

THE WORD

OCTOBER, 1907.

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MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS.

The subjects dealt with in these columns are such as are of general interest and suggested by readers of THE WORD. MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS, we desire to remain all that the title suggests. They are not intended in any way to be controversial. Questions propounded by friends are endeavored to be answered by one of them and in the manner of friends. Arguments, for the sake of argument, are seldom conducive to friendship.

The following article, received soon after the issue of the March WORD, may not seem to the reader to be exactly as the former questions and answers under MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS, but owing to the general interest of the subjects discussed and to the correspondent's earnest request to have his objections published in THE WORD, A FRIEND will reply to his objections as requested, it being understood that the objections are to the principles and practices of Christian science, and not to personalities—Ed. THE WORD

New York, March 29, 1907.
To the Editor of THE WORD.

Sir: In the March issue of THE WORD, "A Friend" asks and answers a number of questions about Christian Science [*p. 1 in the March 1907 Moments with Friends PDF*]. These answers show that the writer has adopted certain premises unfavorable to Christian Science, which, if carried to their logical conclusions, are alike unfavorable to the practice of all religious bodies. The first question, "Is it wrong to use mental instead of physical means to cure physical ills?" is answered practically "yes." It is stated that "there are instances where one is justified in using the power of thought to overcome physical ills, in which case we would say that it was not wrong. In the great majority of cases it is decidedly wrong to use mental instead of physical means to cure physical ills."

If by the use of mental means the writer refers to the operation of one human mind upon another human mind, to remove physical ills, then I agree with him that it is wrong in every case. Christian Scientists do not employ the human mind in any case to remove physical ills. Therein lies the difference between Christian Science

and mental science, which is overlooked by "A Friend."

Christian Scientists employ spiritual means, through prayer only, to cure disease. The Apostle James said, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick." Christian Science teaches how to make "the prayer of faith," and, since the sick are healed through Christian Science prayer, it is proof that it is "the prayer of faith." "A Friend" has unwittingly confused Christian Science treatment and mental treatment. Christian Science relies wholly upon God, through prayer, whereas so-called mental science, whether it operates through mental suggestion, hypnotism, or mesmerism, is the operation of one human mind upon another human mind. The results in the latter case are transitory and harmful, and fully merit the condemnation put upon such practice by "A Friend." No one, however, can object to prayer to God, nor can anyone say that sincere prayer for another can ever be injurious.

Another question is, "Did not Jesus and many of the saints cure physical ills by mental means, and if so, was it wrong?"

In answering this question "A Friend" admits they did heal the sick, and that it was not wrong for them to do so. He says, however, "Jesus and the saints received no money for their cures," and he also says, "How unlike Jesus and unsaintly it would seem for either Jesus or his disciples or any of the saints to charge so much per visit to every patient, cure or no cure."

The facts are that Jesus healed the sick, and taught his disciples how to do likewise. These disciples in turn taught others, and for three hundred years the power to heal was regularly exercised by the Christian church. When Jesus first sent out a band of his disciples with the command to preach the gospel and to heal the sick, he bade them not to accept pay for their services. When he sent them out the next time, however, he told them to take their purses along, and declared that "the laborer is worthy of his hire." This text has been accepted for nearly two thousand years as sufficient authority for the clergy and others engaged in Christian work to accept compensation for their services, and there can be no reasonable ground for making an exception in the case of Christian Scientists. Clergymen are employed by churches to preach and pray, and in almost all cases are paid a fixed salary. Christian Science practitioners both preach the gospel and pray, but they receive no fixed salary. Their charge is so small as to be trivial, and is paid voluntarily by the individual who seeks their aid. There is no compulsion about it, and in any event it is a personal matter between

the patient and the practitioner with which outsiders are not concerned. In order to be a Christian Science practitioner, one must give up secular business and devote his or her entire time to the work. In order to do this, they must at least have some means for ordinary necessities. If no provision were made for compensation it is apparent that the poor would be excluded entirely from this work. This question has been settled by the Christian Science church on a basis that is eminently proper and satisfactory to the parties themselves. There is no complaint from those who turn to Christian Science for help that they are overcharged. Such complaint usually comes from those who have had nothing to do with Christian Science. In any event, it must be admitted by all who wish to treat the subject fairly, that if it is right to pay clergymen to preach, and to pray for the recovery of the sick, it is equally right to pay a Christian Scientist for such services.

Very truly yours.
(Signed) V. O. STRICKLER.

The questioner says that we have “adopted certain premises unfavorable to Christian Science, which, if carried to their logical conclusions, are alike unfavorable to all religious bodies.”

That the premises are unfavorable to Christian science is true, but we do not see how from their logical conclusions these premises would be unfavorable to the practice of all religious bodies. Christian science maintains that its teachings are unique among modern faiths, and that is no doubt true. Because those premises are unfavorable to Christian science, it by no means follows that the same premises apply to all religious bodies; but if all religious bodies were to deny facts and teach falsehoods, then we should unhesitatingly be unfavorable to them in our premises to their doctrines and practices, when the occasion required that our views be expressed.

Referring to the first question and answer thereto, which appeared in the March WORD, 1907, the writer of the above letter says in the second paragraph that he agrees with us that “the operation of one human mind upon another human mind, to remove physical ills, is wrong in every case.”

On reading this, the question naturally arises, what then the need for further objection or argument; but we are astonished at the statement which follows: “Christian Scientists do not employ the human mind in any case to remove physical ills.”

If it is true that the human mind is not used by the Christian scientist in his efforts and practices to remove physical ills, then the case is removed from the courts of the world, and is not then for any court of inquiry. Therefore the Christian scientist need not be concerned with any unfavorable comment on his practices, and it is out of the sphere of MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS to attempt to deal with a subject not concerning the human mind. But it hardly seems possible that such a statement can truthfully be made. If it is claimed that it is the divine mind (or any other kind of mind) which removes physical ills, and not the human mind, then how without the human mind can the divine mind take action? If the divine mind, or whatever principle the “scientist” claims, does act, how is that action induced without the suggestion or employment of the human mind? But should the divine mind be capable of acting and removing physical ills without the employment or use of the human mind, then why is it that the intervention of a Christian scientist is necessary to remove physical ills of any kind? On the other hand, the only alternative is that neither any divine nor human mind is employed in the removal of physical ills. If that is so, how are we human beings, without the use of the human mind, to know or fancy that physical ills, or a divine mind, or the human mind, exist. The writer of the letter concludes the second paragraph by saying: “Therein lies the difference between Christian Science and mental science, which is overlooked by ‘A Friend.’”

We acknowledge that we did not know this distinction between Christian science and mental science. The distinction made by the Christian scientist is in favor of the mental scientist, in that, according to the statement in the letter, the mental scientist still uses the human mind, whereas the Christian scientist does not.

In the beginning of the third paragraph the writer of the letter says: “Christian Scientists employ spiritual means through prayer only to cure disease. The Apostle James said, ‘The prayer of faith shall save the sick.’”

These statements confuse rather than elucidate the foregoing quotations. The question naturally arises, what distinction does the Writer intend to infer between spiritual means and mental means? To the psychic, the mesmerist, and amateur psychologist, all action not believed to be due to a physical cause is lumped under a common head and called either psychic, mental, or spiritual; preferably spiritual. It is not clear how the Writer intends to employ his phrase “spiritual means,” except that he holds that

prayer is not a mental operation. But if prayer is not a mental operation, or has not to do with the human mind, what then is prayer? Who is the one who prays? What does he pray about, and to whom does he pray, and for what?

If the one who prays is a Christian scientist, how can he start his prayer without the human mind? But if he is no longer human and has become divine, then he need not pray. If one prays, we take it that his prayer is directed to a power higher than his own, hence the prayer. And if he is human he must use his mind to pray. The one who prays must pray about something. The inference is, that he prays about physical ills, and that these physical ills shall be removed. If the import of the prayer is for the removal of physical ills, the human being who prays must use his humanity and his mind to know of the physical ill and to ask for its removal for the benefit of the human sufferer. Prayer is the message or request addressed to the person, power or principle who is to remove the physical ill. It is said that the prayer is addressed to God; but one who wishes to address effectively a message or petition to an inferior, equal, or superior, must know how to address such message or petition in a manner which will obtain the desired ends. One who prays or petitions would not petition a power inferior to himself, as it could not grant his request, nor would he ask of one his equal to do what he himself could do. It is reasonable, therefore, to suppose that the one to whom he appeals is superior. If he is superior in power and all-wise in action, then the petition must be to apprise the one to whom it is addressed of something which he does not know. If he does not know it, he is not all-wise; but if he does know it, it is an act of insolence and impudence on the part of the petitioner to request an all-wise and all-powerful intelligence to perform an action, inasmuch as the request suggests that the all-wise intelligence either neglected to perform that which he should have done, or did not know that it should be done. If allowing, on the other hand, that the intelligence is all-wise and all-powerful, but did not concern himself with human affairs, then the one who intercedes or prays for the removal of physical ills must be aware of those physical ills, and uses his human mind in some initial way to make known the physical ills through prayer to God, the intelligence. The petition must be for the removal of the ills, and so in any case the mind is used for physical ends. The beginning is physical, the process must be mental (whatever else may follow); but the end is physical.

As to the prayer of faith the question arises: what is faith? Every

being in human form has faith, but the faith of one is not the faith of another. The faith of a sorcerer in the successful results of his practices differs from the faith of the Christian scientist who may succeed in his practices, and both these differ from the faith of a Newton, a Kepler, a Plato, or a Christ. A fanatic who has blind faith in his wooden god obtains results as do any of the above mentioned who also have faith. What is termed successful action may be based on blind belief, on confident speculation, or on actual knowledge. The results will be according to the faith. The principle of faith is the same in each, but faith differs in the degree of intelligence. Therefore, if the Christian scientists claim to heal through the prayer of faith, then the cures effected must be according to the degree of faith in its intelligent use. It may be infernal or divine; but in any case, because the Apostle James said "the prayer of faith shall save the sick," does not make it so. The facts are the witnesses and not the Apostle James.

The Writer continues: " 'A Friend' has unwittingly confused Christian Science treatment and mental treatment."

If this is the case, "A Friend" acknowledges his mistake; yet he does not see how Christian scientists can learn to make, and "make 'the prayer of faith,' " without the use of their human minds. This doubt seems to be supported by the following statement: "Christian Science relies wholly on God through prayer, whereas so-called mental science, whether it operates through mental suggestion, hypnotism or mesmerism, is the operation of one human mind upon another human mind. The results in the latter case are transitory and harmful, and fully merit the condemnation put upon such practice by 'A Friend.' "

While we do not here speak as to the mental scientists and say that the above statements are correct, still in their books the mental scientists claim together with Christian scientists to rely wholly upon God, or by whatever term they might designate God. This does not make plain the difference claimed by the Writer, for the reasons already advanced. The cures effected by mental scientists are claimed by them to be as effective and as numerous in proportion to the practitioners as the cures of the Christian scientists. Whatever the principle of cure involved may be, cures are effected by the two kinds of "scientists." The claims, however, of the writer of the above letter for Christian science are very pronounced, as accentuated by his denouncement of the mental scientists on whom he looks with displeasure. This is made apparent by the use and absence of capital letters in the terms "Christian Science" and "mental science."

Throughout the letter the words “Christian Science” or “Scientists” are capitalized, whereas in speaking of mental science or scientists, capitals are noticeably absent. At the close of the above paragraph we read: “No one, however, can object to prayer to God, nor can anyone say that sincere prayer for another can ever be injurious.”

“A Friend” endorses this statement, but must add that prayer for another, to be sincere and beneficial, must be unselfish; prayer even though it be for the apparent benefit of another, if there is to be personal remuneration or the receipt of money, cannot but be tainted and ceases to be unselfish, because personal benefits are to be received other than the benefit which comes from the knowledge of performing service.

In the paragraph beginning: “The facts are that Jesus healed the sick, and taught his disciples how to do likewise,” our Correspondent attempts to prove the legitimacy of the action of Christian science in taking pay, by the following: “When Jesus first sent out a band of his disciples with the command to preach the gospel and to heal the sick, he bade them not to accept pay for their services. When he sent them out the next time, however, he told them to take their purses along, and declared that ‘the laborer is worthy of his hire.’”

The first reference in the New Testament applying to the statement of our Correspondent is found in Matt., chap. x., vs. 7, 8, 9, 10: “And, as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass, in your purses; nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat.”

We can see nothing in the above to warrant the Christian scientist for exacting compensation. In fact the statement “freely ye have received, freely give,” argues against it.

In Mark, chap. vi., vs. 7-13, we find: “And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two, and gave them power over unclean spirits; and commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse. But be shod with sandals: and not put on two coats.....And they went out, and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many devils and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.”

The above does not argue in favor of the practices of Christian

scientists, and in fact Christian scientists cannot claim to follow any of the above instructions.

The next reference we find in Luke, chap. ix., vs. 1-6: "Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.....And they departed, and went through the towns preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere."

There is no mention in the above of compensation, and the same instructions concerning the absence of pay, the plainness of dress, is noticeable. The above does not support our Correspondent in his claims.

The next reference is in Luke, chap. x., vs. 1-9, where it is said: "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come.....Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes; and salute no man by the way. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking, such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. And into whatsoever city ye enter and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."

The above contains the quotation in the letter "that the laborer is worthy of his hire"; but this hire is plainly the "eating and drinking such things as they give." Certainly from this reference our Correspondent cannot claim the right to receive compensation other than the simple eating and drinking given him in the patient's house. All of the references thus far have been against the receipt of any compensation other than the food and shelter which is given the healer. And as shown in MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS, nature always provides this for the true healer.

We now turn to the last reference, Luke. chap. xxii., vs. 35-37: "And he said unto them, when I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, but now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and

likewise his scrip: And he that hath no sword let him sell his garment, and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me. And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.”

The meaning in the foregoing passages seems to be that Jesus would be no longer with the disciples, and that they would have to fight their own way; but there is absolutely no reference to compensation for the curing of disease. In fact, the instruction to take their purses and their scrip along with them would suggest the opposite of compensation: *that they would have to pay their own way*. In this fact, what our Correspondent advances as proof in support of the claims and practices of Christian science, turns out to be against them. Our Correspondent has injured his case by what he advances in favor of it. The instructions which are given by Jesus are not followed either in the spirit nor in the letter. Christian scientists are neither Christians in their teachings nor are they the disciples of Jesus; they are disciples of Mrs. Eddy, and the promulgators of her doctrines, and they have no right to advance the teachings of Jesus either as their or Mrs. Eddy’s teachings or in the support of their claims and practices.

The Correspondent continues: “This text has been accepted for nearly two thousand years, as sufficient authority for the clergy and others engaged in Christian work, to accept compensation for their services, and there can be no reasonable ground for making an exception in the case of Christian Scientists.”

It does not seem right for Christian scientists to follow certain practices of the clergy of the Christian church, and excuse themselves for accepting compensation because the clergy do it, and at the same time to entirely ignore the Christian church in its principal doctrines, and to attempt to supplant Christianity by Christian Science. The Christian church observes certain practices and teaches certain doctrines, which hundreds of thousands of the people of Christendom condemn, and the leaders of the Christian church of every denomination act against the teachings of Jesus, though they hold the doctrines; but this has nothing to do with the wrong, if it is wrong, for Christian scientists to accept money for removing physical ills by mental means, or, if the phrase is preferable, by spiritual means, because if God or spiritual means, effects the cure, then the cure is of God, and it is a gift of the spirit, and the Christian scientist has no right to accept physical money where he did not effect the cure, and he is obtaining money under false pretenses.

The Writer continues: "Clergymen are employed by churches to preach and pray, and in almost all cases are paid a fixed salary. Christian Science practitioners both preach the gospel and pray, but they receive no fixed salary."

This is no doubt true, but, good business men, they collect pay for their time and work. Continuing on the question of compensation, the Writer says: "Their charge is so small as to be trivial, and is paid voluntarily by the individual who seeks their aid."

That the charge is small and trivial and is paid voluntarily may possibly be so in the same sense that a man may give up his purse when he thinks he had better, or that a hypnotized subject will voluntarily deed his possessions and give his money to his hypnotist. The claim that the Christian scientists have no fixed salary and that the charges made are so small as to be almost trivial, is exceedingly naive and must appeal to the ingenuousness of the reader. The income of some of the practitioners and readers in the Christian science church is "so small as to be trivial" only when future possibilities of the Christian scientist's income are considered.

Referring to the statement of our Correspondent that "their charge is so small as to be almost trivial," and "this Question has been settled by the Christian Science Church on a basis that is eminently proper and satisfactory to the parties themselves. There is no complaint from those who turn to Christian Science for help that they are overcharged."

We relate the following from the many cases to which our attention has been called. An engineer on a local railroad had a nervous affection of the right arm which threatened to incapacitate him for work. Help was vainly sought from many physicians. Advices of his physicians were followed whenever possible, and his fellow employees even furnished the means for him to take a sea voyage as advised. But this did not result in any benefit. He then tried a Christian science practitioner and was somewhat relieved. This caused him to join the cult and he became an ardent believer, and endeavored to convert such of his friends as would listen to him. But he was not cured. One day he was asked, why, if he had been so much helped, his Christian science practitioner could not cure him. His reply was: "I cannot afford to have him cure me." When asked for an explanation, he said that it had taken all the money he could scrape together to be relieved as much as he then was, and that he could not get money enough together to be cured entirely. He further

explained that the Christian scientist could not afford to give enough of his time to effect a thorough cure unless he was paid for it; that the Christian scientist must live, and as he depended for his living on the pay received for his cures, he could only cure those who could afford to pay for the cures. This votary of Christian science seemed to think that it was eminently proper not to be cured unless he had the money to pay for his cure.

Continuing on the subject of receiving money from the patient for benefits given, the Correspondent says: "There is no compulsion about it, and in any event it is a personal matter between the patient and the practitioner, with which outsiders are not concerned."

Apparently, there is no compulsion as to receiving pay or giving it. This is a question which is left to inference, but the Correspondent cannot so easily dispose of the matter of the latter part of the sentence. That outsiders are not concerned with personal matters between man and man is true; but this does not apply to the practice of Christian science. Christian science endeavors to make its doctrines known, and its practices are not merely a matter of private and personal interest between man and man. The practices of Christian science are a public matter. They affect the interests of the community, the nation, and of the world. They strike at the vitals of humanity; they deny facts, assume falsehoods, attack the moral sense of right or wrong, affect the sanity and integrity of the mind; they claim practical omniscience and omnipotence for the founder of their cult, a woman addicted to most of the frailties of her human kind; they would make and reduce the spiritual world to be the servant of this physical earth; their ideal of religion appears to be, in its chief purpose, merely the cure of disease, and the luxury of the physical body. The church of the Christian scientist is founded and built up on the cure of physical ills, with an eye to physical conditions. The whole religion of Christian science turns on worldly success and the living in physical life; though it claims to be spiritual in origin, in purpose, and in practice. Success in life and the health of the physical body are right and proper; but all of that on which the Christian science church is built, leads away from a worship of the principle of Christ and of the true God. With the Christian scientists, judging from their claims, God exists primarily for the purpose of answering their prayers. Christ exists but as a figure to be pointed at to prove that the Christian scientist is warranted in his practice, and in place of God or Christ and of religion, Mrs. Eddy is by them deified and enshrined in a halo of glory and turned by them into an oracle, whose decree is inviolate and infallible, from which there is no redress or change.

The three sentences following in the letter were answered in MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS. The following sentence, however, presents a different aspect, though it still deals with the subject of compensation. "This question has been settled by the Christian Science church on a basis that is eminently proper and satisfactory to the parties themselves."

Just so; but this is only what any corrupt political or so-called religious body might say concerning their practices. Though it may be considered eminently proper and satisfactory to Christian scientists, it is not so to the public any more than it would be if the inmates of an insane asylum should be allowed to do what they might perchance have a notion is eminently fit and proper.

The Writer of the letter concludes it by saying: "In any event it must be admitted by all who wish to treat the subject fairly, that if it is right to pay clergymen to preach and to pray for the recovery of the sick, it is equally right to pay a Christian Scientist for such services."

Once more we draw attention to the unfairness to attempt to throw the blame, if blame there be, on the clergyman of the Christian church, and to excuse the actions of Christian scientists by the practice of the Christian clergy. It is not a practice in the Christian church for the clergyman to receive pay for praying for the sick. He, as pointed out by the Christian scientist, receives a fixed salary for preaching the gospel as the minister of the church, and not as a healer. But the question involved is not whether it is right or wrong to pay clergymen to preach and to pray for the recovery of the sick, and therefore to excuse the Christian scientists for a like service.

The attempt to throw the argument on the Christian clergy weakens the argument of the Christian scientist. The question is: Is it right or wrong to take money for the gift of the spirit? If it is wrong, then whether the clergyman does it or not, is no excuse for false pretenses or claims made by the Christian scientists.

As to the basis of Christian science, it would seem that if all possibility of making money either from the teaching of Christian science doctrines or from the curing, or the attempted curing, of physical ills were removed the cult would cease to exist, because the Christian science money-makers would either lose respect for it, or have no use for it. As to the believers in Christian science, if the curing of physical ills were done away with, the foundation of their belief in Christian science doctrines would be shattered, and their "spirituality" would disappear with the physical basis.

A FRIEND [H. W. Percival]



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