

LECTURE GIVEN ON CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

MONDAY EVENING, JUNE 11

Hon. Wm. E. Brown, C. S. B., Member of the Board of Lectureship Speaks Here

If it were possible to make a composite word picture of those qualities most desired by mankind, this picture would contain the majestic words, life, peace, and joy.

Inasmuch as we are to spend an hour together in the endeavor to learn how to obtain this life, peace, and joy, and the liberty which these qualities confer upon us, it is essential that we should start out together with some measure of agreement as to the source of these most necessary and desirable qualities. Is not this source God?

In Mrs. Eddy's definition of God, she gives us two synonyms which are very helpful in acquiring a right conception of Deity. The first of these is infinite Mind. A right conception of this comprehensive term immediately accomplishes two very important things: it dispels the incorrect concept of a personal and limited God and simultaneously gives us an understandable idea of an omnipresent God. When one perceives that God is infinite Mind the omnipresence of God is naturally and logically established. The second is the term which, until understood, is thought by some to seem cold or distant, that is, divine Principle. The moment it is understood that this term is employed to signify or emphasize the unchanging character of God, it immediately loses its seeming coldness or abstractness, and the joy of understanding that God's life, love, and mercy are changeless, forever the same, illumines consciousness.

Christian Science gives mortals a clear, understandable, and demonstrable knowledge of God. It is the voice of Paul on Mars' Hill again declaring, "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

Applied Christianity With this brief exposition of the Christian Science concept of God as infinite, changeless good, the divine Principle of life and existence, we may now go forward to consider the problem of existing in harmony with God, so that we may express the divine Life and character in daily living.

Throughout the Bible the results of obedience and disobedience are graphically set forth, and the complete story of cause and effect is simply and directly portrayed in the earthly experiences of Enoch and Asa. Of the former we are told in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, fifth verse, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."

Of Asa it is declared, "And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians. And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign." The story of Enoch shows the blessing which results from turning to God, while the evil resulting from turning to matter for help is plainly brought forth in the sad story of Asa.

Before one can seek or turn to God for deliverance from all earthly discords it is necessary to have a correct concept of God,—to know where "he may be found." Before Christian Science was given to the world God was very generally considered as a localized person, who was responsible for, or at least permitted, all of earth's activities; who sometimes answered prayer but more often did not. When the prayer was not answered the patient sufferer tried to bear his cross without complaining, dwelling under the mistaken notion that God, for some unknown reason, was disciplining him in order to bring him closer to Himself. It is difficult, however, to conceive of one tormented with rheumatism or suffering from constant pain and in fear of death to have much time left for anything but self-consciousness and misery,—misery, a condition which extends itself to all the members of his household as well. Moreover, in this frame of mind the old-fashioned religious sentiment, "I'd like to be a saint and shine in glory," does not strongly appeal. Such a one usually has but one central desire and that is to recover.

Life The great Master of men declared that he came that mankind might not only have life but that they might have it more abundantly. Christian Science teaches with faultless logic that since we are ever conscious of life and existence, it is impossible to escape living and since this is so, it behooves us to learn as quickly as possible how to live harmoniously.

Frequently we hear the remark that one is not afraid to die, and this recalls the conversation between a Christian Science practitioner and a patient who made this declaration. Said the practitioner, "I am not particularly interested in what you say about not fearing to die, but I can say this to you, that it is your business to live, and to live a happy, harmonious life, becoming active in your endeavor to help others live similar lives. It is no more creditable to say you are not afraid to die than to say you are not afraid to steal, for, from the standpoint of absolute Truth, both are activities of the carnal mind."

What is commonly termed life, beginning with birth and ending with

death, is graphically described by Job when he says, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble," and if one were to judge by the evidence from the material senses it would be difficult to disagree with our patient ancestor. Mortals come into this existence without being consulted as to their wishes, and soon find themselves striving to maintain a sense of existence which they believe may be terminated unexpectedly at any time. Here Christian Science comes to the rescue, and declares that this view of existence is entirely wrong, simply a mortal illusion which may be dispelled through a correct, or spiritual view of things. Even our afflicted friend, Job, finally saw the light, for he tells us, "Yet in my flesh shall I see God."

Christ Jesus Christian Science shows clearly that the mission of Christ Jesus was to aid mortals in dispelling the false conception of life so that they might understand true Life and have it more abundantly.

That death is abnormal is clearly taught by Christ Jesus and by many Scriptural writers. The Master emphasized the fact that the process of death is unnecessary and not in accord with God's will. He pointed out the way of escape by declaring, "and this is life eternal" or life continuous—"to know thee." The Bible also refers to death as an enemy to be overcome, while the Revelator declares that "there shall be no more death." Aside from all this unquestioned authority it can be proved logically that death is an abnormal condition, without any reference to the Bible, by the following simple bit of logical reasoning: If what we term death were a part of God's harmonious creation it would be a normal condition, and man would go to his grave as naturally as he does to his couch at night, for man accepts the inevitable as he does the change of seasons. The fact that he rebels at, and fears death, that he has ever hoped to escape and overcome it, proves its abnormality.

In looking over the pages of history we find that there has always existed in the hearts of men a latent hope that the way to elude death would finally be discovered. This hope has expressed itself in expeditions to find the fount of eternal youth, or in research activities of medicine and theology, all of which have failed in their chimerical pursuit. Yet the actual solution of the fear-some problem has always been with us. Listen! The great Master declared, "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death."

The Master not only taught the way to overcome death, but he proved it. Prior to his crucifixion he had been teaching this great truth to his disciples, and in the crucifixion he found an opportunity to prove it. Of his experience on the cross he said in substance, of my own self I lay down my life, then he tells us why,—"that I might take it again." The function of the Christ, so well demonstrated by Jesus, is comprehensively set forth on page 316 of the Christian Science textbook, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," which reads as follows: "Christ presents the indestructible man, whom Spirit creates, constitutes, and governs. Christ illustrates that blending with God, his divine Principle, which gives man dominion over all the earth."

The teachings of Christian Science show us how to acquire this Christ knowledge of the allness of God and how to utilize it in the demonstration of Life eternal, or Life continuous, without the change called physical death. In this connection the Bible declares, "I am . . . not the God of the dead, but of the living," and the prophet said, "The grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee."

Peace What I have said about Life and living will doubtless be concurred in by all, but it will also be very apparent that merely to live, or exist, would not be entirely satisfactory. To enjoy living it must necessarily be peaceful living, a peace so well outlined by the Psalmist, who de-

clared, "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." Herein is also indicated the source of all genuine and permanent peace, namely, obedience to God. It is an easy matter to point out the way to peace, but it has been pointed out for centuries; but the necessary question follows, What is it to know God? Once again Christian Science comes to our aid, and with simple, direct, and comprehensive language which even children readily understand, shows every sincere thinker how to begin immediately to obey God, and to enjoy immediately a measure of peace, a measure limited only by the degree of one's obedience.

Unlike the operation of the life insurance company, one does not have to die to win, but, on the contrary, begins to win here and now. The thing which opposes obedience to divine will, Christian Science defines as self-will, an activity of the supposititious carnal mind, which in operation and nature is wholly opposed to the will of the divine Mind. So, when these opposing thought activities are admitted to consciousness, the result is confusion, restlessness, and unhappiness.

The Remedy From what has just been said of the cause of confusion, or of the absence of peace, the remedy is obvious,—the exclusion from consciousness of all mental activities which are opposed to divine activity. Christian Science assures us, and more-over proves, that we have the ability to refuse admission to all carnal thoughts through a simple process described by Mrs. Eddy in Science and Health (p. 392), as standing "porter at the door of thought." By this process, not only are the thoughts which destroy peace excluded, but also those thoughts which create sin, disease, and death.

Christian Science, reasoning from the Scriptural premise of the allness of God, or infinite Mind, logically maintains that there is but one Mind, and that its supposed opposite, which Christian Science designates as mortal mind, is unreal, hence all its supposed thoughts are likewise unreal.

The beginner or student of Christian Science therefore commences to object to the entrance into his consciousness of all thoughts or arguments which do not proceed from God. The student is greatly aided in this effort by the knowledge that such thought is unreal in its origin or existence. While it is comparatively easy to make this start, it requires, as Mrs. Eddy puts it, persistent effort, when she says (Miscellaneous Writings, p. 340): "Only by persistent, unremitting, straightforward toil; by turning neither to the right nor to the left, seeking no other pursuit or pleasure than that which cometh from God, can you win and wear the crown of the faithful." In speaking of genuine peace, the Master declared, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let be afraid."

A story is told of two artists who were commissioned to paint their conception of peace. One submitted a picture of a beautiful lake, hidden in the mountains, without a ripple upon its placid surface. The other submitted a picture of a roaring waterfall, beating itself to foam and spray on the rocks beneath. Perched on the limb of a tree which overhung the tumbling waters, a robin had built her nest and there was rearing her family, undisturbed by the noise of the water. The committee which passed on the comparative merits of these two paintings decided that the picture of the lake did not portray peace, but rather stagnation; while the other picture indicated true peace, a condition of consciousness which could not be disturbed by external sights and sounds.

Material Existence In surveying the inconsistent and transitory medley known as material existence one is impressed with the universal conviction that no one is completely satisfied or happy, and that in the last analysis all mortal effort is directed toward the goal of achieving satisfaction and happiness. The plans advocated and championed

are legion. Some have been in vogue since time began to be measured, and new methods are always in the making.

After uncounted centuries of application these mortal plans have failed to give the "rest needed," so in helplessness and despair, mortals are crying in the wilderness, "Is there no balm in Gilead?" To this cry for help Christian Science, with the calmness and assurance born of spiritual revelation, answers, Yes! On page 227 of the Christian Science textbook, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," Mrs. Eddy says, "Citizens of the world, accept the glorious liberty of the children of God," and be free! This is your divine right."

To this challenge the carnal mind, with the arrogance of darkness and ignorance replies, What! have you the audacity to discredit the human wisdom of the ages? To this Christian Science simply points to its only guide and authority, the Bible, which declares, "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." There is but one way out of the devastating influence of the carnal mind, and Isaiah simply and comprehensively declares it in Isaiah 32: 17, "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever."

In my own early experience a great spiritual truth was impressed upon me which has never lost its brightness and glory. In substance it was this: If there is any hope for the creature, it must consist in the creature living in harmony with his creator. Now all thinking people will agree that this is a perfectly logical proposition, and if it is truly logical it is susceptible of proof.

Having conceded this, then one naturally inquires, How is one to go about the business of living in harmony with God? The answer to this question, all religions claim to possess, but the fact that the fruits—life, peace, and joy—are lacking, clearly indicates that the way, the way of the Master, who declared that his religion would bring to men "rest unto [their] souls," has not yet been generally understood nor accepted.

Here Christian Science steps into the breach and teaches mortals the true nature of God and His laws; it also shows explicitly how these laws are to be obeyed and the promises fulfilled. It emphasizes and illumines the reason given by the Master for his dominion over all evil, namely, "I and my Father are one;" in other words, I am the perfect expression of God, infinite Mind. It is this unity which he prayed the Father might be established in all. This thought is clearly set forth in his simple and profound prayer, "that they may be one, even as we are one." In this beautiful and comforting prayer the Master again emphasizes the indisputable fact that from God's viewpoint all are equally the

sons of God," and that it was Jesus' task to bring this great truth to the consciousness of mortals.

The Practicability of the Bible

We owe everlasting gratitude to Christian Science for many things, among them is the fact that Mrs. Eddy has given us a method whereby each one of us can prove that the teachings of the Bible are in every way practicable and usable in all the affairs of everyday life.

It has been generally conceded that if the teachings of Christ Jesus were practicable, the affairs of earth would be very much improved. Whenever this question arises the materialists and so-called hard-headed, common-sense individuals dismiss it with the statement that while these teachings are beautiful and idealistic, they are entirely impracticable, and that the world must look to other sources for the remedy for world evils. Concerning this, Mrs. Eddy writes on page 9 of her work entitled "Unity of God": "The talent and genius of the centuries have wrongly reckoned. They have not based upon revelation their arguments and conclusions as to the source and resources of being,—its combinations, phenomena, and outcome,—but have built instead upon the sand of human reason. They have not accepted the simple teaching and life of Jesus as the only true solution of the perplexing problem of human existence." It is true that when considered from a material standpoint, the teaching of the Master regarding the Golden Rule and the brotherhood of man does seem impossible of practical application, but when viewed through the lens of Christian Science its intense and wholly practical nature is immediately disclosed; not only this, but one is instantly convinced that there is no other solution of the world's problems.

As the mortal, or carnal mind is inherently and basically wrong, or, as Jesus said of it, it "is a liar, and

the father of lies," and the evils which it seeks to remedy are its own blunders, it naturally cannot see any virtue in a plan which seeks to abolish all evils by annihilating their source; or, in other words, itself.

With straightforward and simple logic and directness of method, Christian Science insists that the work at hand is to abolish the cause of all moral discord and not to fight its illusory effects, the method employed by ecclesiastical workers for centuries past with but negative results,—fighting darkness without light, as it were.

If one were to enter a room which had been dark for centuries, a room in which the darkness was so intense that it might be felt, as the familiar phrase goes, it would not avail anything if one were to install windmills, electric fans or any anti-dark devices which might be invented, to blow away the dark.

Suppose such a situation existed and that for centuries these fallacious methods had been employed, of course bringing no relief from the darkness; would not one think it high time to try some radically different method, raising the window curtain, for instance? So it is with the religious and medical beliefs and theories; we still see the false machinery vainly puffing in the darkness, and we still see valiant Don Quixotes charging the thick darkness with the broadswords of false theology and material remedies. When it is suggested to the modern Don Quixotes that raising the window curtains of spiritual understanding might dispel the darkness of the carnal mind and its effects, sin, disease, and death, the recommendation is met with ridicule and persecution. To such the voice of truth still cries in the words of Jesus, "Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?"

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