, "I have sinned against the Lord." Nathan replied, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin." We are not damned forever, we can repent and be free! I have lived through this nightmare myself--even, shamefully, after being raised in CS. Finding the Plainfield Church and being introduced to true Christian Science, my life has turned around 180 degrees.

The more I thought about it, there is every secret of happiness in this week's lesson--and the lesson is called "Everlasting Punishment"! :)*****

Thou art the man!

After David had committed adultery with Bathsheba, the prophet Nathan spoke to him about a wicked and selfish rich man. David became quite indignant towards this man, not at all realizing Nathan was actually referring to him and to his own wicked deeds. Then Nathan revealed to David, much to David's horrified shock, -

“Thou art the man.”!! So often it is much easier to see sin in others and let that very sin go unchecked within ourselves. Frequent self-examination is certainly a major theme in Mrs. Eddy's writings and it is why we often speak of it during our Roundtable discussions. This reminds me also of what Mrs. Eddy said, speaking to her followers from the balcony at Pleasant View, “My dear students: guard your tongues. When you see sin in others, know that you have it in yourselves, and become repentant...” *****

How often has this story been in a Lesson-Sermon? Probably never! Why? A touchy subject, temptation. And yet how often has a Reader or a practitioner or prominent Christian Scientist been caught up in adultery. Mrs. Evans made no bones about this subject, especially warned wives to be VERY watchful. And here in our textbook: "Infidelity to the marriage covenant is the social scourge of all races, 'the pestilence that walketh in darkness, . . . the destruction that wasteth at noonday.' The commandment, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' is no less imperative than the one, 'Thou shalt not kill.' Exodus 20:13,14

This is strong stuff!! I wonder why? In order to be susceptible to temptation, one must have shut down their spiritual sense, their thought must be Godless and self-centered. In this state, the moral compass is lost. Any depravity is possible, as David demonstrated. The damage done reaches beyond the marriage, but affects society. Why do we have youth going on killing sprees, or beating up/killing people just for the fun of it? Moral depravity. The pain infidelity causes is the same pain that killing causes. *****

Nathan and Uriah

The story of David and Bathsheba used to seem irrelevant to me because I have felt adultery was a non-negotiable wrong ever since I was old enough to know what it meant. Now I see that it contains two

intersecting storylines and the second is very relevant to me.

The juxtaposition of similar qualities possessed by Nathan and Uriah stands out clearly now. Both men didn't feel they were special or try to place their needs above others. Both were open to receive the message of their master. Both possessed the integrity to deliver the messages they were given without interference. Yet only one focused on what God was saying, and that accounts for the wildly different outcomes in their lives. We know God didn't just speak to Nathan in this story, because He speaks to all of us. But only Nathan listened. God was speaking to Uriah as he took that message to Joab. Uriah probably attributed his anxiety to going back to war.

Many times I have misplaced my loyalty and listened to the wrong master. I've "pushed through" anxiety and fear, quelled that voice within, and done the wrong thing. If I fail to listen to God—whether by following mine or someone else's will—the consequence is still mine to bear. I am still the sinner.

I now understand it is my duty to be sure I am acting on God's Will despite every temptation. The aggressive temptations may be easier to see coming—such as adultery, murder, etc.—but the subtle temptations—such as the desire to be a good man, a good husband, a good father, and so on—were never truly understood by me to be temptations until now.

We must not be merely good when we were created to be godly. *****

Another point the Bible Study brought to me: David took the message that Nathan delivered to heart, he repented, and changed his ways. He didn't humble himself to make Nathan happy. David knew he was answerable only to God.

This helps me to finally understand the dynamic we have with our practitioners. They are delivering the message. I must not forget it is God's message to me. If I

make every change they present to me, but do it to please them, where is my heart? God forbid I change only to avoid rebukes or gain praise!

I have been here for months, but only just now understand this: I seek the practitioner's guidance to advance in Christian Science so I can draw nigh to God; the practitioners get that guidance from God. *****

David's choice: the lowly battlefield or the palace rooftop? II Samuel 11:1, 2

Regarding Bathsheba and her husband, what in the world was David thinking? It was spring (the end of the muddy wintry season), the time when "kings go forth," exchanging the royal featherbed for an army cot, to lead their armies in battle. David had in fact just recently done this very thing, achieving a monumental victory, as recorded in the previous chapter (II Sam. 10). But now, precisely during the fiercest, most crucial battle in Israel's war with the Ammonites, with all his army involved in the siege of the capital, David is asleep in his palace, apparently basking in victories past, arising prayer-less more asleep than awake, completely disconnected from his men in battle. David's transgressions following his fateful stroll on the palace roof may have been sins of commission, spectacular ones at that, but all his trouble started with an inconspicuous sin of omission: resting on his laurels too much . . . way too much.

"WATCH lest you believe that your spiritual momentum can be maintained by aught but daily demonstration. The Bible records that the Children of Israel had to make a demonstration of manna each day. Only daily mental alertness and activity can assure consistent and constant progress in Christian Science. If students fancy that they can progress by resting on past demonstrations or attainments, no matter how long they may have named the name of Christian Science, or studied it, the pull of mortal thought or mesmerism stands

ready to drag thought down to its level, unless it is actively resisted. No doubt this is what Mrs. Eddy meant when she told us to handle animal magnetism.

To be sure, there may be dark hours when one may have to rest in what one has already demonstrated, hours of floating in a consciousness of good; but such times do not represent progress. They are resting points for the swimmer. It may not seem scientific to declare that the claim of matter seeks to encroach on thought each day; but it is the truth about the lie. A man sent out to plough wet snow on a freezing day should be instructed that he must keep ploughing, lest at any point the snow freeze up solid." *500 Watching Points #21 p 13*

Keep proper ward

"If mortals would keep proper ward over mortal mind, the brood of evils which infest it would be cleared out." *Science and Health p 234:17-18* It took me awhile to really figure this one out – that I didn't have to allow negative and fearful thoughts to flit around like rats running about in an attic, my attic, multiplying by the minute! God gave me the ability to identify wrong thinking, to even feel its approach and thus trap it and cast it out! What liberation this was and is! And how wise it is to destroy these false beliefs quickly and not wait until you feel over run by a deceitful enemy.

Yes - and the mark of a good worker: "We should become more familiar with good than with evil, and guard against false beliefs as watchfully as we bar our doors against the approach of thieves and murderers." *Science and Health p 234 9-12.*

Reading, studying, church activities are no replacement for this! - and yet so many try, in this way, to avoid watching their own thought, moment by moment. It is not so difficult - just have to do it and refuse to settle for anything else. *****

