

FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

WWW.PLAINFIELDCS.COM

ISSUE 114

SUBJECT: Probation After Death – April 22nd, 2018

Definition of Probation

I wasn't exactly sure what "probation" truly meant, so I looked it up in the 1828 dictionary:

Probation

PROBA'TION, noun [Latin probatio.] The act of proving; proof.

1. Trial; examination; any proceeding designed to ascertain truth; in universities, the examination of a student, as to his qualifications for a degree.
2. In a monastic sense, trial or the year of novitiate, which a person must pass in a convent, to prove his virtue and his ability to bear the severities of the rule.
3. Moral trial; the state of man in the present life, in which he has the opportunity of proving his character and being qualified for a happier state.

Probation will end with the present life.

4. In America, the trial of a clergyman's qualifications as a minister of the gospel, preparatory to his settlement. We say, a man is preaching on probation

5. In general, trial for proof, or satisfactory evidence, or the time of trial.

It seems that the Number 3 definition would apply to Mrs. Eddy's lesson title, "Probation After Death"—as she is challenging this notion that "Probation will end with the present life."

The Unrighteous Mammon

Many years ago, I read a passage from the "We Knew Mary Baker Eddy" (4th series) book, in which Mrs. Eddy explains Luke 16:10-12, found in our lesson this week. It was written by Martha Wilcox, who was a worker in her home. She writes, "Mrs. Eddy opened her Bible and read to me from Luke: 'He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's man who shall give you that which is your own?' Mrs. Eddy, no doubt, realized that at my stage of growth, I thought of creation – that is all things - as separated into two groups, one group spiritual and the other group material, and that somehow, I must get rid of the group I called material. But during that lesson, I caught my first glimpse of the fact that all right, useful things – which I had been calling "the unrighteous mammon" – were mental and represented spiritual ideas. She showed me that unless I were faithful and orderly with the objects of sense that made up my present mode of consciousness, there could never be revealed to me the truer riches of progressive higher revealments of substance and things." This statement spoke directly to me, because I, too, had separated creation into two groups. It left me almost thunderstruck. I was so very grateful for this clarification and really yearned to read more of this type of literature. It wasn't until many years later our Independent Church received the blessed gift of the Association Addresses of Martha Wilcox, and I devoured reading it like a hungry man searching for Truth. Thank God we now have these priceless books available to us. *****

A Tale of 2 Paradises

“In the midst of the street of [heaven] and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life...” (Rev. 22:2.)

All descriptions of the tree of life in the paradise of the Apocalypse of John exclude any mention, much less description, of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

But the allegory of paradise in the second chapter of Genesis doesn't merely accommodate the presence of the cursed tree; it features it, as though it were the most natural thing in the world for such a species to grow and flourish as a planting of God – the Source of good only. Almost immediately, the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the results of eating its fruit upstage the tree of life, virtually banishing it.

In the *Star Wars* saga, the creative Principle of the universe is called “the Force,” which is characterized as having both a “light” side and a “dark” side, existing forever together as co-equals in a battle of “good” and “evil”. This “Force” is, of course, a fantasy, a god divided against itself, and its self-cancelling existence makes no scientific sense whatsoever.

But thankfully, in the Apocalypse, the final revelation of God and His heaven, the tree of life stands out alone and of itself, without the slightest suggestion of a tree of death “in the midst” of paradise (Genesis 2:8-9), vying for attention, daring to claim its place alongside the Mind of God. *****

The Great Gulf

In the story of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man being in torment, Abraham explains to him that “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.” In Science, we learn that

people in Jesus' parables represent types of thought. The rich man was a materialist, selfish and self-righteous. Lazarus was a humble, poor beggar, seeking solace and finding none in materiality. Yet it was Lazarus, not the rich man, who was comforted. He found his comfort in spiritual reality, not the material illusion.

The great gulf between these two types of thought is the fact that they are opposites and have no connection with one another. Mrs. Evans used to counsel us that whenever someone, even a family member, would try to impose a false, limited belief on us, we should declare, “No connection!” You can't serve God and mammon! The two don't mix. Someone who is highly spiritually minded will feel repelled by a selfish, materialistic thought. A highly materialistic thought will have no clue about spiritual reality.

I find this very comforting, to know that the answer to all of life's issues lies not in material remedies (if you can call them that!), but in spiritualization of thought, and the recognition of our spiritual reality. And we can do that right here, right now. “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” *****

Man is Immortal and Lives by Divine Authority

“O Lord: Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand.” Psalm 31. This Golden text further emphasizes for me who has control of my life and is my life. What a glorious realization in place of all the false beliefs one has had to struggle with; thinking other people, situations, things all have power over us.

I can never forget then that God's laws, including the law of perfect harmony and love govern everything I think, say, or do. Let the true laws govern. They alone do free us. *****

Thank you for this post. This is truly relevant in today's times, when the false gods of government and the stock market and a steady stream of mostly negative news seem to dominate the media 24/7,

instead of all good that is *actually* going on all the time!

It is tempting to believe that somehow our happiness is tied to what elected officials may (or may not) be in office, or the startling news of the day; but this is simply mesmeric and a distortion of our true freedom, whereby “the kingdom of God is within us.” We have to stay awake to what is true! I have to remember this when I may feel a “tug” to believe that which is simply a fabrication of the human mind—something that attempts to draw me in and ultimately rob me of my joy—and being awake to this means I won’t be taken in. It brings peace to turn all these falsehoods around on a dime and remember that it is God who has all power in His “law of perfect harmony and love,” as you put it so well. It is this constant turning to God that ultimately gives us our dominion over things that would try to distract us from Him! *****

SUBJECT: Everlasting Punishment – April 29th, 2018

Sincere Actions of Repentance and Love

Luke 7

37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

Below is a loving message given on these verses from The Bethany Church about the woman’s actions:

Depth of sorrow..... she wept, and covered His feet with her tears

Undid her pride.....she undid her hair—the symbol of her pride and beauty

Her great humility of service toward

Him wiped His feet with her tresses
Expressed deep gratitude..... She then began to kiss His feet repeatedly

Her sacrifice of herself to Him..... she emptied an entire flask of fragrant spikenard—very probably the most expensive thing she owned. ***

Wherein Mortals Gain Severe Views of Themselves

GOLDEN TEXT: Acts 2 : 38

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

In *Pond and Purpose*, Mrs. Eddy wrote:

“The baptism of repentance is indeed a stricken state of human consciousness, wherein mortals gain severe views of themselves; a state of mind which rends the veil that hides mental deformity.”

This brought me back to last week’s lesson:

RESPONSIVE READING: Proverbs 16

2. All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits.

Before coming to Plainfield, I knew something was wrong, but the lie I believed was that I was doing my best and the greater system around me was flawed. In that mindset, I was a victim – because I saw my ways as clean – and I was trapped by circumstances beyond my control.

How much better then, through Christian Science, to find that it was within myself that needed to change, and through these changes my experience of the world around me could be harmonious, and I could become receptive to all the love and blessings that God imparts constantly. The gift of those “severe views” of myself opened the door, and the guidance of this church and practitioner support has shown me the way from victim-hood to dominion, and from “mental deformity” to place, purpose, and “the fruit of the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:22-23) *****

Reform The Sinner

“The design of Love is to reform the sinner.” Mary Baker Eddy

Reform

1. to correct; to restore to a former good state,
2. To change from bad to good; to remove that which is bad or corrupt;

Sin is a hot topic, from damnation to relativism. I certainly did not know where to begin before the clear teachings of the Bible and Mrs. Eddy’s writings at Plainfield. New Age has misconstrued the idea “there is no sin.” Taking that line out of Mrs. Eddy’s writings removes it from the context and changes the meaning. I am learning it takes a deep study of her writings and the Bible and practice of these principles to prove that statement.

There is much general misunderstanding regarding the use of the term “deny” in Christian Science.

This word is often misconstrued as meaning a general non-recognition of evil, a sort of nonchalant waving aside of all that is not pleasant and pleasing, a complete overlooking of things that should be remedied and eradicated; but it is a mistaken idea that Christian Scientists deal with evil as imaginary. They recognize that evil thought precedes evil action, therefore they strike at the root of evil rather than at its branches, and this process must of necessity give their efforts a superior power of destruction. ... Christian Science offers a most practical, scientific, process for the destruction of evil because it works at the cause of evil, rather than the effect. ... Christian Science does not mean apathetic non-recognition of suffering,—a refusal to consider a remedy for evil,—far from it; its denials are fraught with sympathetic power. ... We deny sin, sickness, and death, but when we use the term “deny,” we do not mean that we dream away in an indifference to the proximity of the world’s sin, sickness, and death. Our denials are prayers,—an active, purposeful, unbelieving in the power, activity, or presence of evil, so that we may more nearly approach obedience to the first commandment, “Thou shalt have [or believe in] no other gods before me.” by Kate Swope, Oct. 3 1903 Sentinel *****

AGON – "Struggle the Good Struggle"

“Man’s enslavement to the most relentless masters — passion, selfishness, envy, hatred, and revenge — is conquered only by a **mighty struggle**. Every hour of delay makes the struggle more severe” (*Science and Health*, p 407, emphasis added).

“Final deliverance from error, whereby we rejoice in immortality, boundless freedom, and sinless sense, is not reached through paths of flowers...” (*Science and Health*, p 22).

“**Strive** to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able” (Luke 13:24). *****

Every One of You

ACTS 2: 38 “Repent, and be baptized **every one of you** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” But we learn that contrary to the sinfulness of man ingrained in our past education, the real man, the man He created in His image and likeness is changelessly innocent, incapable of sin; hence when we see an error manifested by any of Love’s creation we must recognize it as a lie about God’s creation, rebuke if need be but never condemn the man or nation etc. Thus we read: “We sustain Truth, not by accepting, but by rejecting a lie.” *Science and Health*, p 357.

We continue our watching for the awakening of all to REPENT and come back Home to God. As we read, “The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty.....” *****

Thank you! I love how it says “and be baptized” after repent and Mrs. Eddy in the Glossary says in part of Baptism, “Purification by Spirit; submergence in Spirit.” To me this means that when we truly repent we are purified in Spirit, forgiven and receive through Christ “the gift of the Holy Ghost.”