

# REV. ERRETT ANSWERED

## Correspondent Explains Christian Science and Corrects Number of Statements

Portland, Ore., Dec. 23, 1904.

To the Editor—I have read with interest in your issue of December 19 the published report of a Sunday evening sermon, entitled "Christian Science vs. Christian Science," as delivered by the pastor of the Christian church of your city, and as many of the statements made therein woefully misrepresented this subject of Christian Science, and also its venerable leader, I am impelled to ask space in your columns for a statement in reply.

### Same Old Misconception.

The same general misconception of Christian Science from the standpoint of biased criticism and inaccurate statement has been presented, though possibly with some slight variations, from pulpit to press for the past 10 years or more, and this has been repeatedly corrected by authentic public utterance and by statements in print. However, the consideration of some of these reported statements seems due, at least, to your fair-minded readers, as well as to Christian Science.

### Is He Unprejudiced?

At the outset, the kindly statement of our critic to the effect that he has "no abuse or censure of those who are followers" of Christian Science or of its founder, Mrs. Eddy, leads one, in any event, to expect considerate criticism; however, the use of personalities and general mis-statements which follow as assertion and by quotation, will certainly convince any reader that the good pastor at least seriously departed from his original good intent.

### Not Charitable and Consistent.

Surely if this respected Christian minister who represents that good body of people denominating themselves the Disciples of Christ, will recall the early history of his own church, its heroic struggles and the opposition and misrepresentation which assailed its esteemed and earnest founders, Rev. Alexander Campbell and his son, this will probably make him more charitable in the present day, and more consistent with at least one of the basic principles of those worthy founders whose purpose was to unite the interests of all Christian people and establish the brotherhood of man.

### Forms Incorrect Estimate.

It was said of our much beloved Lincoln, by those who opposed him for reasons of personal prejudice, sectional difference, and because of idle hearsay, that he was ignorant, unjust and even cruel, but it is also historic that simple acquaintance with this great loving friend of humanity banished all such misconception, and in place brought gratitude, appreciation and affection. Has the pastor of the Christian church gained his knowledge of Mrs. Eddy's education, intelligence and character through personal acquaintance, and has he this warrant for saying "she claims to be divine?" It is quite evident he has not, and it is to be regretted that he is at least not familiar with the valued estimates of those who know Mrs. Eddy personally, for in such case he would not find himself in the unenviable position of proclaiming hearsay opinions which he cannot substantiate. The life of self-sacrifice, and the Christ-like effort in behalf of humanity shown by the revered and honored leader of Christian Science, together with her patient and confident purpose to establish this healing Gospel, notwithstanding past opposition and misrepresentation, bear unimpeachable testimony to her true worth and are her best defense, and because of this the unbiassed thinking world is awakening to a sincere appreciation of her work, which now makes the refutation of idle gossip and mis-statement about her almost unnecessary.

### Mrs. Eddy Appreciated at Home.

The Hon. Henry Robinson, present Postmaster, and former Mayor of the City of Concord, while not a Christian Scientist, has recently spoken most appreciatively of Mrs. Eddy, and the following brief quotation from his remarks would indicate the esteem in which she is held by her fellow-townsmen: "So unostentatious, reserved and gracious is the discoverer, founder and teacher of Christian Science that half of her own town-folks may not realize that history will recognize in her one of the brightest and most beneficent beacons of the last and present century—a radiant spirit, a wonderful intellectuality, a tremendous factor for universal good, whom the whole community respects, appreciates, and holds in evident deference and high esteem." Her Literary Standing. Notwithstanding that our reverend

critic is uninformed as to the scholarly investigators of this subject, Christian Science numbers among its earnest adherents many men and women of recognized prominence and intelligence, among which are college professors, authors, editors, publishers, eminent lawyers, judges, orthodox ministers and physicians; in fact, intelligent people of every walk of life; yet Christian Science depends not on the personal opinion of any individual for its growth or stability, but rather does it rest upon the individual proof in daily experience that it is a vital, practical religion which brings spiritual, moral and physical betterment to mankind.

It may not be amiss, however, to quote one or two recent expressions regarding this subject from authorities whose good judgment is beyond question. Mr. W. D. McCracken of New York, an author of recognized ability and an honored member of the American Historical Association, who since regaining his health through the ministrations of Christian Science, has become an ardent student of its doctrine, in course of a reply to recent adverse criticism of Mrs. Eddy and her writings, made the following statement: "I suppose it is because I am myself the author of several books, and because I have travelled much and read philosophy in times past, and that I can appreciate as I do the great art of the Christian Science text-book, an art that does not stop at theory and technique, but leads, and is thus establishing a new test and criterion for those to emulate who desire to help mankind in literature. Does our critic know of any book except the Bible (to which "Science and Health" acts as an interpreter) which has healed those who read it of all manner of diseases? Does he know of any work within the whole range of medicine, theology, jurisprudence or belles-lettres, the reading of which has healed so-called incurable diseases pronounced hopeless by those confining themselves to material means of cure? Has our critic himself ever healed a patient by its means, or has he ever written a book which anyone would care to read at the bedside of the sick or dying, in order to restore them to health? When he has done this, it will be time enough for him to try to pick flaws in the work of a consecrated woman, whose daily work is doing what thousands of critics have not even begun to do."

Judge Clarence A. Buskirk, formerly attorney-general of the state of Indiana, is recently credited with the following statement, relative to the character and work of Mrs. Eddy: "Too frequently has ingratitude awarded the benefactors of our race Prison chains and a disgraced name awaited Columbus on his return to Spain. His old age saw the undesired chains stricken from his limbs, but he did not live to see his name restored to its purity. Posterity had to perform that act of justice. Mary Baker Eddy, although she has been called upon to drink the cup of ingratitude for a time, now stands as a loved and revered figure, crowned with years and honors, and surrounded and defended by the pure incense of gratitude arising from the hearts of hundreds of thousands throughout the earth. A pure and immaculate life, a gifted and good woman with long years of unflinching devotion to the high cause with which her name will be associated through coming history, she now stands in the sunlight of an assured triumph. Misunderstood, misrepresented, reviled, she was sustained during long years by the consciousness that she was working for God and Humanity."

### Pastor Draws Wrong Conclusion.

Considering another of the worthy pastor's assertions, let me emphatically state that the "Woman Clothed With the Sun," as referred to in Revelation is not looked upon in any personal sense by Christian Science, and does not apply to any mortal; neither does "the little book," in the light of Christian Science, refer to any material book, rather does this whole picture present the God-crowned supremacy of purity, love and righteousness, which should in some degree be made manifest in the life of every child of God.

### Not a Feminine Christ.

The assertion that Mrs. Eddy claims to be a "feminine Christ," or that this is believed by Christian Scientists, is utterly false, and there is no warrant in her life or teachings for such statement. Repetition, even by quotation, of this falsehood is indication of a biased concept concerning Mrs. Eddy, and a total unfamiliarity with her writings. Christian Science teaches "one Christ, even that loving and healing Christ of which the loving Christ Jesus was the embodiment."

### Mrs. Eddy's Views on Marriage Misrepresented.

The attempt to associate Christian Science with Mormonism, and the insinuation regarding Mrs. Eddy's fair name and character is also as unchristian and ungentlemanly as it is untrue. Mrs. Eddy's teaching regarding marriage is clearly set forth in a chapter under that heading in her book "Science and Health," and one in the least familiar therewith could not be guilty of the statement that her teaching "is against the doctrine and practice of marriage."

### Quibble Over Words.

Our critic takes further exception to another reference from the text-book "Science and Health," and bases his criticism on a detached quotation, in which the author has made use of the word "Adam," by dividing it into syllables, as suggestive of "a dam or obstruction," however, this is not given as a definition of the word, but rather as a helpful illustration for the purpose of awakening thought to the realization of the character of the old Adam-nature, which ever hinders and beclouds man's perception of the living Christ. The sacred scriptures themselves have at times been made to appear inconsistent through careless or willful detraction by the removal from their context of certain passages, consequently it is not strange that "Science and Health," or any other work should fare no better by such treatment.

### Denies Unreality of Existence.

Further exception is taken by our critic to the fact that Christian Science denies the reality of matter, but had the gentleman grasped the spiritual meaning of what Christian Science preaches he would have seen that this has reference to the spiritual, and not the mortal existence of man, and that it does not teach that existence is not "real." Christian Science uses the word "real," as applicable to that only which is indestructible and eternal, and because Christian Science interprets the nature of man and the universe from a mental and spiritual rather than a material basis, and this in harmony with the Master's statement, "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing," it does not deny that the evidence of the material senses is "real" as a human experience. However, it must be admitted that this evidence is changing and temporal, and consequently cannot be the eternal reality of spirit. Christian Science teaches that all things in creation, be they great or small, are as real and eternal as their unchanging Creator, and it is not this creation that is denied existence, but rather the erroneous material concept of it. To the child, first noting the appearing of the sun above the horizon, and who is positive that he sees it move, one would say that there is no sun, although he might with profit explain that the sense of what appears to be taking place is the reverse of the actual fact. So Christian Science does not say to suffering humanity, your body is "an illusion," but it rationally explains that spiritual man is ever harmoniously existent and governed by God, and this becomes evident in the degree that man's true relationship to his Maker is realized. Instead of denying that man has a body or, as the pastor's quoted authority affirms, that "outward world, the eyes and ears and fingers, are not real," Christian Science emphatically maintains that man, made in the image and likeness of God, and thus given dominion, has a body which it is his God-given right under all conditions to have perfect and healthful, rather than diseased and distress, and it has been proven that persistent contention against the discords of mortal experience, and the expectant declaration of man's right to freedom, because of the never-changing law of God, does produce healthful and wholesome results which amply justify the denial of sensual evidence notwithstanding their apparent trustworthiness. As to Mrs. Eddy's Revelation. Our worthy critic also finds much fault with this doctrine being considered in any sense "a revelation," and here let me say that Mrs. Eddy's discovery of Christian Science is not claimed to be a revelation in any supernatural or mystical sense, but is rather a spiritual conviction which followed a remarkable personal experience of healing, together with an earnest searching of the scripture for a clearer unfoldment of that promised "law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" which should make "free from the law of sin and death." All true thought which leads to a better knowledge of God and a greater good to mankind may be rightfully termed inspired thought in its literal sense.

### God Not a Corporal Being.

"Science and Health with key to the Scriptures" the text-book of Christian Science is purely what its title implies, a key, or aid to an understanding of the Bible, in other words, a Christian Science commentary, and the great value of this book is well attested by its healing and reformatory effect on humanity. As to the questions of personality of God, Christian Scientists recognize God as personal in the highest significance of the term, but in no sense as a corporal being. Can anyone conceive of giving corporal outline to that infinite Creator who includes omni-presence, omnipotence and omniscience? Mrs. Eddy well considers this question in her published message of 1901 to the Boston church, in which she says: "We hear it said the Christian Scientists have no God because their God is not a person. Let us examine this. The loyal Christian Scientists absolutely adopt Webster's definition of God: 'A Supreme Being,' and the Standard's definition of God: 'The One Supreme Being, self-existent and eternal.' Also we accept God, emphatically, in the higher definition derived from the Bible, and this accords with the literal sense of the lexicons: 'God is Spirit! God is Love.' Then, to define Love in Divine Science we use this phrase for God-divine Principle. By this, we mean Mind, a permanent, fundamental, intelligent divine Being called in Scripture, Spirit Love."

### Mrs. Eddy Demonstrates Her Theory.

The worthy pastor is reported as saying (and I here almost discredit the printer, because of the generally accepted fact that Christian Science demonstrates its claims by healing the sick) that "Mrs. Eddy does not try to demonstrate her theory that matter is nonexistent, she merely states it dogmatically as though it was a matter of absolute knowledge." To this I cannot do better than to reply in Mrs. Eddy's own words from her book "Science and Health" (p. 341) written many years ago to a similar, and now time-worn, assertion: "The strictures on this volume would condemn to oblivion that truth which is raising up thousands from helplessness to strength and elevating them from a theoretical to a practical Christianity. The apostolic injunction is, 'Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.' In Christian Science mere opinion is valueless. Proof is essential to a due estimate of this subject. Speers at the application of the word Science to Christianity, cannot prevent that from being scientific which is based upon divine Principle, demonstrated according to a given rule and subjected to proof. The facts are so absolute and numerous in support of Christian Science, that misrepresentation and denunciation cannot overthrow it."

### Don't Worship Their Leader.

Even if an occasional over-zealous or unwise student of Christian Science should make statements or act in such manner as to approach personal worship of Mrs. Eddy, neither she nor this doctrine should be condemned because of these indiscretions, since such are the direct opposite of Christian Science teaching and are the effects of its lack, rather than of an application thereof. Surely no organization or denomination would care to be judged by the shortcomings of some of its adherents, and the great rank and file of Christian Scientists, while justly appreciating the work of Mrs. Eddy and being lovingly grateful therefor, have no inclination to worship their leader, and this is also farthest from her earnest wish. Mrs. Eddy's attitude on this subject is well expressed in the message of 1901 to her church, in which she writes: "Finally, brethren, wait patiently on God; return blessing for cursing; be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good; be steadfast, abide and abound in faith, understanding, and good works; study the Bible and the text-book of our denomination; obey strictly the laws that be, and follow your leader only so far as the follows Christ. Godliness or Christianity is a human necessity; man cannot live without it; he has no intelligence, health, hope, or happiness without Godliness."

### Christian Science Prayer.

The statement that prayer is practically denied by Mrs. Eddy could not be wider the fact, for the prayer

which has as a result the bringing of the earnest seeker into such better communion with God as to destroy fear, despair, distress and disease, surely speaks for itself, and it is such prayer that Christian Science teaches and that Christian Scientists are striving to approximate in keeping with the Master's admonition to "pray always," and the results of these efforts in sickness healed and sin displaced by reformation in unnumbered instances encourage them to believe that they do not "ask amiss."

### Mind Their Own Business.

Christian Science may not be readily understood by the critical or superficial investigator, but its deeply Christian character is proven by this healing it brings the sick, the comfort to the sorrowing and the renewal and reformation of mind to the sensual and sinner. It is significant that Christian Scientists never preach sermons against the beliefs of others; but concede to them the right to worship as they please, and for themselves simply ask the freedom of their own convictions, their constitutional and divine right to worship God after the dictates of their own conscience.

### Must Stand on Its Own Merits.

It is narrated in the fifth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles that those earnest followers of the founder of Christianity, by reason of the practical and healing application of their Master's gospel, had so incensed the professors of recognized and established religion in their day, that opposition and denunciation was about to culminate in the attempted destruction of these faithful followers. And at this time, so the sacred story runs, "stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people . . . and said unto them: 'Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves, what ye intend to do as touching these men. And now I say unto you, refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this council or this work be of men it will come to naught; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.'"

### May Not Those, who by Reason of Differing Religious Opinions and Possibly Lack of Appreciation of the Doctrine and Application of Christian Science, Find Council Worthy of Consideration in the Wise Advice of that Ancient Doctor of Law? And at this Season of 'Peace on earth, good will to men,' Christian Scientists would most earnestly say to all fellow-religionists regardless of creeds or professions, in the words of Abraham to Lot, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between thee and me . . . for we are brethren."

Thanking you for your courtesy and extended space, I am,

Yours respectfully,

DAVID B. OGDEN,

Publication Committee.

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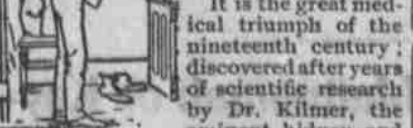
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which has as a result the bringing of the earnest seeker into such better communion with God as to destroy fear, despair, distress and disease, surely speaks for itself, and it is such prayer that Christian Science teaches and that Christian Scientists are striving to approximate in keeping with the Master's admonition to "pray always," and the results of these efforts in sickness healed and sin displaced by reformation in unnumbered instances encourage them to believe that they do not "ask amiss."

Thanking you for your courtesy and extended space, I am, Yours respectfully, DAVID B. OGDEN, Publication Committee.

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Dated at Salem, Oregon, December 15, 1904.

FRANK M. BROWN,  
U. J. LEHMAN.