

# SYNOPSIS OF LECTURE ON CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

Given Thursday Evening at Elm Place Grammar School by Gavin W. Allan, C.S.B.

Following is a reprint in part of a lecture on Christian Science given Thursday evening, March 31 at the Elm Place school, by Gavin W. Allan, C.S.B. of Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The lecture proved a most timely and interesting one.

To many of you the twenty-third Psalm is well known. Some of you know it by heart. Some of you have turned to it for comfort in times of stress. Why did you choose this particular Psalm? Was it because God is therein described as infinitely loving, infinitely caring? Well did the Psalmist know the characteristics of the ideal shepherd: the tenderness, the affection, the love, the intelligence, the wisdom, the courage, the strength; all of them requisite to the proper caring for his flock.

In the centuries since this Psalm was written many have turned to it for help. The measure of comfort one would derive from its study would depend largely upon his concept of the meaning of the first two words, "the Lord," "The Lord is my shepherd." Were the reader to believe "the Lord" to be the sender of both good and evil, health and sickness, plenty and poverty, life and death, the comfort he would derive from the perusal of this Psalm would not likely be so great as if he knew with some degree of certainty that "the Lord" is the giver of good only.

In illustrating her elucidation of the nature of God, Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, has given us a practical and helpful interpretation of this Psalm in the Christian Science textbook, "Science and Health with eKy to the Scriptures." She writes on pages 577 and 578, "In the following Psalm one word shows, though faintly, the light which Christian Science throws on the Scriptures by substituting for the corporeal sense, the incorporeal or spiritual sense of Deity." With this change the first two sentences of the Psalm read as follows: [Divine Love] is my shepherd; I shall not want. [Love] maketh me to lie down in green pastures: [Love] leadeth me beside the still waters."

Has not this interpretation, using John's definition of God as Love, removed any possible chance for misconception of the nature of "the Lord"? Have we not, each one of us, an instinctive sense that Love, divine Love, is good, and good only? Are we not certain that if Love is the shepherd the flock surely will not want or lack anything needful?

But I should like to call your attention to another passage in our textbook. You will find it on page 494. Here is one sentence Mrs. Eddy has stated the scientific fact which underlies the Psalmist's words. This is it: "Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need." Here is a statement of spiritual fact which is of great importance to each one of us. It is important because it is true. It is of value because it can be proved in our own experience. But someone may say, That is just the point: I

agree with you that it is a beautiful statement, and I wish with all my heart that it were provable, but can it be proved, can it be used?

## MONEY

Before we answer this question, let us inquire first, What are the human needs? If I were to ask this question of those who are here it is probable someone would say, My need right now, as I see it, is money; if I had money my need would be met. I suppose many of us have at one time or another entertained a similar notion. But is it really true? Let me illustrate.

Suppose, for example, that two men are employed by the same firm at the same wage. One uses his funds intelligently, making his purchases carefully and at the end of the year has a sum to his credit at the bank. The other spends carelessly and at the end of the year is in debt. Now what is this man's need? Is it money? He may think it is. Or, may it not be wisdom? Is his real need material or mental?

If our needs were purely material, could God supply them? Does God distribute stocks or bonds, houses or lands? It is just possible that you have at some time besought or implored God to give you something you wanted—some material thing. Possibly the thing you desired did not arrive. Perhaps you wondered why it did not come. Perchance you felt that God was in some way to blame: that He had not dealt with you quite fairly. You may not have perceived that if there was any shortcoming whatever it could be on your side only.

If later you become interested in Christian Science and imbued to some extent with the spirit of its teachings you would recognize that behind such a prayer there lay some misconception of the nature of God, and of His gifts to men. Has God, who is Spirit, and whose creation is wholly spiritual, any material things, any matter to give? Are not His gifts of a much higher order? He gives us of His qualities which are indestructible and eternal. These are all He could possibly give to us. He gives us the very best He has: the best that could be given. Hear this illuminating passage from one of our Leader's writings (Miscellaneous Writings, p. 307): "God giveth to all men liberally, and un- in turn, they give you daily supplies. Never ask for to-morrow: it is enough that divine Love is an ever-present help; and if you wait, never doubting, you will have all you need every moment."

But let us return to the question, What does God give? In the Bible we may read, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and unbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Do you know of any passage in the Bible which might be interpreted to mean, If any of you lack houses or lands, stocks or bonds, let him ask of God and it shall be given him? No, there is no such passage. But, you may say, didn't Jesus say something about "all these things shall be added unto you"? Yes, he did. But he said this would come about as an effect, a consequence, or a result of seeking "first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." He said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Should we not regard this as a definite promise that

an earnest desire to gain an understanding of God will be rewarded by the added things necessary to our human need? Were men to place righteousness in the forefront of their desires; were they to desire continually to be governed by God alone; were they to realize as clearly as possible, that ever present reign of harmony which is already theirs, do not you think that such a desire, such a realization, would have an effect, a perceptible effect, upon their lives?

Jesus warned his hearers of the disastrous effect of wrong thought. He said that "evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit," etc., "All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." Our word "defile" comes from a Middle English word which meant "to tread down," and if we habitually harbor such thoughts as those we have just mentioned; if we allow them to take possession of our minds; if we make such thoughts our masters, little wonder if we should feel "trodden down." Under the domination of such thoughts we should be headed for disaster. If we desire to reach a better goal we must change our master. This is where we need Christian Science.

Christian Science is not going to encourage in us the belief that wrong habits of thought are always overcome without an effort, but through the teachings of Christian Science we are assured that we can surely win our way out of such habits; that we can conquer the evil habit, no matter how long it has been indulged. Hear this statement from our textbook (Science and Health, p. 407): "Man's enslavement to the most relentless masters—passion, selfishness, envy, hatred, and revenge—is conquered only by a mighty struggle. Every hour of delay makes the struggle more severe. If man is not victorious over the passions they crush out happiness, health, and manhood. Here Christian Science is the sovereign panacea, giving strength to the weakness of mortal mind,—strength from the immortal and omnipotent Mind,—and lifting humanity above itself into purer desires, even into spiritual power and good-will to man."

## OPPORTUNITY

Let us turn to another phase of this subject. Some of you may feel that your need is best expressed by the word opportunity, the opportunity to work, the opportunity to progress, the opportunity to serve or help in a larger way your fellow men. Let me say just here that limitation is not merely a lack of opportunity, or a scarcity of material things, but is fundamentally a paucity or dearth of ideas.

To-day there are few large business organizations that are not looking for men of the right kind. Such men are not easy to secure. They are busy somewhere else. Other firms will not let them go. They are too valuable. They are men of ideas. They express intelligence, wisdom, foresight, and business acumen. Whence come these qualities: discernment, sagacity, and perspicacity? Whence but from Mind itself, divine Mind? God is the source of every thought that expresses Him, and through Christian Science we are learning that God is continually and abundantly supplying each of His children with His

ideas. No one is left out. No one is under-supplied. Remember the passage we quoted a few moments ago (Miscellaneous Writings, p. 307): "God gives you His spiritual ideas, and in turn, they give you daily supplies."

Were one to believe that his capacity and abilities originated within himself, were he to believe that he was their author, he might conclude, and perhaps rightly, that they would in time dwindle and some day disappear. But, if he recognizes that he possesses these qualities only by reflection, that their source is God Himself, he will see that these spiritual energies cannot wear out nor can they be depleted by advancing years.

Is there anything which can operate to prevent our receiving what God so impartially and abundantly bestows? There should not be, of course. But do not we human beings sometimes permit our thoughts to be occupied by suggestions that are really unworthy; suggestions of laziness, inability, regret of the past, fear of the future; thoughts of envy, jealousy, or hatred; or beliefs that we are in the grip of destructive economic laws from which there is no escape.

This brings up a question which must be answered. The question is, What is man's work? Of what does it consist? Here is an answer I offer for your consideration. Man's work is reflecting God. Man's sole occupation is to reflect God. Whether his daily task is digging a ditch or managing a railroad, his work is to reflect intelligence, wisdom, strength, activity, etc., God's qualities. But suppose that for some reason he was dismissed from his customary employment yesterday, what is his work to-day? Is he without work? May not his work to-day be to reflect those Godlike qualities sufficiently to secure further employment? He may feel that his work to-day is more difficult than it was yesterday. Perhaps he may accept the suggestion that it is altogether too difficult, that he cannot do it, and there is no use trying. But he will not readily yield to the suggestion of discouragement if he sees clearly that all he has to do is to actively and intelligently reflect those qualities with which God is endowing him. In such a situation there are certain facts of which he should be aware: first, that there is a place for him: there is work for him to do; second, that God is equipping him with intelligence and energy sufficient to find it.

Jesus said: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

We human beings are prone to resent any implication that the cause of our failures and losses may lie with ourselves, within our own habits of thought. We are too quick, many times, to excuse ourselves and blame our fellow men, our environment, so-called economic laws, or what not, and yet the law still stands, As we sow, so shall we reap.

Were one to sow selfishness, fear, greed, or dishonesty, could he reasonably expect to reap contentment, happiness, or true success? Have

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