

FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

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ISSUE 204

SUBJECT: Sacrament — January 9th, 2022

Sacrament – Visible and Invisible

A sacrament is defined as an outward physical sign of an inner spiritual reality. In traditional religious practice, sacramental acts include ritual cleansing of hands and feet, cups and pots, physical placement of various material items on an altar, assuming various bodily postures such as kneeling in prayer, etc. The intent here is to be “present with the body” in order to conjure the presence of Spirit or the approval of a personal God.

Three examples of Jesus conceding to outward ceremony are: his baptism at the Jordan River; his commanding 10 healed lepers to show themselves to a priest, and his attendance at the Last Supper, which “closed forever Jesus’ ritualism or concessions to matter.” (*Science and Health*, p. 33) Metaphysically speaking, Sacrament has nothing whatsoever to do with outward rites proscribed by men, but works wrought by Mind alone. The things of Mind “are alone Real; what is called Corporeal, Nobody Knows of its Dwelling Place: it is in Fallacy, and its Existence an Imposture. Where is the Existence Out of Mind or Thought? Where is it but in the Mind of a Fool?” — William Blake

Thank you. Your post caused me to consider the word ‘sacrament’ more deeply. I add from my notes: St Augustine says of ‘sacrament’ that “it is the visible form of an invisible grace” ... “a sign of a sacred thing”.

Humankind, in primitive and pre-literate times, created hierarchical societies that believed ultimate power was in something mysterious. They put their faith in unique gods, persons, and animals, or they believed that there were transcendental powers hidden or unseen in objects, places, buildings, and climatic events. The word ‘sacrament’ was abused

during the Spanish Inquisition when consecrated crosses were believed to be equivalent to the power of God. A cross, as divine authority, was held over a witch’s head in judgement: life or death?

Where does Mary Baker Eddy provide an explanation of the word ‘sacrament’ in the context of Christian Science in her writings? I am unsure of where she refers to it.

From Christian Science Journal, July 1886, excerpted from “Church and Association” article: SUMMER COMMUNION SERVICE –

At the close of Mr. Gill’s sermon, the beloved pastor of the church, Mrs. Eddy, administered the sacrament, after she had received into fellowship those who presented themselves for membership. Happy indeed are those who receive the Right Hand of Welcome in Divine Love from such a pastor as this! She who walks so close to God may well bid others into the wealth of His riches and His power. Self-consecration becomes a joy in itself, when such rewards as she has earned burst upon the vision. She welcomes us to a communion with Spirit, that shall bring as its result a regeneration of ourselves, making us enter into communication with Jesus, who demonstrated the entireness of God, the supremacy of Spirit, and the nothingness of matter.

This communion can come only by regeneration, by the baptism of Spirit, as taught through Christian Science. This baptism with fire brings out the true odor of divinity, establishing the omnipresence of God, imparted to man in healing the sick by salvation from sin, and triumphing over a sense of (dead and buried) understanding, and revealing the Comforter which leadeth into peace. This it is to eat the bread. What is the Bread of Christian Science? It is the strength and nutriment that God gives to the fainting heart and faltering

footsteps, in the awful hours of human helplessness; yea! that power He imparts, by which we gain a recognition of Himself, —that recognition which is never grasped by intellect, but by the humble heart.

What is the Cup of Christian Science? It is that cup which is drank in affliction. It is the exhilaration of joy, after the triumph over temptation. It is the fruit of that vine of which the Father is the husbandman. It is that wine-press which each child of God must tread alone,— that wine-press whose seeds of sin must be crushed, and which the weary feet may not leave till each seed is in itself crushed,—that out of this essence God shall distil a new creature, which shall bear witness of Himself as the Love which heals.

We are bidden, as members of this church, to partake of the silent sacrament, to come to this table of His preparing with thanksgiving. To us is spoken the command, “My child, give me thy heart;” while it is ours to answer: Search me, oh God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my thoughts; And see if there be any wicked way in me.

I Delight To Do Thy Will, O my God

(Golden Text: Psalm 40: 8) “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law *is* within my heart.”

Before I came to Plainfield, there was a long time where I am sure it would have seemed impossible to “delight to do God’s will.” I am sure I would have told myself that I don’t want to be controlled or manipulated. Come to find out that I was in those moments being controlled or manipulated by mortal mind, and I was not in any way delighted about it. Now, I actually do delight to wake up each day and do my best to listen to divine inspiration and live this Science. While reading the Golden Text this week, I was grateful to understand that doing God’s will is not a matter of shutting down what I actually want to do, but rather — as God’s image and likeness — His will *is* what I want to do. To have this opportunity to do good each day and to be full of joy and gratitude for every bit of abundance (whether it be the beauty outside my

window or all the ideas He blesses me with each day to do my work) — why wouldn’t I be delighted to be right where God wants me to be?

Thank you, Plainfield; I am so grateful for how life-changing Christian Science is!

Consistent Prayer is the Desire to do Right

“Consistent prayer is the desire to do right. Prayer means that we desire to walk and will walk in the light so far as we receive it, even though with bleeding footsteps, and that waiting patiently on the Lord, we will leave our real desires to be rewarded by Him.” (*Science and Health*, page 9)

Since attending Plainfield CS Church, Independent, I have learned that prayer must have action, not just repeating words; after all, the scribes and pharisees were full of prayers. We are blessed to have Mrs. Eddy’s chapter, “[PRAYER](#)” (click to read and listen), which she placed first in *Science and Health*. We are taught here the importance of walking the walk for our prayers to be effective, to back up one’s talk with action. This lesson was a good reminder to check that this is what we are doing.

God Given Dominion

(*Science and Health*, p. 381): “Think less of the enactments of mortal mind, and you will sooner grasp man’s God-given dominion. You must understand your way out of human theories relating to health, or you will never believe that you are quite free from some ailment. The harmony and immortality of man will never be reached without the understanding that Mind is not in matter. Let us banish sickness as an outlaw, and abide by the rule of perpetual harmony, — God’s law. It is man’s moral right to annul an unjust sentence, a sentence never inflicted by divine authority.” Also, in *Science and Health*, p. 352-353, Mrs. Eddy explains that false beliefs are like believing in ghosts.... which do not exist, but we have not totally outlived this sense of ghostly belief.

When we finally give up old false beliefs, we are made ready for progress... “forgetting the things which are behind”.

SUBJECT: Life — January 16th, 2022

The Eternal Truth of Life

Christ Science is teaching me that immortal Life contains no element of matter, rather is composed of the substance of Spirit, which is infinite, without beginning or end (see *Science and Health*, 1875, Ch. 1).

Immortality is governed by one scientific Principle, God, and its infinite idea (Christ Awareness) (Ibid, p. 23). Christ Understanding is free of erroneous beliefs (error) and personal sense, since Christ Awareness reflects One Life, One Intelligence, One Mind. As God is All-in-All, there can be no other Life, Mind or Intelligence (see *Science and Health*, 1875, Ch. 1).

Eternal Life, as revealed by every great prophet, reads as a summons: “...come out ... and be ye separate” (11 Cor 6:17). The degree that I can ‘come out’ of error and of personal sense and live in that Mind that was also in Christ Jesus, can I comprehend and demonstrate, I Am That: the ‘image and likeness’ of God, Spirit, Immortal Life (see *Science and Health*, 1875, Ch. 1; refer Genesis).

I consider the great Truth underpinning this week’s lesson on the topic of ‘Life’ is that God’s ‘image and likeness’ is Spirit, Mind, Immortality; that Life “is the atmosphere of Soul pervading ALL space” (*Science and Health*, 1875, p. 24).

“Life is a term used to indicate Deity; and every other name for the Supreme Being, if properly employed, has the signification of [immortal] Life”. (Retrospection and Introspection, p. 59).

I am grateful to Soul for inspiring me to read and to contemplate (to feel in my heart) ‘*Science and Health*’. Thank you, Plainfield CS members, for this lesson which showcases ‘Life’ as the eternal Truth.

“Sound Mind”

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” (II Timothy 1:7).

In looking at the Students’ New Testament Compilation, I found several different meanings for “sound mind”.

“For God hath not given us a spirit of fear, but of energy, and love, and instruction.” (Murdoch’s Translation).

“For God gave us not the spirit of cowardice, but of power, and of love and of admonition.” (Notes: “of admonition”, that is courage is giving admonition to others.) (New Testament by George Noyes)
“for God has not given us a timid spirit but a spirit of power and love and discipline.” (New Testament by James Moffat)

The term “fear”, in the Greek implies “bondage” or “slavery”. This affords a better contrast to “sound mind”. The expression “sound mind” has been translated by Fenton as “discretion”, by Goodspeed as “self-correction”; in the Twentieth Century New Testament as “self-control”.

“Admonition” - Gentle reproof; counseling against a fault; instruction in duties; caution; direction. (Webster’s 1828 Dictionary).

I pray I have the humility to accept gentle reproof but even more to have the courage to speak up, when necessary, as has been mentioned by others on many occasions, that we do not stay silent when we need to speak up.

One God and Father of All

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

(Ephesians 4). This reminded me of an article, “[Love, Personal and Impersonal](#)” From Spiritual Man (c.1914) by Rev. G. A. Kratzer which uses an analogy to teach the importance of seeing beyond outward trappings to the fact that all live, move and have their being in God; therefore, with the correct vision and love for God’s creation comes the freedom from any sense of comparing or coveting.

All having access to the same good in God's abundant kingdom.

Thank you for your post and the article you shared. It really does create a clear picture as to how united in God's love we all are.

Beautiful lesson, thank you!

Let Your Light so Shine

(The Golden Text: Matthew 5:16) "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Bicknell Young's article "God is Individual Consciousness" corresponds so well with the Golden Text: "It is only through this realization of God as the Consciousness of individual being that we can awaken others. We should never try to convince another of Truth, because no appeal to the human intellect can convey Truth. Our Principle is that God is the Mind, Soul, Intelligence, Life and Substance of individual being. This is a universal Truth, and as we abide in this Truth, all who come within range of our thought will be spiritually attracted to it. Let the Truth touch all those who are ready for it. Our interest is in this as a universal Truth, and as we embrace It as such, all those who come in touch with us are healed. Then, our thanks is not for the healing, but our joy is for the PRINCIPLE shown forth."

Also, page 118 of *Science and Health*, speaking of "...the second appearing in the flesh of the Christ, Truth, hidden in sacred secrecy from the visible world? Ages pass, but this leaven of Truth is ever at work. It must destroy the entire mass of error, and so be eternally glorified in man's spiritual freedom."

"God is on the field, although He seems invisible." (Hymn 87)

SUBJECT: Truth — January 23rd, 2022

What is Truth?

(Golden Text: James 1:18). "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."

While I was reading and contemplating the passages provided for this lesson, these words were pushing for centre stage: "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). I discover, according to New Testament Scripture, truth reveals Christ Consciousness as oneness with God. Truth can be defined only in terms of God, Spirit, not person. The revealed Word of God is Truth, since God is the substance of truth (see *Science and Health*). It is clear-cut that "The spiritual sense of truth must be gained before Truth can be understood. This sense is assimilated only as we are honest, unselfish, loving, and meek" (*Science and Health*, p. 272:3-5; see Matthew 5, Sermon on the Mount). Simply believing truth is not sufficient! I relish the scientific fact that Truth is a continuing Principle in Life, and governs everything by its own Light (see *S&H* 1875, Ch.1).

I share my key study points:

- (a) Prophet Elisha's oil 'miracle' tells me, I must pour (share) the 'oil' (truth) I already have in my house (awareness) into jars (receptive thought) to bring forth greater understanding of truth (2 Kings 4).
- (b) Jesus of Nazareth teaches disciples, once they "know the truth" IN SPIRIT, it will "make them free" of everything that is untrue (error, personal sense) (John 8:32; 4:24).
- (c) Saint James (1:17) inspires me to accept God's greatest gift of truth, Immortal Life!
- (d) Mirroring Elisha, James also tells me that I must share the "firstfruits" (Christ Awareness) of God's gift (Immortal Life) with "his creatures" (error-bound mortals) as soon as it ripens ('heals') (James 1:18).
- (e) As a Christ disciple, I have to trust that God will provide "the loaves and fishes" (the demonstration) in recognition of the truth that in Reality I abide in Heaven (Eternal Life), and no longer cling to a material sense of existence (error)

(John 6:1-12).

(f) Saint James (1:18) warns me of the truth that my awakening Christ is “Of his own” (Spirit) so I must live ‘with the word of truth’, not with error.

This lesson reveals to me that ‘truth’ is a sacred word whose meaning will change and deepen as I assimilate to the Christ Mind through the study and practice of divine Science.

Voices of Solemn Import

Thank you, thank you, for the beautiful lesson this week! And for the watches for Thursday and Saturday, which were all very powerful and wonderful to work with! The “burial of error and the resurrection to spiritual life” – how magnificent is this! In doing this work for ourselves, we lift up all mankind. All those ones who are thirsting for God’s Love will feel it. How beautiful! “This truth is all powerful and has no opposition”, and “it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it”. Working with these truths has been such a great blessing to our home this week – the heart is lifted, the soul is soaring within; and the “ignorance of foolish men” is silent in our home, in our hearts and in our lives. The world is waking to the Christ, and nothing, not “media miasma”, not error, not the greatest of all lies can obscure the Divine Love which blesses every single sweet soul with the Christ Comfort. All who seek, find. God’s children feel the Love, they hear the Truth and they joyously come to sit at the feet of Jesus. “Who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth”. O how I LOVE the Truth – “Father, where Thine own children are, I LOVE to be”. Thank you, Plainfield Independent!

Every Thing to All Bountifulness

“And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; ... and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness; Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.” (II Corinthians 9) I love this promise of bountifulness for this church and its mission to bring Mary Baker Eddy’s pure Christian Science to the world. We can be sure that all the prayers and good work our God will

“multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness.” Even though we may never see all the blessings, we can trust this law of Truth is in operation and error of any name cannot reverse it and that “Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.” (Matthew 13).

A Child Shall Lead Them

(This testimonial from the March 1889 CS Journal is a lesson in receptivity to Truth combined with stern resolve in confronting an obstinate, error-spewing adversary.)

In the suburbs of this city [Boston], the following case occurred about two weeks ago.

In a family where Christian Science had found a welcome, but was not clearly understood by the parents, a child, of about ten years, was stricken with an acute belief of suffering. Science aid not being at once available, the former medical adviser was called for his opinion on the case.

The next day the medical adviser expressed fears relative to ensuing conditions, which ripened in one or more subsequent visits to a manifestation that required the skill of a surgeon. He suggested a certain “new process” of lancing, to ward off the danger of an internal breakage, from which sure death would be the result. Upon hearing this conclusion, the affrighted child shrieked in terror for him to go away and return no more, utterly and persistently refusing to take the medicine, or do aught that was prescribed, but calling loudly for Mrs.—, a Scientist, to come and see her.

At length, discomfited, he asked who the party was, and the child replied, with fervor, “She is a Christian Scientist!”

“But you have a disease here that is beyond Christian Science,” said the doctor; then, portraying the condition as very critical, life hanging by a thread, and so on, declared his intention to call the following day, bringing with him a celebrated surgeon from the neighboring city to examine the case, and operate thereupon if necessary.

Through the intensity of fear there had been no expressed remonstrance up to this point, save that of the child's; but when left to themselves the conviction of not having done all impelled the parents to yield to the child's request and summon the Scientist at once. Upon her arrival the child was soon comforted, and with thought receptive to the Truth and accustomed to its blessed ministrations, a quick response followed, visible to sense in the changed condition from high fever in belief, to perspiration and quiet slumber.

After a brief interval the family were induced to retire, while the lady, with her assistant, took charge of the patient, tenderly administered to her needs, and the realization of Truth in its application, looked alone to God for the result, assured by the promise, "My Word shall not return unto Me void."

The morning came, bright with hope; at the appointed hour came also the M. D.'s, one or both of them surgeons, who proceeded to examine the patient for the fatal bunch, but found nothing to lance, nor even from which to determine its location, the temperature normal, and but little, if any, soreness.

After a brief consultation, they advised extreme quiet in bed for recuperation, and left the home. On the following morning the regular attendant called again, the child greeting him with the remark, "I am up, doctor," whereupon the mother was upbraided for not heeding the instructions, and a similar case was pictured before her in which it was alleged that in twelve hours the child had died. He was reminded, in reply, of the statement by the surgeons as to the changed conditions of the patient, in the disappearance of the bunch, to which he gave little heed, and reproached the mother for the grave offence of allowing the patient to be up, saying she should be strapped down to the bed, if she could be kept down in no other way.

This was quite too much; it was now the mother's turn to speak. She asked him how he accounted for the suddenness of change, when he knew that nothing was done in accordance with his order. The reply was, "Oh, rest and quiet brought it about." Then the mother opened her mouth to the praise of Truth, and declared the fact of calling in a Christian Scientist, with this blessed fruit in result.

The scene can be better imagined than described, when the doctor closed with the statement that "Christian Scientists ought every one to be hung." Despite it all Truth triumphed, and its own harmony was made manifest in health and blessing.

A Call to Action!

This is a truly wonderful lesson. In this time where the world seems to be fraught with a lot of untruths, I really dug into this week's lesson. There are so many takeaways, here is my short list: God gave us the Word of Truth. It blesses us! God knows the righteous, those who know His law. Listen to God, He has an everlasting covenant for those who hear. The Word prospers those who do something with it. Keep the Word, bring forth fruit...with patience. Start with just one truth, but start! And reap bountifully. Glorify God and do well, in order to silence ignorance. Be of one mind. Strive! Demonstrate the divine nature. Put into practice what I know.

"...Truth is demonstrable when understood, and... good is not understood until demonstrated." (*Science and Health*, p. 323) Sow the seeds of Truth. "SPEAK THE TRUTH TO EVERY FORM OF ERROR." (*Science and Health*, p. 418) [emphasis added]. And, the "only possible action of Truth is the production of harmony. WOW!!! That's a LOT of inspiration.

Thank you lesson writer!!!! Now to practice speaking the truth to *every* form of error!
