

A Christian Science Lecture Entitled

MARY BAKER EDDY: DISCOVERER OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

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INTRODUCTION

“Earth’s actors change earth’s scenes; and the curtain of human life should be lifted on reality, on that which outweighs time; on duty done and life perfected, wherein joy is real and fadeless” (02 p.17:13). Those are the words of someone who has changed earth’s scenes for the better. Someone whose ideas have altered everyday life for many. We each change earth’s scenes in our own way. Some, though, have so risen above the curtain of human life that what they have done outweighs time. Their life is perfected showing forth the permanence of all that is eternal and fadeless.

Historically, we all can think of a few whose lives have had a lasting influence. Individuals like Abraham Lincoln who fought for fair homesteading, tariff reform and emancipation through his state and military leadership. Thomas Edison who discovered the electric light bulb, the first sound recording device, and the motion picture projector. And Eli Whitney, best known for inventing the cotton gin, benefits the world with his standardization of interchangeable parts. These individuals confirm the quote: “earth’s actors change earth’s scenes....”

Those are the words of a woman who, a few years ago,

was inducted into the National Women’s Hall of Fame. She was honored because her words have changed the world. In fact she is “the only American woman to found a lasting American based denomination.” It has been written that she “emerged from obscurity to make an indelible mark on religion, medicine, and journalism.” And, more recently, she’s recognized as making an indelible mark on society as well. This woman is Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer of Christian Science.

“...HOPING FOR A VISION OF RELIEF FROM THIS TRIAL.”

Mary Morse Baker was born in Bow, New Hampshire, in 1821. During her lifetime many historical events and sturdy forefathers would change the scenes of our nation’s history. In that year a treaty with the Shoshone Indians in Idaho was reached, Kansas City was settled as a fur trading post, and a year later the Santa Fe Trail was opened, hosting more than 5,000 people a year. Expansion into the West had begun. The first railroad would be up and running by 1825. The 1860’s found the United States heading into the Civil War and Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address was yet to be written. As 1866, the year Mrs. Eddy discovered Christian Science approached, Florence Nightingale was aiding sick and war-torn soldiers, and oil was discovered in Texas. By 1875, the year Mrs. Eddy’s primary book, the book that teaches how to heal as Christ Jesus did, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, was published, the phonograph was introduced into the household, the Industrial Revolution was in full swing. And by 1900 the Wright Brothers were inventing the airplane, the automobile was on the road, soon followed by Ford’s Model T.

The United States would flower during Mrs. Eddy’s lifetime, yet in 1821, back in Bow, little Mary, the youngest of six children, would spend the

next forty years searching for relief from frailty and sickness. Her father, Mark Baker, was a farmer and a strict Calvinist. Later, Mary would write in her autobiography, *Retrospection and Introspection*: “My father possessed a strong intellect and an iron will. Of my mother I cannot speak as I would, for memory recalls qualities to which the pen can never do justice (p.5.).

Mary’s mother recognized that Mary naturally and easily turned to God - and had an innate understanding of Him. Because of this, and because of the family’s religious leanings, Mary’s mother often encouraged her to turn to God in times of sickness - *to lean upon Him*. And when Mary did, she was healed. The result was that from her childhood she began to recognize the power of God to heal, yet there would be years of suffering and sorrow, and of great spiritual insight, before she fully understood the connection between spiritual right thought and experience.

In 1838 she joined the Congregational Church, but she rejected the doctrine of predestination because she innately understood that God’s child, His beloved creation, could never be forgotten or left out of the kingdom of heaven. In her early twenty’s she married George Washington Glover. But within the year he died of yellow fever - and Mary was expecting their child. Because of the times, and because she was a woman with no way of supporting herself, she returned to her parent’s home.

The frailty that haunted her from childhood became even more evident and she was unable to take care of her young son. She writes: “...my little son, about four years of age, was sent away from me, and put under the care of our family nurse, who had married.... The night before my child was taken from me, I knelt by his side throughout the dark hours, hoping for a vision of relief from this trial” (Ret.20).

Mary married again, mainly to get her son back, but the son was moved to the Far West with the nurse's family. Although she tried everything to get him back, he would be thirty-four years old, with a wife and two children before she saw him again.

During this time Mary sought long and hard for relief from the frailty and sickness. She turned to 'alternative medicine'. She educated herself in homeopathy, allopathy, hydropathy, and suggestive therapeutics. And she practiced homeopathy. She received some relief, but was never permanently healed.

It's interesting however, that during this time she often healed others permanently - solely through her prayers. And because of this her spiritual understanding was being strengthened and cultivated. It was being reinforced to her that prayer to God heals. She began to recognize, through the study of homeopathy, that thought acts upon the human mind and body. She writes, "During twenty years prior to my discovery I had been trying to trace all physical effects to a mental cause; and in the latter part of 1866 I gained the scientific certainty that all causation was Mind, and every effect a mental phenomenon" (Ret. 24).

The scientific certainty that Mrs. Eddy gained in the latter part of 1866 was the result of a near-fatal injury. She suffered from a concussion, internal injuries, and possible spinal dislocation. The doctor had given her up to die because her injuries were beyond his reach. They called in her friends to wait in the next room and they got her burial clothes together. On this pending death-bed Mrs. Eddy did what was most natural for her to do - something that she had glimpsed throughout the years as the only completely successful and permanent method of healing: she turned to God in prayer. She picked up her Bible, and this time, instead of receiving mere relief like she had with

homeopathy and other methods, she was instantaneously healed. Her limbs that were immovable moved, the internal agony ceased and her strength came back. The life-long oppression of sickness and weakness was gone. She was mentally and physically free.

It was soon after this healing that she began writing this book. She writes, "The Bible was my textbook. It answered my questions as to how I was healed; but the Scriptures had to me a new meaning, a new tongue. Their spiritual signification appeared; and I apprehended for the first time, in their spiritual meaning, Jesus' teaching and demonstration, and the Principle and rule of spiritual Science and metaphysical healing, - in a word, Christian Science.... The miracles recorded in the Bible, which had before seemed to me supernatural, grew divinely natural and apprehensible;... My immediate recovery from the effects of an injury caused by an accident, an injury that neither medicine nor surgery could reach, was the falling apple that led me to the discovery how to be well myself, and how to make others so" (Ret.25,24).

FOUR ASPECTS

From this "falling apple" experience Mrs. Eddy gained a glimpse of what she would give ultimately to the world: a spiritual understanding of God and man's oneness, distinctness, perfection. She spent the next forty years healing, teaching, writing, and establishing her church - learning how to stay well herself, making others well, and teaching them how to do it themselves. The result is a religion based wholly upon the teachings of Christ Jesus - proving the truths he taught by demonstration.

The effects of her discovery touch some facet of almost everyone's life. In particular, she has been honored for advancing four different aspects: religion, medicine, journalism, and society.

Certainly, Mark Twain tells us most succinctly *what* Mrs. Eddy did when he wrote: "She has organized and made available a healing principle that for two thousand years has never been employed except as the merest kind of guesswork. She is the benefactor of the age" (203). It is this healing principle that has altered the lives of those who have sought and found God and His love through these teachings. It is this healing principle that is available to you and me today, because of what Mrs. Eddy devoted her life to accomplishing.

And, certainly, Mrs. Eddy tells us most succinctly *who* she is when she writes, "To-day, though rejoicing in some progress, she still finds herself a willing disciple at the heavenly gate, waiting for the Mind of Christ" (S&H, pref. ix:16). Indeed, Mrs. Eddy was a willing disciple at the heavenly gate - kneeling in humble prayer, waiting for the Mind of Christ - waiting to hear and do God's word.

What would Mrs. Eddy want you to know about her? What do I know about her - someone whose writings I've searched and been healed by - yet, someone whom I've never met in person, someone whom I've only read about? Well, I believe, as important as American history is that Mrs. Eddy may want you to know *how* she has changed earth's scenes. How lifting the curtain of human life reveals a servant of God who has discovered for mankind the way of salvation from all inharmony - great or small. How what she founded outweighs time and is as immortal as God. As the servant of God her duty to bring to mankind the spiritual understanding of the Science of the Christ is complete and in this understanding there is eternal joy.

I know this lady, this beloved servant of God. I know her just as many know Abraham Lincoln or Elizabeth Cady Stanton - through her writings. In fact, she writes,

“We look for the sainted Revelator in his writings, and there we find him. Those who look for me in person, or elsewhere than in my writings, lose me instead of find me. I hope and trust that you and I may meet in truth and know each other there, and know as we are known of God” (My. 120).

So today, you and I can meet in truth and know as we are known of God to learn more of Mrs. Eddy’s life, her mission, her service. To know her writings is to know Mrs. Eddy. There we find the word of God written through her pen. There we find the servant of God bringing to each of us a discovery of solutions to all we face. Those who search her writings find her. There is where her thought is seen, her life explained, her mission accomplished. The basis of her whole life, her every thought and word is the searching and finding of God and His power, expressed through His creation, man made in God’s likeness.

RELIGION

To Mrs. Eddy religion wasn’t something made of creeds and rituals. Rather it was the way she lived. It was a way of thinking, of acting, of doing. Her desire to be well and learn how to make others well led her to search the Scriptures, patterning her life after the life of Christ Jesus. Doing this, she found that the so-called miracles of Jesus’ day are not bygone proofs of God’s love and presence, but rather the foundation of present day spiritual healing, as found in Christian Science.

Mrs. Eddy was wise enough not to let this spiritual understanding of God and man’s relationship remain in theory. She tested her discovery, proving its practicality by healing others. She writes in *Science and Health*, “By thousands of well-authenticated cases of healing, she and her students have proved the worth of her teachings. These cases for the most part have been

abandoned as hopeless by regular medical attendants. Few invalids will turn to God till all physical supports have failed, because there is so little faith in His disposition and power to heal disease” (Pref. X).

One example of her healing power is recorded in a book titled *Mary Baker Eddy: Christian Healer*. This healing shows the efficacy of spiritual right thought. It records: “...one of those who heard her (Eddy) speak was healed: ‘This man had been pronounced invalid for years and had grown so irritable that his family could scarcely live with him. He was unable to walk without support.... he was visiting in Boston not far from the Christian Science Church there. Sunday morning, hearing the chimes, he asked to what church they belonged. On being informed that it was the Christian Science Church, and that the worshipers in that church claimed to heal the sick, he went to the service. He said he had not been there long when a woman came in who was announced as Mrs. Eddy, and she gave a talk. She had not talked long, until all of a sudden he felt that he was healed. He did not miss his canes until after he reached the house of his friend. The next day he bought *Science and Health*, a book written by the same Mrs. Eddy who spoke in the church. Since then he has been an ardent student of that book. (An old friend said of this man), ‘I don’t believe even he realized the transformation that has taken place in him. I assure you I never saw so great a change in any person’” (p.165).

Certainly, someone who could prove the power of God by living her religion resulting in healing invalids, the deaf, blind, and diseased, who established a church not only based upon Christ Jesus’ teachings but demonstrated those teachings was, indeed, ‘a willing disciple’ of God. Her healings benefited mankind. But, more, her

teachings *benefit* mankind today and forever.

Because of all that Mrs. Eddy did, her healings, her teachings, her lecturing, her writing, it’s no puzzle that by 1900 she was an international phenomenon and by 1910 1/2 million copies of *Science and Health* had been sold. (Today over 8 million copies of this book have been sold). Because of this, she was sought by the press, by the pulpit, by all who had the slightest curiosity to the greatest admiration and affection for her. So, you’ll understand when I tell you that as far back as the early 1900’s Mrs. Eddy was being asked about today’s upcoming millennium. In a chapter titled *Questions Answered*, she is asked: “Must mankind wait for the ultimate of the millennium - until every man and woman comes into the knowledge of Christ and all are taught of God...for God to be represented by His idea or image and likeness” (My. 239:12).

Her answer is thought provoking. She writes, “The millennium is a state and stage of mental advancement, going on since ever time was. Its impetus, accelerated by the advent of Christian Science, is marked, and will increase till all men shall know Him (divine Love) from the least to the greatest, and one God and the brotherhood of man shall be known and acknowledged throughout the earth.”

In this passage, Mrs. Eddy takes the concept of the millennium out of a time-space continuum and places it in thought. She practically redefines the millennium when she refers to it as “a state and stage of mental advancement,....” And not just a one day event, a sudden burst into salvation. But rather, an every day experience that is accelerated by the natural growth of Christian Science in our lives. So, we can reason that it is our mental advancement, our deeper learnings of God and man, that bring on the true millennium and

ushers us into the kingdom of heaven within, where God reigns. So, we prove that our mental advancement or spiritual growth isn't relegated to futurity, to some distant event, rather, it is a present experience, right here, right now because here is where God, infinite Spirit, is. These are some of the spiritual facts Mrs. Eddy reveals in her teachings. These are some of the spiritual facts included in her religion that has made it the only 'lasting American based denomination founded by an American woman'.

MEDICINE

The theology of Christ Jesus is the theology of Christian Science. But, more, Christ Jesus' understanding of God and man - his theology - was his medicine - it is what healed the leper, the blind, the dumb.

Through Mrs. Eddy's teachings, medicine is taken higher than the mere combination of substances that produce certain (and sometimes uncertain) effects, to a practical, systematic theology - or understanding of God and man's unity. Her spiritual reasoning, based upon Christ Jesus' example, led her to understand that God, divine Mind, is the only medicine needed. She writes, "It is plain that God does not employ drugs or hygiene, nor provide them for human use; else Jesus would have recommended and employed them in his healing"(S&H 143). Following Jesus' example she moved forward to test her ideas. In her book, *Science and Health*, she tells us the results of her theory: "The author has attenuated *Natrum muriaticum* (common table-salt) until there was not a single saline property left. The salt had 'lost his savour;' and yet, with one drop of that attenuation in a goblet of water, and a teaspoonful of the water administered at intervals of three hours, she has cured a patient sinking in the last stage of typhoid fever. The highest attenuation of homeopathy and

the most potent rises above matter into mind. This discovery leads to more light. From it may be learned that either human faith or the divine Mind is the healer and that there is no efficacy in a drug" (153).

Later, she proved this new-old truth, that divine Mind is the healer when she healed a man who had fallen from the third story of a building. The man writes, "My leg was broken in three places. I was taken to a hospital, where they tried to help me. They said that the leg was so bad that it would have to be amputated. I said, 'No, I would rather die.' They permitted it to heal as best it might, and as a result I had to wear an iron shoe eight or nine inches high. I was called to Mrs. Eddy's home on Commonwealth Avenue, in Boston, to do some light work. Mrs. Eddy came into the room where I was busy, and observing my condition, kindly remarked, 'I suppose you expect to get out of this some time.' I answered, 'No; all that can be done for me has been done, and I can now manage to get around with a cane.' Mrs. Eddy said, 'Sit down and I will treat you.' When she finished the treatment she said, 'You go home and take off that iron shoe, and give your leg a chance to straighten out.' I went home and did as I was told, and now I am so well that, so far as I know, one leg is as good as the other" (MBE: Christian Healer, p.143).

Mrs. Eddy would spend the greatest part of her time teaching and proving to others that God's love for man is demonstrable. She wrote, "A miracle fulfils God's law, but does not violate that law" (S&H 134). And through her theology, her medicine, she proved the laws of God intact and useful to all who avail themselves of this religion.

Mrs. Eddy tells us what she has done for religion and medicine when she writes, "Through Christian Science, religion and medicine are inspired with a diviner nature and essence; fresh pinions are given

to faith and understanding, and thoughts acquaint themselves intelligently with God" (107).

JOURNALISM

The inspiration of the diviner nature and essence are not limited to affecting religion and medicine, as Mrs. Eddy's contributions to journalism and society prove. By the early 1900's Mrs. Eddy, being well known, was accustomed to seeing her name in the paper praising her for her philanthropy and for the spiritual impetus her teachings had given to the world. Her writings were reaching the world and the world responded. Many were healed and turned to Christian Science permanently - in turn healing others. Some, were not as willing to accept these healings and teachings as genuine and felt that Mrs. Eddy was a fraud. That's why many newspapers often made up lies concerning her and all she had done.

In 1906, a Christian Scientist who was a freelance journalist in New York, wrote to Mrs. Eddy to warn her of an upcoming plan to discredit her. The letter read: "Mr. McClure, who is the owner and editor of McClure's Magazine and of McClure Syndicate... has been here a good deal lately; and among other things he has told me that McClure's Magazine is going to start a crusade against Christian Science.... They are to take up every phase and development of Christian Science and do what they can to ridicule and destroy it. This information is authentic. I heard it from Mr. McClure's own lips" (Peel, Authority, p.261).

If this wasn't enough another American journalist was preparing to get the jump on McClures. A biographer writes, "With rumors afloat that Mrs. Eddy was either dying or dead and that McClure's was digging up sensational facts in her past history, Joseph Pulitzer... convinced himself that it was his public duty to be the first to get the story out" (ibid). What

followed was a series of newspaper articles full of lies. However, Mrs. Eddy saw that this yellow journalism not only affected her but all those who were in the public eye. She saw the need to protect the world from such misrepresentation flying through the papers of the day, so she responded by establishing *The Christian Science Monitor*, in 1908. She wanted a newspaper that would enter the home reporting the things of the world that didn't have a sensational slant, that didn't take people apart and lie about them, that enabled the reader to learn of the difficulties facing the world and provided an opportunity to pray about and heal those difficulties. It was a daily newspaper. She told her students, "When I established *The Christian Science Monitor*, I took the greatest step forward since I gave *Science and Health* to the world" (ibid, p.311).

Yet, Mrs. Eddy's contribution to journalism didn't begin with the *Monitor*. Rather, for many years she had been an editor of the *Christian Science Sentinel*, a weekly periodical and the *Christian Science Journal*, a monthly periodical. With these she reached the world. Each issue, although having different missions, share testimonies of healing and spiritual insights into her teachings. As a result, through her writings, in what she wrote for her periodicals, her newspaper, and in her books, have changed earth's scenes - showing a more heavenly view of an earthly experience.

SOCIETY

Mary Baker Eddy was a thinker. Her *thoughts* and *actions* are what changed earth's scenes. Who she was, is to be seen in what she's done.

Throughout her life she turned to God, and even though there were difficult experiences she was never without her Bible. Like most things, Christian Science wasn't discovered with a bang. It was discovered with a

life silently, persistently, quietly, *selflessly* searching for God - the God who Mrs. Eddy felt in her heart but hadn't yet definitively seen with her eyes. Gradually throughout the years Mrs. Eddy learned more and more of how thought affects the body - specifically how spiritual thinking can heal ill effects of erroneous thinking - whether the body in particular, or the body financial, the body politic, the body emotional.

Her prayers echoed her thoughts and the result was a church based solely upon the teachings of Christ Jesus. It was her selflessness, her devotion to God, her humility that led her to God - to hear His voice, to follow His Word. It was her ability to yield to God's will rather than enforce her own self-will upon circumstances that lead her to reach out to mankind to bless them. It was her thought which bowed before the one God that directed her to the understanding of the very presence and power of the Almighty God.

When you go home tonight to think about what we've talked about here, the fact that Mrs. Eddy began a church and edited periodicals, established an international newspaper and wrote *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, although indispensable to humanity, might not lead you to healing. But if you can think of her selflessness, her devotion, her desire to help mankind, her deep love for God and what she has discovered for mankind - if you search her writings and grow into the spiritual understanding of God and man's relationship you will heal and be healed. Why? Because cultivating spirituality will lead you to God which naturally results in healing. They led Mrs. Eddy, they are leading me, they'll lead you.

So, for what Mrs. Eddy has done for mankind Christian Scientists are indeed grateful. But unlike what some may affirm we are not worshippers of her personality; and she is not

equated with Christ Jesus. The world is in debt to Christ Jesus, and to Christ's Christianity. The world is in debt to Mrs. Eddy for her followership of Christ's Christianity - for her devotion of thought to God - the result has changed earth's scenes not only in religion, medicine, journalism, and society, but in almost every field of study. As you get to know Mrs. Eddy, as you see for yourself what she has done, as you read her writings, you too, will begin to recognize and feel the influence of her teachings upon mankind.