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## The Second Noel

By Elise L. Moore

It was Christmas Day, just last week. My granddaughter was working on a jigsaw puzzle while Christmas music was playing in the background, as it had been for a couple of days.

Without looking up from her puzzle, she asked of no one in particular, "Why don't we ever hear about the second noel? It's always 'The First Noel,' like in the carol."

It was a question none of us had heard before in just those terms.

According to standard dictionaries, when "noel" is capitalized, it means Christmas. When it's not capitalized, it means Christmas carol. So the carol, "The First Noel," refers to the first Christmas, the occasion when Jesus first appeared in a bodily form as the newborn infant whom wise men, shepherds, and others recognized as someone very special in the cycle of human events.

But how about a "second Noel"?

In one way, there can never be a second like the first. The conception and birth of Jesus were one-time events. To some Bible students, that precious little babe came with a mission to present and prove to the whole world the presence of the eternal Christ, the Truth of man as God's perfect idea or likeness. It was and is a world-changing truth that's invisible to the material senses and incomprehensible to reason based on those senses.

The nonmaterial reality it reveals is discernible when one's thought is spiritually synchronized with the humble, loving tone of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. The first Christmas launched Jesus' mission. And once that mission was accomplished, there could never be another first impartation. The mission was done perfectly by that holy, compassionate servant and son of God, Christ Jesus.

But is there a second Noel?

Although Jesus' words were for eternity, their spiritual sense and the systematic healing ability that came with them were lost over the centuries. They were hidden by thousands of material theories and beliefs, like a mountain cabin can be lost as trees, bushes, and vines grow around and through it.

So; in a sense, there had to be a "second Noel." Jesus promised another would come in his name, repeating his words, ideas, and works (see John 14:25, 26). He called it the Comforter. It would systematize what he shared and teach the specific rules he taught generally.

Students of the Bible in the light of Christian Science believe this second appearing of the Christ took place in 1866, when Mary Baker Eddy discovered this theology. It came as her thought broke through the grip of traditional science, theology, and medicine to discern the same world-challenging and world-changing truth Jesus had introduced almost 2,000 years before. Her book "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" explains it. And, it refers to this second appearing on the first page of its preface. After summarizing the role in history of the first Noel, Mrs. Eddy added, "... till across a night of error should dawn the morning beams and shine the guiding star of being."

Then, will there be a third Noel? Or a fourth? Or a 4,000th?

If the first two Noels refer to light breaking through darkness for all humanity, then more Noels are inevitable as the light of truth breaks through to individuals. Each time any of us turns away from mortal models to discern God's creation here and now, it is a Noel. It is the light of Christmas shining again.

This light verifies itself in spiritual healing going on today. A close friend of mine, just a few days before Christmas last week; was aboard a holiday cruise when she was struck with debilitating pain. She called a Christian Science practitioner, a professional healer in this system of treatment, a thousand miles away to pray for her. As a result of that prayer, she felt the light of Christ break through the darkness of pain, and she gained immediate relief. By Christmas Day, she was up and about. It was a special Noel for her and her husband. This same truth that spoke to her and brought her healing also speaks to the world.