

# Why I Am a Christian Scientist

Bliss Knapp

Initiating a series of lectures on "Famous Faiths," to be radiocast from Station WEEI during the month of November, Bliss Knapp, a former First Reader of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts, and a former member of The Christian Science Board of Lectureship, delivered an address on Sunday, Nov. 2, on "Why I Am a Christian Scientist."

The program went on the air at 2:30 p.m., with an announcement by the Rev. Gordon Chilson Reardon, pastor of the First Parish in Saugus, Mass., in general charge of the series.

The first number was an organ prelude, based on the hymns, "Joy Cometh in the Morning," by Lorenz, and "I Love to Tell the Story," by Kate Hankey, as given on page 15 of "The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany," by Mary Baker Eddy. It was played by Claude E. Saunier, organist for The Mother Church.

A reading from the Christian Science textbook, "Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures," by Mary Baker Eddy, was then given by Mr. Knapp. The selections were as follows: Page 387, line 27; 326:16, 368:22-24, 321:19-29, 243:4, 359:20, 351:8, 126:22, pref. xi:9-14, 377:26, 410:14, 29-30; 128:4-11, 4:3, 340:15.

Miss Florence Middaugh, soloist for The Mother Church, sang "He Shall Feed His Flock," from Handel's "Messiah," and then Ernest Beaufort of the editorial staff of The Christian Science Monitor introduced Mr. Knapp. The program closed with the solo, "Trust Ye in the Lord," by John Prindle Scott, sung by Miss Middaugh.

Future programs in the series will include Dr. Samuel A. Eliot, Unitarian, Nov. 9; Prof. Clarence R. Skinner, Community Church Movement, Nov. 16; Dr. Garfield Morgan, Congregationalist, Nov. 23; and the Rev. Arthur Lee Kinsolving, Episcopalian, Nov. 30.

## Text of Address

Mr. Knapp's address follows:

I have been asked to tell the radio audience, Why I am a Christian Scientist. There is a fundamental reason for being a Christian Scientist, and it is one of the happiest experiences of my life to share that reason with others. I am a Christian Scientist because Christian Science teaches me how to have a practical faith in God's goodness, as it is taught in the Holy Bible — the same Bible our fathers used long before the discovery of Christian Science in 1866.

## Faith

Some people underestimate the element of faith; others may ignore it entirely; whereas faith is the open door to every department of learning. When, for example, a child first goes to school, he must accept on faith the declaration of his teacher that two and two make four. He must accept on faith the declaration of his teacher concerning the letters of the alphabet; and he must go a long way in the computation of numbers and in the arrangement of letters into words and

sentences, before it can be said that he really understands. Then consider the great faith our inventors of the telegraph, the telephone and the wireless systems must have had. They first conceived an idea; then they had to pursue that idea through faith; eventually the understanding came. Think of the magnificent faith of our aviators who have ventured to nearly every part of the globe. Then we begin to realize that the open door to every department of learning, discovery and invention is faith. Indeed, without faith no one could ever achieve anything really worthwhile.

"Faith," says the Scripture, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." And so Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, has written in her *Science and Health*, (page 298) that spiritual realities "dawn in faith and glow full-orbed in spiritual understanding." Faith then is that quality of intelligence where divinity reaches humanity. If therefore an individual were to suppress his faith, he would no longer be capable of recognizing that which is spiritual or divine.

### The Sign of Healing

When God required Moses to lead the Hebrew people out of Egypt, faith was essential on the part of a whole nation before that nation could accept Moses as its God-appointed leader. When a question of doubt arose, God gave Moses two signs or symbols that would be acceptable as proofs of God's presence and power to those who had faith. The first was the sign of the rod. The second was the healing of Moses' hand of leprosy. Then God assured Moses that if the people would not believe the first sign, they would believe the latter sign of healing; and from that day to this, the sign of healing has been to the people of faith the most absolute proof of God's presence and power known to men.

Some centuries later, when John the Baptist sent messengers to Christ Jesus to know whether he were the promised Messiah, the question might have arisen: What answer could Jesus present that would constitute an absolute proof of his messiahship? He did not resort to an argument. He turned back fifteen centuries and used the same kind of proof that God gave to Moses, namely the sign of healing. Turning to the bystanders, Jesus proceeded in that same hour to heal many of their plagues and infirmities. Then he replied, "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached." That was Jesus' reply to a man of faith. Moreover those works of healing indicated exactly what Jesus meant by "works" when he said, "The same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." There again is the statement that those works of healing indicate the proof of God's presence and power, for as Jesus said, "though ye believe not me, believe the works." I am a Christian Scientist because I have the faith to believe, with all those who accept the Bible teachings, that the sign of healing which God gave to Moses, and which Christ Jesus gave to John the Baptist, constitutes the most absolute proof of God's presence and power known to men.

I am a Christian Scientist because Mary Baker Eddy has expressed this Science in her book, "*Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures*," with such scientific accuracy, that the simple reading of that book has many times healed the reader. The last chapter in the book, called "Fruitage," presents a hundred pages of testimonials by those who have been healed simply by

reading that book. Before those testimonies were published, they were submitted to the same tests for verification that would be required by a court of law. They include the healing of eye-trouble, deafness, dropsy, heart-trouble, asthma, consumption, cancer and so forth, — difficulties that are by many considered incurable. But here again is that sign of healing — the same sign that God gave to Moses; the same sign that Christ Jesus gave to John the Baptist, which the people of faith recognize as the most absolute proof of God's presence and power known to men.

While I was in Florida last winter, I met an old-time friend whom I had not seen in many years. She was then ninety years of age, and she lives with her sister who was ninety-six. I asked her to tell me again what brought her into Christian Science. Her husband was a practicing physician. In 1886, that is to say forty-four years ago, that physician told his wife that she could live but a short time, because she was suffering from malignant cancer. When the husband gave her up as beyond all hope of recovery, she asked permission to try Christian Science. The husband gave his consent, provided she would not allow the Christian Scientist to give her any medicine or lay a hand on her.

When this little lady went to the Christian Scientist's office, she was asked to take a chair, but remembering her husband's warning, she deliberately moved the chair to another position to convince herself that it had no electrical attachments. Then she had her first Christian Science treatment. After a few treatments, not exceeding two weeks time, she was completely and permanently healed of that malignant cancer. That was forty-four years ago; she is today ninety years of age, well and strong for one of her years, and in full possession of her faculties.

To avoid thinking that this is an isolated case, let me tell of another woman whose healing from cancer was authenticated and reported in one of the Christian Science periodicals. As the result of the publication of her testimony, this woman received many letters. When I saw her about two years ago, she told me that up to that time she had received seventy-four letters from those who had themselves been healed of cancer by Christian Science. So there was a single record of seventy-five cases of cancer healed by the power of God in Christian Science.

If forty-four years ago that physician had succeeded in healing his wife of the malignant cancer, the whole world would have bestowed its blessing upon him, and rightfully so. But even at that time Mrs. Eddy had found the remedy, and it has stood the test of all these years. Then does not the world owe Mrs. Eddy a debt of gratitude for such a discovery? Thus it is that Christian Science testifies of Christ Jesus, by doing the works that he did, and by doing them always in his name. Mrs. Eddy has written (*Science and Health*, pp. 476, 477) "Jesus beheld in Science the perfect man, who appeared to him where sinning mortal man appears to mortals. In this perfect man the Saviour saw God's own likeness, and this correct view of man healed the sick."

## Christian Science Versus Suggestion

There are some who believe that inasmuch as Christian Science heals the sick by a mental method, this method must employ some form of will-power or hypnotic suggestion. Those methods, however, are the product of the carnal mind, which St. Paul described as "sin and death"; but he also said, "to be spiritually minded is life and peace"; and these two points of

view are polar opposites. Consequently the Christian Scientist never employs human will or suggestion to heal.

Some may believe that even if hypnotic suggestion is the product of the carnal mind, it may be used by the proper individual and under proper conditions to achieve much good. Such an individual was at the head of the philosophical department when I was in the university. He apparently understood the power of hypnotic suggestion, and it is said that he used it in his classes. For that reason I avoided his courses, because I refused to submit myself to his hypnotic suggestion. But he was so sincere in his belief that such a system of suggestion could do good that he conceived the notion of using it on his own son, in order to cause his son to graduate from the university more brilliantly than if left to his natural resources. That boy was in a class next above my own, and I had frequent opportunity to observe his conduct. Up to a certain point the professor's theory seemed to be a success, because the boy was finally graduated brilliantly. But it was not the boy's own mind, it was his father's mind dominating that of his son. The result was that when the father finally withdrew his personal domination and control, it left his son in such a weakened mental condition that within three years after graduation he was pronounced a helpless imbecile. What a price to pay for a mere philosophical experiment; and if you desire a proof, this experience should convince anyone that good can never be derived from evil, and suggestion of every kind is unquestionably an evil. Consequently, a Christian Scientist never uses will power or suggestion in Christian Science practice.

### Simplicity of Christian Healing

In strong contrast with this experience, let me cite an instance of how practical the teachings of Christian Science can be made. I recall an experience of my own when I was a small boy in the grammar school. Whenever I was called upon to recite in class, I invariably said the wrong thing, and yet I might know the right thing as soon as I was seated, but then it was too late. That condition continued for about a month, and when we were graded at the close of the month, I was placed very nearly at the foot of the class. I was too much ashamed of the condition to speak of it at home, but fortunately we had to present our monthly report card for the signature of our parents. When I presented my card to my father, he examined it very critically, and he took plenty of time to do it. Then he looked at me very critically, and demanded an explanation. I was able to tell him that I had been faithful in my studies. When I told him that, he, as a Christian Scientist, knew instantly what the difficulty was — the same old difficulty described by Paul: "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." Evidently my father was too busy at the moment to deal with the problem, so he turned me over to my mother to be healed of that condition in Christian Science. My mother began by asking me why children go to school, and then she explained that children go to school, not to learn a mass of facts, but rather to cultivate or develop certain mental faculties of intelligence, such as perception, reason, memory, application, and judgment. There are other faculties, to be sure, but these at least are fundamental. My mother showed me that we grasp a new idea through the faculty of perception, we take it into the understanding through the faculty of reason, we retain it from being lost by the faculty of memory, and we are able to express it to others through the faculties of application and judgment. My mother then explained that these are all faculties of

the divine Mind, — God is their creator; and as creations of the divine Mind, these faculties of intelligence are necessarily expressed to all God's children alike. You never heard of a human being who pretended to be the originator or creator of memory. No human being ever claimed to be the originator of the faculty of reason. Webster's dictionary says, "The scholastics held that there is a hierarchy of causes, the supreme or first cause being the divine Mind." Mrs. Eddy declares in *Science and Health* (106:7) that God endowed man with reason as an inalienable right, and that immortal memory (*Science and Health*, 407:22) is never lost. She uses those words "immortal memory," in the side note to the paragraph.

Thus my mother began to lead my thought to recognize the source of true intelligence, not in the human brain, but in the infinity of the divine Mind. She undertook to establish my true relationship to the divine Mind, by explaining that I, as the child of God, made in His image and likeness, must of necessity be the image and likeness of divine Mind; must of necessity be the image of His intelligence, including all the faculties of that intelligence. Therefore, in reality, I could no more be separated from the experience and activity of that intelligence than God could be lost or destroyed. My mother continued that explanation until she led me step by step to the realization of my own inseparable relationship to the faculties of divine Mind; and when she led me to the point of realizing or understanding that relationship, I was healed. After that it was easy for me to recite correctly. The result was that when we were graded at the close of the second month, I found myself as near the head of the class as previously I had been near the foot, and I was able to hold my position.

That experience strengthened my mental faculties, gave me the recognition of the true source of strength and intelligence, and the ability to express myself. I never knew before just what a Christian Science treatment was, but I learned from my mother's audible explanation, even though I was but a child, that a Christian Science treatment is the well-reasoned, logical explanation of that which is absolutely true about the nature of God and of man's relationship to God. When that well-reasoned explanation is carried to the point of realization or understanding, it heals the sick; and it healed me. I saw the relation between cause and effect. I learned from that experience that the teachings of Christian Science are based on the Bible, that they have to do with the nature of God, and that is why in Christian Science physical and moral healing are inseparable. To be healed physically means also to be healed morally, according to the teachings of Christian Science.

### Martin Luther's Healing Prayers

In the Biblical account of the Acts of the Apostles may be found several reports of apostolic healing, which took place after the departure of Jesus. In fact Christian healing was continued for about 300 years after the time of Jesus, proving that this healing could be taught to others. But during the dark ages, Christian healing was unknown, and the people suffered such misery and torment that they began to attribute their suffering to God. Then they resorted to rites and ceremonies to appease the wrath of an angry God. That condition continued until the beginning of the Reformation. Then a small group of reformers began to read the Bible, and through their study of the Bible, they gained such a clear, correct concept of God that their prayers healed the sick.

I should like to bring to your attention one specific case of healing performed by Martin Luther for his beloved disciple, Philipp Melanchthon. Luther had evidently been on a journey, and during his absence Melanchthon was taken ill, so seriously ill that he had lost consciousness, his eyes were set, and the Court physician declared that he was beyond human aid. It was then that Luther returned, and when he found his beloved friend in that condition he was visibly frightened. Then, rousing himself, he exclaimed: "O God, how has the devil injured this Thy instrument!" Observe in that remark the effect of Luther's Bible study. The Bible had taught him that God never made a man sick, — that sickness is the work of the devil, or evil. Is not that exactly what Jesus taught? Jesus once referred to a woman who "was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself," as one "whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years." Jesus declared that the woman's condition was the work of Satan and not of God, and Jesus employed the power of God to heal that evil condition.

Centuries after the time of Jesus, there comes the ringing challenge of Martin Luther that Melanchthon's sickness was the work of the devil. Then Luther appealed to God, the Giver of all good, to save his friend. To use Luther's own language: "I wearied His ears with all His promises of hearing prayers, which I could repeat out of Holy Writ, so that He could not but hear me if ever I were to trust in His promises." Then, grasping Melanchthon by the hand, he exclaimed: "Be of good courage, Philipp; thou shalt not die. God has pleasure in life, not in death. Therefore, give no place to the spirit of sorrow, and be not thine own murderer." Needless to say, those declarations of truth caused Melanchthon to revive; but he was much like a drowning man who begs to be let alone that he may die in peace. "By no means," insisted Luther, "thou must serve our Lord God yet longer." Then food was brought, but Melanchthon refused it, whereupon Luther with his accustomed impetuosity, exclaimed: "Thou must eat, or I will excommunicate thee!" Think of threatening to excommunicate a man, simply because he would not eat. However, it broke that mesmeric stupor, and Melanchthon was completely and permanently healed. The correct application of the power of God prolonged his life for 20 years, a full generation.

### Mrs. Eddy's Healing Prayers

The healing prayers that ushered in the Reformation prove that God's healing power is not for a particular time nor for a particular class of people; it is for all time, "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." When Mary Baker Eddy was a child, her mother taught her that God does indeed answer prayer and heal the sick. One time when the child was suffering from a fever, her mother reminded her that if she would turn to God in prayer, He would heal her. So Mary Baker did pray to God fervently, and she was healed of the fever, and her mother was glad. There was the proof of God's nearness. There was the proof that He answers prayer today, as He has always done. Later on, Mrs. Eddy healed a little child of severe eye trouble through her prayers to this same loving Father of all. Such experiences were but preparing Mrs. Eddy for the great event which came into her life in 1866.

Mrs. Eddy had met with an accident and sustained an injury, which her physician declared must result fatally. On the third day following the accident, Mrs. Eddy turned to her Bible and began to read from the Gospel of Matthew how Jesus healed the palsied man. Doubtless she had read

that account many times before, but this time she was under the stress of circumstances, her physician, from a material point of view, declared that she must die; she knew that nothing material could save her so she turned absolutely to God, and from that spiritual point of view, she began to read how Jesus healed the palsied man; as she read she began to comprehend how the healing was done, and she was instantly healed.

### Healing Effect of the Textbook

The healing that came to Mrs. Eddy was the ancient sign of God's presence and power. She resumed her study of the Bible, and began to write out her observations from that same spiritual point of view, as a scribe under orders. Those writings formed the basis of her book, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures." Then Mrs. Eddy discovered that the reading of her book heals the sick, because it lifts one in thought to that spiritual point of view from which he can comprehend that which is absolutely true in the sight of God. The Bible declares that the seed of truth is in itself. It is a living, palpitating, vitalizing power of the divine presence, and when one understands it, he can always express it. As this book, Science and Health, leads the individual to see and understand that which is true in the sight of God, the expression of that understanding is manifest in healing, purification, and regeneration. It is a most important fact that moral healing can never be separated from physical healing in Christian Science because both proceed from the same source.

Recently I was duly impressed, while attending one of our mid-week testimonial meetings, by the testimonies of two mature men. Each testified that as a result of reading Mrs. Eddy's Science and Health he was healed of the tobacco habit; healed of the liquor habit; healed of the gambling habit; and healed of immorality. When a woman can write a book that will heal its readers of immorality, then surely it will be granted that she must be a pure-minded woman, for "by their fruits shall ye know them."

### Mrs. Eddy Proved the Healing Power Teachable

The fruitage of "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," which book was first published in 1875, proved that Mrs. Eddy not only understood this Science of divine healing herself, but that she could express it in language which enabled others to understand and repeat the healing. Not long after the publication of Science and Health my family was in need of healing. For thirteen years my mother had been a patient sufferer from a condition that gradually developed and finally left her helpless. When the physicians declared that she could not live much longer, she turned to Christian Science. My father wrote directly to Mrs. Eddy for help. Mrs. Eddy responded by sending one of her students to heal my mother. After two weeks treatment in Christian Science my mother was completely and permanently healed. My father and mother intuitively knew that the healing power came from God. They saw in it the return of primitive Christian healing, and they desired to understand more of it. They applied to Mrs. Eddy for class teaching in Christian Science and were accepted.

One day, during the course of instruction, Mrs. Eddy required each member of that class to find a patient, heal the case, and report the completed healing next day in class. My father, like many others, was a stranger in the city, and he wondered how he could find a patient. It was not a

question of the healing; the more serious point was to find the patient. So he told his dilemma to his landlady when he returned to his lodgings. The landlady immediately said that he could heal her, for she was totally deaf in one ear. My father rushed to his room, joyous at having found a patient. As he entered his room he declared, with the realization and the spirit which Mrs. Eddy had poured out upon that class: "In all the realm of the real there is no such thing as deafness." Immediately the woman came running after him, exclaiming: "I am healed, I am healed!" She explained that something happened in that ear like a pistol shot and she was instantly healed. Every member of that class but one found his patient, healed the case, and reported the complete healing next day in class.

Mrs. Eddy could impart the letter and the spirit of these teachings to her students in such measure as to lift them right out of their former environment, and almost invariably make Christian Science practitioners of them.

## Conclusion

All that anyone can ever know about Christian Science must be gained from Mary Baker Eddy and her writings. She has said that her church "is the mouthpiece of Christian Science" (My. p. 247). Consequently the institutional activities of this church provide the means and methods by which sin, disease, and death may be overcome, and complete salvation achieved in the way which Christ Jesus taught.

Christian Science is vital to men and women, because it presents a scientific explanation by which all may work out their own salvation. It explains all cause and effect as mental; and that sin, disease, and death are overcome by the same Principle which enabled Christ Jesus to heal the sick and raise the dead. Contrary to popular opinion, this healing is achieved not by any use of the human will or suggestion, but by the understanding of that which is absolutely true in the sight of God.

Here let me read from Science and Health, the Tenets of the Christian Science Church. Every Christian Scientist, in order to become a member of this church, must first subscribe his name to these six Tenets:

"1. As adherents of Truth, we take the inspired Word of the Bible as our sufficient guide to eternal Life.

"2. We acknowledge and adore one supreme and infinite God. We acknowledge His Son, one Christ; the Holy Ghost or divine Comforter; and man in God's image and likeness.

"3. We acknowledge God's forgiveness of sin in the destruction of sin and the spiritual understanding that casts out evil as unreal. But the belief in sin is punished so long as the belief lasts.

"4. We acknowledge Jesus' atonement as the evidence of divine efficacious Love, unfolding man's unity with God through Christ Jesus the Way-shower; and we acknowledge that man is saved through Christ, through Truth, Life, and Love as demonstrated by the Galilean Prophet in healing the sick and overcoming sin and death.

"5. We acknowledge that the crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection served to uplift faith to understand eternal Life, even the allness of Soul, Spirit, and the nothingness of matter.



"6. And we solemnly promise to watch, and pray for that Mind to be in us which was also in Christ Jesus; to do unto others as we would have them do unto us; and to be merciful, just, and pure."

[Given Nov. 2, 1930, as a radio address (and not formally as a Christian Science lecture) on WEEI AM radio in Boston, Massachusetts, and published in The Christian Science Monitor, Nov. 3, 1930. Many of the ideas here expressed are found in Mr. Knapp's lectures.]