

## PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

Volumes have been written on Christian Science since its discovery in 1866. Time has sifted these works, and preserved the best of them. *Notes from the Normal Class of 1937* is one of the classics. It was taught by Bicknell Young, then known as the Dean of Christian Science Teachers. His understanding of Christian Science went beyond mere theory, for he explained how to utilize its healing power, how to make it practical. These Class Notes represent some of his most profound teachings.

### *Normal Class Instruction*

The purpose of the Normal Class was to prepare Christian Science practitioners to teach Christian Science. At the turn of the century when Mary Baker Eddy was organizing the Christian Science Church in Boston, Massachusetts, she established the Board of Education. Once every three years, the Board holds one class which lasts a week. It is known as the Normal Class. Thirty practitioners from all parts of the world come to Boston to be taught by a Christian Scientist experienced in healing and teaching. After a week's instruction, these practitioners become teachers and return to their local areas to teach Christian Science to others. Those selected are required to "have practised Christian Science healing successfully three years and . . . furnish evidence of their eligibility . . . All members of this class must be thorough English scholars." (*Church Manual*) It is considered an honor to be selected for the Normal Class, and a great honor to be asked to teach it.

Mrs. Eddy designated it a Normal Class because she did not intend it to be a long-term education in advanced metaphysics. The word *normal* in no way denotes advanced training or higher education. During the 1800's, the Normal Schools trained qualified

persons to teach in the first grammar schools opening in the United States. This explains Mrs. Eddy's use of the word *normal* in connection with classes that were intended to train teachers in Christian Science.

When the Notes of the 1937 Normal Class were first recorded, they could not be circulated openly, for they could easily have been misunderstood. For many years, the notes were shared secretly among the more advanced students in the Church. The notes were so rare at one time as to command \$150.00 for a single copy. But times have changed. World thought is rapidly shifting from physics to metaphysics. We live in a mental age, and are learning the subjective nature of all things. And so it seems only right that the 1937 Notes be made available to anyone seeking a better understanding of Christian Science.

Mr. Young was one of the early Scientists who understood so clearly mental cause and effect. For this reason, his teachings seem even more relevant to the present mental climate than when he first gave them to his students. As our world moves deeper into a mental age, the writings of such thinkers are coming into their own, for they explain the subjective nature of reality. They carry metaphysics beyond the mental plane into the spiritual realm, making them divine metaphysics, or Christian Science.

### *The Church Then and Now*

In these notes, Mr. Young says a great deal about the Christian Science Church and Sunday School. In 1937 Christian Science churches throughout the world were flourishing, healing work was prolific, and the movement was at its peak. After World War II, the Church began to decline, until today it is a mere shadow of former years. This decline is due in large measure to the fact that the Church organization in Boston does not make available the deeper metaphysics upon which the progress of the Christian Science movement depends. The Christian Science periodicals have become tools

mainly for promoting the views of the organization. The pure metaphysics taught by Mrs. Eddy and her students have been diluted into a form of modern day inspirational writing that bears little resemblance to Christian Science as expressed in such works as the *Normal Class Notes of 1937*. As the Church has declined, the writings of these early Scientists are becoming a vital part of the lifeline that is keeping pure Christian Science alive.

### *Basic Christian Science*

One should read these notes in conjunction with other works on Christian Science, especially the works of Mary Baker Eddy, for they are based entirely upon her writings. These notes do not explore the whole of Christian Science, but they do go deeply into certain aspects of it which Mr. Young wanted to give the class.

To state simply the basic points covered in most classes:

1. Christian Science establishes God as the final cause of all things real. In the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, by Mary Baker Eddy, God is defined as "The great I AM; the all-knowing all-seeing, all-acting, all-wise, all-loving, and eternal; Principle; Mind; Soul; Spirit; Life; Truth; Love; all substance; intelligence." Here we have an infinite Mind or divine Principle as the only cause or creator of the universe and man. This cause is not material or mental. It is spiritual, the one Mind filling all time and space.

2. Christian Science shows man and the universe to be the effect of the one Mind. Here Christian Science differentiates between the human mind and that spiritualized consciousness which understands God and man in His likeness. We read in *Science and Health*, "When man is spoken of as made in God's image, it is not sinful and sickly mortal man who is referred to, but the ideal man, reflecting God's likeness." When we understand the source or origin of man and the universe to be spiritual, we see that man and

the universe are also spiritual, governed by the one Mind, all intelligent, wise, loving, just and good. Man embodies these Godlike qualities as his true selfhood. In reality, he is harmonious and perfect.

3. The divine logic of Christian Science shows that evil and matter, and all discord and adversity traced to them, are not from reality, but are the product of man's ignorance about reality. They are illusions resulting from false knowledge claiming that material laws and forces create and govern man. It is ignorance of God that causes all sickness, disease, lack, limitation, mental and emotional disturbance, discord, and adversity.

4. The allness of God and the unreality of evil can be proven through the unique form of prayer used in Christian Science known as *treatment*. This is far more than a prayer of supplication to God, or blind faith in Him, or resignation to adversity as the will of God. Treatment is a prayer of action. One takes the initiative and argues for the good, and against the evil or materialistic beliefs in consciousness. Through treatment one defends himself against evil thoughts and harmful hypnotic suggestions, while enlarging upon his understanding of God and man in His likeness.

These Class Notes are Mr. Young's teachings regarding this 'mental work' as it is called. A student of Christian Science first studies Christian Science, then he uses this understanding to pray intelligently or 'treat' his thinking in order to spiritualize it.

### *Healing Results of Prayer in Christian Science*

Metaphysical work in Christian Science results in spiritual healing. Such healing work is not faith-healing, but healing based on a scientific understanding of reality. One studies Christian Science and learns to give a treatment in order to heal all forms of sickness and adversity.

Records of such healings are found in the last chapter of

*Science and Health*, called “Fruitage.” The Christian Science periodicals dating from the 1890’s carry thousands of verified testimonies of healings. Such healings are proof that the ideas set forth in Christian Science are true. A healing experience is evidence that one understands how to pray scientifically. This enlightenment is so powerful that it not only illumines consciousness, but also heals the body, regenerates the inner self, and blesses one’s entire existence.

### *A New Language*

As in all discoveries of such magnitude, Christian Science introduces a new language. Mrs. Eddy had to create special terms in order to communicate what she had discovered. This might be compared to the special language or terminology that one needs in order to understand music or computers. This new language is not hard to learn, and you should not be put off by it. The meanings of these words will unfold to you as you progress in a general study of Christian Science.

In these notes, Mr. Young has a number of references to Mrs. Eddy’s writings — for example: *Science and Health* 242:12-16. This designates the book (*Science and Health*), the page (242), and the lines (12-16) to be read.

If you are new to Christian Science, these Class Notes are a strong introduction to it. Mr. Young was teaching very knowledgeable metaphysicians in 1937. Yet his ideas are most relevant to present day views. Those keeping pace with scientific progress know that world thought is passing through the illusion that matter is solid, that man is a biochemical machine, and that the universe is mechanistic. The final cause of all things lies in the dim unknown realm beyond the senses — a non-tangible dimension that can only be acknowledged subjectively and understood spiritually. Christian Science is the key to this kingdom within.

A. B.