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MARY BAKER G. EDDY: A PREPARATION,
A DISCOVERY AND A CULMINATION

G. Elaine Johnson
Senior Thesis
May 28, 1964

PREFACE

In a study of any religion, particularly Christian Science, it is difficult to find unbiased and historical source material. Therefore the student must accept prejudiced views and make his own judgment on value and authenticity. In such a manner the research and execution of this paper have been completed. Although personal opinions have been included, they have been based on the material presented by both advocates of and antagonists to Mrs. Eddy.

To determine the scope of this paper, it was necessary to find the culmination of her discovery before the actual organization of her church began to form. Although there is a great deal of interesting material about her early life, her doctrines, and her church, only the period of her discovery has been taken up as the subject for this paper.

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CHAPTER I

PREPARATION AND DISCOVERY

By a single word, uniqueness, the history of Mary Baker Eddy and the faith she fostered can be portrayed. An extraordinarily forceful personality, a persistence, and her convictions have characterized her strange childhood, her miraculous discovery, her surprising following, and her magnetic influence. Considered the most remarkable woman of her times or perhaps of any time, Mrs. Eddy had either the nobility and devotion or the egotistical determination to hurdle obstacles, overcome criticism, and survive rebellions in order to obtain her victory. Historians who studied the woman and her work have sharply differed on the nature of her motivation, but the obvious reality of her achievement cannot be denied. Though her discovery has raised controversy and her authority has verged on being tyrannical, her claim as founder and leader of the Christian Science Church has become a safely-accepted fact. Why she led her followers to a formation of such a unique and controversial organization has never been satisfactorily resolved for both critics and converts; how she accomplished her objectives has likewise remained somewhat in question; but what she planted as a seed, nurtured, and carefully attended to full bloom has not been denied.

For her intended role as the powerful, guiding figure in a highly unusual religious sect, Mary Morse Baker was prepared and molded by her childhood and early adult life. Recalling her days of preparation, Mrs. Eddy dwelled on every juvenile fantasy and unusual event, all of which

acquired an added significance to her and her followers. With an increasing awareness of her place as an agent of a great revelation, she reconstructed her origins and youthful growth in a dream world of pleasant surroundings, precocious learning, and miraculous messages and healings. Always of a suggestive nature, her tales became the only reality and truth, thus she rejected any variance on her own life story.¹ "I briefly declare that nothing has occurred in my life's experience which, if correctly narrated and understood, could injure me."² In addition, Mrs. Eddy stated that should the claims of her critics be true, all the more power and praise was due to Christian Science, which raised a pathetic invalid to a position of esteem and leadership.³ With this positive selectivity, her memory excluded well-documented stories of hysteria, quibblings, helplessness, and angry temper.⁴

Although she admitted her condition of frailty and spinal disorder, Mary nevertheless carefully built her image as a person set apart. Ancestry seemed to be the first step in her quest for recognition. Though challenged, she clung tenaciously to her claim of lineage from

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1. Edwin Franden Dakin, Mrs. Eddy, The Biography of a Virginal Mind (New York, 1930), 365.
 2. Mary Baker Eddy, The First Church of Christian Scientist and Miscellany (Boston, 1913), 298.
 3. Ibid., 316.
 4. Georgine Milmine, "Mary Baker G. Eddy: The Story of her Life and the History of Christian Science, Six Years of Wandering," McClure's Magazine, XXVIII (April, 1907), 612. Henceforth any article from this series will be cited by its author, subtitle, and publication.

Scottish nobility.⁵ As further evidence of her peculiar destiny, she certified that at the age of twelve, when applying for membership, she debated questions of doctrine with the elders in the Congregational Church. While the records stated her entrance into the church at age seventeen, she never recognized her error.⁶

Despite her testimony of unique understanding and advanced knowledge, Mary Baker produced no visible evidence of future promise. From the time of her first marriage to 1862, her activities consisted of the ordinary happenings, happiness, and heartbreak of any mortal life. The bride of George Washington Glover in 1843 shortly became his widow, a pathetically dependent creature who was cared for like a baby.⁷ After this marriage left her only an existence of drudgery and sensitivity, she became attracted to current interest and apparently dabbled in mesmerism and spiritualism by acting as a medium and trying to cultivate clairvoyant powers.⁸ As with all unfavorable accounts, she either explained away this accusation as being a misinterpretation of her unusual powers or else flatly denied any connection with spiritualism by saying, "I believe in no ism."⁹ Likewise her unfortunate marriage and divorce

5. Mary Baker Eddy, Retrospection and Introspection (Boston, 1909), 1.

6. Dakin, Mrs. Eddy, 8.

7. Ibid., 16-18.

8. Ibid., 24-25.

9. Eddy, Retrospection and Introspection, 28.

to Daniel Patterson was surrounded by a conflict of statements. Neighborhood accounts of her as a neurotic and hysterical wife were refuted by the Christian Science founder and her biographers, who claimed that their final separation and divorce were through no fault of her own, but were caused by his unfaithfulness and his unaccepting, materialistic attitude toward her revelations.¹⁰

As the aura of divinity surrounded Mrs. Eddy in her period of greatness, her words and her works were accepted by students wholly and without reservation. Emotionally geared to strange phenomena, she told fantastic stories of her first miraculous healings. Supposedly she acquired the reputation of a neighborhood saint and miracle-worker, by subduing a dangerous mad man and by healing a small child of blindness.¹¹ Each recollection took on a spiritual interpretation, elements of self-glorification, and added significance as stepping stones to a destined revelation. Even in the years before her dramatic discovery, she had already begun to consider the possibility of mental causation and cure in disease. As she explained, "During twenty years prior to my discovery I had been trying to trace all physical effects to a mental cause."¹²

From her background in a highly religious family and by her own searches in the New Testament, Mary found similarities in the apostolic

10. Mary E. Ramsay, Christian Science and its Discoverer (Boston, 1935), 44.

11. Sibyl Wilbur, The Life of Mary Baker Eddy (Boston, 1913), 72-73.

12. Eddy, Retrospection and Introspection, 24.

healing and her own experiences. She was not ready to receive the divine revelation for which she had been so long prepared.¹³ In the interlude between marriages and her discovery, the perennial invalid departed from Dr. Vail's Hydropathic Institute to search for help in Portland, Maine, where a Dr. Phineas P. Quimby was established as mental practitioner. Later heated controversy developed between these two figures, and her visits raised questions of authorship and originality of the concept of Christian Science. Whether by his powers or her own volition, Mary was significantly improved after her visits and publicly recognized her cure. Yet health was not to be her normal state of existence, for after the death of Quimby in 1866, a serious fall on the ice resulted in unconsciousness and a state of injury which seemed close to the point of death.¹⁴ Her own diagnosis of an extremely grave condition was not verified by the attending doctor, who listed her symptoms only as a state of nervousness and severe pain. As she recounts the story, she amazed everyone, including herself, by a miraculous and immediate recovery.¹⁵ In a moment of truth with her Bible at hand, she received the message from God and arose as an apparition from the sick room.

In the year 1866 I discovered the Science of Metaphysical Healing, and named it Christian Science. God had been graciously fitting me, during many years, for the reception of a final

13. Wilbur, Life of Mary Baker Eddy, 72.

14. Eddy, Retrospection and Introspection, 24.

15. Milmine, "The Quimby Controversy," McClure's Magazine, XXVIII (March, 1907), 510.

revelation of the absolute Principle of Scientific Mind-healing.¹⁶

Now possessed with a principle, a struggle with her own confusions and with the world had begun. "My discovery . . . set my thoughts to work in new channels, and led up to my demonstration of the proposition that Mind is All, and matter is naught, as the leading factor in Mind-Science."¹⁷ After discovery, demonstration became imperative to the furtherance and formulation of a powerful, but nebulous theory.

16. Mary Baker Eddy, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures (Boston, 1897), 1.

17. Ibid., 3.

CHAPTER II

THE QUIMBY CONTROVERSY

Essential to the doctrine and nature of the Christian Science faith, as it struggled for acceptance and prominence, was the undisputed message and position of Mary Baker Eddy as its discoverer and founder. To consider a possible precursor was to undermine its basic foundation and reason for existence. Therefore, the claims made for Phineas Parkhurst Quimby by his descendants and followers presented the gravest challenge to the leadership of Mrs. Eddy and the whole nature of her church. With vigorous denials and accumulated affidavits, the Christian Scientists sought to discredit Quimby and to stabilize their own position. In a church where the members were instructed against free discussion and contradictory messages, there could be no question of the verity of their leader's word. Yet the matter has remained in controversy with well-founded evidence available to demonstrate the claims of Quimby as founder of metaphysical healing.

Advocates of the old practitioner declared that he discovered the mental idea of disease, that he healed Mrs. Patterson under that method and concept, and that he undertook to instruct her and pass on his theories and writings. According to the Quimby manuscripts, all disease, symptoms, and cures were products of the mind; man only needed the proper faith to get well.¹⁸ As a patient in Portland in 1862 and 1864 and

18. Milmine, "Mrs. Eddy and Phineas Parkhurst Quimby," McClure's Magazine, XXVIII (February, 1907), 340-341.

as a later admirer of the doctor, the Christian Science claimant publicly and privately conceded her debt and lauded his praises. In a letter to the Portland Courier on November 7, 1862, she wrote of Quimby's ideas as "this truth which he opposes to the error of giving intelligence to matter."¹⁹ Away from his presence, she wrote letters to her physician requesting "absent treatment" in illness and declared her moments of strength to be "by the help of the Lord (Quimby)."²⁰ If her debt was only for his kindnesses and temporary healing, as she later said it was, her gratitude would not have extended to the incorporation of his teaching and manuscripts into her own. With emotions running high at the death of Quimby in February, 1866, the amateur poetess addressed a poem entitled, "Lines on the Death of Dr. P. P. Quimby, Who Healed with the Truth that Christ Taught in Contradistinction to All Isms."²¹ Credits given to another so freely and profusely in the 1860's were later to be dogmatically claimed for herself.

Yet Mrs. Patterson seemed to be not only a patient but a minor prodigy of the locally famous practitioner. "Mrs. Eddy explicitly says that the system she was then teaching had been practised 'by one individual who healed me, Dr. Quimby of Portland, Me.'"²² Contradictions to

19. Ibid., 348.

20. Milmine, "The Quimby Controversy," McClure's Magazine, XXVIII (March, 1907), 518.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid., 514.

statements like this one of 1871 have never been satisfactorily justified except by the scapegoat of mesmeric influence, which she supposedly was under when she gave recognition to Quimby.²³ Not only the elements of Christian Science doctrine but also the terminology originated with the gentleman doctor, who called his discovery "Science of Health" and sometimes even "Christian Science."²⁴

To answer any doubt about authorship, it would seem that a look at the manuscripts could resolve the question. Without copyright or careful handling, the unpublished works were subject to alteration and appropriation. According to Mrs. Eddy, the unintellectual, incompetent doctor asked her advice and requested her corrections. With a commanding tone, she wrote to an early follower, "Now dear one, I want you to tell this man . . . that I used to take his scribblings and fix them over for him and give him my thoughts and language which as I understood it, were far in advance of his."²⁵ Refusing to grant such an affidavit, Mrs. Sarah Crosby had copied lectures for Mrs. Patterson in 1877. "These lectures were in all material respects the same as I had myself been taught by said Dr. Quimby."²⁶ During her years of wandering before 1875, Mrs. Patterson apparently spoke often of Quimby and used his writing to

23. Ibid., 523.

24. Horatio W. Dresser, "Christian Science and its Prophetess: The Facts in the Case," The Arena, XXI (May, 1899), 537-550.

25. Milmine, "The Quimby Controversy," McClure's Magazine, XXVIII (March, 1907), 523.

26. Ibid., 522.

teach her science, which was at that time devoid of religious connection. Using a manuscript entitled, "Extracts from Doctor P. P. Quimby's Writings," she added her own preface, interlineations, and oral instruction, thereby providing a basis for her claims as the true creator.²⁷ Gradually incorporating her additions into the body of the text to produce treatises under her own name, she copyrighted a pamphlet in 1870 called, "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."²⁸ Eventually the image of Quimby became to the rising founder of Christian Science a haunting spectre of her fallibility and dependence.

With each struggle for loyalty and authority, Mary increasingly pushed Quimby into the background and repudiated her debt. Recognition would necessarily invalidate her claim of divine inspiration, therefore independence was declared with expediency and without regard for correct acknowledgement.²⁹ In order to discredit a rebellious student in 1872, Mrs. Patterson abandoned any form of physical manipulation and forbid her followers to continue its use. In turn the old practitioner was included in the condemnation of mesmerists and manipulators. Likewise

27. Milmine, "Six Years of Wandering," McClure's Magazine, XXVIII (April, 1907), 623.

28. "Editorial Announcement," McClure's Magazine, XXVIII (December, 1906), 112.

29. Milmine, "The Quimby Controversy," McClure's Magazine, XXVIII (March, 1907), 524.

her own achievement as a writer provided her with the self-confidence to avoid any mention of Quimby ideas after the publication of Science and Health in 1875.³⁰ Without a qualm Mrs. Eddy continued in the 1880's to blatantly contradict earlier statements, such as the 1862 Portland Courier article which had declared his healings were not spiritualism or animal magnetism, but the correct and scientific truth. Nevertheless, as editor of the Christian Science Journal in 1887, she asserted that he "treated us magnetically" in a manner which was "hopelessly incorrect."³¹ Some plateau of compromise must be available between these two absolutes, yet without a full hearing from the Eddy point of view, any judgment would lack historical impartiality.

Despite her testimonies and proclamations of the 1860's, the struggling founder later denied Quimby his place as a precursor in Christian Science. Her acclamation of him as her healer and teacher was granted in a moment of temporary relief and undue gratitude. Failing at first to recognize the true source of cure to be her own faith and understanding, she declared in retrospection that her benefactor had "signally failed in healing her case."³² With no theory of mind versus matter, his writings on the subject of healing consisted of descriptions of

30. "Editorial Announcement," McClure's Magazine, XXVIII (December, 1906), 11h.

31. Josephine Curtis Woodbury, "Christian Science and its Prophetess: The Book and the Woman," The Arena, XXI (May, 1899), 55h.

32. Mary Baker G. Eddy, Miscellaneous Writings, 1883-1896 (Boston, 1903), 378.

symptoms and disease.³³ By immersing his hands in water, rubbing the patient's head, and transmitting electricity, he supposedly effected a cure. Seemingly the doctor was less advanced than his patient who explained that her scientific theory of mind was actually the basis of his magnetic treatments.³⁴ As she reported in the Christian Science Journal of June, 1887, "My mistake is to endow another person with my ideal and then to make him think it his own."³⁵ Therefore her only debt to Quimby was his instruction in the method of manipulation, which she later rejected and outlawed. Mrs. Eddy dogmatically and convincingly disclaimed the education, philosophy, and methods of the Portland practitioner.

Not a theorist or a teacher, Quimby, rather than instructing his patient, was actually the receptive partner in an exchange of thought. Searching for an ideal of metaphysical healing which she had hoped to find in him, Mrs. Patterson requested a copy of his writings and desired to be under his tutelage. Not able to fulfill this demand the old doctor had no understanding of his own method, which made it impossible to accept a pupil or to give a concise, logical explanation for his cures.³⁶ In a letter to the Boston Post, March 7, 1883, Mrs. Eddy explained these

33. Ibid., 379.

34. Eddy, The First Church of Christ Scientist and Miscellany, 306-307.

35. Wilbur, The Life of Mary Baker Eddy, 98-99.

36. Alfred Farlow, ed., Christian Science, Historical Facts (Boston, 1902), 19.

unusual circumstances. After asking for his ideas in writing, "we would take that copy to correct, and so transform it that he would say it was our composition, which it virtually was."³⁷ In effect, the Quimby manuscripts did contain Christian Science theory, but it was their acclaimed leader with her knowledge and literary ability who left him her wisdom and her words. In a more definite statement of her contribution in the 1884 edition of Science and Health, she said, "I restored some patients of his that he failed to heal, and left in his possession some manuscripts of mine containing corrections of his desultory penning."³⁸

With greater assuredness, the 1880's brought two events which seemed to present positive proof of her rights as the discoverer. In a court case over copyright in 1883, she won a decision which to her had far-reaching effects. Though the case was specifically a matter of plagiarism by a student, Edward Arens, it supposedly settled for all time the question of originality. With undue confidence she claimed the "false report that I have appropriated other people's manuscripts in my works, has been met and answered legally."³⁹ To more clearly verify her claims, she made an offer in the Boston Traveler on May 21, 1887, that she would pay to have Quimby's manuscripts published to settle the controversy, but she must be allowed to examine them first.⁴⁰ With this

37. Milmine, "The Quimby Controversy," McClure's Magazine, XXVIII (March, 1907), 520.

38. Ibid.

39. Eddy, Miscellaneous Writings, 249.

40. Farlow, ed., Christian Science, Historical Facts, 22.

stipulation on the offer, it was absurd to think that his descendants would give her an opportunity to declare the works stolen or perhaps even to destroy them. Yet this was the conclusive proof for her and all Christian Scientists of the invalidity of any such manuscripts. With this assurance, she continued to assert in later years, "What I have given to the world on the subject of metaphysical healing or Christian Science is the result of my own observation, experience, and final discovery, quite independent of all other authors except the Bible."⁴¹ Nevertheless her indebtedness to Quimby in the discovery of metaphysical principles was considerable and could not be completely suppressed.

While she protested her originality, the descendants of the physician conceded to her the actual authorship of Science and Health but reserved for their master the essence of its message. With its "incongruous paragraphs and jumble of antagonistic ideas,"⁴² the textbook of Christian Science certainly belonged to her. Yet dispelling the notion of divine revelation, the advocates of Quimby declared the theory and truth of the science came from him, while the wording and the religious interpretations came from Mrs. Eddy. ". . . There can be no doubt that she derived from him the basic ideas of her own subsequent system of Christian Science, although she gave to them a much stronger, subjective

41. Mary Baker Eddy, "Message for 1901," Christian Science Versus Pantheism and other Messages to the Mother Church (Boston, 1918), 26-27.

42. Woodbury, "Christian Science and its Prophetess: The Book and the Woman," The Arena, XXI (May, 1899), 561.

basis.⁴³ Unbusinesslike, unambitious, and wholly lacking in long-range vision, the humanitarian practitioner made no effort to project his ideas into an organized religion. In contrast, Mrs. Eddy was a driving, enterprising organizer who was able to attract a loyal following and to form a rich and influential church.⁴⁴ In spite of her failures, even critics have recognized her contributions in areas of religious, literary, and institutional founding.

What exactly her book owes to Quimby remains, and will probably continue to remain, a matter of doubt: nor does it signify much. . . . Quimby would certainly never have written Science and Health; and in the development of Christian Science that book, and that book only, has been of decisive importance.⁴⁵

Though she undoubtedly derived certain concepts and terminology under his instruction, her vitality, her inner strength, and her peculiar formulations were blended in a unique combination to produce the church and its faith.

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43. Ernest Sutherland Bates, "Phineas Parkhurst Quimby," Dictionary of National Biography, XVI (New York, 1935), 305.
44. "The Origin of 'Christian Science,'" Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, CLXV (May, 1899), 845.
45. H. A. L. Fisher in Robert Peal, Christian Science (New York, 1958), xii-xiii.

CHAPTER III

A PERIOD OF WANDERING AND AN EARLY FOLLOWING

After her experiences with Quimby and the dramatic event of her revelation and miraculous cure, Mary Baker Glover Patterson felt herself torn from a secure environment of family and friends to meet new faces, to search her own soul, to secure the hearing of students, and to formulate her vague notions into a powerful, provable doctrine. Without knowledge of the path she was to take or the people she was to encounter, she met with her first minor successes and her gravest challenges during this period of wandering from 1864 to 1870. In the tone of a martyred saint, she spoke of her years of poverty and nonentity as a denial of the worldly pleasures in exchange for a calling to the spiritual life, which would enable her to search the Scriptures for the scientific principle behind the miracle she had experienced.⁴⁶ Stating her purpose, she "withdrew from society about three years,--to ponder my mission, to search the Scriptures, to find the Science of Mind."⁴⁷ To fulfill her destiny and to find the rest and quiet needed for complete dedication to her work, she turned her back on homely comforts and took her room and board among strangers.

More realistic, down-to-earth explanations for her wandering were

46. Mary Baker Eddy, Christian Healing and Other Writings (Boston, 1914), 35.

47. Eddy, Retrospection and Introspection, 24.

her outbreaks of temper, her nonconformity, and her inability to settle down to an independent means of support. As a misfit in her present society, Mary clashed with her sister Mrs. Tilton and was forced to move from one boarding house to another.⁴⁸ Although she often failed to pay the rent and was frequently at odds with members of the household, her authorized biographers absolved her of any of the blame, declaring that she "never was herself the cause of one separation from all those who went out of her life."⁴⁹ Contrary to stories of her evictions, she was said to have been a welcome guest, who was helpful, happy, and humble. A lovely, uncomplaining person, she was never ill-tempered, condescending, or spiteful. Only when the cures which she performed and the truths which she proclaimed were beyond the comprehension of the ordinary souls with whom she resided did they behave as evil mortals and turn her away from their homes.

Thus Mrs. Patterson, who had by this time resumed the name Mrs. Glover, assumed a persecuted air and equated herself with the rejections of Christ's disciple.⁵⁰ With regularity her budding scholars in the science rejected her and her theory. Though several of her friends, such as Miss Sarah Bagley and Mrs. Sally Wentworth, learned the technique of mind-healing, they would not give up their tendencies toward spiritualism or manipulation to follow Mrs. Glover on the road to physi-

48. Dakin, Mrs. Eddy, 57.

49. Wilbur, Life of Mary Baker Eddy, 171.

50. Ramsay, Christian Science and its Discoverer, 51-53.

cal and moral reform.⁵¹ Commenting on this period of boarding, a famous pupil Richard Kennedy said, "Of course simple-minded people who take life as it comes from day to day find anyone with so fixed an object in life a rebuke to the flow of their animal spirits."⁵² With jealousy and a total lack of understanding, her landlords and fellow boarders were quick to misuse her knowledge or to misinterpret her intentions. Yet it is possible that those "simple-minded people" comprehended the true Mrs. Glover as she struggled to find herself amid a confusion of spiritualistic and mesmeric leanings. A mystic at heart, she reportedly was interested in the Shakers for their concept of a bisexual God and in the Spiritualists for their clairvoyance. Though she admittedly held seances for at least one friend, Mrs. Sarah Crosby, she rationalized her actions as a hoax or device used to give her subject useful advice.⁵³ To explore the powers of the human mind, she did study spiritualism, hypnotism, electrical magnetism, and homeopathy, but she found only the Mind of God was able to control the material world.⁵⁴ Despite her close contacts with a number of isms, she positively asserted that she was "not a spiritualist, a pantheist, or prayerless."⁵⁵ Uncertainty of others about the beliefs of Mrs. Glover would seem to demonstrate that her

51. Wilbur, Life of Mary Baker Eddy, 181-183.

52. Ibid., 185-186.

53. Ibid., 114-115.

54. Eddy, Christian Healing, 64.

55. Eddy, Miscellaneous Writings, 249.

thoughts had not yet formulated into a positive, transmittable theory. With continued dedication, eager searching, and an experimental mind, she moved toward self-assurance and a definite, demonstrative science.

In spite of the distractions of her exterior environs, the mind and heart of Mrs. Glover were busily engrossed in her theory. With super-human determination, she overcame all surroundings to reach an understanding of scientific healing and to produce indisputable proof.⁵⁶ With only her faith and her Bible as her aid, she reinterpreted all that she read in the light of her own revelation.⁵⁷ Even ordinary names and terms acquired additional meaning and substitute phraseology, such as, "God I called immortal Mind. That which sins, suffers, and dies, I named mortal mind."⁵⁸ Values also took on a new perspective, for the material, physical gains became nothing, and the spiritual matters were of all importance. Anything material was not spiritual, therefore it was not God's creation and could not be real, for "the only realities are the divine Mind and Idea."⁵⁹ To become a vital, living force, a philosophical concept needs continuous demonstration and the attraction of some practical benefit to mankind. To avoid oblivion, Mrs. Glover caught the opportunity of the moment when eager ears were listening and began to teach. Before she had worked out all aspects of her principles,

56. Eddy, Science and Health, 3.

57. Wilbur, Life of Mary Baker Eddy, 163.

58. Eddy, Retrospection and Introspection, 35.

59. Eddy, Science and Health, 3.

she sought to test the durability of her conclusions and the receptiveness of her audience.

Within a year after the transforming revelation of 1866, she had acquired a somewhat limited, but willing, student. Though uncertain of her own knowledge, Mrs. Glover began to interpret the Scriptures for her new pupil, Hiram S. Crafts. Fellow boarders with Mr. and Mrs. George D. Clark of Lynn, Massachusetts, Crafts and his teacher proved that the theory could be taught and understood.⁶⁰ Still in the process of writing her textbook, Science and Health, she was led by divine revelation to teach several people who were anxious to practise her healing methods. Against her own desires, but in accord with her calling, she left Lynn to reside with the Crafts for their instruction. Yet the eagerness of a few was not indicative of the reception of the whole community.⁶¹ Among a shoe manufacturing population, Mrs. Glover felt her intellectual and spiritual attainment far superior to that of her neighbors or pupils. With assurance of her powers she later asserted, "I waited for many years for a student to reach the ability to teach; it included more than they understood."⁶² Whether that was a valid observation or mere rationalization, Mrs. Glover obviously had not attained any marked satisfaction in her early days of wandering.

After her beginning in oral instructions and healing demonstra-

60. Wilbur, Life of Mary Baker Eddy, 164-166.

61. Ramsay, Christian Science and its Discoverer, 49-50.

62. Eddy, Christian Healing, 14.

tions, Mary Glover perceived that she must gather around her a loyal and dependable following, who could assist her in formulation and propagation of the faith. Though the existence of such a group was a necessity to her for recognition and the furtherance of Christian Science, yet she could in turn offer her successful students a minor following of their own and a healthy income from their patients.⁶³ Those who sought after her knowledge and remained under her tutelage helped themselves and the cause as they established healing practices in the various towns. Since the teacher herself kept away from a practice, she had no opportunity to publicly test her theories on actual patients, and likewise she was protected from failures which would have stifled her budding career. Therefore, she was shielded from blame for her students' weaknesses by declaring that they had failed to complete the course of study or had abandoned the specific instructions. Yet when glory and acknowledgement came to one of these pupils, the entire credit went to Christian Science and its founder.⁶⁴ Thus despite numerous rejections, moments of poverty, and humiliations, she slowly built a following of students who were attracted by her persistence and her commanding personality and were willingly dependent on her for their emotional and spiritual existence. Yet distortions and misrepresentations were prevalent particularly in these early years, and it became evident that a text was crucial to the

63. David Starr Jordan, "The Education of a Neminist," Popular Science Monthly, LVI (December, 1899), 184-185.

64. Woodbury, "Christian Science and its Prophetess: The Book and the Woman," The Arena, XII (May, 1899), 570.

unity and purity of the faith.⁶⁵

With the assistance and devoted attendance of a few students, Mrs. Glover was able to return to Lynn in 1870 to establish a school and to publish a small pamphlet entitled "The Science of Man." From her concentrated study of the past three years, she had accumulated notes and made observations which she presented to her following in this minor treatise. Only passed among friends and not published for general circulation, this work became a chapter in the 1875 edition of Science and Health under the title "Recapitulation."⁶⁶ Knowing that the world was not yet prepared for her revolutionary ideas, she gave her manuscripts to those who would understand, for she realized that the "basis it laid down . . . was so hopelessly original . . . that I did not venture upon its publication until later, having learned that the merits of Christian Science must be proven before a work on this subject could be profitably published."⁶⁷ Proof of her principles was still in the making, and there was a considerable amount of struggle and hard work to complete before she felt safely supported enough to allow the publication of her masterpiece.

Her return to Lynn in 1870 was a significant landmark on the road to recognition. Declaring herself a teacher of metaphysical healing,

65. Irving C. Tomlinson, Twelve Years with Mary Baker Eddy (Boston, 1945), 40-42.

66. Ramsay, Christian Science, 56-57.

67. Eddy, Retrospection and Introspection, 35.

she had abandoned any ties to Quimby, Spiritualism, or orthodoxy. Now independent from a background of illness and failures, she had the opportunity for achievement or oblivion. Probably the forceful, determined personality of the woman would not have allowed mediocrity or simple tolerance of her theory; she was driving toward recognition and would not be satisfied until all power and glory were hers. Yet this was a dream of the future in 1870, for her small quarters in Miss Susie Magown's boarding house, her financial difficulties, and her small classes were a far cry from the wealth and position she was to enjoy in later life.⁶⁸ Although the deal she made with a student, Richard Kennedy, for him to heal patients and send them as students to her classes enabled her to exist and continue her work on her book, her marked ingratitude to him and similar benefactors was indicative of her self-image as a privileged person with a great destiny. Feeling that God would supply her needs, Mrs. Glover viewed poverty as a creation of mortal mind.⁶⁹ In contrast to the gratitude she should have shown to Kennedy for providing much of their livelihood, she criticized his easy-going personality and accused him of being too materialistic.⁷⁰ Feeling herself superior to her students, she was never satisfied with their efforts and felt that their closed mind and selfishness would lead to false belief.

Attracted by the performances of her healers, residents of Lynn

68. Wilbur, Life of Mary Baker Eddy, 193-196.

69. Ramsay, Christian Science, 57.

70. Wilbur, Life of Mary Baker Eddy, 196-197.

and other small towns sought to acquire the techniques of metaphysical healing and enrolled in her classes. Thus her meager following grew and the movement was able to sustain and perpetuate itself. Though Mrs. Glover's stated purpose for her work of propagation was "to relieve the sufferings of humanity by a sanitary system that should include all moral and religious reform,"⁷¹ her noble aim was enhanced by a monetary reward. As her classes swelled in numbers of pupils, she was able to increase her fee from one hundred dollars for twelve lessons to three hundred dollars for the same amount of instruction.⁷² While this excessive amount seemed outrageous in a community of shoe makers, the teacher thought she was following divine instruction. "This amount greatly troubled me. I shrank from asking it, but was finally led, by a strange providence, to accept this fee."⁷³ With exception her students reportedly paid the price gratefully, for the gifts of health, peace of mind, and knowledge to instruct others were a large compensation. In order to maintain herself and her work, Mrs. Glover swallowed the criticism of outsiders and accepted the tuition fee as a necessity.⁷⁴

While a number of patients and pupils were receptive to her instruction, many shrank from her theories and from the absolute loyalty she required of them. As soon as some of the followers established

71. Eddy, Retrospection and Introspection, 30.

72. Dakin, Mrs. Eddy, 85.

73. Eddy, Retrospection and Introspection, 50.

74. Eddy, Miscellaneous Writings, 38.

their own work independent of her watchful care, rivalry and dissolution challenged her effectiveness. From the accounts of Wallace W. Wright, who took her classes but soon questioned the validity of her message, one is able to discern why a number of her loyal students revolted from the circle of discipleship. Wright, the first to openly and seriously challenge her science, found his instruction resembled mesmerism. At first convinced by Mrs. Glover's dogmatic persuasiveness and her forceful presentation which ruled out debate and independent thought, he was later unable to accept Christian Science without some doubts.⁷⁵ As he stated in the Lynn Transcript on January 13, 1872, "I commenced to think more independently, and to argue with myself as to the truth of the positions we were called upon to take. The result of this course was to convince me that I had studied the science of mesmerism."⁷⁶ Following this declaration, a debate transpired between the teacher and her dissenting pupil, after which he declared her science was powerless and without meaning. Despite this controversy, she was able to continue her work and to overcome frequent harassment, misunderstanding, and opposition.⁷⁷ Yet to Mrs. Glover the most dangerous threat to the life of her science was soon to unfold in her overwhelming fear of malicious animal magnetism.

Animal magnetism, a "specific term for error, or mortal mind,"⁷⁸

75. Wilbur, Life of Mary Baker Eddy, 201-202.

76. Ibid., 202.

77. Ibid., 202-203.

78. Eddy, Science and Health, 283.

their mental powers, malpractitioners could actually cause serious harm and even death.⁸¹ Although the accuser claimed that Mrs. Glover had taught him manipulation, she denied the accusation and declared that he had a "secret passion . . . to produce a state of mind destructive to health, happiness, or morals."⁸² While her biographers proclaimed it a "well-known fact that Mrs. Glover had never manipulated a patient,"⁸³ a student of the 1870's reported that "she taught rubbing, putting hand in water and upon the stomach."⁸⁴ Probably she had demonstrated manipulation either as part of the treatment or a device to win the confidence of her patient. Nevertheless her controversy against Kennedy caused her to abandon manipulation and forbid its use in the spring of 1872.⁸⁵

As the concept of this evil obsessed and distorted all her thinking and personal contacts, she concocted fantastic stories about the crimes of those practicing malicious animal magnetism. All misfortunes and illnesses of Christian Scientist as well as more serious offenses were laid at the feet of the malevolents.⁸⁶ Plagued for the rest of her

81. Eddy, Miscellaneous Writings, 31.

82. Milmine, "The Revival of Witchcraft," McClure's Magazine, XXIX (July, 1907), 337.

83. Ramsay, Christian Science, 59-60.

84. Milmine, "Mrs. Eddy and her First Disciples," McClure's Magazine, XXIX (May, 1907), 102.

85. Wilbur, Life of Mary Baker Eddy, 206.

86. Milmine, "The Revival of Witchcraft," McClure's Magazine, XXIX (July, 1907), 338.

life with animal magnetism, she termed each successive rebel a mesmerist who was maliciously concentrating to do her harm. Although she had declared manipulation the evidence of magnetism, she adjusted her statement to include enemies who didn't practice that method of treatment. With her life so absorbed in this mania of fear, her ridiculous actions to counteract the enemy revealed her state of panic. When her students were expelled from the organization, she began the practice of night watches for her protection. Students would be gathered up at any hour of the night to think against some unknown assailant who was attacking their teacher.⁸⁷ While preaching a doctrine of the non-existence of evil, she was at the same time concentrating on malicious animal magnetism and allowing its threat to govern her life.⁸⁸ As she cautioned her partisans, "Christian Scientists cannot watch too assiduously, or bar their doors too closely, or pray to God too fervently, for deliverance from the claims of evil."⁸⁹ For the protection of her followers, she insisted that each student must be taught the evils of mental malpractice and the necessity of guarding against it. Therefore, she reluctantly included a chapter on "Demonology" in her 1881 edition of Science and Health.⁹⁰ As animal magnetism, false belief, and other

87. Ibid., 341-342.

88. "Malicious Animal Magnetism," The Nation, XC (May 19, 1910), 503.

89. Eddy, Miscellaneous Writings, 114.

90. Milmine, "The Revival of Witchcraft," McClure's Magazine, XXIX (July, 1907), 338.

misinterpretations plagued her work and influence, it became imperative that her Christian Science doctrines be clearly defined in a culminating treatise. Thus after nine years of search, demonstration, and concentrated literary endeavor, the basis for belief was produced in the publication of Science and Health.

CHAPTER IV

A CULMINATION IN PUBLICATION

Prior to the presentation of her treatise Science and Health in 1873, all her actions and energies had been spent in preparation for this event. Having been assured of her unique destiny since early childhood, she adjusted every occurrence, opportunity, or twist of fate to fit into the life pattern of a great religious founder. In progressive steps leading to her proclamation of belief, she had first discovered her mysterious healing and spiritual powers, had experimented with medical and mental treatments, and finally in 1866 had received a divine revelation. Seeking a solution to her inconclusive inspiration, she required a nine-year period of searching the Scriptures, testing her hypothesis and demonstrating her creative powers. Explaining her dilemma, she said, "I knew the Principle of all harmonious Mind-action to be God . . . but I must know its Science, and I won my way to absolute conclusions, through divine revelation, reason, and demonstration."⁹¹ While attempting to instill her knowledge and her faith in a small circle of followers in the early 1870's, she formulated and systematized her impressions into a philosophy. Yet Christian Science could not be disseminated by oral instruction and remain unadulterated and undiluted. Recognizing the time and location limitations on personal influence, she

91. Eddy, Science and Health, 3.

said, "My published words are teachers and healers."⁹² To protect the purity and unity of the faith and to assure absolute authority beyond the impermanent human life, her disciples and practitioners must have the written word.

Following the essential steps in the growth of a religion, "first the need, then the leader, and then the doctrine,"⁹³ Mary Baker Eddy laid the foundation for her particular church. During the period before 1875, she occupied herself with becoming the personal leader of a small but extremely zealous band. As their reverence for her increased, their lives centered around her, and their dependence on her involved every aspect of their existence. While her disciples virtually lost contact with reality, their teacher remained conscious of what was required for the propagation of the faith.⁹⁴ For years she had been working on a text for her science, yet the work was continually interrupted by her duties as a healer, advisor, professor, and preacher. Subject to these demands plus rejection, law suits, and rebellions, she struggled to accomplish her intended task.⁹⁵

Since 1867, she had been composing works for private circulation as a preliminary exercise for her final systematic work. Reacting to

92. Eddy, The First Church of Christ Scientist and Miscellany, 115.

93. "Editorial Announcement," McClure's Magazine, XXVIII (December, 1906), 214.

94. Milmine, "Mrs. Eddy and her First Disciples," McClure's Magazine, XXIX (May, 1907), 109.

95. Ramsay, Christian Science, 61-62.

the criticism of her literary style in her early manuscripts, she admitted that these "compositions were crude" and her "jottings were only the infantile lisplings of Truth."⁹⁶ Continually fighting against other demands on her time, she "revised painstakingly in the midst of the multitudinous duties of a leader."⁹⁷ Even with these considerations, there was severe criticism of her incoherent and contradictory passages which her supporters defended as her struggle with material expressions to reveal intangible and spiritual ideas.⁹⁸ Though the public accepted her literary endeavors, her opposition recognized the misuse of grammar, the uneducated organization, the forced vocabulary, and the super-sweet optimism as the author's appeal to her public. Falling far short of a masterpiece, Science and Health was to all readers but loyal Scientists a rambling, disjointed work, which was only improved in form with the help of an editor.⁹⁹ Regardless of her immature and unorganized style, the publication of her work made a vast impact on the overall conception of Mind-Science.

Though the doctrine proclaimed in Science and Health was to be a deciding factor in the growth of the Church, its reception by the public was not an indication of its future. At its appearance on the market,

96. Eddy, Science and Health, viii-ix.

97. Wilbur, Life of Mary Baker Eddy, 219.

98. The Christian Science Monitor, November 25, 1908, 12.

99. Eugene Wood, "What the Public Wants to Read," Atlantic Monthly, LXXXVIII (October, 1901), 569-570.

critics recognized its originality but judged that it would never be read. In its first edition it appeared that their prediction would prove correct, as only a small percentage of the one thousand copies were bought.¹⁰⁰ Aside from the peculiarity of the work, there were other circumstances surrounding its publication which created an unfavorable response. Without proper editing and printing, the book was filled with errors, misspellings, and inconsistencies. Poorly bound and printed, the work contained material gathered under random chapter titles.¹⁰¹ By her own account, the title of the book itself, Science and Health was derived from divine inspiration in the middle of the night. Some time later a friend showed her a copy of Wycliff's translation of the New Testament in which the identical term had been used.¹⁰² As there are other possible sources from which the phrase could have been taken, it was undoubtedly the product of several sources.

When this work of questionable worth and un auspicious appearances was received with disdain by the general reading public, its sponsors, two students of the author, saw their investment unappreciated and not repaid by her. Although Mrs. Glover termed their investment of \$1000 a contribution, George Barry and Elizabeth Newhall intended to receive a portion of the royalties which she was forced to grant.¹⁰³ While she

100. Eddy, Retrospection and Introspection, 37.

101. Dakin, Mrs. Eddy, 97.

102. Eddy, "Message of 1902," Christian Science versus Pantheism and Other Messages to the Mother Church, 15-16.

103. Milmine, "Mrs. Eddy and her First Disciple," McClure's Magazine, XXIX (May, 1907), 115.

claimed that she used her private income in the founding of her church and the publication of her book, on the contrary she received income from the labors of her healers and thus provided for the spread of her work. With a characteristic persecution complex, she defended her noble actions in the printing of her text.

Healing all manner of diseases without charge, keeping a free institute, rooming and boarding indigent students that I taught 'without money and without price,' I struggled on through many years; and while dependent on the income from the sale of Science and Health, my publisher paid me not one dollar of royalty of its first edition.¹⁰⁴

Determined to use the book as an instrument of her material and spiritual success, she pushed her students to purchase and advertise her text. Though her concern for humanity was the supposed purpose for publication, her shrewd business transactions and advertising campaign revealed her strange attraction to commercialization and profit.

Most profitable of all her business dealings was the monopoly she possessed and the authority she commanded over the purchase of her book. No adherent to Christian Science could read its principles from any other text; in fact, many people reportedly were instructed or healed simply by delving into its truths. Realizing the impact and power she could possess through her written word, she required each student to own a copy of Science and Health in its latest edition.¹⁰⁵ Since all dogma stemmed directly from the text and from other official publications,

104. Eddy, "Message of 1902," Christian Healing and Other Writings, 15.

105. Eddy, Miscellaneous Writings, 91-92.

there could be no controversy over doctrine and purity. With a secure covering of truth and righteousness protecting her words, the illogical, ill-defined, and incorrect statements were accepted by faithful followers without question or confusion. A partial explanation for their indisputable adherence to her book was her personal influence over her immediate disciples, and in later years the legendary character of Mother Eddy carried the weight of absolute right.¹⁰⁶ A profession of faith in the infallible person behind the doctrine was the deciding factor in the acceptance of Science and Health.

To those who believed, her golden sayings and words of inspiration and wisdom were logical, meaningful, and absolute Truth. Likewise, those who denied her faith rationally recognized the inconsistencies and improbabilities. Though the work was acclaimed as an interpretation of Scripture, most of its content, such as the descriptions of disease, symptoms, and sanitations, were entirely un-Biblical. While Christ required no payment for cures, recognized the reality of the body, and put faith above understanding, Mrs. Eddy took opposite views on all these issues, which she declared essential to the nature of "Christian Science."¹⁰⁷ Admittedly there were impressive lists of recoveries credited to the science, but the powers of positive thinking, mental causations, faith, and natural cures must be considered in such accounts.

106. J. M. Buckley, "The Phantom Fortress of Christian Science," The North American Review, CLXXIII (September, 1901), 395.

107. J. M. Buckley, "The Absurd Paradox of Christian Science," The North American Review, CLXXIII (July, 1901), 26-28.

Yet the claim to absolute truth made no allowance for mistakes, limitations, or failures.¹⁰⁸ Despite the criticisms and contradictions, the denial of sensation and matter proved to be the basis for popular appeal. Though it was a highly unsatisfactory principle of philosophy, its deceiving optimism in declaring the nonexistence of sin, disease, and death was accepted by believers as the central theme for their lives.¹⁰⁹ With undying faith, her loyal disciples served her as a benevolent humane spiritual leader, whose doctrine was viewed as logical and sufficient to the needs of man.

To become aware of these specific needs would be to properly assess the merits of the Christian Science faith. In a society of materialism, rationalism, and morbid religious fears, a promise of optimism, idealism, and freedom from evil was an attractive philosophy. Both men of weakness and strength shared a common longing for health, wealth, and happiness. Yet promises must have fulfillment before they can become a dynamic religion; thus the practice of miraculous healing was essential to the founding and continuation of the faith.¹¹⁰ With the perception of a potential leader who was driven to success, Mary Baker Eddy became gradually conscious of the necessary ingredients of a living, powerful religious doctrine. From the growth of Spiritualism and the Transcen-

108. Ibid., 32.

109. "Concerning Christian Science," The Outlook, LXVIII (July 6, 1901), 525-527.

110. E. Wade Cook, "The Truth about Christian Science," Contemporary Review, LXXXIV (October, 1903), 512-513.

dental movements, she observed a popular interest in mind over matter and in a new relation of man to God or Spirit. From the early nineteenth century men were concerned with their status in the world, as growing insignificance brought growing insecurity. By her doctrine, she could offer men and women a place of divinity next to God. By rejecting all matter, evil, and disease as illusions, man no longer had to contend with the problems which plagued all mortals. Moreover, the significant consideration was that men followed Mind-Science with commitment and generosity. To secure such devoted adherence, a magnetic personality and persuasive determination were necessary.

With the help of the healing attraction, she was able to gather disciples in close attendance about her, to win their loyalty, and even to attain their reverence. In each period of her life she prepared for this leadership. Though such a development was not intentional, her emotional, complex personality precluded the possibility of impersonal actions and insignificant events. As a person with a divine calling, she concluded that any notion of her imagination was an inspiration that must be followed. While such a pretence would seem obviously deceptive to a non-believer, to Mrs. Eddy and her followers her revelations were always heavenly. Therefore her own temperamental qualities governed the discovery, writing, and founding of Christian Science. To meet an immediate need or to accomplish a specific purpose, the faith's doctrine was adjusted for the moment, thus it has been termed an "autobiography

in cryptogram."¹¹¹ Regardless of one's belief concerning the validity of her discovery, the significance of her healing powers, or the worth of her written word, her personality and the dynamic church which she founded were to reach beyond her dreams in their extensiveness, power, and influence.

111. Milmine, "The Revival of Witchcraft," McClure's Magazine, XXIX (July, 1907), 836.

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