

A LECTURE ON CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

BY PAUL STARK SEELEY, C. S. member of the Board of Lectureship of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Mass.

teachings of Christian Science, generally known, have to do with thinking, but in just what way not so well understood. The Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy, in her work "Miscellaneous Writings," of this Science, "Its genius is thinking and right acting" (p. 1) and in another of her works, "Yes," she says, "The essence of this Science is right thinking and right acting" (p. 12). Man's actions are the expression of his thoughts. Let us then consider what constitutes right thinking, its effect on the life of man, and the way by which one may learn so to think and thereby gain the benefits.

IMPORTANCE OF THOUGHT IN HUMAN AFFAIRS

We are all deeply interested, whether we have considered the fact or not, in the subject of thought. Our thoughts are in fact the most important thing in the world to each one of us. We are primarily interested in our own thoughts for there we find the sense of life and existence. We are also interested in the thoughts of others, friends, our business associates and in the thinking of society as a whole. We cannot fail to agree that thought is the most essential of things to carry on the world's affairs. In thought government is based. It has its foundation, business conceived and carried on, human relationships are formed; in short, it is thought that the whole scheme of our affairs is founded. Can any one try to conceive of a day without thinking in it and he will find that thought is indeed the nucleus and current of life. Stop thinking and the world would be an immense, a mindless desert. Man's life is his own and to society depends upon the thoughts he entertains. His thoughts and his life go hand in hand. They are coincident and inseparable.

It is to be brought thought to the world is to find the real remedy for its ills, and that Christian Science teaches, it must be through a different order of thinking than any which has been generally known to mankind up to present time. Speculative philosophy, physical science, mere intellectualism and lofty idealism, scholasticism, materia medica, necromancy, hypnotism, mesmerism, and other systems of thinking, have given every opportunity to humanity's need for happiness, peace and peace, have fallen far short of that need. Words and theories there have been a plenty, but there has been a poverty of works.

THE ONLY SOURCE OF INTELLIGENCE

In seeking an answer to the question how to think rightly, Christian Science recognizes that there must be a basis or standard according to which thought may be judged as right or wrong, the same mathematical law measures with accuracy the correctness or incorrectness of mathematical thinking. What is this standard? A perspective of the world as we see it shows us there is in it good thinking, bad thinking, matter and material phenomena. These must be accounted for on a rational basis reached for the solution of evil and the establishment of good.

For explanation of Christian Science, Mrs. Eddy has pointed out with discrimination the total dissimilarity between Mind and matter, mind and matter, intelligence, matter and matter, for the exact opposite of intelligence, non-intelligence. She boldly stated the theory that intelligence could come from matter, and accepted the reasonable premise that intelligence must come from Mind, and that thought and life is the outward expression of Mind. She attributes matter or evil to the intelligent cause, Mind, because both express ignorance, discord and materiality, which are contrary to intelligence.

THE SUPPOSITIONAL OPPOSITE OF GOOD

Every fact we know in our daily lives may suppose its opposite, the intelligent. So in the universal order, Mrs. Eddy discerned that evil and matter is material and material is supposititious or supposed opposite of God's creation, which is the intelligent. She recognized that evil and matter are merely temporal phenomena, the visualized concepts of the carnal mind, the opposite of the one true Mind, God. She recognized this negative nature when she spoke of it as "a shadow which there is no truth in," and matter are seen as "material beliefs, mental in char-

acter, while all that is good and eternal is the manifestation of divine Mind, God. Thus does Christian Science untie, not cut, the Gordian knot of mind and matter, the puzzle of the ages.

The human mind sometimes stands aghast when told that matter is only mental phenomena. If perchance any of you may feel shocked at this assertion you will be interested to know that physical scientists are now admitting what Mrs. Eddy asserted long before, namely, that matter is indeed not a substance of itself but mental phenomena, the externalized concepts of the human mind. A prominent physical scientist in one of the best known European universities has within the past few years said, "Matter is a thing of thought which we have constructed for ourselves." Another says, "The universe as known to us consists wholly of mind, and matter is a doubtful and uncertain influence of the human intelligence."

If Mrs. Eddy's premise was correct and everything was in truth mental, the next and far more important question was, how evil, mortal mind, and its sinful and diseased conditions, was to be mastered and destroyed by the one true Mind, God. This question she met without compromise, and through her writings so clearly elucidated the laws of the one true Mind and the scientific way in which these laws can be used to subjugate, overcome, and destroy all evil and disease, that millions of mankind have through their application in thought been healed, comforted, and purified. Her premise, which is in perfect accord with the Bible, that there is but one God, divine Mind, who creates only good, has been proven by irrefutable works to be the basis and starting-point of right thinking.

EVIL CAST OUT THROUGH RIGHT THINKING

The distinction drawn by Christian Science between the mortal and the immortal, the material and the spiritual, is no new thing, no personal opinion. It is a spiritual and eternal fact, the central truth of the Bible. This Science points out that it is through the correct understanding of the one true Mind and his relationship to that Mind that man may free himself from all evil conditions. He learns to put out of thought the evil and temporal sense of existence, with its sinful and diseased beliefs, and gradually gains that consciousness which knows only good and is not subject to sin, disease or death. This is but the reiteration in present-day language of the statement made by Paul to the Romans, that, "to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." There is nothing strange about spirituality or spiritual mindedness. Spirituality is simply goodness. Spiritual mindedness is right thinking, that is, thinking in accord with the one true cause, divine Mind. If all evil, sin, and disease is mental, then it must be apparent that the thing to be done is to stop thinking evil and to think only good. From the world's point of view it may seem a monumental if not an impossible task to cast out all evil thinking. Without a sure and certain law to go by it would be so. But to the man who has gained even a slight understanding of the demonstrable supremacy of the divine Mind over all evil, the accomplishment seems but the natural and inevitable outcome of the law of God, operating through right thinking or spiritual understanding.

THE NATURE OF MIND

Cause signifies power. Divine Mind being the one cause, it must have all power. Being the only Mind, it must be all-wise. Being the only true substance, there is nothing to limit it, therefore it must be everywhere. Mind's expression or manifestation, which is its creation, must necessarily be mental and spiritual, since effect must have the same character and nature as its cause. Mind's creation too must be harmonious and good, being the creation of an all-wise and all-intelligent cause. There being no cause precedent to Mind, there can be no antecedent cause. Mind, therefore, must be and is self-existent and eternal, without beginning and without end. Now this Mind, as stated before, is the one God, and as understood in Christian Science is synonymous with Spirit, Father, Love, names which the Scriptures apply to Deity. Loving consideration must then characterize Mind's relationship with its creation. Intelligence, wisdom, love, goodness, harmony, are seen to mark the natural order of this creation. Perfection is its standard and no element of evil or destruction is there.

Acknowledging the divine Mind as the alone cause, Christian Science then reasons logically from cause to effect and brings out what must be true about man and the universe which spring from and are the expression of Mind. This is the sec-

ond step toward getting a true basis for right thinking, and brings to light the correct and complete idea of creation—Mind and its manifestation, God and His universe, including man, cause and effect—as the basis for all true thought. Here then is to be found the true and complete standard, God's standard, exact, scientific, unchanging.

MAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO MIND

Reasoning then from Mind as the primary cause, let us see what man really is. How is he related to Mind? What is his function, his destiny? The Bible designates man as God's image, son, and heir. It also says that he is made after God's likeness, thus making him out to be the living representative or expression of God. These terms of course apply to the real and eternal man, not to the mortal and transient sense of man. But it is the real man we want to know about and bring to light. Since God is Mind and Mind's only mode of expression must be through its ideas, the very important fact is seen that the real man must be and therefore is the outcome of Mind, is Mind's idea, and is a state of consciousness forever expressing God. He is a celestial; divine in nature, the individualized idea of God. His function and destiny is forever to reflect and express Mind and intelligence in its limitless unfoldment. Man is forever predestined to reflect God, and this is the only predestination there is.

So Christian Science teaches that man, the real, true, normal man, is forever linked to God as idea is linked to mind, for God is Mind and man is Mind's idea. The real man, being mental and spiritual, cannot be, and therefore is not, materially, physically, or mortally conditioned; since such conditions are temporal, not the offspring of eternal Mind, but of its opposite, mindless matter. Man as idea cannot fall away from or be separated from God, for God is his intelligence, his life, his substance; nor can God abandon, overlook or forget man, for He cannot be separated from His manifestation. Man's life, health, and well-being are therefore always a matter of divine concern. This unity of man and God is a most essential point in the teachings of Christian Science, for without some intelligent grasp of original cause and his rightful relationship to that cause, man is without a guiding star by which to chart his way out of the wilderness of earthly woe.

THE ATONEMENT

Since God cannot evolve anything unlike Himself, man must possess the same quality and substance as his creator. Jesus said, "I and my Father are one." If we fail to recognize the relationship between God and man here indicated, we fail to grasp the basic truth of being, the vital part of Christianity, the very key to the salvation of mankind. This oneness of man with God in quality but not in quantity is indeed the doctrine of atonement as Christian Science explains it, or the doctrine of at-one-ment. Seen in the light of Christian Science the doctrine of atonement is no longer a human doctrine but a spiritual fact, namely, man's natural and eternal oneness with God, divine Mind. Man separated from God would be like a number severed from mathematics, or a tone separated from music, or a ray of light separated from the sun. He would be a non-entity. As the number is one with mathematics, as the tone is one with music, as the ray of light is one with the sun, so man is one with God. So long as God is, man is. They are eternally correlated in thought and action, a relationship clearly defined by Jesus when he said, "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father."

THE CHRIST-IDEA

In place of an obscure, mysterious, or doubtful concept of God and His creation, Christian Science unfolds, as we have shown, the true idea or scientific concept of God and man, which is the corner-stone of right thinking and living and the way to Christian healing. The coming of this true idea of God and man in your consciousness and mine, is the coming of the Christ that is to free us from the bondage of evil and destroy all disease. It is important that we understand just what is meant by the Christ. Christ is defined on page 583 of the Christian Science text-book, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" by Mrs. Eddy, as "the divine manifestation of God, which comes to the flesh to destroy incarnate error." Christ then is the true idea of God and man which comes to displace the wrong concept of existence enshrined in human consciousness.

This true idea, the spiritual idea, of God and man, taught by Jesus, is what Christian Science makes plain to the world today. It is the Christ which shows the coincidence and spiritual agreement between God and man. The Christ-idea is indeed the pearl of great price, the redeemer, the saviour. It comes to each of us

to lead us out of evil into good, out of error into Truth, out of ignorance into intelligence, out of matter into Spirit, away from earth to know God. Theologians have for many years confused the Christ-idea with the corporeal man Jesus. Christian Science makes plain the distinction between the personal Jesus and the Christ, the true idea of God, which must come to each individual consciousness and resurrect it from false beliefs. To elude to a corporeal saviour is to worship a fleshly concept, and Jesus said that the flesh profits nothing. Jesus was a human person. Christ is the true spiritual idea of life which Jesus understood and exemplified better than all others, but which is knowable and understandable by each of us. This true idea must be individually understood before man can know God. This idea lives through the ages and is the saving impartation of God, the emanation of His love and goodness, ever extended to him who, tired of the husks of mortality, would return to his Father's house and seek for higher and better things.

When we begin to lay hold of the true sense of being, actually to realize in spite of all the conflict and distress of mortal existence that there is indeed a God who is altogether good, who is all-wise and all-powerful, and who is now available to help us overcome and master evil—just as soon as we turn to Him, then our thinking begins to change. We begin to seek for and to get acquainted with God, to obey the Scriptural command, "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace." A stranger is one who is unknown, strange. God is therefore strange to us if we do not actually know Him. This foreign concept of God as strange is just what Christian Science is here to remove. Let us suppose that Mr. A. and Mr. B. live in the same community. A common belief in the community is that Mr. B. is unapproachable, distant, difficult to understand. Mr. A., without any personal investigation, believes the report and holds aloof from Mr. B., although he is in dire need of a friend. Mr. B., in fact, is not the kind of a person common reports has made him out to be; he is not distant or difficult to understand, but on the contrary is easily approachable, is interested in doing good, is charitable, kind, and glad to help others. What has kept the men apart? What has made them strangers? Nothing but a false concept entertained by Mr. A., a concept which had no basis in fact, was not the outcome of truth, but was simply a false belief, a lie. Mr. A. was deprived of Mr. B.'s friendship and friendly assistance for no reason at all. The false concept was the barrier. What was needed to restore a normal relationship was the truth in the consciousness of Mr. A.

FALSE CONCEPTS

It is not the lesson plain? What is it but a false concept that is between suffering humanity and God? It is just that and nothing more. How many have accepted the common superstition that God is distant, unapproachable, and difficult to understand, even while the Bible describes Him as a God "at hand" and not afar off, who has said, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Christian Science dispels our false concepts of God, does away with mystery, superstition, ignorance and fear, and enthrones in man the true consciousness of God which shows Him to be all-good, all-powerful, ever available, all-wise, to be the God who presently "healeth all thy diseases," be they mental, physical, moral or of other nature. Being acquainted with God, it is well to remember, is simply a state of mind; in other words, true consciousness. To know God man must be thinking correctly about God, and that is just what Christian Science is helping man to do. When the gentle man of Nazareth voiced the message, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," he voiced the demand of Truth to those of every age, laboring in the shadow of ignorance, superstition and fear. Repent simply means to change your mind. Some men think this privilege, especially as it pertains to religion, is confined to the women, but it is not. Change your mind, change your thoughts, put away false concepts of God, for now, here, at hand, is to be found the harmonious state of being, even at the point of consciousness, for Jesus also said, "The kingdom of God is within you."

MENTAL TRANSFORMATION NECESSARY

With a correct understanding of divine Mind as the one intelligent cause, and man as Mind's eternal idea, whose real selfhood is goodness, as the basis for right thinking, Christian Science shows man how to make this truth practicable in his daily problems. The method is the supplanting

in consciousness of the temporal and mortal sense of life and selfhood with the true and eternal facts of spiritual life and manhood. It is a mental transformation which gradually exchanges a material for the spiritual sense of being.

Mental transformation is recognized by society as the way of progress and reform. All educational effort is but the supplanting of ignorant and limited concepts of being with more intelligent ones. Tyranny and slavery have disappeared as rapidly as man's thought has gained a clearer sense of the rights of man. The whole process of mental change seems the natural and right way to better things. And so it is not only in attaining better things in human society, but in that far more important realm of thought which deals with man's relationship to God. Through the teachings of Christian Science the false and limited concepts of God and man are giving way to that true sense of being which liberates from the tyranny of sin and the slavery of diseased beliefs.

TRUTH CHANGES MAN'S VIEW-POINT

The greatest proclamation of emancipation ever uttered was given by Jesus when he said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." We cannot know what is true while we believe what is false. Two objects cannot occupy the same space at the same time. No more can an erroneous concept of God and the true idea of Him be in thought together. That consciousness must change upon which has dawned the true idea of God and man. Life's outlook cannot remain the same. In place of regarding himself as a mortal of a few days set loose in a world of injustice, misery and woe, to weather the storms as best he may or be crushed by them, with a vague concept of God, distant and indifferent to his needs, man begins to give place in his consciousness to the true and eternal idea of creation. He finds himself coming into conscious touch with his creator and begins to recognize the meaning of John's statement "Our fellowship is with the Father." Through the shadows of mortality he begins to see light and to realize that he has indeed a part to fill in the infinite plan. With his new understanding he reasons that if God be good and all-powerful and man is in reality His idea, only good can be man's birthright. And from this simple but basic truth he begins to meet and master evil's claims.

RECOGNIZING THAT HIS TRUE SELFHOOD IS THE REFLECTION OF GOD, MAN SEEKS TO ORDER HIS THINKING SO THAT ONLY GOODNESS AND LOVE, GOD'S THOUGHTS, WILL EVER BE MANIFESTED IN HIS CONSCIOUSNESS.

With the true idea of perfect God and perfect man as his model he seeks always to think in accord with God, good. Man is God's living witness and expression, the very embodiment of good. Knowing God as incorporeal good, he knows that Deity can never appear in physical outline but is manifested in His ideas, and that therefore every good thought and every kind word or deed is God in action, Love expressing itself as man's real selfhood. Realizing as never before the nearness of God, he strives earnestly to think so as to be at-one with Him. He seeks each day and hour to think and to live up to his highest understanding of life as God, and so far as in him lies to let his true selfhood ever appear in thought and act. He is putting off the old man, as Paul terms the mortal self, and is putting on the new man of God's making.

EVIL'S LIE

We have already stated that, as explained in Christian Science, all evil, sin, disease and mortality is but the supposititious opposite of the spiritual and true creation. To be sure, evil's universal lie is a big one—but what of that? Can any one get nearer truth or in any way change truth by telling a big lie or by telling many lies, or by putting all the lies together in some form of organized falsity? Is there any more truth in a million lies than in one? Is the sum of a column of zeros more than zero or is a zero as big as a goose-egg any nearer something than one as small as a pin-head? Of course not. The question confronting each one of us is, How much longer are we going to be dominated and fooled by the seeming reality of evil's lie, expressed in sin, disease, mortality and material man?

DIVINE WISDOM REQUISITE

One does not find the warfare with the world, the flesh, and all evil, an easy task; but is there anything that is worth while that is really easy? Only the foolish man is content with the sluggard's ease. Like a man in an obstacle race, the student of Christian Science finds plenty of things to occupy his attention, obstacles that cannot be dodged but must be overcome in only one way. He must keep

by dodging the obstacles. He must press on, knowing full well that he has the means at hand of overcoming all obstacles if he is faithful and obedient.

Evil does not yield its usurped authority simply because man desires to be rid of it. It must be combated intelligently. Man must know something of its nature and be wise enough to detect its deceitful subtleties, bring its lies from under cover. Until he is wise, man can not be good. "How much better it is to get wisdom than gold!" said Solomon, and Jesus admonished his followers to be as wise as serpents. Only as man reflects God does he gain wisdom, for all wisdom is in God, is indigenous to Mind, and is naturally reflected by Mind's idea, man. Wisdom so gained transcends all mortal opinion and human conjecture. It enables man to judge and act righteously, to avoid unless conflicts and always to meet evil with good. It enables him to distinguish between the things of the moment and the things of eternity. Wisdom points the right way in every human situation and exalts Principle, which is God, to be the one lawgiver in man's daily life.

WATCHFULNESS NEEDED

Equipped with divine wisdom, man becomes a watchman at the door of consciousness, alert and vigilant. He scrutinizes the thoughts that seek entrance there, separates just so far as he knows how the chaff from the wheat, the false from the true, the mortal from the immortal, and rejects the evil and mortal as having no right to enter. Keeping his mind filled with goodness he finds to be the best protection against all evil. Fear, discouragement, hatred, disense, dishonesty, selfishness, lust, and all sin, he strives to keep out of his thought, for he knows that they are not of God and therefore do not properly belong to His reflection, man. He agrees to disagree with these thieves and robbers that would deprive him of happiness and health and despoil his character. "Whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie," as John puts it, he seeks to exclude from his thought. He stops tolerating evil in consciousness, stops talking about it or dwelling upon it, but turns upon it as an enemy and drives it out with thoughts of Truth. He begins to realize that man as God has made him is not the slave of evil in any form but has dominion over it. Evil can have no more power over man than over his Maker, since man is one with God.

UNCOVERING EVIL

Christian Science shows man how to defend himself against evil in every form. It shows that evil seeks to control and reach man either through mental suggestion, that is, through evil thoughts thrust into his consciousness, or by way of the physical senses. In the last analysis both methods are suggestion. Evil's subtle argument always is in Science and Health explains, "It is a lie" (p. 280). It seeks to make man believe its claim of sin or sickness is a part of his real self. Man finds that, just because the body says, "You have a pain," he does not have to respond, "Yes, I have a pain and I am sick," or because mental suggestion says, "I hate that man," he needs to accept such a thought into his consciousness. He learns that these claims of evil are just a part of evil's lie about man. They are no part of the one infinite Mind or its manifestation, and man has every reason in the world to dispute them and deny their legality. He learns to assert with all the authority of God Himself that is the fact of being, namely, that man is in reality made by God, is His likeness and idea, is divine in quality and character; that he cannot be sick because God never made him sick, but made him perfect and so forever maintains him; that all the claims of discordant and diseased material sense are contrary to God, good, therefore a lie and incapable of encroaching, infringing or imposing upon or in any way making a condition for God's creature. Because sickness is not a phenomenon of God he knows that it cannot be a condition of man who is of and in God. God alone is the substance and condition of man. He knows too that there is nothing in God's man that can respond to mental suggestion. Man is animated by the divine Mind alone. Such conscious realization of the spiritual facts of being is a Christian Science treatment. It is an antidote that evil and sickness cannot withstand and a specific for mental suggestion that is unfailing, for it has all the power of God behind it. It is God-enforced: It is God imparting Himself through His idea and is omnipotent to the tearing down of the strongholds of evil. A Christian Science treatment dissolves error and liberates man. Through right thinking Christian Science has the sick, breaks in pieces the whip of sin, banishes the

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