

Christian Science—the Religion of the Bible

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—I assume that there are some here who are unfamiliar with Christian Science,—some who have come for the first time to hear of it. I will address myself in part to these. I therefore say that Christian Science has a textbook entitled "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," and its author is the Rev. Mary Baker G. Eddy. It was first published in 1875. It is a treatise on healing through the power of God, or the divine Mind. Or, as we claim, it is a thorough exegesis of the Scriptural method of healing all manner of disease, and of curing all manner of sin through the understanding of God as all-present, all-powerful, all-wise, and universal Mind. In short, it is a spiritual interpretation of the Bible; hence its title: "Key to the Scriptures."

THE AUTHOR

The author of a book of note and of value is a person of whom people desire to know, therefore I shall refer briefly to the life and character of Mrs. Eddy. It may not be amiss for me to say that for nearly ten years, as former First-Reader in the Mother Church in Boston and editor of the official periodicals, I have had opportunities which enable me to speak intelligently of her life and character as well as of her labors and literary attainments.

Speaking from this vantage ground, I can truthfully say that intellectually, she is one of the most alert persons I have ever known; that she labors incessantly and unselfishly for the cause to which she has devoted her life, and that, notwithstanding her years, she performs an amount of labor each day which, if known, would seem incredible, even if done by one yet in the adolescence of life. As to her religious character, I speak my profoundest conviction when I say I believe it to be in accord with the highest standard of Christian living.

Yet, notwithstanding her highly spiritual nature, she is withal an intensely practical person. She keeps close watch of current affairs and acquaints herself with the world's doings. She is, moreover, a patriotic citizen of her native State and of her adopted city, contributing generously of her means toward their material welfare and upbuilding.

THE TENETS

I shall next speak of the Church Tenets. There is in Boston a Mother Church, organized a number of years since, having a membership of nearly forty thousand, composed of persons residing in almost every part of this country and of other countries. This membership is increasing at the rate of about 3,000 annually. The Mother Church has branch churches and societies to the number of nearly one thousand, also situated in nearly every part of this country and of other countries. Some years since the Mother Church adopted a set of Church Tenets. These became also the tenets of all of her branches, and must be subscribed to and adopted by every person becoming a member either of the Mother Church or any of her branches. These tenets furnish a fair index to the religious faith or belief of this movement, hence I shall refer to them in substance. They acknowledge the Scriptures to be the inspired word of God. They acknowledge the supremacy and infinity of God. They acknowledge Christ and his divinity, and declare there is but one Christ. They inculcate the omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience of God; that God is Spirit; that man—the real, spiritual man—is made in the image and likeness of God according to the teaching of Genesis, and that this real man must, by the necessity of his relationship to God, reflect, or image forth, the divine character. The real and immortal man, therefore, does reflect God, and is not therefore His image and likeness.

The last of these tenets enjoins upon all who subscribe to them the necessity of striving, watching and praying to have in themselves the same

Mind that was also in Christ Jesus, to love one another, and to be meek, merciful, just and pure.

Surely there can be no higher standard of Christianity. If there be a person on this earth today who can truly be said to have in himself the same Mind that was also in Christ Jesus, that person is a Christian. If there are persons who are sincerely striving, watching and praying to have that Mind, they are in that sense, leading the Christian life. Those Christian Scientists who are thus earnestly striving are true to the church tenets and to their teaching. If there are those who are not so striving, they, like all others, have yet to attain to a higher standard of living.

THE SCRIPTURAL BASIS

The foregoing indicates, in general terms, the Christianity of our faith. No unbiased mind will say that, in statement and theory, it does not embrace all the essentials of Bible teaching; but let us be more specific. All who believe in God at all agree that He is all-powerful, all-present, all-wise. All who believe in the Bible accept the statement of the first chapter of Genesis that God made man in His own image and likeness. We should endeavor to give these Bible truths their full weight, their deep significance. If we do so, we must believe that with God all things are possible. We must believe that if God is whole, His image and likeness reflects wholeness. We must believe that if God is pure, His image and likeness reflects purity. We must believe that if God is good, His image and likeness reflects goodness. We must believe that if God is Love, His image and likeness reflects love. We must believe that if God is Life, His image and likeness reflects life. We must believe that if God, in his wholeness, is free from sin, sickness and death, His image and likeness is likewise free. Otherwise the words "image and likeness" were false and meaningless—a misnomer. A full belief in the first chapter of Genesis, which is the record of the true, spiritual creation, puts upon us the necessity of recognizing God as the only creator of man, and man as the image and likeness of his creator forever and forever.

Paul expressed a clear discernment of the distinction between the real man and the false when, as recorded in Col. 3, he said: "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not to one another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of of him that created him. . . . Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness and humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering. . . . and above all these things put on charity which is the bond of perfectness."

Here is distinctly shown the difference between the true man and the false, the immortal and the mortal, the perfect and the imperfect. Jesus referred to this difference when he said: "Ye must be born again," or "ye must be born anew," as it is in the revised version. He also referred to the true man when he said: "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This is, ye must be borne out of sin and imperfection into sinlessness and perfection, for this is the necessity of birthright as the image and likeness of God.

If this Scripture is to be taken at its plain meaning we have laid the foundation for further Scripture which shows God's power and purpose to transform the false into the truth, by the destruction of the false. This is the only real transformation.

Hear the "sweet singer of Israel" in the 103 Psalm:

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." And listen to the prophet

Jeremiah (33): Call unto me, and I will answer thee and show the great and mighty things which thou knowest not, Behold I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth."

Of old, as now, those who trusted to human aid, instead of the Divine, suffered the consequences of their lack of faith and understanding. In 16 Chron. we read: "And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great; and yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians." What was the result? The record laconically tells us: "And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign." We note that Asa slept with his fathers, not his Father. How many since Asa's time have slept prematurely with their fathers for a season.

JESUS TEACHING.

The Old Testament teachings, as indicated by the few citations made, furnish an abundant foundation for the New Testament doctrine of healing through the divine law, and especially the teaching and works of Jesus. I might quote extensively from the New Testament did time permit, but I shall confine the quotations to the sayings and precepts of the founder of the Christian religion. This should be sufficient authority for every professing Christian.

Jesus sent forth his twelve disciples to preach and heal the sick. He gave them a commandment, called by some Bible commentators his Great Commission. In Matthew 10th, this commandment is thus recorded:—

"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather 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 purse.

"Nor yet scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat."

This commandment is a unit. It is not two commandments. There is in this language no warrant for any attempt to separate the commandment by declaring that the part relating to preaching was to be perpetuated, but the part relating to healing the sick was to be put aside, as having reference only to the time in which, and those to whom, it was given. Even if, for the sake of argument, the kind of preaching mentioned in the commandment had been practiced, and a present kingdom of heaven had been preached, we yet maintain that the part relating to healing sickness is as plain and imperative as that pertaining to preaching. We should thus maintain if we rested the question alone upon the words I have quoted; but we are not compelled to do this. After his resurrection and just before his ascension Jesus gave to the same disciples to whom he gave his first commandment (except Judas Iscariot who had betrayed him) a final commandment. This constitutes the two last verses of the Book of Matthew:—

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

This language is broad and unqualified. It comprehends all the commandments previously given to his disciples, and this of course, includes his first great commandment. It is a plain and unmistakable direction or instruction. Let me plainly ask: When was it ever repealed, countermanded, qualified or changed in any manner, by Jesus or any one else of those having biblical authority to teach