
QUARTERLY UPDATE FROM THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION

“It shall be the duty of the Committee on Publication to correct in a Christian manner impositions on the public in regard to Christian Science, injustices done Mrs. Eddy or members of this Church by the daily press, by periodicals or circulated literature of any sort.” Church Manual, Article XXXIII, Section 2

A Message from the Manager:

Based on the first chapter of Genesis, Christian Science teaches the omnipresence and omnipotence of God as the source of all good, and that we can each rely on and witness this infinite good even in the face of challenging or even dire circumstances. This is the spiritual law behind Christ Jesus’ core teaching: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48).

It is so simple but actually quite thrilling that everything in our experience that does not appear to be at the level of this divine perfection can — must — yield to ever-present good when we see more clearly that we are each the full reflection of infinite God, good. And yet sometimes this approach is caricatured or even criticized as dangerous by those who claim Christian Scientists ignore evil or deny “mainstream reality” and think that we thereby contribute to a problem of misinformation or disinformation being spread in society.

Committees on Publication regularly have opportunities to correct this notion that Christian Scientists are “reality-deniers.” In one recent case, our Manager’s office provided this explanation to someone who inquired about the Christian Science view of “reality”:

Mary Baker Eddy does encourage students of Christian Science to “look deep into realism instead of accepting only the outward sense of things” (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 129:22–24). But this does not mean we deny the world around us or hide from problems. Instead, it means one can go deeper in making Christianity, or spiritual living, practical by reasoning logically that a world created by God as divine Love must be in the nature of Love itself — spiritual, good, and harmonious, even if it does not seem that way on the surface. And through this spiritual reasoning — this looking deeper into God’s creation — we not only change our point of view but witness changes in our lives for the better.

Along these lines, the Committee on Publication office is sometimes asked on a more academic level to explain how Christian Science views the “problem of evil” and how to reconcile the view of a benevolent God with suffering seen throughout the world. If you or your church are asked this question, we hope you will find inspiration in the example below of the response given by a Committee on Publication, which helps to explain that Christian Science does not callously dismiss the suffering of others. The Committee also explains that by understanding the nature of God as infinitely good and loving, we see that God is not the cause of the problem, but is the solution that reveals good even in the face of evil, and that relieves suffering. Even when the question feels academic, the real answer is one that we feel deep in our being — that pure, divine Father-Mother Love embraces us all and meets our every human need.

Sincerely,

Kevin E. Ness, C.S.B.

Manager, Christian Science Committees on Publication

“The substance, Life, intelligence, Truth, and Love, which constitute Deity, are reflected by His creation; and when we subordinate the false testimony of the corporeal senses to the facts of Science, we shall see this true likeness and reflection everywhere.”

(*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, Mary Baker Eddy, p. 516:4)

Fruitage

A college professor in India wrote an extensive and quite encyclopedic blog post on the problem of evil, broadly exploring what a wide range of theologies and philosophies have to say on the topic of theodicy, the question of “how to reconcile the existence of evil and suffering with an omniscient, omnibenevolent and omnipotent God.” Along with brief summaries of key positions from a variety of philosophical and religious perspectives, the author includes a section entitled, “Evil as illusory — Christian Science.” The three paragraphs under this heading begin on an accurate note, but go on to include the following imposition on the public in regard to Christian Science:

The illusion theodicy has been critiqued for denying the reality of crimes, wars, terror, sickness, injury, death, suffering and pain to the victim. If evil is simply ontologically unreal, how can one explain Hitler killing six million Jews? Didn't it truly cause substantial pain and suffering to them and also to others who survived the Holocaust? Why God would create this "illusion" of crimes, wars, terror, sickness, injury, death, suffering and pain; and why God does not stop this "illusion."

The Committee on Publication for India was invited to take this up in prayer and consider a healing response that addressed the impositions on the public in regard to Christian Science contained in the article. The message to the professor included the following:

I am both grateful for and impressed by your thorough and in-depth look at the problem of evil from a wide range of theological and philosophical perspectives.... The article is truly encyclopedic in its scope....

As a Christian Scientist for over 40 years, I wanted to offer a different perspective on how Christian Science addresses the questions of theodicy. It is true, as you noted, that “According to Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910), founder of Christian Science, evil is ontologically unreal in the world created by God who is absolutely good and perfect.” But it does not follow that Christian Science blandly denies “the reality of crimes, wars, terror, sickness, injury, death, suffering and pain to the victim.” Christian Scientists do not wish away the moral horrors of the Holocaust nor other atrocities. At their best, they humbly and compassionately respond to human needs, seeking answers through a growing understanding of the all-good God, who “saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good” (Genesis 1:31). Any real help in alleviating suffering simply cannot happen from a place of callous dismissal of another’s experience.

“Sickness is neither imaginary nor unreal, — that is, to the frightened, false sense of the patient,” writes Mary Baker Eddy. “Sickness is more than fancy; it is solid conviction” (see *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 460:14–18). But then she goes on to say how moral and physical ills can be dealt with “through [a] right apprehension of the truth of being.” In other words, through striving to understand more of the nature of God as infinitely good and loving, we will be better able

to see, and demonstrate by degrees, that the evil in human experience is not caused by God. It results from false human theories about God and reality. By following Jesus' command to "know the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32), more and more we find practical solutions and healing in the face of evil and all sorts of problems.

As the Christian Science Committee on Publication for India, I would be happy to serve as a resource if you ever find yourself writing about Christian Science and would value an insider perspective.

The professor replied shortly thereafter with an appreciative and respectful response.

Inspiration and updates from your Committee on Publication:

Dear Friends,

When it comes to handling aggressive impositions on public thought as they relate to Christian Science, I find it always inspiring to think about Mary Baker Eddy's article *Love Your Enemies*:

Who is thine enemy that thou shouldst love him? ...

"Love thine enemies" is identical with "Thou hast no enemies." Wherein is this conclusion relative to those who have hated thee without a cause? Simply, in that those unfortunate individuals are virtually thy best friends. Primarily and ultimately, they are doing thee good far beyond the present sense which thou canst entertain of good. ...

We have no enemies. Whatever envy, hatred, revenge — the most remorseless motives that govern mortal mind — whatever these try to do, shall "work together for good to them that love God."
(*Miscellaneous Writings* 1883–1896, Mary Baker Eddy, pp. 8:9 (only); 9:9; 10:4)

Warmly,

George

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