

LECTURE ON CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

CURE OF DISEASE AND DEATH

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The teaching of Christian Science concerning the cause and cure of disease has to a great extent revised the world's thought on this subject. Many observing physicians are willing to admit much in the direction of the mental cause of disease; more, indeed, than laymen who have less opportunity for observation. Christian Science goes beyond the most progressive physicians and declares that all disease is of mental origin. In so doing it does not contend that every form of disease is due to conscious fear or willful wrong-doing on the part of those who seem to be the victims of the disease. It merely claims that somewhere back of all so-called abnormal or diseased physical conditions there are erroneous conditions of thought. According to Christian Science, disease is mental, the cause of the disease is mental, and the process which removes the cause and changes the effect is mental, or scientifically spiritual. Christian Science says that in order to effect a permanent cure, erroneous thoughts must be corrected or removed by means of right thinking. It shows that fear is needless, and explains why it is needless. In this way it removes fear. It shows that the so-called law of heredity and other cruel laws which claim to hold mortals in bondage and cause them to sicken and die, are not of God. It explains how these supposed laws may be rendered inoperative by the law of God, which in reality is the only law, and which is the law of health, life, harmony, and freedom. It does not matter how long a supposed law of the human or mortal mind may have been believed and obeyed; it is proved not to be a law when set aside in a single instance. And it is safe to say that Christian Science practice has annulled every so-called law of health not only in one but in many instances.

Through overcoming those beliefs which ultimately in the experience called death Christian Science is gradually leading its students away from belief in death.

Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, wrote, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." What is meant by being "carnally minded" but to believe in the reality of those things which are carnal-matter and evil? And that, Paul says, is death. But to be "spiritually minded"—to understand the reality of that which is spiritual and good—is life. Again Paul said, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord." Sin, broadly speaking, is idolatry, putting other gods in the place of the one living and true God, making a reality in consciousness of that which is not good. The mistake, or error, of believing that to be real which is not real, is sin (in a broad sense), and the wages thereof is death. But "the gift of God" to man in His likeness is consciousness of the eternal continuity of Life. This abiding sense of Life is spiritual, and comes to us through right thinking. Jesus said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." To know or be conscious of God through reflecting those ideas that are good and true, is to live, and there is no other real life. Mrs. Eddy understood this when she wrote:

Thou to whose power our hope we give,

Free us from human strife,

For Love alone is Life.

(Miscellaneous Writings, p. 388).

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE PRACTICE NOT MESMERISM

Some who are not entirely familiar with the teaching of Christian Science believe that its practice consists in the effort of one person to benefit another person by exerting the influence which one human mentality is supposed to have over another. Starting with such a premise, it would be quite natural to conclude that Christian Science practice might be capable of resulting in evil if the practitioner should for any reason decide to use his mental influence to the detriment of his patient.

Such a premise as the one stated is, however, mistaken, and therefore the conclusion drawn from it must be and is incorrect. The fact is that Christian Science regards the so-called human or mortal mind as the cause of all discord, including disease, and regards the immortal or divine Mind as the only effectual healer of mortal discord. This fact may have been known to the psalmist, who sang of God as the one "who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Certainly the all-transforming and redeeming power of God was understood by Christ Jesus, for he healed every kind of sickness and sin among the people of his time. Never in any utterance of Jesus was there anything to indicate that he believed that his power to heal the sick and reform the sinner depended upon the exercise of human will. The record of his life-work as found in the gospels does not contain anything that could reasonably be construed to imply that he worked by means of what is known as the influence of one mind over another. On the contrary, everything recorded of his works by the authors of the four gospels tends to confirm the fact that Jesus brought about the destruction of evil in all of its forms by a faithful reliance on and intelligent application of the power of divine Mind. He prayed and taught his followers to pray, "Not my will, but thine, be done." So Christian Science emphasizes again and again the fact that there is no permanent deliverance from human ills save through the transforming power of divine Love. The action of divine Mind does not depend upon the exercise of human will, but subjugates and controls it. The truth which Jesus said shall make free often does and always should touch and transform the consciousness of the sufferer as gently as light comes into a dark room and dispels the darkness. On page 445 of Science and Health Mrs. Eddy describes this process as "the unlabored motion of

the divine energy in healing the sick."

THE CHRIST-MIND ALONE HEALS

Let us again make use of the illustration of light coming into a dark room through the transparency of a window. It is evident that it is the light that destroys the darkness, and not the window through which the light passes. Thus in Christian Science practice it is divine Spirit and not the human mentality which heals sickness and sin.

It should not be supposed that all Christian Science Mind-healing is the result of what is known as treatment, either present or absent. Sometimes people are healed in conversation with one who speaks the Word of God with conviction and understanding. Frequently healing has resulted from the reading of the Lesson-Sermons at Christian Science church services, and from public lectures on Christian Science. "He sent His word, and healed them" (Psalm cvii.). Many persons have been perfectly and permanently healed of chronic cases of so-called incurable disease by studying the Christian Science text-book. It will be seen that since it is the divine Truth that brings freedom from human error, it matters not whether the truth comes to the individual through silent treatment, through the spoken word, or through reading and study. The essential thing is that it comes to the one who is receptive. When it does come to such an individual, it is as certain that it will displace in consciousness everything unlike itself as that light will destroy darkness. And it should be understood that Christian Science treatment involves something more than mere faith. It includes demonstrable understanding of the ever-presence and all-power of God, or divine Mind, and this understanding is the basis of all true faith. Christian Science treatment is based upon the fundamental proposition that "all is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation" (Science and Health, p. 468). It is therefore the only system of healing which denies the actual existence of matter and of the so-called mortal mind.

It will not be seriously contended that Jesus used drugs in healing or that he depended in any way upon matter to facilitate his cures. There would be few who would claim that Jesus cooperated with doctors of medicine or that he required medical diagnosis of the diseases he cured. The gospel record shows that he healed the sick, reformed the sinner and raised the dead by the power of God, divine Spirit, alone. If this spiritual method was God's way of healing in the time of Jesus, it must be His way now, for God is unchanging. If, on the other hand, the use of drugs is God's way, why did not Christ Jesus use them? If the combined use of prayer and medicine is God's way, why did not Jesus combine them in his practice? It is obvious that if medicine is of itself able to heal, prayer is not a necessary adjunct of the healing art. If prayer is efficacious, medicine is not needed. Christian Science teaches that God's grace is sufficient at all times and that His hand "is not shortened, that it cannot save."

Christian Scientists are not in competition with physicians, nor have they any quarrel with them. They recognize that a large class of medical doctors are sincerely striving to relieve human suffering in what they believe to be the most efficacious manner. Christian Scientists are quite willing that medical practice should stand or fall upon its merits. For this very reason they ask that Christian Science practice be accorded the same right. If Christian Science practice were based merely upon the shifting sands of human philosophy and experimentation, it could not long have resisted the storm of adverse criticism. In spite, however, of persecution and misrepresentation, it has proved itself in hundreds of thousands of instances to the scientific and demonstrable. Therefore it continues to grow in favor with those who are sufficiently open-minded to be guided by proof and demonstration rather than by prejudice and the bias of previous education along other lines. Year by year, often under the most adverse circumstances, Christian Science practice has proved that it is founded upon the rock of absolute Truth, against which the winds and waves of human opinion beat in vain.

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Study of the Christian Science text-book has made Bible students of many who previously were little familiar with the Scriptures. Others who had formerly been students of the Bible have found in its pages a new and vital meaning since they have begun to read it in the light of Christian Science. For all Christian Scientists it has become a daily companion and guide.

Correct translation and proper arrangement of the Bible from a literary point of view are desirable. Knowledge of Bible history is relatively important. Yet that which is of prime necessity to the student who would make his teachings applicable to his daily need is the spiritual interpretation. It is of vital importance that we should find and follow that thread of spiritual inspiration which runs through the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation.

The study of Christian Science shows the correlative harmony and interdependence of the Scriptures. It makes it possible to see that the inspired word which intervenes between the first and the last books of the Bible constitutes an unbroken chain of revealed truth. Above all, Christian Science explains the words of Christ Jesus in such a manner as to illuminate the thought of the student with their true meaning and thus make it possible for him to emulate the works of Jesus. Unless this understanding of the Bible is attained, it cannot be said that the student has a correct knowledge of Scripture, however scholarly he may be. If he is not gaining from his study a practical, demonstrable understanding of Christ, Truth, he has searched the Scriptures in vain.

The life of Christ Jesus makes reasonably safe the conclusion that he put his works above his words. He apparently did not give as much value to what he said as to the

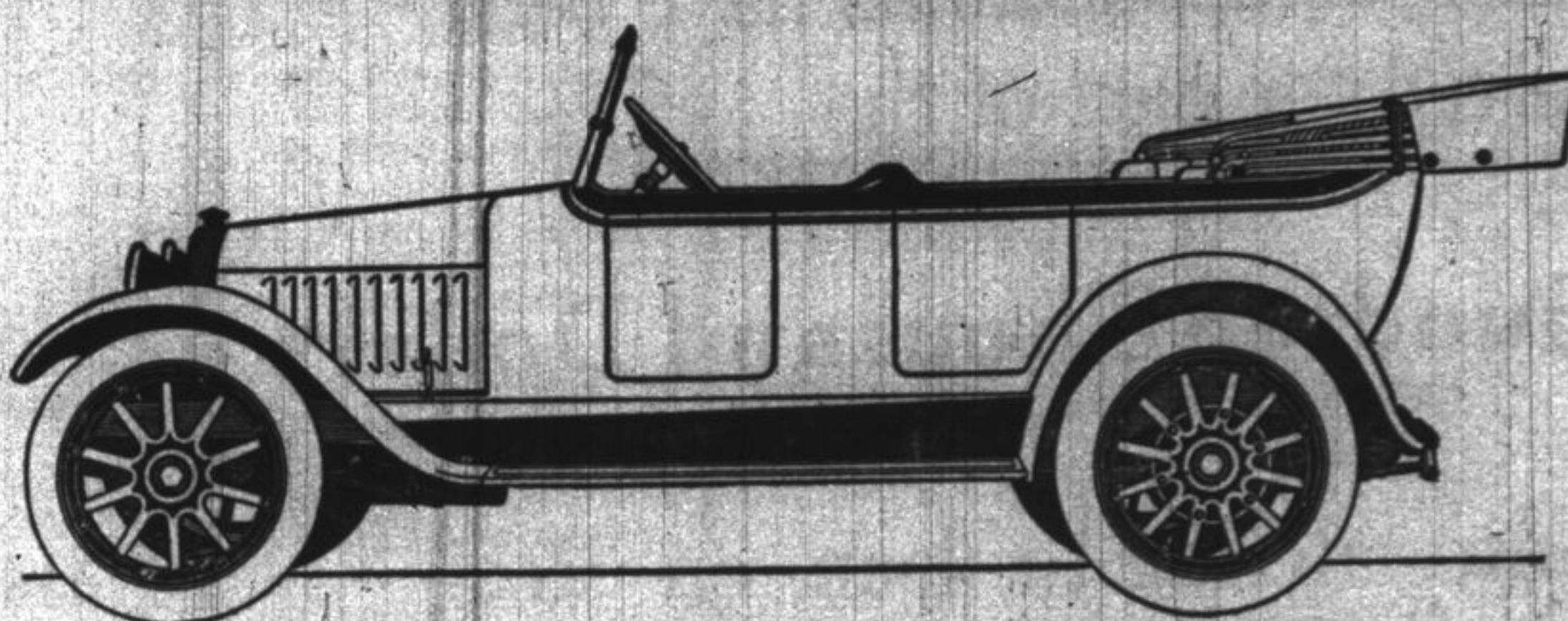
proof that what he said was true. He not only gave his works as proof to the disciples of John the Baptist that he was the Christ, but later in seeking to establish his claim of unity with the Father he said: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works." Perhaps no other figure in history stands out so distinctly as does Christ Jesus as an exponent of the doctrine of works, but in all ages great characters have been immortalized because of what they did for the human race rather than because of what they said in doing it. For example, the utterances of Abraham Lincoln have not been excelled in beauty and truth by those of any man of modern times. Yet if the words of Lincoln should be forgotten, he would continue to live in what he did for a stricken race and a nation whose very existence was threatened.

IMPORTANCE OF WORKS

No modern movement has so emphasized the importance of good works as the movement which has sprung from the discovery of Christian Science. Mrs. Eddy, its Discoverer, said in one of her Messages to The Mother Church: "Earth's actors change earth's scenes; and the curtain of human life should be lifted on reality, on that which outweighs time; on duty done and life perfected, wherein joy is real and fadeless" (Message 1902, p. 17). The very foundation of the Christian Science church was laid in healing works, and its superstructure is rising majestically from that firm base. Before the Christian Science text-book was published, its author and her early students had already demonstrated the truth of the propositions afterward laid down therein. Since then students of that book in all parts of the world have been able to prove the truth of its teaching by removing sickness, poverty, and other ills from their experience according to definite rules of practice. This book is building for itself and for its author a monument of good works which cannot be destroyed, but which will endure to the end of time as an encouragement to those who are in distress.

Undeniably the tendency of the human mind is to resist that which in any manner differs from the existing order of things. Thus it stands in the way of its own progress. When Marconi announced that he had discovered a method of transmitting telegraph messages without the use of wires, he was scoffed at as a dreamer; but he had faith in his discovery and persevered in perfecting it, so that in spite of the est-

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while skeptics, the transmission of wireless messages is now an hourly occurrence.

When a New England woman announced that she had discovered the Principle and law of primitive Christian healing, and that because of this discovery it would become universally possible for the sick to be healed by divine power as in the time of Christ Jesus, her announcement met with ridicule and scorn. But Mrs. Eddy too had faith in her discovery. Yes, more than faith—she had absolute conviction and confidence begotten of understanding and demonstration. Therefore she was not dismayed by the storm of doubt which beat in upon her as the result of her proclamation to mankind. Because she knew her discovery to be genuine, she had the courage and faithfulness to perfect it and give it to humanity in the form of a text-book of demonstrable science. Little by little, scoffers and skeptics were compelled to admit that there is a power on earth today which heals sickness and sin as it did centuries ago. When the works of Christian Science thus compelled recognition, effort was made to discredit Mrs. Eddy as its Discoverer; but this, too, signally failed. Today, when there are in different parts of the world more than 1600 Christian Science or-

ganizations founded upon the rock of Christ-healing, Mrs. Eddy is generally acknowledged as the Discoverer of Christian Science and the revered Leader of the Christian Science movement. And Christian Science is gradually coming to be recognized at the reestablishment or restoration of primitive Christianity. As this understanding becomes more general, and consequently the resistance to Christian Science Mind-healing diminishes, distressing conditions of human existence will continue to be ameliorated until they finally disappear. Each case healed in Christian Science practice makes humanity's burden lighter, and even now, through its still feel obliged to deny are being brought nearer to the light.

Mrs. Eddy has said of her discovery and of its reception. "I have never supposed the world would immediately witness the full fruition of Christian Science, or that sin, disease, and death would not be relieved for an indefinite time; but this I do aver, that, as a result of teaching Christian Science, ethics and temperance have received an impulse, health has been restored, and longevity increased. If such are the present fruits, what will the harvest be, when this science is more generally understood?" (Science and Health, p. 348.)