

An Outline of Christian Science – 1931

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More and more in these days are we transferring all things to the mental realm. Christian Science puts disease there, along with evil, and insists that disease, instead of being a physical condition, instead of being a stubborn reality, is a belief or an illusion of the human mind, which the truth will cure.

What is the truth that will cure any person of his suffering? Simply this: God has made man perfect and maintains him in perfection; and whenever any individual, whatever his suffering may be, begins to grasp the fact that God has fashioned him in perfection, he will necessarily begin to drop his belief of distress and lay hold of strength and health.

Perfection of Man

It is inconceivable that God should have made anything imperfect. Flaws in the universe would bring the universe to an end. And the perfect man under consideration is not away off in the clouds. He is not a man yet to be born or come into existence. The perfect man is here and now, and you are that man.

Not your outward physical self. Confessedly he is imperfect enough. The perfect man is your spiritual self, the man God has made you. Your supposed physical self is really not a man, is really not you. It is the human mind's mistaken sense of you. As you begin to realize that God has created you in spiritual perfection, and hold to this realization as best you can, and repudiate the suggestions of evil and sickness as lying and illusory, the mistaken sense of yourself as material and mortal begins to melt away and pass out of your experience and the true sense of yourself as spiritual and free comes out more and more in your experience.

Then it is that your health gets better, your morals improve, your intellectual faculties expand, and your capacity for doing things enlarges, because you are commencing to find yourself, you are getting acquainted with the genuine man God has made you.

Several months ago a woman visiting relatives in a distant city found one of her knees so painful that she could scarcely get around the house. While she was in this condition her relatives induced her one evening to attend a Christian

Science lecture. She was decidedly interested in the discourse, and the next morning discovered herself moving about in perfect freedom. Her knee was all right. It had been so, she then realized, from the moment the lecture closed. In order to make quite sure of her healing she walked up and down a flight of stairs and found her knee equal to the test. The truths she absorbed at the lecture had accomplished their work. They had aroused her from the dream or illusion of fear and helplessness which had enveloped her and brought her out into a recognition of the harmony and freedom which God designs for every one of us.

Nature of Deity

We used to think of God, at least most of us did, as a man magnified, a sort of king occupying a throne beyond the clouds. But in the light of Christian Science we see that God is divine Mind. Why do we say He is Mind? Because He knows all things and is present everywhere, and there is nothing but Mind that can be all-knowing and everywhere present. And when we think of God as Mind we immediately think of Him as Life also, because Mind and Life are essentially the same. And associated with Mind and Life is Love. These three are inextricably identified with one another, and they are, as you know, the Christian Science names for God.

They are the Scriptural names for Him also, because as you read the New Testament carefully you find that it defines God as Spirit, Love, Mind, Life - all in accordance with Principle, that is, perfect, unerring, eternal. You do not find "Principle" in the Bible as a name for God. Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, has given us that expression. At first you may say that Principle is not an adequate term for Deity. This is because you are accustomed to think of principle as mindless and inanimate. But Principle in its full sense is intelligent and living. Indeed divine Principle is nothing less than Mind, Life, and Love creating and sustaining all of God's creatures, man included.

When you conceive of God as Mind, Life, Love, Principle, you at once see that He is everywhere and that you are always in His presence. I know a woman who for years was almost an invalid. One morning, while in unusual distress, she picked up a book one of her friends had left with her the day before and read for a few minutes until she came to a sentence something like this: "If you realize the presence of God this realization will destroy disease."

She put the book aside because these words arrested her attention. She tried to get the meaning, the significance of the words. She reasoned somewhat like

this: "If God is everywhere, and I know that He is, then He is right where this pain and weakness seem to be; and if God is there those things are not there." Almost immediately she felt freer and stronger. In a short time she was well.

What was this woman doing while thus reverently and intensely declaring the absence of disease and the presence of God, the presence of Life harmonious? She was giving herself a Christian Science treatment. There's nothing mysterious about a Christian Science treatment. It consists, for the most part, in realizing the presence of God and the necessary absence of disease or imperfection of any sort.

Presence of God

The presence of God! How seldom do we consider what this means! The presence of God as Life means the absence of disease, means that God is your Life, and therefore that your life is unfettered and uncontaminated. Disease and mortality are the illusions and dreams of the human mind, which are broken up and dissipated when you are aroused to the fact that actually you are an expression of boundless and eternal Life.

The presence of God as Mind means that really there is only one Mind, and that this Mind, as Paul declares, asserts itself through you, giving you the vision to penetrate the illusions of suffering and evil and equipping you with the ability to go out into the world and make your life useful and successful.

The presence of God as Principle means that your genuine self is a man of Principle, not a faltering, sickly, frightened mortal. Nothing finer than this can be said of you. A ray of light coming from the sun brings with it all the elements or qualities of the sun. So man, emanating from God, brings with him and possesses God's qualities. The divine qualities, then, are all assembled in your real self, making your true self a man of Principle, a man of divine intelligence, a man of imperishable Life. This is the great truth which, so far as you discern it, will set you free.

God must express Himself. Otherwise He would be practically nonexistent. And He expresses Himself in individual men and women. Mind, Life, Love, find expression in you. Thereby your spiritual self becomes God's witness, a witness to limitless intelligence, everlasting Life, measureless Love. In the language of Genesis man is the image and likeness of God; and Mrs. Eddy declares on page 516 of her great book, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures", "Man, made in His likeness, possesses and reflects God's dominion over all the

earth."

Now we must keep in mind that the man endowed with freedom and dominion, the perfect man we here have under consideration, is not physical man.

Christian Science claims neither perfection nor permanence for him. What we call physical man is really not man but only the human mind's distorted picture of man, for the human mind has a dull, blurred vision and does not see man as God has made him. Your supposed physical self, with its heaviness and limitation and disease, is not actually you but the erroneous human sense of you, and as you gain the true sense of yourself you necessarily lose the false sense. This is what Paul styles putting off the old man and putting on the new. How near God is after all! How inseparable from every one of us! You have striven to find Him. You have striven to find the genuine man - you believe He made you. And all the time God has been at hand. All the time your perfect self (though not confined to any limited area because spiritual man is unrestricted) has been here, right where your imperfect, suffering self has seemed to be. Paul sums up the whole situation when he declares that God is above you, in you, and through you; and when he further declares that in God you live, move, and have your being. This shows where God is. It shows where you are. You are in Him, and He is manifested through you. Hence the at-one-ment of God and man.

Yet with all this nearness you cannot see God. You cannot see Mind and Life, though you can see their expression in man. Well, you cannot see beauty except as you see it exhibited in the sunset, the flower, or the bird. You cannot see beauty itself as an abstraction. It has to be identified in something before it becomes visible. One day when Jesus was talking to his disciples, Philip impatiently interrupted him with the demand, "Show us the Father." Jesus replied, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." That is, he who has seen the real man has seen God expressed, has seen an expression of divine Mind and Life.

Constantly you are aware of this expression. You are continuously aware of the presence of intelligence, are you not? So far as that intelligence is sound and good it is the manifestation through you of all-knowing Mind; and when you feel the energy and the movement of Life you are feeling the presence of God (God is Life, your life) and you realize that He is closer than hand or breath, closer, if could be, than thought. He finds expression through you, making you, to use Paul's graphic picture, "The temple of the living God."

Prayer or Treatment

At this point you may recall Mrs. Eddy's ringing words, "You are well, and you know it" (Miscellaneous Writings page 220). Why are you well? Because the Life manifested through spiritual man, and hence through your genuine self, is God, a Life which knows no pain, obstruction, deformity, or limitation of any kind. And how is it that you know you are well? Because divine Mind equips you with a vision that sees through the shadowy illusions of disease and recognizes the perfection in which God has clothed you.

These sublime truths may at first seem dim and remote. But as you meditate on them, and discern their reason and significance they become transparent and vital. More than this they became operative in the affairs and conditions of everyday experience and transform your life for the better, supplanting weakness with strength, wavering with purpose, failure and discouragement with confidence and usefulness. Then is the word made flesh.

Meditation upon spiritual truths and realization of their power is prayer, for prayer consists not so much in asking God for help as it does in realizing that already He has supplied us everything needful. Such prayer tends to awaken us from the dream of human lack and suffering and limitation to the boundless plenty and opportunity and freedom that God has showered on all hands. Then we begin to realize that heaven is here and now, awaiting our recognition of it; begin to realize that eternal Life is here and now and that we have already entered upon it.

Discovery of Science

What we know about Christian Science has come to us through Mary Baker Eddy. This Science was revealed to her in the year 1866. She was a New England woman, refined and intensely religious. She had her full share of trouble and suffering. Finally, as the result of an accident, she reached the point in her career where her physician informed her that her condition was critical. In this extremity she turned to her Bible for consolation. She had always been a profound student of the Scriptures. And while reading one of the Gospel accounts of healing performed by Christ Jesus she felt a sense of peace and strength steal over her.

She arose, dressed, presented herself to anxious friends relieved of her distress. Other people have been healed while reading the Bible. Nobody knows how many. But Mrs. Eddy was not content with being healed. She must know

how she was healed. She must understand the process of spiritual healing. To this end she continued her study of the Scriptures until it was revealed to her that Jesus in healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and even raising the dead was employing Science.

She continued her study until she came into an understanding of this Science, which she afterward most appropriately named "Christian Science." Then when people came to her in distress she applied her newly-discovered Science to the situation and was gratified to find that it brought relief. Having thus discovered and tested Christian Science she next set forth its principles in her remarkable book, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures", and gave this book to the world so that all may understand this Science and use it to bring about better conditions in their lives.

Sixty years ago this great woman was alone in her conviction that only the good is real. But she held her ground against the general current of human opinion until she gained the support of multitudes of intelligent people and inaugurated the Christian Science movement, becoming its Leader and finding an enduring place among the foremost benefactors of the race. In accomplishing all this she exhibited not only marvelous spiritual discernment but a degree of courage and resourcefulness that has never been surpassed.

Matter Temporary

Her fundamental proposition that God is Mind or Spirit, and therefore that the earth with its fullness is mental and spiritual, has the support of both reason and revelation. The material senses and the human mind, with their dull, limited vision, would have us believe that we are material mortals inhabiting a material world. But Mind finds expression in thoughts and ideas, not in solid physical objects. Only when we rely upon the physical senses of touch and sight do things seem hard and stationary and man a physical figure so many feet in height and so many pounds in weight.

This blurred, heavy sense of things constitutes matter. Matter, therefore, is not the substantial reality it appears. It is a mistaken concept of things, and this mistaken concept of things as heavy and localized disappears as physical sense yields to spiritual sense or true vision. The disappearance of matter, then, does not mean that the foundation of things will crumble or that you will vanish and lose your identity. It means that you will part with the erroneous sense of yourself as material and heavy and suffering, and gain the true sense of yourself as spiritual, free, buoyant, incorporeal.

Incorporeality of Man

You get a hint of this lightness and buoyancy in your dreams, for then you occasionally find yourself soaring through the air like a bird. You do not lose yourself; you lose only your heaviness. You get a further instructive hint of incorporeality from your shadow. How light and jaunty it is as it walks down the street with you. It meets and passes other shadows but does not collide with them. Heavy trucks roll along the street but it cleverly evades them. Why does your shadow enjoy such confidence and safety? Because it is incorporeal. It has no solidity, no density, no thickness. Yet, to the physical eye, it has identity, it is there.

You, your real self, are incorporeal. This is why you are so safe. Really there can be no collisions, no accidents for you, no inflammation, no congestion in you, except in belief or illusion or dream. You are more in the nature of consciousness than corporeality. You are an assemblage of thoughts and ideas rather than of cells and atoms. You are an individual consciousness not a physical body.

Constantly you are seeing and feeling and knowing, you are aware of things, and, most wonderful of all, you are aware of yourself. Whence comes this consciousness, this awareness? It is the manifestation in you of the all-knowing Mind, the eternal Life, we call God. Thus it is that you are a witness, safe and enduring amidst the supposed dangers of mortal existence, to Life and Mind boundless and eternal.

Changing Sense of Body

Many are the illusions that throng human experience. But the one that makes you the most trouble is the illusion that you are incased in a physical body and hence that the hurt or destruction of this body means your hurt or destruction. The fact is, you are spiritual. You cannot be compressed within a material habitation. Spiritual man is free and unconfined. You are outside your lead pencil. Likewise you are outside the physical body. Your pencil wears out. It needs replacement. Your body too wears out. It needs repair. And so rapid and radical is the work of repair and construction of the body that you have a new body every eleven months, so the physiologists say. You can readily think of some of your friends who have a new body oftener than they have a new overcoat.

There is not a person in the audience who has not already had several different

bodies and every one of you is due to have nobody knows how many more. Some of you have had twenty, some thirty, some perhaps sixty. And you put off one body and put on another without any great amount of distress, did you not? It did not hurt so much. You survived the process. You lived through it all. Why? Because you are an individual consciousness wherein God continuously asserts himself regardless of whether you lose your pencil, your overcoat, or your body.

You have a very different sense of body according to the varying state of your thought. When all absorbed in work you quite forget your body. It neither hurts nor boasts. And how light and precise are its movements. At other times, notably in your dreams occasionally, your body becomes so heavy you cannot stir hand or foot. Sometimes in your dreams you have a long trip before you. You have to reach San Francisco, New York, or London instantly. Immediately you become aware of a body so light and free that you put it on the opposite side of the globe if that is your destination. Meanwhile your friend sees you in your easy chair at home quietly nodding over the evening paper.

Continuity of Life

All this should help you to understand what takes place when death comes and your present sense of body is abruptly abandoned. Evidently you still remain aware of a body, for as Mrs. Eddy says, in that wonderful way she has of saying things, "Mortals waken from the dream of death with bodies unseen by those who think that they bury the body" (Science and Health, page 429). Why unseen? Because of unbelief and dullness of vision.

But when you go through the experience of death you will still find yourself thinking and living, because consciousness, that consciousness God gives you, continues and persists on and on beyond the grave. It will survive your present body as it has already survived the twenty, forty, sixty previous bodies. Hence the permanence of individual man; hence your eternal life.

"Consciousness," says Mrs. Eddy, "constructs a better body when faith in matter has been conquered" (Science and Health, page 425). Here is suggested the importance of entertaining good and healthful thoughts and rejecting evil and sickly ones. Consciousness grows by what it feeds upon. You grow by the kind of thoughts you entertain. There is no limit to your possibilities for unfoldment if you govern your thoughts.

Right thinking is not far removed from prayer. And he who takes time every day to realize the presence of Mind and Life expressed through him will not be

disappointed. He will find himself growing in vision and strength. He will come to recognize himself not as a mortal but as an immortal; come to know himself as God has made him, not as physical sense has tried to belittle him. Rising above limitations and dangers, he will come into the enjoyment of God-given powers and opportunities hitherto scarcely dreamed of. Heaven will no longer seem remote nor eternal life a thing of the future.

Spiritual Vision

How may one develop this vision that enables him to see himself and others cleansed of the "muddy vesture of decay" with which mortal sense would clothe him? By being good, by holding to right and kindly and healthful thoughts, rejecting their opposites, by reverently realizing as best he can that divine Mind now equips him with this vision, and finally by gaining that sense of safety which comes as one recognizes that he lives in a world that is safe and among people who are good and kindly because governed by divine Principle.

Cultivate the habit of looking out upon the world, and at the people in it, with that intelligent, generous eye which is focused to see in every individual, regardless of his race or religion, the man of Principle that God has made him. The growing sense of confidence which comes to one as a result of this tolerant mental attitude at once begins to eliminate the fear that has been freezing up his life and clouding his vision.

As Paul worked along these lines he was, to use his words, "caught up into paradise" where he saw things as they are, and found them so marvelously beautiful that he could not describe them. In somewhat the same way John was uplifted and enabled to see the new heaven and the new earth wherein people do not have heavy suffering bodies. Imagine yourself in a world where you were divested of all heaviness and suffering. Paul and John caught glimpses of such a world here and at hand.

These men were not so different from you and me. They were still groping in the dubious twilight of mortal existence even as you and I; still struggling with the same temptations, the same infirmities, with which we struggle, yet at times they attained, and we can attain, that vision whereby men see things as they are in all their wonder and glory.

There are people right among us, in all this hurry and confusion of modern life, who in some measure enjoy this vision, but we hear little of what they see because people of fine sensibilities hesitate to voice their extraordinary experiences. They do not care to encounter the stolidity and ridicule of ordinary

mortals.

I know a little girl and her aunt. They are both Christian Scientists. One day while they were down town, they saw a cripple. Everybody was looking at him as is usual on such occasions. The little girl, after observing him and the people for a moment, said, "They don't see what we do, do they Aunt Emily?" The girl glimpsed something of the real man right where the people thought they were seeing deformity and weakness, and she naturally supposed that her aunt, as a Scientist, was also glimpsing the perfect man in place of the grossly imperfect mortal outlined by physical sense.

You are not going to forget, then, that not only do you stand in the presence of a perfect God, but that you also stand in the presence of a perfect man. And that man is you. If you cannot do better than simply say these things you will be helped, because they are true, and the truth, when thought or declared, becomes dynamic. It goes to work to break up the dreams and illusions of limitation and suffering. But you will do better than merely repeat these statements. You will get the reason for them. In other words you will realize something of the presence of a perfect God and perfect man, and as you do so you will necessarily lose the belief of imperfection and distress that has been making your life a burden.

Jesus' Career

The greater the man, if greatness be measured as it should be by spirituality, the more constant his practice to commune with divine Mind. This was exemplified in the life of Christ Jesus. The gospels often refer to his habit of prayer. Mark speaks of him on one occasion, as rising up a great while before day, going out to a solitary place, and there praying.

More and more in this way did Jesus become endowed with the divine Mind, more and more was his consciousness uplifted, until for him matter and mortality, with the limitation and suffering that follow in their train, ceased to be. He emerged into the unobstructed realm of Spirit.

Then what power he enjoyed! At one time he desired to be across the lake. Immediately he was on the other side. On that same occasion he walked on the water in defiance of the law of gravitation. Gravity cannot pull on incorporeal man, neither can time and space restrain him. Jesus annihilated lack or want, clothing the man whom he restored to reason and feeding the people who followed him out in the desert when no supply, beyond a few loaves and

fishes, was visible to physical sense.

Overthrow of Death

Disease and evil, in their worst forms, became unreal to him, and he made them unreal to others. Even death could not make good its boasts in his presence. He stopped the funeral at Nain, called back his friend Lazarus who had been gone four days, communed with Elias and Moses centuries after they had passed from mortal sight, and finally, in his personal experience, proved the truth of his own words, "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." You all remember the occasion: his stirring the forces of evil to the point where they were bent upon his destruction, his seizure at night by the mob in the garden, the tumultuous trial in the morning, the cruel execution, the hurried burial.

Three days afterward he rolled away the stone from his sepulchre, appeared to his friends a number of times, talked with them, ate with them. At one time, affirms Paul, he was seen by five hundred people at once. Then at the end of forty days he ascended, that is, he became invisible to the physical eye. But this does not mean that he ceased to exist. Every man who has ever lived continues to live. And certainly this holds true of the greatest man the world has ever seen.

What had Jesus accomplished in this last scene of his earthly career? He had permitted his enemies to do their utmost to destroy him, apparently they had destroyed him, then he came back alive the selfsame man. He had proved that individual life cannot be destroyed. You will see that your life cannot be destroyed nor brought to an end as you come to realize that you are an individual consciousness, not a physical body, a consciousness wherein limitless Mind and imperishable Life find expression making you God's witness. He proved that individual life is indestructible and continuous; he stepped forth into the freedom and the power of an endless life, a state to which every one of us may rightly aspire.

For if you do not keep in mind that what Jesus said of himself is essentially true of you, if you do not keep in thought that what he did you can do so far as you understand his Science, you are losing the vital part of his message. He did not put himself in a class apart from you and me. He referred to his Father as our Father, which makes us all of the same family. Indeed we call him our elder brother, immeasurably wiser and better than we, certainly, but our brother still.

He made it clear that what he did you can do if you believe and understand him. And Christian Science is awakening you to this fact. It is enabling you to go out

into the world and at least begin to prove that evil, disease, and even death are unreal - nothing more than mortal illusions and dreams which God has not created and does not recognize and which are quite separate and apart from your actual existence. And as you go on in this work you will eventually reach that point in your career as certainly as Jesus reached it in his when you too will step forth into the freedom and the power of an endless life.