

HEAR LECTURE ON CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

BY MRS. NELVIA RITCHIE

Given Friday Evening at First Church of Christ, Scientist, of Highland Park; Many Attend

In the Bible, we read that Jesus said, "Freely ye have received, freely give." The purpose of this lecture is to share with you something of the teachings of Christian Science and tell you in a simple, direct way how this great religion heals, blesses, and redeems mankind. Students of Christian Science early learn the value of true giving and the blessedness of generously sharing with others their gift of spiritual understanding, that all who truly seek freedom from sorrow, sickness, discouragement, and sin may partake of health, happiness, and wholeness, ponder the deep things of God and learn how to understand and apply the rich promises of the Bible to the problems of everyday living. For surely the greatest of all gifts is a correct understanding of God, and man as His likeness.

My first introduction to Christian Science came many years ago through attending a Wednesday evening service in a Christian Science church. The testimonies of healing which were given led me to investigate Christian Science and to study the Christian Science textbook, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" by Mary Baker Eddy. As a result of this earnest study, I was healed of a disease from which I had suffered from early childhood. Two members of my family were soon healed through the loving help of Christian Science practitioners, one of a so-called incurable disease; the other of typhoid pneumonia after physicians said there was no hope of recovery. During the many years that have followed, I have witnessed the healing of a substantial number of diseases and sins and have seen lives regenerated and made new through the practice of this truth.

Christian Science is the name of the religion which proves the works of God. It teaches how to express in daily living the truth taught by Christ Jesus. It is obvious that he expected his followers to understand his teaching and emulate his example, for he said: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also." "Greater works than these shall he do." The world is beginning to realize that the healing of the sick is an essential part of Christianity. Christian Science is putting into operation the healing truth taught and practiced by Jesus and proving to the world by evidence unmistakable that through its teaching, the commandments of Jesus to heal the sick, preach the Gospel, and comfort the sorrowing are being fulfilled.

DISCOVERER AND FOUNDER. It is recorded in the Gospel of John that as Jesus talked with his beloved disciples, he promised, in words tender with love and compassion, that they would not be left comfortless, that they should not be troubled and afraid, that God would send another Comforter that would bring to remembrance all his sayings, and that this Comforter would remain forever and teach them all things. This Comforter, or truth of being, was again revealed to the world, in 1866, by Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science. Mrs. Eddy was a New England gentlewoman. Although delicate when a child, she received a careful and thorough education. From early childhood she was deeply religious and began at a tender age to listen for the voice of God, and never ceased to do so. It was at the knee of her saintly mother that she was first taught the wondrous love of God, to trust and adore Him. At the age of twelve she united with the Congregational Church and remained a member of that religious body until she founded the Christian Science church in 1879.

As a part of this great organization, Mrs. Eddy established the Christian Science periodicals: *The Christian Science Journal*, a monthly publication; the *Christian Science Sentinel*, issued weekly; the two *Heralds*, issued in French and German; and *The Christian Science Monitor*, a live, international daily newspaper. The object of the *Monitor* as the Founder stated (*The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, p. 353), is "to injure no man, but to bless all mankind." These white-winged messengers are to-day encircling the globe, carrying the glad tidings of healing, courage, hope, and peace to hungry hearts in every land. The Mother Church and all its branches maintain free Christian Science Reading Rooms. Here the Bible, Mrs. Eddy's writings, and other authorized Christian Science literature may be read or obtained. Here a place of refuge is provided where one may quietly study and commune with God.

Inquirers sometimes ask *how and why did Mrs. Eddy discover the spiritual law of Life*, the truth taught and practiced by our Way-shower, Christ Jesus? An answer to this inquiry unfolded to me clearly one morning in Colorado. In the early morning hours, while in a hotel, I faced a window looking out upon the darkness of night, when suddenly I beheld far out before me a beautiful pinkish glow which soon developed into light. It was bewildering until I realized that the first rays of the morning sun were striking that glorious high peak of the Colorado mountains. I sat enraptured, awed by the beauty of the scene, watching the light creep down the mountain side until gradually the adjacent snowy peaks were touched by the glow and light. As the sun rose higher, the little ravines along the mountain sides were flooded with light and finally the mist that had obscured the valley below was dispersed and the entire panorama spread out before me bathed in the radiance of sunlight.

As my gaze rested upon that highest mountain peak, outlined against the blue sky far above all others, re-

splendent in all its snow-crowned beauty and purity, that lofty peak which had caught the first morning beams, I realized how Mrs. Eddy had become the Discoverer of Christian Science. Through years of seeking, years of sorrow and suffering, her thought had been forced higher and higher. It was in an hour of great need that the teaching of Jesus so illumined the consciousness of Mrs. Eddy that she was quickly healed of a serious injury caused by an accident, and was enabled to arise from what seemed to be a deathbed. Her thought had been freed sufficiently from materiality to admit the light of spiritual revelation. In deep gratitude to God, Mrs. Eddy turned to the Bible and devoted herself to gaining an understanding of the truths whereby her healing had been received. Her purity of thought and consecration to God enabled her to reach the celestial mental peaks and rise to a spiritual height where she alone of all the world caught the spiritual light ever pouring forth from the great heart of Christ—the wondrous, new-old, living truth taught by Jesus. As I pondered this and gazed upon the beautiful scene before me, I realized why Mrs. Eddy, whose thought was sufficiently high and near to God, had become the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science and would through her writings always remain the God-inspired Leader of the Christian Science movement.

Through Mrs. Eddy's discovery, teaching, and example multitudes have been healed and are to-day striving to obey the Commandments and walk in the footsteps of our blessed Master; striving to understand and to obey the injunctions given in his Sermon on the Mount. Christian Science is enabling countless thousands to prove for themselves and others the practicality of the truth taught by Jesus. They are doing this by halting every form of human discord; comforting the sorrowing; proclaiming to all mankind that world-weary hearts need no longer be turned aside, but may come to the fount of living waters and be healed, through understanding and utilizing the spiritual law which Mrs. Eddy discovered and named Christian Science.

LAW. Christian Scientists are gaining, through a consecrated study of the Bible and Mrs. Eddy's writings, a true knowledge of spiritual law which is enabling them to overcome and eliminate the discords of human existence, just as one who understands the laws of music is able to correct discordant tones and bring out concord and harmony in music. To work out a problem in mathematics correctly, we know one must understand something of the rule or law governing that problem. As a student of arithmetic who understands its rules can use figures correctly, just so a student of Christian Science in so far as he understands its rules can use them to demonstrate the Science and harmony of being. He can use the true ideas of being to correct and destroy the discords of material existence. When one begins to study the Science of being as taught in Christian Science, if he becomes discouraged because the problems of life are not more quickly solved, it might be helpful for him to remember his early lessons in arithmetic,—that it was necessary to learn the name, place, and value of each number; then learn to add, multiply, divide, and so forth. In learning to add, it may have been necessary to put marks along beside the numbers, to make use of fingers, or to call upon somebody for help. However, through patient, persistent study one not only learned to add correctly but finally to add a long column of figures at a glance, and as one advanced in the study, more difficult sums were quickly worked out. In solving the problems of life, progress may at first seem slow, but if we are faithful in putting into practice each day the truth we know, we shall very soon find it possible to overcome quickly discordant conditions. For one to get discouraged because he cannot solve all the problems of life at once would be like a babe who is just learning to creep getting disheartened because he could not run. As a mother will lovingly help and guide her babe in taking its first steps, just so it may be necessary for us to have a loving friend or an experienced practitioner assist us and help in guiding our steps heavenward. To work out the problems of life according to divine law, and to be able to prove our way step by step, we must understand not only the law but the divine Principle from which all real law emanates. A true knowledge of divine law corrects ignorant false beliefs just as surely as a correct working out of the rules of arithmetic corrects and eliminates mistakes.

THE BIBLE. Students of Christian Science are gaining a demonstrable knowledge of spiritual law, which is unfolding to them the facts of spiritual existence, the fatherhood and motherhood of God, and of man made in God's own likeness, as the Scriptures aver. It is a great joy to those who become students of Christian Science to find that its teachings are founded entirely upon the Bible and that there is no conflict between the teachings of Christ Jesus and the teachings of Christian Science. Because Christian Science is founded on the Bible, it will stand, and the demonstration of its teachings will more and more approach and prove the works of Jesus.

The teaching of Christian Science is so simple that children can readily understand it. In the Christian Science Sunday School, the children are taught the Commandments and the Beatitudes and how to make them usable in their everyday experiences, in their home, school, and play. Recently I was told of a little girl who had been in the Christian Science Sunday School only a few weeks when she was taken very ill with an epidemic disease that was prevalent in the neighborhood. Her mother was frightened and suggested calling in a physician immediately. The little daughter replied, "Mother, I have been taught in the Christian Science Sunday School that God is my Father and Mother, that He is ever present, caring for His children. Now if that is true, He is here right now taking

care of me, and I am going to trust Him and not be afraid." The mother was so touched by these unexpected words that she left the room to ponder them. When she returned she found the child fast asleep. The little girl awakened the following morning perfectly well, dressed herself, and went to school.

Years ago, when a member of my family was being healed by Christian Science, a little girl, a neighbor, used to come over daily to remind us that God filled all space and that we should not be afraid. At an early age, this child had been placed in the Christian Science Sunday School and before she could read she would often heal herself of some discord through her understanding of God while turning the pages of the Bible and repeating the Lord's Prayer.

A child reared in a Christian Science home is taught to study the Bible, to love and trust God. He is taught obedience and consideration for others. He expresses mercy and kindness to animals. A Christian Scientist realizes that one's duty to children is not fulfilled when they are properly fed, clothed, and sheltered. Neither is it sufficient to think occasionally that God will care for them. They should early be taught obedience to right. All erroneous thoughts should be checked, rectified, and changed to right concepts, in order that they may develop into useful members of society and valuable citizens, and may have love for God in their hearts and a desire to be of real service to humanity. All this applies as well to children who have grown older.

We learn through Christian Science to value goodness, to desire the beauty of holiness taught in the Scriptures. The teachings of Christian Science will unlock to all earnest seekers, when rightly understood, the treasures of the Bible and make its rich promises available here and now. As we understand these promises, we gain a correct concept of God, and man made in His likeness, and learn how to reflect this truth in daily living, ever striving to prove the availability of God and His laws. To understand the true nature of God enables one to understand the law of life, health, and holiness.

GOD

Christian Science teaches that the Principle of being, the first and only

Cause, is God. Does it not, therefore, follow that the law governing God's perfect creation must of necessity be exact, unchanging, and based upon the Scriptures which declare that God is Life, Truth, Love, Spirit. In the Christian Science textbook, on page 465, to the question, "What is God?" Mrs. Eddy answers, "God is incorporeal, divine, supreme, infinite Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love." Words cannot define God more clearly, for if we take each term, examine it carefully, we find that we have a knowable, provable God, a first Cause from which must proceed all that is real and eternal.

In the Bible, we read in the first chapter of Genesis, "And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good." Here is a complete record of creation, telling us that God made all that was made, and that He made man in His image and likeness, spiritual and perfect. If the creation of God is complete, spiritual, and perfect, as the Bible states, then another record of creation could not possibly change this true spiritual creation. Christian Science unfolds the great fact of spiritual existence and creation, maintaining with Biblical authority that God being infinite, all because of His pure, spiritual nature, could not create anything unlike Himself. God could not create sin, disease, sorrow, poverty, death. These discords are the beliefs of the carnal mind which Paul tells us "is enmity against God."

Christian Science declares that since God is Spirit, spiritual man, the image and likeness of Spirit, God, forever reflects all the qualities of Spirit. These qualities cannot be lost or impaired, because being spiritual and God-given they will remain perfect and indestructible throughout all time. It teaches that God, infinite ever-present good, expresses through the real man these qualities without limitation. As we begin to understand God in all His glory these divine qualities are expressed. To demonstrate this understanding through healing, right thinking, and living is the aim and purpose of Christian Science teaching and practice.

MAN

Mainly it is necessary to understand the true nature of God, and man as His likeness. The basis of the Christian Science teaching about

man is Scriptural, and is given in the first chapter of Genesis, where we read, "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." Then if man is created in the image and likeness of God, he reflects all of God's qualities. Therefore, God's man reflects all intelligence, all wisdom, and is only capable of judging wisely, for Mind, God, is supreme.

The view of man as God's likeness must be held to in face of the opposite testimony of the senses, which cannot be relied upon. We are constantly confronted with evidences proving how futile it is to depend upon sense-testimony. Perhaps no more pathetic illusion of the senses has ever occurred than that of the pioneers who journeyed westward in the early days. Sometimes they would be without water for themselves and their animals, when suddenly in front of them would appear a beautiful body of water sufficient to quench the thirst of all. Filled with hope and anticipation, they would urge their tired animals on at greater speed,—but oh, the sickening disappointment when they reached the spot to find that they had only seen a mirage, the false testimony of the senses.

So it is with our human experiences. Sometimes the mirage before us is green fields of selfish, human ambition, or pleasure in matter. When we finally close in upon these experiences, we find them illusions and our hunger and thirst for peace, health, and happiness still unquenched. One modern proof of the unreliability of sense-testimony is the feeling one experiences when arising in an airplane. The senses tell us that the earth is falling away, going down, while the fact that the plane is rising is true.

Christian Science teaches the unreality of sense-testimony. The unreality of sense-testimony becomes apparent naturally and inevitably as man's true selfhood is perceived and understood in Christian Science.

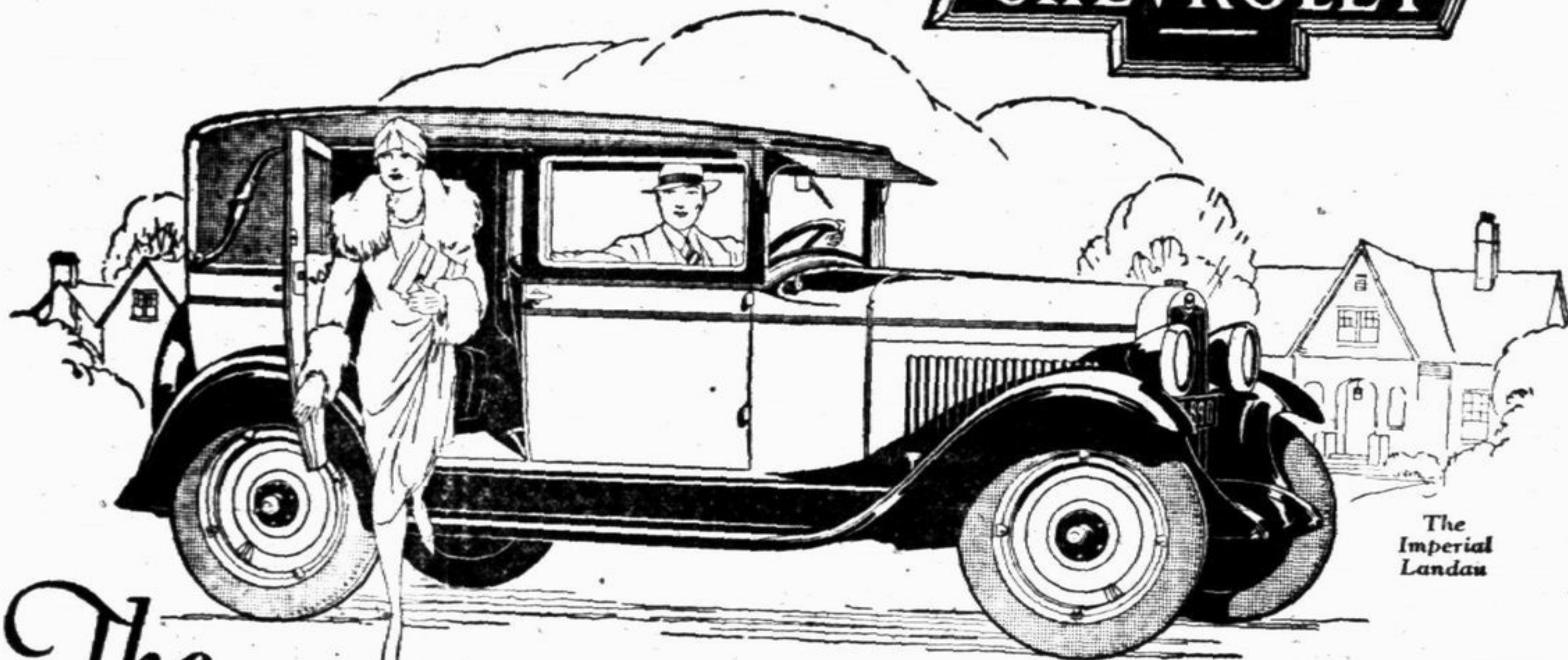
But one may say, "How am I to know the unreality of evil when it seems so real?" Christian Science answers definitely,—that only is real which is good, which is from God. God made all; His universe expresses Him; therefore, nothing unlike God has reality or can exist. Man reflects health, happiness, and har-

mony, because he is the infinite expression of Soul or substance, which does not sin, suffer, or cause discord of any kind. I saw the truth of this statement proved many years ago in the case of a woman who, when travelling, was healed through Christian Science treatment of so-called ptomaine poisoning after she had become unconscious. The healing was so complete she was able to continue her journey the following morning.

In Christian Science, I have witnessed the healing of rheumatism, after the individual was unable to walk or use her hands; the healing of tuberculosis, after physicians said there was no hope of recovery, Christian Science can give proof of thousands of authenticated cases of healing, many of them so-called incurable diseases. These healings have been accomplished through realizing the truth about man, that he is spiritual, the image and likeness of God; that he reflects health, happiness, and dominion. The true man, however, is not the imperfect, mortal concept of man,—the man of flesh, blood, and bones. How could an earnest seeker for Truth think for a moment that a sick, sinning, dying mortal could be the real man made in the image and likeness of God? Mankind, meaning the mortal, material concept of man, needs to awaken from the Adam-dream, the belief of all human woe; from the belief of life in matter, the belief that man is formed from the dust of the ground, to the realization of man's true birthright, his God-given dominion over all things. So long as we believe that the dust-man is real and that there is a human self-existence apart from God, we may seem to have a hard and long struggle. The study of Christian Science corrects this wrong concept of man, and disperses the mist of materiality with the sunlight of spiritual understanding. It has cleared the pathway for many a sufferer. Mists of evil, sickness, fear, may still cling to thought and try to obstruct the way, but these are rapidly being dissolved and mankind is beginning to realize something of the truth taught and practiced by Jesus.

Continued on page 7

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