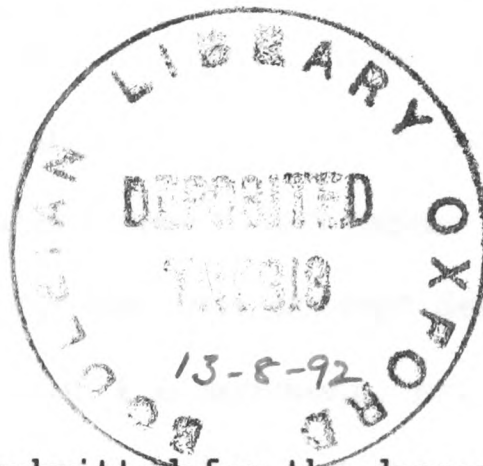


Christian Science: an American Religion in Britain, 1895 - 1940.

by

Claire F. Gartrell-Mills



Thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Wolfson College

Oxford University

Trinity Term

1991

Abstract I.

This thesis seeks to show the acceptance of Christian Science, an American healing religion, in British society, c.1895-1940. It has two primary aims. The first is to chart the progress and growth of the movement in London and some provincial towns and cities up to the First World War; the second concentrates on reaction, both from the British public at large and the specific areas of society most affected by its claims: the Anglican Church and the medical profession. The second of these aims has been given more importance. Responses in religious and secular newspapers and published works, and accounts in the main journal of the movement which illustrate problems faced by early Christian Scientists in Britain have therefore been given throughout the chapters on establishment and expansion. Although background information is given, the thesis does not attempt detailed analyses regarding the doctrine and organization of the movement, nor does it seek to provide precise details with regard to the numbers of churches and adherents. It has drawn on an existing body of sociological scholarship into these questions to provide a basis for its different concerns.

Starting from a discussion on background influences and a brief history and explanation of Christian Science within its American context, subsequent sections explore the progress of the American "missionaries" of the movement and the earliest British membership, discuss public reaction to its growth and to the opening of various churches, and analyze the social composition of the British following, including a social and political élite. The more far-reaching responses from the affected establishment groups mentioned above, constitute the core of the thesis. Finally, two chapters analyzing public reaction in the realm of jokes, cartoons and novels have been included, while an appendix exploring the widening outreach of Christian Science-type ideas in the form of New Thought, concludes the thesis.

Abstract II.

Christian Science is a religion of "metaphysical" origins which emphasizes man's potential perfection in this world as a reflection of God, and his right to claim, through a belief system which involves denying the untoward elements of life as evidence of the effects of "mortal mind", perfect health, happiness, success, and even freedom from death. Its main tenets are expounded in the textbook of the movement, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, by Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, who lived and worked within the context of late nineteenth and early twentieth century New England. Although her system is claimed by Christian Scientists as being original and divinely inspired, scholars have ascribed various prevailing cultural and intellectual currents to its formulation, some of which are discussed in the thesis.

This thesis examines the implantation and progress of the Christian Science movement in Britain, and assesses the British response to it as an American importation. It attempts to contribute to two main areas of scholarship: the diffusion of cultural and religious ideas from America to Europe, and more specifically Britain, and existing studies of individual sects of American origin, some of which are noted as comparative examples. These include movements representative of several of the many different types of religion which flourished in the American climate of religious pluralism, such as fundamentalist, millenarian and "metaphysical" styles. Christian Science has been categorized as belonging to the last group, which gained popularity among the upper classes, "society", or the leisured rich on both sides of the Atlantic (in the United States mainly in cities on the east coast), which included spiritualism, Theosophy, fashionable Buddhism and New Thought. By virtue of the language used by Mrs Eddy in the presentation of her

philosophy, and her abstract interpretation of the Christian scriptures, Christian Science held a certain appeal for the literate and educated classes, and to those who aspired to intellectualism.

Christian Science provoked different responses within the societies in which it took root: the resistance it encountered occurred mainly as a result of its healing claims. However, its message of positivism: health, wealth and success blended well with American ideals at the turn of the century. The progress and popularity of Christian Science in the United States has been well researched, and is not the concern of this thesis. Surveys of the movement in America have included comparative studies of its progress in other countries, including Britain, with accompanying empirical data, but it has not previously been examined within the context of a specific "British" response to an American religious importation.

The origins of Christian Science as an American religion, with its reversal of the traditional Christian view of man as a sinner, and hence its "challenge" to conservative (Anglican) Christianity, posed questions with regard to its reception in Britain which perhaps did not apply to some other religions. Its more practical claims to heal, through a "science" which was, according to Mrs Eddy, "as provable as mathematics", added further contentions. While in its theoretical stance Christian Science stimulated the disapproval of the Anglican Church establishment with its traditional doctrines which encompassed change only slowly, through its healing claims it encountered the British medical profession (under the general auspices of the British Medical Association) with its emphasis on empirical scientific proof as a basis for treatment. British society was, in addition, protected by a legal establishment of historic traditionalism which restricted unorthodox

practices - Christian Scientists, because they preferred to rely on spiritual means to effect healings rather than seeking medical advice, were at risk of contravening the law, particularly where children were concerned.

Christian Science gained many of its early adherents in Britain from the upper sections of society, which in the early years earned it the disparaging press label of "society cult". However, "society" people possessed links with the United States through travel, and wealthy Americans, frequently women, were visitors to British drawing rooms - this was one means by which Christian Science was diffused into Britain. Unlike the working classes, who were perhaps more likely to be drawn to other, more emotive styles of religion stemming from America: revivalism or Pentecostalism, "society" people possessed a certain influence through their wealth and connections. Thus, Christian Scientists in this social category were potentially more noticeable to the established churches, the medical profession and other establishment interests. These themes are discussed in the thesis.

The main question prior to the writing of this thesis centred around this greater adoption of Christian Science by the higher classes in Britain and their incentives for allegiance. Other questions involved the resistance to Christian Science compared with America, and, in spite of Mrs Eddy's conviction that Britain was an important source for recruits to Christian Science, the comparatively few adherents recruited, even allowing for vast population differences. Further queries, previously not considered, involved the reactions which Christian Science stimulated in society at large and within the relevant sections of the establishment mentioned above: the churches; the medical profession and the courts.

In an attempt to resolve these questions, a survey, drawing from existing scholarship, was undertaken into some of the background influences to Christian Science in the American context, including a brief history of Mrs Eddy's life, some possible influences on her thought, a resumé of the history and organization of the Christian Science movement and a summary of its basic doctrine. This forms the content of the first chapter, after which the focus has been shifted by means of the introduction of Christian Science "missionaries" to Britain - hereafter, the context is purely British. The primary focus of the thesis - British membership and reaction, has been afforded by various methods. An examination of the American periodicals of the movement was undertaken, with special attention paid to events in Britain during the formative years (up to about 1904) recorded particularly in the *Christian Science Journal*. These accounts gave some indication of the initial progress of, and resistance to, the special "pioneers" dispatched by Mrs Eddy. The accounts in the journals were supplemented by articles in the British press, which catered for a wide readership, and made possible a more balanced overall picture.

From these sources, impressions emerged of the early years of Christian Science in Britain, the numbers involved, the general public reactions, the opening of churches and the social constituency of its membership. A chapter (Chapter 3) focusing on expansion throughout the British Isles examines how Christian Science was received in some provincial towns and cities, with local responses, drawn from the press. This compares with the establishment of the main London base. A further chapter has been included which assesses the social make-up of the British membership, divided roughly into classes. With some knowledge of individual adherents already assumed, research was undertaken into the lives of some of the more prominent of these individuals,

using information from newspaper obituaries, biographies, and personal letters and papers. The conclusions drawn reinforce the view of Christian Science as a religion which was mainly adopted by the upper classes. Further material regarding individuals who belonged to a social and political élite (as opposed to mere "society" adherents) who were active in public life and politics and enjoyed the highest social connections, provided previously disregarded data. This reveals more far reaching connotations - adherence to Christian Science for these members, while a vital element in their lives, formed a basis for their general attitudes and beliefs in international affairs, particularly during the political turmoil of the inter-war years. Since some Christian Scientists were actively involved in inter-war politics at a high level, the analysis of events connected with them creates a broader arena for this study, and seeks to assess the significance of a belief in Christian Science in the wider society.

Following chapters centre on the core concerns of the thesis: the impact of Christian Science on the more dominant British establishment institutions. The three chapters devoted to a) the response of the established churches, b) the reactions of the medical profession, and c) the standing of Christian Scientists before British courts of law, are in some ways interconnected: they analyze the sense in which Christian Science encouraged greater collaboration between the Church of England and the medical profession in discussions at church conferences and congresses pertaining to the questions both of Christian Science and other forms of spiritual healing. In the courts, a doctor's evidence was seen as essential (as the guardians of public health) in order to establish cases of neglect or otherwise, in cases of Christian Science deaths which came before coroners and the Central Criminal Court. However, all three areas are treated primarily as separate concerns.

Information for the chapter concerning the responses of the churches was gathered from diverse sources. Newspaper accounts, books and pamphlets written by clerics supplemented research in the Lambeth Palace archives into documentation concerning discussion on Christian Science and spiritual healing at two Lambeth Conferences (1908 and 1920) and the letters and papers of Archbishop R.T. Davidson. Records of the discussions at Anglican Church conferences and congresses added to this material. Information concerning the reactions of the Roman Catholic and nonconformist churches was gathered more randomly - Catholics seemed to pay little attention to Christian Science, as an "ultra-Protestant" faith of American origin. The attitudes of some Christian Scientists towards Catholics has, however, provided more significant material, and these viewpoints have been discussed in Chapter 5. Some nonconformist responses (mainly Methodist) were articulated through the medium of their church journals, and the views of some ministers have been included. Material for the chapter concerning medical response was mainly extracted from the major medical journals (the *British Medical Journal* and the *Lancet*), although general newspaper accounts and articles written by doctors for non-professional journals have provided further evidence. Articles in medical journals, in which the progress of Christian Science was carefully monitored, were also an important source for information regarding the court cases. Evidence thus procured has been balanced in these central chapters with views published by the Christian Science authorities.

The final two chapters (omitting the appendix) are concerned with the impact of Christian Science in a less serious realm. A significant number of jokes and cartoons were published in many different secular and religious newspapers, which exposed different elements in Christian Science doctrine. The Christian Scientists' denial of the evidence of the human senses, where

this evidence does not accord with their spiritual conviction that man inhabits a perfect world, most lent itself to ridicule in this sense. The appeal of Christian Science to the leisured classes was also "attacked" through the medium of the joke. The jokes and cartoons have been photographed or quoted where relevant, and provide a further realm of perhaps typically "British" response. The discussion and analysis given in this chapter continues many of the arguments surrounding the particular responses of the British public noted elsewhere in the thesis, and concentrates on a few central themes.

A chapter concerning the "Christian Science novel" contains literary examples which contribute to the same stereotyping discussed in the previous chapter. However, it also explores the significance of novels with a more dramatic content, written by authors of varying calibres with apparent "crusading" dispositions, who saw the novel as a means by which the pitfalls of Christian Science could be "exposed" to an unsuspecting public. Some novels were entirely devoted to the subject of Christian Science, whilst others mentioned it in connection with other themes. Reviews of the novels have been taken into account, as a "reaction" to a "reaction" which, by approval or otherwise of the novels in question, gives a different insight into British attitudes about Christian Science.

As this thesis contends, Christian Science itself had some considerable impact on various facets of British religious and cultural life during the first forty years of the twentieth century. It was perhaps the first significant American religious importation of its type - which reflected the positivism and progressivism redolent in late nineteenth and early twentieth century America, and may have prepared the way for the acceptance of later

religions. Movements and ideologies such as positive thinking, human potential groups and Scientology, which gained followings in the mid-twentieth century, had more relevance for the participant populations of industrial societies than the fundamentalist or millenarian movements which had been imported from the late nineteenth century: adherents of these latter groups were often required to withdraw from society to a greater or lesser extent. As Christian Science reflected the trend for secularization early in the century, and claimed for its followers success within the worldly context, these later movements, which incorporated some of its characteristics, continued this trend in the post - Second World War era. Some of these questions have been discussed in the conclusion, whilst the appendix examines some earlier New Thought groups in Britain.

Christian Science cannot be viewed in isolation from other movements which incorporated some of its more "positive" elements. Some of these, collectively known as New Thought, stemmed from the same period in which Mrs Eddy formulated her Christian Science theories, and their development was partly attributable to the same prevailing intellectual influences in the eastern states of America in the nineteenth century, which are discussed in Chapter 1. Others were breakaway groups adhering to leaders who were disaffected followers of Mrs Eddy, or were the result of schism involving groups of ex-Christian Scientists. This phenomenon occurred in Britain mainly before Christian Science achieved a substantial following.

Research was carried out into the lives and works of some British New Thought leaders who promulgated their own versions of "Christian Science" ideologies within a British environment. Their writings were frequently highly individual, and emphasized the "scientific" content of Christian Science

doctrine rather than the "positive thinking" element. Perhaps, in an attempt to avoid any connotations with "society cults", they presented their theories in dazzling arguments couched in a pseudo-scientific terminology which were claimed to be empirically provable. The movements did not survive on the basis of these theories, which were eventually disproved - although (as was the case with one group, the Society for the Spreading of the Knowledge of True Prayer) they were, in keeping with the shifting tendencies of New Thought, modified over time. Compared with the mainstream Christian Science organization, New Thought groups were further disadvantaged in their survival potential by their lack of a cohesive organizational structure. In the appendix, these movements have been compared with Christian Science, an assessment made of their relative impact and significance for particular sections of society, and some reasons drawn for their comparative lack of success.

In summary, this thesis has aimed primarily to expand upon existing sociological surveys of Christian Science and to examine its effects on British society. While sociological studies have concentrated on a minute analysis of the movement: its factual history, doctrine and social composition, it has been attempted here to assess the progress of the movement in Britain, to examine the significance of allegiance for some prominent Christian Scientists and their commitments to other contemporary causes, and British societal response, within a certain historical period. To this aim, the movement has not been examined as a self-contained sect. Instead, the thesis has sought, in one sense, to examine Christian Scientists as individuals who accommodated their faith within the normal restraints of their lives within this period. Attention has therefore been paid, in the furtherance of this aim, to cultural and religious mores in the period under review, and their effects on the progress of the movement. It has also been

attempted throughout, to chart not only its progress within this frame of inquiry, but public and institutional response to that progress at various stages of its growth: the two-way "tension" of a sect within a society examined by sociologists, which has been adopted here in application to the period 1895-1940. In a wider sense it provides an illustration, within a given historical period, of a form of cultural invasion of modern times which stimulated change, in this case a "return" in cultural terms from a younger society.

Acknowledgement.

Special thanks are due to the Managers and Staff of the Christian Science Committees on Publication, 108 Palace Gardens Terrace, London, for their unfailing help and interest during the research for this thesis.

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Introduction.

Christian Science is a movement of American origins which, from its beginnings in the 1870s, spread to Britain before the turn of the century, and had an increasing impact in the decades following 1900. Its influence was not confined to the steady growth which it manifested, since among its early followers were some people conspicuous in public life. However, its influence went further. Its radical claims, particularly in the realm of healing, excited attention - not only of condemnation - in both the churches and the medical profession. In the early years of the twentieth century, Christian Science was widely noticed and much discussed in circles where Mormonism was probably derided, and the Watchtower Movement virtually unknown. It was not, of course, the first religious current from the United States to have an impact on British religious life, but most of the earlier religious imports from America had been drawn into the life of existing churches: Christian Science stood apart as a new, distinctive, and challenging interpretation of what Christianity really portended for mankind.

Although the core concern of this thesis is with Christian Science in Britain, it is necessary, in the first chapter, to provide in outline something of its history and development in America. It might be seen as a development of certain strands within liberal Christianity, woven together with metaphysical ideas which provided a new interpretation for the Christian scriptures. It was quite unlike the styles of frontier religion which had given to American Christianity a distinctive flavour, and which had issued in the export of revivalism to Britain throughout the nineteenth century. Christian Science was apparently more intellectual, more genteel, and altogether more sophisticated in style from the "typical" effusions of American religious sentiment.

Consonant with the buoyant mood of late nineteenth century America, Christian Science emphasized the positive aspects of Christianity. It legitimized well-being, and taught that the divine plan was for man, as a spiritual being, to enjoy health, prosperity, and even to overcome death. Thus, it justified social success, and might be seen as entirely compatible with Victorian "self-help" philosophies, and as a precursor of the later cults of "positive thinking", although it had a much stronger Christian underpinning than either of these particular currents of thought. Although it was affiliated in some respects - particularly in regard to its rejection of literalism in biblical exegesis - to liberal Christianity, the movement's ideology had little room for those concerns that exercised the contemporaneous social gospel. Its critics, indeed, saw it as uncaring for social problems, except in so far as it was committed to a gospel of health. It offered individual benefits, and had no religious message concerning social structure. Salvation was for the individual by his own efforts: in so far as the redemption of society was considered at all, it would be as a consequence of the scientific "mental work" or prayerful affirmation of "the truth" of individuals.

In both America and Britain, Christian Science recruited a clientèle that was disproportionately drawn from the middle and upper classes. Not only did it confirm them in their relative prosperity, but it assured them that this was indeed God's will for those who rightly understood the Christian message. Beyond this, it appeared also to reconcile the gulf that had grown between material science and Christianity. Not only in its chosen name, but also in its claim to be as "provable as mathematics", the new movement made appeal to a certain would-be intellectual class among the lay public. By

declaring that there was a divine plan, and a divine Mind with which the individual believer could attain rapport, Christian Science appeared to bring order back into a world fraught with intellectual tensions. It resolved certain intellectual riddles. It was also new, and the new was increasingly acceptable, even in a traditional and conservative society like Britain. That its effect was implicitly secularizing, was perhaps not readily perceived - if perceived, then in itself seen as desirable in paring away the archaic and perhaps mystifying aspects of traditional Christianity with its gloomy prognosis for the condition of this world, and for the greater part of mankind.

These are the underlying concerns of the first chapter, which sets out the early history of the movement in America. In subsequent chapters which constitute the core of the thesis, Christian Science is examined as an American movement attempting to strike roots in Britain. In the United States, a pluralistic religious culture and the absence of an "orthodox" religion, in the sense that there was no established church, the social climate was conducive to the emergence of new and heterodox cults. Britain presented a very different context. Although American revivalistic religion had, by the 1890s, a long history of incursions into Britain, that type of faith could be represented as merely a more extreme, populist representation of Protestantism. As such, and even though they met with disdain from those of settled churchmanship, the revivalists found ready audiences and made converts, especially among the working classes. Christian Science was Christianity in a new guise - so new that church people in England could ask whether it was Christian at all: "not Christian and not Science" was a regular judgement. Yet aspects of American culture as such were receiving more attention in Britain than formerly. The cultural autonomy of America was being

recognized, and the American ethos was being diffused in Britain. American science, technology and fashion were increasingly influential - for which Edison, with his microscope, record player, kinetoscope and incandescent lamp, and Bell with the telephone may stand as examples in this field, as did Mrs. Amelia Bloomer in the realm of women's fashion. With such cultural importations, the way was eased for the diffusion of new American religions (as distinct from reassertions in intensified form of the old faith) at least among that section of the public that was aware of the currents of thought emanating from the New World.

The British perception of Christian Science was, especially during the years leading to World War 1, of a more "deviant" religion, even though the status of its clientele conferred upon it a certain social and upper class respectability. As a society in which class traditions were taken for granted, Britain was a traditional and conservative society still rooted in its own past, into which novelty could infiltrate only slowly. Nevertheless, as this thesis illustrates, Christian Science did achieve a sufficiently high profile in Britain to stimulate from this very establishment a reluctant assessment of its healing claims by the groups most affected: the Anglican church and the medical profession. As a novel and distinctive American element in British society, its progress, especially in the capital, but also in provincial towns and cities, was monitored carefully and in some cases sensationally, by the national, local, religious and medical press. Frequently, since this publicity reflected "British" sobriety and conservatism, it often resulted in ridicule.

Christian Science was conspicuous among religious movements emanating from America by its veiled attack on some British institutions, and the Anglican church, particularly, responded by discussion at church conferences

and in church publications. Revivalist and Holiness movements, including Pentecostal sects, mainly because of their appeal to the emotions, attracted little attention among the intelligentsia: they posed no real intellectual challenge to church traditions, while other American "metaphysical" religions, such as, for example, spiritualism or Theosophy, although attracting a similar social class to Christian Science, had little effect on British establishment sensibilities. The emphasis of Christian Science on the individual's achievement of health, wealth and happiness; its ready acceptance by some people who were in the mainstream of society, and the fact that it attracted people, at least initially, by its healing claims, challenged traditional Anglican church teaching, especially with regard to the morally strengthening effects of suffering. Rather than seeing Christ's suffering as the way to true holiness and the path to perfection in the afterlife, Mrs Eddy saw Jesus' healing as a demonstration of the possibility of achieving spiritual perfection in this world.

The central focus of the thesis is on the British public reaction to Christian Science. It seeks to describe the stereotyping of the movement (both in terms of popular conceptions of its teachings and its social composition); to appraise its influence (a) on the attitudes of the major churches to healing and (b) to a lesser degree on the practice of medicine. I have not regarded a detailed account of the opening of individual churches or a minute recording of precise numbers as essential to these themes, although accounts of the opening of some major churches have been included where evidence of public response is available and relevant. The growth of the new movement in America and elsewhere other than Britain is not my concern, nor its fortunes in Britain after its formative period. I do not seek in any sense to appraise the plausibility of the claims of Christian Science, neither to validate nor

to question its claims to healing potential. My concern is rather to chart the course by which the movement became established, and the reactions it provoked. My concerns with this focus of public and institutional reaction therefore call for a thematic, rather than a strictly chronological approach. An attempt has, however, been made to cover the movement's expansion in Britain from about 1895 to 1908, since this is the period in which Christian Science encountered the initial response of the British public, in which it first suffered and then overcame the reputation of being a "society cult". To provide further illustrations of this developing stereotype, I have drawn more on the available evidence to convey impressions of the public's image of Christian Science and Christian Scientists, and the social constituency of its membership.

Subsequent themes cover questions of specific points of interest raised by the nature of the reception of an American healing religion in Britain. The sheer volume of material in which typical reactions are expressed command attention even though they are presented through a trivial medium. Thus, for example, examination of "obvious" areas of direct influence such as reactions from the press, the churches and the medical profession has been supplemented by excursions into the realm of banter (the "Christian Science joke"); and the world of popular literature ("the Christian Science novel"). Since Christian Science attracted to its ranks a number of political figures in Britain, attention has also been paid to the influence which Christian Science ideas may have exerted - at least marginally - in the sphere of public affairs.

The thesis is an essay in the cultural diffusion of ideas, more specifically religious ideas: Christian Science as an example of a "typical" American product implanted into British soil. Studies of cultural diffusion

of influences from America to Britain have previously been fairly broad in scope (for example, R.H. Heindel's survey of 1940 included British responses to a wide range of American influence: politics, culture and the media in particular, and in which religious influences were not examined in depth). The European Association for American Studies publications of the 1970's, edited by A.N.J. Den Hollander, and C.W.E. Bigsby's 1975 compilation cover a diverse range of American cultural influences on European life, in which American religion specifically is included, although proportionate to studies of other topics, it does not represent a major component. B.R. Wilson's contribution to Bigsby's *Superculture: American Popular Culture and Europe*, entitled "American Religious Sects in Europe", follows this general European theme,² although Wilson's article ("American religion: its impact on Britain") in Den Hollander, *Contagious Conflict: The Impact of American Dissent on European Life* (1973), from a background of 18th and 19th century religious (especially revivalist and Methodist) diffusion between America and Britain, goes on to discuss specific types of American religions in Britain: Pentecostal, Adventist and "metaphysical" religions including Christian Science.³ Wesley White also concentrates purely on British receptivity, in a thesis examining the effects of revivalism on the British ecumenical movement.⁴

¹ R.H. Heindel, *The American Impact on Great Britain, 1898-1914*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia and London, 1940.

² B.R. Wilson, "American Religious Sects in Europe", in C.W.E. Bigsby (ed), *Superculture: American Popular Culture and Europe*, Paul Elek, London, 1975, pp. 107 - 122.

³ B.R. Wilson, "American religion: its impact on Britain", in A.N.J. Den Hollander (ed), *Contagious Conflict: The Impact of American Dissent on European Life*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1973, pp. 233 - 263.

⁴ John Wesley White, *The Influence of North American Evangelism in Great Britain between 1830 and 1914 on the origin and development of the Ecumenical Movement*. D.Phil thesis (unpublished), Oxford 1963.

A further main corpus of study for which this thesis has relevance is the study of American sectarianism in Britain, although existing works do not always link the study of sects (as an American religious phenomenon which spread to Britain) with cultural diffusion. Wilson's study of American religion in Britain explores a wide range of religious categories as a result of diffusion. In *Sects and Society*, he took three distinctive types of American religion from this context: the Pentecostal Elim movement, the millenarian Christadelphian sect and Christian Science.¹ In works by other scholars, the field has been narrowed to the sociological examination of single examples: the Jehovah's Witnesses (the Watchtower Movement) have been studied by J. Beckford and A.T. Rogerson,² Scientology by R. Wallis³ and the 7th day Adventist movement by M. Bull and K. Lockhart.⁴ These studies of American sects cover their origins, spread and social composition in both America and Britain, but are not specifically focused on the phenomenon of religious diffusion.

The process of cultural and religious diffusion between Britain (and Europe in a wider context) and America has a long historical tradition

¹ B.R. Wilson, *Sects and Society*, Heinemann, London and Berkeley, 1961.

² J.A. Beckford, *The Trumpet of Prophecy: A Sociological Study of Jehovah's Witnesses*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1975.

A.T. Rogerson, *A sociological analysis of the origin and development of Jehovah's Witnesses and their schismatic groups*. D.Phil thesis (unpublished), Oxford, 1972.

A.T. Rogerson, *Millions Now Living will Never Die*. Constable, London, 1969.

³ Roy Wallis, *The Road to Total Freedom: A Sociological Analysis of Scientology*, Heinemann, London, 1976.

⁴ Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*, Harper, San Francisco, 1989.

stemming from the foundation of the Eastern states. In the 18th century, the population of America was too scattered for a clear cultural style to have evolved. The country was still dependent on Europe, and especially Britain, for its religious and intellectual culture. Its first religious exports were more in style than content - a style that had grown up in the special conditions of the moving frontier and the still unsettled population: namely revivalism. Because religious pluralism was part of the country's inheritance, this may have encouraged new indigenous variants of Christianity which could flower unimpeded by the type of restraints and the presumption of a justified established religion which prevailed in Europe, and in particular in Britain.

If religion had been exported to America from Britain from the founding of the colony, America's "return" in religious terms was rich and diverse, and reflected the diversity of American cultural life. Itinerancy in the revivalist tradition prompted visiting missionaries whose messages ranged from evangelistic "hellfire" doctrines in a literalist tradition, to a personal Holiness orientation. In the late 19th century, sectarian developments in America, often the result of charismatic leadership, spread with varying success to Britain: millenarian groups with distinctive "American" styles of presentation, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Christadelphians and 7th day Adventists, and Pentecostal sects whose emotionalism in group worship was reminiscent both of revivalist styles and negro culture.

The various movements had a populist appeal which in Britain gained lower class adherents. A further genre of American religion which spread to Britain which has been termed "metaphysical", generated among intellectuals (or those with intellectual aspirations) mainly in the Eastern states of America. As in America spiritualism, Theosophy, and fashionable Buddhism,

Christian Science and New Thought appealed to the fashionable and wealthy classes, in Britain they captivated a similar class. Of these, Christian Science attracted the greatest attention as a cohesive and tightly organized sect and became synonymous, on both sides of the Atlantic, with the better-to-do. Its diffusion in Britain was both natural and artificial. Before Mrs Eddy had formulated a coherent "missionary" policy (which was apparently aimed at attracting the upper classes) American emigres and "society" women in Britain had formed groups loyal to Mrs Eddy, through the possibilities presented by improved modes of travel and communications. Perhaps the nearest parallel on a similar scale, but occurring decades later and which also emphasised personal, private prayer diffused through "drawing room" meetings was Buchmanism, or Moral Re-Armament.¹ Both Buchmanism and Christian Science attracted a class which assumed some moral responsibility for world affairs, and both were at pains to ensure an upper class image. Whereas, however, the means by which Christian Scientists hoped to improve the world were through a detailed, introspective, intellectual philosophy, Buchmanism's philosophies were less demanding on the individual and its style more "outward" and practically orientated.

In assessing the receptivity to Christian Science in Britain, it has been essential to analyze both a differentiated class response and the responses to, and influence of, Christian Science in the particular sections of society most likely to be concerned and affected: the Church, medicine, law and the press. Within these different groups, response ranged from vehement assault to gentle satire. Thus, while the response of certain social groups or categories have been examined, attention has been paid to individual

¹ A.W. Eister, *Drawing Room Conversion: A Sociological Account of the Oxford Group Movement*, Duke University Press, Durham NC, 1950.

responses. I have, where possible, followed the canons of methodological individualism,¹ necessary to a study of cultural diffusion, and this study of the spread of Christian Science in British society reinforces the view that cultural currents need not be treated as vague waves, but can be reduced to the actual transmission of ideas and information from one individual to another. This is illustrated in the chapter on "pioneers" (Chapter 2), where I have tried to trace the lines of influence by discussing the individuals involved. Further to this line of inquiry, some of the careers of people involved have been delineated, and, by way of example, illustrations of the formation of early churches have been given: in London, Manchester, Belfast and Codnor. The activities of socially prominent individuals are more easily traced than those of less celebrated people, the effect of which might be to minimise the involvement of working or lower middle class adherents, but examination in detail of these four churches provides some evidence of the involvement of both the more and the less socially well-placed.

A great part of my material has been drawn from contemporary printed sources - from newspapers, national and local, and from the periodical press, some of which developed a keen interest in Christian Science, especially in its early days. My work was very much facilitated by a collection of newspaper cuttings gathered by the Christian Science authorities themselves and to which I had privileged access. The public press augmented such information as was available in the journals produced by the Christian Science Church (all of it American in origin and therefore not always as fully informative on the movement in Britain as might have been desired).

¹ For a general discussion of "individualism" as a 19th century concept, see Steven Lukes, *Individualism*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1973.

Newspaper sources were invaluable not only for accounts of the early establishment of the movement in London and the provinces and major Christian Science personalities, but also as an insight into public reaction. There was also a considerable output of more substantial items on Christian Science and spiritual healing, not only in the medical journals of the days but in a copious output of books and pamphlets. The private papers of prominent figures who became Christian Scientists provided a further layer of evidence, in particular those of Lord Dunmore, Lord Lothian and Lady Astor. Records of discussions pertaining to Christian Science at the Lambeth Conferences of 1908 and 1920 and episcopal letters and papers, were a valuable source of information. The officials of the SSKTP (the Society of the Spreading of the Knowledge of True Prayer) yielded useful information in interviews and provided access to their special material on the development of New Thought in Britain.

In the ordering of the material, the diffusion of Christian Science from America to Britain, individual responses, class responses and responses from particular sections of society has resulted in three "parts" to the thesis: the first three chapters cover the American background to Christian Science, the actual process of transmission through the pioneers, and the subsequent process of expansion of ideas illustrated by the opening of churches in various parts of the country. Following these, a single chapter analyses the "social image" of the British Christian Scientists (including an inter-war social elite) as representative of the established movement in Britain. The three central chapters, analyzing church responses, the reactions of the medical profession and Christian Science within the context of British law, form the primary focus of the thesis and illustrate the peculiarly "British" nature of the response from some of its most influential groups. The final sequence of chapters forms a contrast by the shift of focus from the socially

significant to a less serious realm, in the analysis of the joke response to Christian Science as an object of ridicule, and a literary reaction in "novel" form. Finally, an appendix exploring the widening outreach of Christian Science-type ideas in the form of New Thought, draws some conclusions with regard to a distinctive "British" variety of ideas, and some comparisons with "orthodox" Christian Science.

The first chapter seeks to lay a foundation by briefly surveying the religious and cultural influences in 18th and 19th century New England which may have had some bearing on Mrs Eddy's thought. This chapter draws on existing scholarship, and simply seeks to set the context. This historical appraisal, being of necessity brief, is drawn from somewhat scattered sources, and is not definitive. It aims to place Christian Science as a development of liberal Christianity and of certain mesmeric and hypnotic ideas, which facilitates a summary of the history of the movement itself. This summary again relies on existing works which describe and identify the movement in detail, and act as a point of departure for the different aims of this thesis.

Mrs Eddy's conviction that Britain was a most important field for Christian Science led to her dispatch of "pioneers" to promote the movement. In the second chapter, the careers of individual "missionaries" of Christian Science in an inhospitable British environment, their liaison with existing embryonic groups and their positive effects on the morale of these groups are examined, in their "reports" (in the form of letters) to the Christian Science Journal. Details of the openings of the first churches in London were also extensively recorded in the Journal, which emphasises the close surveillance of the British movement from Boston, and other evidence of the close links

maintained between the "pioneers" and The Mother Church has been noted. The chapter also notes public reactions in the press, and these views, often contrasting with "official" Christian Scientist accounts, accentuate the difficulties involved in the establishment of the movement in Britain.

The second chapter ends with the early Christian Scientists' acquisition of premises off Sloane Square, London, in 1904, which were rebuilt to Christian Scientist specifications and became a prestigious symbol of their progress in the British field. This achievement represents, for the purposes of this thesis, a convenient point at which to phase out the pioneering period (no "missionaries" were sent by Mrs Eddy after 1897). Chapter 3, with Christian Science now well established, at least in London, expands from public impressions of the Sloane Terrace church to examine the outward diffusion of Christian Science into the British provinces, although, as the chapter shows, regional groups were not necessarily motivated by contact with London-based Christian Scientists. The progress of Christian Science in Britain during the "expansion" period has been monitored mainly through accounts in both the national and local press. This perspective has been utilized not only for the historical material it provides, but also as a record of general public impressions of the movement's profile in British towns and cities. With this discussion of Christian Science expansionism, the opportunity of the inclusion of random, as opposed to the more focused, reactions covered in subsequent chapters, has been afforded.

A more detailed analysis of the complexion of the British Christian Scientists is contained within the chapter dealing with their social image. This was to a large degree dictated by the movement's class composition, in which the upper class, or "society", predominated, both in numbers and

profile. Examples of adherents representing many walks of life have been given, however, and an indication of the reasons for the labelling of the movement as a "society cult". Although more abstract analyses of the appeal of Christian Science ideas to the more educated classes have been attempted elsewhere, "Social Image" is centred on actual membership, and more specifically, later in the chapter, careers of individuals involved. For convenience, examples of adherents have been grouped into broad categories of class: working and lower-middle; higher middle (business and professional); "society" and political and social elite. With the greater ease experienced in tracing the activities of prominent people (who would also have had a greater impact on public opinion in their time), it has been possible to give examples of individuals and groups responsible for the "society" image to coincide with both the pre and post-First World War periods. The greater details given of the careers of these socially prominent individuals are justified by their contribution to the progress of the movement in Britain through their influence, social connections and wealth, and to the diffusion of Christian Science values and ideas through the social channels open to them.

The reaction of the churches to the publicity given to Christian Science by the media (and to the claims of the Christian Scientists themselves) opens a trilogy of chapters focusing on establishmentarian as opposed to individual responses which appeared in the press. Although these establishment responses were interconnected, the three main challenges of Christian Science to which the relevant sections of society responded: its supersession of traditional religion; its healing claims and its standing before the law, found within these three British professional groups varying reactions which justify separate treatment. The popularity of Christian Science healing methods with

certain "society" people was undoubtedly a factor in the formation, as early as 1904, of healing movements under church auspices, notably the Guild of Health. In Chapter 5, I have tried to trace the responses within the Anglican church firstly in the spontaneous formation of lay healing groups and the attempted collaboration with the medical profession as a "united front" against Christian Science and other popular forms of spiritual healing, and secondly in the more deliberate discussions at church conferences and congresses which continued throughout the period. Thus, within the church, reaction was on two levels: the practical, in organizations which responded to healing demands, and the theological, in the form of questions raised by the spiritual healing phenomenon with regard to the scriptures. In this chapter, I have attempted to show how Christian Science contributed to the acceleration of changing attitudes towards the religious acceptability of suffering, which led to a reconsideration of the role of the church in a scientific age. As the "national church", Anglican church responses were more far-reaching than those either of the Roman Catholic or the Nonconformist churches, although some examples, and these churches' relationship with Christian Scientists have been included for comparison.

Although collaboration with the medical profession has been shown to be a vital part of the Anglican church's programme of health and healing, within the medical profession such reciprocation not always forthcoming. Members of the medical profession did eventually contribute their specialized knowledge to the spiritual healing discussion by sitting on joint committees with the clergy, but they were more inclined to take their cue from patients, who in some cases demonstrated, by their abandonment of the consulting room, their dissatisfaction with a purely scientific approach and the over-prescription of drugs. In this chapter dealing with the responses from the medical

profession to Christian Science, it has been essential to emphasise that Christian Science has been treated here as only one of several pressures on doctors to develop a more "holistic" approach to patient care, of which perhaps the development of Freudian psychology was the most prominent. However, Christian Science, as one of the most popular new religious movements of the early 20th century which included healing within its tenets, achieved a high enough profile among the classes most likely to visit prominent, "Harley Street" doctors, to stimulate discussion within the highest levels of the profession.

As a hegemonic group who were involved in the maintenance of societal standards, the professional opinions of doctors carried much weight in court cases involving patients who had died while receiving Christian Science treatment. It is a stipulation of Christian Science teaching that, since its healing methods represent the "truth" and are wholly incompatible with "worldly", or medical treatment, it is not possible to combine the two. This apparently uncompromising stance was incomprehensible to many coroners, judges and juries, who saw the failure to summon medical assistance, especially for children, as exemplifying neglect (a view which was supported by existing legislation) especially when doctors testified that medical treatment would have saved the patient's life. This chapter, by describing legal responses through the trials of several such cases, emphasises the difficulties encountered by Christian Scientists in achieving credibility in a more tightly controlled British environment, compared with its acceptance in America.

The two final chapters are included in order to exemplify public responses which differed both from random press comment and those sections of society, described above, to whom the claims of Christian Science were seen

as most alarming. The first of these analyses the minimising effects of humour on the public's image of Christian Science, manifested in jokes and cartoons which appeared in the press. The "Christian Science joke" varied in the aspects of the religion which it selected for the purposes of the lampoon - some facets presented themselves as tantamount (in the public mind) to an invitation of ridicule, not least the challenge to common sense in the Christian Scientist's manipulation of the normal view of reality, and the predominance of society women in the movement. Several of these novel aspects and their humorous response have been examined. In more general terms, outside certain sections of society which were obliged to take a more serious view of its claims, Christian Science was often dismissed as a joke in itself, among more educated and cynical people: apart from the jokes, of which the origins are unknown, some newspaper reports, letters in society journals from, for example, university students (and the disruptive behaviour of some students at Christian Science lectures) illustrate the disposition for ironic response. This "normalising" public response through the press is, in this chapter devoted to a distinctive "British" reaction, shown as unusually widespread for a small religious group, perhaps unique as a response in variety and extent. It provides an example, paradoxically, of the way in which Christian Science attracted attention, albeit disparaging, and subsequently achieved some acceptance within British society.

A further example of the wider public response to Christian Science is to be found in the novel. It is an indication of the attention it attracted that popular novelists of the period found Christian Science a rich source for dramatisation in literary form. Themes reflecting certain aspects of Christian Science and Christian Scientists which had become stereotyped, similar in content to the jokes, were repeated by writers of popular fiction.

These struck a familiar note with readers and helped to reinforce its popular image. Christian Scientists in fictional works were portrayed as recognizable stock characters, widely caricatured in novels depicting "society" life of the inter-war period. As a popular medium, the novel lent itself more readily to lighthearted satire, for which the public's image of the Christian Scientist as a person denying the evidence of the senses as "false claims" provided ideal material. However, some novelists with a "crusading" disposition, or perhaps with a more dramatic purpose, utilized more serious or tragic themes which were impossible in the lampoon. In the novel, possibilities existed for high drama with the "exposure" of some consequences of a belief in Christian Science (for example, the death of children of Christian Science parents). "The Christian Science Novel", as this chapter shows, was an effective medium of this period, through which most shades of public opinion, from vehement assault to capricious facetiousness, could be freely expressed, and this material has been used to provide evidence of a wider response to an unusual religious phenomenon.

In keeping with a primary aim of this thesis, the diffusion of ideas, it has not been possible to examine the diffusion of Christian Science from America to Britain without observing the effects of the widening outreach of Christian Science-type ideas in the form of the collection of metaphysical philosophies broadly known as New Thought. It was perhaps inevitable, with the restrictions on both doctrine and organization imposed on the Christian Science movement by Mrs Eddy in the 1880's, that breakaway groups, under the leadership of individuals previously loyal to Mrs Eddy, should form, and develop derivative philosophies. Although by no means all New Thought leaders were originally taught by Mrs Eddy, Christian Science became representative (and some confusion was often apparent in the press) of a much broader and

looser genre of metaphysical philosophising. Many figures who passed in and out of Christian Science portals continued to purvey theories and therapies in the same general vein. In Britain, as in America, many advocates of these ideas formed movements of their own, with varying success, as marginal agents of variant doctrines. The inclusion of an appendix describing the formation of groups separate from the orthodox Christian Science organization gives an indication both of the wider appeal of Christian Science ideas within the period under discussion, and forms a link with new patterns of religious belief occurring later in the century, with elements evocative of Christian Science and New Thought. Some of these are discussed in the Conclusion. New Thought is examined here in its British variety, as a result of the general diffusion of metaphysical Christianity to Britain. The forms it assumed within a British context were often highly individual, and these and their relevance within the period under review have been discussed to provide a more complete picture of the process of the diffusion of Christian Science ideas to Britain.

Christian Science was a new form of religious organization which promoted a new type of ideology. Organizationally, it combined a congregational polity with an élitist practitioner system of mental therapeutic practice (see Chapter 1). In ideology, it embraced a much more abstract set of traditional religious concepts (such as deity, soul, salvation) than had hitherto been given any popular currency, even allowing for such developments as Swedenborgianism.

In these features and in other ways, Christian Science was strongly coloured by its American origins. It carried the optimism of a movement born in a buoyant and expanding society and the belief in progress native to a

newly forged nation which enjoyed immense resources and a vast land area, and in which scientific advance was unhindered by traditionalism. Thus, Christian Science could lightly abandon various elements that were integral to traditional Christianity, but which fitted ill with the mood and ethos of the optimistic society in which it emerged. Hence, the idea of man as a sinner - surely central to the Christian conception of things - could be relinquished in favour of a particular strain of perfectionist thinking (of which there were several varieties in America). Its particular brand of perfectionism did not draw from the puritan conception of holiness, but rather legitimized a certain hedonism, whilst stopping short of any antinomian tendencies. Implicitly, Christian Science appeared to move towards some reconciliation of the old faith and the new science in which many were inclined to repose their faith. Its therapeutic programme claimed ancient scriptural provenance, but in canvassing an almost mathematical exactitude appeared to marry modern insights with a heightened spiritual sense. These distinctive American features, which might have induced scepticism in the public of a more traditional and conservative society, also had a certain appeal, at least for some. Christian Science was the new wave, offering hope and a reappraisal of spiritual values at the dawn of a new century.

Chapter 1.Christian Science - an American Religion."Scientific" Religions.

Christian Science belongs to that species of nineteenth century religion which might be called metaphysical. As a sect it has been labelled (in common with New Thought, Theosophy, Anthroposophy and others) as "gnostic"¹. Its claims to truth and to efficacy depend on the assertion that there is a now accessible (if once hidden, or even secret) body of knowledge, the possession of which in itself confers salvific power. The Transcendental movement in New England, although itself not a religious movement, served as a precursor and a possible source of Christian Science idealism, and was one current of thought which operated in this social milieu, with its distinctive and localized intellectual and quasi-intellectual culture. It created a climate in which a type of religiosity far removed from revivalism, or pentecostalism, or even from Adventism could develop. It encouraged a style of religion which passed as intellectual, decorous, and philosophical. A religion of the head, an intellectualized spirituality was the congruent form, and in some Eastern cults, in fashionable Buddhism, in Theosophy and in Christian Science and its various offshoots, this type of spiritual stirring took shape.

¹B.R. Wilson, "An Analysis of Sect Development", *American Sociological Review*, 24 (1959) pp. 3-15

B.R. Wilson (ed.) *Patterns of Sectarianism: Organization and Ideology in Social and Religious Movements*, Heinemann, London 1963.

Later, Wilson changed this usage to "manipulationist", in *Religious Sects: A Sociological Study*, (World University Library) London 1970.

Other less exclusively philosophical systems of metaphysical religion had contributed to this context, notably Swedenborgianism, as well as less elevated manifestations of religious phenomena which eventually acquired some metaphysical explanatory apparatus, as in some developments in spiritualism, as well as the more ecstatic variants found among Shakers and even in early Adventism¹. Spiritualism postulated, as did Christian Science and later New Thought movements, a certain reconciliation of the physical and the metaphysical. To a certain degree, late nineteenth century American spiritualism tried to embrace both an acceptance of modernity and a reconciliation with science. In taking Swedenborg's ideas to mean that science was equally relevant in unseen realms, religion and science could be compatible. In direct contrast to the Biblical literalists, the fundamentalists and the millennialists, these "modern" religionists tried to incorporate within religion the idea of scientific progress². Although regarded as somewhat eccentric, these new movements were prominent in society and metaphysical cults acquired a fashionability in America, as in Britain. The followers of Swedenborg, who in the early eighteenth century had promulgated ideas of a "hierarchical series of spiritual spheres surrounding the earth"³, founded their earliest churches in both Britain and America in the late eighteenth century and despite the condemnation of spiritualism as it came later to be practised, Swedenborgian ideas were used to give respectability to the late nineteenth century enthusiasm for transmundane communication. Swedenborg's influence has been claimed in such diverse movements as Transcendentalism, Brook Farm, spiritualism, faith healing,

¹ Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking A Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*, Harper, San Francisco, 1989.

²R. Laurence Moore, *In Search of White Crows*, OUP, New York, 1977, p.22

³Ibid. p.9

mesmerism and others, and in Theosophy, in respect particularly of the belief that humans embody a divine principle¹.

A rather different current of thought which came to have an influence on the popular metaphysical movements of New England can be traced to the ideas of Francis Mesmer (c. 1734-1815), a Viennese physician who first believed that the planets had influence on the human body but who later substituted magnetism for stellar influence. His belief in a "universal fluid" like magnetism or electricity, which connected all material substances, including human beings, pre-echoed the ideas of later New Thought mind healers. He believed that the human body was a living magnet complete with negative and positive poles, and subject to outside influences, particularly mirrors and sound². The name "animal magnetism" was given to this phenomenon (a term which acquired a later significance within Christian Science). Through this magnetic agency, treatment could be given, which was particularly helpful in curing nervous diseases. Mesmer's work was continued by Puysegur, who modified Mesmer's original ideas by postulating the influence of thought on "the vital principles of the body". In 1836, Charles Poyen, a French lecturer, toured New England and later a Dr. Collyer, who lived in Belfast, Maine, expounded similar theories. It was probably through him that P.P. Quimby, also from Belfast, developed his own healing techniques which, after his death, were expanded by one of his followers, a former Swedenborgian and Methodist minister, W.F. Evans. One of those much influenced by Quimby was Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science.

¹R.K. Jones, "The Swedenborgians: an Interactionist Analysis", *Sociological Yearbook of Religion*, p.132, Vol.7, 1974.

² A.M. Bellwald, *Christian Science and the Catholic Faith*, Longmans, Green & Co., London 1922, p. 12

Christian Scientists like to regard their movement as owing little if anything to the influence of Transcendentalism, mesmerism, or the other metaphysical currents of thought prevalent in New England in the second half of the nineteenth century. They see the entire system of mind healing and the religious philosophy of Christian Science as arising de novo with Mrs Eddy and as first presented in her textbook, *Science and Health*, 1875. These apologists see other New Thought groups as derivative from Christian Science, the creations of apostates and imitators, deviants or malcontents who built false systems. Whilst some New Thought movements may be traced to the activities of disaffected students of Mrs Eddy, New Thought and Christian Science are clearly both developments of the combined currents of Transcendentalism and post-Mesmeric mind healing which are well-documented phenomena antecedent to the "discovery" by Mrs Eddy of Christian Science. The Transcendentalists of the Boston area provided the impetus for popular metaphysical speculation, bringing religious ideas from the East within an American context. The group, dominated by intellectuals such as Emerson, Alcott (whom Mrs Eddy met) and Parker, appears to be the principal agency through which these particular philosophic ideas infiltrated America from Europe¹.

Mary Baker Eddy and the Appeal of Christian Science.

It is difficult to estimate to what extent the prevailing currents of thought were assimilated by Mrs Eddy. In her works, not only are there evident strains of Transcendentalism, but other influences have been noted, mainly

¹p.Miller, *The Transcendentalists*, Harvard University Press, Camb., Mass., 1950.

derived from Hegel, Swedenborg, and Mesmer, and Mrs Eddy has been accused of plagiarism from these and other sources. The most obvious, personal source of influence must be attributed to Quimby, the mesmerist healer whom Mrs Eddy first visited in Portland, Maine, in the early 1860's for relief from illness¹. Up to this point, Mrs Eddy's life had been lacking in direction. She had been born in 1821, the youngest of the six children of a New Hampshire farmer. Her life had been affected by ill-defined maladies, illnesses, possibly psychogenetic in origin and probably not improved by subsequent domestic difficulties, which included an early widowhood and a later unhappy marriage which ended in divorce. From the stimulation she received by visiting Quimby, her early interest in religious matters, evident from accounts of her childhood reading, and her later interest in homeopathy, revived. From Quimby she received ideas about healing which were to form the matrix of her new religion, and to which she brought her own brand of unitarian Christianity.

Quimby himself was not particularly religious, although, with other terms, he used the term "Christ Science" in referring to his system, and employed the quasi-scientific phraseology typical of the time, and a kind of manipulative mesmerism. His practice was no doubt aided by a compelling personality. In later years, having produced her own system of healing, Mrs Eddy used the term "animal magnetism" for the mesmeric system which Quimby used, and saw it as the destructive antithesis of her ideas. Animal magnetism was defined by her as the use of mental power ("mortal mind") for malicious purposes. This side of Christian Science was the negative aspect of an otherwise positive, pragmatic, American-style religion. Christian Science

¹B.R.Wilson, "The Origins of Christian Science: A Survey", *Hibbert Journal*, 57 (1959) pp. 161-70.

denies the existence of matter and affirms that reality consists solely of spirit, synonymous with God, which occupies all space and all forms of life, which is stated to be a reflection of the divine principle, God. As God is claimed to be a force only for good, the religion asserts that evil, or "error" can be attributable only to the erroneous working of "mortal mind", which has somehow fallen from this ideal principle of being. Error is false belief, according to Christian Science doctrine: correct belief is the affirmation of the propositions set out in *Science and Health*. Negativity is seen as "mortal mind" and, in its active aspects, as "malicious animal magnetism". One is oneself therefore at fault if "error" creeps in, and one has only to deny the existence of this error in order to be reunited with the principle of truth, another synonym for God. Correct belief ensures the bodily health of the individual and unlimited success in any undertaking, since the power of the divine principle is limitless and may be reflected in all human activity.

These ideas held obvious appeal for late nineteenth and early twentieth century Americans. Unlike the millennial religions developing at the time, Christian Science required no renunciation of worldly pursuits, only a regular study of Mrs Eddy's own interpretation of the Bible to ensure health, happiness and success within the existing social structure. Christian Science appealed to those who saw it as relevant to the "success psychology" of industrial America at the end of the nineteenth century, even though many of its adherents were married women and as such not directly involved in the economic order. In Britain, the movement's adherents were perhaps less concerned with the material benefits it offered. Instead, Christian Science seemed to gain ground primarily among those who already had some social standing, frequently those who were cultivated, and who had leisure time in

which to engage in one or another of the various religious innovations that were burgeoning in America. The fashionability, particularly in London society, of Christian Science and other metaphysical cults such as spiritualism and Theosophy, was in some respects reminiscent of the situation in Boston, although Boston was perhaps not typical of American society generally. The popularity of Christian Science among some sections of British society was a facet of the fashionability of American culture in general, one of the features of which was an emphasis on feminism¹.

Before the development of new techniques of communication, the popular media and the Hollywood film industry², this cultural influence occurred (with some exceptions) only among the Protestant, more literate and wealthy upper classes of British society. These were the people who had the opportunity to travel across the Atlantic and experience American culture, who had access to American newspapers and journals, and who moved in British "society" circles in which there mingled American visitors, often young women undertaking the American equivalent of the "Grand Tour" of Europe (a phenomenon which increased after the Civil War)³. Among the novelties coming from America and one which was particularly readily available to this class of British society, was Christian Science. At the time, some clergymen tended to attribute its apparent success to disillusionment with orthodox religion,

¹R.H.Heindel, *The American Impact on Great Britain, 1898-1914*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia and London, 1940, pp. 186, 264, 289, 304, 310, 326, 328, 329, 338, 343, 385.

²C.W.E. Bigsby, *Superculture: American Popular Culture and Europe*, Pal Elek Leiden 1975.

³ R.H. Heindel, *Op. cit.* pp. 343-350. See also Chapter 2, "Pioneers".

but disillusionment may have been too strong an expression for a much vaguer loss of interest in conventional religion¹.

Christian Scientists were not a radical or revolutionary sect. They were not comparable to the millennialists- Millerites or Mormons- who had found sympathizers earlier in the century. Their association with Christian Science may for most converts have been their first and only departure from established norms. Novelty itself may have been enough to appeal to some "society" people, particularly since it bore the growing prestige of much that was American. However, the appeal of Christian Science was by no means confined to the superficial attraction of novelty: there was a serious purpose. Christian Science offered the prospect of healing for the sick, a prospect, indeed, of escaping sickness, of virtually wishing oneself into health. Christian Scientists liked to say that their recruits were not from the churches but rather from the cemeteries. For some, the Christian Science preoccupation was acquired in exchange for a morbid concern with sickness, real or hypochondriacal.

The impression created by the press of the day was that British Christian Scientists were drawn, in considerable measure, from the upper classes. The Christian Science authorities themselves were not averse to reinforcing this impression, and made the most of publicizing their prestigious social connections. That members of the British upper class should subscribe to a deviant American religion when, unlike many American converts, they, as a class, had little need for a religion which emphasized the prospect of success, may appear surprising. But for the well-established, Christian

¹ See Chapter 5, "Christian Science and Established Religion".

Science offered another function. It served to legitimize well-being and even wealth, and it may have reconciled some to an otherwise troubling sense of social inequality, by proclaiming the abundant availability of health, wealth and happiness. If Christian Scientists experienced a tender conscience, they could be reconciled to social problems, because they knew that such problems, deficiencies and limitations were not structural but only a consequence of wrong thinking. By teaching Christian Science, they could take the most positive action to distribute all manner of spiritual- and material-wellbeing. Their religion did not preclude them, as was the case with some other sects, from full participation in the wider social world or restrict their intercourse with non-Christian Scientists. The new religion demanded neither the severance of pre-existing social connections, nor withdrawal from normal social and cultural pursuits (abstinence from alcohol and tobacco excepted).

Of course, many of those with whom Christian Scientists were in contact did not embrace the faith. Some took it up partially, professing an interest while remaining in membership with the Anglican church. Others became fully committed and became devoted to Mrs Eddy and her cause, ignoring the ridicule which Christian Science often excited in British society¹. Mrs Eddy's ambition to establish Christian Science firmly in Britain was furthered by the loyalty of its wealthy and influential British adherents, who financed the building of churches, in central or fashionable locations in many British towns and cities. Unarguably American in background and style, the establishment of Christian Science in early 20th century Britain was a reflection and measure of its considerable impact in America. Although in Britain it never achieved

¹ See Chapters 8 and 9.

great numbers, that it achieved the success it did is some indication of the relief that some experienced either through its healing or from its confident declaration that all was right with the world. Others may have welcomed it as an attempted reconciliation of the controversy between science and religion.

The History, Doctrines and Organization of Christian Science.

Earlier studies have surveyed the history, doctrines and organization in considerable detail. Here, all that is required to introduce the spread of the movement, is a summary which draws on these sources which apply principally to Christian Science in America, in contrast to the succeeding chapters which deal specifically with the introduction and reception of the movement in Britain.¹

Mrs Eddy claimed that Christian Science, in its total and original form, was divinely revealed to her in 1866. The revelation accompanied what was later to be called a "demonstration" of the healing power of "Divine Mind", or God, after Mrs Eddy (then Mrs Patterson) had fallen on the ice at Lynn, Massachussetts, in a way which, by her own account, might have been fatal. Mrs Eddy subsequently regarded her earlier life, which had been marked by ill-health and genteel poverty, as a spiritual preparation. From then on until her death in 1910, she sought to clarify her understanding of the power

¹ The information for this section has been taken from:
 B.R. Wilson, *Sects and Society*, Heinemann, London and Berkeley, 1961.
 H.A. Studdert-Kennedy, *Mrs Eddy*, Farallon, San Francisco, 1947.
 C.S. Braden, *Christian Science Today*, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, 1958.
 Robert Peel, *Mary Baker Eddy* (3 Vols.), Holt, Rinehart and Winston, NY 1977.
 E.Bates & J. Dittmore, *Mary Baker Eddy: The Truth and the Tradition*, Boston, 1933.
 Harold W. Pfautz, "A Case Study of an Urban Religious Movement", in E.W. Burgess & D.J. Bogue, *Contributions to Urban Sociology*, University of Chicago Press, 1967.

of healing as a divine science. This led to the organization and re-organization of an unprecedented style of church structure and miscellaneous written works, chief among which was the textbook of the movement: *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, first published in 1875. This book, frequently re-written and revised, went through many editions. Christian Scientists regard her revelation as gradually unfolding, just as they interpret their own progress in realizing the "truths" of their religion.

During the period in which Mrs Eddy wrote *Science and Health*, she led a wandering existence, moving from one lodging to another until she settled in Lynn, where a preliminary student base was built up. A Christian Science Association was formed from among her early students. In 1879, having moved to Boston, the First Church of Christ, Scientist, was formed from this first association. In 1881, Mrs Eddy founded the Massachusetts Metaphysical College, where both courses ("Primary" and "Normal") which formed the permanent basis of her teaching of the more advanced students of Christian Science, were taught. The first issue of the movement's main periodical, the *Christian Science Journal*, was produced in 1883 and in 1886 a National Christian Science Association was formed. In 1889 and 1890, all the existing organizations were dissolved, including the college, even though the movement had grown rapidly and was attracting much press attention. During the next few years, Mrs Eddy instituted in their place a tightly organized structure based upon the authority of a central church, called The Mother Church, with a structure of boards and committees resembling that of a business corporation. The *Church Manual* was produced by Mrs Eddy in 1895. This book contained by-laws which were intended to form strict guide lines for the government of The Mother Church and all its branch churches. However, Mrs

Eddy's provisions proved to be far from comprehensive (even though Christian Scientists were disposed to regard the Manual as a perfect instrument of government). Legal problems were aggravated rather than resolved by the attempt to apply the by-laws set out in the Manual. Mrs Eddy even stipulated that only she could amend the Manual. Thus, at her death, the regulations governing the movement became frozen. The Board of Directors assumed the general control of the running of the movement in the mid-1890's, and this continued after 1910.

The changes had a dramatic effect on the character of the movement and on the liberties of Christian Scientists. Before the early 1890's, there had been room for individual interpretations of the faith, partly resulting from the different personalities in charge, as pastors, of the branch churches. After 1895, the only "pastors" permitted were impersonal: *Science and Health* and the Bible, the passages to be read being chosen in advance by the central organization and delivered by two readers whose term of office was limited to three years. Christian Scientists who accepted the new rules were thereafter members of their branch churches, and in most cases, in a separate capacity and provided certain criteria were met, members of The Mother Church. Membership of The Mother Church entitled them to certain privileges: only these members were allowed to become readers or officers of their churches (in effect representatives of The Mother Church) and membership opened the way to further study and to practitioner or teacher status.

There had previously been many defections from the faith among the more innovative students, perhaps because of the somewhat nebulous character of Christian Science theory and the abstract ideas laid down in *Science and Health*. In some cases, individuals such as Emma Hopkins, who taught some

later leaders of New Thought movements, Ursula Gestefeld and others, established their own groups of followers apart from Mrs Eddy. Some of these defections and the movements which resulted are examined in the appendix. However, none of these rival groups were any great threat to the spread of Christian Science either in America or elsewhere. Mrs Eddy's centralization of control was no doubt intended to lay down firm guide lines for her loyal followers and to draw a demarcation between Christian Science and similar movements. At the same time, Mrs Eddy firmly established herself as supreme authority. With the control of the movement in the hands of the five directors after 1910, the provisions eventually stood firm inspite of litigation which perhaps a more thoroughly written constitution might have prevented. The provisions of the 1894-5 reorganization have continued in operation to the present day, inspite of changing expectations within the movement and numerical decline in America and Britain since the 1940's.

The percentage increase in the movement between 1906 and 1936 in the U.S.A. outstripped that of most other established denominations. Between 1906 and 1926, the movement grew from 635 churches to 1,913, an increase of 200 per cent, compared with a national average for all denominations of 9.4 per cent during the same period. The decade 1926 to 1936 showed a further increase, although not on the same scale, of 33 per cent. By 1936 there were 269,000 Christian Scientists in the U.S.A. alone.

Doctrine.

Science and Health contains the complete Christian Science doctrine, and was intended by Mrs Eddy to be read with continual reference to the Bible, and in particular, to selected scriptural passages which, she claimed, proved the basic theories of Christian Science. In some respects, congruent with Mrs

Eddy's New England religious background, it can be seen as a variation of Unitarianism, since the all-powerfulness of one God is emphasised. Christ in this instance is seen not as part of the godhead but as a demonstrator of divine truths. As a son of God, he is seen in Christian Science as an exemplar. Christ's "demonstrations" of healing and his triumph over sin and death showed the heights to which mankind might rise in "Science", provided spiritual consciousness dominated the influence of material, or worldly, beliefs. In contrast to some derivative movements and to other branches of New Thought, Christ, albeit only as a perfect man, is central to Christian Science. His was the work which demonstrated divine science, which Mrs Eddy was able to re-present in terms suited to a later age.

The "truth" demonstrated by Christ in Christian Science concerns the position of man in the universe in a personal relationship with God, or the source of all goodness, knowledge, intelligence and spirituality. Mrs Eddy interpreted the scriptures (particularly Genesis, to which she devoted an entire chapter in *Science and Health*) as describing the creation of man as a literal reflection of God, the creator. The doctrines of Christian Science are mainly based on the premise that man as the creation of God "in His own image" is in "reality" as perfect as the creator, a spiritual reflection of the one divinity and as free from the knowledge, or experience, of sin, sickness and death as God himself. Mrs Eddy claimed a primitive Christianity through the demonstrations of Christ in healing and in finally overcoming death. Through Christian Science, mankind was once more able to demonstrate this truth for himself as the apostles had done, and in this sense, Mrs Eddy considered herself to be a further wayshower. To attain his rightful state, man should, through personal, silent prayer, base his understanding on spiritual realities and realise his spiritual potential. Once "mortal mind"

and all its accompanying miseries- sin, sickness and death- had been subjugated by this realisation through prayer, then the physical condition would be brought to perfection.

Mrs Eddy, again concentrating on Genesis, charted the beginning of the belief in a mortal mind with the "myth of the Adam-dream, the deep sleep, in which originated the delusion that life and intelligence proceeded from and passed into matter. This pantheistic error, or so-called serpent (this word is underlined), insists still upon the opposite of Truth, saying 'Ye shall be as gods; that is, I will make error as real and eternal as truth' ". She also discerned two distinct accounts of the creation and the early history of man in Genesis, one which she pronounced true, and the other as a "history of error", in which God apparently "co-operated with matter in constructing the universe"¹. The account of Adam, the serpent story, and the history of Adam's mortal descendants is, according to Christian Science theory, a mythical, material account, a Biblical contrast to the real, spiritual creation, the account of which appears at the beginning of Genesis. The Biblical history of mankind, thereafter, was shown by Mrs Eddy to be one of an erroneous belief in mortality, with all the ills that flesh is heir to.

The Christian Scientist denies the reality of the material world, and emphasises the singular reality of God, Spirit, and of man as his reflection. The affirmation of this supposed "truth" is held in itself to bring the material into greater consonance with the spiritual, so eliminating sin, disease and death. The belief in a spiritual dimension apparently in effect lifts the Christian Scientist onto some higher plane of consciousness. In the

¹Science and Health, p.522

material world, this spiritual consciousness has, in theory, the effect of improving the physical health and personal circumstances of the believer, provided he has enough faith. Mrs Eddy recognised that since, in some respect, "believing makes it so", men had the power not only to realise benefit but also to work evil by clinging to material ideas, and exercising what she called "mortal mind". Mesmerism, or animal magnetism, was the subject of a chapter in *Science and Health* entitled "Animal Magnetism Unmasked". She described the phenomenon as a sinister force activated by a belief in a power aside from God's. It was more than a passive intrusion of mortal mind such as might prevent an individual from realising his potential as a reflection of God: it was rather the deliberate projection of evil onto others. A process of "mutual influence", a theory attributed by Mrs Eddy to Mesmer, is set in motion and can be utilised maliciously against other individuals, consciously or unconsciously. If this influence is given recognition by one who knows the "truth" (a Christian Scientist) and whose prayerful vigil has slipped, it can produce evil consequences. The Christian Scientist was exhorted to protect himself against such baleful consequences of "malicious animal magnetism" by denying that it had power. Such denials, firmly maintained, would dissipate its influence.

Christian Science was publicised by Mrs Eddy and later by the organization of The Mother Church as a religion which had the practical effect of overcoming all evil. The movement has always claimed that a thorough study of *Science and Health* would confer on the individual an advantageous mental attitude for both his everyday concerns and his ultimate salvation.

Christian Science Practice and Healing.

Christian Scientists constantly affirm the supremacy of Divine Mind over mortal, material belief by a programme which brings them into regular contact with each other, providing a reading routine as well. All churches hold services on Sunday mornings, often repeated on Sunday evenings, and a testimony meeting on Wednesday evening. The programmes for these meetings were laid down by Mrs Eddy in the Church Manual, are common to all churches and do not vary, even though each church is notionally autonomous in its management and organization. In addition, Christian Scientists are required to prepare themselves for the Sunday service by a daily reading of correlative passages in Science and Health and the Bible, the "lesson-sermon", listed in the Christian Science Quarterly, one of the publications issued by the publishing society of The Mother Church. The week's reading is then repeated during the Sunday service, with the First and Second Readers reading the prepared texts. Christian Scientists are expected to carry out these beliefs discreetly in their daily lives, overcoming "error" by affirmation of the "omnipresence" of God.

Much of the "mental work" of a Christian Scientist is carried out in private. They are not encouraged to proselytise, believing that all will "unfold" in due course, and that unbelievers will come to realise the truth in the fullness of time when they are ready, aided, of course, by the mental work of the believers. Those who are not ready to accept the truth are thought to exist on a lower, mortal plane. This mental work amounts to a certain vigilance in prayer, or silent, personal communion with God, the frequency and depth of which reflects the spiritual development of the Scientist. Prayer, or mental work, may amount to merely "holding the right thought" at any time.

Prayer is an agency of protection particularly at times of personal or family crisis, and to ward off malicious animal magnetism.

Private study and prayer is given greater emphasis than attendance at church services, and reading rooms, in which are contained all Mrs Eddy's works, the Christian Science periodicals and "approved" works on its history and Mrs Eddy, are maintained by each church. The rooms fulfil a multi-purpose: they act to a certain extent as public relations offices; the public is welcome in these rooms and current periodicals are on sale. The reading room might be the first contact a newcomer makes with the movement and stands containing the latest publications are often placed strategically outside, to attract the passer-by. For the most part, however, it appears to be Christian Scientists who use the reading rooms.

Mrs Eddy stipulated that a branch church could be formed only if there were at least sixteen Christian Scientists, four of whom should be members of The Mother Church. In addition, each church should contain at least one practitioner, or healer. A practitioner is a Christian Scientist of the middle hierarchy, perhaps occupying not quite as prestigious a position as the teacher, but nevertheless an important figure within the group. Practitioners are graduates of a "Primary" class, taken with a recognised teacher. Provided the class-instructed Christian Scientist has no other gainful employment, he or she may undertake healing work for discretionary fees on a full-time basis. Practitioners in the present day usually undertake healing work for those members who for whatever reason are unable to bring about a demonstration of healing for themselves.

It was perhaps intended by Mrs Eddy originally that practitioners should be put before the public as a real alternative to the medical practitioner. Particularly in Britain, there are recorded cases in the past in which members of other denominations and strangers to Christian Science have called for the services of a practitioner when medicine had failed. This was frequently the individual's first contact with the movement, and a successful healing would almost certainly win a convert. Nowadays, converts are less likely to be made in this way, and practitioners mostly work for well-established Christian Scientists, usually charging a discretionary fee, but sometimes, if a particularly needy case arises, a nominal fee or none at all. It is apparent from this that it would be almost impossible for a practitioner to live on his or her earnings from healing work, but since practitioners are usually married women, they are generally not dependant on such earnings. A man who wishes to become a practitioner often waits until retirement to take up healing work.

The practitioner often gives "absent" treatment, that is, she concentrates on the problem at a distance from the patient, by prayerful study of appropriate texts in Science and Health and the Bible, and by concentrated mental work. She may be visited by the patient for discussion, or visit the patient, and assist him to overcome the problem himself. The rationale here might be that in a case where a patient's faith or mental work was weak, two people working on a case would give greater protection against the workings of mortal mind, or the effects of malicious animal magnetism. If, inspite of these efforts, the healing work should fail, the church permits the Christian Scientist to consult a medical practitioner.

The Structure of the Church Organization.

The Christian Science church organization, apart from a few minor points, is modelled on the *Manual*, 1895. It controls two main concerns: the administration of the church and the teaching structure. The administration resembles a modern business corporation. The Board of Directors of The Mother Church, consisting of five self-perpetuating members, has overall control of the movement (although the Trustees of the Publishing House have disputed this control on one occasion). The directors have ultimate disciplinary control. They control publications, vet lectures, approve lesson-sermons and approve appointments of officers in The Mother Church, and teachers. Christian Science publications and periodicals are managed by a Board of Trustees.

The church has always been concerned about what appears in print about it. Thus, faithfully echoing Mrs Eddy's keen sensitivity to the way in which she and her teachings were represented in the public press, the church has from the early years of this century instituted in each state or county officials (known, curiously, as committees on publication, although each such committee is in fact one person) to monitor press accounts of Christian Science and, where appropriate, to seek to correct erroneous or damaging statements. These officials also ensure the availability in public libraries of Mrs Eddy's textbook, *Science and Health*. The Mother Church has a Board of Lectureship and a Committee on Business, elected by The Board of Directors. Each branch church is obliged to call a lecturer for at least one annual lecture, usually delivered in a public hall. The Committee on Business acts through Christian Scientists who have influence, perhaps as advertisers, to correct articles offensive to Christian Scientists. Thus, this central body often works to put pressure on newspapers, in support of the local committees on publication.

Education and Teaching.

Although many Christian Scientists content themselves by taking out membership in a branch church and, providing they qualify by virtue of total abstinence from alcohol and tobacco, further membership of The Mother Church, there are possibilities typically for a gnostic movement of more specialized instruction. In Christian Science a member may take a "Primary Course" of "class instruction" from a teacher approved by the directors of The Mother Church. This provides the qualification to become a practitioner, a recognised "healer". Class instruction indicates seriousness of commitment and is a source of social status within the local church. After three years of successful healing practice, a practitioner may apply for a further "Normal" course under the Board of Education of The Mother Church which qualifies him as a teacher of Christian Science. A teacher may take classes of no more than thirty students annually and form associations of pupils. As has been observed in a previous study, pupils often evince considerable loyalty towards their teachers, which sometimes occasions schism between associations. For these reasons, Mrs Eddy stipulated that no church should be formed solely from the pupils of one teacher and forbade association teachings more frequently than annually.

Sunday school caters for young people up to the age of twenty, although a person is permitted to become a member of The Mother Church at the age of twelve. The Sunday school programme is again laid down in the Manual and a supervisor is appointed for each church. Sunday school congregations often form a major part of the total congregation, although adolescents are not usually evident in any number.

Social Composition.

Previous studies have shown that Christian Scientists are mainly middle or upper class. Since the earliest days, professional people, doctors, lawyers, businessmen and politicians, and even senators, have been among them. In Britain the movement has been noted for its comparatively high proportion of titled people and gentry. However, it has been women, and mostly married women, at least in numbers, who have dominated the movement¹, and although some have followed their own professions (doctors, nurses, film stars and so on), they are more often wives of successful or socially well-placed men².

These characteristics are typical for Christian Scientists. They tend to be people with more than average amount of leisure time in which to study Mrs Eddy's writings and to attend services. Mrs Eddy's writings, which might be described as expounding a metaphysical idealism shroud the straightforward and literal narratives of Christianity. The genre is one unlikely to be appreciated by people of limited education, and it is not surprising that Christian Science has had little appeal to the working classes. The basic tenets of Christian Science cannot be transmitted via a teacher in the same way as a priest or clergyman acts as a medium for orthodox faith, conveying religious doctrines even to the illiterate. Christian Science depends heavily on the written word. Its mode is intellectual and the adherent needs to grasp a set of metaphysical ideas and to learn how, according to Christian Science, they are to be applied to the material world and everyday life in a system of affirmation of the spiritual and denial of the material (and most specifically

¹ B.R. Wilson, *Sects and Society*, Heinemann, London 1961, pp. 198-9 and Appendix M., p.369, for sex distribution in some British towns.

² See Chapter 4, "The Social Image of British Christian Scientists".

of the baleful and untoward aspects of the material). Whilst material evidences are allowable, only those which confirm the principles of universal wellbeing are admitted. To understand how such a process of "argumentation" and selective affirmation is said to work, and to conform to its requirements, demands a considerable degree of articulateness, mental agility and facility with abstract concepts. Mrs Eddy's general inclinations towards the positive aspects of life which she claimed could be enhanced by a study of Christian Science, also seems to exclude those for whom life has not provided so abundantly. The outward display of success, good clothes, cars, the old school tie, is evident among Christian Scientists.

The organization does not provide its members with any social activities other than services but Forum Monitor groups for the young have spread throughout the movement, although their link to the movement is rather tenuous. Mrs Eddy did not inaugurate any form of social activity, as she believed that man, as a spiritual reflection of the divine, had no need for such diversions, and young people appear to have found that the church does not cater for their social needs. Christian Science does indeed appeal mainly to older people, and in this respect, although it might not be a religion for the young, it can be seen as a religion which revitalises and rejuvenates the old.

Whilst the movement does not encourage amusements as such, unlike some other sects it does not restrict members from seeking them elsewhere. There is no barrier to attending the cinema, theatre, to dancing or other pastimes, although the prohibition of alcohol, tobacco, drugs and even of tea and coffee is a puritan element. Christian Scientists, who are perhaps disproportionately recruited as discrete individuals whose families do not

affiliate with the church, are not discouraged from association with outsiders. As a movement, Christian Science has more in common with voluntaristic therapeutic cults than with tight-knit socially cohesive sects. Although its therapeutic practice is engrafted onto a church structure, there is an evident duality of organizing principles in the movement. On the one hand, there is the church congregation with its notional congregational polity and the (somewhat emasculated) leadership of readers and the local church board, all dependent on The Mother Church. On the other hand, there is the structure of practitioner-client relationships which can function entirely outside, and in any case always alongside, that of the church itself. The attachment is, in either case, segmental rather than total, and the orientation of Christian Scientists is individualistic rather than collective or communal. Christian Scientists are found nowadays in disproportionate numbers in watering places, middle-class resorts, towns where there is a high proportion of wealthily retired people, often from the military, in politically and socially conservative areas and the better suburbs of cities. The system provides prestige through knowledge of a type, a system of education of sorts for the perpetual student and an opportunity for association with others of the same class.

Chapter 2.Pioneer Christian Scientists in Britain.

Given the relatively rapid expansion of Christian Science in New England and elsewhere in the United States, the appeal of Christian Science to relatively affluent Americans and the publicity accorded to a religious movement which had a woman as its founder, it is not surprising that interest was soon awakened overseas. This was particularly true of Great Britain. *Science and Health* was available and accessible, and news of what happened especially in the Eastern states of America was carried in English newspapers. Given the appeal of earlier forms of American Christianity in the nineteenth century, that Christian Science should soon attract British adherents was entirely expectable.

Beyond this, Mrs Eddy had a profound interest in Britain. She claimed British ancestry and she saw Britain and America as kindred nations, celebrating their relationship in one of her poems¹. She expressed herself frequently in terms that indicated her great pleasure that Christian Science was being taken up in Britain (whilst she was apparently less enthusiastic about its diffusion elsewhere, particularly in Germany, where this entailed the prospect of translation of *Science and Health*). There may, however, have been more to her interest than this, since Mrs Eddy may have subscribed, and certainly many of her close associates in Christian Science subscribed, to

¹ Mary Baker Eddy, "The United States to Great Britain" in *Poems*, The Christian Science Publishing Society, Boston, p.10. It was written during the Spanish-American War and was first published in *The Boston Herald* on May 15, 1898.

For limited discussion of Mrs Eddy's anglophilia:

Robert Peel, *Mary Baker Eddy, The Years of Authority, 1892-1910*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, NY 1977, pp.114-119 and Clifford P. Smith, *Historical Sketches*, The Christian Science Publishing Society, Boston, 1934, p. 230.

the theories of British or Anglo-Israelism, which taught that the British and American peoples constituted a chosen race, descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel¹.

During the late nineteenth century and up to the end of the First World War, British or Anglo-Israel theories increased in general popularity on both sides of the Atlantic, particularly among those concerned with actual empire building, such as, for example, the military. Robert Peel, the Christian Science writer, described the theories and the archetypal person who might entertain them as:

"That strange amalgam of religious fervour, symbolism, prophecy, off-beat erudition, florid rhetoric and intellectual confusion so characteristic of a certain type of military mind engaged in esoteric pursuits unrelated to the disciplines of the drill field and the cavalry charge"².

As a Christian Scientist, Peel would support the theory that Mrs Eddy was divinely inspired and was not influenced by currents of thought such as Anglo-Israelism in her desire to spread Christian Science. Paradoxically, however, this description might be applicable to some British military personnel who have become Christian Scientists. Apart from this military aspect, there has been a tendency for Christian Scientists, particularly in Britain, to be élitist, white, Anglo-Saxon and above all of Protestant origin.

¹ For an account of British Israelism, see J. Wilson, *The History and Organization of British Israelism*, D.Phil Thesis (unpublished) Oxford 1966.

² Robert Peel, *Op. cit.* p.116.

Peel was describing the characteristics perhaps represented by Lieutenant Charles A.L. Totten, professor of military science and tactics at Yale, who wrote in the 1890's: *Our Race, its Origin and Destiny*, which was admired by Julia Field-King, Mrs Eddy's self-appointed intellectual adviser and early pioneer leader of the London group of Christian Scientists. Peel claims that Mrs Field-King influenced Mrs Eddy and drew her attention to the apparent significance of Totten's version of Anglo-Israelism for Christian Science, in the possibility of tracing Mrs Eddy's line back to David, but that Mrs Eddy was never entirely convinced.

Whilst Totten was not the only writer on the subject in America, his work was noted by some Christian Scientists. Judge Septimus Hanna, an important member and lecturer of The Mother Church, quoted him in the *Christian Science Journal* in 1892 and wrote of his prediction of the impending end of the present Christian dispensation through some kind of crisis. Peel claims that Julia Field-King was also later carried away by Totten's interpretation of the Apocalyptic "woman clothed with the sun" (which was sometimes also applied to Mrs Eddy) and, like some women New Thought leaders, it is possible that at some time she applied the description to herself. He explained that many Anglo-Israelists were concerned with the prophetic role of woman, which he put down to the use of the female lines in genealogies to ensure the desired links back to early biblical references. Christian Science and New Thought provided women with unprecedented opportunities for leadership, partly because the founder of Christian Science was a woman and because of Mrs Eddy's provisions for women in the Manual; but a further element of the elevated status of woman is inherent within Christian Science,

perhaps justified in the early days by the adoption of apocalyptic imagery.

Totten had apparently traced the British royal line back to David, and Mrs Field-King, perhaps seeing in this opportunities for her own advancement, thought the same could be done for Mrs Eddy, showing her to be not only descended from the House of Israel, but a relative of Queen Victoria, and as such, entitled to the English throne. At first, Mrs Eddy endorsed Mrs Field-King's research into her lineage in America and England, ostensibly in order that her mission might be taken more seriously in the world, which was encouraged by the aristocratic element in the early British following. Peel, an apologist for Christian Science, suggests that it was because of the unanticipated appeal of the movement to a conspicuous (if not actually very numerous) section of the aristocracy that Mrs Eddy's interest in Anglo-Israelism was re-awakened, even though Julia Field-King was herself directly responsible for stimulating this aristocratic following.

Other events point to Mrs Eddy's basic desire to spread Christian Science to Britain, shown by her exemplification of British upper-class behaviour to Americans. Letters from English Christian Scientists were reproduced regularly in the *Journal*, and the movement's progress in Britain was faithfully reported, even to the earliest, somewhat irreverent letter from a Rev. I.G.W. Bishop, from Hemel Hempstead, dated September 1887, who thanked Mrs Eddy for sending a copy of *Science and Health* and requested that she refer him to anyone similarly interested in Britain, as he got "more kicks than halfpence in discussing it"¹. Letters concerning royalty or the peerage were particularly noted. When a letter from W.N. Miller (First Reader of the first

¹ The *Christian Science Journal*, Vol.5, No.6, September 1887, p. 293.

Christian Science church in London) reached her which described a resolution by members of the church to send a message of sympathy to the new king and members of the royal family on the death of Queen Victoria, it was printed in the Journal under a heading inserted by Mrs Eddy saying it was published so that "American manners towards religion and distinguished individuals" might be improved, and to "pattern our ancestors"¹. Queen Victoria she considered to be "one of the very best queens that history has recorded"².

Edward Kimball, a Christian Science lecturer highly regarded by Mrs Eddy, who visited Britain in 1908, described in a letter published in the Journal "the characteristic sturdiness and earnestness and stability of the better class of people in these islands" which served

"...a very large purpose when these people become Christian Scientists. As a rule they have a high and dignified appreciation of Science itself and of what constitutes legitimate and effective practice"³.

Mrs Eddy appended a comment: "Forty years ago I said to a student: 'I can introduce Christian Science in England more readily than I can in America'". This evidence suggests that she thought London the most important field for the work after America and vital for the progress and reputation of the movement in a wider sense. Her sense of achievement shows in a cabled message

¹The Christian Science Journal, Vol. XIX, May 1901.

² Mrs Eddy - Earl and Countess of Dunmore, printed in the Christian Science Journal, February 1906.

³ Edward A. Kimball - Mrs Eddy, Manchester, May 21, 1908, printed in the Christian Science Journal, August 1908.

to London on the opening of the first church in Britain, Bryanston Street in London, in 1897.

"Beloved Brethren across the sea:- To-day a nation is born. Spiritual apprehension unfolds, transfigures, heals. With you be there no more sea, no ebbing faith, no night. Love be thy light upon the mountain of Israel. God will multiply thee."¹

Earliest Christian Scientists in Britain.

The first recorded British Christian Scientists were Mr and Mrs Colles, from Killiney, near Dublin. Marjorie Colles, the daughter of an Anglican clergyman, was typical of early Christian Scientists. She was well-to-do and, having first become aware of Christian Science through a friend in America, was able to travel to America in order to attend one of Mrs Eddy's classes in Boston. She became a member of The Mother Church in 1893 and on her return to Britain, the first British practitioner. In the mid-1890's she went to London, where her financial support for the developing movement was invaluable: she helped to finance the first church in Bryanston Street². Her support for the movement was not without cost to herself, however, which emphasises the degree of commitment needed to sustain interest in the embryonic sect, at odds with the later public view of Christian Scientists as social butterflies. Mrs Colles described in a letter to the *Christian Science Journal* in 1897 the social ostracism she had experienced when she had adopted Christian Science:

¹The *Christian Science Journal*, Vol. XV, January 1898, p. 593.

² Clifford Smith, *Op. cit.*, p. 232.

"None would accept the teaching.....Then the battle began. My friends began to avoid me, I was afraid to mention the name of Christian Science"¹.

Before the establishment of the London group, and while she was still in Ireland, Mrs Colles acted as a central figure for both Boston and British based followers. Under Mrs Eddy's direction, Mrs Hannah Larminie visited Mrs Colles in 1888 as the first "missionary", probably to assess progress, but also to undertake "demonstrations" of Christian Science and teaching work. Her efforts were compromised by what Christian Scientists referred to as "counterfeit teaching", presumably the work of one of the New Thought groups which, even at that time, were emerging among apostate Christian Scientists. Although these groups were often short-lived, they appear to have impeded the growth of Mrs Larminie's following at this early stage. Further confusion was added by many apostate groups adopting the title of "Christian Science". Mrs Larminie did, however, ensure the establishment of "orthodox" Christian Science in Britain: Mrs Eddy wrote to her praising her work and indicating that this was the main purpose for her extended stay in London, where she had gone to undertake more healing work. In 1888, Mrs Eddy wrote that Mrs Larminie was "putting the dividing line between the false and the true that people may not be deceived"².

Impressions of the British and their aptitude for the study of Christian Science were conveyed to Mrs Eddy by Miss Anne Dodge, who travelled to London under Mrs Eddy's direction in 1890 and conducted the first public services in Stanhope Gardens.

¹ The Christian Science Journal, Vol. XV, August 1897, p. 299.

² Clifford Smith, Op. cit., p. 237.

"I have been able to explain the Science to several who have evinced a profound interest. People over here will not take it up superficially; but will do it as a Science, and in the spirit of a Science, which is an excellent thing. The English are slow to embrace anything new, but when they once take hold of a thing they do not relinquish their grasp. They are faithful and devoted; and, as we know in Science, these two qualities are essential to the furtherance of the great cause for humanity"¹.

In this assessment of the British appreciation of the scientific content of the Christian Science tenets is seen an early explanation of the orientation of British New Thought groups, particularly that of Rawson, whose concentration on scientific theory in his interpretation of Christian Science established a peculiarly British New Thought tradition (see Appendix).

Anne Dodge's place was taken by Mary H. Freshman, a student of Augusta Stetson, First Reader of the New York church, who stayed for a year. She considered her first "demonstration" to be the coincidental encounter, already on the ship in which she was travelling, with the very person to whom she had a letter of introduction², particularly since Christian Scientists in London were still so very few, and contact with them was not always easily achieved. Some enlargement of the group took place by inviting interested people to meetings; Miss Freshman would visit them in turn to meet people they had invited and to give talks. In this way, she wrote to the Journal in 1893, she had personally talked to about 150 people. She also claimed to have received about fifty letters thanking her for explaining Christian Science and

¹ The Christian Science Journal, Vol. VIII, October 1890, p. 301.

² Ibid., Vol. XI, p. 180, July 1893.

expressing appreciation. One wrote that it was "the greatest moral tonic of the age".

Miss Freshman sold 24 copies of *Science and Health* and had ordered more from the publisher. She delayed her departure because of healing demands and concluded by remarking that:

"Some one will have to come here, for a great work can be done. It will take time and will require tact, patience and great spirituality, for London is a Sodom. There is much wickedness in high places."¹

Not surprisingly, Miss Freshman's reception by the clergy was not all that she desired. One clergyman who attended one of her meetings told everyone after she had left to take all they could of her healing but not to listen to her religion.² However, perhaps these early "drawing room" meetings, with their exclusive character, by private invitation only, and which probably because of the women originally sent by Mrs Eddy, were mainly attended by upper class women, set the tone for the upper class female membership which was characteristic of the movement in Britain.

With the dedication of early Christian Scientists, a group formed in London without the benefit of direct, continuous support from Boston (Mrs Field- King did not arrive until 1896), although The Mother Church would have acted as a communication centre for the scattered British adherents. Such early adherents included Mrs Blanche Ward, who had again first encountered Christian Science in America (New York) in 1889 and received class instruction. Her efforts at establishing Christian Science in Belfast met with

¹ Ibid., July 1893.

² Ibid., July 1893.

little success, but she was able to form a group in Bedford before moving to London in 1894. Others included a Miss Catherine Verrall, who practised in London and Brighton, and Frances Williams of Llangammarch Wells, whose father was an Anglican rector in this Welsh health resort¹; although Miss Williams' father's occupation is supposed to have hampered Christian Science activities, it was a place in which there was a higher than average concentration of people concerned about their health, which could have fostered interest. Mrs Ward held regular meetings in London (Hammersmith) but moved to the central Baker Street in 1895, which resulted in a larger attendance (about 16). By March 1896, a small hall in the Portman Rooms, at the corner of Baker and Dorset Streets, was hired for services². Mrs Ward acted as First Reader and was helped by a variety of people who acted as Second Reader at different times. The 11.30 Sunday service was advertised in the Journal for the first time for the year 1896-97. It was at this point that a permanent teacher from Boston was requested by the London group, to which Mrs Eddy responded by sending Julia Field-King³.

As Miss Freshman had remarked, London at the turn of the century was not an easy soil in which Christian Science could take root and the modest progress of its early advocates was well recognised within the movement. In 1908, by which time Christian Science had achieved a certain notoriety, Frederick Dixon, the District Manager of the Committee on Publication,

¹ Clifford Smith, *Op. cit.*, pp. 235-6.

² From a statement (unpublished) by Mrs Mabel S. Thomson, C.S.B., regarding the early history of Christian Science in London, July 1932.

³ H.A. Studdert-Kennedy, *Mrs Eddy, Farallon*, San Francisco, 1947, p.396.

assessed the progress of the pioneers¹. Dixon maintained that there had been nothing sensational in the growth of Christian Science to 1908 in spite of the efforts of the pioneers, and recognised the hardships they had endured. Adopting a rhetorical style, and describing mainly classes of people who might have had more relevance for the settlement movement or the Salvation Army rather than the more upper class targets of the Christian Scientists, he reiterated Miss Freshman's views about the "wickedness" rife in the metropolis. How often, he wondered, did these pioneer Christian Scientists look down at midnight from their windows....

..."into that awful labyrinth of gaslit streets, where under their 'smoke counterpane' five millions of human beings lay heaped and huddled together, with nothing but a little carpentry and masonry between them, striving in their loneliness to realize the truth of that great saying of Douglas', 'with God one is a majority' "².

Apart from Mrs Eddy's obvious preferences for the upper class British, perhaps Dixon recognised the difficulty of spreading effectively an American religion such as Christian Science in Britain, especially by a group of women, some American and unfamiliar with the British way of life and its class system.

Julia Field-King's Leadership.

Julia Field-King became a controversial figure within the church when she later defected from The Mother Church and is believed to have become the

¹ Frederick Dixon wrote an article on the early pioneers which was published in *The World Today* in February 1908. Extracts were re-issued in a short statement by the Committees on Publication.

² *The World Today*, Vol. XIV, February 1908, No.2.

leader of a small apostate group. Some doubt has even been expressed as to whether she was actually sent by Mrs Eddy. She is mentioned only briefly by the official historian of The Mother Church, Clifford Smith, although she played such a dominant part in the history of the early church in Britain. Today, the church in Britain disclaims all knowledge of her after her departure from the London group in the early 1900's. Peel, writing a semi-official biography of Mrs Eddy sought to derogate Mrs Field-King's influence: he described her as a "temptress" because of her high personal and educational status which appealed unduly to Mrs Eddy at an early stage in the founding of the movement and because she appears to have encouraged Mrs Eddy to endorse Anglo-Israelite views¹.

Mrs Field-King was medically trained and practised for a number of years in America. Her interest in Christian Science began in the early 1880's through Emma Hopkins, and she attended one of Mrs Eddy's classes in 1888, becoming a Christian Science practitioner in Seattle. In 1891 she was invited by Mrs Eddy to travel to Boston and assume editorship of the *Christian Science Journal*. She has been described as a cultured woman, accomplished in a wide range of social skills, which perhaps explains Mrs Eddy's decision to send her as a "special envoy" to London². She was at first disappointed with the progress of Christian Science in Britain and later sent word that she thought the religion had reached the stage at which it had already arrived fifteen or twenty years before in America³.

¹ Robert Peel, *Op. cit.*, p. 116.

² H.A. Studdert-Kennedy, *Op. cit.*, p. 396.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 396.

It has been claimed that it was because of Mrs Field-King's social skills in the presentation of Christian Science that key social figures such as Lord Dunmore became interested, although Dunmore himself claimed to have discovered Christian Science in India, through a healing experienced by his wife¹. Although both Kennedy and Peel suggest that the spread among upper class people came about through the influence of Mrs Field-King, evidence suggests that, like the Dunmores, others also began the study of Christian Science long before her arrival, and that these were mainly women from the upper classes, through the work of the lesser-known "pioneers" and through contact with American Christian Scientists on both sides of the Atlantic.

Whether independently or through the social skills of Mrs Field-King, the early beginnings of Christian Science in Britain were adorned during her sojourn by some measure of aristocratic and upper class involvement. There is no doubt that this was still to Mrs Eddy's liking. Apart from the earlier indications of her pleasure in this fact, Mrs Eddy had written to her son about "earls, princes and marquises" in a favourable tone, in a letter remarking on the loneliness which accompanied success². In another letter, to George Moses in 1897, she wrote of the "lords and ladies" in London who "throng" to learn of her teachings, and also mentioned, somewhat mysteriously, that Christian Science also existed in Windsor Castle, home of the Royal Family.

The April 1897 Journal reported that Mrs Field-King ("a faithful and zealous student of our Leader's who in a large sense has been pioneering the

¹ A discussion of the Dunmores is in Chapter 4, "The Social Image of the British Christian Scientists".

² Mrs Eddy to her son George Glover.

way over there") had purchased the Jewish synagogue in Bryanston Street (off Oxford Street in the west end) which was to become First Church, London. The report concluded with the comment that the "brave little band" of workers, with their "faithful and competent leaders" were to be congratulated on this evidence of growth in the "great metropolis"¹. The Mother Church seemed to admire the steadfast qualities of British Christian Scientists who by all accounts did not disappoint Mrs Eddy in her original confidence in the suitability of British qualities for the religion. It is difficult to assess in what spirit Mrs Field-King's arrival "from the top" was taken by the workers already established in London. Perhaps a note of pique can be discerned in Mrs Colles' letter to the Journal in 1897, in which she does not attribute the growth of Christian Science directly to Mrs Field-King's work.

"Mrs Field-King has been here nearly thirteen months. The work has grown marvellously since she came. Mrs Ward, who was the only Christian Scientist in London, and who did such good work, and conducted the meetings, rejoices with the rest of us that we have so experienced and faithful a teacher as Mrs Field-King"².

There is little doubt that under Mrs Field-King's competent leadership the movement gathered momentum. Shortly after the move to the Portman Rooms, the membership had become large enough to consider a move to a church building and a search had been carried out for a suitable site. Some advertising took place, but without success, possibly because of the purpose to which a building would be put. However, a member of the group happened to pass by the synagogue in Bryanston Street belonging to the Spanish and Portuguese Jews,

¹ The Christian Science Journal, Vol. XV, April 1897, p.66.

² Ibid., Vol. XV, August 1897, p.299.

apparently disused. Several plans to secure the unexpired lease failed, but Mrs Colles eventually purchased it for £2,000¹.

According to Dixon, the Jews were at first reluctant to sell the synagogue to the Christian Scientists. He remarked that: "Like a great many other people whose knowledge of Christian Science is second-hand, they knew a great many things about Christian Science that no Christian Scientist knew". The Jews' objections apparently disappeared after they had attended services at the Portman Rooms, and it is possible that they were impressed with the generally decorous conduct of the services and Mrs Field-King's educated leadership (although Dixon does not mention her). The complete remodelling of the interior of the synagogue was the responsibility of Sir Douglas Galton (see Chapter 3). Under his direction, the rabbi's house became a reading room and offices, while the synagogue itself became the church. More money was needed for the remodelling, and a committee of three was appointed to receive subscriptions. Christian Scientist reports emphasise the ease with which the money was raised from members.

On Sunday November 7th 1897, "the first Christian Science church in Europe opened its doors to the world". The dedication service was held on this date with about 300 people present. Normally, in Christian Science, dedication services are held only when a church is free from debt. In this case, it appears that debts were not accumulated, as private subscription and donations were adequate to cover the expenses for the adaption of the synagogue. The editor of the *Journal* noted the occasion in an encouraging tone and in a rhetorical style, by remarking that the significance of the event

¹ Ibid., Vol. XV, January 1898, p. 593, "Dedication of a Church in London, England".

"...is beyond our present capacity to understand.... This public projection, upon the world's greatest metropolis, of a Church of Christ, Scientist, carries with it so much of historical interest, from the spiritual view-point, that only the future can answer the question: 'What shall the end be?' "¹

From an outsider's point of view, a *Daily Telegraph* reporter irreverently thought the programme "rather long"², although he may have appreciated the "well-rendered selection" by the "quartet of professional singers well-known in London musical circles, and earnest Christian Scientists all"³. The sermon was specially selected for the occasion, the lesson text being from 1 Kings, 8, The Dedication of the Temple. A sermon by Mrs Field-King and a brief history of the British movement to date were delivered at an evening meeting on the same day. Mrs Field-King chose to discuss the topic "Does God Curse Man", and Galton touched on the difficulties which the group had encountered in the building of the church: the securing of the lease, the remodelling of the building and the total cost, which was £4,500.

An Outsider's View: Early Criticism.

As a contrast to Christian Scientist accounts of the beginnings of the British movement, it may be appropriate to include here a critical account by a London schoolteacher who nearly joined the church but discontinued her

¹ The *Christian Science Journal*, January 1898.

² The *Daily Telegraph*, November 8, 1897.

³ From the report of the dedication ceremony in the *Christian Science Journal*.

allegiance at an early stage. Her experiences were printed in the Methodist organ, the *British Weekly*, in 1898¹, as a severe exposure of Christian Science (the earliest recorded of its kind) as a sinister and dangerous cult, the members of which sought to snare adherents. This branding of Christian Science as potentially harmful was a feature of much of the initial public reaction to the movement, particularly from clerical and medical circles, up to the First World War. It was similar to reactions later in the century to the Unification Church or the Scientologists and, again similarly, was exacerbated by the popular press. Although in this case the author's views are somewhat over-coloured, useful descriptions and impressions are given of the interior of the Bryanston Street church and of the social composition and numbers of members.

The series of articles was reprinted in a dramatically presented book form under the title: *Christian Science: An Exposure*². The articles were written in the form of chapters of a short novel, and the names of the characters appear to be fictitious, although the descriptions of the church and the services seem mainly to be based on fact. Anne Harwood, the schoolteacher, was introduced to Christian Science by a friend as a possible cure for "nervous depression". In a chapter headed: "A Service in the Christian Science Church" she noted that:

"Shortly before half-past eleven on Sunday morning we found ourselves on Bryanston Street, a quiet thoroughfare which runs behind Oxford Street at its extreme West end....There is only one conspicuous

¹ The articles were printed in five parts, from September 15 to October 13 1898.

² Anne Harwood, *Christian Science, An Exposure*, James Bowden, London, 1898.

building in the street, and that is the Christian Science temple"¹.

She remarked that in its style of architecture, it did not differ from the ordinary nonconformist chapel, and described the interior where the service was held in an upper room as spacious and sunny, which might hold when full about five hundred people, and also remarked upon the lack of pews, noting instead the long rows of chairs. About one hundred people were present on this occasion, about four fifths of them being women. They were of all ages, and seemed to belong entirely to the richer classes. She did not notice "a single shabbily dressed figure in the room".

On another occasion Anne Harwood inquired of her friend (an American) why it was that Christian Scientists held themselves so aloof from other churches. To this she received the answer that the question was being asked of Christian Scientists every day in America.

"The other churches refuse to have anything to do with us. A prejudice exists against Christian Science, partly, no doubt, because its founder is a woman, and partly because we claim to have revived those gifts of healing which were inherent in the Christian Church at its foundation"².

On a further occasion, the author visited a Christian Science class at the exclusive "Progressive Women's Club". The apparent wealth among members of the club, possibly depicted as a recruitment centre for Christian Scientists, is described disparagingly. The club was situated "in one of those

¹ Ibid., p. 17

² Ibid., p. 25

quiet, aristocratic streets near Hyde Park" and it was noticed that "jewels flashed from every part of the room, for this is one of the richest women's clubs in London"¹. This section of the "novel" is probably fictitious, as no further evidence of the club is to be found; however, the author's argument that Christian Science was a religion for leisured, rich women, was reinforced by this description. The better-to-do are not held to blame for being attracted to what the author saw as "unwholesome" and "unnatural" aspects of fin de siecle life. Distaste for Christian Science is evident and much is made of their charging fees for healing practice and the acquisitiveness of the practitioner who had treated the author. She alluded to an American New Thought healer, Henry Wood, and to Quimby, whom she described as 'a magnetic doctor and spiritualist' and carried forward imputations of these associations in her negative appraisal of Mrs Eddy's teachings.

The Church in Disrepute.

During Mrs Field-King's sojourn in Britain, two occurrences brought the movement into disrepute. The more important of these was the death and subsequent inquest of Harold Frederic (see Chapter 7) an American writer living in London. Kennedy describes the Harold Frederic affair as "one of those amazing onslaughts on the new teaching which were so characteristic of the early days of its history"². Frederic, an American journalist and author, had been experimenting with Christian Science and at the time of his death was under the care of a Christian Science practitioner (although he had formerly been treated by an orthodox physician) who was consequently tried for

¹ Ibid., p. 27.

² H.A. Studdert-Kennedy, Op.cit., p. 397.

manslaughter. As far as can be discerned, this case is the first of many coroners' inquiries and some criminal court cases involving practitioners whose patients died under treatment and reflected the concern felt by the medical profession about a new religion which claimed to heal.

Christian Scientists saw the Frederic affair as a serious setback, but although people left the movement, the rate of growth recovered quickly. By early 1901, a society journal was able to report that:

"Christian Science was supposed to have received its death blow at the time of Frederick Harrison's death (presumably an error for Harold Frederic); but it was only scotched, not kilt, and never has it been a more potent factor in Society than now"¹.

However, Mrs Eddy viewed the incident seriously and it seemed to trouble her for some time afterwards. She wrote to Mrs Field-King that students should not "take a case of so doubtful a kind" and later was reported to have said that she would "rather have had the demonstration made in that home in London where Harold Frederic was than to have all the gifts on earth"². She insisted that during the previous twenty years nothing had harmed the cause so much, since the survival of the doctrine depended on its healing demonstrations.

Great care was taken in the presentation of the case in the *Journal* and an editorial printed in a Massachusetts evening newspaper was chosen as the

¹ *The Onlooker*, February 16, 1901.

In this report, Harold Frederic may have been confused with one of the early Comteans in Britain, Frederic Harrison. If so, it indicates how readily the media confuse and identify one "disreputable" religion with another. For further discussion of media confusion, see pp 69 - 70.

² H.A. Studdert-Kennedy, *Op. cit.* p. 397.

most favourable or fair account for its Christian Scientist readers. This was reprinted in the *Journal* for December 1898. Other reports reproduced in the *Journal*, mainly from provincial newspapers, included one from a Buffalo newspaper which described the "demand.....throughout England for laws which will restrain the practice of Christian Science and legalize the prosecution of practising Scientists whenever they lose a patient whom some one else thinks they should have cured.....¹" The nervousness on the part of Mrs Eddy and the American Christian Scientists as they viewed this setback to the progress of the nurtured British movement indicates their awareness of the difficulties involved in establishing Christian Science in Britain. The Harold Frederic case was a forerunner of later public condemnation and gives some indication of the conservative attitude of the British legal and medical institutions.

The death of Major Cecil Lester, an instructor at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, occurred almost simultaneously in late 1898 and involved similar circumstances, in which a physician had also been previously consulted. Also reported widely in the British press, it did not excite as much public interest as the death of Frederic. The *Christian Science Journal* printed a letter which was sent to Mrs Field-King by Major Lester's sister, Mrs K. Stuart, which was read out at the Sunday evening meeting in the new Bryanston Street church in November 1898. In this, Mrs Stuart, who appeared to be a Christian Scientist, tried to redress some of the blame by stating her own experiences with the physician involved. She claimed that information

¹ The *Christian Science Journal*, Vol. XVI, December 1898, p. 622.

relating to the physician's acquiescence in the summoning of the practitioner was deliberately withheld from the inquest¹.

It is not known how much these cases discredited Mrs Field-King's leadership with Boston. An 1898 report after the Frederic case suggests that she "became more and more disinclined to be guided by advice from Boston, and was finally recalled"². Summoned by Mrs Eddy to teach in St. Louis, she did not remain long in the United States, apparently because her teachings were no longer in line with Mrs Eddy's. She returned to Britain, and the last reference to her in the Journal is March 1902, when she appears with a Welsh address, living with Mrs Mabel Saunders in Cilwendeg Park. Mrs Field-King was excommunicated from The Mother Church in 1902. In the March 1903 edition of the Journal, whilst Mrs Saunders' name appears, all reference to Mrs Field-King has gone, and her activities are unknown after this date.

Initial Public Reactions.

During this early period, the churches in Edinburgh (1898) and Dublin were opened, and Lady Victoria Murray's work in Manchester began in 1900. Mrs Agnata Butler opened meetings in Cambridge in the same year. In April 1901, a letter to the Journal indicated that a few people in Newcastle were becoming interested and that some had bought copies of *Science and Health*. The Belfast society was recognised by The Mother Church in 1903. The opening of First Church, London, had helped to attract more members, although Dixon attributed the growing awareness of the movement to the reputation of the healing work. Evidence suggests, however, that Christian Science was not always viewed by

¹ The letter, dated Vienna, November 17, 1898, was reprinted in the Journal, December 1898.

² Quoted in an unpublished account by Mrs Mabel Thomson CSB, 1932.

the British public in the way Mrs Eddy and the authorities of the church might have wished, even though its exclusiveness had been encouraged by an upper class membership. It was in the early 1900s that Christian Science started to become known as a "society craze", and attracted wide ranging comment in the popular press. In addition to this, and in spite of the confidence and optimism of Mrs Eddy that the movement, once generally known in Britain, would take a similarly popular hold as in America, early reactions among many British people were at best mocking when not suspicious and antagonistic. Random comments in the press were forerunners of the more organized opposition by the Anglican church and the medical profession which developed a few years later.

By 1901, Christian Science was the subject of a regular correspondence by readers to the "letters to the editor" columns in one or two society journals¹. It also provided a novel topic for editorials. *The Onlooker*, particularly, which was first issued in 1900, carried frequent discussion of Christian Science throughout its thirteen year life.² Although the level of discussion in the society journals was often frivolous, the appearance of the subject in connection with prominent individuals ensured interest in "society" and was a sign of the "saleability" of the topic. The journals appealed to a clientele which aspired to involvement in society affairs and Christian Science was clearly regarded as a subject congenial to the wealthy and socially prominent. Letters and articles written by Christian Scientists were

¹ Notably the *Bystander* and the *Onlooker*.

² In 1907 alone, for example, 25 articles varying in length, some of which were advertised on the front cover as the main feature, appeared in the *Onlooker*.

a frequent occurrence, particularly to dispute points made by observers, and Frederick Dixon was a regular and meticulous contributor, whose official task after 1904, as the manager of the London branch of the Committees on Publication, was to take up any mention of Christian Science in the British press.

In a 1901 edition of *The Onlooker*, the editorial noted that although the Harold Frederic affair had been a significant setback to its progress, Christian Science was at that time already said to be of social consequence.

"It is true that not all those who believed in it at first are its votaries now, but for every one that secedes from the ranks, there are two or three more to come in, and if it goes on progressing as it is progressing now, the names of its members will be legion soon. Some people take Christian Science seriously as a religion; while others look upon it more lightly as a physical and even as a mental cure"¹.

Other letters showed how easily Christian Science tenets could be confused with other fashions and beliefs currently in vogue, including Eastern religions and hypnotism. From letters such as the following, which was printed in a 1901 *Onlooker*, it seems that there was a tendency for the more unpleasant aspects of other cultish phenomena to assume the Christian Science label, which could not have improved its reputation. It is true, however, that apostate groups collectively known as New Thought had formed by this time, which may have included bizarre "treatments" and still retained, either partly or wholly, the title of "Christian Science" in their names.

¹ *The Onlooker*, February 16, 1901.

"(it was)....always an interesting speculation to me how the curious frame of mind, known to its adherents by the extraordinary name of Christian "Science", could have obtained the hold, with which you are, no doubt, right in crediting it, over society, and even that portion of society that thinks, more or less....As far as I understand its methods the patient is subjected to a course of prayer and fasting, in the course of which the body is exhausted and the mind becomes impressionable; consequently, the patient is subject to hallucinations suggested by the operating scientists....as the "science" seems to be in danger of becoming more than a fashionable fad, a note of warning seems to me urgently required, and, in my opinion, you would be doing a public service if you had the whole matter investigated in a spirit of unbiased inquiry on scientific lines." (Inquirer)¹

Similar alarm that Christian Science might be a danger to public health and should be suppressed was expressed in other letters. "M.A. Oxon" warned against the substitution of faith healing for "recognised medical methods", while a member of the London County Council expressed concern that Christian Scientists would be a "grave menace to the community" if their principles were followed to their logical conclusion in an epidemic outbreak, and they refused to adopt required sanitary precautions².

Apart from the fears for public safety apparent among members of the public who perhaps over-estimated the size and influence of the movement, a distaste for a religion, especially from America, which involved payment for treatment was discerned even among the upper classes from which the movement

¹ *The Onlooker*, March 9, 1901.

As far as authentic Christian Science is concerned, the points about fasting, exhaustion of the mind and hallucinations are entirely misplaced.

² *Ibid.*, April 6, 1901.

The subject of sanitary regulations was answered in a subsequent issue (April 13 supplement to *The Onlooker*) by Lord Dunmore, who explained Mrs Eddy's teachings on the matter.

drew many of its members. From "Countess" of Curzon Street, Mayfair, came misgivings along these lines.

"The fact that a course of instruction has to be paid for at a considerable sum- twenty guineas- gives a disagreeable idea of commercial mindedness which seems incompatible with any, even an American, religion"¹.

She concluded, after listing other factors including the difficulty of crediting their "so-called demonstrations" that "all these are things which causes the world to scoff".

Growth and Dissent in the London Group.

In spite of public criticism, the early 1900s was a period of steady growth both in London and the provinces. The "official" documentation emphasises the fact that larger halls were needed to accommodate the growing number of members, but it is apparent that the pattern of disagreement and schism characteristic among Mrs Eddy's followers in America was repeated in the early years in Britain, and some members, with followings already established, left the London church to form separate "New Thought" movements, some of which survived for a number of years. Others retained allegiance to The Mother Church but established separated churches after disagreement among leading Christian Scientists². Thus, Third Church was formed from the congregation of First Church in about 1906, following a rift between William Miller, who had been First Reader, and other members, one of whom may have

¹ Ibid., April 13 1901.

² The process of schism and the formation of separate groups was an important factor in the early growth mechanism of Christian Science.

been Mabel Thomson, who became First Reader of First Church at about the time of the building of a new church at Sloane Terrace, completed at the end of 1907. William Miller had replaced Julia Field-King as First Reader at Bryanston Street.

A contributory factor to this particular rift was the behaviour of one of its members, F.L. Rawson, whose work is examined in the Appendix. The records of the Society for the Spreading of the Knowledge of True Prayer (SSKTP), the schismatic New Thought group which Rawson founded and which became established during World War 1, highlight this early discord: it is nowhere mentioned in Christian Science literature. Rawson was accused of splitting First Church by his spectacular healing testimonies: it was said that instead of concentrating on their work, members were discussing Rawson and his methods, which were too radical for orthodoxy. Rawson, in SSKTP literature, claimed that he was driven out by "malicious mental malpractice" and that the two workers whose class Rawson had attended (William Miller and his wife) became involved in the dispute¹. Swihart considers that Julia Field-King was also a party to the dispute which split First Church and led to the formation not only of Third Church but at least two schismatic New Thought groups: the SSKTP and the Parent Church of one of Rawson's associates, Annie C. Bill².

According to Christian Scientist accounts, by late 1902 the Bryanston Street premises had become too small to contain all the members and visitors

¹ "J.L.", "Mr. Rawson's Experiences as a Christian Scientist" in F.L. Rawson, *Man's Powers and Work*, The Crystal Press Ltd, London, p. 47, reprinted from the *International Psychic Gazette*, November and December 1913, and February and March 1914.

² A.K. Swihart, *Since Mrs Eddy*, Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1931, p. 185.

to the services, although it held about 300 people. Temporary accommodation was secured for the Wednesday evening testimony meeting in Steinway Hall, Lower Seymour Street¹. In spite of having this larger hall, however, Christian Scientists claim that one or two hundred people were unable to get inside. Out of this "overflow" from First Church, Second Church was formed, which first met in Queen's Road and later in the Aeolian Hall in Bond Street, where Mrs Ward became First Reader. In 1904, the members of First Church sold the Bryanston Street premises to the Church Army and bought an old Wesleyan chapel in Sloane terrace, off Sloane Square, which became, when rebuilding was complete, a familiar Christian Science centre even to the general public². Christian Scientists attribute this step to the growing numbers of members, for which, in spite of the formation of Second Church, the Bryanston Street premises were inadequate.

The re-building of the Wesleyan chapel was a significant step forward for the early members. In the space of a few years, still within Mrs Eddy's lifetime, the "tiny band" of Christian Scientists, many of whom were American, had grown considerably in fame and number, to include people who were prominent in British society. As Christian Scientists are not encouraged to proselytise, interest had, according to Frederick Dixon, been aroused by the reputation of healing successes. Knowledge of Christian Science was more likely to spread within groups and among friends who could personally testify to their healing or "success" experiences in a "drawing room" context than to gather recruits through the publicity given by the press or other media, which was often condemnatory. This "bad press" continued at least until the

¹ The Christian Science Journal, January 1903.

² See Chapter 3.

outbreak of the First World War with such intensity that it was clear that Christian Science was established in Britain as an unwelcome outsider. Mrs Eddy's convictions that the British temperament was more suited to her religion than the American could not be substantiated by results.

Chapter 3.The Expansion Of Christian Science in Britain.

From the time of the establishment of the Bryanston Street church in 1897, Christian Scientist accounts emphasise the rapid spread of the movement both in London and the provinces. Official figures, published in the *Christian Science Journal* for 1900, show eleven practitioners to have been based in London and one in Canterbury. By 1902, the list had expanded to include several provincial towns and cities, with eight practitioners in Edinburgh, three in Manchester, two each in Cambridge, Cilwendeg Park (South Wales), Upper Deal and Dublin, and one each in Alyth, Glasgow, Ipswich and Richmond, as well as twenty-seven in various parts of London. In 1903, details of the Manchester church services were given, with increasing numbers of practitioners in Kingston-Upon-Thames, Liverpool, London, and other towns in Ireland and Scotland. In 1906-7, there were forty-five practitioners listed in London, with sixty-one elsewhere, the greatest numbers, apart from London, being in Manchester, Brighton and Edinburgh. From then on, the spread was fairly consistent, until by 1921, fifty-one churches and sixty-two societies were listed¹.

Because of the greater concentration of Christian Scientists in London and their comparative affluence, they set the style for the organisation in Britain and for the sort of buildings which they occupied. By 1904, the British movement had started to acquire the numbers, wealth and influence to make a significant impression in various towns and cities, particularly by their distinctive church buildings and reading rooms. Free from traditional

¹ B.R. Wilson, *Sects and Society*, Heinemann, London and Berkeley, 1961.

restrictions and from any specific requirements of The Mother Church with respect to Christian Science church edifices, individual Christian Science congregations employed the architects of their choice. At the London church at Sloane Terrace, built between 1904 and 1907, which may be taken as an example of a "Christian Science building" relatively unhindered by considerations of cost, a distinctive Eastern appearance was evident in its exterior, particularly in the tower, which was topped by a stone cupola. The architect, R.F. Chisolm of Southsea, had worked in Calcutta, but both the element of eastern religion within Christian Science and the general oriental fashions at the turn of the century may have been contributory factors. Later churches were noted for their plainness, particularly in the interiors, and the emphasis at Sloane Terrace was on the practical needs of the Christian Scientists with regard to the incorporation of a Sunday School, a reading room and the creation of an atmosphere of stark simplicity reminiscent of American frontier churches, perhaps designed to avoid the suggestion of dependence on anything other than Mrs Eddy's texts and their Biblical correlations.

In November 1904, the foundation stone of the Sloane Terrace church, which had been imported from Mrs Eddy's native state, New Hampshire, was laid with ceremony¹. The building was completed by the end of 1907, and was considered by members of the public to be of particular architectural significance and a curiosity for sightseers. A popular newspaper, which published each week a guide to public buildings of architectural interest, devoted an article to the church soon after it was built². From this

¹ The Christian Science Journal, Vol. XXII, February 1905.

² "Stones of London" in the Evening Standard, March 25, 1911.

description, and from other newspaper reports¹, a picture emerges of a church of highly individual design which departed in style from that of both traditional Anglican churches and buildings used by other denominations. The building operations were supervised by a committee of the church, since it was customary for each church to raise its own revenue (The Mother Church could not have financed each new church, particularly overseas, although Mrs Eddy had earlier made donations).

A Christian Science church then, as now, had no altar; instead, the focal point of the main hall, where chairs were arranged in rows, was (and still is) a simple platform, usually decorated with flowers, on which were situated the two readers' desks. So it was at Sloane Terrace. Like all Christian Science churches, including those in America, two mottoes were prominently displayed: one over the entrance to the left of the platform through which the reader of the Biblical passages passed during services, which read "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" and on the other side, over the entrance, through which the "Christian Science" reader emerged, an excerpt from *Science and Health*: "Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need". The Sloane Terrace church conformed to the design later adopted in most Christian Science churches, after the pattern of The Mother Church, in providing small, comfortably furnished rooms for the readers to the rear of the platform.

Built in one of the most prestigious areas of London, the style of the Sloane Terrace church, within the confines of its required "metaphysical" simplicity, obviously impressed newspaper reporters, who wrote lengthy

¹ *The Onlooker*, November 9 1907. *Westminster Gazette*, April 25 1907. *British Weekly*, November 23, 1905. *Daily Mail*, 25 October 1907.

descriptions of it. As a symbol of the apparent effectiveness of Christian Science doctrine in providing material benefits through an emphatically non-materialist religion, the church was, to the London group of Christian Scientists, a gratifying example. The organ was particularly noted. Its builders were reputed to have said that it was second in London only to the organ in St. Margaret's, Westminster¹. The organ was important in providing a link with the general Christian tradition, which the movement always emphasises. The organ was a means by which the hymns attained the impressive and emotive quality reminiscent of services in other churches, and in contrast with the generally austere and rational tone of the rest of the proceedings.

A general observation by outside commentators was that adherents appeared to be wealthy. They noticed in particular the frequency of fur coats. One commenter in 1905 suggested that the late start of the morning service, at 11.30, was significant since it accommodated upper class people who were not accustomed to turning out early on a winter morning (others suggested that the lateness and the brevity of the service were particularly congenial to the aged or infirm). This particular service began with a "missionary hymn" sung to the tune of "From Greenland's Icy Mountains" and the lines by Mrs Eddy were compared unfavourably by the visiting reporter to the original. Praise, however, was given to the First Reader, whose reading was described as comparable to anything heard from a pulpit. The observer was impressed by the extensive use of the Bible: the passages read were longer and more varied than those read in other Protestant churches. He considered the frequent repetition of material to be beneficial for a complete understanding of scripture, but

¹ Westminster Gazette, April 25 1907.

he attacked (as others did) the way in which readers were rigidly bound to the set texts, and Mrs Eddy's writings were considered strange and clumsy when read alongside Biblical passages¹.

Later reports of services held at Sloane Terrace tended to be far more critical and tinged with the same distaste which marked press reactions to the movement between about 1907 and 1914. One journalist estimated in 1910 that 90% of the 1,600 (his estimated figure) in attendance at Sloane Terrace were women (this may have been true but here it was used to derogate Christian Science). He described in graphic detail his impressions of a testimony meeting, held in the church on Wednesday evenings: "the ailing and decrepit attended in scores. Men hobbled in on sticks, women with frames attenuated and worn crawled painfully up the aisles"². He likened the meeting to the old Methodist "love feast", although it apparently lacked the famous "Cornwall fire" or the "North-country fervour". Many of these newspaper impressions were published at the height of the public antagonism towards Christian Science, which was probably intensified by publicity given to court cases in which Christian Scientists were involved (see Chapter 7). The popular press particularly were not above sustaining hostility throughout the pre-First World War period, in a kind of vendetta, although how much this was an attempt to cater for their largely lower class readership in an attack on the upper class Christian Scientists is open to question. An impression of a testimony meeting in 1910 was given as follows:

"Once I went to a testifying meeting of the Christian Scientists, and from one part of the hall a man (a stranger) got up and said how he had been cured by

¹ *British Weekly*, November 23, 1905.

² *Daily Express*, 31 October 1910.

faith of some disorder (a mild one); then in another part rose a second man (a stranger), he also told how faith had cured him; then a third arose and told a similar tale. To the audience these people were apparently strangers one to another, but to me it looked very much as if they had spread themselves about the building to deceive the audience in this specific way, for I happened to learn that all these people were close friends, and were all staying together at the same house, a big one, in the country. It looked like fake!¹"

Although in "official" literature Christian Scientists claim the dramatic increase in members in the few years after the founding of the movement in Britain, some press reports were quick to point out that attendance figures at the Sloane Terrace church did not always reflect this assertion. On one occasion, it was estimated that only about fifty people were present².

Provincial Activity.

Compared to its development in London, where nine churches existed by 1925, progress in the north and in provincial centres in other parts of the country was less rapid. Even so, impressive churches were built (the extent of the impression they made can largely be gauged by contemporary newspaper reports) and these were testimony both to the commercial sense of the northern towns where they were erected and to the wealth of the bourgeois families who were well represented in the movement in the north. Architects specialising in somewhat unusual design were commissioned to undertake the building work in various parts of the country. Thus in Manchester, the church in Victoria

¹Hull Topics, June 11 1910.

A similar view was reported in Throne, February 9 1907, "A Human Ostrich Farm".

² West London Press, 26 September 1905.

Park was designed by Edgar Wood, an architect known for his unconventional approach, on a basis of sketches first drawn up by Dr. Walter Wilding, one of the original members of the Manchester group¹.

Undoubtedly, much of the success of the establishment of Christian Science in Manchester and in other northern districts may be attributed to the work of Lady Victoria Murray, a daughter of Lord Dunmore, who was himself a pillar of the London branch until his death in 1907. Lady Victoria and her assistant, Florence Coutts-Fowlie, shouldered until 1902 both the healing and business work in Manchester, having held services in a private house which they rented near to the university (the average attendance at this time given as 28) when a committee took over the administration of the group. According to Christian Scientist accounts, a visit by the popular American Christian Science lecturer Judge Ewing, on his first visit to Britain in 1902, stimulated attendance at services to the extent that a decision was made to erect a church building: the first purpose-built Christian Science church to be opened in Britain. Perhaps the decision to build was taken as a result of the reluctance on the part of local landlords to rent large enough rooms to the group when, as was the case in London prior to the purchase of the Bryanston Street church, owners realised the purpose for which they were to be used.

A building committee was appointed in March 1903 and in May the foundation stone was laid by Lady Victoria, the ceremony being attended by Judge Ewing. As in London in late 1904, a stone from Mrs Eddy's native state

¹B. Tatham Woodhead, *An Historical Sketch of the Beginnings of Christian Science in Lancashire and the North of England, and the Early days of First Church of Christ, Scientist, Manchester*. John Taylor, The Queen's Press, Manchester, 1934, pp 33-34.

was used for this purpose, a block of Concord granite on which were carved Biblical words appropriate to the Christian Scientists: "This stone from Concord, N.H., U.S.A., was laid in gratitude for the spiritual truth and physical healing found in Christian Science. Heal the Sick. Raise the dead. Cleanse the lepers. Cast out demons- Jesus. These signs shall follow them that believe- Jesus." The core of the building, without the wings that were a part of the original design, was opened in April 1904; in 1907 extension work was carried out and the completed church was opened in January 1908, with seating accommodation for five to six hundred people: a measure of the confidence of the Christian Scientists in their growth potential. This was reflected in comparatively large and impressive buildings erected throughout the country in the period up to the 1930s. First Church Manchester's concessions to conventional ecclesiastical style were its fine stained glass windows, depicting the healing miracles of Christ, presented by Lady Victoria's Pupil's Association, and a matter for pride in the local congregation.

In due course, other churches were opened in Manchester and surrounding areas: Second Church was opened at Didsbury in September 1909 by members who had come from First Church. The opening of new churches was not always caused by growth alone; in Christian Science there was a recurrent phenomenon of new churches arising (particularly in the case of Third Church, London) because of disagreements between members in existing churches and was a feature of the process of growth in the movement. Third Church Manchester was opened in May 1914, again from among members of First Church. Later, in 1921, First Church Stockport was organised, also from First Church, and Fourth and Fifth Churches were formed from the first three churches. In 1908 it was observed at the dedication services of First Church, Manchester, that many towns in the north then had Christian Science churches or societies, including Liverpool, Leeds,

Hull, Blackpool, Scarborough, Bradford, Rochdale, Sheffield, Darlington, Warrington, Hindley, Sandbach, Alderley Edge, Wilmslow, Southport and others, even though Christian Science was less known in the north than in the south.

Lady Victoria Murray and her sister, Lady Muriel Gore-Browne, were active in encouraging societies in the north by their presence at services and meetings. In addition, members apparently often travelled to other towns to support services. A testimony meeting in Bolton in 1908, for example, where Lady Muriel was First Reader, attracted Christian Scientists from Southport, Blackpool, Rochdale, Manchester and Bowden¹. Lady Victoria and her mother, the then dowager countess of Dunmore, were also at this meeting. This encouragement was extended to Blackpool, described in the press as cosmopolitan and a place where sects and creeds flourished- it could perhaps be seen as the then northern equivalent of Brighton on the south coast, which contained a larger than usual proportion of retired people. Lady Victoria attended at least one Sunday service in Blackpool in 1907². The Blackpool branch had come into being under the direction of a Mr. Harwood, a student of Lady Victoria, described as a young resident, "earnest and quiet", who had been converted to Christian Science after witnessing the healing of a friend. In 1907, the branch had been in existence for two or three years, the first services being held, typically, in Mr. Harwood's house. Thereafter, they were held in a hired room, and subsequently at a local masonic hall. At this stage, attendance on Sundays averaged between forty and fifty, but on the particular

¹ Bolton Journal and Guardian, October 23, 1908.

² Gazette News, April 2, 1907.

day Lady Victoria attended, the gathering was markedly larger, around sixty or seventy attending, apparently most of them women, with a few children.

It is possible that Lady Victoria, in view of her social position, attracted a number of personal followers. In Christian Science there is a strong interdiction of what today might be called a personality cult. "Human personality" was regarded as an inappropriate basis for attachment: Christian Scientists should be attracted by divine Principle which was represented by an abstract force, and their love for others should be impersonal. The movement had perhaps suffered from the strong appeal of particular individuals, and particularly so among its teachers who in acquiring leadership aspirations sometimes quarrelled with Mrs Eddy and who then led off their own students into apostasy (or, as mentioned above, who quarrelled with each other but maintained loyalty to Mrs Eddy or The Mother Church). In establishing readers in her church to replace the preachers who in the earlier days (before 1895) had occupied Christian Science pulpits, and limiting their term of tenure to three years, Mrs Eddy was striking a blow against the fissiparous tendencies that were a consequence of personal attachments. Lady Victoria Murray was acting in accord with the By-Laws laid down in the *Manual*, 1895, in stepping down from the readership after a short tenure, even though growth in the north of England may have suffered as a result. However, some confusion is apparent from at least one press report, which stated that Lady Victoria personally conducted the Manchester services for four years and retired from the post "at her own desire, feeling, as all Christian Scientists do, that the Christ, and not a human personality, is the Head of the Church,

and the Leader of every Christian Science community"¹. She was replaced as First Reader by B. Tatham Woodhead, a member of a well-known Quaker family.

Just as in the north, the movement was very much promoted by two women of the leisured classes (the daughters of Lord Dunmore), so it was in Scotland, where the wife and daughters of Sir James Ramsay, Baronet of Banff (not himself a Christian Scientist) were particularly active. Christian Scientist accounts emphasise the foundation-stone ceremony as particularly significant achievements, and this was performed in Edinburgh by Miss E.M. Ramsay, president of the church, and, with her sister Liliias, a well-known figure within the movement. The ceremony was particularly sentimental- the earliest member of the Sunday School placed a "casket" in with the stone, in which was contained a copy of *Science and Health*, and other articles including a list of church members. The church, prominently placed in Inverleith Terrace and designed by an Edinburgh architect, Ramsay Traquair, was Scottish gothic, and was capable of seating over 600 people on street level, with a library, schoolrooms and other rooms in the basement. Mrs Eddy had contributed £1,000 to the total cost of £8,000².

Specially commissioned Christian Science churches in this period were, wherever possible, built on prominent sites in central positions. Even where adherents could do no more than hire premises, they sought central locations. The Southsea group (Hampshire) attracted particular attention from local newspaper reporters, who recorded the society's move from the outskirts to the

¹ *The Onlooker*, February 16 1907.

² *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, September 1 1910.

more frequented Palmerston Road¹. Churches and societies elsewhere tended to migrate towards central sites or to prosperous suburbs. Likewise, the location of the War Relief Rooms during the First World War, which were provided as a place for quiet study for servicemen, were usually centrally located, even though, in the case of Plymouth, Christian Scientists did not appreciate the proximity to nightspots². The Sheffield church provides a further example, moving from the periphery of the town (at Millhouses) to the centre. The development of the movement in Sheffield may also be used as an example of how Christian Science expanded in provincial towns. From the first services, before 1905, conducted by Mrs Addie May Gunstone and Christopher Alvey Peck for about twelve attenders, the branch expanded by 1911 to accommodate about 35 on Sunday mornings, 75 on Sunday evenings and 70 at the Wednesday evening meeting. Mrs Gunstone, as was often the case, had come across Christian Science while on a visit to America, and Peck had become interested through the work of Lady Victoria Murray, who patronised the Sheffield group and recommended that a committee of the society should be formed in 1905³. In 1906, Christian Science in Sheffield was considered by the local press to be "a force to be reckoned with" as the newest religious sect to be established in the city⁴.

The developing movement in Sheffield was given much support from America, in the form of frequent visits from lecturers. Such visits boosted

¹ *Portsmouth Times*, January 4 1908.

² *Christian Science Wartime Activities: A report of the Board of Directors of The Mother Church by The Christian Science War Relief Committee, The Christian Science Publishing Society, Boston, 1922, pp.227-229.*

³ From a Short Historical Statement of the Christian Science Movement in Sheffield, England, supplied by the Committees on Publication, London.

⁴ *Sheffield Telegraph*, May 28 and December 10 1906.

attendance and encouraged the acquisition of church buildings: in 1907, Bicknell Young lectured in a hall close to new rooms which had recently been acquired near the city centre and some months after this a reading room was opened in Norfolk Street. The city was visited by two more lecturers in 1908 and 1909, Edward Kimball and Dr. Francis Fluno. Shortly after Fluno's visit, a hall in Pinfold Street and other rooms were located, and it is thought that Fluno was instrumental in finding these rented rooms¹. Here in October 1909, First Church, Sheffield, was formed with 24 members and officers. Steady growth was recorded until 1932, with several moves to larger premises; Second Church was formed in 1928 by 19 members from First Church.

During the years before the outbreak of the First World War, distinguished Christian Science churches and ancillary buildings were erected in several parts of the country and usually provoked interest, if only for the distinctive styles of architecture employed. In Swansea, for example, where the movement gained some early popularity, a lecture hall, built in this case before a church in 1911, in one of the main thoroughfares of the town, was of Renaissance style and was the design of a local architect, Glendinning Moxham. It had offices and other rooms, and seated about 300. Moxham responded, as had many architects commissioned by the Christian Scientists, to the desire that the building should be a prominent feature of the town. Plans for a church were, at this time, being drawn up to occupy ground adjacent to the lecture hall².

¹ Christian Scientist statement of the Sheffield movement.

² The Herald of Wales, November 23 1907.

Public Reactions to Visiting Lecturers.

The pattern established earlier by which Mrs Eddy had sent her special emissaries such as Dr. Field-King to encourage her London followers, became institutionalized in the regular dispatch of itinerant lecturers by The Mother Church. However, while Christian Scientists themselves welcomed support from the spiritual centre in Boston, general public reaction to lectures, recorded by the press, ranged from disbelief that repetitious lectures could be found interesting, to the disruptive behaviour of medical and divinity students, who, although they may have seen in the lectures an opportunity for poking fun, reflected by their violence the more concerted and measured attacks from among the clergy and the medical profession. While church services and testimony meetings were protected by law from disturbance, the public reaction to Christian Science found expression perfectly licitly at the public lectures arranged by various churches but held on secular premises, delivered by speakers approved by The Mother Church's Board of Lectureship. Christian Scientist accounts emphasise that the lectures, which began in 1899 with one delivered by W.N. Miller, attracted large attendances. In 1906, during Vosburg's tour, it is claimed that many people were turned away from the doors¹. Frederick Dixon pointed out the increase in the number of lectures given throughout Britain from 1 in 1899 to 40 in 1907, in various centres throughout the country. In 1905, William Webb, the clerk of First Church, Manchester, remarked on the effectiveness of the lectures: the third lecture called for by the Manchester church had just been delivered by Bicknell Young, and Webb praised Mrs Eddy's "provision" that at least one lecture should be called for annually by each church².

¹ Frederick Dixon, in *The World Today*, February 1908.

² William Webb - Mrs Eddy, December 15 1905, printed in *The Christian Science Journal*, February 1906.

Although the public response to lectures was often antagonistic, Christian Scientists tended to ignore this aspect of the public's reaction and usually reported only the positive value of the lectures, while the press concentrated on more sensational occurrences such as, for example, student violence at lectures in Scotland and Ireland. While some of these were mentioned in Christian Scientist accounts, the way in which Christian Scientists regained control of the situations were emphasised, possibly in an attempt to illustrate the way in which error was overcome.

Heckling and interruptions of various kinds seemed to be a frequent occurrence during this period: in May 1908, for example, a "small but noisy band" of medical students in Edinburgh interrupted Edward A. Kimball's lecture at the Music Hall¹. If press reports are to be relied upon, he was lecturing to about a thousand people, mostly women. On this occasion, the disturbance was not serious, apart from an attempt by the students to raise a chorus of "Here's to Good Old Whisky", and they dispersed quietly. Accounts of a lecture held in Belfast in November 1907 given by Judge Clarence Buskirk show that a large number of people attended and that there were some unusually violent scenes: the lecture was stopped when students apparently charged the platform. The back of the hall had been occupied by about two hundred students at the start of the lecture and they continually interrupted the proceedings by shouting and singing. Repeated appeals for quiet by the lecturer and others, met with no success. The police, of whom there were about a dozen present, tried to persuade the students to leave the building, but this provoked another outburst of activity, and paper bags filled with flour were thrown at

¹ The Edinburgh, May 8 1908.

stewards and others. At this point the speaker left, accompanied by cheering, but the disorder did not abate. The students remained behind singing, throwing chairs about and generally causing a nuisance. The police again tried to move them, by force, managing, with considerable trouble, to eject five or six. When the students were finally induced to leave, one carried a policeman's baton and another the chairman's bell. Fireworks were later set off in the city centre, and a large board, displaying the advertisement of the lecture, was carried to the river and, amidst loud cheering, was thrown in¹.

Similar violence was experienced in Belfast at a lecture given by Edward Kimball in 1909. This time the students were not allowed into the hall before the start of the lecture, but they broke all the windows and threw objects onto the platform. They also climbed onto the corrugated iron roof and pounded it with heavy sticks, making it difficult to hear what was said inside the hall. After these episodes, admittance to Belfast lectures was by ticket only, and lectures, always attended by police, were held whenever possible on Sundays. However, according to an account by an early Christian Scientist, Evelyn Webb Sumner² (which emphasises the way the students were brought under control), one Wednesday evening in 1909 about 60 students attended a testimony meeting after having been refused admittance to a lecture the previous Sunday. Although the students apparently came prepared to break up the meeting, they settled down and even left with copies of the *Christian Science Sentinel* and *Science and Health*. Mrs Sumner attributes this change on the part of the

¹ *Irish Times*, November 8 1907.

A parallel is cited of student protests in Oxford during the 1880s against Anglican mission band activity. G. Simpson, *A Sociological Study of the Church Army*, D. Phil Thesis (unpublished), Oxford 1979.

² From an unpublished statement by Mrs Evelyn Webb Sumner C.S.B., concerning the early history of Christian Science in Belfast.

students to the handling of the situation by the Reader, and undoubtedly this was seen as an example of error being overcome, although this is not mentioned explicitly. It was promised that questions would be answered after the meeting was over, and the students responded amicably to this, although they were still noisy, clapping every testimony: particularly inappropriate behaviour in a Christian Science meeting, where an atmosphere of silent reverence is expected to prevail. Furthermore, this achievement did not prevent the next lecturer to visit Belfast, Ira O. Knapp, from experiencing similar problems, although this time the handling by the combined efforts of the Christian Scientists and the police, succeeded in subduing the clamour and no more violence was recorded after this date in Belfast, although similar disturbances were reported from elsewhere in Ireland¹.

If violence was a public reaction in Ireland, the hostility of the opponents of Christian Science tended to take a different form in England. The complaint was more often that Christian Science lacked credibility and that the lectures were often dull, inspite of the fact that, perhaps surprisingly, they seemed to attract large audiences (in May 1907 a lecture given by Bicknell Young almost filled the Albert Hall)². The American style of the delivery also came under some attack from members of the press. In 1909, a lecture given by Fluno in the Queen's Hall, London, a popular venue for Christian Science lectures, attracted a large audience - a fact verified by photographs in the press³. The commentator remarked that in an irreligious age, whatever one might think of Christian Science, the fact that it could

¹ *Irish Independent*, November 7 1907.

² *The Onlooker*, April 27 1907.

³ *The Graphic*, May 30 1909.

attract so many, even if out of curiosity alone, suggested that all was not lost spiritually. Dr. Fluno was an ex-member of the American medical profession and was observed at the Queen's Hall by a correspondent from the *British Medical Journal*. He estimated that women (the preponderance of whom was nearly always remarked upon) predominated by about six to one in the large hall, which he described as full. However, he described the lecture as the dullest he had ever heard,

"Now and again there were flashes of that mechanical humour which the vulgar American reproaches us with not understanding, not seeing that we think it silly.....Dr. Fluno's discourse would have been an excellent soporific, but for the obsessing delusions of an uncomfortable seat and the painful cough of a lady near me, who, I suppose, had not attained the fullness of faith necessary to salvation from such unreal troubles....."¹

A reply to this report from Frederick Dixon, which meticulously rebutted every criticism made by the correspondent, appeared in the June edition of the *British Medical Journal*. Referring to the cough of the lady near to the reporter, Dixon rejoined:

"Now supposing this to be the case, what does it prove? Really, nothing at all, since, for aught he knows, in order to overcome the cough, the lady might have had to overcome something very much more serious than a cold, and no Christian Scientist pretends to be able to overcome every phase of sickness instantaneously. But, as a matter of fact, how does he know that the lady was a Christian Scientist? The possibilities are distinctly against it. So many people had been turned away from Dr. Fluno's first lecture that Christian Scientists were largely conspicuous by their absence at the second, having left the floor mainly to the outside public...."

¹ The *British Medical Journal*, May 29 1909.

General Responses.

Towards the later part of the decade, general comments in the press, compared with those published when Christian Science was a new and unknown phenomenon, became more rationally focused on a few major issues. While the specific, though varied, reactions of those with particular interests in the claims of Christian Science, such as the medical profession and the clergy, are examined later, press criticisms were presented to a wider readership and sought to provide an outsider's impressions of a movement that was gaining a foothold in many provincial towns and cities. Press reactions to the growth of Christian Science and its church buildings varied in different parts of Britain, although the same general characteristics were observed¹. The London churches represented the British movement in its most polished, or "American" form: the comparative wealth and numbers of the London groups most resembled the constituency of The Mother Church, and Americans themselves were present there in greater numbers. It was the content of the services that came under the greatest attack. Reporting a service in Sloane Terrace, one journalist described *Science and Health* as "a queer medley of doctrines", whilst it was observed that the emphasis which the Christian Scientists placed on the dangers of occultism was not altogether out of place in West London². The reporter's general impressions of the services were unfavourable, particularly

¹ Similar comments were widely made regarding the rapid growth of Christian Science in for example:

Bradford (Bradford Argus, November 4 1908)
 Darlington (Yorkshire Herald, August 1 1908)
 Oxford (Oxford Chronicle, July 4, 1908)
 Leeds (Leeds Mercury, October 21 1907)
 Dover (Dover Express, March 8 1907)
 Eastbourne (Eastbourne Gazette, January 22 1908)

² *British Weekly*, November 23 1905.

what he saw as the clumsiness of Mrs Eddy's writings. This impression of the inadequacy of Christian Science in trying to deal with the mysteries of life and death emerged in many written reports and was unfavourably compared with the "poetry" of the Bible and other sacred scriptures.

This antagonism was echoed by journalists in the provinces. One reporter used a mocking tone when describing a meeting in Southsea, and criticised the name of "testimony meeting" as being a title too awe-inspiring for Christian Science activities. Attacking the movement with ridicule, he wondered whether the entire medical fraternity of Southsea would be rendered useless and unemployed, through the establishment of Christian Science in the town. He criticised the period of silent prayer (a feature of every meeting and service), which conveyed the impression that the meeting was merely asleep. The silence on the part of members which greeted each testimony also came under attack, and it irritated other observers, who suggested that it confirmed Christian Scientists in the view that all that they had heard was "unanswerable". Comment in services was in fact forbidden by Mrs Eddy, since it as this would be tantamount to discussion or the questioning of doctrine. Even at public lectures, the practice has always been for the speaker to leave the platform directly the lecture has been concluded, and for the gathering to break up at once. At the testimony meeting at Southsea, the reporter announced the gathering to be "the most extraordinarily quiet, self-contained, one might almost have said matter-of-fact, audience, if such a term applied to Christian Scientists were not very little short of an insult"- since he had gathered from the meeting that matter was what they disliked most. He left the meeting with a "grudging admiration for the Christian Scientists who were so

brave in their battle against the stronghold of the medical profession and in their misguided groping for truths"¹.

However, visitors frequently admired the appearance of the church interiors or those of the houses or halls where the services took place. In particular, the simplicity of the decorations when contrasted with orthodox church interiors, was commended, as was the warmth, cheerfulness and the abundance of flowers. In the Sloane Terrace church, although the simple interior was a contrast to its ornate exterior, the church was described as having everything to make religion easy, including comfortable seats, perfect acoustics and a subtle arrangement of lights². This unashamed acceptance by Christian Scientists of material comfort in religion was noticed in provincial churches and societies. Thus, the comparatively modest building housing the society in Bedford in 1906 used just one large room for both services and reading room, divided in the centre by a curtain. The reading room section was described as comfortably furnished, the service room as well decorated with expensive flowers, and over the central archway the requisite text was observed, in this case: "He sent His word and healed them". This room, according to the account, seated one hundred people and was described as full on this particular occasion. Wealth and comfort were reflected in the appearances of the Christian Scientists. Expensive fur coats and jewels gave substance, even in provincial Bedford, to the image of the movement as a society cult³.

¹ *Portsmouth Times*, January 4 1908.

² *Pall Mall Gazette*, June 16 1910.

³ *Bedfordshire Times*, July 7 1906.

Christian Science gained momentum in its expansion throughout Britain between 1921 and 1941. In 1931, 109 churches and 105 societies existed, in 1938, 144 churches and 134 societies¹, while in 1941 the figures increased to 148 churches and 139 societies. The number of practitioners rose from 585 in 1926 to 1104 in 1940². After this, the growth slowed down in the 1950s and thereafter numbers appear to have decreased. Christian Science authorities have never published numbers of members and at the end of the 1950s ceased to report the increase or decrease of organisations.

Christian Science introduced into Britain an early and distinctive form of a strand of a particularly American variant of Christianity, and one subsequently to be found in New Thought cults³; in the vogue for "positive thinking"⁴ (as advanced by Norman Vincent Peale⁵, Rabbi Liebeman and Bishop Sheen); and in more recent times, by Prosperity Theology⁶. Christian Science was perhaps more nuanced than these later movements with their more explicit claims that guided "spiritual thinking" could, and should, lead to material blessings, but, behind the elaborate metaphysical rationale, the same message is in essence there within Christian Science. This strand of Christian thought has never had great appeal in Britain, but as presented by Christian Science,

¹ B.R. Wilson, *Sects and Society*, Appendix D., p. 359.

² B.R. Wilson, *Ibid.*, Appendix H, p. 364.

³ A.W. Griswold, "New Thought: A Cult of Success", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 40, No. 3, 1934.

⁴ L. Schneider and S. Dornbusch, *Popular Religion: Inspirational Books in America*, University of Chicago Press, Illinois, 1958.

⁵ Norman Vincent Peale, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, The World's Work Ltd., Kingswood, Surrey, 1953.

⁶ Bruce Barron, *The Health and Wealth Gospel: A Fresh Look at Healing, Prosperity and Positive Confession*. Inter Varsity, Illinois, 1987.

it was sponsored by a coherent system of organization which bestowed on the movement a resilience and a potential for growth and institutional durability which none of the other examples of the cults of spiritual success has achieved. The strength of its organizational structure, with the dual bonding of adherents discretely both to the local church and to The Mother Church has helped to prevent serious schism occurring, and in numerous instances of the movement's growth in Britain (and elsewhere) has made it possible to contain local disagreements between adherents (and more especially between the movement's teachers) in a way which led to the multiplication of churches whilst retaining the allegiance of mutually opposed groups to The Mother Church.

To these organizational features may be attributed the success of Christian Science as a movement which, for more than four decades, showed steady growth in Britain, when compared with other American bodies in this broad metaphysical and "new thought" tradition. It would be difficult to assess just what measure of influence Christian Science, as an American movement, has had on Christianity generally. Certainly, it can be noticed that mainstream Christianity is today more disposed to emphasise the love of God (rather than, say, the judgement of God) and to dwell less on sin, the need for redemption and the prospect of damnation. These trends, however, although conspicuous in their early American expression, are widely diffused, and by no means confined to Christian Science or the New Thought movement: indeed, these tendencies were evident in American liberal Protestantism, Unitarianism, and even in the radical conversionist orientation of the restorationist movement in mid- 19th century¹. But if little can be directly attributed to

¹ Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1989.

Christian Science for these developments, it represented much of the same tradition. As a distinctive and separate movement and as one which made the claims for positive thinking in extreme terms, it was a conspicuous if slightly aberrant example of the prevailing American religious currents, gaining considerable public notoriety but perhaps by virtue of its exclusivistic status as a separate denomination, losing some of the diffuse influence which other less structured exponents of a broadly similar persuasion may have enjoyed.

Chapter 4.The Social Image of the British Christian Scientists.

Christian Scientists in Britain were widely represented in the early 20th Century as predominantly upper class people, or even aristocracy. The movement was depicted as a "society craze". Certainly, there were conspicuous examples, and it is likely that these social classes were over-represented relative to their numbers in the general population. the newspaper impressions, based as they were on the congregations of the larger London churches, and those in other big cities and fashionable resorts, were somewhat overdrawn. The church did attract some socially well placed people, those who had leisure, including the retired, and a disproportionate constituency among the personnel of the armed forces, but there were also from early days middle class, lower middle class and some working class people in the movement, although very few of the lowest class.

From sociological evidence assessed in the 1950's, and from conclusions based upon the educational attainments needed to understand Mrs Eddy's metaphysical concepts, Wilson estimated an almost total predominance of middle class over working class Christian Scientists¹. In the course of participation among members of the sect, only one member from the artisan class was encountered. However, very early evidence, although scarce, shows examples of involvement among the lower classes. In spite of Mrs Eddy's liking for the socially and educationally prominent (particularly evident in the way she favoured the Dunmores) and the British aristocracy, evidence from the press

¹B.R. Wilson, *Sects and Society*, Heinemann, London and Berkeley, 1961, p. 201.

indicates that some Christian Scientists were in lower middle class occupations (particularly nurses) and even some who were working class.

In an attempt to assess the proportion of aristocratic and military titles among Christian Science practitioners between 1899 and 1925, a count was undertaken of practitioners listed in the *Christian Science Journal*. The result of the count of actual titles (there were a considerable number of double-barrel surnames, which occur mainly among the upper and middle classes) superficially suggests that in terms of percentages, the claim that the aristocracy was over-represented had some basis in fact, at least in the early days. The 1899-1901 listing records two titles, one military and one aristocratic (the Countess of Dunmore) out of a total of seventeen practitioners. The 1904-05 list contains more- two styled as "honourable", three as "ladies" and the two Ramsay daughters, whose father was a baronet. There were also two military titles in this list from a total of seventy-four practitioners. In 1909-10, out of a total of about 185 practitioners, there were nine titles, three of them styled "honourable" and two being the Ramsay daughters. The other four were Lady Victoria Murray, Lady Ashbourne, Lady Alice Archer in London and Lady King in Dublin. There were also two military titles in this list. Out of about 300 practitioners in 1914-15, there were seven styled "lady", five as honourable and two military titles. After this date, however, the proportion of titles seems to lessen. In the 1922-23 list from a total of about 385 practitioners, four bore the title "lady", five "the Honourable" and there were two military titles. The trend is apparent when it is observed that out of about 500 practitioners in the 1924-25 period, five "ladies" were listed (mostly the same ones), six "honourables" and there was one military title.

Since only a very small proportion of Christian Scientists qualified as practitioners, this evidence remains inconclusive: on the one hand, upper class and aristocratic members may not have wished to practise; on the other hand, being a practitioner may have commended itself particularly to people (especially women) as a spiritually gratifying occupation which, whilst it had the potential to generate income, remained genteel and socially acceptable. In the latter case, the upper classes might indeed be over represented among the ranks of practitioners relative to their numbers in the movement at large.

Some Examples of Lower Middle and Working Class Involvement.

Accounts of the beginnings of two local churches show how the movement spread among people with occupations which did not comply with the "society craze" label attached to Christian Science by press publicity. It is likely that many groups, particularly in rural areas, began in a similar way and included "ordinary" people of the kind that Christian Scientists such as Frederick Dixon projected as the backbone of the movement. Such a group emerged at Codnor, Derbyshire¹. Mr. Warren, a brother of Arnold Warren, a well-known cricketer and an emigrant to America, revisited his village in the early 1900's and introduced the local infants school headmistress, a Miss North, to Christian Science. Miss North began to introduce Mrs Eddy's ideas to her Sunday school pupils and on being asked to desist, resigned, taking with her three of her pupils. Together they formed a Christian Science group. Years later², the child of one of these early students experienced a healing and this induced others to join the group, which included a chauffeur and a

¹From an anonymous manuscript "Christian Science in Codnor", given by the Christian Science Committees on Publication, London.

² The Christian Scientist account is not specific with regard to dates.

watchmaker. Eventually, the group acquired premises in an outbuilding of an outfitters, in Codnor High Street. Later, people from outlying villages joined and the children of the first group, although living some distance away, retained their allegiance and regularly travelled to meetings. A church building was erected and completed in 1935 and, as is the custom in Christian Science, was dedicated when free from debt in 1942.

Further evidence of working class involvement came from a local account of the church in Belfast¹. In 1896 or 7 two sisters named Robinson, who were strict Presbyterians, received a copy of *Science and Health* from a relative in America. Being "almost afraid to look at it" they sought the counsel of a Mr. Crawford who supplied the drapers shop they owned with knitted goods and who was also a strict Presbyterian. He found "much good" in the book and the sisters studied it secretly, eventually going to New York, where one of them became a practitioner. Unknown to the Robinsons, a Miss Riddel, who was an English missionary to the railwaymen in Belfast, heard about Christian Science in the late 1890's and took instruction from Mrs Field-King in London. Soon after, she returned to Belfast to start the movement there. In 1898, Miss Riddel successfully undertook healing work for one of Crawford's children and thereafter regular public services were held in a house rented by Miss Riddel which Crawford and his family attended. Others joined the group, including a postman, an upholsterer, a joiner, and people from similar walks of life. Soon afterwards, a family of linen and woollen manufacturers, the Wilsons, improved the financial circumstances of the group by paying the rent of the house where the meetings were held. Eventually, however, disagreement occurred and the Wilsons, taking the law into their own hands, forcibly ejected from the house

¹ Statement from Mrs Evelyn Webb Sumner, C.S.B., concerning the early history of Christian Science in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

those members who were loyal to Miss Riddel. Miss Riddel's group eventually settled in a house in Lincoln Avenue where services were held for about two years.

After a visit to London, Miss Riddel introduced new ideas to the group (possibly New Thought), supplanting the (official) *Christian Science Journal* with a publication called the "Washington Post". Crawford and his family objected and, on being excluded, began their own services, later attracting to them some of the Lincoln Avenue group. Such a history, revealing as it does the fragility of Christian Science orthodoxy and the fissiparous character of some of these local churches, is presented here to indicate the working and lower middle class beginnings of at least some local churches. The tendency to seek the patronage of better-to-do (and perhaps better educated) people was always strong, however. Crawford sought the help of the First Reader of the well-established Dublin church, Lady Ashbourne, who was a daughter of Marjorie Colles, one of the earliest Christian Scientists¹. Lady Ashbourne's daughter, the Hon. Frances Gibson, with a Miss Browning, went to stay in Belfast with the idea of helping those in the city to start up public services again. In about 1902, a hall was hired in Wellington Place, where a recognised church was formed. Crawford was appointed First Reader, and his stand against the heretical followers of Miss Riddel was much appreciated by members in later years.

Contemporary Christian Scientists, no doubt at times appreciative of their links with the aristocracy, were at other times also at pains to disabuse the public of the image of the movement as a society cult. Frederick

¹ This is verified by an article in the *St. James' Gazette*, September 2 1907.

Dixon, Committee on Publication, defended his movement by referring to its progress in Manchester. He maintained that it was not because Lady Victoria Murray's father was an earl that the movement had expanded so much in Manchester and the surrounding districts, but because she healed the sick. Dixon challenged anyone to go to the meetings in Manchester, Rochdale, Liverpool or Hull, and see how many "society idlers" were to be found there. "It is just in the great seaports, and in the industrial cities, where the struggle for existence is sternest, and the world seems clothed in drab, shot with furnace smoke, that, outside London, Christian Science has taken its firmest hold....."¹

Local newspapers played a significant role in attracting people from the outlying towns and villages to the Manchester church. According to a Christian Science publication,² Manchester newspapers, which circulated throughout Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire and western Yorkshire, often reported testimony meetings. Those who visited the Manchester church sometimes formed groups in their own communities and some of them were far removed from the popular view of Christian Science as a fashionable cult.

Dixon engaged in a dispute in a popular periodical on the topic of the class composition of Christian Science. The journal had claimed that a Christian Scientist west end (of London) butler had healed a gardener "of the same way of thinking"³. Dixon had objected to the surprise expressed in the

¹ *The Onlooker*, August 17 1907.

² B.Tatham Woodhead, *An Historical Sketch of the Beginnings of Christian Science in Lancashire*, John Taylor, The Queen's Press, Manchester 1934, p.41.

³ *Truth*, April 14, 1904.

paper at the apparent spread of Christian Science to the lower orders. The journal defended itself by citing an article published some years previously, when the new religion appeared to be "catching on", in which the author had been impressed by the fact that "there was so much money in it" and believed that "proselytes who had not got plenty of money were not much wanted". Dixon had interpreted reporting the case of the butler and gardener as proof that "a glimmering of the truth that Christian Science is devoid of class distinction" was beginning to dawn on journalists, to which the article's author had rejoined that the case was evidence that Christian Science was only spreading to the lower classes because "every class of society imitates the class above it". Every folly of the drawing room, the report went on, was "reproduced in the servant's hall". It was only to be expected that Christian Science would bloom most freely in the "poorer social soils" because faith healing had always appealed to the ignorant and uneducated.

In 1907, Dixon insisted that the spread of the religion among the artisan classes in large manufacturing towns was "one of the features of the movement which had lately attracted much attention". He added that he did not know that these churches included any really wealthy people among their adherents. In Rochdale, for example, they had a church with six or seven hundred members and this growth was expanding to many of the surrounding towns¹. In various reports, particularly in medical journals, of inquests held upon the death of people who had undergone Christian Science treatment, a variety of occupations are represented, particularly ex-nurses, and the case

¹ *Manchester Daily Dispatch*, August 9, 1907.

of a dairy assistant manager who was temporarily held in an asylum (at the instigation of members of his family) for his Christian Science beliefs¹.

The Middle Class: The Services.

The progress of Christian Science among the middle class "professions", such as army, navy, engineering, the medical profession and the clergy, was given considerable publicity. There have also been Christian Scientists among the business élite. By 1907, the significant numbers of military personnel interested in Christian Science, as early as 1900, was noted. Commenting in the press in 1907, Dixon remarked that several officers had resigned their commissions in order to devote themselves to the movement, but by no means all military personnel who became Christian Scientists followed this course: press reports of services held at Aldershot mentioned serving officers among the congregation, and it is likely that in many cases they continued, until retirement, to combine their faith with their careers. Many Christian Scientists in the forces had been through the South African war, and Dixon claimed that not one had been wounded or invalided home².

An anonymous letter to a national newspaper in August 1908 remarked on a published report on Christian Science in the British army. The writer observed that there had long been a connection between "the profession that threatens to destroy bodies and the profession that has for its aim the rescuing of souls". Every war of any significance, the writer continued, had brought its aftermath of officers who had resigned to take holy orders, and he gave as examples Cardinal Vaughan and the then Archbishop of York. The

¹ *Daily Express*, July 30, 1906.

² *Manchester Daily Dispatch*, August 13, 1907.

writer also remarked on the desirability of resigning a commission before adopting the church as a profession, whereas at the time there seemed to be a tendency (presumably referring to Christian Scientists) to combine the two. Whatever the reasons for an army man adopting the religion, however, "the undisguised adoption of this creed" would probably "militate strongly against the subsequent success in their profession of the officers who adopt it". When it came to the point, the man who believed that the explosion of a melinite shell between a man's feet produced damage which was merely the result of sensory illusion was not likely to be entrusted with the safety of subordinates who must carry out his orders. The writer was under the impression that a belief in Christian Science would encourage inappropriate behaviour in situations of active combat¹.

By 1908, the success of the movement in Aldershot had attracted the attention of the press, both local and national. In October, a report appeared in the local press about a thanksgiving service as the Aldershot Christian Scientists assembled in their Freehold Hall, whereas three years before, the group had been small enough to meet in a single small room: there had been remarkable growth. Christian Science in Aldershot before 1905 had been little known but the first service had been held in the School of Music in the High Street, sponsored by Mrs Ada Carter (wife of Major Evan Carter, Professor at the School of Instruction, Army Service Corps, and an author of a novel about Christian Science), Mrs Agatha Scott and Mrs Isobel Ansley. The Aldershot meeting apparently grew out of the Farnborough meeting held at Manor Farm. In 1906, the service attendance had grown sufficiently for meetings to be held at a restaurant and had warranted the organization of an officially recognised

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, August 14, 1908.

Christian Science society. A few months later, the local Masonic Hall was rented for the Sunday services¹.

An account survives by a journalist who attended a service and described the social composition of the members. The men were mostly officers, attached to the Headquarters Staff and the Departmental Corps, with perhaps one or two from the cavalry divisions. The women were the wives of officers and belonged to the same class. They were described as well dressed, with nothing about them to distinguish them from "ordinary churchgoers". The Second Reader was a Major O'Malley, a well-known sportsman. At a testimony meeting, it was recounted how a master in a public school had been able to bring influence to bear upon the boys in his charge through the help of Christian Science, so giving "fuller power and capacity for both mental and bodily work"².

A meeting predominantly for non-Christian Scientists, at the Theatre Royal, Aldershot, had been packed with a fashionable audience for a lecture by Bicknell Young, from The Mother Church, who had lectured only the previous day to a large audience in the Albert Hall, London. Cars and carriages had brought visitors to the theatre, and a special train had conveyed about three hundred people who had travelled via London from Liverpool, Ireland, the north of Scotland and the Continent. It was noted that a display of flags hid the empty orchestral seats from the view of the audience and that their introduction was a novelty at Christian Science meetings. In the view of the journalist, the flags acknowledged that the gathering was held "in the largest

¹ Aldershot Gazette, October 31, 1908.

² Daily Telegraph, August 12, 1907.

military garrison of the United Kingdom"¹. Christian Science had also made converts in military units serving in various parts of the Empire. The Earl of Dunmore had a son and a son-in-law serving in two different regiments in India, and it was whilst in India that Lady Dunmore's health dramatically improved whilst reading *Science and Health* (she had been lent the book by a woman friend).

Captain Wilkinson, Frederick Dixon's assistant in the office of the Committees on Publication in London and son of Colonel Wilkinson of the Bengal Staff Corps, had passed into Woolwich in 1898 with a commission in the Royal Engineers. He first encountered Christian Scientists while serving at Peshawar on the Afghan frontier. When he returned to England he joined the Staff College but a year later (no date is known) resigned his commission to devote his time to Christian Science². Captain Douglas Baynes, formerly an officer in the Bengal Cavalry, also gave up his army career around 1904 to devote his time to Christian Science. Others encountered Christian Science at military centres in Britain. These included Major Cecil Lester, an instructor in military topography at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, whose case was given much publicity in 1898 when he died whilst under Christian Science treatment; and Major John Whyte, D.S.O., who died in 1906 under similar circumstances and who had come across Christian Science at the convalescent home for officers in Osborne. Later, during the 1920's and 30's, some notable senior officers became Christian Scientists, including Admiral Sir Cecil Harcourt and Lady Harcourt, Admiral Cayley and General Spencer Hollond³.

¹ *Sheldrakes Aldershot Military Gazette*, April 26, 1907.

² *The Onlooker*, April 27, 1907.

³ From information given by the Manager of the Christian Science Committees on Publication, London.

The tragic episode of the sinking of the Titanic in 1912 provides an example of the spread of Christian Science among naval personnel. Lieutenant C.H. Lightoller, R.N.R., the second officer on board the Titanic on her fateful maiden voyage, should have been first officer but had changed duties for the voyage. He attributed his survival of the wreck entirely to Christian Science, and emphasised that while the ship was sinking and during the whole time he was working at the lifeboats, he "held to the truth, thereby eliminating all fear". Later, while in the water until being picked up by the Carpathia at dawn, he managed to endure the cold and was the last one to board the Carpathia. Until the Carpathia reached New York, Lightoller took very little rest and suffered no ill effects from his ordeal, to the surprise of those about him¹.

Just why Christian Science should have attracted so many servicemen and their wives is something not easily explained. As a religion it claimed to be part of the Christian tradition whilst it also emphasised a radical new approach to practical matters, especially physical health. It placed considerable emphasis on the will and could be represented as a system of auto-suggestion: adherents were encouraged to will themselves into health, wealth and competence. Christian Science may readily be seen as an agency promoting morale. Its activities could be presented as matter-of-fact and down-to-earth, with no opportunities for sentimentality or shallow emotionalism. Christian Science was presented as a philosophy of certitude, likely to appeal to those who sought discipline, order and practicality in

¹ Yorkshire Telegraph, October 9, 1912.

their faith. These elements all manifest some degree of congruence with a military approach.

Other Converts among Middle Class Occupations.

Engineers were well represented in New Thought groups and a notable example among the mainstream Christian Scientists is Sir Douglas Galton, a distinguished Royal Engineer and a member of many scientific and engineering associations, best known for his contributions to sanitary science¹. A later example of a Christian Scientist from an engineering background (whose father, also a Christian Scientist, and grandfather were engineers) was Sir Alastair Pilkington, who became Chairman of the Pilkington Glass Company in the 1970s. How and when Galton became a convert to Christian Science is unknown, but his conversion, like Lord Dunmore's, may have taken place towards the end of his life. His family saw his involvement with Christian Science as inconsistent with an otherwise brilliant career. He was instrumental in the remodelling of the Bryanston Street church building after it had been bought from the Sephardic Jews.

William N. Miller, K.C., graduated in law at Toronto University and became interested in Christian Science in 1889, making him one of the earliest members. He had been a prominent lawyer in Nova Scotia, sat in the Nova Scotia Assembly and was a senator and a member of the Privy Council for Canada. He arrived in England on the instructions of Mrs Eddy in 1898. He did not, however, practise law in England, dedicating all his time to Christian Science. By 1902, he was First Reader at the Bryanston Street church. In June 1899 in a lecture given at the Queen's Hall, Langham Palace, he explained the

¹ The Dictionary of National Biography.

reasons for his joining the church. Emphasising the "loving bonds of kinship" between the English-speaking nations, he described how about eleven years previously, he and his wife had been bereaved by the death of their son. Their own "orthodox religion" could provide them with little comfort, and their bereavement induced in them a very low state of health: then they heard of Christian Science. Miller later went on to become one of the founder members of Third Church in Curzon Street, and was president after 1910, when the foundation stone of the church was laid. He died in January 1913 aged about 76 in the church itself, an event covered in the press¹.

Although the medical profession was understandably the loudest in its denunciation of Christian Science, some doctors abandoned medical practice to devote themselves to the movement (see Chapter 6). Apart from Dr. George Adcock, perhaps the best known medical practitioner to abandon his profession for the new faith was Walter F.W. Wilding, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., who, as the Medical Officer for Health, Hindley, Lancashire, had been a medical practitioner for about twelve years when he became converted to Christian Science in 1900. Belief in Christian Science being absolutely incompatible with the practice of medicine, he was forced to abandon his medical career².

Wilding's father had settled, with his family, in California, where they had become interested in Christian Science. It was they who, hearing of an illness of Wilding's daughter, encouraged Wilding to try Christian Science, which he apparently at first resisted. Other therapies failed, however, and in desperation, without letting his family know, Wilding advertised in

¹ *The Daily Telegraph*, January 10, 1913, *The Nottingham Guardian*, January 10, 1913.

² Tatham Woodhead, *Op. cit.*, p.28.

newspapers in the north of England for a Christian Science practitioner, but without response. At length, he asked his family to send information. They sent over a copy of the *Christian Science Journal*, and he found the name of Lady Dunmore listed as a practitioner. Upon contacting her, she passed the letter on to her daughter, Lady Victoria Murray, who arranged to travel to Hindley. A spectacular healing is recounted of this episode in Christian Science literature. Apparently, Dr. Wilding's daughter, who had suffered from a "tubercular" condition for some time, progressed from a state of lying on her back on a plank with a weight hanging from her feet, in which position she had been for six months, to being able to dress and walk the following day. Within a week, according to the source, she was riding her bicycle, healed.

In the United States, Christian Science has traditionally gained a large following from among businessmen, and examples exist in Britain of Christian Scientists who have achieved prominence in business corporations, although these occurred at a later date than their American counterparts. Sir Alastair Pilkington, mentioned above, provides one example, who taught in a Christian Science Sunday school later in life¹, while another is Sir Dallas Bernard, Chairman of Courtaulds in the 1960s². Whether attributable to Christian Science or not, both were highly regarded by their peers in a moral sense. Another businessman who was a Christian Scientist, Lionel Fraser, wrote an autobiography: *All to the Good*, (1963). In that book he emphasized that Christian Scientists were "normal, real people", and asserted that his

¹ *Dictionary of Business Biography*, ed. D. Jeremy, Butterworths, London 1985, p. 689.

² D.C. Coleman, *Courtaulds: An Economic and Social History* (Vol.3) Oxford 1980, pp. 136, 243, 247.

religion had a major effect on his life, deepening his "appreciation of things and people"¹.

Society.

It was for its connections with the gentry and the aristocracy that Christian Science attracted most attention during the early years of its establishment in Britain as a "West end fad" or a "drawing-room cult". There were some conspicuous society figures in the movement, which suggests that there must have been others of the same class. For a number of titled and socially prominent people to belong implies that Christian Science was a congruous environment for them. In religion, as in other associations, there is a strong tendency for people to feel most at ease with others who share their social and cultural assumptions, and since Christian Science was not a missionary movement (in which one might find well-to-do missionaries mixing to some extent with a much poorer and socially inferior public), the likelihood that it had a constituency congenial to its well-to-do and well known adherents is considerable. The Rev. W.S. Swayne, Vicar of St. Peters, London, remarked in 1905 in a personal newspaper interview that he thought the spread of Christian Science among the well-to-do was a sign that they were becoming spiritually more advanced, as previously many of this class had been materialists, atheists or agnostics.²

Helen, Lady Abinger, was one of the earliest members of the movement in Britain³. She was one of the first fifteen who met in the rooms of Mrs Blanche

¹ W. Lionel Fraser, *All to the Good*, Heinemann, London, 1963, p.62.

² *Church Bells and Illustrated Church News*, October 27 1905.

³ *Evening News*, March 17 1915 (obituary).

Ward, at the northern end of Baker Street, in 1896, who constituted all the Christian Scientists in Britain and Ireland with the exception of Mrs Graves Colles in Ireland and Mrs Hester (or Esther) Grant, who was at the time in America. Those fifteen were entirely Americans, except for a Colonel Eckford and his two daughters. Lady Abinger was also a member of Mrs Field-King's first class, in April or May of 1896, with four English women. She was an American, the daughter of a commodore in the United States navy, who had married Lord Abinger in 1863. At the time Lady Abinger met her husband, he was serving as a lieutenant-general with his army regiment in Canada. Her family home had been broken up during the Civil War and they had crossed the frontier into Canada. Lady Abinger is perhaps typical of the accepted view of the "ideal" Christian Scientist in Britain. Although born an American, she was quickly accepted into British society and became well-known not only for her adherence to Christian Science, but also for her work concerning animal welfare. Reports describe her as "ultra-Protestant", with a "niche of her own in the world of London" and as having many friends.

Mrs Alice Martineau was a society hostess who, like her sister, Viscountess Maitland, was a Christian Scientist. Mrs Martineau, a native of Wales, was described in a society journal as artistic, musical and a keen sportswoman who was also apparently a successful farmer at her country home, Hurst Court, near Twyford¹. Her interest in breeding horses took her to America. She became interested in Christian Science in about 1900 through the healing of her husband, although it is possible that she may have met Christian Scientists in America.

¹ *The Onlooker*, April 13 1907.

All the members of some aristocratic families were converted to Christian Science, forming a network of connections. Such were the families of the Earl of Dunmore (except for the heir, Lord Fincastle). A direct link existed between the Dunmore family and the Earl of Leicester, who it was believed was a Christian Scientist (the Coke family), and also Lord and Lady Airlie, parents of Angus Ogilvy, brother-in-law of the present Duke of Kent, who were both Christian Scientists¹. Other prominent Christian Science families were Lord and Lady Ashbourne, the Ramsays of Banff, Perthshire, and the Butler family in Cambridge. Mrs Agnata Butler, wife of the Master of Trinity, was a daughter of Sir James Ramsay, a baronet and historian, whose wife and two other daughters, Miss E. Mary Ramsay and Miss Liliias Ramsay, were all Christian Scientists, as was Butler's son, Sir James Butler, a professor of history at Cambridge. Henry Montague Butler, of Trinity, had married the much younger Agnata, daughter of Sir James Ramsay, in 1888. Butler's brother-in-law was the famous scientist Sir Francis Galton, a cousin of Sir Douglas Galton, the Christian Scientist who helped in the building of the Bryanston Street church. Butler is not known to have been an adherent of the movement².

Lady Ashbourne's husband, Edward Gibson, had attended Trinity College, Dublin, had been called to the Irish Bar in 1860, becoming a QC in 1872. He became Attorney general in 1887 and Lord Chancellor in 1885. Lady Ashbourne's house, in Merion Square, Dublin, became the meeting place of Irish Christian

¹ From information given by the Manager of the Christian Science Committees on Publication, London.

² Information from diverse sources including the Committees on Publication, Dictionary of National Biography, press reports, a biography of H.M. Butler by his son and Francis Galton, *Memories of My Life*, Methuen & Co., London 1908.

Scientists for many years. At least two of her daughters, the Hon. Mrs Orde-Fowlett and the Hon. Mrs Alex Porter, were Christian Scientists. Lady Alice Houblon was also a member of this set. She was a sister of the Earl of Crawford and in 1906 contributed an article to *The Onlooker* on the progress of Christian Science in England, a society journal which showed keen interest in the religion. Four members of her family were converted to Christian Science after the healing, by Christian Science methods, of one of her daughters who had been unsuccessfully treated by medical methods for three years¹. The Countess of Atholl was an early member in London, and certain members of Lord Powerscourt's family became Christian Scientists². George Kemp, who became the First Baron Rochdale in 1913, and his wife, formerly Lady Beatrice Egerton, the daughter of the Earl of Ellesmere, became Christian Scientists at some point. It is likely that Lord Rochdale may have become an adherent through his wife, as some members of the Egerton family were Christian Scientists before the First World War.

The Dunmore Contribution to the Image.

The most prominent of these families in the movement was the Dunmore family, which occupied an elevated social position and was associated with the court. The seventh earl had been a childhood friend of the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) and had held positions in the royal household. Queen Victoria was godmother to Lady Victoria Murray, one of Dunmore's daughters. In the early years in Britain, the Dunmore family probably provided the movement with most publicity. Their allegiance to Christian Science was much publicised, both in Christian Science publications and in the press. The

¹ *The Onlooker*, January 19 1906, *The Bystander*, June 13 1906, *St. James Gazette*, September 2 1907.

² Committees on Publication.

Christian Science Journal for July 1899, for example, reported that several members of the family attended the annual communion service at The Mother Church. The reserved pew on the main floor of the church was held for and occupied by the Countess of Dunmore, her daughter Lady Mildred Murray and her son, Viscount Fincastle (who had recently received the Victoria Cross). Fincastle had come straight from his regiment in India to be present at the service. He did not, however, remain a Christian Scientist. By the time he had succeeded to the title in 1907 he had apparently lost all interest. The same report emphasised that the reservation of the pew for the family (Lord Dunmore was not present on this occasion, although he visited Mrs Eddy several times, as did other members of the family) "was wholly a matter of international courtesy and not in any sense a tribute to their rank".

The Christian Science authorities in Boston were at times prepared to use the influence and prestige of their aristocratic adherents to claim for the movement a respectable image. The Dunmore family were socially the most prominent aristocrats in the early church, and Lord Dunmore, although not holding any office or practising as a practitioner, was nearly always present on important occasions in London: for example, he often introduced visiting American lecturers. There is reason to believe that Dunmore was something of a disappointment to Mrs Eddy and for some reason he was apparently not considered suitable to become a practitioner or a teacher (Lady Dunmore was listed as a practitioner in the Christian Science Journal). There is a suggestion, for example, that he smoked tobacco, even within church precincts, when the tenets of the faith forbade the practice (and it is not possible to become a member of The Mother Church and hence to take class instruction until tobacco and alcohol are renounced). At one point, in a letter from Mrs Eddy to Lord Dunmore, she appeared to change her mind after a meeting with him,

about enlisting his aid in a certain matter¹. However, Lord Dunmore and his family were often featured in the society press (echoed by the popular press) which gave publicity and helped to create for the movement an image of wealthy supporters with high social positions.

There is some confusion about the circumstances in which Lord and Lady Dunmore adopted Christian Science. According to Dunmore's own account, he became convinced about the effectiveness of the healing methods after his wife had experienced a healing in Kashmir, India, in 1892, after borrowing a copy of *Science and Health*². This account is contradicted in other works. According to another version, Lady Dunmore had previously heard of Christian Science from an acquaintance in Egypt, and wrote for a copy of *Science and Health*³. She had been suffering from a severe spinal complaint and was "literally snatched from the jaws of death" through reading the book, which had been lent to her by a lady who, like her, had left the plains of India in the hot weather for the more congenial climate of Kashmir. The English doctors in Kashmir had gone so far as to warn Lady Dunmore of the probability of a fatal outcome. Dunmore recounted how there was no Christian Science practitioner in the country and that at the time the religion was little known outside America and Canada. The family later moved south into India proper, where they introduced a few people to the religion. A newspaper account gives the time of Dunmore's adoption of Christian Science as slightly later, when he experienced a healing from his daughter Victoria⁴. However, what is clear

¹ Mrs Eddy - Lord Dunmore, December 18 1906, Dunmore papers, Scottish Record Office, Bundle 15.

² The Christian Science Journal, April 1907.

³ Tatham Woodhead, Op. cit., p.8.

⁴ News of the World, September 1 1902.

from Christian Science literature is that Lady Dunmore and her daughters first became enthusiastic about the religion in India and influenced Lord Dunmore.

Lord Dunmore was a figure to whom the church turned for a particular purpose, and this in connection with reports of Mrs Eddy's ill health and a lawsuit which sought to show her to be incapacitated. A report in Reynolds News in 1907 after Dunmore's death, maintained that he had several times visited Mrs Eddy, the last time being in the January of that year¹. There was, in fact, a press campaign which reported that Mrs Eddy was a helpless cripple or cancer sufferer in the hands of ruthless exploiters, and that the figure seen driving out daily in her carriage was an imposter. Reynolds asserted that Lord Dunmore wrote that he had seen Mrs Eddy eleven weeks before and had found her in perfect health of body and mind. An article by Lord Dunmore entitled "The Truth about Christian Science" appeared in early 1907².

Letters reveal that Dunmore's visit to America in early 1907 was not incidental but had been requested by the Christian Science authorities in Boston. A cablegram reached Dunmore in November 1906, asking whether he would be willing to come to America at once "if we call you" to write a magazine article in their cause. This was followed by a letter signed by Alfred Farlow, official spokesman of The Mother Church, which explained that the Boston Christian Scientists were trying to offset the health controversy by "effectual, authentic and reputable newspaper and magazine articles". They were in negotiation with a popular magazine (probably *The Cosmopolitan* or *The Onlooker*), seeking to have an article of considerable length published and

¹ Reynolds News, September 1 1907.

² The article was reprinted in the Christian Science Journal from The Cosmopolitan in April 1907.

proposing to give them Dunmore's name as its author. The letter suggested various topics on which Dunmore could dilate. The article was not to be a reply, but a neutralizer, and it

"must contain a very bountiful reference to our Leader and her various qualifications, the good she has accomplished, her real worth, etc. etc., what Christian Science is doing. Let it include your personal testimonial as extensive as you care to make it; if it were made the fullest report of your own experience you have ever written, it would be all the better. The article might contain anywhere from three to eight thousand words. We find that testimonials of what CS is accomplishing are more interesting and convincing to the public than anything else, so a history of your past life in connection with your present desires and inclination would be a great help."¹

Soon thereafter, Dunmore did travel to America. A letter from Lewis C. Strong dated 17th December contained a message from Mrs Eddy to the effect that she wished Dunmore to write in his article that he visited her in her home today, saw her arrive in her sleigh and alight from it, talked with her in her room and that she was the veritable woman known by him for the past eight years to be Mrs Eddy. A letter from Mrs Eddy herself followed the next day, in connection with some other undisclosed prospect. In this she stated that after consideration of a conversation she had had with Dunmore the previous day, "and from my present experience of a conspiracy of which you have no idea.....it being in this country and concerning persons unknown to you....." she definitely desired that he should not act as her agent or personal representative in any way, in matters of business of any sort or contracts "of any name or nature". A letter of the same day signed jointly by Calvin Frye and Lewis Strong explained that this change of mind was entirely

¹ Alfred Farlow - Lord Dunmore, November 21 1906.

occasioned by a change of conditions, "which has come to her since her talk with you yesterday. This unpleasant circumstance has absolutely nothing to do with you, though on account of it, she feels that the only safe course both for you and for herself is not to implicate you in any way in her personal affairs".

In January 1907, Dunmore had arrived back in London and received a letter from Strong on 9th February stating that Mrs Eddy "was much pleased with your article". Mrs Eddy asked for permission to publish it in one of the periodicals of the movement. This was probably the reprint from *The Cosmopolitan* in *The Christian Science Journal* in April 1907. In March 1907, Dunmore was interviewed by a representative of *The Tribune* with regard to cabled statements published a few days previously concerning the law suit. In the interview, he denied some allegations that Calvin Frye was a mere "footman" to Mrs Eddy and reasserted his former statements that Mrs Eddy's powers were undiminished.

"I saw her on December 17th and conversed with her for nearly an hour on matters connected with Christian Science. I was very much struck, not only with the vigour of her intellect, but also with her bodily activity. The talk of an electric battery being used to stimulate her for her brief interviews with callers is as far-fetched as it is absolutely false".¹

Lord Dunmore's daughter, Lady Victoria Murray, has already received some attention. In some ways she was perhaps more important in the history of Christian Science in Britain than either of her parents. Her work in establishing the movement in Manchester - a northern centre for Christian Science which almost rivalled London - has been noted, and there is no doubt

¹ *Tribune*, March 6 1907.

that her wealth, independence and connections were important adjuncts to her competent presentation of Christian Science, and the reputation she acquired as a healer.

Lady Victoria Murray was born in 1877 and as a child had apparently always suffered from ill health, in the form of spinal and lung troubles, so that she had to live on and off for twelve years in warm and sunny climates. She claimed that after her adoption of Christian Science her health was no longer dependent on climate, as is apparent from her strenuous work in Manchester. The family was living in India in the 1890s. After they returned to London, Lady Victoria went "into society" for four years, which she appeared to resent somewhat, as it distracted her from her study of Christian Science.¹

With all their society connections, country house visiting and the London season, the Dunmores interested a number of people in Christian Science but they did not undertake any formal work in the establishment of the movement in London. They attended the services once they had been started but manifested a certain diffidence which may have been occasioned by a desire not to compromise the family's social position. There were other instances of a certain reticence: when, for example, Lady Victoria eventually began teaching work in Manchester, her assistant, Miss Coutts-Fowlie, sometimes had to open the door of the classroom and push her in, as Lady Victoria suffered from attacks of shyness. On another occasion, after Lady Victoria and her parents and sister (Lady Mildred) had attended a class at the Massachusetts Metaphysical College, Mrs Eddy had to impress upon them very firmly that she

¹ Tatham Woodhead, *Op. cit.*

desired that they should be teachers. Mrs Eddy gave them "additional council, expressing the while much satisfaction with the healing we had already done"¹. Lady Victoria explained this reticence in an account among her private papers. They had, as she wrote, "been passing through deep waters due to insufficient understanding in handling the error of mental malpractice"². The episode in America reinforces the argument that Mrs Eddy and the Boston church authorities were eager to engage the Dunmores in Christian Science activities. By constant encouragement, therefore, and renewals of faith by frequent visits to Mrs Eddy in person, the high profile of the Dunmores and their unique contribution to Christian Science were maintained.

It was following such a visit to Mrs Eddy in 1898 with her family that Lord and Lady Dunmore allowed Lady Victoria to withdraw from society and devote her time to Christian Science. Mrs Eddy had on this occasion asked them to work in the field. Lady Victoria travelled round Britain among Christian Scientists whom she knew. Apparently, some of the local people, who had heard that she undertook healing work, asked her for help. In 1900, she and Miss Florence Coutts-Fowlie, who was closely associated with her in the Manchester work, spent some time near Hull with Mr and Mrs Haworth Booth (Mr Haworth Booth had been educated at Trinity, Cambridge, home of the Butlers) who had begun a small group there. In October of the same year, Lady Victoria was staying in Ireland with friends when Lady Dunmore sent her the letter from Dr Wilding asking for help for his daughter, and she travelled to Lancashire and afterwards to Manchester.

¹ Ibid., p.14.

² Reprinted in Tatham Woodhead, Op. cit., p.13.

By the time Lord Dunmore died in 1907, Lady Victoria had built up her Manchester movement into a branch church of considerable significance for the surrounding areas. Local newspaper reports wrote of her "bloodless surgery" in Deansgate, Manchester, and made much of the fact that she had "given up" society in order to devote her time to the cause of Christian Science¹. In 1908, by which time the main task of establishing the work in Manchester had been accomplished and the church in Victoria Park had been built, Lady Victoria was able to say in a newspaper interview that public feeling had changed very much and that the members were now being respected. New members, as she explained, first came for relief from pain or illness for which they had not hitherto been able to find a cure. "...then they find a religion which meets their needs as they have never been met before". Her callers represented all walks of life, from well-to-do businessmen to sufferers from the slums. "The businessmen say that Christian Science enables them to attend to their duties better".

Lady Victoria also remarked that it had not alone been the recovery of her health (she had also experienced a healing in India) fifteen years before, which had persuaded her to adopt the religion.

"The teaching appealed to me, as it appealed to other members of our family, as a higher ideal of Christian life, and it also taught one how to live up to such an ideal. It is a logical understanding which seems to appeal at once to people who are not what may be termed naturally religious".

The great aim of the group, she continued, was to "carry it to the people". It did not, she emphasised, require an educated, cultured mind to understand

¹ *Manchester Evening Chronicle*, January 2, October 29, 1908.

Christian Science. On the contrary, this sort of mind had the most to unlearn "in order that they may become, as Jesus said, a little child, to understand things spiritual". Lady Victoria was asked if that meant "that the religion of the Christian Scientists is one aiming at the breaking down of the hide-bound social system which is described by so many people as un-Christian?" To this, Lady Victoria replied that as Christian Science was founded on gratitude, which meant love for everybody, there must be "a broad sympathy with the conditions and status of the people" as the religion grew. The present conditions, she said, were occasioned by a lack of Christianity and if Christian ideals had been practised they would never have arisen¹.

A Christian Science Élite in Society and Politics.

The early impressions of Christian Science as a religion of the better-to-do was consolidated in the inter-war years by the adherence of a particularly prominent group within British society, people who were not only socially celebrated but politically conspicuous too. In this context, the stereotype of a tightly-knit, mainly female dominated movement acquires a more far-reaching significance, perhaps partly because men involved were prominent in their fields and had wide national and international connections. Although practising Christian Scientists were not numerous within the political community, there were several prominent individuals, and others who were not attracted to it were certainly likely, because of its current fashionability, to have known of individuals who were.

Christian Science acquired some marginal political significance with the emergence into public prominence of Lady Nancy Astor, and with the political

¹ Manchester Evening Chronicle, October 29 1908.

careers of Philip Kerr (later Lord Lothian), Victor Cazalet M.P. and his sister Thelma Cazalet-Keir M.P., all of whom were Christian Scientists. These adherents were contemporaries, and mixed socially as well as in connection with the church. They were acquainted with many influential people, including the royal family. Through members such as these, an awareness of the movement was diffused through the upper classes, although there is no evidence that more aristocratic converts were made in this way.

Lady Astor married into the wealthy Astor family in 1906 and she and her husband, Waldorf, were devoted members of the church. Among the "Cliveden Set", which took its name from their home, was Philip Kerr, who became Marquess of Lothian in 1930. Lady Astor, the first woman to take her seat as a Member of Parliament, was, in accordance with her religion, a vigorous temperance advocate and a campaigner for equality for women, and was instrumental in putting through parliament a number of bills in accordance with these views¹. Throughout her time in parliament she was frequently under the direction or guidance of Christian Science mentors who encouraged her not to forget her religion when considering public matters². She maintained a wide social circle and her public prominence ensured that many learned something of Christian Science who might not otherwise have done so or would have lightly dismissed it. However, Richard Robinson, the late Manager of the Committees on Publication in London, reflected the views of the Christian Scientists when he remarked that to the Christian Scientists who knew him, Lord Astor was regarded as much closer to the "true metal", and a great benefactor of the church in various ways.

¹ Christopher Sykes, *Nancy: The Life of Lady Astor*, Collins, London, 1972.

² The Astor Papers, Reading University Library.

Lord Lothian, ambassador to the United States at the time of the outbreak of the Second World War, had a long career as a high-ranking public servant. He had been a member of Lord Milner's South African "kindergarten" after the Boer War and later became secretary of the Round Table and editor of the journal of the same name, an organization which promoted the unity of the Empire. He held cabinet posts for a short time and became ambassador in Washington in 1939. He was devoted both to the British Empire and Anglo-American friendship and in this he can only have been encouraged by his religious allegiance, since Mrs Eddy had voiced a strong commitment to Anglo-American accord. Lothian was sufficiently committed to Christian Science to allow it to influence his career: in 1923 he refused the prestigious post of foreign editor for *The Times* on a moral question.¹

Lord Lothian and Nancy Astor both became interested in New Thought in the summer of 1913, and in Christian Science later in the same year. In a letter written by a friend of Kerr's, Percival Witherby, to Lothian's sister Minna, after his death, Witherby writes: " 'Christian Science' had indeed given him a new and different outlook. But it was, as he himself recognized, but a label directed to a certain line of thought, and (though this he never would recognize) not always a very reasonable one"². Lady Astor had become interested in Christian Science on a visit to America in late 1913 and had sent Kerr, who was on his way back from India, a copy of *Science and Health*.

¹ Lothian wrote to Lord Brand that he thought that time spent on "the daily intrigues of Europe and its politicians" would impede his study of religion, i.e. Christian Science. J.R.M. Butler, *The Life of Lord Lothian*, Macmillan & Co., London 1960, pp. 92-3.

² P. Witherby - Minna Butler-Thwing, December 31 1942, Lothian letters, Scottish Record Office, 514/27.

Lady Astor's brother-in-law, Robert (later Lord) Brand, who had worked with Kerr in South Africa and later on the Round Table, was sceptical about New Thought and probably also about Christian Science, and was unhappy about this development¹. Sometime later, Waldorf Astor, impressed by a healing experience, also became interested in Christian Science. Although, with his wife and Kerr, Lord Astor contributed to the building of Ninth Church, London, to which all three belonged, Lady Astor's involvement with the movement was more widely known. Some of her friends, for example, George Bernard Shaw, remained tolerantly amused by her involvement. He wrote to Lady Astor about a year after they became friends: "My Charlotte, I regret to say, is in bed with a swamping headful of sin and error, known to the mob as a bad cold".²

Christian Science in Britain received much of its early impetus from Americans, and influential emigres like Lady Astor and Lady Abinger were among its most vigorous exponents: it may not be entirely discounted that its American-ness was an element in its appeal to such expatriates. It represented something of the New World to contribute to the prestigious class of the traditional society which they had joined.

Victor Cazalet, Conservative Member of Parliament for Chippenham from 1924 to his premature death in 1943, a member of the landed gentry and a godson of Queen Victoria, shared many of the views of the Astors and Lord Lothian, particularly regarding equal rights for women and the promotion of Empire and Anglo-American brotherhood. His views on these matters must have been encouraged by his allegiance to Christian Science, which he had followed

¹ Sykes, *Op. cit.*, p. 156.

² *Ibid.*, p. 343.

from a very early age. His mother, Maud Cazalet, was the daughter of a Scottish baronet, Sir John Heron-Maxwell of Springkell, and was an early adherent, passing the faith on to at least two of her children, Victor and Thelma. Christian Science, as a consequence, may have affected Cazalet's development and moral outlook. As his brother-in-law, David Keir, once remarked: "....this consecration to a moral law is an essential key to the understanding of his career and character". Cazalet's biographer, Robert Rhodes James, is under the impression that Christian Science was partly to blame for his somewhat innocent outlook on life (confirmed by his sister Thelma's remarks that he was sometimes disparaged behind his back) and his failure, on many occasions, to promote his own advancement in spite of opportunities and the advantages of his prestigious background and social connections.

There is little doubt that, in common with Lady Astor and perhaps Lord Lothian, his intention was to promote Christian Science values within the opportunities available through his position and political career. In a letter to his mother in July 1917 from the Front, where he was serving as an officer in the Household Battalion, he wrote of his ambition for a "future devoted to England, raising the poor to a level of equal opportunity with the rich, and by setting an example of absolute purity and honesty in politics and life generally. I hope to raise the whole station of society and make it feel that Christian Science is the only thing that matters".¹

Perhaps this idealistic view led him, like Lady Astor, to support somewhat unpopular or what his parliamentary colleagues may have seen as minor

¹ Robert Rhodes James, *Victor Cazalet: A Portrait*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1976, p. 23.

political issues, including his support for women's rights and his championship of the Jews, Poles and refugees. However, in his staunch opposition to communism and socialism, his views coincided with those of Winston Churchill, a close friend, who, incidentally, once commented that he had "great respect" for Christian Science¹. Cazalet's main direct contribution to the cause of Christian Science in Britain was to move a clause in the Nursing Homes Registration Bill to exempt Christian Science homes from registering. As he noted in his diary, "Christian Science has been established by law as an alternative to medical science and our homes have got exemption from the Bill", which he admitted as being "quite a struggle"².

The Christian Science Élite and Appeasement.

The "Cliveden Set" was a small but influential group of conservative politicians reputed to be partly responsible for the appeasement policy towards Europe's dictators which was implemented by the Chamberlain government in the late 1930s. The significant members of the "set" included Lord and Lady Astor, Philip Kerr, Geoffrey Dawson, editor of *The Times* and Neville Chamberlain. Three of these five were committed Christian Scientists. Neville Chamberlain was a frequent guest at Cliveden, and his Unitarianism shared some fundamental theological assumptions with Christian Science. Christian Science ideals may not have been lacking in some appeal during the approach to war, particularly those concerned with the conviction that good would prevail or "unfold" if the "right" belief was held and appealed to. These ideas occurred to some. Thus Noel Coward, in a jocular vein through one of his characters in

¹ Ibid., p. 120.

² Ibid., p. 122.

This Happy Breed, advanced the idea that Neville Chamberlain was trying to maintain peace with Hitler because he was a Christian Scientist.¹

There is no evidence that Chamberlain had any definite sympathies with Christian Science, although, as Minister of Health he showed a marked concern for fairness in the debate on Christian Science nursing homes in 1927, possibly because of his acquaintance with the Astors.² Apart from members of the Cliveden set, Chamberlain had other Christian Scientist friends, among them, Victor Cazalet and his mother, Maud Cazalet. In July 1939, Victor Cazalet wrote a letter which illuminated certain facets of Chamberlain's personality.

"I had the opportunity this week-end of studying the P.M. rather closely. I have known him for some time and I think he is at his best with my Mother. He is incredibly simple, perfectly charming to everyone, but overwhelmingly shy. He has a horror of emotion and hypocrisy".³

If Chamberlain did not embrace the Christian Science faith, he evidently found the company of its adherents congenial, and even shared some of their general views. In 1915 he had served on a committee to control the sale of liquor in areas important for munitions and transport of which Lord Astor was a fellow member, (although Astor was not converted to Christian Science until 1924). Chamberlain's first impressions of Lord Astor were that he was "quick and intelligent and most attractive in person and manner. I will make up to him

¹ See Chapter 9, "The Christian Science Novel".

² David Dilks, *Neville Chamberlain* (Vol.1), Cambridge University Press, 1984, p.521

³ Rhodes James, *Op. cit.*, p.213.

and perhaps he will ask us to Cliveden!" as he remarked to a member of his (Chamberlain's) family.¹

Some recent scholarship has suggested that the appeasement policy was attributable mostly to Chamberlain, especially with regard to events leading to the Munich conference.² In May 1939, Cazalet had the impression that Chamberlain did not have enough contact with the "outside world" and that the foreign secretary, Lord Halifax (another regular visitor to Cliveden) was the only person who had any real influence with him.³ Cazalet himself did not support appeasement, nor did he regard it as an opportunity to make a "demonstration" of Christian Science; he thought the Nazi regime "anti-Christian". In July and August 1939, Cazalet commented on the differences between the reactions of other politicians and the public to Hitler's actions and the policy carried out by Chamberlain's government: the public, he remarked, were "a long way ahead of the government. They have made up their minds that if Hitler takes any further aggressive step in Europe, we have got to fight him" and he emphasized the "anti-Chamberlain" stance of Lloyd George and Winston Churchill.⁴

It would be going too far to suggest that the dynamic personality of Lady Astor and, indirectly, Christian Science principles concerning the way to overcome "error" (represented by the behaviour of the dictators) by

¹ Dilks, *Op. cit.*, p.145.

² L.M. Fuchser, *Neville Chamberlain and Appeasement: A Study in the Politics of History*, W.W. Norton & Co., N.Y. and London, 1982, esp. Introduction, pp. 161-167 and 196.

³ Rhodes James, *Op. cit.*, p.211.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.212.

Christian Science "truths" representing God, could have affected Chamberlain's somewhat timorous nature and hence the implementation of his foreign policy. Accusations were made that the "set" was unconstitutionally affecting foreign policy (although Christian Science was not an issue), and this was publicly rebutted by Lord Astor in a letter to *The Times* in 1938. It was claimed that Chamberlain was affected by the Astors, and that the attitudes of the "set" were "timorous" and "anxious to grasp at any excuse for giving way to the latest threats from Hitler and Mussolini".¹

Both Lothian and Lady Astor appeared, however, to want to further the cause of Christian Science through political activity. Lothian visited Hitler twice in a political capacity and also as a representative of the Advisory Council preparatory for the World Conference on Church, Community and State, probably chosen because of his strong interest in religion.² On his second visit in May 1937 he defended, on behalf of the Board of Directors of The Mother Church, German Christian Scientists who were suffering harassment under the Nazi regime. They were considered in the same light as Jews and freemasons and were not allowed to sell their literature freely. Lothian's request was well received by Hitler, but nothing was done.

On a political and "worldly" level, Lothian's concern for the continued influence of the British Commonwealth evident in his work for the Round Table, his social interests among the underprivileged (he founded the first adult education centre in Scotland) and his desire for closer cooperation between Britain and America suggest that for him appeasement could have been no more

¹ Sykes, *Op. cit.*, pp.425-480.

² Butler, *Op. cit.*, pp.99-100.

than a policy of expedience. Lady Astor's political leanings were also incompatible with support for fascism (in fact, she was on Hitler's "black list")¹ and it is suggested that any support for appeasement by either Lothian or Lady Astor arose from religious, rather than political, convictions.

General Political Activities of the Élite.

Like Lady Astor, it is not altogether clear how far Lothian's political and religious tendencies were complementary, and how far his adoption of an American religion affected his outlook regarding that country and its relationships with Britain. He included America in his overall view of the superiority of the English-speaking people. R.G. Casey, later Minister of State in Cairo, worked with Lothian for a year in Washington before Lothian's death in 1940 and recorded in his diary that Lothian had quoted Cecil Rhodes as saying that the United States and the British Empire should work together as one. The English-speaking peoples were the best in the world - on an all round basis. Rhodes had gone so far as to say that he would, if necessary, transfer all the capital of Britain to America in order to achieve a union. Lothian quoted Rhodes to support a similar view of his own.²

Lady Astor was a woman of considerable political ambitions. Her reluctance to stand down in the General Election of 1945, despite the advice of Lord Astor, is said to have had a deleterious effect on their relationship.³ She sought to promote a number of bills in accord with Christian Science tenets and which bore strong American influence. She wrote

¹ Rhodes James, Op. cit., p.281, Cazalet to Halifax, 1942.

² From the personal diary of R.G.Casey, 1940, Lothian papers, 514/1, 2 July 1940.

³ Sykes, Op. cit., pp. 573-581.

that since 1914, when she had adopted Christian Science, she had had to face many trials and to do things that seemed humanly impossible, but she had proved her religion to be of use in any kind of situation, "be it war or peace, in public or in private life".¹ Whilst it is doubtful whether Mrs Eddy envisaged such a direct political role for Christian Science, there is evidence to suggest that Lady Astor was guided in parliament by her mentor and Christian Science teacher, Margaret Whyte, and that consequently, in introducing measures she felt that she was furthering the cause of Christian Science through politics. In January 1920, whilst on a visit from America and staying in London, Margaret Whyte wrote:

" I see God's purpose for humanity ripening so fast through you - and Philip Kerr....it is simply inspiring to think of you entering the world of politics, not only as a woman, but as a Child of God with your Father's Hand, turning to Him for guidance"²

On her return to America, Margaret Whyte wrote again:

"I saw that you had spoken in the House, and hope to hear from Bunny about it. I am confident it went off well- and that you just represented your Father- and spoke in that hour what it was given you to say".³

A letter written to Lady Astor from Mrs Knott, a member of the Board of Directors of The Mother Church in Boston, who wrote on behalf of the Board, expressed their satisfaction with the work in which she was engaged in

¹ Astor papers, C.S.10, p.4

² Margaret Whyte to Lady Astor, 9 January 1920

³ Whyte-Astor, 7 March 1920. "Bunny" was Miss Benningfield, Lady Astor's political private secretary, who was also a Christian Scientist.

Britain. Implicit in the letter is an acknowledgment that Lady Astor was representing both her country and her religion in the British parliament.

"We have thought and spoken of you very often, and I for one cannot fail to see how wonderful it was that divine Mind should have made the first woman member of the House of Commons a Christian Scientist....It is so splendid that the moral and religious forces in England rallied to your support and thus proved the powerlessness of mere prejudice to impede in any wise the establishment of God's kingdom on earth, for that is what we are really working for all the time, is it not? It has been a pleasure to follow your progress in the last three or more years, and to see how quickly you are ready to meet the exigencies of each hour, and with all your keen wit that the unerring arrow which you send out is never barbed with any bitterness".¹

A support for Anglo-American brotherhood, the unity of the British Empire and Commonwealth and opposition to communism and socialism appear to have been common sentiments among Christian Scientist politicians in Britain. Lords Astor and Lothian were both members of the Round Table group: other members at this time were Lord Brand, Lionel Curtis and Edward Grigg, later Lord Altrincham. Some members of this group had worked together in South Africa after the Boer War and remained friends for many years. Victor Cazalet an affinity with the American people similar to that of Kerr. On a visit to Boston in 1918 he had remarked favourably upon the prosperity of the country compared with Britain.

"Where in England could we find the same class of people, or the same quantity of people with incomes varying between 5,000 and 10,000 dollars? Herein is the glory of the United States; herein too is the safeguard against socialism".²

¹ Knott-Astor, 6 December 1922.

² Rhodes James, Op. cit., p.46.

Cazalet's anti-communist position is not surprising, considering that a branch of his family in Russia had been victims in the revolution; Cazalet had fought in the war against the Bolsheviks. His political affinities were similar to those of other Christian Scientists. He wrote to Lord Halifax in 1942 that he understood that in Russia

"...a book has now been printed in which I occupy a chapter as No.2 enemy of Russia in England. Lady Astor is No.1. Between us we have prevented a second front and I forget what else. It is wonderful to have so much influence...."¹

Lord and Lady Astor, George Bernard Shaw and Lord Lothian had visited Russia in 1931. The Astors apparently came back with anti-Stalinist leanings, although Shaw did not.²

Like Lady Astor, Cazalet was a champion of women's rights, and supported his sister Thelma in her vigorous campaigns for women, when she was a member of the London County Council (Thelma Cazalet-Keir became a Member of Parliament after the General Election of 1931, but her activities in this role are obscure). Evidence of a moral and crusading ideology is apparent in Cazalet's support for other minority groups, for example, his championship of a national home for the Jews in Palestine, for which he gained great respect from the founders of the state of Israel.

¹ Ibid., p.281.

² Sykes, Op. cit., pp.377-410.

Intercommunications of the Élite.

As their letters and papers disclose, close links existed between Christian Scientists who led public lives, and it appears that particularly in the cases of Lord Lothian and Lady Astor, whose roles in public affairs were morally and intellectually demanding, such letters and contacts played a vital role in maintaining their religion and commitment. These communications were on a level quite distinct from the "worldly" level on which they led their political lives. Apart from Lady Astor, who remained a close friend up to the time of his death, there appeared to be comparatively few people with whom Lothian could communicate about his religion, although he must have had many acquaintances among Christian Scientists (even so, Lothian did not join a Christian Science church until some years after he became a Christian Scientist. He seemed to prefer to exercise the religion in private). His family remained Roman Catholics and were considerably distressed at the time of his death as they believed that the employment of orthodox methods of healing would have saved his life, as did many who were in Washington at the time.¹

In the absence of close religious confidantes, Lothian's friendship and correspondence with Percival Witherby was understandable though curious. Lothian's biographer, Sir James Butler, described Witherby as a man some ten years older than Lothian, who had become interested in the Round Table movement in New Zealand. He had afterwards joined the staff of *The Times* in London and gave lectures on the British Empire. Butler described him as a man of "great enthusiasms" and "strong religious feeling" whose admiration for Lothian came close to idolatry. Lothian saw Witherby as a "safety valve....I

¹ Butler, *Op. cit.*, p.94.

have been able, through you, to let off steam in the knowledge that this could be done without risk of leakage...."¹

Witherby was never a Christian Scientist, but he and Lothian "were both intensely interested in the British Empire and what it would become".² Their first meetings (they originally met somehow in the street in London) were occupied in discussing religion and the new empire after the First World War. Both had similar religious doubts, although Lothian had resolved his by the adoption of Christian Science. Although Witherby did not adopt Christian Science, its study produced in him a train of thought not dissimilar to that experienced by others, especially in the medical profession and the clergy. In 1956, Witherby wrote to Lord Brand (a member of the Round Table) that he had not only obtained a clearer comprehension of what God was but realised as never before the influence the mind had on the body for good or ill, and he had also discovered that "as one thought one largely became".³

At the time that Butler was writing Lothian's biography, Witherby was in possession of many letters about Christian Science which Lothian had written to him and which Butler wanted to see. Witherby was reluctant to part with these, even though requested to do so through solicitors. He felt that Lothian would not have wished his religious thoughts to be made public.

"The great bulk of his letters to me were therefore on this subject (Christian Science) and dealt with

¹ Lothian papers, 514/28, extract from Witherby's unpublished autobiography, p.130.

² Lothian papers, GD40/17/514/3, Percival Witherby - Mackenzie, Innes & Logan, Edinburgh, 21 March 1941.

³ Lothian papers, 514/39, Witherby - Lord Brand, 2 January 1956.

questions raised by me as the result of my long study of it. I doubt whether Lord Lothian would wish them to be read by others...."¹

Shortly before he died in 1956, the dispute with Butler and Lord Brand (who was involved in the debate) about Lothian's letters was still continuing, with Witherby finally admitting that the letters were lodged in his sister's attic in England (Witherby was living in British Columbia) and unobtainable.

Lady Astor was widely connected with other prominent Christian Scientists, and her communications with them were in a vein quite distinct from that of her public life and involved quite a different language and approach, although it was apparently not uncommon to find the occasional Christian Scientist among a motley group of guests at Cliveden (visiting Christian Science lecturers often stayed there). Her Christian Science associates included John Doorly, who later abandoned Christian Science to start his own New Thought movement, and John V. Dittmore, a director of The Mother Church who was later expelled from office. In 1925, she lent the Astors' house in Sandwich to John and Laura Doorly, the former still at that stage a member of the church. Dittmore had stayed at Cliveden in the summer of 1920. Margaret Whyte's letters, as well as providing religious encouragement, informed Lady Astor of events concerning Christian Scientists, sometimes in terms almost incomprehensible to the non-Christian Scientist but providing some insight into Christian Science "society". In 1920 she remarked that she had for some reason incurred the disapproval of Charlie and Mary Bovet (Christian Science practitioners) who had "withdrawn their smiles from me" and went on to warn Philip Kerr, through Lady Astor,

¹ 514/3, Witherby - Mackenzie, Innes & Logan, 21 March 1941.

"....about not saying much to other C.S. (especially a teacher) about how he is working out his problems. I mean that the lines he is now discovering for steady treatment. Because these antediluvians who ought to be in glass cases in a Museum, think that you oughtn't to help anyone who has ever looked inside an R.C. Church, to learn to climb out scientifically-... But these back number C.S. don't really believe in God only- so they hedge Truth about- and say- Please do not touch.... God is All. Again deep love to you & such a happy conviction that you are going on from victory to victory in the conquest of self-" ¹

Behaviour of the Élite "in society".

Many Christian Scientists "in society" mingled with people who did not share their general outlook on life as members of a movement which demanded a somewhat puritanical lifestyle: the use of tobacco and alcohol was forbidden, and even tea and coffee were not encouraged, although there is some evidence that members of branch churches have not always followed the no-smoking rule. "In society" in Britain, these rules may have been more difficult to follow among groups where such indulgences were habitual and where there were no financial limitations to their enjoyment. It seems that, even though few of their associates may have been adherents, most Christian Scientists, even at this level of society, were able to maintain their principles. From biographies of such individuals by writers with little "inside" knowledge of Christian Science, common characteristics emerge which mark these "society" members out as almost a group apart. In effect, they followed the accepted pattern of Christian Scientists, in that adherents were not averse to enhancing their quality of life in a worldly setting. Whilst in America, Christian Science may have been utilised to gain material advantages

¹ Whyte-Astor, 21 February 1920.

in a "self help" society, in Britain, where the religion appealed to many beyond need of improving their social position, its origins as an American religion which embraced Puritan values was frequently remarked upon by observers, who were not always aware that others were Christian Scientists. Elements of strict control, practised among Americans with an ultra-protestant heritage, were evident among high ranking British Christian Scientists. Although the temperance movement (supported by influential Christian Scientists) had found supporters among the middle class, perhaps comparatively few aristocrats, for example, were affected. Christian Science may have been partly responsible for bringing teetotalism and "clean living" to society circles and for helping to introduce more tolerance for such "deviant" behaviour: a direct American behavioral influence.

Christian Scientists "in society" appeared to derive direction in matters of behaviour from their religion before the dictates of their groups, so that their abstinence from alcohol, for example, may have been noticeable, though their group loyalties were not affected: as true Christian Scientists would, they continued to live wholly within the "world". Within the examples looked at in this section, Lady Astor, Lord Lothian and Victor Cazalet, all these characteristics are apparent, and as has been observed, the last two (Lady Astor being herself American) retained strong affinities with America. Lady Astor's support for temperance is well known; however, although she herself did not drink or smoke, alcoholic drinks were served at mealtimes at Cliveden for the benefit of her guests. Lady Astor's niece, the actress Joyce Grenfell, who was a Christian Scientist, sometimes caused discomfort among her friends, however, by her Spartan tastes, as she occasionally gently admonished

those around her against over-indulgence.¹ Lothian has been described by his biographer as "clean living". In 1919, in a letter to Lady Astor, he wrote:

"I am pretty sure that if I were to stand (for parliament) I should have to put in my election address that I believed drink was the worse curse that the poor or the rich suffered from, and that I could not compromise on that point".

Butler records that in later life Lothian did not drink or smoke, which implies perhaps that he abstained when he became a Christian Scientist, although again, he had no objection to others around him doing so.

Victor Cazalet's background was similar and his society connections were as varied as Lady Astor's and Lord Lothian's. There is no evidence that Cazalet drank alcohol or smoked tobacco, although he was a close friend of Winston Churchill, whose addiction to tobacco is legendary. During his youth, at Fairlawne, the family home in Kent, his parents had entertained a polyglot of people, writers, artists and politicians, who would have had varied moral dispositions: considering that Cazalet's mother was a Christian Scientist, this provides a further example of the way in which Christian Scientists consciously mixed with the "world" and did not shun their non-Scientist social equals.

The inter-war period for Christian Science in Britain may be considered in a separate sphere from the early years of the movement. Whereas the main concern pre-war was its establishment in a mainly hostile environment, after

¹ Reggie Grenfell and Richard Garnett (eds), *Joyce by Herself and her Friends*, MacMillan, London 1980.

World War 1 these reactions had largely died away, and it was tolerated, and even respected, in a society which had had other major concerns to consider. Although in general Christian Science still appealed to the same class of people, those who had a certain amount of education, wealth, social connections and leisure, society itself had changed. It could no longer be considered as a "drawing room cult" because among other things the status of women had altered during the war. With the decline of domestic service and the greater incidence of working women, the class of woman who had trifled with Christian Science before the war had all but disappeared. Those who remained unoccupied may have become more sober in their way of thinking.

The political and social élite considered here were as valuable for the cause of Christian Science in the inter-war period as, for example, the Dunmores were in the early period, but in an entirely different social context. In a sense, they updated the relevance of the religion to the changing social and political values of the post-war world. Aided by the group examined here, Christian Science diffused more effectively the various facets of its American values in post-war Britain, and although it relinquished the high profile it had had before the First World War, it continued to exert some influence and gained in respectability from the top of society downwards. The post-war élite succeeded to a certain extent in increasing the appeal of Christian Science during the period which marked the greatest increase in adherents in Britain. Christian Science was to lose much of its credibility after the Second World War - a religion which promoted positive values was out of place after 1945, with the demise of the Empirical optimism which had included a certain racism and confidence in the promotion of an English speaking brotherhood of nations: sentiments which some Christian Scientists shared with the classes from which they came.

General Conclusion.

Although Christian Scientists have claimed for the movement a marked proletarian element, no evidence of mass working class involvement exists, although it seems that some working class people were involved, mainly in rural communities. Christian Scientists appear to have preserved records (some of which have been consulted here) of working class adherence to validate their belief that the religion, as the ultimate Christian truth, must be a universal faith in accord with Biblical teachings. The sociological studies which emphasise the upper middle class nature of the movement in Britain are reinforced by the early 20th century press, representing a layman's view of the social composition of the sect, from observations of church services or the activities of society people, which were closely monitored by the popular media. While probably prejudiced by the prevailing idea of the religion as a "society cult" (propagated to some extent by those with special interests in the progress of the movement, such as the clerical and medical professions) these reports are too numerous and similar to discredit, and cover a wide range of popular and "serious" periodicals and local and national newspapers.

Lady Victoria Murray's remarks that Christian Science often appealed to people (she was referring to her own family) to whom religion had otherwise little meaning, echoed the Rev. Swayne when he said that in his west London parish, the upper classes who otherwise would have had no religion, or who were atheists or agnostics, often turned to Christian Science. Working class people who did not subscribe to a middle or upper class ethic of fashion or respectability, particularly in large centres such as London and Manchester, probably would not have been encouraged by the entrenched middle class

presence at Christian Science services and the observable wealth of the members. Although it is true that joiners, watchmakers and suchlike were attracted to Christian Science in the early days, they were scarcely typical. It is even possible that their adoption of Christian Science was a part of their upward mobility. For working class people without such aspirations, other forms of religion appear to have had more appeal. Holiness and subsequently Pentecostal movements give every indication of having attracted a much more predominantly working class constituency than did Christian Science, which certainly had the image, and hence something of the reality, of a movement appealing to a more sophisticated, better educated, and socially better-to-do public. Lady Victoria, perhaps the closest person to a missionary ever possessed by the Christian Science church, received callers to a "surgery" rather than seeking out the poor like the Salvation Army or the exponents of Christian Socialism. Mrs Eddy did not encourage proselytizing. Knowledge of her teaching was to be gradually diffused as people were ready for it. Science would "unfold". Perhaps she feared that vigorous canvassing would lead- as it had in more vigorous missionary movements- to a distortion, attenuation or vulgarization of her teachings. The consequence was a certain exclusivity among Christian Scientists, and especially so among those who counted themselves "more advanced", and especially among those who had taken special "class instruction". These features were unlikely, with their strong intellectual or pseudo-intellectual implication, to be elements attractive to most working class people.

News about Christian Science spread among acquaintances through particular social networks: "society", the army, among middle class professionals and their wives, and, since they were aware of Christian Science as a challenge to their convictions, in some cases among the clergy and

medical profession. In the early 20th century, a time of scientific and religious uncertainty, such converts might not have been viewed as the eccentrics which they might later appear to have been. As part of the general American influence felt in Britain, Christian Science became known to many people who were aware of the general buoyancy of American society and economy, the positive "self-help" ideology and the seemingly unlimited possibility of social advancement which America offered. Although it asserted that material things had no reality, Christian Science undoubtedly preached a gospel of enhanced material blessings- in health, wealth and material well-being. As such, it appears to have had an appeal to some among the business classes. This is a more conspicuous aspect of its development in bourgeois Manchester than in London, where it was identified more specifically in the public mind with the established upper classes and the aristocracy. It was progressive- or offered itself as being such. It had a strong focus on health and positive thinking. It asserted the availability of benefit and rejected the reality of everything untoward or unpleasant. It drew a mixed constituency, but perhaps a disproportionate element from among those who enjoyed circumstances in which there were already blessings to be appreciated.

Chapter 5.Christian Science and Established Religion.

The emergence of Christian Science in Britain appears to have focused the attention of at least some clergy on the question of spiritual healing, while at the same time it aroused comment, understandably mainly strong criticism, within the medical profession. If the result of all this interest was generally unfavourable to the type of healing claimed by Christian Scientists, none the less it may not be wrong to attribute to it an awakening of interest in the boundaries between religious and medical ministrations in the treatment of at least some areas of illness. Within the Anglican church, Christian Science certainly provoked discussion and its healing system was perceived as its principal claim to attention. That it attracted more attention than the faith healing practised among Holiness groups or, later, in Pentecostal bodies, may be a result of its much greater social visibility and the relative affluence and social prominence of a sizeable segment of its constituency.

Christian Science emerged from a general background of liberal Protestant Christianity which emphasised the beneficent aspects of the divine rather than a God of wrath, and had rooted where the Transcendentalism of Emerson and Parker had prepared the ground. In Britain at the beginning of the twentieth century, Christian Science was one cause of a revival of the theological discussion of suffering, polarized between the view of the world as a "vale of tears", and, on the other hand, the view that God was not the author of man's suffering. The popularity of Christian Science was attributed by outsiders to its healing methods, although as the Christian Scientists were quick to assert, healing was only a by-product of knowing the truth,

which illumined all aspects of existence. Thus, Christian Scientists denied the reality of disease as a derogation of life that should be perfect.

Within the church, reactions to Christian Science appeared at first to be universally condemnatory,¹ but later more deliberate discussion at conferences and congresses reflected certain divisions of opinion among the clergy with regard to attitudes to suffering and spiritual or faith healing, and led to a re-examination of the historical development of the healing tradition. The outcome of this discussion and reflection resulted in the majority of clergy supporting a greater role for the church in the alleviation of sickness and suffering and an increased acknowledgment of the benefits of a psychological dimension in healing. By 1908, at the last Lambeth Conference before World War 1 (although discussion continued well beyond this date), the church had reached a broad, official, consensus view that, among other changes reflecting this attitude, the office for the Visitation of the Sick should be revised to make the tone of the proceedings more hopeful.² While the official position of the church (as explained in various reports of the committees set up to explore the "spiritual healing" question) was modified to allow for the admission that suffering was on the whole undesirable and greater allowance was made for progress in fields such as medical psychology, in practical terms the church also discussed the revival of the ancient practice of anointing, or Unction of the Sick (as distinct from the well-used Extreme Unction). This, it was thought, might provide one theological response within the church not

¹ e.g. Discussion at the 1905 Church Congress (*The Guardian*, 11 October 1905); *The Methodist*, 23 November 1905, on the Bishop of London's remarks concerning Christian Science; a condemnatory account in the *Church Family Newspaper*, 30 March 1906; a condemnatory introduction by the Bishop of Durham in the Rev. J.B. Purvis, *Christian Science versus The Bible*, Marshall Bros. Ltd., London 1908.

² Report of the Conference of Bishops, SPCK, London, 1908.

only to Christian Science but to the whole question of spiritual healing. Eventually, Unction was theoretically provided on request to parishioners who desired it, although not all clergy favoured the practice, and Unction was apparently rarely administered.¹

It is possible that before the war such discussion was the result at least partly of falling church attendance, which led clergy to question whether the church was providing a scriptural and material "service" appropriate for the new scientific and industrial age. On the other hand, attendance at Christian Science services were on the increase, and comparison was made in the press between the luxurious comfort of the Christian Science churches and the cold, draughty and otherwise uncomfortable facilities provided by the Anglican church. The brevity and effectiveness of the Christian Science services also compared favourably with the apparently (to some) pointless exercise of standing for long periods during, for example, the singing of psalms. In addition, it was said that the new breed of London flat dwellers found Christian Science services a welcome change from forbidding orthodox services. One could just "slip in" to a Christian Science church service at a later hour on a Sunday morning and one's religious conscience was thereby soothed with the minimum of physical discomfort.²

¹ In 1905, Christian Science and the position of the church with regard to healing was discussed at the Weymouth Church Congress (*The Guardian*, 11 October 1905) and by the Bishop of London (*The Methodist*, 23 November 1905). In 1908, the revival of unction was discussed at a meeting of the English Church Union at Newbury (*Newbury Weekly News*, 2 July 1908) and at a meeting of the Union in Exeter in 1910 (*Western Daily Mercury*, 8 October 1910); by the Bishop of Sheffield to the BMA (*Evening News <Portsmouth>* 1 August 1908); in R.H. Malden, *Spiritual Healing*, SPCK, London, 1908; Rev. W. Yorke Fausset, *Christian Science and Spiritual Healing*, SPCK, London, 1908; in a pamphlet: *Christian Healing*, by T. Farmer Hall, London 1909; W. Yorke Fausset, "The Principles of Modern Christian Healing", and other articles in *Medicine and the Church*, (ed.) Geoffrey Rhodes, London, 1910, etc.

² *Church Family Newspaper*, 30 March 1906.

Church Healing Movements.

Apart from official actions represented in the church conferences and endorsed from Lambeth Palace, other reactions showed the varied views and independence of some clergy with regard to the question of spiritual healing. The Church introduced various measures in respect of spiritual healing, although it is unclear whether these were a response to other faith healing activity; to increasing expectations for health and happiness in this life; or, as was claimed, particularly in the *British Medical Journal*, whether they were prompted by the high visibility and public awareness of Christian Science¹. Some of the steps taken by the Church are well-documented. Such was the creation of healing movements under general Church auspices- the Guild of Health and the Society of Emmanuel. An attempt at a working alliance with the medical profession, the Church and Medical Union, was established in 1908, but this body does not appear to have survived. The point of the Union was that "suitable" cases among the sick who were already receiving medical attention should be encouraged to seek spiritual help from clergy as an auxiliary form of treatment. Some of these developments do reflect a conscious reaction to Christian Science. Thus, Harold Anson, a clergyman who resigned his living to devote his time to the Guild of Health, stated in 1924 that the Guild had been founded to provide the kind of help which Christian Science offered² and the *British Medical Journal* claimed that the main object of the Church and Medical Union was to show that the church had a ministry of healing which could "beat Christian Science on its own ground".³

¹ See for example, *The British Medical Journal*, 9 January 1909, pp. 108-110.

² *The Methodist Recorder*, 6 March 1924.

³ *The British Medical Journal*, 24 April 1909.

In 1904, Dr. Percy Dearmer, a famous American scholar and liturgist, Conrad Noel, and other clerics formed the Guild of Health to encourage cooperation with the medical profession in the practice of healing. Its objects, to be achieved through prayer, sacrament and counselling, and by eliminating the polarizations between the caring professions, were "to enable all members to study the interaction between physical, mental and emotional factors in well being, and their relationship with the spiritual life in prayer and meditation".¹ A press report described the establishment of the Guild, and how some members of the Anglican church wished to form a centre of their own "for those who believe that spiritual healing is in accordance with the historic faith and practice of the Church".² The Christian Social Union, with which the Bishop of London, the Bishop of Worcester, Canon Scott Holland and other prominent clergy were connected (the Bishop of London and Canon Scott Holland were later strongly to condemn Christian Science) endorsed the scheme. Evangelicals, like the Rector of Brompton (who had himself apparently practised healing with good results and who urged that, although the healing movement had come from American and Unitarian sources, they should not be utterly prejudiced against it) and the Vicar of Potters Bar became helpers, and so did some members of the "high church party", which included Dearmer and Noel. The Rev. B.S. Lombard, of All Hallows, initially acted as secretary of the movement.

The Guild, which was to be mainly for members of the Anglican church, had two primary objects: first, to study "sympathetically and critically" the

¹ Morris Maddocks, *The Christian Healing Ministry*, London Churches Council for Health and Healing, London 1981.

² *The Daily Mail*, 18 August 1904.

movements of mental and spiritual healing and alleged cures (one of the most prominent obviously being Christian Science); and secondly, to develop and extend the knowledge of scripture and church tradition on the subject. A small service sheet was used which contained the various prayers formerly used by the church for unction or anointing, since this was to form a major part of the healing process. Some cases of healing by these means had been reported in 1904. Speeches in support of healing within the church were given at the first meetings of the Guild, by the Rev. H.C. Williams and by Dr. J.P. Mills. Conrad Noel also preached a course of sermons on "Saving Health" in 1904. In a press report of the same year, he emphasised that medical skill should be supplemented by the prayers and faith of patients seeking help from the Guild. He also stated as an object of the Guild the revival of Unction, and warned that one of the errors to be combated was the confusion of Extreme Unction with anointing. Anointing was regarded by the Guild as beneficial not for those who were about to depart, but for those who had a chance of recovery.¹

Conrad Noel contrasted the Guild's philosophies of suffering and healing with those of Christian Science. The clerical organisers of the Guild were clergy who had adopted a more liberal and optimistic view of spiritual healing, in contrast to those who followed the traditional doctrines of the church. Even so, he rejected Christian Science philosophy, particularly Mrs Eddy's apparent declaration of the non-existence of a physical world. In consequence, her teaching of the non-reality of disease as a delusion was also rejected. The members of the Guild believed disease to be real but, none the less, that the Spirit had a great influence over the material body. In their view, which can be taken as an extreme liberal stance, when the Spirit was in

¹ The Daily News, 20 August 1904.

union with God, the creator of health, it could modify and in some cases completely eliminate disease. Traditional church teaching asserted that the body was "vile and worthless": the leaders of the Guild rejected this notion. Instead, they put forward the theory that the body was the "temple of the Holy Ghost", which explained the power of the Spirit over the body. They did not, however, completely disagree with Mrs Eddy in the teaching of what Noel called "original righteousness", a complete reversal of the "original sin" doctrine, namely that the image of God in man transmitted itself through generations as a "deposit of grace". However, with this "original righteousness" the Guild believed was transmitted original sin, which Mrs Eddy altogether denied.¹

The other Church organization which might be said to have been at least in part prompted by concern about the growth of Christian Science, was the Society of Emmanuel. The movement owed its existence to J.M. Hickson, a layman whose healing activities in the poorer areas of south London, using prayers, laying-on of hands and anointing, came to the attention of Archbishop Davidson, and his work continued apparently with the full support of the church. In 1905, Hickson formed the Society, which appropriated the name Emmanuel from the Emmanuel Movement, which in turn took its name from the church in Boston where healing activity was centred, but the British society had a separate identity. Before embarking on a world healing mission, Hickson held services throughout Britain and established the Emmanuel League of Prayer, apparently convinced, with his colleagues, Bishop Mylne and Prebendary Carlisle, that this healing ministry was to be a part of the preparation for

¹ The Daily News, 20 August 1904.

the Lord's Second Coming and that God wanted to use this ministry especially for the healing of His body, the church.¹

In 1909, Hickson took part in a meeting at Sion College with the object of promoting the formation of a Central Church Council in the diocese of London for spiritual healing questions.² On that occasion, he said that the Society of Emmanuel had been formed more than three years before with the idea of reviving the gift of healing in the church. This was to be effected in the Society through prayers, the laying-on of hands, and anointing by a priest on request by the patient. Although the Society favoured all kinds of healing, in particular it canvassed the need for a more spiritual atmosphere to exist around a patient. A magazine, *The Healer*, was produced, which listed Hickson as the President, Lady Mosely as the Honourary Treasurer, and Charles Mylne as the chaplain. The Society's objects were:

1. To develop the Divine gifts left to His church by the Master, especially the gift of healing by prayer and laying-on of hands, with the object of using these divine gifts, not only for the healing of the body, but as a means of drawing the souls of men nearer to God.
2. To further this purpose by opening a hostel, especially for poor gentlefolks, a class who are beyond the reach of ordinary help where their cases may be diagnosed by duly qualified medical men, and where a band of healers may develop and use their gifts to further the work.

¹ Maddocks, *Op. cit.*, p. 101.

² *British Medical Journal*, 9 January 1909.

3. To form a strong wall of defence against the powers of evil, by mutual united intercession, and by common reception of the Holy Communion on the Second Sunday in the month.

4. To safeguard the central doctrine of the Incarnation, all regular members should acknowledge the divinity of our Lord although the operations of the Society should be freely used for all in need of them.¹

The *British Medical Journal* was doubtful about the alleged cures listed in *The Healer* and, citing the opinion of Truth that Hickson had probably at one time devoted his energies to massage, asked for information about Hickson's qualifications for his position.

This healing activity within the church stimulated discussion at the highest level of the church hierarchy from 1905. This centred on a renewed interest in a key biblical text, James V 14, "Is there any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord". In 1904, a Rev. F.W. Puller published a pamphlet: *The Anointing of the Sick* in which Unction was considered to be desirable from an evangelical angle. In 1906, a memorandum was published with special reference to Puller². Percy Dearmer emphasised, however, in a letter to Archbishop Davidson, that at the Guild of Health meetings, the revival of Unction was not an issue. "Perhaps I may add that we hardly ever mention Unction at Guild of Health meetings. Even healing in itself is secondary. Our first object is 'health', to help people to realise that they are spirit and

¹ The *British Medical Journal*, Loc.cit.

² R.T. Davidson Papers, Vol. 488, Lambeth Palace Archives.

to live at peace in God. Our most noticeable rites are extemporary prayer and our prayer circles are imitations of Quaker meetings"¹. Two years later, however, at the time of the Lambeth Conference, Dearmer expressed anxiety that the church should not delegate all responsibility for the handling of the interest in the revival of Unction to movements on the fringe of church activity. "The Bishop of London asks me to send you the enclosed letter from the Rev. Percy Dearmer: he feels that the step of regulating the revival of unction for the sick to be too important and serious for him to take alone: and yet at the same time he is sure that Christian Science is taking a very strong hold on an ever-increasing number of intelligent people and it seems to him to be very probable that the scriptural use of unction may be what is really needed".²

Christian Science- the attitude of Anglicans.

By 1905, the subject of Christian Science became an important topic of discussion at the Church Congress at Weymouth, when time was set aside for discussion on "The Church and the Sick". Two speakers presented papers on the topic of Christian Science: the Rev. W.S. Swayne, vicar of St. Peter's, Cranley Gardens, London SW, who had obviously been called upon to speak because of his experience of wealthy parishioners who had adopted Christian Science, and Miss Carta Sturge, who had already written on the subject. Swayne, who was afterwards interviewed by the press, approached the subject from a balanced viewpoint and pointed out the lessons that could be learned by the church, although he deplored the current concern for health among the middle and upper classes. Health, he said, had "become a subject of general

¹ 16 February 1906, Dearmer-Davidson, Vol. 488, p.20.

² M.P. Gillson (Chaplain of Fulham Palace) - R.T. Davidson, 7 June 1908, Davidson Papers, p. 28, Vol. 488.

conversation to a degree which can only be described as unfortunate and degrading". Miss Sturge also spoke of the Christian discipline which could be gained through suffering. In his statement to the press, Swayne advocated the encouragement of more orthodox religious ministrations in the sickroom against the modern medical tendency of discouraging visits from clergy in the interests of medical science. Having been one of the first to recognize that Christian Science could be fought only on its own ground, he was instrumental in the encouragement of the church healing movements and the discussion on Unction.¹

The so-called Pan-Anglican Congress of churchmen, held in London in June 1908 was unprecedented and on a grand scale, and acted as an introduction to the first Lambeth Conference of the new century. To avoid repetition, the bishops, who were due to meet the following month at the Conference, did not speak at the Congress. The Congress, in the words of Bishop Montgomery, was to be an engine for setting all churchmen thinking about the deepest needs of the church. Christian Science was on the agenda of the Lambeth Conference, and was not discussed in depth in June. However, several people presented papers on the subject at one of the Congress venues, the Kensington Town Hall, on June 17th, under the general heading of Christian Philosophy, with the Bishop of Calcutta presiding.² Discussion of Christian Science and Spiritual Healing occupied a whole morning. Dr. Eleanor M. Reed from New York presented a paper on "Christian Science and Contrasting Christian Truth", while other speakers included the Rev. Dr. McComb from Boston, one of the organisers of the American Emmanuel movement; the Bishop of Bleomfontein, who emphasised the new

¹ The Church Congress Official Report, 1905, pp. 422-426, Bemrose & Sons, London 1905.

² Pan Anglican Congress Official Report, 1908, p. 17 Section B.

view of consciousness taken by psychology; the Rev. Oldroyd, vicar of St. James', Hampstead; J.M. Hickson; Bishop Mylne; Archdeacon Cunningham from Cambridge; a Dean Hart from Denver; and a Miss Whitehead, who, without disloyalty to the Church of England had shared in the benefits of Christian Science for six years. The Rev. Francis L. Palmer from Minnesota thought it was the duty of everyone not to denounce or ridicule Christian Science, though he thought it would be a mistake to preach it. He anticipated the bishops when he declared that he never mentioned Christian Science by name unless alluding to it at different times when speaking of other similar movements.

A photograph of the Kensington Town Hall meeting in the press shows that it was well attended. Attention was given to the speech of Archdeacon Cunningham, who said that cures effected by psychotherapeutic methods were dangerous and that the church should refrain from encouraging them. It was, he said, a complete reversal of Christianity to make physical health a supreme end, and to regard spiritual power as merely the means of attaining it. Common sense held that physical evils could be met by appropriate physical remedies (that is, by the medical profession)¹.

The Lambeth Conference of 1908 was the venue for some of the most important pre-war discussion about Christian Science and set in motion further debate by appointing a permanent committee composed of carefully chosen and prominent clerical and medical men. The topic was prepared well in advance of the Conference discussion. In February 1908, Davidson asked the Bishop of Salisbury whether he should invite the Bishop of Wellington to be a speaker on "the very difficult subject of 'Ministries of Healing' including Unction,

¹ Daily Graphic, 18 June 1908.

Faith Healing and Christian Science? He need not of course speak upon all of them, but I am anxious that the subject should be introduced by thoughtful and capable men"¹. He called upon Professor Osler, the Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford, to provide the medical background for the preliminary committee. The subject, he wrote to Osler, was "obviously a burning one at the present time....The matter appears to me to be one of really far-reaching importance, and it is practically impossible that ecclesiastics can discuss it aright or formulate judgements respecting it without the aid of the trained thought of medical men of high position and reputation"². Another medical adviser was Sir Thomas Barlow. Osler complied with the request and booklists containing works on New Thought and Christian Science were prepared for Davidson by Percy Dearmer and the Honourary Secretary of the Guild of Health. Davidson wanted an American bishop to introduce the topic of "Ministries of Healing" at the conference and wrote: "To my mind there are few subjects that are coming before us on which it is more important that wise and thoughtful counsel should be given by the Episcopate. But most people feel the difficulty of the subject to be so great that they want to avoid it and rather to listen to others"³. In this last observation, Davidson may have meant that the English clergy were more reluctant to discuss it than the Americans. Sir Clifford Allbutt, Regius Professor of Physics at Cambridge, Osler and Hickson all sent papers.

At the morning session of the conference, 1st August 1908, the report of the Committee X on Ministries of Healing was given. The British Medical

¹ R.T. Davidson Papers, Vol 488, 20 February 1908, p. 35, Davidson - Bishop of Salisbury.

² Davidson Papers, 26 February 1908 p. 38.

³ Davidson - Bishop Leonard, 11 March 1908, p. 65.

Journal later published sections of the report of most interest to its readers. The belief was stated that sickness was in one aspect "a breach of the divine purpose, not only analogous to, but sometimes at least caused by, want of moral harmony with the divine will, and that this restoration in mind and will often brings with it the harmony of the body". The committee had come to the further conclusion that "that sickness has too often exclusively been regarded as a cross to be borne with passive resignation, whereas it should have been regarded rather as a weakness to be overcome by the power of the spirit". After referring to "the spread of phases of thought dwelling on mental and spiritual healing", the report went on to observe that "undoubtedly in the case of many of those who have come under the influence of such phases of thought, a very remarkable effect has been produced; they have been helped physically and mentally, their general health has been improved, disorders have been controlled or removed altogether". The Journal observed that the committee spoke with "no uncertain sound about one at least of 'the phases of thought' to which it refers. It says that 'with reference to definite and, indeed, aggressive systems such as that which describes itself as Christian Science, the committee considers that the claim to heal all manner of diseases and organic troubles has not been substantiated, while suffering has been caused, with many deaths, by the refusal to allow the sick, children as well as adults, to profit by medical attendance and care.' " The committee had come to the conclusion that "it would for the present be unwise to depart from an attitude of watchfulness and reserve, and it is not, therefore, prepared to recommend that at the present stage any authoritative recognition should be given to those who claim to exercise these 'Gifts of Healing'.....the committee believes that medical science is the handmaid of God and His Church, and should be fully recognised as the ordinary means appointed by Almighty God

for the care and healing of the human body."ⁱ As an "official" church view, it may be seen that the greater collaboration of the church with the medical profession seemed to indicate that church teachings were being affected by medical science: the fact that sickness was usually now explained in medical terms as attributable to defined causes might indicate that the sufferer had broken universal laws of health which could be synonymous with divine or moral laws. Hence, health and righteousness were increasingly seen as complementary.

The manner in which Christian Science was described in this published report reflected the discussion pertaining to recognition of the movement by the church at the conference. A comparatively large amount of time was given to the apparently trivial question of whether Christian Science should be recognised as a movement and accorded the dignity of being named as such, or whether the more prudent course would be to include reference to it within other references to faith or spiritual healing. Implicit in this dilemma was the position of the church relative to Christian Science. However, no other spiritual healing movements were mentioned by name, not even the most prominent among them, namely Hickson's Emmanuel Movement and the Guild of Health.

The bishops at the Conference were much exercised about the question of mentioning Christian Science by name in their Report, divided between those who saw this as conferring importance and dignity on that movement, and others who maintained that not to mention it would be seen as evidence that the Church had nothing to say specifically against it. The Bishop of Winchester (introducing the report to the Conference), said that his Committee

ⁱ The *British Medical Journal*, quoting the Official Report, SPCK, London, 28 November 1908, p.133 et seq.

had "decided that on the whole it would be wisest to refer to Christian Science in passing.....only as a conspicuous example of a general phase of thought...." It could have been "assailed as a great foe and as a dangerous cause of heresy" or it could have been altogether ignored, but since it was one of the subjects of reference it could not be passed over, but equally it was not to be attacked "as if we were anxious to go into controversy with it...It seemed then to be undesirable to give any more publicity to Christian Science than was barely necessary....and also we thought that far more people are generally influenced by Christian Science than actually have become strict members of the community, and that it was better and wiser to refer to it in general terms than to go into great details.....we have referred to the remarkable influence produced by it" and "have uttered a grave warning....against the thoughtless manner in which members of the Church have been drawn and attracted into the domain of Christian Science" even though it was "entirely antagonistic to the Christian Faith" and repudiated "the fundamental doctrines of the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the reality of Sin and the use of the Holy Sacraments".

Others, particularly some American bishops, wanted to eliminate all direct reference to Christian Science in the Report. The Bishop of Springfield in particular said that direct reference to Christian Science would do great harm in the United States. There, mention of it in the Report would "give it a certain dignity it ought not to have. Its advocates will say, 'The Lambeth Conference has considered it and not condemned it'...I think we are in danger of commending this thing with faint blame". He wanted the Conference to say something clearer and to condemn Christian Science more strongly.

The Bishop of Down and Connor, however, whilst no less strongly condemning the evil of Christian Science, declared that "it would be a most triumphant victory for the whole Christian Science cult if, after publishing to the world in all the papers that there had been a reference to this Committee in very definite and special language to consider and report upon Faith Healing and Christian Science, Christian Science was not mentioned by name in the report....It will be taken as proof that we have nothing to say against it or are unable to come to any conclusion as to the evil of Christian Science." The Conference resolved to remove the name from the context in which reference to it appeared to suggest that Christian Science had appeared "due to the shortcomings of the Church" and agreed to place it in a context where it was more specifically condemned.

The question of whether "Unction" had ever been used by the early church for healing purposes was discussed. This issue, stimulated by the growth of Christian Science, led the Church to discuss supposedly traditional methods of healing and to consider the role of Unction in this regard.¹

After the Lambeth Conference.

The Church and Medical Union.

The report published by the Lambeth Conference resulted in greater attempts at collaboration by the clergy and the medical profession. Although in 1909 the BMA appointed a committee inquiring into the question of faith healing, the main instigation for collaboration before the war came from individual clerics or laymen and women with healing interests. Typical of this was an attempt at establishing a Church and Medical Union at a meeting of

¹ Proceedings of the Fifth Lambeth Conference, 1 August 1908, Minutes IV, LC 4/23, Report of Committee No.X on Ministries of Healing, pp.1-15.

clergy and laypersons at Sion College in 1908, (which later met on church precincts: Church House, Deans Yard, Westminster) which was to consider cases of spiritual healing along the lines advocated by the report of the Lambeth committee. Headquarters were established at Dryden House, 43 Gerrard Street, London, with Geoffrey Rhodes, a layman, as secretary.¹

The objects of the Union were:

1. To establish headquarters in London where books and literature may be consulted, and where persons may come for advice and information.
2. To canvass the clergy and medical men generally all over Great Britain with a view to obtaining their cooperation.
3. By means of literature, lectures and meetings, to obtain support for the Union and the objects for which it had been formed.
4. To recommend courses of reading.

Examples of the recommended reading were: *Mental Healing* by the Bishop of Bleomfontein; *Christian Science and Spiritual Healing* by Prebendary Yorke

¹ No account of the Union's activities are to be found in church documents, but the *British Medical Journal* gave a detailed account; the only other source of information discovered is an anonymous pamphlet describing the work of the Union: *Psychic Healing: An Account of the Work of the Church and Medical Union*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., London, 1910.

Fausset (this was strongly condemnatory) both published by SPCK, and Religion and Medicine, by Worcester, McComb and Coriat.¹

Men and women were in attendance at Dryden House to interview the patients who were asked for their medical certificates. It was then arranged for the patient to be seen by a clergyman, if possible by one from his own parish. It was also the intention of the Union to hold lectures and classes in mental therapeutics for the benefit of the clergy, who, it was predicted, would need to study psychology in the future. There is a lack of information regarding the numbers of members enrolled and the extent to which the Union's activities were implemented. The BMA's report confessed "some curiosity as to the exact position of the Union" and also, as with the case of Hickson, wanted information about Rhodes' qualifications. Until these details were known, the BMA advised its members not to give any active support to the Union.

The principles of the Union were based on certain paragraphs of the Lambeth report, including the following:

"The Committee believes that medical science is the handmaid of God and His Church, and should be fully recognised as the ordinary means appointed by Almighty God for the care and healing of the human body."

The lay founders of the Union appeared to take this clause at its literal meaning in organizing a society through which sick parishioners were actively channelled into seeking spiritual advice from an orthodox clergyman. The BMA

¹ The British Medical Journal, 9 January 1909. See also: the British Medical Journal, 28 November 1908, 20 February 1909, 13 March 1909 and 24 April 1909.

in general did not endorse the scheme or support its promoters. The church authorities appeared not to interfere or make official comment, although the Union was termed a Church of England Society. Support from individual members of both professions was, however, acquired, although some of the clerical supporters were anxious not to be led into the position of the Christian Scientists and others, who were believed to make physical health the object of life. The Union insisted that those approaching them for help should first obtain a letter from their medical practitioner for the clergyman acting in the case. This would of course necessitate that anyone who had been under exclusive treatment from a Christian Science practitioner should abandon that arrangement.

The Union's main aim was in fact seen by the BMJ as showing that the church had a ministry of healing which could "beat Christian Science on its own ground". Frederick Dixon wrote that Christian Scientists saw it as such and considered it an attack on their area of influence. It is likely, however, that the promoters of the Union saw it as a society which provided an orthodox answer to the demand for a spiritual dimension to healing, particularly in diseases "of the character" and those ailments under the general undefinable blanket of the popular term "nervous". The Union would decline to act until a statement from a physician was received to the effect that the patient was not receiving treatment other than orthodox medical care. The patient was then referred to a sympathetic clergyman or sent back to a doctor "from whom he had drifted away".

"It is a generally accepted fact among alienists that when any person, by virtue of circumstances or constitution, has lost his proper measure of self-control, the all-important line of treatment is to discover the particular point on which he holds sound, sane views and gaining his confidence in that connection to lead him out of the path of danger".

Four "typical" cases were cited, three out of the four having been dissuaded from consulting Christian Science practitioners. For example, in the case of "G.H.", a young married woman who came "complaining of nerves", she

"...had read Mrs Eddy's book and was inclined to take up Christian Science, but her doctor objected. It was discovered that the root of the trouble was lack of religious belief ...It was suggested that she should seek preparation for confirmation in the Church of England. She was soon after confirmed and having found the peace of mind she sought has quite given up all thought of Christian Science."¹

Further discussion within the Church.

Two years after the Lambeth Conference, at the Canterbury Diocesan Conference at Lambeth Palace in 1910, the subject of the Ministry of Healing was discussed by clergy. The subject was introduced by Canon F.E. Gardiner, Vicar of Holy Trinity, Folkestone, and the Rev. C.J.M. Shaw, Vicar of Margate.² At this conference. the subject of Christian Science, although entering significantly into the discussion, was not regarded as directly responsible for the upsurge of healing activity within the church. Opinion about methods of procedure, however, was still divided. Canon Gardiner said that a religion which ignored, as Christian Science did, the spiritual element in healing, was not the Christianity of Christ- the age had witnessed a great change in the awakening to the healing presence of Christ in the church and the time seemed to have come for public recognition of this power. The Rev. Sir Charles Shaw compared the contemporary health fads, which led people to try any "freak theory" that claimed to be scientific, with the superstitions

¹ Pamphlet on the work of the Union, Op. cit.

² Pall Mall Gazette, 18 June 1910.

of the past, and no less dangerous. The Archbishop of Canterbury endorsed Shaw's opinion. It was, he said, difficult to get at the facts and the difficulty of calm and thoughtful investigation had been rendered far greater by the growth of "that wild thing" known as Christian Science.

The Clerical and Medical Committee on Spiritual Healing, 1910-1914.

Members of the clergy and the medical profession met, after an initial conference, in a committee to discuss spiritual healing in St. Paul's Chapter House in 1910.¹ Among members of the committee were the Dean of Westminster, the Dean of Durham, the Dean of St Pauls and Sir Clifford Allbutt. It is not clear whether the meetings were "official", in the sense of being sanctioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury. There were nineteen meetings altogether before the committee's report was submitted (on the wrapper of the published version of which there was advertised Stephen Paget's attack on Christian Science). Concern that Christian Science was ignored in the report prompted the first anonymous publication in 1913 of a book by C.H. Lea, a businessman and freechurchman who later became a Christian Scientist. Lea pointed out that Christian Science was the only major organization which currently propagated healing as a central doctrine, yet the committee considered that, despite the fact that it had been instructed to report on the whole subject of spiritual healing, Christian Science did not come within the terms of its reference. Indeed, Lea accused the committee, composed of prominent men whose opinions would carry much weight, of "throwing dust into the eyes of both press and public as regards the true facts of spiritual healing".² Lea claimed that

¹ C.H. Lea, *A Plea for the Thorough and Unbiased Investigation of Christian Science and a Challenge to its Critics*, London (Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co. Ltd) 1923, Third Edition.

² Ibid., p.X.

no attempt was made to investigate Christian Science healing, and no direct allusion was apparently made to Christian Science during the course of discussion. Lea argued, however, that some of the conclusions were covertly aimed at Christian Science healers. He argued that the rapid development of that movement in Britain was obviously a main reason for summoning the original Clerical and Medical Conference, and that the other two or three minor healing bodies were mostly the outcome of Christian Science.

Lea's accusations appear to be at least partly substantiated by an indiscretion committed by W.R. Inge, the Dean of St. Paul's, a member of the committee, in 1912. In a speech at the annual medical service at the Parish Church, Brighton, in front of a large number of doctors and nurses, he strongly deprecated Christian Science and remarked that he was a member of a committee which met frequently to investigate the subject which was, as they all knew, very much in the air. In a letter to the journal which printed this report, he wrote: "The brief report in your last issue of a sermon of mine at Brighton is not only misleading, but is, I am afraid, likely to prejudice the course of a perfectly impartial inquiry. It would have been better if I had not mentioned the committee at all, since its proceedings are private, though its existence is no secret. But since that degree of indiscretion has been committed by me, will you allow me to say that 1), 'C.S' has not been touched by the committee, at any rate since I joined it; 2), I was only expressing my personal opinion when I said "at present". I believed that "no organic disease can be touched by these methods"...."churchmen and churchwomen ought to be very suspicious of the fashionable tendency to dabble in occult supernaturalism".¹

¹ The Lancet, 26 October and 2 November, 1912.

The Spiritual Healing Question, Post War.

The First World War effectively suspended discussion on Christian Science and the question of healing within the church and the decennial Lambeth Conference was postponed until 1920, when some time was devoted to the discussion of Christian Science. The Bishop of Ottawa and the Bishop of Western New York spoke on the topic. The Bishop of Ottawa had studied Science and Health in an attempt to reach an understanding of its theory and with a view to analyzing and categorising Christian Science. He deduced that it was a form of pantheism.

"I have tried to study it from the point of view of sympathy and from the point of view of those who are eagerly anxious to find out- but not to deal with it controversially- what exactly is the truth which has this power. They have bidden me steep myself in the writings of Mrs Eddy and of her accredited teachers. It has been a painful process. I have felt strangely enough a subtle power. In spite of the perplexities, in spite of the absolute contradictions, and in spite of the confused and almost irritating misuse of ordinary words which are saddled with extraordinary meanings, nevertheless there is a real power which grows rather than decreases as one tries honestly, though quite seriously and painfully, to understand it, which seemed to block to a certain extent my spiritual capacity for other things. I had at the same time to prepare two sermons, which were a great responsibility to me, and I found that the more I steeped myself in this book the more difficult it was to approach that task. It was a real subtle power running through the book. Now what actually is it? That is what I have tried to find out."¹

This "power" the bishop accredited to the "oneness" which came "beating upon the mind and the soul in reading this book, making its impression rather after

¹ Proceedings of the Sixth Lambeth Conference, 5 July 1920, Minutes, Speech of the Bishop of Ottawa, pp.76-85.

the fashion that the modern advertiser makes his impression upon the mind" and of the "forcible denials" throughout the book, which he claimed had a "subtle influence over the subconscious mind". Reasserting the general deference to the medical profession evident in the 1908 Conference and perhaps to reinforce his argument against Christian Science, the bishop praised the work of the physicians during the war as a "gift of God".

The Bishop of Western New York spoke less emotively, but said that Christian Science stood for "certain great truths" and that it was for them to "take those truths and put them in proper relation to the great body of truth". He believed that the church had fed Christian Science by their own method of approach to healing and had given "no substance to replace the shadow which Christian Science gives". He added that in that scientific age, all of them had been "more or less poisoned by medical materialism, so that we think the doctor's word is the last word". He pointed out that doctors did make many mistakes and that they should get away from medical materialism by insisting that prayer is not merely for fatal diseases but for all diseases. He ended by advocating consideration to laying-on of hands with prayer and anointing, and criticised the Society of St Raphael and the Nazarenes in America. They were, he said, "running into the danger of cults and these Societies must not be allowed to do what the Church as a whole should do".¹

At the end of his speech, the Bishop of Western New York desired that the Committee should consider what he had said, and the President put the "second part of the resolution:" namely that a committee be appointed to consider the subject of Christian Science, which was agreed. However,

¹ Ibid., p.87.

Christian Science was not considered as a topic separate from the general subject of spiritual healing, as recommended by Resolution 63, which read as follows:

"For the general guidance of the Church the Conference requests the Archbishop of Canterbury to appoint a Committee to consider and report as early as possible upon the use with Prayer of the laying-on of hands, of the Unction of the Sick and other spiritual means of Healing, the findings of such a Committee to be reported forthwith to the authorities of the national, provincial, and regional Churches of the Anglican Communion."

This committee, under the chairmanship of Hubert Burge, the Bishop of Oxford, was beset by difficulties.¹ Between 1921, when the committee began its deliberations, and 1924, when the final report was submitted, the bishop twice offered his resignation, because of a lack of cohesion among committee members, but this was refused by Davidson. These members included prominent members of both the clergy and the medical profession and psychologists, originally chosen because of their special interest in the subject: Sir Clifford Allbutt, W.H. Rivers, J.A. Hadfield, Bishop Chandler, Canon Mason and others numbering about twenty. The president of the Guild of Health, the Bishop of Kensington, was generally supposed to be sympathetic towards Christian Science and was alleged to be "hurt" on being excluded from the committee.²

¹ See Stuart Mews, "The Revival of Spiritual Healing in the Church of England 1920-26", in W.J. Sheils (ed.) *The Church and Healing*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1982.

² R.T. Davidson Papers, *Spiritual Healing 1924*, Vol. 489, p. 36, Harold Anson - Davidson.

At the Convocation of Canterbury in February 1922, the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke of the "greatest possible difficulty in reaching a conclusion as to what should be the reference to such a Committee, or how I was to obtain the right men to serve upon it. They were all anxious to have a reference extremely carefully drawn in full, and a good many, especially the medical men, were suspicious of it in general terms, thinking that their membership of such a Committee might compromise them in regard to opinions which they were accustomed to hold as medical men.....I am led now to the conclusion that there must be some delay- perhaps considerable delay- before anything can be appropriately put forth which would cover the ground with tolerable adequacy, There are preliminary questions, historical and in a sense theological, which must be dealt with more thoroughly than, so far as I can learn, they have ever been dealt with yet."¹

The final report, published in January 1924, after considerable revision to an original draft submitted in 1922, inspired the headlines in the *Daily Express*: "The Church as Doctor" and "C.S. Challenge". The Convocation of Canterbury discussed the report at some length. The Bishop of London declared that the Christian Scientists had "called attention to the power of mind over matter and the influence of the soul full of faith and hope over both" and spoke of the evidence that applying Christian truths to patients in the belief that it was the will of God that sickness as well as sin should be overcome, obtained "remarkable results". In spite of such views, a key passage in the report summarised the continuing principles of the church, holding that "it was not the function of the Church to apply its means of restoration if no higher end is sought than the recovery of bodily health. Indeed, to do this

¹ The Proceedings of the Convocation of Canterbury, London SPCK, 1922, p. 265.

would gravely compromise the meaning and purpose of the Church's rites and sacraments. No sick person must look to the clergyman to do what is the physician's or surgeon's duty to do".¹

The conviction that ministrations to the sick should be carried out in a more hopeful spirit, was, as in 1908, included in the report. It was thought that a power to heal did exist in such ministrations, which the church now approved, and this was a shift in the attitude of the main body of church opinion partly attributable to the influence of Christian Science. At the same time, the church was careful to proceed "upon the sane and moderate lines of the Report", which many felt was a disappointment, to avoid the "extravagancies and fallacies" of the Christian Scientists. The committee had insisted that early treatment of patients by a member of the medical profession was of vital importance: a reflection perhaps on Christian Science "fatalities", but which might also apply to the form of healing advocated by Hickson and perhaps advocated by over-zealous members of the church healing societies. A recommendation of the committee was the appointment of a permanent committee of clergy, doctors and psychologists to advise the church and to extend the work of the Lambeth Committee.²

During the 1924 Convocation, the Archbishop of Canterbury (the President) compared the conclusions of the 1908 and 1920 Lambeth committees. He remembered that, in 1908, the committee had recommended prayers for the restoration of health accompanied by laying-on of hands, to be included in the Office for the Visitation of the Sick. Anointing was carried out if it was

¹ Proceedings of the Convocation of Canterbury, 1924, p.150.

² The Report of the Lambeth Conference Committee, SPCK, London, 1922.

"earnestly desired by the sick person", but was not to be a rite. The President remarked that at that time revision of the rubrics and the Common Book of Prayer was being carried out and marked changes had been made in the Office for the Visitation of the Sick. He called attention to the "change of tone" towards the question of spiritual healing adopted by the conference of 1920 after the intervention of war. New experiences had encouraged a change of attitude and questions had been raised with regard to those suffering from shell shock, and the "physical, mental and psychical treatment which they ought to have". In 1920, the committee adopted a more definite tone: " We would urge the recognition of the ministry and gifts of healing in the Church, and that these should be exercised under due licence and authority."¹ In accordance with the advice of the committee that a permanent committee be appointed to advise the church, the Bishop of Oxford arranged a joint meeting of clergy and members of the Medical Research Group (appointed by the BMA to research spiritual healing) in March 1925 at the Church House, Westminster. It appears that, compared with the attitude of the medical profession towards spiritual healing and healing undertaken by clergy after the 1908 Lambeth Conference, the experiences of wartime had encouraged a more open view. Other proposals of the 1920 committee were adopted by the Lambeth Conference of 1930.

Christian Science and Other Religions.

Roman Catholicism.

The Roman Catholic clergy made no formal response to Christian Science except to see it as outright heresy. Their reaction was inevitably more

¹ H. Riley and R.J. Graham (eds), *Acts of the Convocations of Canterbury and York, 1921-1970*, SPCK, London, 1971. pp. 209-212.

monolithic and less subject to idiosyncrasy than that of the much more independently minded Anglican clergy (some individual more liberal Anglican clergy, for example, whilst apprehensive about the spread of Christian Science and the effect on the numbers in their congregations, were more willing to recognise what Christian Science had to offer and to incorporate some of its procedures, such as healing methods, into their own church practice). A typical Roman Catholic response was that of a Father Day at the Roman Catholic church in Manchester in 1910, who delivered a "trenchant and scathing attack" on the principles of Christian Science, saying that *Science and Health* read like the ravings of a madman.¹ Among the laity, although there were examples of Roman Catholics being converted to Christian Science, further comment on the incompatibility of the two religions was sometimes expressed. In evidence given at the trial of Robert Adcock, the mother of Major John Whyte, whom Adcock had attempted to heal through Christian Science remarked that it was utterly impossible for any Roman Catholic to be a Christian Scientist: her son had abandoned the Catholic church to become one.²

Hostile, suspicious and even fearful attitudes prevailed among Christian Scientists respecting Roman Catholicism. The reserve of some Christian Scientists towards Philip Kerr, Lord Lothian, because of his upbringing in Roman Catholicism, was one instance of a much more general distrust of, and at times hostility towards Catholicism and even towards individual Catholics. The reference of Mrs Whyte (Lady Astor's Christian Science mentor and not to be confused with the mother of Major John Whyte) to some "antediluvians" in Britain who did not approve of converts from Catholicism is an example of

¹ *The Lancet*, 15 October 1910.

² *The Daily Telegraph*, 28 June 1906.

this.¹ Because of this mutual antipathy, Catholic conversions to Christian Science were more difficult. Christian Science, since it inherited some traditions from American puritanism, and was unitarian in its theology, might be regarded as an ultra-Protestant religion, having affinities with liberal Protestantism as that strand of Christianity was developing in late nineteenth and early twentieth century America. Adherents of Christian Science have regarded the historic Roman Catholic church as clinging to archaic doctrines and practices long since superseded by Protestantism and finally shown as misinterpretations of the truth by Christian Science.

Philip Kerr's conversion to Christian Science provides one example of the phenomenon of a Roman Catholic becoming a Christian Scientist, and illustrates the extent of mental and emotional changes involved. Kerr greatly distressed his family, particularly his mother, by his conversion.² However, since his Oxford days, he had been experiencing religious doubts which reflected his growing interests in the progress of mankind and in science. "I saw", he wrote in 1923, "that Christian Science was manifestly the religion that Jesus of Nazareth taught and that Mrs Eddy was the first individual to understand his teaching fully, at least since the very earliest years of the Christian era. I have never had the slightest doubt about this from that time"³. After his death, A.G. Fraser, who worked for Lothian at Newbattle, one of Lothian's houses, wrote to Lothian's sister that it was while Lothian was at Oxford that he was impressed by the fact that he found nobody there as

¹ Margaret Whyte - Lady Astor, 21 February 1920, Astor Papers (1915-27) Reading University Library.

² J.R.M. Butler, *The Life of Lord Lothian*, Macmillan & Co., London 1960, p. 89

³ Ibid., p.88.

"saintly" as his own family but that he met many who had a greater power to think, to weigh principles and to make decisions. It was this greater moral freedom, Fraser explained, that attracted him and made him take the (to Lothian) painful step of leaving the Roman church.¹

In the correspondence of Lady Astor there are references to Christian Scientists adopting a severe attitude towards Roman Catholics. Lady Astor herself is known to have adopted similar views and her biographer attributes this mainly to the influence of Lothian (who became increasingly anti-Catholic as his allegiance to Christian Science became stronger.)² A curious article among her papers substantiates this assumption. It was reprinted from the *American Standard* in booklet form, dated 1924, and bears a notice on the back cover to "read this booklet at the next meeting of your lodge or club" and is entitled: "Secret Hypnotism by the Jesuits". Certain passages have been marked, presumably by Lady Astor, which seems to imply that she considered these views important. One is as follows:

"An individual highly sensitised to mental phenomena and spiritually alert, can "feel the thought" of a Roman Catholic as soon as he comes into contact with it. The dangerous folly of employing Roman Catholics as nursemaids or other servants, or as business assistants, is obvious to the intelligent thinker".³

¹ A.G. Fraser - memoirs, Lothian papers, Scottish Record Office, GD40/17/514/33.

² Christopher Sykes, *Nancy: The Life of Lady Astor*, Collins, London, 1972, (Granada Publishing paperback version 1979, p.166)

³ Astor Papers, MS 1416/1/2/584-43, 1915-1927, C.S.12. "Secret Hypnotism by the Jesuits: An Exposure of the Sinister Mental Methods, Used by Papal Adepts, to Influence the Thoughts and Acts of Politicians and other Persons", p.6

The article continues in the vein that the "Jesuit" employed manipulative mental methods in order to cause malicious occurrences in society, or even bodily harm to individuals.

"In addition to the intentional manipulators such as Jesuits and protocol Jews (the last two words are underlined by Lady Astor, who was said to have anti-semitic tendencies) skilled in oriental occultism, it should be remembered that the entire world, or consciousness, in which we dwell, is mental (the last word underlined), and that two mental forces seem to be constantly operating, namely, good and evil".

A letter dated 1925 from Lady Astor to the Maidenhead Christian Science church objected, however, to their decision not to admit the children of Roman Catholic parents to the Sunday school. None the less, the church remained adamant and their reply repeated the resolution: "...that for their own protection the children of Roman Catholic parent or parents shall not be eligible for admission to Sunday School". This situation was unusual, however, since it can be safely assumed that few Roman Catholics would want their children to attend a Christian Science Sunday school.

Through the attention given to the booklet by Christian Scientists, it is apparent that Roman Catholicism was considered dangerous, a source of "malicious animal magnetism" (MAM) and as such a subject for only indirect allusion. In general, Christian Scientists at this time tended to think of Roman Catholicism as the embodiment of alien and evil influence which they characterized as "malicious animal magnetism". Some even went so far as refusing to mention Catholicism by name, using only the initials "R.C." or even the term "red currants" to avoid mentioning so potent an agency of "error". The Catholic Church could probably afford to ignore a movement which

must surely, in consequence of the suspicious and even hostile attitudes it encouraged, have been no real threat to the loyalty of Catholics. Although a similar attitude is found among some other Protestant bodies, no other Protestant religion entertains to such an extent the notion of anti-Christian forces as the antithesis of a faith which superficially adheres to the belief of the absolute non-existence of evil. The acknowledged (on one level) existence of MAM as the reverse of the positive elements in Christian Science is correlated to the mystical or pagan elements in Roman Catholicism as the opposite of Christian truth as given by Mrs Eddy.

The Nonconformist View.

In contrast to the concern about Christian Science and spiritual healing shown by the Anglican Church, nonconformist bodies appear not to have discussed these issues at any length in their formal assemblies. However, individual Methodist ministers entered the discussion during the years when interest in Christian Science reached its height, from about 1905. Apart from Frank Ballard, a Wesleyan minister who wrote prolifically on many theological topics and scathingly about Christian Science, other Methodists held moderate views and some seemed favour the restoration of healing practice.

Ballard wrote blistering attacks on Christian Science and was named by C.S. Lea as responsible for other nonconformist attacks. Some reviewers agreed with Ballard's condemnation. In the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine in 1909, Ballard's book, *Eddyism: Miscalled Christian Science* was reviewed as "a trenchant and uncompromising exposure of the flimsy and delusive claims of the followers of Mrs Eddy". In the opinion of the reviewer, Ballard was "not a whit too strong". He recommended the book to "all Eddyists, and to those who

are attracted by the specious claims of so-called 'Christian Science'".¹ Ballard wrote for the *London Quarterly Review* in 1921: "The Menace of Eddyism", the title of which is largely self-explanatory. In this he answers the "challenge" of C.H.. Lea, who claimed not to be a Christian Scientist, and who ran an advertisement in the *Christian World* for a considerable time, offering to send copies of his book *A Plea for the Unbiased Investigation of Christian Science*, to any Christian minister who wanted one.²

Other commentators included H.W. Horwill, a Methodist minister who retired from circuit work in 1896, and wrote *Christian Science as a Reaction* in 1907³. This work was more moderate in tone than most Anglican comments, and was written from a position distant both from that of his own church and of Anglicanism, which at times he criticized. Writing from a theological perspective, he maintained that the popularity of Christian Science stemmed from a want both of simplicity and a direct application of faith in the older churches and from a desire for the greater equality of women in matters of worship. C.J. Wright, B.D., in a general discussion of Christianity and healing printed in 1922,⁴ questioned whether the Anglican church's neglect of a healing ministry should not be held responsible for the development of the Christian Science movements and other healing phenomena. Wright remarked : "May it not be that Christ's word applies to His Church in her neglect of a

¹ *The Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1909, p.953, "Books to Read".

² F. Ballard, "The Menace of Eddyism", *London Quarterly Review*, July 1921, pp.58-71.

³ *London Quarterly Review*, October 1907.

⁴ C.J. Wright, "Christianity and Healing 'Miracles'", *London Quarterly Review*, April 1922, pp. 161-174.

healing ministry, 'These things ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone'?"

A doctor, Edward Walker, was very condemnatory of Christian Science in the *London Quarterly Review* in 1911¹. He quoted Dr. Jane Walker, who in her paper included in "Medicine and the Church", had quoted a passage from the *Hibbert Journal* for October 1908: "The modern revolt against all suffering is obviously suicidal. To extinguish all suffering, were that possible, would be to deprive the world of a leverage as all-pervading and effectual towards spiritual elevation and purification as is gravitation towards stability". In a bibliography, Walker included Ballard's book, *Eddyism: Miscalled Christian Science*, Carta Sturge's work, Paget's book and Milmine's *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy*. Lastly, Leslie Weatherhead, a prominent Wesleyan, included a chapter on Christian Science in one of his later works,² having had a long interest in the psychological dimension in healing which he put into practice in his pastoral work in the north of England after the war. In his chapter, not entirely condemnatory, he also advocated a return to healing methods by the churches.

The disparity of concern about Christian Science evidenced by the Church of England and the nonconformist denominations cannot be attributed to any known marked divergence between them respecting the loss of members to this new religion. It is not apparent that more Christian Scientists came from Anglican than from nonconformist backgrounds, although this might have been

¹ Edward Walker, "Christian Science and Disease", *London Quarterly Review*, April 1911, pp. 193-213.

² Leslie Weatherhead, *Psychology, Religion and Healing*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1951.

the case. What is clear is that Christian Science in these early years attracted a relatively well-to-do public, was conspicuous in the capital, and had votaries who were well known -by repute if not by personal acquaintance- to clergy of the established church. Discussion in the Church of England may well have been more generally influenced by these religious currents in the metropolis, and in particular in its more affluent residential areas than was likely to have been the case for nonconformists.

Chapter 6.Responses from Members of the Medical Profession.

Christian Science, being not only a new religious movement but also, and in some ways more conspicuously, a therapeutic practice, was inevitably on course for confrontation both with the clergy (who might have ignored it as a religious cult but who were also affected by its healing claims) and with a powerful profession which had vested interest in discrediting alternative therapeutic methods. That confrontation was likely to be sharper and to take on a more explicit connotation of the public interest in Britain than in the United States, if only because Britain had a more cohesive "establishment" with more restrictive policies in the fields both of religion and medicine. The pluralism of the American situation which necessarily tolerated wide religious diversity and which maintained a much more tolerant, libertarian, not to say laissez-faire, approach to therapeutic preference, gave Christian Science a better chance to work without so much criticism in America than ever it was likely to be accorded in Britain. In consequence of this circumstance, the new movement was from the outset likely to draw hostile notice from bodies who saw their public duty (much more explicitly in Britain than in the United States) to pronounce authoritatively on what was conducive to the public good. Thus, it follows that just as the clergy were exercised and articulate about Christian Science (to perhaps a greater extent than with respect to other new religious bodies) so, too, the medical profession was ordained to become significant respondents to Christian Science in seeking to form public opinion, and in defence of their own near-monopolistic and sanctioned authority in the realm of public health.

It appears from contemporary accounts that Christian Science attracted the attention of medical practitioners, some of whom were prominent in their field. The orthodox view of the medical profession as represented mainly by the *British Medical Journal* was, at first, sceptical and cautious concerning any suggestion that there should be greater medical concentration on the psychic aspects of healing, although the British Medical Association did later set up a committee of inquiry into spiritual healing and thereafter worked on the subject in collaboration with the Anglican church. Some practitioners, although dismissing Christian Science, were prepared to accord greater recognition to the psychogenetic basis of some somatic diseases. Christian Science was often seen by medical men as one of a number of what they sometimes alluded to as hypnotic therapies, which they tended to identify with the influence of Mesmer, and with which later they came to link at least the early work of Freud.¹ It was, of course, the Freudian link - however tenuous - to this current of thought, which, much more than Christian Science or more directly Mesmeric practices, was to exert an influence on standard medical psychiatric practice.

The measure of disenchantment with the purely materialistic aspects of medicine, as exemplified by the increasing administration of drugs, may be compared with the diminished regard for orthodox forms of religion, which at the beginning of the century no longer appeared to satisfy some churchgoers. Spiritualism, Theosophy, Christian Science and other "spiritual" or occult religious practices were perhaps expressions of this dissatisfaction with the

¹ For example: Dr. Bernard Hollander, whose views were stated in the *Manchester Dispatch*, 18 October and 13 November 1905 and the *Weekly Budget*, 14 January 1912 and Dr. Alexander Robertson, onetime physician to the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, whose views were discussed in the *British Medical Journal*, 2 January 1909. These and the views of other doctors are discussed later in this chapter.

rigidity of traditional religion, or they could be seen as attractions which offered new religious interest. However divergent in their theory and therapy, Christian Science and the new forms of psychology and psychiatry each presented a challenge to and a departure from medical orthodoxy.

In the face of the increasing widening of the credibility gap between church teaching and medical science, some people sought to restore a "whole" view of science and religion, but on a level which could be explained within the fluctuating terms of early 20th century science. What physicians objected to in Christian Science was the attempted invasion of what they saw as their scientific hegemony in a blatant violation and distortion of proven scientific facts. They saw the new "religion", if they chose to regard it at all, as not medicine and not religion. In company with other critics, they denounced it as "not Christian and not science".¹ However, perhaps partly through a desire to close ranks against unorthodox outsiders (mainly, it seems, the Christian Scientists) and through the approaches of some clergy who were also noticing the effects of Christian Science on their congregations and who were reappraising the ancient church healing doctrines, some members of the medical profession, as the century advanced, relinquished the claim to exclusive diagnostic and therapeutic competence and undertook some collaboration with clergy. This took place at conference and committee level and, nominally at least, in the sickroom, at the same time incorporating some of the

¹ This phrase was used by the Methodist minister Frank Ballard (in *Eddyism, miscalled 'Christian Science': A Delusion and a Snare*, Robert Culley, London 1909), who adopted an extreme position with regard to Christian Science. Among members of the medical profession, the nearest parallel was Dr. Stephen Paget, whose extreme opposition to Christian Science is discussed later in this chapter.

humanitarian aspects of religion into medical practice.¹ These moves were to some degree dictated by the apparent needs and wishes of patients, who, by adopting new therapies which both physicians and clergy considered dangerous spiritual phenomena, had in some cases demonstrated their doubts of the adequacy of orthodox medical practice and traditional religion.

Patients frequently deviated from orthodox medicine and religion to explore a multiplicity of popular phenomena, such as forms of faith healing, various New Thought beliefs which included healing, and occult practices. Christian Science was just one of these attractions, but because of its organized structure, the reputation of its healing work and its high profile in the press, it became a focus for attack for physicians and clergy. However, whilst condemning the movement itself, a positive, optimistic outlook on bodily health, attributed to the influence of Christian Science, was increasingly accepted within a total treatment of body and mind and encouraged the recognition of a psychological dimension in healing. In the early 1900's, religious belief was considered by many to be important for the maintenance of mental health,² and physicians saw an alliance with the church as compatible with the moves towards psychosomatic treatment, although the acceptance by patients of unorthodox or occult practices was strongly discouraged. The toleration of spiritual support in sickness by the church;

¹ Among other activities, prominent physicians provided papers for the preliminary committees of the Lambeth Conferences (see Chapter 5) and sat on the Clerical and Medical Committee that met to discuss spiritual healing from 1910 to 1914. Doctors also contributed to the work of the Church and Medical Union which was established after the 1908 Lambeth Conference (see Chapter 5).

² This is particularly illustrated by the work of the Church and Medical Union, which laid great emphasis on a patient's faith in Anglicanism (*Psychic Healing: An Account of the Work of the Church and Medical Union*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., London, 1910).

the recognition of the medical profession as the "handmaid of God and His Church"; and the later co-operation on committees set up to explore the spiritual healing question, were moves towards a narrowing of the gulf between medical science and religion. Some doctors and clergy saw these moves as a "counter-attack" against Christian Science,¹ which some regarded as a significant and insidious religious development.

One early writer, commenting on the development of mental and spiritual forms of healing in 1901, noted the increase in "fashionable West-end people" who took up the subject of psychic and mental processes of healing, which he believed had been caused by the recent publicity given to Christian Science and the views of those who professed to cure disease by these means. He went on to write of the "extreme doctrines of Mrs Eddy and her school" and said that if it were not for the fact that Christian Science was creating these "other tendencies" (a general interest in spiritual healing), this "wave of popular interest in the vagaries of Christian Science " would be of little consequence. He claimed, however, that many people

"....who are attracted to this kind of study by the bold and persistent claims of the Christian Scientists, are now turning their attention to other and more subtle processes of healing which have at various periods of the world's history been spasmodically resorted to. Psycho-magnetics, mesmerism and hypnotism, as well as various other psychic and mental methods which have from time to time been applied to the alleviation and cure of disease, are all entering, apparently, upon a new lease of life as a result of the Christian Science 'boom'.²

¹ The British Medical Journal, 28 November 1908, p. 1634, discussing the proceedings of the Lambeth Conference and the Church and Medical Union.

² The Onlooker, 25 May 1901.

significantly, the writer remarked upon the "stolid indifference" of English doctors to everything "outside the pale of orthodox physical science" and the fact that it had been left to a few to experiment with mesmerism and similar fields and risk their medical reputations by doing so. (Perhaps here he referred to the recent formation of the "London Psycho-Therapeutic Society", which was to be devoted to the "systematic study and investigation" of psychic and mental forces for healing and educational purposes, in which some prominent physicians were involved.) In this criticism of the British medical profession was an implied comparison with American or European doctors, who may have been less cautious in their adoption of new techniques. The same line of criticism was continued in 1907 by a doctor, John Knott M.D., who described the position which Christian Science had by then achieved in society as "a success unparalleled by any other which has originated in our generation". He attributed this partly to the failure of contemporary medicine to satisfy the demands and confidence of society. He advised his fellow practitioners that they should recognise the position, "with its manifold obvious bearings and collateral influences, and contribute to the true higher education of the public".¹

Medical Opposition to Christian Science.

Medical opposition to the movement was expressed not only in isolated attacks in press articles, but in books devoted to the subject and at meetings and conferences that were reported in the press. A number of individual physicians emerged who attacked Christian Science repeatedly: they sat on committees concerned with the general topic of spiritual healing, and collaborated in producing cooperative works consisting of articles on this

¹ *The Westminster Review*, February 1907.

general subject which frequently, during the course of discussion, criticised Christian Science. A "Christian Science Opposition League" was set up in 1911, the membership of which was mainly drawn from the medical profession, some of whom had been active in the opposition debate.

Among them was Dr. Stephen Paget, the son of Sir James Paget (one of the foremost medical men of his time), who became well-known for his attacks of Christian Science and who was an active participant in conferences on spiritual healing. He was a strong advocate of scientific medical methods, and rejected every kind of faith healing. He was as strongly antagonistic towards faith healing as he was to Christian Science, which he branded as dangerous, particularly to the children of believers. In 1909, he compared the Christian Science church with the Peculiar People sect, in an address typically cast in the emotive tone he frequently used, to the annual meeting of the Congregational Union of Sheffield, and emphasised the uncompromising nature of both movements.

"You cannot separate her faith from her works (C.S. and Mrs Eddy). If you open your door to what she says, you let in what she does. It is with her as it is with the Peculiar People, that small tragical community which is one of her poor relations. The Peculiar People have neither fame nor money, they seem to come silently out of dim streets into the glare of the coroner's court, and then go back, out of public notice, till it is time for another baby to die of one verse of the Bible. This quiet company of Peculiar People, with its little graveyard, is one way of taking things, one set of doctrines, one frame of mind. So it is with Christian Science. Her philosophy, her religion, and her way of healing are all one, and you may neither approve nor disapprove of less than all of her".¹

¹ Stephen Paget, *The Case Against Christian Science* (pamphlet): Papers read at the Church Congress, Swansea, and the Annual Meeting of the Congregational Union, Sheffield, Cassell & Co., London, 1909, p.19

Paget had compiled a series of Christian Science "failures" for a book which followed the same emotive line and contained accounts of many distressing cases of illness among Christian Scientists who had refused medical aid.¹ He had tabulated two hundred testimonials from the Christian Science sentinel for the book and, as he remarked at a Church Congress in Swansea in 1909, these testimonies referred to cases all of which could have improved of their own accord. Paget disliked the church healing movements because they in effect pandered to Christian Science, and he saw the Society of Emmanuel as being under the shadow of the Christian Scientists, which he thought the church should have prevented. Although himself an opponent of Christian Science, Sir Robert Anderson disapproved of the stridency of Paget's assaults, and declared that they would add one hundred recruits to the Christian Science "army" for every one deserter.² Paget appeared as a somewhat reactionary member of the profession, perhaps regarded by some of his peers as behind the times in his views about psychology in medical science; this was illustrated by the speech he delivered at a meeting of the medical Harveian Society and the reaction that it stimulated.³

Others who emerged as strongly against "miraculous medicine" or Christian Science, included Sir Clifford Allbutt, Regius Professor of Physics at Cambridge, who contributed to the *British Medical Journal* and to a

¹ S. Paget, *The Faith and Works of Christian Science*, MacMillan, London, 1909.

² *The British Medical Journal*, 30 October 1909.

³ *Ibid.*, 6 November 1909, Vol. 2 p. 1352, "The Mind as a Therapeutic Agent". Dr. Claye Shaw (Emeritus Lecturer on Psychological Medicine at St. Bartholemew's Hospital), replying on the whole discussion, said... "there is more in psychology and its connexion with science than Mr. Paget would have us believe..."

symposium on the subject in 1910.¹ The symposium was edited by Geoffrey Rhodes, secretary of the Guild of Health (Paget also contributed a paper to this work). Allbutt was actively involved in the subject in other ways. He was consulted by Archbishop Davidson before the Lambeth Conference of 1908. He also appeared on the Clerical and Medical Committee that met to discuss the spiritual healing question between 1910 and 1914 and was on the joint committee which sat to consider the subject after the 1920 Lambeth Conference. (By this time, Allbutt was well into his eighties and was criticised as being "senile and ignorant" by another member of the committee.)² The Clerical and Medical Committee of 1910-1914 had been strongly condemned by the freechurchman C.H. Lea, an apologist for Christian Science. Sir Henry Morris, ex-President of the Royal College of Surgeons, was also mentioned by Lea as a target for his counter-attack on behalf of the Christian Scientists. Morris wrote a condemnatory article about Christian Science in which he discussed various historical examples of "mass fraud" before going on to compare Christian Science with the healing miracles at Lourdes, which he found more acceptable.

"It is quite possible to read about the miraculous cures at Lourdes with toleration and even interest, however incredulous one may be; but the reading and study of Christian Science are simply insufferable....What a contrast there is between the miracles of healing related in the Gospels and the miserable travesties, failures and tragedies of the Christian Science healing.....Compared with the

¹ The British Medical Journal, 18 June 1910, p. 1453; *Medicine and the Church: A Series of Studies on the Relationship between the Practice of Medicine and the Church's Ministry to the Sick*. Edited by Geoffrey Rhodes. London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1910.

² Stuart Mews, "The Revival of Spiritual Healing in the Church of England 1920-26", in W.J. Sheils (ed.) *The Church and Healing*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1982, p.322

Lourdes craze, Christian Science is as a snare and a pitfall to a refuge and haven of security".¹

William Osler, Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford, was another prominent physician who was particularly condemnatory of Christian Science. Like Allbutt, he had been consulted by Archbishop Davidson for medical information for the preliminary committee of the 1908 Lambeth Conference. His views about Christian Science were summarised in an article in the *British Medical Journal*. After describing old beliefs as being in the "melting pot", he remarked that one result of the current intellectual and spiritual unrest was that a new cult (Christian Science) had arisen. It was only natural, he continued, that this should have come from America, where so many cults proliferated.

"Only in the welter of a new world, untrammelled by a past, and by regard for authority, among a keen people too much absorbed in business to work out for themselves any mental salvation could such a chaotic mass of rubbish have had any measure of successful acceptance".²

The Christian Science Opposition League.

The doctors referred to in the preceding paragraph represent the extreme opposition, which was eventually focused in the Christian Science Opposition League, set up in late 1911.³ There is a marked lack of information available concerning the League, and it is not known which opponents were involved. The League was primarily a medical group which sought the endorsement and

¹ The *British Medical Journal*, 18 June 1910, p.1465.

² Ibid., 18 June 1910, p.1472.

³ *Weekly Budget*, 14 January 1912, The *British Medical Journal*, 13 January 1912, p.106.

cooperation of the British Medical Association, and it is likely that many of the well-known medical opponents of Christian Science were connected with the League and that they helped to draw up its aims and produce its literature.

The League's headquarters were at 71 Piccadilly and its Honourary Secretary was Dr. Vivian Wall, physician and surgeon, who lived at 71 and 72 Piccadilly between 1911 and 1916. One early notable member was Dr. Bernard Hollander, a well known member of the Royal College of Surgeons, a consulting physician to the British Hospital for Mental Disorders, and a student of hypnotism. He was also president of the Ethological Society and was the author of a widely circulated book: Suggestion and Hypnotism. He later withdrew his support from the League, claiming that he did not agree with their methods of attack. On leaving the League, he made a comprehensive statement about Christian Science and psychic healing. This may be regarded as perhaps the most thoughtful and authoritative medical word on the subject.¹

The League did not appear to last long after Hollander withdrew. Its low profile may have been deliberate, if members were afraid of providing Christian Science with publicity from which it might gain adherents. This was the opinion of one journalist, who believed that the interest aroused by the League's attacks and by the responses of the Christian Science organisation might attract large audiences to two lectures scheduled to be given by Bicknell Young. The objects of the League were:

1. To make Christian Science "healers" amenable to the law, and to bring a charge of manslaughter against them in the event of death under their ministrations.

¹ See pages 202 - 203.

2. To be represented by counsel at all inquests on "Christian Science" victims.

3. To oppose by means of lectures, pamphlets, exposure in the press, and by every other legitimate means the erroneous and pernicious teaching of Christian Science "healing". The reasons for this opposition are as follows:

1. Because Christian Scientists assert that physical disease is purely an error of the mind.

2. Because their treatment, being merely amateur and misapplied mental suggestion, ignores all physical or material methods of treatment.

3. Because Christian Science has been proved to interfere with domestic happiness.

4. Because it has also the effect of making its adherents unsympathetic.

5. Because Christian Science "healers" are untrained, unskilled, and generally unfitted to undertake the cure of bodily ailments.

6. Because Christian Science "healing" methods too often entail needless suffering, permanent disablement, insanity, and even premature death, and therefore constitute a serious danger to the whole community. The constitution of the Christian Science Opposition League is: Non-sectarian, non-partisan; open to all.¹

¹ The British Medical Journal, 13 January 1912, p.106.

Moderate Opposition.

Other members of the medical profession who were more moderate in their reaction to Christian Science, published articles and sat on at least one committee which discussed the spiritual healing question. Physicians who showed interest in the topic were Sir Dyce Duckworth, who was vice-chairman of the Clerical and Medical Committee and contributed articles to the press; Charles Buttar, one time president of the Harveian Society, who was also a member of this committee and wrote an article which was included in a volume of papers devoted to "Medicine and the Church" as well as chairing a discussion on the subject at the Harveian Society; T.B. Hyslop, also on the committee and a contributor to the same book, and others such as Jane Walker, who made at least one literary contribution on the subject. The views of these physicians reflect the gradually changing medical attitudes towards a psychological dimension in treatment, which included awareness of the relevance of a patient's religious beliefs.

Duckworth emphasised that a genuine Christian attitude was essential in a good physician, a point that was reinforced by other medical opinions. "We should look to a higher Power than that of man to aid us at the bedside, and as thoughtful physicians we do seek these means to aid us".¹ He thought that mental healing had a recognised basis of truth and fact, but that it should be employed as part of ordinary treatment by "honourable and skilled doctors" rather than by priests, whose involvement he did not think appropriate, but

¹ Sir Dyce Duckworth had contributed an article to *The Guardian* which was described by Ellis Roberts in "The Church and Mental Healing", in *Medicine and the Church*, (ed) Geoffrey Rhodes, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., London, 1910, p.227.

in any case knowledge of these phenomena was in a primitive stage at that present time.

Buttar agreed with Duckworth that the role of the clergy should be purely concerned with spiritual matters or, if ministers felt divinely called to concern themselves with healing they should act in a subservient manner to the physicians in matters which their training had not prepared them to undertake. Buttar emphasised that it was folly for the church to allow untrained laymen to meddle in healing. His overall view as a scientific person was that any so-called healing which might have taken place from religious ministrations was entirely attributable to the power of suggestion rather than to any divine intervention. The main function of the clergyman in the sickroom was to divert and comfort the sufferer. It appears from his writings that Buttar did not want to enter into any kind of healing partnership with the Church, which he thought should stay well clear of any pretensions to scientific medical treatment.¹

Some physicians openly supported Christian Science as a medium through which the beneficial effects of appealing to the subconscious mind had been highlighted. This, in the current atmosphere of other discoveries, could only increase knowledge and understanding in treating all kinds of disease. M.A. Stobart suggested that whilst Christian Science had performed this great service to mankind (notwithstanding the many absurdities which marred its system), to the uninitiated the cures it had effected appeared to be miracles, rather than proof of the powers of the subconscious. Again, however, the

¹ C. Buttar, "Medicine and Religion", in *Medicine and the Church*.

scientific physician regarded cures as attributable to the power of mesmerism or suggestion rather than to any kind of divine intervention.¹

Christian Science Contributes to Revised Attitudes.

A.T. Schofield, a Harley Street doctor, termed himself a Christian physician who supported the Guild of St. Luke, an association of Christian physicians and surgeons who met annually in St. Paul's for worship. These physicians united with their medical skills a concern to deal with spiritual aspects, although within a strictly orthodox context. Schofield was of the opinion that leaders of the medical profession had often possessed something of this dual concern, of religion combined with medical works. He was the author of some religious as well as medical and psychological works, and wrote a work: *Christian Sanity* in 1908, for which the Bishop of Durham, who had been active in denouncing Christian Science, wrote the foreword.

Schofield generally supported proposals for action by the church epitomised by a proposition for a central church council in London for the consideration of spiritual healing. However, he thought that with regard to the collaboration of medicine and the church, both doctors and clergy should have more adequate supplementary training to deal with the areas in which they were deficient. he criticised doctors for their frequent lack of sympathy and knowledge in treating some disorders which were of a psychotic or nervous nature.

"The difficulty arises, and the need for something more than we have got becomes obvious, when one has to deal with, say, a case of physical breakdown, involving possibly gastric and other disturbances, which is really due primarily to some long agony or perplexity of spirit. The fact must be stated that

¹ M.A. Stobart, *The Fortnightly Review*, February 1909, p.310.

for such work the present medical curriculum is not adequate. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that the training given in our medical schools is physical rather than human, as if we had to do with material mechanisms instead of the complex mystery of a human being. The physician has to face in his consulting room men and women, tripartite beings whose physiological and psychological interdependence and unity is so complete that no one part can suffer without the others being affected; beings, indeed, so complicated that it is well-nigh impossible to say where a disorder of the spirit ends and where one of the body begins. And yet there can be little doubt that, as a rule, the average physician feels at home only in dealing with the physical, and ill at ease if the disease goes beyond it, and tends to regard the patient almost entirely from a material standpoint. Should deeper questions arise, he too often hastily dismisses or ignores them, or maybe frankly confesses himself unable to deal with them at all. He has most probably paid no attention to mental therapeutics, against which his whole training has too often given him a decided bias. One may safely say, without the slightest exaggeration, that no day passes but patients with other than physical disorders leave the doctor's presence unrelieved and distressed, and ready to fall a prey to any quack or pseudo-scientist who may come along".¹

Not all British physicians, however, had always regarded the physical state of the patient as the only relevant field of interest. The use of psychic force as a remedial agent, mainly for hysterical or nervous ailments, had been used by Alexander Robertson, while physician to the Glasgow Royal Infirmary before 1889. His experiments were recorded in the Glasgow Hospital Reports in that year, and before this had been reported to the International Medical Congress. This method was a form of hypnotism not unlike the methods of Quimby and other non-medical healers, and appears to have derived from the general knowledge of mesmerism and similar phenomena prevalent in the United States and Europe at the end of the century, and from the development of a

¹ A.T.Schofield, "Spiritual Healing", *Contemporary Review*, March 1909, p.298.

primitive psychiatry. Robertson discussed his methods in the medical press in 1909 as a contribution to the prevailing controversy about Christian Science and spiritual healing and claimed to have been using these methods before Christian Science had become generally known.¹

Bernard Hollander had considered the wider implications of Christian Science as a healing method which incorporated and reflected many current psychic ideas. While condemning its uncompromising stance about the calling of medical aid and its apparent doctrine of the non-existence of disease, he set forth in statements to the press (one on leaving the Opposition League in 1912) what he believed to be a common element in all forms of healing, whether under the name of psycho-therapeutics, faith healing or Christian Science.² This, he thought, was the power of suggestion. He believed that Christian Science and any kind of faith healing would put the patient in a better frame of mind so that all bodily functions would be improved and the diseased organ be given a better chance of healing under orthodox medical treatment (although the "orthodox" treatment would not, of course, usually be administered to a Christian Scientist).

Hollander admitted that at the present time many people visited their doctor suffering from minor functional troubles such as indigestion or heart palpitations, which were primarily mental in origin. The physician, often acting on a purely scientific and material basis, would give them some remedy which would afford only temporary relief, with the result that the patient afterwards sought help from a Christian Scientist or a faith healer. These

¹ The British Medical Journal, 2 January 1909, "Ministries of Healing".

² The Manchester Dispatch, 18 October and 13 November 1905; Weekly Budget, 14 January 1912.

healers, he believed, appeared to effect a cure simply by improving, through an optimistic religious approach, the mental outlook of the patient. Hollander asserted that such a cure was effected purely by suggestion, in the patient's own mind. The mental outlook had a beneficial effect on the physical condition by, for example, improving the circulation, which eventually aided a more complete recovery. Hollander had observed, through his experiments with hypnosis, that serious disease could also be improved by putting the patient into an attitude of faith and hopefulness. He felt that the profession as a whole should take more interest in psycho-therapeutics and study the individual more instead of the disease en masse. However, he made an important distinction between Christian Science and hypnosis as an improvement to orthodox medical practice. He thought that hypnosis was then being more widely used by physicians, but only as an aid to orthodox treatment.

"The qualified doctor will see that the originating cause of the pain is removed, medically or surgically, whereas Christian Scientists, if they succeed in making the patient ignore his symptoms, make him also ignore the actual disease, and thus bring him prematurely to the grave."¹

Not all physicians agreed with the view presented by Hollander and others, that current medical practice was lacking in sympathy towards the psychological aspects of disease, and anything relating to "hypnotism" was regarded by some with great suspicion. Professor T. Annandale, on making a speech to new medical graduates at Edinburgh University in 1906, illustrated the tendency of "vulgar error" to reproduce itself under new names, "mesmerism", for example, reappearing as "hypnotism" and "temple worship" as "Christian Science". He warned his students of these "hostile forces" which

¹ Weekly Budget, 14 January 1912.

they must encounter.¹ In 1909, Dr. Allan McLane Hamilton, drawing attention to the collaboration of clergymen with the medical profession, denied what the current agitation seemed to suggest, namely, that the intelligent physician had never made any use of psychotherapy, but that he was a mechanical giver of drugs who took little or no interest in his patients. He added that among the great and successful men of all times, the human side was very strongly developed. In most cases, patients were studied from every point of view and treated accordingly.²

The editor of the *British Medical Journal* reinforced Hamilton's opinion, but in view of the appeal of Christian Science and faith healing and of some self-criticism from within the medical profession, perhaps these points were raised somewhat belatedly as a means of counter-attack. None the less, evidence suggests that the question of healing by suggestion gained more recognition within medical practice, partly as a result of the prevailing discussion on Christian Science and spiritual healing, and also as a reflection of the activities of the Anglican church in spiritual healing and its quest for a greater knowledge of healing techniques. Medical practitioners, however, preferred to adapt these ideas within the context and evolved history of their defined profession (suggestion and faith healing having a long history in medical practice) without seeking clerical aid. In spite of calls from members of the clergy for cooperation, the BMA particularly, remained for the most part, at least until after World War 1, reluctant to appear to compromise professional principles and the

¹ The *Lancet*, 4 August 1906.

² The *British Medical Journal*, 13 March 1909, Vol.1, p. 680. The *Journal* referred to an article written by Dr. Hamilton for the *North American Review*.

respectability of proven scientific facts. General medical opinion did call for a greater recognition of religious and psychological needs in patients, but preferred to adapt these requirements to conform to a scientific frame of reference. This being the case, the physician could, with the aid of psychology, attempt to deal with both the physical and mental aspects of disease whilst maintaining only the most slender links with the clergy, providing the total answer to both physical and mental questions within the scope of contemporary medical science.

Medical Practitioners who became Christian Scientists.

Superficially, it would appear that given the incompatibility of the study of medicine and the practice of Christian Science, there would be little likelihood of Christian Science recruiting members from the medical profession, but two particular cases and their circumstances have been noted, and there have almost certainly been others, especially in America. One explanation for this phenomenon is that in the early twentieth century, there were greater possibilities for wider scientific interpretations, and the work of psychologists, hypnotists and other innovators may have led to uncertainties within the medical profession. Alternative forms of healing, including Christian Science, encouraged some physicians to re-examine, albeit in some cases reluctantly, the question of the appropriateness of a purely materialistic approach in the consulting room. In some cases, therefore, it was possible in certain circumstances for a physician to have "gone over" to Christian Science, adopting Mrs Eddy's metaphysical concepts in place of his empirical training. Such circumstances have been known to include a sick relative's lack of response to orthodox medical methods, and this was the case with Walter Wilding, whose early involvement with the movement in the north of England has already been noted elsewhere.

Wilding's conversion was brought about by the healing of his daughter by Lady Victoria Murray in 1900. It is claimed that Wilding persuaded some of his patients, hitherto believed incurable, to try Christian Science. Many are recorded as having experienced Christian Science healings quite apart from the medical treatment they had been receiving. Wilding gave up his medical practice about six months after his daughter's healing, remarking to Lady Dunmore: "I will be an honest man if I have to break stones on the road." He moved from Hindley, Lancs., to Manchester, where the movement was already gaining a footing, and for a while worked at a commercial occupation before later becoming a Christian Science practitioner.¹

Some of the cases which had been under his care and which he alleged were healed through Christian Science were later related in a letter from Wilding to *The Onlooker* in 1908,² which caused a reaction in the medical press, in which Wilding was invited to submit a medical report with all medical details normal in such a report.³ This, of course, to a Christian Scientist, which was what Wilding had now become, was impossible, because to a Christian Scientist disease is the result of error and is not in itself a reality. As far as the medical profession was concerned, no proof was ever furnished by any medical man who had adopted Christian Science and thus, all prospective medical or psychological evidence was inevitably, and perhaps regrettably, lost.

¹ Tatham Woodhead, *Op. cit.*, p.28

² *The Onlooker*, 28 March 1908.

³ *The British Medical Journal*, 5 June 1909; 3 July 1909; 10 July 1909, "Medical Testimony as to Christian Science".

Frederick Dixon, in a letter to *The Outlook* in June 1909,¹ implied, according to the *British Medical Journal*, that the fact that they had not formerly disputed Wilding's qualifications pointed to the genuineness of the cures, as Wilding would have been operating his trained critical faculties as a medical man. The journal rejoined by arguing that a person's legal qualifications could not prevent him from making mistakes, nor could it "safeguard him from the pitfalls of credulity". The medical profession, the report continued, merely wanted evidence set out in the form of a scientific document with all cases, both failures and successes, substantiated, as with any orthodox treatment. This done, and if the evidence was sufficient, "disease will be conquered in the sign of Mrs Eddy, whatever that may be, and dethroned medicine will have to find itself a dishonourable grave".²

The phenomenon of a physician becoming a Christian Scientist created something of an issue in the case of an ex-doctor treating, as a Christian Scientist, a patient who died. In the case of Robert Adcock, who treated Major John Whyte, which came before the Central Criminal Court in 1906,³ the question was mainly a moral one: could Dr Adcock be accused of neglect as a one time medical practitioner with the knowledge which that implied? In failing to give the proper treatment and thus allowing his patient to die through inadequate medical attention, he was liable to be accused of criminal neglect leading to manslaughter. Alternatively, the issue was whether he was treating the case as a doctor or as a Christian Scientist: in the latter case his treatment was outside the realm of the inquiry. The practice of Christian

¹ *The Outlook*, 26 June 1909.

² *The British Medical Journal*, 3 July 1909.

³ *The Daily Telegraph*, 28 June 1906.

Science on a willing patient, even if that patient died, was not an offence. Adcock was still on the medical register at the time he was treating Major Whyte, which complicated matters. He was also said to have used a limited amount of materia medica in the form of some remedies such as a powder, which usually a Christian Science practitioner would not employ, which implies that he still had confidence in medical techniques and was perhaps not fully committed to his new religion. It transpired in this case that Adcock may have become a Christian Scientist in order to cure himself of a drug addiction, for which he could probably find no cure in current medical practice.

Conclusion.

In the years preceding World War 1, Christian Science contributed incidentally to a developing awareness and more general acceptance of the relevance of applied psychology in medical practice. Through the views of individual physicians, who took advantage of the general discussion surrounding Christian Science to project their opinions and to make known what they had achieved in their own practices, greater knowledge of psychic healing for mainly functional disease was disseminated through the profession. Because of its impact on the wealthier classes, Christian Science was sufficiently socially visible to attract this measure of attention. Today, medical practice often incorporates psychological perspectives and although from a medical view the Christian and spiritual aspects of treatment have ceased to have the relevance accorded them before World War 1, a development of the early collaboration of the medical profession and the church is seen at present in the Churches' Council for Health and Healing.

Christian Science was itself symptomatic of a wider search for a more holistic approach to disease, but it also reflects the currents of the late

nineteenth century's faith in progress which itself, like the changing religious attitudes towards suffering, played a part in changing attitudes towards disease. Disease had come to be regarded as unacceptable, in a world in which people had come to believe in man's scientific skills, and lost its old rationale, as part of God's punishment or man's trials in a worldly "vale of tears". That in itself was a challenge to received religious interpretations of illness. However, it could be said that Christian Science, perhaps because of its high social profile, helped to encourage a positive approach as an aspect of therapy, and drew attention - albeit not in its own terms- to the duality of mind and body which may have promoted the techniques of self-help and preventative medicine.

Chapter 7.Christian Science and the Law.

In Britain, responsible adult citizens have a common law right to choose their own religion and method of healing in times of illness, without interference from the state, except when these should involve harm to others. During the earlier years of the Christian Science movement in Britain, however, there was some cause for alarm and a call for a revision of the law when some cases came before the courts involving Christian Scientists, Higher Thought practitioners and members of the sect known as the Peculiar People. In the case of Christian Scientists, the uncertainty revolved around the standing of Christian Science practitioners and whether they were to be viewed as religious operators or medical practitioners. Coroners, judges and juries frequently had little or no knowledge of Christian Science and acted simply in accordance with current prejudices.

Was a Christian Science practitioner, who was treating a serious case by relying merely on prayer to produce healing, culpably negligent in failing to call in a medical doctor? The situation was made more difficult by the fact that a Christian Scientist practitioner received payment for the treatment, which he (or she) rendered, which, as far as the courts could see, consisted of doing very little, especially when an orthodox clergyman would have prayed free of charge. The fee placed the Christian Science practitioner into the situation of a hired practitioner, who was apparently doing nothing to earn it. A further complication arose when the Christian Science practitioner had formerly been registered as a medical practitioner or had been a nurse. In such cases it could be assumed that the practitioner would be medically aware of the gravity of a serious illness. The questions before

the jury then was in which capacity the practitioner was acting and whether the patient knew and approved of the treatment being given.

Children and Christian Science "Fanaticism".

In the early years of the movement, excessive enthusiasm existed in Christian Science circles and this led to reliance on mental treatment which sometimes failed. This, then, attracted the attention of the press, which saw these cases as particularly newsworthy. Through the press, these cases excited public attention, and Christian Science was publicly indicted. Both the Christian Scientists and the Peculiar People were especially criticised with regard to the treatment of children. Several cases came before the coroners' courts and in some instances the criminal courts, in which it was alleged that children had been allowed to die without medical treatment. Although in more recent times the Christian Science authorities have recognized the force of new laws and seek medical attention for their children in serious cases, in the early decades of the century the position was much less clearly defined.

Christian Science literature in recent times has encouraged parents to try Christian Science healing first, and to seek medical aid only to comply with the law when the illness becomes serious:

"Although a serious accident or sudden severe illness would necessitate the immediate calling of a doctor to attend a child in obedience to this law, a decision in the majority of other cases does not have to be made in a hurry, and there is normally sufficient opportunity for a healing to be brought about quickly through Christian Science treatment".¹

¹ Legal Rights and Obligations of Christian Scientists in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, issued by The District Manager of Christian Science Committees on Publication for Great Britain and Ireland, April 1980, p.10

In this modern booklet, Christian Scientists were urged to acquiesce in a doctor's recommendations for treatment, but the motive appears to have been to avoid the risk of breaking the law. If, after making this decision for this reason parents remained committed to their religion, Christian Science treatment might continue even if medical treatment were in progress. Otherwise, if medical treatment was voluntarily chosen as an alternative, Christian Science treatment must cease, since the two were regarded as incompatible. This applied to cases not only of children but to all Christian Scientists. However, if Christian Science treatment had been chosen without effecting a cure, then medical aid might be summoned as a last resort. Such a procedure occurred in many cases reported in the press in the early years of the century, when physicians complained that they had been summoned too late to act effectively. The justification for obeying the law (rather than persisting in metaphysical treatment) was supported by the biblical injunction: "to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:17). This conforms to Mrs Eddy's sentiments regarding service to one's country in times of national crisis, for instance, answering the call to military service: she did not encourage her followers to break the law. Christian Scientists have always looked forward to a time when Christian Science healing would be considered a responsible alternative to medicine and recognised by law - views which Mrs Eddy would certainly have held.

The Frederic Case

The death in 1898 of Harold Frederic, a well known American writer living in London, led to the first major court case in Britain involving a Christian Science practitioner. Two other major cases involving adults brought

the movement notoriety in the courts: the cases of Major Lester and Major Whyte. Other Christian Science cases came before the coroners' courts fairly regularly, reported mainly in the medical press, but these were of less moment. These cases, far from discouraging interest in Christian Science, however, appear to have spurred interest further.

The British Weekly's leading editorial of October 27th 1898 commented on the Frederic case with little surprise at the death of the author. The avoidance of any direct reference to Christian Science was notable.

"Of the painful circumstances attending it (his death) I have nothing to say. Some of those who knew Mr. Frederic have thought for some time that death might be welcome to him.....He had no mercy upon himself, and almost seemed to think that he might defy with impunity the laws of health".

That "those who knew him well" preferred to "ignore what, after all, they are not in a position fully to understand", was reflected in a current edition of the Saturday Review. The writer (and editor) Frank Harris, was a friend of Frederic's and visited him at his home shortly before his death. He was therefore aware of the circumstances surrounding it, but in his article he did not mention Christian Science, giving only an assessment of Frederic's life and literary achievements.¹

It is evident that to those who knew him, Frederic's adoption of Christian Science was considered an unfortunate aberration in an otherwise brilliant career. Even for those with no direct interest in the case, it

¹ Saturday Review, 22 October 1898.

provided the opportunity, particularly for the coroner, to make a public pronouncement against unorthodox religious movements - one of the earliest instances with respect to Christian Science. The Observer opened its lengthy report on the case by describing the "large amount of interest, healthy and unhealthy", which the inquest had excited. It stated briefly the facts of the case, which were that Frederic, who was living with a Miss Kate Lyon, called in a Christian Science friend of his, Mrs Mills, during a rheumatic and cardiac illness. He died, but professional medical evidence suggested that had Frederic been given orthodox medical treatment, his life would have been saved, and there was some conflicting testimony about his mental state.¹

On this evidence, the coroner's jury returned a verdict of manslaughter against both Miss Lyon and Mrs Mills and they were committed for trial. The report emphasised that Christian Science healers took fees for treatment, the basis for which purported to come from an "appeal to a higher Power". Payment was justified by the Biblical text: "The labourer is worthy of his hire", although, as The Observer remarked, "that may not strike most of us as entirely to the point". The newspaper took the opportunity to remark that a "large number of men and women, mostly of fair education and good social position" had announced in public meetings their cures from serious illness. It emphasised that these people were at liberty to allow themselves to be treated according to any method which they chose, "Nor is there any reason why they should not pay for it.....so long as they perfectly apprehend what it is they get for their money".

¹ The Observer, 13 November 1898.

The verdict of the coroner's jury was that Frederic was influenced by Lyon and Mills when in a state of mental and physical helplessness, so that he neglected to take medical advice, with the result that his death was accelerated. The two women were arrested but later released on bail. A later report of a press interview with Mrs Mills at the Bryanston Street Reading Rooms revealed her as saying that she could not understand why the case had aroused such "extraordinary commotion in this matter-of-fact age". It was a striking example, she said, of the remarkable ignorance of the general public. She declared, "truth will come at last, and with it our vindication."¹ The case came before the Central Criminal Court in December 1898, but no evidence was offered by Mr. Horace Ivory for the prosecution, and the verdict was not guilty.

The Major Lester Case.

A similar case occurred in 1898 involving the death of an army officer, Major Cecil Lester, an instructor in military topography at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. The *Lancet*, which reported many Christian Science cases, opened its report by declaring that "We cannot in the public interest forbear to call attention to the facts elicited at an inquest held on October 8th by Mr. G.F. Rounieu on Major Cecil Lester....who died on October 5th after being attended for a month by a lady 'Christian Scientist'"² (the quotation marks were a common occurrence in any references to Christian Science in the press in the early period). The case afforded a further opportunity for both lawyers and doctors to express their antipathetic views of Christian Science, which

¹ The Daily Telegraph, 10 November 1898.

² The Lancet, 15 October 1898.

were carefully recorded by medical reporters especially, and appeared in the reports of the case in the medical journals.¹

Major Lester was suffering from "tuberculosis peritonitis" and between August 19th and September 5th 1898, he was under the care of a Dr. Clarke, the principal medical officer of the college, and his colleague. The patient's condition grew very serious, and his wife and father were informed that he could not be expected to recover. On September 5th, Dr. Clarke was informed that a Christian Scientist had been summoned and that his services would no longer be needed. The practitioner, Mrs Esther Grant, began "absent" treatment immediately, before seeing the patient. General Lester, in his evidence, said that there had been a marked improvement in his son's condition after Mrs Grant's treatment began, but he did not know whether to dismiss this as coincidence.

On 5th October, Major Lester died, and Dr. Clarke, not having seen the patient for a month, refused to issue a death certificate. A post-mortem testified to the accuracy of Dr. Clarke's diagnosis. The jury, finding that Major Lester died from tuberculosis peritonitis, added the following riders to their verdict, firstly that they were entirely satisfied with the action and treatment of the doctors, and secondly that they desired to express their sense of abhorrence at the "so-called treatment of the deceased by Mrs Grant as representing the Christian Scientist Society in not using material means for the alleviation of his suffering".

¹ The Lancet, 15 October 1898, Vol 2, p. 1000; The British Medical Journal, 15 October 1898, Vol.2, p.1187.

The Lancet editorial endorsed this view. In supporting Dr. Clarke as a man of high repute, "no consideration or kindly thought was likely to be overlooked in the efforts made on behalf of his suffering brother officer", they felt it "rather to be our duty, our solemn duty, to warn Christian Scientists of the grave responsibility which they incur in regard to the health and lives of their fellow-beings". The editorial emphasised that "their methods of so-called treatment are ignorant devices, spurious in themselves and altogether unscientific and opposed to common sense.

"We feel it further, to be our duty to point out that apart from evils which may result to individual members of the community from it, the Christian Science treatment is neither more nor less than a fin-de-siecle fad, a drawing-room cult, and that is the counterpart of the culpable negligence which has brought the Peculiar People of the less educated classes within the range and operation of the criminal law of the country."¹

Apart from comments in the medical journals, the case stimulated discussion in other newspapers in which individuals were able to air their views regarding the standing of Christian Scientists before the law and the vulnerability of the public to Christian Science. An editorial in the *British Weekly* commented on the series of articles by Anne Harwood (see Chapter 2) which it had published, in which the writer had brought the readers' attention to articles published by *Truth* magazine, to which the Christian Scientists had attempted no reply. *Truth* had reminded the public of the liability of a "healer" to the charge of manslaughter, should a patient die whilst under treatment. In her articles in *The British Weekly*, Anne Harwood remarked that there was no doubt that the law permitted Christian Scientists to proselytise,

¹ The Lancet, 15 October 1898.

since they did not wilfully and falsely pretend to be regular practitioners. The *British Weekly* editorial commented on the timeliness of Miss Harwood's articles in view of the inquest at Camberley on Major Lester and remarked on the similarity between what had appeared in the Harwood articles which it had just printed, and the discussion in the case before the coroner, and also on a "striking illustration" of a point made in the Harwood articles, that the patients of Christian Scientists were likely to be either "nervous invalids" or those who were practically given up by the physicians.¹

The *Christian Science Journal* of December 1898 printed a letter from Lester's sister, Mrs K. Suart, which revealed that not all the available evidence pertaining to the case may have been fully considered in reaching the verdict. The letter was addressed to Mrs Field King and read out at a Sunday evening service. Mrs Suart said that she wished to make known that her brother did not suffer under Christian Science treatment as people insisted he must have done. She asserted that after Christian Science treatment commenced and until his death, he "never again had intense or unbearable pain, only on one occasion.....it seems that others believe we could stand by and see intense pain, day after day, and do nothing to relieve it". She further emphasised that the meeting should be made aware of the following: that Dr. Clarke had said, "freely, generously and emphatically....'By all means try Christian Science if it is any comfort to you, and if it does him any good no one will be as glad as I'". The governor of the college, according to Mrs Suart, uttered the same words, which Dr. Clarke repeated to her the next morning.

¹ The *British Weekly*, 13 October 1898.

Mrs Stuart emphasised that at the inquest, this free permission was not mentioned; it was, she claimed, deliberately withheld, and "the lie allowed to go forth that we had dismissed the doctors". She further remarked that she would have been present at the inquest, but did not know of it nor of the healers being summoned until it was too late.

Treatment of Practitioners in the Courts.

From the foregoing, and from press reports describing the exchanges in the courts, it seems that some members of the legal profession regarded Christian Science practitioners as irresponsible members of society who made a profit out of innocent people. In 1898, both Mrs Mills, who treated Harold Frederic, and Mrs Grant, who took the case of Major Lester, even suffered some mockery in the courts. At the Frederic inquest, held at Kenley, much laughter, provoked by the lawyer, ensued at the cross-examination of Mrs Mills. This occurred several times but was particularly marked when she was being questioned about payment for her treatment. The coroner remarked:

"Whatever might be said for or against Christian Science, no words of mine would in any adequate measure convey to Mrs Mills my utter abhorrence of her so-called treatment, and it is difficult to realise that in the enlightened days of the nineteenth century sensible and intelligent people should lend themselves to such an absurd course of procedure."¹

Other practitioners were criticised and jeered at in court by coroners, juries and lawyers. In 1910, an inquest took place at Urmston, near Manchester, on Walter Stratham, aged 53, who had died whilst under the care

¹ The Daily Telegraph, 22 October 1898.

of a practitioner, William Pitfield.¹ Pitfield refused to admit at the inquest that the treatment had been a failure, and was accused by the foreman of the jury of juggling away Stratham's life.² A verdict of "death from septic poisoning" was returned, although the coroner remarked that if the deceased had been a child, a verdict of manslaughter might have been returned.

Several protests were made about the case from individuals (possibly with Christian Science affiliations) who wrote to their local newspapers. One person named Whitcroft criticised the antagonistic attitude assumed by the coroner and his jury towards the practitioner. He wrote that they "addressed him in a manner which even had he been a criminal would have been a disgrace to any English court of justice, and in fact would not be permitted in a law court".³ Various members of the jury had called Pitfield a blasphemer, fool, swindler, and so on. One jurymen accused him of killing the patient and another suggested the lethal chamber for Christian Scientists. The outrage that Christian Scientists charged for their treatment, felt by many members of the public, was expressed in this case by calling the witness a "pigeon plucker", although as he had stressed, the fee of ten shillings a week had included three visits a week to the patient, who lived on the outskirts of Manchester, and each of which occupied from two to three hours. These somewhat extreme reactions caused by practitioners in the courts induced Whitcroft to remark that when a Christian Scientist had been asked for help

¹ The Lancet, 15 October 1910.

² The Lancet, 8 October 1910.

³ The Gloucestershire Echo, 7 October 1910. This letter, describing Whitcroft's reaction, is one example of several reports and letters to local newspapers from individuals protesting about the treatment of Pitfield at the inquest, which are preserved by the Committees on Publication.

"...and has given it as faithfully in his way as a doctor does in his, should that help in some cases prove ineffectual, such failure does not entitle a coroner or his jury to disgrace themselves and their office by hurling invectives at the witnesses called. Surely, when any occasion arises for these inquiries to be held the public has a right to expect that they should be conducted decently."

The Chisolm Case.

The first court case involving the death of a child of Christian Science parents occurred in that of Chisolm, 1906. Two years after this, the "medical aid" clause, which had been omitted in the earlier statute of 1889, and which declared it a form of neglect not to call a doctor when this was perceived as necessary, was restored in the Children Act, 1908.¹ Christian Scientists doubt whether this addition to the previous statute was reinstated as a result of the Chisolm case, and no mention of Christian Science is to be found in the parliamentary debates. However, that the re-wording of the act occurred at a time when Christian Science in Britain was undergoing its most severe period of public criticism may not have been entirely coincidental.

The Chisolm case induced the commonplace press reaction towards Christian Science. Robert Chisolm was acquitted of manslaughter, but convicted of the misdemeanour of neglecting his child who was suffering from diphtheria. A lenient view was taken by the judge and jury at the Old Bailey, who saw this neglect as being occasioned by fanaticism and not by indifference to the welfare of the child. It was perhaps implied in this judgment that the ultimate responsibility lay with Christian Science, or more specifically with Mrs Eddy, in promoting an ideology which misled individuals. It was clear from

¹ Described in correspondence from the District Manager of the Committees on Publication.

the difference in court attitudes towards practitioners and the "victims" that practitioners were seen as the representatives of the movement and as such a target for attack.¹

The medical press noted that although similar leniency had been extended towards the Peculiar People who broke the law, Christian Scientists seemed to attract even greater sympathy from the courts, and it was suggested that this might be because they were drawn mainly from the wealthier classes and could afford good lawyers to defend them.² However, the treatment of practitioners in the courts challenges this proposition.

One point of concern arising from the case was the possibility that infectious disease might be spread if the authorities were not notified of relevant cases. As the law stood, the offender must have been aware of the nature of the illness, and this was recognised as not being possible if they had not obtained a medical diagnosis. At the Chisolm trial, it emerged that three of the child's schoolfellows developed diphtheria shortly afterwards, and these cases were traceable to him. Again, as with the matter of medical aid, Christian Scientists comply with the law in this regard and would not have supported Chisolm if he had knowingly neglected to report the case. However, in this instance, the diphtheria was apparently not of the kind immediately recognisable and an ex-nurse, who attended the child as a Christian Science practitioner, had diagnosed the case as mumps, and therefore not strictly serious enough to require that medical aid be summoned. This provided the judge with a further reason for leniency. Had Chisolm realised

¹ *The Lancet*, 1 December 1906.

² *Loc.cit.*

the severity of the illness, would he have complied with the laws regarding child neglect and the notification of infectious disease?¹

The Major Whyte Case.

An important court case occurred at the Central Criminal Court in 1906 involving the death of Major John Whyte, D.S.O., who died under the care of Dr. George Adcock.² Adcock had recently joined the Christian Scientists but was still listed in the medical register. Mrs Grant, who had also treated Major Whyte, and Captain Douglas Baynes were involved in this case. Major Whyte had come across Christian Science whilst at the convalescent home for officers at Osborne, Isle of Wight. The matron of the home had helped Whyte to contact Christian Scientists when she thought that the doctors could do no more for him, according to evidence heard at the trial. Whyte's mother, who was a Roman Catholic living in Dublin, had visited Whyte when he went to London where he was first under the care of Captain Baynes, and possibly of Mrs Grant.

Later, Dr. Adcock took over the case, and Mrs Whyte asked him if he would treat her son as a medical practitioner and not as a Christian Scientist. This, Adcock failed to do, although he had apparently given his word that he would. Apart from a mild powder which was used in an attempt to alleviate the very severe bedsores which had developed as a result of paralysis (Whyte had originally suffered a fractured spine when he fell from a horse), nothing further was done in a medical sense. Whyte eventually died

¹ According to information given by the COP, six of Chisolm's children had already died under medical treatment. Two other cases involving children of Christian Scientists occurred in 1913 and both ended in acquittal.

² The Daily Telegraph, 28 June 1906.

from general septic poisoning as a result of the virtually untreated bedsores.

Adcock was tried for manslaughter in July 1906 at the Old Bailey, but the outcome was that the Attorney General ordered that a nolle prosequi should be entered, because of the disagreement of the jury about Adcock's conduct. He had been charged not as a Christian Scientist, but as a medical attendant who had failed to exercise "care, attention, and proper skill" towards Major Whyte. It seemed clear from the evidence that the latter's relatives knew that Adcock was a qualified medical practitioner and were basing their hopes for Whyte's recovery on this. However, Whyte did not employ Adcock in this capacity and would, as the trial brought out, have refused anything other than Christian Science treatment. It was probably this evidence which acquitted Adcock.

The trial was significant as far as the standing of Christian Scientists before the law was concerned, since it finally established the activities of adherents as outside the jurisdiction of criminal law. *The Lancet* criticised this point of law which condemned medical men to punishment for negligence and seemed to protect "foolish or designing persons" who had "abandoned Christianity and avowed a disbelief in science". As the law stood, the Christian Science healer could "cozen his victims out of life itself by falsely pretending that he has the power to cure disease, and can earn a living by doing so with perfect safety- to himself".¹ In spite of these protests from the medical profession, no change in the law concerning adults occurred. The general interest aroused by the case was evident from accounts in the daily press, which described the public seats in the courtroom as "more

¹ *The Lancet*, 28 July 1906.

crowded than ever, women being again in a large majority among the spectators" on the fourth day of the trial.¹

Other Cases.

A considerable number of cases involving "death by Christian Science" came before coroners at inquests, held because of the unusual circumstances of the deaths.² These were often reported in the medical press. However, in spite of criticism from the juries, verdicts of "natural death" or "death from natural causes" or death from the illness concerned were carried. In the case of Mary Elizabeth Dixon, who at 58 had died from bronchitis whilst under the care of two Christian Scientists: Elizabeth Davidson, who described herself as a Christian Science student, and Bessie Hales, a trained nurse, the jury at first added to their verdict of death from acute bronchitis, that death "had been accelerated by the gross neglect of the two women mentioned and especially by that of the ex-nurse". The coroner, however, substituted for this "severe censure for neglecting to secure medical aid", since the jury's accusation amounted to a charge of manslaughter. Realising how the law stood, it was probably apparent to the coroner that unless there were extenuating

¹ The Daily Telegraph, 2 July 1906.

² See e.g. Chelsea 1906 (BMJ, 10 March 1906)
 S.W. London 1906 (BMJ, 19 May 1906)
 Hammersmith 1906 (BMJ 27 October 1906)
 Richmond 1907 (Lancet, 18 January 1908)
 Richmond 1908 (BMJ, 18 January 1908)
 Sutton 1909 (BMJ, 24 April 1909)
 Worthing 1909 (BMJ, 18 September 1909)
 London 1909 (Lancet, 6 November 1909)
 Chelsea 1910 (Lancet, 13 August 1910)
 Urmston (Nr. Manchester) (Lancet, 15 October 1910)
 Chelsea 1911 (Lancet, 24 June 1911)

Some of these cases have already been mentioned in this chapter.

circumstances, a criminal court would dismiss a manslaughter charge as others had been dismissed.¹

Similarly, the inquest held at Chelsea in 1910 on the death of Elizabeth Rowe, who was a nurse, returned a verdict of death from natural causes. Rowe, who was 34, had been suffering from tuberculosis and dropsy and in any case could not have lived long, according to the physician who called after death. He claimed, however, that medical attention might have prolonged her life and relieved discomfort.²

Although Christian Science was not at issue directly, a case in which the practitioner described himself as practising Higher Thought illustrates further the general attitude of the courts to unorthodox forms of therapeutic practice. In June 1914, Miss Kate Addison Scott, who was 37, and had been interested in Christian Science, had died whilst under the care of Orlando Miller, at Spring-grove House, Isleworth. At the inquest in Hounslow, Miller described himself as a teacher, lecturer and healer. Replying to the coroner, Miller, when he was asked about his meetings, denied that his work was Christian Science or faith healing. Miller conducted a form of Higher Thought healing along physical lines, using injections, exercise, appliances and laying on of hands. He lectured about the practice weekly at Bechstein Hall. He, who had studied medicine and mechanical healing at Denver University College, U.S.A., claimed that he would call in a doctor, whereas a Christian Scientist would not. He had administered drugs and raw food to Miss Scott, who had consulted him for cure of paralysis, but kept her without food for two

¹ The Lancet, 18 January 1908.

² The Lancet, 13 August 1910.

days and a night, whilst administering dangerous drugs by injection. It was after this combination of drug administration and starvation technique that the patient died. The jury returned a verdict of natural death but added the following rider:

"That the Coroner should severely censure Mr. Miller for administering a dangerous drug which might have accelerated death. A trained nurse, who was in attendance, should be reported to the hospital which granted her diploma, and we express our appreciation of the medical evidence as placed before us."¹

The coroner said he quite agreed with the rider. Addressing Mr. Miller, the coroner said:

"You are deserving of the gravest censure for treating this woman in a very improper way. Fortunately the medical evidence is in your favour, or you might have found yourself in difficulties. It was clearly your duty to send for a doctor much sooner than you did. The only extraordinary part of this case is the evidence which it affords of the easy way in which the public are taken in by these quasi-religious faith healers".²

Although this case does not belong strictly to the history of Christian Science practice, it shares some features with it, and no doubt in the eyes of the courts and the public at large there was little to choose between them. The courts' strictures on "quasi-religious faith healers" was a general and all-embracing assault on a genre of practice of which the fine

¹ *The Observer*, 12 July 1914. Also reported in *The Morning Advertiser*, 11 June 1914.

² *The Observer*, 12 July 1914.

distinctions made among mental healers regarding their precise beliefs and the legitimation of their methods was a matter of little consequence to the law.

Questions Arising from the Cases.

Through the publicity given to cases of death among people who had been undergoing Christian Science treatment, a somewhat distorted view of the movement was disseminated, and some misapprehensions occurred among judges and juries to whom beliefs of this kind were novel and incomprehensible. People saw the conduct of practitioners as alien and abhorrent in a civilised society, and the courts provided a context where Christian Scientists, already under attack from other quarters, came face to face with the British legal establishment, which epitomised British tradition and values. However, the cases tended to convey, through the press, the impression that adherents were coerced, and sacrificed on the "altar of Christian Science", whereas Christian Scientists (or their kinsfolk) regarded themselves as being free to choose between Christian Science and orthodox medical treatment.

Fatalities appear to have decreased in later years, or at least, Christian Scientists who refuse medical aid did not receive as much publicity, although it is true that since about 1940, for instance, there has been no court case in Britain involving the death of a child of Christian Science parents. Paradoxically, the advance of medical science may have been partly responsible for this, together with the greater circumspection of Christian Science practitioners, since most Christian Scientists have eventually come to summon medical aid if they were failing to "make a demonstration" of "knowing the truth". Some of the early deaths might have occurred regardless of treatment, although members of the medical profession usually disputed this when giving evidence. Before the development of effective antibiotics and

other drugs, Christian Science treatment might, in some cases, have been no less effective than medical treatment.

Although The Mother Church has emphasised that the continuation of Christian Science treatment in very serious illness is a matter of personal choice (except, in the case of children, where there are legal obligations), many Christian Scientists have regarded summoning a doctor tantamount to failure, and this reluctance may have led the courts to suppose that it was forbidden by the Christian Science authorities. The courts also found it difficult to categorize the practitioner, who acted as a healer through the power of prayer, but who took payment as if for a service. In this respect, Christian Science obviously contravened the conventions of both the medical profession and the clergy. A minister was expected to pray without monetary reward whilst physicians were paid but they performed a material service. The Christian Science practitioner did not earn his fee in this way and had no interest in the disease itself: the only explanation in the eyes of the courts for his charging fees was that of extortion, and the practice of Christian Science was seen as a fraud. This view was a major factor in the incrimination of practitioners and one reason for the abuse they received in court.

No practitioner was ever convicted for the practice of Christian Science, and some people, especially in the medical profession, were outraged that British law allowed Christian Scientists effective freedom to practise.¹ This was strongly expressed in the medical press and even lesser known cases were reported in the medical journals. After the First World War, reports of

¹ The Chisolm case particularly, stimulated this type of response from the Lancet, in an article which was a typical response of the medical profession to the Christian Science deaths: *The Lancet*, 1 December 1906.

court hearings became less frequent in the medical press. The diminution of reports might reflect a decrease in the incidence of deaths, or an increased tendency for Christian Scientists to seek medical attention.

Chapter 8.The Christian Science Joke.

In the first two decades of this century, when Christian Science was beginning to make some impact on British society, a considerable number of jokes and cartoons aimed at ridiculing the central tenets of the faith and its following, appeared in both the religious and secular press. In view of the vigilance of the contemporary Christian Science Committees on Publication, particularly in the work of Frederick Dixon, in answering criticisms in the press, it is perhaps surprising that no attempt was made to refute the jokes. Indeed, present day Christian Scientists whom I have interviewed had no knowledge of these early humorous criticisms until recently informed of their existence. Whilst perceiving the humour of what was implied, contemporary Christian Scientists regretted that such jokes encouraged what they saw as a misunderstanding of the literalism of their denial of matter and of bodily discomfort.

It is hardly surprising that the general British public saw Christian Science as an ideal target for humour. It challenged established religious assumptions to an unreconcilable extent and as an American import, it showed many characteristics which were perceived in early 20th century Britain as bizarre and suitable for raillery. Whilst other religions that deviate from accepted religious norms have been subject to ridicule (such as the Jehovah's Witnesses or the Scientologists), Christian Science excited a more imaginative humorous response. Central to this response was the Christian Scientist's view of "reality" and worldly materialism, which challenged common sense not only in religious terms but in everyday life. Whilst Christian denominations acknowledge a spiritual realm, generally they distinguish it sharply from the

material world and, in practice, recognize that its influence there is limited. Christian Science, however, claims that the spiritual is the sole reality and that the material world is illusion. Awareness of this "truth" alters the individual's perception of the material world, and should render his experience of that world as entirely in accord with the assumption that what is spiritually good is the actual reality.

Apart from the obvious ground, that this reasoning defied common sense and was thus open to ridicule, Christian Science, more than other movements which proclaim healing by faith, was particularly vulnerable to caricature because its tenets asserted that the material world, including the body, was susceptible to spiritual manipulation. The claim of observable material results was the *raison d'être* of the faith, the "proof" that the system was "the truth" and the main ground for persuading others to join. Christian Scientists, because their creed demanded that they claim that all material impediments or imperfections, from a broken bone to the experience of a draughty room, might be dissipated by correct application of metaphysical understanding, were placed in a position that rendered them vulnerable butts for ridicule. Were their strongest claims to be taken literally, material phenomena would indeed yield to superior spiritual power, but in practice all that Christian Scientists could offer were accounts of less spectacular spiritual influence. Christian Scientists tended to concentrate on advertising these less dramatic results as "proof" that their system worked and as a way of convincing others of their claims.

All this might have provided, in the ordinary way, reason enough for mockery of a strange new American sect which challenged both common sense and previously unquestioned spiritual and material views. However, the probability

that the religious press and to some extent the secular press, published jokes that were "going the rounds" in order to denigrate Christian Science should not be overlooked. Editors of the religious press, particularly, may have recognised in ridicule a weapon against a movement that was popularly supposed to be making serious inroads in Britain, particularly among the better-to-do. Unfavourable reports of Christian Science and some New Thought groups had been and continued to be published in both the religious and secular press, and the attitudes of many journalists and editors were in varying degrees hostile.

In a 1976 study, Powell emphasised a number of points which can be applied to the humorous response stimulated by Christian Science. He recognised that humour was a form of social control encouraged by the "Establishment" with its domination of media. While individuals learned through current humour what constituted "normal" or "deviant" practice, the "Establishment", or the dominant members of any political system had interests in maintaining ideas of "normal" or legitimate actions and beliefs. He argued that

"humour is quite regularly used in a generally unsystematic, almost certainly non-conspiratorial though routine manner, to reinforce the 'world-view', values and norms of the 'Establishment' and to ridicule and invalidate those who constitute a threat".¹

Powell emphasized that humour was an initial reaction to something regarded as not particularly serious- however, perhaps the response to Christian Science differed somewhat from this hypothesis. Whilst, with the example of the suffragettes, the response was at first mocking and later more serious,

¹ Chris Powell, "Humour as a Form of Social Control", in A.J. Chapman and H.C. Foot, *It's a Funny Thing, Humour* (International Conference in Humour and Laughter) Cardiff 1976.

Christian Science provoked a variety of responses both from society at large and from the "Establishment", more or less simultaneously. The "Establishment" response to Christian Science can be seen in denunciations by the Anglican church and the medical profession. Humour was only one response, perhaps all the more pertinent because of the sprinkling of the socially prominent whom it had recruited to its ranks.

The jokes originated among members of the "public" where some hostility existed, particularly as evidenced by the wide and often critical press coverage. Public reactions to Christian Science, as revealed in letters to the press, ranged from jocularity to outrage and condemnation. Blase reactions from Oxford students, for example, showed a predisposition not to treat Christian Science with any seriousness, and although it is not possible to locate the origins of the jokes, it was people from the upper classes who mainly provided the material.

Jokes about Christian Science readily embraced ridicule not only of a religion which reversed common sense, but also of what was perceived as American faddism, and feminism - represented in the leadership of Mrs Eddy, and the predominance of women among Christian Science practitioners. Although other "new" religions of various origins had emanated from America, Christian Science presented itself as an appropriate target. Its teachings were far enough removed from accepted perceptions of reality and biblical teachings to protect reactions of ridicule from any common suggestion of blasphemy. Aspects of other "American" religions, such as, for example, the polygamy of the Mormons, the anachronistic lifestyle of the Shaker sect or the proselytising practices of Jehovah's Witnesses have at times been targets for ridicule. But Christian Science went further and diverged more radically from easily

recognized biblical standards by virtue of its system of metaphysics. Whilst some Eastern religions and philosophies such as Buddhism, questioned basic concepts of reality, Christian Science lacked the respectable antiquity of Buddhism, for which late Victorian England had developed something akin to respectful if distant regard.¹

Newspapers and journals which published Christian Science jokes spanned a wide cultural field and the jokes appeared in both the religious and secular press, reaching a diverse readership. That these newspapers chose to publish jokes at the expense of the Christian Scientists, points to the sect's high profile in society and the extent to which, however inaccurately, its teachings were known. Church newspapers in particular may have had a motive beyond humour for their publication. Their readers were assumed not only to have clearly rejected Christian Science as an absurdity (and thus to be alert to the point of the jokes), but perhaps also to be concerned about the appeal of Christian Science - some clergymen had expressed in the press their belief that, at the beginning of the century, this new religion was responsible for the drop in church attendance.² It is possible, then, that the jokes were published in the religious press as a form of propaganda: whilst the jokes may have appeared innocuous, they encouraged a dismissive if amused attitude towards Christian Science.

¹ See Philip C. Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism*, Cambridge University Press, 1988.

² The Rev. W.S. Swayne, Vicar of St. Peter's, Cranley Gardens, in London's West End, was in a particularly good position to observe the effects of Christian Science on Anglican Church attendance. His views were set out at length in *Church Bells* and *Illustrated Church News*, 27 October 1905.

In the photograph below, the fact that Christian Scientists do not admit the reality of "error", in this case of injury, is taken to the extreme of ridicule.



Figure 1 Sketch, 29 November 1907.

Tender-Hearted Motorist (who has knocked down and run over a fervent Christian Scientist): Dear, dear! What a dreadful accident! Are you very much hurt?

The Christian Scientist (with the utmost cheerfulness): Hurt, Sir? A little rumped perhaps- nothing more.

Whilst Christian Scientists might have regretted an apparently unfair and ignorant portrayal of their beliefs, the jokes were not entirely based on a mistaken understanding of their tenets. It is probable that many members of the public had more knowledge of Mrs Eddy's teachings than is supposed, and cartoonists deliberately chose to misrepresent them, not only for the purposes of the joke, but also to expose what they saw as the crudity of the metaphysical doctrine.

The following "draught" joke, in this case in the form of a cartoon, appeared repeatedly in varying written and pictorial forms in different newspapers and magazines throughout the period.



Figure 2 The Tatler, 2 February 1910.

The joke form of this cartoon, which was published in other newspapers, may also provide the text.

"The Christian Scientist's Chance.

While waiting for a speaker at a public meeting, a pale little man in the audience seemed very nervous. He glanced over his shoulder from time to time, and squirmed and shifted about in his seat. At last, unable to stand it any longer, he arose and demanded, in a high, penetrating voice, "Is there a Christian Scientist in this room?" A woman at the other side of the hall got up and said, "I am a Christian Scientist". "Well, then, madam, requested the

little man, "would you mind changing seats with me?
I'm sitting in a draught".¹

This cartoon is a further illustration of the compounding and elaboration of this basic "error", either deliberate or accidental, in the public's perception of fundamental Christian Science tenets, particularly those concerned with the apparent ability of the believer, similar to that of the Hindu on the bed of nails, to raise his consciousness above physical discomfort or pain. Perhaps a part of the joke lies in the contrast between two such philosophies. Whereas, if such a comparison were made, the Hindu would possess, in an appropriate context, the integrity of an ancient belief system, the same kind of philosophy, transplanted to the mundane situation of a chilly English lecture hall at what was considered the height of western "civilised" life and manners is incongruous, and enhances the basic point that the denial of the obvious is in any case at odds with common sense. Further, the Christian Scientist in this cartoon is depicted as a woman, fashionably dressed and apparently wealthy. The main contentions in the public's view of Christian Science are brought together in one cartoon- the wealthy circumstances of membership, the high female component and the unacceptable metaphysical elaboration of a crude doctrine.

Socially Undesirable Christian Scientists.

Some public criticism had been levelled at Christian Scientists because of their supposed deviation from "British" standards of decency and uprightness. Such virtues as honesty, the sacredness of family life and the willingness to defend one's country, then often viewed as the minimum standard of behaviour for acceptance into respectable society, were, probably unjustly,

¹ Evening News (Manchester), 2 November 1905.

sometimes seen as lacking among Christian Scientists. Again, it is possibly to the American origin of the movement that this view may be attributed and, because such virtues were often seen as masculine attributes and Christian Science was frequently regarded as a woman's religion, men who were involved with Christian Science were often seen as charlatans. The popular early 20th century novelist, Winifred Graham, in *Christian Murderers* (see Chapter 9) created a character who appeared to view involvement with the sect as a means of economising on medical expenses. This character may have been based on personal acquaintance, but this case illustrates a view held perhaps by others at the time, that some Christian Scientists were prone to seek unscrupulous and easily obtainable advantages over their fellow citizens, to the cost of their families and their country. The moral point is that having abandoned the "true" (Anglican) deity, a downhill moral trend easily occurred. The implication may be that people of dubious nature were recruited more readily into the sect: these characteristics, again, would probably only apply to a male convert, since female Christian Scientists were generally depicted as being silly and irresponsible for their actions.

"The Advantages of a Christian Science Christmas" (below) reinforces the point of material complacency and unscrupulous economy among some men whose families were Christian Scientists, and also highlights the unrealistically optimistic outlook of the Christian Scientist at times of deprivation. The Christmas tree is shown as illusory and "spiritual".

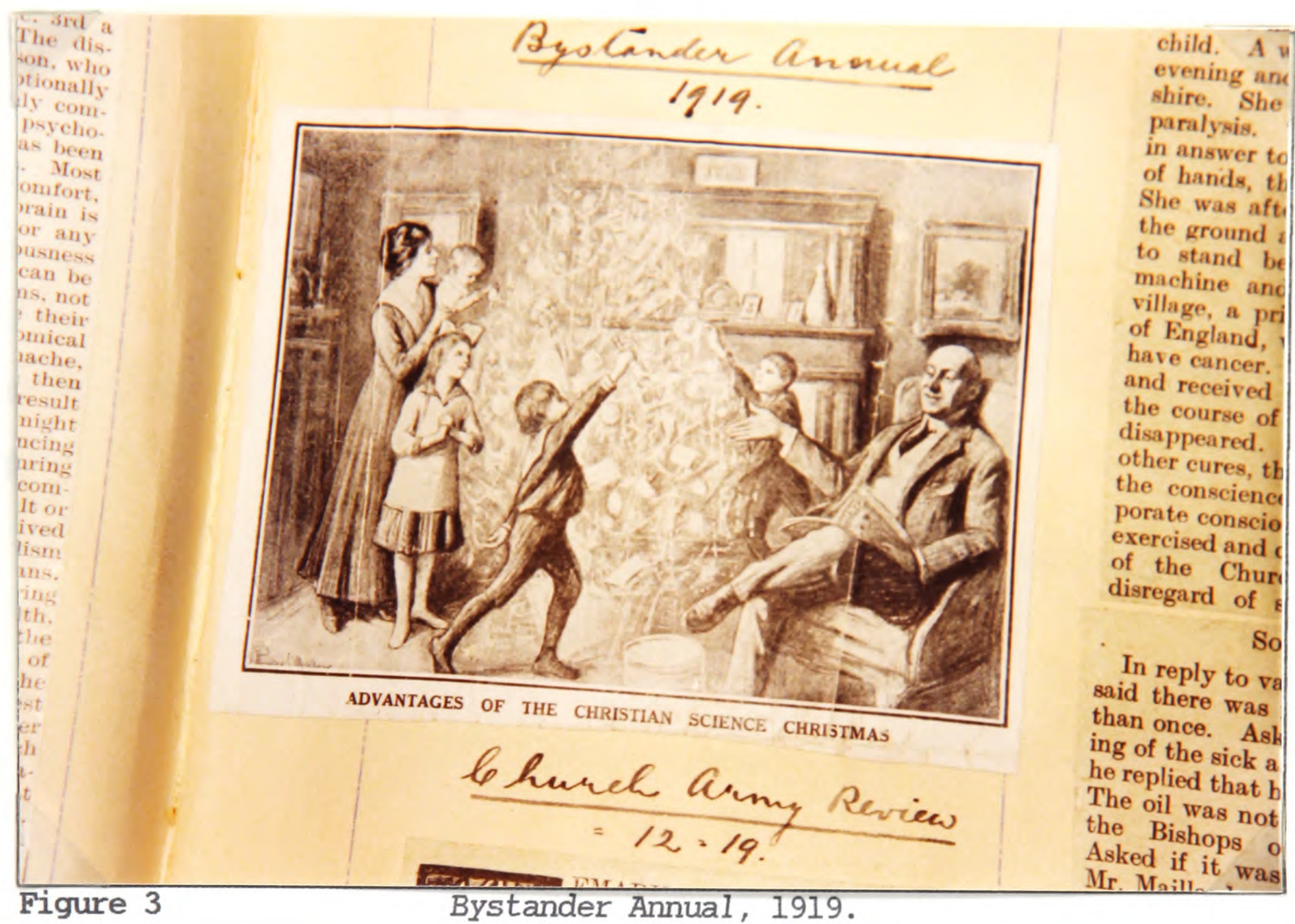


Figure 3

Bystander Annual, 1919.

Although there is a danger of over-interpretation of jokes in retrospect, which may be more than was originally intended, it is not possible to assess in what spirit they were received by readers. To a critic, the wife and children would be viewed as the losers, deceived by both the husband and the Christian Science movement. Nevertheless, the humour is obvious, based once more upon bringing about desired material benefits through "positive" thinking and the hypothetical event, as with all jokes and cartoons, too recognisable a theme to require explanation.

A few cases of "conscientious objectors" arising during World War 1, may have reinforced the view that some Christian Scientists were being socially irresponsible. Mrs Eddy was not a pacifist, however, and there was no reason why Christian Scientists should not be conscripted. Army personnel, serving or retired, were prominent in the movement, as the sizeable congregation at

Aldershot showed. In Figure 4 the woman converses with a man in uniform. Christian Scientists mixed both socially and at church activities with the military. The high incidence of military members of the movement may, however, not have been known to many outsiders: the press focused on the movement as a society cult (although as army personnel involved with Christian Science seemed mainly to be officers, they would usually have been recruited from the upper classes).



Figure 4 London Mail, 15 September 1917.

"I'm glad my husband has taken up Christian Science".
"Why?"
"He can't insist now that he's got to come away for his health this summer?"

Other, somewhat bizarre incidents connected with the name of Christian Science occurred during the war and may have helped to tarnish its reputation: F.L. Rawson, the New Thought teacher sometimes known as a Christian Scientist, established a practice in the west end of London and devoted much of his time during the war to helping soldiers at the Front to apply New Thought principles in overcoming danger. His movement received a bad press in 1917, and some people, not appreciating the subtle differences between New Thought and Christian Science, may have received derogatory impressions, at a time of patriotic fervour, about Christian Scientists' commitments to King and Country, or thought that they sought an easy way through the war. Rawson was accused of profiting from the war, since, like Christian Science practitioners, he charged for his services.

Following these wartime events, the cartoon shown beneath, depicting the Christian Scientist (or perhaps the New Thinker) on the field of battle, is shown as an exposure of cowardice, as a less stressful way of disposing of the enemy, as "absent treatment" required no combat and no risk: the use of language implies that the soldier was "absent" from battle as well as applying a well-known form of Christian Science treatment.

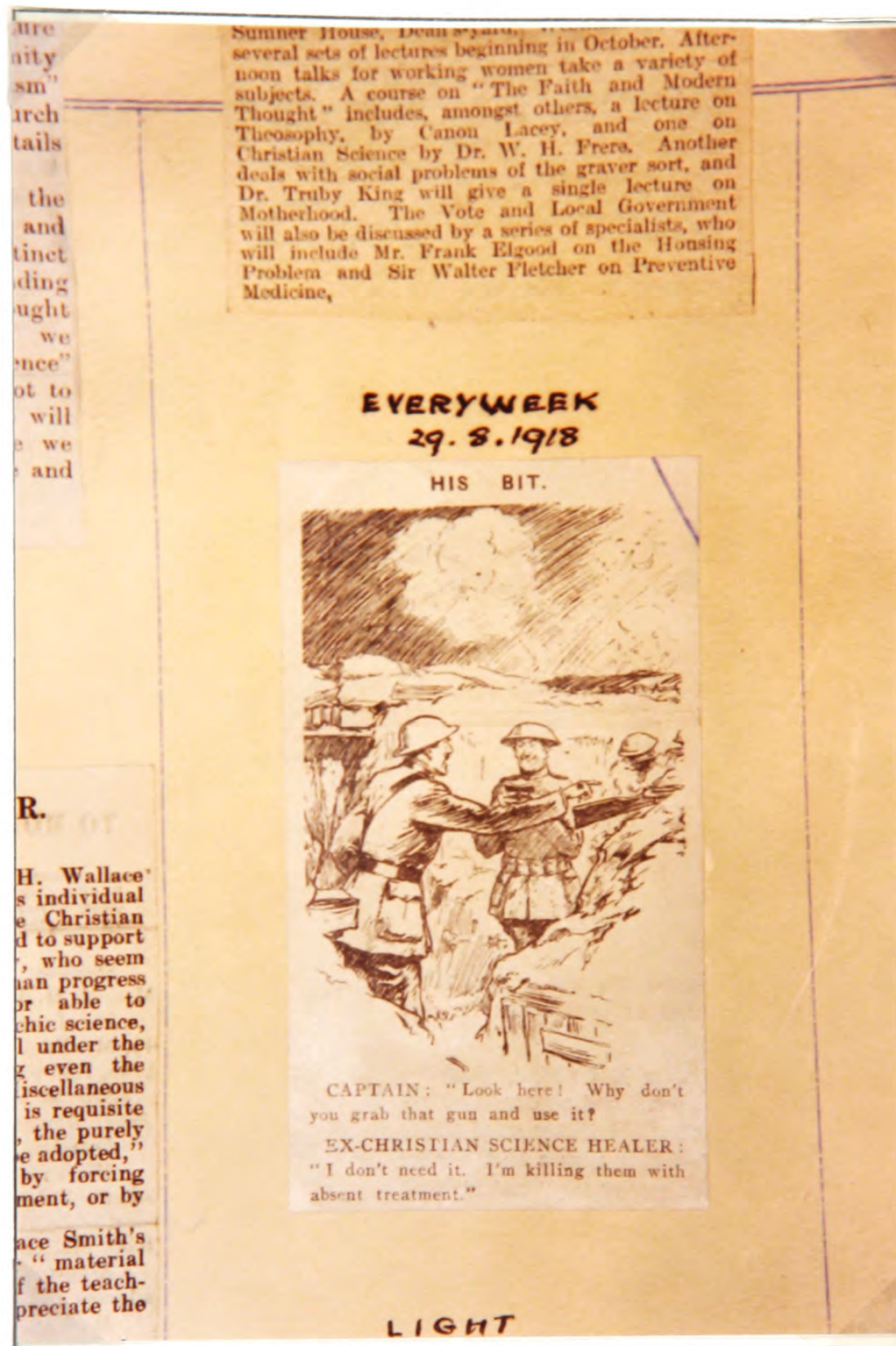


Figure 5 Everyweek, 29 August 1918.

Captain: "Look here! Why don't you grab that gun and use it?"

Ex-Christian Science Healer: "I don't need it. I'm killing them with absent treatment."

However, as Christian Scientists would be quick to assert, no Christian Scientist would apply their principles to bring about a destructive situation.

"Holding the right thought" encompasses the non-existence of war itself- the fighting, being erroneous, was in fact not "really" happening, but was a

terrible illusion brought about by a concentration of the erroneous workings of mortal mind, and perceptible only to persons sharing in the illusion.

From the angle of the joker, on the level at which the joke would have been received by the reader, the method of combat ascribed to the soldier as a Christian Scientist is absurd. In 1918, the growth of the Christian Science movement was a phenomenon which had occurred at roughly the same time as the approach to war, and many Christian Scientists were involved in the fighting. The press publicity given to Christian Science and the topicality of war led to dual interest and unusual possibilities: the humour lies in the uncertainty about a Christian Scientist's tendencies in such an unprecedented situation. The "mistake", however, is deliberate: the joke is that Christian Science tenets are being applied literally, although readers would be aware that an adherent would not interpret his "unworldly" religion in such a way.

Children as Innocents in Christian Science.

Jokes featuring children of Christian Scientists reflected the hostility of doctors and clergy to the attitudes which devotees maintained with respect to children's health-care. The medical profession was concerned about cases of child neglect in illness if a doctor was not called, and lawyers denounced Christian Science when children died as a result of "neglect" (see Chapter 7).

Jokes which featured children may have been used as a means of attack but it is not safe to assume that this was the reason for their publication. Children were a sensitive issue in Christian Science and early members were criticised on this account as, at a later date, were Jehovah's Witnesses with respect to the issue of blood transfusions. The jokes' humour mainly focuses on the child who, consciously or unconsciously, exposes his or her Christian

Scientist parents as foolish and misguided. The incidents are low key, and intended primarily to amuse: no serious accidents or illnesses occur and the incidents (minor accidents or mild illness) merely serve to enable a healing or non-healing to take place. The ridicule is centred on the movement and the children are portrayed as mildly victimised, but not to a dangerous degree.

"Not Really Hurt

The children of Christian Scientists are more convinced devotees than the parents themselves. A story is told in the British Weekly of an urchin named Mary who fell, barking her shin, and began to cry. 'Why, Mary, are you hurt?' asked her aunt. 'No, I aint hurt,' sobbed the little girl, restraining her sobs as best she could. 'But, if you are not hurt, why are you crying?' 'I'm crying,' said Mary 'because I'm mad.' 'And what are you mad about?' 'I'm mad-boo,hoo!' wept the little girl, 'because I can't feel I ain't hurt.' "¹

"When Christian Science began to find firm rooting in a certain town, the little son of a prominent woman who had embraced the faith, and was urging others to take it up, was out of school a day or two because of sickness. When the youngster returned, his teacher, who was well along in years, and possessed an inquiring mind, engaged the youngster in conversation. 'Been sick, Joe?' 'Yes'm.' 'Sick enough to be in bed?' 'Yes'm.' 'What did your mother do for you, Joe, while you were in bed?' asked the teacher, now all expectancy for the reply. 'She mended my knickers,' lisped Joe."²

In the second story, the teacher represents intelligent authority or "establishment", concerned for the welfare of children of Christian Scientists. The mother is portrayed as giving treatment to the boy by concentrating her thoughts while sewing by his bedside. The knowledge that Christian Scientists' treatment frequently consisted of sitting silently in prayer, for days, if necessary, by the side of a sick person, resulted in

¹ Evening News, 31 July 1917.

² Modern Society, 21 March 1908.

considerable ridicule, as well as provoking anger from opponents when the illness was serious.

The use of knowing children in jokes as vehicles for exposing their elders to ridicule was common in other contexts in the 19th century. In the "exposure" of Christian Science, the method was effectively used since its tenets were apparently ridiculous and even a child or an illiterate person would not be fooled by them. Evident in such a view are traces of the traditional religious adage that the innocent can perceive truth or fallacy, as in Hans Christian Andersen's tale of the emperor's clothes. In these stories the children, although powerless to act independently, were perhaps depicted as receiving an orthodox divine protection through their perception of Christian Science as a religious imposter.

"Inside Information.

A Christian Scientist found a small boy sitting under an apple tree doubled up with pain. 'I ate some green apples,' moaned the boy, 'and, oh, how I ache!' 'You don't ache,' answered the Christian Scientist; 'you only think so.' 'That's all right,' said the boy: 'you may think so, but I've got inside information.'"¹

"'Pa,' complained the boy, 'so long as I go to the same school with Tommy Tuff I can't be a Christian Scientist.' 'What,' cried the pillar of the new church, 'why can't you?' 'Cause it is hard to believe that a punch in the jaw is all imagination'." ²

The following story is a variation of the same theme. In this joke, the little girl is portrayed as ideally obedient, and anxious to please her Christian

¹ Ceylon Morning Leader, 17 October 1907.

² Bury Visitor, 4 June 1909.

Scientist mother by trying to convince her that she is also a devotee of the faith. However, her true perception of Christian Science as an absurdity is revealed through making the dog speak for her.

"Bumping the Steps of Truth.

'Mamma, I just now fell downstairs and hit every step the way down!' exclaimed little Mary, who attends the Christian Science Sunday School. 'Did you hurt yourself, dear?' 'No, Mamma. I kept saying, "Truth, truth, truth!" every step I hit, and I didn't hurt myself a bit. But I had Fido in my arms when I fell, and I think he is pretty badly hurt.' 'What makes you think so, dear?' 'Why, every step we hit he yelled "Error, error, error!"'"¹

The same idea is used through a doll (a more common medium, perhaps) which expresses the general reaction against Christian Science through the speech of a precocious child: the vehicle for the joke.

"Here is a story which is going the rounds:- A little girl came running up to her mother, saying- 'Oh, mamma, my doll's very sick, and we don't know what to do for her, and we're afraid she's going to die.' 'Send for a doctor,' said the practical mamma. 'We did, mamma, and he left a pill, but she couldn't swallow it. Then we mixed up a powder in some water for her, but she couldn't swallow that.' 'Well, you'd better try Christian Science on her, then.' 'We did, mamma; but she couldn't swallow that either.'"²

Such childish precocity, in an example of a child perceiving not only the folly of the religion but deliberately gaining a psychological advantage from it, appeared first as a cartoon in 1917 and was repeated as a narrative joke (as they frequently were, appearing in different newspapers either as cartoons or jokes) four years later. The teacher in the latter joke was described as a Christian Scientist, which adds another dimension to the story.

¹ Public Opinion, 6 March 1914.

² Aberdeen Evening Express, 30 September 1916

The teacher has chosen a traditional method of discipline but the boy has placed her in a difficult position. Obviously not persuaded to the faith himself, the child has deliberately placed her in a dilemma through her own belief.



Figure 6 Winning Post Annual, 1917, Summer Number.

"Willie, this hurts me more than it does you.
"What does, teacher?"

Here can be seen the precocity of the 20th century child and his common-sense perception of reality, possibly utilised by the newspaper to discredit what

was depicted as the gullibility of the Christian Scientists, and certainly to provide amusement at their expense. Childish precocity and common sense was sometimes contrasted with the child gullible enough to believe in Christian Science. Again, the field of action is transferred to a doll, which has been unrealistically but typically invested with life by the first child.

"Science from the Nursery:-

First small girl: 'No, I never give my dolly nasty medicine; she's a Christian Scientist.' Second small girl (thoughtfully): 'Well, I s'pose it's all right being a Christian Scientist if you've nuffin' but sawdust in your stummick.'¹

The Lower Classes as Children.

The theme of innocence or foolishness in jokes about Christian Science was carried beyond children. An early 20th century idea of domestic servants as patronised and protected by the wealthy, conforms to the notion that servants were as much at risk from Christian Science employers as the children of Christian Scientists, bearing in mind that many adherents were in a class which at that time usually employed at least one domestic. However, just as children were depicted as vehicles of common sense, so were servants. The following anecdote repeats the theme of obedience. The servant never openly corrects her mistress but succeeds in making clear what she has perceived as the foolishness of Christian Science. The mistress can hardly fail to be shocked into a realisation of the hardships in the lives of the lower classes as a contrast to her own somewhat cushioned existence.

"His Delusion.

Mrs Newthought, a Christian Scientist, has a day girl. One morning she failed to materialise at the proper time, and, upon being questioned as to the cause of her absence, gave as an excuse that her father was very ill with rheumatism of the heart. 'But, Mary,' exclaimed her mistress, 'there is no

¹ Town Topics, 25 November 1921

such thing as rheumatism. Your father only thinks he is ill.' 'Yes, Mum,' agreed Mary. Several days later Mary again failed to put in an appearance. The following morning she took up her duties as usual, but gave no excuse. As an opening to a reprimand, her mistress said: 'I suppose it was your father again, Mary. Does he still think he is ill?' 'Oh, no, mum,' said Mary wearily; 'he thinks now he's dead- we're going to bury him to-morrer.' The reply of the mistress unfortunately is not recorded."¹

A second "servant" anecdote illustrates the mistrust and apprehension with which many of the working class regarded Christian Science. The Irish "help" was apparently aware that the new religion had taken hold upon some members of the English upper classes and was to some degree prepared for some irregularity in religious belief in her new employers. The joke, an "Irish" joke, combines "Irish" and "Christian Science" humour. The high percentage of relatively unsophisticated women from rural Ireland in domestic service during the early part of the century forms the background to the joke. Such women often experienced difficulties in adjusting to "modern" urban households. As the "help" failed to understand household gadgets, so she would have had distrust of Christian Science. The religious newspaper which printed it sought to emphasise the absurdity of Christian Science through the speech of one who had naturally misconceived its basic tenets. The reference to the "fireless cooker" might be seen as Christian Science carried to logical extremes, that Christian Science could be literally applied in the most mundane situations. It is perhaps true that Christian Scientists have always erred on the optimistic side when experiencing deprivations which others might not tolerate, such as cold, and "Bridget" may have imagined that she would be required to cook without the aid of heat.

¹ Christian Age, 15 April 1910

"No Christian Science for Her.
 To the new Irish help the 'lady of the house' was giving explanations. 'Bridget, here is the pantry, here is the cupboard, here is the sink, here is the water heater, here is the gas range and over yonder is the fireless cooker.' But at the mention of the last Bridget broke out with: 'Indade, ma'am, I've bin a cook with a good character for tin years, but if you expects me at my time o'life to cook by Christian science, ye's greatly mistaken.'"¹

Women as Innocents in Christian Science Humour.

As has been seen, Christian Science was mainly regarded as a woman's religion. This was partly because its founder was a woman and also because of its many prominent women adherents. A further reason, as illustrated by jokes, cartoons and other material, was that only hysterical, foolish and nervous women could be persuaded to accept it. Emphasis in the jokes is on foolish women, although "sensible" non-Christian Scientist women are also depicted as holding conversations with the misguided, and sometimes trying to dissuade them from what were seen as their erroneous beliefs. The jokes would perhaps have been appreciated most by upper class women, of comparable social standing as those "taken in" by Christian Science- who would know such adherents or at least of them. This type of women was portrayed as another kind of "victim" of Christian Science: a person not fully in control, perhaps because of being weakened through illness, or through "silliness" through the influence of society friends. A belief in Christian Science was often regarded as synonymous with foolishness. This was pointedly illustrated in 1909 by a defendant at the South London Police Court who stated that he was "neither a Christian Scientist nor a fool, but a man of intelligence".² There are many other examples.

¹ Christian Age, 10 January 1913

² Daily Graphic, 5 November 1909.

A magazine aimed at the upper class woman printed such an anecdote in 1908.

"A little story is going the round in society. Lady A, let us call her, is known to be an ardent Christian Scientist. A friend, the other day, met her looking white and weary. 'Prithee, why so pale?' cried the friend. 'Oh, I've just been to have two teeth out', was the reply 'But of course, without gas?' said the friend, with mischievous intent. 'Oh, no!' cried Lady A, falling into the trap unconsciously. 'Who would be such a silly as not to take gas when it prevents one feeling any pain?'"¹

The joke, perhaps a reference to Lady Abinger, one of the earliest Christian Scientists, also touches upon a contentious and vague point in Christian Science doctrine which gives rise to many jokes: the claim to heal which, taken to its metaphysical outcome, would have extended its principles to cover such problems. Such jokes took Christian Science at its literal claim, to heal "mechanical" physical ailments such as broken bones, rotten teeth and faulty eyesight, and "organic" healing, such as the curing of tumours, and were focused upon both by those who disbelieved all faith healing and by others who might accept faith healing but as a peripheral part of another religion. Mrs Eddy asserted that in theory, the "perfect" Christian Scientist (she admitted that there had as yet been only one of these: Christ) would be able to cure himself of any ailment and laid the blame for failure to achieve this blissful state upon human beings and "mortal mind" rather than the system itself: in an ideal world these things would not occur at all, as in "reality" mankind was already perfect. In worldly practice, therefore, it was quite permissible for an "imperfect" adherent to have these matters attended to by medical practitioners without fear of compromising his faith. Naturally, if a Christian Scientist opted for such treatment as an

¹ Gentlewoman, 11 April 1908.

alternative, the use of gas or other anaesthetic was consistent with the treatment.

Jokes and cartoons at the expense of women Christian Scientists seemed, therefore, to concentrate on human weaknesses and failings. The point of the jokes was that Christian Science was an inadequate religion with many loopholes, and did not achieve much that it claimed. The cartoon below shows such a situation, deliberately commonplace, and concentrating again upon this vulnerable point at which the "strongest" and "weakest" claims of the Christian Scientists meet.



Figure 7 M.A.P., 10 November 1909.

The Christian Scientist: "Dear me! I never knew an error of mortal mind to take such a disagreeable form."

The following anecdote concentrates on a situation typical among women. Here the "guest" is a foolish woman who has become involved with Christian Science but who has a limited grasp of the basic tenets. It seems that she may have

but who has a limited grasp of the basic tenets. It seems that she may have adopted the religion as a cure for a specific problem. It is likely that some Christian Scientists did (and still do) utilise the religion purely for physical complaints, although Christian Science orthodoxy emphasises that such benefits are only a by-product of true understanding. Such people as the joke depicts were probably seen within the movement as innocent "lambs" whose understanding of Christian Science might or might not improve, depending on intellectual capacity.

"No Body In It.

'Tell me now,' queried the intellectual hostess, cross-examining her latest lamb, 'why do you believe in Christian Science?' 'Well, you see,' her guest blushingly confided, 'I have been getting rather stout lately, and it is such a comfort to know I really have no body.'¹

Christian Scientist Men in Jokes and Cartoons.

One cartoon shows a working class Irish "innocent" who has apparently adopted Christian Science, portrayed in a humble guise through his clothing and social situation.

¹ Pearsons Magazine, October 1913



Figure 8

London Opinion, 5 April 1913.

Christian Scientist: "Toothache Pat? Dentist? Nonsense, get rid of it by faith. Say "Get thee behind me- "

Pat: "Ouch! begorra! Phwat, and make it lumbago?"

It is significant that the better-dressed man will have no part of it. However, where men were shown in Christian Science jokes, they were mainly portrayed as basically intelligent people who had come to their senses before too much harm could be done. This return to common sense had usually come about through some experience or illness, and they had abandoned the religion. For example, this joke form was widely distributed through newspapers.

"A man with rheumatism joined the Christian Scientists. He was asked six months later: 'Did Christian Science cure you of rheumatism?' 'No,

but rheumatism cured me of Christian Science."¹

The same joke occurs repeatedly with different illnesses substituted (the inference in some cases is that they had been persuaded, through the enthusiasm of a woman friend or relative, to adopt the religion in the first instance). In other jokes and novels men Christian Scientists are depicted as using the religion purely for its material benefits in order to gull their womenfolk, as for example, in "The Christian Science Christmas".

Where men are the subject in jokes, they are in the main represented as people who had not been permanently convinced by Christian Science. The theme of logical male thinking made clear the "absurdities" of Christian Science and made plain the predominance of women in the movement. To the joke writer and the cartoonist, this preponderance of women explained the illogicality of the faith which was "exposed" at the expense of making the female majority in the movement look ridiculous.

"What Didn't he Die Of?

'There is nothing the matter with you,' persisted the Christian Scientist (probably a woman), absolutely nothing. Can I not convince you?' 'Let me ask you a question?' replied the sick man. 'A thousand, if you like.' 'Well, suppose a man has nothing the matter with him, and he dies of it, what didn't he have the matter with him?'"²

" 'Does not Christian Science help your cold any?' asked the sweet young thing with the rapt expression and the Boston accent. 'Help it?' growled the unconverted Briton. 'The dashed thing doesn't want

¹ Catholic Fireside, 15 July 1916

² Shields Daily Gazette, 9 May 1914.

any help. What it wants is something to discourage it."¹

A story was recounted in 1908 of a Christian Scientist woman who undertook to cure Sir Frederick Milner of his deafness. Miss Milner, Sir Frederick's sister, related the incident at the Pan-Anglican Congress, where other discussion of Christian Science had taken place.

"She took his hand and whispered in his ear: 'I am quite sure you are not deaf'. As he did not hear it, she kept repeating it, raising her voice until she positively bellowed at him".

Miss Milner, who did not wish to appear uncharitable, said she "regretted" that her brother had replied: "I am quite sure you're a fool!"²

Finally,

Innumerable Christian Science stories are being told just now, especially as many well-known and wealthy women are joining the movement. That told of a "laird" over the border, whose mother is a Christian Scientist, is decidedly good, says a ladies' paper. Tramping briskly over the moors one day he tripped and fell; being garbed in the kilt, an unprotected knee received a deep cut. Returning home he asked his mother to bandage it; she, dear lady, thinking this an excellent opportunity to practise Christian Science refused, but begged him to bring all his will to bear on the subject, and he would soon find there was no cut there at all. However, the laird got his man to look after the wound, and appeared again before his mother with a bandage round the knee. She expostulated, and asked him to take the bandage off. "Bandage, mother," he exclaimed in innocent tones, "why there is none there, you know, at least if you

¹ Southport Guardian, 18 August 1909

² Christian Herald, 23 April 1908.

bring all your will to bear on it, you will find that there is none there at all."¹

Jokes and cartoons reproduced here are only a selection from many that appeared in newspapers and magazines in the first two decades of the century. In total, 33 were recorded, but probably more than 50 were noticed, many of them repeats or variations of similar themes; over 30 different newspapers and magazines were recorded as having printed the jokes. The earliest recorded was in 1905 (1), there was 1 in 1906, 3 in 1907, 5 in 1908, 3 in 1909, 2 in 1910, 3 in 1913, 2 in 1914, 1 in 1915, 3 in 1916, 3 in 1917, 1 in 1918, 3 in 1919 and 2 in 1921. After this date it seems that few were published.

Other jokes - not discussed here - are merely aimed at a general exposure of certain themes in Christian Science which were seen as challenging accepted religious and cultural norms. It is doubtful whether any other small cult or sect provoked such a far-reaching response. The jokes constitute a specific genre and repeat one or two familiar themes. They were directed at what appeared to be a new and fashionable religious craze which affronted common sense. Perhaps only a new religious movement which appeared so flagrantly to contravene everyday experience and common sense and yet which was taken up by some well-to-do and prominent people could have stimulated such humour.

The public misunderstanding of the sect's view of the material world was often linked with older humorous devices to reinforce the humour: thus the

¹ East Anglian Daily Times, 20 April 1907.

precocious child and the Irish illiterate became prisms through which the "absurdity" of Christian Science is made visible. Whereas in standard jokes these two characters often diverge in their perspicacity - the child often exposing illogicality (as here) and the Irishman often applying false logic - here they are both assimilated to the cause of common sense. Christian Science becomes so silly that not only the smart child but even the normally unschooled Irishman can see through it. Christian Science is depicted as a religion for idle, foolish (and often wealthy) women. The stereotype is sustained from one joke or cartoon to another, so that these religionists become virtually stock characters. Although perhaps not in itself an attack, the Christian Science joke was potentially a levelling, "normalising" deterrent to prospective recruits, perhaps even more so than the direct attacks shown in other chapters.

Chapter 9.The Christian Science Novel.

Christian Science had its first significant impact on British society during the seven years before the First World War, and among the various reactions particularly during this period and immediately after the War were some that took literary form. Some popular novelists who catered for the increasing demand for light fiction, particularly among women, used Christian Science as a topical or controversial subject suitable for popular reading. Novelists also catered for the leisured upper class woman who might have already had an interest in the movement. Not all of the authors were hostile, but there was a tendency, as with the jokes, for light treatment or satire. The novels also provided an opportunity for condemnation of Christian Science, using fictional, "larger than life" situations which gave ample scope for exposure of the more controversial aspects of the movement's tenets.

Religion had been an established theme in literature: documentation, scepticism, disparagement and even raillery were by no means unknown, as James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, Tobias Smollett's *Humphry Clinker*, George Eliot's *Adam Bede* and *Scenes From Clerical Life*, and Mark Rutherford's *Autobiography* exemplify. In the 20th century, George Bernard Shaw examined the new social phenomenon of the Salvation Army in *Major Barbara* (1905) and later, Noel Coward treated Spiritualism in a lighter way in *Blithe Spirit* (1941). There are other examples, even though discussion of religious movements as a primary objective in novels and plays was not common. As new movements became institutionalized and hence less distinctive in belief and practice, they probably attracted less attention. The "outlandish" movements among the less

educated were less attractive targets than a movement with intellectual pretensions and an appeal to socially prominent people.

Christian Science invited ridicule because it contradicted not only common sense but sense perception, and yet had successfully recruited a clientele that was by no means uninformed, unintelligent or inarticulate, of people well respected in society. It made its claims to success by rejecting- in terms of emphatic denial- what to most people were palpable and self-evident truths. It set itself forth as a religion and yet it lacked so many of the then assumed prerequisites of religion. It had little about it that was sacramental, it dispensed with anything that might be recognized in any conventional sense as liturgy or ritual, and it operated in ways that appeared manifestly secular. Its church government was modelled on similar patterns and its associated class of therapists (practitioners) worked for payment. In embracing a strong demand for "positive thinking", it made limitless claims for the influence of thought alone, and scandalized some by thinking away or wishing away all that was unpleasant or baleful- sickness and also sin. In all, it was open to easy lampoon and ready satire.

Among the authors who devoted attention to Christian Science were Noel Coward, in *This Happy Breed* (1943), Rose McCauley, in *Told by an Idiot* (1923), E.F. Benson, in several novels devoted to the subject, and some lesser-known novelists and writers whose work achieved little notice or acclaim:- Winifred Graham, Rosina Filippi, "Rita" (Mrs Desmond Humphries), and Mrs Horace Tremlett. Ada Carter, one of the readers at the Aldershot Christian Science church, wrote a novel about Christian Science in 1907 which was favourably received by the press. A play, *Haunted Woman* (1934) by Francis J. Mott, about Mary Baker Eddy, was banned from the British stage by the Lord Chamberlain.

In some of their works, well-known writers, such as H.G. Wells¹ and (popular at the time) Marie Corelli and Hall Caine, explored some of the prevalent scientific-religious ideas reminiscent of Christian Science theory; Aldous Huxley devoted a portion of one of his novels to the subjects of Christian Science and New Thought; and G.K. Chesterton wrote at least one article on Christian Science which appeared in the press.² George Bernard Shaw, who was a friend of Lady Astor, toyed with Christian Science ideas, although not seriously. Oscar Browning is thought to have been a Christian Scientist but apparently did not write on the subject.

Satirical Treatment in Fiction.

Noel Coward typically adopted a lighthearted style in both *Blithe Spirit* and *This Happy Breed*. Unlike the former, however, which is completely devoted to Spiritualism, *This Happy Breed* contains only incidental reference to Christian Science. One of the characters has adopted the religion, but Christian Science is itself symptomatic of the way in which society is seen in the play. Although superficially a comedy, serious undertones eventually become apparent. Christian Science is seen as a symptom of a society which has become un-British, or influenced by undesirable foreign (that is American) elements, and generally soft. Sylvia, the Christian Scientist character, is the stereotype portrayed as a silly woman who wears the bright, unnatural smile associated (particularly in fictional works) with a belief in Christian Science. Her absolute denial of "error" leads her to dismiss the possibility of a Second World War, which is reminiscent of the much-criticised belief in

¹ For example, in *The Soul of a Bishop*, Cassell, London, 1917.

² *The Sunday Express*, 18 September 1921, "The Disease of Health".

appeasement centred on the "Cliveden Set", which in many people's minds was also seen as un-British and even cowardly.

"Sylvia: Your very life has been saved at this moment by the triumph of right thinking over wrong thinking.

Vi (equably): Well, that's nice, isn't it?

Sylvia: I've often thought Mr. Chamberlain must be a Christian Scientist at heart.

Vi: Well, let's hope that Hitler and Mussolini are too, and then we shall all be on velvet.

(Frank comes in, his hat and coat on)

Frank: What are you two looking so glum about?

Vi: We were talking about Mr. Chamberlain; Auntie Syl says she thinks he must be a Christian Scientist.

Frank (going out again): That might account for a lot."¹

In the last scene, Frank, expounding sturdy, if belligerent British values in which an American import such as Christian Science can have no place, reiterates his views. The play is brought to an end as he orates to his baby grandson, who of course cannot understand what he is saying, perhaps in a futile symbolic hope that his ideals will be carried forward into the post-war future. However, the tone of the speech is not optimistic.

"Another thing you'd better get into that little bullet head of yours is that you belong to something that nobody can't ever break, however much they try. And they'll try alright- they're trying now. Only people in other countries who want to do us in because they're sick of us ruling the roost- and you can't blame them at that! but people here, in

¹ Noel Coward wrote a song entitled "Don't Lets be Beastly to the Germans" in 1943. The Ministry of Information's Censor Department refused to pass it for publication, recording or broadcasting because "there were lines in it that Goebbels might twist". The Noel Coward Diaries, (ed) Graham Payn and Sheridan Morley, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London 1982, p.22

England. People who have let 'emselves get soft and afraid. People who go on a lot about peace and good will and the ideals they believe in, but somehow don't seem to believe in 'em enough to think they're worth fighting for.....The trouble with the world is, Frankie, that there are too many ideals and too little horse sense."

Some earlier writers concentrated on exposing Christian Science through fictitious, farcical stories with few obviously serious undertones. Very similar in style, the entire tone of these novels was lighthearted, and intended, as with the Christian Science joke, to trade on popular assumptions about the movement in a kind of novelistic lampoon. In some novels the Christian Scientist, usually a woman, was portrayed as a victim of a fashionable delusion who caused little harm to others except perhaps embarrassment and slight discomfort. Well known among these writers was E.F. Benson, a son of an Archbishop of Canterbury (E.W. Benson) and a popular novelist whose work is now less well known. Benson moved among the fashionable people of his day (Margot Asquith and Marie Corelli were among his friends) among whom he would have encountered the Christian Scientists who regularly appear in his sketches of fashionable society. Like Coward, Benson's view of the Christian Scientist was mainly stereotyped, except in his serious and dramatic novel *The House of Defence*, in which the Christian Scientist, who was also given serious treatment, is, significantly, a man. In his satirical novels Benson may have set the trend for similar treatment among lesser known novelists. Mrs Bliss in *Paying Guests* (1929); Jane Watson in *The Oakleyites* (1915) and Jane Weston in *The Freaks of Mayfair* (1916) are typical of this image, and may have been based upon personal impressions, although some characteristics, such as the determined, inappropriate gaiety of demeanour and the apparent unconcern for the discomfort of others were obviously exaggerated somewhat for the purposes of the lampoon.

Paying Guests, written in 1929, was an example of Benson's mature style and is perhaps one of his more successful works. It is a farce which "exposed" various forms of hypocrisy represented by the guests themselves, in which the Christian Scientist was seen by Benson as one instance. However, the character of Mrs Bliss differs little from the Christian Scientists in his earlier works. In one scene, the heating system in the boarding house has broken down and the other guests are depicted as allowing "error" to dominate by causing them to feel very cold and miserable.

"The only exception to these suffering breakfasters was Mrs Bliss. She was limping very badly, and it took her a long time to sidle round the corner of her table, and leaning heavily on it, to sit down, but throughout the whole of this apparently agonizing process she had a bright smile and salutations right and left. She was wearing quite a thin blouse and no jacket, but when Mr. Kemp seeing that there was a reddish tinge on her nose, a bluish tinge round her mouth, and that her hands were deadly white, said that she would surely get double pneumonia, being so lightly clad on such a bitter morning, she protested that she had never been so warm and comfortable. 'And what a beautiful day it is going to be!' she said, as the gusts rattled at the window. 'Such a refreshing shower! The grey rain clouds on the hills, driven along by the breeze looked so lovely as I was dressing.' Her teeth chattered lightly as she spoke, but she fixed them in a piece of hot roll."¹

The irritation caused by behaviour like that of Mrs Bliss as a Christian Scientist is also highlighted in other novels. The exasperation of non-Christian Scientist friends or relatives was particularly highlighted in *The Oakleyites*, even though other members of Jane Watson's family displayed interest in other popular trends, such as vegetarianism and deep breathing.

¹ E.F. Benson, *Paying Guests*, Hutchinson 1929; paperback version 1984 London (Hogarth), p.63

"Mrs Watson, thereupon, after fortifying herself against materialism by a whispered recitation of the True Statement of Being, nails a Christian Science smile to her ruddy and handsome face, and calls attention to the glory of the sky. Then, as likely as not, Louisa and Minnie both simultaneously fall on her, making common cause together, and wonder how she finds it consistent with her creed to admire colours that are as unexistent as she said Louisa's headache was.... Often and often Louisa Tobin and Minnie Andrews agree that poor Jane ought really to have some of that ridiculous nonsense called Christian Science knocked out of her by the visitation of a good sound toothache....."¹

Benson included a spoof on Christian Science in *The Freaks of Mayfair*, a collection of trivial short stories which revealed the idiosyncrasies of wealthy socialites. Benson's stereotyping of the Christian Scientist carried over from *The Oakleyites* into the character of Jane Weston, a figure almost identical to Jane Watson. Mrs Weston is rich and leisured, although a faddist to whom Christian Science is merely a passing whim. She is a "dabbler" in any cult which is fashionable, flying "like a bee gathering honey from every flower, to suck the sweetness out of every fad" and eventually turns from Christian Science to spiritualism. Benson expressed similar, apparently widely held, views against Christian Scientists to those in *The Oakleyites*: the lack of common sense, the rejection of the evidence of the senses and the leisured lifestyle of adherents which facilitated faddism. Christian Science here is represented as a mere cult, without serious religious meaning.

"Christian Science made Mrs Weston brighter and younger and more robust than ever. Being quite convinced that there were no such things as discomfort or evil or disease or death, she recognised with increased vividness that the world

¹ E.F. Benson, *The Oakleyites*, Hodder & Stoughton, London 1915. p.14

was an exceedingly pleasant place, and went about all day with a brilliant smile."

Benson bestowed upon the misled Mrs Weston a degree of callousness, which is apparent but unintentional among Christian Scientists. She exercised Christian Science principles literally and, in a total rejection of mundane reality, paid no attention to the discomfort of others in her household.

"What made the house more uncomfortable for her husband was that his false claims were ignored also, so that if his study fire was found not to be lit, and the room in consequence like an ice-house, instead of sympathising with him over the carelessness of the housemaid, Jane continued to assure him that there was no such thing as cold, though her teeth were chattering in her head. She got into touch with other sufferers from these cheerful delusions, who seemed to him to resemble gargoyles with their fixed inflexible smiles, and their attitudes of determined hilarity, and the house became a perfect Bedlam of invincible cheerfulness, which was depressing to the last degree.....It made poor Mr Weston very uncomfortable, but since one of the strongest characteristics of Christian Scientists is their inhuman disregard of other people, she did not take any notice of a little thing like that, and proceeded to make home unhappy with utter callousness".

Christian Science appears in a later novel by Aldous Huxley (*Crome Yellow*, 1921) as the religion of faddists equal in interest to New Thought, the occult, fortune telling by the stars, spiritualism and Theosophy. Included within this assortment of popular cultish phenomena, the status of Christian Science was reduced to that of an obscure sect which might appeal to such "gay and gadding" individuals as Priscilla in *Crome Yellow* and the society women in Benson's novels. Rosina Filippi, once a popular novelist but who is now little known, gave Christian Science a similar status in *The Heart of Monica*

¹ E.F. Benson, *The Freaks of Mayfair*, T.N. Foulis, London 1916, p.58

(1914). In this novel, each member of a family indulged in one fad and Christian Science is lumped together with atheism and hypochondriasm, widely differing types of belief that were all the preoccupations of some early twentieth century leisured people. The novel also explores such things as heredity, English women and education. It was written in the form of a fictional collection of letters from a woman (Monica Green) to a friend, and was intended to be a comment on the status of women in society and of society as viewed by a married woman.

Although *The Heart of Monica* has not survived as a work of merit, at that time the publishers (Cassell) were "so struck...by its literary merits, its originality, its poignancy and so favourably was it commented upon by various readers to whom it was submitted that they decided to re-issue it in a revised and improved form". The flippant comments in the novel about Christian Science are among the least serious throughout, and emphasise that the religion was not always regarded seriously by outsiders but seen as a mysterious faith that was as effective as contemporary medical treatment: a comment on both Christian Science and medical practices. The family, faddish and fashionable, live in comfort in a large house on the Berkshire downs where the owner, a brother, is a "confirmed hypochondriac".

"Alison, the eldest girl, is another eccentric creature. She professes atheism, and is rather a bigot about it. Sarah, the second daughter, is a Christian Scientist. Though so much spoken of, I really don't know what Christian Science means. It is somehow connected in my mind with a woman having a baby in one bed, two children down with scarlet fever in another, no doctor or nurse to attend to either case, and a grandmother down on her knees praying for the safe recovery of all three. As medical treatment, according to Sarah Stapleton, it is often quite efficacious, and on the whole quite economical; it just kills or cures like ordinary doctoring, and I suppose there are no by-laws against the use of disinfectants. As a Religion it is not a bad one

either, it is just a popular American form of my favourite belief Kismet. But hailing from America, I have no very great faith in it....."

Satirical treatment of Christian Science is contained within an episodic collection of situations divided into chapters by Mrs Desmond Humphries, a popular novelist who wrote under the pseudonym "Rita", entitled: *The Philanthropic Burglar* (1919). The novel was intended as a farcical account of a London burglar's life; an adventurer (Harry) becomes a professional intruder, having met an old friend (Rorke) who has introduced him to a life of petty crime. In this chapter of the novel entitled: "The Christian Scientist", Harry enters a Christian Scientist's house at Rorke's direction. The latter is aware of the occupant's religion and had given his protege *Science and Health* to read for interest. Rorke, perhaps a kind of Robin Hood figure, has undertaken the burglary for the cause of the needy. "After all", as he asks Harry, "What does a Christian Scientist want with jewels?"

The Christian Scientist is portrayed as courageous, although the story in general is a trivial farce. The adherent, a rich elderly woman, has been reading *Science and Health* in an upstairs room when she hears the burglar trying to break into the downstairs safe. Surprising him, she tricks him into leaving by telling him that the safe is empty (which it is not) whilst holding a discussion with him in which the subject of Christian Science is included. Harry has been impressed by his earlier reading and perhaps the author intended the reader to believe that he is influenced by what he thinks is the power of Christian Science. A reference to the proliferation of Anglo-Indians in the neighbourhood, South Kensington, may be significant in view of the Christian Scientists who had been introduced to the faith in colonial communities in India and the Middle East.

Curing Christopher, by Mrs Horace Tremlett, is another light farce in which the hero is caught in a trap of his own making. In order to escape the consequences of his philanderings, Christopher feigns madness, only to worsen his situation by being given a male nurse who watches him intently, and a Christian Science healer by his wife, who has recently been converted. The novel focuses on about a dozen fictitious women in the mythical town of Uppington who are Christian Scientists, and implies that they fail to mingle socially outside their closed religious community (which is not true of genuine Christian Scientists). It impugns their ignorance of current affairs and their pecuniary acquisitiveness. The depiction of the leader of this Christian Scientist community strikes a familiar note reminiscent of very early Christian Scientists (pre-1905) in London, many of whom were American. Mrs Sutherland was

"...a gifted and strenuous American, who, although she had adopted her English husband's country, could never be persuaded to relinquish her own, and spent most of her time in frequent journies to and fro across the Atlantic. A tall, commanding figure, crowned, although she was barely fifty, with beautiful white hair, her Paris clothes were the envy and admiration of Uppington; and, together with her genial smile and devastating nasal twang, caused her to be easily the most remarkable figure in the village. She lived with her devoted John in a handsome, well-built house near the river, which had become, in spite of his feeble and half-hearted protests, the headquarters of what was cryptically known as Christian Science. Mrs Sutherland was a very busy woman. Her work in connection with the church took up a good deal of her time, what with meetings, preparations for meetings, correspondence, etc. She was also known as a healer of great power, especially among the poorer brethren, who could generally manage to extract a few shillings for temporal necessities from her well-filled purse. Being most hospitably inclined, she was never happier than when entertaining her friends, who were welcome from all parts of England and America, so long as they held the right Belief. But what she particularly loved was

a convert, a wobbler, somebody who could be coaxed, reasoned, or persuaded, into joining the Church. To these she sold every book that was issued by the Christian Science press at fabulous prices; put down their names for various subscriptions and donations in spite of their protesting wriggles, and entered the whole of the transactions carefully in her account-book, with a calm and triumphant sense of duty performed".

In this illustration of Mrs Sutherland, the writer's inferences are clear: the implicit disapproval and distrust through farce of the American woman as a larger-than-life figure who dominated a small English country town and has spread American heresy among its inhabitants. Of striking appearance and with open American manners, her attractiveness made her all the more dangerous to the inhabitants of Uppington, who found her novel foreignness so disarming. Mrs Sutherland is the personification of the early 20th century image of Americanness in Britain, with her overbearing femininity, persuasiveness and material acquisitiveness. From the beginning of the century, as an American religion, Christian Science was treated with similar distrust. Charging fees for treatment, the more than equal status enjoyed by women in the congregations (a kind of early positive discrimination) and elements of bland self-satisfaction and justification among adherents were often identified by the British as part of an American material orientation. Mrs Sutherland, with her American ways and her American religion, which she promotes as a saleable commodity, is represented as a contrast with traditional British values.

Serious Treatment.

It is evident from his lighthearted treatments of Christian Science that Benson's attitude was not entirely hostile. In *The House of Defence* (1907)

which stimulated the term "Christian Science novel" in the press,¹ he recounted an occurrence in the preface of which he claimed to have had personal experience (although this may have been a writer's device to add drama). It may have been this incident, however, which made Benson more cautious; his thoughts on Christian Science are set out in the preface.

The book was dedicated to a Christian Scientist friend of Benson's who had, in an attempt to cure a laudanum drinker from the drug-taking habit, imbibed himself what should have been a fatal dose. The drug apparently had no effect on the Christian Scientist but the "patient" was cured through the shock of what appeared to be a person taking his own life to cure him. This episode supposedly spurred Benson into examining the tenets of Christian Science. He could not, however, accept what he regarded as its miraculous aspects, but preferred instead to explain its apparent healing effects in the power of mind over the body. This was also the explanation he placed on the laudanum drinking episode in his preface. One press reviewer believed that Benson wanted to give an illustration to the biblical text: "If they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them".

Considerable drama was given in *The House of Defence* to the habit of drug taking. Throughout the novel, the drug laudanum was given demon-like qualities which completely possessed the moral faculties of the main character, Lord Thurso, who was eventually cured by an American Christian Scientist, Bertie Cochrane, in the dramatic manner described. The intensity of the drug's power was emphasized as a way of demonstrating the great healing power of the Christian Scientist, but not of the religion itself. In a scene

¹e.g. *The British Weekly*, 16 May 1907, "The Woman's World. Mr.E.F. Benson's Christian Science Novel".

where Cochrane, the healer, is trying to concentrate his thoughts on encouraging an influx of divine power in order to begin to effect a healing, an early 20th century view of the drug taker as morally repugnant is evident.

"And another thought more wide-awake yet had to be put to sleep (and, if possible, be strangled as it was sleeping)- namely, his strong physical disgust for a man who, through sheer weakness and self-indulgence, had allowed himself to get into the state in which he had found his patient: that slack lip, that sallow face, that dull, stale, eye, the thinning, whitening hair, were like some voluntary and ghastly disfigurement, as if Thurso had striven with his own hands to deface and render hideous his own body, and had succeeded so well that to Cochrane this morning he had been scarcely recognisable. But all this had to sleep; all his disgust had to be done away with. You could not heal a leper by shuddering at his sores..... Then, like the force that turns the driving wheel of some great engine that is just beginning to haul its ponderous freight out of the station, the power of the Divine Mind began to press within him. Once and again the wheel spun round, not biting the rail, for the load was very heavy; but soon the driving power began to move him, the engine, and the dead and heavy weight of the trucks weighted with the error and sickness he was to cure".¹

Perhaps too, in the attempted cure of a British peer by an American Christian Scientist may be observed the triumph of American morality and spirituality over the dissipated British aristocracy.

Rosina Filippi's *Bernardine* (1912), which was neither a farce nor an assault on Christian Science, contains an incidental reference to Christian Science: one of the main characters somewhat unexpectedly reveals himself as a Christian Scientist at a key point in the story. The adherent, Leyton, is an eccentric man who leads a hermit-like life and "adopts" a family to which he takes a liking. When Leyton discusses his beliefs with a doctor, he wins

¹E.F. Benson, *The House of Defence*, Heinemann, Toronto, 1907, p.244

his argument and the doctor is all but convinced. The occasion is the healing by Christian Science of a brain tumour of one of the children of the family, for which the doctor had failed to find a cure. The section of the book in which Christian Science is discussed is the only serious part of an otherwise trivial work, although a review described the section as "the weakest point of the book". *The Morning Post* otherwise recommended Bernardine as a "jolly" book but was critical of Miss Filippi's support for Christian Science. It was, the review stated,

".....not a story to summarise in the cold print of a review. It is so alive that such a method would seem to have the cruelty of vivisection.....We do not know if Miss Filippi is as strong a believer in Christian Science as her rather highly coloured description of Leyton's great art of healing would lead us to believe...."¹

Rosina Filippi is not known to have been a Christian Scientist, although she may have had sympathies with the movement. Like many popular writers of the period, she wrote a considerable number of novels and probably no other contains significant reference to Christian Science. It is probable that if she had had connections with the movement she would not have written on other topics. It appears that Christian Scientists have little inclination or time for novel writing: Ada Carter, a reader in the Aldershot church who wrote two novels about Christian Science,² appears not to have written on other topics. Like E.F. Benson in *The House of Defence*, Rosina Filippi's attitude was an exception to the usual attitudes of novelists who wrote either satirical or condemnatory accounts.

¹ *The Morning Post*, 19 December 1912

² *The Seamless Robe* (1907) and *The Children of the Resurrection* (1909).

The Novel as a Means of Attack.

The press notably came out in support of novels which were particularly condemnatory of Christian Science. Mrs Desmond Humphries ("Rita") wrote *Calvary* in 1909 at the height of public criticism of Christian Science, and this book was far more critical than her later spoof in *The Philanthropic Burglar*. As one review stated when discussing *Calvary*: "Her vigorous denunciation of Christian Science is a feature of the book".¹ The review quoted from a particular passage at length, revealing the author's view of the movement, which reflected the unfavourable impression of the movement in some sections of society. The review referred to the following passage as "delightfully sprightly". The passage includes criticisms already discussed: the objection (unusual perhaps from a woman writer) to the high profile of women in the movement, and to the American origin of the sect.

"....Christian Scientists always gloss over facts that don't suit their creed. They secure followers for two very excellent reasons. There are few things a sick person won't do if you assure him of a cure. Christian Science goes one better. It declares there is nothing to be cured; that disease and pain are imaginary. Well, if you can believe that you can believe anything. The second appeal is even more subtle. It is the appeal to woman. Two officials must conduct a Science service; a woman and a man. Man is not to have it all his own way. Women can also become Science preachers and healers, and try their prentice hands at mental and physical cures. Women may get up and testify and speechify to their heart's content before an admiring assemblage of the Faithful. And, as most women are illogical and the others emotional, this occupation suits them exactly." "But, said David, "if there was nothing in it, how would it have taken such a hold of the public mind?" "Of the Transatlantic mind, you mean. An American would believe anything, especially if there's dollars in it. There have been millions of dollars in this. And the converts are mostly rich, hysterical malades imaginaires. Half our bodily ailments are brought about by over-feeding, careless living or neglect of

¹ Bournemouth Graphic, 4 November 1909.

common hygiene rules. Apply Christian Science to these and you may reckon on a cure. But any other mental treatment would do as well; only it mightn't appeal so strongly to vanity. That's where the testimony comes in. It's a *sine qua non* of the treatment. The moment you feel better you must stand up before a church full of people and declare Science has cured you, and give thanks to Mrs Eddy! I'm not, as you know, David, a very orthodox person, but I do draw the line at ranking a crack-brained American faddist with God Almighty!"

The most savage attack on Christian Science in novel form came from Winifred Graham in 1908, a writer, judging from contemporary reviews, with much popular appeal. Miss Graham concentrated her novel writing on the discussion of several issues of the day, including Mormonism, female suffrage and mariolatry. Her Christian Science novel, uncompromisingly entitled *Christian Murderers*, was extensively reviewed by the press, one report remarking that the book was "exposing evil", another comparing it with Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Little Lord Fauntleroy*.

"The fallacy of Christian Science is cleverly attacked by boldly admitting its apparent beauty and charm, until the surface radiance crumbles beneath the glare of reality and common sense. Alas! We know so well the certainties of disease, sin, and death; no denials can conceal them, though they be glossed over by the most fascinating and healthy exponents of the Christian Science creed".¹

The Observer called it "a displeasing subject for romance" when reviewing the book.²

¹ *Irish Society*, 14 November 1908.

² *The Observer*, 15 November 1908.

The main public criticisms of Christian Science during the period are represented in the novel, the foremost being the supposed victimisation of and cruelty to children. The concerted opposition of the clergy and the medical profession; the image of the movement as appealing to the leisured rich; its undesirable American origins; and the much-criticised self-satisfied air of Christian Scientists were all issues on which critics concentrated. In contrast to the veiled attacks in the satires, *Christian Murderers* was a direct, forceful and bitter exposure of what the author saw as an evil and dangerous cult which must be resisted. The book is reminiscent of other works attacking the movement, particularly by clergy (for example, those of the well known Methodist, Frank Ballard), but in novel form.

As with many Christian Science jokes, the novel focuses on the dilemma of the child of Christian Science parents (in this case the fashionable Grace and Sebastian Every) who try to reconcile a "metaphysical" faith and its complex levels of reality with the evidence of the senses. The child, Elaine, is illustrated as a victim of the faith.

"Day by day- year by year, the young mind strove heroically to believe the unbelievable. The illusion of illness faced her on every side. Small friends were laid on beds of sickness, suffering men and women walked the London streets, dogged by that great trick of imagination,- the hunger fiend".¹

In the character of Godfrey Dunboyne, the local parish clergyman, is recognised some clergy as they were stimulated to seek fresh religious interpretations for their congregations who might be attracted by the claims

¹ Winifred Graham, *Christian Murderers*, Everitt, London 1908, p.10

of Christian Science (for example, Basil Wilberforce, Archdeacon of Westminster): this was seen in the novel as a response to a rival.

"Why should not the Church take a leaf from Sebastian's book, and 'refresh the faded tints' by speaking old truths in a new manner? Godfrey Dunboyne turned the idea over in his mind. It ought not to be difficult. He would preach from his pulpit sound scientific knowledge, explaining that if mental healing were attempted, it should be put upon a basis of reasonable suggestions, and not contaminated by open absurdities. He would start a school of thought dealing with the mental self-management of the body, casting aside fantastic phrases, and systems too shallow to be tolerated by rational beings".

The story is predictable and written in an early 20th century emotive and melodramatic style designed to affect and repel its readers, who would be mostly women. Elaine becomes ill and no doctor is summoned, the Everys summoning instead a Christian Science practitioner who is portrayed as negligent- she falls asleep while Elaine is dying. The child's friend (whom she had met as a neighbour) Sir Anthony Carmichael, an eminent London physician, stands by with a medical team, apparently helpless to act (the book must have been written before the amendments to the Children Act, 1908). He is finally summoned by the parents, but by then it is too late, and the child dies in his presence. An example of the climactic prose is as follows:

"Out into the full light of the morning sun he (Sir Anthony) moved as one who lives, but has no conscious being. His steps were slow and halting, his eyes blinded by unshed tears. In the distance, church bells called early morning worshippers to service- "come, come, come," they cried, and the sleeping could not hear. No need in the future for Godfrey Dunboyne to fight his rivals at The Wilderness, the battle was over, and Manning-Valley had yet to weep- for the slaying of Elaine. The final sermon had been preached, soon the news would spread, and the little white coffin carry its own story".

In the final paragraph of the book, with the church service in progress, a contrast is apparent, intended by the author, between the normality and duality of traditional religion and medicine and the excesses of Christian Science, as Sir Anthony joins in the service.

"The Communion service had begun. Mr. Dunboyne was reading the Commandments from the altar, in his clear, ringing voice. Silently Sir Anthony slipped into a pew by the door. He felt too crushed to join in the murmured responses, until the words rang out:- "Thou shalt do no murder". Then his answer rose, in fervid utterance, as he saw in fancy the agonized faces of Grace and Sebastian- "Incline our hearts to keep this law."

The "Christian Science novel" is a phenomenon which coincided with the first over-reaction of the public to the appearance of Christian Science during the first twenty years of the century. As shown, apart from one or two serious works, the novels are mainly light fiction, portraying the foibles of the leisured classes for whom membership was a mere diversion, and aimed at a similar class of readership. Since readers could identify with the characters in a romanticised, imaginary sphere, it is possible that Christian Science gained more converts through this medium. Ada Carter, the reader of the Aldershot church mentioned previously, used the novel as a way of vindicating Christian Science. She wrote two novels in 1907 and 1909, using the pseudonym "A. Channel".

Novels added another dimension of communication to the considerable amount of discussion of Christian Science in both the periodical and daily press. In general, the novels made fun of the new religion, extending - at times at tedious length - the same points that were the burden of Christian

Science jokes. The authors were by no means usually novelists of the first rank and they wrote for a popular readership whose tastes were largely "middlebrow" and who could laugh at what they took to be the absurd intellectual pretensions of Christian Scientists. It is possible that more popular lampooning of Christian Science occurred within a short period than was stimulated by any other new religious movement. There were novels with more serious intent, of which *Christian Murderers* was the chief, and these works were clearly stimulated by the cases reported (often sensationally) in the press of deaths following the illnesses of patients who had received no medical attention because parents or kinsfolk were convinced that Christian Science was the most (or only) effective healing agency. But the indignation to which such actual events gave rise were scarcely a suitable subject for the novel. Christian Science was perhaps more effectively depicted in the novel as an object of humour than as the object of righteous indignation.

Conclusions: Echoes of Christian Science in Later Movements.

Christian Science achieved notice in America and Britain which was unusual for a relatively small sect independent of the mainline churches. Its emergence coincided with some indications of decline in the self-confidence within the major Protestant churches. Affected by the higher criticism, by the impact of Darwinism, and by the growth of socialist thinking, the churches appeared to be less assured about their role in society. Christian Science emerged as a confident faith, claiming to cope with practical problems and - however superficially - to bridge the growing gulf between religion and science. It could be said that, in effect, the demands of society had dictated the success of a new religious movement. The historic (Anglican) church, whilst retaining a faithful core of worshippers, relied on a traditional eschatology which for increasing numbers may have appeared irrelevant to their practical needs. The service which the churches offered became increasingly associated solely with the rites of passage in ceremonies for birth, marriage or death.¹

Mrs Eddy drew on elements already developing in the Eastern states of America in the presentation of her philosophy. The concept of the unprecedented powers available to human beings in the manipulation of the physical components of the universe for the benefit of mankind, was demonstrated to her by Quimby, who had in turn developed his mesmeric theories

¹ See Robert Currie, Alan Gilbert & Lee S. Horsley, *Churches and Churchgoers: patterns of church growth in the British Isles since 1700*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1977, and Alan Gilbert, *The Making of Post Christian Britain: a history of the secularization of Modern Society*, Longman, London, 1980.

of the utilization of supernatural influences on matter from other sources.¹ Such theories, in addition to major scientific discoveries, which seemed to imply man's potential ability to exert a greater control over himself and his environment, coincided with a gradual, "liberal" change of perspectives within the orthodox churches. Such developments, both scientific and religious, were instrumental in the formulation of Mrs Eddy's ideas. Christian Science was perceived by Mrs Eddy as the culminating realization of Christianity incorporating both science and Christian religion. Unlike Quimby's methods, Mrs Eddy's system of mind cure was supported by extensive biblical references and a metaphysical concept of God as an ethereal "intelligence", which lent it respectability and a certain religious credibility.

Although scientific concepts formed an important part of Swedenborgianism, Mrs Eddy's system represented the first serious attempt at creating a philosophical praxis which could "demonstrate" benefits for its followers in terms both of healing and worldly success. It presented for potential adherents the possibility of a spiritual interpretation and solution of the world on its own terms: indeed, success in Christian Science was often measured by the adherent's health and success in society. This represented a departure from conventional Christian spirituality which had emphasized other-worldliness and spiritual separateness from the world's concerns.

The advantages in such a pragmatic system were recognized by some of Mrs Eddy's students and co-workers, even though they disagreed with some of her metaphysical interpretations and were termed "apostates" by Mrs Eddy. Some of

¹ For precursors to Quimby's and Mrs Eddy's ideas, see Chapter 1, also B.R. Wilson, *Sects and Society*, pp. 134-136, and B.R. Wilson, "The Origins of Christian Science: A Survey", *Hibbert Journal*, January 1959.

them possessed sufficient charisma to form their own groups, which followed marginally variant doctrines. This congeries of similarly characterized movements were the precursors of later sects, many of which formed round charismatic teachers who held that men could realize their potential by getting "in tune with the infinite". These movements ranged from the cult of "positive thinking" to the more recent "human potential" movements, and although they have varied in their claims to legitimation - the more recent ones often becoming explicitly secular - they have in common the central idea that by appropriate mental discipline human beings may acquire enormously enhanced power, energy, health and even wealth, since this too counts as wellbeing.

Mrs Eddy's Christian Science has survived as a separate movement largely as a result of the organizational structure which she instituted as a defence against apostasy. Ironically, it was perhaps this very structure which ensured its eventual outdating and decline. Although the Christian Science corporation was constructed in 1890, Mrs Eddy continually revised *Science and Health* until her death in 1910. Thus, possibilities for fresh interpretations still existed within the movement itself, despite the control she asserted in the late 1890s. After 1910, no such possibilities existed. To a certain extent, the structure supplanted the ideology in importance - Christian Science, having been drawn from a wide arena of nineteenth century philosophical and scientific ideas, became frozen within the confines of an early style of business corporation. This structure appears to have become less attractive, perhaps less effective, as a framework for a religious organization in recent decades. The revival of evangelical religion has seen new forms of church organization evolve and has led to a considerable de-institutionalization of Christian communities - for example in the House Church movement. Christian

Science reached a peak of popularity in both America and Britain in the 1930's. Its corporate style appears somewhat rigidified, and does nothing to facilitate the increased spontaneity in worship which developed widely in the 1960s - particularly in the charismatic movement. In Britain, at least, this process has coincided with the ageing and dwindling of Christian Science congregations, as fewer young members have been recruited.

Christian Scientists stress that they are quite distinct from positive thinking, human potential movements and similar ideologies. From early days, groups which broke away from Mrs Eddy's control found benefits in making connections with other groups: for example, early New Thought groups in Britain often invited Theosophists to speak at their meetings. The New Thought Alliance was formed from many groups which differed only marginally in doctrine and practice. This freedom for doctrinal experimentation was one obvious attraction for groups and individuals who abandoned orthodox Christian Science. However, Mrs Eddy insisted from the outset that her system could not be "adulterated". Unlike groups which focus primarily on the individual, Mrs Eddy first concentrated on a re-definition of deity, regarding man as a mere reflection. To Mrs Eddy, the benefits of this "at-one-ment" with the deity were available only to the Christian Scientist, and were secondary to the recognition of God as the "supreme being". To the Christian Scientist, God was "Spirit", pervading the entire universe. Thus all was spiritual, and matter was non-existent - no more than an erroneous perception of "mortal mind".

Although Christian Science in effect confirmed a certain hedonism in its votaries, and asserted their right to enjoy material benefits - albeit as mere reflections of spiritual realities - it was also a demanding religion, with exacting requirements of silent prayer and persistent affirmation of its

tenets as prerequisites to the attainment of material blessings. In their vision of God as an entity who merely endorsed capitalist success, the positive thinkers abandoned even those vestiges of the conventional conception of Godhead which had persisted in Christian Science. They also abandoned all conception of an evil force, of malevolent influences (seen by Christian Scientists as "malicious animal magnetism") the (purported) power of which had at least to be denied and counteracted.

In Christian Science doctrine, the world, as perceived by "mortal mind", which to the adherent means the non-Christian Scientist world, is error-inspired. Such emphasis is placed in the doctrine on the denial of the evidence of the human senses, that from a purely doctrinal angle, it is difficult to visualise the conscientious adherent as utilising his religion to obtain material benefit. In this regard, perhaps the links between positive thinking and Christian Science have been overdrawn by outsiders, although Christian Scientists generally expect to experience material benefits. In Britain, the majority of adherents were well-to-do on recruitment, and perhaps could afford to disregard claims that material blessings would result from allegiance. Christian Science lays a greater stress on spirituality than either positive thinking and human potential movements, and in this its greater proximity to traditional Christian religion is apparent. Some fundamentalist religions view material blessings as a divine sign of the spiritual progress of the believer - thus, the "special pioneer" workers of the Jehovah's Witnesses, who believe that their material needs are divinely provided, to enable them to continue their work. Similarly, with the Christian Scientist, worldly gain is (or should be) incidental: not sought, since this would interfere with spiritual communication with divine mind: a re-definition

of the old Christian concept that God will provide sufficient to enable the individual's freedom to seek spirituality.

The Christian Scientist's perception of the "unreality" of matter has largely been discarded by those New Thought and positive thinking ideologies which developed later. As healing was a major incentive in the conception of Christian Science, it was vital to view the material body as an illusion. Further parallels can be noted in this regard with conservative Christianity. Although discussion of Christian Science stimulated the general debate within the Anglican church on the question of the Christian desirability of suffering, much of the traditional Anglican view of the body as "vile and worthless" is redolent in Christian Science. In this are strains of a late nineteenth century prudery, inappropriate a century later, when the trend for body consciousness and physical fitness has assumed paramount importance. In spite of her three marriages, Mrs Eddy's public image retained a virginal, if not asexual quality. To many of her followers she represented an incarnation of her "discovered" doctrine and set a spiritual example.

In Christian Science, man had to transcend his material state in order to achieve the "true" spiritual state - a reflection of the divine, in order to achieve holiness. Only if he could achieve such a consciousness was he perfect, and logically ("scientifically") free from sickness and sin. In some subsequent New Thought movements, positive thinking, human potential and movements based on an exploitation of quasi-scientific concepts, such as Scientology and some New Thought movements, the focus has been shifted to man's existing state and his potential as a human being within contemporary society. Whereas Christian Scientists experienced problems with their credibility in their assertion that matter did not exist, later leaders saw

benefits, with the preoccupation with physical health no longer of vital importance, in encouraging a less spiritual approach and closer ties between human beings. In this context, "at-one-ment" with a divine power was replaced by social consciousness and success as a new holiness. Superficially, it was Christian Science without the need for prayer - a short cut with a more direct aim of success and fulfilment of worldly desires.

If some see similarities between Christian Science and later movements, many differences also exist. The lifestyle of the individual Christian Scientist is a symbiotic relationship with a metaphysical concept of God. A spiritual, if not a physical, separateness from the world is desirable for his progress in "Science". Christian Scientists do not encourage undue familiarity, even among members of their congregations. Conversely, "encounter" groups, hippie culture, and New Age revival groups, among others, emphasize group loyalties and "meaningful" relationships.

Mrs Eddy's system absorbed some elements derived from Eastern philosophies, particularly those espoused by the Transcendentalists, which were popular among New England intellectuals in the mid-nineteenth century. However, her efforts to produce a "Christian" religion in the retention of Christ as an exemplar for her metaphysical system of healing, and her strict Unitarian upbringing, ensured closer links with traditional Christianity than some subsequent related ideologies have possessed. Some New Thought movements have combined a "this worldly" outlook for individual success with elements such as Eastern mysticism, yoga and meditation. In many cases Christ has not figured significantly, if at all, in ideologies where material or scientific focuses diverge from biblical authority. Their link with Christianity has become blurred, although some Christian behavioral ideals, such as brotherly

love, prevail. However, if some modes survive, the irrelevance of materialism to Christianity has become increasingly inappropriate. Whereas, in some fundamentalist religious movements family and group loyalties often formed a basis for spiritual goals, in movements which promote worldly success these goals have been realigned. To attain such different ends, family or clan commitment has been to some extent transmuted to the preoccupation with self improvement, allegiance with those of similar aims, and company loyalty.

Scientology illustrates this re-focusing of the matrix of power from God to the human being, with its corresponding change in the sphere of action from the supernatural to the physical world. Its concept of the existence of a "thetan" entity within humans correlates with the notion of human independence from a divine power, and echoes the Freudian idea of the essential "ego". The framework in which Scientology operates is reminiscent of science fiction - a non-biblical religiosity based on quasi-scientific concepts of space and time as an alternative spirituality. Scientology exemplifies the departure from dependence on biblical Christianity noted in other groups, but differs by providing a scientific scenario. Like Christian Science, Scientology advances the belief that the individual possesses the power to succeed in the world, but the means by which he might do so is not a realisation of "atonement" with a metaphysical, supreme power but a harmonizing with a physical universe with the elimination of the reactive mind.

In Britain, Christian Science appealed mainly to a literate, middle class clientele with sufficient financial security to provide ample leisure to indulge in meditative or philosophical preoccupations. It was a class which suffered serious blows to its security in the post-First World War

economic climate. The "decline" of Christian Science in Britain coincided to some extent with the decline of the social acceptability of leisured lifestyles among the upper classes. An illustration of the increasing irrelevance of the pursuit of leisure for its own sake after the First World War can be seen in the cessation of the publication of some "society" journals (e.g. the *Onlooker*), after 1914. However, other factors were involved. In Britain, particularly, important advances of medical science may have reduced the impact of metaphysical theories of disease and therapy except explicitly in the psychological sphere. While the effects of Christian Science were recognized by some doctors in psychic ailments (see Chapter 6), it had never made such ailments its explicit concern, and would not be inclined to accept that it was no more than a philosophy of autosuggestion or subjective mental manipulation.

Christian Science differed in its approach to social problems from other contemporaneous religious movements in both Britain and America. It stood in sharp contrast, for example, to the Social Gospel movement in America, the Salvationists in Britain and to the social welfare orientations strongly evident within the churches. In this it shared some affinity with the more evangelical movements of the day. Its philosophy was that only by producing a change in the individual's orientation to the world would the condition of society be changed. Like the evangelicals, the Christian Scientists believed that social change was dependent upon and derivative from individual change: the social gospellers took the opposite view that structural change of society would produce better individuals.

To a certain extent, and considering the wide appeal of ideals of positive thinking in America, Norman Vincent Peale and Dale Carnegie both

reflected and reinforced an attitude to life and behavioral norms identifiable as indigenously "American". In a climate of religious and cultural pluralism, such attitudes made possible a certain societal and national cohesion. Although their works became well known in Britain, the British reader was invited to identify with the aspirations of a society not his own, and to relinquish a British reserve about the viability of claims for methods of instant success. Positive thinking superficially resembles Christian Science in its determination to ignore or dismiss the untoward aspects of life, but unlike the positive thinker, the Christian Scientist reached the desired state of consciousness by vigilance in prayer, in combatting the effects of "error". Parallels can be noted between on the one hand Christian Science and positive thinking, and on the other, attitudes seen as essential for commercial success, where any undue preoccupation with possibilities of failure were discouraged as tantamount to inviting it. Thus in Christian Science, recognition of "error" lent credence to the power of "mortal mind".

Metaphysics were not part of the positive thinking philosophies of Peale and Carnegie. Simple guidelines from workable handbooks, such as Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, were aimed at the ordinary man in the (American) street: a non-elitist set of methods and rules which could be applied under the auspices of a liberalized Christian God. The looseness of the connection with a deity (although still a vital link) emphasized the American ideal of the liberation of the human spirit and personal freedoms from the confines of a God of retribution. Personal happiness and domestic contentment constituted a primary aim among Carnegie's stated objectives, as a "wholesome" basis which further, worldly success might or might not complement. At its inception in post-Second World War American society, positive thinking both endorsed and built upon traditionalist values of family

life as a basis for national capitalist objectives. It provided a formula for personal redemption in relation to the wider society. Belief and a willingness to obey the rules keyed in the individual to the benefits and approval of that society, synonymous with divine approval. As a nation mainly geared to capitalist and materialistic goals, seen as divine rewards, American society as a whole has promoted the Protestant work ethic, and has encouraged a unity of attitude and approach to life. As such, the deviant - the non-conformist "drop out" or alcoholic - came to be regarded with perhaps more disapproval than in other societies, as a sinner against the cause of the common good. Positive thinking philosophies have concentrated on the attempted "healing" and rehabilitation of such individuals, endeavouring to replace "negative" attitudes, seen as a belief in a personal unworthiness, with attitudes more appropriate to the national consciousness.

In Britain, Christian Science gained more credibility than the positive thinking ideologies which were regarded as more relevant to the American environment. Although an "American" religion, Christian Science could be effectively applied to individual health problems, and Mrs Eddy's doctrines, her anglophilism and genteel image were not uncongenial to some among British middle or upper class older women who formed the bulk of the Christian Science congregations in Britain. Even so, like positive thinking, Christian Science gradually lost much of the dynamism and potency which it possessed in America, and came to be seen as a fashionable religion for faddists, to those excessively concerned with health or to people outside the mainstream of society. It has been left to subsequent movements stemming from America to recruit from a British business class the aims of which more closely resembled those which have hitherto been regarded as "American".

In sum, in spite of the limitations of its social appeal, Christian Science quickly became widely commented upon as an American religion in the early part of the 20th century. Although it was only one of a number of religious imports, chief among which were revivalism; Mormonism; Holiness movements; 7th-Day Adventism and Pentecostalism, Christian Science was unique: it had entered not as a movement seeking mass conversions or public gatherings, but rather as a private practice, a "gnostic" movement in the real sense, with special teachings into which one had to be virtually inducted. Unlike all these others, it appealed to the better-to-do, at least in conspicuous measure. Its agents were not full time clerics or missionaries (Mrs Field-King perhaps excepted) - it came with laymen who were not in Britain specifically to promote Christian Science but who brought it as part of their American inheritance. These were people rich enough to travel, or who had married wealthy Englishmen. Thus, it was much more a religion of the metropolis, at least in its early days, and belonged to a class possessing savoir faire. As such, it acquired notoriety and in a sense respectability, and stimulated a widespread interest in religious circles, the commentaries of the intellectual and respectable press, and even jokes, which may also imply a relatively sophisticated public.

Its insertion into British society thus occurred - as later was to be the case with a very different sort of movement: Moral Re-Armament - at levels much nearer the top than was true of other American religious importations. This arose not only from the social position of its "carriers" but also because it possessed different elements that might appeal to this class. It carried with it the American commitment to progress. It was an optimistic religion, virtually conveying the idea that any manifestation of the untoward could be thought out of existence. It jettisoned the burden associated with

the idea that man was irrevocably a sinner, disowned "original sin" and cultivated an encouraging approach to everyday affairs. It was a profoundly this-worldly religion, even though such this-worldliness depended on a highly abstract exposition of metaphysical ideas. In some ways it could also be presented as beautifully simple, deriving its arguments from a few very straightforward premises which had all the appeal of something profoundly logical - given certain basic assumptions.

This was another element in its attraction: it claimed to be scientific - in the sense that mathematics was a "science". It could thus span the gulf between archaic religion and the modern world, because it reduced religious principles to logical formulation and, apparently, demonstration.

Part of the success of Christian Science related not only to its positive orientation in ideology but also to the organizational form that it adopted. Essentially there are two organizational tiers in Christian Science: the congregational model of the church, and the client-practitioner structure of the healing practice. Christian Science retained the congregational pattern, which gave it the external identity of a church, encouraged the mobilization of the resources of its members for "bricks and mortar" and hence encouraged their persisting commitment. It also gave the movement physical location. At the same time, Christian Science congregational life was different in ethos from that of older churches. There was (and remains) a lack of strong associative bonds in Christian Science churches, thus enabling members to practise their religion collectively without, however, necessarily engaging in any sort of communal activity. Here was a precursor of a privatized type of religious practice which, however, went beyond the purely private practice of practitioners. This may explain why Christian Science not

only appealed, but had survival capacity as a new religion, much less evident in the case of New Thought movements that arose in the wake of Christian Science. At the same time, Christian Science had a defined and settled body of teaching - other New Thought movements were often eclectic and open to new ideas and developments, which allowed their memberships to become diversified in commitment and their teachings to lack fixity. Mrs Eddy saw that her teaching should not be "adulterated" and that Christian Scientists should not add to or dilute which she had produced (legitimizing it by its status as "divine revelation"). This fixity of doctrine gave Christian Science a permanence and a stability often lacking in other movements where people were always open to new ideas and developments. Innovators were purged - as John Doorly, a sometime president of the Church when (in Britain) he sought to expound a special exegesis of Mrs Eddy's writings (see Appendix). By these two devices - unconsciously adopted no doubt - congregational structure in duplication of the healer-patient relation and fixed ideological system, Christian Science acquired a stability and durability lacking in other New Thought movements, and lacking too in the amorphous currents of "positive thinking", which also had much in common with Christian Science ideas.

The movement also had the advantage of requiring its members to do very little by way of manifesting commitment. It was a privatized religion in many respects: even attendance at Church was never absolutely required, and the limited sociability of its congregational life imposed few if any burdens on members unless they wished to be more vigorously involved, when they usually became committee members. There was thus no social side to congregational life, nor, as mentioned above, was there a social welfare orientation. Any interest in social wellbeing (the idealism of, for example, Victor Cazalet and Philip Kerr notwithstanding) could be referred to the metaphysical sphere. It

did not need to become a practical concern, since social evils were as illusory as body ailments. Conscience could be salved by offering Christian Science as the panacea for social ills, and this transcended in value infinitely beyond any material assistance - which, indeed, could be at best a palliative, when what mankind needed was knowledge of the truth, and hence a different set of mental dispositions. Christian Science could offer what was claimed as a more effective remedy for seeming ills, which, none the less required only mental effort and no social involvement.

In Britain, Christian Science could be seen as an advanced religion, reassuring yet permitting a certain piety; world affirming, yet with certain traditional restraints and abstinences which made it anything but "vulgar"; well-connected but more than a mere society fad; decorous, respectable, unostentatious, yet also "special" and "privileged". It was new, but it sought to affirm its ancient (Christian) credentials. It was progressive, but could also claim to be re-asserting pristine Christianity. It was metaphysical but claimed to be pre-eminently practical. These, then, were many of its sources of appeal to a traditional society. For some it provided the opportunity to assume roles as beneficiaries of mankind, and like most sects provided for some members leadership roles and sources of internal prestige by virtue of superior knowledge and ability.

Appendix.New Thought: "Christian Science" in a Wider Framework.Notes on the Diffusion of an Ideology.

In the Conclusions section, an attempt has been made to trace some connections between Christian Science and later movements whose followers sought the results attributed to a belief in Christian Science - health, wealth and happiness, but for whom alternative belief systems proved more congenial in terms of doctrine, method and organization. Because of its original chronological and geographical proximity to the founding of the Christian Science organization, some aspects of New Thought and its leaders within a British context have been analyzed in this section to illustrate processes of schism and the foundation of marginally variant doctrines. A specifically British variant of New Thought has not previously been treated as a separate entity. However, not only have differences between American and British tendencies been noted, but in order to maintain concurrency within the thesis as a whole, it has been necessary to view New Thought in Britain, as it has been attempted with Christian Science, as being outside its "natural", or American, habitat.

The movements in America and Britain which have been collectively termed New Thought (or Higher Thought) groups have in most cases emphasised their distinctiveness from Christian Science. In spite of the formation in London of the International New Thought Alliance in 1914, these groups remained separate and distinct one from another and may, for convenience, be loosely categorized as follows.

Firstly, there were those associations which emerged when an individual or a group of people broke away, voluntarily or otherwise, from Mrs Eddy and her church. The main cause for such schisms appear to have been objections to the authority both of Mrs Eddy and her textbook, *Science and Health*, which she claimed was divinely inspired. Examples of apostasy are many, and notable among them, because of the number of their followers, were Emma Hopkins, who left the church in 1886 and taught several later leaders of New Thought; Ursula Gestefeld, who published her own version of the faith in 1888; Augusta Stetson, founder of the New York Christian Science church who was excommunicated in 1909; and in Britain, Annie C. Bill, founder of the Parent Church and Frederick L. Rawson, founder of the S.S.K.T.P (The Society for the Spreading of the Knowledge of True Prayer). Most of these leaders, while acknowledging the efficacy of the healing methods pioneered by Mrs Eddy, objected to the control increasingly exercised by The Mother Church and put forward individual metaphysical interpretations which differed in greater or lesser degree from those of Christian Science.

The second category of New Thought groups consisted of the followers of P.P. Quimby, the mesmerist healer who influenced Mrs Eddy at an early stage of the development of Christian Science. Some groups which descended from disciples of Quimby were never followers of Mrs Eddy. For many New Thought groups, whether or not they were originally "Eddyist", the works of, for example, Warren Felt Evans, were a primary inspiration. Evans, an associate of Quimby, published a considerable amount on mind cure, and was, and still is, read widely in both British and American New Thought circles. Julius Dresser and his wife Annetta, who during the 1880s launched a campaign to try to establish Quimby as the founder of Christian Science, were also prominent among Quimby's followers. The campaign was continued by their son, Horatio,

who in *A History of the New Thought Movement* (1906) designated Quimby as the founder of the system of thought from which Christian Science was derived. According to the Dressers, the Christian Scientists' preoccupation with the spiritual resulted in denying the physical, which was seen by them as "the garment of the spiritual, and equally a part of man"¹. Horatio Dresser, a student of William James, acknowledged physical scientific concepts such as Darwin's theories of evolution and attempted, as did some New Thought writers, especially those in Britain, to accommodate scientific discoveries within a religious framework by explaining them in metaphysical terms. Thomas Troward, recognised within New Thought as its most widely read British exponent, and F.L. Rawson, both pursued the same concern.

Finally, some individuals appeared to develop New Thought leanings quite apart from the influence of either Mrs Eddy or Quimby. The spread of Christian Science probably helped to revive interest in spiritual healing and both spiritualism and Theosophy may have stimulated this current. The new interest in psychological analysis was also perhaps a contributory factor. Some of these individuals, such as the British leader H.T. Hamblin, collected followers and formed organized groups which promulgated their own versions of New Thought. Although they did not organize groups of adherents, Thomas Troward published independent New Thought ideas and Emmet Fox preached along similar lines. Other less well-known groups were also active during the period, particularly in Edinburgh and Blackpool, and were loosely connected through the INTA. These "home grown" British groups had some contact with various American New Thought "churches", but they developed independently of such American organizations as the Church of Divine Science (founded by Ernest

¹ Horatio Dresser, *A History of the New Thought Movement*, Boston, 1906, p. vi.

Holmes) or Charles Fillmore's Unity organization, which were later established in Britain. Holmes' and Fillmore's ideas were taught by Emma Hopkins and so can be viewed as movements which had somewhat tortuously derived some of their teachings from Christian Science. British New Thought groups and individuals, such as F.L. Rawson and John Doorly (a "disfellowshipped" Christian Scientist who was at one time president of The Mother Church) developed an interpretation which became increasingly appropriate to British needs, particularly so in the case of Rawson with his prayer service for soldiers during the First World War. In these two cases, however, the introduction to New Thought came originally from an earlier involvement with the Christian Science church¹.

Although some of these bodies embraced some of Mrs Eddy's ideas, such has been the insistence that Christian Science be not "adulterated" that no deviation from her system has been tolerated by the Christian Science authorities. Indeed, those using Mrs Eddy's ideas outside her church have at times been strongly excoriated but her organization has generally ignored the existence and activities of these outside groups, inspite of the fact that many of them continued to support some of Mrs Eddy's theories in writings.

New Thought developed an eclectic tendency which easily absorbed current modes in religious belief. Conversely, New Thought ideas were more easily absorbed by some within the major denominations than were similar teachings which derived from Christian Science. The emphatic exclusivism of Christian Science, and its establishment as a separate church, were the significant

¹ For an in-depth account of the American New Thought movement and some background for the British groups, see C.S. Braden, *Spirits in Rebellion: The Rise and Development of New Thought*, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, 1963.

factors in this differentiation, but it should also be acknowledged that many New Thought bodies in their eclectism, could promote a very generalized type of what was later called "positive thinking" and this was an orientation which subsequently had some appeal for churchmen of various denominational persuasions. Rawson's periodical *Active Service* mentioned several clergymen who had become interested in certain aspects of New Thought, among them Archdeacon Basil Wilberforce of Westminster (onetime Chaplain to the House of Commons), the Rev. L. Watson Fearn, who was a colleague of Wilberforce, and the Rev. Stewart Stitt, Rector of Stretham Ely. These and others thought highly of Rawson's organization, which was perhaps the most prominent of the New Thought groups in Britain, and they introduced New Thought ideas to their congregations¹. Archdeacon Wilberforce, particularly, who was described in the press as being a preacher of the "broad" school² was a frequent visitor to Rawson's offices, and was one of the most prominent churchmen of his time.

Most of the New Thought groups retained the emphasis on healing which was then the most popular aspect of Christian Science, and most of the prominent leaders provided textbooks for the guidance of their followers, which set some limits on the claims made for metaphysical ideas and stopped short in many cases of the more extreme claims made in Christian Science. The

¹ *Active Service*, 5 August 1916.

During a distinguished career as an electrical engineer, F.L. Rawson was commissioned by the *Daily Express* in 1900 to undertake a scientific investigation of Christian Science. He became a convert but was later expelled for unorthodox healing practices. Shortly before the First World War, he formed his own movement which became known as the Society for the Spreading of the Knowledge of True Prayer (the SSKTP) with an office in central London.

² *The Church of Ireland Gazette*, 26 May 1916. This report, although acknowledging that Wilberforce's preaching "had the effect of retaining within the Church of England a number of people who would otherwise have slipped away to Christian Science", criticized the "unrestrained and unbalanced language" he often used.

numbers of small groups claiming connection with aspects of New Thought is difficult to assess but they were widely scattered throughout Britain. Even the INTA (hereafter called the "Alliance") did not encompass all of these groups, although its published Declaration of Principles was broad enough in scope to include a wide spectrum of belief. To be included in the Alliance, groups were required to meet certain Christian criteria laid down by the organization.

The Alliance was formed during the years directly preceding the First World War, when various American New Thought groups held conventions: at Omaha in 1911, Los Angeles in 1912 and at Detroit in 1913, where the idea of an International New Thought Conference in London was probably mooted. The Higher Thought Centre in London, which may be regarded as the "official" British New Thought group at that time, invited the American leaders to hold their next conference in London in 1914, and representatives from France, Australia and South Africa also attended. At the end of the Congress, the various representative groups were formally organized into the Alliance; Thomas Troward was appointed the president of the British section. A continuation conference was held in Edinburgh, an important centre for New Thought.

At a later meeting in America, a Declaration of Principles was composed as a generally agreed set of goals that were reprinted frequently in the Alliance's journal, the Bulletin. Broadly, they affirmed the freedom of the individual in his choice of beliefs, and this freedom was not limited by the Principles. Each person must be loyal to the truth as he saw it. The "good", in the image of which man was made, was affirmed, rather than "God". Evil and pain were said to appear when man's thought did not harmonize with these assumptions. Health was stated to be the man's divine inheritance and every

part of this inheritance was held to be "intelligent" and controlled by mind (with a small "m", unlike the usage in Christian Science). Divine supply was also emphasised, the Declaration stating that: "He who gives himself, he who knows and acts in his highest knowledge, he who trusts in the divine return, has learned the law of success. The teaching of Christ is also affirmed, that the Kingdom of Heaven is within the individual, that one should not judge, that one should heal the sick, return good for evil, and minister to others. We affirm the new thought of God as Universal Love, Life, Truth...." The statement concluded:

"We affirm that the Universe is spiritual and we are spiritual beings. This is the Christ message to the twentieth century, and it is a message not so much of words as of works. To attain this, however, we must be clean, honest and trustworthy and uphold the Jesus Christ standards as taught in the Four Gospels. We now have the golden opportunity to form a real Christ movement. Let us build our house upon this rock, and nothing can prevail against it. This is the vision and mission of the Alliance".

This declaration, called the St. Louis Declaration of Principles, remained unchanged until 1950¹.

In many cases, however, group loyalties and religious commitment proved stronger than the desire to subscribe to the umbrella principles of the Alliance. The desire not to be confined to established rules such as those of Christian Science, led some towards the less firmly structured and less ideologically rigid New Thought groups. The Alliance, then, as an attempt to unite a motley collection of metaphysical groups, succeeded in providing only a very loose and general definition for New Thought; each group had its own

¹ C.S. Braden, Op. cit., pp. 195-6.

distinctive doctrines. New Thought has been a fluid term, prone to subtle shifts as new notions are absorbed. In this chapter, only certain more prominent New Thought organizations and thinkers will be considered, particularly with respect to their relation to Christian Science.

New Thought in Britain.

New Thought appears to have arrived in Britain before official Christian Science teaching. One early agent was Frances Lord, who was a student of Emma Hopkins and who, according to her book *Christian Science Healing*, taught classes in London in 1887 and 1888. A couple named Bowles also held classes, possibly even before Frances Lord. Their teaching, typical of New Thought, is described in an anonymous pamphlet written between 1911 and 1915. The same pseudo-scientific terminology occurs in their teaching which characterised later British New Thought, for example, the perception of thoughts as representing positive and negative poles. In their version, the positive thought was the retention in the mind of an image of good. Thoughts were defined as "things", forming habits and shaping character. The mind could be trained in higher or "purer" thought, making for a better way of living. Health was positive. Disease was negative, and was regarded as a consequence of the absence of truth. Little is known of the Bowles. They are assumed to have been American and independent of the Christian Scientists¹.

It has been claimed that the establishment of New Thought in Britain did not differ substantially from its origin in America and that public interest was first aroused by Christian Science, after which a "gradual reaction" occurred and the "establishment of independent branches of the (New Thought)

¹ Ibid., pp. 411-413.

movement"¹. By the mid 1880s, sections of the British public had heard of Christian Science mainly through an article from a Boston correspondent which had appeared in the Times in May 1885 which had described Mrs Eddy's religion in some detail. However, little publicity was given to the disputes among her followers, and the British public particularly, were in no position to discriminate between Christian Science and New Thought.

Around 1890, a small group had formed from the Bowles' class which met in a room near Earl's Court, who apparently read widely from Transcendentalist and Quimbyan (Evans) sources, recognising such teachers as Emma Hopkins, Ursula Gestefeld and Frances Lord. Splintering soon occurred, setting a pattern typical of New Thought, and one group formed the "Moral and Spiritual Development of the Womens' Educational and Industrial Union" (the mainline group) led by one Dr. Harriet Clisby. The splintered groups were in close contact with the Theosophists, who, with visiting American New Thought lecturers and leaders, paid frequent visits to their meetings. Among these were Charles Brodie Patterson, Dr. Julia Seton Sears (who established the New Thought Centre) and a well-known New Thought teacher, Annie Miltitz. The Womens' Union was dissolved in 1900 and formed the Higher Thought Centre, based in Kensington, the first of several similar centres in other parts of Britain. The centre established a library, held regular meetings and lectures and provided a focal point for visiting American lecturers².

While New Thought writers such as Dresser were glad to record the establishment of these different groups and saw their multiplicity as a sign

¹ Dresser, Op. cit., p.vi.

² C.S. Braden, Op. cit., pp. 412-414

of progress, their number caused some confusion. One journalist writing in 1917, perhaps typical of the uninitiated, confessed himself a "perplexed wanderer in that maze of psychic speculation and habit of life which is comprised under the loose designation of "Higher Thought"...A benighted outsider may be pardoned if he fears to trespass beyond such finely distinguished boundary marks...."¹

Christian Science and New Thought: Comparisons.

Many aspects of New Thought practice resembled Christian Science activities. Although the London group led by Julia Seton Sears was described in the press in 1910 as a "church",² this description was avoided by those who attended, perhaps because they wished to establish a completely different identity from Mrs Eddy's church. Comparisons by outsiders, however, particularly by the press, which had by then become accustomed to reporting Christian Science activities, was unavoidable. The parallel nature of the faiths was apparent in, for example, the emphasis on healing and physical wellbeing.

The way in which meetings were conducted was a further similarity. At the International New Thought Convention held in the Queen's Hall, Edinburgh, in 1914,³ (although this was not a typical "service"), the plainness of the platform was relieved by decorations of plants and flowers, which was the style at Christian Science services. American and British flags were prominently displayed in the galleries, indicating the American provenance of

¹ The Outlook, September 1917.

² The Daily Graphic, 15 October 1910.

³ Edinburgh Evening News, 29 June 1914.

New Thought - something it shared, of course, with Christian Science. The predominance of women, sharing, if not dominating, the conduct of the services, was reminiscent of New Thought's American and Christian Science connections. Julia Seton Sears was a figure not unlike Julia Field-King. Both had medical qualifications and were described as dynamic and attractive personalities, with considerable lively intelligence.

Despite its internal diversity, New Thought doctrine in general basically centred on the innate power of the individual to effect benefit in the control of his life through a direct link with God, or "mind" (since the orthodox concept of a personified God was rejected in favour of a divine and beneficent intelligence, or power in the universe). In a scientific view of the universe, reduced to the basic or unseen atomic elements, the concept of this divine intelligence was mainly concerned with purpose, or pattern, in which man was considered a part. When all components were "in tune" with each other, the result could not be less than faultless operation, in which was included the life and wellbeing of the individual.

Groups adhering to the Alliance, such as the Higher Thought Centre, advertised in ways somewhat reminiscent of Christian Science terminology, "perfect health, perpetual opulence, and Divine realisation for all mankind". They also taught "the One Life in all and through all; its understanding inspires all human intelligence; its infinity is the animating principle of all being; it is all health, wealth, and love; it is powerful, glorious, all-sufficient, and has in it neither sin, sickness, poverty, nor death".

Acknowledgment was given to "the creative power of the finite mind, which helps us to be whatever we will be"¹.

As has been discussed, a Christian element was usual within the main groups, although how integral a part this was for many New Thought adherents is a matter for speculation. At that time, it was perhaps both judicious and expected that a new religious body should retain some of the forms and shibboleths of traditional Christianity. To a certain extent, the acknowledgment and inclusion of Christ in the doctrine was something of an anomaly, in spite of the healing element, since a simple, straightforward belief in the efficacy of being in accord with a divine intelligence might diminish or even eliminate the relevance of a Christ figure. Mrs Eddy had relied upon the significance of the Christ role as an example, and it was an important part of her doctrine, but she did not place such emphasis on a scientifically ordered concept of the universe. The mainline New Thought groups, however, whilst still regarding Christ as a demonstrator of healing method, put the main emphasis on the positive power of the individual. In more extreme, or "advanced" groups, the Christian element was either abandoned altogether, or was optional. At the International Convention in Edinburgh in 1914, for example, the Bible readings were taken from the Old Testament rather than the New, the excerpts from Deuteronomy (Chapters 8 and 15) indicating perhaps a more natural and direct affiliation with the concept of a powerful god of the Israelites who promised reward for unerring service. The New Thought interpretation of these accounts were perhaps that, as for the Israelites, obedience was important, but in the 20th century written commandments were unnecessary. Obedience in this century consisted instead of

¹ The Daily Graphic, 15 October 1910.

a readiness to equip oneself with the "scientific" knowledge of the divinely organized system of life and the universe, and to accept that the controlling power of "mind" included each individual. Individuals in turn contributed to the sum total of this enfolding "intelligence" by their "right thinking".

That there was a choice in this was to New Thought adherents as important and potentially damning as disobedience to the god of the Israelites, or indeed to any adherent of an evangelistic faith. Unlike Christian Scientists, the New Thought adherent believed that disease and sin were real, and that by failing in this communion with the "infinite" he or she exposed him or her self to the vicissitudes of a godless existence in an evil world. In such an existence he or she would be likely to fall prey to all manner of misfortune, sickness and to death. However, like Christian Scientists, New Thought adherents emphasised the positive and relegated their untoward experiences to the background, since to think of such things was considered a sin in itself. Happiness was thought to be a right, even an obligation, which was almost fiercely defended. Just as Christian Scientists were criticised for their "too bright" or "unnatural" smiles, so the adherents of New Thought may well have been subjected to the same strictures.

In late 19th century Britain, the adherents of New Thought constituted a more or less deviant form of Christian Science who did not acknowledge Mrs Eddy as supreme leader. As time went on, some groups developed intellectual orientations which indicated their British origin. British leaders of New Thought and thinkers such as Thomas Troward, F.L. Rawson, Annie Bill and (eventually) John Doorly, placed an interpretation on Christian Science which corresponded with prevailing scientific aspirations of the early 20th century,

including modern engineeringⁱ. Since most New Thought groups in Britain maintained contact with one another, there was an effective exchange and diffusion of these ideas. American lecturers - some of whom were progenitors of New Thought ideas - were not uncommon visitors to Britain. The danger that the more theoretical "scientific" aspect typical of British New Thought might submerge the positive, success-orientated "American" angles of the faith was averted through this interaction, particularly among the mainstream groups.

Some Examples of British New Thought Tendencies.

Although New Thought had American origins, British adaptations quickly gained a following: four British exponents, the first three of whom were originally Christian Scientists, are now considered: Thomas Troward, F.L. Rawson, Annie C. Bill and John Doorly. The three followers of Mrs Eddy arrived at their versions of New Thought independently. Much of Mrs Eddy's doctrine remained, but these leaders did not accept the finality of her claimed revelation and in particular criticised what they saw as limitations in her scientific analysis. Rawson particularly, saw Mrs Eddy's educational limitations as responsible for her vagueness in explanations of this kind, whereas he, as an electrical engineer with qualifications which impressed his followers, possessed the knowledge required to improve upon her original doctrine.

With the exception of Troward, whose thought developed independently and in isolation in India, the major New Thought leaders in Britain adapted

ⁱ Some adherents took the word "Science" as in itself the key to linking religion and advanced modern thinking, and saw Christian Science and New Thought as having a practical application, as engineering was a practical application of natural science. Thus there were those, trained in engineering, who saw in it a close physical analogy to what Christian Science offered in the spiritual realm.

Christian Science to an environment which placed emphasis on an in-depth study of doctrine. In the cases of Rawson and Mrs Bill, British Israelism also formed a considerable part of their teachings. This, together with the more highly developed scientific aspect of Christian Science, formed the basis of Rawson's thought.

British New Thought writers produced works of a highly complex and involved nature, which defied the understanding of reviewers. Generally, unlike their American counterparts, who concentrated on "health, wealth and happiness", British leaders obscured their positive theories within pseudo-scientific analyses which attempted to prove, in contemporary scientific terminology and within a Biblical framework, the relationship of the individual with a divine power. This emphasis on scientific "proof" may have been regarded as essential for captivating and challenging their British middle class readers - the same readership or "market" which might have been equally attracted to Christian Science.

As was the case with Mrs Eddy and Christian Science, these leaders enjoyed a certain charisma, particularly so in the case of Rawson, who inspired a strong loyalty among his followers, even many years after his death. In all of these traditions, a student (as adherents were often called) might apply the principles of the new science without dependence on the leader of the movement. Mrs Bill, although convinced that she was intended, through a divine order of the universe and Biblical history, to be Mrs Eddy's successor, also provided a large number of works for the enlightenment of her followers. Thomas Troward appears to have been more self-effacing, although he was regarded in New Thought circles as a "father" of the movement; his

writings helped to form a basis for a highly scientific British New Thought.

Troward.

Much of Thomas Troward's early thought was condensed into the Edinburgh Lectures on Mental Science, delivered in 1904, and these were later issued in book form. His early ideas, before he came into contact with New Thought groups in Britain and America, were developed while he was a British divisional judge in India. While there were Christian Scientists among the British army personnel in late 19th century India, there is no evidence to indicate that Troward came into contact with any of them. His ideas appear to have originated in a combination of Hindu lore and Hebrew scripture, rather than to have been derived from contemporaneous developments in America.

Troward's Edinburgh lectures sought "to indicate the Natural principles governing the relation between Mental Action and Material Conditions". He reasoned that the higher the grade of life, the higher the intelligence, from which it followed that the supreme principle of life must also be the ultimate principle of intelligence. This was clearly demonstrated by the grand natural order of the universe: the advance in the scientific theories of evolution had made evident "new subtleties of connection" in this universal order "which already exists and only needs our recognition to bring it into practical use". Troward went on to develop his argument regarding universal design and intelligence.

"...the student must bear in mind that as a Mental Scientist it is his business to regard even the most exalted spiritual phenomena from a purely scientific standpoint, which is that of the working of a universal Natural Law.....we must remember that in dealing with it we are still dealing with a purely natural power which reappears at every point with protean variety of form, whether as person, animal,

or thing. In each case what it becomes to any individual is exactly measured by that individual's recognition of it.....where the individual development is incapable of realising anything more, this is the limit of the relation; but as the individual's power of recognition expands, he finds a reciprocal expansion on the part of this intelligent power which gradually develops into the consciousness of ultimate companionship between the individualised mind and the individualised source of it".¹

This small sample of Troward's thought reveals the physical nature of his theories and his demand that it should be possible to explain religious concepts in modern scientific terms, otherwise they were invalid. Among some people his ideas were highly regarded, notably and perhaps surprisingly by William James, who remarked that his writings were "far and away the ablest statement of the philosophy I have met, beautiful in its sustained clearness of thought and style; a really classic statement".² Troward's writings reflected the demands of the time for religious explanations of science. Healing was an integral element in his overall concept, the healer being a necessary medium and channel for the passage of divine power. The "patient" merely had to become receptive to this, removing the barrier of his own obstructive personality to afford entrance to the mental power of the healer.

Rawson.

Whilst Troward absorbed and adapted his religious theory from a background of ancient scripture, F.L. Rawson was persuaded of the truth of Christian Science by a healing incident while he was investigating the

¹ Thomas Troward, *The Edinburgh Lectures on Mental Science*, London 1904, p. 54.

² Braden, *Op. cit.*, p. 418. (Quoted in Harry Gaze, *Personal Recollections of Thomas Troward*, No.2, p.4)

movement for the *Daily Express*.¹ The claims of Mrs Eddy that Christian Science effected real and observable healing results led some newspaper editors to investigate them. The subject of mind cure was also popular enough in the early 20th century to ensure that any news of it would result in good newspaper sales: editors asked whether the phenomenon was provable in scientific and material terms. F.L. Rawson, a consulting electrical engineer well-known in the industry, was commissioned for this work. Evidently, he was convinced by the theory, although his version of Christian Science, as finally formulated after he left the church, betrayed the influence of his training as an electrical engineer.

Were Rawson's beliefs genuine or was New Thought another opportunity for enterprises. His main work: *Life Understood*, is a large volume which brought a mixed reaction when it was published in 1912. Later, during the First World War, he was accused by the press of gaining material profit by exploiting the anxieties of relatives of servicemen, after he had opened his office in Regent Street, London.² The same press campaign, instigated by the *Daily Mail* in 1917, attacked Rawson as a "prayer-monger", charlatan, quack, and in other uncomplimentary terms, and his office was termed a "prayer shop".

Rawson's "treatment" consisted of applying the principles of "right thinking" to any undesired situation: sickness, wrongdoing, or as a protection against injury or death. During the war, his services were particularly in demand from servicemen and their families, who sought protection against injury or death on the battlefield. What he claimed, exceeded the practical

¹ F.L. Rawson, *Man's Powers and Work*, Crystal Press, London and New York, c.1914, p.35.

² *The Daily Mail*, January 1917.

claims made by Mrs Eddy, who had never given her system such a specific material or mechanical application, or claimed such dramatic, observable results. Christian Scientists involved in the war probably limited the practice of their religion to a more general faith in their safety and the relief of pain from injury. Rawson, however, claimed that his system of mind control could stop shells from bursting and divert bullets from their course, as well as providing all the usual benefits of healing claimed by Christian Science.¹

Rawson's basic theory was similar to Troward's in its explanation of the forces which provided the benefits of healing and other effects. Troward's vision was of a grand natural order of the universe and the operation of an overall intelligent power. Rawson, although he acknowledged a divine law and "Principle", concentrated on proving his theories with minutely specific examples from his electrical knowledge. Troward did attempt to illustrate his ideas with examples of the hitherto unknown actions of the mythical "ether" (a concept well known among scientists at the time) but his lack of a scientific background limited his observations to matters of general knowledge.

Both Rawson and Troward believed that the action of the human mind could actually change the structure of matter by influencing the movements of electrons. The scientific uncertainties at the beginning of the century created such possibilities of scope for New Thought theories. Rawson, for example, seized upon a discovery of Faraday that the "ether" consisted of "lines of force at right angles to each other". These lines of force, in New

¹ F.L. Rawson, Op.cit.

Thought terms, were, as Rawson explained, simply the "natural science" name for thoughts. Some scientists believed that the electron existed at points where these "lines of force" (or high tension electrical current) crossed. According to Rawson, if any strong action of the human mind was applied through will power, hypnosis or other concentrated mental action, the electrical "knot" (which he recognised as a form of error) at these points would disappear, but it would form again at some other point. Thus, the human problem, whether of health or something other, was not regarded as solvable by this method alone.¹

In order to dissipate these electrical problems, a person, whether the healer or the patient, had to "pray" in the "right" way, as his "thought action" alone lacked sufficient strength to create an avenue for the direct application of divine power, using the agency of the healer. In physical terms, this power short-circuited the lines of force and the electrons as well. In this way, instantaneous healings could be effected. Rawson gave credit to Mrs Eddy for indirectly explaining these concepts in metaphysical terms. Although she had not mentioned such terms as "ether" or "electron", Rawson maintained that her theory of "error destroying itself" meant this short-circuiting action of the two ends of adjacent particles on each other, one end being positive and the other negative. He stated that Mrs Eddy had called these "thought germs" and had described the whole action and interaction of the "ether" in metaphysical terms.²

¹ Rawson explained this aspect of his thought in a letter to W.T. Stead, printed in *Review of Reviews*, March 1909, p.136 and the *British Medical Journal*, 1 May 1909, p. 1078.

² W.T. Stead, *Op. cit.*

Rawson thought that his interpretation of these scientific theories was a way to reconcile science and religion which, because of Darwin's theories, had appeared to be totally incompatible. Metaphysics, seen then as a feasible supernatural science, was included in his overall view of things. This new branch of science included such subjects as psychology and hypnotism. He emphasised that a complete single explanation for all three important modes of thought: the metaphysical, the physical scientific and the religious, was needed, and he claimed to have brought all three into harmony, to have proved the "truth" of his theories, and to have provided an advance in complete universal thought. These modes of thought had not previously been reconciled because, according to Rawson, hitherto they had been using different terminology, even though there had been parallel progress in all three.

Annie C. Bill.

One of Rawson's early associates and his collaborator in the production of *Life Understood* was Annie C. Bill, left Third Church, London, where she and Rawson had been members, in protest at Rawson's expulsion.¹ Mrs Bill's religious theory is complicated by her attempt to discredit the directors of The Mother Church after Mrs Eddy's death by her own claim to be Mrs Eddy's successor.

A conspicuous feature of Mrs Bill's theories was the importance she attributed to the mystical number seven. Applying it to Christian Science, she perceived seven stages in the development and history of the church down to her own discovery. The sevenfold system was also applied to physical phenomena. She claimed that there had been seven stages in the evolutionary

¹ A.K. Swihart, *Since Mrs Eddy*, Farrallan, New York 1931, p. 186.

scale up to man, where Mind, which was manifested in varying degrees throughout the universe, reached its culmination as the highest development. The physical world was only a shadow of the "true reality", which was Mind. Even a grain of sand represented divine intelligence, and the atom was a good example of her meaning (which she used in her pamphlet: "Translation of Physical Phenomena"). She stated: "...it presents a miniature model for all human action in accordance with universal laws that impel periodic, harmonious, higher self-development....The positive nucleus symbolizes through whom the new discovery wells up from the boundless basis of Mind..." The old Mother Church was seen as an old body, or atom, which disintegrated spiritually at the death of Mrs Eddy- after this, its members began to gather round Mrs Bill, who represented the new positive centre.

Mrs Bill saw physical scientists as potentially the greatest enemies of the metaphysicians or the Christian Scientists. In *The Universal Design of Life* (1924) she wrote:

"The most terrible inversion of the Truth, however, may be found in the labours of the physical scientists who look upon the world as purely matter, and who are seeking to generate more physical energy. These physicists are the greatest opponents of the metaphysicians or Christian Scientists.....The natural scientists, instead of interpreting the atom spiritually, are seeking to break it up to gain more physical power....the advancing release of physical energy urges the obvious fact that all human interests and relations moral, physical, civil, and religious are at stake in the final physical contingency of the atom.....these men may do untold damage if their interpretation of the world wins over the spiritual one. The struggle is now on to determine which one will be the victor...."

Mrs Bill was a direct contender for the position of leader of the Christian Science church after Mrs Eddy's death. This ambition had motivated others, and during Mrs Eddy's lifetime she had found cause to expel one after another the aspiring women in the movement. In this struggle for power, which Mrs Eddy in her lifetime was never really in danger of losing, her main rivals were women. Mrs Bill (and Mrs Stetson in New York) were merely the last of these.

Unlike Rawson, Mrs Bill did not try to provide a service along business lines, although she conformed to the British variant of New Thought with its emphasis on a physical dimension. Her conviction that her carefully calculated predictions would result in the natural reform of the Christian Science church around her as leader, resulted in her group remaining small at first. She extended the movement by establishing an American base in 1924 with John V. Dittmore, one-time director of The Mother Church, as co-worker.

John Doorly.

A reinterpretation of the rules laid down by Mrs Eddy in the Church Manual was also fundamental to the work of John Doorly. He analyzed the Manual and attempted to show in his major work that it was not intended to impede the continuing evolution of Christian Science. Instead, he argued, it gave the means to dissolve organic control of the Church when it was no longer needed, through advanced spiritual understanding.

Doorly became a Christian Science practitioner after having taken Primary Class instruction in Manchester in 1907 with Lady Victoria Murray, and was listed in the Christian Science Journal for the next forty years. He was appointed to the Board of Lectureship in 1914 and made many tours around the

world. In 1918 he was appointed President of The Mother Church for one year at the time of the "Christian Science Litigation", the legal battle between the Trustees of the Christian Science Publishing Society and the Board of Directors of The Mother Church. In 1929, he resigned from his lectureship in order to devote more time to the study of Christian Science and to investigate and emphasise the scientific aspect rather than the faith healing angle. Inevitably, as with any deviant Christian Scientist (especially one who was so prominent), accusations of apostasy were made against him and in 1944 he was "put on probation" as a Christian Science teacher. In 1946, he was excommunicated from The Mother Church. Similar charges had been made against him by the branch church in London which he attended, Ninth Church, from which he had resigned in 1943. In 1945 he published a booklet entitled: *A Statement*, in which he revealed his view of divine science and the details leading to his excommunication.

At the time of his excommunication, Doorly had a large following in his Pupils' Association, consisting of about seven hundred members. Although some dissociated themselves from him when the breach occurred, many remained loyal to him and formed the nucleus of his new organization. From 1945 he began to give talks, particularly on the book of Revelation which in its symbolism he considered epitomised his views. His work, *The Pure Science of Christian Science* contained his accumulated perceptions of the scientific aspects of the faith. Like Rawson, Doorly was under the impression that Mrs Eddy had reduced this important scientific element to scientific metaphysics, which had somehow diluted its potential impact. He encouraged those interested to make a minute independent examination of the Bible and *Science and Health*.¹

¹ Peggy M. Brook, *John W. Doorly and the Scientific Evolution of Christian Science*, The Foundational Book Company Limited, London, 1973.

In the introductory talk to his Oxford Summer School in 1948, Doorly explained the means by which he came to his personal interpretation of "divine science". In the simple language characteristic of his style, he stated that he was first attracted by the synonymous terms which Mrs Eddy used for God, which presented His different aspects.

"And then one day I began to see that in these synonymous terms there were very much the same tones as in the days of creation which begin the Bible....And so I began to see that there was a very definite order in the days of creation. And that was where the trouble began! I presented the proposition to my fellow religionists, but they would not accept the idea.....And so for years I studied the days of creation very carefully with some of my friends, and we began to see that the days of creation had a very definite order,-an order which exists in everything.....we saw that the order of the days of creation presented definite values, just as the notes of music or the numbers in mathematics do....(the) root notions of reality are contained in the days of creation, which begin the Bible, and Mrs Eddy put them into the idiom of today when she gave the answer to the question 'What is God?'...."¹

In 1949, Doorly published *God and Science*, a book intended for the general public. The Yorkshire Evening Press remarked:

"This is a notable contribution to that reconciliation of religion and science that must be achieved before those people who call themselves 'thinking people' will be willing to accept religion as something which can appeal to and satisfy their minds as well as their hearts and souls".²

¹ J. Doorly, *Introductory Talk to the Oxford Summer School*, Foundational Book Company, London, 1948, pp. 16-17.

² Peggy M. Brook, *Op. cit.*, p. 20.

As the century progressed, the physical scientific aspects of New Thought began to diminish, or at least were not regarded as seriously by adherents, perhaps because many of these theories were finally disproved by scientific advance. As scientific assumptions moved away from those made by New Thought, fewer people were persuaded by it. Remaining members of Christian Science schisms and New Thought groups, as with Rawson's group, probably concentrated instead on aspects of the thought which could be reconciled more realistically with mid-20th century knowledge. These aspects, as is the case with the SSKTP, appear to resemble the Christian Scientist interpretations of Christianity rather more than it seems Rawson intended. Being beyond empirical investigation, these ideas could be given a much freer interpretation. They needed no proofs but constituted a metalanguage in terms of which to order experience and to provide it with a congenial gloss. The metaphysical formulation of Christian Science survived more readily than the quasi-scientific elements of the various New Thought movements. Christian Science continued to grow in Britain, at least until the Second World War, and to retain many of its members longer, while the New Thought groups, perhaps because of the diminishing plausibility of their ideologies, but also because of their less coherent organizational structure, tended to stagnate or decline. Troward's theories, for example, and Rawson's *Life Understood* have survived as striking examples of religious-scientific attempts to draw together half-digested or superseded scientific theories with a style of religious metaphysical thinking which had grown out of the idealism and progressivism arising in a buoyant society in a particular historical period.

It is evident that some British New Thought leaders felt that they could improve Mrs Eddy's Christian Science theories by attempting to eliminate what they saw as the repressive aspects of her faith. Many elements of Christian

Science were retained, but the emphasis was on individual interpretation and experience rather than on an unquestioning acceptance of doctrine, either from New Thought leaders or Science and Health. The dogmatic character of Christian Science was often criticised, Christian Science lectures were delivered and received without comment from the audience, and there was no room anywhere in the movement for any variation of official teaching which was claimed in Sunday services to be "divinely authorized". On the other hand, New Thought had a less exacting style, encouraged individual exploration, and did not seek to establish a monolithic organization or to promote a rigid ideology.

Many New Thought groups still exist today, mainly, it seems, concentrated in towns and cities in which Christian Science has flourished. These groups appear to prosper most in centres which attract a retired population of better-to-do people, and particularly they appear to have a disproportionate appeal to older women. They concentrate on the "metaphysical" type of New Thought, read American New Thought writers and have included other interests such as yoga, health foods, meditation and positive thinking in their programmes. These continuing groups, open as they have always been to individual elaboration of doctrine, have responded to many of the newer influences in religion, to elements of oriental mysticism, as well as to the less abstract and at times even occultist ideas disseminated by the New Age group of late-20th century religious movements.

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