

**Distinguishing Characteristics**

OF

*Mary Baker Eddy's*

**PROGRESSIVE REVISIONS**

OF

**SCIENCE AND HEALTH**

AND OTHER WRITINGS

*by*

*A COMPILER.*

*Published by*

**RARE BOOK COMPANY**

99 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y.

1933

## FOREWORD

*"That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past."*

Ecclesiastes 3:15.

The purpose of this little book is to prove the truth of the above statement from earth's wisest man, Solomon. This Principle was not only the basis upon which he built his magnificent Temple of Peace, but the basis upon which all building is effected. What would be the thought of a builder who would destroy each previous step of his structure so fast as the subsequent step was built?

One may say, Yes, but we have the entire structure in our latest edition of *Science and Health* and its corresponding Church demonstration. While this is true of the Revelation, a contemplative view of its specific demands as an Architectural Plan will but serve to assure us that its demands have been fully met in its corresponding church structure, "the structure of Truth and Love," S. & H. 583. Certainly, Mrs. Eddy thought so, as the following indicates:

In the first article in the *Christian Science Journal* of April, 1891, entitled "Science and Health," the great comparative value of the successive revisions of *Science and Health* is set forth in the following language:

"A practical suggestion or two regarding study of the new edition: In the first place, *do not attempt to dispose of the earlier editions*. Some are asking, 'Can we be permitted to exchange?' Probably not; but you do not want

to do so, even if you can. Fortunate is he who has all former revisions, together with the original edition of 1875! They are indicators of successive stages of growth in Christian Science; and as such, at some future day will not only possess historic value, but will be exceedingly difficult to procure. Keep them all; they will prove a 'treasure-trove.' Again: let the new volume be studied *in connection with earlier editions*. The very contrasts help us to see how the thoughts have risen only as we have been able to receive them."

The above, while not directly signed by Mrs. Eddy, had her full and unqualified approval in the sense of having been reprinted three times in the *Journal* for the purpose of wide dissemination at her direction. This authorized dissemination is evidenced by the *June Journal*, 1891, p. 123.

The above quotation from the *April Journal*, 1891, is in no sense inconsistent with Mrs. Eddy's subsequent warning against making a "precedent" of the early editions, in *The First Church of Christ Scientist and Miscellany*, p. 237. A study of the definition of "precedent" will show that it means to place before or to prefer the earlier editions to the latest revision, which would controvert the course suggested in the above quotation in regard to their proper use for their successive *comparative* value. As a further definite assurance that such was the sole meaning of her warning in *Miscellany*, p. 237, Mrs. Eddy almost simultaneously (in 1908) added to *Miscellaneous Writings*, for the *first time*, all of its footnotes, not only citing her oldest editions for identification of references but demanding the use of *Science and Health*, Revised Edition of 1890, to "elucidate" her meaning of a most

vital truth, *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 309 (the alternate reference was added since she left us in person, and is not hers).

Again, Mrs. Eddy's smaller writings, including *Miscellaneous Writings* and *Miscellany*, were written during these formative periods of our Text-book, and surely no one would venture to assume that their collaborating vision was superior to that presented in the old revisions of *Science and Health written at the same time*. These smaller writings were written from 1883 to 1910, inclusive, and not one of these books was ever revised with the exception of *Retrospection and Introspection* (one year after it was published in 1891). The articles in *Miscellaneous Writings* were slightly pruned before the book was published in 1897.

Mrs. Eddy certainly made no mistakes which were subsequently corrected in her revelation of Truth, but no one could doubt from the careful reading of what follows in this little book that her vision, although continuous to the end of her revelation, was intermittently halted for demonstration.

The purpose of this little book is to show that each halt and forward movement was the fulfillment of a specific prophecy of Jesus concerning the onward movement of the Church which he promised to build, Math. 16:18. His Church is a living Church and must necessarily await demonstration in the lives of Christian Scientists. The halting of vision insured the fulfillment of this demand. The pure spiritual links which united these halting periods reveal their vital necessity.

The *lives* of Christian Scientists have forged these links, for the article previously quoted as Mrs. Eddy's authorization of the comparative use of these old revisions assigns as a reason therefore: "It is simply because the advancing thought, or demonstration, of Christian Students has ascended to that plane which makes it both possible and practicable for us to have the new Work." Thus we approach with gratitude and reverence the *living past*, which God "*requires.*"

*The Compiler.*