

March 31 2003 — 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.

The selection this week is from —John Lawrence Sinton's, Harrogate Summer School 1952 — A VERBATIM REPORT OF CLASSES ON THE GLOSSARY OF SCIENCE AND HEALTH WITH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES, BY MARY BAKER EDDY.

For a short biography of Mr. Sinton please [click here](#).

Evil as Supposition

SCIENCE AND HEALTH 287: 26-27. “Matter is neither a thing nor a person, but merely the objective supposition of Spirit’s opposite.” It is an “objective supposition,” implying that our concept of matter as a supposed opposite is, to our immediate apprehension, external or objective to the infinitude of Spirit.

SCIENCE AND HEALTH 528: 4-8. “That Adam gave the name and nature of animals, is solely mythological and material. It cannot be true that man was ordered to create man anew in partnership with God; this supposition was a dream, a myth.” To postulate the supposition is the only way to resolve the problem; otherwise we are helpless because of incomplete means with which to work.

SCIENCE AND HEALTH 103:15-17. “The maximum of good is the infinite God and His idea, the All-in-all. Evil is a suppositional lie.” Notice this is from the chapter “Animal Magnetism Unmasked.”

SCIENCE AND HEALTH 200: 20-22. “The suppositional antipode of divine infinite Spirit is the so-called human soul or spirit, in other words the five senses...” So we have to begin with the process of analysis by postulating evil as a “suppositional antipode.” But remember, merely to postulate it as such does not yet demonstrate it. This is merely the first of three phases of demonstration.

SCIENCE AND HEALTH 207:27, 30-2. We read this yesterday. “The spiritual reality is the scientific fact in all things... Spiritual facts are not inverted; “—why? Because the infinitude of Principle precludes any possible inversion;—”the opposite discord, which bears no resemblance to spirituality, is not real. The only evidence of this inversion is obtained from suppositional error, which affords no proof of God, Spirit, or of the spiritual creation.” That is a fundamental and very searching statement.

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS I4:23-28. “Good is the primitive Principle of man; and evil, good’s opposite, has no Principle, and is not, and cannot be, the derivative of good. Thus evil is neither a primitive nor a derivative, but is suppositional;” —if it were a primitive it would have the property of causation; if it were a derivative it would have the property of effect or phenomenon; but being neither, it has neither cause nor effect;—”in other words, a lie that is incapable of proof—therefore, wholly problematical.” Evil cannot be proven.

Evil is incapable of proof because it is neither primitive nor derivative, and therefore has no logical properties. Well then, how can we deal with it? Since it has no logical properties, is incapable of proof, and is wholly problematical, we only have to reduce it to its nothingness and cause it to dissolve and disappear. There is no other treatment which we can give it.

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS 196:4-14. Now we see the question taken a stage farther. “Idolatry, the supposition of the existence of many minds and more than one God, has repeated itself in all manner of subtleties through the entire centuries, saying as in the beginning, ‘Believe in me, and I will make you as gods;’ that is, I will give you a separate mind from God (good), named evil; and this so-called mind shall open your eyes and make you know evil, and thus become material, sensual, evil. But bear in mind that a serpent said that; therefore that saying came not from Mind, good, or Truth. God was not the author of it; hence the words of our Master: ‘He is a liar, and the father of it;’...

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS 260: 14-16. “Jesus knew that erring mortal thought holds only in itself the supposition of evil, and that sin, sickness, and death are its subjective states;.... That is to say, the supposed inversion that we call mortal mind holds within itself as false phenomena all its own constituents, the constituents of sin, sickness, and death; it holds within itself its own suppositional properties, and these are its subjective states. This discloses the supposed inversion, as counterfeit to the one Principle and idea; it discloses to us the so-called unity of evil as opposed to the unity of good.

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS 289: 7-11. “What is evil? It is suppositional absence of good. From a human standpoint of good, mortals must first choose between evils, and of two evils choose the less; and at present the application of scientific rules to human life seems to rest on this basis.” The time has now come when we can advance and subject this whole question to scientific analysis.

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS 332: 18, 22-24, 29-4. “A sense of evil is supposed to have spoken”—that is, in the Adam allegory. “What was this sense? Error versus Truth: first, a supposition; second, a false belief; third, suffering; fourth, death.” You see how it builds up through a process of adding lie to lie. “The supposition is, that God and His idea are not all-power; that there is something besides Him; that this something is intelligent matter; that sin—yea, self hood—is apart from God, where pleasure and pain, good and evil, life and death, commingle, and are forever at strife;

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS 334: 18-21. “The diabolism of suppositional evil at work in the name of good, is a lie of the highest degree of nothingness: just reduce this falsity to its proper denomination, and you have done with it.” There is a statement both searching and fundamental; it takes us to the bottom of mental action.

RETROSPECTION AND INTROSPECTION 67: 1-2, 18-19. “Sin existed as a false claim before the human concept of sin was formed; ...” That is to say, our present sense of evil as observed through the five senses is secondary, it is an effect; and it is an effect of an impersonal evil which claims to exist before the human concept of sin was formed, and evil that is presented Biblically as the serpent.

That is the proposition we have to deal with. "...hence one's concept of error is not the whole of error." That is to say, one's personal sense of error, as felt or experienced within the human mind and its five senses, is not the whole of error; it is the effect or the phenomenal sense of error. But to go to the bottom of the situation, we have to deal with the sin that generates the error. "The human thought does not constitute sin, but *vice versa*, sin constitutes the human or physical concept."

Suppose a man came to us for healing and suppose he was a drug addict. Would we just treat him as a deceived suffering mortal? Or would we go deeper than that and take into account the phase of animal magnetism that constitutes the whole claim of drug addiction? If we were to heal the man finally and regenerate consciousness and character, we should have to deal with the claim in both its phases: first, that sin has a cause, that it has power to generate or to induce a personal sense of sin, that it has power to evolve a mortal; and second, that it has power to subject this mortal to a further development of belief that reduces him to moral depravity and leads the way to his ultimate self-destruction. We should have to bring to this self-deceived, victimized mortal the greatest tolerance, love, and compassion in order to dissolve the sense of guilt, suffering, weakness, and depravity out of his conscious thought. But equally we should have to lay the axe at the root, in other words, silence the serpent, destroy the claim that appears to have cause and to induce that very condition. If we dealt with the claim in both phases, we should heal the man finally, but if we dealt only with the personal sense of the error, we might give him some temporary relief but we would leave the door wide open to reversal because we would not have eliminated the claim of inversion. Can we see, therefore, how important it is to have an understanding which is adequate to meet the claim of evil from the standpoint of both cause and effect?

Likewise, someone might be suffering from a physical claim because of some hereditary belief or law. If our work were to go no farther than dealing compassionately with a personal patient, we might bring some comfort and relief, but unless we dealt with the claim of heredity which operates involuntarily and unconsciously on the patient, we should still leave him open to further victimization and reversal, and the case would not be healed scientifically.

So it is essential to have a Christlike understanding that goes to the bottom of mental action, and then we can deal with the error or the argument in its claim of both noumenon and of phenomenon, of cause and effect, and of the so-called link between the two, whereby cause generates effect. We must take every case comprehensively, and at the same time so love the identity behind the visible evidence that we as it were love it into expression, and the mortal becomes increasingly conscious of himself as identity and less and less sensibly aware of himself as a state of physical suffering. So the visible and invisible error are made to disappear, they have no option; they are just made to yield and give way. If we do this work thoroughly and with Christlike compassion, then we shall have reduced sin to its nothingness Christianly and scientifically.

Continuing the reference: "Sin is both concrete and abstract. Sin was, and *is*, the lying supposition that life, substance, and intelligence are both material and spiritual, and yet are separate from God.

The first iniquitous manifestation of sin was a finity. The first was self-arrayed against the infinite, the mortal against immortality, and a sinner was the antipode of God.

“The sinner created neither himself nor sin, but sin created the sinner; . . .” These statements are profound metaphysics, and my counsel throughout the years has always been to ponder them inwardly and assimilate them rather than enter upon controversies that may lead to further difficulties. Until our consciousness is mature enough, until our means of ex-pression and reflection are adequate enough, it is wise to ponder these propositions and set about the individual demonstration of them rather than pour them out upon unprepared thought. Let us be wise as to the extent we dispense these deeper truths to immature thought.

UNITY OF GOOD 52: 16-21. “God is not the so-called ego of evil; for evil, as a supposition, is the father of itself,”—the father of the whole counterfeit creation,—“of the material world, the flesh, and the devil. From this falsehood arise the self-destroying elements of this world, its unkind forces, its tempests, lightnings, earthquakes, poisons, rabid beasts, fatal reptiles, and mortals.” Those are all the phenomena of evil as a supposition, as the father of itself. When those elements are dissolved out of individual consciousness, they will like-wise disappear from our concept of the universe, and as this happens the universe around us will become increasingly lovely and free from these self-destroying elements; it will appear less and less physical to our senses and will become increasingly spiritual in terms of identity; in other words, this same office of translation will be taking place. Then we shall see the fulfilment of the passage in which Mrs. Eddy says of the colour and form of the sensuous universe: “I love your promise; and shall know, some time, the spiritual reality and substance of form, light, and color, of what I now through you discern dimly” (Mis. 87: 8-10). In the measure that we deal with evil as a supposition, as the father of itself, we are able to deal with its effects as unkind forces, tempests, lightning, and so on; and as those are eliminated from individual consciousness they will begin to disappear outwardly.

Remember, this translation of the universe is an individual conception and an individual experience. Jesus carried it right through to finality and we have likewise to carry it through to finality. We do it through this process of Christian and scientific reduction whereby evil as cause is made to dissolve, and then its effects, as named above, dissolve with it. The universe as a physical concept or as physical structure becomes a diminishing factor, and it increasingly reappears in terms of identity and individuality, within an infinite spiritual progression.



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