

Our tolerance point

Lynn G. Jackson

EACH night one can turn on the television and see wars and threats of wars, famines, diseases, murders. Barred with pictures and sounds of horror, one may ask, "What is my tolerance point? As much as I care, at what point can I, or do I, begin to say, 'No more!'" As I have come to terms with these questions, I have realized I can be of significant help to others by making sure I have a zero tolerance for evil.

Having no tolerance for evil isn't wishful thinking or ignoring wrong in favor of pie-in-the-sky dreams. Nor does it mean refusing to be appropriately informed about humanity's needs. The demand is for prayer and watchfulness about what we accept to be true of God and of man's relation to Him. Our tolerance point then becomes not a measure of disgust but of our spiritually based love for God and man. And healing results.

Christ Jesus didn't have any tolerance for evil—either in the form of abnormalities and disease or in the form of hatred's atrocities. He healed the blind, the sick, the lame—not partially, but wholly. He fed the hungry and restored to their parents children whose lives were under threat of disease or death. When he was crucified by cruel persecutors, he was able to rise from the grave. It was his spiritual understanding of God, as omnipotent Love and divine Life, that enabled him to prove man's wholeness, immortality, and spiritual exemption from wrong.

The Christianly scientific basis on which Jesus healed was discovered by Mary Baker Eddy. In her book *Science and Health* she records what she learned of the divine Principle of Jesus' healing works. She writes: "Suffer no claim of sin or of sickness to grow upon the thought. Dismiss it with an abiding conviction that it is illegitimate, because you know that God is no more the author of sickness than He is of sin" (p. 390).

■
 Christ Jesus
 didn't have any
 tolerance for
 evil—either
 in the form of
 abnormalities
 and disease or
 in the form
 of hatred's
 atrocities.

If we tolerate inhumanity, abnormality, disease, as real, we accept God, who is the creator of all, as the author of evil. But by learning more of God as the author of only good, we help not only ourselves but the world, because we spiritually and scientifically confront and defeat in some degree the belief in a power opposed to God. This is a position of strength from which to reach out to humanity.

Mankind is searching for something consistent, crying out for something to rely upon. It appears that the so-called constancies, the good, in human experience ebb and flow. Christian Science teaches that God is the constant—the one, unchanging good. God is man's source, and man is made in His image and likeness. This fact is reliable. Humanity will find this out as mistaken, limited views of God are relinquished for true views of Him.

■
 Even though it may appear that God is not completely good, that He is tolerating suffering, it is actually such misconceptions about God and His perfect government that allow the belief of suffering to continue. Believing that God is merciless, unforgiving, or powerless in the face of hatred and death keeps us from proving His omnipotence as Jesus taught. Spiritually understanding that God, omnipotent Love, is man's creator, and that God loves man unfailingly, helps us to prove that God, good, is the only power governing man. We read in the Bible that "God is love" (I John 4:8). In the Scriptures we also learn that God is Life. Life, then, is, in reality, changeless good, the only power and presence.

Prayerfully refusing to consent to abnormalities and atrocities, because they have no foundation in Life, God, is the basis of one's zero tolerance point. A friend of mine was able to confront hatred and violence in her neighborhood in this way. One day she noticed that her neighbors were outside fighting. She began retreating to her home to avoid the conflict, but she also wanted to help. She knew that prayer is effective because she had proved it many times in her experience. So she prayed. And as she did, instead of going into her house, she crossed the street. She was led to say something to the individuals involved that lifted their thought away from the turmoil. Immediately the violence began to subside, and soon everyone involved dispersed. The children who had witnessed the upheaval once again began to play, and the streets were peaceful.

With much more than mere human courage, my friend's prayer led her to confront a potential conflict. And because she based her actions on the all-power of God, she was successful. Her tolerance for evil was demonstrably zero, and she followed Christ Jesus' teachings by mentally disallowing, or by disbelieving, intolerance and by expressing love.

Christ Jesus promised, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). This is the promise for mankind today, because his works show us how to heal—wholly and completely—and how to help our brothers and sisters. Refuting the images and outcomes of hatred and disease, instead of accepting them as inevitable, we can learn how Christ Jesus healed these difficulties and how we can heal them today. ■

EDITORIALS

William E. Moody, *Editor*
Associate Editors:

Russ Gerber, Mary Metzner Trammell,
Barbara M. Vining

J. Anthony Periton, *Editor in Chief*
The Christian Science Publishing Society

Why go to church?

PEOPLE gather together at church services to worship God. But to worship God you don't need to be in the company of others. You can worship God anywhere, anytime, all by yourself. And, in fact, Christ Jesus said, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:23). So, why gather at a church service to worship *together*?

Could it be that the Father is calling on us collectively, as well as individually, to "worship [Him] in spirit and in truth"? A recent experience offered a helpful perspective.

My husband and I had the privilege of spending quite a bit of time over a two-week period with our granddaughter, Sadie. (We enjoyed being with her parents, too!) Whenever this little girl sees us, her face lights up with delight, as if we were the most exciting thing in her life. And she's always ready with open arms to hug us and tell us that she loves us. It isn't just that we are her grandparents. She's just naturally animated with a spirit of openhearted love that draws out the joy in everyone. If the family takes her to a restaurant, for example, customers from other tables not only smile and wave at her, they make special effort to come over to talk with her when they get up to leave.

In asking myself what it is that people are so spontaneously attracted to in this little girl, I concluded that it must be the spirit of universal, divine Love, reflected in her nature. Divine Love, you might say, is everyone's natural habitat; it's where we find our