

# 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



should love their neighbor as themselves, mortal natures haven't been impelled to follow his teachings on this point. Why is this so? Because they haven't learned that Jesus' teachings explain and demonstrate divine Science.

### **Spirit recognized as cause**

Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, with inspired spiritual vision, saw beyond the age-old doctrinal views held of Jesus and his teachings. She revealed the full purpose of his mission. She writes in "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," "Jesus of Nazareth was the most scientific man that ever trod the globe. He plunged beneath the material surface of things, and found the spiritual cause" (Page 313). So Mrs. Eddy didn't regard Jesus' teachings as a form of human psychology. She saw that his teachings were Science derived from divine Spirit, God, and from his recognition that Spirit or God is the only cause.

To be our brother's keeper and to love our neighbor as ourselves are one and the same thing. They're not just pleasant philosophical attitudes toward life. They're not a man-made formula devised from observations of human behavior. Divine Science is involved in both of these teachings. They're basic to the law of spiritual healing with which Christ Jesus met all human problems. They're indispensable scientific rules for correcting discordant human relationships and the ills arising from these discords. So they have to be practiced in spiritual healing today.

Spiritual healing is an essential activity of the Church of Christ, Scientist, founded by Mrs. Eddy. In the spirit of love and brotherhood she met the resistance of long established systems of medicine and religion. She revealed and established the most effective and radical healing method of all time, a method that is wholly spiritual. She saw and proved in her healing work that the divine Love which Christ Jesus taught and scientifically demonstrated is what heals all ills. And this Christliness, this Christ-power, when practiced today, is still the only real healing agent.

When Jesus taught that a man should love his neighbor as himself, he was explaining something of the Christ, Truth, or the Science of God. Yes, he was trying to show us what our real spiritual natures are like and how to behave as sons of God. To live as God's sons is the way to completely and permanently cast out the Cain-like elements, the envy, hatred, and jealousy, that disturb human relationships, and to heal the sorrows, diseases, tensions, and frustrations that arise from them. So this is what we're going to think about here - what is needed to really love our fellowmen - the Science involved in being our brother's keeper.

### **God is always just at hand**

The basic reason people don't love others as themselves is because they think of themselves and others as material mortals. Cain slew Abel because he saw everything through the limited eyes of a mortal. He didn't understand that there was enough of good for his brother and himself. So the way for us to stop being Cain-like, to stop envying and hating one another, is for each one simply to learn of his unlimited selfhood as an immortal child of God. And then act like the child of God.

I'm sure you've asked yourself, "Who am I?" and "What am I?" Well, the Bible tells us who we are and what we are. As most of you know, it says in the book of Genesis, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him" (1:27). People have been reading that Bible description of man ever since it was first written, but they've still thought of themselves as material mortals. Why? Because we can only understand what the image of God is like by first knowing what God is.

The study of Christian Science reveals that God is the absolute Principle of the universe including man. He isn't like a human being at all. But this doesn't mean that God as Principle is cold or distant. On the contrary, He is divine Love, everywhere present, always just at hand. He is infinite and eternal Life, the inexhaustible source of all life. His living, loving presence is the ceaseless activity of good. He perpetually governs and holds the whole of creation in uninterrupted harmony. He is Soul, the source of all true capacities and capabilities. He is Spirit, the indestructible substance of man and the universe, and the one Mind or intelligence of all.



## **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.



One time he was in a meeting with some businessmen and there was much hatred being expressed. He found himself becoming very resentful. He began to feel ill and was gripped with fear. But he tried to think scientifically about those present. Then it dawned on him for the first time that he developed this illness only when he became upset over personal relationships. This was a turning point in his life. He saw that, instead of just using Christian Science as a remedy, he had to live its teachings. He had to be willing to love people who expressed hatred toward him. He needed to be permanently redeemed from hate by practicing Christliness. This healing took place a good many years ago and that was the last of those attacks. You see, the harmonizing influence of divine Love brought him mental tranquility. Then its ceaseless healing action restored normal action to his system. This was a spiritual healing, not a human adjustment.

Each one of us has the choice of meeting hatred either with hatred or in a Christlike way. The Christlike way is to pray for those who despitefully use us, as Jesus said we should, to admit into our consciousness only loving thoughts about them. It's saddening to see hatred met with hatred and the painful experiences following. But they who think lovingly of those who hate them are being truly Christian. In a very real sense, that's praying for them. They are on the side of Christliness and are worthy of God's gift of grace that heals and blesses all. Furthermore, as we give our brother mental elbowroom in which to grow out of his hatefulness, we are responding to God's grace. Making mental elbowroom for others means that we want to be guided by divine intelligence in dealing with them and not let emotional reactions govern us. Those who reach this point of Christliness will make compassionate decisions and won't be irritated by other people's problems. And they'll not only prevent discordant human relationship problems from arising, they'll keep themselves healthy.

Now physical healing is only one benefit of maintaining sound human relationships on a spiritually scientific basis. Another is right achievement that blesses ourselves and others.

Experience has proved that those who would be successful in whatever they're doing have to get along with people. But I want to stress again that we shouldn't merely adjust to other people's thinking in order to get along. What we need is to lovingly make mental elbowroom for them in which to grow and expand. But this doesn't mean we have to accept imposition or injustice. No, indeed! It means that we refuse to hate and condemn people who don't agree with us. Jesus said if we judge others, we condemn ourselves.

## **Expectations of good fulfilled**

Anybody who keeps a loving attitude toward others because it's Christianly scientific to do so refuses to be disturbed when mental conflicts appear. He refuses to become resentful or afraid. He learns to hear the ceaseless voice of divine intelligence guiding him. As the Bible says: "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isaiah 30:21).

Who can doubt that people feel our thoughts toward them? How we see each other is a big consideration in establishing sound human relationships. Mrs. Eddy says in *Science and Health*, "The great truth in the Science of being, that the real man was, is, and ever shall be perfect, is incontrovertible; for if man is the image, reflection, of God, he is neither inverted nor subverted, but upright and Godlike" (Page 200).

I once knew a lawyer, a Christian Scientist, who really tried to correctly behold his fellowman. A noteworthy thing about his practice of law was that he truly wanted divine Principle to govern. Other lawyers were amazed at his honesty and fairness. His serenity, born of loving his brother men as himself, was impressive. He put trust in them and expected good from them, and he got it. He didn't classify people as good or bad. He looked to behold the Godlike man. Was he a successful lawyer? Indeed he was, and highly so. But that wasn't all. He was one of the most respected men in his community. His views on civic and educational subjects were sought and valued. Later, as a Christian Science practitioner and teacher, he had another successful career in the healing work. He certainly had given the right answer to Cain's question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9.)



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



it invokes the all-powerful action of God's grace which heals the malice and sickness resulting from attaching error to persons.

### **Parable shows God as Love**

Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7). Being merciful is still another aspect of true forgiveness, of being our brother's keeper. Mercy is an attribute of divine Love. In Jesus' parable of the prodigal son you will recall that the brother objected to the father restoring the erring one to his full sonship. Here was hardness of heart, pitiless disregard for his brother's well-being. He was attaching error to him. He was willing to shut him out from good. Merciless is the word for it - unforgiving. But the father didn't make any distinction between the brothers. He made room for the prodigal. The father's forgiveness wasn't just a parental indulgence, either. He wasn't just satisfying a human affection for his son. The parable was intended to teach the nature of God as all-acting, all-inclusive Love. Christliness in us exemplifies this Love in acts of mercy. A merciful attitude is a prayerful attitude. Mercifully wiping out error or mistakes by declaring and spiritually reasoning that divine Principle, Love, knows no mistakes is true prayer. It is Christianly scientific prayer to expose evil, not as something, but as the nothing which it has always been. Its divine impulsion heals the effects of error. Then we see there's no such thing as a man of mistakes.

Forgetting error by wiping it out, exposing its nothingness, or in other words being pure in heart and merciful, increases the stature of our manhood in Christ. It lays hold of God's grace which is waiting to lift us out of the mean, the petty, and the contemptible. It opens our thoughts to the spiritual view so necessary for truly adjusted human relationships and for a healthy, successful human experience.

Our sojourn in this human experience will be a happier one as we take a larger view of what's going on in it. You and I and all mankind are simply emerging from the belief in a finite, material sense of existence into the recognition that Life is infinite, spiritual, and eternal, and always has been. All that's really true of Life is good and unlimited, and everybody is simply about the business of finding that out. Seeing this will help us to understand that the ceaseless activity of divine Love treats us all alike in its bestowals of unlimited intelligence and substance. Eagerly then will we want to love our brother as ourself and bridge over with unselfed love the gaps or divisions between us. This higher, more expansive, more spiritual outlook prepares us to gain a fuller understanding of the Science of being our brother's keeper, the only Science that really heals.

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