

POSSESSION

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*"The 'still, small voice' of scientific thought reaches
over continent and ocean to the globe's remotest bound.
The inaudible voice of Truth is, to the human mind,
'as when a lion roareth.'"*

— Mary Baker Eddy

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There is a belief among mortals that they can become the privileged possessors or owners of something. When through the usual process of law a man acquires real estate, he has a strong desire to erect a fence around it and to keep everybody else away. Then follows the belief which is universally acknowledged, that he owns a certain amount of the earth's surface and that the law protects and defends him in private possession thereof. He builds a house and occupies it, calls it his own, and no one is permitted to approach or to enter it contrary to his wishes without being considered a trespasser. In our present degree of development it is generally understood that property is something which *should* have an owner; that the earth and all that is contained therein may be divided into parts and parcels, and that different individuals may claim possession of more or less of it to the exclusion of others. All this, however, is based on the supposition that matter is substance and that man is the proprietor of it.

Through the illusive processes of mortal belief truth is apparently reversed; thoughts are externalized into things, and these things are claimed, held, and dominated by individuals. Some people have a large amount of property, others a little, while a great many have none at all. This apparently unequal distribution of material possessions fosters envy, jealousy, and strife, often provoking the one who finds himself deprived of his heart's desire into the use of questionable means, if not of physical force, to gain his object. It would be safe to say that nine tenths of all the war and contention in the world has been inaugurated and carried on because of the invasion of so-called property rights, or because of a desire to extend material possession or dominion.

Just as soon as a man finds himself in possession of a certain amount of matter, — of houses or lands, of stocks or bonds, — he is besieged by a sense of personal responsibility for his wealth and a fear that he may at some time be dispossessed of it. The whole system of property rights and of the division of property is based upon the

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supposed substantiality of matter, an illusion which some day must be dispelled by the law of God, which declares that Mind is the only substance. This change may not be brought about all at once, but through right thinking and conduct there will in due time be established the true concept, namely, that "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." Rightfully speaking, everything in this world belongs to God, and through reflection belongs also to man, who is the image and likeness of God. When we have reached the point in our demonstration where we can resolve things into thoughts, the multiplication of these thoughts will be possible, so that every individual may reflect and possess all that belongs to his Maker.

In some lines of thought this ideal condition already prevails; for example, in mathematics. Let us suppose that the figures used in making calculations, instead of being accepted as thoughts, were regarded as material objects. In such a case every mathematician or accountant would have to provide himself with a supply of figures, which would perhaps be made of some durable material like wood or iron, and which he would keep on a shelf or locked in a drawer. When the mathematician wished to use the figures he would take them out, arrange them in their proper order, and be enabled thereby to work out his problems.

If in a busy season the accountant's supply of figures should become exhausted, he would have to purchase more or perhaps borrow them from his neighbor. He might approach a fellow worker and say, "I wish you would lend me two or three fives and a few sevens this morning; I am out of these figures." His friend might reply, "I am sorry, but I have been using so many fives and sevens lately in my work that I need all I have and cannot accommodate you." There might even be a shortage in figures which would affect the whole population, and there would be a scramble for a supply. The price of figures would advance, and if people really believed that these objects were a necessity, there would be such brisk competition that the price of enough figures to do business with would be out of all proportion to the cost of their production, and many people would have to do

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without them.

This condition of affairs, however, is impossible because of the fact that figures instead of being *things* are *thoughts*, and as such are everywhere present without limit or restriction. No contrivance of mortal mind nor any scheme of manipulators can take away from us one single figure or deprive us of instantaneous access to all that we can possibly have use for. No war has ever been declared because one nation has attempted to appropriate more than its share of the multiplication table, nor has any man been found guilty of using figures which he has surreptitiously taken from his neighbor.

Figures are not things but thoughts; they are mental concepts, and as such they are available to everybody. Sometime it will be realized that not only is this true with regard to figures, but that every so-called material object in the universe is but the counterfeit of some divine idea and not what mortal mind represents it to be. The time will come when mortal mind will abandon its belief that ideas are represented by material objects, and when this time arrives there will be no fear of loss of, or damage to, that which we understand to be an idea and not a thing. We shall then be able to realize what Jesus meant when he said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures [right ideas] in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."

You may ask what all this has to do with our present demonstration. A great deal. Christian Scientists may add to their peace of mind and freedom from responsibility by thinking along right lines and endeavoring to put into immediate practice the teachings of Christian Science. If a man is engaged in a business which he believes to be his own, of which he thinks he is the creator and proprietor, and for the success of which he deems himself personally responsible, there may be a great sense of burden attaching to his position. He may suffer from poor business, loss of trade, or any of the beliefs which go

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with his particular occupation or profession; so long as he feels that the business belongs exclusively to him, he will never be free from some of the countless beliefs that are supposed to affect trade in general and his occupation in particular. The remedy for this condition is for the man to begin to declare and to know that all is Mind and Mind's ideas; that there is nothing whatever about his business that is limited or material. If God is the creator of all, and if everything in the universe belongs to Him, then this business which the man calls his own is really God's, and the man becomes the master of it only to the degree that he conforms his thoughts and his daily transactions to the law of God. If he recognizes this, and applies his understanding of the Principle of Christian Science to his work, his fear and uncertainty will vanish. He will find himself conducting and carrying on business in the manner God requires it to be done, and he will exercise dominion and control over it just to the extent that he places himself under the unerring direction of divine Mind.

If a woman considers herself the owner of a home and that everything in it is hers; if she believes she has furniture and fixtures which are her personal property; if she feels that she has servants to manage and that she must assume personal control over them as well as over every other household accessory, she may become so burdened with responsibility as to find herself utterly inadequate to control the situation. But if she is willing to accept God as the ruler of her household, to convert things into thoughts and to understand that "all things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made;" if she can realize that divine intelligence governs and controls her servants, her house and everything that is contained therein, she will immediately lose all sense of care, fear, and confusion, and find that the divine law of peace and harmony has taken possession of her household and manages it. If she realizes that the servants are working for God and not for her, that everything about the house is designed to bring out and express the law of perfection, things will run much more smoothly for all connected with this establishment, and peace and joy will come to all who enter therein.

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There is another phase of possession which is perhaps one of the strongest of mortal beliefs. Parents believe they are the privileged creators of something; that they can usurp the creative power of divine Mind and have children of their own, for whose bringing up, education, and future welfare they are entirely responsible. This feeling on the part of parents opens the door wide to the suggestion of failure, and the trials and tribulations which are supposed to go with the ownership and control of children assail them from every side. They must learn that God is the only Father and the only Mother; that man is the offspring of God; that he is not physical and material, but spiritual, reflecting and expressing the wisdom, love, and intelligence of infinite being. As soon as this line of thought is touched upon, the false sense of responsibility which mortal mind has placed upon parents is taken away, and they can then in the right way trust God to take care of their children, knowing that nothing can interfere with the harmonious results which accompany divine protection.

All belongs to God; nothing belongs to us. Man is neither a creator nor an owner. As Christian Scientists we can begin the realization of this at once, and the results will be speedy and satisfactory. But when we relinquish all thought of personal possession, this does not mean that we must sacrifice everything we hold dear or that we shall really be deprived of anything. On the contrary, it means that through an increased understanding that all is Mind and the ideas of Mind we shall gradually come into possession of all that is worth while. This is surely a more gratifying way to bring God into our experience than to cling to the old material illusions. The mere act of surrendering something is not in itself a virtue, nor is there anything to be gained by assuming a false sense of humility. It is true that there is much to give up, but it is always the old, unsatisfactory beliefs which we are parting with, and as these disappear they are supplanted by right ideas, which give to us a greater sense of freedom, power, and possession than we ever had before.

What did Jesus mean by the statement, "He that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that

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which he hath"? Why, this: that the one who has the right idea is really the one that "hath," and his possessions are bound to increase; while the one who has the wrong thought is the one that "hath not," and he must of necessity lose even that which he seems to have. What we need to do, then, is to change our method of thinking. Jesus' saying, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you," is made possible only through Christian Science.

On page 62 of "Miscellaneous Writings," our Leader says, "Holding the *right* idea of man in my mind, I can improve my own, and other people's individuality, health, and morals." All things are accomplished through the right idea, which asserts itself in human consciousness and dispossesses us of our false beliefs. The only thing that can happen to the human sense of things is that it disappears in exactly the proportion that we apprehend the right idea.

It is a law of metaphysics that thought externalizes itself. Therefore the right idea in Christian Science naturally expands into expression and brings thought into a demonstration. When we attain the standpoint from which we can see all material things as beliefs only, and that these beliefs can be transformed and improved through holding the right idea, we shall then begin to bring into our experience the things referred to by Paul when he said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Another line of thought which suggests itself at this juncture, is that mortals believe they are in possession of a mind which they call their own, and that they can think and will as they please with respect to this mind. This belief leads to another erroneous conclusion, namely, that we are in possession of a body of our own, that we have personal eyes, ears, lungs, and a private stomach, all of which we believe to be material, and for the well-being of which we are responsible. When this error takes possession of us, the next thing that mortal mind claims is an ability to deprive us of sight, hearing, et cetera, and that our

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stomach can become disordered or diseased. This is all the result of believing in another creator besides God, another intelligence and power to which we yield obedience. "Know ye not," Paul says, "that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey." The only remedy for the ills of the flesh is to correct the false beliefs that produce them by introducing the right idea. On page 415 of Science and Health our Leader says: "Note how thought makes the face pallid. It either retards the circulation or quickens it, causing a pale or flushed cheek. In the same way thought increases or diminishes the secretions, the action of the lungs, of the bowels, and of the heart. The muscles, moving quickly or slowly and impelled or palsied by thought, represent the action of all the organs of the human system, including brain and viscera. To remove the error producing disorder, you must calm and instruct mortal mind with immortal Truth."

In mortal mind's method of thinking, thoughts are externalized as matter and are called the body. When we understand this, and grasp what Mrs. Eddy teaches in regard to the externalization of thought, we shall see that our bodies are nothing more or less than the outward expression of our thought. Therefore, to heal what seems to be a diseased condition of the body, we must drop all thought of it as being material and recognize it as a purely mental product, an objectified condition of material sense, the correction of which, by replacing the false belief with the spiritual idea, will according to the law of God produce health and harmony.

God is the only creator, and all that He creates must be like Himself. Man is the individualized aggregation of right ideas, the compound idea of God which includes these right ideas. Knowing is being; "for God to know is to be" (No and Yes, p. 16). Therefore what man knows of God constitutes his being, and the consciousness of man consists only of the knowing of those right ideas which already exist in the mind of God. It is scientifically impossible to put a wrong thought into consciousness, and there can be no imperfection in Mind, since whatever God knows is perfect and inviolable and can never be changed or altered in any way. Nothing exists but God and what God

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creates, consequently there is only one right idea of anything. "The divine Mind maintains all identities, from a blade of grass to a star, as distinct and eternal" (Science and Health, p. 70).

Mortal belief in its endeavor to see materially creates the human eye and declares it to be the organ of sight, while in reality sight is a quality of Mind, entirely independent of iris, pupil, lens, or other parts comprising the visual organism. When Jesus said that "the light of the body is the eye," he was not referring to a material eye, but to a mental condition. Hence what Mind knows about the thing we call eye is all there is to it. This is also true in regard to what mortal mind calls heart, liver, lungs, and all else that goes to make up the so-called material body. Mortal mind claims that man is organized matter, but mortal mind's beliefs are not substantive, and the fact remains that the only organization there is or ever can be, is that compound spiritual idea of which this material organism is the counterfeit. Inasmuch as there can be only one right idea of everything, there is only one right concept of stomach. It is not made of matter; it is not a material thing. It is a mental concept, and as such has its rightful place in the divine Mind. Any other concept of stomach is false and misleading, and must eventually be destroyed. "Every object in material thought will be destroyed, but the spiritual idea, whose substance is in Mind, is eternal" (Science and Health, p. 267).

It is time for Christian Scientists to stop trying to doctor sick organs and devote themselves to exchanging their imperfect models for better and more improved beliefs, which is the only true method of healing. God is the law of health and harmony to all His own ideas, and not only is this true, but the law of God which governs the perfect spiritual idea is also the law of perfection to the human belief of things, and this extends to every organ of the human system. Whatever God knows about hand, eye, foot, is all there is to know about them. He knows that they are not material, but that they are perfect, harmonious, and useful ideas, and that their identity is distinct and eternal. If a man has the wrong concept of hand, eye, foot, his only salvation is to get the right idea concerning these useful members. If

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his body should be injured, it would be his concept of body that is affected, not God's, and the remedy is for him quickly to give up his erroneous belief of body and acquaint himself with God's idea. "Acquaint now thyself with him [God], and be at peace."

On page 218 of Miscellany Mrs. Eddy writes: "Neither the Old nor the New Testament furnishes reasons or examples for the destruction of the human body, but for its restoration to life and health as the scientific proof of 'God with us.' The power and prerogative of Truth are to destroy all disease and to raise the dead — even the self-same Lazarus. The *spiritual* body, the incorporeal idea, came with the *ascension*."

We can have no other body than the one perfect incorporeal idea. Man being the compound idea of God, it naturally follows that everything which is included in the consciousness of man must be spiritual and perfect, or it is not the consciousness that God knows and which man should have. Matter can never be spiritualized; but our mistaken belief which presents itself as matter can be corrected and thus spiritualized. To heal an imperfect heart, which is simply a wrong belief of heart, one must repudiate the testimony of material sense and claim the presence of God's idea, in order to improve his false concept. It is not necessary that he should know just what the divine idea back of the human belief of heart is. All he needs to know is that his mistaken sense of heart, which appears to be material, is not the right one. There is a right idea of God of which the human belief of heart is the counterfeit, and that idea of God is present now and here and there is no other. If a man has an unhealthy belief of stomach, the only remedy is to recognize the falsity of all that mortal mind says about stomach and claim possession of God's idea, which is the only perfect reality.

All sickness is due to a wrong belief of things, and the only remedy is to get the right idea. Because there is a right idea of heart and a right idea of stomach, we can understand what our Leader means when she says, "Divine Science . . . excludes matter, resolves

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things into *thoughts*, and replaces the objects of material sense with spiritual ideas" (Science and Health, p. 123). If there were no spiritual ideas with which to replace objects of material sense, our diseased beliefs could never be corrected and our bodies could not be scientifically healed. God is not separate from His ideas; the spiritual idea of anything is always present and carries with it the power and activity of infinite Mind, and when this spiritual idea is brought to bear upon the false belief, it produces a harmonious result.

If it is true that a wrong belief concerning body manifests itself as a disordered material condition, then the right idea which corrects the false belief must produce an improved physical manifestation. We can never heal by attempting to exercise the power of Truth on a sick body. It is the exercise of the power of Truth on a *belief* of sickness that produces the healing results.

Christian Science is an exact science, and as such it will permit of no deviation from its Principle and rule. It demands that the student, in order to demonstrate its truth, must be able to meet its requirements. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Then a knowledge of the truth of what Christian Science teaches, is absolutely necessary to its demonstration.

We are all laboring more or less under the belief that man is a human being separated from his creator, with a mind and an intelligence all his own. This belief must be destroyed, and the only way to accomplish its destruction is by constantly holding in thought the right idea and by declaring the presence and activity of all the ideas of God. As these ideas become more real to us the so-called human mind will disappear and we shall find ourselves growing more like Him, — more like infinite wisdom, more like Truth and Love. Then it shall come to pass as is written by the prophet, "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Adam H. Dickey, C.S.D.