

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE LAW OF PROGRESS STATES LECTURE

The following lecture, "Christian Science—God's Law of Progress," was delivered at the Holly theatre last evening by Judge Frederick C. Hill, C.S., of Los Angeles, member of the board of lecturers of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Mass.

In presenting the subject of Christian Science to you I shall make an earnest endeavor to present its object and purpose from the standpoint of what it is and how it operates, as distinguished from the religion which it often erroneously believed to be. I can think of no better introduction, in presenting the motive and purpose of Christian Science, than to refer to a public declaration recently made by a clergyman who, in the course of a sermon, is reported to have said, "Christian Science sprang directly out of the Holy Scriptures, for Christ introduced healing and the driving out of superstition in his own day." From this declaration it should be plainly apparent that the religious world is beginning to recognize that Christian Science is a religion; and that the fundamental purpose of this religion is to reinstate the essential elements of primitive Christianity, including the element of spiritual healing.

How Achieved
The object and purpose of Christian Science may be recognized by many thinking people who do not subscribe fully to its doctrine, and the question may be asked, Can these desirable ends be attained in this day and age? In answer to this query it may be helpful to consider some of the positive statements which we find in the Bible and which are recognized as truths by all religious people.

Solomon, who has been declared to be the wise man, writing with reference to the Christian experience, has declared, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he," plainly indicating that the mental status is the key, or the index, to the man. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, has declared, "Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God," further indicating that there are states and stages of transformation and that these transformations are wrought about the mind, through education, and reformation of the thinking.

The Galilean Prophet, Christ Jesus, once said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Since the time of that important declaration, many have asked the questions: What is truth? Can truth be discerned, interpreted, and intelligently applied? The answer to the last question is positive and direct. The truth is discovered, interpreted, and applied in proportion as an individual is transformed by his thought to conform to the law of spiritual, scientific thinking.

In the material universe we observe the operation of that which mankind has been pleased to define as the law of gravitation, by which humanity is made up of individuals bound together and held by the various phases and codes of man-made systems of law. We further observe that in the universe about us there is in active operation a force which has been termed the law of gravitation. We also observe that which has been termed the law of numbers, and the law of harmony. Would it not then be reasonable to assume that as mankind observes about them these various phases and forms of material expression, there is a fundamental spiritual law by which man lives, moves, and has his being? We not only affirm this to be a reasonable and normal assumption, but that it is a provable fact—that there is a spiritual law of man's being. Hence, there must be, there is, a rational way by which men can discern, interpret, and intelligently apply this fundamental law to the end that they can solve every distressing problem of mortal existence. Throughout the world there are hundreds and thousands of individuals who through the study of Christian Science have succeeded and are interpreting and applying the law. Hence, in this lecture it is our purpose to discuss and present the subject of Christian Science from the standpoint that it interprets God's law of progress.

An Essential Element

Human law has been defined to be a governing rule of conduct prescribed by a supreme power, commanding that which is right, and prohibiting that which is wrong. This law is but the attempt of mankind to pattern infinite, divine law. I ask you to pause and consider for a moment. That which is right, or necessary is good. And that which is both right and necessary is truth. When we apply this logical line of right thinking we shall at once discover that there is a law of God, of good, and that this supreme law finds expression in a positive command to observe that which is right, that which is good, and that which is the truth. Hence, just to the extent that men discover and obediently follow the law of man's being, they will have discovered the truth which Christ Jesus declared and demonstrated centuries ago that mankind should know. And the knowledge of this truth will make us free from every one of the deluded beliefs of the human mind.

It would be very reasonable to assume that there are many individuals before me at this time, or who will read this lecture, who are not Christian Scientists and who do not practice its religious teachings. We welcome this occasion and this opportunity to help such to form right opinions and right conclusions regarding the religious teaching.

There are certain historical facts connected with the Christian Science organization which should be thoroughly understood by every thinking individual.

Christian Science: Its Inception

Christian Science is a discovery. It is the discovery of an absolute, provable law. This discovery was made in 1866, by a gentle, New England woman, Mary Baker Eddy. She named her discovery "Christian Science." She defined Christian Science as "the law of God, the law of good, interpreting and demonstrating the true Principle and rule of universal harmony" (Fundamental Divine Science, p. 1).

After her discovery, in 1866, Mrs. Eddy submitted her discovery to proof. As a result, she observed that just in proportion as she understood the true Principle and rule of universal harmony, the more she was elevated and transformed, that this transformation of her thinking was expressed in the enjoyment of a better sense of health, happiness, peace, and contentment. Accordingly, she had a deep desire to share her discovery with the world. She wrote and published her book, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," which she designated the Christian Science textbook. This book is not a Bible, but it is just what the Bible is and assists in discovering, interpreting, and applying the healing spiritual truths set forth in the great English classic, the King James Bible.

Mary Baker Eddy was a great woman. She was born in 1821. Up to the time that she was past fifty-four years of age her life was spent substantially as the lives of many other New England women. In 1875, the first edition of her book, "Science and Health," was published. It became public property. It was read by thoughtful people throughout the world. From the first it challenged the attention of thoughtful readers.

It is now more than fifty years since this book became public property. The interest of the reading public therein continues unabated. The interest in this book has grown by leaps and bounds, until it has become recognized and declared by many as the most important production among religious writings, with the exception of the Holy Bible.

The reading and the study of this book has inspired faith and confidence in the teachings of the Bible. It has brought elevation and transformation of thought to many, and there are hundreds and thousands of individuals throughout the world who have been so transformed in thought that this transformation has brought about the expression of happiness, peace, and contentment. These individuals owe their present existence on this plane of human experience to the transformation wrought in their lives by her discovery and the gift of Christian Science to humanity.

One such instance of transformation that came under the personal observation of the speaker is that of the wife of a clergyman, who had become so ill in mind and body that it was necessary for her protection to be committed to one of the state institutions in Illinois.

A niece of the patient, who had experienced healing in Christian Science, interested her practitioner in this case. At this time the patient had been an inmate of the institution for about ten years. Through the faithful work of her practitioner and her niece, who daily read to her from the Bible and the Christian Science textbook, at the expiration of six months she was healed and left the institution. At the end of one year she was discharged, cured, and returned to her rights as a citizen and to the care and management of her property.

After her healing through the study and application of Christian Science she became the librarian of the public library in a city of considerable size, and later the Second Reader of the Christian Science church in that place.

In 1879, Mrs. Eddy organized a church; to use her words, "... a church designed to commemorate the word and works of our Master, which should reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing" (Manual, p. 17).

It is now more than fifty years since the establishment of this church. The Christian Science movement has developed and progressed until there are now more than twenty-six hundred branch church organizations throughout the civilized world. And every branch organization is established upon the same fundamental foundation—an earnest endeavor to reinstate the essential elements of primitive Christianity and spiritual healing.

In 1908, Mrs. Eddy established The Christian Science Monitor, an international daily newspaper, which from the standpoint of clean journalism is regarded by many as the highest standard in the newspaper world.

I ask you to pause just for a moment, consider the measure, or necessity is good, and that which is both right and necessary is truth. When we apply this logical line of right thinking we shall at once discover that there is a law of God, of good, and that this supreme law finds expression in a positive command to observe that which is right, that which is good, and that which is the truth. Hence, just to the extent that men discover and obediently follow the law of man's being, they will have discovered the truth which Christ Jesus declared and demonstrated centuries ago that mankind should know. And the knowledge of this truth will make us free from every one of the deluded beliefs of the human mind.

Medicine—Science—Theology

When Christian Science, as a religious teaching, was given to the world, it challenged the thoughtful attention of three separate and distinct modes of human thought.

By reason of the endeavor to reinstate spiritual healing, Christian Science is a challenge to the religious world. The clergy at once became interested to know why the word "Christian" should be connected with the word "science"; hence, we have Christian Science, a distinct challenge to the medical, scientific, and religious worlds of thought, as constituted fifty years ago.

I feel quite safe in assuming that there are many individuals who may not agree with the theology or the teaching of Christian Science who will readily subscribe to the truth of two fundamental statements made by Mrs. Eddy in the Christian Science textbook, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures." She declares, "Progress is born of experience" (p. 296); and "Progress is the law of God" (p. 293). If it is admitted that these are true statements, then there is no escapeable conclusion, namely, that the only progress that has ever been made is born of, and is the result of, past experience. Hence, humanity has been and is continually ascending to higher levels of thought and action, until today we are on the plane of unfoldment and development that is occupied by those who lived fifty years ago. And there is another conclusion equally definite and positive, that those who live fifty years from this time will continue to "Progress" (born of experience, thought and action, and will thereby evidence the law of progress.

These conclusions are not mere idle statements; they are provable facts. Let us briefly review the progress and development in the medical, scientific, and religious worlds of today, and then consider their status of fifty years ago.

Many of you are familiar with the fact that in the treatment of the diseased conditions of humanity, the medical world of fifty years ago failed to recognize thought as a factor in producing disease, and consequently gave little heed or attention to the transformation of thinking as an element in healing bodily conditions. By this we do not wish to be understood as stating that none of our medical practitioners recognized thought as a factor, but that the traditional sense or understanding of God as a superman or as a corporal Jehovah is not the vision or view of God as presented by Christian Science.

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There is a divine Principle, or spiritual law which governs and controls man individually and collectively. Through the understanding of, and obedience to, the demands of this Principle, we can result in progress. However, when ignorant of, or disobedient to, this spiritual law, he pays the penalty therefor through discord, want, sorrow, and woe, and thus man is compelled to make progress through direct experience of the following: the fundamental teachings of Christian Science. In the Christian Science textbook Mrs. Eddy directs attention to this scientific regeneration as follows: "Either here or hereafter, suffering or Science must deliver each step of progress through the spiritualization of thought and action. Just in proportion as we enlarge our conception of God as divine Mind or Spirit, we ascend in the understanding that man is spiritual, and not material. We thereby prove to ourselves individually that we pass from an illusive belief of life in matter to an intelligent recognition of the true idea of life in Mind, that we attain this understanding not through the experience called death, but through the proof of the understanding of Life spiritually." (The Christian Science textbook, p. 17.)

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In this connection, let me ask my hearers and readers to do a very simple but sensible thing. Assuming that you are all engaged in the "race" of life, let me ask you to pause for a definite, or a specific period of time and devote this specific period to an earnest endeavor to catch a glimpse of God as Mind. Exclude from your thinking everything that does not bring the order out of chaos and that which is right, that which is good, that which is holy, that which is true. In your thinking, rise to the understanding that infinite Mind is infinite intelligence and as such is omnipotent, the only power there is; and an infinite Mind, the only reality, truth, knowledge, understanding, is there expressed as the omniscience of God. Realize that infinite Mind is here and everywhere, now and at all times; that infinite Mind is omnipresent. In this brief outline today we are on the plane of unfoldment and development that is occupied by those who lived fifty years ago. And there is another conclusion equally definite and positive, that those who live fifty years from this time will continue to "Progress" (born of experience, thought and action, and will thereby evidence the law of progress.

God the Lawmaker
We have assured you that man lives by divine decree, and that there is a spiritual law of his being. We have been endeavoring to present to you God's law so that you may understand that law in human affairs. However, it should be plainly apparent to the thinking individual that before we can apply a basic law we must have some right knowledge and understanding of the nature and the character of the Lawmaker. Hence, it should be our fundamental purpose to discern the true nature and the true character of God, the infinite creator and the author of spiritual law and order.

In this connection we affirm positively and emphatically that the traditional sense or understanding of God as a superman or as a corporal Jehovah is not the vision or view of God as presented by Christian Science.

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The inquirer may further say: But I have a mind of my own. My mind is a separate, distinct entity. My mind is a mortal, material human mind. Is this mind God? If so, am I God? You surely will not contend that "my mortal, material human mind is the infinite divine Mind. If so, that would make man God. You are quite right in both conclusions. The mortal, material human sense which you call your mind is that defined by Paul as the "carnal mind," which he declares is "enmity against God" and not "subject to the law of God."

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There is no matter-stuff—a reversal of the material position. What do we observe with reference to the changed attitude toward Christian Science in the religious world? The clergyman of fifty years ago formulated two very definite conclusions regarding this religious teaching. First it was a sure road to perdition and destruction—and that it was the teaching of atheism, because it was said that Christian Science did not set forth the true nature and the character of God.

As evidence of a changing and tolerant attitude of the clergy of today, I called your attention at the beginning of this lecture to the declaration of one of our clergymen, that Christian Science sprang directly out of the Holy Scriptures. He further said, "Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, the Founder of Christian Science, did much good in the world, for she liberated many thousands of people from the fear of death and the ravages of disease." A president of one of our institutions of learning has declared that the Christian Science churches are filled today, due to the fact that Christian Science teaches that there is a living God, thus restoring the argument to this religious teaching is destructive or atheistic in character.

We have brought this evidence to your attention, not for the purpose of confusing your thinking, or seeking to impress you that the medical world has recognized Christian Science as a healing agency, not for the purpose of having you believe that the scientific world has recognized the essential elements of true science therein, and not for the purpose of trying to convince you that the religious world has adopted the teachings of the teachings of Christian Science. It has been submitted for your thoughtful consideration solely for the purpose of causing you to see the truth of the statements quoted from the Christian Science textbook, that "Progress is born of experience" (p. 296); and "Progress is the law of God" (p. 293).

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In this connection, let me ask my hearers and readers to do a very simple but sensible thing. Assuming that you are all engaged in the "race" of life, let me ask you to pause for a definite, or a specific period of time and devote this specific period to an earnest endeavor to catch a glimpse of God as Mind. Exclude from your thinking everything that does not bring the order out of chaos and that which is right, that which is good, that which is holy, that which is true. In your thinking, rise to the understanding that infinite Mind is infinite intelligence and as such is omnipotent, the only power there is; and an infinite Mind, the only reality, truth, knowledge, understanding, is there expressed as the omniscience of God. Realize that infinite Mind is here and everywhere, now and at all times; that infinite Mind is omnipresent. In this brief outline today we are on the plane of unfoldment and development that is occupied by those who lived fifty years ago. And there is another conclusion equally definite and positive, that those who live fifty years from this time will continue to "Progress" (born of experience, thought and action, and will thereby evidence the law of progress.

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In this connection, let me ask my hearers and readers to do a very simple but sensible thing. Assuming that you are all engaged in the "race" of life, let me ask you to pause for a definite, or a specific period of time and devote this specific period to an earnest endeavor to catch a glimpse of God as Mind. Exclude from your thinking everything that does not bring the order out of chaos and that which is right, that which is good, that which is holy, that which is true. In your thinking, rise to the understanding that infinite Mind is infinite intelligence and as such is omnipotent, the only power there is; and an infinite Mind, the only reality, truth, knowledge, understanding, is there expressed as the omniscience of God. Realize that infinite Mind is here and everywhere, now and at all times; that infinite Mind is omnipresent. In this brief outline today we are on the plane of unfoldment and development that is occupied by those who lived fifty years ago. And there is another conclusion equally definite and positive, that those who live fifty years from this time will continue to "Progress" (born of experience, thought and action, and will thereby evidence the law of progress.

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We have assured you that man lives by divine decree, and that there is a spiritual law of his being. We have been endeavoring to present to you God's law so that you may understand that law in human affairs. However, it should be plainly apparent to the thinking individual that before we can apply a basic law we must have some right knowledge and understanding of the nature and the character of the Lawmaker. Hence, it should be our fundamental purpose to discern the true nature and the true character of God, the infinite creator and the author of spiritual law and order.

In this connection we affirm positively and emphatically that the traditional sense or understanding of God as a superman or as a corporal Jehovah is not the vision or view of God as presented by Christian Science.

In the Christian Science textbook (p. 465) God is defined thus: "God is that which we call spirit, or infinite Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love." Let me ask you to make an earnest endeavor to apprehend and understand God as infinite Mind. An inquirer may say, Do you mean that God is Mind and that I can understand His nature and character? He replies, "I can understand now and here that the only vision or view of God that we will ever have is the vision or view which we obtain through the expression of the activities of Mind, which reveal His mental habits and His character.

The inquirer may further say: But I have a mind of my own. My mind is a separate, distinct entity. My mind is a mortal, material human mind. Is this mind God? If so, am I God? You surely will not contend that "my mortal, material human mind is the infinite divine Mind. If so, that would make man God. You are quite right in both conclusions. The mortal, material human sense which you call your mind is that defined by Paul as the "carnal mind," which he declares is "enmity against God" and not "subject to the law of God."

There is no matter-stuff—a reversal of the material position. What do we observe with reference to the changed attitude toward Christian Science in the religious world? The clergyman of fifty years ago formulated two very definite conclusions regarding this religious teaching. First it was a sure road to perdition and destruction—and that it was the teaching of atheism, because it was said that Christian Science did not set forth the true nature and the character of God.

As evidence of a changing and tolerant attitude of the clergy of today, I called your attention at the beginning of this lecture to the declaration of one of our clergymen, that Christian Science sprang directly out of the Holy Scriptures. He further said, "Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, the Founder of Christian Science, did much good in the world, for she liberated many thousands of people from the fear of death and the ravages of disease." A president of one of our institutions of learning has declared that the Christian Science churches are filled today, due to the fact that Christian Science teaches that there is a living God, thus restoring the argument to this religious teaching is destructive or atheistic in character.

We have brought this evidence to your attention, not for the purpose of confusing your thinking, or seeking to impress you that the medical world has recognized Christian Science as a healing agency, not for the purpose of having you believe that the scientific world has recognized the essential elements of true science therein, and not for the purpose of trying to convince you that the religious world has adopted the teachings of the teachings of Christian Science. It has been submitted for your thoughtful consideration solely for the purpose of causing you to see the truth of the statements quoted from the Christian Science textbook, that "Progress is born of experience" (p. 296); and "Progress is the law of God" (p. 293).

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Progress: Individual Responsibility
There is a divine Principle, or spiritual law which governs and controls man individually and collectively. Through the understanding of, and obedience to, the demands of this Principle, we can result in progress. However, when ignorant of, or disobedient to, this spiritual law, he pays the penalty therefor through discord, want, sorrow, and woe, and thus man is compelled to make progress through direct experience of the following: the fundamental teachings of Christian Science. In the Christian Science textbook Mrs. Eddy directs attention to this scientific regeneration as follows: "Either here or hereafter, suffering or Science must deliver each step of progress through the spiritualization of thought and action. Just in proportion as we enlarge our conception of God as divine Mind or Spirit, we ascend in the understanding that man is spiritual, and not material. We thereby prove to ourselves individually that we pass from an illusive belief of life in matter to an intelligent recognition of the true idea of life in Mind, that we attain this understanding not through the experience called death, but through the proof of the understanding of Life spiritually." (The Christian Science textbook, p. 17.)

I am sure we all readily agree that humanity in the past, through ignorance of this law, has faced serious conditions. Perhaps not an individual or a group of individuals in the world can successfully forecast or predict the immediate events of the future. There is one thing, however, upon which we all can and must agree. We face changed conditions and a new order of events. There must be, there will be, transformation and unfoldment of new and better ideals. Every individual has a duty and a responsibility in bringing order out of chaos and a reestablishment of better conditions. This individual responsibility can be successfully met and mastered only as one clarifies his vision with reference to the nature and the character of God as infinite Mind, and an infinite Mind, the only reality to express and reflect in his thinking the wisdom, goodness, justice, and mercy of God.

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