

FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

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SUBJECT: Substance —
September 13th, 2020

Our True Substance

“As God is substance and man is the divine image and likeness, man should wish for, and in reality has, only the substance of good, the substance of Spirit, not matter. The belief that man has any other substance, or mind, is not spiritual and breaks the First Commandment, Thou shalt have one God, one Mind.” *Science and Health*, 301:17

The Readings on Wednesday called THE RIGHTEOUS PRAYER OF FAITH IN THE ALLNESS OF GOD, really struck me. In Hebrews 11, the faith of Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Rahab, Daniel, etc., teach us how faith brings understanding to our true substance, which is Spirit, not matter. This enlightenment helps me to cling to the First Commandment in a different way. When I pray for myself, I now ask God for faith because I know this will lead to understanding and a greater obedience to Him.

“All Sufficiency in All Things”

“God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work.” (II Cor. 9:8)

Early on, I was taught in this church the importance of tithing. Initially, I thought it only meant to give 10% of my financial income to church. And as I did so, I’ve prospered and never lacked. Now I realize that tithing is much more, goes much deeper. God is the *infinite* source of all good — mercy, compassion, wisdom, justice,

spiritual strength, moral courage, integrity — all good, and it is infinite. This infinite good is being bestowed on me all the time from God, and it is my duty to tithe this infinite good, also.

So, I was thinking, what is 10% of infinity? *It is infinite, also!* There is no limitation to what I should be giving back in mercy, compassion, wisdom, justice, spiritual strength, moral courage, integrity, etc., since it comes from God.

What an important and needed lesson to learn! Thank You, God, for your abundant and ever-present grace, and help me always to tithe it back.

Every Perfect Gift is From Above

“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

I love how the Daily Watch this week was perfectly chosen to blend with the Lesson.

“449 — WATCH that you bear in mind that God is not separate from the blessings He bestows, in the sense that His expression carries His qualities. On this basis we declare that God never sends man gifts; He always brings them.

“We cannot believe that any part of His expression lacks any of His qualities. Food as spiritual nutriment designed to support man, cannot be separated from God’s love and care; hence it cannot produce suffering or death. Neither does it sustain man of itself; it must be considered to be the expression of God’s love.” (From *500 Watching Points* by Gilbert C. Carpenter)

A few weeks ago, I came across the following, also by Carpenter: “At this point let us consider the demonstration in connection with food, where one endeavors to realize that all food is a gift of God, that it cannot be matter; hence mortal mind cannot

be back of it, since divine Mind is forever present with it.” (from *Mary Baker Eddy, Her Spiritual Precepts*, Vol. 4, by Gilbert C. Carpenter)

Do I always see food as a gift from God and as an expression of His love and care? Do I pay attention to the thought behind the food I have? Do I treat myself as the “temple of the Holy Ghost”? Do I feel I don’t need to consult God regarding food (what, where, how, when, why)? It wasn’t until I came here that I learned more about the love Mrs. Eddy expressed through the food in her home, and that it was always to be right with God from beginning to end. I am grateful for the many ways I am learning to make Christian Science practical in all areas of my life, especially eating and food.

“How excellent *is* thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.” Psalm 36:7, 8

Thank you for your post. There is another Watching Point in *500 Watching Points* that goes so well with this week’s Watching Point. Watch #285 says, “Jesus encouraged the eating of food, showing that at our present stage of experience, it is not food that we must eliminate, but the belief that it is material, that it can affect man adversely either through quality or quantity, or that it can be the medium for mortal mind....When Jesus met with his disciples at supper, the eating of food became a channel for a spiritual uplift. When food is seen as a channel for inspiration and blessing, man’s spiritual nature is fed, at the same time his temporary material needs are taken care of.”

Since this beautiful Lesson is on “Substance,” we can use this same analogy for any gift. In the same Watch “nerves” are referred to not as “...the medium through which mortal man becomes conscious of matter, pain, suffering, disease, death.... (but) methods of communicating spiritual ideas; they are the spiritual antenna over which are transmitted the precious messages of good. Spiritually considered they are God-given means by which man becomes conscious of God, man and the universe.” This is why in the Bible reference given in the above post, it says that every good gift

comes from above and has “no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

“Meekly we kneel at our Master’s feet, for even a crumb that falleth from his table. We are hungry for Love, for the white-winged charity that heals and saves; we are tired of theoretic husks, — as tired as was the prodigal son of the carobs which he shared with the swine, to whom he fed that wholesome but unattractive food.” (*Miscellaneous Writings* 369:19–24).

“ ‘The earth brought forth food for man’s use.’ Do not say there is no intelligence in food, but instead, strive for the intelligence that sees what both earth and food are. Adhere to the statement that divine intelligence directs man, and governed by it, eats, sleeps, walks, and talks harmoniously.” (*COLLECTANEA Of Items By and About MARY BAKER EDDY*, p. 60).

“Like a watered garden...”

“...*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...” (Isa. 58:10)

There is a condition at the beginning of this verse that tells us what we need to do in order to have our light rise and shine. This condition is to comfort and satisfy afflicted souls. It reminds me of the beautiful prayer/poem by A. E. Hamilton that Mrs. Eddy included at the end of *Retrospection and Introspection* (p. 95):

Ask God to give thee skill
In comfort’s art:
That thou may’st consecrated be
And set apart
Unto a life of sympathy.
For heavy is the weight of ill
In every heart;
And comforters are needed much
Of Christlike touch.

Only as I do this, shall I “be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters

fail not.” (Isa. 58:11) *Barnes Notes* writes: “Like paradise...a most beautiful image to denote continued prosperity and blessedness — an image that would be particularly striking in the East. The ideas of happiness in the Oriental world consisted much in pleasant gardens, running streams, and ever-flowing fountains, and nothing can more beautifully express the blessedness of the continued favor of the Almighty.” Could there be any better substance than God’s blessedness?

**SUBJECT: Matter —
September 20th, 2020**

“The LORD Reigneth...”

I liked *Barnes Notes on the Bible* commentary this week for Psalm 97:1 in the Responsive Reading, “The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad *thereof*.”

“The LORD reigneth – This is the general fact to be dwelt upon; this is the foundation of joy and praise. The universe is not without a sovereign. It is not the abode of anarchy. It is not the production of chance. It is not subject to mere physical laws. It is not under the control of evil. It is under the government of a God: a wise, holy, intelligent, just, benevolent Being, who rules it well, and who presides over all its affairs. If there is anything for which we should rejoice, it is that there is One Mind, everlasting and most glorious, who presides over the universe, and conducts all things according to his own wise and eternal plan.

“Let the earth rejoice – The earth itself; all parts of it; all that dwell upon it. As the earth everywhere derives whatever it has of fertility, beauty, grandeur, or stability, from God – as order, beauty, productiveness are diffused everywhere over it – as it has received so many proofs of the divine beneficence toward it, it has occasion for universal joy.

“Let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.... The eye of the psalmist is evidently on the many islands which are scattered over the sea. Not merely the continents — the extended countries

where nations dwell — have occasion for joy, but the beautiful islands — the spots of earth which have risen from the deep, and which are covered with fruits and flowers — these, too, have occasion to rejoice: to rejoice that God has raised them from the waters; that he keeps them from being overflowed or washed away; that he clothes them with beauty; that he makes them the abode of happy life; that he places them in the wastes of the ocean as he does the stars in the wastes of the sky, to beautify the universe. The idea in the verse is, that all the earth has cause to rejoice that Yahweh reigns.”

Let All the Earth Keep Silence Before Him

“...the LORD *is* in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.” Habakkuk 2:20

The recent Bible Study on Psalm 119 gave me a new appreciation of God’s laws and precepts. The above citation brought to thought the Fourth Commandment, Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. After the discussion of the Psalm writer’s love and deep reverence of God’s laws, it brought to thought a question, “Do I love God’s precepts as was expressed by David in this psalm?”

I came across an online Bible study regarding the Sabbath. It reminded me of all that has been taught here regarding keeping the Sabbath holy. We are taught that all days should be a Sabbath; but in this case, I was applying it to Sunday, in the light that it has become so acceptable to not dedicate this day to the worship of God. Not only that, but it has become the opposite. I am grateful to be learning here a clear sense of the purpose of church and Sabbath.

The following is a quotation from author, Sarah Koontz: “Keep the Sabbath. When we learn to receive the Sabbath as a gift, we will rejoice in its bountiful blessings....God’s grace and generosity infuses the Sabbath with hope and Sabbath rest brings heavenly direction into our earthly duties.”

Some further lines I liked from this author’s post: “This is not a burdensome rule but a path to freedom. It is a weekly reminder how deeply we

depend on God. Choose God's ways over the world's ways. A spiritual discipline that frees our hearts and schedule for silence, reflection, and fresh revelation. We are establishing a pattern of honoring God. Make sure my time with God is meaningful, quiet, listening."

Most importantly for me was the citation's reminder to be silent before the Lord.

Helpful post, thank you. I especially appreciate the idea of the Sabbath as a *gift*. I see I've been thinking of it as a restriction.

If We Say, "I Want."

I am grateful that this church teaches us that our joy is in giving. If I am not joyful, it may be because I am thinking of my "self" and my "wants." I can always give, no matter if I am alone or in a crowd, by the way I am thinking. On Wednesday, I didn't give a testimony of thanks to God for all His blessings, and felt down afterwards, so I am glad to be aware of this, as often it seems everything will try to stop me from giving a testimony.

Under the articles section of this website, Bicknell Young has a great article called "If we say, 'I want.'" In this article one of the many helpful ideas he gives is "if there is anything you want, stop and think; that's the reason you haven't got it."

This morning when I woke, the first thing that came to me was Hymn #3 from the Christian Science Hymnal. "A grateful heart a garden is." It was a good way to start the day.

In years of reading Christian Science organized Bible Lessons, never once did I read of the story of Jezebel and Ahab. I was really glad for a new, fresh lesson. It seems that Ahab was wealthy, but still wanted more. He became depressed over the fact that Naboth wouldn't give him his vineyard. While Jezebel ended up causing the murder of Naboth, it was Ahab's ingratitude and thoughts of "I want," that instigated the whole situation. This is a good

lesson for me to remember always to be grateful. God really has blessed us with so much good and to be in a state of "I want" never leads us to anything good. I am really grateful for the Plainfield Bible Lessons, and all that I have started to learn from this church, and from the practitioners here. Thanks for a great lesson!

Hymn #3, 1st Stanza

A grateful heart a garden is,
Where there is always room
For every lovely, Godlike grace
To come to perfect bloom....

"A Tough Teacher's Alter Ego"

This week's Bible story about Ahab coveting and taking possession of Naboth's vineyard reminded me of Mrs. Eddy's spiritual interpretation of the commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," which is "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Then I remembered a newscast from several years ago entitled "[A Tough Teacher's Alter Ego](#)," depicting a behavior completely opposite to that of Ahab and Jezebel, at the same time in complete alignment with Mrs. Eddy's reiteration of the commandment above, as well as this week's golden text: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

Such a beautiful story and example. It brought tears to my eyes. Thank you!

"Thanks at the Remembrance of His Holiness"

"Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness."
Ps.97:12

This week's Watching Point 32 states: "In denying matter you are really denying the way mortal mind sees the true heaven and earth, that *already exist* here and now in all their

perfection. You will surely see this perfection the moment your dull eyes are opened....” (*emphasis added*) It is *God* that opens my eyes to the remembrance of His holiness; therefore I give thanks *to God*.

Henry Grove, an English minister (1683-1738) wrote about this verse: “God...feeds our hearts with a thousand little rivulets of joy and satisfaction from created objects.” What an abundance of good to be thankful for! — and to know that it comes from God and is not in matter.

And Andreas Musculus (1514–1581), a German Lutheran theologian writes about the same verse: “Two things are to be observed — One, that the Psalmist unites joy in the Lord and praise of God. Another, that he connects the praise of God with the remembrance of his holiness. Thus, this verse contains the root and fruit of divine praise. The root is joy in God; the fruit is the remembrance of God and his goodness.”
