

MARY BAKER EDDY,
SPIRITUALIST
MEDIUM

By PAUL R. LOMAXE

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I

Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of the Christian Science Church, published the first edition of her well known book, *Science and Health*, in 1875. In a later edition she devotes an entire chapter—*Christian Science versus Spiritualism*—to attacking Spiritualism. She does not condemn other forms of belief. Just why did she single out Spiritualism for attack? There must have been some mental complex which caused this.

Mary Baker was born at Bow, N. H. in 1821. She was thrice married. Her first husband was George Washington Glover, whom she married in 1843. He died six months after the wedding, and her only child, George Washington Glover, Jr., was born three months later. In 1853 she married Daniel Patterson, a dentist. He deserted her in 1866, and in 1873 she divorced him. In 1877 she married Asa Gilbert Eddy. He died in 1882, and she survived until 1910.

In her *Retrospection & Introspection*, Mrs. Eddy wrote, "For some twelve months, when I was about eight years old, I repeatedly heard a voice, calling me distinctly by name, three times, in an ascending scale . . . This continued until I grew discouraged and my mother was perplexed and anxious."

As a child, Mrs. Eddy was subject to violent seizures of epileptiform nature, in which she would fall to the ground, sometimes kicking and screaming, sometimes limp, sometimes cataleptic.

After Glover died her hysterical attacks became worse, and she passed long periods in a state of apparent collapse. During this period she went into trances, in which she had what purported to be visions of distant scenes and events. She was interested in spiritualism, and heard "rappings" at night like the Fox sisters at Hydesville, N. Y., in 1848. When she married Patterson, her health was such that he had to carry his bride down stairs and back again on her wedding day.

Wilbur, a very friendly biographer who defends Mrs. Eddy against the charge of spiritualism and mediumship, admits that "she associated with Spiritualists for years, more or less; . . . At times she was even present at seances." In describing one of her seizures, while she was living with Patterson, Wilbur writes, "'I had the honor to take care of Mrs. Eddy once,' said a very old woman of Groton. 'She was all alone in her home and I heard her bell ringing. I went in and found her lying rigid with foam on her lips. I brought her around with cold water.'"

In the autumn of 1862, Mrs. Eddy visited Phineas Quimby at Portland, Me., and took his treatment for her disorder. Quimby had been a professional mesmerist, and he used spiritualist clairvoyance for diagnosis. He came to the conclusion that cures were caused by the patient's faith and confidence in the doctor. He worked out a doctrine of mind-cure which was put in writings, which were later published under the title of "The Quimby Manuscripts," edited by Horatio W. Dresser. They refer to his theory as "The Science of Christ" and "Christian Science." Mrs. Eddy returned home, seemingly entirely cured. But she was later plagued by her disorder, and wrote Quimby for absent treatment.

While in Portland, she met Mrs. Sarah Crosby, one of Quimby's other patients, who was a spiritualist. In May, 1864 she visited Mrs. Crosby at Albion, Me. Mrs. Crosby made an affidavit of the incidents of this visit, and it is outlined in "Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy and the History of Christian Science" by Georgine Milmine, published serially in McClure's Magazine in 1906-8, and in book form in 1909 by Doubleday, Page & Co. (Dakin, in his "Mrs. Eddy," says, "This book is composed of the articles published originally by Miss Milmine

in McClure's Magazine, with revisions and additions . . . The copyright was eventually purchased by a friend of Christian Science, and the plates from which the book was printed were destroyed, according to information which appears to be authentic and accurate. As a result, this most valuable source-book has become exceedingly rare.") From Mrs. Crosby's affidavit it appears that she and Mrs. Eddy indulged in spirit communications from Mrs. Eddy's deceased brother, Albert. Mrs. Eddy told Mrs. Crosby that Albert was the latter's guardian spirit, and Mrs. Eddy was "his only earthly medium." Mrs. Eddy went into trances and delivered messages from Albert. After going home, she sent Mrs. Crosby a communication from Albert.

Patterson and his wife moved to Lynn, Mass., in 1864, where he practiced dentistry. He deserted her there in 1866, whereupon she resumed the name of Glover, and went to board at the house of Mrs. George D. Clark on Summer St., and returned there in later years. Mrs. Clark was a spiritualist. Seances were held at her house and Mrs. Eddy sometimes attended. Powell, in his biography, publishes a seating list of the fourteen at Mrs. Clark's table and comments, "If there were not, in that friendly circle, any fisher folk, as among the twelve

who surrounded Jesus, emphatically there were nineteenth century equivalents—workers in the Lynn shoe factories, salesmen in shoe stores, a painter, and a teamster."

At Mrs. Eddy's left sat Hiram Crafts. He was a shoe factory worker and a spiritualist. He listened to her Quimbyism and became her first pupil to go into practice. In the spring of 1867, Mr. and Mrs. Crafts, with Mrs. Eddy, went to Taunton where he opened a healing office.

After this, Mrs. Eddy went, as a complete stranger, to the home of Mrs. Mary Esther Carter, a spiritualist, in Amesbury, but failed to become a guest. She then visited with elderly Mrs. Nathaniel Webster of Amesbury. She was a drawing and healing medium and had a seance room. "These two women," writes Wilbur, "were placidly content together. If 'Mother' Webster was inclined to discuss spiritualistic 'Phenomena' this was no new experience for Mary Baker." Mrs. Eddy spent months there, and was asked to leave. From there she went directly to visit with Sarah Bagley, of Amesbury, another spiritualist.

In the July 4, 1868 issue of the *Banner of Light*, the official organ of the New England spiritualists, Mrs. Eddy inserted an advertisement, intermingled

DR. ROUNDY AND WIFE,

CLAIRVOYANT, Magnetic and Electric Phys-
cians, have recently furnished a house on
Quincy avenue, in QUINCY, MASS., where they are
still Healing the Sick with good success. Board
and treatment reasonable. Address, QUINCY,
MASS. 6w*—June 6.

ANY PERSON desiring to learn how to heal the
sick can receive of the undersigned instruction
that will enable them to commence healing on a
principle of science with a success far beyond
any of the present modes. No medicine, elec-
tricity, physiology or hygiene required for un-
paralleled success in the most difficult cases. No
pay is required unless this skill is obtained. Ad-
dress, MRS. MARY B. GLOVER, Amesbury, Mass.,
Box 61. tf†—June 20.

MR. MARY LEWIS, by sending their autograph,
or lock of hair, will give psychometrical de-
lineations of character, answer questions, &c.
Terms \$1.00 and red stamp. Address, MARY
LEWIS, Morrison, Whiteside Co., Ill.
June 20.—20w*.

Mrs. Eddy inserted the second of the above advertisements in the
July 4, 1868 issue of the *Banner of Light*, the official journal of the
New England spiritualists.

Because her second husband, Dr. Patterson, whom she later di-
vorced, had deserted her, she was then using the name of her deceased
first husband, Glover. She was then living in the home of the Websters
in Amesbury, and the number of the Webster post office box was 61.

Mrs. Eddy had been familiar with this spiritualist journal for
years, and later she even mentioned the *Banner of Light* by name at
page 75 in the first edition of her *Science and Health*.

with those of clairvoyants, offering "instruction that will enable them (pupils) to commence healing . . . No payment is required unless this skill is obtained. Address Mrs. Mary B. Glover, Amesbury, Mass., Box 61."

For about two years, from 1868 to 1870, Mrs. Eddy lived as a guest with Mrs. Sally Wentworth, another spiritualist.

In 1870 she returned to Lynn with a youthful pupil named Richard Kennedy, and took offices. Kennedy did the healing and she organized classes. Her fees at first were \$100. for twenty lessons; but she raised this to \$300. for seven lessons.

After her break-up with Kennedy, she continued to frequent circles. Milmine writes that Mrs. Richard Hazeltine of Lynn swore in an affidavit as follows:—"I distinctly remember meeting Mrs. Mary Glover at these spiritualistic meetings in which she frequently took part as a medium. It was in 1871 and 1872 as nearly as I can remember the date, that Mrs. Glover acted as the chief spiritualistic medium in a circle which met at the home of a Mrs. Clark in Summer St., Lynn. My husband, Richard Hazeltine, and I went to the circles at Mrs. Clark's and saw Mrs Glover pass into the trance state, and heard her communicate

by word of mouth messages received from the spirit world, or what she said and we believed were messages from the spirit world. . . . "

In 1875 she bought a house in Lynn, where she completed the first edition of *Science & Health*. In Boston she founded the "Church of Christ, Scientist," in 1879, and the Massachusetts Metaphysical College in 1881. The latter was a financial success inasmuch as it received 4000 students in seven years.

Dr. Carl A. Wickland wrote in one of his books in 1934, "The fact that Mrs. Eddy was a medium has been abundantly proven and there are still persons living who affirm that they not only witnessed, but also assisted in, Mrs. Eddy's psychic work as a medium. Among our correspondents is a man who attended Mrs. Eddy's mediumistic work for the period of some three years. Many others have informed us that they had personally known Mrs. Eddy as a medium. We ourselves have seen a clipping from a Boston paper wherein Mrs. Eddy advertised herself as a medium, giving readings at fifty cents a sitting."

Such is the record of some of Mrs. Eddy's spiritualistic and mediumistic adventures over a period of years. Nevertheless, in 1878 when she pub-

lished the *second* edition of her *Science and Health*, she wrote at page 166: "*. . . we were never a Spiritualist; and never were, and never could be, and never admitted that we were a medium . . . and I am not a medium.*"

One does not deny unless one has been accused. It seems pretty obvious that, when her first edition appeared in 1875, her many New England spiritualist cronies lifted their eyebrows and said, "*Why, that's Mrs. Eddy who sat with us as our medium many a time!*" That sort of talk would never do. It might wreck her new movement. In her second edition she made the above emphatic and unequivocal denial; and in later editions devoted an entire chapter to attacking spiritualism. As the Queen, in *Hamlet*, remarked, "*The lady doth protest too much, methinks.*"

II

During the years 1918, 1919, and 1922, after her death, Mrs. Eddy transmitted four psychic communications through the trance medium, Anna Wickland. These communications were recorded stenographically and are reported in Dr. Wickland's book, published in 1924. The following are some passages from them.

"I went into spiritualism first, and found that it was much better than orthodoxy, so I followed it for some years, but I felt that I could not get very far with it."

"I had a vision, and I saw how they treated patients in the other world . . . They were teaching the spirits that there is no such thing as matter. They said, 'Forget it, it is only imagination. You are not sick, you just imagine it. That belongs to matter. That is only your mortal mind' . . . I thought that this vision meant that I was to teach that on earth, and I set to work. Now I see my mistake, because there is matter, and so long as you live on the material plane you will have to recognize matter. When you reach the spirit side of life your mind has to be taught to overcome matter, not cling to it, because spirits in darkness are clinging to matter as much as we cling to matter when we have our physical bodies . . . I was so misunderstood, because I could not myself explain why matter was not."

"I knew about the wonderful truth of life beyond. I knew it well in life, but . . . I wanted a religion of my own. Spiritualism belonged to past days. I wanted something new, something higher, something better than spirit return." "I was a trance

medium and I gave readings, but I must confess I felt that it was too common . . . I found that spiritualism would not reach the people I wanted to reach, so I took Quimby's doctrine, and also, as I told you previously, the vision I had of mortal mind in the spirit world, and I combined the two."

"When I passed to the spirit side of life, it was in one way surprising to me, because I had concentrated that I should live forever . . . I took it literally . . . Now I can see how ridiculous the thing was . . . In my visions I had been to the spirit world many times and had always returned to earth. This time I felt that I could go back again, but my body was not there. It had been interred. Still I did not realize the change because I had closed the door for spirit return. I did not want to teach it. I knew it, because I was a medium in my early days. I gave readings in Boston for some time, and I gave lectures as well, but after a while I denied it all—the truth was not in me. When I woke up in my spirit body I still did not realize that it was not my material body. It was hard for me to understand that I had gone through the change called death, because I had concentrated that I should never die. That realization took much time. Then I had much to do, and many diffi-

culties to overcome. First of all came my brother Albert . . . and told me that I had not taught the whole truth. There was a time when I was a medium and he talked through me, but after a while I refused to allow this. Now he came again and said, 'Come, I will show you that what you taught is not true, and that you did not tell the truth.' After a while my first husband came. He understood me better than the rest. He showed me the way. One by one many friends came. Then came Quimby. He said, 'You took my theory. Why did you not give me a little credit for the help I gave you?' Then I saw how selfish I had been. I was accused. I was helped, but I had not given credit for it . . . Quimby helped me . . . and taught me . . . After he had gone I took his theory as my own. In the spirit world I had to go through a great deal to overcome selfishness. I had to serve and learn the lessons of life like a little child."

"My people read and read, and the majority come over here without any understanding. I closed the door for my people and it is hard." "So long as my people are in the mortal body they are all right, but once the body is lost things go round and round." "My people are especially fixed because everything with them outside of themselves

is mortal mind and their own mind is Infinite." "For them there is no spirit world, it is all Infinite. I taught them to close the door to the spirit world, and I taught them to read only my books. I wanted a religion of my own."

"During the last of my days I was not myself very much. All through my life I was back and forth on the invisible plane. You know I was a psychic and I could have been a very good one, and have done more good to the world through my psychic power than I did . . . If I had used my psychic power I could have helped thousands."

"I want to be helped. My people come to me and want help, and I need help myself. They cling to me and hold me down." "Here are my followers coming to me one by one. Every day there are some coming over to the spirit side of life, and I am trying to tell them of the beautiful spirit world. But they say, 'No, you are not Mrs. Eddy because she did not teach that when she was on earth. You are only a false person,' and then they go away. You see what I have to deal with, and I cannot progress until I can help all these to open their eyes."

"What is my spiritual body now? It is in a very crippled condition because my mind was so closed

and I denied the truth." "We should not deny God's wonderful manifestation of matter. It is real, not imagination. You could not live without matter. You could not have manifestations without matter. I denied the wonderful manifestation of matter and called it only imagination and error . . . I denied God by denying matter . . . I have my eyes open now. I wish I could come back to teach the wonders we can do to help humanity and the spirits that are in the darkness. I am there myself. I have to serve for what I have done . . . I wanted to keep the people under my control, and I did. I am now suffering for what I did . . . Let us all . . . work together to spread the truth of the life hereafter, and also to help the earthbound spirits. Do not cast them away and say they are devils. They are only ignorant spirits—like myself. I wanted to be something in the world."

