

A LECTURE ON CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

ENTITLED CHRISTIAN SCIENCE THE LIBERATOR OF MANKIND BY JOHN RANDALL DUNN, C. S.

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The widespread interest in the subject of Christian Science, in this and other lands, is traceable directly to the fact that enslaved mortals are finding in its spiritual teaching that liberator graphically pictured by Isaiah as sent "to preach good tidings unto the meek;... to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." The attempts of some misinformed critics to prove that Christian Science is not this liberator, that the sick are not healed, the sinning reformed, nor the sorrowing comforted through its ministrations, are of course of little moment in the presence of an ever increasing host of witnesses testifying to the fact that whereas they were bound physically, mentally, or morally, now they are experiencing through the teachings of Christian Science a greater measure of health, freedom and happiness than they have ever known.

What would those who fancy themselves opposed to this spiritual teaching have its students do? Would they ask the man who states, and whose family corroborates his statement, that he has been freed from the torments of alcoholism, to go back to his appetite and bondage? Would they bid the infidel who through Christian Science has become a believer in and a lover of the Bible, discard that holy volume, and tread again his cheerless, godless road? Would they bring back the pain and anguish which in the cases of thousands of men and women and little children have been banished by the touch of this healing evangel? Surely this is no time to oppose the coming to saddened humanity of a spiritual message the certain effect of which is the uplift and comfort of mankind. It might be recommended, therefore, to those who feel called upon to ridicule and revile the Christian Scientists, that perhaps the safest and most Christian attitude for them to assume is to be found in Gamaliel's sound advice to the would-be persecutors of the apostles as recorded in the fifth chapter of Acts: "And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this council or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

The Work of the Monitor

The Christian Science Monitor, the international daily newspaper published by The Christian Science Publishing Society, is conceded even by many non-Scientists to be one of the great forces for righteousness in human affairs to-day. Its object, Mrs. Eddy has stated, "is to injure no man, but to bless all mankind" (Miscellany, p. 353), and is ever the champion of lofty patriotism, good government, and high civic ideals. It is doing more to awaken humanity to a clear metaphysical view of earth's problems than any other news journal on the globe. It is bringing to the very doorstep of the reader's heart the problems, the hopes, the trials, and the achievements of his brethren over-seas and over-continents. In other words, as it has been well said, the Monitor is teaching mortals "to think in hemispheres." Thus it is laying a sure foundation for a truer cooperation and lasting fellowship among men and nations; and when the smoke of this great conflict lifts, the Christian Scientists in all parts of the world will be found offering a cup of cold water in Christ's name, as they have been offering it for the past generation to the receptive thought, healing the sick, comforting the sorrowing, and wiping out unhappy memories, enmities, and hates.

Armageddon

Certainly it must be recognized by every thinking person that the signing of a treaty of peace, favorable to human interests as it may be, will not alone usher in the millennium. To be sure, the yielding of autonomy to democracy, the ordaining of humanly good governments, and the establishment of equal rights and privileges among men are absolutely necessary steps toward the ultimate liberation of the race. But the great battle of Armageddon is not ended, for this battle is the conflict between the flesh and Spirit, between Truth and error; the struggle whereby mortals finally shall be freed from the bondage of material sense, from sickness, hate, animality, limitation, imperfection, old age, death. Down through the

centuries enslaved mortals have echoed Jeremiah's plaint: "Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"

The Coming of the Remedy

Now it has been proven true in the world's experience, that every great human crisis has witnessed the appearance of some courageous God-prepared teacher or leader proclaiming a remedy, publishing deliverance, or pointing a way of escape.

The enslaved and outraged children of Israel yearned for deliverance, and a Moses, and later a Joshua, appeared to lead them from bondage. Out of the night of religious ignorance, superstition, and error shone the light of a Martin Luther. From the shores where then thrived the hampering weeds of religious intolerance and bigotry, sailed the Pilgrim Fathers. And when the freedom of their descendants was at stake in 1776 and their unity threatened in 1861, there stepped forth a George Washington and an Abraham Lincoln to meet the human need. And now in this age, this material mammon worshipping age, which in spite of its wonderful material inventions and achievements is hungering after spirituality, after healing, bodily and mental, in this age that Love divine which "always has met and always will meet every human need" (Science and Health, p. 494) has spoken again, proclaiming to the sons of men that there is balm in Gilead, and that Gilead is not afar off, but within our very reach, here and now. And should it be surprising that it was the gentle voice of a woman that was appointed to bring this message, assuring the saddened and fearful children of earth, with all the tenderness of the mother, that God is indeed able to care for His creation, to heal and to save?

We only have to remember that pure Jewish maiden whose uplifted sense beheld and brought into demonstration the fatherhood of God; the repentance and gratitude of the magdalen; the faithfulness of the woman "last at the cross and first at the sepulchre;" and likewise the fidelity and devotion of the women-thought thru all the centuries, to that which points to faith and purity—we have only to remember these, should the human mind find it difficult to accept the fact that truth has spoken to this age through a woman.

Prejudice Against Mrs. Eddy

I regret to confess the fact that before I knew anything about Christian Science, before I had read a line of its authorized literature, or attempted to prove by demonstration its truth or error, I was one of that rapidly decreasing number of persons who seem to take a special delight in making flippant and unchristian remarks about Mrs. Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, and in laughing at the movement in general. I was quite sure that Christian Science worshipped Mrs. Eddy, and that her system of healing was based upon her power, or the human mind over matter. In fact my fund of information as to what Christian Science did not teach, reminds me of the man who was endeavoring to impress his pastor with his extraordinary familiarity with the Holy Scriptures. "Why, parson," he exclaimed, "I know that Bible from Genesis to Exodus!"

Christian Science Not Suggestion

But when at last I read the Christian text book, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," and when I had attended a few services, I found that which no impartial investigator could fail to discover, that Christian Scientists worship the supreme and only God, and entertain for the revered Leader of their movement only sentiments of affection and deep gratitude. I found, instead of a system of material philosophy, dealing with the action of will power and suggestion, the purest Christian metaphysics, based upon a spiritual sense of the Scriptures. Well may we rejoice that Mrs. Eddy during her search after Truth had investigated so-called magnetic healing, and mind cure based upon hypnotic control, and found such systems not only devoid of spirituality, but positively iniquitous. And even a casual glance through the pages of the text-book must convince any fair-minded person that Christian Science is as far from hypnotism and suggestion as is Christ from Belial.

Mrs. Eddy

As to that revered gentlewoman through whose spiritual vision the simple, healing truths of the Bible are today made available for those who sit in darkness, I may say only this: Her character needs no defense at the hands of men. By her fruits shall she be known. History is replete with annals wherein are recorded the unreasoning and unfounded misrepresentation which has inevitably pursued the apostle of a new idea. Even the immaculate Jesus did not escape. Think of it! Blind, perverted material sense said of him, "He is a winebibber, a glutton, a friend of publicans and sinners!" Mrs. Eddy writes in Science and Health (p.28): "Remember, thou Christian martyr, it is enough if thou art found worthy to unloose the sandals of thy Master's feet! To suppose that persecution for righteousness,

ake belongs to the past' and that Christianity to-day is at peace with the world because it is honored by sects and societies? Is to mistake the very nature of religion. Error repeats itself. The trials encountered by prophet, disciple, and apostle 'of whom the world was not worthy, await' in some form, every pioneer of truth."

MRS. EDDY'S DISCOVERY

Christian Scientists know that Mrs. Eddy did not originate Christian Science; she discovered it, brought it to light. The balm of Gilead which she has revealed for the healing of the nations is not of her creating, nor is it a restatement of ancient or modern material philosophy. It is the simple, unadorned spiritual teaching of Jesus and the prophets who preceded him. To this assertion some may say, "But I believe and have been endeavoring to follow, the teachings of Jesus all my life." Yes, this is unfortunately the remarkable predicament of Christian peoples today; hundreds of differing sects acknowledge Jesus as their guide and their king, and then proceed to place their human interpretation upon his words and works. This leads to endless diversity of opinion and the sad differences among Christians, causing one to say, "I believe this," another, "My belief is that." Yet the plain fact of the matter is this: It matters not what any man or set of men believes about Jesus' teaching. The all-important point is, What was Jesus' actual teaching? Is there to be found in his word a practical present day salvation for you and me?

Salvation

I once asked a woman seeking health in Christian Science if she understood the meaning of the word "salvation." "Indeed I do," was her response, "I was saved when I was eighteen." "From what were you saved?" I ventured to inquire. "Why, I was saved," she explained, "You know Jesus died to save me." "To save you from what?" I persisted. "Have you been saved from sin all these years?" "No," she admitted honestly, "I cannot say that I have." "Have you been saved from sickness?" "No," she replied sadly; "I have been a terrible sufferer for years." "Did your salvation include deliverance from heart-ache, from fear, from worry, from poverty?" "No," she said; "I suppose my salvation was reserved entirely for the future life."

Jesus' Definite Instructions

Is it not strange, this seemingly universal misunderstanding among professing Christians regarding the teachings of Jesus upon this vital point? Many Christian denominations unite in teaching the attainment of heaven and of spirituality through death, as well as the possibility of an eternal punishment for those who have strayed. Now the fact of the matter is that such notions have absolutely no connection with Jesus' teachings. Before his coming the Jews believed that the faithful were gathered to Abraham's bosom. Jesus would have brought no new message had he taught the gaining of heaven through dying. The Chinese have always believed in an after life, and even the Indians have clung to a hope in a happy hunting ground. Let us examine the instructions given by Jesus to his students, as recorded in the tenth chapter of Matthew: "Go... to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses... for the workman is worthy of his meat." "The kingdom of heaven is at hand. In the Christian Science text-book we read that heaven is harmony. Therefore the message of the Savior, which indeed is tidings of great joy to the bound and the afflicted of the earth, is that harmony, deliverance, salvation, are at hand, and are to be realized in the proportion that we lift our thought from material and lay hold on the spiritual facts of being."

Eternal Punishment Unthinkable

The notion of a place of eternal torment is absolutely foreign to the teachings of him whose keynote was Love divine. In the parable of the prodigal son Christ Jesus shows that the sufferings and punishment of the wayward boy were not inflicted by the father, but were the results of sin, and last of all only while the sin lasted. "You remember, do you not, that the young man goes into a far country and there wastes his substance 'with riotous living.' And we read that 'when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his field to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him.'"

It has been my privilege to address the prisoners in several penitentiaries, this last year, and on each occasion I have read to the men this parable of the prodigal son. When I have come to the words just quoted, I have stopped, and said to the prisoners, "Men, where was that man?" On each occasion, absolutely unprompted, has

come this response, "In hell!" Yes, he was in hell. He was in the only hell there was, and those poor prisoners knew all about it. They recognized it the moment they heard it. But, I said to them, here is a feature of Jesus' teachings which apparently has escaped many of us all these years: Here is a man who was able to get out of hell. We read that "when he came to himself"—in other words, when he had suffered enough to "wake him up, when he had had torment enough to turn him from his sin with loathing, he said: "How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father." Now had Jesus meant to teach the idea of a place of everlasting punishment, of a torment or hell-fire from which there was no possible escape, here would have been his opportunity to have shown the fathers closed to the erring child, and the father standing there saying, "No, son—no! It is too late, too late! The sin has been too grievous, the stain is too deep. Depart from me, depart from me!" And haven't we heard just that, and just that, preached in the name of a highest creation, man. At the close of each step in the progression we do we find in the Scriptures? "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And... the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet... for this my son was dead, and he is alive again; he was lost and is found." This is the God of Christ Jesus, the God of infinite Love and compassion and justice, a God who is not the author of suffering or sickness or sin; and it is this God which Christian Science is revealing to the world after, in these many weary, heartsick years!

Have you ever heard the story that is told of the man who was such a never failing optimist that he met every revival of calamity with the comforting words, "Well, well, it might have been worse"? This custom of his aroused the ire of one of his friends, an avowed pessimist, who resolved to put an end to it. Meeting him soon after, said the pessimist to his friend, "I dreamt about you last night—a most horrible dream—and when you have heard it, I know you cannot say it might have been worse." And then told of his supposed dream graphically picturing his friend perishing in the torments of everlasting fire, and making the story as horrible as possible. When he finished the other thought for a moment, and then said, "Well that might have been worse." "How might it have been worse?" echoed his astonished friend. "It might have been true," said the other.

And so we think about the theory of everlasting punishment. How terrible, how unthinkable it would be if it were true. Christian Science, however, revealing an all-powerful creator who is ever-present Love, shows that such a concept is too bad to be true.

Definition of Hell

"So," says some one, "the Christian Scientists do not believe in hell?" Unfortunately most of them do, and they are trying hard to get out of it. Let us read the Christianly scientific definition of hell: "Mortal belief; error; lust; remorse; hatred; revenge; sin; sickness; death; suffering and self-destruction; self-imposed agony; effects of sin; that which 'worketh abomination or maketh a lie'" (Science and Health, p. 588). Now most of us find ourselves in one or more of the conditions of thought just described, and the insistent yearning of all mankind is for deliverance, for harmony, for heaven. How is this to be attained? By will power? By forcing ourselves to think thoughts of health, rather than thoughts of sickness? By no means. Would a teacher say to a class in school, "Children, clench your fists, close your teeth hard, use all your determination and will power at your command, and say, 'Five times five must equal twenty five?' Never. A teacher imparts to his class the truth about arithmetic, and that truth quietly enters the pupil's thought and gently displaces the ignorance which before held sway. Will power has absolutely nothing to do with it. No man will power or suggestion or any action of the carnal mind enter us from hell to heaven from discord to harmony. The remedy lies in the simple rule left by the Master, "This is the eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent." Salvation then is a matter of knowing the truth about God and the son of God, and as Jesus say sin another place, when you know the truth, the truth will make you free.

Let no one think, however, that the working out of one's salvation thru knowing the truth is always along a path of flowers. Spiritual unfoldment, like a child's material education, involves wrestlings with self-will, bat-

tlings with discouragement, and even the encountering of temporary defeats until the human is brought into subjection to the divine. But in our spiritual education we have the comforting assurance that it is not human will but God that worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Basis of Christian Science

Let us now consider the basis of Christian Science; let us find the truth about God and man which it reveals—the truth which is destined to liberate the race. Science and Health in a few words sums up the remarkable discovery of the truth of being. We read: "The Christ-like understanding of scientific being and divine healing, includes a perfect Principle and idea, perfect God and perfect man,—as the basis of thought and demonstration." (p. 259).

This teaching is founded squarely on the opening chapter of the Bible, the first chapter of Genesis. It will be remembered that this chapter contains a record of God's creation. This creation is depicted by successive steps of unfoldment, symbolized by the appearing of light, the heavens, the earth, the growing things upon the earth, the heavenly bodies, the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea, the creatures that move upon the earth, and lastly, God's noblest work, His just that, preached in the name of a highest creation, man. At the close of each step in the progression we do we find in the Scriptures? "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And... the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet... for this my son was dead, and he is alive again; he was lost and is found." This is the God of Christ Jesus, the God of infinite Love and compassion and justice, a God who is not the author of suffering or sickness or sin; and it is this God which Christian Science is revealing to the world after, in these many weary, heartsick years!

What a wonderful record is this chapter of Genesis! How beautiful is God's creation, how thoroughly in keeping with a good and loving creator. No evil has been created, no sickness, sin or death. Do you realize, also, that the man of this first record of creation is not material, not made of dust? The record states that God made man in His image, after His likeness. In other words, man was created God-like, and as God is spirit the man of His fashioning must have been like Spirit, or spiritual. This spiritual man is not cursed, but blessed. As the text-book says (Science and Health p. 518), "His birthright is dominion, not subjection. He is lord of the belief in earth and heaven, himself subordinate alone to his maker."

There Went Up A Mist From The Earth

Now had I been asked before studying Christian Science as to what was the first mention of man in the Bible, I should promptly have referred the inquirer to Adam, in the garden of Eden. But Christian Science shows that the Adam, or material man of the second chapter of Genesis, does not appear until the first mention of discord, in the second chapter of Genesis. We have read that God's creation is good, is finished, divine law and perfection reign, and the creator rests from His work. Then occurs this significant statement in the second chapter: "But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground." And then came a man made from dust, not in the likeness of Spirit, and apparently not given dominion over all the earth. In fact, the earth seems to have dominion over him, for he promptly yields to the enslavement of materiality, being loyally assisted by a woman fashioned from one of his ribs. Surely this man made from the dust and this woman from a rib depicting as they do the weakness, frailty, disobedience, and lawlessness of materiality, cannot present the deathless, perfect, spiritual handiwork of the Most High. Far indeed is material man from the image and likeness of the One "altogether lovely."

What Was The Mist?

In fact, as indicated before, this material sense of man appeared only with the coming of the mist. What was this mist? In the text-book we read (Science and Health, p. 523): "The creations of matter arose from a mist or false claim, or from mystification, and not from the firmament, or understanding, and the oneness of ignorance. Ignorance of God, Spirit, ignorance of the spiritual facts of being, ignorance of spiritual sense which results in a material view of creation—this, then, is the mist which seems to go up from the earth. And from this ignorance, this false sense of materiality, and never from Him who is infinitely Love, comes discord, or understanding, and the oneness of ignorance. Ignorance of God, Spirit, ignorance of the spiritual facts of being, ignorance of spiritual sense which results in a material view of creation—this, then, is the mist which seems to go up from the earth. 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