

SYNOPSIS OF LECTURE ON CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

BY ROBERT S. ROSS, C. S.

Delivered Tuesday Evening In The First Church of Christ, Scientist, of Highland Park

A large audience listened to a lecture on Christian Science given by Robert Stanley Ross, C. S., Tuesday evening at First Church of Christ, Scientist, of Highland Park.

Standing on Mars Hill nearly two thousand years ago, the apostle Paul preached the first Christian sermon ever delivered on European soil. Turning to the curious crowd which had assembled to hear the new doctrine, Paul said: "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

Today, as in the days of the great apostle, Christian Science has come to turn mankind from a blind or faltering faith, or from no faith at all, to a rational, demonstrable understanding of Him in whom "we live, and move, and have our being." It has come, furthermore, not to tear down existing systems of religion and medicine, but to deprive the people of anything that is essential to their health and happiness, but lovingly to show mankind, in strict accord with the Master's teachings, how to build more safely on the sure foundation of Christian healing.

Prophecy and Fulfillment In one of the most solemn and impressive incidents recorded in the New Testament, Luke tells us that Jesus, after returning to Nazareth from what may have been a period of preparation at Jerusalem, went into the synagogue (probably by invitation) to expound the Scriptures to his fellow townsmen, with many of whom, no doubt, he had once played and worked. In those days, it was customary to honor distinguished visitors and guests in this manner. Furthermore, Jesus, having evidently now reached the required age of thirty before which none were supposed to preach in public, appears to have entered here upon the work of his ministry.

When Jesus stood up to read, the minister handed to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. Turning to what we know as the sixty-first chapter, Jesus read: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." He then closed the book, returned it to the minister, sat down, and opened his discourse with the words, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." In proof thereof, immediately after leaving Nazareth, he began to perform his mighty works of healing.

Divine Law Jesus was no magician or wonder-worker aiming to set aside or nullify God's law. Neither did he practice mesmerism, so-called mental science, or auto-suggestion in the hope of persuading sick people to believe they were well. He came to fulfill and enforce fundamental divine law; to illustrate its utility and availability in that age and for the ages to come. He proved that this law of God, this law of infinite good, is the law of life, health, and of happiness to you, to me, and to all mankind. He demonstrated the supremacy of good notwithstanding the seeming presence and power of evil. He brought to light out of the realm of spiritual reality the truth about God and man in much the same manner that heretofore unknown facts in the realm of material phenomena have been discovered and made available to humanity notwithstanding their temporary rejection by customary belief and experience.

Good Ever Available Christian Science is demonstrating that it is the Christianity of Jesus made practicable today. Now as of old, it is showing mankind how to escape from evil. No matter how long one has been ill, no matter how deeply one is involved in sin, no matter how heavy one's burden of sorrow, poverty, or care, Christian Science lovingly points the way out, not through death and the so-called hereafter, but here and now. The Bible tells us that the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, is at hand, here, now; that now is the day of salvation; that now "are we the sons of God." Instead of exhorting us to wait until tomorrow, or next year, or the next world for salvation, Christian Science invites us to partake today of God's infinite goodness. All the possibilities of being are always here and everywhere. How could it be otherwise in view of the nature and omnipresence of God, good? Consequently the only God about which Christian Science teaches us is "God with us," a God who is absent only to those who believe He is absent.

Imposition of Evil If, according to Christian Science, the universe, including man, is harmonious and intact, notwithstanding all sense testimony to the contrary, it is evident that the human race is the victim of imposition. Christian Science declares that the race is suffering from the delusion that there is an evil power or influence at work in the affairs of men which is capable of beclouding reason and destroying health and happiness without let or hindrance. It declares that this delusion, not divine Love, is responsible for all the trouble in the world, and that the awakening from this delusion will usher us into health and happiness. The process might be likened to that of awakening from a troubled night-dream to find with a

sigh of relief that all is well. The Psalmist must have had something of the sort in mind when he said, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

This imposition is the covering or veil to which the Bible refers as having been cast over the face of all people since the world—that is, the material sense of things—began, only to be removed by the looked-for deliverer, spiritual enlightenment. It was this delusion to which the Master referred as the adversary or devil. It was this to which Paul referred as the carnal mind or mind of the flesh. It is this to which Mrs. Eddy refers as mortal mind or animal magnetism. Because of this universal mesmerism, mankind has been accepting as real a false, material sense of existence with all the darkness and discord that it includes. Hence it is from this delusion, not from anything real, that mankind needs to be awakened and saved. The Saviour is Christ, Truth, understood and demonstrated, to which the Revelator referred in the words, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."

Reality of Good Christian Science declares that all the sin, disease, sorrow, poverty, and death in the world is due to the erroneous supposition that God either sends or permits evil. Friends, even a human parent would not consciously permit his child to walk into the meshes of temptation, inflict an incurable disease upon him, or kill him in order to show his affection for the child or even to compel obedience. If not, how far removed from such inhumanity must be our heavenly parent to whom John refers as Love, and of whom James says, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." Other Biblical passages of similar import could be cited; but the foregoing are enough to convince any reasonable-minded person that God does not visit condemnation or punishment upon mankind. He does not need to do it. Sin and its inevitable punishment are emanations of error, not of Truth.

The Bible tells us that Jesus came to do the will of the Father and to destroy the works of the devil. By reading the gospels, you will find that the Master spent most of his time liberating those who were in bondage to sin, disease, and death. If these were real—that is, if they were of God—Jesus would have disobeyed God by destroying them. But the fact that Jesus did destroy them proved beyond cavil that God was not their author. True, God made all that was made, but the Bible tells us that He made it all good. Are sin, disease, and death good? Did you ever hear anybody say he was glad to do wrong, to be sick, or to be in pain? Sin, disease, and death are not good, hence not of God; therefore they are unreal, and you can begin right now to prove it and be indirectly responsible for evil, if He were in any way associated with human suffering, the cries of mankind for relief would be useless, and Christian Science or any other method of treatment to which one might appeal would be illegitimate. But God does not inflict penalties for human ignorance of Truth any more than a wise schoolmaster punishes his pupils who appear to be backward in learning their lessons. The need and only rightful treatment of ignorance is loving enlightenment, not punishment. Mankind has only to be awakened spiritually to the unreality of evil and the present perfection of God's universe, including harmonious man. Through this open door, a disillusioned world will be only too glad to escape from evil and its torments.

Biblical Healing The Bible records the unfolding of human consciousness of the truth about God and man. In Abraham's day the people were idolaters. They believed God to be a finite personality. This prompted them to make and worship images of their finite concept of the infinite. Abraham was the first on record to recognize in God a mighty, unseen power. Although his faith in God has been an inspiration to all succeeding generations, he did not understand God clearly enough to heal the sick. In Moses' day we find the first evidences of healing by spiritual means. This patriarch discovered that the God of Abraham is "a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he," obedience to whom would bring divine power to bear upon human experience.

This power Moses demonstrated to a marvelous degree, but there is nothing in the Bible to indicate that he ever imparted his understanding to others. Aaron, Elijah, and Elisha healed the sick by prayer; but, with the possible exception of Elijah, none of the patriarchs or prophets taught others to heal the sick. Not until the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth do we find one who could freely impart his understanding to others. He overcame human discord of every sort and called upon his followers through out all time to go and do likewise, saying, "He that believeth on me, that is, he who understands my teachings, 'the works that I do shall he do also.' For three centuries the early Christians obeyed the Master's injunction, after which the primitive Church, unable to withstand the onslaughts of error, was permeated and corrupted by the materialism of pagan Rome. Then it was that spiritual healing, as Jesus taught and demonstrated it, ceased.

Christ Jesus Interestingly enough, there is nothing to indicate that Jesus ever recorded his teachings in writing. All that we know about his words and works has been handed down to us in the writings of others. That Jesus was the supreme demonstrator of Truth's dominion over error there is not the slightest room for doubt. So closely did his human life conform to Christ, the divine ideal, that he became known as Jesus the Christ, or Christ Jesus. Had the age been ready to assimilate divine healing as a Science, God would certainly have made it possible for the Master to record

it. But the very fact that Jesus looked definitely to the future for the Comforter, who would abide forever and lead into all truth, indicated that the final revelation of the Science of Christian healing was yet to come.

Accordingly, in the year 1866, Mary Baker Eddy, who was a lifelong and devout student of the Bible as well as an untrusting searcher for Truth, through her own instantaneous recovery from an accident supposed to be fatal, discovered the divine Principle or law underlying Jesus' wondrous works. After proving that this Principle is demonstrable according to rule, Mrs. Eddy named her discovery Christian Science, which means orderly, systematized knowledge of Christ, Truth, of which Jesus was the example and exemplar. In the year 1875, Mrs. Eddy published her famous textbook, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures." In the light which Science and Health throws upon the Bible, it is now possible for any sincere student, in proportion to his fidelity and love, to learn and practise Christian healing. Writing on pages 146 and 147 of Science and Health, Mrs. Eddy says: "Divine metaphysics is now reduced to a system, to a form comprehensible by and adapted to the thought of the age in which we live. This system enables the learner to demonstrate the divine Principle, upon which Jesus' healing was based, and the sacred rules for its present application to the cure of disease."

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