

The Soul of Medicine

Spiritual Perspectives and Clinical Practice

EDITED BY

John R. Peteet, M.D.

AND

Michael N. D'Ambra, M.D.

Harvard Medical School

Boston, Massachusetts

The Johns Hopkins University Press

BALTIMORE

© 2011 The Johns Hopkins University Press

All rights reserved. Published 2011

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

The Johns Hopkins University Press

2715 North Charles Street

Baltimore, Maryland 21218-4363

www.press.jhu.edu

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The soul of medicine : spiritual perspectives and clinical practice / edited
by John R. Peteet and Michael N. D'Ambra.

p. ; cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-1-4214-0299-4 (hardcover : alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 1-4214-0299-8 (hardcover : alk. paper)

1. Medicine. 2. Medicine—Religious aspects. 3. Mind and
body. I. Peteet, John R., 1947– II. D'Ambra, Michael N.

[DNLM: 1. Spirituality. 2. Religion and Medicine. WM 61]

R708.S68 2011

201'.661—dc22 2011009990

A catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

*Special discounts are available for bulk purchases of this book. For
more information, please contact Special Sales at 410-516-6936 or
specialsales@press.jhu.edu.*

The Johns Hopkins University Press uses environmentally friendly book
materials, including recycled text paper that is composed of at least 30
percent post-consumer waste, whenever possible.

Driessen, Christine J. "Christian Science."

The Soul of Medicine: Spiritual Perspectives and Clinical Practice

Ed. John R. Peteet and Michael N. D'Ambra. pp. 152-170.

© 2011 The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Reprinted with permission of Johns Hopkins University Press.

Contents

<i>List of Contributors</i>	vii
<i>Preface</i>	ix

PART I: HISTORICAL AND CLINICAL CONTEXT

1	Spirituality and Biomedicine: A History of Harmony and Discord	3
	<i>Michael J. Balboni and Tracy A. Balboni</i>	
2	Approaching Spirituality in Clinical Practice	23
	<i>John R. Peteet, Michael J. Balboni, and Michael N. D'Ambra</i>	

PART II: MAJOR TRADITIONS AND MEDICINE

3	Judaism	47
	<i>Steven C. Schachter and Terry R. Bard</i>	
4	Hinduism	59
	<i>Gowri Anandarajah</i>	
5	Islam	79
	<i>Areej El-Jawahri</i>	
6	Christianity	96
	<i>John R. Knight and Walter Kim</i>	
7	Buddhism	115
	<i>Robert Wall</i>	
8	Eclectic Spirituality	133
	<i>Elizabeth Spencer-Smith</i>	
9	Christian Science	152
	<i>Christine J. Driessen</i>	

10	Jehovah's Witnesses <i>Jon Schiller</i>	171
----	--	-----

11	A Secular Perspective <i>David C. Ring</i>	188
----	---	-----

PART III: IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

12	Ethical Considerations and Implications for Professionalism <i>Michael J. Balboni, Terry R. Bard, Shan W. Liu, Michael N. D'Ambra, Travis D. Johnson, Walter Moczynski, and John R. Peteet</i>	199
----	---	-----

13	Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy <i>Terry R. Bard and Walter Moczynski</i>	225
----	--	-----

14	Teaching and Learning at the Interface of Medicine and Spirituality <i>Marta D. Herschkopf</i>	237
----	--	-----

	<i>Index</i>	256
--	--------------	-----

Contributors

Gowri Anandarajah, M.D., Professor (Clinical), Department of Family Medicine, Brown University School of Medicine, Providence, Rhode Island; gowri_anandarajah@mhri.org

Michael J. Balboni, M.Div., Th.M., Ph.D., Center for Psycho-oncology and Palliative Care Research, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, Massachusetts; mjbalboni@partners.org

Tracy A. Balboni, M.D., M.P.H., Assistant Professor of Radiation Oncology, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts; tbalboni@partners.org

Terry R. Bard, D.D., Clinical Instructor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston, Massachusetts; Terry_Bard@hms.harvard.edu

Michael N. D'Ambra, M.D., Associate Professor of Anesthesiology, Harvard Medical School, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts; mdambra@partners.org

Christine J. Driessen, C.S.B., M.A., M.S.T., J.D., Christian Science Practitioner, Church of Christ, Scientist, New York, New York; driessencsb@gmail.com

Areej El-Jawahri, M.D., Clinical Fellow in Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts; ael-jawahri@partners.org

Marta D. Herschkopf, M.St., M.D., Resident Physician (Psychiatry), New York University School of Medicine, New York, New York; marta.herschkopf@nyumc.org

Travis D. Johnson, M.D., M.P.H., Faculty, Hendersonville Family Medicine Residency Program, University of North Carolina, Hendersonville, North Carolina; travisduanejohnson@gmail.com

Walter Kim, Ph.D., Associate Minister/Teaching Pastor, Park Street Church, Boston, Massachusetts; wkim@parkstreet.org

John R. Knight, M.D., Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School, Senior Associate in Medicine/Associate in Psychiatry, Children's Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts; john.knight@childrens.harvard.edu

Shan W. Liu, M.D., S.D., Instructor in Surgery, Harvard Medical School, Department of Emergency Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts; sliu1@partners.org

Walter Moczynski, D.Min., M.T.S., M.Div., Instructor in Ministry, Harvard Divinity School, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, Massachusetts; wmoczynski@partners.org

John R. Peteet, M.D., Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts; jpeteet@partners.org

David C. Ring, M.D., Ph.D., Associate Professor of Orthopedic Surgery, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts; dring@partners.org

Steven C. Schachter, M.D., Professor of Neurology, Harvard Medical School, Director of Research, Department of Neurology, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston, Massachusetts; sschacht@bidmc.harvard.edu

Jon Schiller, M.D., Valley Medical Group, Amherst, Massachusetts; joschillo4@gmail.com

Elizabeth Spencer-Smith, M.D., F.A.C.R., Rheumatology Associates, Greenbrae, California; foxydoxy9@yahoo.com

Robert Wall, M.Div., M.S.N., F.N.P.-B.C., A.P.M.H.N.P.-B.C., Commonwealth Care Alliance, Boston, Massachusetts; wall.r@comcast.net

Christian Science

Christine J. Driessen, C.S.B., M.A., M.S.T., J.D.

Genesis 1, the beginning of the Christian and Jewish Scripture, states that Spirit alone has created all and made everything good and that Spirit made each of us, man or woman, in the divine image and likeness. Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, found this to be a scientific basis for prayer, enabling anyone to prove that health is our natural state.

Christian Science is the universal system of Mind-healing (Mind meaning God, the divine creative intelligence of the universe) through the understanding of the omnipotence and supremacy of Spirit as the source of all creation. It is based on the teachings and healing work of arguably the greatest physician who ever lived, the Jewish teacher Jesus, called the Christ or the Messiah.

Through spiritual means alone, Jesus healed every type of physical condition (Matthew 4:23–24)—acute and chronic; contagious, congenital, hereditary; even long-standing conditions: a woman whose bleeding continued unabated for 12 years in spite of medical treatment (Mark 5:25–34); a woman bowed over, unable to stand erect for 18 years (Luke 13:11–17); a long-standing case of epilepsy (Matthew 17:14–21; Mark 9:14–29); and a man unable to walk for 38 years (John 5:2–9). Jesus resuscitated people who had already died—a

12-year-old girl (Mark 5:21–24, 35–43); a young man being carried to his tomb (Luke 7:12–16); his friend Lazarus, who had been dead for four days (John 11:1–44)—all healed instantly through prayer based on his acknowledgment that God, Spirit, is our only Life (John 11; Matthew 12:22–28).

Jesus taught that anyone who followed his teaching would be able to heal as he did and do even greater works (John 14:12). His command to his followers was, “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8). “These signs will follow those who believe; in my name they will cast out demons; . . . they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover” (Mark 16:17, 18; biblical quotations from Kohlenberger 2004).¹ Through his healing work, Jesus defined the meaning of “Christ” as a universal saving power (Luke 7:19–22). Hebrew prophets such as Moses, Elijah, and Elisha, and the disciples of Jesus (in particular, Peter, Paul, and John) all demonstrated the power of Spirit to heal disease and overcome death.

Eddy called this system of healing “Science” because a science is truth or knowledge based on universal laws that anyone can test or put into practice when the laws are understood (such as the science of mathematics). Christian Science refers to the divine laws of Life, Truth, and Love found in the Bible which govern the universe, including each of us irrespective of religious background, and which can be tested and proven by anyone who adheres to them (Eddy 1906, p. 107).

These laws declare that our reason for existing is to glorify God, not through suffering, but by demonstrating our inherent wholeness as God’s creation. Eddy explains our purpose: “As an active portion of one stupendous whole, goodness identifies man with universal good. Thus may each member of this church rise above the oft-repeated inquiry, What am I? to the scientific response: I am able to impart truth, health, and happiness, and this is my rock of salvation and my reason for existing” (1913, p. 165).

Eddy called this the “Science of the Christ” or “Christian Science” because “Christ” and “Christian” refer to the healing power of divine Love as demonstrated by Jesus. His life and teaching illustrate how obedience to the two great commandments found in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—“Love (trust, obey, submit to) God, Spirit, supremely,” and “Love your neighbor as yourself”—will enable anyone to heal as he did and prove that our life is entirely spiritual here and now.

The Bible has many references to the “Science of God,”² which it describes as perfect and accessible through the Christ. The Bible warns against false sci-

ence, which it defines as any teaching that steers people away from faith in God, Spirit, as the only power. Eddy also called Christian Science “Mind healing,” referring not to the brain—which can be injured, unconscious, or in a coma—but to the one ever-present, all-knowing, divine Mind, God, which enabled Jesus to heal. The apostle Paul said we need to have the Mind of Christ.

Insights about Life and Healing

Christian Science is both therapeutic and preventive, and it declares that health, peace, and wholeness are natural to each of us eternally: “The Christian Science God is universal, eternal, divine Love, which changeth not and causeth no evil, disease, nor death” (Eddy 1906, p. 140). Rather than holding an anthropomorphic concept of God, Eddy believed the God of the Bible to be all-powerful, all-knowing, all-acting; the only creator and the source of good alone, whose law supports and maintains all creation; the All-in-all or *sine qua non* of existence.

Her insights came from years of searching for better health for herself. After suffering from digestive and back problems, she tried allopathic medicine, homeopathy, and many forms of alternative medicine available during her lifetime but could find no permanent relief. Her discovery of a reliable system of healing came in stages, after a period of experimenting with homeopathic medicine and prayer to treat disease (Eddy 1906, p. 152).

When she cured a woman who had dropsy (edema), whom doctors had abandoned, simply by administering what today would be called a placebo (Eddy 1906, p. 156), she began to appreciate the mental nature of all suffering. However, it was not until she experienced a serious fall and her own healing through prayer alone that she understood its full significance. She wrote: “During twenty years prior to my discovery I had been trying to trace all physical effects to a mental cause; and in the latter part of 1866 I gained the scientific certainty that all causation was Mind [God, Spirit], and every effect a mental phenomenon. My immediate recovery from the effects of an injury caused by an accident, an injury that neither medicine nor surgery could reach, was the falling apple that led me to the discovery how to be well myself, and how to make others so” (1892, p. 24).

Eddy discovered in Genesis 1 an explanation for how Jesus healed and how she was healed. This chapter explains that Spirit created the entire universe, but there is no mention of evil, disease, sin, or death in creation. Genesis 1:26–

27 states that man (“male and female”) is given dominion over all the earth. (Jesus demonstrated that this “dominion” is our ability to prove the omnipotence of Spirit here in the human experience through healing.) Deuteronomy 32:4 declares God’s work to be perfect. Ecclesiastes 3:14 says that God’s work is forever; nothing can be added to it or taken from it, so it is logical to assume that disease cannot be added to God’s creation, nor can dishonesty, hate, stress, malfunctioning, or failure. And normal action, proper growth, and right thinking cannot be taken away from it.

The explanation for why suffering, disease, aging, accident, and death seem real and inevitable is found in another scriptural narrative, Genesis 2 and 3, the allegory of Adam and Eve. This second version of creation is entirely material; the creator is neither all-knowing nor all-powerful; and the creation is something of a failure from the outset—the antithesis of the creator in Genesis 1, whose creation is perfect and complete.

In Genesis 2–3, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil represents what Christian Science would consider the mistaken teaching that man is created from matter (dust and rib) and that matter has the ability to give life, pleasure, and power; that good is not the only power—evil is also a power; that men can be “as gods” in control of their lives (I Timothy 6:20–21 refers to this as false science). The Bible says this leads to death (I Corinthians 15:22: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive”). The story of Adam and Eve breaks the first great commandment of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam—“Thou shalt have no other gods before me [Spirit]”—and illustrates how this belief in matter as a medium for creation or as a creative power mesmerizes thought and persuades people to believe that suffering is natural and death is inevitable.

Eddy found that if we believe that life and health are in matter and controlled by matter, then we also have to accept the belief that we are subject to disease, aging, accident, and death. If we doubt the existence of God or believe that He is not the only power and that there exist evil conditions or powers beyond God’s power, this causes great fear, which results in suffering. She explains: “The procuring cause and foundation of all sickness is fear, ignorance, or sin. Disease is always induced by a false sense mentally entertained, not destroyed. Disease is an image of thought externalized. The mental state is called a material state. Whatever is cherished in mortal mind as the physical condition is imaged forth on the body” (1906, p. 411).

The word *sin* means “missing the mark” (Strong 1974), believing that any-

thing can “overpower omnipotent and eternal Life” (Eddy 1906, pp. 428–29)—diverting one’s life from God, Spirit, divine Love, through hatred, anger, dishonesty, self-indulgence, sexual license, or pagan worship of matter gods. Psalm 37 explains that when we keep our eyes focused on the mark, or goal, of “perfect man”—God’s perfect creation—we find the presence of peace and the end of evil (Psalms 37:35–37). Psalm 138 continues, “The Lord will perfect that which concerns me.” Jesus commanded, “Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

Resources for Living Well and for Healing

Eddy made a number of recommendations for students, followers, or practitioners of Christian Science. Foremost is obedience to the Ten Commandments, summed up in the two great commandments: “There is only one God; love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind”; and “Love your neighbor as yourself.” In line with that, followers of Christian Science should avoid anything that interferes—drugs, alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, sensuality, and sex outside of marriage—with their ability to think clearly and follow God’s guidance; live a balanced life; and begin each day with prayer and a study of a weekly Bible lesson which addresses many of the challenges people face each day.

A study of Eddy’s textbook, *Science and Health*, has been sufficient to heal people of a wide variety of problems, such as rheumatism, tuberculosis, astigmatism, hernia, fibroid tumor, cataracts, valvular heart disease, cancer, Bright’s disease, and pains of childbirth, to name a few (1906, pp. 600–700).

After people have studied her textbook and recognize its unique healing potential, they have the opportunity to take an intensive two-week Christian Science course called Primary Class Instruction, which is based on the chapter “Recapitulation” in *Science and Health*. During this course the students learn the fundamentals of Christian healing and how to give specific treatments through prayer for themselves and others. Teachers also discuss the ethics of Christian Science practice, including considerations that relate to confidentiality, availability, fees, and relationships with patients (for example, avoiding personal control, counseling, or involvement in personal affairs and avoiding mixing of spiritual and medical treatments).³

Although class instruction teaches people how to maintain their health, at times Christian Scientists face physical problems like anyone else. There are three provisions to support people seeking healing: (1) Christian Science prac-

titioners are available to give treatment through prayer for people with any type of problem, including physical ones. (2) Christian Science nurses are available to care without medication for the physical needs of people dealing with injury, sickness, disease, mental problems, or aging. These services include private duty nurses; visiting nurse services; and camp and school nurses. (3) Christian Science nursing facilities staffed by Christian Science nurses are available for those requiring temporary care.

Students of Christian Science who want to advertise as Christian Science practitioners or nurses in the *Christian Science Journal* must meet certain requirements. Both practitioners and nurses must be members of the Mother Church and must have completed Primary Class Instruction with an authorized teacher of Christian Science.

Christian Science practitioners must have demonstrated an understanding of Christian Science in their own lives, based on deep study of the Bible and *Science and Health*. They must have an established, public practice with a record of success in healing; three references from patients who can attest to their healing work; full-time availability to answer calls (i.e., no other job); mentoring and recommendation from a Christian Science teacher or other experienced practitioner; and an interview with the Christian Science Publishing Society regarding the standards for an advertiser.

Christian Science nurses must have a "demonstrable knowledge of Christian Science practice," must "thoroughly understand the practical wisdom necessary in a sick room," and must be able to "take proper care of the sick" (Eddy 1908, p. 49). Preparation for Christian Science nursing includes courses and/or individual mentoring as well as a considerable period of supervised practice. This preparation generally takes between two and four years to complete and addresses the range of patients' needs, from those requiring light assistance to those needing full or extensive assistance, whether inpatient, outpatient, or in-home care.

The courses include, for example, skills required for preparing and modifying nourishment, and feeding the patient; assistance with lifting, moving, turning, and walking; the use of mobility aids; bed care and personal care; cleansing and bandaging skills; and responding to emergencies. Christian Science nursing is a spiritual and practical ministry that does not include medication but rather supports the patient's desire to rely solely on God for healing and provides compassionate care until the patient is again able to care for himself or herself.

Most Christian Science nursing facilities are relatively small, with 2 to 40 beds. There are about 26 facilities in the United States and others in Canada, Great Britain, Germany, and Switzerland. The majority of these facilities are designed to be short-term care facilities where individuals can find a refuge for prayer and healing. Many are Medicare providers. Individuals who are eligible for Medicare Part A and qualify as needing skilled care in a Religious Non-Medical Health Care Institution may apply for coverage while receiving care there.

The psychological atmosphere surrounding a patient is an important component of healing. Eddy counsels:

The poor suffering heart needs its rightful nutriment, such as peace, patience in tribulation, and a priceless sense of the dear Father's loving-kindness. (1906, pp. 365-66)

By conceding power to discord, a large majority of doctors depress mental energy, which is the only real recuperative power. Knowledge that we can accomplish the good we hope for, stimulates the system to act in the direction which Mind points out. The admission that any bodily condition is beyond the control of Mind disarms man, prevents him from helping himself, and enthrones matter through error. To those struggling with sickness, such admissions are discouraging—as much so as would be the advice to a man who is down in the world, that he should not try to rise above his difficulties. (1906, p. 394)

Give sick people credit for sometimes knowing more than their doctors. Always support their trust in the power of Mind to sustain the body. Never tell the sick that they have more courage than strength. Tell them rather, that their strength is in proportion to their courage. (1906, p. 417)

Struggles of Believers with Contemporary Medical Practice

Eddy had great respect for doctors because they devote their lives to relieving suffering. She felt doctors would benefit from being students of Christian Science because this science would equip them with a “safe and sure medicine” (1906, p. 198; 1896, p. 252). In her chapter, “Science, Theology and Medicine,” Eddy explains her understanding of true medicine: “God being All-in-all, He made medicine; but that medicine was Mind. It could not have been matter, which departs from the nature and character of Mind, God” (1906, p. 142).

Her objection was not to doctors but to matter-based medicine and treatments—a view of man as material and subject to sin, disease, and death, and a view of matter as more powerful than Spirit, God—contrary to Jesus’s teaching and healing work. The fact that Jesus was sent as the Savior of the world and yet never used drugs or surgery but rather healed through prayer alone was one of the reasons she rejected material medicine. Jesus said, “It is the spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing” (John 6:63). He even turned people away from seeing him as the source of healing. He said, “I can of myself do nothing” (John 5:30, 19). “Why do you call me good? No one is good but one, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matthew 19:17).

Matter-based medicine and treatments are constrained by their negative side-effects, high cost, and inaccessibility to large numbers around the world; and yet the Bible promises that God’s gifts bring only good, not suffering, and that they bless everyone—no one is excluded (James 1:17). As Eddy writes, “In divine Science, where prayers are mental, *all* may avail themselves of God as ‘a very present help in trouble’” (1906, pp. 12–13).

Christian Scientists are free to choose whatever form of treatment they feel works best for them, but generally speaking they choose an entirely spiritual approach to all forms of suffering or malfunction because they find it so effective and reliable. The Mother Church (the organizing body of Christian Science which is governed by its church manual) does not dictate the personal choices of health care for its members—for example, whether or not to have surgery. In fact, Eddy makes a provision for a Christian Scientist to have bones set by surgery:

Until the advancing age admits the efficacy and supremacy of Mind, it is better for Christian Scientists to leave surgery and the adjustment of broken bones and dislocations to the fingers of a surgeon, while the mental healer confines himself chiefly to mental reconstruction and to the prevention of inflammation. Christian Science is always the most skilful surgeon, but surgery is the branch of its healing which will be last acknowledged. However, it is but just to say that the author has already in her possession well-authenticated records of the cure, by herself and her students through mental surgery alone, of broken bones, dislocated joints, and spinal vertebrae. (1906, p. 401)

Eddy also made provision for Christian Science practitioners to consult with medical doctors in certain cases (1908, p. 47), and there may be times

when Christian Science nurses need to consult with doctors. If a patient has received medical treatment before seeking healing through spiritual reliance, or chooses to seek medical assistance after entering a Christian Science facility, a Christian Science nurse might communicate (within HIPAA regulations) with medical personnel regarding the care. For example, a patient who has chosen to have an X ray and a bone set, or surgery, and is requiring skilled assistance with continued care might request to have this care without medication and with the support of Christian Science nursing. The Christian Science nurse would need to consider appropriate activities for the patient and skilled care regarding mobility and other matters.

I received a call from a hospital chaplain who said she was working with a Christian Scientist who had been diagnosed with an advanced case of cancer. The patient was trying to decide between medical and Christian Science treatment, but he was overwhelmed with fear, pain, and a feeling of having been abandoned by God. I shared some passages from the Bible with the chaplain that she could read to the patient to comfort and support him as he prayed about which course to take. The chaplain found the passages helpful and was happy to read them to the patient. She also took the name of some Christian Science practitioners to contact.

The best support a doctor or nurse can give to a Christian Scientist who has been brought to a hospital but wants Christian Science treatment is to help the person find a Bible, a copy of *Science and Health*, and a Christian Science practitioner so he or she can pray about what step to take or choice to make. Christian Science is the science of God's tender, loving care for each of us.

Although Eddy makes provision for practitioners to consult with a medical doctor, she is also clear that the medicine of Mind and the medicine of matter tend to negate each other because Spirit and matter are opposites. The Bible explains: "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:6-7).

It would be unethical, Eddy says, for a Christian Scientist to give treatment to someone who makes a conscious decision to rely on medical treatment because Christian Science treatment affirms the powerlessness of matter and would undermine the patient's choice of treatment. In like manner, when a patient chooses to rely on Christian Science treatment, medical diagnoses, prognoses, and treatments tend to undermine the patient's ability to put all his confidence in God.

My family has relied exclusively on Christian Science treatment for four generations and has found God, the divine Mind, to be the most effective physician and surgeon. When my uncle was a young man in the Air Force, he was diagnosed with spinal meningitis. The medical treatment failed, and he went into a coma. The doctors told my grandmother there was nothing more they could do for him and they doubted he would survive. However, after five days of Christian Science treatment he came out of the coma. He was soon completely healed, returned to training and became a pilot.

My father was told by a friend who was a surgeon that the lump on my father's forehead was a tumor requiring immediate surgery; however, my father healed it through prayer alone. Both my brother and my cousin were in serious car accidents with multiple broken bones, and both were healed through prayer alone.

In my cousin's case, he was taken to the hospital and given drugs before my aunt arrived. The doctors feared he would not survive because of the negative reaction he had to the drugs and the severity of the injuries. Through prayer, that prognosis was turned around, and he began recovering. Because my uncle was not yet a Christian Scientist, my aunt let him choose between medical or Christian Science treatment for their son. The doctors said it would be six months before my cousin could walk again. My uncle chose to rely exclusively on Christian Science treatment, affirming that his son was governed by the law of God, Spirit, which maintains our life and health, and not by so-called laws of chance, accident, or physiology. Eight weeks later, my cousin went on a 50-mile hike with his Boy Scout troop completely healed. Later he joined the Navy and was declared fit by the medical examiner.

My cousin's healing took place many years ago, when doctors and hospitals were more supportive of patients' decisions about their own health care. However, in the last couple of decades, that interaction between doctors and patients, including respect for patients' rights and choices, seems rare. Often Christian Scientists or those turning to Christian Science after first seeking medical help have raised the concern that once a person is in the medical system, it is difficult to get out again if they so desire.⁴

Challenging and Reinforcing Contemporary Medical Practice

A significant body of medical writing questions the growing medicalization of the human condition (e.g., the medicalization of childbirth or the "epidemic of

obesity”). It points to the mental nature of suffering and challenges the medical tendency to reduce everything to matter and the brain (Crabtree 1993; Kelly et al. 2007). Although this literature cannot be said to prove the effectiveness of prayer to heal, it nevertheless suggests a relationship between prayer and healing which cannot be ignored.

For example, the authors of *Irreducible Mind* write: “The hypothesis that consciousness is the product of brain processes, or that mind is merely the subjective concomitant of neurological events, has been and remains the almost universal assumption in neuroscience and psychology. Investigations of certain extraordinary circumstances, however, reveal phenomena that call into question this assumption” (Kelly et al. 2007, p. 367). In discussing the genesis of their book, Kelly and coauthors state: “By the year 2000 our discussions had advanced to the point where we believed we could demonstrate, empirically, that the materialistic consensus which undergirds practically all of current mainstream psychology, neuroscience, and philosophy of mind is fundamentally flawed. . . . In a nutshell, we are arguing for abandonment of the current materialistic synthesis, and for the restoration of causally efficacious conscious mental life to its proper place at the center of our science” (2007, pp. xiii–xiv).

The teachings of Christian Science can seem hard to accept when the five physical senses confirm in no uncertain terms that a bone is broken, or that disease is spreading, or that a person has died. And yet for years a wide variety of medical studies has questioned the reliability of the physical senses. Studies of the placebo effect (evident when people think they are receiving a drug or treatment and improve even though they were given no drug or treatment) and of the nocebo effect (seen when people think they have been exposed to a disease or something noxious in the air, and then develop the symptoms, suffer, perhaps even die, without being exposed to any disease) are examples of this. They illustrate the mental nature of all suffering.

A striking example of this is the case of a group of patients diagnosed with angina pectoris, who were offered surgery (ligation of the internal mammary artery) in the hopes of improving their heart condition (Dimond, Kittle, and Crockett 1960). Five of 18 patients—which 5 was not known either by the patients or by their cardiologists—received sham rather than real surgery (a slit in their chest which was then sewn up again) and experienced improvement comparable to that of patients who underwent real surgery. In fact, all 5 reported improvement ranging from feeling much better to being cured, whereas

4 of the 13 who actually did undergo surgery were disappointed with the improvement or got worse. This 1960 study is cited because it is unique and because, given ethical concerns, it will never be repeated now that there is successful coronary intervention technology. It does add to the growing body of evidence regarding placebo (faith-based) effects.

A recent issue of *Scientific American Mind* (Niemi 2009) described a man who was dying of cancer of the lymph nodes, with orange-size tumors in his neck, groin, chest, and abdomen. Doctors had exhausted all available treatments. But “Mr. Wright,” the patient, was confident that a new anticancer drug called Krebiozen would cure him. Although he was “bedridden and fighting for each breath” when he received his first injection, within three days his tumors had shrunk by half, and after 10 more days of treatment, he was discharged from the hospital. However, two months later, on reading reports that Krebiozen was worthless, he died within two days.

There are many examples of the power of hypnotism to make people believe they are physically suffering when it is simply the power of suggestion (Kelly et al. 2007, pp. 179–239). Kelly and associates point out: “Hypnotic suggestion *properly administered to suitable subjects* can bring about psychobiological changes in the total organism which are impossible of attainment in the waking state” (2007, p. 182). Sorcery, which is practiced extensively in Africa and countries with African descendants, is a clear example of this. Its practitioners explain that when a sorcerer or witch doctor puts a curse on a person (saying that the individual will suffer an accident, a disease, or death), it happens just as they say it will. This practice evolved out of a centuries-old belief that there is a spiritual side of material life and a belief in the power of thought to control things in the material world—mixing good and evil in practice.

Voodoo or hex death is found not just in folk societies but also in Western cultures: “The belief that one is going to die may be generated, not by a witch doctor’s curse, but by . . . a doctor’s pronouncement of a hopeless condition . . . , or some other suggestion accepted by the patient” (Kelly et al. 2007, p. 125; see also Eddy 1906, pp. 197–98). Eddy explains: “Mortal existence is a dream of pain and pleasure in matter, a dream of sin, sickness, and death; and it is like the dream we have in sleep, in which every one recognizes his condition to be wholly a state of mind. In both the waking and the sleeping dream, the dreamer thinks that his body is material and the suffering is in that body” (Eddy 1906, p. 188).⁵

Once people have studied Christian Science, learned the omnipotence of

good and the powerlessness of sorcery, a curse has no effect on them, and the disease, suffering, or danger disappears.⁶ However, it is important to point out that this is not an intellectual, mystical, or ritual exercise. It is the power of divine Love expressed in unselfishness, patience, tenderness, compassion, and forgiveness—found in obedience to the two great commandments and in Jesus's Sermon on the Mount, discussed earlier—which overcomes fear, and fully and finally reduces sorcery to its powerlessness. Believing that there are two powers—good and evil—undermines one's ability to overcome evil. Only by understanding that Spirit is good alone, and is the only power, can one overcome fear and suffering. St. John said, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear because fear involves torment" (I John 4:18).

Kelly and his coauthors point to many medically documented cases of healing through faith or prayer of even potentially fatal diseases that failed to respond to medical treatment (2007, pp. 130–39). The Christian Science Church has had magazines since 1883, and now Web sites, that regularly document healings through Christian Science treatment, including many examples where there has been a medical diagnosis.⁷

For example, over the period from 1969 to 1988, the *Christian Science Journal* and *Christian Science Sentinel* printed more than 7,100 testimonies of physical healing. Of these, 2,228 involved medically diagnosed conditions; 2,400 were healings of children, more than 600 of which had been medically diagnosed. These children's cases included "spinal meningitis (in several cases after antibiotics failed to help), pneumonia and double pneumonia, diabetes, food poisoning, heart disorders, loss of eyesight from chemical burns, pleurisy, stomach obstruction, epilepsy, goiter, leukemia, malaria, mastoiditis, polio, rheumatic fever, and ruptured appendix" (Christian Science Board of Directors 1989, p. 68; see also Christian Science Publishing 1966).

While some medical practitioners are open to the idea that prayer could effect physiological change and that suffering could be mental, many are not open to anything but a material view of life and healing. Christian Scientists and many others are troubled by (1) the lack of freedom of choice experienced by many people in relation to medicine, including legal pressure put on parents to choose medical over spiritual means (even when medicine admits its lack of certainty or its danger); and (2) the prevailing tendency to see disease as the natural and inevitable state of mankind, manifested in an aggressive diagnosing or looking for disease, even in healthy people. My perception is

that before the 1980s in the United States, it was easier to practice Christian Science treatment without interference.

Perhaps one of the reasons that Christian Science healing was so effective and widespread in the United States during the first century after Eddy shared her findings was the U.S. tradition of democracy and respect for religious freedom (together with a deep love of the Bible and a strong Christian foundation focused on only one God). Fear of persecution and penalties for choosing prayer have at times inhibited healing through prayer.

Eddy points out that both the doctor's thought and the patient's thought are important for healing: "A patient's belief is more or less moulded and formed by his doctor's belief in the case, even though the doctor says nothing to support his theory. His thoughts and his patient's commingle, and the stronger thoughts rule the weaker. Hence the importance that doctors be Christian Scientists" (Eddy 1906, p. 198). Negative mental states on the doctor's part, such as impatience, irritation, anger, indifference, fear, or hopelessness, directly affect patients' thoughts and expectations, as we saw in the medical studies reviewed by Kelly and others in *Irreducible Mind*.

Christian Science and Culture

Western culture and medicine tend to see everything as material and therefore appear more antagonistic toward the belief in the spiritual and more likely to restrict the free practice of healing through prayer. Asian and African cultures, on the other hand, are open to the idea of the spiritual and mental nature of things in the human experience and are thus more open to considering nonallopathic methods of healing, including prayer. To the degree that a culture respects freedom of religion and recognizes the power of one God, Spirit, who creates only good, to that degree healing thrives.

Over the last couple of decades, a culture of fear—of seeing danger in every direction—appears to be developing in society and undermining people's recognition that health is natural to all of us. And yet the Bible assures us, "God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Timothy 1:7).

The U.S. culture places emphasis on the body—fearing it, worshipping it—and one often hears, "Listen to your body." This is contrary to the biblical foundation of Christian Science healing, which teaches us to silence the body or

physical senses. The Bible says, “Be silent, O all flesh before the Lord” (Zechariah 2:13); we need “to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (II Corinthians 5:8) if we want to maintain our health. Although disciplining thought and not listening to the body have always been natural to athletes who succeed in breaking limitations, today our culture tends to undermine this mental discipline.

In the past few decades, Western medical culture, particularly in the United States, has questioned the use of prayer in children’s cases, and yet the single thing I am most grateful for on the part of my parents is that when I was a child they handled all physical problems through prayer in Christian Science and taught me from my youngest years to turn to God in prayer. My healings were quick and painless. And even better, I have found Christian Science to be the best preventive medicine. My brother, sister, and I all found as children that Christian Science treatment freed us from fear, limitations, and many childhood problems. Now our grown children have chosen this form of health care and have found consistent health and well-being.

Christian Science parents naturally love their children and want them to thrive. The Bible repeatedly stresses that it is never God’s will that children or anyone else die (Ezekiel 18:23; Psalms 103:2–4). God’s will is that we prosper and be healthy. Like any good parent, Christian Science parents want to choose the form of treatment that is most effective, reliable, and immediate, and that is why they choose Christian Science prayer so often. A growing number of parents today, including some doctors, question the safety of inoculations for children.⁸ Christian Scientists, generally speaking, do not give their children inoculations because they have found a safer, more effective way of preventing disease, and that is daily prayer for their children—prayer based on the Science of the Christ.

Addressing and Accessing Spirituality in Practice

Prayer in Christian Science affirms the allness and supremacy of God, Spirit, and the consequent powerlessness and nothingness of evil in any form. As a practitioner, I am striving to lift my thought and the thought of my patient up to the Christ—the divine understanding of perfect God, perfect man (Eddy 1906, p. 259). This means sometimes specifically addressing, through prayer, any fear, ignorance, or sin in the thought of the patient. Other times, both the patient and the practitioner so fully understand man’s inseparability from

God, man's true nature as God's perfect reflection, and the allness of God, Spirit, and consequent powerlessness of matter that the healing comes quickly and naturally.

Christian Scientists never ignore a physical problem; rather, they choose the form of treatment they have found to be most immediate and reliable with no negative side effects—the medicine of Mind. For example, one night around 3:00 a.m., I received a call from a man whose wife appeared to have just died. She had had a heart attack and stopped breathing. He tried to revive her but could not, so he called an ambulance. Then he called me.

I asked him to put the phone to her ear, and I spoke to her: "You know that God is your life and that you can never be separated from God. You know that God is the only Mind and nothing can keep you from hearing God's healing message." Then I put down the phone and continued praying. In the morning they called back to say she revived immediately after I spoke to her and felt fine. She later learned from a doctor that excessive caffeine and taking energy supplements containing ephedrine can have this effect on the body (she had previously had heart murmurs). She realized that although she had never taken medication of any sort, she had believed her strength and alertness depended on material supplements rather than God (Isaiah 40:31). She stopped relying on those things and has not had a recurrence of the heart problem.

The question is often asked, why Christian Science treatment cannot be tested by controlled clinical studies. The Bible explains that "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered in to the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Corinthians 2:9). Health is entirely and exclusively a spiritual state. It cannot be measured by the limited ability of the physical senses. These senses know only disease and deterioration; they cannot even recognize health. Paul said we live, move, and have our being in Spirit (Acts 17:28). Spiritual sense alone communicates health.

Conclusion

Christian Science offers healers and patients, regardless of religious background, a perspective and an approach to healing that has proven to be effective and reliable for over a century. The apostle Paul summed up the truth of the complete system of healing in Christian Science (Eddy 1913, p. 113) in two verses in the Bible, Romans 8:1–2: "There is therefore now no condemnation [which has as one of its meanings "incurability"] to those who are in Christ

Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.”

Eddy taught that “when the Science of being is universally understood, every man will be his own physician, and Truth will be the universal panacea” (Eddy 1906, p. 144).

NOTES

1. The Hebrew, Christian, and Muslim Scriptures all contain references to the Messiah, Savior, or Christ and the power to heal disease, injury, blindness, deafness, and insanity through spiritual means alone. Examples in the Hebrew Bible include Daniel 3; Exodus 3–4; I Kings 19; I Kings 17:17–24; II Kings 4:17–37; Psalms 103:2–4. The birth story of Jesus appears in the Quran 3:42–51. See also, Eddy 1906, p. 328.

2. See note 1. The Christian Scriptures were written in Aramaic and Greek, and the Jewish Scriptures in Hebrew. Depending on the translator and the language, a text may read “knowledge” or “science,” because both are accurate translations. The French translation, for example, uses “science”: “the science of God” (Romans 11:33); “God’s science is perfect” (Job 37:16); “the fear [respect] of God, Spirit, is the beginning of science” (Proverbs 1:7); “in Christ are found all the treasures of wisdom and science” (Colossians 2:2–3); Paul warns against “false science which turns people away from faith in God” (I Timothy 6: 20–21). Quotations translated from Second 1910.

3. For more on the ethics of Christian Science practice and nursing, see the following. On ethics as defined in Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5–7), Eddy 1906, pp. 444:31–446:4; 144:14–22; and 145:16. And from Eddy 1908, on ethics, 40:5; 83:4, 11; 84:18; on practice, 46:12–47:10; 82:16; 92:3–11; on nursing, 49:7–16. For more on surgery and vaccinations, see Eddy 1896, p. 243; Eddy 1913, pp. 344–45.

4. An interesting question arose while I was in law school about how much control one organization should be given over an individual’s choice of health care. I took a course on antitrust and hospital law, in which the professor expressed his concern about the control the AMA appeared to have over all health care practices and the ability to restrict which ones could be practiced, explaining that such a control violates antitrust law, but that the public and the government were reluctant to challenge them.

5. For more on the effect of doctors’ and/or patients’ beliefs on the patient’s physical condition, see Kelly et al. 2007, pp. 123–27, specifically the following: P. 123: “Hopelessness . . . correlated with higher rates of death from cardiovascular disease, cancer, and violence or injury. . . . Association between depression or hopelessness and cancer . . . or cardiovascular disease.” P. 127: The case of an elderly man who died after being given the diagnosis of widespread incurable liver cancer (which he believed); but an autopsy revealed the diagnosis was false. P. 130: “Religious involvement correlates with improved immune system function and a lower risk of cardiovascular disease, hypertension, stroke, pain, and mortality in general.” P. 131: “In 42 independent studies based on a sample of almost 126,000 people, the meta-analysis also revealed a significant correlation between religious involvement and reduction of mortality from a variety of causes.” Pp. 221–24: Medical studies talk about “maternal impressions” in which a

mother is mesmerized (greatly impressed and frightened) by pictures of deformity, for example, and then her newborn child manifests the deformity. See also Eddy 1906, p. 178.

6. As manager of the international Christian Science Board of Lectureship, I was responsible for training our lecturers in Africa, who are all Christian Science practitioners. They each had examples of the harmful effect that sorcery seems to have, even on educated people, but each gave specific examples of how the belief in sorcery lost all power to harm them once they studied Christian Science and realized that God, good, is the only Mind governing us and never causes suffering or death.

7. The following weekly, monthly, or quarterly publications by the First Church of Christ, Scientist, along with their Web sites, document healings through Christian Science treatment, including conditions that have been medically diagnosed: the *Christian Science Journal*, the *Christian Science Sentinel* (both accessible on the Web at www.spirituality.com), and the *Herald of Christian Science* (printed in 14 languages and posted in 22 languages on the Web site, www.csherald.com); also see www.christian-science.com.

8. As an attorney in the Legal and Legislative Department of our Committee on Publication at the Mother Church, I received several calls from medical doctors asking if they could use our legal provisions to protect their children from having to receive inoculations. They said they gave inoculations to their patients because the patients wanted them, but the doctors did not feel they were safe for their own children.

REFERENCES

- Christian Science Publishing 1966. *A Century of Christian Science Healing*. Boston: Christian Science Publishing Society.
- Christian Science Board of Directors. 1989. *Freedom and Responsibility: Christian Science Healing for Children*. Boston: First Church of Christ, Scientist.
- Crabtree, A. 1993. *From Mesmer to Freud: Magnetic Sleep and the Roots of Psychological Healing*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Dimond, E. G., C. F. Kittle, and J. E. Crockett. 1960. Comparison of internal mammary artery ligation and sham operation for angina pectoris. *American Journal of Cardiology* 5:483-86.
- Eddy, M. B. 1892. *Retrospection and Introspection*. Boston: First Church of Christ, Scientist.
- . 1896. *Miscellaneous Writings, 1883-1896*. Boston: First Church of Christ, Scientist.
- . 1906. *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. Boston: First Church of Christ, Scientist.
- . 1908. *Church Manual of the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts*. Boston: First Church of Christ, Scientist.
- . 1913. *The First Church of Christ, Scientist and Miscellany*. Boston: First Church of Christ, Scientist.
- Kelly, E. F., E. W. Kelly, A. Crabtree, A. Gauld, M. Grosso, and B. Greyson. 2007. *Irreducible Mind: Toward a Psychology for the Twenty-first Century*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Kohlenberger, J. R., III, general editor. 2004. *The Essential Evangelical Parallel Bible: New King James Version of the Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Niemi, B. 2009. Cure in the mind. *Scientific American Mind*, Feb.–Mar., pp. 42–49.
- Second, L., trans. 1910. *La Bible et Parole Vivante*. Grezieu la Varenne: Association Viens et Vois.
- Strong, J. 1974. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- Wolf, S. 1950. Effects of suggestion and conditioning on the action of chemical agents in human subjects: The pharmacology of placebos. *Journal of Clinical Investigation* 29:100–109.

Driessen, Christine J. "Christian Science."

The Soul of Medicine: Spiritual Perspectives and Clinical Practice

Ed. John R. Peteet and Michael N. D'Ambra. pp. 152-170.

© 2011 The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Reprinted with permission of Johns Hopkins University Press.