

FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

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SUBJECT: Spirit – February 5th, 2017

It is the Spirit

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. John 6:63

When I first came to this church, I thought I would never be a true Christian Scientist. I thought because I did not have a college education or degree I would never be able to practice Christian Science correctly. Through practitioner help and this statement, I was able to understand that it is the Spirit that gives us life. Our human education, heritage – they are nothing. They are the human mind. Only our oneness with God gives us life and the more we strive to be Godlike, the better our lives become through Christian Science and practitioner help. *****

Unquenchable. Unstoppable. Un-dam-able

Golden Text: I Thessalonians 5: 19, 20
“Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings.”

RESPONSIVE READING: I Corinthians 2: 9, 10, 12-15

9. As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

12. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

In the times before coming to Plainfield, even in my darkest moments, I had an intense feeling that I had a purpose and a reason to be here. At that time,

I considered myself an atheist, and such a thought has no basis when you believe in nothing. Yet it was there, and it was strong.

I see now that, despite my best attempts at quenching the Spirit, it could never stop that still, small voice from speaking constantly. Spirit is ever-present, delivering goodness, correction, hope, inspiration, revelation, and whatever else I need to be His expression.

It gives me great comfort to know that — even as I tried to dam myself off with false beliefs and foolish thoughts; to hide from that voice — Truth, Life, and Love flows to each of God’s ideas constantly. There is no stopping it, and no stopping the needs of all being met by it. Each material obstruction will fall, until all mankind realizes they were not separate for one moment from God. *****

Neglect Not the Gift

Paul states “Neglect not the gift that is in thee,”. It is rather awesome to contemplate that we have this gift of spiritual sense, but still it is a fundamental fact of our being and for everyone. Not only do we have it, but the instruction is to not neglect it, something to take seriously. Each has the capacity to perceive God’s guidance, but all too often it goes unnoticed, when confidence in our own ways takes over, when the ego slips in. Paul also states in Ephesians “by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God”. Let’s not neglect this gift, but amplify it. *****

Thank you. Spiritual sense is a gift from God that needs to be cultivated. The Bible admonishes us not to quench the Spirit. (1 Thessalonians) So how does one quench the Spirit? The word “quench” means to “extinguish or to put out” and although it is impossible to ever truly put out man’s oneness with the Father, we can separate ourselves in belief, as in a bad dream, by repeatedly disobeying His commandments, by plunging headlong into our affairs without even bothering to listen to that “still

small voice” for direction. When this is done repeatedly and willfully, God’s voice becomes fainter and fainter. But as stated on another post even at this time, God, being omnipresent, has not left us – we need only to humbly and yearningly turn ourselves back to Him, turn our face to the Light. His amazing Grace will save us every time!

Indeed, as our hymn says, “Our God is Love, unchanging Love And can we ask for more?” And *Science and Health*: “The way is straight and narrow, which leads to the understanding that God is the only Life,” but “It is a warfare with the flesh,” and much gratitude to Plainfield for all the support in striving to live with God more and more.

False Landmarks

“Willingness to become as a little child and to leave the old for the new, renders thought receptive of the advanced idea. Gladness to leave the false landmarks and joy to see them disappear, — this disposition helps to precipitate the ultimate harmony. The purification of sense and self is a proof of progress. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.””

Leaving the old for the new... leaving the false landmarks... and joy to see them disappear.

The question arises: What are these false landmarks? Can I give an example of them? If a landmark is something that guides us, such as a lighthouse for the mariner, then what would it be? What is Mrs. Eddy referring to?

Things that come to mind: self-will, self-righteousness, doubt, anxiety, trust in the material, such as medicine, bad habits, or labels like “I am _____” (unworthy, a worry-wart, incapable, etc.)

What are other examples of “false landmarks” that we are happy to see disappear through “purification of sense and self”? *****

What comes to mind as false landmarks would be, pride of possession, pride of achievement, pride of position, reliance on people, ingratitude, “a closed heart,” due to the fear of being hurt, all false concepts that lead us away from our walk

with God and the falsity that we can do anything without God. *****

Gratitude

The ingratitude of having manna for free and wanting flesh which they had for the eating in their own flocks that they brought along; how easy it is for me to complain, wanting more when I’m not using completely what I already have or not thinking it is good enough... the one pure and perfect God.*****

From *Science and Health*, p. 3:22-24: Are we really grateful for the good already received? Then we shall avail ourselves of the blessings we have, and thus be fitted to receive more. Gratitude is much more than a verbal expression of thanks. Action expresses more gratitude than speech.

Science and Health, p. 3:27-30 If we are ungrateful for Life, Truth, and Love, and yet return thanks to God for all blessings, we are insincere and incur the sharp censure our Master pronounces on hypocrites.

These citations are powerful instructions about gratitude. In all our striving, we can work to remain consistent in reflecting Life. That is, to be more lively, vivacious, joyful, active; to be the expression of Truth, that is to be honest, faithful, reject falsehoods, and to be Love manifested. That is to be compassionate, be quick in separating false claims of all sorts from God’s children, His creation, express kindness, be selfless, slow to anger etc. in order to feel more of our God given completeness and satisfaction.*****

Living Water

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Science and Health, p. 298: ...Spiritual ideas, like numbers and notes, start from Principal, and admit no materialistic beliefs. Spiritual ideas lead up to their divine origin, God, and to the spiritual sense of being.

For me, this is what Christ was offering to the

woman of Samaria at the well.... the water of Life, the Holy Spirit. And this is offered to us, no matter who we are, if we hear, trust, and obey.

SUBJECT – Soul – February 12th, 2017

Soul

By Mary Baker Eddy from the book Collectanea:

Today

He who hath made thee whole,
Will keep thee day by day;
He who hath spoken to thy soul,
Hath many things to say;
He who hath gently taught,
Yet more will make thee know;
He who hath wonders wrought,
Still greater things will show,
He loveth always-faileth never;
Then rest in Him today-forever. *****

Expectation

“My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.”

I once heard that an expectation was a premeditated resentment. This expectation is based on personal will, which comes from pride, fear, condemnation, etc. Since participating here at Plainfield, I have been able to begin to understand how to put my expectation in the Lord. In Psalms, we read, “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” I am finding I need to get myself out of the way. At our Roundtable last Sunday, part of the article, Taking Offense by Mary Baker Eddy was read, “Then, we should go forth into life with the smallest expectations, but with the largest patience; with a keen relish for and appreciation of everything beautiful, great, and good, but with a temper so genial that the friction of the world shall not wear upon our sensibilities; with an equanimity so settled that no passing breath nor accidental disturbance shall agitate or ruffle it; with a charity broad enough to cover the whole world’s evil, and sweet enough to neutralize what is bitter in it, — determined not to be offended when no wrong is

meant, nor even when it is, unless the offense be against God.”

To me this speaks of putting our expectation in the Lord. I love how the classes and lessons flow and build on each other each week. *****

“...with an equanimity so settled.....”

EQUANIMITY: Evenness of mind; that calm temper or firmness of mind which is not easily elated or depressed, which sustains prosperity without excessive joy, and adversity without violent agitation of the passions or depression of spirits!

Remain calm so that we do not lose our Science. *

I recently found a beautiful Native American saying, “Give thanks for unknown blessings already on their way.” This is a wonderful expression of having your expectation from the Lord! This is what Christ Jesus did when he gave thanks to God even before Lazarus was raised from the dead. This is an example of expecting good – rather than predicting and dreading some horrible event to happen. Stand porter at your door of thought, as Mrs. Eddy counsels us. Are you expecting good from your Father? If you are, it will help prepare the way to receive it! “Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, and don’t mess with Mr. in-between” as the old song goes!! *****

Much is written from the Bible commentaries about this verse, and I thought these paragraphs from MacLaren’s Expositions – about listening silently to God and waiting on him with all our energy – expressed it beautifully:

“As the flowers follow the sun, and silently hold up their petals to be tinted and enlarged by his shining, so must we, if we would know the joy of God, hold our souls, wills, hearts, and minds still before Him, whose voice commands, whose love warms, whose truth makes fair, our whole being. God speaks for the most part in such silence only. If the soul be full of tumult and jangling noises, His voice is little likely to be heard....

The silence of the soul before God is no mere passiveness. It requires the intensest energy of all our being to keep all our being still and waiting upon Him. So put all your strength into the task, and be sure that your soul is never so intensely alive as when in deepest abnegation it waits hushed before

God.” *****

Thy Darkness Be as the Noonday

“And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday.” (Isaiah) We have learned here a simple rule, “Expression is the opposite of depression.” In times past, whenever I would be feeling sick and/or depressed, it would be easy to think even more about my troubles or want to discuss them with others – looking for support and sympathy. It took a practitioner in this church to teach me this kind of action (or self-centered inaction!) was only sinking me deeper into a mesmeric hole. I was also looking to people rather than to God for my answers and for my comfort and not blessing them at all! I needed to forget self and to think of how I might bless others. Not in some do-goody way, but in a Divinely directed way, knowing I could reflect His intelligence and His Love. This, of course, was an entirely new way of looking at things and took some struggles on my part to become obedient and to follow Christ’s path. The results, however, were and are tremendous. Thank God a practitioner loved enough to show me the better way and to bring me out of that self-inflicted darkness into the everlasting Light of noonday!

The Highway of the Upright

The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth the way preserveth his soul.
Proverbs 16:17

“I wondered why it says ‘the highway of the upright.’ Why a highway?” In thinking about this statement, the thought came to me that a highway is the fastest way to get somewhere. On a highway, the speed is faster than a secondary road. It is a way open to everyone. I need to depart from evil quickly; don’t delay. Don’t weigh the pros and cons or justify why I am holding on to an error. The highway is the best course to take.

As I depart from evil, my soul is preserved. This will keep me from injury or destruction. It keeps

me safe. If a problem arises, it is because I have made a wrong turn and I can quickly get back on the highway of God.

The Bible says, “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction.” (Matt. 7:13). Let us keep ourselves on the narrow highway with God and preserve our soul. *****

Desolation

If I see desolation in the world, “standing where it ought not,” I can’t allow myself to get down about it or drawn into it — I must work to purify my consciousness and see mankind and the world correctly. I must “flee to the mountains,” the higher thoughts of Truth, Life, and Love, until I see that God’s reality contains no desolation, and that there is only His reality.

Real Security Only Found in Science

Science and Health, p. 232: 3-8 “Many theories relative to God and man neither make man harmonious nor God lovable. The beliefs we commonly entertain about happiness and life afford no scatheless and permanent evidence of either. Security for the claims of harmonious and eternal being is found only in divine Science.” In Science, we learn that whatever occupies our thinking is likely to show forth in our experience. Hence, a sinful, fearful consciousness which believes in evil as real (and often more in it than it trusts in God) is likely to experience uncertain fearful circumstances. We are to obey and trust God’s Allness and deny all else!

From Collectanea pgs. 79 and 63 respectively:

May the allness of God, Love, and the nothingness of aught else serve to cover the question of your protection, and the allness of good, and the powerlessness and non-existence of evil be the reality of your thought.

Prayer For Yourself: I am the child of God. His care and love surround me. Animal magnetism cannot reach me to make me fear or be afraid.