

THE CLAIMS TO HEALING MADE BY CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

A CRITIQUE

By

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Scope and Contents of Thesis:

This thesis is in three sections: an introductory chapter surveying the contributory factors which gave rise to Christian Science as a healing cult taking into account the life and peculiarities of its founder, Mrs. Baker, Glover, Patterson, Eddy; a chapter on Mrs. Eddy's contact with Mesmerism through Phineas P. Quimby whose writings and methods she adopted as her own; and, finally, a chapter wherein the doctrine of "Mind Healing" is evaluated as to its validity, limitations and possibilities. It is contended that the healing taught and practiced by Christian Science is nothing new but merely a reintroduction, under a different name, of the ancient practice of hypnotic suggestion which is, without doubt, effective in healing functional diseases. It is further contended, however, that Christian Science claims to healing of all diseases is fraught with real danger to life since its methods cannot heal organic disease, neither can it claim divine healing since its very philosophy is a denial of true Christianity as also of true Science.

PREFACE

The claims to healing made by various individuals and religious sects have aroused the author's desire to discover to what extent they are valid. The fact that healing is stressed so little in the "older" Protestant churches and practiced, instead, by travelling miracle workers or by sects whose doctrines are questionable, cannot but cause concern. Christian Science is one of these sects and since its growth is based almost entirely upon "Mind Healing" the author has confined his present research to an evaluation of its claims.

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B. A. Wingblade.

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CHAPTER I

GENERAL SOURCES OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

Throughout the history of the human race there have been men and women who have claimed knowledge and power in the healing of human ailments. Such knowledge and power has ranged in degree from that of the very primitive witch-doctor with his charms and incantations to the authenticated supernatural healing effected by our Lord Jesus Christ and his followers. Somewhere in this wide reach from the ridiculous to the divine, from the imaginary to the real, must be placed the claims to healing made by Christian Science. This healing cult, for so it may be rightly called, originated in New Hampshire about the middle of the last century in a social, religious and national setting peculiarly adapted to its rise.

The founder was a native New England woman, Mrs. Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy, who has been characterized as "a sincere, though quite uncritical, student of the Bible, the wife of three husbands, who wrote a Best Seller, launched some successful newspapers and died leaving nearly three million dollars, all made out of religion".¹ She made her discovery of Christian Science

¹H. A. L. Fisher, Our New Religion (London: Earnest Benn Ltd., 1929), p. 10.

at the age of forty-five, describing the event in her own words as follows:

In the year 1866, I discovered the Christ Science or divine laws of Life, Truth, and Love, and named my discovery Christian Science. God had been graciously preparing me during many years for the reception of this final revelation of the absolute divine Principle of scientific mental healing.¹

History teaches us that no movement is the progeny of a single parent. The healing practices of Christian Science were formulated out of a curious combination of feminine eccentricity, Shakerism, Spiritualism and Mesmerism in an age torn by civil war. These sources of the movement we will proceed to analyse.

Mrs. Eddy

The old adage, that necessity is the mother of invention, is applicable to the discovery of healing by Mrs. Eddy. An invalid for many years, she finally found a cure at the hands of a mesmerist whose methods and teachings she adopted and gradually revised and published as her own.

Mary Baker Eddy was born on July 16, 1821 at Bow, near Concord, New Hampshire, U.S.A. Her parents, Mark and Abigail Baker, were devoutly religious and members of the Congregational Church. A significant portrait of Mrs. Eddy's parents is found in the words of Hugh A. Studdert

¹M. B. Eddy, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures (Boston: Published by the Trustees under the Will of Mary Baker G. Eddy, 1906), p. 107.

Kennedy:

The "iron-willed" Mark Baker, unrelenting Calvinist as he was, must often in spite of himself have called her (Abigail, his wife) blessed. She had a way of softening the rigours of his faith without hurting him, and, with a fine heresy in the presence of which the voice of protest was often stopped, "dwelling on all the embracing love of God" in an age committed to the "horrible decree" of predestination¹

Abigail Baker who was thirty-eight years old when Mary was born (an age at that time considered unusually old for child-bearing) could not help feeling that, even as in Bible times, a child born to aged parents was holy and consecrated and set apart for wonderful achievements.² Having been thus prenatally conditioned to be more than the average child it is understandable that in later years she should write of herself:

From my childhood I was impelled by a hunger and thirst after divine things, a desire for something higher and better than matter, and apart from it, to seek diligently for knowledge of God, as the one great and ever-present relief from human woe.³

Mary Baker was indeed different from her brothers and sisters. Physically she was delicate, mentally she was studious and hysterical. She was too frail for the rigours of school and consequently was taught at home. During her early years the Bible was almost the only intellectual food in her home, which may explain an incident to

¹Hugh A. Studdert Kennedy, Mrs. Eddy (San Francisco: The Farallon Press, 1947), p. 14.

²Ibid., p. 14.

³Mary Baker Eddy, Retrospection and Introspection. (Norwood, Massachusetts: Tlinton Press, 1891).

which she attached considerable importance. When she was eight years old she heard a voice calling her, which voice her mother interpreted in the light of God's call to Samuel. At the age of ten she learned something of natural philosophy, logic and moral science from her brother Albert who was then an undergraduate.¹

Even as a child, Mary could not accept her father's predestinarian views. His relentless insistence on the dangers of endless judgment caused her sleepless nights and physical exhaustion. On one occasion these fears caused her such acute illness that her father, fearing for her life, made haste to fetch the doctor. Writing of the incident many years afterward she said:

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 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.²

If only Mrs. Eddy's writings are consulted, one forms the picture of a delicate little girl with a remarkable interest in learning and with a bright halo around a "well-shaped head." There are others, however, who give a different picture, and their testimony cannot be wholly discounted because Mrs. Eddy tended in later life to idealize her youth, she made little mention of acute childhood illness. Pre-

¹Kennedy, op. cit., p. 29.

²Mary Baker Eddy, Retrospection and Introspection. (Norwood, Massachusetts: Tlinton Press, 1891), p. 13.

cisely what this illness was is not known, but from all evidences she capitalized on it in getting her own way.

Speaking of her childhood condition Dakin says:

It was a strange sickness, inducing a lack of physical vitality, with pronounced tendency to attacks of childish temper, hysteria and sudden pains in the spine ... Her "fits" were sufficient even to make the redoubtable Mark Baker pliant to the whims of his youngest daughter. During these seizures she exhibited symptoms that the modern psychologist would classify as hysteria in an unmistakable form, sometimes screaming, sometimes lying on the floor and pounding her heels up and down, and not infrequently passing into a state of unconsciousness. These seizures were usually brought about by flashes of anger following some thwarting of desire.¹

Various physicians were called in to treat her and since homoeopathy was much in vogue she acquired a smattering of knowledge regarding the theories of this method of treatment which she later evidenced in her writings.

Mary Baker was married at the age of twenty-two to George Washington Glover but was almost immediately left a widow and an expectant mother. Becoming a mother only made her condition worse. Her attacks of nervousness and hysteria were so frequent and severe that her father was forced to cover the surrounding roads with tan bark to soften the noise of horses and carriages. Her brother-in-law went to the length of making her a large cradle and often employed the hired man to rock her.² When every known device failed to calm her a local mesmerist, Boston

¹E. F. Dakin, Mrs. Eddy (New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1930), p. 6.

²Ibid., p. 19.

John, was called in. Again her illness brought to her attention that which was to interest and influence her life work. By the age of thirty she had become deeply interested in Mesmerism.

Mary Baker Glover was married a second time in 1853, to a dentist named Dr. Daniel Patterson. That this marriage was unhappy is without doubt, the blame for the incompatibility shifting with the prejudice of the biographer. Whatever the cause of this marital unhappiness the result was that once again there were frequent attacks of illness during which Mrs. Patterson became rigid with foam upon her lips. Sympathizing with her husband, Dakin says, "His sojourns at home were far from satisfying, made dreary as they were by the ills of a neurotic wife whose strange spells and fierce tempers became a byword over the whole neighborhood".¹ In her later years she had little to say about these years of unhappiness and well she must have desired to forget them, for as Fisher says:

From 1844 to 1866 the years flowed by in a sluggish stream, utterly wasted. She had let them carry her whither they would, had made only one or two fleeting attempts to help herself, and had never raised her hand to do anything for anyone else. At forty she found herself alone; unloved even by her relatives and her own son, poverty stricken, pain-racked, purposeless.²

This picture is significant in relation to what she was to

¹Ibid., p. 31.

²Fisher, op. cit., p. 55

became upon the meeting and association with Phineas F. Quimby in 1862; but since this was the meeting that effected her own healing and launched her on her career of mental healing the account of Quimby will be consigned to chapter two.

There was still to be a third marriage, that of 1877 to Asa Gilbert Eddy who gave the name by which the founder of Christian Science is known to the world today. Although Mrs. Eddy outlived her husband, he made two distinct services to her cause, he put the publication of Science and Health on a firm and profitable basis and he introduced his wife to the "wealthy clientele of unoccupied persons in search of health, religion, or fashionable excitement" in Boston.¹

In addition to these factors associated with Mrs. Eddy's person there were environmental influences of broader scope which contributed to the birth of Christian Science as a healing cult.

Women in the News

Mrs. Eddy lived during a period of American history when women were coming into their own in all spheres of public life. The early frontier women, while they had no political rights, had been considered equal with their mates, for it took teamwork between man and woman to win the frontier.

¹Ibid., p. 35.

When the rigours of the advanced settlements gave way to well established homes and quiet town life the women were once more expected to be ladies. There was as yet no place for them in business or professional world with the exception of teaching, they were permitted to teach young children. As late as 1853, Susan Anthony, a Quakeress, caused consternation in a teacher's meeting by her request to enter a debate. Never before had a woman spoken in such a gathering.¹

During the second quarter of the nineteenth century women began to express themselves extensively through the press. The causes of temperance and slavery were the first to attract their attention. Margaret Fuller was editor of the Dial, and in 1841, Ann Royall of Baltimore, became editor of the Anti-Slave Standard in New York. The most widely influential woman novelist was Harriet Beecher whose "Uncle Tom's Cabin" played a decisive role in the anti-slavery movement.² Mrs. Eddy, herself, at the time of her first marriage, in 1843, came into actual contact with the slavery question and began to mingle her voice with others against its evils.

In 1848 the legislature of the state of New York, after twelve years of discussion, passed a Married Women's

¹Alice Felt Tyler, Freedom's Ferment (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1944), p. 431.

²Ibid., p. 436.

Property Law that gave to women certain limited rights in the control of their own property. From that time on women in all the older states where restrictive laws existed worked for their repeal. In 1860 the New York laws gave women joint guardianship of children, the right to sue and be sued, the right to their own wages, incomes and real and personal property. Women continued to work for full privileges and finally in 1920 the triumph came in the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Closely allied to the cause of equal suffrage was the women's crusade against alcoholism which in 1874 resulted in the National Women's Christian Temperance Union under the leadership of Frances E. Willard and eventually in the shortlived Prohibition Amendment, 1919-1933. Other famous women associated with suffrage and temperance reform were Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone and Carrie Nation.

Still other women of this period founded peculiar religious sects which remain to this day, the most important being Mother Ann Lee founder of the Shakers, the Fox sisters founders of Spiritualism and Madame Blavatsky founder of Theosophy. It was an age when America listened to women and allowed themselves to be lead about by the proverbial "apron string".

Thus Mrs. Eddy came upon the scene when much of the ground work was done with regard to women's rights. America

was already accustomed to hear a woman's voice on the public platform. Thousands listened to Mrs. Eddy and followed her teachings.

The Rise of the City

The third underlying factor which gave rise to the healing cult of Christian Science was the rapid urbanization of America during the later half of the nineteenth century. Until about 1840 this century was one of domestic tranquility in America, the economy was largely rural and there were few very rich and few very poor. Then between 1840 and 1850 emigration from Ireland and Germany was enormous, the total number of immigrants rising to 1,713,251 as against 599,125 for the decade 1830-1840, and only 143,439 for the decade 1820-1830. From 1840 to 1860 nearly four million immigrants came, and from 1865 to 1884 the influx of new peoples amounted to seven million. Considering the whole of the century the population increase was about fourteen fold.¹ Even though there were still large tracts of land open for settlement, the major part of this increase produced new cities and swelled the population of old ones.

In 1790 there were only five cities with over eight thousand inhabitants, while in 1900 there were two hundred and thirty-one such urban centers. In Rhode Island in 1900, eight out of every ten persons lived in cities of eight

¹The Encyclopedia Britannica. Vol XXVII, pp. 635ff.

thousand or more inhabitants, in Massachusetts seven out of ten, while in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut the numbers were about half and half.¹ This phenomenal urbanization of American life was the result of industrial expansion, in fact the last half of the nineteenth century was the era of industrial revolution in America. The rapidity with which new inventions were entering the economy can be indicated by only a partial list of achievements of the period; 1865 saw the first web printing press, the first tank car and the first oil pipe line; 1866, the trans-Atlantic cable; 1867, the combined reaper and binder, and the Pullman car; 1868, the first typewriter; 1869, the Westinghouse air brake; 1875, the refrigerator car for shipping meat; 1876, the first telephone; 1895, the Haines automobile.²

Such inventions made for a rapid increase in wealth. In 1861 there were only three millionaires in the United States while in 1897 there were 3,800, and in 1929 the number had increased to 43,184.

It requires little imagination to realize something of the social and religious upheaval that this age caused in the lives of individuals. The thousands of immigrants arriving in a new country were free from the restraining

influences of orthodox religion and community mores of old world variety. The very nature of urban life with its tensions and seeming lack of concern for the other fellow produced a new psychological problem which cried out for a new answer. There was a subconscious sense of frustration because men had let go of the "old ship" and had embarked in the "new" with great faith but with little practical knowledge. Atkins says of this age:

Materialism affected greatly the practical conduct of life. It offered its own characteristic values; possession and pleasure became inevitably enough the end of action, and action itself, directed toward such ends, became the main business of life. Science offered so fascinating a field for thought as to absorb the general intellectual energy of the generation under the spell of it; the practical application of science to mechanism and industry with the consequent increase in luxury and convenience absorbed the force of practical men.¹

There are many things implied in this quotation.

The age was one of changing values; gone was the simple life of the frontier when men were near the soil and the elements of nature which gave them a sense of dependence upon the powers of Providence. Men were beginning to feel that it was possible to lift themselves by their own bootstraps to new heights of economic achievement. This self-sufficiency carried over into religion and men who had gained economic status by sheer aggressiveness began to feel that the old doctrines of sin, repentance and salvation were outdated.

¹G. G. Atkins, Modern Religious Cults and Movements (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1923), p. 52.

Many of these newly established "middle-class-rich" also began to feel uncomfortable in the highly liturgical churches.

To those of this mind set Christian Science had strong appeal. First, it advocated the exercise of mind and discounted the old idea of faith and submission. Secondly, the very word "Science" was a magic term on the lips of all men. This was the scientific age, the age of Darwin and his Origin of Species, of Biblical criticism, and of pragmatic philosophy.¹ What more inviting name than that of "Christian Science" could be placed before the men of such an age? Here was a religion suitable to the new era! Here was a new church that offered to allay the doubts and heal the diseases of nerve-racked minds of the newly created industrial rich. In an age when the Salvation Army and other churches were becoming concerned with the social problems of the thousands of industrial poor, well-to-do men and women found release from the demands of industrial life in the intellectual and physical comforts of richly ornamented Christian Science churches. It was an age too when the authority of the Bible was being questioned and many were losing old foundations. Mrs. Eddy produced her own version of the Scriptures which purported to interpret to the reader in practical form all that was necessary to

¹Ibid., p. 64.

his well-being.

While it is true that Christian Science has come to make its chief appeal "to members of other denominations at higher income levels",¹ it has never been without an appeal to the fearful of all classes. Commenting upon this characteristic, Fisher says:

The ugly and depressing side of materialism was especially prominent in the society in which Mrs. Eddy passed her active life. To many simple folk, to whom the consolation of literature and art were foreign, the emptiness of the ordinary low minded life had become an oppression. In their soulless desolation they found comfort in Christian Science.²

Other evidence corroborates the judgment that Christian Science is an urban cult dependent on the rise of the city for its development. Mrs. Eddy first organized her church in the city of Lynn, Massachusetts, but this first offer met with meager success because her followers were largely factory workers. In 1832 she moved to the metropolis of Boston where her real success began. Here she gathered needed money to publish her book and to erect necessary buildings. Schlesinger suggests that "as a philosophy Christian Science would probably have had little appeal, but as a system of therapeutics it assured nerve-racked urban dwellers of immediate cure of their bodies as well as ultimate

¹A. M. Schlesinger, A Critical Period in American Religion, 1875-1900. (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1932), p. 17.

²Fisher, op. cit., p. 125.

cure of their souls."¹ In Canada there are approximately 20,795 members of the Christian Science Church, of these, 17,075 are in cities and half of these in cities of over one hundred thousand.

The Rise of Healing Cults

As we have said the art of healing in some form has been present in human society from its beginning. Demon possession was the earliest explanation of disease, the belief being that if the evil spirit could be exorcised the patient would get well. Many fantastic means were used by the priest-doctor: he might scare out the spirits, scold them out, pray them out, or trick them out. If he used medicines, as he often did, their function was to make the abode of the spirit so uncomfortable that it would leave. This was of course nothing more than working cure through the mind of the patient. Even today, medical doctors find it necessary to use such psychological medicine to cure certain neurotic patients.

The idea that disease was evidence of evil spirits is present in Hebrew writings and persisted far into the Christian era. But a new interpretation also emerged, namely, that disease was the manifest punishment for some sin, known or concealed; to try to effect a cure was, therefore, an attempt to by-pass the justice of God. This new

¹Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 17.

philosophy of disease did much to hinder the advance of scientific and physical cures.

While the Christian Church did not permit the study of the anatomy, it did seek to cure by exorcism and gradually developed a ritual for that purpose. The sign of the Cross was supposed to have commanding power, in fact, the very breathing of the priest was supposed to influence the evil spirit which fled defeated from the touch of holy water. In the Middle Ages the relics of saints were thought to be invested with curative powers. Parts of the true Cross possessed supreme healing value; St. Louis of France being reported to be brought back almost from death to life by the touch of the sacred wood.¹ It is without doubt that the cures experienced were due to the faith with which the relics were approached, for bones of saints possessing healing value were later proved to have been bones not of men but of animals. The long and incredible story of cures since the Middle ages in which charms, amulets, talismans, have been used bears testimony to the fact that a great deal of human ailment is directly or indirectly attributable to the workings of the mind. Atkins sums it all up well in his introductory chapter on faith healing by saying:

The list of healers began early and is by no means ended now. The power of the healer was sometimes associated with his official station in the church, sometimes due to his saintly character and often

¹Atkins, op. cit., p. 103.

enough only to a personal influence, the fact of which is well enough established, though there can be in the nature of things no finality in the estimate of his real efficacy it is finally through the healer rather than the saint or the king or the shrine or relic that we approach the renaissance of mental and faith healing in our own time.¹

The method of healing which gave rise to the Christian Science movement may be traced back to a sixteenth century German-Swiss physician and alchemist, Paracelsus.

He believed that the human body was endowed with a double magnetism, one portion attracted to itself the planets and was nourished by them, the result of which was the mental powers, the other portion attracted and disintegrated the elements, from which process resulted the body....He believed the well had an influence over the sick through magnetism and used the magnet in his practice.²

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries this idea of magnetism continued to attract a number of individuals who attempted to influence others by it.

A more direct contributor to Christian Science was Mesmer of Paris, France. He added to the philosophy of Paracelsus by originating the phrase "Animal Magnetism" and, unknowingly, he originated the practice of hypnotism. His healing was effected by manual manipulation of the patient's head. He had a great following and effected his cures in a dramatic setting of stained glass, mirrored and scented rooms, and mysterious music. In 1825, ten years

¹Ibid., p. 106.

²Ibid., p. 109.

after Mesmer had lapsed into obscurity, Alexandre Bertrand made a remarkably true estimate of Mesmerism when he contended that the results which Mesmer had produced "were not due to animal magnetism but to the expectation induced by suggestion".¹ Since that day, hypnotic suggestion has had its place of importance in the cure of abnormal mental states. There are therefore two forms of healing practice flowing from that early conception of so-called Animal Magnetism: medical science which has developed its possibilities into an effective and recognized therapeutic, and occult healing - impatient of discipline and law of cause and effect, seeking short cuts to health.

America was thus, during the nineteenth century, fertile soil for both sound scientific and psychological research and for the occult and sensational. The Shakers, officially called, the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Coming, were well known to Mrs. Eddy in her youth. Some of their beliefs foreshadow those of Mrs. Eddy: for example, they believed that God was both masculine and feminine and prayed to "Our Father and Mother which are in heaven"; that their founder, Mother Ann Lee, was the second appearance of Christ; that Mother Ann had the gift of healing; and that she had a strange mental power with which she could inflict torture on her followers if she so

¹Ibid., p. 111.

desired.¹ Like Shakerism, Spiritism, with the table rappings of the Fox sisters, interested Mrs. Eddy, who, always anxious for an audience, began to receive messages from the dead. Mesmerism had been introduced to America by Charles Foyen in 1836 and had during the next decade or two gained much publicity and practice at the hands of sensation-
 alists. At about the age of thirty, Mrs. Eddy developed the habit of falling into trances and delighting her friends by describing "scenes and events" and purporting to give information concerning lost and stolen articles while under the so-called hypnotic spell. She was thus influenced by the general tendency of the day to search for new departures from orthodox religion. Many others of these might be mentioned, but the principal source of her healing science was Phineas P. Quimby, a New England mesmerist. Since Quimby is so closely associated with the warp and woof of Christian Science we will devote the entire next chapter to his teaching as taken over by Mrs. Eddy.

Before proceeding to this we may summarize the central thesis of the present chapter by quoting from Atkins:

The religious cults and movements thus engendered used inherited religious material but so recast it as to give religion new names, forms and uses -- also, they believed, a new and healing validity. They wanted first to explain and then to escape the misfortunes, sickness and haunting inadequacies of the average life. They were not scientifically minded though some of them made a science of their

¹Dakin, op. cit., p. 131.

own. They were religiously minded and they made religions of their own

Sickness offered the most definite region for demonstration. I do not know that the 1880's and 1890's were unusually sickly; they were certainly the golden age of patent medicines and home cures. The credulous could have any disease they pleased; there was always a specific for it. The period was avid for cures. If one could offer a religion as a health and healing specific, the field was unlimited. Mrs. Eddy did just that, and the response was astounding.¹

¹G. G. Atkins, Religion in Our Times (New York: Round Table Press, 1932), p. 285-286.

CHAPTER II

MRS. EDDY, PHINEAS QUIMBY, AND SCIENCE AND HEALTH

In the foregoing chapter something of the general atmosphere of the times has been indicated. The enumeration of places and people that were effecting cures during the nineteenth century could be extended to considerable length, but the previous examples given suffice to show that the temperament of the people in general was susceptible to the new and sensational masquerading under the name of religion.¹ However, the main purpose is to consider healing in Christian Science, thus we turn now to its immediate beginning and to its true and immediate source, Phineas P. Quimby, nineteenth century mesmerist.

Phineas P. Quimby

Phineas Pankherst Quimby was born in Lebanon, New

¹See J. M. Buckley, Faith-Healing Christian Science and Kindred Phenomena (New York: The Century Company, 1879), p. 3, for example,

No mention has been made of such healing cults as the Mormons and Millerites; of healers such as Dr. Newton who arrived in Boston in 1859, the Rev. Mr. Simpson, formerly a Presbyterian minister in New York; of Mrs. Mix, a colored woman in Connecticut, and many others. There were also cures effected within the Roman Catholic Church as, for example, by Prince Hohenlohe, Roman Catholic Bishop of Sardica, born in 1794 in Waldenburg. The famous Lourdes of France, discovered in 1858, was but one of many places to which pilgrims went for healing. It is of interest to note that in the very year, 1875, that Mrs. Eddy published her book, Science and Health, the Roman Catholics consecrated a large church above the grotto of Lourdes.

hampshire, February 16, 1802, but soon moved to Belfast, Maine, where he died in 1866. He was remarkably successful as an experimenter in mesmerism. His education was meagre and accounts for his own unique spelling of words and peculiar use of grammar. A clock-maker by trade, he was a faithful student of mechanics and science but had only a detached interest in the popular religious life of his time. In one of his own articles he wrote, "I have been trying all my life, ever since I was old enough to listen, to understand the religious opinions of the world and see if people understood what they profess they believe."¹ H.W. Dresser says:

Not finding spiritual wisdom, he was inclined to be sceptical, and later spent much time setting his patients free from religious belief Quimby was very radical in opposing doctrinal conceptions of Christ. He uniformly called Jesus "a man like ourselves," that he might win for the Master new recognition as the founder of spiritual science. To him the Science of Christ was greater than religion.²

Veneration paid to Quimby varies with the biographer. Dresser says of him that he "was, if you please, a pioneer and specialist, devoted to truth as his own insight led to it, without regard to prior teachings save those of the New Testament."³ Be this as it may, Quimby was set on his

¹Horatio W. Dresser, The Quimby Manuscripts (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1921), p. 4.

²Ibid., p. 4.

³Ibid., p. 10.

way by Charles Poyen, the French hypnotist who came to Maine in 1838. Poyen is said to have recognized mesmeric powers in this Belfast clockmaker and took pains to arouse Quimby's desire to learn. After being taught by Poyen for some time and reading all he could on Mesmerism, no doubt including Poyen's own book, Progress of Animal Magnetism in New England, Quimby became very successful in inducing magnetic sleep and even effecting healings. By 1842, people were flocking to him for aid, and, in that year he made an important discovery. Among the subjects who had come under his influence, was a youth named Lucius Burkmear, known to his neighbors as queer, under Quimby's influence he came to exhibit surprising powers. When under a mesmeric trance, he could diagnose illness and prescribe remedies which were often effective. Then Quimby discovered that the medicine prescribed was not the factor in the healing but the faith placed by the patient in the drug dispensed.¹ This observation of Quimby was "A most significant discovery in therapeutic psychology".² Others had made it, but the use to which Quimby put the idea was to have special significance. He soon took the next logical step and dispensed with medicine altogether. He now induced cures by establishing in his patients certain attitudes of mind and emotion. His theory, according to Dakin, was that

¹Kennedy, op. cit., p. 110.

²Dakin, op. cit., p. 40.

.... the mind gives immediate form to the animal spirit, and that the animal spirit gives form to the body as soon as the less plastic elements of the body are able to assume that form. Therefore, his first course in treatment of a patient is to sit down beside him and put himself en rapport with him, which he does without producing the mesmeric sleep.¹

The important advance made by Quimby was that he had arrived at the conclusion that he could use suggestion to heal his patients just as previously he had used it to hypnotize them. He took to the practice of "laying on of hands" to establish confidence in the patient. It was purely a psychological device, but a necessary part of the treatment.

The fact that Quimby urged many of his patients to teach the secret of his healing to at least two others before they died indicated that he believed that his therapeutic psychology could be practiced, not alone by one with hypnotic powers, but, by anyone who learned the principles of its application. Quimby took further precaution to preserve his "secret" for posterity by recording his discoveries. He wrote at least ten volumes which are available today.

Dr. Warren F. Evans, a Swedenborgian clergyman, who visited Quimby in 1863 for treatment and became a convert to his practice, declared him to be reproducing the wonders of "Gospel History." Although Quimby believed that he had

¹Ibid., p. 40.

come upon the method which Jesus had used in healing the sick, he was quick to refute any thought of his equality with Christ or that his work was supernatural.¹ His theory and personal feelings on the matter are set forth in his own words:

When I commenced to mesmerize, I was not well, according to medical science; but in my researches I found a remedy for my disease. Here was where I first discovered that mind was capable of being changed.

Also that, disease being a deranged state of mind, the cause I found to exist in our belief. The evidence of this theory I found in myself, for like all others, I had believed in medicine.²

.... disease can be cured with or without medicine, on but one principle Man is made up of truth and belief that he has, or is liable to have, a disease, the belief is catching, and the effect follows it.³

Quimby named his discovery "Science and Health", - "A Science of Christ," or "Christian Science." Being convinced that it was really a science to which he had gained a key, he declared; "This is my theory; to put man in possession of a science that will destroy the ideas of the sick, and teach man one living profession of his own identity with life free from error and disease."⁴ Commenting on this, Dakin says:

He maintained that health was man's natural state, that only man's false ideas, suggesting impotence and misfortune to his whole self from earliest child-

¹Ibid., p. 41

²Dresser, op. cit., p. 27 (Observe account of his healing).

³Ibid., p. 41.

⁴Dakin, op. cit., p. 42.

hood, were responsible for holding the race in the thrall of disease. Justifying this belief on philosophical grounds, he maintained that a beneficent God could and would not have created disease and suffering -- only man himself was to blame because of the falsity and error in his concepts.¹

Protege and Disciple

In the year 1862 Mrs. Eddy, a most sickly and miserable person, visited Quimby seeking relief. She had suffered for years from a back ailment, which, along with her neurotic nature, poverty, and sorrow, had made her almost totally bedridden. When she arrived in Portland, Maine, on October 10, 1862, she was so weak and exhausted that she had to be assisted up the steps to Quimby's room. When the "great healer" sat down beside her "she felt herself roused to a sense of expectancy almost reaching exaltation."² He told her that she was "held in bondage by the opinions of her family and physicians" and that "her animal spirit was reflecting its grief upon her body calling itself spinal disease," and that "she could be cured and would be cured."³ Her experience was a feeling of peace and new strength and a certainty that she was healed. So effective was this healing that she claimed a week later to have climbed the one hundred and eighty-two steps to the top of the City Hall. The future circumstances in which Mrs. Eddy found herself were often

¹Ibid., p. 42.

²Kennedy, op. cit., p. 112.

³Ibid., p. 112.

difficult and her old ailment threatened to return. At such times she wrote to Quimby asking for absent treatment and apparently received relief,¹ although, it is of interest to note that Quimby failed to have any effect on Abigail, Mary's sister, and her son, Albert, because they refused to exercise faith in him.²

In 1864, Mrs. Eddy again visited Quimby, this time determined to learn his secret. She went away with a copy of one of his writings called Questions and Answers. She leaned heavily upon these teachings and later incorporated them in her copyrighted pamphlet of 1870, which bore the lengthy title, "The Science of Man by which the Sick are Healed, Embracing Questions and Answers in Moral Science Arranged for the Learner by Mrs. Mary Baker Glover." This pamphlet is today included in Science and Health in the section captioned "Recapitulation."

Quimby died in 1866 from an abdominal tumor and overwork leaving Mrs. Eddy without "his influence" and "power" and "omnipresence." About this time she is supposed to have been seriously injured by a fall, although facts concerning it are obscure. She claims to have been given no hope of recovery by the attending physician, but, that through the reading of a Bible passage she discovered how to heal herself. In later life she wrote of this incident as "the

¹Dresser, op. cit., p. 150.

²Kennedy, op. cit., p. 116.

falling apple that led me to the discovery of how to be well myself and how to make myself so".¹

Despite this new discovery she spent the next four years wandering from house to house. She had been permanently turned out of her sister's home and her husband could no longer endure her although he contributed to her support for several years. On one occasion she was bodily ejected from a home where she had out-stayed her welcome. Through it all she continued to preach Quimbyism to any who would listen to her but found her greatest welcome among Spiritualists with whom she was most at ease. All the while she was writing her "Bible." Commenting on this period of her life, Dakin says:

It was a baffled life and a miserable and unhappy one. Fear is the keynote - fear of inferiority, fear of disease and pain, fear of poverty and dependence, fear of reality, fear of self It was in this atmosphere that Science and Health was born if it (the book) stands for anything, then it is a record of deliverance. Indeed it was the deliverance itself. For Mary Glover it was at once a flight from external reality and from self within. It was the crystallization of desire that became an obsession She denied more than Quimby had ever dared to deny. She denied existence to the entire world in which she had all her life been in conflict. Huddled alone in her room, the world of the day did indeed seem blessedly phantom-like, far away, unreal. And so she wrote page after page after page.²

The year 1871 was the turning point in Mrs. Eddy's fortunes. She commenced a healing and teaching practice in

¹Dakin, op. cit., p. 61.

²Ibid., p. 81f.

partnership with a youth of twenty-one, Richard Kennedy. Kennedy was the healer and Mrs. Eddy the teacher, the latter charging three hundred dollars per person for a course of twelve lessons. This very successful and lucrative partnership was short-lived, but before it broke up the following year Mrs. Eddy had acquired some financial means, six thousand dollars, with which she purchased the house at 8 Broad Street, Lynn, which for many years to come was to be the Mecca for devout members of Mrs. Eddy's later church.

During these years of increasing success Mrs. Eddy was gradually adopting Quimby's teachings as her own. The stages by which this appropriation took place are noteworthy. First, she wrote an introduction to Quimby's treatise, Questions and Answers, and signed it so as to give the impression that she wrote the whole. Secondly, in 1875, she published the whole treatise, with a few changes made by herself, copyrighting it under her own name. Thirdly, she issued a manuscript entitled, Scientific Treatise on Morality as Taught by Mrs. Mary Baker Glover, still based on Quimby but making less use of his actual wording. Fourthly, she used another manuscript entitled Soul's Inquiries of Man, still further adapting Quimby in her own use! The manuscripts and their similarity to those of Quimby became less and less important as Mrs. Eddy gained prestige

and her followers hung increasingly on her "impassioned word." To distinguish herself from Quimby in the minds of others she had her students abandon the practice of "laying on of hands" which Quimby had used as a means of contact. In her first edition of Science and Health she said: "Sooner suffer a Doctor infected with small-pox to be about you than come under the treatment of one that manipulates his patient's head and is a traitor to science."¹ This was in direct repudiation of Kennedy who still practiced manipulations, but she had come to believe that equation of her movement with the mesmerism of Quimby was a detriment, therefore claimed that her science was wholly her own inspiration.²

As Mrs. Eddy's influence spread and students, fired with her spoken word, went forth to teach and to heal, it was her book they carried with them. Since her death her followers have found in it the secret of their health.

Science and Health

Science and Health, the book which embodies the philosophy of Christian Science, was first published in 1875. Succeeding editions plentifully revised, have improved upon this poorly written, poorly bound first effort. Within the covers of this book is Mrs. Eddy's philosophy of healing

¹Ibid., p. 94.

²Ibid., p. 95.

and its related teachings. The numerous quotations which will follow in this section are meant to let the book speak for itself with regards to its teachings on the matter of healing.

In the chapter entitled "Science, Theology, Medicine"

Mrs. Eddy says:

Jesus demonstrated the power of Christian Science to heal mortal minds and bodies. But this power was lost sight of and must again be spiritually discerned, taught and demonstrated according to Christ's command with "signs following." Its science must be apprehended by as many as believe on Christ and spiritually understand truth.¹

What Mrs. Eddy claims to have discovered is:

.... that erring, moral, misnamed mind produces all the organism and action of the mortal body that mind is all and matter is naught.

Christian Science reveals incontrovertibly that mind is All-in-all, that the only realities are the divine Mind and idea. This great fact is not, however, seen to be supported by sensible evidence, until its divine Principle is demonstrated by healing the sick and thus proved absolute and divine. This proof once seen, no other conclusion can be reached.²

The fundamental propositions upon which Mrs. Eddy bases her metaphysics are:

1. God is All-in-all.
2. God is good. Good is Mind.
3. God, Spirit, being all, nothing is matter.
4. Life, God, omnipotent good, deny death, evil, sin, disease. Disease, sin, evil, death deny good, omnipotent God, Life.

Which of the denials in proposition four are true?

¹M. B. Eddy, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures (Boston: Published by the Trustees under the Will of Mary Baker Eddy, 1906), p. 110.

²Ibid., p. 108-109

Both are not, cannot be, true. According to Scripture I find that God is true, but every (mortal) man is a liar.¹

It is often thought that Christian Science effects its healings by mere will power, but this is refuted by Mrs. Eddy:

Human will power is not Science. Human will belongs to the so-called material senses, and its use is to be condemned. Willing the sick to recover is not the metaphysical practice of Christian Science, but is sheer animal magnetism. Human will power produces evil continually Truth, not corporeal will, is the divine power which says to disease 'Peace be still.'²

She denied the existence of the entire physical universe including the human body and all its organs. The human mind which senses this material universe is carnal mind, unreal, a delusion. Only Divine Mind is real.³

In our endeavor to follow this mode of reasoning, we find some encouragement along the way in Science and Health where its author says "that although it contains the complete Science of Mind-healing, never believe that you can absorb the whole meaning of the Science by a simple perusal of this book"⁴

Her philosophy of healing and disease is further set forth as follows:

You may say a boil is painful; but that is impossible for matter without mind is not painful. The boil simply manifests, through inflammation and swelling, a

¹Ibid., p. 113.

³Ibid., p. 591.

²Ibid., p. 144

⁴Ibid., p. 147.

belief in pain, and this belief is called a boil. The fact that pain cannot exist where there is no mortal mind to feel it is a proof that this so-called mind makes its own pain -- that is its own belief in pain.

We weep because others weep, we yawn because they yawn, and we have smallpox because others have it; but mortal mind, not matter, contains and carries the infection.¹

Disease arises, like other mental conditions, from association. Since it is a law of mortal mind that certain diseases should be regarded as contagious, this law obtains credit through association, calling up the fear that creates the image of disease and its consequent manifestation in the body.²

Through different states of mind, the body becomes suddenly weak or abnormally strong, showing mortal mind to be the producer of strength or weakness. A sudden joy or grief has caused what is termed instantaneous death. Because a belief originated unseen, the mental state should be continually watched that it may not produce blindly its bad effects. The author never knew a patient who did not recover when the belief of the disease had gone. Remove the leading error or governing fear of this lower so-called mind, and you remove the cause of all disease as well as the morbid or excited action of any organ. You also remove in this way what are termed organic diseases as functional difficulties.

The cause of all so-called disease is mental, a mortal fear, a mistaken belief or conviction of the necessity and power of ill-health; also a fear that Mind is helpless to defend the life of man and incompetent to control it. Without this ignorant human belief, any circumstance is of itself powerless to produce suffering.³

Turning now to the actual combat with the error called disease and suffering, Mrs. Eddy continues:

When the first symptoms of disease appear, dispute the testimony of the material senses with divine Science.

¹Ibid., p. 153.

³Ibid., p. 377

²Ibid., p. 154.

Let your higher sense of justice destroy the false process of mortal opinions which you name law, and then you will not be confined to a sick-room nor laid upon a bed of suffering in payment of the last farthing, the last penalty demanded by error.

'Agree to disagree' with approaching symptoms of chronic or acute disease, whether it is cancer, consumption or smallpox. Rise in the conscious strength of the spirit of Truth to overthrow the plea of mortal mind, alias matter, arrayed against supremacy of Spirit. Blot out the images of mortal thought and its beliefs in sickness and sin.

Instead of blind and calm submission to the incipient or advanced stages of disease, rise in rebellion against them. Banish the belief that you can possibly entertain a single intruding pain which cannot be ruled out by the might of Mind, and in this way you can prevent the development of pain in the body.¹

Mrs. Eddy's instruction to healers is long and repetitious. It is perhaps embodied best in the following quotation:

My first discovery in the student's practice was this: If the student silently called the disease by name, when he argued against it, as a general rule the body would respond more quickly, - just as a person replies more readily when his name is spoken; but this was because the student was not perfectly attuned to the divine Science, and needed the arguments of truth for reminders. If Spirit or the power of divine Love bear witness to the truth, this is the ultimatum, the scientific way, and the healing is instantaneous.

The procuring cause and foundation of all sickness is fear, ignorance, or sin. Disease is always induced by a false sense, mentally entertained, not destroyed. Disease is an image of thought externalized. The mental state is called a material state. Whatever is cherished in mortal mind as the physical condition is imaged forth on the body.

¹Ibid., p. 390-391.

Always begin your treatment by allaying the fear of patients.¹

Maintain the facts of Christian Science, - that Spirit is God, and therefore cannot be sick; that what is termed matter cannot be sick; that all causation is Mind, acting through spiritual law. Then hold your ground with the unshaken understanding of Truth and Love, and you will win.

To the Christian Science healer, sickness is a dream from which the patient needs to be awakened.²

In spite of all these claims for the power of Mind and the error and falsity of disease, Mrs. Eddy inserted a clause which excluded certain ailments from the sphere of Christian Science.

Until the advancing age admits the efficacy and supremacy of Mind, it is better for Christian Scientists to leave surgery and the adjustment of broken bones and dislocations to the fingers of a surgeon, while the mental healer confines himself chiefly to mental reconstruction and to the prevention of inflammation.³

Thus comes the gospel of Christian Science from the pages of Mrs. Eddy's "inspired word". Nevertheless she claimed for herself and her students well authenticated cures of broken bones, dislocated joints and spinal vertebrae. Less credulous people than Christian Scientists tend to doubt the authenticity of these reported cures for lack of reference to precise dates and individuals. Because of this we will give our final chapter to a critique of the healing practice of Christian Science.

¹Ibid., p. 411.

³Ibid., p. 401.

²Ibid., p. 417.

CHAPTER III

A CRITIQUE

However impossible some of the healing theories of Christian Science may appear to be, the honest observer is confronted with a movement that has drawn an impressive following. Since it has attracted thousands of men and women, many from orthodox churches, and has given them religious satisfaction which they had not had before, its claims cannot lightly be dismissed. To deny all its claims of healing would be absurd, to accept all would be equally absurd. The truth lies somewhere between these extreme views. In an attempt to find it, we will present first the view of the convinced Christian Scientist who has practised Mrs. Eddy's theory and to his own satisfaction been healed, then the negative critique of caustic opponents and the more positive critique of medical specialists which seems to be the more reliable.

Christian Science Testimonials

In the last section of Science and Health, one hundred pages are given over to testimonials to the healing efficacy of Christian Science. These are mainly letters previously published in the Christian Science Journal and Christian Science Sentinel, official periodicals of the

group. Five of the earlier of these testimonials indicate relief from rheumatism, healing of hernia, restoration of lung tissue, removal of a tumor, and mending of a broken bone. In the last instance a person signing himself as L. C. S., Salt Lake City, Utah, describes how he fell from his bicycle and broke his left arm.

While pain was intense, I lay still in the dust, declaring the truth and denying that there could be a break or accident in the realm of divine Love. On arriving home there I lay down and asked my little boy to bring me our text book. He immediately brought Science and Health, which I read for about ten minutes, when all pain left.¹

When a surgeon X-rayed the arm later the verdict was, "Yes it was broken but whoever set it made a perfect job of it, you will never have any further trouble with that break."²

Another person, B. N. H., of New York, N.Y., credits Christian Science with healing a number of gastric ailments in two weeks time, taking away his desire for liquor and tobacco (he smoked eight to ten cigars daily before), giving him spiritual uplift and starting him attending the Christian Science Church. He never took a treatment, rather "every inch of the way" was "through study and practical demonstration." His conclusion is that "all men can do the same if they will try."³

¹Ibid., p. 606.

²Ibid., p. 606.

³Ibid., p. 610.

Other Testimonials claim cures for such malignant diseases as cancer and consumption, the most extreme claims coming from Mrs. Eddy herself.

After my discovery of Christian Science, I healed consumption in its last stages, that the M.D.'s, by verdict of the stethoscope and the schools, declared incurable, the lungs being mostly consumed. I healed malignant tubercular diphtheria and carious bones that could be dented by the finger, saving them when the surgeon's instruments were lying on the table ready for their amputation. I have healed, at one visit, a cancer that had so eaten the flesh of the neck as to expose the juglar vein so that it stood out like a cord.¹

Present day Christian Science Literature continues to carry such testimonials. We cite the following taken from the Christian Science Journal, April, 1950: Mrs. Maude Hetherington, Ottawa, writes that a dislocated bone which protruded from the side of her daughter's foot was quickly adjusted without surgical aid. Another daughter was healed of whooping cough and pneumonia and of an unsightly growth on her hand. Her husband was healed of astigmatism, pronounced incurable by an outstanding oculist. All these healings are attributed to the reading of the Christian Science text book.

All Testimonials are relatively similar in content in that they are all high in praise of Mrs. Eddy and her book and for all that has happened to make them free from

¹W. Riley, F. W. Peabody, C. E. Humiston, The Faith, The Falsity and the Failure of Christian Science (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company 1925), p. 249.

the error of disease and fears of all kinds. There is no need to extend these citations since they can easily be found in current Christian Science Literature. We turn now to the opposite view concerning these claims.

Negative Critique

Characteristic of the purely negative critique of Christian Science is the following satirical attack by Stefan Zweig:

Our poor earthly reason, trained on the principles of ordinary science, certainly stands aghast in face of this 'holy discovery'. Some astonishment may be excused. For three thousand years all the sages, all the philosophers of the East and the West, all the theologians of all religions, have been puzzling their brains over the problem of the inter-relationship between mind and body. Endless have been the variations upon this theme over which throughout all ages, the great intelligences have incessantly pondered, until at last, in the year of grace 1875, a resolute American woman is able, in a trice, ignoring reason, to settle the whole matter with her dictatorial utterance: 'Soul is not body'. How simple, how gloriously, how touchingly simple! The most difficult of philosophical problems has been solved, once for all. Jubilemus! It has been solved with such miraculous simplicity by the castration of reality. A radical cure has been achieved, bodily suffering has been achieved, bodily suffering has been overcome through the declaration that the body does not exist. It is much as if we were to 'cure' toothache by cutting off the sufferer's head.¹

F. W. Peabody, after citing Mrs. Eddy's claim that she could heal malignant disorders such as cancer, says:

In the humble opinion of the writer, no viler, wicked, crueller lie was ever conceived or

¹Stefan Zweig, Mental Healers, Translated by Eden and Cedar Paul (New York: Viking Press, 1932), p. 168.

uttered if she had given those details time, place and person, it would be possible to meet them with the ordinary form of disproof. She didn't give them because she couldn't; and she couldn't because she had never healed anyone or anything, never relieved anyone of anything -- but dollars and sense.¹

The above claim of Mrs. Eddy is only one of twenty which Mr. Peabody exposed as outright falsehood, and which induced him to say further, she "was the most erratic, contradictory and untrustworthy witness that has occupied the stand since the days of the lamented Ananias."²

Mark Twain turned all of his sarcasm against Mrs. Eddy's Science and Health.

Of all the strange and frantic and incomprehensible and uninterpretable books which the imagination of man has created, surely this one is the prize sample. There are plenty of people who imagine they understand the book; I know this for I have talked with them, but in all cases they were people who also imagined that there were no relativities in the world; nothing actually existent but mind. It seems to me to modify the value of their testimony.³

The inconsistencies, absurdities and contradictions in Christian Science are without doubt, large in number and tax the mind of the incredulous to the limit. Mrs. Eddy, herself, though she taught that the body and pain were imaginary and that physicians only created disease, advocated and paid for an operation on her sister-in-law when mind-

¹Riley, op. cit., p. 250.

²Ibid., p. 254.

³Mark Twain, Christian Science (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1907), p. 29.

healing failed to cure the latter's cancerous breast.¹ Mrs. Eddy's healing also failed to restore her own teeth and thus she found it necessary to have a dentist create "imaginary" teeth so that she might eat food which was mere mortal idea. If Mrs. Eddy could have given an explanation of this failure of mind-healing half as unique as that supposedly given by Brigham Young, in another instance,² she might at least have been credited with ingenuity.

M. O. Vaundry points out the absurdity of Christian Science if Mrs. Eddy's teachings are followed through to logical conclusion.

In her usual contradictory manner she states: 'Every concept that seems to begin with the brain, begins falsely'. Science and Health, p. 262. If the above statements are true, what about her own physical senses when she wrote her book? When Christian Science lecturers speak in public they appeal to the sense of hearing, her literature appeals to the sense of sight, but according to her statements above, her book is an error and delusion.

¹She had cancer for seven years before anything was done for her by surgery, but by that time it was too late. See Leslie D. Weatherhead, Psychology, Religion and Healing (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1951), p. 188.

²A young man who came to believe in the faith healing of the Mormons asked Brigham Young if he could restore his leg. The wily Mormon leader replied that it would be easy for him to do so but that first felt it his duty to explain what it would involve; the man had lost one leg -- if he received a new one at the hands of Brigham Young he would then have two when he died. However in the next life the original leg would be restored and then he would have three. Which would he choose, the transient inconvenience or the deformity forever? Buckley, op. cit., p. 36.

No one reading it or hearing lectures on the subject should trust to his or her physical senses, both they and Mrs. Eddy's doctrines are error and delusion.¹

In spite of all that may be said, there are thousands of men and women today who find comfort in Christian Science as a healing agency. It is inconceivable to believe that they have accepted Christian Science because of its conclusive logic; rather, they have experienced something undeniably beneficial. Therefore before concluding, we must speak seriously of the possibilities of mind-healing.

Positive Critique

Medical science recognizes that there is a definite relationship between the mind and the state of physical health that prevails in any individual. One's approach to the subject of mind-healing must therefore, be with the open mind of Dr. Pierson Parker who says:

Sometimes there is real healing of physical disease. While the whole subject of psychosomatic medicine is in its infancy, we know enough to be sure of the relationship between spiritual and bodily well being. There can be no doubt whatever that genuine, even permanent, physical betterment sometimes accrues from Christian Science and from forms of faith-healing, just as from Roman Catholic healings at Lourdes. Such phenomena almost certainly follow genuine psychosomatic laws. Danger arises, of course, when a principle, of undoubted value in selected types of illness, is by cult teaching made to apply to diseases for which it is not effective, so that proper medical care is deferred too long.²

¹M. C. Vaundry, Christian Science and Pantheism (Lennoxville, Quebec: Privately Printed, 1948), p. 52.

²The International Seminary Series, Edited by R. C. Miller, Vol. I, Book II (New York: Harper Brothers, 1946),

Christian Science had its origin in the mesmerism of Quimby. The latter practice actually antedates Mesmer, but he was the first to use it as a healing agency in relatively modern times and to bring it to the attention of a government appointed commission in 1784. This commission consisted of members from the Faculty of Medicine and the Academy of Science in Paris. Its findings, along with that of another commission appointed by the Royal Society of Medicine, was that imagination, not magnetism, accounted for healing results. Whatever accounted for the astounding results, lawyers, medical practitioners, merchants, numbers of nobility and gentry, published grateful reports concerning the cure Mesmer had provided for their ailments, and they were not afraid to sign these documents with their authentic names.¹

It was Mesmer's pupil, Count Maxime de Puységur, who was the first to show that by means of what we now call

p. 198. The term "psychosomatic medicine" is best defined by quoting from the Encyclopedia Americana, XVIII, 1951 edition, article, "Progress in Medicine," p. 582b which reads:

"Up to about 1930 our knowledge of the psychoneuroses was centered largely around certain syndromes or groups of symptoms, unaccompanied by any well grounded system of treatment. Treatment was largely empirical and not conditioned to the needs of the individual patient. In the years that followed a clear understanding has come about and this has aided, to a gratifying extent, the evolution of a plan of treatment aimed at correcting, in individual cases, the basic causative factor. Much of this has been achieved through the work of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Adolph Meyer (1866-). Such plans are often referred to as belonging to the field of psychosomatic medicine."

¹Zweig, op. cit., p. 69.

hypnotism, an individual could exercise an influence for good or evil upon the mental condition of another. The accidental hypnotizing of a young patient by Paysegar and experiments with hypnotic and post-hypnotic suggestion opened up a new field of inquiry. Here was an intermediate stage between sleep and waking, a strange condition wherein was an interplay of mysterious spiritual forces which worked on a different plane from that of conscious intelligence. This was the beginning of what years later was taken up by Sigmund Freud and others and developed into our modern psychology and psycho-therapy.

Hypnosis, stripped of all mysticism, may be defined as an intense form of artificial abstraction (absent mindedness) brought on by suggestion. There are various degrees of hypnotic sleep: complete loss of memory known as amnesia, suggestibility, and subconscious phenomena. The value of hypnotism lies chiefly in what is known as post-hypnotic suggestion: suggestions are made to the hypnotized person which will either be remembered when he awakes or which will be acted upon unconsciously after awaking. Here, undoubtedly, lies the secret of a large part of faith-healing. The patient passes under the influence of the healer, the suggestions of healing and well-being are made, and, for a time, in the post-hypnotic state, the patient believes that he is without pain and has experienced a "miraculous cure." The hypnotic state is produced by verbal suggestion or by

various mechanical devices such as staring at a bright object or listening to a monotonous sound stimulus, thus fatiguing the sense organs and brain by the narrowing of consciousness upon one point. Since eighty to ninety percent of all persons are hypnotizable,¹ the field is large and needless to say open for both beneficial and harmful practice.

The therapeutic value of hypnotism or psychotherapy, as it is now called, is a question of great practical importance to medical science. Its field of action is limited to functional diseases and unless very careful diagnosis is made by competent physicians, much harm may result from delay of the necessary treatment for organic ailments. Faith and mind healers are rarely capable of or concerned with diagnosis, therefore often cause unnecessary deaths. Several such instances are on record in relationship to Christian Science, a case in point being that of Mrs. Eddy's husband; a stubborn attempt to treat his organic disease with mind-cure resulted in his death. On the other hand a disease like hysteria is functional and very amenable to hypnotic treatment. Dr. Coriat says:

Hysteria with its manifold symptoms all tend to disappear in the hypnotic sleep, a fact which speaks emphatically for the soundness of the modern theory of hysteria. By this we mean that hysteria is a

¹E. Worcester, S. McComb, I. H. Coriat, Religion and Medicine (New York: Moffat, Yard and Company, 1908), p. 225.

mental disease whose symptoms are due to a dissociation or splitting of the personality. In the hypnotic state the splitting disappears and the hysteric individual remains well while in this condition. On being awakened the symptoms tend to recur, but by repeating hypnotizing there is established a psychic re-education through suggestion, and ultimately a cure results. Hysterical paralysis and convulsions, losses of sensation (anaesthesia), or of memory (amnesia), loss of the voice (aphonia), the various digestive and motor disturbances of hysteria, yield to hypnotic treatment. Many of the sudden recoveries of persons who have been paralyzed for years are causes of pure hysteria. If the paralysis were of an organic nature, that is, caused by a hemorrhage or softening of the brain or spinal cord, such a recovery would not occur.¹

Dr. Coriat speaks of another functional disease known as neurasthenia which also responds to hypnotic suggestion. The symptoms which it manifests are rapid exhaustion, sleeplessness, various fleeting pains, gastric distress, palpitation of the heart, headache and dizziness. The cause of such experiences, he says, is introspection and self analysis of a sort which can lead to the condition known as hypochondriasis, wherein the patient is continually examining his fleeting bodily pains and finally comes to believe that he is suffering from a severe organic disease. To him palpitation comes to mean heart disease; headache, brain tumor; gastric symptoms, an incurable affection of the stomach.² Hypnosis often provides adequate cure for such ailments.

Sibyl Wilbur speaks of Quimby as "the unconscious hypnotizer."³ In the light of what is now known about

¹Ibid., p. 235.

²Ibid., p. 238.

³Sibyl Wilbur, The Life of Mary Baker Eddy (Boston: The Christian Science Publishing Company, 1907), p. 90.

hypnotic suggestion, it is easier to understand the effect that Quimby had on Mrs. Eddy during the first few days of their acquaintance. Her ailments seem to have been manifestations of hysteria and neurasthenia and amenable to hypnotic treatment. Although Mrs. Eddy renounced Quimby in later years, especially his practice of manipulation, or the laying on of hands, the work of the Christian Science practitioner is of hypnotic kind and is, without doubt, suggestive therapy.

One other aspect of suggestive therapy needs to be mentioned, namely, auto-suggestion, first brought to the fore by Emile Coue (1857-1926) of France. He was an apothecary, not a doctor, but very interested in psychology. Twenty years of study and experiment guided him to a very important discovery relating to the operation of the mind in healing:

The patient did not need suggestive therapy applied by another, as in hypnosis. Within himself was the power. He did not need a trance state so that direct access to the unconscious could be obtained. Ideas, if repeated again and again in confident voice eluding as much as possible the attentions of the "critical policeman" (i.e., the screening faculty of the mind), and especially if repeated at those times when the mind is most receptive -- namely, on waking and on falling asleep -- would sink into the subconscious and unconscious parts of the mind and work the expected wonder.¹

Coue instructed his patients to say every morning and evening, "Every day in every way I am getting better and

¹Leslie D. Weatherhead, Psychology, Religion and Healing (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1951) p. 128.

better." One suffering from lumbago was to say repeatedly: "My back is easier. I am able with greater and greater ease to bend it." Coue did not teach his patients to use will-power; he worked rather on the important psychological truth that if will and imagination are in conflict, the imagination wins. He believed that the unconscious had almost complete power over the body. Weatherhead commenting on the validity of this theory points out that an idea received into the subconscious can even produce a blister or rash on the skin, and says further: "No effort is required to believe that if Coue's method really does get ideas into the subconscious, bodily benefit is certain."¹ Here again, there is a psychological explanation of what takes place when Christian Scientists experience relief from suffering as a result of reading Science and Health. "Of course," says Weatherhead, "the factor on which everything depends is the suggestibility of the patient -- that is, the facility with which he accepts ideas into his mind without critical examination."² If repetition of ideas will have an effect, then it is little wonder that Science and Health has therapeutic value. Considering the nature of its contents, it undoubtedly comes into the mind only when not critically examined.

There is still another basis upon which Christian

¹Ibid., p. 129.

²Ibid., p. 198.

Science healing is accomplished. It simply fulfils one of the great requirements for natural recuperation, namely, dispelling fear from the sick-room. A recent writer in the British Medical Journal says:

Whatever exorcises the demon of fear and brings to the sick man's bed the Angel of Hope, is a powerful aid to medical treatment. To lie in the shadow of fear deprives a man of energies that might otherwise be available for curative purposes.¹

How right Mrs. Eddy was when she wrote: "Fear is the fountain of sickness Fear which is an element of all disease must be cast out to readjust the balance for God."² Herein lies the main difference between faith-healing and Christian Science healing. In the former, the act is expected immediately and must come through divine intervention, or, as we have seen, through some form of hypnosis. In the latter the patient is visited regularly by a practitioner who never once admits of disease or allows the patient to talk about it. The visitor brings an atmosphere of cheer and hope and unshaken confidence that the patient is perfectly well or at least will quickly be so. During such treatment there is time for nature to take its course. Undoubtedly many of the reported mind-cures have been nothing more than the patient recovering by natural means, but aided appreciably by renewed confidence and friendly association.

Thus, healing in Christian Science is, within

¹Ibid., p. 198.

²Science and Health, p. 392.

bounds, based on legitimate basic principles and consequently many of the reported cures are undoubtedly authentic. Mrs. Eddy may not have recognized these principles, but whatever healing she effected was by their means. Weatherhead frankly admits: "All the Christian medical psychologists on the staff of my City Temple Psychological Clinic accept and practice all the truths that lie behind Christian Science."¹ There are therefore many things in Christian Science which are commendable and which the other churches need to incorporate into their program. William James puts the case well when he says:

The leaders of this faith had an intuitive belief in the all-saving power of healthy-minded attitudes as such, in the conquering efficacy of courage, hope, and trust, and a correlative contempt for doubt, fear, worry and all nervously precautionary states of mind.²

Christian Science fights the old Hebrew belief that suffering and disease are the will of God and that they are sent as punishment for and must be borne with submission and

¹Weatherhead, op. cit., p. 196.

²William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1912), p. 94. While this is generally true of leaders of the movement it cannot be overlooked that Mrs. Eddy herself lived in constant fear - fear of recurring illness and fear of poverty in her younger days, and in old age she feared that her illness would be found out. She sent out another person, when she was too sick to take her usual daily drive, dressed like herself so that her public would not know. Yet despite this she wrote in her book, "..... the sick can meet disease fearlessly if they only realise that divine love gives them all power over every physical action and condition" (Science and Health, p. 420).

resignation. Because many Christian churches have become so engrossed in the welfare of the soul that they have neglected to care for the physical aspect of their church members, many have turned to Christian Science, although basically inconsistent with their other Christian doctrine. They are concerned about their health and want relief. Many lonely people have been helped by Christian Science because it has led them away from themselves. It has directed their mind away from self toward the qualities of God who they sincerely believe to be beside whom there is no other. Their theology may be illogical but it has therapeutic effect.

Conclusion

Having recognized the beneficial aspect of Christian Science, we shall not remain blind to its errors. While mind healing is effective in functional illnesses, Christian Science makes no distinction between functional and organic diseases. Diagnoses are usually made by the patient or practitioner without medical training; consequently many have died because medical aid was denied to organic diseases. For Christian Science health is the end of religion and God a means to it. Those who remain ill must come to feel that their incapacity is of their own making, that it is the result of their own inadequate faith.

Christian Science is not a science by the standard

meaning of the word. Science is reasoned thinking, based on human experience and observation, it depends on the reliability of our senses to report truth fully and consistently to us. Christian Science declares that the senses do not bear reliable testimony, that the body is only an erroneous belief of a mind which itself is not real. Therefore the very basis of science is taken away.

Nor is Christian Science basically Christian, for it denies too many things that are fundamental to the Christian faith. It is in many respects a resurrection of early "Christian" Gnosticism. As did the Gnostics, Mrs. Eddy denied the reality of matter, flesh, suffering and death, thereby ruled out the entire Christian gospel of redemption. Who is right, Mrs. Eddy, in her affirmation that sin does not exist and that salvation consists in realizing it, or the Fourth Gospel?

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.¹

Mrs. Eddy perverts the historical meaning of New Testament words and passages. Her theories are pantheistic, her main thesis being the "allness of God." She speaks of the Logos in Christian Science and identifies the Holy Spirit with "Divine Science." The inconsistency and essentially un-Christian character of her philosophy is forcibly set forth by Weatherhead:

¹I John 1: 8, 9.

God is good. Let man bask in the sunshine of that idea and exclude all the above illusions (death, sin, pain and body). Let him wipe out the drug, the hospital, the doctor, the dark shadows of poverty and death, and think about positive and beautiful things. The weakness here, of course, is that a neurotic woman's wishful thinking cannot evade the so-called illusion indefinitely. If the Master of life suffered sorrow and pain and death, and died for human sin, it is hardly likely that Mrs. Eddy can by-pass them worthily, and the greatest victories of men have not been found along the road of evasion, but over steep hills almost as fraught with tragedy as Calvary itself.

Christian Science has never gone down into the slum and borne on its heart the burdens of the poor. Where it is recognizable, it is a Christianity without tears.¹

Healing of certain diseases on the principles of psychotherapy, as actually practiced by Christian Science, is scientifically valid and cures are incontestable; but Christian Science's philosophy of healing is neither scientific nor Christian and has taken flight from common sense. The final test of any faith or creed or philosophy is whether or not it will stand up under the everyday experience of mankind in every situation and circumstance of life. Fisher has subjected it to this test and found it wanting.

What can Christian Science say to the dying pauper in the slums which he will not regard as an affront to the lesson of a lifetime? It will tell him that his pain is an error. It will tell him that he is suffering from the delusion of a mortal mind. To the downcast and the outcast such a philosophy is a cruel mockery. They know instinctively that it is false.²

¹Weatherhead, op. cit., p. 199.

²Fisher, op. cit., p. 176.

The motive of Christian Science is highly commendable, its practice and claims open to question, but it stands as a timely warning to the Christian Church which concentrates on man's soul to the neglect of his body. Until this evil is banished from Christendom, there will always be "Christian Science" by whatever name it may be known.

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