

Free from Contagion



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“Beloved Christian Scientists, keep your minds so filled with Truth and Love, that sin, disease, and death cannot enter them. It is plain that nothing can be added to the mind already full. There is no door through which evil can enter, and no space for evil to fill in a mind filled with goodness. . . . And not only yourselves are safe, but all whom your thoughts rest upon are thereby benefited.”

—Mary Baker Eddy

The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany, page 210

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Bringing Our Prayers to the Threat of Contagion

“Today only! Free flu shots!”

The bright banners snapping in the late fall breeze seemed to be effective. Lots of cars were turning in at the large chain drugstore near our home. As I drove past, it occurred to me how easy it is to assume that it’s natural, even inevitable, to come down with contagious illnesses, especially during the winter.

Taking responsibility for our health is important. For many folks, seasonal shots and prescriptions are one approach, and I certainly respect and support those who make that choice. But in my own experience, I’ve found that through Christian Science it’s possible to consistently challenge the assumptions about getting sick, and that doing so has brought more solid and lasting health. Prayer based on a spiritual understanding of God has always been a reliable and effective way to care for my health.

How can this kind of prayer help? In my own experience, I’ve seen that this prayer makes us aware of a radically different view of our lives and the world around us. This *spiritual* view is based on a recognition of God as divine Life—wholly good and the source of all harmony. Life being all good, causing only good, and maintaining harmony throughout its creation is therefore the source of health rather than sickness, vitality rather than vulnerability. And this fact, understood, has practical effects, such as protection from contagion.

While we might usually think of health as a variable condition of a physical body, it is, in fact, an unchanging spiritual quality sourced in God. It’s permanent. It’s sustained by God and maintained in each of us in all seasons and circumstances. And we can prove this in our daily lives in a way that allows us to start feeling that health, not disease, is what’s normal.

We can face down the fear of “catching” something by holding firmly not just to what’s true about God but also to some basic truths about ourselves: for example, that God as divine Life made us in the image of Life—the very expression of all that divine Life is. So, as the image of the Life that is God, we

could never succumb to being less than the exact representation of this perfect Life: spiritual and whole, safe and vital in every season.

This kind of focused, prayerful defense is something we can undertake daily so that our whole concept of life begins to shift. We start to see ourselves more consistently as the likeness of this divine Life—as fundamentally spiritual and invulnerable. This enables us to combat the fear of getting sick and to dispute the many widespread assumptions about contagion. It allows us to swiftly and effectively refute every detail about infectious disease that comes at us, whether through the news, lunchtime conversation, or social media—or even thoughts that seem like our own.

This is more than mere positive thinking. It’s the kind of prayer Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer of Christian Science, attributed to Christ Jesus as his “deep and conscientious protests of Truth,—of man’s likeness to God and of man’s unity with Truth and Love.”¹ People have asked me whether that kind of “deep and conscientious” prayer can actually be effective in both preventing and dealing with contagion. Gratefully, I can answer yes. It is—and I’ve seen how in my own life.

For years, I’d frequently worried about coming down with a cold or maybe the flu during the winter; and sometimes I did. But through a deepening of my own “protests of Truth” and prayerful understanding, I’ve been able to counter that fear and defeat the suggestion that contagion is inevitable by seeing and accepting only God’s perfect creation—only His nature as divine Life expressed in vitality, health, and freedom. As I’ve understood more of God’s omnipotence, and the impotence of anything unlike God, my seasonal worries and the appearance of cold and flu symptoms have gradually dissolved, and I’ve been encouraged by the fact that I haven’t experienced any symptoms of seasonal or contagious illness for a number of years now.

Coincidence? Good fortune? Evidence of “a healthy constitution”? Actually, I see this newfound freedom as confirming and affirming the spiritual fact of our divinely maintained health and wholeness.

What would keep us from recognizing this? I've learned that it's helpful to consider the mental elements that can weigh against our conviction that health really is our natural state of being, and one of those influences is fear. For example, the constant exposure to media coverage about contagious diseases can whip up a frenzy of fear that can indeed have a negative impact on human health. *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* speaks clearly to this issue when it says, "Fear is the fountain of sickness, . . ."²

In light of today's 24-hour news cycle, it seems clear to me that we can have a positive impact by taking a daily "dose" of the peace and power of

individual clarity and spiritual wholeness. Prayer can lift us out of the swirl of fear, and it can be a calming, healing influence in our communities as well.

No matter how widespread a contagion may be—even if it's encircling the globe—it will never be more powerful than the all-encompassing, inviolate presence of divine Life, embracing each one of us in its safety and care. And our consistent acknowledgment of this fact for everyone, everywhere, makes it possible, right here and now, for us to see evidence that God alone truly does govern and sustain our health.

—Kevin Graunke

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¹ Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 12.

² *Ibid.*, p. 391.

True Health

Editor's note: This article, originally published in 1953, offers an enduring perspective on spiritual ideas that continue to bring uplift and healing.

A Christian Scientist had long enjoyed an almost uniform sense of good health, which he attributed to his understanding, gained through Christian Science, of God as the only Life, and which he took very much for granted; but the time came when he found it necessary to establish his sense of health on the sure foundation of Christianly scientific demonstration. The aggressive mental suggestions poured into thought: Your health has been undermined, you have lost your health, you may not recover, and so on. In blessed reassurance came the inspired words of Isaiah, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him."¹ And so it proved.

Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, writes in the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, "It is as necessary for a health-illusion, as for an illusion of sickness, to be instructed out of itself into the understanding of what constitutes health; for a change in either a health-belief or a belief in sickness affects the physical condition."² A belief in health based on the illusion of health as a physical condition is no more stable or real than a belief in sickness, for both are built on the sands of human variableness and have no foundation in Truth.

What then is health, and where is it to be found? Christian Science reveals health as a condition of Mind, of God, Spirit, not of matter. Hence scientific health is spiritual, an emanation of God. It is found in an understanding of God and exists wholly apart from the supposititious conditions of matter. Health is associated with holiness; the words health, holy, and whole have the same Anglo-Saxon derivation.

Christ Jesus illustrated the spiritual nature of health. With simple naturalness the Gospels recount multitudes made whole through the tender ministrations of the great Physician. His word broke the mesmerism and set the captive free. To the man whom he healed of the palsy he said, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee,"³ showing that true health is akin to holiness, not merely an absence of physical

bondage. Jesus demonstrated God's law as a law of Love, not a law of penalty; he recognized no secondary law as able to defy the divine law. He accepted no evidence of the physical senses, but refuted it on the ground that it is un-Godlike, hence illegitimate and untrue. He knew that God is the only power, and that God, good, is as incapable of sending evil as He is of experiencing evil; hence, that God is not the author of sickness. To those who through steadfast adherence to his teachings became his disciples he promised, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."⁴ Jesus never compromised with error. He never administered material remedies. He proved health to be always present and forever intact, waiting only to be revealed through an understanding of God.

Mrs. Eddy defines "health" thus: "The true consciousness is the true health."⁵ Let us examine this statement and see where it leads. Since God is Mind, there is but one Mind, hence there can be but one consciousness, namely, Mind's awareness of itself. Consciousness cannot cognize or experience that which is unlike God, because God knows and experiences nothing beyond Himself. Mrs. Eddy says, "Man and his Maker are correlated in divine Science, and real consciousness is cognizant only of the things of God."⁶ Outside of infinity nothing exists. Consciousness, then, is infinite; it is Mind's awareness of itself as Life, as Soul, Spirit, Principle, Truth, and Love. Thus true consciousness, or health, is God's consciousness of Himself reflected in the harmony of His creation—God's consciousness or experience of unlimited Life, without beginning or end; of the transcendent beauty of Soul, unmarred by flaw or blemish; of the vibrant energy of Spirit, the invariability of Principle, the substance of Truth, the well-being of Love.

Health cannot fluctuate. Man is the manifestation of health, as inseparable from health as he is from God. Health can no more be lost than God can be. It is incorruptible, inexhaustible, sound. It can never break down, can never lapse into disease, can never be tainted. Man's being, the reflection of God's being, is without poison, without defect, without pain, perfect in strength and freedom of action. Being is the rhythm of Soul; hence every function of being is normal, painless, unlabored,

regular. Being is incapable of congestion or stoppage, of inflammation or decay. There is no obstruction to health because there is no obstruction in consciousness. There is no paralysis, because Mind or consciousness is perpetual motion. "The true consciousness is the true health."

Health does not inhere in a physical body; it is not controlled by physical law, is not shaped by hereditary belief. Health is God's expression of harmony. Man has no health apart from God; hence God is responsible for man's health. Furthermore, since there is but one consciousness there is but one health, and it is always complete health, always good health. There is no partial health, because there is no partial consciousness, no partial Mind. There are no degrees of health; Mind or Life in every instance expresses itself fully. There is no deterioration, no decomposition in Mind. Consciousness never lapses into unconsciousness; health never lapses into disease.

Health never stagnates; it never grows old; it never wears out. It is not localized; it is infinite. There is not more health in one place than in another. Health is not subject to atmospheric conditions, to temperature, to altitudes. Climate has nothing whatever to do with health.

Since health is infinite, it is universal. Also, being infinite it has never been lost; therefore it does not have to be regained. Health is never uncertain. Man is not dependent on his health for his efficiency; being dependent alone upon God, man manifests the health which God expresses. Because man reflects infinity he is never the victim of exhaustion. The limitless capacities of Life never wear out, they never grow threadbare, they never slow up. Man can no more break down than God can; he is never prostrated, because Mind, his Mind or consciousness, is forever active, forever intelligent, forever free, forever expressing the buoyancy of Soul.

Health is not something to be theorized about; it is a spiritual fact which demands demonstration.

Mrs. Eddy points out that the basis of all disease is fear, ignorance, or sin.⁷ Christ Jesus proved this, as a study of his healing works will show. All erroneous conditions are the result of false education. Thus certain diseases are deemed contagious, others fatal. In every case mortal mind maps out the course and pronounces the sentence, and the one infinite, ever-available remedy is pure Mind. God knows nothing of curable or incurable diseases. He knows no man who needs healing. He rejoices ever in His own unrestricted expression of good.

A little Christian Scientist, instructed in the Christian Science Sunday School in the sweet naturalness of good, went one day to visit a friend who was not a Christian Scientist. The little friend's mother opened the door and promptly sent the visitor away, saying that she would get sick if she came in, because her child was sick. With simple logic the little Christian Scientist later said to her mother: "But, Mother, if Alice is sick and I am well, why should I get sick from her? Why shouldn't she get well from me?"⁸ It was many years later when the little girl now grown to womanhood discovered the identical reasoning in Mrs. Eddy's article entitled "Contagion" in *Miscellaneous Writings 1883-1896*.⁸

The sure foundation of health is the impregnable oneness of God and man, of Mind and its idea. Mind without idea would be a nonentity; idea without Mind would be an impossibility. Thus idea has no existence separate from Mind; it never gets outside of Mind; it has no substance other than Mind, no entity or ego apart from Mind. It were as impossible for pure Mind to evolve an impure idea as for pure Mind to hold within itself an idea capable of corruption or contamination. Thus health is inherent in God's idea, the idea which is forever showing forth the beauty of Soul and the holiness of Love. God's consciousness of His own allness is the only true consciousness, and this true consciousness is true health, the health that is forever intact.

—L. Ivimy Gwalter

Originally published in the July 1953 issue of *The Christian Science Journal*.

¹ Isaiah 59:19.

² Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 297.

³ Luke 5:20.

⁴ John 8:32.

⁵ Mary Baker Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings 1883-1896*, p. 298.

⁶ *Science and Health*, p. 276.

⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 411:20-21.

⁸ See *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 229.

Forecasts—Not the Final Word

We may face all kinds of forecasts about our health, careers, and general well-being, as well as about the weather, economy, and government. But I've learned in Christian Science that instead of feeling bound by a forecast, we can seek in Christ "a more sure word of prophecy," as a light shining in the dark places of human fear, to reveal God's loving provision for all.

A forecast is material in origin and scope, based on knowledge gained from looking at the material picture rather than to God, Spirit, who is All. A forecaster compares current physical data with patterns in the past, determines a range of possible outcomes, and chooses what seems most likely. However scientific a forecast appears, the premise is fundamentally inaccurate, because material observation and laws don't touch upon the spiritual facts of being.

A prophecy, however, is spiritual in origin and scope. It springs from fact, a revelation of divine Truth. In the epistle of Second Peter, we read: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: . . . For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."¹

Prophets such as Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and Isaiah—and above all, Christ Jesus, the Galilean Prophet—were moved by divine Spirit. They didn't look to mortal belief or material sense for insights. Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, wrote, "The ancient prophets gained their foresight from a spiritual, incorporeal standpoint, not by foreshadowing evil and mistaking fact for fiction,—predicting the future from a groundwork of corporeality and human belief."²

A spiritual standpoint opens for us the truth of what is going on now and forever. It is the light of divine Truth that frees humanity from the error of physical sense manifested in sickness, sin, suffering, and death. The definition of "prophet" in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* is: "A spiritual seer; disappearance of material sense before the conscious facts of spiritual Truth."³

The Bible's Gospel of Mark includes an account of a materially based forecast contrasted with a spiritually based prophecy. Once when Jesus and his disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee, a fierce storm arose, and waves began to fill the ship. Jesus was asleep. Waking him, the disciples fearfully predicted disaster—the loss of the boat and their lives. They were experienced fishermen. They made that forecast from their past experience with storms and from the physical conditions in front of them.

Jesus, however, did not accept the forecast: "And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?"⁴ Jesus had full faith in and an understanding of the power of Truth to dissolve the material fable and reveal the harmony at hand. The storm vanished.

When faced with a dire forecast, what can we do? We can look to Christ, Truth, to discern spiritual truth and act as spiritual prophets. We can "arise." Jesus demonstrated that the movement needed was the movement of individual thought as it rose from materiality to Spirit. When he faced the storm, Jesus arose; he lifted his thought to God. We can look to Christ and Christian Science for the spiritual facts that reveal God's presence and power.

As we become conscious of spiritual reality, we can naturally rebuke or deny error or evil, following Jesus' example when he rebuked the wind. In the allness of God, good, evil has neither place, right, nor power. Knowing the truth quiets fear and destroys the error. When Jesus spoke to the sea—he was actually addressing frightened human thought—the sea became calm.

The prophetic thought, or spiritual word given by the Holy Ghost, or divine Science, is transformative, like the dawn. It is discernment of spiritual fact. In that light, material storms are stilled. Such prophecy is God's provision for healing and salvation today.

A year or two after I finished college, I became very ill. A medical specialist tested me, diagnosed hepatitis, and quarantined me. He predicted

(forecasted) that it would take from two to six months of bed rest before I was well.

My parents invited me back home for the quarantine. I was grateful for their help at this difficult time. At the end of the first week I was a lot worse. The thought that I would be like this for many more weeks was very distressing.

In my need, I began to pray. I had been raised in Christian Science but hadn't given much thought to it for several years. At this point I actively reached out to God. One thing I remembered from Christian Science Sunday School was that when we are in trouble, we can turn our thought away from the material picture and cling steadfastly to God—and hold our thought to Truth and Love.

I knew this was God's direction. I saw that if I could hold to one clear spiritual truth and understand it more deeply, my thought would be lifted above the picture of aggressive illness and I would be freed. I realized that I could be freed by learning more of spiritual reality, which Christian Science explains.

I didn't seem to have much mental clarity and my thoughts were all in a jumble, but I felt Christ guiding me to the fact that God is perfect Mind, the only Mind. There was no jumbled mortal, counterfeit mind. I held to this truth all that day. It lifted my thought above the material fog and into the light of divine Truth and Love. It was a sacred time for me.

By the next morning, all the symptoms had disappeared. Two days later I went to the local hospital to take the required test. The doctor said I was well and released me from quarantine. The forecast of a long illness was invalidated by divine Truth.

Instead of automatically accepting forecasts, we can stop for a moment and remember that a forecast is not the final word. It is simply a belief about our health, the economy, or even the climate. To gain the more certain word of prophecy—the spiritual reality, the fact of what is actually going on—we turn from material sense to divine Spirit. We can seek in Christ the light that shines in the darkness and reveals the presence of goodness, health, and harmony.

—Judith Hedrick

Originally published in the August 14, 2017 issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

¹ II Peter 1:19, 21.

² Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 84.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 593.

⁴ See Mark 4:39–40.

No Classification of Diseases

Editor's note: This article, originally published in 1946, offers an enduring perspective on spiritual ideas that continue to bring uplift and healing.

Why do some phases of sin and disease often seem more tenacious and difficult to overcome than others? Is evil really able to inject more power and tenacity into cancer than into colic? That is its claim, but its claim has no law of Truth to support it.

In a paragraph in the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, under the marginal heading "Diseases not to be classified," Mary Baker Eddy says, "One disease is no more real than another."¹ Heart trouble is no more the reality of man than hives, rheumatism than rickets, arthritis than asthma. The claim of the one evil, mortal mind, that it can classify its lying concepts, calling some mild and little-to-be-feared, and others serious and much-to-be-feared, needs to be seen as a lie about lies. But the lie of false classification is powerless to lift the lie of any disease or any sin above the dead level of the fictitious evil mind which is its origin.

Persistent advertising, dinning into the ears of people that a certain product will turn age into youth, or that some other product will satisfy all mortal cravings, has sometimes temporarily deceived many and secured large sales for the product advertised. So self-assertive mortal mind through persistent suggestion would falsely educate mortals to believe that some of its wares are Goliath monsters of disease or leech-like afflictions of sin. So long as a mortal consents to accept a fraudulent advertiser's statements as being true, he lays himself open to the consequences. So long as a mortal consents to accept mortal mind's false valuation and classification of its beliefs, he opens the door to suffering therefrom.

Mortals become fearful of the names given some diseases because other mortals are fearful of them. All the Israelites except David were afraid of Goliath. Why? Because they accepted his inflated valuation of himself. They believed he had the might and power he claimed to have. But David did not accept evil at its fictitious valuation of itself. Why not? Because he knew that all real power

belongs to God, universal good, and that those who trust Him more than they fear evil can fearlessly face and overcome evil's braggadocio with the forces of God.

Mortal mind, the source of every material, evil thought and concept, would in a variety of ways give a build-up to many of its evil conceptions. It would establish a general belief among mortals in regard to some diseases, such belief often initiated and supported by medical opinion. It would even call one disease curable and another incurable, meaning only that from its wholly material viewpoint it sees no way to effect a cure.

Christian Science is greatly aiding its students to realize the simple truth that God, the infinitely good Mind and the only real cause, makes and knows *no* disease or sin. Because nothing can be real except what is of God's causing, no disease—be it classified by mortal mind as mild, intermediate, or serious—can be real, for God, good, causes *no* disease. Once we see that evil in its totality is entirely outside infinite Mind, God, we begin to see how impossible it is for any of its offshoots to breach God's infinitude and threaten or afflict man, His reflection.

The material mind may deceive mortals into believing that it makes good its claim that certain diseases are more serious, and so more to be feared, than others. It may say to the ear open to it, "Remember that your Aunt Eliza and your Uncle Horatio were afflicted with and died from this trouble." Or it may argue: "Medical statistics show this is one of the worst. Count the number of your friends who have passed on from it, and you'll see there is good reason for you to be afraid." Such is the devil's propaganda of deceit and falsehood.

The Christian Scientist turns on these lies with such questions as: Has disease or sin ever been known to or caused by infinite intelligence, God? No. Has a single one of God's eternal family, His children or ideas, ever been afflicted or ever died? No. Is it true that all reality is God, infinite Mind, and His universe of unafflictible ideas? Yes. What must I do then to lift myself above the mesmerism of these evil suggestions? I must use my God-given

ability to know God, His allness, and the oneness of man, collectively and individually, with Him.

What argues so aggressively for the prestige of sin and disease is mortal mind. And what it argues with are material thoughts and material sensation. To what does mortal mind thus argue? Only to that which believes in and fears it—a negative state of thought of its own conceiving.

Let us see that in God and His universal, ever-present kingdom there is no mortal mind, no mortal personality to listen to, or to be made fearful of, or afflicted by the devilish lie that man is an afflictible mortal. Let us know what God causes each of His children forever to know: that nothing in error's totality can come into God's all-embracing

universality. There divine Life and its manifestations presently and eternally safely dwell, unconscious of and unendangered by any phase of material belief, howsoever classified by thought that does not know God and His idea.

There is no qualification, no exception, in the Scriptural promise, "He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions."² There is really no classification of disease or sin except the line of demarcation which spiritual understanding forever establishes between Truth and all error. This reveals that to God and His man there is no disease or sin of any type or degree, because God is All-in-all.

—Paul Stark Seeley

Originally published in the October 5, 1946 issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

¹ Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 176.

² Psalms 107:20.

Nipping Disease in the Bud

Likely most everyone will agree that disease is abnormal and not the natural condition of the body. And most people will also agree that disease can be prevented, though we may differ widely as to the methods of prevention.

Those who rely exclusively on prayer as taught in Christian Science to prevent the development of disease in the body know that they have to be alert to what they allow into consciousness. They realize that disease or any inharmony often comes as a mental suggestion. And that a suggestion does not require overt argument to gain admission but often easily slips into thought and gets accepted unnoticed. Suggestions concerning our physical welfare are constantly pouring into thought. Some of these are deliberately sent forth to interfere with the saving and healing mission of Christian Science. Others are conclusions drawn from medical theories and practices, or just plain superstition. Regardless of their source, such suggestions await an unwitting acceptance.

It takes mental alertness to not be influenced by these suggestions. Many have found it helpful to follow an instruction in the *Manual of The Mother Church*. The By-Law reads in part, “It shall be the duty of every member of this Church to defend himself daily against aggressive mental suggestion,”¹ and goes on to point out that such suggestions can make us forget or neglect to do the good works that Christian Science enables us to do for others.

Building daily a defense against such mental intrusions by filling thought with truths of God’s goodness and infinite nature makes it possible to detect suggestion for what it is. No matter how aggressive a specific prophecy of impending evil may appear, it is not a fact to act on, nor is a symptom “something.” These are never more than mental error and need to be eliminated from thought. We need to be alert to realize that bodily dysfunction often comes simply as a suggestive thought or mental image, perhaps instigated by a current news story, advertisement, or someone relating his or her physical problems.

The thought of illness may begin like this: “I have a pain in my back.” Recognize this as a

suggestion and not a real condition of the body, and you can deny it a home instead of allowing it to continue developing in thought. You can take a moment to realize that discomfort is not natural, and dismiss it with the conviction that the pain has no truth supporting it and need not be accepted as real. You can further realize that the discomfort has no history and carries no threat of ongoing or increasing illness or suffering. Even though it may bid for attention, the pain or illness really is nothing more than a suggestion and has not the reality and lasting value of spiritual truth.

The Bible explains that God made all, and that He saw everything He had made and “behold, it was very good.”² This is the reality of our being now and forever. One’s true identity, or body, is spiritual and good, therefore anything unlike good is not a fact of being but an erroneous suggestion. And we have God-given authority and ability to rule it out of thought and experience.

Out of her spiritual discoveries, Mary Baker Eddy wrote, “The transmission of disease or of certain idiosyncrasies of mortal mind would be impossible if this great fact of being were learned,—namely, that nothing inharmonious can enter being, for Life is God.”³ The basic need is to be alert that nothing inharmonious can enter the body (which only manifests an individual’s state of thought), whether the suggestion comes as an inherited tendency toward some disease, or as something heard in conversation, or from the news media.

At least once a week in my Christian Science healing practice, someone says to me, “I feel a pain” and indicates the location of the pain. The caller continues, “I must be getting . . .” and names a particular disease. I find it important at this point to recognize any discordant condition reported to me as suggestion and not as symptom. As *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* explains, “The act of describing disease—its symptoms, locality, and fatality—is not scientific.”⁴ We need never let that which is unscientific into our reasoning.

It can be instructive to hear someone who knows nothing about medical theories describe what he or she feels is a symptom of a certain disease. It

helps me realize that disease is not scientific, has no pattern, and need not be accepted as a condition of reality even though current theories may support it. Any hint or suggestion of inharmony is illusion, and treating discord as illusion enables the healer to not let suggestion assume the status of symptom. Thus Christian Science is proved to be as effective in preventing disease as in curing it.

It's not always easy to get rid of "disease beliefs" once they've entered thinking and influenced the body. Obviously, it's far better to keep one's guard up and not admit such beliefs in the first place. But whether some belief of illness is entrenched or is simply knocking at the door for admittance, it can be, and eventually will be, seen for what it is, a lie about God's pure and good creation.

While disease beliefs may be promoted by the desire for profit through selling drugs or some other form of treatment, often the motivation is more unselfish, yet equally damaging. Many a friendly warning regarding catching some disease becomes a source for perpetuating that disease. In a short article titled "Contagion," Mrs. Eddy noted: "Floating with the popular current of mortal thought without questioning the reliability of its conclusions, we do what others do, believe what others believe, and say what others say. Common consent is contagious, and it makes disease catching." The article concludes, "A calm, Christian state of mind is a better preventive of contagion than a drug, or than any other possible sanative method; and the 'perfect Love' that 'casteth out fear' is a sure defense."⁵

As many readers of the Christian Science periodicals have experienced, the best defense is to regularly maintain such an awareness of God's always-present goodness that we instinctively reject any suggestion of inharmony as the lie that it is, right when it first bids for acceptance.

Claiming early in your day that there is nothing in you that can respond to or correspond with any suggestion or argument of error, acts to expose suggestions for what they are before they become fixed in your thinking. True and scientific thinking does not respond in any way to mere suggestion but dismisses it. And certainly do not comply with suggestions or bogus arguments by saying, "I'm like that," and actually identify with error.

It's a joy to know that we can stop disease at any point in its development; it does not have to run a prescribed course. I have experienced and known others to have experienced instantaneous healing when disease has been recognized to be what it is, a lie about the actual state of health that is normal to the real individuality of everyone. In a way, every Christian Science healing is instantaneous, for it occurs at that instant when the suggestion of disease is no longer mistaken for fact.

Every time we realize that perfection is the actual and eternal condition of all creation, we are building a consciousness that's immune to suggestions of every nature. By nipping disease in the bud, or earlier, we make way for a full blossoming of uninterrupted health for ourselves and others.

—Bea Roegge

Originally published in the September 2009 issue of *The Christian Science Journal*.

¹ Mary Baker Eddy, *Manual of The Mother Church*, p. 42.

² Genesis 1:31.

³ Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 228.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁵ Mary Baker Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*, pp. 228–229.