

EVIL NON-EXISTENT

The phases of evil seem so numerous and varied, and so real, that to believe, much less to understand, evil to be nothing, seems not only difficult, but impossible. Nevertheless, it is a fact that because there exists but one infinite God, good, there can be no evil — hence its nothingness or non-existence.

Suppose we believed in the presence of evil everywhere, and as we were quietly strolling along a dark, lonely country road, we believed that there swept suddenly across our line of vision a form, which at the same time was emitting an uncanny scream. For a moment our terror would be acute, our blood would seem to freeze in our veins, and the next moment, we would unceremoniously and with haste flee from what we thought was something fearful. Apparently both of us (my friend who is walking with me) would believe we had witnessed the same thing, and the memory of this experience would remain with us for years — or, so long as we continued under the delusion that evil actually exists.

It is a fact, however, that no such thing as evil exists and never did exist; therefore, it will become evident immediately that neither of us ever saw that form, nor did we ever hear that scream; each one of us ran away, not from a something, but each one ran away from his own belief that he saw something and heard something.

It is true each one would probably believe he saw much the same thing as the other, because of the general fable concerning the appearance of evil; but this does not alter the fact that each one did not see a form or hear a scream, because there are not and never were disembodied human beings. Each one, however, had his own belief or standpoint of such beings; and, therefore, each one ran away from his own belief concerning apparitions without bodies, or so-called phantoms, and never from a phantom itself, for there are no beliefs, and never were beliefs, expressed as phantoms.

If, through the interpretations of God to mortals, we were healed of believing in phantoms, we would have to recognize the true spiritual fact that, because God never created beliefs, we could not have seen such a thing as a belief expressed as a phantom. If we understood this fact as a fact, we would be forever healed of our phantom beliefs, or of believing in beliefs.

If, however, while we still believed in the existence of phantom beliefs, it were pointed out to us that what we saw was a hoot-owl, we would have merely changed our belief of seeing a phantom into a belief that we saw a hoot-owl. Inasmuch as belief cannot destroy belief, but only changes itself from one belief to another belief — covers that belief or hides that belief — we would still believe in the actuality of phantoms, and would then be liable to believe that we could at any time see and hear other phantoms or beliefs, though, of course, this particular phantom belief would have been laid to rest.

To illustrate: One summer a woman had to go to a large city. Upon arriving

there she found that the friend at whose house she was to stay in the suburbs had gone to her country home, but that she was to take the key from such and such a place and stay at her house as long as she wished.

It was rather late when she arrived at this house, and found it in complete darkness, with few other houses in the distance, and a vacant field in front of the house. However, she unlocked the door gingerly, and decided to sleep on the top floor as being the most likely place to find security. As she prepared for bed, with both ears open for sounds of footsteps, or creaking floors or stairs, and turned out the light, she glanced through the window and was sure she saw the form of a man looking directly up to the window. In her terror, she sat up all night by the window and watched this "man," never daring to sleep as she very much wanted to do.

In the morning light, to her astonishment and amazement, the woman found that what she had believed was the form of a man was simply a water hydrant, the top appearing to her in the darkness like a hat. She realized then how her own fear, her own belief, had visualized the form of a man which was not there at all, and she suffered all those long hours from her belief, and not from the form itself.

As with the phantom belief, or the hydrant belief, so is it with error, evil, matter, or aught other than Spirit. Because God *is*, and *is* infinite good, it is utterly impossible for evil to exist; it is non-existent, for there is no evil; positively and absolutely, there is no evil, and not even a belief that there is a belief of evil. Evil has being only as a phantom belief has being, as a viewpoint, and solely within the chambers of our own imagery.

Just as one could not destroy the phantom belief by endeavoring to attack and destroy the phantom (in this instance, believing that the hoot-owl was a phantom) by chasing it into a trap and killing it, or by destroying the hydrant, so one finds that there is no evil to attack and destroy. There is only the viewpoint that evil exists; therefore, the viewpoint must be obliterated by the recognition and acceptance of the true facts in both cases. "In the third degree mortal mind disappears, and man as God's image appears." (*Science and Health*)

As one's own belief about phantoms is all there is to a phantom (though millions of others have similar viewpoints), so is each one's belief, or concept, of evil all there is of evil, as far as he is concerned; thus one's own belief is all that can ever be obliterated; someone else's belief in evil, or phantoms, has nothing to do with that one's belief. Each one can obliterate his own belief, but not another's, for the very simple reason that each one has to do his own recognizing, and his own practicing of that Truth he has rightly apprehended.

It may be clearly seen, inasmuch as God is infinite good, that sickness, matter, evil of whatsoever kind, have no existence; that they are but mistaken viewpoints. Therefore, all that has to be obliterated is the viewpoint which one holds about evil, or phantoms in whatever disguise, which is done by the cognition of a normal or spiritual consciousness of creation.

It may be asked why, since this is so, and it is so, is it that Christian Scientists do not heal instantaneously, for they claim to understand the true facts of being which destroy the distorted viewpoint of these true facts? In reply, it may be said that oftentimes one only theoretically perceives, rather than being actually convinced of the true

facts of being. Recognizing, accepting, and living the true facts of being, healing is instantaneous. It may seem difficult to attain that conviction practically, rather than theoretically, because of past educational processes. As an instance of this, I presume that every Christian Scientist would smile if accused of believing in phantoms, but I venture to say that if most anyone were suddenly to meet with a white hoot-owl on a dark, lonely road, as aforesaid, that one would be startled, would draw back, his heart would pop up into his throat, and a cold chill would run up and down his spine! Why? Because he believes in phantoms partly, and because he understands the truth of the allness of God theoretically, and not practically.

Just so it is with our endeavor to recognize, or be convinced, of the truth in regard to the allness of God, good, and the consequent nothingness of disease, matter, or evil of whatsoever kind. It must be made practical.

We should be so absolutely convinced of the allness, the oneness, the onliness of Mind, God, and the consequent non-existence of evil, or even a belief of evil, that should a phantom or apparition of sin, disease, death, or trouble of whatever nature, suddenly cross our line of vision, emitting screams as it were, we still would stand firm and undisturbed in our faith in His Word. "May the gentle presence of Divine Love so reward your lives that you shall so rise in faith and understanding as never to doubt or dread in a single conflict with evil" (Letter from Mary Baker Eddy, dated 1898; reprinted in the *Christian Science Sentinel* of August 22, 1936).