CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

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THE fact that *Christian Science* has of recent months been appearing (and re-appearing) with a considerable degree of regularity in the police court, and before the coroner, goes to prove that ridicule—at least the scientific form of that weapon—does not always kill, in spite of the proverbial truth of proverbs. Orthodox theology has combined with scientific medicine in denouncing its teaching and practice as pernicious—to soul as well as body, to spiritual health as well as corporal. The Bishop of London has publicly denounced it as “a gigantic heresy.” Medical journals of all grades—first-rate, second-rate, and (down to) *n*-th rate—have, from time to time, treated their readers to the perusal of editorial denunciations of its preposterously unscientific theory and the criminally dangerous application thereof. As a wise contemporary points out, it is only when the Christian Scientist is subjected to a legal inquiry that the absolute hollowness of his claims can be exposed. This exposure—and consequential scientific comment—has been exhibited to the public over and over again, and yet *Christian Science* doth still live! The apostle of this cult has survived the repeated denunciations of himself and his belief and his work—as a bogus medical practitioner of the worst type, a danger to the State, and a cruel parasite upon society. And now we have just seen that a medical man of fifteen years’ professional experience resigned his profession about a year ago in favour of the new practice—with the result that he has been placed in the criminal dock on a charge of manslaughter. Possibly the very searching investigation which the case of the late Major Whyte, D.S.O., is sure to receive may have some beneficial effect in the direction of the much-needed enlightenment of public opinion regarding the merits and pretensions of this latter-day panacea for the physical ills of humanity.

When a fully-defined body of doctrine (and practice), such as *Christian Science* proves (or claims) to be, finds widespread acceptance among men, the fact of its doing so may, I think, fairly be held to constitute undeniable proof that its introduction

has filled a previously existent vacancy in the domain of human opinion. Intellectual, as well as atmospheric, currents are continuously flowing—their unceasing restlessness being apparently necessary to prevent hopeless contamination of their respective media. Both kinds also vary—with apparent similarity—in force and area of distribution: from the Zephyr breath which barely serves to waft the perfume, and cause audible agitation of the strings of the Æolian harp, to the scorching suffocation conveyed by the sandy simoom, and the explosive violence of the irresistible tornado. But of whatever type and degree—cyclonic or anti-cyclonic, breezy, gusty, stormy, or thunder-charged—their existence is surely demonstrative of the pre-existence of an area of unstable equilibrium, as their direction is of its locality. Their momentum forms a true index of the (tendency to) vacuity—Nature's pet aversion—which had existed in the space towards which they flow. Now the development and persistence of the Christian Science current of opinion may, I think, be held to have surely proved two facts: (1) the survival into our own generation of the pre-scientific belief in—and even hankering after—the supernatural and the miraculous; and (2) the (at least, partial) failure of contemporary medicine and surgery to satisfy the demands and secure the complete confidence of the members of the suffering section of humanity and their confidential advisers. Its existence in this age of vaunted enlightenment has awakened thoughtful observers to recognition of the conservative pertinacity with which the primitive—very characteristically human—pathways of thought are still trodden by a large proportion of the human race, in presence of—and, indeed, directly in spite of—the influences of (quasi-) miraculous scientific conquest, and universally diffused education. It has demonstrated the survival of the point of view from which the inhabitants of pre-Christian Judæa regarded the visitation of disease as the entrance of an unfriendly spirit. It shows an unmistakable revival of some, at least, of the modes of thought which prevailed in mediæval times, when the victims of prolonged disease nearly always endeavoured to avail themselves of the knowledge and power which were almost exclusively confined to the Catholic hierarchy—in those centuries when murder and robbery, with suitable correlated amusements and minor occupations, formed the life-long business of monarchs and aristocrats: when the fact of a non-member of one of the

learned professions being able to sign his own name was regarded as satisfactory proof that he was *not* a "gentleman"; when the scientific culture of the healing art was almost exclusively maintained by the Irish and the Jews, and its "unqualified practitioners" included the whole motley host of magicians, astrologers, herbalists, witches, and gypsies. In those good old days of the identity of might and right, the destruction of life (and appropriation of property) formed the recognised profession of men of "honour and dignity": the saving thereof, the relief of pain and the prolongation of human existence, constituted the occupation of menials, who were despised even when most skilled and honourable, except in the hours of physical suffering; and pretenders, often criminal and always ignorant, whose incurable moral strabismus probably prevented them from distinguishing between right and wrong. "Times have changed" since then; so have "things," and opinions and modes of thought: very many, indeed, but not all. Education and even evolution have left the basic features of humanity very much as they were on leaving the Garden of Eden. And I would suggest that in presence of the persistent belief in the miraculous—in spite of all the revelations of physical science—and obvious dissatisfaction with the results of our most up-to-date practice, in presence of our complete familiarity with pathogenic microbes and our almost startling dexterity in the synthesis of the most important alkaloids, the leaders and teachers of our profession should more seriously recognise the significance of the existing facts of the broadcast diffusion of the methods of Christian Science, investigate their actual sources, and devise the most efficient means for counteracting and neutralising their pernicious effects.

It is very true that the doctrine and its applications have been repeatedly attacked and subjected to vigorous denunciation and copious ridicule—the latter I have thought, in most cases, of an exceedingly clumsy type. The editorial critic has often seemed to me to discuss his subject in a tone of too loftily-removed distance; he appeared to scorn the idea of coming to close quarters. The man of *science* in the pride of his knowledge, actual or fancied, has usually ignored the fact that Christian Science, if not exactly "scientific," is, most assuredly very human; an excrescence, indeed, and an unhealthy one; but a specimen which has unquestionably grown on the spiritual side of the nature of *homo sapiens*. He has also, so far as I can remember,

ignored the significant truth that the existence of this doctrine and practice forms an index of the fact that his own claims have been badly discounted : that they have been found wanting in some important essentials ; and that he should regard the promulgation of the new therapeusis as a warning to set his own house in order, re-furnish his armoury, brighten his weapons. man all his defences, extend his outposts, and vigorously insist on the watchfulness of all his sentries. In attacks on the pernicious folly of Christian Science, logical methods cannot be very effectively applied, for the necessary evidence which can be obtained only from the results of simultaneous test and control experiments is never available. Foul-mouthed abuse, delivered with sledge-hammer weight and force, may relieve the mental feelings of its manufacturer and dispenser ; but it will hardly convince the thinking part of the community, or enlist the sympathies of the more refined. The *ad hominem* argument, in some of its shapes, must be the principal weapon of attack in such cases. But much skill is required to make its application effective ; and this does not seem to have been very conspicuously displayed in the columns of the orthodox editorials of our contemporaries. The soul-stinging irony of a Pascal or a Gibbon, which set every individual member of their respective hosts of opponents simultaneously writhing and howling all over Christendom, requires something approaching the skill and culture of one of those literary Titans to produce and apply it with telling results. The employment of scathing sarcasm, when prepared with the razor-edged subtlety of a Voltaire, or the Nasmyth momentum of a Huxley, would surely produce earthquake effects on the defences of Christian Science ; but, unhappily, we miss the powers of those wizards at the roll-call of the representatives of the "inner circle" of the science of the opening years of the twentieth century.

The glaring fact is that the feverish haste for immediate results is so great in the present generation that nothing is to be learned that will not pay ; no intellectual ballast is to be taken on board ; no superfluous culture to be sought for ; no effort wasted in the acquisition of attainments which are not immediately negotiable in cash. Such, I must regretfully indicate, is the programme of a mechanical, not of an intellectual, generation. It calls for the abolition of Greek teaching among the future votaries of science. This means extinction of the view of the original

source of all the literature and the most subtle and profound thought to be found diffused throughout the whole of Western Europe. Such influences go to make the possession of muscular vigour a more important factor in the attainment of eminence in a (formerly) learned profession than that of knowledge and skill. It very naturally has the effect of making the professional gentleman who has attained the goal of his ambition without a knowledge of Greek (or Latin, or even native English) fail, as did Dr. Primrose's casual acquaintance, to see the good of that language.

The much vaunted triumphs of reason over faith, which are assumed to constitute the special glory of our over-journalised generation, assuredly require attention in some of those aspects which have most completely escaped critical notice. A recent historian of rationalism assures his readers that he would not bestow on such an "unnecessary and thankless task as the refutation of theological error" even so much intellectual exertion as would be included in "the labour of a week or a day." And he further informs them that: "the true liberation must come from the enlargement of mind by wider and more accurate views of the natural universe. As this takes place, the mediæval beliefs must drop away of themselves." The dogmatic self-satisfaction which illuminated the inner consciousness of the writer of these sentences, as he contemplated the solidity of the foundations of his own (home-made ?) opinions, must, I feel sure, be admitted by all. Yet in the face of the deluging torrents of such volumes and such opinions we have the fact that the lineal representatives of the abused and derided mediæval theology are not merely holding their own, but are actually winning all along the line. Their continuity of traditional knowledge and experience, their unequalled organisation, and their cosmopolitan intercommunication combine to furnish the most reliable and adaptable acquaintance with the undulatory (or circular, or irregularly curvilinear) movements of that phenomenally unstable entity—the human understanding, individual and collective. And all the contemporary history of the whole period of our own generation—and, even more emphatically, of the twentieth century section of the same—goes to contradict and disprove the confident view of the assured and absolute (progressive) conquest of the domain of the spiritual and emotional in human nature by the purely materialistic and utilitarian. A very wise

German physician of the past generation defined *neuralgia* to be "a cry of the nerves for healthy blood." This view, and the words in which it was so very happily and concisely expressed, can, I venture to assert, be applied with a very suitable adaptation of metaphor to many of the innumerable excrescences of unpruned opinion and dogmatic belief which at present cloud our intellectual atmosphere; and very specially, I would say, to that of Christian Science—which at present looms so prominently above the mental—and medical—horizon. The conspicuous growth of this unhealthy plant appears to me to represent an agonising appeal to the Invisible Power which—so far as I have been able to ascertain—every human being possesses an innate tendency, however deeply encrusted by negligence or soiled by circumstances, to make an object of adoration; or to which he would, at least, attribute undefinable and unlimited powers. In other terms, I regard it as an outcry of the collective emotions of the human spirit against the undoubted tendency of the materialistic "science" and mechanical "progress" of the present day to (reduce or) improve man into a very efficient calculating machine, and to denounce—or, at least, depreciate—his worship of any spiritual concept or physical image of omnipotence, other than that represented by the "almighty dollar."

A free-thinking and philosophical fellow-countryman of ours wrote, a long time ago, a very interesting—and, in many aspects, a very original—volume, "Christianity as old as the Creation," a title which lucidly enunciated the thesis which the author had undertaken to expound and defend. It formed one of the earlier landmarks of the modern rationalistic movement in the embryonic era of its growth. And as rationalism appears to form the opposing reflex of religious thought and culture, it has pretty surely some considerable claims to an antiquity of existence as remote of origin as the earliest collective co-ordination of human thought. And a very interesting biological feature of the life-history of rationalism is that its existence is essentially a parasitic one (perhaps better described as saprophytic); for its activity—as well as its original genesis, birth, and development—depends on the prominence of the position occupied in the public mind by the superstitions (or religions, or faiths) whose domains and strongholds are the avowed objects of its attacks. When victorious, as it usually appears to be, or persuades itself that

it really is, over a certain hydra-headed combination of obstinately vital beliefs, it proceeds to lay to its soul, and to the souls of its militant band of critical iconoclasts, the very flattering unction that it has given the final death-blow to the serpentine spirit of superstition. But if rationalism appears in the season of its declared triumph to be endowed with the strength and the weapons of a Hercules, we most assuredly have (and this item of history has never failed to repeat itself) its opponent demonstrating its characteristically pythonic nature by displaying to the full the tortuous, and unexpected, and self-renewing, vitality which distinguished his proverbially many-headed opponent. Were the hydra of superstition to cease to reproduce its heads, the occupation of rationalism would be gone; its inspiration being removed, it would collapse for want of inflating material. The fact that the rationalist, after having successfully (as well as scientifically and *brilliantly*) demolished the defences and exterminated the garrisons of so many faiths and opinions, has no positive scheme of the Cosmos which he can utilise to occupy the vacancies so created, is the very significant cause of the hopelessly unsatisfying nature of his final results. His interminable task, like that of Sisyphus, has always obliged him to begin over again immediately after having reached, in apparent triumph, the appointed goal of his scientific and argumentative ambition.

This characteristic feature, and the facts therewith connected and thereon dependent, have been very demonstratively repeated in the course of the rapid and feverish progress of the past half century and the commencing years of the present. Yet it does not seem to have proved to the average (intelligent and educated) citizen so clearly as it might have done that the craving of the human spirit for faith, or belief in the invisible and unknowable, is one which cannot be completely stifled—any more than can hunger, which was grafted by an over-seeing Providence as an essential agency in the preservation of the individual; and sexual desire, which was bestowed for the securing of the maintenance of the species. However frequently, and remotely, religion may have appeared to alter its central basis of support down through the centuries of recorded time, it has, in all the ages and nationalities, displayed sufficient adaptability to the spiritual cravings of the peoples to whom its message was being delivered to enable it to cast off the accidents

which had for a period obscured the features and disguised the actual form of the body of its doctrine. History has repeatedly demonstrated the fact that an opinion (or group of opinions) which was unsuccessfully ventilated or ruthlessly crushed down by one generation may sweep over the next with the force and velocity of a tidal wave. The late Mr. Lecky keenly appreciated the importance of the determining influence of the *intellectual atmosphere* in the growth and developmental expansion of opinion; and Mr. Balfour also accepts the claims of the same meteorological power (with the stage-name and surname of "psychological climate") as one of the most important factors in modifying the attitude of an epoch towards the beliefs and doctrines of the past. The eye of the philosophic student of the wavy modifications of human opinion perceives that the surface phenomena of arguments and definitions are almost always the symptoms and pretexts, very rarely, indeed, if ever, the causes, of any far-reaching changes. They really derive their force of movement and efficiency of application from their adaptability to, and conformity with, the mental habits and aptitudes of those to whom they are addressed; and, in accordance with this fundamental fact, we find that reasoning which is rejected by one generation as utterly flat and unprofitable, if not actually stale, is greedily absorbed by the next, whose intellectual leaders may be heard to trumpet its triumphs in tones of enthusiastic applause. The germs—mentally pathogenic, as the rationalist regards them—of so-called Christian Science have been floated broadcast throughout the intellectual atmosphere. And their fate has been truly scriptural. Those which fell upon the solid rock of genuine reason and physical knowledge inevitably perished for want of sustenance; those which fell by the wayside, over which hovered the rationalistic and sceptical birds of passage were swiftly devoured—although, probably, never well digested—by the winged denizens of the gaseous envelope of the intellectual globe; while those which happened to alight on the naturally fertile, but neglected and uncropped, earthy soil of the vicinity immediately rooted and brought forth a hundred-fold.

The frequently disappointing results of medicine and surgery have, very naturally, had the effect of discounting the confidence of that advanced—and very representative—section of the members of the tax-paying community who insist upon seeing

and feeling before believing ; or, at least, before registering their beliefs by acting on their private opinions. The limits, actual and possible, of true scientific therapeutics should, accordingly, always be defined with perfect distinctness on the visual horizon of the intellect of every true physician. As this circle widens, with the progress of true knowledge, its expansions must be familiar as watch-hand rotations ; it is only the healer who so scrutinises the boundaries of his heritage who can be regarded as a true representative of the one profession which was practised and blessed by the Saviour of Mankind during His own pilgrimage on earth ; and it is only by the hands of such ever-watchful guardian members of our profession that its field of usefulness to suffering humanity can be defended from the encroachments of blasphemous pretenders to divine enlightenment and mysterious—if not miraculous—powers of healing. In furtherance of this noble missionary work, we should all be up and doing ; the consciousness of conformity with the dictates of the truest faith and the highest sense of duty should ever be regarded by the true physician as his best reward—even in a generation in which the muscularity of a “learned” profession scores higher than its intellectuality, and a complete somersault on the political tight-rope secures the branding of the acrobatic healer with indelible “eminence,” as judiciously and exclusively as it did for the ambitious politician at the Court of the Empire of Lilliput. It is only by the collective exertions of a garrison of physicians fully armed with all the weapons of true science and true faith that the border inroads of such “inspired” healers as the apostles of Christian Science can be permanently checked.

To every earnest and inquiring soul concerned with this, and other similar questions, there is permanently present the consciousness that behind and beneath all such lurks the unchanging moral of the vanity of human aspirations, and the failure of all the innumerable voyagers and explorers to localise the mental and moral geography of the Atlantis of immutable *truth*. *Justice* and *happiness*, the other great objects of the pursuit of the philosopher and philanthropist, seem to have proved equally successful in evasion of the grasp of the most industrious and enthusiastic of their would-be captors. Recent political history well shows that poverty, misery, official corruption, social injustice, and unlimited discontent may be found to flourish and extend their branches as widely in the most advanced democracy

as in the most absolute monarchy. So do their associated results and consecutive consequences, physical and moral. The materialism and utilitarianism of recent times have continuously aimed—and with a considerable proportion of success—at the weeding (or stamping) out of all the higher emotions, as their results were but visionary and unpractical—and, accordingly, unmarketable. It was felt by the apostles of these modern doctrines that the influence of the passions and emotions of the human soul acted as a permanent (and sometimes explosive) drag on the wheels of the human calculating machine, while no saleable commodities could safely be generated from their activity. In order fully to utilise the value of these very enlightening views and discoveries it became inevitably a matter of necessity that superstition—and even its most disciplined representative, orthodox religious belief—must be extinguished, as otherwise unsurmountable obstacles in the paths of “scientific” progress and materialistic “success.” Passion of every kind must be completely eliminated; all emotions must be absolutely controlled; faith must submit to physical tests. This programme has been worked with increasing demonstrativeness—and loudly-announced advertisement of results—during the latter half of the past century and the opening years of the present, and the discouraging result is that current events furnish an unquestionable demonstration of the depressing fact that in presence of the seven-league strides of physical science, and its continuously successful inroads on the mysteries of nature, the human race, as a whole (and perhaps individually), still remains unsatisfied: while the members of its most “advanced,” and most materialistic, sections are probably the most miserable of all. The emotional longings for, and aspirations after, “things above” still stubbornly refuse to submit to extermination or eviction; the hankering after the mysterious, the unknowable, and the unattainable—the human characteristics, in fact, which most definitely distinguish man from brute—still survive in the human spirit, and retain their vital and moral influence in the human heart. Their attempted suppression leads to recurrences of volcanic explosion—in type and form sometimes ridiculous, or even preposterous; sometimes painfully insane; and sometimes horribly criminal. It may, indeed, be said to have furnished the mainspring of the most characteristic form of criminality of our generation. It is surely short-sighted to deny (? not to

see) the effects of the passions and emotions on the circulation—and, consequently, on nutrition—in the human body. The pallor of fear, the glow of hope, the flush of anger, the jaundiced hue of jealousy, are surely significant indexes of the respective influences. The fact that such are usually transitory causes most people to ignore the permanence of their effects when unusually prolonged. It is not merely useless, it is positively mischievous, in the interests of true enlightenment, to deny that wonderful—apparently “miraculous”—cures have been obtained by Christian Science. They most assuredly have been at Lourdes—scoffing materialism notwithstanding. One of the specially vivid reminiscences of the boyhood of the writer of this article is one of a glorious summer morning, on which two bathers were drowned in Sligo Bay. The place was a very crowded resort, and everybody flew to the scene. An anæmic lad, of about fifteen, was *running* about the strand in a state of great excitement. On speaking to him, he told me that he had come from the country to the sea-side with the hope of benefiting his *lameness*, and pointed to a *crutch and stick*, at some distance, without which he had never been able to walk for eighteen months before. The cumbrous aids to pedestrianism were not resumed; the shock of witnessing the fatal accident effected a permanent cure. Earthquake vibrations have wrought wondrous cures in certain neurotic cases.

Medical men should surely recognise the position, with its manifold obvious bearings and collateral influences, and contribute—as, I venture to suggest, they readily can—to the true higher education of the public. As members of a learned and trusted profession, their opinions will, if conveyed with the skill and illustrative knowledge which they should be able to utilise, exercise a broad and deep collective influence on those of the general community. It is also of greater interest and importance to us than to most sections of the public to keep continuously in touch with the leaders of the advanced guard of thought. And the confidence of the heads of families in their trusted medical consultant gives him opportunity and influence in the formation and continuous culture of collective opinion on the more profound subjects of human speculation, which is second to none but those of the accepted spiritual adviser: and the special facilities afforded by the necessity of his presence in times of the deepest trouble and anxiety offer the very best

seed-time for the implantation of those germs of opinion which should produce the giant growths of the future forest of human thought. It should always be remembered that the most active intellects and most naturally fertile imaginations must inevitably produce the most mischievous weeds of opinion and consequent practice, when grossly neglected and viciously cultivated; as the rankest pasture field produces the largest thistles, and the sweetest wine yields the sharpest vinegar. And as surely true as the latter familiar proverb is the fact that unsatisfied aspirations and disappointed hopes have created: on the one hand, a cosmopolitan brotherhood of bomb-throwing *anarchists*; on the other, a devoted crusade of *Christian Science* healers!

VOYAGES D' ÉTUDES MÉDICALES AUX STATIONS HYDROMINÉRALES
ET CLIMATIQUES DE FRANCE.

THE eighth Voyage d' Études Médicales (V. E. M.) will take place from the 1st to the 12th of September, 1906. It will comprise a visit to the health-resorts of Savoy and Dauphiné: Hauteville (sanatorium), Evian-les-Bains, Thonon, Saint-Gervais, Chamonix, Annecy, Aix, Marlioz, Le Revard, Challes, Salins-Moutiers, Brides, Pralognan, Allevard, Bouquéron, La Motte, Uriage. The V. E. M. of 1906—like the seven previous medical tours—has been placed under the scientific guidance of Dr. Landouzy, Professor of Clinical Medicine in the Faculty of Medicine of Paris, who will deliver at each health-resort an Address on its indications and applications in hydromineral medication (treatment by mineral waters). A reduction of half-price in fares on all railways will be allowed to members of the party from their place of residence to the rendezvous at Lyons. Foreign physicians will benefit by a similar reduction of fare from the railway station at which they set foot on French soil. A like reduction of fare will be allowed, at the end of the tour, at Uriage, for the return journey to the railway station from which each member originally started. From Lyons to Uriage, inclusive contract fare: 300 francs, for railway, carriages, hotels, board, conveyance of luggage, and gratuities. For all detailed information application should be made to Dr. Carron de la Carrière, 2 Rue Lincoln, Paris (eighth arrondissement), or to Dr. Jouaust, 19 Rue du Colisée, Paris (eighth arrondissement). Entries will be received up to August 15, 1906, at latest.