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THE PERSONAL SOURCES OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.¹

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"I am a Christian Scientist, the founder of this System of Religion, — widely known, one readily sees that this science has distanced all other religions and pathological systems for physical and moral reformation." These words of Mrs. Eddy furnish a proper point of view for an examination of her cult. A study of the sources of Christian Science is the study of a certain sort of personality. Were the psychology of religion to be put in pathological terms, here indeed is a 'variety of religious experience' — a discordant inner life, a liability to obsessions and fixed ideas, a falling into trances, a series of mental over-tensions resulting in self-importance exaggerated to a disease.

Mary Baker was born about 1820, at Bow, New Hampshire, within sight of her present home at Pleasant View, Concord. According to her autobiographical reminiscences entitled 'Introspection and Retrospection,' she counts among her ancestors Scotch Covenanters and English Dissenters, the hero Wallace

¹References: 'Science and Health,' by Mary Baker Glover, first edition, Boston, 1875; third edition, Boston, 1881, especially the chapter on 'Demonology.' Later editions of 'Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures,' by Mary Baker G. Eddy, are not here used because of their various transpositions, additions and suppressions of compromising contents. 'Miscellaneous Writings,' 1883-1896, Boston, 1899, contain Mrs. Eddy's various articles from the *Christian Science Journal*. 'Retrospection and Introspection,' Boston, 1900.

'The Philosophy of P. P. Quimby,' by A. G. Dresser, Boston, 1899. 'The True History of Mental Science,' by J. A. Dresser, Boston, 1899. Local histories of Concord, N. H., Lynn, Mass., Portland, Me.

and the poetess Hannah More. But the local histories of her native state do not bear out this Pumpernickel pretence. Unfortunately for the pathologist there is little to be gleaned here concerning the family history. However, the young religionist herself described her father as of a strong intellect and an iron will; her mother as a great bible reader and believer in miracles. Thus it is evident that the auditory hallucinations of the daughter were considered veritable calls from heaven. In the section designated as 'Voices not Our Own' there occurs this passage: "For some months, when I was about eight years old, I repeatedly heard a voice, calling me distinctly by name, three times in an ascending scale. I thought this was my mother's voice, and sometimes went to her, beseeching her to tell me what she wanted. * * * This continued until I grew discouraged, and my mother was perplexed and anxious. * * * That night, before going to rest, my mother read to me the scriptural narrative of little Samuel, and bade me, when the voice called again, to reply as he did."

During Mary Baker's childhood her parents removed to the town of Tilton, eighteen miles from Concord and adjacent to the Shaker community of Canterbury. The pervasive influence of these mystic neighbors and their works upon the impressionable mind of the youthful seeress is to be considered later. But Mary Baker's educational opportunities were by no means as scanty as those of the contemporary visionaries and religious founders like Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet, and Andrew Jackson Davis, the Poughkeepsie Seer, who both wrote not wisely but at length. The incipient Christian Scientist has herself said: "At ten years of age I was as familiar with Lindley Murray's Grammar as with the Westminster Catechism; and the latter I had to repeat every Sunday. My favorite studies were Natural Philosophy, Logic and Moral Science. From my brother Albert I received lessons in the ancient tongues, Hebrew, Greek and Latin. My brother studied Hebrew during his college vacations. After my discovery of Christian Science, most of the knowledge I had gleaned from school books vanished like a dream." The last is the saving clause, the explanation of a paradox. In parts of her writings Mrs. Eddy borrowed her learning and forgot the

sources; in other parts she remembered the sources and forgot her learning. In the former case the amnesia appears real, in the latter fictitious: blank ignorance alone would account for such curious etymologies as are found in the first edition of 'Science and Health,' where Pantheism is derived 'from the Greek god Pan' and Adam 'from the Latin demens.' Without referring to what Voltaire said of comparative philology, it is clear that Mary Baker was nothing if not imaginative. It is therefore hard to say how far the constitutional romancer appears in what she called 'theological reminiscence.' Here she tells how, at the age of twelve, she was admitted to the Congregational (Unitarian) Church, but only after suffering from a fever superinduced by the doctrine of Unconditional Election. Her father's relentless theology, she relates, 'emphasized belief in a final Judgment Day, in the danger of endless punishment, and in a Jehovah merciless towards unbelievers; and of these things he now spoke, hoping to win me from dreaded heresy.' On the other hand it was through the mother's tenderness that the 'horrible degree' of Predestination was exorcised: "She bathed my burning temples * * * 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." In this personal experience there perhaps lies the key to the curious Eddyite doctrine of the superiority of the feminine principle in matters of religion. At any rate, in terms of the psychology of religion, this conversion was of the optimistic type. It was also precocious; two years before the average of adolescence the change came and Mary Baker left her old church because she was 'not satisfied with a man-like God.'

Succeeding this time of spiritual unrest and recovery there came a period of physical suffering: "When quite a child we adopted the Graham system for dyspepsia, ate only bread and vegetables; and drank water. Following this diet for years we became more dyspeptic, however, and, of course, thought we must diet more rigidly; so we partook of but one meal in twenty-four hours, and this consisted of a thin slice of bread, about three inches square, without water; our physician not allowing us, with this ample meal, to wet our parched lips for

many hours thereafter ; whenever we drank, it produced violent retchings. Thus we passed most of our early years, as many can attest, in hunger, pain, weakness and starvation."

Perturbation over theological infelicities, accentuated by ascetic practices, had as a correlate the visionary seizure. "This phenomenon of spiritual discernment," Mrs. Eddy has recently said, "appeared in my childhood, is associated with my earliest memories and has increased with my spiritual increase. It has aided me in healing the sick, and subordinating the human to the Divine. While this metaphysical phenomenon puzzles poor philosophy, and is not in the slightest degree theosophy, hypnotism, clairvoyance or an element of the human mind, I regard it as a component part of the Science of Mind not yet understood." It is significant that this condition of ecstasy, for such it will appear to be, occurred in a locality infested by an American species of illuminati. The author of the 'Autobiography of a Shaker,' who had turned from being a materialist to being a new light, tells how "one night I heard a rustling sound and found that a singular mental phenomenon was going on. I was positively illuminated. My reasoning powers were enhanced a hundred-fold. I came to a conception of the inner world as being the most substantial, and of the inner man as being the real man ; the outward world being only the shadow of the invisible world of causation."

The period of mysticism was followed by a period of invalidism ; the quietism of malnutrition by the restless pursuit of health. After her first marriage in 1843 the anæmic visionary tried in term allopathy, homeopathy, hydropathy, electricity, spiritualism and mesmerism. These 'medical experiments' in what were bitterly denounced as the various 'isms of mortal mind were succeeded by the 'emergence into light.' "The trend of human life was too eventful to leave me undisturbed in the illusion that this so-called life could be a real and abiding rest." In these health cure experiences is to be found the first step toward the 'great discovery' of 1866. As long ago as 1844, Mrs. Eddy asserts, she was convinced that mortal mind produced all disease, and that the various medical systems were in no proper sense scientific. The further statement that for

twenty years prior to the discovery there was an attempt to trace all physical effects to a mental cause has an ex-post-facto air. As will be seen, the Eddyite system of mental healing was more of an invention than a discovery, was due rather to chance than to cogitation. Nevertheless, the physical side of these experiences may be accepted as valid. They betray, as nothing else could do, the psychopathic condition of the woman. Early in life she had acquired what might be called the sanitarium habit. She next took up vicious schemes of self-cure and began her dabbings in mental healing. Out of these grew an abnormal sensibility. She became squeamish about herself and oversensitive toward others. "We were an homeopathist because of our aversion to the dissecting room. * * * In years past we suffered greatly for the sick." What Mrs. Eddy terms the 'perpetually egotistical sensibility' is doubtless a reason for her present refusal to attempt the cure of others. The mental exertion, the concentrated attention needful for a demonstration would bring a return of this morbid self-consciousness. Hence she says: 'My own personality afflicteth me not willingly, for I desire never to think of it.'

Further details of these days of the search after health are given in certain suppressed letters. In 1861 Mrs. Eddy's second husband, Dr. Patterson, wrote to Dr. Quimby, a magnetic healer of Maine, asking aid of Quimby's 'wonderful power' in behalf of his wife, who had been for six years an invalid unable to sit up. Mrs. Patterson next writes herself from a New Hampshire water cure that she hopes to reach Quimby, as she is 'sufficiently excitable' to live through the journey. That this correspondence is substantially true is borne out by further letters in the public prints. As to her invalidism she says: "In 1862 my name was Patterson; my husband, Dr. Patterson, a distinguished dentist. After our marriage I was confined to my bed with a severe illness, and seldom left bed or room for seven years, when I was taken to Dr. Quimby, and partially restored." But regarding the success of this mental healer, Mrs. Patterson had given more positive testimony in the *Portland Courier* of 1862. "Three weeks since, I quitted my nurse and sick-room en route for Portland. The belief of my recovery had died out

of the hearts of those who were most anxious for it. With this mental and physical depression I first visited P. P. Quimby, and in less than one week from that time I ascended by a stairway of one hundred and eighty-two steps to the dome of the City Hall and am improving *ad infinitum*."

According to her 'Miscellaneous Writings,' that *journal intime* for the faithful, the mid-period of Mrs. Eddy's life was a chapter of accidents. She married in haste and repented in the divorce courts; she met the man from whom she is alleged to have pilfered her system of drugless healing; she finally suffered a fall which injured her seriously. Four years after this there befell her an accident, the effects of which are now visible in a lameness of limb and a palsied shaking of the head. A letter of 1866 from Lynn, Massachusetts, to a pupil of Quimby reads in part thus: "Two weeks ago I fell on the sidewalk and struck my back on the ice, and was taken up for dead, came to consciousness amid a storm of vapors from cologne, chloroform, ether, camphor, etc., but to find myself the helpless cripple I was before I saw Dr. Quimby. The physician attending said I had taken the last step I ever should, but in two days I got out of my bed *alone* and *will* walk; but yet I confess I am frightened, and out of that nervous heat my friends are forming, spite of me, the terrible spinal affection from which I have suffered so long and hopelessly. * * * Now can't *you* help me? I believe you can. I write this with this feeling: I think that I could help another in my condition if they had not placed their intelligence in matter. This I have not done, and yet I am slowly failing. Won't you write me if you will undertake for me if I can get to you?"

In passing to the fourth period in the life of the founder of Christian Science we may employ a phrase from Hawthorne's romance of transcendentalism: "The weakly maiden, whose tremulous nerves endow her with Sibylline attributes, has now become the Veiled Lady." This desire to be mysterious explains the discrepancies between the earlier and later accounts of the accident. The time of recovery was made more rapid, the process more magic, until it was counted the turning point leading to the 'great Discovery of the spiritual science of

Mind-healing.' According to the original document the patient was still suffering two weeks after the fall. Another version says that, three days after her accident was pronounced fatal, she read Matthew IX., 2, and thereby learned that life was the sole reality of existence, that mortal thought evolves a subjective state which it names matter. The third and fourth accounts should be given at length, since the one exhibits the writer's manner of qualifying previous damaging statements, and the other presents the developed theory of metaphysical healing. "At Swampscott, Mass., in 1866, we recovered in a moment of time from a severe accident, considered fatal by the regular physicians, and regained the internal action that had stopped and the use of our limbs that were palsied. To us this demonstration was the opening of the new era of Christian Science. We then gained a proof that the principle, or life of man, is a divine intelligence and power, which, understood, can heal all diseases, and reveals the basis of man's immortality. But the minds around us at that time were unacquainted with our mental theory." The fourth account is the fullest and has a glossary tacked to it. "My immediate recovery from the effects of an injury caused by an accident, an injury that neither medicine nor surgery could reach, was the falling apple that led me to the discovery how to be well myself, and how to make others so. Even to the homeopathic physician who attended me, and rejoiced in my recovery, I could not then explain the *modus* of my relief. I could only assure him that Divine Spirit had wrought the miracle — a miracle which later I found to be in perfect scientific accord with divine law. I then withdrew from society about three years, to ponder my mission, to search the Scriptures, to find the science of mind, that should take the things of God and show them to the creature, and reveal the great curative principle, Deity. The Bible was my text-book. It answered my questions as to how I was healed; but the scriptures had to me a new meaning, a new tongue. Their spiritual signification appeared; and I apprehended for the first time, in their spiritual meaning, Jesus's teaching and demonstration, and the principle and rule of spiritual science and metaphysical healing, in a word, Christian Science. I named

it *Christian*, because it is compassionate, helpful and spiritual. God I called *Immortal Mind*. That which sins, suffers and dies I named *mortal* mind. The physical senses, or sensuous nature, I called *error* and *shadow*. Soul I denominated *substance*, because soul alone is truly substantial. God I characterized as individual entity, but his corporeality I denied. The real I claimed as eternal; and its antipodes, or the temporal, I described as unreal. Spirit I called the *reality*, and matter, the *unreality*."

The humdrum sources of this curious amalgam of medicine, metaphysics and religion are to be traced with some exactness. Mr. Eddy's own opinion of her system should first be given. She declared it to be the 'first purely metaphysical system of healing since Apostolic days,' founded on a 'basis so hopelessly original' that all other systems of mental healing are plagiarisms from "the precious book 'Science and Health.'" As to the origin of this volume Mrs. Eddy explains: "I should blush to write of 'Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures' as I have, were it of human origin, and I, apart from God, its author; but as I was only a scribe echoing the harmonies of Heaven in divine metaphysics, I cannot be supermodest of the Christian Science text-book."

But this is anticipating: before the period of printer's ink and money-making there was a period of struggle and fear. Before 'Science and Health' reached its three hundredth edition the rediscoverer of 'divine' healing was making a precarious living as a mental healer by performing 'recuperative incidents.' By 1877, the year of her marriage to Mr. Eddy, she was apparently in a state of panic dread lest she be hoist with her own petard. When the hopeless invalid besought the magnetizer Quimby to visit her in his 'omnipresence,' she evidently believed that mental therapeutics was both local and long distance. This anticipated doctrine of telepathy, by a peculiar sort of feminine logic, was considered a reversible doctrine. By the 'law of opposites' it might do evil as well as good: "A mind taught its power to touch other minds by the transference of thought, for ends of restoration from sickness,—this mind, by misusing its freedom, reaches the degree of total moral de-

pravity. * * * In coming years the person or mind that hates his neighbor will have no need to traverse his fields, to destroy his flocks and herds, and spoil his vines; or to enter his house to demoralize his household; for the evil mind will do this through mesmerism; and not in propria personæ be seen committing the deed. Unless this terrible hour be met and restrained by science, mesmerism, that scourge of men, will leave nothing sacred when mind begs to act under direction of conscious power." It is interesting to note that Mrs. Eddy acknowledged her doctrine of malicious animal magnetism to be a sort of recrudescence of the Salem witchcraft. More pertinent is the evidence of her earlier writings as to her pathological state. "Our readers," she says in the third edition of her text-book, "may feel an interest to learn something of the indications of this mental malpractice, or demonology. So far as we have traced it, it has not outward signs, such as ordinarily indicate mesmerism, and its effects are far more subtle, because of this. Its tendency is to sour the disposition, to occasion great fear of disease, dread and discouragement, to cause a relapse of former diseases, to produce new ones, to create dislikes or indifference to friends, to produce sufferings in the head, in fine, every evil that demonology includes and that metaphysics destroys. If it be students of ours whom he attacks, the mental malpractitioner tries first to produce in their minds a hatred of us, even as the assassin puts out the light before committing his deed."

But to leave this Iliad of woes. The successive stages of adolescent brooding, of trance, of invalidism, of experiments in health cures, of social ostracism had culminated in a state of neural instability and morbid subjectivism. Now the busy objective world relieved the woman from what might have been serious mental impairment. Mrs. Eddy's native ability and Yankee shrewdness had a chance to assert itself, and Boston saved her brain. Soon after the founding of the Church of Christ, Scientist, considerable forethought was shown in the substitution of readers for preachers and in the frequent disbanding of the organization. Personal exposition, private interpretation of the new Scriptures might have led to heresy and schism. Hence the order went forth that the pastors of the

church were not to expound but simply to read 'Science and Health' and always in the latest edition. Then there was the scheme of local decentralization — a scheme, as some one has cynically observed, as effective in preventing disaffection as the constant disbanding of a Boer commando. These measures cannot positively be taken as a test of the mental calibre of the veiled prophetess; they may have emanated from her male advisers. Yet she herself originated one of the most paying of the Christian Science institutions. In 1867 she began by teaching one student Christian Science Mind-healing. From this seed grew the Massachusetts Metaphysical College in Boston, chartered in 1881. This institution for drugless healing was successfully opposed by the regular practitioners, the matter-physicians not the meta-physicians as they were dubbed. It was closed by the so-called anti-diploma law of 1883, 'after accomplishing the greatest work of the ages,' said its originator. It throws some light on the character of the spiritual healer to read her explanation of the size of her fees. "When God impelled me to set a price on Christian Science Mind-healing, I could think of no financial equivalent for the impartation of a knowledge of that divine power which heals; but I was led to name three hundred dollars as the price for each pupil in one course of lessons at my college; a startling sum for tuition lasting barely three weeks. This amount greatly troubled me. I shrank from asking it, but was finally led by a strange Providence to accept this fee. God has since shown me in multitudinous ways the wisdom of this decision."

This period of prosperity needs a further word of description as introductory to the last period in the life of Mother Eddy, the period of practical deification. In this we are not concerned with the mentality of the follower but of the founder. The obligatory purchase by each disciple of the latest expensive edition of the text-book, the sending of five-hundred-dollar cheques for absent treatment may be cause for astonishment. Yet back of the financial there was the psychic element. That Mrs. Eddy has been successful in treating many nervous, non-organic troubles cannot be denied. For all that there are strange contradictions in the business. That she and her

devotees could not inhibit by will power the activities of the wilful microbe is virtually acknowledged in the recent manifesto from Concord; that in case of contagious diseases, and in order to keep within the law, a regular practitioner may be called in. However, the arch-healer still holds to her assertions that she has cured consumption in its last stages, the lungs being mostly consumed; that she has healed carious bones which could be indented with the fingers, while the doctors were preparing their instruments for operation; and that she has healed at one visit a cancer that had so eaten into the flesh of the neck as to expose the jugular vein, so that it stood out like a cord.

Suggestive therapeutics, the mental factor in control of disordered physiological functions, goes far to explain the last stage in the life of the high priestess, her elevation to a more than human plane. Thus a disciple tells how, in a public meeting in 1888, the audience rose after Mrs. Eddy's address; the people were in the presence of the woman whose book had healed them, and they knew it. They came in crowds to her side begging for one hand clasp. A mother held her sick baby up. Others touched the dress of their benefactor. A palsied woman held up her shaking hands and went away healed. The other side of this picture is given by the thaumaturgist herself. "It was not uncommon in my own church for the sick to be healed by my sermon. Many pale cripples went into the church leaning on crutches who went out carrying them on their shoulders."

In subsequent meetings Mrs. Eddy simply appeared on the stage, bowed, and disappeared. In 1889 she withdrew to her native state and her invisibility increased her reputation. Lest by any means this withdrawal should mean a loss of influence, in the absence of the sacred person, the sacred thing was substituted. A modern form of fetish worship arose. There was the Mother Eddy souvenir spoon which the faithful were urged to buy and mark for their inward digestions. There was also the booklet entitled 'Christ and Christmas' in which the author is represented with a halo around her head. Of this one reader asserted, 'looking at the pictures in your wonderful book has healed my child.'

Another step in the process of deification now occurred. Mrs. Eddy claimed inspiration for her utterances. In her 'Miscellaneous Writings' she says, "the works I have written on Christian Science contain absolute truth. * * * Christian Science is the soul of divine philosophy and there is no other philosophy. * * * It is not a search after wisdom, it is wisdom. * * * When God speaks I listen." The final step in this process was the assumption of a superhuman personality. As 'Mother' Eddy she has cautiously but virtually acknowledged herself to be the 'feminine principle of the Messianic expectation.' For example, she says: "Jesus' immortal words were articulated in a dead language. Christian Science was to interpret them and woman to awaken the dull senses. * * * Jesus was the masculine representation of the spiritual idea. The Divine Science was the immaculate idea represented first by man and last by woman. * * * No person can take the place of the author of 'Science and Health,' the discoverer and founder of Christian Science."

Thus far Mrs. Eddy has given this picture of herself: in youth indifferently educated, anæmic and subject to trances; in middle age an unhappy invalid whose condition was ameliorated by the suggested mental treatment of another and by her own strong will; lastly in old age the acknowledged leader of what she styles 'the seventh modern wonder, a mighty system of metaphysical healing.' The task now before us is to compare this system with various contemporary records and show how the more bizarre doctrines of the day worked their devious way into the mind of the New Hampshire seeress. The doctrines may be intrinsically worthless, but their excogitation affords a glimpse of the mental processes of a sectary. Primitive Christian Science, as given in the first edition of 'Science and Health,' was a back-door philosophy. Its sources were provincial, its derivation accidental. To put some method into its madness, in a tentative way its theology may be traced to the Shakers; its therapeutics to the mesmerists; its metaphysics to the homeopaths. That this eclecticism had a dash of New England transcendentalism is true only if we accept Emerson's definition of that movement as the Saturnalia or excess

of faith, wanting the restraining grace of common sense. Furthermore, this summary statement is to be modified by the personal equation. Christian Science was of the feminine-mystic type; it was expounded by the 'Reverend' Mary Baker Glover Eddy. Its method of cure was hieratic; it was 'a pathology of spiritual power, a science to meet sin and uncover it.' Lastly, its philosophy, if such it had, was neurotic. It was a crude immaterialism based on youthful hallucinations and persistent trances.

The whole system was called by its inventor 'hopelessly original.' In truth it was to one ignorant of the elusive courses of abnormal psychic visitations. As to the earlier lucubrations there is no need of charging Mary Baker with downright prevarication. The most unique of her philosophizings appear to have been the product of unconscious mentation, expressed in terms of a perverted emotional sensibility. In two respects she resembled Emerson's description of the heroine of the 'Blithedale Romance'; she was self-deceived by her own phantasms; she possessed the dangerous vertigo nature. Along with this abnormal personality we may expect the concomitants of a more or less subnormal activity. There was a youthful amnesia; there was also a certain subconscious retention of vaguely apprehended fragments of knowledge. Mrs. Eddy's 'spiritual syntax' was said to be due to the fact that Mary Baker's book-knowledge 'vanished like a dream.' At the same time in the production of the sacred writings there was the insistence of the fixed idea, the claim of an impulsion 'by a power not one's own.' That there was here mentation of an automatic order the writer evidently had no inkling. Whether the first pastor of the Church of Christ, Scientist, is to be considered an inspirational speaker depends upon the attitude of the hearer. Nevertheless, her books still bear the ear-marks of inspirational writing, vapid generalization, vain repetition and crude alliteration: 'matter is manifest mortal mind * * * pleasure and pain are mists of mortal mind.' If these tricks of style betray a poverty of normal thought, there were other ways of getting ideas. A half unconscious borrowing of current opinions explains the welter of notions in the early documents. So to

return to origins and to trace the first of the sources of Christian Science.

To the 'unspiritual and ungodly' the Eddyite theology is said to be 'dark and difficult'; to the psychologist it appears but the recrudescence of latent memories, the more or less unconscious transcription of stored impressions. Bearing in mind that during the period of her youthful trances Mary Baker lived near the Shakers, it is to be presumed that she unwittingly imbibed many of the doctrines of this peculiar people. At the outset there are many minor resemblances between 'Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures' and the 'Holy, Sacred and Divine Roll and Book of the United Society of Believers.' There is the same tirade against rationalism and materialism, the same symbolical interpretation of the Bible, the same prediction of a last dispensation of spiritual healing. This manual of the 'Church of Jesus Christ and Mother Ann' also claims that 'Shakerism is the only religious system that teaches Science by Divine Revelation.'

But chapters sixteen and seventeen afford the most striking analogies. They are headed thus: "Christ's second appearing in the female, her office as Spiritual Mother. The Female had never been revealed in her sacred order before this dispensation. * * * Of what was manifested in Mother. In her was displayed my sacred and saving power to search the hearts and penetrate into the souls of such as came before her." Of the Englishwoman Mother Ann Lee's pathological experiences — her trances, visions and distressing ascetic practices, it is unnecessary to speak. Our concern is with the strange reappearance of her doctrines and their incorporation into an American cult. We need only put in brief parallels some of the statements of Shakerism and Eddyism to see how intimately connected they are. To Ann Lee was given 'the endearing term of Mother'; to Mrs. Eddy was given 'the endearing term of Mother.' To Ann Lee, the Woman clothed with the Sun was 'the divine spiritual intuition as representing the Mother in Deity'; to Mrs. Eddy she was 'the spiritual idea or type of God's Motherhood.' To Ann Lee marriage was 'the celibate spiritual union of the sexes'; to Mrs. Eddy it was 'the spiritual unity of male and female.'

Here, it appears to me, is the clue to the curious dualistic notions found in Christian Science. Like Joseph Smith and his 'Book of Mormon,' Mary Baker inadvertently absorbed certain environmental beliefs of the baser sort. In another Shaker compendium are given the grounds of this dualism. "In the last cycle," it was asserted, "Christ would come again to some other individual. This second coming must of necessity have been to a woman because the race is female as well as male."¹

The second source of Christian Science was mesmerism and the allied methods of mental healing. Mrs. Eddy acknowledges as much: 'Take away the theology of mental healing and you take away its science, leaving it a human mind cure that produces the effect of mesmerism.' The writer's familiarity with this black art of the day has been already mentioned. How it reached her is a bit of back stairs history. Animal magnetism proper had been discredited throughout the land by the efforts of Benjamin Franklin, who was one of those signing the Report of the Commission of the French Academy of Sciences. But two generations later it gained a footing in America. It was in 1837 that a Frenchman, Charles Poyen, who had been cured 'mesmerically' of a nervous disorder, published his 'Progress of Animal Magnetism in New England.' In this he tells of his travels in the very towns of Massachusetts, Maine and New Hampshire, where Mrs. Eddy later lectured and practised. That she was conversant with what he taught is likely from the similarity between his six mesmeric phenomena and the elements of her teaching. His 'suspension of the external sensibility' was her 'unconsciousness.' His 'intimate connection with the magnetizer' was her 'mesmeric connection between you both.' His 'influence of the will' was her 'will power.' His 'communication of thought' was her 'absent treat-

¹ The two Shaker books from which I have quoted were written near Mrs. Eddy's home and before her first marriage. She may yet have had other than literary sources to depend upon. Her brother worked in the law office of General Franklin Pierce who was counsel for the Shakers in their trial at Concord in November, 1848. To those who care to go further into the affinities between esoteric Christian Science and Shakerism, the chapter on 'Marriage' in the first edition of 'Science and Health,' should be compared with 'Holy Mother's promises given by Inspiration' as contained in the 'Report of the Examination of the Shakers of Canterbury and Enfield before the New Hampshire Legislature.'

ment.' His 'clairvoyance' was her statement that 'the mesmerized subject sees with closed eyes.' His 'faculty for seizing the symptoms of disease and prescribing the proper remedies for them' was what she meant by 'healing the sick without seeing them.'

In the same year as Poyen's book came Durant's 'Exposition, or a New Theory of Animal Magnetism with a Key to the Mysteries.' In this animal magnetism is declared to be a 'branch of electricity, a science which gives a new life to the religious principle (furnishing unconquerable weapons to Christianity against materialism), creates a new method of pathological investigation and settles therapeutics on a basis hitherto unknown to the medical world.' Within another generation an Americanized form of mesmerism — Dr. Grimes' electro-biology — was known to high and low. The poet Whittier was familiar with it, while Mrs. Eddy wrote in the *Portland Courier* of 1862 as follows: I have employed electro-magnetism and animal magnetism, and for a brief interval have felt relief from the equilibrium which I fancied was restored to an exhausted system, or by a difference of concentrated action, but in no instance did I get rid of a return of all my ailments, because I had not been helped out of the error in which opinions involved me.' This confession has been used by the opponents of Mrs. Eddy in the attempt to prove that she stole her doctrines from the Portland magnetic healer Quimby. At first sight Eddyism might seem to be nothing but Quimbyism. He taught a 'Science of Health'; she wrote 'Science and Health'; both employed the term 'Christian Science.' Again Mrs. Eddy has her 'reversed statements,' propositions which are offered as self-evident because they read backward. She propounds this concatenation: 'There is no pain in Truth, and no Truth in pain; no matter in mind and no mind in matter; no nerve in Intelligence and no Intelligence in nerve; no matter in Spirit and no Spirit in matter.' Similar patent reversibles are to be found in Quimby's 'Science of Man': 'Error is sickness, Truth is health; Error is matter, Truth is God; God is right, error is wrong.'

Finally there are many points of resemblance between Quimby's Portland circular of 1859 and Mrs. Eddy's defence of

his system in 1862. The former alleged, "My practice is unlike all medical practice. * * * I give no medicines, and make no outward applications, but simply sit by the patient, tell him what he thinks is his disease, and my explanation is the cure. If I succeed in correcting his errors, I change the fluids of his system, and establish the truth or health. *The truth is the cure.*"

Mrs. Eddy's apology for her master ran thus: "My operator believed in disease independent of the mind; hence, I could not be wiser than my teacher. But now I see dimly at first, and only as trees walking, the great principle which underlies Dr. Quimby's faith and works; and just in proportion to my light perception of truth is my recovery. This truth which he opposes to the error of giving intelligence to matter and placing pain where it never placed itself, if received understandingly, changes the currents of the system to their normal action; and the mechanism of the body goes on undisturbed. That this is a science capable of demonstration becomes clear to the minds of those patients who reason upon the process of their cure. The truth which he establishes in the patient cures him."

But it is needless to go further into this muddy question of plagiarism. There is no real issue between the Eddyite and the Quimbyite, because the head of each school drew their philosophic trickles from a common source. One of the chief ex-Christian Scientists himself grants that there was a near approach to the theory and practice of Dr. Quimby in the contemporary investigation of John Bovee Dods, who believed that electricity was the connecting link between mind and matter, that disease originated in the electricity of the nerves and can be cured by a change of mind. Turning to the 1851 edition of Dr. Dods' book, the 'Philosophy of Electrical Psychology,' there can be found passages reflected in both the writings of Dr. Quimby and Mrs. Eddy. Thus the former was said to change the 'currents of the system to their normal action,' while the latter asserted that electricity is the essence of mortal mind, the least material form of consciousness.

But to turn the study of Christian Science into a study of comparative literature is a trifle too ponderous. It was from the

vaporings of itinerant magnetizers that Mrs. Eddy sucked in her primary notions. The quacks were drawing full houses in New England at the very time she was on her pilgrimage after health. Hence the 'true history of Mental Science' is to be traced, not to the only original Quimby, but to the indiscriminate practice of mesmerism along in the forties and fifties, and to the crude attempts of Yankee philosophizers to explain the borderland phenomena of hypnoidal states. Some of these crude attempts are to be found in Mrs. Eddy's primitive publications. Thus, she says: "In Mesmerism pain is only a suggested belief. * * * That sight is not in the eye is apparent when the mesmerized subject sees through different portions of the head. * * * Any mental link touching mind, though bodies are leagues apart, is sufficient to reproduce these to the clairvoyant; if the individuals have passed away, their aroma of thought is left, which is mentally scented and described. Mind has senses sharper than the body."

Out of this perception of a real hyperæsthesia with spiritualistic trimmings there was evolved a doctrine of supersensible apperception: "Clairvoyance is mind-reading alone, whereas science in contradistinction to clairvoyance reveals truth through the understanding, by which we gain the principle and explanation of phenomena; these are distinctly opposite stand-points whence to obtain information; and the right interpretation of cause and effect, belongs alone to science. Clairvoyance reaches only the fancied realities of mortal mind, whereas science admits none of these things, but admits truth, outside of mortality and error." This is only the beginning of the author's attempt 'to meet the deep demand of the Science of Psychology.' As steps to her doctrine of immaterialism she cites anything that happened to puzzle her mind, for example, 'the phenomenon of mediumship' and 'the mischievous link between mind and matter, called planchette.'

If in any sense Mrs. Eddy may be said to have transcended the current philosophy below stairs, it was only by kicking over the ladder by which she mounted. Her method of attaining the heights of truth was to spurn the assertions of her contemporaries. As her reminiscences insinuate, theirs was the impo-

sition, hers the demonstration. 'In contradistinction to the 'ism of spiritualism,' she put as her 'scientific basis' of mind: that 'soul gives utterance to itself when sense is silent. Soul sets man free, which explains the phenomena of impromptu poets and uneducated orators.' In brief, the Eddyite theory of knowledge here appears to be an approach to the automatism of inspirational speaking and writing. But this would be a fatal admission; it would fit too closely the sing-song style and alliterative tricks of her who denies ever being a trance medium.

This feminine logic, this happy way of employing many premises and avoiding any conclusions, might be given as a proof of the authenticity of 'Science and Health'; at any rate it makes it unnecessary to linger much longer over it. There are, however, some further biographical details which illustrate the manner in which the female sage of Concord worked up her system of blank immaterialism. Having done with spiritualism and mediumship the author next takes up medicine. "The physical side of this research was aided by hints from homeopathy, sustaining my final conclusion that mortal belief, instead of the drug, governed the action of material medicine. I wandered through the dim mazes of *Materia Medica*, till I was weary of 'scientific guessing,' as it has been well called. I sought knowledge from the different schools—Allopathy, Homeopathy, Hydropathy, Electricity, and from various humbugs—but without receiving satisfaction. I found in the two hundred and sixty-two remedies enumerated by Jahr, one pervading secret, namely, that the less material medicine we have, and the more mind, the better the work is done; a fact which seems to prove the principle of mind-healing. One drop of the thirtieth attenuation of *natrum muriaticum*, in a tumblerful of water, and one teaspoonful of the water mixed with the faith of ages, would cure patients not affected by a larger dose. The drug disappears in the higher attenuations of Homeopathy, and matter is thereby rarefied to its fatal essence, mortal mind; but immortal mind the curative principle remains, and is found to be even more active."

These hints from a diluted Hahnemannianism do not give the earliest steps to the Eddyite adumbration of the really real.

Like a contemporary Shaker with his 'inexpressible something' she obtained in certain mystic experiences her first glimpse of what she called 'the eternal somethingness': "There have always attended my life phenomena of an uncommon order, which spiritualists have called mediumship, but I clearly understand that no human agencies were employed. * * * The recognition of the power of the Spirit came to me through the spiritual sense of the real, and of the unreal and mortal sense of things." These two fragments of experience demand their psychopathic interpretation. As the 'voices not our own' were auditory hallucinations, the 'phenomena of an uncommon order' were mere trances. They were veritable psychoses, yet the ecstatic having but a confused remembrance could with difficulty recall and describe them. Inasmuch as they transcended normal thought and experience they were ineffable. Hence if the ordinary reader desires to grasp the Christian Science epistemology he is informed that, as a literature, Christian metaphysics is hampered by a lack of proper terms in which to express what it means. This prairie-dog way of getting out of difficulties by falling into a hole leads to the other subterranean experience. The second passage concerning the Eddyite theory of spiritual insight has a similar interpretation and an equal significance in the building up of the system. The 'recognition of the unreal sense of things' may be laid to a temporary absence of *conæsthesia*. In this loss of the sense of the compact reality of the bodily organism is to be found the final flimsy basis of this latter-day doctrine of immaterialism.

In tracing the sources of Christian Science by isolating special factors in the psycho-physical development of its founder, her 'Science of Mind, the All-in-all of Spirit' is seen to be in large part the morbid outgrowth of an abnormal personality. Yet this sketch would not be complete without a reference to the saner influences which left their mark on her system. Besides the Shakers, the mesmerists and the homeopaths, the New England transcendentalists indirectly contributed to her 'divine metaphysics.' There is no need of Mrs. Eddy's denying her indebtedness to Emerson. In comparison with her subjective denial of matter, of evil, of sin, of everything that did

not suit her personal fancy, his solipsism was a common-sense dualism. Yet between the two Concord schools of philosophy there was an essential, albeit a perverted resemblance. The transcendentalism of the New Hampshire cult has succeeded for much the same reasons as those given for the success of the Massachusetts cult. The earlier movement has been described as possessing "all the chief qualifications for a gospel. Its cardinal facts were few and manageable. Its data were secluded in the recesses of consciousness, out of the reach of scientific investigation, remote from the gaze of vulgar scepticism; esoteric, having about them the charm of a sacred privacy, on which common sense and the critical understanding might not intrude. Its oracles proceeded from a shrine, and were delivered by a priest or priestess, who came forth from an interior holy of holies to utter them, and thus were invested with an air of authority which belongs to exclusive and privileged truths, that revealed themselves to minds of a contemplative cast. To the pure transcendentalist the soul when awakened utters oracles of wisdom, prophesies, discourses grandly of God and divine things, performs wonders of healing on sick bodies and wandering minds."¹

Certain more formal resemblances between these two movements may be given as final proof of the experiential and eclectic nature of Mrs. Eddy's system. It would be too much to say that she ever reached the great upper air currents of Emersonian idealism, yet in so far as her morbid nature allowed she tried to breathe the atmosphere of supersensible forms of thought, attempted to approach the realm of the absolute right, the unconditioned excellence, the eternally true. How far original Christian Science was influenced by contemporary literature it would be hard to say. These were books of the day which had a sort of anticipated Eddyite terminology. Out of the narrow circle illuminated by the Boston pundits there came such works as James Walker's 'Philosophy of Man's Spiritual Nature,' Frothingham's 'Philosophy as Absolute Science,' Henry James' 'Shadow and Substance.' But a comparison be-

¹O. B. Frothingham, 'Transcendentalism in New England,' New York, 1876, page 303.

tween these works and 'Science and Health' turns into a contrast. From internal evidence alone we may be sure that Mrs. Eddy's only hovered about the penumbra of Cambridge culture. If any literature influenced her mortal mind it must have been a variety of philosophic chap-books such as the anonymous pamphlets 'The Panidea or an Omnipresent Reason,' and 'The New Science or Mental Theology.' Some of these crumbs from the feast of reason were undoubtedly within the reach of the wandering seeress. As she had been an experimenter in systems of mental hygiene, she now became a taster of random idealistic speculations. A twisted transcendentalism gave direction to her religious convictions and the result was that 'immortal sentence' in answer to the question: 'What is the Scientific statement of being?' *Answer.* There is no life, substance, or intelligence in matter; all is mind; there is no matter. Spirit is immortal truth, matter is mortal error. Spirit is the real and eternal, matter the unreal and temporal. Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness; hence, man is spiritual and not material.'