

The selling of disease

“Contrary to popular belief, the cause of disease is not in matter nor is it the result of physical conditions.”

BY LYNN
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NOT LONG AGO, someone asked me if I'd ever noticed how often diseases are sold to the public. At first this seemed surprising. *Sell* sickness and disease? But, since my friend made that comment, I've been watching advertisements more closely and have noticed that she has a point.

Resides advertisements of products relating to certain illnesses, episodes on television include detailed descriptions of diseases, suggested treatments, and statistics on curability and vulnerability. What really caught my attention, however, was an article in a well-known newspaper about an advertisement in an upscale Saudi magazine. The ad, which was placed by an American clinic, showed a color photo of a beaming customer in white flowing robes and Middle Eastern headgear.

The advertisement told of a fearful day in this man's life when he suffered from a heart

attack and came to their clinic for treatment. It described a successful operation and explained that the clinic could help others with the same difficulty. The newspaper article about the advertisement reported, however, that the patient pictured was not a patient at all. He was “a fictitious character. . . his testimonial the invention of a creative ad executive in the Middle East.” His story was a “composite biography” inspired by similar cases.

In short, through graphic details, a willing model, and fabricated symptoms, they were selling this disease to the unwary public. That is when I began to understand a little better what my friend meant by the selling of disease.

Although the approach may be different, depending on the advertisement, there is often a fine line between informing people about disease and actually encouraging people to accept certain symptoms as a “normal” part of human life. For example, there may be a large number of advertisements related to colds and flu when the winter season approaches, as though to build up the expectation of sickness as inevitable.

The overarching fact that is not as widely publicized is that sickness is *not* inevitable, and that it can be warded off by keeping a close watch on one's thinking and what one accepts as a biological law. Filling the human mind with descriptions of disease, weakness, or physical disorders makes people fearful. And fearing or honoring something makes us subject to it.

Mary Baker Eddy, the author of *Science and Health*, a book that explains spiritual therapeutics and the prevention and cure of disease, writes: “Why declare that the body is diseased, and picture this disease to the mind, rolling it under the tongue as a sweet morsel and holding it before the thought of both physician and patient? We should understand that the cause of disease obtains in the mortal



human mind, and its cure comes from the immortal divine Mind. We should prevent the images of disease from taking form in thought, and we should efface the outlines of disease already formulated in the minds of mortals" (pp. 174-175).

I find that prayer is an effective

way to prevent the images of disease from taking hold in my thought. Prayer enables me to accept only what I wish to have manifested in my life. It keeps thought focused on all that is God-created, good. And it keeps out images of disease and its symptoms. Prayer does this by en-

abling one to discern, spiritually, what is good and is based on God's law of love. This precludes sickness and disease from taking hold in consciousness and attempting to rule one's life.

Contrary to popular belief, the cause of disease is not in matter nor is it the result of physical conditions.

A TELEVISION AD CAN'T MAKE ME SICK

What is the first thing a dog usually does after it gets wet? It shakes itself off vigorously! Believe it or not, this was the image that showed me the way to a final healing of cold sores.

The experience began when I saw a television advertisement for a cold sore cream. The commercial included a picture of the complaint, which reminded me of how badly I used to suffer with this condition. A few days later I found myself experiencing all of the symptoms of the problem, and I was tempted to feel discouraged.

Before my family was introduced to Christian Science, this condition had been a frequent part of my life. Then I started reading the Bible and *Science and Health* each day. From these books I discovered that I had a God-given right to be free from fear and disease. I found that our heavenly Father has created each of us in His likeness, as spiritual and perfect, not material and sickly.

As I learned more about God and my relation to Him, I found that when a sore appeared I was quickly healed through persistent prayer. The disorder kept reappearing regularly, however, until finally one day I realized that because God is *unchanging* good, I expressed uninterrupted good health. Because God is unchanging Life, *my* life did not include periodic bouts of pain or suffering. Disease is no part of God and therefore no part of man. Wellness is permanent and changeless. How grateful I was to have gained this spiritual understanding!

Yet as a result of seeing a television advertisement, there I was experiencing the same thing all over again! *Or was I?* I realized that I had a choice to make: I could believe that a relapse had occurred, or I could accept the permanency of health and healing.

I recalled this powerful statement in *Science and*

Health: "Citizens of the world, accept the 'glorious liberty of the children of God,' and be free! This is your divine right. The illusion of material sense, not divine law, has bound you, entangled your free limbs, crippled your capacities, enfeebled your body, and defaced the tablet of your being" (p. 227). I could see that I was simply being tempted to believe again in the reality of a particular material condition. I needed to mentally shake off this false notion, as well as pictures of disease.

The word *shake* caught my attention. I recalled

this verse from the Bible: "Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion" (Isa. 52:2). The instruction seemed so applicable to me. Suddenly I saw in my mind's eye our neighbor's dog shaking herself vigorously after undergoing a bath. I laughed at the determined way she went about getting rid of the water from her coat. Her action displayed that she knew without a shadow of a doubt that the

water was no part of her. She knew she could free herself from it.

I realized then that I could do likewise. I began by rejecting the belief that I had a history of suffering. With wholehearted spiritual determination, I resolved not to return to thinking of myself as a material being subject to disease. Divine Love had created me perfect and whole. I had never lost my freedom. Disease was no part of my true being as the image and likeness of God. My thought was uplifted, and the physical condition dropped away, leaving no trace.

With an understanding of our pure and perfect nature as God's child, we can all shake off what was never a part of us in the first place.

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The cause of disease is wholly mental, as Christian Science explains. It stems from fear, primarily. And that is why it must be dealt with through that which removes fear.

Spiritual understanding does this, giving us the conviction that God, **good**, is the source and sustainer of all true existence, and that man—the actual selfhood of you and me—is made in God’s likeness, wholly good and spiritual.

If we’re flooded with disease-oriented images, we don’t have to fear or honor any one of them. They can be eliminated through spiritual right thinking—the thoughts of

Sickness is not inevitable.

God, divine Mind, that come to us through prayer. We each are responsible for our own acceptance or rejection of anything unlike God, good. So it is our job to make sure we’re undeceived by frightening images and fearful predictions. We do this by turning prayerfully to the source of all that is real and true—and diseaseless—God, the divine Mind.

Often, when I’m faced with the temptation to buy into disease, I use the ninety-first Psalm as the basis of my prayer. Verses 1, 2, and 10 help me remember where all of us, in reality, dwell: “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. . . . There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.”

To me, the guidance to “dwell” means to keep my thought on God. It helps me remember that as God’s child each one of us is under His shadow, under His care. Declaring these facts in my prayers strength-

ens my trust in God. Fear subsides. I’m assured that nothing evil can come near and overtake me.

Each verse in the ninety-first Psalm can be a guideline for prayer. Affirming that God is our refuge and fortress isn’t just good positive thinking. Rather, it is yielding to God’s strength, acknowledging our coexistence with Him. When we turn to Him in our prayers for help, we prove that His “truth [is our] shield and buckler” (verse 4)—our protection from sickness and disease. We feel His presence. In fact, the psalm inspires us not to be afraid, but to lean on God.

Communing with Him places our thoughts and lives under His government. It dissolves fear. It denies any power opposed to His might. And it comforts us. Sometimes our prayers are simple, humble petitions. Other times they may be fervent declarations of God’s all-might. Whatever form they take, when they are spiritually based they are full of power and bring forth God’s good will for all.

One verse that I keep in mind continually, is this: “He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways” (verse 11). God’s angels are His thoughts, His guidance, His protection. Acknowledging His charge over me helps me feel His presence and power. I realize that I am not alone, struggling. Rather, I am ever with God, who keeps me in His ways.

These are just a few ways we can pray using the ninety-first Psalm. It is full of many more healing verses. No matter what we’re facing, we can spiritually understand that man, God’s child, is always in the “secret place of the most High,” where buying into disease, or the selling of it, doesn’t take place. This is the place, the state of consciousness, in which we remain safe.



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