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Religious Fads of To-day.—No II.

Christian Science—Is It Christian?

[By Rev. A. E. Cooke]

Perhaps the best way to begin an answer to the question of our title is that of the Irishman—by asking another. What do we mean by "Christian?" I have always noticed that clear definitions prevent much muddy discussion, in more senses than one; and nowhere is it more necessary for the average man or woman to put a good dictionary alongside the Bible and use it, than in studying the peculiar system that masquerades under the title of "Christian Science." What, then, do we mean by "Christian?" Is Dr. Fluno, of the Christian Science Board of Lectureship, who lately visited Vancouver, right when he says "Christian Science is perfectly Christian because it countenances no wrong either in theory or practice?" Supposing the latter clause true, what does it prove? Certainly not that Eddyism is Christian; for every sincere Moslem or Agnostic might use the same expression with as much sincerity. Christian faith and practice are founded upon the reliability of the facts regarding Jesus Christ set forth in the New Testament. That which claims to be Christian must be in harmony with the teachings of Jesus and His Apostles as there recorded, hence there need be little ambiguity as to whether Eddyism is or is not Christian. The claim is made that it is not only Christian, but the only true form of Christianity—made by Mrs. Eddy, and all her followers in no uncertain terms. In fact, its authority does not merely depend on the New Testament, for Mrs. Eddy claimed a "more sure word of prophecy" and in perusing her marvellous text-book, "Science and Health,"* one finds such assertions as these: "God called her to proclaim His Gospel to this Age" (p.xi.); "No human pen or tongue taught me the Science contained in this book, Science and Health, and neither tongue nor pen can overthrow it" (p. 4); "After the author's sacred discovery she affixed the name 'Science to Christianity,'" and she adds this modest comparison be-

* References are from Editions of 1894 unless otherwise stated.