

**CHRISTIAN SCIENCE; AN EXPOSITION
OF MRS. EDDY'S WONDERFUL
DISCOVERY, INCLUDING ITS LEGAL
ASPECTS; A PLEA FOR CHILDREN
AND OTHER HELPLESS SICK**

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Christian Science; An Exposition of Mrs. Eddy's Wonderful Discovery, including Its Legal Aspects; A Plea for Children and Other Helpless Sick by William A. Purrington

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PHOTOGRAPH OF A GANGRENEED FOOT OF A CHILD TREATED BY A "HEALER."
AN OBJECT LESSON. See preface, and page 113.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

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including its Legal Aspects

A Plea for Children and other
Helpless Sick

BY

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PREFACE.

It has seemed worth while to collect these papers, expounding the dangerous teachings of our latter-day delusion, Christian Science, and the theory and limitations of medical legislation, if only for the sake of children and helpless adults. Thanks are due to the Proprietor and Editors of the *North American Review* for permission to reprint the articles written for that periodical at the instance of my friend David A. Munro, Esq., and to the publisher and editor of the *Medical Record*, and the *New York Sun* for the use of the matter copyrighted by them. They have proved less tenacious of their copyrights than is the discoverer of Christian Science of hers.

The papers have not been altered from their original form in order to avoid in the bound volume repetitions due to treating the same subject before different audiences. When line upon line and precept upon precept are needed repetitions are not vain.

Four of these papers deal with the exposition of Mrs. Eddy's teachings, her own account of herself and the status of her cult before the law. Another treats of the educational effect and policy of medical legislation, and the last shows how by enforcement of medical laws not consonant with public opinion the apothecary in England became a general practitioner of medicine.

The best proof that the articles in the *North American Review* are fair expositions of Mrs. Eddy's biography and teachings is that their accuracy has not been denied, so far as their author knows. How could it be when they consist for the most part of her own words quoted by book and page so that error might

be easily corrected? No willful misstatement has been made, and none, it is believed, unwittingly. The patient reader will see that there is here no denial, but rather explicit and repeated admissions of the extraordinary influence of suggestion, expectant attention and mental excitation however caused upon the body. It is not denied that hysterical patients, the morbidly introspective, the worriers, the *malades imaginaires*, the victims of obscure nervous ailments have been helped by Faith Cure, Christian Science, Mental Healing, Mesmerism, Hypnotism, Vitapathy, and the like. But it is denied that every *post hoc* is a *propter hoc*, and that because, for instance, asthma, which often yields to a change of residence, or wears out by lapse of time, and childbirth, a normal function, sometimes run successful courses under such methods, therefore gross ignorance and presumption are to be substituted without restraint or liability in daily life for demonstrably efficient skill and science. We know that a surgeon can staunch the gush of blood from a severed artery, that the physician has sweet oblivious antidotes for pain, and, if called in time, can, often counteract the deadly work of poison. Eddyism cannot do these things. Will Mrs. Eddy or any of her disciples venture by personal experiment under test conditions to prove that Christian Science can counteract by its arguments the effects of morphine, atropine or strychnine?

What must be obvious to any one who will think but a moment is that suggestion, expectant attention and such mental stimuli cannot operate upon babies as they do upon adults; and accordingly, as one would

naturally expect, we find some of the most horrible instances of criminal wickedness on the part of Christian Scientists, Peculiar People and like faddist in their treatment of children. One object lesson is worth a wilderness of words, and the photograph prefixed to these papers is a volume in itself. I am indebted for its use to Charles H. Tag, M. D., of Brooklyn. The case, referred to on page 113, was one of gangrene of the left foot of a child twelve years old; the lower ends of tibia and fibula being exposed and the foot attached to the leg only by the internal lateral ligaments of the ankle. Physicians advised amputation; but an ignorant woman was called in who guaranteed by prayers, passes and salves to effect a cure. She professed belief in Christian Science and mental treatment, but also in the efficacy of remedies, the use of which made her conviction possible under the law of New York. She was not a strict Eddyite, but had a system and book of her own. Eventually amputation was performed by Dr. Blaisdell assisted by Drs. Tag and Caffrey. The operation was successful and the child is now in good health. Is it not horrible to think of cases of this sort, of contagious diseases, of severed arteries and fractured limbs falling into the hands of ignorant and audacious "Scientists" even when patients are conscious and willing to accept the treatment? How much worse it is when the patients are little children or unconscious adults whose lives are put by misguided kin or friends into the deadly keeping of those who lightly and boldly assume with ignorance, what the learned attempt with care and misgiving.

The questions submitted to Mr. Carol Norton as set out in the appendix remain unanswered by him. They are the *crux* of Eddyism. Would Mrs. Eddy treat her own severed artery by arguing with it like a congressman? Would Mr. Norton discuss a fish-bone out of a child's throat? If not, who will deny that the pretensions of the cult are humbug and sham of the commonest, wickedest sort?

It is by no means asserted that the disciples of Mrs. Eddy are ignorant or unintelligent. On the contrary their sincerity is willingly admitted, as well as that among them are persons of unusual intelligence. But persons of intelligence and honesty, ever since the world began, have been deluded in amazing fashions by vulgar and ignorant impostors in religion, medicine and finance. Hope tells its flattering tale to rich and poor, wise and foolish. All conditions of men blindly follow false beacons of health and wealth, set for them by fanaticism, greed and cunning. Fortunate are they who find the true light before shipwreck.

If this exposition turns one Ephraim from his idols; if it saves one child, one woman in peril of childbirth, one strong man in delirium from unnecessary suffering and death at the hands of the ignorant and criminally reckless, it will not have been written in vain. And because it may happen that some reader might wish to find again a droll absurdity of Christian Science's discoverer wherewith to confound him who accepts Mrs. Eddy's teaching on faith without knowledge, a sufficiently copious index has been made, and a table given of the cases cited from law reports.

W. A. PURBINGTON.

59 Wall Street, New York City,
December 11th, 1899.

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