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Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
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Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Hall
Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Willis
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Turgenev Balzac
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Whitman Twain
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Potter Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Burton Harte
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Unity of Good

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Imprint

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Summary

Unity of Good

Caution in the Truth

Perhaps no doctrine of Christian Science rouses so much natural doubt and questioning as this, that God knows no such thing as sin. Indeed, this may be set down as one of the "things hard to be understood," such as the apostle Peter declared were taught by his fellow-apostle Paul, "which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest ... unto their own destruction." (2 Peter iii. 16.)

Let us then reason together on this important subject, whose statement in Christian Science may justly be characterized as *wonderful*.

Does God know or behold sin, sickness, and death?

The nature and character of God is so little apprehended and demonstrated by mortals, that I counsel my students to defer this infinite inquiry, in their discussions of Christian Science. In fact, they had better leave the subject untouched, until they draw nearer to the divine character, and are practically able to testify, by their lives, that as they come closer to the true understanding of God they lose all sense of error.

The Scriptures declare that God is too pure to behold iniquity (Habakkuk i. 13); but they also declare that God pitieth them who fear Him; that there is no place where His voice is not heard; that He is "a very present help in trouble."

The sinner has no refuge from sin, except in God, who is his salvation. We must, however, realize God's presence, power, and love, in order to be saved from sin. This realization takes away man's fondness for sin and his pleasure in it; and, lastly, it removes the pain which accrues to him from it. Then follows this, as the *finale* in Science: The sinner loses his sense of sin, and gains a higher sense of God, in whom there is no sin.

The true man, really *saved*, is ready to testify of God in the infinite penetration of Truth, and can affirm that the Mind which is good, or God, has no knowledge of sin.

In the same manner the sick lose their sense of sickness, and gain that spiritual sense of harmony which contains neither discord nor disease.

According to this same rule, in divine Science, the dying—if they die in the Lord—awake from a sense of death to a sense of Life in Christ, with a knowledge of Truth and Love beyond what they possessed before; because their lives have grown so far toward the stature of manhood in Christ Jesus, that they are ready for a spiritual transfiguration, through their affections and understanding.

Those who reach this transition, called *death*, without having rightly improved the lessons of this primary school of mortal existence,—and still believe in matter's reality, pleasure, and pain,—are not ready to understand immortality. Hence they awake only to another sphere of experience, and must pass through another probationary state before it can be truly said of them: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

They upon whom the second death, of which we read in the Apocalypse (Revelation xx. 6), hath no power, are those who have obeyed God's commands, and have washed their robes white through the sufferings of the flesh and the triumphs of Spirit. Thus they have reached the goal in divine Science, by knowing Him in whom they have believed. This knowledge is not the forbidden fruit of sin, sickness, and death, but it is the fruit which grows on the "tree of life." This is the understanding of God, whereby man is found in the image and likeness of good, not of evil; of health, not of sickness; of Life, not of death.

God is All-in-all. Hence He is in Himself only, in His own nature and character, and is perfect being, or consciousness. He is all the Life and Mind there is or can be. Within Himself is every embodiment of Life and Mind.

If He is All, He can have no consciousness of anything unlike Himself; because, if He is omnipresent, there can be nothing outside of Himself.

Now this self-same God is our helper. He pities us. He has mercy upon us, and guides every event of our careers. He is near to them who adore Him. To understand Him, without a single taint of our

mortal, finite sense of sin, sickness, or death, is to approach Him and become like Him.

Truth is God, and in God's law. This law declares that Truth is All, and there is no error. This law of Truth destroys every phase of error. To gain a temporary consciousness of God's law is to feel, in a certain finite human sense, that God comes to us and pities us; but the attainment of the understanding of His presence, through the Science of God, destroys our sense of imperfection, or of His absence, through a diviner sense that God is all true consciousness; and this convinces us that, as we get still nearer Him, we must forever lose our own consciousness of error.

But how could we lose all consciousness of error, if God be conscious of it? God has not forbidden man to know Him; on the contrary, the Father bids man have the same Mind "which was also in Christ Jesus," — which was certainly the divine Mind; but God does forbid man's acquaintance with evil. Why? Because evil is no part of the divine knowledge.

John's Gospel declares (xvii. 3) that "life eternal" consists in the knowledge of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. Surely from such an understanding of Science, such knowing, the vision of sin is wholly excluded.

Nevertheless, at the present crude hour, no wise men or women will rudely or prematurely agitate a theme involving the All of infinity.

Rather will they rejoice in the small understanding they have already gained of the wholeness of Deity, and work gradually and gently up toward the perfect thought divine. This meekness will increase their apprehension of God, because their mental struggles and pride of opinion will proportionately diminish.

Every one should be encouraged not to accept any personal opinion on so great a matter, but to seek the divine Science of this question of Truth by following upward individual convictions, undisturbed by the frightened sense of any need of attempting to solve every Life-problem in a day.

"Great is the mystery of godliness," says Paul; and *mystery* involves the unknown. No stubborn purpose to force conclusions on

this subject will unfold in us a higher sense of Deity; neither will it promote the Cause of Truth or enlighten the individual thought.

Let us respect the rights of conscience and the liberty of the sons of God, so letting our "moderation be known to all men." Let no enmity, no untempered controversy, spring up between Christian Science students and Christians who wholly or partially differ from them as to the nature of sin and the marvellous unity of man with God shadowed forth in scientific thought. Rather let the stately goings of this wonderful part of Truth be left to the supernal guidance.

"These are but parts of Thy ways," says Job; and the whole is greater than its parts. Our present understanding is but "the seed within itself," for it is divine Science, "bearing fruit after its kind."

Sooner or later the whole human race will learn that, in proportion as the spotless selfhood of God is understood, human nature will be renovated, and man will receive a higher selfhood, derived from God, and the redemption of mortals from sin, sickness, and death be established on everlasting foundations.

The Science of physical harmony, as now presented to the people in divine light, is radical enough to promote as forcible collisions of thought as the age has strength to bear. Until the heavenly law of health, according to Christian Science, is firmly grounded, even the thinkers are not prepared to answer intelligently leading questions about God and sin, and the world is far from ready to assimilate such a grand and all-absorbing verity concerning the divine nature and character as is embraced in the theory of God's blindness to error and ignorance of sin. No wise mother, though a graduate of Wellesley College, will talk to her babe about the problems of Euclid.

Not much more than a half-century ago the assertion of universal salvation provoked discussion and horror, similar to what our declarations about sin and Deity must arouse, if hastily pushed to the front while the platoons of Christian Science are not yet thoroughly drilled in the plainer manual of their spiritual armament. "Wait patiently on the Lord;" and in less than another fifty years His name will be magnified in the apprehension of this new subject, as already He is glorified in the wide extension of belief in the impartial

grace of God,—shown by the changes at Andover Seminary and in multitudes of other religious folds.

Nevertheless, though I thus speak, and from my heart of hearts, it is due both to Christian Science and myself to make also the following statement: When I have most clearly seen and most sensibly felt that the infinite recognizes no disease, this has not separated me from God, but has so bound me to Him as to enable me instantaneously to heal a cancer which had eaten its way to the jugular vein.

In the same spiritual condition I have been able to replace dislocated joints and raise the dying to instantaneous health. People are now living who can bear witness to these cures. Herein is my evidence, from on high, that the views here promulgated on this subject are correct.

Certain self-proved propositions pour into my waiting thought in connection with these experiences; and here is one such conviction: that an acknowledgment of the perfection of the infinite Unseen confers a power nothing else can. An incontestable point in divine Science is, that because God is All, a realization of this fact dispels even the sense or consciousness of sin, and brings us nearer to God, bringing out the highest phenomena of the All-Mind.

Seedtime and Harvest

Let another query now be considered, which gives much trouble to many earnest thinkers before Science answers it.

Is anything real of which the physical senses are cognizant?

Everything is as real as you make it, and no more so. What you see, hear, feel, is a mode of consciousness, and can have no other reality than the sense you entertain of it.

It is dangerous to rest upon the evidence of the senses, for this evidence is not absolute, and therefore not real, in our sense of the word. All that is beautiful and good in your individual consciousness is permanent. That which is not so is illusive and fading. My insistence upon a proper understanding of the unreality of matter and evil arises from their deleterious effects, physical, moral, and intellectual, upon the race.

All forms of error are uprooted in Science, on the same basis whereby sickness is healed,—namely, by the establishment, through reason, revelation, and Science, of the nothingness of every claim of error, even the doctrine of heredity and other physical causes. You demonstrate the process of Science, and it proves my view conclusively, that mortal mind is the cause of all disease. Destroy the mental sense of the disease, and the disease itself disappears. Destroy the sense of sin, and sin itself disappears.

Material and sensual consciousness are mortal. Hence they must, some time and in some way, be reckoned unreal. That time has partially come, or my words would not have been spoken. Jesus has made the way plain,—so plain that all are without excuse who walk not in it; but this way is not the path of physical science, human philosophy, or mystic psychology.

The talent and genius of the centuries have wrongly reckoned. They have not based upon revelation their arguments and conclusions as to the source and resources of being,—its combinations, phenomena, and outcome,—but have built instead upon the sand of human reason. They have not accepted the simple teaching and life of Jesus as the only true solution of the perplexing problem of human existence.

Sometimes it is said, by those who fail to understand me, that I *monopolize*; and this is said because ideas akin to mine have been held by a few spiritual thinkers in all ages. So they have, but in a far different form. Healing has gone on continually; yet healing, as I teach it, has not been practised since the days of Christ.

What is the cardinal point of the difference in my metaphysical system? This: that *by knowing the unreality of disease, sin, and death*, you demonstrate the allness of God. This difference wholly separates my system from all others. The reality of these so-called existences I deny, because they are not to be found in God, and this system is built on Him as the sole cause. It would be difficult to name any previous teachers, save Jesus and his apostles, who have thus taught.

If there be any *monopoly* in my teaching, it lies in this utter reliance upon the one God, to whom belong all things.

Life is God, or Spirit, the supersensible eternal. The universe and man are the spiritual phenomena of this one infinite Mind. Spiritual phenomena never converge toward aught but infinite Deity. Their gradations are spiritual and divine; they cannot collapse, or lapse into their opposites, for God is their divine Principle. They live, because He lives; and they are eternally perfect, because He is perfect, and governs them in the Truth of divine Science, whereof God is the Alpha and Omega, the centre and circumference.

To attempt the calculation of His mighty ways, from the evidence before the material senses, is fatuous. It is like commencing with the minus sign, to learn the principle of positive mathematics.

God was not in the whirlwind. He is not the blind force of a material universe. Mortals must learn this; unless, pursued by their fears, they would endeavor to hide from His presence under their own falsities, and call in vain for the mountains of unholiness to shield them from the penalty of error.

Jesus taught us to walk *over*, not *into* or *with*, the currents of matter, or mortal mind. His teachings bearded the lions in their dens. He turned the water into wine, he commanded the winds, he healed the sick,—all in direct opposition to human philosophy and so-called natural science. He annulled the laws of matter, showing them to be laws of mortal mind, not of God. He showed the need of changing this mind and its abortive laws. He demanded a change of consciousness and evidence, and effected this change through the higher laws of God. The palsied hand moved, despite the boastful sense of physical law and order. Jesus stooped not to human consciousness, nor to the evidence of the senses. He heeded not the taunt, "That withered hand looks very real and feels very real;" but he cut off this vain boasting and destroyed human pride by taking away the material evidence. If his patient was a theologian of some bigoted sect, a physician, or a professor of natural philosophy,—according to the ruder sort then prevalent,—he never thanked Jesus for restoring his senseless hand; but neither red tape nor indignity hindered the divine process. Jesus required neither cycles of time nor thought in order to mature fitness for perfection and its possibilities. He said that the kingdom of heaven is here, and is included in Mind; that while ye say, There are yet four months, and *then*

cometh the harvest, I say, Look up, not down, for your fields are already white for the harvest; and gather the harvest by mental, not material processes. The laborers are few in this vineyard of Mind-sowing and reaping; but let them apply to the waiting grain the curving sickle of Mind's eternal circle, and bind it with bands of Soul.

The Deep Things of God

Science reverses the evidence of the senses in theology, on the same principle that it does in astronomy. Popular theology makes God tributary to man, coming at human call; whereas the reverse is true in Science. Men must approach God reverently, doing their own work in obedience to divine law, if they would fulfil the intended harmony of being.

The principle of music knows nothing of discord. God is harmony's selfhood. His universal laws, His unchangeableness, are not infringed in ethics any more than in music. To Him there is no moral inharmony; as we shall learn, proportionately as we gain the true understanding of Deity. If God could be conscious of sin, His infinite power would straightway reduce the universe to chaos.

If God has any real knowledge of sin, sickness, and death, they must be eternal; since He is, in the very fibre of His being, "without beginning of years or end of days." If God knows that which is not permanent, it follows that He knows something which He must learn to *unknow*, for the benefit of our race.

Such a view would bring us upon an outworn theological platform, which contains such planks as the divine repentance, and the belief that God must one day do His work over again, because it was not at first done aright.

Can it be seriously held, by any thinker, that long after God made the universe, — earth, man, animals, plants, the sun, the moon, and "the stars also," — He should so gain wisdom and power from past experience that He could vastly improve upon His own previous work, — as Burgess, the boatbuilder, remedies in the Volunteer the shortcomings of the Puritan's model?

Christians are commanded to *grow in grace*. Was it necessary for God to grow in grace, that He might rectify His spiritual universe?

The Jehovah of limited Hebrew faith might need repentance, because His created children proved sinful; but the New Testament tells us of "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." God is not the shifting vane on the spire, but the corner-stone of living rock, firmer than everlasting hills.

As God is Mind, if this Mind is familiar with evil, all cannot be good therein. Our infinite model would be taken away. What is in eternal Mind must be reflected in man, Mind's image. How then could man escape, or hope to escape, from a knowledge which is everlasting in his creator?

God never said that man would become better by learning to distinguish evil from good,—but the contrary, that by this knowledge, by man's first disobedience, came "death into the world, and all our woe."

"Shall mortal man be more just than God?" asks the poet-patriarch. May men rid themselves of an incubus which God never can throw off? Do mortals know more than God, that they may declare Him absolutely cognizant of sin?

God created all things, and pronounced them good. Was evil among these good things? Man is God's child and image. If God knows evil, so must man, or the likeness is incomplete, the image marred.

If man must be destroyed by the knowledge of evil, then his destruction comes through the very knowledge caught from God, and the creature is punished for his likeness to his creator.

God is commonly called the *sinless*, and man the *sinful*; but if the thought of sin could be possible in Deity, would Deity then be sinless? Would God not of necessity take precedence as the infinite sinner, and human sin become only an echo of the divine?

Such vagaries are to be found in heathen religious history. There are, or have been, devotees who worship not the good Deity, who will not harm them, but the bad deity, who seeks to do them mis-

chief, and whom therefore they wish to bribe with prayers into quiescence, as a criminal appeases, with a money-bag, the venal officer.

Surely this is no Christian worship! In Christianity man bows to the infinite perfection which he is bidden to imitate. In Truth, such terms as *divine sin* and *infinite sinner* are unheard-of contradictions,—absurdities; but *would* they be sheer nonsense, if God has, or can have, a real knowledge of sin?

Ways Higher than Our Ways

A lie has only one chance of successful deception,—to be accounted true. Evil seeks to fasten all error upon God, and so make the lie seem part of eternal Truth.

Emerson says, "Hitch your wagon to a star." I say, Be allied to the deific power, and all that is good will aid your journey, as the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. (Judges v. 20.) Hourly, in Christian Science, man thus weds himself with God, or rather he ratifies a union predestined from all eternity; but evil ties its wagon-load of offal to the divine chariots,—or seeks so to do,—that its vile-ness may be christened purity, and its darkness get consolation from borrowed scintillations.

Jesus distinctly taught the arrogant Pharisees that, from the beginning, their father, the devil, was the would-be murderer of Truth. A right apprehension of the wonderful utterances of him who "spake as never man spake," would despoil error of its borrowed plumes, and transform the universe into a home of marvelous light,—"a consummation devoutly to be wished."

Error says God must know evil because He knows all things; but Holy Writ declares God told our first parents that in the day when they should partake of the fruit of evil, they must surely die. Would it not absurdly follow that God must perish, if He knows evil and evil necessarily leads to extinction? Rather let us think of God as saying, I am infinite good; therefore I know not evil. Dwelling in light, I can see only the brightness of My own glory.

Error may say that God can never save man from sin, if He knows and sees it not; but God says, I am too pure to behold iniquity, and destroy everything that is unlike Myself.

Many fancy that our heavenly Father reasons thus: If pain and sorrow were not in My mind, I could not remedy them, and wipe the tears from the eyes of My children. Error says you must know grief in order to console it. Truth, God, says you oftenest console others in troubles that you have not. Is not our comforter always from outside and above ourselves?

God says, I show My pity through divine law, not through human. It is My sympathy with and My knowledge of harmony (not inharmony) which alone enable Me to rebuke, and eventually destroy, every supposition of discord.

Error says God must know death in order to strike at its root; but God saith, I am ever-conscious Life, and thus I conquer death; for to be ever conscious of Life is to be never conscious of death. I am All. A knowledge of aught beside Myself is impossible.

If such knowledge of evil were possible to God, it would lower His rank.

With God, *knowledge* is necessarily *foreknowledge*; and *foreknowledge* and *foreordination* must be one, in an infinite Being. What Deity *foreknows*, Deity must *foreordain*; else He is not omnipotent, and, like ourselves, He foresees events which are contrary to His creative will, yet which He cannot avert.

If God knows evil at all, He must have had foreknowledge thereof; and if He foreknew it, He must virtually have intended it, or ordered it aforetime,—foreordained it; else how could it have come into the world?

But this we cannot believe of God; for if the supreme good could predestine or foreknow evil, there would be sin in Deity, and this would be the end of infinite moral unity. "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" On the contrary, evil is only a delusive deception, without any actuality which Truth can know.

Rectifications

How is a mistake to be rectified? By reversal or revision,—by seeing it in its proper light, and then turning it or turning from it.

We undo the statements of error by reversing them.

Through these three statements, or misstatements, evil comes into authority: —

First: The Lord created it.

Second: The Lord knows it.

Third: I am afraid of it.

By a reverse process of argument evil must be dethroned: —

First: God never made evil.

Second: He knows it not.

Third: We therefore need not fear it.

Try this process, dear inquirer, and so reach that perfect Love which "casteth out fear," and then see if this Love does not destroy in you all hate and the sense of evil. You will awake to the perception of God as All-in-all. You will find yourself losing the knowledge and the operation of sin, proportionably as you realize the divine infinitude and believe that He can see nothing outside of His own focal distance.

A Colloquy

In Romans (ii. 15) we read the apostle's description of mental processes wherein human thoughts are "the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." If we observe our mental processes, we shall find that we are perpetually arguing with ourselves; yet each mortal is not two personalities, but one.

In like manner good and evil talk to one another; yet they are not two but one, for evil is naught, and good only is reality.

Evil. God hath said, "Ye shall eat of every tree of the garden." If you do not, your intellect will be circumscribed and the evidence of your personal senses be denied. This would antagonize individual consciousness and existence.