

Christian Science ~ Its Healing Ministry (1)

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A large audience gathered at the Lyceum yesterday afternoon to listen to a lecture by Bliss Knapp, C.S.B., on "Some Phases of Christian Science," delivered under the auspices of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, of Duluth.

Mr. Knapp's lecture was as follows:

Every known religion or philosophy claims to be the promulgation of revealed truth; but whatever may be the nature or quality of such truth, that which differentiates the demonstrable revelation of Jesus Christ from them all is its power to give health and life. Other religions might interest themselves in a man's death or the Adam dream, but "I am come," said Jesus, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." His healing, resurrection and final ascension demonstrated this life-giving element in Christianity.

It is this element of healing which distinguishes Christian Science from the prevailing religions of today. If the healing sometimes overshadows the religion in its appeal to the stranger, it is because he has not looked beyond the cure to seek the cause or explanation; for that which determines the real import of Christian Science is its theology, and by way of application this theology exhibits a system of healing and reformation, necessarily mental and spiritual, which system is based on the inspired Word of the Bible. Both the sinner and the disease are healed by the same principle, which proves that the church never should have divorced the healing element from Christianity. The leading purpose of Christian Science, however, is the destruction of sin, and in this we all are united against our common enemy. Far from being an ethical philosophy for academic debate, this is a life to be lived, — a truth to be proved. For one to relate the story of how Jesus went to Peter's mother-in-law and healed her of a fever, does not set forth in any adequate manner the explanation of how it was done. The mere recital does not delineate the power that accomplished the healing, nor does it give the process so that another might readily repeat the operation. At least we may draw this inference from the fact that these works have not been repeated for several centuries. Now that which has given to Christian Science its utilitarian value is its ability to explain satisfactorily, not only what the power is which enabled Jesus Christ to perform the miracles of Christian healing, but what the rule is for doing those works in accordance with the command, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

Footsteps in Spiritual Discovery

When Jesus healed the centurion's servant and the Syrophenician's daughter without so much as going near them, it should be clear that the power must be mental. An English poet (Puttenham) has propounded the query, "For to say truly, what else is man but his mind?" Indeed we might ask, "What else is God but divine Mind?" It is truly unthinkable to conceive of an all-wise, all-intelligent God apart from Mind. When the availability of God's healing power is seen to be in the ever-present Mind, then He becomes "a very present help in trouble." Indeed, how can an ever-present God be everywhere present, except that presence is Mind? The words of Paul that "to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace," expresses the fact that the healing power is in the spiritual or divine Mind, not in matter.

The first of the old patriarchs, peering up through the carnal to the spiritual, beheld in this ever-present Mind a supreme power, the same power which later divided the waters of the Red Sea and closed the lions' mouths. When Abraham looked above the prevailing idolatry of the age and beheld in faith one supreme power governing the universe and man, that power was to him the Almighty. Now Abraham could see only the promise of deliverance, — only the promise that "to be spiritually minded is life and peace," from what he saw afar off and by faith only was made known more clearly and fully to others. Indeed the voice of God said unto Moses, "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Issac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them."

Like the experience of Abraham, the first sense that Moses had of God was one of power, but this experience grew into a realization that this power of divine Mind is expressed in well defined laws. Then it became possible for this Hebrew law-giver to prove thereby that God is not only ever-present, but ever-available for man's deliverance. With the actual proofs of deliverance from the plagues, the Red Sea and the terrors of the wilderness, this law was seen to be the truth in so absolute a manner that the Scriptures have added to Abraham's definition of Almighty, the Mosaic definition that God is Truth; and David has reiterated this discovery by the declaration that "thy law is the truth." Nevertheless, when these people had the law, and lived by the law, and were delivered by the law, there was yet one thing needful they lacked. The fullness of the law was not yet understood. They were still looking for the promised "Immanuel, or God with us."

The one who supplied this lack, and who became thereby the great physician, the best healer and reformer the world has ever known, was Jesus of Nazareth. He proved by his words and works that he knew more about God and His law of life and salvation than any other man in the annals of history. By means of rites and sacrifices provided by the law, Moses healed the flesh of leprosy and serpent bites; these sacrifices, however, never made the people perfect, but continually reminded them of their sins. Knowing better how to atone for this lack through the spirit, Christ Jesus purged their conscience once for all, and once purged they had no more consciousness of those sins. The apostle Paul has portrayed this as the true healing. Where the vision of

Abraham stopped at the power of Mind, and Moses beheld the law of justice which demands penalties, the founder of Christianity with deeper perception could see in that same power the attraction of divine Love which says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Thus the Scriptures declare that what the Israelites lacked was this Christian idea of love, for "Love is the fulfilling of the law," and for that reason the beloved disciple declared that "God is love." This union of justice and affection was the proof that not the law, but love is the power that heals.

Christian Doctrine of Evil

Let us consider for a moment this evil that Jesus purged from their conscience, for it introduces another very striking point of difference between these rites and sacrifices and the perfect law of Christ. The Israelites accepted the seeming power of evil, in that their law provided penalties for it. The founder of Christianity, on the other hand, taught a perfect law, fulfilled in love, which included no imperfection or evil, and therefore provided no penalties for it. For "when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." Jesus, therefore, conducted himself as though evil had no right to exist anywhere, since it had no right in the perfect law, and he purged the people's conscience of it as though it were nothing, just as infinite harmony corrects, dispels or wipes out discord. It is clear that the divine intelligence cannot be inspired with ignorance, and it is equally clear that evil or error is ignorance of truth. Evil is then a negation, the unreality of which is proved only as one understands the allness of God. As Christ Jesus understood this allness of God, he could prove the nothingness of sin, disease and even death, — the last enemy to be destroyed, — and he taught others this method of purging the conscience of sins.

So long as the law provided penalties for evil, the Israelites believed the exponents of evil had to be killed to be rid of the evil. They believed, therefore, in a personal devil. The founder of Christianity, on the other hand, taught that evil is not a person, but a carnal mind; for whenever he rebuked the devil, it purged the conscience — it freed the person of his carnal or perverted sense of mind and healed him, and that without being killed for the purpose of salvation. Indeed, he cast seven devils out of one person, and proved that "to be spiritually minded is life and peace." That the disciples were slow in grasping this new doctrine is proved by their request to have fire called down from heaven to destroy certain evil persons, for Jesus "rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." To this end he taught that the kingdom of heaven is within you, and "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Scientific Discovery

The proof of Christianity was in the purging of the conscience of its sin and sickness, as manifested by the works of healing. Through the materialism of the ages this proof was early lost; but Christian Science has rediscovered primitive Christian healing, and has supplemented this work by the discovery of its Science. One of the criticisms of

Christian Science has been that it is not a science, which means that it obeys no law. You well know that a science implies classified understanding — it requires a law which must be presented in its unity, order and system. This is precisely what Christian Science does. It presents this divine law in its unity, order and system with such accuracy that the proof of healing prevails. It is therefore scientific, and it is Christian, because this law is not physical but divine.

Jesus' Teaching

It is interesting to observe the method which Jesus adopted in teaching this healing power to his disciples. Not gifted in learning, these disciples were nevertheless familiar with the Mosaic law. Indeed they were as familiar with the Old Testament writings as is the average man of today, but their spiritual sense of it must have been closer, for we may read in Luke's Gospel how that Jesus opened "their understanding that they might understand the scriptures." It is possible then, for a materialist to be familiar with the Scriptures and yet not understand them. It was their spiritual understanding, therefore, that needed to be opened. When Jesus healed the man with the withered hand, all that he said was "Stretch forth thine hand." And it was restored whole like as the other. We are all familiar with those words but suppose some one today repeated these same words to one suffering with a withered hand, could the mere repetition of these words heal him? It must be evident to you that it was Jesus' spiritual understanding and not the words which healed the sick. One might in time commit to memory the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and not be able to heal a single case, because it is the spirit of the Word which heals. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." For "the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth."

To present this spiritual understanding it was necessary for Jesus to begin on their plane of thought where they could grasp the meaning of his teachings. He began with parables, and without a parable spake he not unto them. A little later he said, "I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father". In this he did exactly what the mother does when she teaches her child that two and two are four. The mental problem is a pure abstraction to the child, for he has not yet become familiar with mental processes; he has not reached beyond the tangible forms. Therefore the mother begins with something as tangible as four red apples. They mean something directly and he can understand that two red apples in one hand placed with two red apples in the other, make four red apples. We can't proceed too rapidly, however, for next there must be an intermediary step. The child must learn by thinking red apples that two and two are four. Then he is ready to grasp the mental problem without the physical forms. In like manner Jesus taught his disciples in parables using the things of common experience which they could understand. Gradually in this way he lifted their thought to more spiritual altitudes, until he sent them out two by two to heal in his name, and behold they returned saying, "Even devils are subject unto us in thy name." The great mental principle which underlies all being and action was unfolding to them, and they grasped the spirit of it all, so that Jesus could say to them,

"I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall speak unto you plainly of the Father." On the walk to Emmaus the disciples said, "Did not our heart burn within us * * * while he opened to us the scriptures?"

There are many today who believe that the healing works of Jesus are not teachable, averring that the disciples gained their understanding through the personal inspiration of the great Master. If this were true, what shall we do with Paul and the early Christians? Paul was not a personal disciple of Jesus, but he understood how to heal the sick and raise the dead. He was at first a persecutor of the Christians, actively engaging in opposing their teachings. Since mathematics follows a scientific law, it matters little how much one may ignorantly oppose its principle; for the moment he understands mathematical law, he can solve the problems of mathematics. For the same reason, the moment that Paul understood this Principle, which is God, he gave to the world the proof of his understanding by the healing works. It was no longer unreasonable to him. He learned that the carnal mind was no fit standard by which to judge the spiritual facts of being. For 300 years this Christian healing continued to be exercised by the church.

"I will not leave you comfortless," said Jesus; and he promised to send us another comforter which he defined not as a man, but as the "Spirit of truth," which shall abide with us forever and testify of him.

Disease Mental

When one turns to God for aid or comfort, it is commonly done through prayer. Christians are taught that prayer is efficacious in the reformation of sinners, because of the mental nature of sin. They are also taught to pray for the sick, but most people have looked upon sickness as purely physical, and therefore outside the control of mental prayer. However, if disease were purely physical and could be reached only by drugs or material means, there could be no such thing as Christian healing. One of the leading points in the theology of Christian Science, and one which physicians are now admitting to be true, is the mental nature of disease.

All admit that insanity is a mental disease, but very briefly let us consider a case of surgery.

When a surgeon administers anesthetics to suspend or divert the thought during the process of an operation, he is proceeding on the assumption that if a man can't think, he can't be hurt; for during the time when the patient's thought is suspended or diverted, his flesh and bones manifest no pain, sensation, life nor intelligence. Consequently pain is all in the thinking. It is in the mortal mind and not the physical form. It follows therefore that even a surgical operation may prove indirectly the mental nature of disease.

It is not enough, however, to know that disease is mental and that mind [...] will cure it. We must recognize with Paul two types of mind, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." The body is therefore healthy or diseased according as to the mind which governs it is illumined by the healing spirit of

God, or clouded by the infection of carnal thoughts and heresies. In the ratio that one approximates the thought and mind of God and of Christ Jesus, he can understand the law of Truth and Love which regenerates the thought, casts out his fear, and heals the sick.

Healing Methods

There are many who charge God with visiting sickness and death upon His children. It would startle many to learn the large number of excellent people who are driven annually into infidelity by the cold and cruel assertion that God takes our loved ones away from us; and Christian Science wins these good people back to Him by proving that God never made a man suffer with disease. The devil does that, according to the teachings of Jesus. The gospel of love has done away with this belief of an angry, jealous and cruel God. The founder of Christianity knew that divine Love never made a man sick, and never even permitted it; for when he healed the lunatic child, he did not rebuke the angels of God, but he "rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour." At another time he rebuked the devil of dumbness, and when the devil was gone out, the disease went with it, and the dumb spake. Even a poor crippled woman he referred to as "a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years," and he healed her by first casting out the sinful cause.

Jesus would have it understood therefore, that sickness and disease are the procurement, not of God but of the devil, or evil which "changed the truth of God into a lie." It is clear that his sense of devil was not a something with hoofs and horns, but that it is the evil thought which proceeds from the heart and defiles the man. The sick man, however, by reason of his sickness, may not be more sinful than the well man, as you will perceive by the following words of the Master: "those eighteen, upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." If the good and pure seem to suffer more than do others, it is from a too feeble understanding of God's protecting power. It is because they fail to understand how the law of God applies to their need. So good a man as Job regarded his sickness as the buffeting of Satan and not of God: but he sought a cure through a better understanding not of his disease, but of the power of God which overcomes disease. When the cure came he cried out to God, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee." He was healed because he had perceived the truth which unites reason and revelation in man's freedom.

Christian Science Not Hypnotism

The influence of the mind over the body in health and in disease is receiving considerable attention from intelligent physicians, and there are many in all walks of life who believe that the human will is the mental agency employed. When one has explored this action of the human will in influencing disease, he is apt to believe that he

has explored the whole range of mental conditions with which Christian Science has to do. For this reason it has been charged that Christian Science sprang from the teachings of a certain hypnotist. As a matter of fact, not that a single sentence in Science and Health was ever written by any human being other than Mrs. Eddy herself. Let us investigate a little and see if this be true. Human will is the carnal mind and "to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." "By their fruits ye shall know them." Some of the fruits of this carnal mind are evil thoughts, murders, fornications, anger, jealousy, hatred, revenge, which produce sickness and disease and defile the man. They are absolutely opposed to the fruits of the Spirit, for these are honesty, justice, mercy, goodness and so on, which produce life and peace. As human will is mostly clearly marked in the animal instincts, the seeking after food and pleasure, and the effort to exploit itself as something and frequently the only thing, so the educated and more hidden use of this animal will is exploited in hypnotism and mesmerism, and these are known as animal magnetism. It was this philosophy of the serpent which "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." It is not of God, but of the serpent who said, "ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil."

Spiritual things must be spiritually discerned. No one can learn mathematics by the rules of biology, neither can one learn astronomy by the rules of physiology. It follows just as truly that the rules of physics can never interpret divine metaphysics. Even as one has to think mathematically to learn mathematics, so does one have to think spiritually to gain the interpretation and understanding of Christian healing.

Mrs. Eddy's Discovery

Before Mrs. Eddy discovered Christian Science, she had been searching for years along the line that all causation is mental. She had been studying homeopathy and learned that pain is all in the thinking, and that the higher attenuations of medicine which contained the least of the drug and the most mind were the most powerful. When she arrived at the conclusion that disease is mental and that mind does the healing, she desired to learn which mind, whether the human or the mind of Christ.

Her next quest was to make a careful investigation of such mental influences as spiritualism, mesmerism and hypnotism; but she didn't find God there. This she did discover, however, that this carnal will expressed in spiritualism, mesmerism and hypnotism, is the cause of disease instead of its cure, and thus she escaped the many wiles and foibles that all before her had stumbled into. It was therefore impossible for her to build her system on these products of the human will and she turned in prayer to God, and searched the Scriptures for the divine Mind "who healeth all thy diseases." It was at this period of her experience that the dawn of the spiritual light came and found her waiting and prepared to receive the message. The circumstances which brought it and thereby established her conclusions was her remarkable recovery in the year 1866 from an injury caused by an accident. She had touched the hem of the

Christ-Truth and was instantly healed. This was the vindication of her long search, for it was the spirit that quickened, and she had made it her own.

Now that Mrs. Eddy had found the Comforter, which is the "Spirit of truth," and which heals the sick, she began to search the Scriptures for a scientific explanation of it, that she might impart it to others. She soon learned that the healing operates according to a divine law, and she began to write out her observations. These writings formed the basis of her more complete work known as Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, which was first published in 1875.

As a sermon may seek to explain or comment on the Scriptures, so the Christian Science text book is a scriptural commentary, which can never take the place of the Scriptures, but which makes them clearer to human understanding. As other commentaries have sought to elucidate the gospel preaching, Science and Health proves that the gospel healing is not an impenetrable mystery, but presents the naturalness of law and salvation. It can not, for that reason, be the human opinion of a woman, for no one can either make or change the law. Indeed Mrs. Eddy has religiously excluded any human opinion on this subject, and has confined herself to declaring an absolute Principle. The facts have been presented as they exist, and for that reason, the simple study of that book heals the sick both morally and physically. Instead of separating reason and revelation, or separating the healing from the preaching, this book presents the whole truth that makes free, and permanent cures and reformation are the grand results. Nor should this be considered a strange result, for the Master said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The last chapter in this book, known as the chapter on "Fruitage," contains 100 pages of testimonials in evidence and proof of the fact that its study has healed all manner of sin, sickness, disease and infidelity.

There are some who have found it difficult to grasp the author's meaning in their study of the Christian Science text book. Indeed there are some intelligent people who have confessed to this difficulty. On the other hand, the smallest school boy has been able to gain a sufficient understanding of its teachings to heal himself and others. The seeming obscurity to the riper intellect is occasioned by a wrong method of approach; for "spiritual things must be spiritually discerned." The Master said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." We discover therefore certain needful qualities in the child, as first footsteps to an understanding of spiritual things; these are humility, spiritual receptivity and teachableness — three qualities so native to the child that, if lost, they must be regained to reach the verities of Spirit.

What else may be said about her, this fact should portray the true character of the discoverer and founder of Christian Science; for those childlike qualities must have been uppermost in her thought to discover so accurately this "Spirit of truth" or divine comforter. Indeed she is a true friend to all lovers of truth. She has presented its true meaning of liberation and liberty, and thereby won the boundless gratitude of humanity.

How clear it is that a book is the product of the author's mind. We can know the mind of Shakespeare today by reading his books. We can discern the kind of man, whether he was good or evil, by his writings. In like manner the purity of Mrs. Eddy's thought is clearly portrayed by her writings, for she is a faithful disciple of her own teachings. To understand the works is to understand the author, and it follows that to understand the author is to understand the works. This is why Jesus said, "no man can do a miracle in my name and lightly speak evil of me," and it follows just as truly that no one can lightly speak evil of the author of Science and Health and understand its teachings. Paul had to change his thought concerning the early Christians and their teachings, and his understanding was coincident with his life afterwards. It should be a reasonable thing in a Christian land for the teachings of our Master and Wayshower to be fulfilled. Christian Science has penetrated the mystery of his words and works; and in all that we do, we are asked to observe Mrs. Eddy's enjoyment, "Follow your Leader only so far as she follows Christ."

[Delivered at the Lyceum under the auspices of First Church of Christ, Scientist, Duluth, Minnesota, and published in The Duluth Evening Herald, May 18, 1908. The title of the lecture has been supplied by this site, on the basis of its strong similarity in general outline to the lecture of this title published in The Christian Science Journal later in the year. Some typographical errors and capitalizations have been corrected. The quoted words of Jesus in the final paragraph of the lecture are a free rendering of the text in the King James Version of Mark 9:39.

[In the first sentence of the last paragraph in the section "Disease Mental," ellipses have been added in brackets. This denotes the removal of a phrase from the sentence. This is the sentence in full, as published; the phrase that was removed has been set off here in brackets: "It is not enough, however, to know that disease is mental and that mind [enter into the practice of Christian Science at all, and there is no proof] will cure it." Possibly the phrase in brackets was inadvertently inserted into the sentence by a typographer. Certainly as published the sentence is nonsensical. Curiously a less complete account of the same lecture was published in The Day of New London, Connecticut, April 13, 1908, and this sentence appeared there in identical wording.

[Mr. Knapp was introduced on the occasion of the lecture in Connecticut by the Rev. W. L. Swan of Westerly, Rhode Island, who had himself become a Christian Scientist and who said in part: "I personally know people healed of the worst forms of insanity, cancer, neuritis, paralysis, epilepsy, kidney trouble, total blindness of seven years' standing, stiff joints of 40 year's standing."

[The Christian Science Sentinel of Nov. 10, 1906, reports that, in introducing lecturer Bicknell Young two years earlier, the Rev. Mr. Swan had said: "After having preached in the Baptist pulpit for about twenty years, I find myself committed to Christian Science and to Christian Science work. I came by quite definite steps. A near relative, after

being pronounced incurable by a large number of specialists, was cured. I decided to investigate and with absolutely fair mind. I said first: 'Do the Scientists heal?' And I investigated until I was satisfied beyond a shadow of a doubt that they did what they claimed. Then I said, 'How do they do it? I am going to separate the wheat from the chaff.' And I began the process of separating. I found it was very easy to write a criticism on Christian Science, but after I became an able critic it was impossible for me to demonstrate it. I said, 'I must try again. I do not know much about Christian Science until I can do the work that they do.' My experience was that I did better work the nearer I approached the understanding of Christian Science from the viewpoint of the book Science and Health by Mrs. Eddy, and how to work became more clear to me upon my acceptance of the teachings of Christian Science from this viewpoint."]