

Who Is Your Brother's Keeper?

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Failure in human relationships underlies much of the world's serious health troubles, disappointment, and frustration, said a Christian Science lecturer, Neil H. Bowles, C.S.B., on Thursday, Dec. 1.

He told a public audience in The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, that the healing of all human discords depends ultimately on an understanding of man's spiritual nature as the son of God.

Referring to the Bible story of Cain and Abel, Mr. Bowles said that Cain's problem was not maladjustment to society but lack of spiritual understanding.

"Cain didn't know God. He didn't know God as the absolute all-inclusive Principle of man and the universe, divine Love."

"When Jesus taught that a man should love his neighbor as himself," added the lecturer, "he was trying to show us what our real spiritual natures are like and how to behave as sons of God."

Mr. Bowles described Jesus' teaching as the divine Science which underlies everything real and good in life. He said each individual has a responsibility to contribute his share to the world "on the spiritual side," on the side of love and healing.

Mrs. Rose M. Henniker-Heaton, Second Reader of The Mother Church, introduced Mr. Bowles, of Atlanta. His lecture was titled "Who Is Your Brother's Keeper?"

Following is a partial text:

Divine rules solve problems

I'm sure most of you are familiar with the Bible story of Cain and Abel in which Cain killed his brother because he envied him. It highlights our need to understand one another. We're all aware that failure in human relationships can result in many kinds of evil - unhappy personal situations, serious health troubles, mental tensions, disappointment and frustration in our careers.

Today, in trying to analyze human relationship problems, some people will tell you that men with Cain-like natures aren't well adjusted to society, or to their environment, or to themselves. But that's not the basic problem.

What was wrong with Cain is what's wrong with the world today. Cain didn't know God. He didn't know God as the absolute all-inclusive Principle of man and the universe, divine Love. Naturally, then, Cain didn't know anything about the brotherhood of man, or the divine rules of maintaining a right relationship with Abel. No one will ever be really well adjusted until he knows something of these divine rules. But those who do know and practice them can solve the problems resulting from discordant human relationships, and all other problems, too.

Because of the growing interest in mental causes, it's important to distinguish clearly between differing viewpoints in this area. Christian Science doesn't concern itself with the study of the human mind or observation of human behavior. On the contrary, it is the Science of divine Mind, God, Spirit. It shows that what best produces right human relationships is an understanding of man's spiritual nature and behavior as the child of God, divine Love.

You remember in the Bible story, that, after Cain killed Abel, God asked him, "Where is Abel thy brother?" And Cain replied, "I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9.) Well, ever since Cain was asked that question most of the people of the world have gone right on saying, in effect, "Why should I be concerned about my brother's welfare? I'm not my brother's keeper." And even though Christ Jesus taught his followers that they

Man expresses freedom, harmony

When we comprehend that that's what God is, we can let go of the mental picture of Him as being manlike. When we gain this understanding of God, we can also comprehend our own real nature. Mrs. Eddy writes: "God's being is infinity, freedom, harmony, and boundless bliss" (Science and Health, Page 481); and elsewhere she says, "Man is the expression of God's being" (ibid., Page 470). So he isn't a corporeal mortal. He's the expression of "infinity, freedom, harmony, and boundless bliss." He is the expression of all that God is. Then he can't be a physical or finite personal mentality, but is the individual, spiritual idea of all-inclusive Mind. He is the object and expression of limitless divine Love.

Now it stands to reason that for us to love our brother as ourselves and heal the sickness-producing frictions and tensions between us, we have to admit his true nature to be spiritual and loving like our own. In fact it's only through our own spiritual vision that we recognize his true nature. Then we'll love him and want to be his helpful keeper.

The scientific fact is that infinite intelligence and substance can't be measured out in limited quantity for just a few people. Substance and intelligence are inexhaustible and immediately available for everybody. Indeed, as this is seen, men will begin to understand that the capacities and capabilities of every individual, as the image of divine Principle, Love, are unlimited. Then they'll realize the utter folly of envy, rivalry, and hate. They won't be Cain-like thinkers any more; there'll be no reason to even want to exclude others from their full share of good. And they'll not fear there won't be enough of it to go around. They'll see the Science of being their brother's keeper and gladly follow the rule of loving their neighbor as themselves. And, finally, they'll understand that divine Love alone is the only giver of good.

So you see there's a great difference between the Christly rules of Jesus and the psychological approach to human relationships on the basis of the human mind. Jesus' teachings are pure Science. They're based on the spiritual facts of life. He possessed the spiritual perception with which to discern these facts because of the Christ, the divine idea of Truth and Love, which inspired him. Mrs. Eddy refers to Jesus' teachings as the Christ, Truth. They show mankind what life is all about. That's why Jesus was called Saviour. His teachings save or redeem us from the material sense of life and its sufferings.

So Christ-healing differs widely from all merely human forms of treatment. Christ-healing leads out of a material sense of life; it does not accept a material sense of life and work within it. Just forming new patterns of human thought and emotion isn't enough. This doesn't eliminate the material sense of life that causes envy and hate to churn within the human heart and produce the tensions which make people quarrelsome and sick. We have to feel the love for our brother man that comes from understanding the scientific fact that he, too, is in truth the unlimited expression of divine Principle, Love. As St. Paul says, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Timothy 1:7).

These days psychiatrists, medical doctors, and even dentists advise patients to avoid mental tensions because of their bad effects on the mind and body. Now, because they've seen this much, they're in a position to do some good. But Christian Science goes much further. It shows people how to be led right out of what it is that produces tensions, out of mortal and material ignorance God.

Resentment overcome heals illness

Here's an actual example of how the scientific understanding of divine Love healed suffering produced by tension. A man I know suffered from childhood with very painful liver attacks. They grew more severe as time went on. He'd get quick relief when he would turn to Christian Science treatment for help, but he didn't get a permanent healing until he realized that he had to love his neighbor as himself.

I've already spoken of God's grace that heals and blesses. This same divine grace enables us to love our brother as ourselves. It is Christliness on our part - that is, the expressing of unselfishness, forgiveness, mercy, and the like - which opens the way for the grace of God to work in us. And it's God's grace operating in us that enables us to express this Christliness and resist the temptation to see our brother as Cain-like.

Dare to act unselfishly

Even though we may feel we love him, we have to resist the common tendency to classify him humanly and thereby limit him. Loving him also means protecting him. Wanting to protect him, we won't saddle him with any limiting classification such as "hateful," "selfish," "stupid," or "difficult." And divine Love will speed our own reformation, too, and help us to grow in mental stature and spiritual vision. There's great joy and contentment in seeing all mankind in a Christianly scientific way. There's no happiness or satisfaction in downgrading others.

The way to attain the Christliness that willingly makes mental elbow-room for others is through the pathway of unselfishness. Because mortal inclinations seem to resist unselfishness, it has to be cultivated. Through God's grace we can do this. We have to dare to act unselfishly, and not fear the loss of good. The Apostle James wrote, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). To Mary Baker Eddy that was Science. To her, loving her fellowman wasn't merely being willing to live and let live, it was an unselfed desire to free him from every limitation.

Mrs. Eddy is rightly recognized as a scientific discoverer and religious pioneer of unique stature. But she worked always under the impulsion of divine Love. So, unlike many persons of outstanding ability and genius, she was throughout her life a sublime example of unselfishness. From the very start of her ministry, there were people who tried to shut her out. However, she impartially loved everybody. She prayed for all mankind, and instructed her followers to do likewise. She truly understood the Science of brotherhood! So there was room in her love for those who tried to shut her out. She refused to exclude them or to war with those who ridiculed her and her teachings. Under the impulsion of God's grace, she refused to deny good, even to those who hated her. Making strong demands on love, she writes: "We must love our enemies in all the manifestations wherein and whereby we love our friends" (Miscellaneous Writings, Page 11); and she concludes the paragraph, "When smitten on one cheek, I have turned the other: I have but two to present."

This is but one incident in her life that illustrates her great love for her fellowman. When certain persons with malicious intent tried to gain control of her affairs and went to court to prove that she was too elderly and incompetent to handle them, they failed. The suit was widely publicized by those who wanted to destroy the growing influence of Christian Science. They thought by discrediting Mrs. Eddy they could accomplish this end. They didn't succeed.

Long before this suit was started, Mrs. Eddy's followers had come to call her Leader, and not without good reason. After the suit was over, many friends urged Mrs. Eddy to have a book written that would preserve for all time a history of the treachery of her attackers. The book was prepared, but after reading it she never permitted it to be sold or circulated. Aware of her obligation as keeper of her brother, she refused to shut out from her love those who had attempted to destroy her. She remained true to her understanding of God's impartial love. Here was leadership of the highest order. She was practicing what she taught. Years before, she had written to one of her students, "Love unselfed, love of one's enemies, humility, moderation, strength, are the cardinals of Christian Science." She exemplified to the world what it means for us to be our brother's keeper. She saw forgiveness as an essential part of the Christly law of loving our neighbor as ourself.

The time to forgive is now

Forgiveness is an activity of divine Love. It is divine Love that supplies the impulsion to forgive. So our ability to