

## How calamitous thinking can transform an event from blessing to curse



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Hi Friends -

This essay describes what happens when an event occurs that our mind has perceived as threatening. We judge it, then we fight it. The event then becomes what the author refers to as a "calamitous, arrested event"—an event which has never been given the opportunity to mature and thereby bring the blessing for which it was initially destined to provide. As an arrested event, it does indeed become a calamity—but it is a calamity only because we have plucked an unripe event out from its unfolding process.

This essay may help us get through times like we find ourselves today. It was published exactly 100 years ago—a time similar to today—filled with "floods and droughts" (wildfires and floods), political extremism, and unimagined human suffering. World War I was raging in Europe. My grandfather never stopped talking about [the brother he lost in France, Baxter Hicks, on September 21, 1918.](#)

This essay also contains great metaphysical thinking. Its premise—that calamitous thinking can transform an event from blessing to curse—is a profound theological insight. It defends the basic premise of metaphysical religion—one power, one presence—and it is an insight that calls each of us to intelligent thinking, to patience and to non-judgment. I believe it to be a unique and important contribution to Christian theology. I am saddened by the inability of western Christianity to recognize how Unity teachings can help move the church forward in responding to the many challenges we face today.

Another reason this essay is important is because it was published in Unity magazine and it was written by Imelda Octavia Shanklin, one of Unity's great thinkers and writers. Both the author and the early editions of the publication have much to teach us. I wish I had the talent and skills to make the author and the publication appear more relevant in today's culture. The best I can offer is to deliver a PDF and a commentary in your inbox each month. If you wish to receive it, click on "[Stay in Touch](#)" and select "Unity magazine from 100 years ago on 1st of each month."

I hope they are a blessing to you.

*Mark*



**SEED TIME AND HARVEST**

by: Imelda Octavia Shanklin

“While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” [Genesis 8:22](#)

Good and evil are mental perceptions. Two perceptions wholly opposite as these are, come through two qualities of mind. The quality that perceives good is intelligence; that which perceives evil is earth-textured. Evil is the antithesis of reality, even as it is of good. It is nothing in itself, has nothing in itself whereby it may produce a materialization. It has neither substance nor power, the two indispensable elements to manifestation. It comes of nothing and remains eternally a no-thing.

Physical events come out of the mind of the race, and are the outward forms of what is being carried forward mentally by the race. Our lives are on the invisible, and the invisible activities are apparent to the intelligent mind. The invisible is as the steam which makes the cloud, under given conditions.

**Mental events have origin, development and maturity.** Dependent upon its mental genesis, the physical event pushes up over the rim of the mental, grows in the visible, matures, and then subsides. The mental support on which it was built has been withdrawn to work out another event which moves in an order like that which marked its predecessor. If each event is permitted to grow, develop and subside in an uninterrupted procedure, there are no disasters on the surface of life, because there are no thwartings beneath the surface.

The composite mind of humanity works on the invisible, manipulating the universal essence. The event has its visible and its invisible steps, and the intelligent mind looks through both the invisible and visible procedures, noting the lawfulness of purpose, the orderly innocence with which the invisible event manifests. It knows that the visible event is never calamitous, never evil. The earth-textured mind knows in the zone of the earthy, and is incapable of penetrating to the invisible; therefore it is unable to see events in their true perspective. It views the Punch and Judy of the show, but has no idea of the wires or of the manipulator of the wires. All that it sees it adjudges as substantial, unappealable.

**The ignorance of the earth-textured mind is responsible for what appears calamitous. It sees an event emerging from the invisible and not understanding that the event is in process of development, it takes fright, and begins defensive, perhaps offensive preparations against a supposed antagonist. Because the mind is the source of all that appears, movements of offense or defense arrest the event, and lengthen the time which it requires for the working out of its destiny.**

When a mind looks from the intelligent and from the earth-texture standard it sees contradictions, apparent warfare between good and evil. Paul observed from this dual outlook when he spoke of Spirit warring against the flesh and the flesh warring against the Spirit. What Paul saw was the arrested event broken in its own confusion. Flesh has not the power to war, and Spirit does not war, being essential peace. The condition which Paul partly described is illustrated by the waves of the sea beating against the enduring wall of a granite promontory. There is apparent warfare when the swift-running swells hurl themselves against the rock, but all the uproar and defeat is in the water recoiling upon itself when it tries to overleap its natural bounds.

The promontory stands unmoved, non-contentious. It has no active part in the turmoil. It is itself, calm, undisturbed. The Spirit does not war. The flesh, trying to do what it cannot do, is the cause and only agent of disorder.

**Prophecies that point to disaster are based upon observation of the unripe event.** Such forecasts are basically untrue, and may be wholly defeated by twitching the observation from the earthy to the intelligent viewpoint. Evil is no-thing, and the nearest it can come to reality is to absorb the attention of the earth-textured mind. It never wholly enters into an alive world. To the credulous mind an arrested event looks like prophecy fulfilled, whereas it is but an item in the endless, shifting procession of mind. The credulous mind is the matrix of the disagreeable occurrence. A child will pull up a tender pea vine and call the young leaves flowers. The dog in the story dropped good food out of its mouth into the water below, to snatch at what was tempting in the mouth of the reflected dog. An ignorant man fears the heat of the liquid iron in its sand mold, and his mind does not see the utility of the cooled and dressed metal.

In less obvious connections than cited by the foregoing examples, **the unripe event is called a calamity, a plague, a loss. Floods, fires, crop failures, are arrestments which the earth-textured mind has put upon natural agencies in some stage of action.** The salvation of our planet is committed to the intelligent minds of our planet because the ignorant earth-textured mind never makes progress. Its tendency is to travel around and around in a circle, following after its own foundationlets prophecies and believing them fulfilled.

From the time when the Son of God quickened the life germ of this planet the mind of man has observed in its own zone, and judged accordingly. It has carried with it through its many-aged evolution its evil and its good. Its

evil has been the shadow blindness of its own ignorance; its good has been the daystar gleam of its veiled divinity. **The earth texture of its mind caused it to pluck the undeveloped event into the realm of experience, to arrest the growth of what is altogether good.** Its God-mind obscured and ignored, has nevertheless urged it on, until now we have the first visible signs of what God meant when he approved his own works as good, and even very good.

**When we hear an evil predicted, we are listening to an earth-textured mind as it delineates an undeveloped good. If we join our expectation to the prophecy, we shall be party to an arrested development in the perfect race.** It is the prerogative of the intelligent mind to nullify the predictions of the ignorant mind. When ignorance said to its child, "You are blind from birth," intelligence looked, and saw, and said, "Receive your sight." And the man's eyes were opened.

**In these days of food administrations and general conservations, the earth-textured mind fearfully reaches out to pluck the growing good. It predicts failures, hungers, sufferings. But it is operating in its own zone, the zone of the no-thing. Its prophecies are based on unreality, and it is the business of the intelligent mind to see to it that ignorance does not arrest the natural good, and so bring disorder into the world.**

It is a fact that too much rain will ruin wheat, that drought will shrink the corn yield. But weather is man's harvester, not his destroyer. **Floods and droughts are arrestments, and they do not need to occur.** In the intimacy that links the peoples of the world today, each shortage, each probability in the estimate of yields is known in every civilized section of the globe. **The rule for the intelligent mind is: Keep your faith high, and your attention on totals.** When this is done, the foolishness of evil prophecy is plain, for shortage in one place is always found to be balanced or more than balanced by plethora elsewhere; shrinkage in one product is compensated by excess in another.

"While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." [Genesis 8:22](#)

This is the prophecy which the intelligent mind brings to bear, especially when it hears ignorance predicting abnormal seasons and crop failures. This is the inspired statement of the sure law, and those who are for God and not against him will cleave to the promise, work with it, and let it work with them.

**Adam reached out into the undeveloped event and plucked a curse for himself and for those who followed him. But the curse was washed away in the obedience of Noah. "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake," was the ripe event as it came in through the Master of the Flood.** The ignorant mind cringes under the curse; the intelligent mind springs up with the victory of pardon, poises itself above the shadow and keeps forever free from suspicion of failure; "there shall be no more curse" for the intelligent one.

**The mind of the world is focused on Europe. But there is mind enough to go around and meet all contingencies. While we are joining the might of our souls to the might of God's cause as it centralizes over there, intelligence prompts us to hold for an orderly procession of events, everywhere.** The political tangles will unravel; the industrialism of the world will meet the rearrangements of our daily changes and will adapt itself to the readjustments impending. The world has always come out of its travel pains, stronger and better. There is more intelligence in the world now than ever before, and the opportunity should invite enthusiasm rather than doleful prophecies.

The fields of the earth, sown and reaped in a sturdy confidence in the present and future good of the developing event, will yield "seed to the sower and bread to the eater."

**The event which is upon the world today is of God, and it will go through. It is our part to not complicate conditions by arresting the development of the event, as yet mostly invisible, stupendous, and wholly beautiful.** The march of cause and effect need not be made disorderly. Nature is at command, and will do her part. God does not require sacrifice. So let us not prove slackers in the fundamental obligation of meeting the invisible demand. Let us give to it the same courage, the same exalted faith that characterize our response to the outer demand, effacing each dark prediction of the earth-textured mind with the immutable certainty that "seed time and harvest . . . shall not cease."