

A Lecture on Christian Science

Entitled Christian Science: The Law of Love Revealed and Demonstrated

by Richard J. Davis, C. S. of Chicago, Illinois Member of the Board of Lectureship of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts

Mr. Davis was introduced by Mrs. Margaret Stacer, member of First Church of Christ, Scientist, Coquille:

Friends, I welcome you here this evening in the name of First Church of Christ, Scientist, Coquille.

In Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures by Mary Baker Eddy, she writes these words (Page 113): "The letter of Science plentifully reaches humanity today, but its Spirit comes only in small degrees. The vital part, the heart and soul of Christian Science, is Love. Without this, the letter is but the dead body of Science—pulseless, cold, inanimate."

Jesus gave a most potent invitation to humanity to learn of this doctrine of Love when he said, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For the Son of Man will save that which is lost." He also said "My doctrine is not mine but His that sent me."

No doubt you have come here this evening to learn how to lay down your burdens. I assure you, my friends, you will not leave this lecture disappointed.

It is a pleasure to introduce Richard J. Davis, C. S. of Chicago, Illinois, a member of the Board of Lectureship of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Mass., who will address you on the subject "Christian Science, The Law of Love Revealed and Demonstrated."—Mr. Davis.

In the book of Isaiah the prophet has written, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath appointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; . . . to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." This beautiful and comforting statement declares the promise and office of Christian Science. "It expresses the love which prompts these lectures. It explains why I am here, and it voices the joy we take in speaking of our religion to those who do not know it or who have not yet experienced its blessings.

We are living in an era of scientific thinking, an age when the emphasis is being laid on science—material science of all kinds. We recognize that discoveries in the realm of the physical sciences are important. Progressive inventions are all helpful and encouraging, but, viewed from the standpoint of comparative values, have all the discoveries of the ages in the realm of matter brought to light any information, fact or law that will bring comfort and real healing to the sick and suffering; that will make the crooked straight and the rough places plain; that will heal sick hearts? What discovery or scientific law can lift the sinner out of bondage to false appetites and destructive habits? Have all or any of the philosophers, thinkers, and scholars of centuries, sincere though their efforts may have been, contributed to the race a scientific law that will make sure and certain the one fundamental essential to human existence, namely, happiness, an understanding of heaven? Reviewing the situation for a moment, we see that practically all the research and the study of centuries has centered wholly in matter and in material thinking. In view of this, and certainly in view of the results,—that the race still has far to go morally, that disease has by no means been eradicated, and that poverty and financial distress are still much in evidence,—one may naturally inquire, if all these centuries of study in the realm of matter have failed to bring humanity health, happiness, and heaven, why not make a right about face and direct all our thought, effort, and investigation toward the realm of Spirit, toward the understanding of spiritual law?

DIVINE PRINCIPLE AS GOD
Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, did turn from matter, and with that compassionate impulse expressed in the verse which I have just quoted from Isaiah, earnestly sought the remedy for human ills in the realm of Spirit. Her search resulted in the discovery of what she termed Christian Science,—the Science of Truth,—the demonstrable understanding of God and His

Christ. She proclaimed that the divine Principle of the universe is Love; that God, the cause and creator of all being is Love—universal, all-inclusive, and omnipotent. It is of this law, the law of Love, the understanding of which she grasped and then made practically applicable in human affairs, that I shall speak tonight.

There are those who, at this point, may reasonably be questioning: How do we know that God is Love? What do we mean by love and can we conceive of a principle as love? When John declared that God is Love he was certainly not expressing a mere metaphysical abstraction, nor was he endeavoring to formulate a concept of Deity based on sentiment or emotion. He was stating a spiritual fact. Even from a human standpoint, as we view the universe, the wonders of earth and sky, we are obliged to concede a certain evidence of law and order, and it is encouraging that in the last few months two eminent physical scientists, Sir James Jeans of Cambridge University, England, and Professor Arthur Compton of the University of Chicago, have declared that their investigations are leading inevitably to the conclusion that the universe is the result and expression of orderly thought. Pope said many years ago that "Order is heaven's first law," and there is plenty of evidence, if we look for it to-day, that a divine Principle or law governs the entire universe in uninterrupted harmony. The presence of an evil force, or creation of the premise that Principle, or God, is both good and evil would inevitably ultimate in the self-destruction of the universe. If that Principle is anything less than intelligent Love are we not doomed to chaos and oblivion?

The Anglo-Saxon term for God is good, and if the sublime cause or law of creation be good, then must it not be exact, right, perfect, orderly, all-harmonious, capable of producing only a beneficent result? Rightness, or righteousness, expresses the very nature of divinity. The attributes of an altogether righteous Principle or law must inevitably be mercy, justice, wisdom, and exactness. Love in Christian Science is neither sweet nor bitter, neither hard nor soft, but is exact, just, and fair. These qualities are as truly loving as gentleness, tenderness, and other characteristics usually associated with Love.

The law of Love is not material, not physical, not tangible to the senses. It is wholly spiritual and mental, and though not discernible to human eyes, we know that it exists. The so-called law of gravitation remains unseen, but we see its effect. The rules and laws of mathematics are this moment operating in perfect harmony everywhere—in the United States, in Siberia, in Java, in the ends of the earth. How much more truly, then, may we say that the law of Love is active and operative, here and everywhere, right now. Man is not called upon to enforce the law of Love, for it is its own enforcement; but he does become conscious of its existence and experience the revelation, in his own consciousness, of its action.

Can you conceive of this world without love, a loveless universe, an earth with love left out? Even the most barbarous savage will reveal in some action that love, the impulse to be kind, is basic in consciousness and there is no one who will not at length respond to its gentle and compelling influence. The atheist will tell you that there is no God, but he will not deny that something impels him to be kind to his neighbor and to love his own child. He may not have analyzed this impulse, but whether he realizes it or not, he is expressing what we in Christian Science understand to be the law of Love, the divine Principle of all existence. We recognize, therefore, that Love exists as thought, as Mind, and that the law of Love is consciously brought into action by right thinking. To-day we see some faint manifestation of Love in man and rejoice; yet think what a world of peace and harmony there might be, if all about us we saw only the evidence of divine Love's impulsion!

There are, no doubt, here to-night people who have experienced much trouble, unhappiness, loss, and pain in their lives, and possibly some one of them may say: "How can I love God, a God who sends sorrow and suffering? How can God be Love, when I have had so much unhappiness? God does not appear very lovable to me." May it not be possible that we are unconsciously holding God responsible for a difficulty which lies with ourselves? Suppose one of us were to break a traffic or speed law with our car, and were to be arrested, fined, and punished. Could we very logically blame our trouble on the law or on the judge who fined us? Does the law itself know anything about the infraction or violation? Not at all. Both the judge and the law are quite impartial. Then where does our difficulty come from? Solely from our ignorance or our willful disobedience or lack of conformity to the law. Is it not clear, then, that in the same way what seems to us punishment, suffering,

and pain, come not through the law of Love, but because our lives and our thinking are out of harmony with the law. The adjustment which needs to take place is not in the law, but in our own attitude toward the law. The law of Love, therefore, even though it seems to chastise, is truly loving. If out of the experience comes a happier and better life. All that is needed is that we shall cease struggling against the law of Love and come into unity with its tender action. Then shall we see God's great purpose fulfilled in our lives. The human sense struggles to work out its own destiny, even while divine Love waits to fulfill every aspiration soaring toward good.

JESUS' UNDERSTANDING OF LOVE

The life-purpose of Christ Jesus was to reveal God's love for man and to demonstrate the inseparable unity that exists between Mind and its idea, between God and man. But the love reflected by the Master was by no means an expression of sentimentality. He perceived fully the nature of evil and sin, and recognized that love does not always consist in being easy or gentle. The man who took a whip to the money-changers in the temple and scathingly denounced the hypocrites of the scribes and Pharisees was no weakling. He understood clearly the kind of wicked thinking with which he was dealing and used the only method which that type of mentality could understand. If his rebuke had been gentle, his enemies would have laughed at him, but evil would have been sown in the hearts of such as this, a chastening that uncovered error and then cast it out. Jesus did the kindest thing he could have done, under the circumstances, to sternly compelled sin to be self-seen and then destroyed. That was Love.

We are all more or less children in believing that discipline, whether from within or without, is not particularly pleasant. We resist and object to what the Bible calls "instruction in righteousness," and yet, whether it be a father who corrects his child or the effort on our part to discipline our own thinking, the purpose is the same—to teach conformity, obedience to Principle. Christian Science teaches us that in order to be scientifically happy we must learn to discipline ourselves and our thinking. And if ourselves, why not our children? Some people will tell you to-day that children should be allowed to express their own individuality and therefore should not be disciplined. This is due wholly to a false sense of what love really is. If we follow the rule that discipline is wrong we would soon have a race of undisciplined people. A proper sense of love on the part of a parent will not destroy the individuality of the child but will help him to replace the impulses of the human will with thinking based on Principle.

Jesus fully understood the law of Love. He lived it and applied it in every act. The Mind that was in Christ Jesus was naturally the consciousness of Love which he embodied and expressed. Who but the most loving of men would have endured the torture of crucifixion and the hatred of the world, except to prove by actual example the dominion of Love's law in human experience? He said, "The words [the ideas or thoughts] that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." These ideas constitute the Christ, the spiritual idea of God. That which comforts, heals, and releases from pain, sin, and death can be nothing less than Love and Christian Science declares the Comforter for each one of us to-day is this healing Christ, the idea of Love, which is asserting itself in the consciousness of mankind.

Jesus did not come to do impossible things, but possible ones. These works, he said, ye shall do and greater, if ye keep my commandments, and the commandments were summed up very simply in the injunction to love God and man. This obviously means to love both God and man understandingly—with a correct concept of what God and man really are.

The charge is often made that Christian Science is altogether too transcendental because it declares that all is Mind and its infinite ideas; because it declares man's true identity as a divine idea in Mind; and yet I call to your attention the fact that the only thing in the world which has any true tangibility and permanence is thought. The entire civilization, all the physicalities and personalities of the time of Christ Jesus have passed away, are gone and forgotten; and yet the thoughts of that great man remain as actual and alive to-day as they were in the first century. He declared the tangible and eternal nature of the Christ, or real man, when he said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words [my thoughts] shall not pass away."

The more one knows of God, the more he knows of the real man. We can only discern man, the real and spiritual man, as our understanding of God grows. The Christ, or spiritual idea of God, influenced and directed every motive and act of the human Jesus. As a man he was perpetually responsive to the call of the Christ, Truth. Describing this call of Christ at the door of consciousness we

read in Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." That same Christ, or true idea of God, can enter your life if you will but open the door and let it in. The Christ in your consciousness will govern every act of your being. It will make you a good man and a successful one, and if you accept it fully, it will glorify your being.

In order to find out exactly what man is like, we turn completely away from the usual human way of thinking. For example: If you ask someone whom he resembles he is very likely to say, "Oh, people say I'm like my mother, and my sister Jane is like my father," meaning, of course, that he and his sister resemble two other human beings called their father and mother. Yet all the teaching in the Bible is constantly endeavoring to point out to us that God alone is our Father, and that He created man exactly like Himself, like Mind, like Love, like Spirit, and this implies something quite different from what we have ordinarily supposed. Indeed Jesus said, "Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." And again, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me."

Now this did not mean to imply that we are to desert or ignore our mothers or fathers or our families, but it plainly indicates that sooner or later we are all called upon to give up that family relationship which is so much of bondage and suffering, and to learn to establish our true individuality as children, or ideas of God. One of the most appealing aspects of Christian Science, is its teaching of the motherhood of God. Clearly, infinite Love, the creator of the universe, can be no less Mother than Father and includes in perfection all the qualities ascribed by us to the highest concept of motherhood. Speaking of this Mrs. Eddy has written in her book: Miscellaneous Writings (p. 151): "God is our Father and our Mother, our Minister and the great Physician: He is man's only real relative on earth and in heaven. David sang, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.' Is not human experience full of heartaches and sorrows, arising from the false belief that we belong to some human beings, or that we have created and possess some individuals whom we call our sons and daughters? In the realm of thought there is a distinction between possession and ownership. We all possess ideas by reflection, but we do not own them. So it may be said that while we possess the love and affection of our children, or of our wives or husbands, we do not own their individuality. Mind maintains the identity of each idea distinct and free through all eternity, and the individuality of one is never lost in another. John declared, 'Now are we the sons of God,' Mind, the sons of God alone. As a result of the false sense of parenthood and creation, mortals have reared a God like unto themselves, a man-like God, instead of worshipping, as the first chapter of Genesis teaches, a God who makes man like Himself."

Last year, while lecturing in a middle-western state, I was introduced by a fine-looking young married man whose father told me the following story: At the age of fourteen this young man was a victim of epilepsy, hopelessly afflicted, so the doctors said. In fact, they had told the parents that the boy could not live long under the existing conditions. The mother was reading Christian Science, and had begun to grasp in a very simple way the true relationship which exists between God and man, but treatment had not been asked for the boy. One night when conditions were unusually bad the mother came downstairs to the father and said, "Now we have tried earnestly to do all we can to save our boy and yet conditions are becoming worse. The doctors say the case is hopeless and that he will die. Then there is just one thing we can do. If there is any power to save him at all it must be something greater than ourselves. We must give that boy back to God. After all, he is God's child. Let us both turn unreservedly to the divine power." My friends, in that hour, in that moment, that boy was healed, completely healed. The disease fell away from him like the ugly dream that it was, and his father told me that there was never again a return of the affliction. Now what had happened? Something had taken place in the thinking of that father and mother, and it was simply that they had let go completely in their own thought of their possessive and fearful sense of ownership. They had given up their belief of parenthood, of being personal creators, and, like Abraham, had placed their child on the altar of God. With fear and the false sense of personal responsibility removed, the law of Love naturally asserted itself and restored that boy to his normal and legitimate status as a child of God.

Christian Science points out that the love we have for those near us

must be transformed and exalted, until it resembles more nearly the Father—Mother Love which God has for his children. If you have some loved one whom you are unconsciously holding in the tightened grasp of fear and anxiety, place him, like those parents, in the care of his Father—Mother God, and be not afraid. You will recall that when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead the Bible says: "He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes; . . . Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go." Christian Science shows us that, sometimes, without our realizing it, we are binding some loved one, or someone perhaps who is not loved, with graveclothes—graveclothes of fear, graveclothes of poverty, graveclothes of disease. If such is the case, then, in the words of Jesus, Christian Science urges, "Loose him, and let him go."

UPLIFTING HUMAN RELATIONSHIP

You will find in the study of Christian Science that spiritual understanding greatly changes our concept of what love really is or should be. For example, it removes a false sense of personal responsibility for other people's problems. It is not always loving to work out another's salvation; indeed in the last analysis one never can. It is not love to make a "leaner" out of our fellowman. Who really wants to be a "leaner"? To go through life on another's efforts? To do this is only to weaken one's own strength. At the same time, in our own problem, will a child learn to apply the principle of mathematics himself? A correct understanding of Love uncovers misdirected efforts to be kind, based on sentiment instead of reason, and enables philanthropy to be the expression of divine Principle, the law of Love.

Then there is the other side to this question of personal relationship. It sometimes happens that one is called upon to assume the care of someone else in the family, a manifest duty, accepted at first with loving willingness, and a desire to serve. Then, after a time possibly, unless the responsibility is placed where it belongs, with divine Mind, the care becomes a burden, and without our being aware of it, fear, weariness, and self-pity have supplanted love. The spirit of service has departed, and only an unhappy sense of duty remains. In the light of Truth we see that service, at the behest of Love, is always joyful and makes all burdens light.

If human relationship were based on the law of Love, it could not be shaken. But what do we see about us? Everywhere the evidences of discord, inharmonious, broken-families and homes. Something must happen in the thinking of human beings that will place friendship and relationship on a firmer footing. Human friendship is a broken reed on which to lean, if divine Love has not transformed it. To be lasting, it must be based on divine Principle. This may at first thought seem difficult to understand. We all love and reach out rather naturally for friendship, and perhaps take a certain satisfaction in the possession of friends and those we love; and yet human life brings many experiences that show us the mistake of personalizing happiness and placing too great dependence on person. Even those who greatly love may fail us, but divine Principle never. Christ Jesus understood and experienced the frailty of human relationship and constantly endeavored to have his followers see that in the measure that they placed God, and the love of good, before a human sense of possession they gained immeasurably, and did not even lose the love of friends and those near and dear to them. To Peter he said: "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's; but he shall receive an hundredfold now at this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."

Who among us does not know that the greatest sorrows of the human heart often come from those nearest us, and back of the sorrows, my friends, lie the diseases, the suffering, and the pain. Some doctors recognize this to-day, and earnestly endeavor to uncover the secret sorrow, the repressed fear or hate, which they themselves will tell us has engendered poison in the human body. But you cannot cut out sorrow and hate with the surgeon's knife. You cannot amputate fear. If fear, hate, worry, and grief, afflicting though they are, are the root causes for disease, then there is but one way to get rid of them—replace them with right thinking, thoughts of love, forbearance, and forgiveness. Mrs. Eddy has written on page 454 of "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," "Human hate has no legitimate mandate and no kingdom. Love is enthroned. That evil or matter has neither intelligence nor power, is the doctrine of absolute Christian Science, and this is the great truth which

strips all disguise from error." But someone may say: "How can I get rid of my hurt and grief? I have been greatly injured and unjustly treated." We recognize that sometimes it seems like a most difficult thing to unsee hate or unkindness. Indeed, they seem very real, and yet Christian Science declares there is no difference, as far as what we see, between the evidence of a sick man or of a hating, unkind man. Neither one is a creation of God, divine Love. Each is the victim of a delusion, and the man who is being impelled to hate, to be unkind or unjust to his brother, is truly in a much more deplorable mental state than the one who seems to be sick, and needs that love which Christ Jesus expressed when he said of those who were crucifying him, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

WAY OF HEALING

Christian Science shows us that the way of deliverance, from both disease and hate, is the way of perfect, exact, and spiritual thinking. This was the way Jesus taught, and Mrs. Eddy has written in her textbook (Science and Health, p. 476): "Jesus beheld in Science the perfect man, who appeared to him where sinning mortal man appears to mortals. In this perfect man the Savior saw God's own likeness, and this correct view of man healed the sick. Thus Jesus taught that the kingdom of God is intact, universal, and that man is pure and holy."

When a man declares, "I want to be better," his mind is set on the way to want to be the image, the reflection of divine Love, and what higher aim can anyone have than this? Keeping this ideal in mind, he begins to express those qualities in thought and character which are eventually manifested as spiritual power.

In Christian Science we see that everyone is entitled to immediate and effective release from bondage. Love knows no postponement, no delay. Does it take time to make four times four equal sixteen? No, the result is instantaneous. So we can know that the law of Love operates instantly and unfailingly to deliver us from the false beliefs, and misconceptions of life and body, that are trying to enslave us. Our work is to adjust our thinking, to bring it into harmony with the law. Christian Science declares that there is nothing wrong with the real man. The process of Christian Science treatment is not that of changing a sick man into a healthy one, or a diseased body into a well one. God's man is already well and free. It is our privilege to see and know it. Consistent knowing of the truth, and certain expectancy of its realization, will dispel the fog or mist of mortal thinking. As in a fog the landscape remains unchanged, even though it be for a time obscured, so, in Christian Science, the real man remains perfect, and has always been so through all eternity. Mrs. Eddy has written on page 242 of "The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany": "You can never demonstrate spirituality until you declare yourself to be immortal and understand that you are so. Christian Science is absolute; it is neither behind the point of perfection nor advancing towards it; it is at this point and must be practised therefrom. Unless you fully perceive that you are the child of God, hence perfect, you have no Principle to demonstrate and no rule for its demonstration."

OVERCOMING FEAR

Have you ever stopped to consider that fear is nearly always for the future, the fear of impending trouble? Men are always afraid of something that possibly is going to happen. Many of you will recall the story of the very old man who told his assembled family that he had had many fears in his life, but most of them for things which never came to pass.

Fear comes to every one of us as a temptation to believe in evil as a real power, as an active force in creation. Theoretically, the majority of the people in this audience will say, "There is just one God, and that one is infinite and omnipotent." But in order to get rid of fear effectually, such a statement must be lifted out of the realm of theory, and be recognized as fact in our thinking, and unswervingly held to. Christian Science does not meet the terror and apprehension of the sick and unfortunate with a cold abstract declaration. "Now, don't be afraid." There is a reason for the hope within us. In order to remove fear effectually, we need to know, in a measure at least, why we need not be afraid.

Is the Almighty, the omnipotent, confronted with another power called evil? If so, Almighty is a misnomer. Is infinite, omnipresent good sharing that presence with other power, destructive in nature? If so, there is no infinite, no omnipresence. The aliveness and oneness of God precludes the existence of anything unlike Himself, unlike the infinite perfection. Love has no consciousness of anything unlike or outside its own harmonious being. Would you be afraid, could you be afraid, if you really knew that God is Love, right here and everywhere, and that you cannot get out of His all-encircling presence? Could you be afraid if you knew that