

FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

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ISSUE 174

SUBJECT: Are Sin, Disease, and Death Real?
— **October 11th, 2020**

Joy

“...for the LORD JEHOVAH *is* my strength and my song...” (Isaiah 12:2)

Several times in this lesson we are reminded to be **joyful** — “with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation,” “Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things,” “Cry out and shout,” and “I exhort you to be of good cheer.” And in our Roundtable discussions, we have been taught to sing hymns when feeling discouraged or fearful, and that joy and gratitude are essential ingredients for healing. Error always tries to get us to lose our joy, but there’s nothing that error hates more, than to be laughed at!

This importance of joy has been proven to me many times, and I’m so grateful to have learned it here in this church.

To Ruminare

“The patient feels ill, ruminates, and the trial commences.” *Science and Health*, 430:19-20

“Ruminate: to think again and again.” Webster’s 1828 Dictionary

Rebecca Knight said in the *Harvard Business Review*, “rumination is the tendency to ‘repetitively mull over a thought or problem without ever coming to a resolution.’ It’s not only ‘unhealthy,’ but it’s also an ‘unproductive’ behavior that prevents us from solving problems.”

I realized any unhandled negative fearful thoughts repeated over time may seem normal, but they are a form of rumination. In the past, I thought of rumination as repetitive thoughts taking place at

one time. Now I see it is the “again and again” that is the problem. Not long ago, my Plainfield practitioner reminded me that I needed to “stand guard to anything that is unlike God.” Don’t open the door to any of it. “The past is over and has no power, so go forward!” This stand for the Truth is productive, has healing as a resolution, and is able to solve problems. Which court case do I want?

“And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid *them* on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. ***And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.***” (*Emphasis added.*) (Acts 28:3, 5)

“He shook off the beast into the fire...” Paul didn’t ruminate, and ask himself “Why is this happening to me? What have I done wrong?” He just shook it off and went on with right thinking and “Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence...” (Acts 28:31) What a good lesson this gives for us all, to not ruminate when some untoward thought or incident tries to fasten itself upon our thinking, claiming to be real and have power. Just confidently and persistently declare God’s Allness and shake the “beast” off.

Trial by Motives and Acts

Thank you for this week’s Lesson Sermon and the lesson of “The Trial” therein. Mary Baker Eddy’s allegory shows how, though unreal, animal magnetism — through lies and deception — deceives us into believing things that aren’t true. These come to us, as in this story, often very openly because they are commonly accepted beliefs, and often through the use of labels such as in this case of “Coated Tongue,” “Sallow Skin,” “Nerve,” etc. (*Science*

and Health, pp. 431-432) One must use the “Rule for Motives and Acts” to determine whether these “labels” are from God; and if not, they do not have any power over us to harm our well-being.

I have been reflecting and assimilating (“Assimilation is unity of ideas.” Mary Baker Eddy, p. 269 in *Divinity Course and General Collectanea*, the “Blue Book”) the most recent Bible Study over the past week. The most important thing I received from this was the defining explanation of the difference between ignorant animal magnetism (ignorant a.m.) and malicious animal magnetism (m.a.m.). I’m grateful to have been once again reminded how important it is to be clear in understanding, and when speaking about a subject, to leave no room for the deception of error/animal magnetism to creep in!

The different degrees of ignorant animal magnetism are still a belief in a power aside from God. Many years ago, I was diagnosed by medical doctors with a severe “label”/malady of inhaling mold from moldy cow feed and was told I might die from it and that there was nothing that could be done. I resorted to ‘pretending’ that the issue didn’t exist, which never resulted in a cure!

Mrs. Eddy explains emphatically in *Science and Health* 446:31, “Ignorance of the error to be eradicated oftentimes subjects you to its abuse.” What was amazing is that 30 years of various degrees of suffering from this “label” disappeared upon coming into Christian Science, — not specifically seeking help for it, but through the Truth acquired from daily study. That is what Mrs. Eddy means when she says that God’s healing is not miraculous but “supremely natural!” (It does seem that way when one hadn’t known better.)

After unreservedly committing to Christian Science, I discovered how far the Christian Science Board of Directors had diverged from Mrs. Eddy’s true Science. I wasn’t shocked (had experienced many failed organizations already,

aside from the medical!), but that knowledge, and still ignorant of true Science, left me stuck in the whims of ignorant animal magnetism. Once I began to submerge myself into the earlier *Christian Science Journal* bound volumes and writings, started attending all that this Plainfield Church has to offer in classes, etc., things have become a whole lot more scientific for me. But still not being as useful to “the healing of the nations” as I need to be, I felt somehow, I still wasn’t handling a.m. well enough, still with a level of ignorance.

The way malicious animal magnetism was explained during the Study made me realize that I was believing this organized maliciousness aimed at the likes of Christ Jesus and Mary Baker Eddy to destroy their ability to share God’s Word was beyond my ability to resist. In Truth, the same porter, God, at the door of my consciousness, prevents me from accepting either ignorant or malicious animal magnetism as real.

He Shall Deliver Thee from the Snare of the Fowler

Looking up “snare of the fowler” from the 91st Psalm in this week’s lesson, I came across a great sermon on the subject given by Spurgeon:

<https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/the-snare-of-the-fowler/#flipbook/>

He says “the snare of the fowler is generally noted for its adaptation. You do not find a fowler setting the same snare for one bird as for another; he knows his bird and he adapts his bait to it. He would be an unwise fowler who should go to work with the same machinery to catch the lark that flies on high as the duck that swims along the stream.”

I am grateful for the Bible lesson and for this church for being such a great example to me of actually doing and living the work that is required to be a Christian Scientist.

I can see that the resistance I have experienced to doing a Watch is the “Snare of the Fowler.” Just sitting down to do this work has been challenging,

but I am grateful to at least be aware of how undisciplined and apathetic my thinking has been.

Unseen, silent arguments may say “Get up and do something else,” “You can’t do this,” “You don’t know how to do this,” “You aren’t good enough to do this yet,” “There are more interesting things to do,” “Someone’s texting me,” “I have no clue how to do a watch,” and “The time is up, now you can relax.”

Mary Baker Eddy writes in *Science and Health*, page 102:20-21, “So secret are the present methods of animal magnetism that they ensnare the age into indolence....” (Webster’s 1828 Dictionary: “Indolence: freedom from pain, love of ease or aversion to toil.”)

She also writes in *Miscellany* (211:9), “All that error asks is to be let alone....” And further “Be ever on guard against this enemy. Watch your thoughts and see whether they lead you to God....” (213:19-21)

In “Admonition and Counsel” (*Miscellany*, page 210) she writes “Good thoughts are an impervious armor: clad therewith you are completely shielded from the attacks of error of every sort.... The right thinker abides under the shadow of the Almighty. His thoughts can only reflect peace, good will towards men, health, and holiness.”

I am grateful that the lesson this week has started me off on the right foot with the 91st Psalm. And it’s a new opportunity to do a better watch.

Thank you for the various citations of caution to make us aware of the liar’s many ways! We have also learned that it comes tailor made; all of which helps us to be onto its deceiving methods.

I learned to be patient with myself and to not join the self-deprecating suggestions that come from the same evil source which tries to discourage, as you mentioned above. After all, living Christian Science is a new way of life, a new way of thinking, and that needed discipline is cultivated over time, when we are not fooled by error’s tricks, but steadfastly persist for the priceless goal!

Mrs. Eddy counsels us to “Abide in the 91st Psalm, and know that such abiding is treatment and protection.” Also, to “Ever keep the fact of the Allness of God and nothingness of error before us....” (*Divinity Course and General Collectanea*, the “Blue Book,” pp. 222 and 102)

Trial and Transformation

“The Trial” allegory, *Science and Health*, pp. 430-442 of the Christian Science textbook, is an account of a sick person who obeys Romans 12:2 — “...be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (The NIV says, “Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is.”)

At first, it seems the patient is all alone in court, without counsel, and it’s as though he has simply given up even before the battle has begun, allowing the voices of his accusers to steamroll him into deeper and deeper levels of self-condemnation and hopelessness. Not only do these voices speak without objection, but there is absolutely no cross-examination of any of the witnesses to question the merit of their testimony against the accused.

It seems the accused has totally, apathetically yielded to accepting a lie. Convinced his illness must be the will of God, he becomes a prisoner — on death row.

But all is not lost. As Christ promised, everyone on earth now has free access to a *pro bono* Advocate — attorney for the defense of helpless humanity — also known as the Holy Ghost (John 14:26) or “Divine Science; the development of eternal Life, Truth, and Love.” (*Science and Health* 588:7-8).

And so, in the second half of the allegory, the prisoner makes a life-changing choice to appeal the sentence of his accusers, to re-try his case, relying only upon his Advocate.

From lower-court consciousness — the court of wrong-thinking — the prisoner somehow manages, with all his strength, to do a complete mental about-face and turn his upside-down view of

himself right-side up. Like changing channels on a radio, he chooses to tune out the lower-court's voices, and, with heightened awareness, tune into thoughts unknown and far superior to the dismal croaking of the lower-court world.

Thus, the "dead man walking" is now able to "test and approve what God's will" actually is, and so silence his prosecutors, to destroy utterly their case against him.

It is this stupendous reversal of wrong thinking to right thinking that saves the prisoner, overturns the decision of the lower court.

Be of Good Cheer

Acts 27:1, 4, 14, 15, 20-25, 36, 37, 44

I am so grateful for these verses this week, because it has further impressed upon me to live this Science at all times. Had Paul been at times wise and other times foolish, or occasionally caught lying¹, or baselessly optimistic, or disingenuous at all, no one would have been the least bit relieved when he said what he did. However, Paul was always serving God, and was unabashed and unapologetic about it — and what's more, he also was always demonstrating. His words came to everyone on the ship with strength, certainty, and comfort, reminiscent of Christ Jesus' statement, "...my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27)

How many times has "no small tempest lay on us" and practitioner support brought this same peace and good cheer? Many, many times for me! I am so grateful that Christian Science, this Church, and practitioner support provide the means to learn and grow so that we also may serve God and bring comfort to those in need. What a blessing to be a member here! Thank you!

¹ "When Aristotle was asked what a person could gain by uttering a falsehood, he replied, 'Not to be credited when he shall tell the truth.'" (Miscellaneous Writings 226:18)

SUBJECT: Doctrine of Atonement — October 18th, 2020

Oneness and Atonement

It was suggested to me to read about atonement in Bicknell Young's article "[Oneness](#)" in his *Collected Writings*. Here is a section of it: "The atonement is an exact science. Therefore, to be understood, it must be demonstrated, and that means individually. It becomes clearer and clearer to every student, that he must progressively gain a better understanding of what atonement is, and individually prove it. The atonement teaches us the Science of our oneness with God, and because it is Science, we must demonstrate it in our daily lives, by overcoming sin, sickness and death, and over all suggestions which would claim an existence apart from God. Jesus did not say, 'My Father and I are two,' but ONE. In speaking of this oneness with God, Jesus could not have meant twoness; otherwise, he would have said, 'I and my Father are two.' He was impressing thought with the fact that there was only one Being, not two. God being God-being and man-being."

This is wonderful to read and ponder the entire selection.

"What Manner of Persons Ought Ye to Be"

"...what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness..." (II Peter 3:11)

The Responsive Reading (II Peter 3:14, 17, 18) answers the question for me, "what manner of persons ought ye to be" in order to attain the atonement that "exemplifies man's unity with God." All these requirements, found in the Responsive Reading, are based upon definitions in Webster's 1828 dictionary.

1) *Be diligent* — be steady in my application of Science; constant in my effort to accomplish what is undertaken; attentive to God's commands; careful, not acting mindlessly, or in the human mind; not idle or negligent of my duty to God, my Leader, and to mankind.

2) *Be steadfast* — fixed, firm, steady; no ups and downs; not fickle nor wavering; but sticking to the pure teaching of Christian Science I've received here in Plainfield Church.

3) *Grow in grace* — show forth, and progress in, good will, kindness, faith, meekness, patience, humility, not from any sense of personality or human will, but all proceeding from God, divine influence.

4) *Grow in the knowledge of our Lord* — study the Bible and *Science and Health* and *Prose Works* daily to gain a clear and certain perception of the Truth, in order that I may always see all things clearly, in the light of Truth and Love.

“Blessed are the Pure in Heart: for They Shall See God.”

“Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” *Golden Text: Matthew 5:8*

This verse has taken on more meaning to me this week, as I thought, “If the pure see God, then what is it the impure in heart see?” The word “self” came. Human development feels like this push to gain knowledge and develop our personality and sense of self, only to find that personal sense is why we feel distant from God.

In *Mary Baker Eddy, Her Spiritual Precepts*, Gilbert Carpenter wrote: “It is in proportion as we learn to strip ourselves, and return to the purified thought of a child, freed from human knowledge and experience, from the world’s ideas, ideals and modes of thinking, that we become a channel for God.”

This goes right along with what Mrs. Eddy wrote: “The purification of sense and self is a proof of progress. ‘Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.’” (*Science and Health* 324:4-6)

I am so grateful for Christian Science and practitioner support for showing me how to cut through that clutter and get back to God. Thank you!

“The Pure in Heart” and “The Law of Divine Love”

When I first saw the Golden Text for this week’s lesson (Matthew 5:8 “Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”) I remember thinking “Oh, that’s not my favorite beatitude,” and “I’m not that pure in heart.” And that’s when I caught myself. Well, why couldn’t I be pure in heart? Don’t we talk about being God’s children and keeping our innocence.

In *Science and Health*, it says, “In Science, man is the offspring of Spirit. The beautiful, good, and pure constitute his ancestry.” (63:5-6) Then I need to work on seeing this as true about myself and others. As I read the Responsive Readings (II Peter 3), I realized that I also needed to repent of any wrong-doing or sin in order to purify my heart and let the error be burned up. In addition, I should be “diligent” and “grow in grace.” I think I understood more about this lesson on “Atonement” when I read in *Science and Health* (19:6-11), “Jesus aided in reconciling man to God by giving man a truer sense of Love, the divine Principle of Jesus’ teachings, and this truer sense of Love redeems man from the law of matter, sin, and death by the law of Spirit, — the law of divine Love.” Thank you for this lesson!

“Sinless Sense”

“Peace be within thy walls, *and* prosperity within thy palaces.” (Psalm 122:7)

“He that *hath* no rule over his own spirit *is like* a city *that is* broken down, *and* without walls.” (Proverbs 25:28)

Second to *Pilgrim’s Progress*, John Bunyan’s most widely read book is *The Holy War*, a timely and timeless allegory featuring two main characters, the city of Mansoul (man’s soul) and its mortal enemy, Diabolus. Mansoul has 5 gates: Eye-Gate, Ear-Gate, Feel-Gate, Mouth-Gate, Nose-Gate. The walls are so constructed that an invader such as Sin (another character in the story) cannot enter the city from the outside. Only if the gates are

opened from *within* can Sin breach the walls and take over the city.

Realization has to do with keeping the integrity of the 5 spiritual senses permanently intact, united in oneness of purpose, securely dwelling in heavenly places. This means not making stolen visits to the secret place of the Most High, but dwelling there, at one with the Mind of God, not allowing any of my God-given senses to fall into a material mode of Feeling, Seeing, Hearing, etc., which is a state of warfare with Mind, or at-two-ment with Mind, not at-one-ment.

“If it is true that nerves have sensation, that matter has intelligence, that the material organism causes the eyes to see and the ears to hear, then, when the body is dematerialized, these faculties must be lost, for their immortality is not in Spirit; whereas the fact is that only through dematerialization and spiritualization of thought can these faculties be conceived of as immortal.” (*Science and Health*, 211:24-31)

CS Hymnal, 144

In atmosphere of Love divine,
We live, and move, and breathe;
Though mortal eyes may see it not,
'Tis sense that would deceive.
The mortal sense we must destroy,
If we would bring to light
The wonders of eternal Mind,
Where sense is lost in sight.

Thank you for this breakdown; makes it very clear what to guard against and be alert to, to maintain our oneness with Mind, God.

In the First Edition of *Science and Health*, page 295, Mrs. Eddy gives the spiritual signification of this line of the Lord's Prayer:

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,”

“And lead man into Soul, and deliver him from personal sense.”

Again, many thanks!

Grow in Grace

“But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” II Peter 3:18

This last Sunday during our Roundtable, we were reminded to keep our walk with God steady, to follow what is being taught, and be patient because this work takes time and discipline. We were also encouraged to take note of our progress rather than focus on what is wrong. To do your best and abide in the 91st Psalm. Every day is new, so don't take the past with you.

This spoke to me in what is partly meant to “grow in grace.” The grace to keep going on, the grace to accept correction, the grace to learn from mistakes, the grace to take step-by-step, the grace to say “No” to negative thinking, the grace to become less self-focused and more God-centered, the grace to forgive others as we would be forgiven, the grace to stand up to error, the grace to be grateful, the grace to see good everywhere, the grace to listen to God. I am very grateful for our weekly classes.

“The new birth is not the work of a moment. It begins with moments, and goes on with years; moments of surrender to God, of childlike trust and joyful adoption of good; moments of self-abnegation, self-consecration, heaven-born hope, and spiritual love.” (*Miscellaneous Writings* 15:13-17)

“The purification of sense and self is a proof of progress. ‘Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.’” (*Science and Health* 324:4-6)

“Look for New Heavens and a New Earth”

Thank you for the inspiring lesson this week. I like the idea of “look for new heavens and a new earth...” (II Peter 3:13) And in *Science and Health*, on page 21, Mary Baker Eddy writes of the disciple looking: “He constantly turns away from material sense, and looks towards the imperishable things of Spirit.” (21:10-11)

Mary Baker Eddy mostly refers to St. John's experience in Revelation, when she writes about

the new heaven and the new earth. In *Science and Health*, page 573, she writes: "...St. John's corporeal sense of the heavens and earth had vanished, and in place of this false sense was the spiritual sense, the subjective state by which he could see the new heaven and new earth..." and on the same page, "...we can become conscious, here and now, of a cessation of death, sorrow, and pain."

And in *Miscellaneous Writings*: "St. John spiritually discerned and revealed the sum total of transcendentalism. He saw the real earth and heaven. They were spiritual, not material; and they were without pain, sin, or death. Death was not the door to this heaven. The gates thereof he declared were inlaid with pearl, — likening them to the priceless understanding of man's real existence, to be recognized here and now." (30:8-15)

I find it reassuring that she writes of this as being possible "here and now."

Excerpts from *Divinity Course and General Collectanea*, the "Bluebook," about Atonement

"What is the atonement? It is self-sacrifice that finds the way for others through the experience that meets and overcomes error; then shows this way to others who have slept, to save them from a similar experience." (p. 220)

"The Principle of our demonstration as Christian Scientists is *unity* and our demonstrations depend on united minds and their at-one-ment with the One Mind." (p. 164)
