

I Am Movement and Christian Science

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The **I A M**
MOVEMENT
and
CHRISTIAN
SCIENCE

By

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THE "I AM" RELIGION COMPARED AND CONTRASTED WITH CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

Among the false religions that, in recent years, have come in the name of Christ are these two: Christian Science, founded by Mrs. Mary Baker G. Eddy; and the "I Am" movement, founded by Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Ballard. It is my purpose, in this message, to put before you the heart of the teachings of these systems, in order to show wherein they agree and wherein they differ, as well as to explain why it is that many Christian Scientists are forsaking that system for the newer Ballard teaching.

FALSE CHRISTS FORETOLD BY OUR LORD

To us, as Christians, the teachings of such systems seem absurd and foolish, as well as satanic; but we know that they were definitely foretold by our Lord Himself. In His last great prophetic utterance, made just prior to His crucifixion on Calvary, He warned His disciples of heresy to come. This warning and this prophecy are recorded in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew, in what is known as the Olivet Discourse. This message from the lips of the Lord Jesus was spoken in answer to the question of the disciples, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?"

The Lord had been prophesying about His death, His going away, and His return to the earth; and the disciples asked this question in order that they might know the "signs of the times" prior to His return to reign. In answer to this question, the Lord cast His all-seeing eye on down the age, toward its close, and gave unmistakable signs by which we might know when that hour is approaching. He spoke of wars and rumors of wars, of famines, pestilences, and earthquakes. He also described the religious conditions at the end of this age, when He said, "Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many... Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many."

These false prophets, Christ said, would do such wonderful things in performing miracles that, if it were possible, the very elect would be deceived.

Is it to be considered a strange thing, therefore, that such cults as Christian Science and the "I Am" religion should have so great a following in this day of ours? "A wicked and perverse generation" has denied the Lord of glory; and in gross blindness is ready to "believe a lie"—Satan's lie; the "strong delusion" concerning the person and work of our crucified and risen Lord, and concerning His eternal, infallible Word; "the strong delusion" which will sweep the earth in the end of this age.

WHAT CHRISTIAN SCIENCE TEACHES

Concerning the heresy of Christian Science most of you are familiar. You know that it denies the existence of sin; therefore, the need of a Savior. It denies the personality of the Holy Spirit; the personality of God, the Father; the reality of heaven; and the personality of Satan. In fact, Christian Science denies every doctrine of orthodox Christianity. It lays much stress upon the healing of the body, and makes great claims concerning miraculous healings that have taken place.

I would give warning in this connection; for physical healing is no evidence that a system is of God. "What think ye of Christ?" is the real test.

Not only did the Lord Jesus say, in the Olivet Discourse, that the false teachers would do such wonderful things that, if it were possible, even the very elect would be deceived. Paul also warned us of the "lying wonders" of Satan's emissaries in the latter days. Again, the Lord Jesus said, in Matthew 7:21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

WHAT THE "I AM" RELIGION TEACHES

In former studies we have considered rather fully these false teachings of Christian Science. But let us now, for a little while,

look into the doctrines set forth by her sister-religion, the "I Am" movement, which has more recently swept the country and is receiving into its fold many who hitherto have embraced Christian Science. Not only so; but the "I Am" movement is also being received by many adherents of Unity, New Thought, and Theosophy. Those who are forsaking these cults for the newer "I Am" movement claim that the former systems were but steps to the higher and more perfect truth. The "I Am" philosophy, they say, is the ultimate, the final, and the perfect cosmic law that will bring all humanity through rebirths and reembodyments to perfection and ascension.

Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Ballard and their son, Donald, all of Chicago, founders of the "I Am" religion, claim to be the sacred messengers of Saint Germain. This saint, together with Jesus and others, they call the "ascended masters."

I. The "I Am" Religion Defies the Bible.

In the February, 1937, issue of *The Voice of the I Am*, the official organ of the "I Am" movement, the Ballards make this claim of inspiration, in arrogant defiance of the eternal Word of God:

"This magazine is not an outlet for articles from the students, but is the outpouring of the help from the ascended masters, and *has no human concepts in it.*"

This is the bold assertion of the Ballards concerning their magazine. Please note that, according to them, there are no human concepts in *The Voice of the I Am*. In other words, it is the direct message from the ascended masters, of whom Jesus is one. It is a message delivered through the Ballards to the people of our generation. They, of necessity, claim that their revelation is by far of a higher order than that which we have in the Bible.

In this respect the "I Am" movement is like Christian Science, Mormonism, Russellism, and many other modern cults. Each of these has a book, and each claims for it even a greater degree of inspiration than that which is to be found in the eter-

nal Word of God. Surely such systems are but the voice of Satan, who in the Garden of Eden raised the question, "Hath God said?" And the solemn warning of judgment to come, mentioned in the closing verses of the book of Revelation, describes the portion of all these systems that take away from or add to the completed Word of God.

II. The "I Am" Religion Blasphemes the Name of Christ.

1. *It Robs Christ of His Deity.* The "I Am" people base their teaching upon a perversion of the claims of the Lord Jesus before He went to the cross, when He said, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58); and again, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).

About twenty-five times in the Gospel of John the Lord Jesus referred to Himself as the "I AM." When He made these statements, the Jews knew that He applied to Himself the name of Jehovah, spoken to Moses from the burning bush, "I AM THAT I AM." This name implies eternity and self-existence; and none but God has a right to it. The Lord Jesus Christ had every right to it, because He always was and always will be eternal God, equal with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. He is, in very truth, the great "I AM." The Jews recognized His claim to deity when He said, "Before Abraham was, I am." And because they refused to acknowledge Him as Lord, they sought the more to slay Him.

Mr. and Mrs. Ballard, however, blasphemously claim that Jesus freed Himself from the bondage of sin and materialism—we know that our Lord could not sin, because He was and is our holy God—but these false teachers blasphemously say that He freed Himself from the bondage of sin and materialism by constantly asserting His oneness with the "I Am Presence," which, they say, later gave Him liberation, caused His ascension, and placed Him among the ascended masters. They claim that, in like manner, you and I may receive freedom by constantly asserting the same thing: "I Am health; I Am strength; I Am

life; I Am power; in that way affirming our oneness with the 'Mighty I Am Presence'." This, they say, will eventually give us liberation and will place us among the ascended masters. That is, we shall have an ascension, even as Jesus and the other ascended masters had.

Thus they teach that the ascended masters were once men and women who lived upon the earth, and who eventually overcame death through ascension by constantly affirming their oneness with the "Mighty I Am Presence." And, to repeat for emphasis, they say that Jesus is only one of these ascended masters.

2. *It Claims the Support of Jesus for Its Teaching.* Mr. Ballard is supposed to have had an interview with the Lord Jesus; and to Mr. Ballard in that interview Jesus is supposed to have given this message to all men today:

"I want to say to the whole world: 'Every human being who rejects my beloved brother, Saint Germain, rejects me, and don't forget it. My beloved brother, Saint Germain, is just as real as I am, and is an ascended being. He is completing the work which I started two thousand years ago. May the whole world understand that and give obedience to it.'"

This message, supposedly from Jesus, appears in the May, 1936, issue of *The Voice of the I Am*. Think of it! Saint Germain is completing the work that our Lord began two thousand years ago! Any person with any degree of spiritual insight whatsoever knows that such a message is of the devil; for the Lord Jesus said in His great intercessory prayer, recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, "Father, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." And on the cross that last utterance He made before commending His spirit into the hands of His Father was this, "It is finished." The Lord Jesus does not need anyone to finish His work of redemption, even as He said. All who trust in His finished work on Calvary are saved eternally.

Mr. Ballard has given many similar messages, supposed to

have come from Jesus, all of them just as blasphemous as this one. In April, 1936, *The Voice of the I Am* printed the following words, as from the Lord Jesus:

“Saint Germain, Myself (Jesus), or any other ascended masters are not giving out teachings of the ‘I Am’ in the western world, except through Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Ballard and their son, Donald, and those named to them and under them.”

Jesus is here supposed to have declared that, if we want the real truth, we must go to these false teachers! This would nullify the message, which our blessed Lord gave to His disciples nearly two thousand years ago, when He bade them “go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

Yet another equally blasphemous message comes from *The Voice of the I Am* of February, 1936. It is signed, “Jesus the Christ.”

“Let no one desire to transcend or replace these beloved messengers, in this light and expression of the ‘I Am’ that Saint Germain has given forth. They have proven their ability to stand in the light and, with no personal desire, carry unselfishly the pure, unadulterated message of the ‘Mighty I Am Presence.’ And until the ascended masters come forth in their tangible, visible bodies, they will remain the direct messengers of Saint Germain, Myself (Jesus), and others of the ascended masters. It is only through their joyous and willing obedience to our slightest wish, that it has been possible to bring forth this expression and understanding of the ‘I Am’ in the purity and clearness in which it is expressed today.”

Thus these messengers of Satan would seek to hold all authority in this evil sect!

3. *It Denies the Efficacy of the Shed Blood of Christ.* The “I Am” teaching has no place for the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. According to this heresy, His atonement on Calvary has

nothing to do with sin. In other words, the “I Am” religion is a bloodless cult, going “in the way of Cain.” In this it is like Christian Science, Unity, New Thought, Theosophy, and many other religions that humanize God and deify man.

Such false teaching will not bear the light of Holy Writ; for “God hath spoken,” saying: “Without shedding of blood is no remission” of sin; in Christ “we have redemption through his blood”; He hath “made peace through the blood of his cross”; “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (See Heb. 9:22; Col. 1:14, 20; John 1:29; and many similar passages.)

III. The “I Am” Religion Holds the Pagan Doctrine of Reincarnation.

In *The Voice of the I Am* for February, 1937, we find this statement recorded:

“The ascended master is as far above a disembodied individual as light is above darkness. The ascended master is the conqueror over so-called death, while the one who has passed through death has failed to hold the mastery or control of its substance and energy. Therefore, he must return in another baby body, grow up, and try again to attain this victory, by keeping his physical body harmonious long enough for his presence to release through it the full power of light and love, and thus expand the perfection of itself, which is the ascended masters’ victory—the ascension.

“This is the only means by which you can become free from the wheel of birth and rebirth, free from the hundreds and perhaps thousands of embodiments in which you have lived.”

Reincarnation is refuted in Heb. 9:27: “It is appointed unto men *once* to die, but after this *the judgment.*”

Satan’s falsehood, “Ye shall be as gods,” spoken to Eve in the Garden of Eden, is reiterated in this cult, in the following promise, given out by the Ballards:

"All should understand that, when one has made his ascension, he becomes a wholly perfect being of such beauty and radiance that all who contact him realize that he is superior in every way to all other beings. He is no longer subject to any of the limitations of the outer world; for he has the full use of the power of precipitation, can take his body anywhere he desires instantly, transcends time and space, and is such an outpouring of light, love, and peace that all who contact him know instantly that *he is a god being*, manifesting marvelous perfection in every way.

"Where the physical body has red blood in the veins, at the moment of ascension, it becomes a liquid, golden light, pouring its radiance through the flesh until the rays of golden light fill the aura."

In holding the doctrine of reincarnation, the "I Am" religion is simply echoing Hinduism. According to this teaching, if you do not rise in this life to your realization of oneness with the "Mighty I Am Presence," you will fail to have an ascension, which means that you will die. This necessitates your having to return to this earth to live over again, possibly a million times, until you eventually come to realize that you are one with the "I Am Presence," which will then give you an ascension.

When I attended the "I Am" convention in Los Angeles, in 1937, I heard the statement from the platform that twenty-one people were to have an ascension on the following Sunday. This ascension was to take place from Mount Teton.

On this occasion I was also informed that, in a previous existence, Mr. Ballard was George Washington; that Mrs. Ballard was formerly Joan of Arc; and that Donald Ballard was Lafayette. Even more interesting than this, was the statement told me by one of the leaders of the movement, declaring that, before Mr. Ballard was here as George Washington, he was the "centurion of great faith" mentioned in Matthew 8 and Luke 7. I also learned that, according to this cult, Saint Germain was Samuel of the Old Testament; and that he appeared upon this

earth again as Lord Bacon of the Shakesperean days, at which time he had an ascension said to be the greatest of the ascended masters, even greater than that of Jesus Christ.

IV. The "I Am" Religion Forbids the Eating of Meat.

The Ballards hold that the "Mighty I Am Presence" can not do his perfect work in anyone who eats meat. They say that the followers of Saint Germain should never eat anything that ever had a face. One of their theories for this is that the animals are filled with a fear, which is transmuted to the person who eats the animal. One work of the "Mighty I Am Presence" is to rid the individual of fear; and, therefore, the eating of meat hinders his work.

Another explanation is that the meat forms a film that interferes with the working of light.

The Holy Spirit foretold just such heresy as this when He spoke through Paul, saying, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and *commanding to abstain from meats.*" (I Tim. 4:1-4).

V. The "I Am" Religion Teaches That Prayer Is Offered to Angels.

The prayers of the "I Am" people are just as unscriptural as their teachings concerning everything else. One of their prayers is: "O Michael, archangel, thou true source of divine light, we praise thee, we bless thee, we serve thee, we worship thee." Mr. Ballard claims to have received this prayer from Jesus, the ascended master. Think of it! The Lord Jesus Christ, Creator of angels, offering prayer to one of His creatures!

Please compare such a petition with Colossians 2:18: "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and

worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind."

Another prayer of the "I Am" people is this: "'Mighty I Am Presence,' Great Host of Ascended Masters, Mighty Legion of Light, Great Angelic Host, Great Cosmic Beings, and Great Cosmic Light! Come forth now in your mightiest authority and power of the Unfed Flame, the Three times Three, and the Cosmic Light; take possession of America, the government and her people. Control her resources by Thy Almighty Powers. Take command of every governmental official and employ e and every individual within her borders; charge them with the Light and Love of the Combined Ascended Host, and keep them loyal to our Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Supreme Court of the United States of America and all their activities."

These prayers on behalf of the United States are offered because Mr. Ballard claims that, as George Washington in a former incarnation, he was connected with America in a special way, having been the founder of the nation, giving to her people liberty and independence. Please note that this prayer, too, is addressed to the angelic host.

VI. The "I Am" Religion Promises Physical Healing and Material Wealth.

Like many other false religions, the "I Am" movement offers not only bodily health, but also material wealth. That is why it is so popular with many darkened souls. All the benefits received thereby are material.

On page 68 of *Discourses*, Saint Germain is supposed to have said: "Is it not appalling that sons and daughters of God will submit to the binding chains of limitation, when with persistent effort and determination they could open the door and step through into this Inner Chamber, filled with such dazzling light, jewels, gold, and substance from which every kind of food in the universe can be precipitated?"

In other words, a practical realization of your oneness with the "I Am Presence" will fill your wallet with all the gold that you need, and your pockets with the costliest of treasures.

VII. The "I Am" Religion Is Foreign to Christianity.

The "I Am" religion is not occupied with redemption from sin or with eternal salvation. Christ's atonement has no place in it, and God is not known as a personality. Every doctrine of the Christian faith is entirely foreign to the "I Am" religion.

The only explanation for the fact that thousands are going into it is that we are rapidly approaching the end of this age, and that we are living in the day of which Jesus spoke when, in answer to the question of the disciples, "What shall be the sign of thy coming?" He said, "Many false prophets shall arise and shall deceive many."

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE AND THE "I AM" RELIGION COMPARED

To summarize the likeness of the two false systems known as Christian Science and the "I Am" religion:

I. Christian Science and the "I Am" religion are alike in that both claim to base their doctrines upon the teachings of Christ and His apostles, at the same time proceeding to deny all that they taught. Mrs. Eddy says in the 1899 edition of *Science and Health, a Key to the Scriptures*, "I plant myself unreservedly upon the teachings of Jesus, His apostles and prophets." Mrs. Ballard claims the same thing—a gross contradiction that no one would accept unless he be ignorant of what the Bible teaches.

II. Both of these false religions produce a book and place it above the Bible. We have already seen the claims which the Ballards make for their magazine; but they are no more startling than are those which Mrs. Eddy makes for her book, *Sci-*

ence and Health. On page 456, line 25, of the 1899 edition, Mrs. Eddy says: "A Christian Scientist requires my work, *Science and Health*, for his text book; and so do all his students and patients. Why? Because it is the voice of truth to this age."

According to these statements, the Bible is not "the voice of truth to this age," but rather the text books produced by the founders of these systems are truth—books which are presented for the purpose of supplementing the Word of God.

III. These religions are alike in that they deny the deity of Christ, take the crown of supremacy from His head, and reduce Him to the position of an ordinary, sinful man, who rose to position and power through self-effort.

IV. Both are alike in that they deny the atoning work of Christ. Never do these systems sing:

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

Neither of these systems observes the Lord's Supper; for the emblems on such a table speak too eloquently of the shed blood of Christ. Mrs. Eddy says, on page 33 of *Science and Health*, 1899 edition, "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."

Mr. and Mrs. Ballard hold the same doctrine. When I was interviewing one of the "I Am" teachers, I asked her whether or not the people of her religion believe that Christ died for our sins, and that we have to believe on Him and His redemptive work, in order to be saved from the consequences of sin. She told me that such doctrine was just a myth or a fable, contrary to divine truth. Then she took the "light chart" and presented their theory as to how an individual claims to rid himself of that which we call sin.

I learned that the followers of Mr. Ballard could not get along very well in their worship without having a copy of the chart—and, of course, these copies cost \$1.00 each! They can be printed for less than five cents. No heathen of darkest Africa worshipping his idol was ever a greater idolator than the "I Am" disciples standing before the "light chart."

Concerning this chart, *The Voice of the I Am* for February, 1937, states: "The use of the violet consuming flame is imperative. It is the only means by which all undesirable accumulation can be forever dissolved, consumed, and its cause and effect annihilated."

THE NEED TO CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH

My dear Christian friends, such false teaching as we have been considering would be laughable to us, if it were not so tragic, holding in its grip, as it does, thousands of never-dying souls. It appears foolish and absurd to us who know the Lord; but literally thousands are being ensnared by these "wiles of the devil." Let us contend earnestly for "the faith once for all delivered unto the saints," that we may pluck, as brands from the burning, the eternal souls of men and women, lost and undone.

