

A Lecture

Christian Science

Christian Science: The Revelation of God's Healing Presence

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Held Monday Evening,

January 18, 1943

In the Elm Place Auditorium

Under the Auspices of

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST

Highland Park, Illinois

To be brought into a clearer and closer realization of that presence of God which heals humanity's ill is a happy as well as a sacred experience.

No doubt there are some here tonight who are hearing of Christian Science for the first time, and possibly others who are just becoming interested.

A writer once set down these stirring words regarding religion. He wrote: "Religion is not an escape nor an insurance. It is conquest."

Christian Science brings to us the message of spiritual healing which Jesus proved in his life, making it clear that all disease and suffering, incapacity and disability are the results of false education, culminating in fear and helplessness.

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Man is God's reflection or witness. Man does mean, of necessity, express all of the qualities of God as God would be expressed. Man is God's idea ever dwelling in Mind.

Becoming Aware of the Divine Presence

At this point in the unfoldment of our subject, the question might be asked, "Why are there not more who know and feel God's presence?"

It is seen from these statements that the testimony of the five physical senses arguing for the mortal concept of things is not true and can only be considered in the light of a dream.

The question next arises: How can this illusion or dream of material existence, the presence of evil and absence of God, be broken?

In the Holy Bible, Moses comes first as the one to whom God revealed His great name, His nature, as "I AM THAT I AM," and to whom God later gave the Ten Commandments.

Jesus reiterated these commands and explained their spiritual basis and proved their applicability at all times to human needs.

Jesus understood God. This understanding was due to his clear realization of spiritual being, for he was endowed with the Christ from God.

The healing activity of Soul is to glorify. Soul imparts the majesty, the supremacy, the glory of God, and as we magnify or glorify God in our human thinking we become aware of His glory.

The intervening years have shown a gradual, steady growth in the appreciation of his teachings and of his unbounded love for humanity.

life of the body. But the great fact of God's presence, power, and intelligence could not be denied a place in human affairs and, as has always been the case, when one is prepared to receive a revelation of God's revelation appears.

So Mary Baker Eddy, one of our own countrywomen, proved to be the one ready to receive this revelation of divine Science, which is the promised Comforter.

Now to many people Mrs. Eddy's healing might have been of little importance. Some might say, "Oh, she would have gotten well, anyway," or, "Maybe the doctor was wrong."

So Mrs. Eddy set to work to discover the "divine laws of Life, Truth, and Love," which she has named "Christian Science" (p. 187). Law is the expression of the power and authority of Principle, God.

You will naturally agree that there must be a true perception of God's nature before one can understand His presence and its power.

Then we learn, according to Christian Science, that God is incorporeal, that is, without a physical body; divine not human, supreme, without an equal, and infinite, filling all space; and we also learn that the presence of God would embrace the presence of His synonyms—the presence of Mind, the presence of Spirit, the presence of Soul, the presence of Principle, the presence of Life, the presence of Truth, and the presence of Love.

Now while to each synonym we may for the moment attribute a particular healing quality or activity, we must remember that the words are synonymous, and for that reason what pertains to Mind would also pertain to Spirit, to Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love. However, it is true our understanding of God is enlarged and eventually completed by a study of these seven other names for Deity.

Let us consider these synonyms for God in their different aspects. Now the healing activity of Mind is to instruct. Mind is the source of intelligence and must know its own ideas, and must be continually imparting itself through these ideas.

The healing activity of Spirit is to purify. Spiritual man already created in God's likeness is immaculate, pure, holy, and the human or mortal man, conceived in sin, as the Bible says, needs to know these facts in order to purify his thinking.

The healing activity of Soul is to glorify. Soul imparts the majesty, the supremacy, the glory of God, and as we magnify or glorify God in our human thinking we become aware of His glory.

Next let us consider the healing activity of Principle. Principle governs. Principle is infinite causation. There can be no effect without a cause. Man is the effect of Principle. He is Principle's idea, man at one

with his Maker. Man can no more be separated from his Principle than cause can be separated from effect. Realizing that Principle governs his idea helps mankind to overcome the belief that man is governed by mortal mind instead of God.

The healing activity of Life is to perpetuate. Only by acknowledging that Life is God can we begin to grasp the fuller meaning of Life as "immortality brought to light," as the textbook says (p. 335). God, who is eternal Life, is forever expressing Himself through spiritual man; consequently man is the expression of Life.

And, finally, the healing activity of Love is to inspire. Man, as God's representative, is forever inspired, and this destroys the beliefs of depression, dejection, discouragement, and frustration.

Among Christian Scientists and, indeed, others, one is apt to hear the expression, "Well, the thing has got to be handled; we've got to handle it or it will handle us."

As the years bring with them just and appreciative regard for all those who have given to men a higher and holier sense of God and His creation, how grateful we are and shall continue to be that Mary Baker Eddy, throughout the remainder of her earthly days, devoted her entire time and fortune to the establishment, equipment, and nourishment of the Cause of Christian Science.

There was a time when no one knew what she was talking about. She, alone, comprehended the meaning of her "scientific statement of being" (Science and Health, p. 488): "There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation. For God is All-in-all. Spirit is immortal Truth; matter is mortal error. Spirit is the real and eternal; matter is the unreal and temporal. Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore man is not material; he is spiritual."

God certainly cannot do any more for us than He has already done. He knows our needs are spiritual and already He has supplied them. To pray to understand this fact is true prayer, which will be answered.

During the busy activities of the day with its many distractions, suggestions of all kinds constantly presenting themselves, we should maintain our poise and con-

science in God through prayer. And it becomes the privilege and duty of the one desiring to know God's will to commune with Him frequently. This communion with God is the most holy and sacred privilege we have. And Christian Science enables us to so silence the material senses and quiet our own impulsiveness and anxieties that we are able to have audience with God and take in the purifying qualities of His presence as one imbibes a refreshing draught of cool water or the warmth and light of the sun.

Perfect prayer consists not in the multitude of words, but in the straightness of the pure desire which raises the thought toward God. To pray effectively Jesus said we must enter into our closet and close the door and our Father which seeth in secret will reward us openly—we must shut out our fears and anxieties for ourselves and others and realize the facts of our true being as the sons and daughters of God.

Working Christian Scientists soon realize the great need for these periods of spiritual refreshment, these moments spent in God's presence, imbibing His purity, wisdom, strength, and joy with which to meet and overcome the errors of material existence.

Beginning with the premise that God or good is All-in-all, the only presence, we see that evil must be nothing. Evil is referred to in the Scriptures as a serpent, always hiding itself in the guise of good, and that is just what material beliefs are constantly trying to do—impress us that there is pleasure in matter and only dullness in Spirit.

For a fine example of handling error let me recall another incident which happened to Moses. The story goes that Moses, upon being instructed by God to rescue the children of Israel from slavery to the Egyptians, answered God, saying, "But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee. And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand; and they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee."

The interesting part of this episode is that instead of asking Moses to pick up the serpent, grasping it by the neck so that it would not reach him with its fangs, the Lord told him to pick it up by the tail, which to human reasoning would be the most dangerous method of handling the serpent. But, obedient to God, Moses called his fear and took it by the tail and it became a rod in his hand. We may gain a splendid lesson from this incident, for it shows matter to be a belief only, which becomes dangerous or beneficial according to our thought about it. When error should be handled from its most dangerous aspect, for it cannot hurt you.

A little child had been suffering from a severe carache, or mastoiditis, and as her mother was unable to meet and heal the condition a Christian Science practitioner was asked to help. So treatment was taken up. Instead of getting any relief the child seemed to grow worse, and the mother more fearful. The practitioner had been faithful and sincere

in her work. But she knew that had she rightly diagnosed the case it would have been healed. So, in humility and trust, she turned to God and asked Him to reveal to her the error of belief that was holding the patient. After a few moments of quiet, prayerful meditation, like a beam of light in the darkness, came the words, "Handle the error from its most dangerous aspect." The thought was then turned to find what was the most dangerous aspect of the case, and suddenly the answer came. "Why, the mother is afraid that the little one is going to die." The most dangerous aspect is always the fear of death. Immediately the practitioner turned her attention silently to the claim of death. She knew that God is the life of man and life can never result in death, that God is Love, and mercy and compassion are always present to overcome the beliefs of everlasting punishment and condemnation. That perfect Love casts out fear or inflammation. The action of these true ideas soon had its effects on the mortal fear and helplessness expressed by the mother; and the child, released from the mother's fear-laden thoughts, quickly recovered from the beliefs of suffering and in a few hours was entirely free and about her play. What a beautiful answer to understanding prayer!

There is today a marked increase in prayerful consideration of God and many evidences of His guidance and protection. In the war in which we as a nation are concerned with our allies, we hear from time to time of men in great extremity showing exceptional judgment. We also hear of numberless cases of endurance and strength beyond the ordinary human capacity and under circumstances of almost unbelievable stress. We hear, too, of what seem to the human sense miraculous escapes from conditions threatening disaster. These incidents all point to the presence of Mind's direction.

At this crucial period in the world's history men and women are looking and searching, as never before, for that heavenly assurance which will enable them to look beyond the physical evidence of evil to that spiritual consciousness or divine presence, in which there is no war, no disease, no death, and where the brotherhood of man is already established, to that secret place of the Most High, where one truly finds his protection from this onslaught of paganism against Christianity.

Never before has the earth been so engulfed in war. This fact leads one to reasonably expect that, because of its all-embracing nature, there will emerge from this fiery trial a peace promising more lasting good than the world has ever known. The prophet Ezekiel's words are being fulfilled: "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is." This prophecy will not stop short of complete fulfillment, which shall be the coming of the Christ, Truth, to the individual consciousness of every man, woman, and child. Then they "shall know me, from the least to the greatest" (Hebrews 8:11).

The despotic forces of evil—self-will, injustice, cruelty, theft, and destruction—seem to be holding sway over a great part of the world. And there are evidences of the infiltration of anti-Christian methods and purposes in every portion of the globe.

We must not, however, be dismayed at the picture presented by mortal mind for, as Mrs. Eddy states (Science and Health, p. 97), "The more destructive matter becomes, the more its nothingness it appears, until matter reaches its mortal zenith in illusion and forever disappears." But unless we are awake and alert to the hidden ways of Satan's warfare, we shall find ourselves either lulled into apathy by it, or made frantic by fear. The purpose of Satan is always to divide and separate, and then destroy individually, whether it be groups of persons or groups of nations. United we'll stand, divided we'll fall.

As our eyes are opened through spiritual clear-sightedness to the presence of God, we shall behold the unseen chariots and horses that the prophet Elisha saw, and rise in strength and courage to face any foe. "For they that be with us are more than they that be with them." Unflinching, unyielding faithfulness to God and to mankind, a refusal to admit the power of the strongest and most tenacious suggestions of evil—these stalwart traits of character may at any moment receive marvellous rewards.

The Christian peoples of the world have accepted the challenge of materialism and paganism and have virtually taken up the burden of all oppressed peoples everywhere. God will supply strength and grace, wisdom and power to those who do His work, for it is self-evident that God works with those who work with Him. Hence our hope and faith in ultimate victory.

Let us throw away the crutches of dependence on matter and physicality, and lean on the sustaining arms of God. Let us put off the dark glasses of prejudice, fear, and doubt and look through the lens of faith and hope; let us take off the sackcloth of self-pity and self-justification and put on the robes of gratitude and joy. Let us stop drinking in the beliefs of passions and appetites and imbibe the inspiration of purity and love. Remember, God's words to Moses are for you. "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Let this presence go with you in your church, in your business, in your home, in your school, in your innocent pleasures, in your car, in the cockpit of your bomber, in the depths of the sea, in your submarine, on the bridge of the battleship, in the workshop, the shipyard, the battlefield, at home and abroad. There is no place where His presence may not be felt and His power realized. For in God's presence evil is forever absent and God is present here, now, and forever.