

DEFINITION
OF
“BEAST,” “FALSE PROPHET,” “DRAGON”

One good way to understand the manner in which malicious mind operates, appearing always as effect, is to study what John had to say on this subject in the Book of Revelation. This book was dictated to John by Christ Jesus, and may therefore be taken as a statement of absolute metaphysical fact. John recorded it in symbols; but as soon as these symbols are translated into ordinary speech they will be found to be very enlightening.

According to John’s allegory, there were two forces of evil which claimed between them to rule the world and to be able to destroy anyone who did not worship them. The first, a physical power, was called by John “the beast,” and the second, a mental power, was called by him “the false prophet.” These two terms stand, for ma-

teriality and for mentality. But according to the allegory, and this is the point to be noted, neither of these two phenomena has the slightest power of its own. They have “great authority” only because it has been given to them by the third figure in the allegory, the “dragon.”

John defined the dragon as “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.” The dragon is therefore a hypnotic mental deceiver, or in other words, malicious mental malpractice. It is the insistent mental argument that appears to the Christian Scientist and says, “God is not all. You have a separate mind of your own, and I can manipulate this in such a way as to make you believe in both the beast and the false prophet, my servants who owe their power only to me.”

These two servants of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet, stand for the whole of the apparent world. The beast is the belief in many bodies, and the false prophet is the belief in many minds. Many bodies means limited bodies: and all that the term implies in the way of sickness, death, lack, laws of physiology, etc., comes under this heading. The belief in many minds is the other aspect of this same belief in limitation and produces religions, governments, fears, and

all forms of good and evil mentality. Between them, these two symbols make up the sum total of outward manifestation, or effect, through which the one evil, or dragon, operates.

In the same way that God, the one cause, always appears to you as effect, in the language that you can understand, so in the same way the dragon, the supposititious opposite of God, appears to you as effect also. Remember, however, that it never is effect. It appears only *as* effect, and is always, really, the same old dragon. Allow yourself to be misled, and handle either the beast or the false prophet, physicality or mentality, instead of the dragon, hypnotic suggestion, and you will be helpless before it.

Suppose, for instance, you see a man lying in the street with a broken leg. No one is responsible for this appearance; no one invented it or put it there. It came there through the beast, the idea that there are a lot of separate, limited bodies all obeying various laws of growth and destruction; and no one invented the beast either. The beast came there through the dragon; and the dragon “antedates man”, because it is exactly as old as the reality of which it seems to be the reverse. As Mrs. Eddy so clearly points out in *Retrospection and Introspection*, “Sin existed as a false claim before the human concept of sin was

formed; hence one’s concept of error is not the whole of error . . . The sinner created neither himself nor sin, but sin created the sinner.”

There was a time, when you were beginning your study of Christian Science, when it was enough to attack the beast. It was enough to declare there was no life and substance in matter to produce a complete healing; the man in the street got up and walked away, quite happy. This, however, was strictly dealing with effect; it did not touch the basic lie, and the beast could appear in a different way tomorrow: the mortgage could be foreclosed, or the tire could blow out and wreck the car.

Obviously, a struggle of this kind would have no end to it, no matter how conscientiously and earnestly the Christian Scientist continued to deny the reality of matter. This watchfulness was enough in the beginning, as a knowledge of the rule of fractions is enough when you are studying fractions; but it did not touch the fundamental point. There was no final victory because it was an effect that was being fought, not a cause.

The effect, in spite of the multitude of its ramifications, is a comparatively simple, open thing. The cause, the dragon, on the other hand is extremely subtle. It stands in the holy place

and calls itself “Mind,” “my Mind.” Naturally it does this. It is imitating the one cause, the one Consciousness, the one Mind, and anything it can do to convince you it is your mind it will naturally do. It claims for itself infinite subtlety and strength, as the suppositional opposite of the one Wisdom and Strength, and it will use all this to persuade the Christian Scientist it is his mind.

His business, of course, is to reverse it, because, reversed, it really is his Mind. Unreversed, it is nothing at all, and all the names given it are only the names of a supposition. But it is a supposition that claims for itself “the power and dominion” as long as it is believed in as something real.

Now suppose, instead of the beast, materiality, making its appearance in the guise of a broken leg, we have the false prophet making an appearance instead. The claim of the false prophet is that the world is full of people - men, women, and children - who are thinkers, and that their minds can operate on each other or on themselves for good or evil. In this case, it does not exhibit a man lying in the streets with a broken leg, as the beast did. It appears perhaps as a man working hard mentally to destroy forces which, he has been told by an ecclesiastical body, are trying to destroy the church.

Now, to believe in this man’s mind is no better than to believe in a leg that can be broken. To believe in the existence of that church, a church that needs protecting, is no better than to believe in the street accident. These two attempts at destruction have no force in themselves. They are merely two different external aspects of the fundamental lie, the beast and the false prophet deriving their power exclusively from the dragon. As long as one spends his time mentally arguing with either of these two effects he can do nothing, because they are only effects and not the cause of the trouble. “Lay your axe at the root of the tree.”

The supposititious opposite seems to follow the truth exactly. What seems to be is patterned exactly after what is; and, as one gets a clearer understanding of what *is*, he gets a clearer understanding also of the way the suppositional opposite seems to follow it, imitating it exactly.

The reality is as follows: “There is one cause, or Mind. There is one effect, or idea. God is the one Mind; I am the one effect. A proper synonym for what I call ‘myself’ would be ‘the awareness of God.’ There is nothing else *to* me. What I see all around me, all the things I am conscious of as persons, places, things, governments, minds, etc., are the varying ways in which Con-

sciousness, or God, appears to me, taking the language I can best understand but always appearing to me in a perfect and unlimited manner. This language appears as effect, as other ideas like myself. It is never effect. It is the presence of God appearing to me, Consciousness appearing to that which is conscious only of It.”

Now, the imitation, the suppositional opposite, patterns itself exactly on this reality. It does not invent some new kind of arrangement for itself, but claims to appear in exactly the same way, as though the false creation were a shadow superimposed upon the real one and fitting it exactly. (Of course you understand this. There is no shadow, there is no superimposing, and there is certainly no creation, either imaginary or real, since God does not create but spontaneously *is*. You know that this is true.) It is as though the dragon, the supposititious lie which claims to wear the garments of Truth, (that is, to be true) came to “you” and said, “I am cause. I am your mind and you are my effect, conscious only of me. I appear to you in the limited, dying language that is suitable to me. This language appears to you as effect, as persons, places, things, governments, minds, etc., but it is never effect. It is my presence appearing to you.”

Now supposing, just to carry on the symbol-

ism, the “dragon” could make a survey of the steps leading to its own destruction. (Apparent destruction, of course. It is only an apparent dragon, after all.) The steps might run something like this: “I had you fooled for a long time. I made you think, when I appeared as effect, that it was a real world you were seeing, a world that was really made up of men that died and laws that killed and an endless, unending round of birth and decay. Then you began to find out that it was not a real world, that it had no actual substance at all; it was only a kind of hypnotic illusion, not solid reality, and that what was really occurring was something quite different. But still I had you. You wasted your strength by fighting not against *me* but against the way I was appearing as effect. The reason you did this was because you did not understand then the word ‘Consciousness.’ You thought in a manner that was still theological rather than scientific. You thought that God was a Creator and He had made a perfect creation full of ideas, sons and daughters of God, made in His image, of which you were one out of many. You did not understand why Mrs. Eddy said, ‘The Christian Scientist is *alone* with his own being and with the reality of things.’ You thought, instead rather, that there were a lot of consciousnesses reflecting

God, instead of understanding that there was one Consciousness, appearing in infinity of variety but always One.

“Now, because you did not really understand about this One, although you admitted it theoretically from the days of Moses onwards, you did not realize in a practical way that the suppositional opposite, me, was one also. You thought that my effects were the lies; death, destruction, limitation, etc. Not at all. I am the lie, the only lie. You can reverse the way I am appearing to you as effect all you please, but that will not reverse me. I will still go right along, calling myself your mind, and all the arguments you lavish on effects (so-called), although true in themselves, will not affect me in the least.

“But I am now badly frightened. Since you have discovered that what you have been calling ‘creation’ is really God appearing to you, you have discovered also that the false creation is really only me appearing to you. You have taken me out of my hiding place. You are paying no more attention to my beast and my false prophet, all the physical and mental manifestations that are no more than the branches of a tree. You are laying your axe at the root. You are giving me your sole attention and calling me by my real

name, and I don't like it at all. I am in great anguish, knowing my time is short.”

Now, to drop the suppositional and get back to the real. What is the ‘real name’ of what you have been calling evil? Obviously the real name is God, since there is no other realness. The real name of death is Life. The real name of a mistake is Truth. Death could not be destroyed except by calling it by its real name, neither could the dragon be destroyed except by ceasing to misunderstand it and by seeing it instead for what it really is. This obliterates what has been called “dragon” and leaves in its place what has always been there, the name God. Nothing is destroyed, because there is nothing to destroy: destruction is a kind of symbolism. What is done is to see it correctly; and because the awareness of God is all that there is to one he cannot very well do anything else. The apparent warfare with the dragon is simply the finding of one's own identity with God; and it ends when the Christian Scientist is finally and practically able to call the “dragon” by its real name.