

condition for its exercise. In practice it operates by firmly implanting in the patient's mind the conviction that he will be cured. The range of maladies which have been cured or beneficially affected by suggestion, as it has been practiced in some of the European hospitals, is surprising. Not only have diseases which we class as nervous been cured; but under such treatment wounds and abscesses have healed more quickly, minor operations have sometimes been rendered painless and the weakly and lame have recovered strength. To give but a single instance of the extent to which this method is used, Dr. Woods, medical superintendent of Hoxton House Asylum, England, states in a paper writteth within a year or so, that he has treated over one thousand cases by suggestion, and finds it a most potent remedy, not only in functional disorders, but in organic as well.

Of course no one of these investigators would claim that suggestion or any other method of mental therapeutics was a panacea for every ill. The limits within which it is effective are becoming more and more clear as experiments proceed. For many ailments such treatment is only subsidiary, not a principal means of cure. And in the case of not a few injuries, such as the dislocation of joints or the fracture of bones, it must count for almost nothing as an influence toward recovery, compared to manipulating under the surgeon's hand.

But waiving further details, when all is said, it is apparent that the last decade has seen, among both physicians and laymen, a most interesting awakening to the importance of the mental attitude of every sufferer from physical ailment. Right-mindedness of this kind is no cure-all, but it is an important means for the recovery and the maintenance of health.

It is this truth of the importance of the mental attitude to the physical well-being which has been grasped by Christian Science and urged with impressive intensity and fervor—urged, however in a form which seems to a student of the facts sadly distorted, involved as it is with an utterly unscriptural doctrine of God and of man, and exaggerated to a dogma of the curability of every kind of physical affection.

For any one who would take advantage of what has been learned of late of this matter of mental therapeutics, the course is clear. The facts are available for whoever cares to inform himself in readable and suggestive books; and if one desires more personal instruction, there are lectures by students of this subject, who with saneness of judgment and without doing violence to their received Christian faith present the principles which make for healthful thinking and healthful living. Should illness overtake him, there are doctors who recognize adequately the part a man's

soul plays in his recovery, who know their psychology as well as their physiology—and there are going to be more of them. And, most important of all, by a wholesome, hearty type of Christianity he will open his life to all the healthful influences by which the living God presses in upon his soul. There is sound sense in that little verse from the pen of a hard working Scotchman:

"Three blissful words I name to thee.  
Three words of potent charm,  
From eating care thy heart to free,  
Thy life to shield from harm—  
Pray, work and sing."

For one who thus informs himself of all that God is able to do for the body through the soul, and practices what he learns, who lives in glad and joyous trust in the God of all power, all things are possible that are possible to the Faith Christ, the Mental Healer or the Christian Scientist.

If, on the other hand, one prefers to adopt the doctrines of Christian Science, he also will come, no doubt, into a mental attitude which will tend to minimize bodily ills. But this can only be by the surrender of much that is precious in our historic faith and by the acceptance of doctrines of God and of His own nature which, possibly attractive at first, have repeatedly in the course of Christian history proved harmful to the soul. I can do little more in closing than name some of these teachings.

And first is the *practical denial of the personality of God*. I know that some Christian Scientists would repudiate this as one of their doctrines. Possibly Mrs. Eddy would do so. It is true the denial of personality is not specific. But throughout the volume, *Science and Health*, there is a vagueness on this point which would lead one to class the pantheists. God is constantly spoken of as a divine principle. It is distinctly stated that "prayer to a personal God is hindrance." The attitude of a heart in prayer to God as Mrs. Eddy pictures it is not the attitude to which Jesus invites us. Listen, for example, to the interpretation of the Lord's prayer which is read responsively with that prayer at Christian Science services:

"Our Father which art in Heaven,  
Our Eather and Mother God, all harmonious,  
Thy Kingdom come,  
Thy Kingdom is come,  
God is ever present and omnipotent,  
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;  
Enable us to know—as in heaven so on earth,  
God is all in all.  
And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,  
And divine love is reflected in love.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
And leaveth us not in temptation, but delivereth us from sin, disease, death.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.  
For God is omnipotent Good, Substance, Life, Truth, Love."

Or here is a somewhat different "spir-

itual interpretation" given by Mrs. Eddy in *Science and Health*:

"Our Eternal Supreme Being all harmonious,  
Ever glorious,  
Ever present and omnipotent.  
Thy supremacy appears as matter disappears:  
Thou givest to mortals the bread of life,  
Thy truth destroys the claims of error,  
And led by the spirit, mortals are delivered  
From sickness, sin and death:  
For thou art Spirit, Life, Truth, Love, and  
Man is in thy likeness forever.  
So be it."

Surely the one to whom that prayer was addressed is not our Father in heaven to whom Jesus taught us to pray and to whom He himself spoke with such consciousness of personality.

Again there is in the teaching of *Christian Science* the denial of the reality of matter, especially of the real existence of our bodies. This seems perhaps a harmless doctrine, too visionary to have much bearing upon ordinary life. And yet it is a doctrine with a bad record. The student of church history knows it well from its first appearance under the name of Gnosticism down. The Apostles opposed it vehemently in some of the Epistles, for they foresaw its tendencies. Appearing as a most spiritual doctrine, its tendency was downward. For from the denial of the existence of the body, to a relaxed control of the body, followed by self-indulgence growing more and more demoralizing the steps were swift an easy. I do not prophecy such a decadence to Christian Science; but I do say that this doctrine of the non-reality of the body, wherever seriously held, has proved a dangerous doctrine.

And the last teaching that we can speak of is *the denial of the reality of sin*. If this were merely the philosophic doctrine that in the great plans of God, stretching into the æons before us, sin is not to be everlastingly existent—that it will be conquered at last by God's love and holiness, we should not take time in this practical discussion to notice the question. But that is not the obvious meaning of the language of Christian Science, nor the way in which its teaching is universally understood. The idea is rather, that the sin with which you and I are grappling is after all only a delusion of "mortal mind," best conquered as it is ignored. I leave you to square this with the words of the beloved Apostie, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us;" with the agonizing cry of St. Paul, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin that is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" with the name of Him who was "called Jesus," Saviour, "for he shall save his people from their sins." "Who His own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree." Surely, you and I are struggling with something more than a "delusion of mortal mind,"