

## William P. McKenzie, CSB

Born in 1861, William P. McKenzie was a key figure in the Christian Science movement from 1894 until his passing in 1942. There are two excellent sources of information about him: (1) “Mary Baker Eddy: Through the Lens of William P. McKenzie,” published by The Longyear Foundation in 2005 and republished in 2013, and (2) “They Answered the Call: William P. McKenzie” from *The Christian Science Journal*, June 1989. I’ve drawn from both sources.

McKenzie was raised in Canada and became an ordained Presbyterian minister (like his father and grandfather). He served a 4-year term as a church pastor, but struggled with doctrinal issues such as predestination and hell, eventually coming to the point that the only thing he could believe was that God is Love. He eventually took a position teaching English literature and rhetoric and Rochester University in New York, and while there in September of 1894, he withdrew from the Presbyterian Church and two weeks later became a Christian Scientist, having found, in his words, “the truth of God,” with the help of Miss Daisette Stocking (whom he later married).

### Hymn 93 (all verses)

Having embraced Christian Science in September, it amazed many in the movement when Mrs. Eddy, even before she met him in person, made him a First Member of The Mother Church in October. Why would she do so? The explanation is in a letter that she wrote to him at the time: “Your poem in our Journal is like the song of the redeemed, and the smiles and tears of the new-born for the milk of the Word. It touched my heart of hearts.” (Would you like to hear the poem?) Here’s a hymn that captures some of the same thought.

### Hymn 228 (first verse)

Responsibilities came quickly for McKenzie after this. In 1895 he became a Christian Science practitioner. In 1896 he accepted Mrs. Eddy’s invitation to serve on the Bible Lesson Committee. It was about this time that he published his first book of poetry from which 4 of his 7 hymns in our Hymnal come (including the 2 we just sang). The book was titled *Heartsease Hymns*, and I found the entire text available on Google Books. He sent the book as a gift to Mrs. Eddy in 1896. There were two poems in it that Mrs. Eddy said were “its finest.” One is now Hymn 339.

### Hymn 339 (all verses)

I said Mrs. Eddy said that two poems in the book were its finest. Want to hear the other one?

### Hymn 275 (first verse)

*(poem specially written for this tune)*

McKenzie’s service to the Christian Science movement only intensified in the few years after his embracing Science in 1894. In 1898 he was in Mrs. Eddy’s last class (making him a teacher of CS). That same year he was made one of the first 5 lecturers, and he served on the Board of Lectureship for the next 17 years. That same year, 1898, he became one of the first Trustees of

the Christian Science Publishing Society, serving with a 5-year break until 1932. He was appointed President of The Mother Church 3 times, and he contributed over 300 items to the Christian Science periodicals, of which he was editor from 1917 to 1920. McKenzie was also a member of the Christian Science Board of Directors from 1932 to 1942 and a Trustee Under the Will of Mary Baker Eddy.

**Hymn 150 (all verses)**

*(poem specially written for this tune)*

It was not all smooth sailing for McKenzie. In 1899, a disaffected student, Josephine Woodbury, sued Mrs. Eddy for libel. The case dragged on until 1901, and proved to be a test for McKenzie's loyalty to Mrs. Eddy. That loyalty prevailed, however, and led to many more opportunities for service to the movement. Mrs. Eddy called on his literary skills in the arrangement of various edition of the *Manual of the Mother Church*, and late in 1901, she entrusted him, along with Edward Kimball, with proofreading the revision of *Science and Health*. (McKenzie became a naturalized US citizen that same year.)

**Hymn 359 (verses 1 & 2)**

*(from "Heartsease Hymns")*

Between 1920 and 1922 there was litigation between the Board of Directors and the Trustees of the Christian Science Publishing Society. McKenzie resigned his position as a Trustee during this time, but after the Directors' victory, he resumed his work as a Trustee. It was during that litigation that he testified in court about his loyalty to Mrs. Eddy: "I served her as a son might all the years that she was with us."

**Hymn 381 (all verses)**

*(poem specially written for this tune)*

(poems referenced above are on the next page)

### **The Present**

William P. McKenzie  
(from *Heartsease Hymns*, 1896, William  
Tyrrell & Co., Toronto)

The doors of my future and past  
    Have irremovable bars;  
I fought as they prisoned me fast,  
These doors of my future and past,  
But in the still Present, at last,  
    I am calm beholding the stars;  
Though doors of my future and past  
Have irremovable bars.

The future and past are man's,  
    The Present belongeth to God;  
Man visions, and fears for his plans,  
(The future and past are man's)  
Regrets, and his failure bans,  
    Till Peace is a path untrod;  
The future and past are man's,  
    The Present belongeth to God,

### **One Thing Needful**

William P. McKenzie  
(from *The Christian Science Journal*,  
October 1894)

Gently hath a sweet voice spoken;  
One thing needful must ye choose;  
O ye weary and heart-broken,  
Can ye still this call refuse?

Seeking good on earth nor finding,  
All your hope earth must defraud,--  
Things of sense forever blinding  
Eyes whose light is seeing God.

Patient Love, so wise and tender,  
Standing Mother-like apart,  
Waits till love awakened send her  
Each far-wanderer from her heart.

And that love, the one thing needful,  
Bringeth life and conquers death;  
Oh, let hearts be still and heedful  
Hearing what the sweet voice saith.