

October 2, 2006 – Subject: Are Sin, Disease, and Death Real?

Dear Friends: Mary Baker Eddy gave her students 26 subjects for weekly Bible Lessons, to be covered twice yearly. Flowing through the year in her order of the subjects, we hereby present fresh views of each one by outstanding Christian Scientists. In this way, we hope to partake with you of new unfoldments of her infinite revelation.

Our first selection this week is the Foreword from "Addresses and Other Writings on Christian Science" by Doris DuFour.

FORWARD

It must have been about the year 1910 that Christian Science was first introduced to our family; I know Mother was disappointed that she had just missed seeing Mrs. Eddy. Certainly no family could have been more in need of the truth. Our home was a "hospital ship." We had never known what it was to see Mother well. She had no strength; her days were spent lying on a couch and no medicines had helped. My brother Ronald had consumption – it was hereditary – and it was thought a miracle that he had reached the age of fourteen, even though he had not been able to attend school. My father suffered from a liver complaint and periodic attacks of migraine. And my sister Doris-Doll, as we called her-was a shocking sight. She had had multiple operations on her face and head for carious bones. Her face was constantly bandaged, and a nurse was in attendance to do this. One side of her face was paralyzed; her mouth was at an angle and one eye was shut. The surgeons said they could do no more for her as the facial nerve was severed, but they offered the scant comfort that, before long, she would know no more as the disease would reach her brain.

One day a friend came to see my father at the mill which he ran. To the question "How are you?" my father replied as usual, "Just fair." On hearing this, the friend asked if he could tell my father about "his faith," which had changed his life. My father agreed with some reluctance, as he held office in the Wesleyan church, and he learned that his friend's faith was Christian Science. The friend lent my father a copy of Mrs. Eddy's book Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, setting a time limit of two weeks for its return. However, when my father got home with it, Mother said, "We don't want any of those newfangled ideas," and the book was put on the piano, where

it remained unopened until it was returned a fortnight later. I can see it there to this day!

A little later my father visited Manchester; and, feeling he had perhaps been a little discourteous about the book, he went to a Christian Science Reading Room and purchased a copy of Science and Health. One day shortly after that, Mother was feeling particularly weak. She had been reading the Bible and then turned to Science and Health, and her eyes fell on the words (page 135), "There is today danger of repeating the offence of the Jews by limiting the Holy One of Israel and asking: 'Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?' What cannot God do?" She jumped up, went into the kitchen, and started to give orders. My father returned home for lunch, saw Mother was up and about, and asked what had happened. Mother answered, using a Yorkshire expression, "I've been reading the book: I feel made over again." Father said, "Do be careful" But Mother replied, "I know what I am doing. I'm all right. "

Shortly after that, Mother went into the schoolroom and said to Ronald and Doll, "There's no need to be ill any more. I have found a book that tells us that Life is spelt with a capital L, and what we thought was life was just a mistake. I wish I had known about this before.." Ronald began to improve at once and soon attended school. He had a long and active life before he passed on at the age of ninety years. My mother said to Doll, "Now we have heard of Christian Science, we shall not take you to Manchester [where the specialist was] any more." Nor were there any more bandages.

My parents began to attend church services some miles away. One day, my father had a severe attack of migraine and retired to bed. My mother read Science and Health for a short time and then went to him and said, "Get up: you are healed!" He was. Doris also began to improve, even though there was at that time no practitioner locally. She soon started to attend school, which was a great step, and one day, not long after, she suddenly said to her schoolmistress, "I can feel my face!" Feeling had indeed come to her face for the first time. Father took Doll to the specialist in Manchester, who looked at her and said, "The age of miracles is not over. The nerve has joined."

It was about this time that, as Doll recalled, two things happened. She made contact with James Neal in Boston. He had been in Mrs. Eddy's last Class and was the one whom Mrs. Eddy had referred to as the "perfect practitioner." She asked him what time he worked for

her each day so that she could be working too! Then, one day, she read in a local paper that a cousin had won a beauty competition. Rather sadly she said, "I could never do that," but then she added, "But I have the beauty of holiness." She went to her schoolroom and all morning she thought about the beauty of holiness. At lunch time, when she came down, Mother exclaimed, "Doll, have you seen your face?" Doris replied, "God, cannot see a mortal face: He can only see the beauty of holiness." By the evening, her whole face had moved round to a normal angle.

Doris could not have enough Science, and soon she decided to go to Boston, where she was determined to meet those who had known our Leader. She met with James Neal and expressed her desire to practice. He said that she should just wait as there was evidently something to do with her mouth that still needed healing. "In that case," said Doll, "you heal me!" He gave her one treatment and she was healed. During her visit to Boston, as well as in subsequent visits, she spent long times with members of Mrs. Eddy's household, and in particular with Laura Sargent and Daisette McKenzie, learning many things that our Leader had told them. When she returned to England, she started her practice, and for over sixty years I never knew her without a full practice. Services were started in our home and Mother began to worry that Doll was doing too much!

The numbers attending services increased. For a time they were held in the local Sobriety Hall, but this was inappropriate and a search was made for a site on which to build a church in the local Yorkshire town of Todmorden. A businessman heard of the search. He was a flamboyant character, and when he was seen to attend a local Christian Science lecture – given by Bliss Knapp – it was something of a seven-day wonder! However, his daughter had been healed of hip disease by Doris and was able to walk again, and one day Doris took a telephone call from him in which he expressed his gratitude for all she had done for him and his family. He then said, "I hear you are looking for a building for your church. If you can make something out of my residence in town, you can have it. I'm giving it to you!" This became the local church, and it would be true to say that its membership was drawn in large part from those whom Doris had healed. One of those early members writes of this time: "Our son was returning from an international car rally and his car went over a precipice. Doris was contacted and her statement was, 'This accident has no more touched Oliver than the crucifixion touched the Christ.'

In spite of several severe injuries, within six weeks he was driving again, completely healed.” Another healing of those early days is recorded in A Century of Christian Science Healing, on pages 84-86.

It was not long after this that Doris moved to London, and her work from then on is known to many. So, too, are her Association addresses, which have been of such help to those who have had them. I was very happy to learn that some of her friends had decided to collect these papers from many sources so that the pure Science they express might be preserved in book form and circulated to those who knew her. I went with her to many of these Association meetings and know many of those whose lives have been touched by her work. She was a great giver. She was so sure of what her real substance was that she never ceased giving. Everyone was precious to her. Nothing was allowed to get in the way of her Science, even though she managed her home efficiently and with a constant sense of abundance. Few have succeeded in dropping the human concept and its demands more than she did, but she once said: “It was so easy for me: there was nothing worth keeping!” She was, as I have always said, an amazing child.

To those who originated the idea of this book and cherished it until it took form, as well as for the work and time (so happily given) that it has involved, I wish to express my gratitude.

Flora Nelson Ogden

West Sussex, England

January 1989

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Our second selection is from SEEDTIME AND HARVEST IN UNITY OF GOOD by Mary Baker Eddy.

What is the cardinal point of the difference in my metaphysical system? This: that by knowing the unreality of disease, sin, end death, you demonstrate the allness of God.

This difference wholly separates my system from all others. The reality of these so-called existences I deny, because they are not to be found in God, and this system is built on Him as the sole cause. It would be difficult to name any previous teachers, save Jesus and his apostles, who have thus taught.

If there be any monopoly in my teaching, it lies in this utter reliance upon the one God, to whom belong all things.

Life is God, or Spirit, the supersensible eternal. The universe and man are the spiritual phenomena of this one infinite Mind. Spiritual phenomena never converge toward aught but infinite Deity. Their gradations are spiritual and divine; they cannot collapse, or lapse into their opposites, for God is their divine Principle. They live, because He lives; and they are eternally perfect, because He is perfect, and governs them in the Truth of divine Science, whereof God is the Alpha and Omega, the centre and circumference.

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