

FREE LECTURE ON CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

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In the tenth chapter of Luke, it is recorded that Jesus at one time sent forth seventy disciples, with instructions to enter, by twos, into certain cities and villages. Wherever they were hospitably received, these disciples were to heal the sick, and to say to the people, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."

If, at any time prior to the advent of Christ Jesus, one person had said to another, "Is there anyone who can tell me how I can enter into the kingdom of heaven, how I can come into the enjoyment of all that is good and beautiful? the correct answer must always have been, in effect, "There is not a person upon earth who can perform that great service for you. But when Christ Jesus began his ministry, the situation changed. Then if one man had said to another, "Tell me what I must do to be saved, any man, who knew enough, could have answered truly. Follow the teaching and practice of Christ Jesus, who is now preaching and healing in Palestine, and you will enter into the spiritual enjoyment of all good."

Christ Jesus understood God. He knew what the race needed to deliver it from bondage, and to usher it into the enjoyment of eternal peace and happiness. St. Paul truly declares, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Jesus came to show the way of salvation for all men. He succeeded, completely, gloriously. Sooner or later every man will awaken to the realization of that great fact, and will work out his salvation in the way Jesus of Nazareth taught.

On one occasion Jesus said, in explanation of the purpose of his great work for humanity: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Again he declared, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." What more important question can occupy the thought of any man or woman of to-day than this, "How can I gain, and do all in my power to help others to gain, that understanding of God which is eternal life? We all know with what happy anticipation people journey to a new section of country in order to make their first acquaintance with some beautiful scenery which they have not seen before, or to become still better acquainted with the grandeur and beauty which they have previously enjoyed. We all know what joy has come into our lives through association with grand and noble men and women. Sometimes a single hour spent with one of God's noble men or noble women, stands out as something for which to be increasingly grateful down through the years. With what eagerness, should we embrace every opportunity to become better acquainted with our heavenly Father, the Giver of all good.

Why has not the race given more willing and joyful heed to the Scriptural admonition, "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace"? There are many reasons for this apparent apathy. Prominent among them stands this, that false doctrines have presented God in such an unlovely and unlovable light that they have quite naturally caused people, who accepted these doctrines, to turn away from contemplation of the nature and character of the Supreme Being. A young woman was asked how she thought of God before she became interested in Christian Science. She replied, "Oh, I did not think much about God. I preferred to think of Jesus; because I thought he was so much kinder than God."

False doctrines have indeed made that appear to be the case. But Jesus knew and taught something entirely different. He said of the healing power he exerted, "If I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you." Jesus knew that every instance of healing, every comforting word or deed, which reached humanity through him but exemplified God's beneficent love for His creatures expressed through Christ Jesus, the Way-shower who came to do God's will. So plain did Jesus make this fact to his students that his disciple, John, declared: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

The student of Christian Science, studying daily the Bible and the writings of Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, soon learns to trace the good that comes into his experience to God, with the same unerring certainty with which we all trace sunlight to the sun. He comes to know with equal certainty that evil of any kind cannot emanate from God. "The blessing of the Lord," says the Bible, "it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."

Now it is not enough merely to believe in God. God must be understood. It is not enough for us to believe in the law of mathematics. Such a belief will not enable us to solve a single mathematical problem. We must gain an understanding of mathematical law, if we would have practical results in that field of endeavor; and we measure our understanding of mathematical law by our ability to solve problems which fall under that law. Jesus taught his followers to understand God. We must gain that same spiritual understanding.

God, the One Infinite Cause
One of the most important things to understand concerning God is that He exists always at the standpoint of causation, and that He alone exists at that standpoint. Man and the universe exist always at the standpoint of effect or creation; they never exist at the standpoint of causation. God is the one and only cause and creator, who produces, sustains, and governs the one and only real effect or creation, spiritual man and the spiritual universe.

From this great fact, it follows that man can possess no un-derived power, wisdom, or ability. The effect can do only what the cause impels and empowers it to do. Jesus recognized this fact, and acted upon it at every turn of the way. He said, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." The nature of God, the cause, must determine the nature of the effect, or creation, which God produces. Like produces like. The first chapter of Genesis says that "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." That is the only way God could create man, — a man in quality and kind like Himself. A perfect God can create only a perfect man, and a perfect universe.

Now mankind theoretically admits that God is perfect, but is very slow to grasp what that fact really implies. In the first chapter of Genesis, with its wonderful account of creation, the statement is made five times that God, beholding His creation, "saw that it was good." And the last verse of that chapter declares that "God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." Jesus taught and proved the perfection of the everlasting God. He taught that God is good, and all that He produces is good. What a joyful note John strikes in the beginning of his first epistle, where he imparts to others Jesus' teaching on this point, that their joy may be full. "This then," writes John, "is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." As John goes on with his epistle, he rejoices likewise in the unalterable perfection of the man whom God creates and sustains.

Christian Science completely disagrees with the Adamic theory of creation and all its corollaries. Christian Science repudiates the doctrine that the man whom God creates and sustains ever fell, or ever could fall.
Please remember that when we take issue with theological dogmas, long believed, we are not taking issue with anything which Jesus taught, or with any part of the inspired teaching of the Bible. We agree with all that Jesus taught. We stand squarely on the inspired teaching of the Bible. The first tenet of Christian Science, written by its Discoverer and Founder, Mary Baker Eddy, reads (Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, p. 497): "As adherents of Truth, we take the inspired Word of the Bible as our sufficient guide to eternal Life."

According to the Adamic theory of creation, God existed without man until some six thousand years ago. This view presents man as a mere afterthought of the creator, an experimental addition to God's earlier creation. And this experimental creature is represented as soon falling into error, and causing his creator trouble.

Christian Science makes clear the fallacy of this theory. It shows exactly why man as created by God is upright and spiritual and absolutely essential to God. The Bible clearly indicates that God is the divine, infinite Mind; and Christian Science explains and amplifies this grand fact. Mind is that which knows. Since God, the divine Mind, is perfect, then the divine Mind must be unlimited or infinite; for any limitation in divine Mind would indicate a lack of intelligence, or imperfection. The infinitude of divine Mind renders impossible the existence of other minds; and thus God, the one and only cause and creator, is seen to be the one and only Mind, — the original all-knowing One. Since the divine Mind is perfect and complete, this Mind must know every good thought, or spiritual idea, which can be conceived by unlimited intelligence. Now God is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." It follows then that God always has known, and always will know every good and beautiful idea. Consequently everything that enters into God's perfect creation, every one of His perfect ideas, always has existed and always will exist. There is no escape from this logic; and it completely disposes of the commonly accepted but entirely illogical and impossible definition of creation as the bringing into existence of something which previously did not exist. God is the infinite creator, in the sense that He is the one and only cause which produces, sustains, and governs the one and only effect, spiritual man and the spiritual universe; but the entire effect is co-existent with its cause and, like the cause, is eternal. God could no more dispense for a moment with one of His perfect, spiritual ideas than He could cease to be. And man is God's highest idea. Christ Jesus drove home this point of the imperishable, indispensable nature of the real being

of man, when he declared to his disciples, "There shall not an hair of your head perish."

The Bible clearly teaches that God's creation completely satisfies Him; and every idea therein is blessed and is a blessing. When something of this truth dawned upon Abraham, it found expression in this prophecy, "I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing." As a single sunbeam manifests all the qualities of light, so the individual, spiritual man, the child of God, manifests the attributes of God, and reveals the quality of God's perfect being. Hence Jesus' declaration, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." But as it takes the innumerable rays of sunlight to express the full majesty and glory of the sun, so it takes all men to manifest the full glory of God's eternal being.

Recognition of the fact that God is forever governing His perfect creation, and that all contained therein is essential and is in its proper place, brings to the individual a sense of peace with regard to himself and all his fellow-men. It reveals the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man as eternal and unalterable facts. It dispels all indifference and all enmity. The loving mother cannot be indifferent to the welfare of her child, because she recognizes that its welfare is inseparable from her own. Similarly, one individual cannot be indifferent to the welfare of any other, when it has become clear to him that where material sense says there exists only an imperfect mortal, spiritual sense reveals man, made in the image and likeness of God, — a man who is necessary and dear to God, and who exists to express God's perfect being.

Jesus taught his disciples that all men should call God, Father, as he did, and look upon themselves, in their true spiritual being, as sons of God. John, expounding Jesus' true theology, makes this remarkable declaration concerning the true being of man: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Here we have a plain, clear declaration, in the inspired Word of the Bible, that the man whom God creates never sins or falls, but remains forever upright, pure, perfect, spiritual.

By this we do not mean that the human conceptions of man, or in other words mortals, are perfect. We all know that a false concept of something is not that something. Mortals are no more like the real spiritual man than false human concepts of God are like the perfect, eternal Supreme Being. False concepts can be changed and improved; and they need to be. Mortals vary according to the degree of enlightenment they possess concerning the real nature of God and man. Plato uttered a great truth when he said, "What thou seest, that thou beest." What mankind needs above all else is spiritual enlightenment. The highest type of humanity is the one who knows best what God and man are.

God, the Infinite Person
Frequently the question is asked, "Is God personal? Now no helpful or intelligent answer can be given to this question, without carefully considering what is meant by the word "personal." Does the question mean, "Is God anthropomorphic? That is, is God like a human being, subject to anger, jealousy, changeableness; does He have a physique like a mortal; is He finite and limited? If such be the meaning of the question, then the answer is, No!"

But, on the other hand, if the question means, "Is God the ever present, ever conscious Supreme Being, who loves and understands all, and who may be loved and understood by all? then surely the answer is, Yes. For, as we have already seen, God is the self-existent, self-sustaining, eternal, all-wise, infinite One, who knows all that is knowable, and who produces and sustains, loves and governs, all that has actual existence. Christian Science makes plain the fact that not only is God personal, in the higher meaning of that term, but that indeed God is the infinite Person. On page 116 of Science and Health, Mrs. Eddy writes: "As the words *person* and *personal* are commonly and ignorantly employed, they often lead, when applied to Deity, to confused and erroneous conceptions of divinity and its distinction from humanity. If the term *personality*, as applied to God, means infinite personality, then God is infinite Person, — in the sense of infinite personality, but not in the lower sense. An infinite Mind in a finite form is an absolute impossibility."

The individual who would understand God aright must never lose sight of the fact that God is the ever conscious, ever active Supreme Being. Not only does God know, and love, and understand; but true thinking and true affection are made possible to men solely because God, the one infinite cause, is the all-knowing, all-loving divine Mind, which is reflected by man and the universe. All true thoughts emanate from God, and remain forever under His government and care. In her book, "Unity of God," page 48, Mrs. Eddy makes this statement: "To me God is All. He is best understood as Supreme Being, as infinite and conscious Life, as the affectionate Father and Mother of all He creates; but His divine Parent no more enters into His creation than the human father enters into his child. His creation is not the Ego, but the reflection of the Ego. The Ego is God Himself, the infinite Soul."

The fact that God is the Supreme Being makes possible and necessary the existence of His real identities with their individualities. The materialistic view that we exist as conscious thinking beings, but that we have been evolved by and from non-intelligent matter, is a theory which Christian Science shows to be entirely illogical and therefore impos-

sible. Like produces like. Only God, the ever conscious Supreme Being, can produce His conscious creatures. Thus the individualities of men exist because God is the infinite Person, and as such creates countless spiritual individualities to express His nature. All these spiritual individualities exist in God, and are governed by Him. God knows, understands, and loves them every one.

Mrs. Eddy's perception of the fact that God is divine Principle has done much to clarify thought concerning the nature of God and concerning the nature and source of true law. Prior to the discovery of Christian Science, the more enlightened portion of the race became accustomed to think of the word "principle" as relating to that which is obedient to law or sustains law, and which is unchangeable, stable, reliable. But the word "principle" was not understood to be inseparably connected with divine consciousness or intelligence. Mrs. Eddy was the first to define and to use this grand word in its highest and most exalted sense. She perceived the fact that there is in reality but one Principle, and that Principle must be divine, infinite, and conscious. She saw that God, divine Love, is the one and only Principle, as surely as He is the one and only Mind. She saw also that, just as the beauty of the sky and the flowers points to the beauty that resides in the divine Mind and must be expressed, so the reliability and stability found in the law of mathematics point to the unchangeableness of the

one eternal cause, God. On page 226 of "The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany," Mrs. Eddy says, "What are termed in common speech the principle of harmonious vibration, the principle of conservation of number in geometry, the principle of the inclined plane in mechanics, etc., are but an effect of one universal cause, — an emanation of the one divine intelligent Principle that holds the earth in its orbit by evolved spiritual power, that commands the waves and the winds, that marks the sparrow's fall, and that governs all from the infinitesimal to the infinite, — namely, God."

The terms Principle and Love when used together, as they so frequently are in the writings of Mrs. Eddy, to describe the nature of the Mind which is God, convey as clearly as words can the infinite and unalterable tenderness of the Supreme Being. To an age, ready to a certain degree for that revelation, Jesus made known the divine fatherhood of God. To an age which valued more highly than any previous age the grandeur of true womanhood, Mrs. Eddy revealed the divine motherhood of God. On page 332 of her book, Science and Health, Mrs. Eddy writes, "Father-Mother is the name for Deity, which indicates His tender relationship to His spiritual creation."

Prayer
"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you," says the Bible. Prayer plays an essential part in this process of drawing nigh to God. In a broad sense, everyone prays more

or less. The words of a well-known hymn express a vital truth:

"Prayer is the heart's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

"Prayer is the simplest form of speech,
That infant lips can try;
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high."

A selfish, a petty, a wrong desire is a false prayer. A noble, an unselfish, a grand desire is a true prayer. Everyone should devote thought to the subject of prayer and learn how to pray. Prayer will naturally become more intelligent, and consequently more fruitful, as the individual increases his understanding of God.

Often the question is asked, Do Christian Scientists use petition when they pray, as other Christians do, or do they confine themselves to affirmations of truth, and denials of error? Christian Scientists have confidence in the efficacy of clear, firm affirmations of truth and vigorous denials of the false arguments of error, when such affirmations and denials rest upon spiritual understanding. But Christian Scientists follow Christ Jesus in all things, and the great Master proclaimed in unmistakable terms the importance which he attached to the right kind of petitions. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus not only said, "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be



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