

Challenging and Correcting Human Belief

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The Bible declares: "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made,"¹ and "God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."² In consonance with these statements Christian Science teaches that anything that is not good, no matter what it looks like, sounds like, or feels like, cannot be real or have substance. It can only appear to exist and then only as a belief, an illusion in human thought, since it could not have been made by God, infinite good, the one creator. The challenging and the correcting of erroneous human beliefs with the harmonious, loving ideas of Mind bring the needed change.

When the appearances of evil, or mortal mind, seem formidable or threatening, it is a relief to realize confidently that they are all only beliefs! We know that a belief is changeable and subject to the truth understood. The problem we face can be seen as no longer a thing or condition of apparent substance or permanence but only as a disembodied concept that changes when thought is spiritualized. This puts fearful conditions on a basis that can be dealt with, because there is no longer something extraneous to thought that has to be changed to bring us harmony, prosperity, or health.

To become aware that we do not have to strike out humanly, go anywhere, or change anyone or anything "out there" is a comforting realization. It tends to dissipate the fear and uncertainty that would blind our vision when the mirages of mortal mind present themselves as actual. Nothing—absolutely nothing—has to be changed but the erroneous belief being entertained.

Mrs. Eddy states, "Belief is changeable, but spiritual understanding is changeless."³ Through our sincere study and prayer as taught in Christian Science, changeable mortal belief yields to the changeless spiritual understanding of Mind. As this understanding corrects erroneous concepts, harmony replaces discord; abundance replaces want; health and activity replace sickness and stagnation; contentment and happiness reign where depression and fear had held forth.

We replace false beliefs by first recognizing and challenging them as empty, groundless counterfeits, totally without value or substance, and then by discarding them as worthless frauds. These counterfeits can be readily detected by applying the standards taught by our Master, Christ Jesus, who demonstrated so effectively the invariable law of God.

One Christian standard set forth in Paul's Epistle to the Philippians is, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."⁴ Erroneous concepts—selfishness, impurity, fear, or dishonesty—do not measure up to this inspired standard. We can recognize them for what they are and dismiss them. It makes no difference how long we have held on to a counterfeit; the moment we see it for what it is, its value is gone.

After we have recognized, challenged, discredited, and expelled wrong beliefs, we must replace them with right ideas that meet the standard of Jesus' teachings. We do this by filling our consciousness with love, purity, unselfishness, harmony, and joy. Where a discordant, dishonest, selfish, fearful, or impure person appears to be, we must lift the soiled cloak of false belief and see God's perfect man, His image and likeness, the reflection of God's perfection. Then these wrong beliefs are deprived of their supposed force and effectiveness and, seen in their proper light, they fade into absolute nothingness.

Since concepts mentally entertained are made manifest in human experience, any changed, improved concepts invariably bring an improved human experience. Mrs. Eddy says, "Hold thought steadfastly to the enduring, the good, and the true, and you will bring these into your experience proportionably to their occupancy of your thoughts."⁵

A Christian Scientist who had carelessly accepted as true a condition of bursitis manifested by an office associate experienced an identical physical condition many months later. At first he was inclined simply to ignore it with the hope that it would just go away; but it grew increasingly painful and disabling until sleep or rest became impossible.

This discomfort aroused the Scientist to the necessity of ridding his consciousness of the wrong beliefs entertained. He recognized that the condition was not physical but only a suggestion of mortal mind; that nothing had to be done except to reverse the mistaken belief about man and replace it with the true concept of the man of God's creation—spiritual, perfect in every respect.

Mrs. Eddy says, "The remedy consists in probing the trouble to the bottom, in finding and casting out by denial the error of belief which produces a mortal disorder, never honoring erroneous belief with the title of law nor yielding obedience to it."⁶ In obedience to this advice the Scientist thoroughly denied the reality of the illness, whether manifested by the office associate or by himself. As the false belief was replaced with the true concept of man, the discordant physical condition faded away,

leaving complete normalcy. Moreover, the great weight of personal responsibility for his business that he had borne for years lifted, and a wonderful new sense of freedom and joy was gained.

Be the problem physical, financial, or one of human relationships, the answer always lies in the correction and purification of our own thinking. By exchanging human concepts for the divine consciousness, we can recognize our God-given dominion and experience harmony, health, and joy, which are the inevitable rewards of a consciousness filled with Love. As Paul admonished the Romans, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."⁷

¹ John 1:3; ² Gen. 1:31; ³ Science and Health, p. 96; ⁴ Phil. 4:8; ⁵ Science and Health, p. 261; ⁶ p. 184; ⁷ Rom. 12:2.