

FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

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ISSUE 156

SUBJECT: Sacrament – January 12th, 2020

To Obey is Better Than Sacrifice...

“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice...”
(I Sam. 15:22)

The word “obey” is derived from the Greek root word meaning “to hear.” “Obey” or “obedience” is mentioned 22 times in this Lesson. This idea of “hearing” ties in beautifully to last week’s Lesson and Roundtable where the importance of listening to God (the still small voice) and obeying it, was discussed.

Webster (1828) defines “obey” as “to comply with commands or instructions of a superior, or with the requirements of law.” In studying this Lesson, I was especially moved by Jesus’s command to Simon — “Feed my sheep.” Jesus repeated this command 3 times because Simon just didn’t get it at first. Simon kept affirming a personal love for Jesus. Jesus addressed him as “Simon, *son of Jonas*” — that is, as one who was in a human or personal sense of self. When I hold a personal or human sense of myself, I am unable to love divinely or express unselfed love. What a tremendous lesson Jesus gave! This is the one command (Feed my sheep) that I need to keep uppermost in thought and obey — to love more, and to love divinely, not humanly.

In *Watches, Prayers, Arguments*, Mrs. Eddy states: “I have time for every manifestation of love and tenderness in the abundant present.” This is the sacrament I will try daily to offer to God. *****

Thanks for the post and for the Lesson’s many reminders about obedience....Unless we are complying or practicing the rule or law, we cannot say we are obeying it!

Romans 6:17 “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.”

OBEY other definitions:

To submit to: To be submissive; to yield without murmuring. **To yield to:** To surrender. **To comply to:** To fulfil; to perfect or carry into effect; to complete; to perform or execute. “Divine Mind rightly demands man’s entire obedience, affection, and strength. No reservation is made for any lesser loyalty. Obedience to Truth gives man power and strength. Submission to error superinduces loss of power.” (S&H, 183:21-25)

“Ignorance of God is no longer the steppingstone to faith. The only guarantee of obedience is a right apprehension of Him whom to know aright is Life eternal.” (S&H, vii:17-20)

“Jesus bore our infirmities; he knew the error of mortal belief, and **“with his stripes [the rejection of error] we are healed.”**

(S&H, 20:14-23)

How wise to obey (practice) what Christ Jesus did....it was **His stripes, the rejection of error that healed.** Hence, our instruction to persistently and as earnestly as possible reject the errors that tempt us in varying cloaks. We are not to accept the lies as ours and then try to use the truth to “fight” them.

“...he swerved not, well knowing that to obey the divine order and trust God, saves retracing and traversing anew the path from sin to holiness.”
(S&H, 20:20-23) *****

Thank you for these posts. “When I hold a personal or human sense of myself, I am unable to love divinely or express unselfed love.” I have been really thinking about this! While praying today, I asked myself how am I loving? I have found the directive to Peter (and to all of us)...to “Feed my sheep,” to be a wonderful command. Since coming

to Plainfield, I have come to realize what I had been doing in supporting others was often from a human standpoint. I have much room for improvement. To me this is why the classes and these posts are so important. Everything explains, upholds, and guides us when studying the weekly Lessons. *****

How to Be a Law to Yourself

Science and Health, 442:30 “Christian Scientists, be a law to yourselves that mental malpractice cannot harm you either when asleep or when awake.”

Science and Health, 458:23-31 “The Christianly scientific man reflects the divine law, thus becoming a law unto himself.”

Thank you, Mary Baker Eddy. *****

I found these related statements also helpful: “Every man and woman should be to-day a law to himself, herself, — a law of loyalty to Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.” (Misc., 12:12)

“[CS teachers] shall teach their students how to defend themselves against mental malpractice, but never to return evil for evil; never to attack the mal-practitioner, but to know the truth that makes free, — and so to be a law, not unto others, but themselves.” (Misc. 315:32)

Very grateful for this week’s Lesson. *****

Improving the great blessings

“Implicit faith in the Teacher and all the emotional love we can bestow on him, will never alone make us imitators of him. We must go and do likewise, else we are not **improving** the great blessings which our Master worked and suffered to bestow upon us. The divinity of the Christ was made manifest in the humanity of Jesus.” S&H, 25:26-32.

“To be “present with the Lord” is to have, not **mere** emotional ecstasy or faith, but the actual

demonstration and understanding of Life as revealed in Christian Science.” S&H, 14:6-9.

Improve: To make better. To advance in value or good qualities. To use to good purpose. To make productive. To apply to practical purposes. To cultivate.

Mere: That only.

Emotion: A moving of the mind or soul.

(Definitions from Webster’s 1828 Dictionary.)

Reading the Lesson this morning made me realize that many times I have stopped at “mere emotional ecstasy or faith” believing that was enough, or not fully making the things I was learning and reading more consistent and practical in all areas of my life. Mrs. Eddy did not say not to have “emotional ecstasy or faith” since the soul needs to be stirred, but don’t stop there – go on to apply to practical purposes. *****

“If Christ Jesus were to walk our streets would he be so much pleased with the beautiful church edifices, and with the honor in which his name is universally held, as with the fact that his followers were able to make good his promises and were able to relieve others of weakness and weariness, sorrow and suffering, sickness and sin?”
(*The Religion of The Bible. The Gospel of Helpfulness*, by Rev. Irving C. Tomlinson, *Christian Science Journal*, September 1900.)

“...I Bare You on Eagles’ Wings....”

The verse this week in Exodus 19:4 which says “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself,” reminds me of the verse from Deuteronomy 32:11-12 — “As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.”

What tenderness is expressed here how God has shown His love, His care, His protection, all to bring us closer to Him, in whom alone is

happiness; and in turn all He insists upon our part is that we obey Him.

SUBJECT: Life – January 19th, 2020

Moral Courage

“There is too much animal courage in society and not sufficient moral courage. Christians must take up arms against error at home and abroad. They must grapple with sin in themselves and in others, and continue this warfare until they have finished their course. If they keep the faith, they will have the crown of rejoicing.” (S&H, 28:32-6.)

Concerning moral courage, Samuel Smiles wrote: “Character is human nature in its best form. It is moral order embodied in the individual. Men of character are not only the conscience of society, but in every well-governed State they are its best motive power; for it is moral qualities in the main which rule the world. Even in war, Napoleon said *the moral is to the physical as ten to one*. The strength, the industry, and the civilization of nations — all depend upon individual character; and the very foundations of civil security rest upon it. Laws and institutions are but its outgrowth....”

“The man of character must also be a temperate man, and exercise the virtue of self-denial, than which nothing is so much calculated to give strength to the character. John Sterling says truly, that *‘the worst education which teaches self-denial, is better than the best which teaches everything else, and not that.’*

The Romans rightly employed the same word (*virtue*) to designate courage, which is in a physical sense what the other is in a moral; *the highest virtue of all being victory over ourselves.*” (Emphasis added.)

Lastly: “Intrepid, self-oblivious Protestants in a higher sense than ever before, let us meet and defeat the claims of sense and sin, regardless of the bans or clans pouring in their fire upon us; and

white-winged charity, brooding over all, shall cover with her feathers the veriest sinner.” (Misc. 172:6-11.) *****

Thank you so much for this post! Mrs. Eddy’s discourse on “**Character**” in 1893 is worth revisiting. It gives a humbling analysis of what this word means, from which all can learn. She commences the sermon with this from the Bible “**Be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man.**” (I Kings 2:2) The whole discourse can be read here:

<https://articles.plainfieldcs.com/mary-baker-eddy/character/>

It says Christian Science exists for more than healing: “There is nothing on earth so valuable as Character. You will notice that no adjective is prefixed to this word, character; thus, I do not say Christian character, for the evident reason that there can be no character which is not Christian. Here in this world and in all worlds swinging in space, nothing is so grand, so God-like, as character. Certainly the trend of thought on this one point is moving in the right direction. Christian Science extends its hand in friendly greeting and welcomes this advance step onward and upward. This is what Christian Science exists for, — to promote every worthy and spiritual effort, to attain unto a higher realization of what character surely is. What is called the Christian Science healing is not the “end-all-and-be-all,” of Christian Science teaching. It is simply a means towards an end. That end is the production of better lives, or in other words, the promotion of character.”

There is certainly much, much more for our lives in this talk than what that word is generally accepted to mean. *****

Thank you for these posts.
“...thus, I do not say Christian character, for the evident reason that there can be no character which is not Christian.”

Love this quote — much food for thought here! And timely, as those on the current world stage struggle to put their best face forward. Mrs. Eddy’s discourse on Character serves as a treatment in

support of “men of character” exercising their moral courage and therefore being the “conscience of society.”

Thank you for the reminder that temperance, self-denial, and humility ultimately prepare the way to “Be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man.” I Kings 2:2. *****

Doubtful Mind

Luke 12:29 “And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.”

There have been times in my life when I have been doubtful if God could take care of a problem, whether it be financial supply or health, but the problem has always been taken care of. Doubtful means: Dubious; not settled in opinion; undetermined; wavering; hesitating; not obvious, clear or certain; questionable; not decided; not confident; not without fear.

Several years ago, I got the answer to this problem. God has always taken care of me and He always will. Having no doubt or fear, every problem has been taken care of and in God’s way, not the way I had thought it should work out. I had to be obedient to His direction, have courage to trust with my whole heart and never doubt or be fearful. He always took care of every problem, and His way was always better than I thought it should work out, bringing lessons and healings.

The Bible has the answer to every problem, and I am grateful for these uplifting, healing lessons.

Thank you for this post. I am learning about this and have great gratitude to have been led to the Plainfield Independent Church where we are supported in a spiritual way of living that takes us higher and enables all of us to overcome our old ways of doubt. Some of my fears and waverings were obvious and easy to see, while others were more hidden and needed to be rooted out, overturned, and smashed. I have learned that I can’t be easy on the fears, but must face them squarely with courage and firmness. I think that

this is part of the “states and stages” that Mrs. Wilcox talks about in the chapter on “Translation” in her Association Addresses. I do believe it was Mrs. Eddy who said that fear is, “useless and unreal”! *****

“Wait on The Lord: Be of Good Courage...”

The Golden Text says this week, “Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.”

Wait – To rest in expectation and patience

Expectation – Prospect of good to come

Patience – The act or quality of waiting long for justice or expected good without discontent.

(All definitions from Webster’s 1828 Dictionary)

So, I asked myself, how am I waiting? Am I waiting on God while at the same time holding in thought fear, resentment, anxiety, doubt, or with an expectation that only good is going on at all times? I must be sure to weed these intruders from my thought because they certainly don’t come from God, the one Mind. I can’t be tempted to disobey God and give these destructive thoughts any power or presence.

Psalm 37:4, 5 “Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord: trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass.” *****

Thank you for your post. I am finding great comfort in the Biblical promise in our Golden Text this week. It tells us that God “shall strengthen thine heart,” not my job to do it or another person’s job, but God will take care of it as I trust and obey Him.

“Be of good courage — Keep up thy spirits in the midst of thy greatest dangers and difficulties: let thy heart be fixed, trusting in God, and thy mind stayed on him, and then none of these things will move thee; wait, I say, on the Lord — Whatever thou doest, grow not remiss or careless in thy attendance upon God, but keep close to him and thy duty.” (Benson Commentary)

The definition of strength was shared during our January 12th, 2020 Roundtable. “Strength: Firmness; solidity; toughness; power of resisting attacks; power of vigor; confidence.” (Webster’s 1828 Dictionary)

I am grateful for the helpful instruction that went with it also. *****

SUBJECT: Truth – January 26th, 2020

The Form of the Fourth

“[King Nebuchadnezzar] answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” (Daniel 3:25.)

“Christian Science translates Mind, God, to mortals. It is the infinite calculus defining the line, plane, space, and fourth dimension of Spirit.” (Misc. 22:10-12.)

The mightiest men of Babylon were roasted alive as they threw the three Hebrew children into the fiery furnace. The unharmed children suddenly discovered they had not entered into a space defined by standards of mortal length, breadth, depth. Instead, they had entered the fourth dimension beyond the jarring testimony of the three-dimensional world, and the form of the fourth-dimensional being that unbound them and walked among them was the Son of God.

This incident changed a whole nation, a whole empire, in fact. Note that King Nebuchadnezzar did not simply say, “I now warmly welcome the worship of the God of Israel into the pantheon of all the religions of the world so that we all can live in harmony with one another.” No. The king’s decree was absolute: no one should worship or serve any other god but the God of the three Hebrew children.

King Nebuchadnezzar’s absolutism runs parallel to that of John Adams: “Our Constitution was made *only* for a moral and religious people. It is *wholly* inadequate to the government of any other.” (Emphasis added.)

And Mrs. Eddy was equally absolutist: “The thunder of Sinai [the Ten Commandments] and the

Sermon on the Mount are pursuing and will overtake the ages, rebuking in their course all error and proclaiming the kingdom of heaven on earth.” (S&H, 174:17-20.) *****

“John Adams: “*Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.*”

Over the years I’ve come to recognize that is so true. One can have a lawyer-written, duly-filed contract, but only as valid as the parties involved. All the layers of dross laid upon the Constitution allow immoral people to not live up to their end of the bargain because too many times the people with the most money win in court through attrition. Or one wins in court and the offending party has all their assets in a spouse’s name. This happened while I was farming and a very brazen individual completely in the open was selling used silos and never delivering, to more farmers than just me. The state police, FBI, state attorney general, all refused to enforce the law that we won in court. After entering Christian Science, I had a buyer default on my wife’s property. Using prayer to the best of my ability, had positive results. Glory to God always — when used as taught in Christian Science. (Through all the litigation she was unjustly dragged into, by listening to God, Mary Baker Eddy always told her lawyers the RIGHT thing to do!!) *****

“Through the Fiery Furnace...”

“Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth.” (Ps.86:11)

The “burning fiery furnace” is the “ring of fire” that we all must walk in and through. It is the “wholesome chastisements of Love” (Truth) which, if we accept, will burn up any sense of selfhood apart from God — any ego or personal sense — that would try to separate us from God, from our divine purpose. The Hebrew boys came through with flying colors. By burning out personal sense, and completely trusting in, and obeying, God, they were able to express the Christ-consciousness, which enabled them to walk safely through the fire, without even a smell of smoke — without a vestige

of ego expressed as resentment, self-pity, or self-justification. I have seen many examples of this “ring of fire” in my time at Plainfield Church, but only a few that were able to come through, purified with the Christ-consciousness. And only one that remained so faithful to the teaching (the Truth) received, that she was able to continue in the practice and carry on the mission of this church.

I have been taught the way (the Truth) here in Plainfield Church — and am continuing to learn, through the help of my practitioner, how to rid my thought of personal sense. Often, it feels like a “burning fiery furnace” when error is exposed in my thinking, but I know as I trust in, and obey God, He will help me — not run from it — but walk through it. *****

Belief Instead of Demonstration

“To seek Truth through belief in a human doctrine is not to understand the infinite. We must not seek the immutable and immortal through the finite, mutable, and mortal, and so depend upon belief instead of demonstration, for this is fatal to a knowledge of Science. The understanding of Truth gives full faith in Truth, and spiritual understanding is better than all burnt offerings.” S&H, 286:1-8.

During our Bible study, [A Tool in One Hand and a Sword in the Other](#), it was instructed: To be able to stand strong in the Lord, “is what you live and understand, not what you believe because belief can be shot down.” This explains why for so many years I allowed myself to be drawn away from God into the opposite direction because I took my stands from the standpoint of human will and what I “believed.” It only takes a stronger will or pull to derail this plan. The things that I actually stood for, based on what I was living and understood, did not fold under pressure. Mrs. Eddy instructs in the article, [The Man of Integrity](#), “The upright man is guided by a fixed Principle, which destines him to do nothing but what is honorable, and to abhor whatever is base or unworthy;...” (Misc. 147:14:21)

For All His Ways Are Judgment

Deuteronomy 32:4 “*He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.*”

This verse, — especially “for all his ways *are* judgment” — has stayed with me this week as I thought on its meaning and practical application in my life. I can see now that God actually *is* Truth, Life, and Love. Therefore, all that He does — His every expression and manifestation — is instantly judged by Him to be of Him, and cannot be unlike Him. There is no gray area to it (and life before Plainfield felt like it was all gray area!)

This had me thinking of all the ways I’ve learned here which help me know when I am moving closer to God. Here are a few questions that came:

Is Truth being revealed? Am I making the same old missteps, or are my steps “ordered by the Lord” (Psalm 37:23) and guiding me to my place and purpose? Is the need for empty calories, empty words, empty interactions, and vain imaginings going away, and being replaced with the need for the healing, comfort, and peace that only Christian Science brings?

Is Love being demonstrated? Well, is fear lessening? Is joy increasing? Is my life blessing more than just me? Am I moving beyond selfish concern and seeking the good of all mankind? Do I hate my enemy or love him?

Is Life being expressed? Do I accept the claims of sickness, or do I “rise in rebellion against them”? (S&H, 391:8) Do I see and feel the beauty of God’s creation evident all around me? Do I feel drained by this work, or invigorated by it? Am I grateful to get up each day and live for God? I once had so much difficulty telling right from wrong, but answering these questions helped me to see how much things have changed. I am so grateful for all I am learning in this church and from my practitioner. Thank you! *****

Thanks for your post! I have found that when I take the premise or proposition of “He is the Rock, **his work is perfect:** for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just

and right is he” seriously, it gives me a lot to ask myself and makes clear how ridiculous the claims of mortal sense are! I have found these questions and counteracting Truths helpful:

Could God send me fear, pain, discomfort, distress? “God is Love....” (1 John 4:8)

Is God All powerful **only** today? “I am the Lord, and there is none else” (Isa. 45:5) and “this one is God, omnipotent, omnipresent...” (S&H 465:18)

Will He not be with me next week or during that test, as His promise says? “...lo, I am with you alway...” (Matt. 28:20)

Does He not have the best plan for my life? God is omniscient “.... behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it...” (Rev 3:8)

How can I lack anything good? He is my inexhaustible source and “no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” (Ps. 84:11)

With every question I can find a divine promise that completely wipes the lies out. If I consistently **practice/use** the antidotes of Truths, soon the awful unreality of the tormenting claims lose their supposed power. I like to never lose sight of the Truth that, “No power can withstand divine Love.” (S&H, 224:31)

I find it a great comfort! *****

No Variableness

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” (James 1:17, 18)

I love thinking about God as the “Father of lights” shining in us. “Ordinary heavenly lights produce shadows, they wax and wane, shift and fade, even the sun is occasionally eclipsed. God’s light cannot be overshadowed.” (A Pilgrims Theology, WordPress.com)

How comforting to know that God is a constant, immutable, ever present source of all good, life, wisdom, purity, happiness, and that this Truth has always been, is now, and forever will be. This can never change. *****

Thank you for your post!

I love this, “**Truth IS, falsehoods are not!**” (*Divinity Course and General Collectanea*, p. 282) It is this established distinction between what is Truth and what is false that makes Truth always the victor.

This scientific fact is enlightening and encouraging. As man is really the manifestation of our **unchanging** Father-Mother God, we can know that the appearances of discord of any kind is only transient, “they appear to disappear.” Physical claims, emotional turmoil, any form of discord, unrest or discontent, has no permanency if we do not give them any life by making them “something.” Whether likened to the eclipse of the sun (the moon’s shadow blocking the sun) or to the thick clouds of false beliefs and negative thinking, these do not **change** the spiritual substance of true being. They do not have the capacity to **alter** what is eternally true. When the passing eclipse is over, or the clouds move away, we see that wonderful light again shining so bright. As when the brightness of our true being is seen again shining even brighter when those clouding false beliefs are gone. *****

Glorious Liberty

This Bible Lesson is a real treatment for a world seemingly under the bondage of so-called material laws. I realized after reading the Lesson how free our thought is as Christian Scientists — and must be — on the side of God. Health is normal, sickness is not! But the general thought is that sickness is “normal” and medicine will save. It may help for a while, but how many times do doctors say, “you’ll have to take this the rest of your life” because the belief is, there is no cure. That’s another form of bondage. Isn’t it a relief, that it is our “divine right” to be free? What an encouragement to know that “Error is a coward before Truth” and that “error is self-destroyed” when the Truth shines upon the supposed error. Jesus said (John 8:32), “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” This Lesson is a clear explanation of what he meant. Thank you to the Lesson writer.