

# FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

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ISSUE 173

**SUBJECT: Reality —  
September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

## **Choose Good as the Reality!**

“The Bible declares: ‘All things were made by Him [the divine Word]; and without Him was not anything made that was made.’ This is the eternal verity of divine Science. If sin, sickness, and death were understood as nothingness, they would disappear. As vapor melts before the sun, so evil would vanish before the reality of good. One must hide the other. How important, then, to choose good as the reality!” (*Science and Health* 480:26)

Last Sunday’s Roundtable, “Two Essential Ingredients for Healing” had a lot of instruction regarding praising God. A few of the things that were said were: “Don’t rob God of a grateful heart. If you are not grateful to God, you don’t know God. If you don’t have something to be grateful for on Wednesday, then something is wrong. There are two essential ingredients to healing ‘joy and gratitude.’ We need to be contented no matter what situation we are in. This gratitude is a deep part of you, not a superficial expression.”

What I took away was to make sure that I was truly feeling genuine joy and gratitude for God, and to counteract any ingratitude or lack of joy trying to enter thought. Do not let error block the flow of good. Be grateful, sing hymns, praise God. “Choose good as the reality!”

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Thank you. This morning I said to myself: “Today I choose good.”

In thinking more about this choice, the word “election” came to mind. Webster’s 1828 Dictionary defines “election” as “Divine choice; voluntary preference; free will; liberty to act or not; discernment; discrimination; distinction.” This

lesson on Reality is all about electing to choose good as our thinking. This is what we have been elected or chosen by God to do. This is the only true election going on.

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## **Rising with the Light**

“But the path of the just *is* as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” (Proverbs 4:18)

“I am the light of the world: he that *followeth* me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” (John 8:12, *emphasis added*)

The scriptures above teach that light is something not simply to be looked at or appreciated, but something to be followed, to be walked in, helping me understand the promises in Isaiah 60:1-3.

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”

To illumine earth, the sun does not turn itself on like a spotlight, nor does it attain its high-noon position in a sudden leap from below the horizon, but appears gradually by degrees as day progresses.

As faith without works is dead, so light that is not followed is darkness. Arising and shining is not a sudden sunburst, but a step-by-step ascension up Jacob’s ladder of light, each step brighter than the last.

“The spiritually minded meet on the stairs which lead up to spiritual love.” (*Retrospection and Introspection* 76:14) Not on horizontal ground, but a stairway. Thus, I have to keep moving, walking in the light as He is in the light, onward and upward!

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## "Ghosts Are Not Realities"

I thought it interesting that the word “ghost” was mentioned several times in this week’s lesson. One was regarding children who “should be assured that their fears are groundless, that ghosts are not realities, but traditional beliefs, erroneous and man-made.” (*Science and Health* 352:22) In the “Glossary” on page 587, Mrs. Eddy defines “GHOST” as “illusion; a belief that mind is outlined and limited; a supposition that spirit is finite.” In other words, an unreal, false belief that is the opposite of God as all-powerful, infinite Spirit, Mind. I definitely don’t want to believe in that!

Continuing on page 353 in *Science and Health*, (lines 13-16, and 19-24) it says: “The age has not wholly outlived the sense of ghostly beliefs. It still holds them more or less. Time has not yet reached eternity, immortality, complete reality.... We must give up the spectral at all points. We must not continue to admit the somethingness of superstition, but we must yield up all belief in it and be wise. When we learn that error is not real, we shall be ready for progress, ‘forgetting those things which are behind.’”

I looked up “superstition” in the Webster’s 1828 Dictionary. It said: “Excessive exactness or rigor in religious opinions or practice...the doing of things not required by God, or abstaining from things not forbidden; or the belief of what is absurd, or belief without evidence.... Belief in the direct agency of superior powers in certain extraordinary or singular events, or in omens or prognostics.” Wow! Talk about being obsessive, and compulsively doing the wrong things at the wrong time trying to appease God. Or worse, appease some power one thinks is evil and more powerful than God. This got me to thinking, what false ghostly beliefs have I allowed to “haunt” me? Past mistakes, guilt, a sense of loss, a nagging fear? Am I identifying myself as a mortal subject to superstitious beliefs, such as heredity, materia medica, having to do things the same way, fear of doing/learning something new, “black cats, and ladders,” and the list goes on?

Mrs. Eddy further states in *Science and Health* (403:14): “You command the situation if you understand that mortal existence is a state of self-

deception and not the truth of being. Mortal mind is constantly producing on mortal body the results of false opinions; and it will continue to do so, until mortal error is deprived of its imaginary powers by Truth, which sweeps away the gossamer web of mortal illusion. The most Christian state is one of rectitude and spiritual understanding, and this is best adapted for healing the sick.”

Webster’s 1828 Dictionary defines “gossamer” as “a fine filmy substance.” This was very encouraging to me because it means that the illusion is not strong or very deep. It is only my false beliefs, which when I confront them vigorously and persistently with Truth and finally see their utter falsity, they are destroyed. Isn’t it funny how when I finally wake up from some false belief and see its nothingness, it truly disappears because it was never true in the first place?

Wonderful lesson. Thank you lesson writers.

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## "Wait on the Lord"

“Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.” (Ps. 27:14)

Two words in this verse struck me: “wait” and “courage.” Webster’s 1828 Dictionary defines them as follows:

“Wait” – to stay or rest in expectation; also to attend, as a servant; to look watchfully; to be ready to serve; to obey.

“Courage” – (derived from the word “heart”) bravery; intrepidity; that quality of mind which enables men to encounter danger and difficulties with firmness, or without fear or depression of spirits; resolution.

So, waiting upon God is not a passive thing, but an active service on my part, a “clinging steadfastly” to God, a watchfulness and resistance to any false suggestions that may tempt me. Waiting is so important, that it is repeated in this Psalm verse.

Charles Spurgeon wrote of this verse: “Wait at his door with prayer; wait at his foot with humility; wait at his table with service; wait at his window

with expectancy.” And another Bible commentary stated: “Make an effort to be strong, and the strength will be given thee.” This reminds me of what Mrs. Eddy wrote: “Resist evil — error of every sort — and it will flee from you.” (*Science and Health* 406:19) This is God’s promise.

I’m grateful for these inspired Lesson-Sermons, and for this Forum which helps me dig deeper into the Bible and get what God has for me.

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## **SUBJECT:Unreality — October 4<sup>th</sup>,2020**

### **A Knowledge of Error and of Its Operations**

“A knowledge of error and of its operations must precede that understanding of Truth which destroys error, until the entire mortal, material error finally disappears, and the eternal verity, man created by and of Spirit, is understood and recognized as the true likeness of his Maker.” (*Science and Health*, 252:8)

“Mrs. Eddy once asked a branch church member how his church was getting along. When he said, ‘very harmoniously,’ she said, ‘That’s too bad. If you were making progress, things would not be so harmonious.’” (*Divinity Course and General Collectanea*, by Mary Baker Eddy)

Today, I came across a poem in *Mary Baker Eddy, Her Spiritual Precepts*, Vol. 2, by Gilbert C. Carpenter, C.S.B. — “A young student calls all affliction dark, and struggles to overcome it, just as he calls all harmony demonstration. He has not yet learned that the most deterring phase of animal magnetism is that which presents itself as human harmony, or human good, because it would seek to make mortals so happy in hell, that they have no interest in heaven. The following parody illustrates this contrast between human evil and human good:

“It is easy enough to fight,  
When the devil frowns and is vile;  
But the man with might,  
Is the man who can fight  
When the devil comes with a smile.”

In my experience, this smile works like a spell. It charms, promises, and deceives. The desire for things to be nice and smooth without facing and destroying evil was keeping me clinging “to earth because he has not tasted heaven.” (*Science and Health* 263:10) I am grateful to be learning to build spiritual fortitude rather than seek soothing words that did not heal. It is good to be where this is being taught!

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### **PLEASURES OF SENSE VS. PANGS OF SENSE**

“In his mortal agonies, Job’s wife tempted him, saying: ‘Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die,’ but Job resisted this temptation of evil and rebuked his wife. Hereby we learn that Adam’s estate in error — where the senses were supposed to supply him only pleasure — was more subtle than the pains of sense to mislead mortals. [Adam] yielded to the temptations of the flesh and thereby lost a sense of harmony; he had never possessed its science, while through the pangs of sense Job was instructed and made able to resist the temptations of evil.” (Sermon, “Key to Job,” Mary Baker Eddy, 1887.)

- On <https://mbepapers.org/>
- Click on “Access the Papers” (button at center of page)
- Enter “Key to Job” (with quotation marks) in the Search field (upper right-hand corner)
- Click on “This man began to build (Unfinished and Finished)”

This is the sermon that includes the “Key to Job.”

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Thank you very much for these posts, so helpful! And how wonderful to find Mrs. Eddy’s writings in “Mary Baker Eddy Papers” — spending time here has been a great boon. Thank you for sharing this resource!

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### **Art Thou He That Troubleth Israel?**

“And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, *Art* thou he that troubleth Israel?” (I Kings 18:17)

Here Ahab first accuses Elijah. This is so typical of error. Whenever you take a stand against error, its first defense is to turn the lie upon you, and accuse you of the sin *it* has committed. It thereby tries to put you on a weak defensive, and feel guilty for something you have not done.

In Edward Kimball's *Teaching and Addresses* (page 214) he writes: "The very worst form of malicious animal magnetism is that which offers itself to us in the guise of truth through the avenue of recent circumstances. In belief, it presents itself to you in the guise of an accusing angel." Kimball goes on to say, "It haunts you with a personality all distorted with mortal suggestions, makes itself hideous and hateful, urges you to adopt this as being yourself, and to consider this kind of an 'I' as an outcast from God, bereft of hope and merit." This is the absolute epitome of deception (unreality), and always error's aim!

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## All Gifts

"That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ." (Ephesians 4:14,15)

"Do not err, my beloved brethren. 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 1:16, 17)

It is becoming clear to me that ALL is from our Father, and nothing human can bring us supply, joy, or love. I did not understand that unless everything is based on Spirit and Truth, it is not real. This is quite a lesson, and I am grateful for what I am learning here at the Plainfield Christian Science Church, Independent.

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## Do Not Err, My Beloved Brethren

"Do not err, my beloved brethren." (James 1:16)

Webster's 1828 Dictionary definition of "err" is "to wander from the right way; to deviate from the path or line of duty."

To this definition of "err" I added: to be discouraged, to lose faith, to quit working; to be unwatchful; to doubt; to lose joy; to believe that evil is real. This really brought it home to me. Brethren, we WILL NOT, SHALL NOT err.

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## Hymn 253

*From The Christian Science Hymnal,  
1932 edition*

*The words of this hymn were written by  
Mary Baker Eddy.*

O'er waiting harpstrings of the mind  
There sweeps a strain,  
Low, sad, and sweet, whose measures bind  
The power of pain,

And wake a white-winged angel throng  
Of thoughts, illumed  
By faith, and breathed in raptured song,  
With love perfumed.

Then His unveiled, sweet mercies show  
Life's burdens light.  
I kiss the cross, and wake to know  
A world more bright.

And o'er earth's troubled, angry sea  
I see Christ walk,  
And come to me, and tenderly,  
Divinely talk.

Thus Truth engrounds me on the rock,  
Upon Life's shore,  
'Gainst which the winds and waves can shock,  
Oh, nevermore!

From tired joy and grief afar,  
And nearer Thee,—  
Father, where Thine own children are,  
I love to be.

My prayer, some daily good to do  
To Thine, for Thee;  
An offering pure of Love, whereto  
God leadeth me.