

# Special Auxiliary Lesson

## Practical Christianity

BY

CHARLES FILLMORE.

*An Explanatory Lesson, given in a series of  
lessons on "The Science of Being and  
Christian Healing."*



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## SPECIAL LESSON ABOUT "PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY"

### AN AUXILIARY LESSON EXPLANATORY



STUDENTS are asking what relation this teaching bears to Christian Science, Mental Science, Theosophy, and Orthodox Christianity, and where we get our authority. To answer these queries will require the space allotted to a lesson, and we shall, therefore, count this as a lesson explanatory; not of the regular course, but necessary thereto.

Religion is natural to man. The religious nature has always been considered first and highest in man's constitution. Every man has a religion of some sort, and in his extremity he calls upon his God. In the exercise of his inherent freedom of choice, man selects that form of religious belief that best suits him, or meets his needs, and there are all kinds of religions in consequence, because man really makes his own religious belief. Fundamentally, there is but one religion, but many interpretations of it. In the Divine economy every man is free to form his own concept of God, and his relation to Him. This constitutes religion.

Every man should reason out his own religion, and adjust himself to it. In this way he becomes acquainted with his Source, and learns the law of his being. If he adopts the religion which another has formulated, he is memorizing instead of unfolding from within. The law of right development for the soul is individualism. God is personal to every one of us, and we must know Him intimately before we can be truly religious. This, then, requires that we shall adopt the course that will most speedily open our souls to this individual acquaintance with the Most High, and the system of religious training that will "show us the Father" is the one we should seek. Jesus said, "He who hath seen me hath seen

the Father," and, "The Kingdom of God is within you."

Thus Jesus of Nazareth is the type of man we should follow in our search for God. He was thoroughly individual and independent in his religious views. He proclaimed his own understanding, and asserted his freedom and right to do what his highest reason told him was true, regardless of the standards of the Hebrew church. When the Hebrew Scriptures corroborated his position he quoted from them. But he as often acted in direct opposition to their teaching, and when the Pharisees refused to receive the *living word* which proceeded forth from him, he said, "Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me." It is clearly idol worship—bowing down to graven images—to search any religious writing, expecting through it to find the Word of the Spirit; which is revealed in its original purity to all who faithfully seek it in Spirit. Thus the proclamation of Jesus was, "When the Spirit of truth is come he will lead you into all truth."

It is universally admitted that Jesus Christ is the greatest teacher of all the ages, and from a religious standpoint his doctrine far surpasses that of any other. It covers the whole earth, and is now accepted by intelligent people everywhere. It appeals to the religious and moral natures of all who are trying to do right, and those who follow the teachings get the fruits, and thus demonstrate that it is founded in Truth. As Practical Christians we follow Jesus Christ, and our whole aim is to do as he did, and draw from the same great Universal Fount. In doing this, we find that we conform closely to the doctrine of the Christian church, yet, not being trammelled by external rules of church worship, we open our spiritual natures to the inner, or esoteric, side of Jesus' doctrine. We find that there is an occult, or inner, teaching in Christianity, which those who look upon it in its historical light only, are igno-

rant of. Yet we do not put aside the historical part; but seek to join the within and the without, and make of them a perfect whole. We accept Christ in his spiritual nature, and the ideas which he promulgated as the saving power that is redeeming the race from the effect of the transgressed law. We believe that Jesus Christ was everything that he proclaimed. We do not, however, forget that we are following him, and do as he did. He said, "Ye shall do these things and greater." We do not worship his personality, but seek through him to find the Principle, or Father, who dwells within every one of us. "In Him we live, move and have our being" and He lives, moves and has His being in us.

It is not the object of our work to build up another sect or to establish churches. We come, as John the Baptist came, crying, "Make straight the way of the Lord." The church must eventually accept the doctrine of complete regeneration of both soul and body. We propose to establish schools for the purpose of instructing Christians in this esoteric part of Jesus Christ's religion. We are not working in opposition to the Christian church, but in harmony with it. We recognize that in every church organization there are a few who are in the Spirit, and understand, though it be "through a glass darkly," the real character of Christianity. Consequently, Primitive or Practical Christianity, as we teach it, is in perfect harmony with the accepted religion of the Christian world.

By many of those not acquainted with the distinctions of metaphysical thought, we are classed with Christian Scientists, because we do healing. But we are radically different from them in nearly all of our expositions of Truth, and it is an error to class us with them in any way, except in the fundamental perceptions of the being of God, which are common to all religions. Christian Science teaches that God does not dwell in man, but is "reflected" into him. We hold that this limits the all-pervading Spirit of

God, and is in direct opposition to the teaching of Jesus Christ, who, in several places in the Scriptures, affirmed the Kingdom of God to be *within* man. He said the Father was within him.

Christian Science teaches that the book, "Science and Health," written by Mrs. Eddy, is a direct revelation from God, and the end of all revelation, and that all other writings of a religious character, outside the Scriptures, are spurious. We teach that all scripture, that is, spiritual writings, is "profitable for instruction." In all matters pertaining to spiritual things Christian Scientists refer to Mrs. Eddy, and her writings are authority instead of the Spirit of Truth, as commanded by Jesus. Thus they follow man instead of Jesus Christ, and to this extent are anti-Christ. We teach that the Holy Spirit is here with every one of us, and through right understanding of its character, we may be led and inspired today as were the spiritually-minded of the past.

Christian Science teaches that the body is the creation of mortal mind, consequently mortal error. Yet, through the power of the Spirit they heal the body. This is an inconsistency which has no place in our doctrine. We hold with Jesus Christ that the body is the temple of God. His teaching faithfully followed will give us the same power and dominion over this temple that he had, and we can say with him, "I can take it up and lay it down." Christian Science does not teach the spiritualization of the physical organism, yet this is the ultimate object of Jesus' instruction and demonstration in overcoming death. We are not to put off this redemption to some future time, when we shall become strong, but realize that God is always with us, and that the power to overcome the errors of the carnal mind is indwelling, and an integral part of the constitution of man. The Scripture says, that God created man in His "image and likeness," and gave him dominion over all things in the beginning. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together

until now . . . waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." (Romans 8:22,23.)

Christian Science instructs its practitioners not to treat contagious diseases, thus limiting the power of God. We teach that God is all-powerful, and equal to the healing of every disease of mind or body; that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and that it should be pure and perfect, and express the Divinity of God, which it will if we let the fullness of His Spirit manifest through it.

Thus it will be seen that our teaching differs from Christian Science at every vital point, and we should not be confounded with that sect because we do healing. We do not claim to do the healing—it is done by the Father. "It is not I, but the Father within me, he doeth the works." If the Father does the healing, He knows what the compensation should be, and we proclaim Him as our resource, letting the people give as they are moved. "Freely ye have received; freely give." We rejoice in and accept gladly the good that is set forth by Christian Science, and all religious doctrines, but we do not follow them, nor are we borrowers of their teachings. The Spirit of Truth is our teacher, and we look to that source alone for our authority. Christian Science instructs its followers to pay no attention to diet or hygiene, while we give special study to pure foods, and endorse the general hygienic rules laid down by the progressive scientists of the day. The Spirit of Truth reveals to us that the character of food substance makes a great difference in body building. Jesus did not say, "Take no thought . . . what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink," but, according to the Revised Version, he did say, "Be ye not *anxious* what ye shall eat," etc.

We have closely followed the guidance of the Spirit of Truth, and on all points proclaimed boldly the instructions given to us. Much of what has thus come to us has been found to be in the teachings of the various religious and metaphysical

cults, and we have been classified with nearly all of them, because of this apparent endorsement of their doctrines.

It was revealed to us that the soul did not die with the dissolution of the body, but continued to exist as an entity in a body on another plane of consciousness, and under certain conditions could communicate with those in the flesh body. For declaring this phenomenal fact, we have been called spiritualists. Yet we do not endorse the philosophical teachings of that cult, and consider mediumship a direct violation of the law of spiritual development.

Then again, it was revealed to us that those same so-called spirits went through a second death and lost that body in which they lived for a season. Then the Ego, with its desires for further expression, was born into another flesh body; and that this process was repeated over and over again, until the soul awoke to the Christ-consciousness, and overcame death. For this teaching we have been called Theosophists. But we differ radically from the Theosophical schools in our practice. The Spirit shows us that the law of Karma, by which the Theosophists lay great store, endures only so long as the Ego submits to it. Thus it is not necessary to endure much penance in many incarnations for the errors of the past, but through the Christ power dissolve the thought-energies that are carrying those errors, and start anew. Theosophy teaches that it is dangerous to do this. Yet we have the example of Jesus, whom they admit was a very great adept, dissolving these sins in a large way. He taught that the Christ-man was greater than all the personalities through which the Ego had passed, in Matthew 16:13, where he asks his disciples, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" "Some say John the Baptist; some say Elijah, and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets," they replied. "But who say ye that I am?" Peter discerned the true Ego, and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Upon this foundation and

power men are to build the true "church," or temple, which means the body, and the promise is that whatever they "bind," or affirm, on the lower shall be bound on the higher, and whatever they "loose," or deny, in the lower, shall be loosed in the higher.

The comparisons which we have made between the doctrine we promulgate and that of other schools are not in a spirit of condemnation or disparagement of their teachings. We are asked to explain the difference between ours and theirs, and we have here set them forth in a spirit of fairness.

We know that every movement that has for its object the upliftment of humanity has good at its foundation. The seamless garment of Truth is found in even very external and worldly philanthropies.

We do, however, most radically protest against the Phariseeism that seeks to find eternal life in its little scripture, and condemns everybody that differs from it, or refuses to receive it as the last and highest revelation of God. Inspiration and revelation did not cease with the four Gospels; Paul had viewpoints of his own. Luther was not intimidated by the cry of "heretic and devil," neither did John Wesley let the denunciation of the church institution deter him from expressing his revelation.

So in our day, there are a surprising lot of prophets and inspired ones proclaiming what God has revealed to them, and we should not fear to hear their message. Those who wish to make a trust of their religious system, will tell you that all the others are of the devil or evil, and satanic in some respect, and try to scare you into their syndicate. The timid and fearful are being coerced and bound in mental fetters by these tools of a false system, but the independent souls are standing for liberty, and will surely win in the end. "Where Christ is there is liberty." Jesus Christ was a radical individualist. He protested against the theology of his time, and he protests as vigorously today against the theology which has been built up upon his teachings as a foundation.

Moses said to the children of Israel in the wilderness, "Go forward." This onward movement pertains to every department of human development; religion included. Jesus Christ proclaimed and demonstrated the ability of man to overcome death, but his words on this point slumbered for nearly two thousand years, until now the New Thought of God, and man's relation to the law of life, makes imperative perpetual living, and those who are true to the logic of Being, cannot evade the conclusion. So what was demonstrated by one man in Galilee has suddenly been presented as a possibility to all men, and it is found to be the essential and pivotal doctrine of the Christian religion. The last enemy to be overcome is death. "If Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain."

The spiritual quickening of the mortal body, which is the coming out of the tomb of material sense of the vital energies, is being felt by people everywhere, and some have a large realization of the spiritual body forming within them, but few know the law. We have made discoveries in the relation of the mind and body that have never been given in any system of instruction. These are of vital importance to man in taking that great step in human development which is now being opened to the race—the overcoming of physical dissolution.

We assert, in the full knowledge of the weight of our words, that now, here on earth, can instructions be had that will reveal and bring forth to activity the brain and nerve centres in the organism through which the Spirit builds the celestial body. We have been for the past eighteen years working out this problem under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth. Our bodies are being transformed and transmuted into finer matter than that of the human organism, and we shall demonstrate what the Spirit has been proclaiming through us so long—that the resurrection of the body of flesh from all its fleshly limitations is a possibility here and now. We

do not make the proclamation as one who spiritually perceives this overcoming of death as a possibility, but we are working the problem out in flesh and blood. This we shall outwardly manifest in the near future. What Jesus Christ made possible by his mighty work will soon bear its fruits here in America. The Kingdom of which he was King is to be set up as a tangible reality in our midst. The time of restitution is at hand. Let us rejoice.

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