

September 27, 2004 - 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 selection this week is from *WORKS ON CHRISTIAN SCIENCE VOLUME 1* — by Martha Wilcox. For a brief biography on our featured authors, click [here](#).

Our textbook contains many words that are not only vital in meaning, but a knowledge of which is essential to the student of Christian Science in working out the Science of being. One of these words is deflection.

Deflection, according to Webster, means to turn aside or to deviate from a true course. In Christian Science, deflection has reference to mortal man and to all that constitutes mortal man. Our textbook teaches that the untrue image of God, held in the human mind, is all there is to what we call mortal man. Then the correct sense of mortal man is not an entity or an existence, but is an untrue image or deflection of the actual man at hand. Deflection results when the true appearance of actual man is turned aside or deviated by thought passing through a mind unilluminated by Truth. This deviation of thought causes the actual man at hand to appear as sinning mortal man. The actual man is not changed, but his actuality is seen in reversion, or as deflection.

Deflection is an untrue image of actuality; and when in our practice work, we reverse this deflection or untrue image, in order to perceive actuality, we are using the process of thought that is set forth in our Christian Science textbook. When we understand deflection, we do not attach erroneous conditions to actual man, but we deal with the erroneous conditions as untrue images or deflections entirely separate and apart from actual man.

In the correct process of metaphysical work, we never have two things present. We understand that the actual thing is always present, and the deflected appearance does not make another thing. Spirit and matter are not two things. Spirit is the actual existence, and matter is the deflection or untrue image of Spirit. It is false appearance only. Actual man and sinning mortal man do not both exist. Actual man is, while sinning mortal man is the deflection or false appearance of actual man.

Actuality — the only thing that is at hand — does not need healing. It is God's very presence. The deflection, like the mirage lake, is non-existent, and we cannot do anything to that which does not exist. A deflection, like the horizon, is not an entity nor a condition. It does not fill space. It is purely false appearance in the unilluminated mind. When the prairie grass is seen as a mirage lake, we already understand that it is still prairie grass and is not a lake. The prairie grass does not need anything done to it, regardless of how it appears. All there is to the mirage lake is the prairie grass imperfectly seen. The mirage lake is nothing. It does not fill space and is non-existent.

Deflections do not occupy space, and are never things or conditions. When we really understand this to be a fact, our work in Christian Science will be much easier. The deflection called a horizon does not fill space. All there is to the horizon is the earth and sky as they are in fact. Horizon is simply a name for that which does not fill space and is non-existent. Likewise, the deflection called disease is just a name for that which does not occupy space, is not a thing or condition, and is non-existent. Lack, and age, and fear are not conditions, and do not occupy space. They are deflections or untrue images of actuality.

The actuality of man, imperfectly seen, we have named personal man. The actuality of the universe, imperfectly seen, we have named the material universe. Now we do not need to do anything to personal man or the material universe, but we do need to do something to our mode of mind that sees things as they are not. We need to enlighten our mind with the truth or fact of being. The mode of mind that sees deflection needs enlightenment.

Disarm the claim of personality. We should disarm, that is, render powerless, the deflection or false appearance of actual man that is called personality. Personality has neither life nor intelligence; it is mere ghost or shadow, and we should behold actual life and intelligence as Mind's omnipresence, where the ghost or shadows seem to be. Even though with our outer eyes we see personal man, the untrue image, with our inner spiritual vision we are to behold the actual man, "the perfect man" that Jesus beheld. With our spiritual thought we are to look through the deflections or illusions of matter, and behold the perfect ideas of divine intelligence.

Mrs. Eddy once went to call on a patient. After she had looked at the sick man, she turned away and went and looked out of the window, saying, "Dear heavenly Father, forgive me for looking at matter." The patient was instantly healed. If we see matter as anything other than a deflection of actual man, hence non-existent, we are not practicing the laws of divine Science.

Mental Grooves

Unless we make earnest efforts through Christian Science to spiritualize our thought and to improve our thought processes, and strive to see actual man and the spiritual universe at hand, we are quite apt to lose the process of spiritual thinking altogether. Bicknell Young once said, "We often get into a rut and go right on rutting." This might be said of many students and of some practitioners. They get into certain mental ruts or grooves, and go round and round in this fixed routine of thought, with the grooves growing deeper and deeper, until they bury themselves mentally. They have chained themselves to a fixed habit of thought. They have failed to spiritualize their thought and improve their mental processes; they have failed to see actual man and the spiritual universe at hand.

Demonstration depends upon improved processes. The demonstration of Christian Science depends upon the degree that we attain the Christ-mind, and upon our improved processes of thought. It takes the Christ-mind in us to see actualities at hand where the deflections or false conditions seem to be. The Christ within does

the healing. It is the spirit of Truth and Love — the Christ that is already the presence and substance of all things — that heals or dispels the deflections of mortal thought. We are not to save, or reform, or change that which appears to be personal man. Our mission is to give proof to the world that individual man — the actual man — is at hand. We are to give proof that man is not only in God's presence, but is God's presence.

As Christian Scientists, we should not desire to heal in the ordinary sense of healing. To desire to heal a claim or deflection is to have something in our thought besides actuality. But just to say there is nothing to heal will not give proof that error or disease is not present. We must be the actual understanding in which there is no capacity to see or feel anything unlike the Christ-image. It is only as we have the Christ-mind, or sensible, living Truth within ourselves as our own mind, that we can see the Christ, or the actuality of anyone or anything. When Peter said to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ," Jesus immediately answered Peter, "Flesh and blood [meaning the personal mind] hath not revealed it unto thee." It was the Christ in Peter that could see Jesus as the Christ. (See Matt 16:16-17.)

The Claim of Age

I have been asked to say something about handling the claim of age. What is age? Where is age? Of one thing we may be sure, God is never aged, and His manifestation, actual man, is never aged. Then age is a deflection, an untrue image in the human mind. Age is not a condition to be healed, or to be dealt with; it is not a sense, and it is not a quality that belongs to God or to man. This deflection, or untrue image of thought called age, claims to out-picture itself as a sense of decline both in power and ability of all functions and faculties of the human life. It says there is deterioration or decadence of the substance of the so-called human body. Do we believe that God, Mind, Life, can consciously see or feel within itself what the human mind calls age? If God does not see or feel age, then actual man or body — the embodiment of all immortal ideas — cannot see, feel, show forth or experience the untrue image of age.

Mind, or conscious Life, in its very being, is the conscious qualities of enthusiasm, spontaneity, buoyancy, elasticity, agility, vigor, vitality, virility, and these qualities are ever in manifestation as the actual man and the only man. Does divine Mind ever operate consciously as the deflection of these qualities? Such a thought is unthinkable, unseeable, unfeelable.

Our textbook says, "Men and women of riper years and larger lessons ought to ripen into health and immortality, instead of lapsing into darkness or gloom. Immortal Mind feeds the body with supernal freshness and fairness, supplying it with beautiful images of thought and destroying the woes of sense which each day brings to a nearer tomb" (S&H 248:5).

When our textbook makes these statements, it is Truth, or Mind, saying them to us, and since Truth, or Mind, says that we should ripen into health and immortality, then we can do it, and we should do it. But we shall not ripen into health and immortality

by trying to ripen or make immortal the deflection. Actual man is already ripened and finished as to his health and his immortality, and we do not need to do anything to actual man. But we should turn from the deflection and find ourselves in oneness with the infinite immortal qualities of God.

Weekly Lesson Citations provided by the Mary Baker Eddy Institute
visit our website at www.mbeinstitute.org for more information
or call (239) 656-1951. We welcome your comments!



New!

Large-print version
mailed to you - for
only \$9.50!

Call: 239-656-1951