

**CHRISTIAN SCIENCE;
GOD'S LOVINGKINDNESS
PROVED TO MAN**

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Christian Science; God's lovingkindness proved to man by William P. McKenzie

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WILLIAM P. MCKENZIE

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A LECTURE DELIVERED BY

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AS A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF LECTURESHIP OF THE
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BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



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Christian Science :

God's Lovingkindness Proved to Men

ALL down the ages some have been enabled to "taste and see that the Lord is good." Being blessed by the lovingkindness of God they recognized the benign influence and praised the source, giving to us our enduring literature in the Scriptures. Mrs. Eddy says: "God is universal; confined to no spot, defined by no dogma, appropriated by no sect. Not more to one than to all, is God demonstrable as divine Life, Truth, and Love; and His people are they that reflect Him—that reflect Love" (Miscellaneous Writings, p. 150).

SEARCH FOR TRUTH

The human search through all the years has been for something satisfying and enduring. Because of the deceitfulness of false beliefs, men go on spending their "money for that which is not bread," and their "labor for that which satisfieth not." But the testimony of the Scriptures is that in every age there have been those who have recognized the actual truth; not truth relative to the blooming and fading theories of their time, and so as transient as they, but truth that from everlasting to everlasting is the same. This truth has

proofs of a certain character, and the most salient proof is healing, whether of sickness, or of plague, or of national fear tending to defeat and disaster. The acceptance of the truth causes immediate reversal of the error which has been posing as fact or acknowledged as reality. The great work of the prophets was to call the attention of men to the real when they were enamored with the unreal, and the idolatrous in consequence. They sought to instil true reverence and true love into the minds of people ever lapsing into the variable devotions and innumerable fears of heathenism. They proclaimed a God of universal goodness, saying, "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord;" and, "How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings."

ENOCH, NOAH, ABRAHAM

That writer knew fundamental truth who said, "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy." In earliest times we find it recorded of Enoch that he knew this pathway. His brief biography tells us that he "walked with God." It is declared also that he did not die, but that God took him to Himself. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews says that Enoch had "this testimony, that he pleased God;" so he was "translated that he should not see death." It is habitual for Christians to expect to have, after death, joy in God's presence; but Enoch proved God's pres-

ence to be joy and life while here on earth. Noah also reached fellowship with God and was "a preacher of righteousness," as Peter describes him. Being affiliated with divine wisdom, he "prepared an ark to the saving of his house," because he was "warned of God of things not seen as yet."

There is deep significance in Abraham's response to God. Following the inward impulse of faith, he turned away from the glowing prospects of high estate, in order to be free from the worship of strange gods and the claims of idolatrous kindred. He was a seeker after the one God, and in accord with the perpetual promise, "Seek, and ye shall find," he came to know "the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth." Various records as well as the testimony of tradition led James to say of the patriarch that "he was called the Friend of God." It is easy, then, to see the sureness of the promise that "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him;" because if Abraham, like Enoch, developed friendship with God, the correlative fact is implied that both knew the eternal truth of God's benevolence for man. From this truth we may derive courage and comfort. Abraham's primitive perception of the eternal goodness caused him to be spoken of as "faithful Abraham," and led Paul to describe the faithful as those who "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham."

The patriarch, however, looked out across the future ages with prophetic vision, for he knew

that this saving truth of God's love must appear with larger demonstration of power and good will, and offer satisfying proofs beyond what he could demonstrate. The Prophet of Nazareth recognized what Abraham's faith had seen afar off, for he said to the Jews, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." From the mountain-top of his faith Abraham foresaw the time when by proofs undeniable God's love should be evidenced by the manifestation of the Son who was to reveal God's character by doing His will.

LAW OF MOSES

So also Moses had the forward look. He promised the coming of a prophet of whom the Lord had said, "I . . . will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." Moses, like Noah, achieved that understanding of God whereby he was enlightened; for amid his many trials he "endured, as seeing him who is invisible." Though learned in the wisdom of the Egyptians, he found not God until in the wilderness alone, when the angel of God appeared to him. Then he was instructed by the wisdom of Spirit. He learned a new name for the God of the forefathers, of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the great I AM—self-existent, eternal, and unchangeable being.

When the ten commandments were eventually given, we can readily see that they were not, as

some have said, mere ethical precepts based on Egyptian wisdom. They were based on the recognition of God as the source of eternal life, whose good will to men required of men good will to one another. Declaring the I AM, they also declared the changeless laws of morality. These were unknown to heathen or idolatrous nations, because their imaginary deities were transient, dethroning one another, or perishing; hence moral life depending on everlasting law was impossible for them. Into the world's confusion Moses brought the moral law, and the sanction of the commandments was the changeless being of God. The reason, then, why men should be kind to one another, refraining from unfilial action, theft, impurity, false witness, covetousness, and murder, is that they may avoid unlikeness to real being. Only by obedience can they be in harmony with the ever-living, and find the joys of the true path of life.

Could the men of this age, for instance, by obeying one of these commands, relinquish all coveting, what a change would arrive! Covetousness is desire for material good, and leads to fraud, chicanery, heartlessness, dishonesty, cruelty, and murder. The recognition of divine Being as the source of man's blessings, leads each one to foster and develop his own good. It brings about the change from selfishness to real benevolence, such as is implied in the admonition: "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, work-

ing with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

TESTIMONY OF THE PROPHETS

When God is identified as "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob," the testimony as to the continuous being and righteousness of God is in no wise impaired by the fact that each prophet was, as was said of one of them, "a man subject to like passions as we are." Criticism of those who began to perceive the truth does not reach to the consistent truth of which they gained some perception. When Jacob made his struggle with his fleshly nature and emerged into spiritual understanding, so that the new name, Israel, was appropriate, the divine Being was identified by his people thereafter as "the God of Israel."

When David, the pure-minded youth, faced Goliath, the challenger of the hosts of Israel, it was with a clear trust in the unseen God of Israel; and in his faith and devotion he certainly was a man after God's own heart. When the temptation of material belief listened to had darkened his sense so that he fell into sin, he had with agony and repentance to regain his right relationship with the God of Israel. To this God of purity and absolute righteousness the prophets testified. One and another of them reached the spiritual vision of God's lovingkindness whereby all might have healing and salvation derived from the power beyond and above themselves.