

**CHRISTIAN SCIENCE  
AND THE  
CATHOLIC FAITH**

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Christian science and the Catholic faith by A. M. Bellwald

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# CHRISTIAN SCIENCE AND THE CATHOLIC FAITH

*Including a Brief Account of New  
Thought and Other Modern  
Mental Healing Movements*

BY

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## PREFACE

Why deal once more with Christian Science? With so many works already on the market, why increase the output by another study on this much debated subject? Christian Science will run its course, as other systems of thought, once much in evidence, have run theirs, and will not be materially influenced by the discussions to which it has given rise. Yet to discuss the subjects of the day is an intellectual need. The process of winnowing out truth from error must go on without interruption, the more so in this case, as Christian Science skims over many subjects of the very highest importance, opening up to controversial minds fair vistas of debatable ground.

But why associate New Thought with its traditional foe? The answer must be sought in the treatise itself, which makes plain that, whatever minor differences there may be between these two organizations, their wider aims and common pursuits unite them in a clearly defined group, and blend together naturally in a common discussion.

Mind healing is not exactly an American invention or monopoly. We shall see that it is practically coeval and coextensive with the human race. Yet in our own days and place it has taken on hues and shapes that differentiate it radically both from its remoter and its nearer ancestors, and it is assuming proportions that may yet put its European prototypes completely in the shade. In its American dress, it has crossed both the Atlantic and the Pacific, and is making a successful bid for world supremacy in its chosen field. Under these circumstances, an inquiry into the origin, the underlying principles, and the methods of these movements must prove of interest, even if, from a religious point of view, they are not of sufficient moment to claim attention.

Such an investigation is no longer a pioneer work. Many Protestant authors have turned their attention to this newer

Protestantism. Not a few scent, in this new gospel of health, danger for what they are pleased to call orthodox Christianity; their works are polemical in character, and, on the whole, of but little intrinsic worth. Others, not particularly interested in the Churches, have been attracted by the psychological problems which the real or pretended successes of these mind-healers have forced on their consideration. These, though pursuing strictly scientific methods of investigation, but too often mar their work by an ill-disguised hostility, or a studied indifference to revealed religion, so that hardly any work of either class could be unreservedly recommended.

From the Catholic viewpoint, few of the publications that have appeared, valuable though they are in their own way, can be said to do justice to the subject. A fairly complete list of these books, pamphlets and articles will be found in the bibliography, page 262. Among these we might single out, as of greater excellence, Father Lambert's *Christian Science before the Bar of Reason*, Fr. Thurston's *Christian Science*, in *Lectures on the History of Religions*, Fr. Searle's work entitled *The Truth about Christian Science*, and especially—in its scientific aspect—Dr. Walsh's various works on psychotherapy. The present essay proposes, besides giving a short historical survey of mental healing, followed by a discussion of the causes that may serve to account for whatever success the movement has achieved, to discuss from the Catholic standpoint more fully than has as yet been done, its philosophical and religious presuppositions, implications and doctrinal statements.

There yet remains for me to fulfill the pleasant duty of thanking all those who have helped me in the preparation of this essay in any way whatever, by counsel, correction, or revision of the manuscript. I desire more particularly to express my sincere thanks to Rev. Charles C. Aiken, D.D., Dean of the Faculty of Sacred Sciences at the Catholic University of America, who suggested this work and who, by advice, encouragement, and kind interest, very materially coöperated in its completion.