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Doctrine of The Atonement As Taught by Christian Science vs. The Doctrine of The Atonement As Taught by The Bible

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Recommended Citation

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The Doctrine of The Atonement
As Taught by Christian Science

vs.

The Doctrine of The Atonement
As Taught by The Bible

Third Address by Rev. Louis T. Talbot on the Series
"Cults Versus Christianity"
hampson 1889



Our subject tonight is Christian Science and its view of the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ as compared with the doctrine of the atonement as taught in the Word of God.

Some time ago, I heard John Brown relate an interesting legend belonging to the early centuries of the Christian era, concerning a certain monk, Saint Martin by name, and his experience with an imposter. Saint Martin was sitting in his monastery cell one evening, studying the Bible, when suddenly he heard a loud knock at the door. The good monk invited the stranger to enter his cell, and when the door opened, there stood before him a man attired as a prince. The monk surveyed him for a moment, moment, and then asked: "Who art thou?" The stranger at once replied, "I am Christ, the Son of the living God." The wise old monk sat for a few moments, sunk in deep meditation, undisturbed by the bold declaration of the stranger. At last he arose, and approaching his visitor, asked: "If thou art the Christ, where are the prints of the nails in thy hands and feet, and where is the mark of the spear in thy side?" This infallible sign of the true Christ was lacking, and Saint Martin knew the man was an imposter and a fraud.

We are living in a day of many Christs. We have the Christ of New Theology; the Christ of Mormonism; the Christ of Russellism, with a score of other Christs, knocking at our doors, and I want to say that there is no better

test to apply in order to distinguish the false Christs from the true Christ, the Son of the living God, than to ask to see the prints of the nails in the hands and feet, and the wound made by the spear which pierced His side. The Christ that is presented to us in the Bible is the Christ of God, who died for our sins, and who rose again on the third day, according to the Scriptures.

In the Old Testament, hundreds of years before the Son of God came into the world, God gave to us a portrait of Him, and told us how He was to be born, the circumstances under which He would come into the world, the very time of His birth, the character of His ministry, His death, His resurrection, His exaltation to the right hand of God. On every page of the Word of God there is emphasized the fact that His death would be SUSTITUTIONARY, and ABSOLUTELY essential if a way was to be provided whereby man, alienated from God by his sin, was to be saved.

I have heard that the British Navy uses a special make of rope, which has a scarlet cord running through the center of it, and that wherever that rope is cut, the scarlet cord is seen. The Bible is like that. From Genesis to Revelation there is a thread of scarlet. That scarlet line refers to the sacrifice necessary to atone for sin. In Old Testament days, the blood of bulls and goats was spilled. That pointed to Calvary. At Calvary, atonement was made once for all, and by the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ it became an accomplished fact. From that day, the Church of Jesus Christ began to be formed, and the members of that church are being called out—the church purchased by His own blood (Acts 20:28).

Now, when we come to Christian Science, and drive the pick of our investigation into the heart of its teaching with a view to ascertaining its attitude toward this great central theme of the Bible, we find a blank denial. We have seen in previous studies how Christian Science denies the personality of God; how it denies that Jesus Christ came in the flesh; and now we have a denial of that which alone can save fallen mankind, a denial of the atoning work of the Son of God, and thus we uncover one of the most disastrous and soul-destroying tenets of the Christian Science system.

Let us turn to **Science and Health**, and see what is there recorded concerning the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

On Page 328, (Edition Seventy fourth.) we read: "One sacrifice, however great, is insufficient to pay the debt of sin."

Get the full force of this statement: "ONE sacrifice, **HOWEVER** great, is **insufficient** to pay the debt of sin." The death of Christ was a great sacrifice, but it was only **one** sacrifice, and if "one sacrifice, however great, is insufficient to pay the debt of sin," then the one sacrifice our Lord Jesus made on Calvary's cross is insufficient.

According to the teachings of Christian Science, when Christians testify, therefore, to the sufficiency of the blood of Jesus Christ to wash away the sins of the world, however deep their hue, they are testifying to something that is not true. When Christians sing:

"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains,"

they are singing a lie, and there is no word of truth in what they say, if Christian Science teachings be true.

According to Christian Science, Jesus Christ's sacrifice never did, never can, expiate one sin of a human being.

When I advertised this address in the newspapers under the heading "Christian Science, the Religion that Denies the Blood Atonement of Jesus Christ," some of the Christian Scientists got so angry—they do get angry—that a number of complaints were directed to the newspaper office, requesting that no more of my advertising be allowed to appear in the newspaper. It is gratifying to know that the newspapers gave no heed to this demand.

The advertised statement, however, is just as true as truth can make it, for a Christian Scientist does not know Jesus Christ as a Saviour who died as a substitute for sinful men and women, that they might live eternally in the presence of God. Christian Scientists do not speak of Jesus as a Saviour who delivered them from the wrath to come and who saves them from sin. Attend any testimony meeting of a Christian Science organization and you will fail to hear men rise to testify that Jesus Christ became a curse on the cross of Calvary that they might become the righteousness of God in Him. Read carefully the testimonies that are published in the Christian Science journals from month to month, and not once will you find any reference made to Jesus Christ as a vicarious sufferer. Why? Because Jesus Christ is not known in Christian Science as a Redeemer. He may be known as a teacher, a way-shower, an expert in mind healing; but as a personal Saviour who went to the cross and shed His blood

that man might live, He is unknown in Christian Science. Remember the statement:

"One sacrifice, however great, is insufficient to pay the debt of sin."

What I have said before is further emphasized on page 330 of **Science and Health**:

"The material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin when it was shed upon the 'accursed tree' than when it was flowing through His veins as He went daily about His Master's business."

Could language make the position of Christian Science concerning the atoning work of Christ plainer than this?

Study that statement:

"The material blood of Jesus"—there is no other kind of blood but material blood. The blood He shed on the cross was material blood, and yet Mrs. Eddy has the audacity to say:

"The material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin when it was shed upon the 'accursed tree' than when it was flowing through His veins as He went daily about His Master's business."

When the Roman soldiers pierced the side of Jesus, there came out water and blood. Neither water nor blood were immaterial. And yet, of that blood, Mrs. Eddy says:

"The material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin when it was shed upon the 'accursed tree' than when it was flowing through His veins as He went daily about His Master's business."

In other words, the shed blood has no more power than unshed blood, according to Christian Science.

It is not to be wondered at that Christian Scientists do not observe the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, for that Supper speaks too eloquently of the blood that was shed for sinners, to be observed by people who hold doctrines like those of Christian Science.

How, then, are sins atoned for in Christian Science? On page 328, you have Mrs. Eddy's own statement:

"The atonement requires constant self-immolation on the sinner's part." "Self-immolation" means self-denial, or a denial of self. The denial of self in Christian Science is denial of the material mind. She tells us that sin is not real; that evil does not exist; that it is not **sin**, but **sense**

of sin, that must be destroyed. How is this sense of sin to be destroyed? By "self-immolation"—that is, by constant denial of the reality of sin on the sinner's part. Christ, according to Christian Science, did not make atonement for sin. The sinner must atone for himself, and he atones by denying the reality of sin. From beginning to end, this is the teaching of Christian Science concerning sin and the atonement.

Let us bring these statements, culled from Christian Science, under the lens of Holy Writ:

All through the Bible we find that the Spirit of God emphasizes the teaching that Jesus Christ actually died on the cross, was buried, and rose again from the dead; that He shed His blood on the cross, and that all this was done to wash away the sins of those who put their trust in Him as a personal Saviour.

For instance, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5:21.)

The first statement I quoted from **Science and Health**, "One sacrifice, however great, is insufficient to pay the debt of sin," is diametrically opposed to the teaching of Paul in Hebrews 10:10-14: "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all**. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered **one sacrifice for sins forever**, sat down on the right hand of God."

Could two statements be any more antagonistic than these—the former from the pen of Mrs. Eddy, the latter from the Word of God, given to the church by the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle Paul? The Apostle in this statement declares that Jesus Christ "offered **one sacrifice for sins forever**" and that sacrifice was **sufficient**. And that sacrifice being sufficient, He ascended on high and "sat down on the right hand of God." The very fact that He **sat down** speaks of a completed work, for a man sits down when His work is done. We learn from Genesis 1 that when God finished the work of creation and saw that everything was good, He **rested** on the seventh day. That is, He ceased from His labors, His work having been accomplished. When Jesus cried out, "It is finished," as He hung upon the cross, He had finished the work of the new creation, and consequently He ascended to the right hand of God and sat down. And my brother, it is only as you believe this truth that you can enter into and enjoy

the rest of mind and heart that comes from peace with God.

Sometime ago, I was talking to a man who was slowly dying of creeping paralysis. I asked him whether he was a Christian or not. He told me he was trying to be. I said: "Man, that is not the way to become a Christian. We do not become Christians by **trying**." "What is the way, then?" he asked. "How may I become right with God?" I pointed that man to Calvary's cross, and told him the story of how the Son of God offered Himself once for all, that all those who believe and receive what Jesus had done were born again, became Christians, and entered into rest. That man believed and rested his soul in what Jesus had done, and he found that the one sacrifice that was offered on Calvary not only gave him rest of heart, but enabled him to die triumphantly and with the assurance that he was bound for glory.

The second statement made by Christian Science: "The material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin when it was shed upon the 'accursed tree' than when it was flowing through His veins as He went daily about His Master's business," should be compared with Colossians 1:20:

"And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself."

Please note the words in the verse just quoted. Not "blood in His veins as He went about His Master's business," but "**BLOOD OF HIS CROSS**," that is, blood shed there on the cross. We find this statement emphasized in Hebrews 9:22:

"... **"Without shedding of blood is no remission."**

Remission of sin can only come through the shedding of the blood of Jesus. In the Old Testament days, the sacrifices offered in tabernacle and temple all pointed forward and were types of the shedding of the blood of the Son of God, without which the Spirit of God here says "there is no remission."

You will readily see that if one accepts the doctrine of the atonement as taught by Christian Science, he repudiates the doctrine of the atonement as taught in the Word of God. There are thousands of so-called Christian Scientists who would be horrified if they knew the doctrine of this cult concerning the blood atonement of Jesus. Many people have gone into this system with the hope of finding healing for their bodies and have no idea as to its theology.

Some time ago, a woman asked me if I would go to see her sister, who was dying of galloping consumption. She told me her sister had for some time been taken up with Christian Science with the hope of getting healing and would not allow anyone to discourage her in this quest. She thought possibly an outsider might be received kindly by the sufferer

I went to see the young woman. I found by her bedside a copy of **Science and Health**. I asked her if she were a Christian and she said, "Yes." When I asked her on what grounds she had that assurance, she told me that Jesus had died for her. I then asked her if she thought any one could get to heaven apart from the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ. She said, "No." When she told me that, I realized that she had no idea as to what the real doctrines of Christian Science were. When I had gained her confidence, I said:

"Would you accept any system of religion as from God that denied the very things you say you are trusting in to give you standing before the Holy God?" She said, "No indeed." I said, "Suppose I can show you in **Science and Health** a bald denial of the blood atonement of Jesus Christ." She said, "You cannot, because there is no such denial." When I turned to page 330 and read her the statement that the blood of Jesus Christ was of no more avail, when it was shed upon the accursed tree, than when it was flowing through His veins in daily life, she turned wide, startled eyes to the book and read the statement for herself. Then she looked at me. I shall never forget the look from the eyes of that girl whose life was fast ebbing away. She called her brother, and handed him the book, saying, "Take it away. I do not want it any longer."

My friend, if you are really a child of God, washed in the blood of the Lamb, you will do the same thing. If you are a child of God, it is absolutely impossible for you to accept a system that denies the foundation truth of the Gospel of the Son of God.

Take the next statement: "The atonement requires constant self-immolation on the sinner's part."

That is not what the Bible teaches. Compare that statement with Romans 5:11:

"... We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

We do not make atonement by any self-immolation on our part at all. The atonement is something we receive,

and receive through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

“Christ hath for sin atonement made,
What a wonderful Saviour!
We are redeemed, the price is paid,
What a wonderful Saviour.”

He made atonement in His death, and we receive it as a gift from Him.

May I close with a reference to Revelation 7:9-17? John sees heaven opened before him, and a great multitude which could not be numbered, standing before the throne of God. He wonders how they got there. They were all dressed in spotless white garments, and are standing in the presence of God. And one of the elders asked John, “What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?” And John answered, “Thou knowest.” And the elder said to John, “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. **THEREFORE** are they before the throne of God.”

That word “therefore” emphasizes the blood of the Lamb as that which gives them the right to stand in the presence of God. You notice it does not say, “These are they who have made their robes white by self-immolation.” Nothing of the kind! The angel told John that those whom he saw were “they which . . . washed their robes, and **MADE THEM WHITE IN THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB**—a great multitude.” The inference of course is that there was a time when their robes were not white; when they were sinners before God. They were like you and like me, sinners in need of a Saviour. And how were those sins to be expiated?

“There is a fountain filled with blood,
Dawn from Immanuel’s veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.”