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IRENÆUS ON THE CHURCH.

The topic for consideration leads to ground where every inch has been fought over, and is still contested. The greatest controversies have been actuated by dogmatic interests.¹⁾ From the time of the *Magdeburg Centuries* and the *Annales Eccle-*

1) The basic argument against the Catholic Church during the Reformation period was not historical, but Scriptural. It is only natural that the historical argument should appear, in fact, quite frequently and quite spontaneously. Hans von der Planitz, writing from the *Reichs-regiment* at Nuremberg to his Elector about the discussion on the mass and monastic vows, January, 1522, says: "Dan vor dieser zeit nach der himmelfahrt Christi eezlich hundert jar kein monchsorden vom babst bestetigt gewest, sso hetten auch die prister eezlich hundert jar weiber gehabt. Und were ein lange zeit under beiderlei gestalt das heilige sacrament den leihen und christen gereicht worden." This is a very clear and concise expression of the historical view-point at the very beginning of the actual reorganization according to the Reformation principles. However, in the controversy it remained but a side-issue. With the reformers of every type, as well as with Frederick and the other rulers drawn into the controversy, the decisive criterion was the teaching of Scripture.—The *Magdeburg Centuries* were the first—and ever will remain one of the most massive—attempts to shatter the Catholic system by showing how it grew century after century into its medieval form. The *Annales Ecclesiastici* of Baronio were the Catholic answer to them. With the stimulus of these two exhaustive treatises, representing opposite view-points, one would expect to meet a host of scholars scanning the records of the early centuries. Largely owing to the continuation of that earlier interest in the Bible only, this prospect did not come true. A monumental *Historia Literaria* was published by Cave, which is the first real effort in giving a comprehensive account of Christian authors and their writings. The work has merit to-day only as a curio. The real study of that early period began with the spread of rationalism and higher criticism. Christianity was considered a historical growth,

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

II.

There is a church in our city which bears Scripture-inscriptions, but these inscriptions are not in the least followed by the preachers of the church nor by the members of the church, if otherwise they accept the preacher's word. In this church Biblical inscriptions are on the exterior and interior of the church, but inscriptions from heathen philosophers would be more in place.

To prove our assertion, we shall take one of the exterior inscriptions and show that it does not belong on this church. The inscription reads: "Preach the Gospel," and is taken from Mark 16, 15. The inscription,

PREACH THE GOSPEL,

on the Christian Science temple in Grand Rapids does not belong there, because,

- I. *Christian Science does not preach the Gospel, and*
- II. *In agreement therewith denies that man needs the Gospel.*

I.

The inscription, "Preach the Gospel," on the Christian Science temple in Grand Rapids does not belong there, because Christian Science does not preach the Gospel.

What is the Gospel? Last Sunday, on the occasion of our missionary festival, you have been admonished: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." (Matt. 16, 15.) This command, this missionary command, of Christ was the sum and substance of all missionary sermons. What is the Gospel? As answer to the question read 1 Cor. 15, 1—4.

Does Christian Science preach this Gospel? Let me call your attention to the Gospel event of the death of Christ. Paul says, 1 Cor. 15, 1. 3. 4: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel; for I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." Also in other passages of his letters to the Corinthians the apostle teaches the death of Christ: 1 Cor. 8, 11; 2 Cor. 5, 14. 15; 1 Cor. 2, 2. What is the Gospel record of the death of Christ? The prophecy of Jesus: Luke 18, 33; Matt. 16, 21. The Passion history: Luke 23, 46; John 19, 30. 33; Mark 15, 44—47. The soldiers, the centurion, Pilate, Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, the women, knew that Jesus was dead. The court and love attested that Jesus had died. And this fact of the Gospel the apostles, and also Paul, preached, obeying thereby the command of their Master: "Go ye, and preach the Gospel."

Does Christian Science preach the Gospel? Their temple in our city tells all members and all passers-by, "Preach the Gospel," and adds the name of the Author of this command, Jesus. Judge for yourselves. *Science and Health*, p. 44, lines 5—7: "The lonely precincts of the tomb gave Jesus a refuge from his foes, and a place in which to solve the great problem of being." *Ibidem*, p. 45, lines 10—13: "Paul writes: 'For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the [seeming] death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.'" Page 44, lines 28—31: "His disciples believed Jesus dead while he was hidden in

the sepulcher, whereas he was alive, demonstrating within the narrow tomb the power of the Spirit to overrule mortal, material sense."

The inscription, "Preach the Gospel," does not belong on the Christian Science temple. If this Biblical inscription or other Biblical inscriptions on the exterior or interior of the temple have led you to believe that Christian Science teaches the Gospel, then take your Bible and compare it with the book written by the originator of Christian Science, and judge for yourself. Let not the words of Paul to the Galatians be also true of you: Gal. 1, 6—9.

II.

Christian Science does not need the Gospel, it does not need the death of Christ, for according to Christian Science man has no sins.

When Paul tells the Corinthians what the Gospel is, he writes in part: "I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that *Christ died for our sins* according to the Scriptures." When Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command, they sinned. Of Adam's and Eve's fall Paul writes to the Romans: "By one man sin entered into the world." (Rom. 5, 12.) John writes: "Sin is the transgression of the Law." (1 John 3, 4.) All human beings are guilty of sin: "*For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.*" (Eccl. 7, 20.) Man's conscience tells him that he has sinned against the knowledge of right and wrong which God put into his heart, and this conscience keeps on accusing man till he admits to himself, to God, and often also to his fellow-men that he has sinned. Man's conscience also tells him, according to the knowledge God has placed into his heart, that man must appear before the judgment-seat of God to answer for all the sins he has committed. No man can honestly deny that he has sinned against God and His will. If man denies this, it is done contrary to his own conviction, contrary to the voice of conscience.

The knowledge of sin which man has because of the Law written in his heart, and the voice of conscience bearing witness, is deepened by the written Law of God. Such dimensions the knowledge of sin reaches that man experiences what David did when he refused to admit to God that he had sinned: "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." (Ps. 32, 3. 4.)

For the sins of man Christ suffered and died. "Jesus was delivered for our offenses." (Rom. 4, 25.) "God hath made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. 5, 21.) "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." (Heb. 9, 28.) "Christ His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." (1 Pet. 2, 24.) Jesus Himself said: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20, 28.) "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John 15, 14.)

The knowledge and the confidence that Jesus died for our sins gives peace to the troubled conscience, quiets the fears felt for the anger and wrath of God, and allays the dread of Judgment Day. In the realization of forgiveness man will say with David: "I acknowledge my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found; surely, in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my hiding-place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah." (Ps. 32, 5—7.)

According to *Science and Health* God neither formed man

out of the dust of the ground, nor did man fall into sin. The account of the creation of man and the account of the fall of man are called a "myth," a "dream-narrative," and an "allegory." (*Key to Scriptures, Science and Health*, p. 530, 13, to 531, 7.) "The Science of being reveals man as perfect, even as the Father is perfect." (*Ib.*, p. 302, 22. 23.) "Man is spiritual and perfect." (p. 475, 9.)

We think it proved that the inscription, "Preach the Gospel," on the Christian Science temple in Grand Rapids does not belong there, because Christian Science does not preach the Gospel, and in agreement therewith denies that man needs the Gospel.

The rise and spread of such errors as Christian Science should stimulate the Church to extraordinary activity. These errors which are preached with such brazen effrontery are a challenge to the Church. We know that the devil must do his worst before the end, but we also know the word of Jesus: "The Gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the world; and then shall the end come." (Matt. 24, 14.)

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