



## The Great Heart of Divinity

Excerpt from a talk by Col. Janet Horton (US Army Ret.) at Lynn House of Potomac Valley  
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I think all of us are pretty familiar with Mrs. Eddy's piece in *Miscellaneous Writings* on "Taking Offense." And my feeling is you can't study it too much. Actually, I try to read through it at least once a month—even more often, if I have the opportunity to do so.

It never ceases to amaze me how lovingly Mary Baker Eddy and Christ Jesus define the great heart of divinity. To understand the magnitude of the love that we express to people at our church, to our colleagues at work—to anyone, whatever our situation—is very important for us. Above all, we need to detect anything that would stand between us and really feeling that sense of unity and harmony with others.

In fact, as Mrs. Eddy said in *No and Yes*, pointing to scriptural authority, "... it is vain to look for perfection in churches or associations. The life of Christ is the perfect example; and to compare mortal lives with this model is to subject them to severe scrutiny." (See p. 41.)

And that's such a compassionate recognition to make. Actually, she identifies it as a form of vanity to expect absolute perfection from people at work or in our families, churches, or associations. And maybe vain for us to think that we know it all and have demonstrated everything there is to demonstrate in life.

Of course, Mrs. Eddy expects us to understand that we always work from the point of perfection as we progress with each individual step on our spiritual path. But not to get spiritually arrogant, or to confuse human opinion with Truth. Instead, we should attempt to do our individual work and church work in that sense of unity.

I think that we also have to say that it's a tendency to want to artificially divide our world up into Christian Scientists and non-Christian Scientists. So, one of the things I decided to do when I went into the military chaplaincy was to not make that artificial distinction. Rather, I like to think of everybody as a Christian Scientist who maybe hasn't realized it yet. After all, those Christianly Scientific truths that we see in the Bible and Mrs. Eddy's works are just so natural to anybody's heart—and will touch that heart when we share them.

Here's a good example of what I mean. A woman was wheeling her baby to the supermarket on a really cold, icy day. For that reason, she took a shortcut through the park. But as she walked, she was thinking, "Maybe I shouldn't have done this." Because there were people sleeping on park benches who looked shabby and homeless. And she said to herself, "Was this silly of me to try to bring the baby through here?"

Just as she was thinking that, the baby looked up, and one of the men on a bench sat up. And the baby did exactly what he would have done to any other person: He did his little hand wave!

To this mother, it was striking, because, where before the man looked a little groggy, and perhaps was even intoxicated, seeing that baby wave cleared his thought. It was just like his eyes cleared up. And he looked at the baby and waved back. This experience brought out the very best in him.

The woman said she then saw this man the way God sees him, just as her baby did, very naturally. And that baby continued to be in touch with that great heart of divinity. He looked at every person he saw, and he did the same little wave.

Mrs. Eddy speaks of holy, uplifting faith, and mentions that it elevates thought. (See *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 109.) And I want to suggest that we, too, can support a more spiritual perception of anybody we see.

Sometimes what I find in my thought is that God is leading me to do something. Often you may think the best thing that God can do for you is to tell you this beautiful loving truth. But the other side of that love of God can be a rebuke—a teaching element that’s very much needed.

I remember I was driving to church one Easter morning, and I’d gone fairly early because we had things to do. And I heard this voice in my head saying, “Go get potatoes. Go get potatoes.” So I’m arguing with the voice in my head. “I’ve got two bags of potatoes already! I have white potatoes. I have red potatoes.” And this voice says, “No, I told you to go get potatoes.” Now, selfishly, we think that’s about us.

So I go into Winn Dixie, and of course being very early on Easter morning, they’ve got four lanes open in the store. And as I looked down, I see this young man. They keep putting his check in that machine that sees if it’s okay or not, but it keeps spitting it back out. Then I heard him say, “My wife and I balanced the checkbook right before.” And you could see he had all the stuff for an Easter dinner, as well as a little girl’s Easter basket. And by the way, he had potatoes, too.

Suddenly I realized, “These are the potatoes I’m here to buy.” So I went over and put down some \$20 bills. I said, “Son, when I was in the military, women weren’t allowed to have children. And so God has let me spoil other people’s children. If you wouldn’t mind, you have no idea what this would mean to me if I could buy your Easter dinner.”

Well, he kind of fought me, but with a lot of insistence from me, he finally said that he could take it. What was interesting to me was that it kind of blew him away. You see, he was thinking, “I can’t believe you want to do this.”

Meanwhile, no one in that Winn Dixie said a word. It became absolutely quiet. And everybody was very careful not to embarrass the young man. You could see he had worked all night. He was in work clothes, and he was a little dirty. So they waited until he left. And then they all came together and hugged and cried. And many of them said, “I’ve never seen anybody do anything like that, ever before.”

So that rebuke on the other side of God’s love sometimes is saying this is maybe not even about you. Maybe it’s completely about somebody else. And it tells us that that great heart of divinity is looking out for every single one of His children. This is how it came to me that the potatoes were for that young man and his family.

In our daily prayer on p. 41 of our *Church Manual*, I love this part especially: “...and may Thy Word enrich the affections of all mankind, and govern them.” It’s really pushing you to say how universal love is. And that divine love is going to include, put its arms around, and embrace mankind—any folks you could encounter. To quote Mrs. Eddy again, “The rich in spirit help the poor in one grand brotherhood.” (*S&H*, p. 518)

Note: The complete audio of Col. Horton’s talk at Lynn House may be heard at [www.lynnhouse.org/events/past-events/](http://www.lynnhouse.org/events/past-events/)

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