

GORDON (W. A.)



The Christian Science Humbug.

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One of the most remarkable facts in human experience is the great susceptibility of communities and races of men to the influence of what is known in modern scientific parlance as, suggestion. Mobs, stampedes, panics, manias, crazes, all the innumerable mental epidemics which have swept over the world are proof of the proneness of the people to suggestion.

The Crusades were mental epidemics. The most pathetic epidemic in history was the Childrens' Crusade, when so many thousands of boys and girls from eight to twelve years of age were carried by an insane impulse toward Jerusalem only to meet death and slavery at the hands of the Turks.

For a hundred and fifty years the witchcraft mania afflicted society and all kinds and conditions of people. It was a universal insanity. In recent years the extraordinary delusion of the Millerites, who believed the world was to come to an end on a certain day and hour in the year 1844, is a good example of an epidemic of insanity. The blue glass craze started by General Pleasanton a few years since when so many prominent men and cultured citizens were cured of all kinds of diseases by light transmitted through panes of blue glass was an interesting and harmless epidemic, illustrating how many abnormally suggestible people are at large in the country.

The Trilby fad, the new woman malady, the acute delirium of the woman's crusade in Ohio in 1873, the melancholy aberrations which have characterized some of the religious revivals in recent times are instances of psychic contagion which are interesting to the student of mental epidemiology.

It appears that there are still numbers of people in every community who can be depended upon to follow after any and every seemingly pious impostor who chooses to declare he has super-human influence or power. This is true of all countries. There are false Mohammeds in Mohammedan countries; false

prophets everywhere. The prosperity of Mormonism is a sad illustration of what a single unscrupulous man can accomplish in the way of deceiving people. Any old hook which is baited with "divine authority" will be swallowed by a considerable number of people as promptly as certain fish bite at painted tin. This is especially true if there is a medical attachment to the religious hook. The reasons are not far to seek. Man has always been on his knees striving to propitiate the invisible. And to obtain relief from the pains and disablements of disease has been the one uninterrupted quest of the ages.

The mystico-Messianic field has been cultivated so assiduously in times past and the frauds have been shown up so often that scholars had come to the conclusion that such transparent swindles would not again thrive in this country. But the late Illinois Christ found plenty of followers and lots of wives. Dowie, the ecclesiastico-medical confidence man, has plenty of converts who know that he has great influence on high because he admits it himself. Consequently they are willing to pay substantial sums to have one of the anointed properly present their claims to Him that sitteth in the heavens.

Dowie's combination of factory and fanaticism is one of the most spectacular devices in modern crankdom, and it greatly increases the power and revenue of this cunning paranoiac.

His appropriating the ancient insignia of universities (the cap and gown) as the garb for his "officers" and his purloining so much of the Episcopalian ritual for the use of Zion, illustrates the poverty of his imagination and the wealth of his impudence.

Schlatter, the "Divine Healer," who was mildly and piously insane, was thronged by people who were cured with neatness and despatch when he merely placed his emaciated hands upon their credulous bodies.

These evidences of superstition and gullibility match the belief in the potencies of charms, amulets, incantations, liver pads and pounding of tom-toms, the vagaries of pelopathists and the mummeries of soothsayers and are all proofs of the power of suggestion.

One of the most absurd and amusing medico-religious insanities of recent years is the Christian Science delusion which is temporarily affecting a considerable number of excellent people

at the present time. The mania was originated by a shrewd New England female, who has a decided penchant for dollars. She used the old and always reliable "revelation" dodge to secure coin and converts. This inventor of the Christian Science fake has brought together scrappy ideas from the Hindoo pantheism, hints from Bishop Berkeley's idealism, portions of medieval mysticism, some of the sayings of Jesus and mixed them with a few of her own pipe dreams and labelled the hodge-podge "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," price, cloth, \$3.18, prepaid.

This is the sacred book of the Christian Science cult. This is the fountain of knowledge for "metaphysical healers." In this precious volume (Morocco, \$5.00 prepaid) are the great truths which Divine Love has at last vouchsafed to a suffering world. It is probably the most self-contradictory work ever printed. The impudence, irreverence, ignorance and conceit in this book are simply phenomenal.

God, so the story goes, took the impecunious Yankee female into His confidence and gave her pointers on the structure of the Universe, so she has been able to obtain a large fortune by selling this information to adoring disciples who pay three hundred dollars apiece for the heaven-sent knowledge. By selling books, pamphlets, magazines, souvenir spoons and occult secrets obtained direct from God this modern priestess has built up a large and lucrative trade. There has seldom been a more beautiful illustration of the truth of the scripture, "that Godliness is profitable unto all things," than in the commercial transactions of the founder of the Christian Science folly. It is humiliating to know that so many apparently intelligent people can be "worked" by a sanctimonious female sharper posing as an emissary of the Almighty.

She counts her followers by the hundreds of thousands.

She is the high priestess of a mysticism before whose glories the Blavatskys and Cagliostros pale their ineffectual fires.

By conjuring with the name that is above every name, this woman has obtained the devotion and the dollars, the love and the lucre of multitudes vastly greater than ever thronged the puissant Peasant of Palestine.

Single handed by the magical force of her own genius she has

secured loving mastery over thousands of honorable and conscientious people who are proud to acclaim her as their leader; who revere her as a divinely inspired being whose glad evangel is to rehabilitate a sinful and sorrowful world.

While devoutly acknowledging the Prince of Peace as her exemplar she accomplishes her purposes by ways and means entirely foreign to those adopted by the Gentle Comforter.

She is under the spell of modern commercialism.

She has up to date notions of the value of advertising and the importance of keeping an eye on the main chance.

No archaic and romantic ideas of poverty, celibacy and self-sacrifice animate this expounder of the faith once delivered to the saints.

In her youth she must have been as affectionate (see inventory of divorced and defunct consorts) as Cleopatra, in her old age she is as insatiably avaricious as the horse leech.

While to critical eyes it may have a touch of incongruity—to the majority of us it is quite entertaining to behold how deftly and boldly the cheery doctrines of the epicurean can be commingled with the teachings of Him, who had not where to lay his head.

When the Divine bachelor of Galilee healed the sick He bade them depart in silence and tell no one of the miracle, but the much married New England dreamer believes in that scripture where the light is not placed under the bushel.

The Man of Sorrows gave the loaves and fishes to the multitude—this dear prophetess kindly permits the multitude to contribute the loaves and fishes to her that they may graciously realize in its beauty and fullness that scripture which states that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

My lord Hamlet complained that he "lacked gall." This famous female has never so far as recorded in authentic contemporary history manifested any deficiency in this important respect.

The fundamental doctrine of the so-called Christian Science is that there is nothing but Mind in the Universe, that there is no such thing as matter. A tree is not a tree; it exists only as a delusion of mortal mind; it is a part of God. "God is everything and everything is God," exclaims this devout Christian

idolator; and this transcendental nonsense passes for science. Science is systematized knowledge. The only thing scientific about the so-called Christian Science is the systematized method of obtaining good honest money from mystified, half hypnotized mortals who have been hoodwinked into believing that they believe. Vast egotism is on nearly every page of her writings. I am the only truly holy dispenser of truth is the constant assertion of this vulgar miracle monger. Everyone is in error except Jesus of Nazareth and myself, and you can only understand His teachings by a prolonged study of my "Key to the Scriptures," in which there are some fine improvements on His methods (see the last revised edition, price \$3.18).

This new revealer of inspired wisdom states, "I won my way to absolute knowledge through divine revelation;" "Mind is all and Matter is naught;" "Matter seemeth to be, but is not;" "The blood, heart, lungs, brain, etc., have nothing to do with Life;" "Every function of man is governed by the Divine Mind;" "All disease is the result of education and can carry its ill effects no further than mortal mind maps out the way;" "To reduce inflammation, dissolve a tumor or cure organic disease. I have found Divine Mind more potent than all lower remedies."

These are samples of the absurd and contradictory assertions of this Boston Messiah. On one page there is no such thing as disease, sickness or pain, and on the next page terrible cases of organic disease have been miraculously cured by the application of a chunk of "Divine Mind" to the afflicted person, place or thing.

Here is a choice bit of therapeutic wisdom from this new oracle: "In inflammatory affections the Truth of Being whispered into the ear of mortal mind will bring relief."

The typhoid bacilli will promptly abandon their favorite abode and chase each other around the corner when "the Truth of Being" is whispered. You don't have to yell but just whisper into the fevered ear, and presto! away they go and of course the inflammation subsides, Peyer's glands heal and there you are. The next time a ship bearing small pox or yellow fever comes to an American port, instead of all the disinfection and quarantine nonsense, the officers should send for a Christian Science "healer" and get her to scatter some of the "Divine Mind" about the

ship and "whisper the Truth of Being" into the mortal ears of the crew and passengers and thus stop the whole miserable business. The Divine Mind is powerful in such cases, but care must be used so as not to injure the furniture and bedding. The Divine Mind method can only be applied scientifically by graduates of the Massachusetts Metaphysical College (tuition \$300 for twelve easy lessons.)

According to the sacred tenets of the Christian Science the man with a broken thigh does not really need gross splints and material extension apparatus. The misguided doctor only thinks he does and the M. D. imparts this fool notion to the patient. What is actually demanded in such cases is a "knowledge of the Truth." Calm and soulful contemplation of the good, the true and the beautiful; a prayerful acceptance of Christian Science; gentle refined meditation on the spiritualization of thought will promptly demonstrate the divine harmonies by which Mind, through Science, reigns in this and other worlds and thus positively prove that the leg is not fractured, or if it is fractured there is no such thing as pain and consequently the leg cannot be painful. How lovely is the Divine Science. How clear and simple the immortal Truth when scientifically elucidated by the "Key to the Scriptures!"

It is noticeable that this spiritualized prophetess pays large attention to the things which common men and women regard as desirable forms of matter. She dwells in a costly home, rides in a special car, demands earthly money for the revelations God gave for nothing.

This celebrated divorcee must have been something of a voluptuary, at least in the heyday of her career, for she has had a variety of husbands, some of whom were not all mind. Her experiences in the divorce courts were not of a strictly metaphysical character, at least to uninspired eyes.

She writes so sweetly of Love (in some passages there is almost a Swinburnian flavor to her utterances) that one is charmed by her eloquence. This spiritual priestess has had such ample experience in loving and being loved that she is well qualified to speak authoritatively on this always interesting topic. God loved her so that He let her have the secrets of Life and Death and all mysteries and never charged her a dollar. All her hus-

bands loved her and all her disciples love her and are willing and eager to put up the \$3.18 per copy for the record of the "revelations." So, taking everything into consideration an unusual amount of the nothingness of this poor non-existent world has gone her way and stopped with her.

This woman has probably "heard voices." She says she has. Such hallucinations are common enough among the mildly insane. Her book is illogical and at times incoherent; it is full of contradictions; in some places there are well written and eloquent passages, and in other places she mixes her metaphors like a populist orator. It would be base flattery to accuse her of being acquainted with English grammar. The boundless conceit and the insane egotism of the ungrammatical authoress are exhibited in sentences like these: "God has been graciously fitting me during many years for the reception of a final revelation of the absolute principle of scientific mind healing."

God made the world in six days but He had to labor for years to get this woman ready to do business. Then after she was duly, truly and fully fitted so that God was satisfied, she cut loose and began to do fitting on her own account. She worked faster than God, for her disciples were fitted and ready for business in three weeks, \$300 per fit, cash invariably in advance. She states, "God impelled me to set a price on my instruction."

It is no wonder that this Christian Science promotor calls on all her disciples to look to God, seeing He has been so greatly concerned about the financial department of the new medico-theological enterprise.

It is quite evident from the teachings of the Christian Science that God has changed a good deal in recent years. This is the first time on record where He has shown marked personal interest in the fee bills of "healers." The priestess says: "I shrank from asking it, but was finally led by a strange Providence to accept this fee."

The Most High, He who inhabiteth eternity, finally persuaded this modest timid thing to stamp C. O. D. on the inestimable truths He had so long kept to Himself before He would let her put them on the Boston market. He was so insistent, He was bound to have His way, so she at last shrinkingly acquiesced. When Christ was on earth He was not "impelled" to

fix a price on His instruction and cures. God did not "impel" Him to even pass the hat, let alone constrain His disciples to put up in advance.

The Christian Science armamentarium is mystical, wonderful. There are no cold, material knives or artery forceps, no trephines or bone drills therein. Moonshine needles and ethereal silk are used to coaptate severed structures. As for stethoscopes, syringes, specula, electrical appliances, etc., they are gross, earthly, crude, useless devices of the deluded "matter-physicians" whose blindness has not been removed by the perusal of the "Key to the Scriptures." Many brilliant and brainy men—such as Marion Sims and Sir J. Y. Simpson—always supposed the obstetric forceps was a humane and life saving instrument; but they were simply ignorant and unilluminated creatures who believed that mud is not mind.

The Christian Science pharmacopoeia is still more mystical and wonderful; it is actually thaumaturgic. Prayerful purgatives produce painless peristalsis so that recalcitrant bowels move on schedule time; aerial astringents get a spiritualized pucker on flabby membranes; dreamy, viewless metaphysical soporifics sooth the insomniac brain to sweet forgetfulness; celestial antiseptics, odorless and invisible and "quite superior to matter," cleanse and heal all running sores on man or beast; divine diuretics, immaterial and tasteless, filter through afflicted kidneys as gently as the evening dew falls upon the bosom of a lily and then they are so aesthetic and so powerful in Bright's disease; unseen anodynes and mental paregoric are guaranteed to cure colic in one treatment; microbes, pathogenic germs and all pestilential vapors are promptly destroyed by giving them a piece of your mind, or if you are short on mind let them have one lovely application of Divine Mind; sweet thoughts, beautiful ideas and Love (always use a capital L) are death on cancerous growths and bunions.

In the case of worms a short prayer and "silent argument" will fix pin-worms, but the old fashioned tape worm has to have a scientifically intangible course of treatment, "the calm, strong current of true spirituality" can be depended upon as an efficient, matterless worm killer; but to avoid griping the current must not be too strong.

If there is no such thing as Matter why do Christian Science "healers" use gross material foods? To be consistent they should eat only immaterial articles. Soulful soups, spirit on the half shell, psychical potatoes, mental mush, toasted truth, truffled thought a la mode, iced ideas, etc., would cost less than common grub and by demonstrating the nutrient qualities of a genuinely spiritualized diet the "healers" would soon convince the ungodly that "Matter is not." The work of the world would be changed into the channels of "Truth." Butchers, bakers, gardeners, millers, farmers and all the persons who are now uselessly getting victuals together could quit work and bask in the sunshine of the "Holy uplifting faith of Christian Science."

If there is no such thing as Matter why do Christian Science "healers" wear petticoats and other articles known as clothing? They should be merely wrapped in thought. A good stout thought with intellectual passamenterie trimmings and ruffled ideas for edging would be suitable for summer and winter wear, because the sibyl has said that "cold and heat are products of mind." One suit would do for all seasons. A reflection hat and meditation veil would look well with the thought suit. For northern climates opaque thought should be used in preference to transparent thought except on Sunday. Lord Tennyson states that Lady Godiva, when she took her celebrated horseback ride, was "clothed on with chastity;" an undersuit of this nature, like a motion to adjourn, is always in order and would not interfere with the thought gown.

This great discovery, that there is no matter in the universe, is destined ultimately to revolutionize all human pursuits.

Time and space have no real existence; they are mere figures of speech.

What we ordinary mortals know as matter can be influenced at great distances by the refined potencies of pure mentality so that absent treatment of disease can be successfully conducted across the prairies and over the mountains by the etherealized will of the operator.

This power to influence, modify and control the manifestations of divine mind, which we vulgarly know as matter, will prove invaluable in the manufacturing and domestic economics of the Twentieth century.

When the great principles of Christian Science ultimately triumph, an impalpable tea kettle can be filled with mental water and a drawing of ghostly tea prepared and be ready for use by an act of the will while the family is walking home from the lecture.

A panful of mythical biscuit can be stirred up by your mind and baked in a supernatural oven by imaginary caloric supplied by a metaphysical furnace while you are resting.

The houses of that joyous time will be warmed by distributing a few good hot adjustable emotions among the rooms.

A collection of large, lambent, luminous conceptions will supplant electric lighting plants and will doubtless produce an iridescent illumination, whose heavenly radiance will make even the benighted minds of skeptics and scoffers shine as the perfect day.

When the glorious doctrines of Christian Science are universally adopted and practiced, sickness, sorrow and pain will vanish from the earth.

The venerable edict that "in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" will be abrogated.

The work of the world will be performed by just thinking about it.

Men will hoe corn, dig potatoes and saw wood by sitting in the shade and wishing it done.

Sweetness and light will dwell in all hearts.

Insanity, poverty and crime will be but remembered nightmares of an unhallowed past.

The millenium will dawn amid choruses of universal hallelujahs with all the children of God shouting for joy.

In the meantime there are prosaic persons, who maintain that the true mission of all this Christian Science hubbub is to teach humility to the sons of men; to demonstrate to what extravagant absurdities undisciplined masses may subscribe; to show the necessity of modifying the educational courses in our schools and colleges so that Reason may not "rust in us unused."

The reasons why Christian Science has attracted attention and won converts lie upon the surface. The crafty authoress is an adept in the art which "darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge." She cunningly mingles her medical balderdash

with extracts from the Bible, which are held as a priceless heritage by all Christian people. Her physiological inanities go hand in hand with rhapsodies upon the glory of God. Her therapeutic vagaries are carried along upon the swelling torrent of religious emotion. Her appeals to her followers to lead pure lives and follow after righteousness meet the approval of all people. If the dollar mark were less obtrusive there would be more confidence in her sincerity. The heart of her secret lies in her exploitation of some of the great truths of Christianity and her ability to so mingle with these truths her medical errors that they pass by being in good company.

There are, however, only a few people who can be fooled all the time. All that is needed to destroy this mushroom growth is the truth. To prosecute its believers under medical laws tends to produce martyrs.

Christian Science will follow Perkins Tractors, Walker's Vinegar Bitters and the liver pad into merited obscurity and our grandchildren will wonder how any person could have been exercised over such a perspicuous humbug.

The Medical historian in future years will note as of interest this curious psychic epidemic through which we are passing and will doubtless give a few paragraphs to the name of Mary-Moss-Baker-Grover-Patterson-Eddy, as one of the most remarkable religio-medical female mountebanks of all the ages.

