

Editorial

“Preach the gospel”

LETTERS received by the editors of the *Sentinel* from members of newer and smaller branch churches indicate that frequently much perplexity is experienced over the question as to whether or not a Sunday afternoon or evening service should be held by these churches in addition to the regular morning service. Some seem to feel that a second service should be held only when the first has become so overcrowded as to make it imperative that something further be done to accommodate all who wish to attend the services of the church. On the other hand, some believe that a second service would be such a display of hospitality as would attract those who otherwise might not be able to attend church service in the morning, as well as those who might consider themselves under obligation to attend the forenoon service of a church of some other denomination.

Of course the editors are not in a position to decide these questions, and as there is no by-law or rule of The Mother Church which makes it obligatory upon churches of our denomination to hold a second service, it may fairly be assumed that the branch churches should be governed in this matter by local conditions and requirements. It has, however, been the experience of most of the branch churches located in the larger cities, that there are many persons who do not find it convenient to attend the morning service, and yet are glad to avail themselves of an opportunity to attend a later one; also that some considerable portion of those who attend the second service are strangers or persons whose regular church affiliations have taken them elsewhere in the forenoon. This would indicate that as a general rule the afternoon or evening services should not be regarded solely as overflow services, but rather as additional opportunities for presenting the healing gospel of Christian Science to all who wish to hear it. Observation of these conditions has led most of the Christian Science churches in the principal cities to believe that it is profitable to hold a second service, even though the morning service may not be overcrowded; but whether this would hold good in the smaller cities and towns is a question to which the good judgment and experience of those locally interested must furnish the answer.

On page 322 of “Miscellaneous Writings” our revered Leader says, “Your dual and impersonal pastor, the Bible, and ‘Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures,’ is with you; and the Life these give, the Truth they illustrate, the Love they demonstrate, is the great Shepherd that feedeth my flock, and leadeth them ‘beside the still waters.’” The primary object of a religious service is the worship of God in such manner and at such time as will best meet the needs of the greatest number; and since many persons bear testimony to the fact that they have been healed of disease and spiritually elevated by the public services in the Christian Science churches, it would seem wise not to limit the number of services. If a church is founded upon Christ and preaches the full and complete gospel which the Master preached and exemplified, it will do good at every service it holds; and while it may not seem practicable for the smaller churches which meet in rented quarters to hold more than one service each Sunday, there appears to be no reason why churches which occupy their own buildings should not hold two services, unless some local conditions make this inexpedient.

Another and somewhat similar question asked by some of the societies is in regard to the establishment of a reading-

room. This too is a matter which must be decided by the local society, since there is no by-law of The Mother Church which obliges a society to maintain a reading-room. It may be said, however, that the establishment of a reading-room at the earliest convenient time is something to be looked forward to by every society; and when it is established it should be made as inviting, attractive, and hospitable as possible. This does not mean that it should be extravagantly or even expensively furnished, but it should be neat, attractive, and well kept. One of the mistakes made, we think, in a few instances in regard to these reading-rooms is, that they are not kept open every week-day and at the most convenient hours. When the reading-room is open only an hour or two on one or two days each week, it is rather difficult for the public to keep track of these days and hours and to adjust other duties and arrangements to them.

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Impartial Love

ON page 13 of *Science and Health* Mrs. Eddy says, “Love is impartial and universal in its adaptation and bestowals,” a statement which accords with St. Peter’s declaration, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.” The apostle’s words nevertheless show that while God is impartial, a distinction is made between those who do that which is right and those who do wrong, a discrimination which is maintained by other Scriptural writers who declare for the divine impartiality.

In spite of the unequivocal declarations found in the Scriptures, there are some who are confused as to the issues involved, and the old belief in predestination seems to hold sway to the extent that material evidence is accepted where one person is apparently protected by divine power and another seems to be cut off from this aid. Even the outpourings of thankfulness on the part of those who have been healed in Christian Science or preserved in time of danger, are sometimes misconstrued, as implying that these persons were special recipients of divine favor, but this is a most incorrect assumption. It goes without saying that the one who consistently follows his highest sense of right is under its protection to the extent of his recognition of divine law. The question is not, however, a negative one; it is positive in its demand that all power be ascribed to God, good, and this of course implies a denial of any power in evil.

The ninety-first psalm illustrates in a remarkable way the Christian Science teaching as to divine protection, and the strange thing is that Christendom should so long have missed its wonderful lessons. Great is our joy, however, in this harvest hour that the veil of material sense has been lifted through Mrs. Eddy’s inspired teachings, and that not a word of truth is found wanting. This psalm not only offers complete deliverance from evil but makes known the conditions under which perfect security may be realized. It is “because” one makes God his refuge that the promise is given, “There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.” Neither pestilence nor destruction shall harm the one who abides “under the shadow of the Almighty,” even though ten thousand others fall at his side; but this protection no more indicates the bestowal of special favor than does the fact that one who knows how to swim is preserved where one without this knowledge is not.

Let no one, however, think that we are ever independent of the divine Mind in whom we “live, and move, and have our being.” Fear may at any moment assail the one who does