

THE GHOST OF EVIL

Let us suppose that you and I believed in ghosts.

Let us suppose, too, that we were quietly walking down a lonely country lane on a dim moonlight night, and that we suddenly came upon a post, and hanging thereon was a sheet flapping lazily in the breeze.

Our steps would first falter; we would pause, and then, as we believed we saw a ghost, we would turn and flee at the top of our speed.

Now then, from just what would we be running? Not from a post with a sheet hanging on it! Of course not; no one would run from a post with a sheet on it, or from either one of those things. We couldn't possibly have run away from a ghost for the simplest of all reasons — there is not, never will be, and never was any such thing as a ghost. What, then, did we flee from? The veriest novice must see plainly that each one ran away from his own belief that he saw a ghost.

It must be just as evident, too, that each one ran away from his individual belief, and that we did not run from the same belief, for we are not running, remember, from a sheet-covered post, but are running from what we think is a ghost. And since there is no ghost to run from, we are not running from the same thing, but as aforesaid, each is running from his own belief that there is a ghost.

If in our feverish haste we run into a pit and hurt ourselves, of course, the reason of our fall and consequent injury could not be attributed to the ghost — because there isn't any — neither could we lay the blame on the sheeted post, because as aforesaid we were not running from it. The reason is plain, very plain indeed: we fell into the pit and injured ourselves because of the false belief that each one of us entertained, for had not each one entertained a false belief, we would not have run recklessly or otherwise, and as a consequence would have met with no accident.

If another who saw us wildly fleeing toward the pit, had wished to save us from the visibly impending accident, would it have been of any use to bind the already secured post, even if he was aware of what had seemed to occasion the fright? Not at all! Of course, it would prevent the accident if actually the post or the sheet or the combination falsely seen as a ghost, were causing it, but we have seen that it was the belief, and not the combination of sheet and post in the moonlight, that was responsible for the wild haste. No! The way to prevent the evil consequences would be to destroy the belief that ghosts exist. I say *destroy* the belief — because it requires understanding of the underlying facts to destroy a belief; whereas simply to change the belief that there was ghost in the lane to the knowledge that what we conceived to be a ghost was but a post with a sheet thereon, would, it is true, lay that particular ghost and prevent the then impending accident. But we would both still believe in the existence of ghosts and be liable to some later untoward result as a consequence; whereas, if it were shown to us individually through spiritual understanding that because in God's creation — the only creation there is — there is good only, which

would destroy the belief that there are such things as ghosts, we would never get into a panic from such a belief again, and no evil consequences could possibly ensue therefrom.

It is evident, too, that you cannot run away from my belief, nor can I run away from yours. You might have told me that there were ghosts — told me your belief — but I would have had to accept it and make it my own before the belief would affect me. Then it would be my belief (yours that became mine) and not yours that I ran from. Moreover, it is none of my business what you or anyone else believes; but it *is* my business — very much my business — what *I believe*. It is my business, therefore, what I *believe* about you and of what you may be believing. If I permit myself to believe that you are believing rightly about there being ghosts, I am believing wrongly myself and become therefore subject to my own belief that you are right and that ghosts exist, with the result that I accept your belief as the truth, and thus making it mine, I am liable to, and probably will, suffer as a consequence of the then my own belief about the existence of ghosts. Furthermore, had I had spiritual understanding of the truth, I would have “pooh-poohed” your silly chatter about ghosts, well knowing you were advancing an erroneous theory; and this knowledge of the facts would have prevented me from being afraid when we came to the post standing there in the moonlight in all its white weirdness.

As it is with the “post” ghost, so is it with the “evil” ghost.

Inasmuch as God is All and God is good, all is good. We cannot get back of this fact. Therefrom there is no evil of any sort or description. It has no more reality than a ghost. As a matter of fact, it is nothing but a ghost and has no reality whatsoever — has no existence at all, never had, and never will have. Why? Simply because good is infinite, and All-in-all. That is why. Could there be a better reason?

What, then, is it which seems to cause us to suffer, which causes us to fall into the pits we have dugged for ourselves? A ghost of evil? Not so! Why not? Because there is no ghost. What then? Even as we fell into the pit — suffered — as the result of our individual beliefs that there was a ghost (not, you will remember, because of a ghost — because there is none), so now do we suffer wholly and solely because of our individual beliefs that there is a ghost of evil. We suffer because of our individual beliefs, and only because of our individual beliefs, that there is something apart from God, good, which by its presence or absence has power to cause suffering or enjoyment, pain or pleasure.

As with evil, so with sickness, poverty, and all error; they are all evil; and we see that we do not suffer from sickness or poverty, nor do we enjoy from health or riches, because, being material, they have no existence — God or Spirit being in very fact All; but we suffer and enjoy because we believe there is something other than God, good.

To get rid of the suffering consequent, not upon evil, but upon the belief that evil exists, we as Christian Scientists must spiritually understand the Truth that God, good, is the Only and All, and this destroys the belief. It is not enough to change a belief of poverty to one of prosperity, or to change the belief of ill health to one of good health; but rather must the beliefs of ill health and poverty as well as health and riches be destroyed by spiritually understanding the allness of God, good, which is perfect harmony, a purely spiritual condition, wherein man “lives and moves and has his being,” as Paul said. Thus man as the reflection or image of God has, is, and does all that God has, is, and does eternally, because man is God expressed or God manifested. “All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all.” (*Science and Health*)

Were this not done, we would find ourselves in a bad way, deluded by the endeavor to get rid of the *evil* belief “of the tree of knowledge of good and evil” by replacing or hiding it with the belief of so-called *good* of the same “tree of knowledge of good and evil,” which “good” is even more insidious than its accompaniment, evil, because it lulls us into a false sense of harmony.

So doing would be the same as in the case of the ordinary tree in your garden. We prune it of the dead, sick (or evil) branches and water the roots, which process causes the tree to grow and flourish the more; and “the tree of knowledge of good and evil” will grow and flourish more and more if we cut off the evil and water its roots by cultivating the good — human sense of good.

It is not to be inferred from the foregoing that good must cease. Not at all. The “good” that is referred to as the “good fruit” of the “tree of knowledge of good and evil” is what appears to humanity to be good, such as material health, but which really is not good. Mrs. Eddy says — and do not forget that this is the inspired Word of God, directly revealed to her — in referring to health and ill health, that “there is a universal insanity of so-called health” (*Science and Health*), and both of these beliefs must be obliterated before harmony can appear; this is what is meant by the foregoing. Many of us, not recognizing that physical health is an illusion of the human or mortal mind, even as ill health is, feel satisfied when we attain the former illusory state and thus accept and are satisfied with the so-called “good fruit” of the “tree of knowledge of good and evil,” and it is not until that condition changes to ill health as it always does, because it is not stable, do we begin to look around for something to help us out of our difficulties. Other so-called “good” things are material riches of all kinds, material pleasure, etc., and as these become realities to us, then are we badly deceived. But if we, through spiritual understanding, by the advent of Christ, or Christian Science, into our consciousness, perceive the realities or truth of being, then health, wealth and happiness will abound, but instead of being material, though they will so appear, they will be of and dependent only on God, Spirit.

The good, however, in human consciousness is of God. It is the love that is the reflection of Love, manifest in mortals as meekness, humility, peace, joy, abundance, health, harmony, and all the human concepts of the divine goodness. These are not of “the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” These qualities are to be built upon and enlarged until, by losing all human attributes and mortal semblance, they merge into the divine and take on the divine hues.

Then, when we have destroyed the belief in evil, does the evil disappear? Does the ghost disappear? No. Why not? Because there never was any evil or ghost to disappear. All that has occurred is that human consciousness, by the advent of the Christ, has awakened to man’s Sonship with Christ, through spiritually understanding the allness of infinite good — God (the only way it can be understood); and this recognition of the fact is the destruction of the illusion.

It is no excuse to say that I was taught to believe in evil reality — in the reality of a ghost. I am responsible for myself, and it is my business to be about my Father’s business, and to do so, I must have the Mind of Christ. It is not my business, as in the example of the “post ghost,” to concern myself as to what the other fellow believes or how he acts. If I believe, however, that he is acting wrongly, unlovingly, unkindly, sickly or

unChristly, whether I believe it true or not true, then I am believing wrongly myself, for I am believing there is something else than God or good, or believing in ghosts of evil. Thus I will be receiving the results of my own false beliefs (or ghosts of evil) until I cease thus believing through the appearing of the Christ in my consciousness. For God is a consuming fire, destroying all unlike Him — the material sense or ghosts of evil.