

# A LECTURE ON CHRISTIAN SCIENCE BY BLISS KNAPP, C. S. B., Member of Board of Lectureship of Mother Church, First Church of Christ, Scientist

A large and attentive audience listened to the able lecture on Christian Science by Bliss Knapp, C. S. B., of Brookline, Mass., at the Orpheum theater last evening.

Geo. E. Ross, of this city, in introducing Mr. Knapp, said: "The purpose of this lecture is to present to the people of this community the truth regarding Christian Science and correct erroneous concepts and misrepresentations concerning the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science.

"In order that the public may be correctly informed as to the true nature of Christian Science, a Board of Lecturers is appointed by the Mother Church, the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Mass., and the lecturer with us tonight is a member of this board, who brings us a message of hope and a promise of deliverance from sin, sickness and unhappiness.

"My friends, it gives me much pleasure to introduce to you Mr. Bliss Knapp, C. S. B., of Brookline, Massachusetts."

Mr. Knapp's lecture follows in full:

## CHRISTIAN SCIENCE: THE REVELATION OF DIVINE POWER

During many centuries men have grown accustomed to think of religion as a haven of rest to those in sorrow and temptation. But while religion ministers to the mind, it regards the diseased body in helpless compassion. Such helplessness contrasts strongly with the religion of Jesus Christ, who made no distinction between mind and body. He asked, "Whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk?" He set the standard of religious achievement by healing sickness and sin by the same power. It is the purpose of Christian Science to increase the joy of life by restoring to the infinite compassion of Jesus' teachings the lost element of healing.

The invalid is not frightened at his disease. It is the possible termination of that disease that frightens him. Then his frightened sense finds sweet consolation in the Master's teaching, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." There followed, too, the explanation, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Two things are therefore needful to save one's life. It is to know God, and also His Son Jesus Christ. Some believe that Jesus was God, and that belief excludes the God and Father to whom Jesus himself prayed. The condition of thought that sets aside Christian healing may not be so much a lack of faith, as a complete omission from prayer of any recognition of the God and Father to whom Jesus prayed.

**JESUS NOT GOD**  
It was the day of the resurrection, early in the morning, that Jesus appeared to Mary and sent her with a message, saying, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and unto my God, and your God." Now if Jesus were God, as so many believe, and there is one God, how could God have brethren? But inasmuch as he recognized himself to be, not God, but the son of God, he could have brethren and could truthfully say, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and unto my God, and your God." When Jesus was before the tomb of Lazarus, it is recorded that he "lifted up his eyes, and said, Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always." He certainly was not praying to himself on that occasion. Previously he had said to the woman of Samaria, "God is Spirit." When, therefore, the disciples gathered around to examine the spear wound and the nail prints, he took occasion to remind them that "Spirit hath flesh and bones as ye see me have." From that the disciples knew that the human form of Jesus was not God. Indeed, to worship a humanly form would be in conflict with the second commandment of the Decalogue, which forbids the worship of any graven image. Jesus recognized, moreover, that the power employed was not himself; for he said, "I can of mine own self do nothing. . . . Because I seek not mine own will, but the will of my Father which hath sent me." He said, referring to himself, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do."

**GOD'S HEALING NATURE**  
In the face of so much popular misconception about what God really is, Jesus found it exceedingly difficult to get the people to accept the truth about Him. It was necessary, in so far as possible, any statement about God that would be open to doubt or controversy. He answered therefore to portray a God whose apprehension of God by making the people familiar with the effects of divine power on humanity. The popular belief prevailed then as now that God sends sickness to discipline mortals and bring them to God. But when Jesus portrayed the nature of God as He actually is, it had the effect of healing the sick in every case and thereby proved, in a manner that admitted of no doubt or controversy, that sickness is no part of God's nature. Another popular belief adhered to then as now was that God knows, or at least permits, sin. That too was disposed of by showing the effect divine power had in cleansing sinners even as light always dispels darkness. Moreover people believed then as now that God takes away our loved ones for some inscrutable purpose; and this belief has unquestionably thrust more people into infidelity and agnosticism than have ever been rescued therefrom. But when Jesus declared the truth about God as he actually is, it destroyed death and the grave, and thereby proved the nature of God to be Life. "For I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

People could see the physical changes wrought by Jesus readily enough, and in a manner that admitted of no doubt. But a natural question to follow is this,—Could it be taught to others? It is said that no one really understands a thing for himself, until he can teach it to another. That Jesus made disciples who could repeat his healing ministry was the proof that the healing power could be taught to others, and that he understood it. Indeed the early Christians proved the same thing by continuing those works of healing for 200 years after the time of Jesus. Even so the Christian Scientist is today perpetuating that healing ministry just to the degree that he gains a correct understanding of Him "whom to know aright is life eternal,"—an understanding of the God and Father to whom Jesus prayed.

**HEALING LAW**  
The first man in Bible history to know God well enough to heal sickness and sin was Moses, and it came about by his recognition that the divine power operates through law. Before that he knew God only as the great "I am," but that was not sufficient to win confidence in himself as the messenger of God. The necessity for him to speak the truth about God so convincingly that the people would actually believe what he said, was the occasion for God to reveal His healing nature by two distinct signs. The first was with the rod by which was proved the divine supremacy over personified evil. The second was the healing of leprosy. Perhaps those two were selected because none but the power of God has ever been known to destroy leprosy and sin. But that exhibition of divine power over sickness and sin revealed to Moses the existence of a well defined law of healing which enabled him, thereafter, to employ the divine power, guided by the intelligence of a well-defined law, in healing leprosy and serpent bites. It revealed to him the existence of certain facts concerning the healing nature of God in which no variation has ever been perceived. It marked the existence of an unchanging law of healing with which human beings had been hitherto unacquainted. It revealed something so definite and tangible about the nature of God that the people believed him just as God said they would.

**GOD IS TRUTH**  
Now that which Moses saw in the healing power of God was the Truth; whereupon he declared, "Thou art a God of truth." David later declared in the Psalms "Thy law is the truth." And Jesus indicated the intimate relation that exists between Truth and the healing law, when he said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." That is, a knowledge of God, not as a human form, but as Truth has a healing effect. Mrs. Eddy has therefore accepted that scriptural definition that God is Truth, and also its intimate relation to law; for she has written in Science and Health, "Not personal intercommunion but divine law is the communicator of truth, health, and harmony to earth and humanity."

It is true that every system of religion known to men claims to be the promulgation of revealed truth; but that which differentiates the demonstrable revelation of Jesus Christ from all others is its power to give life and to restore health. It is the life-giving power in Christian truth which makes it demonstrable in healing sickness and sin. One school of philosophers has propounded the theory that truth is two-fold; that there is one truth called reason, and another truth called revelation, but that revelation has no law and is lacking in a

reasonable explanation. The result is agnosticism. Christianity, on the other hand, teaches there is but one Truth and this Truth is God. It teaches moreover that divine Truth is expressed through law which may be understood and demonstrated in Christian healing. This teaching reconciles reason and revelation in the oneness of Truth.

## TRUE WORSHIP

Some may feel they have lost their God in thinking of Him as Truth; but Jesus declared in all earnestness that "The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." That may be clarified by another of Jesus' sayings: "None is good save one, that is God." Now the spirit or law of infinite good is goodness, and the true worshippers can worship infinite good only through goodness. For example: No one goes directly to the basic meaning of mathematics. He must go by way of its rules or laws. The simple law that two and two are four mediates between the basic meaning of mathematics and the prospective student. Even so no one can go directly to infinite good. He must go by way of goodness, which is the law or attribute of infinite good. That is, he must worship infinite good in the understanding of goodness. Mrs. Eddy has said in Science and Health, "A pure affection takes form in goodness." Then as one entertains an affection for others that is pure and constant, it takes form in goodness, which is an attribute of God. In this simple process he comprehends the law of goodness, and in the understanding of it he reaches to the actual recognition of infinite good. In the same spiritual understanding of divine law shall one worship the God and Father who is Spirit and Truth.

## GOD IS PRINCIPLE

As the nature of God continued to unfold before the vision of St. John, it was revealed to him that "God is love." Paul described the intimate relation that exists between Love and Truth when he said, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Other scriptural names used to define the nature of God are Soul and Mind. Christian Science accepts all those descriptive definitions of deity and adds one more. Since there is a divine law to express the healing, it is reasonable to suppose it must have a Principle. That is, the nature of God must include Principle as a descriptive definition. But far from expressing any of the coldness of an inanimate law, the divine Principle comprehends all intelligence, gentleness, peace and power to heal and save mankind through law.

If one were to stand at the base of the great pyramid and gaze in wonder at its vast dimensions, he could not see its whole structure from that single viewpoint. He must see it from the north and the south, the east and the west. He must explore its passages and chambers within. Not until he had seen it from every angle, and learned the meaning of its structure and design, could it be said that he had actually seen the pyramid. In like manner the various scriptural names which are employed to define the nature of God are all essential to a complete understanding of Him.

## TRUE INTELLIGENCE

The Christian Scientist becomes familiar with God's ways in a most practical manner. Jesus referred to God as "my God and your God." He is therefore my Mind and your Mind. The practical operation of that was proved to me when I was a student in the elementary schools. For a month I was troubled with a difficulty that may be described in the words of Paul, "The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." With me it was a difficulty in answering my school problems correctly. Though I might know the correct answer, I would invariably say the wrong thing. Instead of excusing that on the basis of stupidity, Paul saw in such conditions the warning of the fleshly mind, and so did my parents who were Christian Scientists. My mother proceeded to heal me of that difficulty according to the teachings of Christian Science. With wonderful patience she explained to me, in language I could easily understand, the reason why children go to school. It is not so much to assimilate a large mass of facts as it is to develop certain faculties; such for example as perception, reason, memory and application. Then she explained to me that they are the faculties of the divine Mind, and as such must be reflected through all alike. It concedes the right to every one to achieve the mental might of a genius. Inasmuch as God is my Mind and my intelligence, it was my right and duty to claim such must be reflected through all alike. It concedes the right to every one to achieve the mental might of a genius. Inasmuch as God is my Mind and my intelligence, it was my right and duty to claim such must be reflected through all alike. It concedes the right to every one to achieve the mental might of a genius. Inasmuch as God is my Mind and my intelligence, it was my right and duty to claim such must be reflected through all alike.

**MRS. EDDY'S DISCOVERY**  
The preparation for Mrs. Eddy's great discovery seemed to include much of the sorrow and suffering that purifies one's thought and purpose. Mrs. Eddy was a gentle woman of deep religious experience, trained from her youth to seek in divine guidance actual relief from sickness and distress. Added to that was an unusual intellectual ability which received careful training and development, so that she had great personal charm by reason of her refined manners and well-balanced mind. Then, in the flower of her youth, she was overwhelmed with grief at the loss of all that seemed near and dear to her. There followed a long period of invalidism and the search for a remedy, which culminated in the conviction that disease responds most readily to a mental remedy. Still abiding in that conviction, she met with an accident which was so serious that it was expected to result fatally. Knowing that only spiritual things could save her, she turned to her Bible for help, and as she read those spiritual

truths, she was wonderfully healed. That was in 1866. There was her proof of mental healing, and that the divine Mind is the healer to comfort in sorrow and in sickness. The next step was to learn the Science of that healing and, as she states in Science and Health, page 109, "I won my way to absolute conclusions through divine revelation, reason, and demonstration." Again she writes, "Reason and revelation were reconciled, and afterwards the truth of Christian Science was demonstrated," page 110. She stated that Science in the Christian Science textbook so simply and logically that the simple reading of that book has brought the healing Comforter to multitudes of those in sickness and distress, and made them every whit whole.

Mrs. Eddy had thus become the discoverer of Christian Science, and the founding of its institutional work was to follow. In her joy to share such a great blessing she appealed to the spiritual thought of learned men, only to suffer the rebuff of dignified silence. Her first ray of hope came when that silence was turned into ridicule and abuse; for it meant that she had gained at least a hearing. Deserted by friends and relatives and opposed by subtle and powerful influences whichever way she turned this woman patiently kept her course in the founding of the various institutions of Christian Science, until the movement has spread itself over this world, and all within her own lifetime. By her clear statement of scientific Christianity, Mrs. Eddy has enormously increased the number of followers of Christ's teachings. The sick are healed of bodily ailments by reading its literature; the sinner may know how to liberate himself from his sin; and greatest of all, the pure-minded is given the power to save himself from the general belief in sin, so that the good he desires to do, that he can do. Mrs. Eddy has therefore proved, in accordance with the vision in the apocalypse, that a pure-minded woman, armed with Science, can unlock the secrets of "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," and reveal the promised Comforter.

Try as hard as one may, it is impossible to separate Moses from the commandments, or Jesus from the beatitudes. When Jesus had that exalted vision of law and prophesy on the Mount of Transfiguration, the human representative of law and prophesy became apparent to those near enough to get the lesson. It is equally certain that the human representative of scientific Christianity can never be separated from the spiritual treasures which she has opened to our use.

## MIND OF CHRIST

We have no record in the four gospels that Jesus ever permitted himself to be deceived or taken advantage of in any way. Had he been victimized, it would have been by reason of a lack of intelligence. But he claimed and exercised the divine intelligence that knows all that is necessary to know, and thereby set the standard for all mankind. It was the Mind which was in Christ Jesus that enabled him to heal the sick, even when they were absent from him, as in the cases of the centurion's servant and the Syro-phenician's daughter. It was the Mind which was in Christ Jesus that enabled him to heal leprosy and raise the dead, even to the raising of himself from the tomb. It was this Mind which constituted his divinity, and enabled him to say, "I and my Father are one," and also the correlative statement, "My Father is greater than I." It was the divine Mind which was in Christ Jesus that enabled him to say, "Before Abraham was, I am," and, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." We are moreover enjoined by the scriptures to "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." And "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

## THE COMFORTER

Before Jesus went away he promised us another Comforter. That no misconception might arise, he took the precaution to explain the nature of this promised Comforter. It should not be a man, nor a person, but rather the impersonal "Spirit of truth." He explained further that the "Spirit of truth would lead mankind into all truth which is God, and it would testify of him. Now the spirit of Truth is its law,—the law which communicates God's healing power to humanity. That law, moreover, requires a science which can interpret it and be reasonably understood. Since the law is divine, its Science must be a divine or Christian Science. That is what Christian Science is,—the spiritual understanding of divine law as applied to the needs of humanity. It is not an invention. It is the discovery of what has always been true, and what always must be the real Comforter to suffering humanity.

Sometimes it occurs that one is so completely overwhelmed by sorrow and grief that all the comfort and consolation of human affection seems helpless to brighten the thought. Then we need to remember that there is a sorrow that purifies, and another sorrow that works evil. It will sweeten or sour the disposition according to the direction it takes. But in the apparent helplessness of insurmountable grief, there is the consolation that the power of one's right desire can steer its course unerringly into repentance and purification. In the momentum of that directed experience no harm can overtake us. Only good can come out of it. Such an assurance removes the fear and heals the grief. This is the real Comforter at work in the human consciousness, purifying one's thoughts and motives. There is therefore a grief that is salutary; for it sweetens the disposition, chastens the affections, and enables one to be charitable toward the faults of others.

## OPPOSING VIEWPOINTS

A perplexing feature about Christian Science is that some very astute thinkers are readily baffled by its teachings, while others like the fishermen of Galilee listen gladly and understand. The difficulty is largely in the viewpoint. The logic of Christian Science always starts with God and ascribes to Him all intelligence. It ascribes mental life to Him who transcends brain. Most schoolmen, on the other hand, are trained to regard brain as the seat of the intellect, and matter as the fundamental basis of thought these two opposing systems of philosophy, strange as it may seem, have their authority in the first two chapters of Genesis in the Bible. The first chapter, sometimes called the Elohist record of creation, presents an absolutely good God, the source of all intelligence and being, who knows no evil. The second chapter and thereafter, called the Jehovist record of Creation, presents a mixture of good and evil which results in a third power called mankind, and this third power is supposed to derive from the basis of matter the intelligence to interpret both good and evil. Now a talking serpent was the author of that second record, and he is supposed to lie in all that he said. In fact there is nothing in the animal kingdom as a talking serpent. When contrasted, the two systems of creation are absolutely opposites, so that if one is true the other must be false. Every system of religion and philosophy known to men, with but one exception, is founded on the supposed mixture of good and evil. That single exception which is founded on an absolutely good God who knows no evil, is the teaching of Christ Jesus and of Christian Science. Furthermore that system alone can destroy both sickness and sin.

As a mode of salvation from the ravages of sin and disease, the two systems take opposite directions. The Christian Scientist gains relief in a better understanding of God. The materialist seeks it in a knowledge of matter. The Christian Scientist learns that mortal, or human mind and body are one, and that the divine Mind is the only lawgiver. The materialist separates mind and body and they can be healed by a mental

process. Their basis being wholly material, and matter being mortal error, the truth of God dispels those errors just as light dispels darkness,—just as the understanding that two and two are four dispels any denial of that fact. And when one understands that truth, he does not have to sit up nights to be certain of it in the morning. Jesus so understood the nature of God as Truth, that he could make it just as consciously apparent to the man with the withered hand, and that diseased condition was wiped out by that process just as effectually as one could take a sponge and wipe out the wrong figures on the blackboard.

It is generally recognized that certain nervous disorders are mental; for though the person may be sick as to distraction, examination may disclose no diseased organ, tissue or nerve. He may have apparent physical ailments, such as that trinity of disorders known as dyspepsia, heart palpitation, and insomnia; but an examination discloses no organic disease. The patient's troubles are actually unreal, in the sense that they have no physical cause. But to the patient they are decidedly real, in the sense that he feels them constantly, and can not free himself from them.

## "MATTER IS MORTAL ERROR"

If matter is supposed to be the seat of the human intellect, we ought to know its nature. It is true that no one ever understood it; but we may nevertheless know its nature. We can for instance know whether matter is truth or error. For example Consider applied mechanics. There is nothing in the material universe any more accurate than applied mechanics. The most accurate piece of mechanism is supposed to be an ordinary time-piece or watch. Every such mechanical device requires, in its construction, the use of weights or measurements. In other words, weights and measurements are fundamental to the highest form of material accuracy.

An essential point to determine weights and measurements is the degree of their accuracy. Are they absolute, or do they merely approximate truth? The most accurate implement for weighing purposes, in its simplest form, is a horizontal beam balanced on a fulcrum. If the fulcrum is a knife edge, much of the friction which would impede the swing of the balance would be overcome. If the fulcrum were a razor edge there would be even less friction and more accuracy to the instrument. To protect it from air currents and air friction it should be enclosed in a vacuum. But a perfect vacuum is impossible, and a razor edge can bear no weight without dulling. Friction can not be entirely eliminated. There is simply an approximation to truth. And that which produces the friction, and introduces the error is matter. So much for weighing instruments. As for measurements, a micrometer gauge might be employed to measure the diameter of a human hair to within one ten-thousandth of an inch, but it never could be absolute. As a mental proposition there are twice inches in a foot of space. That is an absolute truth when considered mentally. But the moment you apply it to matter, the error is introduced. Matter is the thing that introduces the error, because its nature is error. Since it is mortal or perishable, "Matter is mortal error," as Mrs. Eddy teaches; and mortal error should never be the basis of intelligence, religion or medicine.

Physicians have observed that the depressing and poisonous effects of fear, anger, hatred, jealousy and so forth are relieved by the wholesome effects of faith, hope, cheerfulness and loving kindness which promote health. How then shall they be administered to the patient? The method taught by the schools is by suggestion, human will, and human reason, which are as material as the disease. They may be employed just as well by a wicked man, by an infidel or a pagan,—one who knows nothing about the truth of God. The Christian Scientist, on the other hand, employs only the spiritual Mind which transcends brain or matter. That Mind is never transmitted through suggestion; because it is everywhere present, and its government prevails wherever it is most needed by the patient. We simply have to understand the ever-presence and activity of that truth for the patient, and the truth makes free. The scripture says that "Fear hath torment," but "perfect love casteth out fear." There is no remedy known to the human consciousness for fear of any sort, save alone divine love. It is that understanding of the divine Mind, whose nature is Love, that gives to the Christian Scientist the spiritual power to wipe out the fear of consumption and to remove its physical effects. It is on that basis that Christian

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