

Rolling Away the Stone
Mary Baker Eddy's Challenge to Materialism

By Stephen Gottschalk

(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006. Pp. xii, 484. Illustrations, chronology, notes, bibliography, index. \$35.00.)

Rolling Away the Stone is a well-researched, elegantly written, sympathetic biography of Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910), the founder of Christian Science. One of several biographies of Eddy, this is the first book-length study to draw extensively on the recently opened collections of the Mary Baker Eddy Library in Boston. The perspective of her newest biographer, the late Stephen Gottschalk, is explicitly that of an insider to Christian Science. The tone is admiring and at points defensive, but the narrative is at every point richly textured and engaging, not only shedding light on Eddy and Christian Science, but also presenting fresh readings of other influential Americans and illuminating broader cultural trends of historical and current significance.

Gottschalk's book focuses on the last two decades of Eddy's life, from 1889 to 1910, a period during which Eddy, although in her seventies and eighties, engaged in some of her most influential work to establish and defend Christian Science. The chapters are organized more topically than chronologically, and the narrative frequently jumps backward and forward in time to pick up on particular themes; a timeline at the back of the book alleviates the frustration that

this organizational scheme might otherwise cause the reader. The narrative is at its finest in chapter two's comparison of Eddy with vocal critic Mark Twain—revealing surprising similarities. Twain, like Eddy, grappled with the problem of evil, resisting Calvinist understandings of the sources and meanings of sickness, but reaching conclusions that diverged sharply from Eddy's. According to Gottschalk, Eddy's "overriding interest was to establish the Christian identity of Christian Science" (p. 141), and Gottschalk apparently shares this agenda. The biography emphasizes Eddy's devotion to the Bible and prayer. Likewise, it refutes the claim of previous biographers that Eddy stole her ideas from mind-cure healer Phineas Parkhurst Quimby (1802-1866). This point is important not only as a defense of Eddy's integrity and originality, but more fundamentally as a defense of the movement's Christian identity. In Gottschalk's own words, it refutes the charge that "Christian Science, even if clothed in Christian language, belonged to the orbit of mesmerism rather than Christianity" (p. 273). The narrative accepts Eddy's argument that the truth of Christian Science is evidenced by its "fruitage" (p. 323)—the testimonies of physical

and spiritual healing that many individuals avowedly experienced, often while reading *Science and Health* (1875). Such healing claims are not, according to Gottschalk, “easily dismissed” (p. 332), but the book presents no evidence beyond the sheer number and variety of such claims.

Although some of the volume’s biographical details might be of greater interest to Christian Scientists than others, a broad spectrum of readers should take interest in its crucial conceptual argument that Christian Science issued a fundamental challenge to the materialism that has explicitly dominated biomedicine and implicitly shaped American Christianity. This theme of antimaterialism helps us to understand a range of healing alternatives that proliferated at two historical moments when naturalistic paradigms seemed in the ascendancy: the late nineteenth century, when Christian Science emerged

alongside such alternatives as homeopathy, mesmerism, chiropractic, and divine healing; and again in the late twentieth century, with the blossoming of practices such as yoga, Therapeutic Touch, and charismatic Christianity. By presenting a clear portrait of Eddy’s teachings, Gottschalk’s work can provide a springboard for more nuanced comparisons and contrasts with such alternatives, which have tended to be conflated in many discussions. In sum, this is a beautifully written, provocative biography that a variety of readers will find valuable.

CANDY GUNTHER BROWN, associate professor of religious studies at Indiana University, Bloomington, is the author of *The Word in the World: Evangelical Writing, Publishing, and Reading in America, 1789-1880* (2004), and is writing a cultural history of spiritual healing in America.



Copperheads

The Rise and Fall of Lincoln’s Opponents in the North

By Jennifer L. Weber

(New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. Pp. xi, 286. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$28.00.)

Carl von Clausewitz, the German war theorist, claimed that a nation’s success in waging war required a coordinated effort between its people, its leaders, and its army (p. 10). If one leg of this triad falters, the structure will topple. The Civil War proved no exception to this theory. Indeed, Lin-

coln feared that a third column of antiwar Democrats (Copperheads) would undermine the Union war effort; he called this internal threat “the fire in the rear.” In *Copperheads: The Rise and Fall of Lincoln’s Opponents in the North*, Jennifer L. Weber persuasively argues that “the fire in