

**March 28th, 2005 — Subject: Unreality**

**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 an excerpt from a lecture entitled Christian Science - The Science of Perfection. by Dr. Hendrik Jan de Lange, C.S.

### THE BASIC DISCOVERY

An American Christian Science lecturer once said, If Napoleon had known enough he would have been driving a motorcar and Abraham's wife would have enjoyed a sewing machine. All the materials for these conveniences were available to the world of six thousand years ago just as they are now. Basically it is thought that has changed, not matter. it is to be noted that greater progress in discovery and invention has been made during the last fifty or sixty years than in any other period of human history. This remarkable progress is the result of the ever increasing innate desire for perfection, rarely recognized in one's self or in others, yet ever urging mankind consciously or unconsciously to think beyond and above its material surroundings. We affirm that the Science, which enables mankind to do this, is really fundamental to all other sciences, which brought so many wonderful and useful discoveries to the light. It is the Science basic to the teachings and works of Christ Jesus. It was discovered by Mary Baker Eddy. She called it the Christ Science or Christian Science. It deals with the most important of all problems, namely that of revealing the perfection of God and man and of making applicable to human needs the power and law of perfection. Here the questions naturally arise, what does this mean? Admitting your statement, how can we, everyday people, gain the proof that such a power is available to us?" The full and satisfactory answer to these questions comes whenever the Principle of Christian Science is understood and vitally accepted and its rule correctly applied.

### PRINCIPLE IMPLIES PERFECTION

In the Christian Science textbook, "Science and Health with Key to

the Scriptures,” written as a result of Revelation of Christian Science, Mrs. Eddy defines the word God to mean divine Principle. In this way Religion is lifted out of its unstable groundwork of sentiment and placed upon the firm foundation of Science. At the same time, true Science is shown to be, not a system of human conjecture ever swinging between the uncertain concepts of the human mind and the inevitable limitations of materiality, but an infinite, inspired, and provable knowledge of God, man, and the universe. The Christian Science textbook further-defines God as “in-corporeal, divine, supreme, infinite Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle. Life, Truth, Love” (p. 465). How could it be otherwise? These synonyms are in strict accordance with the Bible, where God is called “Spirit,” “the Word” or Logos, “the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,” and where John’s inspired words, “God is love,” are to be found. Moreover, these synonyms are in consonance with our highest sense of the great First Cause, with the source of what we know of infinity and eternity, with the initial and original Power, which made all that was made. How could we be together here; how could we be conscious and speak of perfection, if there were not a divine Principle of perfection, an infinitely perfect, eternal Cause which we, in deepest adoration, call God?

### **EVIL NOT MADE**

Stating that this perfect and infinite Cause made all that was made, someone may remark, “How about all the imperfection, the evil, sin, sickness, death which seem to abound in the world? Has God made these?”

The answer is: How could a perfect Father-Mother God or Principle conceive of, create, and express something so utterly unlike Himself, and still remain perfect, eternal, infinite? Indeed, He could not, and cannot, because God made all that was made; nothing less, nothing more. This means — and here we have arrived at one of the most glorious revelations of Christian Science — that God did not conceive of nor make nor express the finite, the material, the sick, the sordid. God made everything, and “behold, it was very good,” according to the inspired record of the first chapter of Genesis. Consequently, every *thing* that is real exists as an idea of the divine selfhood, God, and is perfect and inevitable as the expression of divine Principle; spiritual and infinite as the expression of Spirit; beautiful and harmonious as the expression of Soul; eternal and existent as the expression of Life; true

and unerring as the expression of Truth; above all, loving and lovely as the expression of Love.

### **THE RIGHT CONCEPT OF GOD AND MAN APPEARING**

The material world with all of its imperfections and limitations is generally believed to be the only real world. It is also generally assumed that God made it and made it material and takes cognizance of it as such. It is to be remarked, however, that even prior to the advent of Christian Science many people were unable to accept the religious creeds which teach that a perfect God creates and knows imperfection, although even such liberal and advanced thinkers continued to believe in the reality of disease, sin, and death. Thus they virtually accepted, together with the believers in religious dogma, a God made after the finite sense of man, or the material concept of man. This God was supposed to be enthroned somewhere above the skies. The pictures of the old masters in Italy and elsewhere illustrate this finite sense of God. To the believers of that particular dogma, God is nowadays less definitely located, but is still in more than one respect stamped with the stigma of imperfection. The words in the first chapter of Genesis that God made man in His image and likeness, seemed to the uninspired reader to fortify the belief of such an anthropomorphic God, that is, a God after the human form.

Here comes Christian Science "in the picture," as the current expression has it. It fully accepts the statement in Genesis that man is made after God's image and likeness. However, it makes it evident at the same time that God is the perfect, divine, infinite Creator, or Cause, or Principle. Therefore, man in God's image and likeness must of necessity have no other characteristics than those which belong to Deity. He must be the very expression of these characteristics without measure and without interruption. God being the only and divine reality, God's man is the real and only man. This man is spiritual, because God *is* Spirit; this man is infinite, because God is infinity; this man is eternal, because God is without beginning of years or end of days; this man is ever living, because God is Life; loving, because God is Love; true, because God is Truth; perfect, because God is perfection.

This is a logical conclusion, which cannot be gainsaid. A conclusion arrived at not by heeding the material sense testimony, but by following sound reasoning, which in the measure of its logic partakes of the

divine. The creature we have been supposing to be man, that conglomeration of finiteness, sickness, sin, feebly intermixed with beautiful and noble qualities, is not, then, the man of God's creating. *That* misconception of man is disappearing in the proportion that it is self-seen as unreal, and in the process, we are gaining a more permanent, perfect, and satisfactory sense of existence.

When this light of understanding dawns upon the finite concept, the new birth in Christian Science begins to take place. Thus the "new man," as Paul puts it, is born, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." With this new understanding, the Christian Science understanding, Jesus' words, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," receive a new meaning. We see better than before that Jesus did not urge upon us something superhuman or impractical or untimely. We understand that we neither have to change place nor wait for perfection or salvation. We understand that it is a question of change in our consciousness, right here and now; and everybody must admit that it is possible for one to change one's thoughts, if one is shown how to do it.

### **CHRISTIAN SCIENCE THE HIGHER EDUCATION**

It is certainly a remarkable evidence of the insufficiency of the finite conception of education that it is unable to teach consistently the most important subject, that is, how to think. Men are educated in the schools of learning in almost every conceivable subject, save the most essential of all: how to understand man's existence and his relationship to God and the universe. Christian Science fills in this notorious gap. In this way, it is an educational system. Human philosophy speaks of the "higher criticism." Christian Science may be aptly called the "higher education."

This education does not start out from the finite concept. It proceeds from the only source really worth knowing — it proceeds from divine Principle or God, Starting out from the perfect and eternal, we begin to apprehend man's true status as God's image and likeness, as "The compound idea of infinite Spirit; the spiritual image and likeness of God; the full representation of Mind," as Mrs. Eddy has written in the Christian Science textbook (p. 591). "Be ye therefore perfect," as Jesus said, is then understood to mean: Have the understanding of the real status of man as God's image; stick to it under all circumstances know

that it is your divine right of which nobody, no power, no suggestion can possibly divest you, be willing to recognize that the testimony of the material senses is incorrect and that it is undoubtedly so concerning yourself. Accept the comforting thought that God made man perfect and so maintains him forever, and with this thought reject the testimony of the material senses when it is contrary to your health and peace.

When this work is earnestly and consistently undertaken with adequate understanding of God's loving omnipotence and omnipresence, our conditions improve. We become more loving, less selfish, less fearful. Our intelligence is enhanced, our wisdom increased, our forbearance enlarged. We are freed, partly at least, from the burden of believing in the necessity of sin, sickness, and ultimately of death; and that which we call our bodies experience the beneficent influence of this moral regeneration.

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Our last selection is from a collection of articles titled: HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A TWO? by Richard Claude Haw.

### **EVIL IS UNREAL, UNKNOWABLE**

Few statements in Christian Science appear more contentious than the declaration that evil is unreal. Belief in a devil, or in evil powers, is still strongly held by vast numbers of mankind. Nobody would dispute the appearance of evil or of matter as a phenomenon, as something apprehended by the physical senses. But the human senses are unreliable and do not interpret reality correctly.

Real identity exists spiritually, eternally, unchanged, irrespective of material conditions. That which appears as evil — error — is the material senses' misperceived view of what really exists. The carnal, or mortal, mind sees its own false pictures in terms of its own limited material frame of reference; but right where the false picture seems to be, there instead is perfect spiritual reality, which exists as the entirely good expression of creative Mind, God. In Miscellaneous Writings, Mrs. Eddy writes: "Every material belief hints the existence of spiritual reality; and if mortals are instructed in spiritual things, it will be seen that material belief, in all its manifestations, reversed, will be found the type and representative of verities priceless, eternal, and just at hand."

When we have understandingly denied the reality of evil, we need to realize what really is present and actual in order to round off metaphysical treatment, or prayer. Instead of merely saying of error, "It's not true," we need to know what is true of the situation (although emphatic denials have often been sufficient to heal when made with the resolute conviction of the unreality of error).

Whenever a suggestion comes to us that there is something evil "out there," we can recognize — as Christian Science explains — that this is a lie of mortal mind, a phase of what Mrs. Eddy calls animal magnetism. Christian Science teaches us to reverse the lie by knowing the truth of God's infinite goodness. The healing activity of the Christ, or true spiritual idea of God and man, unfolds to us what divinely is, in contradistinction to what humanly seems to be. It makes manifest the presence and power of God.

When correcting a mathematical error, we do not try to make the mistake true. Instead, we know the mathematical truth, and use it to correct the error. We correct the error by referring to the law of mathematics, knowing that the mistake has no entity or place in that law.

The Bible states of Christ Jesus, "His word was with power." And in Psalms, we read that God "spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." The power of the Word rests on the fact that Mind, God, is infinite Spirit, Love, divine Principle, who is good, perfect, and forever expressed in His universe. The Scriptures state God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil." We also read, "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."

Where the Scriptures sometimes appear to impute evil to God, this can be ascribed to the writers' vesting God with their own humanly circumscribed conceptions.

Materialistic "logic" would reason that because mortals see and experience evil, it must exist, and if God created all, He must know and perpetuate evil.

If God included both evil and good, He would be divided against Himself. But God, as Christian Science shows, is preeminently intelligent and good, and no science or truth can be founded on contradictions.

Christian Science reasons from a correct starting point — that there is

one infinite God, Spirit, good, the only, cause and creator, the only power and intelligence. If God is One, and infinite Spirit, there could not be one iota of matter without destroying that infinitude. Likewise, if God is good and infinite, it would be logically impossible for any slightest degree of evil to coexist with Him. Moreover, if God were responsible for evil, or permitted it, how could His Son, Christ Jesus, have destroyed it?

Evil inheres in wrong thinking. If everyone were to allow into his consciousness only pure, spiritual, perfect, good, loving, unselfish, Christly thoughts, evil would have no manifestation, and our world would be transformed. Nevertheless, evil thoughts do not have actual entity or power, and this is provable fact.

It may seem presumptuous for anyone to say that omniscient God doesn't know evil, while people claim to know and experience it; but Christian Science declares that neither God nor man can really know that which is not real, that which was never created by all-knowing, divine Mind. Evil is unknowable, unknown, because it isn't.

Moreover, Christian Science proves what it claims by demonstration as well as through divine logic. Under the impact of Christianly scientific prayer, the entire syndrome of materialistic error is being exposed as a mental delusion. Error is losing its foothold, and the turmoil in the world today denotes the breaking up of material beliefs, the ferment of evil preparatory to its destruction. This demonstration is facilitated as we unsee error — know its unreality — even as an illusion. The power of the Christ, Truth, in destroying evil in all its forms has been abundantly proven in the practice of Christian Science. The potential exists for the total elimination of evil through Science.

There is work to be done in handling not only the smaller-scale illusions of material sense in our daily lives, but also the larger-scale illusions of world famine, pollution, wars, crime, and so on. We learn in Christian Science that a big error is no more real than a small one, and that God is all-power.

What would we do if someone asked us to give Christian Science treatment for the resolution of a human relationship problem in his family? Wouldn't we prayerfully know, affirm, specific spiritual truths of God and man, and deny all that is inconsistent with those truths? Why then should we shy away from treating our world and the human family,

as though such problems were too big for God! Error is unreal, no matter how widespread or insistent it appears. All that's really going on, here and everywhere, is one infinite God, Spirit, good, expressing Himself in eternal perfection, harmony, unity, brotherhood, affluence, peace, justice, love, freedom, purity, joy, completeness, limitless opportunity, and goodness. This is the divine fact, and you and I are actually awake to it, because there is but one Mind, which we all reflect.

We don't have to make truth true. It is true now, and ever will be. We just have to know it, live it, and consistently rejoice in the fact of the allness and omnipotence of Spirit, God, good.

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