

THEOLOGICAL REMINISCENCE

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1 At the age of twelve¹ I was admitted to the Congre-
gational (Trinitarian) Church, my parents having
3 been members of that body for a half-century. In connec-
tion with this event, some circumstances are noteworthy.
Before this step was taken, the doctrine of unconditional
6 election, or predestination, greatly troubled me; for I
was unwilling to be saved, if my brothers and sisters were
to be numbered among those who were doomed to per-
9 petual banishment from God. So perturbed was I by the
thoughts aroused by this erroneous doctrine, that the
family doctor was summoned, and pronounced me stricken
12 with fever.

My father's relentless theology emphasized belief in a
final judgment-day, in the danger of endless punishment,
15 and in a Jehovah merciless towards unbelievers; and of
these things he now spoke, hoping to win me from dreaded
heresy.

18 My mother, as she bathed my burning temples, bade
me lean on God's love, which would give me rest, if I
went to Him in prayer, as I was wont to do, seeking His
21 guidance. I prayed; and a soft glow of ineffable joy came
over me. The fever was gone, and I rose and dressed
myself, in a normal condition of health. Mother saw this,
24 and was glad. The physician marvelled; and the "hor-

¹See Page 311, Lines 12 to 17, "The First Church of Christ,
Scientist, and Miscellany."

1 rible decree" of predestination — as John Calvin rightly
called his own tenet — forever lost its power over me.

3 When the meeting was held for the examination of can-
didates for membership, I was of course present. The
6 pastor was an old-school expounder of the strictest Pres-
byterian doctrines. He was apparently as eager to have
unbelievers in these dogmas lost, as he was to have elect
9 believers converted and rescued from perdition; for both
salvation and condemnation depended, according to his
views, upon the good pleasure of infinite Love. However, I
was ready for his doleful questions, which I answered with-
12 out a tremor, declaring that never could I unite with the
church, if assent to this doctrine was essential thereto.

Distinctly do I recall what followed. I stoutly main-
15 tained that I was willing to trust God, and take my chance
of spiritual safety with my brothers and sisters, — not one
of whom had then made any profession of religion, —
18 even if my creedal doubts left me outside the doors. The
minister then wished me to tell him when I had experi-
enced a change of heart; but tearfully I had to respond
21 that I could not designate any precise time. Nevertheless,
he persisted in the assertion that I *had* been truly regener-
ated, and asked me to say how I felt when the new light
24 dawned within me. I replied that I could only answer
him in the words of the Psalmist: "Search me, O God,
and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:
27 and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in
the way everlasting."

This was so earnestly said, that even the oldest church-
30 members wept. After the meeting was over they came

1 and kissed me. To the astonishment of many, the good
clergyman's heart also melted, and he received me into
3 their communion, and my protest along with me. My con-
nection with this religious body was retained till I founded
a church of my own, built on the basis of Christian Science,
6 "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."

In confidence of faith, I could say in David's words,
"I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make
9 mention of Thy righteousness, even of Thine only. O
God, Thou hast taught me from my youth: and hith-
erto have I declared Thy wondrous works. (Psalms lxxi.
12 16, 17.)

In the year 1878 I was called to preach in Boston at the
Baptist Tabernacle of Rev. Daniel C. Eddy, D.D., — by
15 the pastor of this church. I accepted the invitation and
commenced work.

The congregation so increased in number the pews were
18 not sufficient to seat the audience and benches were used
in the aisles. At the close of my engagement we parted
in Christian fellowship, if not in full unity of doctrine.

21 Our last vestry meeting was made memorable by elo-
quent addresses from persons who feelingly testified to
having been healed through my preaching. Among other
24 diseases cured they specified cancers. The cases described
had been treated and given over by physicians of the popu-
lar schools of medicine, but I had not heard of these cases
27 till the persons who divulged their secret joy were healed.
A prominent churchman agreeably informed the congre-
gation that many others present had been healed under
30 my preaching, but were too timid to testify in public.

1 One memorable Sunday afternoon, a soprano, — clear,
strong, sympathetic, — floating up from the pews, caught
3 my ear. When the meeting was over, two ladies pushing
their way through the crowd reached the platform. With
tears of joy flooding her eyes — for she was a mother —
6 one of them said, "Did you hear my daughter sing? Why,
she has not sung before since she left the choir and was
in consumption! When she entered this church one hour
9 ago she could not speak a loud word, and now, oh, thank
God, she is healed!"

It was not an uncommon occurrence in my own church
12 for the sick to be healed by my sermon. Many pale cripples
went into the church leaning on crutches who went out
carrying them on their shoulders. "And these signs shall
15 follow them that believe."

The charter for The Mother Church in Boston was ob-
tained June, 1879,¹ and the same month the members,
18 twenty-six in number, extended a call to Mary B. G. Eddy
to become their pastor. She accepted the call, and was
ordained A. D. 1881.

21 ¹This statement appears to be based upon the Annual Report
of the Secretary of The Christian Scientist Association, read at its
meeting, January 15, 1880, in which June is named as the month in
24 which the charter for The Mother Church was obtained, instead of
August 23, 1879, the correct date.