

Address delivered by James P. B. Hyndman from Station WHAP, New York City, on Monday, July 19, 1926, (9:30 P.M.), on Americanism. Subject:

AMERICAN ART

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, *it was* very good. (Genesis 1:31.)

In the material world, thought has brought to light with great rapidity many useful wonders. With like activity have thought's swift pinions been rising towards the realm of the real, to the spiritual cause of those lower things which give impulse to inquiry. Belief in a material basis, from which may be deduced all rationality, is slowly yielding to the idea of a metaphysical basis, looking away from matter to Mind as the cause of every effect. Materialistic hypotheses challenge metaphysics to meet in final combat. In this revolutionary period, like the shepherd-boy with his sling, woman goes forth to battle with Goliath. (*Science and Health with key to the Scriptures*, by Mary Baker Eddy, 268:1-13.)

American Art is unique in the history of the art of all the world, in that it is inherently spiritual. For centuries, men have worshipped at the shrine of Grecian art, and the world feels a thrill whenever a Grecian statue, usually broken or mutilated, is dug out of the sands of the South European seas. Our museums are filled with such specimens, and young ambitious artists spend years in studying and in attempting to copy the ancient sculpture of Greece. Some years ago, a beardless statue of Jesus was rescued from the bottom of the Aegean Sea. Deep spirituality is depicted even in the marble face of the young Galilean Prophet, Christ Jesus, who was to leave as a heritage to the world, the impress of the highest Art; namely, the Art of gaining "power to become the sons of God."

Italian art has given to the world many paintings illustrating the life of Jesus, the most notable of which is Da Vinci's painting of The last Supper. A very beautiful specimen of Flemish art came into the possession of Station WHAP a few weeks ago. It is a striking painting, on wood, attributed to the Flemish artist, Peter Pourbus, of the 16th century. The subject is Jesus dining with the disciples after his resurrection.

Through the centuries, countless art treasures have been brought forth in Europe, many of which, to the mortification of the Europeans, are being purchased by our American men of wealth, and transported to America. Perhaps European art is best known in the realm of architecture. Many of the old castles on the continent and in Britain, are treasured to-day by the people of Europe, even in their ruined condition. The country villas of the wealthy and

cultured, are regarded as highest works of art in architecture. The ecclesiastical activity of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the building of churches, throughout all Europe, forms a graphic page in the history of that continent.

In the realm of music, the names of the great masters, Bach, Mendelssohn, Haydn, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, and many others, are known to and loved by the music-loving world. In modern times, Eduard Greig and Richard Wagner have left a strong impress, the former in his illustrations of nature in and through music, and the latter in his marvellous interpretation of spiritual Nordic symbolism.

In the realm of letters, if we may class this as Art, we have the immortal Shakespeare and his contemporary lights of the brilliant Elizabethan period when awakened Protestantism threw off the papal yoke. The outstanding work of art, in English letters, is the King James translation of the Holy Bible, the foundation rock of modern Protestantism. This monumental work, the result of the labors of 54 of the greatest and most consecrated Protestant scholars of Britain, has spread the Gospel of Christ Jesus throughout the world, and has laid the foundation for the second appearing of Christ, in America.

The foregoing account of European art, though meagre, is sufficient to illustrate by comparison the unique character of American art. The keynote of our national development, in Art, in politics, and in religion, has been simplicity and sincerity, and deep spirituality.

What is Art? Is it mere technical skill, great and praiseworthy as this is, or is it VISION?. Surely the essence of all Art is Vision. "God SAW everything that he had made, and behold it was very good." Does the marvellous spirit of this inspired verse of Holy Scripture permeate the art, either of modern Europe, or of the Europe of the centuries that have passed? Every genuine Protestant is forced to answer, that the heavy, deadening hand of priestcraft and popery has dulled the spirituality of the artistic spirit of Europe, and has permeated it with materiality, and its resultant death. Roman Catholicism, the apotheosis of worldliness, paganism and materiality, has seemingly put a covering of flesh and matter over the entire creation of God; and the music, sculpture, paintings, architecture, and letters of Europe, of the past ages as of this, is dimmed by the lack of spirituality of this anti-Christian system that is well designated in John's Book of Revelation by the number 666, the acme of evil. I forbear to enter into a detailed criticism of European art, from the viewpoint just expressed, except to call attention to one flagrant example, that of the so-called Madonna and child. Every specimen of the painting of this subject — and there are several — leave upon the mind, the strong impression of the mere materiality of the human Jesus, the coarseness and vulgarity, notwithstanding a certain beauty of outline, of over-obtrusive flesh; and leaves far hidden, the intrinsic spiritual beauty of the spiritual Christ, the Son of God, the "lily of the valley, the bright and morning star." Did I need support for my criticism, I have it in Paul's words:

Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea,
though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now
henceforth know we *him* no more. (II Cor. 5:16.)

In the foregoing criticism, it is not the intention to pass untempered judgment and wholesale condemnation upon every work of art produced throughout the centuries in Europe. In letters, for example, we must certainly place in exception, the works of the immortal Shakespeare, the great interpreter of human character, and the monumental work of the 54 British scholars, the King James Bible. Yet, the pall of popish materialism must be lifted, even from these mighty books, before their deep spiritual meaning can be effectively understood; and the work of lifting this popish pall, will be done, and is being done here in America, the land which Christ prepared and established for this very work.

I have said that the genius of American Art, is spirituality. In Boston, Massachusetts, on Commonwealth Avenue, there is a statue to Leif Ericson, the young Norseman (Icelander) who discovered America in the year 1000. This statue is opposite the former home of Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science. It was designed by Anne Whitney, and the Committee which erected it was composed of James Russell Lowell, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Oliver Wendell Holmes. The statue, itself a beautiful work of art, embodies the entire spirit of discovery of a land of freedom, the joy of a new world, where oppression shall be unknown, the inspiration which comes from a new breath of spirituality. In Plymouth, Massachusetts, there is a small rock, and two statues, one of an Indian, and the other of a Pilgrim Maiden, which, in their sweet simplicity, tell the entire story of a mighty nation, born of the spirit of "Freedom to worship God," a destiny, inevitable, it is true, because it was ordained of God, yet hastened by the marvellous self-sacrifice of a handful of noble men and women, imbued with Christ's spirit, the spirit of utter intolerance against the priestcraft of the world, and withal, the spirit of deep devotion and consecration to God and His Christ. These three simple objects are real works of Art --- American Art.

On the Sub-Treasury, at the corner of Wall and Nassau Streets, New York City, there is a bronze bas-relief showing General George Washington, on his knees in prayer in the forest, his horse tethered to a tree close by. This, to me, is one of the noblest works of art ever produced in all the world, in all the ages. The entire spirit of the founding of the mightiest Christian Nation the world has ever known, the American Federal Republic, is embodied in this small bronze.

In Newark, New Jersey, there is a statue of Abraham Lincoln. The great Emancipator is seated on a bench, his long legs spread apart; and little children of to-day seat themselves on his knees, and nestle close to his heart. The spirituality of America is surely a rich and most obvious heritage for all genuine Americans, both to enjoy and to defend with their might.

The motive underlying the discovery of America, by the Norsemen, in the year 1000, her colonization by the Pilgrims, in 1620, and the establishment of the Nation in 1776, has been one and the same; namely, the eventual overthrow of popery, in accordance with the prophecy contained in St. John's Book of Revelation.

At the corner of 96th Street and Central Park West, stands First Church of Christ, Scientist, New York City. This structure is the mightiest work of art, ever produced on earth. It was conceived under inspiration of Mary Baker Eddy, Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, by her student, Augusta E. Stetson, C.S.D. Mrs. Stetson supervised and directed the design of this remarkable structure, her architects being Messrs. Carrere & Hastings. Its cost was \$1,250,000, all of which was paid before the dedication of the church, in November, 1903; and Mrs. Stetson and her students alone contributed this vast sum, not one penny having been contributed by any student of Mrs. Eddy, other than Mrs. Stetson.

In 1886, Mrs. Eddy sent Mrs. Stetson to New York City, with the following commission, "I want you to establish the Christianity of Christian Science in New York City." After preaching, healing, and teaching Christian Science in this great metropolis, for many years, beginning in a humble hall on Fifth Avenue over a drug store, Mrs. Stetson's thought developed and expanded in the understanding of Christian Science, and just before the close of the century she was ready to begin to build her "Church Militant." The history of this work is given in her books, *Reminiscences*, *Sermons and Correspondence*, and *Sermons and Other Writings on Christian Science*, published by Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York. She selected the site at Central Park West and 96th Street.

The church edifice is built of Concord granite, hewn from the quarries of New Hampshire, Mrs. Eddy's native State. It is oblong in plan, extending 150 feet along 96th Street, and 50 feet along Central Park West. Its auditorium and galleries seat about 2000 persons; during Mrs. Stetson's regime, wicker benches had to be provided in the spacious side aisles, which accommodated 500 persons. The pews are of Circassian walnut. Above the auditorium are, the beautiful reading room, a "meditation" room, practitioner's offices, and Mrs. Stetson's room. In the basement are several spacious rooms. There are three elevators. The organ was the finest that could be obtained, at the time the church was built. At the west, or front of the building, there is a beautiful stained glass window, illustrating the meeting of Christ Jesus with the woman at the well. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the church is its spire. Mrs. Stetson, after much spiritual contemplation and prayer to God, decided on the design of an obelisk capped with a pyramid, for the steeple of her church. Although severely criticized, she defended her inspiration, and the spire was thus built. The Pyramid is the symbol of spiritual man and the spiritual universe of God, as opposed to the counterfeit material so-called man and universe. Having completed her Church Militant, Mrs. Stetson rededicated herself to her work in Christian Science, healing the sick (her records, scrupu-

lously kept during her administration, show that she and her practitioners healed 40,000 cases of sickness through the years of Mrs. Stetson's ministry, raising the spiritually dead, and denouncing the dragon, or carnal, mortal man, created in flesh. So intense was this campaign, as conducted by Mrs. Stetson, that in six years it reached a climax, and Mrs. Stetson passed through her Gethsemane and emerged from material organization. Mrs. Stetson's church was dedicated as a loving tribute to her Leader and Teacher, Mary Baker Eddy, whose gracious letter to her student, Mrs. Stetson, is deposited in the cornerstone of Mrs. Stetson's church.

In 1910, Mrs. Eddy requested her "dear brethren in New York" to "begin to build on a wholly spiritual foundation, than which there is no other." Mrs. Eddy continued; "Spirit is infinite, therefore, Spirit is all, 'There is no matter.'" Mrs. Stetson and her students alone responded to Mrs. Eddy's call. Mrs. Stetson thereupon began the building of her Church Triumphant, and to-day this marvellous spiritual structure has progressed to a phenomenal degree. The veil of hypnotism, which has seemingly covered God's creation during the long night of materialism and paganism, is being lifted; the carnal mind is being forced to rend itself, preparatory to its self-destruction, and the eternal Christ, who said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the (material, or flesh) world" will shortly appear. Even as I write these words, there appears in the evening papers an account of a new discovery of a prophecy contained in the Great Pyramid of Gizeh, predicting the beginning of a great world cataclysm tomorrow, July 20, 1926, and after a period of general chaos, ending in May, 1928. I close with the thought, with which I began, that the greatest Art is the "power to become the sons of God." This power is bestowed by Christ, the eternal spiritual Man, created in the image of God, Spirit, Mind, who appeared on earth and among men two thousand years ago, as the man Christ Jesus, and, who, in accordance with the prophecy of the beloved disciple John, in Revelation, will appear the second time as "a woman clothed with the sun," the transcendent brightness of spiritual understanding. This second appearing of Christ is close at hand.

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