

A Lecture on Christian Science

Christian Science: The Science of Existence by Dr. Hendrik J. de Lange, C.S.B. of New York City

Member of the Board of Lectureship of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts

A lecture on Christian Science, entitled "Christian Science: The Science of Existence," will be given in the Washington School Auditorium this evening, March 26th, 1942, under the auspices of First Church of Christ, Scientist in this city.

The lecturer will speak substantially as follows:

According to Christian Science the Biblical declaration that God is One and All reveals the basic truth of existence. Thus Christian Science challenges the increasing complexities and complications of material sense testimony.

The understanding of Christian Science as the Science of Existence has practical value in daily life.

Mrs. Eddy's discovery shows forth the necessity of being willing to reject erroneous modes of thinking.

Simultaneously one has to be conscious of the true or spiritual sense of existence. In this manner, the healthy and happy simplicity of Life as it really is becomes one's natural experience.

Existence Mental Activity. The possibility of such a radical change is understood when one recognizes that existence is primarily a mental activity.

Early in human history, the mental nature of existence has been glimpsed. Plato with his idealism was somewhat aware of it.

In the seventeenth century, Descartes epitomized this truth in his well-known "cogito ergo sum" (I think; therefore I am). In modern days, Edding-ton with his "selective subjectivism" is coming ever closer to the same conclusion.

Mrs. Eddy describes the basic truth of existence in the following words (Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, p. 375): "Divine metaphysics, as revealed to spiritual understanding, shows clearly that all is Mind, and that Mind is God omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience—that is, all power, all presence, all Science. Hence all is in reality the manifestation of Mind."

The author of the textbook here quoted came to these fundamental conclusions in a truly spiritual fashion—by pure inspiration, not by mere human reasoning.

There never existed a more genuinely intuitive woman than Mrs. Eddy. She embodied spiritual intuition and trustingly followed it up with penetrating perspicacity and loving thoroughness.

This accounts for her being so inspired to Christian Scientists and progressive in her scientific conclusions and demonstration. Her healing was the result of spiritually perceiving the true nature of existence, regardless of material appearances.

Her unselfish character evidenced itself in discovering that spiritual healing was not exceptionally a good fortune, but in accordance with divine law and thereby available for all.

In order to establish among mankind this healing and saving knowledge of existence as it really is, Mrs. Eddy founded and became the Leader of a great movement with a Church built on the Rock, Christ, that might serve the purpose for which she intended it.

She wrote and revised her foremost work giving the complete system of Christian Science, and called her book "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures." This textbook together with the Bible she ordained as the impersonal pastor of the Christian Science churches throughout the world.

By her tireless efforts and persistent work, humanity is now in a position to relinquish its false beliefs and to comprehend existence as Science or divine knowledge. In this progressive understanding Mrs. Eddy has advanced the standard of living so effectively that those who abide by the rules of Christian Science are naturally healthy, prosperous, and in possession of that happiness which cannot fluctuate.

Thinking of existence as personal in the ordinary ways of the world, one ascribes reality to millions of human minds with all the ensuing contradictions, fears, and enmities. Mrs. Eddy's divine discernment revealed that God is the source of all power, which one can understand and utilize regardless of what appear as persons or personal minds.

This revelation came about because she saw the impersonal and scientific nature of existence. She understood God as divine Principle, Love, perpetuating itself as self-manifestation. Reasoning from Cause to Effect. In Christian Science one thinks from cause to effect. The nature of the one primal cause determines what is true and real as effect.

What ever appears as contrary to the nature of the one cause must be classified as untrue and unreal, however true and real it may seem to be from within its own misconception. Hence the conclusion in Science and Health (p. 127) that "everything entitled to a classification as truth, or Science, must be comprised in a knowledge or understanding of God."

One's faculty to discern the ideas of infinity, eternity, oneness, perfection, aliveness—however dim and restricted this perception may seem to be—shows that these ideas exist. And their existence points to the fact that they must have a source. The nature of this source, must be infinity, eternity, oneness, perfection, aliveness—in other words this source is God. It is impossible to assume that infinity contains matter; that oneness contains duality; that perfection contains imperfection; that aliveness contains lack.

For this reason, matter, time, duality, imperfection, lack—and thereby sin, sickness, and death—are necessarily to be classified as unreal and untrue.

For the one who has been habitually thinking about himself as a personal person, the dawning understanding of the unreality of material sense testimony has a revolutionary effect. He begins to discern that the only correct way to think of himself must be in terms of divine ideas expressing divine Principle.

Otherwise, he ascribes to himself something unreal and untrue. Divine Principle is always expressing itself in direct accordance with its own divine and perfect character—that which divinely or truly exists. This leads to the conclusion that whatever is real and true concerning oneself is to be found exclusively in divine knowledge or Science.

Man's Real Selfhood. Christian Science refutes material sense testimony with its belief about man as being equipped with a sinfully mortal and imprisoned in a destructible material body. To man is assigned the exalted status of direct, divine manifestation or idea. In this sense, the textbook (Science and Health, p. 475) defines man as "the compound idea of God including all right ideas."

God, divine Mind, the one and All-Being, is conscious of itself only in this self-consciousness, Mind expresses itself as man.

Understanding the divine reality of one's selfhood or existence, one can be freed from everything which does not belong to divine reality. This is done by consistently, directly, subjectively living—that is, being conscious of the true definition of oneself. The liberating effect is the result of this identification with divine power. Christ Jesus furnishes the example. His words and works indicate the method. Although sometime too casually quoted, his declaration, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," has lost nothing of its practical value and pungency.

He did not belittle Truth's aliveness and directness of effect by advising one to merely know about the Truth without the use of a mortal or human mind. The specific function of Truth's illumination is such a clarifying, dynamic presence that no darkening and interfering falsehood can suggest or maintain itself.

The belief of a personal or human mind is seen to be the basic disturbing factor. Instead of the belief that this so-called mind is indispensable for human improvement becomes "the middle wall of partition," spoken of by St. Paul—that is to say, an impediment to the directness of experiencing one's real, divine existence.

The Messiah's Mission. Christ Jesus' nature and mission were better understood by Mrs. Eddy than by anyone else. She comprehended that his mission consisted in breaking down that "middle wall of partition." The revelation of God as divine Principle made her aware of the fact that the works of the Master were natural and scientific in the highest sense of those words, although miraculous to human comprehension.

Before Mrs. Eddy's day, God had been mainly considered as a mighty Person, bestowing upon Jesus and a few others the exceptional gift of healing. The understanding of God as divine Principle means that the primal cause never could bestow a personal munificence. Consequently, whatever takes place in accordance with the nature of God, is fundamental, impersonal, and scientific. It must be the utilization of divine power on the part of the one who has awakened to that possibility. It is not divine power stooping down to a person in order to impart itself. Rather is it that which humanly appears as a person utilizing itself of divine power.

As a result of this, it is evident that the works of the Master are to be renewedly shown forth whenever Christ-knowledge prevails and to the extent it is emulated. Christ Jesus' uniqueness is apparent in that he has been unsurpassed, in his healing works. Accordingly, Science and Health states (p. 473): "Jesus is the name of the man who, more than all other men, has presented Christ, the true idea of God, healing the sick and the sinning and destroying

the power of death." The textbook (p. 332) defines Christ as "the divine image and likeness, dispelling the illusions of the senses; the Way, the Truth, and the Life, healing the sick and casting out evils, destroying sin, disease, and death."

The indisputable fact of divine reality as infinite Truth and perpetual Life, comes to humanity or the human sense of existence as the way of progressive discernment. At first it seems to be merely a promise of good to come, heralded by the prophets as the Messiah. Then it appears as a person who comforts and heals. Finally, in full-orbed glory, it is promulgated as the Christ Science or Science of Christianity. But all the while the Messiah's mission remains the same: the redemption of humanity. Thus the Messiah appeared first as a promise, then as a person, and finally as Science, the Science of Existence.

According to the Old Testament, salvation looked like a far-off future possibility. According to the New Testament, salvation was often interpreted as a belief in a personal Jesus. In terms of Christian Science, salvation is "Life, Truth, and Love understood and demonstrated as supreme over all; sin, sickness, and death destroyed." (Science and Health, p. 593). Thus humanity is now being provided with a scientific system which is freeing it from all ills, sins, discords, fears, and limitations. This entails the discernment of existence as it really is. It means the refusal to accept a false sense of self, consequently the recognition of true selfhood as the impersonal, ever-present Christ.

You and I are able to acknowledge this Christ and are capable of showing it forth. This takes place by ceasing from "man whose breath is in his nostrils"—that is, by refusing to think of oneself from a personal point of view. Instead of such superficiality, we must behold existence from out its cause, and we exist identically ourselves with the divine ideas thus revealed. We have to affirm as true for ourselves whatever is true of the nature of God or Truth, and we have to deny as untrue whatever is not in accordance with the divine nature.

No Identity for Mortal Suggestions. It does not make the least difference whether the false suggestion comes as "I have a problem," or as "his difficulty," or "in trouble." In no case must the suggestion be accepted. As long as I think that I know the Truth, but at the same time continue to admit that "he" or "they," or "humanity at large" has difficulties, I have indirectly admitted a very undesirable error, impeding my own progress. Then one becomes less discriminating between what seems to be one's own problems and those of others, the oft-repeated complaint that it is so much easier to help somebody else in Christian Science than oneself will not be any more heard. It is never one's own problem; it is always a problem of the erroneous human concept—the human concept being a problem in itself.

On the basis of the aliveness, oneness, and reality of divine Mind, error or mortal mind, so called, has no presence, power, reality, entity, or identity. This leads to the conclusion that all there is to error is its admission and the admission a mistake. When I stop admitting error to the extent that I do not even any more accept the belief that something else admits it, in that ratio this is the end of that error. There is encouragement in knowing that since error or evil never really started wholly having no origin, since it is wholly fictitious and negative—its end is always now.

Treatment Utilization of Truth. The thought activity here indicated is the Christian Science prayer or treatment. Briefly, it may be defined as the utilization of divine power, eliminating whatever suggestions may seem to have placed themselves between oneself and his primal source, or preventing such erroneous occurrences.

Affirmation of the truth and denial of error constitute the treatment. Although humanly appearing as the declaration or thought of a person, the firmness of the truth is really Truth expressing itself. Error is always self-denied. In "Miscellaneous Writings" by Mary Baker Eddy, this illuminating statement appears (p. 259): "The consciousness of good has no consciousness of knowledge of evil; and evil is not a quality to be known or eliminated by good."

The fact of the aliveness of Truth makes possible the nothingness of error. Nevertheless, if not all, error would have entity and reality, consequently it could not be regarded as nothing. Christian Science treatment fulfills the function of divesting error of the possibility of perpetuating itself.

The affirmation of the truth should have immediate healing effect. And it has this effect when it takes place in the way it is so incomparably set forth in Science and Health (p. 411): "If Spirit or the power of divine Love bear witness to the truth, this is the ultimatum, the scientific way, and the healing is instantaneous."

In this affirmation of the truth, one has the right basis for denying whatsoever is not true—whenever the situation requires it—that is to say, if the healing should not be instantaneous. Nevertheless, the affirmation constitutes in itself the most potent denial. The denial or argument is always a human auxiliary. It serves a purpose in order that the treatment may appear as the patient's own work, clearly understood and felt that in the infinitude of real Being all is well.

Healing Explained. All real Being is Mind; therefore the healing in Christian Science effects a removal of false beliefs which, externalized evidence, themselves either as diseases of the human body or as discordant conditions by the way of family relations, business difficulties, and world problems. Should the healing not readily follow the treatment, it might be well to ponder statement made by Mrs. Eddy in

"Retrospection and Introspection" (p. 54): "Millions are believing in God, or good, without bearing the fruits of goodness, not having reached its Science."

Let us take a case of disease. For the sake of simplification, the false beliefs assumed to be the source of disease may be divided into three groups. The first group pertains to life, the second to body, and the third to health.

As far as human sense is concerned, life belongs to the material body and is dependent upon it. Life is supposed to start with the birth of a material man and to end with his death. In Christian Science, this is recognized to be a misapprehension. In accordance with Christ Jesus' declaration that to know God right is life eternal, life is identified with God. Indeed, the Christian Science textbook states (p. 468) that Life is a synonym for God, God being All, there is but one Life, inevitable the only Life expressed as man. Let us, then, think of life, not any more as pertaining to the finite frailties of a material entity, but as the infinite perpetuation of divine Principle itself.

Again, body is humanly regarded as connected with matter, which is nothing but objectified limitation—the expression or embodiment of mortal, so-called, mind. Obviously, this is the false concept about that which body divinely is as Principle's expression or embodiment of itself. St. Paul's statement coincides with this when he wrote his fellow Christians in Corinth that they were "the temple of the living God." This temple or body is immune to disease, disintegration, death, and decay.

It consists in knowing oneself as divine Being. Being aware of this divine knowledge as real existence, as body, is health, strength, and thereby regeneration to what is humanly considered to be body. Why? Because it lessens fear, the most disintegrating of all evil influences. Also because it removes the limitations attached to a false concept, thus making it possible for one to take a heavy load of human life and property, but also threatens to wipe out civilization with its rightful human liberties laboriously won in previous centuries.

Mass Hypnotism Exposed. Hypnotism of the masses seems to be the medium through which certain nations are made the tool for conquering and subjugating other nations. Speech, writing, radio are marshaled to impress these masses with special slogans repeated ad nauseam. Hereby, freedom of thought is impaired and many become victims, surrendering their mental independence and liberty.

One of the methods used by those who believe in this mesmeric influence is propaganda. It may be remarked as an interesting instance of human prophetic and intuitive wisdom, that Mrs. Eddy stayed away from the use of propaganda altogether. The word "propaganda" is mentioned only once in all of her published writings. The sentence in which this word occurs is worth while quoting: "To demonstrate Science and its pure monotheism—one God, one Christ, no idolatry, no human propaganda—it is essential to understand the spiritual idea" (The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany, p. 303).

One misunderstands grossly the spiritual idea by thinking of oneself as a human person realizing the truth among millions of other persons. One has hereby opened his mentality for propaganda and its mass hypnotism. It is evident that a merely human method for obliterating the belief of mass hypnotism is insufficient from the start. The only thing it can do is to offer a counter-suggestion. Naturally, that is not a lasting and dependable remedy. It does not eradicate the false claim.

Science Protective and Preventive. The scientific way of eradication—on the basis of evil's nothingness—has been explained by Mrs. Eddy in the following statement (No and Yes, p. 36): "The human Jesus had a resort to his higher self and relation to the Father, and there could find rest from the unreal trials in the conscious reality and royalty of his being—holding the mortal as unreal, think about yourself as a person. Know, therefore, that this is all wrong. Know that you have the ability, through the understanding of Christian Science, to exclude this falsity, or, better still, to preclude it on the basis of its nothingness. All there is to man is all-inclusive infinite Mind manifesting itself. Outside of Mind, no reality exists. Evil claims to be now and here, but it always is nowhere."

The mortal sense of existence, being merely a suggested absence of divine good, the consequent belief in the reality of evil, is continually scourged by fear in different disguises. Sometimes it has been the fear that the world would come to an end. Particularly around the year 1000 A. D. this suggestion prevailed. A mistaken sense of millennium had the Christian world in jitters. All earthly existence was expected to end. People sold, gave away, and squandered their possessions.

Everything being mental, the millennium is a state of consciousness wherein there is no more identification with any form of error and wherein there is complete identification with the divine—absolute scientific existence. The millennium, contrary to its name, has really no connection with time. It is the understanding of Truth, divine Love; the "kingdom of heaven" which Christ Jesus proclaimed "is within you." It is always now and here for those who know enough to realize it. And, by its very nature, real existence has to be eternal. It has nothing inside of itself that could stop it, and there is nothing outside of it.

At other periods of human history fear seemed to prevail in the form of certain diseases, such as plague and smallpox. It appeared to overwhelm vast sections of mankind with disastrous results. Nowadays, the same mortal fear has assumed a different disguise, far from unfamiliar to mankind but more gruesome and destructive than ever. War is the name of this senseless belief. It not only claims to take a heavy toll of human life and property, but also threatens to wipe out civilization with its rightful human liberties laboriously won in previous centuries.

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and the divine as real." On the same page is further explained how "this retreat from material to spiritual selfhood" enabled the Master to triumph over every form of evil, death included.

The understanding that one's true selfhood is divine idea, here and now instead of dwelling in the attitude of trying and hoping to realize this fact in the future makes Christian Science operative as the mighty preventive of everything ungodlike. One sees that the divine consciousness, which seemed formerly to be a spiritual retreat in which a human sense of self found shelter, is really one's direct spiritual, and only selfhood or existence. "Existence separate from divinity, Science explains as impossible" (Science and Health, p. 322).

In this way of thinking, false suggestions are prevented from asserting themselves as one's experience. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews declared that Jesus was in all points tempted, yet without sin. Does not this mean that although mgical mind suggestions came to Jesus as to others, his immediate detection of such suggestions as being neither his body nor his thoughts prevented them from having any physical or moral effect? His spiritual integrity remained intact.

Church the Consciousness of Truth and Love. Spiritual integrity makes it possible to understand more clearly the mental nature of all existence. Thus it is discerned that church primarily is a spiritual idea, although humanly seen as a material building and organization. When Peter recognized Christ Jesus' real nature, by declaring that he was "the Christ, the Son [consciousness] of the living God," the Master inferred that this right idea which Peter had voiced was the Rock, or spiritual foundation, whereon Jesus would build his church (see Matthew 16:16-18).

Mrs. Eddy defines "Church" in Science and Health (p. 583) as "the structure of Truth and Love; what ever rests upon and proceeds from divine Principle." This structure evidently is the Rock of which the Master spoke and for that reason we can elucidate our spiritual sense of church by thinking of it as the consciousness of Truth and Love. This consciousness has necessarily to rest upon and to proceed from divine Principle. And why is this so? Because it is not human thought going up to God.

When thought begins to proceed naturally from divine universal Principle, Love, it becomes possible to recognize that the whole array of mortal mind pictures—from a miserable, fearful person to the agony of nations in a deadly struggle—is the most preposterous dream ever dressed. Indeed, all there is to it is a gigantic illusion staged by the father of all frauds—the devil, alias mortal mind.

The way to help the world and what claims to be one's human self is to stay out of the human mortal, deceptive dream by living church in all its spontaneous power and loving tenderness. Refuse to think of this as arduous or time-requiring. The joy and Science of real Being is ever present. It is here and now for your instant acknowledgment and fruition. It means the satisfaction of of spiritual inclusion—including not only those right ideas about which the material body, the person, and his personal relationships and conditions are the finite concept, but also those right ideas about which the nations and races of the world and their relationships are the mortal misconception.

The Movement's Universal Scope. The understanding and consequent embodying of the blessedness of universal Love constitutes a vital part of one's qualifications for membership in The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts, and in one of its numerous branch churches or societies throughout the world. With such a well-prepared and well-equipped membership, the Christian

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