Textual Healing: Mainstream Protestants and the Therapeutic Text, 1900–1925[1]

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Healing—whether via medical or miraculous means—has increasingly caught the attention of scholars of North American Protestantism within the past decade. Recent studies have convincingly argued that healing was at the heart of Protestant identity, especially in turn-of-the-twentieth-century United States and Canada.[2] Loosely defined as the restoring of physical or emotional well-being with recourse to medical, symbolic, or religious means, healing is often distinguished from curing as a therapeutic approach with more "ho-

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2. James Opp, *The Lord for the Body: Religion, Medicine, and Protestant Faith Healing in Canada, 1880–1930* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005); Heather D. Curtis, "The Lord for the Body: Pain, Suffering and the Practice of Divine Healing in Late-nineteenth-century American Protestantism" (Th. D. diss., Harvard University, 2005); Rennie B. Schoepflin, *Christian Science on Trial: Religious Healing in America* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Yvonne Chireau, *Black Magic: Religion and the African-American Conjuring Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Richard Ostrander, *The Life of Prayer in a World of Science: Protestants, Prayer, and American Culture, 1870–1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Robert Bruce Mullin, *Miracles and the Modern Religious Imagination* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996); and Robert K. Burkinshaw, *Pilgrims in Lotus Land: Conservative Protestantism in British Columbia, 1917–1981* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995). Many of these texts have built on the pioneering work of Raymond J. Cunningham, such as "From Holiness to Healing: The Faith Cure in America, 1872–1892," *Church History* 43:4 (December 1974): 499–513. Negotiations between Christianity and biomedicine also profoundly shaped Catholicism; for example, see Robert Orsi, *Thank You St. Jude: Women's Devotion to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996). For survey and comparative approaches, see Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); and Susan Sered and Linda Barnes, ed., *Religion and Healing in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

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listic" goals than the cessation of particular physical ailments.[3] Nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century groups known for their commitment to divine healing and their antipathy to biomedicine, such as Christian Scientists and Pentecostals, are readily fit within this paradigm of healing, but so too are groups often thought to have disparaged faith healing in their embrace of biomedicine, such as mainstream Anglo-Protestants.[4] Through foreign and domestic medical missions, establishing hospitals and medical schools, and initiating deaconess orders, mainstream Protestant groups, including Anglicans and Methodists, made healing central to their public identity and daily practice. In the process, they faced the tricky negotiation of embracing epistemologies of scientific medicine without surrendering their own theologies of God's omnipotent love, all the while living in an increasingly "therapeutic culture."[5] Complicating their task was their persistent encounter with different, often competing versions of religious healing, whether in the encounter with natives in colonial missions or in the challenge of rival therapeutic theologies such as those of Christian Science. Making their way through this era of increasing medicalization (and increasing contestation of medicalization), mainstream Protestants developed a strain of Christian healing that was unabashedly medicalized and modern, and they testified to its power in print and in practice.

In another line of recent research, scholars have focused anew on the significance of print culture—the publishing, marketing, and consumption of books, newspapers, and tracts—for the development of North American Protestantism. Arguing that "faith in reading" cultivated a particularly textual piety among nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Protestants, these scholars have encouraged a con-

3. Medical anthropology, in particular, has developed the curing/healing distinction in which the first term is physiologically focused and the latter term considers the social and cultural contexts of embodied suffering. For example, Thomas Csordas argues that religious healing in particular employs a "rhetoric of transformation" that reinterprets bodily conditions as meaningful and transformative, without necessarily "curing" those conditions: Thomas J. Csordas, *Body/Meaning/Healing* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 53. See also, Arthur Kleinman, *Writing at the Margin: Discourse between Anthropology and Medicine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
4. By mainstream Protestants, I refer to English-speaking, predominantly white Protestants who engaged in, or felt some investment in, the fields of biblical criticism, scientific medicine, ecumenism, and social reform, and who felt confident of their accepted place as citizens in Canada and the U.S. Many, but not all, of the Protestants I discuss could also be labeled "liberals." See Richard Wightman Fox, "The Culture of Liberal Protestant Progressivism, 1875–1925," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23:3 (winter 1993): 641; and Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality* (San Francisco, Calif.: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005).
5. T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Anti-modernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920* (New York: Pantheon, 1981).

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sideration of texts not only for their intellectual content, but also for their economic, ritual, and cultural effects.[6] In this essay, I draw from both avenues of research to argue that the medicalized Christianity of early-twentieth-century mainstream Protestantism was underwritten by a particular "text-based cosmology"—an ordering of the world that imparted a therapeutic and even salvific role to texts in the process of healing.[7] Differentiating themselves from spirit-filled Pentecostals crowding the stadiums and tents of urban and rural North America, from illiterate non-Christians (or non-Protestants) populating the mission field at home and abroad, and from New Thought, Christian Science, and spiritualist adherents experimenting on the borders of theological and scientific orthodoxy in Europe and North America, mainstream Protestants used texts to establish the scientific rigor and spiritual righteousness of their modes of Christian healing. Texts were not only containers of discourse, but also material artifacts that helped to cultivate healthy Christian subjects and communities. Alternatively, if heretical or tasteless, "poisonous" texts could lead to their readers' ruin.[8]

Textuality—encompassing the practices of reading, the economies of publication, and the status given to the Book, books, newspapers, and print more generally—has been deeply constitutive of Protestantism, while remaining potentially treacherous. Important questions of literacy aside, early-twentieth-century texts were the relatively democratic grounds on which theologians and biblical scholars essayed their intellectual breakthroughs and missionaries tried to translate their message for non-Christian audiences. Although new technologies of communication such as the telegraph, the phonograph, the lantern slide, and the radio were in the air, texts were the dominant medium of the time and had a symbolic import, beyond their communicative content, that shaped the daily practice and sense of identity of mainstream Protestants.[9] For example, at the same time that Protestants grappled at home with the disenchantment—or possibilities—of the highly rational textual analysis within scholars' higher

6. David Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1989); Candy Gunther Brown, *The Word in the World: Evangelical Writing, Publishing, and Reading in America, 1789–1880* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
7. Janice Boddy, "Spirit Possession Revisited: Beyond Instrumentality," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23 (October 1994): 411.
8. "Poisonous Books," *Canadian Churchman*, 20 January 1910.
9. See Lisa Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines: Representing Technology in the Edison Era* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999); and Lisa Gitelman and Geoffrey B. Pingree, *New Media, 1740–1915* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003).

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criticism of the Bible, missionaries abroad relayed narratives of encounter that told of the heathen receiving the Bible (or sometimes the book more generally) as not a discursive, communicative tool, but as a magical talisman.[10] Native reception of the Bible as talisman, though useful for the purposes of conversion according to some missionaries, also pointed to the "lack" they considered the text to illuminate: lack of literacy, lack of history, and lack of ethical religion.[11] As Homi K. Bhabha wrote of missionary encounters in India, "the discovery of the book installs the signs of appropriate representation: the word of God, truth, art creates the conditions for a beginning, a practice of history and narrative. But the institution of the Word in the wilds is also an *Entstellung*, a process of displacement, distortion, dislocation, repetition—the dazzling light of literature sheds only darkness."[12] Colonial processes of translation and codification of laws, and encounters with competing traditions of sacred texts often resulted in missionaries and colonial authorities misinterpreting, marginalizing, and diminishing the diverse textual traditions of the colonized.[13]

For my purposes, I redirect Bhabha's insights, arguing that the centrality of texts for Protestants also has a talismanic—or therapeutic—dimension. Inhabiting a "strange world of textual intimacy" in which Bibles were read and analyzed but also nuzzled and heard to speak, mainstream Protestants have also granted the book ritualized and therapeutic powers, however concealed by the primacy of their use of texts as intellectual or doctrinal tools.[14] Consider, for example, the story of Hu Yuan Hsi, a blind, Bible-reading evangelist in an

10. On Canadian Protestant distrust of biblical criticism, see Michael Gauvreau, *The Evangelical Century: College and Creed in English Canada from the Great Revival to the Great Depression* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991). On biblical texts as talismanic, see John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 2:338–46; and David Morgan, "Print Culture and the Circulation of Imagery in Protestant Mission History" (paper presented at Windows and Mirrors: American Popular Culture at Home and Abroad, University of Toronto, March 2004).
11. For an example in which the word "Christian" is translated as "reader," see Derek Peterson, "The Rhetoric of the Word: Bible Translation and Mau Mau in Colonial Central Kenya," in *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, ed. Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003), 166. See also the long history of textual traditions in colonized societies as described in Jack Goody, ed., *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968).
12. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 105.
13. See Anver Emon's discussion of the truncation of the diversity of Islamic law into a highly circumscribed code under British rule of India in *Islamic Law and the Canadian Mosaic: Law, Politics, and Multicultural Accommodation*, ed. Leonard Kaplan and David Weisstub (forthcoming).
14. Leigh Schmidt, *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 48. See also, David Morgan, "Print Culture and the Circulation of Imagery in Protestant Mission History"; and Peter

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OUR BLIND EVANGELIST, HU YUAN HSI,

Reading the Bible by the bedside of a patient in David Hill ward.

FIG. 1. "Our blind evangelist, Hu Yuan Hsi," W. A. Tatchell, *Medical Missions in China in Connexion with the Wesleyan Methodist Church* (London: Robert Culley, 1909).

early-twentieth-century Methodist mission hospital in Hankow, China, as told by British missionary Arthur Tatchell. Tatchell remembered Hsi as a former street-singer who survived by singing "lewd songs" until he was converted when he chanced upon gospel preaching in a Christian chapel. Subsequently, Hsi enrolled in a British mission's school for the blind, emerging with impressive skills of literacy and evangelism. Once at the mission hospital, Hsi read the Bible (via Braille) to his countrymen as they lay ill in their beds, and he conveyed "his holy influence, his testimony to the saving and keeping power of God . . . and his powerful prayers and irresistible preaching"[15] (see Figure 1). Hsi's twin conversions from heathen to Christian and from illiterate to reader were considered especially remarkable by Tatchell because of Hsi's blindness, but Hsi's therapeutic Bible reading was not in itself extraordinary. Instead, it exem-

Thuesen, *In Discordance with the Scriptures: American Protestant Battles over Translating the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

15. W. A. Tatchell, *Medical Missions in China in Connexion with the Wesleyan Methodist Church* (London: Robert Culley, 1909), 135–37.

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plified a common strategy of medical missionaries as they sought to convert the Chinese by administering doses of both medicine and text.

The text-based cosmology of mainstream Protestantism was a form of lived religion. Reading and otherwise using texts was an important technique of the body in the development of Protestant selves and communities. Following Talal Asad's call for inquiries "into the way in which embodied practices (including language in use) form a precondition for varieties of religious experience," I examine the significance of these embodied practices of textuality by turning to the texts that early-twentieth-century mainstream Protestants left behind—an admittedly ironic, but necessary, method.[16] Demonstrating the textuality of Protestant healing complicates the notion of the "therapeutic" as it is has been applied to mainstream Protestants, whether in T. J. Jackson Lears's condemnation of late-nineteenth-century "liberal Protestantism" as at once positivist, sentimental, and consumerist, or in Robert Bruce Mullin's tripartite division between therapeutic, sacramental, and thaumaturgical approaches to healing among early-twentieth-century Protestants.[17] By recognizing the multiple roles of texts in discourses of healing, I show that even the most optimistically medicalized of Protestant approaches to healing remained ritually and spiritually powerful in their practitioners' eyes.

I. Textual Healing and Canadian Protestants

My focus is on early-twentieth-century Protestant discourses of healing within the Dominion of Canada, proudly part of the British Empire according to the politically dominant Anglo-Protestants, and a settler colony that itself sent missionaries into the empire and beyond. Living within a text-based cosmology that was deeply shaped by transnational currents from Great Britain, Europe, the United States, and missionary settings, Canadian Protestants surrounded themselves with a variety of trustworthy texts: the Bible

16. Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Disciplines and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 76. See also, Marcel Mauss, "Techniques of the Body," *Economy and Society* 2:1 (1973): 70–88. My thinking is also shaped by arguments about the relation of textuality, religion, and a "scriptural economy" found in Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); as well as the work of Jack Goody, *The Power of the Written Tradition* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2000); and Harvey Whitehouse, *Arguments and Icons: Divergent Modes of Religiosity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). For an Anglican-focused theological discussion, see John Milbank, "Pleonasm, Speech, and Writing," in *The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).

17. Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 23; Robert Bruce Mullin, *Miracles and the Modern Religious Imagination*, 194.

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provided divine truths, albeit newly complicated by historical-critical approaches; missionary narratives offered truths of Anglo-Protestant superiority, while also vividly inscribing the presence of alternative religious views; and church newspaper articles about scientific discoveries—truths or laws of nature—usually sought to demonstrate the compatibility of medical progress and Christian faith. Although some Canadian Protestants began to question these verities, especially after World War I, the truths of the Bible, of Protestant superiority, and of scientific progress remained dominant discourses in church newspapers, popular texts, and memoirs for most of the first quarter of the century.[18]

Within the category of mainstream Protestants, my focus is on Canadian Anglicans and Methodists from 1900–1925 (the latter joined with Congregationalists and some Presbyterians in 1925 to form the United Church of Canada). Whereas Anglicans have long attended to healing in their liturgy, Methodists did not explicitly develop liturgical approaches to healing until very recently, within the United Church of Canada. However, both churches have long grappled with the intersection between religion and medicine, whether in the case of the Anglican Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* or in the warnings of Methodist founder John Wesley regarding the health and spiritual risks of tea, tobacco, and sugar in *Primitive Physick*.[19] Though not representative of all Canadian Protestants, Anglicans and Methodists were approximately 30 percent of Canadians in 1911 and were two of the three largest Protestant denominations, along with the Presbyterians. (It is useful to remember, however, that Roman Catholics—with their long traditions of Christian healing—almost equaled the numbers of Anglicans, Methodists, and Presbyterians combined.) In Ontario, where Anglicans and Methodists were most concentrated, and from where my sources largely come, they made up approximately 58 percent of the Protestant population.[20]

18. See Gauvreau, *Evangelical Century*; Eric Reinders, *Borrowed Gods, Foreign Bodies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); and Rhodri Hayward, "Demonology, Neurology, and Medicine in Edwardian Britain," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 78 (2004): 37–58.
19. Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici* (London: Dent, 1965[1643]); John Wesley, *Primitive Physick, or, an Easy and Natural Method of Curing Most Diseases*, 14th ed. (Bristol: William Pine, 1770). See also, Ronald L. Numbers, *Caring and Curing: Health and Medicine in the Western Religious Traditions* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998; E. Brooks Holifield, *Health and Medicine in the Methodist Tradition: Journey Toward Wholeness* (New York: Crossroad, 1986).
20. Brian Clarke, "English Speaking Canada from 1854," 261–360, in *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada*, ed. Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 262. Although some Anglo-Catholic Anglicans argued that they were not Protestant, having never forsaken Catholic episcopal lineage, for my pur-

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In my examination, I turn to four main groups of primary sources from 1900–1925: newspaper articles from the two leading newspapers of these denominations, the Methodist *Christian Guardian* and the Anglican *Canadian Churchman,* archival records of these papers and their editors, archival records of medical missionaries, and relevant theological and popular texts written by Canadian, American, and British clergy, medical doctors, and laypeople.[21] Protestant debates about healing have always taken place in a transnational context, as German, British, and French scientists, missionaries, and healers influenced American and Canadian practices, and, in turn, they were often shaped by their New World counterparts. Canadian Anglican and Methodist newspaper editors and authors bore this out in regularly drawing from British, American, and foreign missionary sources, whether via news reports, reprints, or reviews.[22]

II. Protestantism as a Text-based Cosmology

As "people of the Book," Christians have long used texts as both communicative tools conveying divine messages and material objects bearing sacred power. This doubled nature of texts has allowed them to serve as sources of doctrinal direction and as sacred objects with powers to heal and protect. In their communicative role, texts have also been the apparatus for rationally based forms of analysis that have allowed Christians to challenge their tradition and each other, as in the development of text criticism among Christian biblical scholars. The specifically therapeutic power of a text could take many forms, as second-century amulets with biblical inscriptions protected their wearers from a host of dangers, sixteenth-century French Catholics placed small notes under altar cloths to achieve God's blessing, and seventeenth-century New England Puritans bore a Bible perched on top of a pole as a prophylactic weapon as they clashed with Puritan rivals.[23] "Biblio-medicine" granted texts an authority that went well

poses (and for those of many Anglicans), Anglicans are Protestants. See Alan L. Hayes, *Anglicans in Canada: Controversies and Identity in Historical Perspective* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 115.

21. For my larger project, I have gathered all references to healing found from 1900–2000 within these two newspapers and their successors, and used these papers as pathways to other sources (for example, via book reviews or citations). My choice to focus intensively on two newspapers reflects my commitment to consider these papers not only as sources of data, but also as communities of discourse.
22. See Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999).
23. Marvin Meyer, ed., *Ancient Christian Magic* (San Francisco, Calif.: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994); Natalie Z. Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), 109; David Cressy, "Books as Totems in Seventeenth-Century England and New England," *Journal of Library History* 21:1 (1986): 94. For more recent

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beyond their discursive content and into realms of ritual, sympathetic magic, and efficacious healing, thus contributing to a cosmology—an understanding of the world inextricable from language—that depended on texts to construct and mediate relations among body, mind, spirit, science, and divinity.[24]

Though the Reformation notion of *sola scriptura* has encouraged a scholarly focus on Protestant uses of texts as intellectual sources of theological content, the Reformation also nurtured practices of reading that continued to imbue texts with the ritual power they held within Catholicism and that saw reading as a devotional activity transformative of soul and body.[25] For American Puritans, books continued to provide entry into "worlds of wonder," and in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the salvific power of Christian texts for Protestants emerged anew once more, especially within newspapers and books that narrated domestic and colonial missionary encounters.[26] As tract and Bible societies grew in nineteenth-century North America, Protestants both fostered a nascent mass media and displayed their conviction that reading was essential to developing Christian virtue.[27] Newspapers were especially important for shaping the Christian as reader, usually in a denominationally specific way, as weekly editions encouraged regularized rituals of reading. Editorial voices endeavored to shape appropriate positions on a range of issues, in the midst of an increasing variety of religious and secular reading options.[28] Put succinctly, Protestant cosmology

examples, see Pamela E. Klassen, *Blessed Events: Religion and Home Birth in America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press 2001), 189; and Simon Coleman, "All-Consuming Faith: Language, Material Culture and World-Transformation among Protestant Evangelicals," *Etnofoor* 9:1 (1996): 33.

24. See Paul Gutjahr, "Sacred Texts in the United States: The State of the Discipline," *Book History* 4 (2001): 335–70. On biblio-medicine, see Cressy, "Books as Totems," 98. The recent use of "cosmology" as an interpretive tool has been particularly notable in anthropology; however, the genealogy and tacit meanings of the term still require unpacking, something that space does not allow me to do here. See, for example, Marshall Sahlins, "Cosmologies of Capitalism: The Trans-Pacific Sector of 'The World System,'" in *Culture/Power/History: A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory*, ed. Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley, and Sherry B. Ortner (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 412–55; and Daniel Miller, *A Theory of Shopping* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
25. Cressy, "Books as Totems"; Adrian Johns, "The Physiology of Reading and the Anatomy of Enthusiasm," in *Religio Medici: Medicine and Religion in Seventeenth Century England*, ed. Ole Peter Grell and Andrew Cunningham (Aldershot, U.K.: Scolar, 1996), 145.
26. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder*; Brown, *The Word in the World.*
27. Nord, *Faith in Reading.*
28. See Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, "Writing Our Way into History: Gender, Race, and the Creation of Black Denominational Life," in *Women and Twentieth-Century Protestantism*, ed. Margaret Lamberts Bendroth and Virginia Lieson Brereton (Urbana: University of

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was text-based in the sense that a Christian life without texts was unimaginable.

In the midst of this culture of virtuous reading, Protestants evoked discourses of healing through texts and the contestation of texts in four main ways. First, and seemingly most simply, the evolving discourse of healing emerged within a print culture of church newspapers, church-sponsored pamphlets, and books. This print culture created an "imagined community" centered on drawing community boundaries that differentiated the Protestant from the heathen, the colonial convert, or the wayward fellow Christian.[29] Second, the Bible was a recurring point of departure for arguing what constituted Christian healing in the modern age and was even in some cases deemed a tool of healing itself, when properly prescribed. Third, Protestants deemed innovative, antibiomedical readings of the Christian Scriptures, and accompanying textual therapies, such as Christian Science and, with less vituperation, Pentecostalism, misguided or heretical rivals. Finally, rational, sober processes of reading and recording evidence in print, based on the scientific method, were clearly thought of as the best way to adjudicate the effectiveness and authenticity of healing practices. Together, these four textual modes created a larger pattern of a text-based cosmology in which texts as artifacts and words participated in and evaluated healing.

My analysis centers on these four textual modes—differentiation through print culture, Bible-based argument, heretical readings, and texts as scientific evidence—to reveal what was at stake in debates and discussions of healing, namely the cultivation of a Protestant identity that was at once modern, culturally dominant, and scientifically relevant, while also properly attuned to the power and divinity of God. Reading the Bible, receiving one's church newspapers, dispensing tracts (or giving donations to allow others to do so), and critically evaluating the writings of fellow Christians and impostors rooted Protestants in a mode of religiosity that encouraged a range of perhaps contradictory emotions: the peace of contemplative reverence, the eager horror of voyeurism, and the mental clarity of scientific rectitude. Taken together, the emotional, material, and intellectual roles of texts in early-twentieth-century Protestant discourses of healing did not make for an enlightened, lucid mirror to the distortions (*Entstellung*) of colonized readings. Instead, the text-based cosmology

Illinois Press 2002), 164–83; R. Marie Griffith, "Female Suffering and Religious Devotion in American Pentecostalism," in *Women and Twentieth-Century Protestantism*, 184–208.

29. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Verso, 1991).

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of Protestantism bore within itself reflections of its disparaged literate and illiterate others, and of its increasingly agonizing love for both biblical and scientific truth.

III. Imagining Healing Communities through Print Culture

In the text-based cosmologies of early-twentieth-century Anglicans and Methodists, reading and writing texts were major ways of establishing one's religious identity. The church newspaper, the Sunday sermon, the missionary's letter to home—all these texts worked together to establish a print culture specific to particular denominations, while also inscribing identities based in being Protestant, Christian, or Canadian. As Benedict Anderson has argued, print-capitalism—with newspapers as its greatest harbinger—was central to nineteenth- and twentieth-century projects of imagining the new form of modern community, the nation. Newspapers, as daily or weekly compendiums of "current events" consumed by many readers simultaneously, provided a shared identity of readership along with the reassurance "that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life."[30] Anderson's heralding of the newspaper reader as the most "vivid figure for the secular, historically clocked, imagined community,"[31] however, ignores the significance of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century church newspapers as media for the cultivation of the religious imagined community.[32] Media—whether newspapers, radio, television, or the internet—are deeply formative of religious identity by including clerical and lay religious actors within certain networks of knowledge and inculcating within them certain habits of devotional practice (and/or entertainment).[33]

Usually published weekly, early-twentieth-century Anglican and Methodist newspapers were a mix of church news, biblical study, social and political commentary, notes on the famous, personal and medical advice, and advertising. Both the Anglican and Methodist papers were based in Toronto, and despite efforts to be broad in

30. Ibid., 35–36.
31. Ibid., 35.
32. Martin E. Marty, *The Religious Press in America* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963).
33. There is even evidence of an interplay between particular communication technologies and religious epistemologies and ritualization, as in the case of spiritualism's interest in the telegraph, and the shared discourse of "automatic writing" as a spiritualist phenomenon and an early description of typewriting: see Jeremy Stolow, "Techno-Religious Imaginaries: On the Spiritual Telegraph and the Circum-Atlantic World of the 19th Century," Institute on Globalization and the Human Condition Working Paper Series, McMaster University, forthcoming; and Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines*.

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scope, they reflect the partiality of specific theological traditions and, to a lesser degree, specific regions. In 1900, the *Canadian Churchman* was owned by a layman, Frank Wootten, and was under the editorship of high churchmen, including a Trinity College professor, Rev. William Clarke, until Wootten's death in 1912. At this point, a group of evangelical Anglican businessmen bought the paper, and a varied group of evangelicals continued to publish what they hoped would be a national church paper until it was taken over by the Anglican Church in 1948. From 1906–25 (and unofficially even earlier), the Methodist *Christian Guardian* was edited by W. B. Creighton, who developed as a progressive social gospeler during his tenure. In 1925, with the establishment of the United Church of Canada, the *Guardian* became *The New Outlook*, still under Creighton's editorship.[34]

Though the importance attributed to a church newspaper by its editors must be somewhat suspect, it is clear that publishing the *Christian Guardian* to build Christian community was a self-conscious goal: "The religious newspaper of today in every issue is demonstrating the fact that it has a place and a great mission among men."[35] Self-consciously political throughout its history, the *Guardian* sought

34. Between the years 1908–25, the *Christian Guardian* had a consistent subscription rate that ranged from 20,000 to 23,000, with a jump in 1920 to 32,126: "Methodist Book and Publishing House Financial Statements," 1915, 1919, 1920, 1924, 1925, file 21, box 30, fonds 513/2, 83.061C, Financial operations: Methodist/Ryerson, United Church of Canada Board of Publication Collection fonds (hereafter UCC Board fonds), United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Toronto, Canada. Ministers were the main agents for the paper, but it was also peddled door to door: "The Christian Guardian," n.d., 7, file 2, box 12, fonds 513/2/3, 83.061C, Ryerson History, UCC Board fonds. Archival records and subscription rates for the *Canadian Churchman* from 1900–1925 are seemingly non-existent. In the 1950s, a low point, its subscribers numbered approximately 5000: "Anglican Journal/Journal Anglican: A Brief History," Anglican Journal—Historical Information, GS96–07, Anglican General Synod Archives, Toronto, Canada. On editorial histories, see T. R. Millman, "Canadian Anglican Journalism in the Nineteenth Century," *Canadian Church Historical Society*, 3:5 (1959): 9; William H. Katerberg, "Redefining Evangelicalism in the Canadian Anglican Church: Wycliffe College and the Evangelical Party, 1867–1995," in *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*, ed. George Rawlyk (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 176; Hayes, *Anglicans in Canada*, 125; Phyllis Airhart, *Serving the Present Age: Revivalism, Progressivism, and the Methodist Tradition in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1992), 78; Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900–1940* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 25. On Creighton's love of books, see Donald Creighton, "My Father and the United Church," in *The Passionate Observer: Selected Writings* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1980), 95–96.

35. *Christian Guardian*, 19 July 1905. Even among Pentecostals, for whom bookishness was highly suspect, newspapers abounded and were used not only for communicative purposes but also on occasion as objects with supernatural healing power that needed to be kept from the defiling hands of unbelievers: Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 94.

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to expound "principles of Christian citizenship" that were pro-British, patriotically Canadian, and clearly Methodist.[36] One Methodist deaconess—part of the order of Deaconesses whose task was to visit the sick and the poor—even proclaimed humorously that the church newspaper was constitutive of health, as she reported about a sick man whose subscription had lapsed: "A Methodist without his *Guardian*! No wonder he was ill!"[37] The profound importance of texts was most dramatically displayed by Methodists in Toronto, who in 1915 built a neo-Gothic edifice in the heart of downtown with the largest occupant being the "Mother Publishing House of Canada," the Methodist Book and Publishing House, which was founded in 1829 with the publishing of the *Christian Guardian*.[38]

The communities imagined in the newspapers of Canadian Methodism and Anglicanism—Protestant movements with British roots and American influences—were differently situated with regard to Great Britain and the United States. In the newspapers, Anglicans appeared predominantly oriented toward Britain as their theological and cultural inspiration, while Methodists evinced more openness to American perspectives, though they remained resolutely British subjects. At the same time, both rooted themselves in a Canadian Christian identity and concerned themselves with local, provincial, and federal matters in the church and the nation.[39] Evaluating health was a constitutive part of this identity. In the Anglican *Canadian Churchman* and the Methodist *Christian Guardian*, the years 1900–1925 were filled with frequent and varied references to healing, encompassing discussions of medical developments as in "Radium as a Cancer Cure," exposés of Christian Science and patent medicine as in "An Epidemic of Faith Killings" and "Fakes and Quacks," warnings of the ill health of the heathen as in "Moslem Menace," and assertions of the

36. "The Christian Guardian," n.d., file 2, box 12, fonds 513/2/3, 83.061C, Ryerson History, UCC Board fonds.
37. *Christian Guardian*, 21 September 1904.
38. Lorne Pierce, *On Publishers and Publishing* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1951, n.p.), in "The Christian Guardian," n.d., file 2, box 12, fonds 513/2/3, 83.061C, Ryerson History, UCC Board fonds. See also *The United Church Publishing House: A Brief Look at its Origin, Development, and Present Structure*, n.d., file 2, box 12, fonds 513/2, 83.061C, Ryerson History, UCC Board fonds.
39. Both denominations were deeply influenced by their British and American counterparts. See Hayes, *Anglicans in Canada*; Airhart, *Serving the Present Age*; William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989); Richard W. Vaudry, "Evangelical Anglicans and the Atlantic World: Politics, Ideology, and the British North American Connection," in *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*, ed. G. A. Rawlyk (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 154–70.

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purifying Gospel, as in "Christ the Cleanser."[40] Letters to the editor demonstrated that the editorial voice in these papers was not always representative of all readers, but it was largely in keeping with the spirit of the public Protestantism of the day: masculine and confident in its contributing role as clergy and citizen.[41]

Though Michael Gauvreau has convincingly argued that from 1900–1914 Canadian Protestants endured a "crisis of confidence" due to new forms of biblical criticism, their ambivalence toward developments in biblical studies was not paralleled in their generally positive embrace of developments in medical science.[42] The masculinized Protestantism so optimistic about medicine in the Anglican and Methodist church newspapers reacted in part to a perceived threat, but not one coming from the academy. Instead the embrace of medicine was partly a response to what Gauvreau and others have characterized as a growing anxiety over the feminization of religion, both in terms of leadership—including female medical missionaries—and lay participation. Church leaders launched a range of programs that they hoped would transform their denominations into centralized, efficient bureaucracies engaged with the burgeoning social and natural sciences, and with fields such as public health and hygiene. Not surprisingly, the growing female-identified faith healing movement influenced by mind cure and New Thought was not part of their larger strategy—eventually even deaconesses would be seen as not sufficiently professional.[43]

In keeping with these aims, those writing about healing in the *Christian Churchman* and the *Christian Guardian* sought to build and

40. *Christian Guardian*, 17 January 1914, 31 January 1900, 5 May 1914; *Canadian Churchman*, 8 October 1914, 3 February 1910.
41. On women's writing in denominational newspapers, see Maffly-Kipp, "Writing Our Way into History."
42. Gauvreau, *Evangelical Century*, 220.
43. Gail Bederman, "The Women Have Had Control of the Churchwork Long Enough: The Men and Religion Forward Movement of 1911–1912 and the Masculinization of Middle Class Protestantism," in *A Mighty Baptism: Race, Gender, and the Creation of American Protestantism*, ed. Susan Juster and Lisa MacFarlane (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996), 116; and Christie and Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity*, 65. For a caution regarding the ubiquity of feminization, see Ann Taves, "Feminization Revisited: Protestantism and Gender at the Turn of the Century," in *Women and Twentieth-Century Protestantism*, 304–24. On bureaucratization, see Christie and Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity*, 164. On feminization and healing, see James W. Opp, "Healing Hands, Healthy Bodies: Protestant Women and Faith Healing in Canada and the United States, 1880–1930," in *Women and Twentieth-Century Protestantism*, 236–56; Beryl Satter, *Each Mind a Kingdom: American Women, Sexual Purity, and the New Thought Movement, 1875–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); R. Marie Griffith, *Born Again Bodies: Flesh and Spirit in American Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

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emphasize an alliance between Christianity and biomedicine that claimed a Christian relevance in medical matters. For example, in a *Christian Guardian* article detailing a joint political, church, business, and medical deputation to the provincial government asking for more funding to combat tuberculosis, the author concluded: "The great works of Jesus, in which we can follow him, were teaching and healing. The ministers and the medical men should be his true successors in these works."[44] The confidence—tinged with pleading—with which male church leaders asserted their equal partnership with medical counterparts indicated their still considerable yet changing influence in early-twentieth-century Canada.[45]

The optimistic partnership among business, medicine, and the church was supplemented, and sometimes undercut, by the ubiquitous advertisements that filled the pages of these church-run newspapers, trumpeting cures for such ailments as catarrh, deafness, insomnia, and chronic disease. Adopting the Protestant genre of the testimonial, the advertisements called on doctors, ministers, and housewives to vouch for their product, even if the product may have been suspect for a teetotaling audience such as the Methodists. In the Methodist *Christian Guardian*, a paper that often criticized patent medicines for their alcohol content, Dr. Chase's Syrup of Linseed and Turpentine—a.k.a. distilled trees—was a regular advertising feature.[46] Other ads drew on the connection between nationalism and masculinity in touting the health benefits of their products. In 1915, at the beginning of World War I, an ad for the breakfast cereal Shredded Wheat proclaimed that men would be "surprised at the mental 'pep' and 'snap'" the cereal could provide, adding that it "builds strong, brainy men who are fit to fight . . . [for] the Empire."[47] Two weeks later, an ad claimed that "Bovril is all British" and, furthermore, that "it is the only food which has been proved by independent scientific investigation to possess body-building powers from 10 to 20 times the amount taken."[48] In accepting these advertisements, with their blend of quasi-scientific proof and personal testimony, these church newspapers at least tacitly sanctioned a view of health that deemed it an affair of science, nation, religion, and the market.

44. *Christian Guardian*, 14 March 1900.
45. Christie and Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity*, 77; William Westfall, "Constructing Public Religions at Private Sites: The Anglican Church in the Shadow of Disestablishment," in *Religion and Public Life in Canada: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Marguerite Van Die (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 23–49.
46. *Christian Guardian*, 31 January 1900. See also, "Patent Medicines and Methodism," *Christian Guardian*, 21 February 1915.
47. Ibid., 15 January 1915.
48. Ibid., 27 January 1915.

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While advertisements rhetorically encouraged the construction of a Christian reader who would make sensible choices in consuming health care, articles portrayed Christians who would deliver the right kind of care, especially medical missionaries. For Protestants, it was through the increasingly prominent (and heroic) figure of the medical missionary that newspapers cultivated not only imagined communities but imagined others.[49] Traveling as solitary individuals or in small groups to mission fields that had often been opened first through Empire, missionaries were positively compared to their military counterparts, since with "the Church . . . like the British Army, a little of her goes a long way."[50] Laymen themselves were to adopt missionary fervor, as articles enjoined them to enlist in the remasculinization of Christianity via military allusions drawn from the colonies: "Laymen of the Church, whether you see it or not, you are in the thick of the fight today. Your foeman is more subtle, dangerous, deadly than Tippoo Sahib ever was. . . . Will you join His 'Movable column,' and quit you like true soldiers of the Great Captain?"[51] What may read today like hyperbolic prose was a common approach in Methodist and Anglican papers, as writers in both papers sought to evoke and inscribe a relevant, virile, and rational Christianity. They built their cosmology not only on readings of Scripture, but also on symbolic and rhetorical resources from medicine, militarism, and colonial Empire.

The most powerful printed testimony to the centrality of healing in the construction of modern Protestant identity came in the form of missionary reports and memoirs from the field. Medical missionaries occupied an exalted space within the print culture of Canadian Protestantism, both via their own memoirs and as featured in reports, editorials, and articles on missionaries and the non-Christians they encountered. In accounts from China, India, Africa, and urban and northern Canada, missionaries repeatedly wrote of the convincing power of Christianity and medicine as beacons for salvation and civilization. Testimonials and letters from the field were read at wom-

49. Gail Edwards, "'The Picturesqueness of His Accent and Speech': Methodist Missionary Narratives and William Henry Pierce's Autobiography," in *Canadian Missionaries, Indigenous Peoples: Representing Religion at Home and Abroad*, ed. Alvyn Austin and Jamie S. Scott (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 67–86; Andrew F. Walls, "'The Heavy Artillery of the Missionary Army': The Domestic Importance of the Nineteenth-century Medical Missionary," in *The Church and Healing*, ed. W. J. Sheils (London: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 287–97; C. Peter Williams, "Healing and Evangelism: The Place of Medicine in Later Victorian Protestant Missionary Thinking," in Sheils, ed., *The Church and Healing*, 271–85.
50. *Canadian Churchman*, 1 March 1900
51. Ibid., 5 March 1908.

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en's missionary society meetings across North America, sometimes by the visiting missionaries themselves, and were reprinted in church newspapers, thus forming both lived and virtual Protestant communities centered on narratives of suffering and salvation in distant lands.

Textual and oral appeals were meant to bring forth tangible economic results. After recording donations of one and two dollars from several Toronto laywomen in 1901, Anglican recording secretary Caroline Macklem went on to detail the suffering of famine victims in China and India, quoting a fellow churchman's letter to her: "all this suffering may be God's way of opening the country to Christianity and civilization, the true civilization which only comes with the knowledge of Christ."[52] The Anglican Bishop of Derry was even more convinced of the civilizing power of the Gospel, as he wrote: "There is nothing else that our civilization has mastered that you can possibly offer to all the inhabitants of the world. Whether you go to the Eskimo, the African, the cultured and cultivated Indian, the South Sea Islander, or to any of our own islands, they will tell you that our Gospel is what they crave, and what they were made for."[53] The universality of Gospel cravings often lay dormant, and medical practice was considered the best way to bring natives to understand their natural lack. As A. R. MacDuff, Anglican missionary to India, phrased it in 1903, "once those sick are cured, then their hearts are aglow with gratitude, and their minds are opened to receive the Gospel."[54] Despite the growing conviction that Christians could utilize their minds to transform their bodies (backed by the increasingly prominent science of psychology and, less comfortably, by New Thought), in the case of the non-Christian the body was thought to work on the mind, thus intensifying the stereotype of the "natural" and "primitive" corporeality of the heathen.[55]

Detailed accounts of the success of missionary work, or the savagery of the yet-to-be converted, urged the reader toward further sympathetic connection with the missionary. After a Bible reading by a male minister on "gentleness, goodness, and long-suffering," the

52. Ibid., 21 November 1901.
53. Ibid., 15 February 1900.
54. MacDuff, *Canadian Churchman*, 8 January 1903.
55. For a somewhat self-critical approach to the missionary's dilemma that "when one talks of religion they [the Chinese mountain folk] simply cannot understand," and the resort to tracts as better modes of communication, see C. B. Kelly, "Healing the Sick in Chung-Chow, China," *Christian Guardian*, 30 December 1914. See also, Sander Gilman, *Disease and Representation: Images of Illness from Madness to AIDS* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988).

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Board meeting of the Anglican Toronto Woman's Auxiliary listened as "Mrs. Hickman, wife of J. A. Hickman, CMS missionary in Western China, gave a vivid description of her experiences among the Chinese. . . . Her account of the cruel practices and superstitions of the Chinese deeply moved her hearers."[56] Found often in both newspapers and popular books, the trope of the desperate and exploited heathen woman was also a feature of books on medical missions, which often included chapters on the particular challenges of medical missions among women.[57]

Anna Henry, a doctor with the Canadian Methodist Women's Missionary Society in China, penned a short pamphlet in the early 1900s that depicted this despair with some compassion. In *Life from the Dead*, Dr. Henry described the arduous job of rehabilitating an opium addict: "As they go through the terrible throes of the unbearable craving for the cursed opium, they cling to you so, beseeching help, while their abject, pain-distorted features, attitudes and motions remind one of Dante's Inferno."[58] One particularly difficult case, wrote Dr. Henry, was a woman named Mrs. Wang, brought to the hospital by her "kind-hearted" husband. Despite several near escapes from the hospital, Mrs. Wang emerged from the torment of withdrawal "like one from the dead or like one from whom an evil spirit had been cast out, leaving a very helpless wreck."[59] Joining in daily morning prayers and literacy training at the hospital allowed Mrs. Wang to overcome this powerlessness, according to Henry, "and with praiseworthy persistence she applied herself to studying the little books taught to beginners."

Six months after her return home, Mrs. Wang, having avoided the common fate of relapsing into addiction, visited the mission hospital, "bubbling over with appreciative speeches and loving demonstrations, and told us that every morning at eight o'clock, the hour for hospital prayers, she and her husband read from the New Testament we had given her, and then knelt in prayer." Through becoming literate and ritualizing her reading of the Bible at home, argued Henry, Mrs. Wang was truly healed, "fortified by the strength that

56. *Canadian Churchman*, 22 February 1900.
57. For example, Walter R. Lambuth, *Medical Missions: The Twofold Task* (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1920); R. Fletcher. Moorshead, *The Way of the Doctor: A Study in Medical Missions* (London: Carey, 1926); and Tatchell, *Medical Missions in China*.
58. Anna Henry, *Life from the Dead* (Toronto: Women's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, Canada, n.d.), 3.
59. Ibid., 6.

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God alone provides."[60] In multiple examples chronicled in the *Christian Guardian*, Henry reiterated that the path to lasting healing came through developing habits of biblical reading. Surgical interventions and medicines merely prepared the ill for their true healing through the word, "as we try to impress upon them that in order to serve the true God aright and know what He would have them do, they must read His book."[61]

Though missionary accounts varied in casting women as the source of the deliverance or the destruction of their cultures, children—young enough to be educated and given the tools of literacy—consistently appeared as a source of innocent hope among their cultures' ignorance of true religion and science.[62] At a Woman's Auxiliary meeting in the Niagara region, local women learned about the Sarcee Indians from Anglican missionary Miss Crawford, who

> gave a most interesting address, pointing out how the Indian tribe was being diminished in numbers, owing largely to their lack of knowledge about their physical requirements, and urging the necessity of bringing the knowledge of salvation to those benighted pagans; she dwelt on the many touching examples of conversion among the Indian children and read several letters that the children had written to her since she came East.[63]

First Nations peoples were cast as victims not only of their cultures' superstitions, but also of their ignorance of science and physiological needs, despite the fact that their physical ailments were often the direct result of the reconfiguration of lifeways brought by missionaries and colonial governments (as was also the case with the Chinese and opium addiction).[64] For Miss Crawford and her listeners, however, that children could learn to read and write in the midst of such physical and spiritual deprivation was considered a true mark of the missionaries' success.

60. Ibid., 7.
61. Anna Henry, quoted in "Medical Work," *Christian Guardian*, 28 June 1916. See also Rosemary R. Gagan, *A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient, 1881–1925* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992).
62. On the "desperate situation" of women, see "The Needs and Possibilities of Medical Work for Women in China," *Christian Guardian*, 21 April 1909. Also see Anglican Caroline Macklem's comment: "It is the women of India, who, by their gross superstition, are retarding the growth of Christianity": *Canadian Churchman*, 23 May 1901. See also *Canadian Churchman*, 22 February 1900.
63. Ibid., 1 March 1900.
64. Mary-Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900–1950* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998). For a discussion of opium addiction, see Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

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Almost twenty years later, middle-class Anglican children themselves had been brought into missionary work as they performed dramatic renditions of biblical texts for the Jewish children of the Nathanael Institute, an organization dedicated to converting Jews within the predominantly Jewish neighborhood of Kensington Market in Toronto. The children's "Christmas spirit" was commendable: "the children of other churches have . . . generously given of their good things to contribute to the happiness of our little Jews, and to relieve the need of souls to whom sickness and other causes have brought distress." Although delayed by the influenza epidemic, the 1919 Christmas festivities also featured a visit from Santa, gift-giving, and repeated lessons showing how "the Christmas story was linked with type and prophecy throughout the Old Testament." The culmination of these lessons highlighted newly emerging visual technologies as a magic lantern slide show for forty-seven Jewish children featured the text, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His People from their sins."[65] Though bringing Christianity to Jewish children brought one text-based cosmology into competition with another, the Nathanael Institute supporters clearly felt that their interpretation of prophetic texts, paired with their innovative and dramatic modes of textual presentation, were not only convincing, but also therapeutic.

The print culture that provided the basis for Anglo-Protestants to think of themselves as healers of a desperate, heathen world depended on imagining communities far away through the lens of the eyewitness missionary or even perceiving those nearby through the eyes of a child. Not all Christians actually practiced the blend of arduous medical and evangelical work they vaunted and supported financially and materially. However, they could participate vicariously in the healing—and salvation—of the nations through listening to letters and reports read at women's auxiliary meetings, reading church newspapers and missionary memoirs, reading study guides focused on particular non-Christian cultures, and singing hymns with lyrics redolent of the medical mission field.[66] That texts were such important mediators of the healing imagination was a reflection of the significance accorded to the central text of Protestant piety, the Bible.

65. "Christmastide at the Nathanael Institute," *Canadian Churchman*, 9 January 1919. The biblical text is Matthew 1:21.

66. See Revelation 22:2. In 1904 the Women's Missionary Society read Arthur Henderson Smith, *Rex Christus: An Outline Study of China* (New York: Macmillan, 1903): *Christian Guardian*, 9 November 1904; and in 1905 they read "Japan: Woman in Japan," a chapter from William Elliot Griffis, *Dux Christus: An Outline Study of Japan* (New York: Macmillan, 1904): *Christian Guardian*, 9 August 1905.

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IV. The Bible as the Basis for Healing

The Bible was central to Anglo-Protestant healing practices both as a tangible artifact and as a source of instruction. In addition, the Bible was also considered an authority in itself for adjudicating proper Christian approaches to healing in a medicalizing world. Influenced by cessationist readings of the Bible that attempted to limit miracles to the apostolic age, many early-twentieth-century, mainstream Protestants directly refuted Holiness and emergent Pentecostal claims to gifts of healing by arguing that yes, Jesus was a healer, but that no, Christians could no longer directly access and transmit his healing gifts.[67] In a letter critical of a book that argued for the ability to speak in tongues, L. M England posed and answered the question this way: "Do we today have the gifts Paul mentions [in Acts and First Corinthians]? Yes, in God-given ability, the ability of the linguist in his patience and delight, in the ability of the consecrated physician and nurse."[68] By limiting Jesus' powers of healing to the apostolic era, these Protestants did not deny that Jesus and/or God could heal, but that people could not channel this spiritual healing without the medical authority to do so. A few letters and articles in the papers were sympathetic, or at least cautiously open about Pentecostalism and faith healing, but the dominant message was that "the strongest confidence in the protection and favor of God does not preclude the use of any of the means of self-preservation and defense which his providence has put in our power," namely medicine.[69]

The confidence that both Methodists and Anglicans had in medicine was based in a strong conviction that medicine and Christianity were in deep alliance with one another, especially in medical missions. Though medical missionaries were considered the most effective, due to the openness (or vulnerability) of the sick and the gratitude of the cured, their effectiveness was rooted both in medical techniques and, as Anna Henry's therapeutic approach demonstrated, in the Book. As one optimistic 1914 article entitled "The Medical Missionary and the Redemption of China" put it, the hospital waiting room was the perfect place to dispense texts and/as medicine: "Each patient receives a portion of Scripture and a tract. In this way the Word is distributed far and near, and seed is sown broadcast. A large number of homes are reached, as we have over one hundred patients

67. See Opp, "Healing Hands, Healthy Bodies"; and Mullin, *Miracles and the Modern Religious Imagination*.
68. *Christian Guardian*, 31 January 1900.
69. Ibid; see also "The Limits of Faith Healing," *Christian Guardian*, 27 May 1914.

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each dispensary day."[70] Inpatients received an even more "intensive" introduction to the word, as they sat through prayers, New Testament readings, and morning and evening hymns. Whether or not these tracts could be read by a largely illiterate population, missionaries were confident that the mere distribution of printed material in native languages would later bear fruit. They were not necessarily mistaken, as demonstrated by Homi Bhabha's quote from "the shrewd view of an unknown [Indian] native, in 1819: 'For instance, I take a book of yours and read it awhile and whether I become a Christian or not, I leave the book in my family: after my death, my son, conceiving that I would leave nothing useless or bad in my house, will look into the book, understand its contents, consider that his father left him the book, and become a Christian.'"[71] Missionaries were keenly aware that the power in the text lay partly in its ability to communicate long after the missionary was gone.

Anna Henry's colleague in the Canadian Methodist mission in West China, Dr. William E. Smith (1864–1944), demonstrated a therapeutic approach to texts that was both personal and evangelistic. He kept detailed and often introspective diaries of his more than thirty years as a missionary, with many of his earlier entries recounting his afternoons of selling biblical tracts at the city gate. While dwelling on the successes and failures of the tract business, he gave comparatively little attention to the particulars of surgeries or health concerns, and in 1903 even demanded that a reluctant colleague move to another town so that his house could be converted into a print shop.[72] Another medical missionary, American W. W. Peters, director of the Council on Health Education based in Shanghai, drew a graph to connect the distribution of missionary and public health literature with moral and political effects in 1920s China, insisting that, "A distinct falling off in the use of health education material, especially printed matter, has accompanied disturbances in student and political life, internecine warfare, interruptions in transportation, [and] general business depression."[73] An innovative showman who orchestrated parades with

70. Ibid., 18 November 1914.
71. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 118.
72. Diary 1903, box 2, no. 10, William Edward Smith Papers, Mission Research Library Archives: 2, Burke Library archives, Union Theological Seminary, New York. On Canadian missionaries to China more generally, see Alvyn Austin, *Saving China: Canadian Missionaries in the Middle Kingdom, 1888–1959* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986).
73. W. W. Peter, *Broadcasting Health in China: The Field and Methods of Public Health Work in the Missionary Enterprise* (Shanghai: Council on Health Education, 1926), by courtesy of The Burke Library, Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University Libraries, New York.

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floats depicting unsanitary eating habits and gave lectures on the need for public health illustrated by hanging rows of skulls representing "strong and weak nations," Smith considered texts to be the most important media for his message.

As Smith and others showed, the word was performed as well as dispensed. Hu Yuan Hsi's Bible reading at the clinic bedside was a practice shared by missionaries at home and abroad, and was consistently encouraged in manuals of missionary practice. American Methodist Bishop and medical missionary Walter Lambuth encouraged Bible reading as a prime tool for evangelization: "it is in the hospital wards and by personal dealing with the patients at the bedside, that the best opportunity offers; . . . this work should be chiefly done by the native evangelists and colporteurs who regularly and systematically visit the wards and thus get in touch with the patients."[74] Though Lambuth held that native evangelists, Bible women, and colporteurs were to be the purveyors (usually for a small fee) of the Bible, medical missionaries were also to utilize texts as important tools for their work.[75] When listing four categories of "equipment for master workmen," Lambuth placed a medical missionary's book-lined study ahead of the dispensary—where medicine and tracts shared shelf space in front of waiting patients—followed by the chapel and hospital. The bookishness of the missionary's study would include medical journals, dictionaries in English and native languages, the Bible translated into the native language, account books, files of patients, new remedies, proverbs, and hanging scrolls with quotations from the Bible and the "sages of the country."[76] In several cases, medical missionaries wrote books of their own, especially translations of biblical or medical texts into the language of their host country.[77]

Missionaries and their supporters considered the performance of the word—reading the Bible but also displaying and purveying it—to have healing and redemptive powers at the same time that it had the power to civilize. As Jean Comaroff has argued in the South African context, British missionaries who brought the Bible and, perhaps more importantly, literacy, to the Tshidi also brought about a cosmological shift, as "perhaps the most palpable effect of literacy is that it transforms the consciousness of those who acquire it, setting it off, in

74. Lambuth, *Medical Missions*, 125.
75. On Bible women, see R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (London: Oxford University Press, 2002).
76. Lambuth, *Medical Missions*, 116–17.
77. Ibid., 117–20.

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unprecedented ways, from the world view of their illiterate fellows."[78] The improving qualities of the Bible were at times clearly more ceremonial than effective, however, as reported in the *Christian Guardian*: "the Basuto chiefs of South Africa visited England to stop the importation of liquor. . . . No definite answer to their plea was given, though they were presented by the British and Foreign Bible Society with handsomely bound Suto Bibles."[79] The Bible as an artifact ceremonially bestowed held a larger symbolic significance than simply that of a tool of rational communication—in the Basuto case, the bestowing of the Bible was also the deferral of a pressing question of political, religious, and medical import.[80]

The healing power attributed to the Bible also came forth in its reading in Canadian and U.S. contexts. For example, the *Christian Guardian* tells a story of a famous physician who, instead of turning to drugs, prescribed Bible reading to his anxious female patient. When the prescription worked, he told her, "with deep earnestness, 'If I were to omit my daily reading of this book, I should lose my greatest source of strength and skill. I never go to an operation without reading my Bible. I never attend a distressing case without finding help in its pages. Your case called, not for medicine, but for sources of peace and strength outside your own mind, and I showed you my own prescription and I knew it would cure.'"[81] This anecdote must be read in the context of burgeoning faith healing and New Thought movements in which Protestant women—including Methodists and Anglicans—were major actors, both as patients and healers. As James Opp has argued, when women established themselves as healers, usually on the basis of first-hand experience of divine healing, they found themselves "arraigned by a masculine professionalism that came in a variety of forms: the cleric, the doctor, and the scientific knowledge within . . . books."[82] The famous physician merged bookish masculine professionalism with more feminized and experientially based approaches to healing in his version of a Bible mind-cure, but his medical authority and the textual orthodoxy of his (biblical) prescription shielded him from the condemnation given to his female mental healing counterparts in the pages of the *Christian Guardian*.

78. Jean Comaroff, *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African People* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 143.
79. "The Heathen Way," *Christian Guardian*, 24 March 1909. See the caution about attributing undue influence to literacy in terms of social and cultural difference in Leah Price, "Reading: The State of the Discipline," *Book History* 7 (2004): 316.
80. See also Comaroff, *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance*, 143.
81. *Christian Guardian*, 5 June 1901.
82. Opp, "Healing Hands, Healthy Bodies," 237.

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The *Guardian's* support for the biblical strategy of this doctor leads to a difficult area of tension for Anglo-Protestants in their attempts to find their role in the midst of the rising authority of biomedicine. The doctor prescribed Bible reading because he understood that some kinds of ailments could be cured through a change in mood and mind—the power of suggestion could effect such change, and the best source of suggestion, in his view, was the Bible. Anglo-Protestant writers were quite united in their conviction of the empirical truth that the mind (or sometimes the soul) could have a powerful influence over the body. In this small window there was room for a kind of faith healing—a kind of healthy-minded religion.[83] However, they were also convinced that it was possible to go too far in making claims for the power of suggestion—whether or not God was behind the suggestion. Their greatest concern in this regard was the "heresy" of mental healing and especially Christian Science, with its conviction that one could pray or think oneself well, by attuning one's thoughts to God.

V. Heretical Readings

As mainstream Protestants sought a tricky balance between endorsing and containing the achievements of scientific medicine, they found a particularly useful—albeit threatening—foe in the emerging religious healing movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Two such movements—Christian Science and Pentecostalism—brought forth antagonistic reactions from their mainstream Protestant critics that reveal much about Protestant anxieties over the role of texts in establishing cultural and religious hegemony, and Protestant worries about their own tentative alliances with medical science. While in the early part of the century Pentecostalism (and its nineteenth-century precursor Holiness) was often seen as a misguided, enthusiastic detour that could be brought back into the fold (especially among Methodists), Christian Science was already deemed heretical, both in Christian and scientific terms. Intriguingly, both Pentecostalism and Christian Science proposed new relations to biblical texts in both discursive and ritual forms. Christian Science was more problematic in this regard, however, because not only did Mary Baker Eddy provide innovative readings of biblical texts, she also

83. In William James's terms, healthy-minded religion is characterized by a faith that makes one happy, through "the deliberate adoption of an optimistic turn of mind": William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 87.

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canonized these readings—her own writings—into a new sacred (or heretical) text: *Science and Health with a Key to the Scriptures*.[84]

Though considered less egregious than those of the Christian Scientists, the textual innovations in Pentecostal approaches to healing were twofold: (1) a rereading of New Testament texts that embraced the apostolic gifts of healing as gifts still available to believing Christians, and (2) ritual practices—whether in faith healing, speaking in tongues, or extemporaneous preaching—that distanced them from the formality of written texts (or even languages), be they read sermons or written prayers. Methodists, given their roots in revivals and camp meetings, wavered between acknowledging faith healing as a part of their domain and deriding it as inappropriate enthusiastic excess. Some Methodists endorsed faith healing and rejected medical approaches without hesitation, as one letter-writer who signed himself J. T. P. urged: "We cannot pretend to trust him [the Lord] and still be clinging to something else, for fear he might fail us, for the healing of our bodies any more than we can for our spiritual bodies—it is Jesus Christ wholly—or nothing."[85] Editorial comments, however, revealed the discomfort that leading Methodists had with embracing Pentecostal-style faith healing while Methodism was moving toward a social gospel-based, respectable style that considered itself in partnership with the natural and social sciences.[86] The editors appended this cautionary and tepid endorsement to J. T. P.'s account of faith healing: "While we might hesitate to make too many generalizations from his experience, there can be no doubt that that experience was just as he has represented it to be."

The letter directly following J. T. P.'s shed further light on growing Methodist discomfort with convictions gained via personal, experiential means. W. M. Bielby praised Ann Preston, or "Holy Ann," as an Old-Time Methodist tempted but not swayed by Holiness revivalists such as Nelson Burns, a minister deposed by the Methodist Church in the 1890s.[87] Holy Ann, though an inspirational prayer leader, was saved from the excesses of "Burnsism" when "she opened her eyes to the pretence that a man could be so holy as not to need the written Word." Indeed, Bielby added in a metaphor fit for a text-based cos-

84. Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with a Key to the Scriptures* (Boston, Mass.: First Church of Christ, Scientist, 1994). She was of course not alone in the production of new sacred literatures. See Gutjahr, "Sacred Texts in the United States."
85. J. T. P., *Christian Guardian*, 18 July 1906.
86. Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Kingston, Ont.: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 349; Christie and Gauveau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity*; Airhart, *Serving the Present Age*, 50–51.
87. Semple, *The Lord's Dominion*, 224.

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mology, "She was a living concordance."[88] A particularly compelling example of the admixture of text and healing, Holy Ann was an unschooled Irish immigrant who came to Ontario in the 1830s as a young servant to the family of a Methodist doctor. By the time of her death in 1906, she was widely known as a pious Methodist with a power for prevailing prayer—including the power to pray successfully for healing, which she often did from a custom-built wooden prayer hut. Ranking high among her amazing feats was her divinely granted ability to read. Without any formal training, Ann had been given the divine gift of being able to read only one book, the Bible: "a newspaper was like a foreign language to her."[89] Furthermore, she was said to be unable to memorize Scripture passages, yet could, through "heavenly mnemonics," recite word for word the most appropriate Scripture for any occasion by asking God to bestow it upon her.[90] Holy Ann—the living concordance—impressed a wide range of Protestants (and the occasional Catholic priest) with her astounding biblical gifts and was widely celebrated upon her death for the ways she merged miracles of text and healing in the cause of Christian witness.

Being attentive to the word, however, could go too far, as in the case of the higher criticism practiced by biblical scholars and cautiously supported by more liberal Protestants. One Methodist complained that such analysis led to personal opinion, not the conversion brought by the popular revivals of a preacher such as Dwight L. Moody: "Let [these critics] compare the achievements of their vaunted erudition with the marvelous results of Moody's labors . . . and they will find their littleness in startling contrast with the grandeur of the soul-saving evangelists God has honored."[91] The celebration of Bible-based revival, however, also had its limits. Pentecostalism, while not presuming to introduce a new sacred text as the Christian Scientists dared, insisted on the power of the Holy Spirit in ways that, for Methodists, strayed too far from the biblical text as an anchor for Christian experience and ritual.[92] As it began luring some Methodists from the fold, Pentecostalism also threatened to tar Methodism with

88. *Christian Guardian*, 18 July 1906.
89. Helen E. Bingham, *An Irish Saint: The Life Story of Ann Preston, Known Also as 'Holy Ann,'* 27th ed. (Toronto: Evangelical, 1927), 18; Digital publication: http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyctr/books/0001-0100/HDM0016.PDF.
90. Bingham, *An Irish Saint*, 28.
91. "Revival of Religion and Higher Criticism," *Christian Guardian*, 3 January 1906.
92. See Wacker, *Heaven Below*; and Grant Wacker, "The Holy Spirit and the Spirit of the Age in American Protestantism, 1880–1910," *Journal of American History* 72:1 (June 1985): 45–62.

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its antimedical brush, threatening the emerging view of the Bible as a venerable text compatible with the development of medical science.

Anglicans were not as ambivalent as Methodists when it came to spirit-filled religion, perhaps because of their intense grounding in textually mediated ritual via the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, but also because they had already rid themselves of their revivalist spinoffs a century earlier, when the Methodists formed. Though approaches to ritual and evangelism divided Anglicans in complicated ways—setting High Churchmen, Anglo-Catholics, and Evangelicals in conflict—in the early twentieth century they did not grapple over issues of charismatic authority as persistently as the Methodists.[93] The post-World War I international healing tour of the English lay healer James Moore Hickson prompted controversy among English Anglicans due to Hickson's charismatic leadership, but his version of faith healing—however flawed—was viewed as within the sacramental tradition of Anglicanism, especially among "overseas" Bishops.[94] In 1920, Hickson was warmly welcomed by clergy and laypeople at Toronto's St. James Cathedral (not, as with other faith healers, at the hockey arena), when he conducted popular, but not overly emotional, healing services based on laying on of hands and anointing with oil. As one observer put it, instead of Hickson the faith healer, "It was the mighty working of the Spirit of God, it was the healing power of our Blessed Saviour that brooded over that great throng."[95]

For the most part, Anglicans were united in viewing texts as a central tool in bodily religious devotion. One writer commenting on devotional practices for Ash Wednesday suggested that the body was "a dangerous machine that needs the soul as master." To this end, the writer opined, a textbook on fasting would be a great help as "a book of tactics to increase our efficiency in fighting the flesh."[96] Though less preoccupied by Pentecostal claims to healing than Methodists, for whom Pentecostals often came from within, Anglicans and Method-

93. Westfall, "Constructing Public Religions at Private Sites"; and Katerberg, "Redefining Evangelicalism in the Canadian Anglican Church." See also Terence Ranger, "Medical Science and Pentecost: The Dilemma of Anglicanism in Africa," 333–65; Sheils, ed., *The Church and Healing*.

94. Raymond J. Cunningham, "James Moore Hickson and Spiritual Healing in the American Episcopal Church," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 39:1 (1970): 2–16; Mullin, *Miracles and the Modern Religious Imagination*, 237–42; Stuart Mews, "The Revival of Spiritual Healing in the Church of England, 1920–26"; Sheils, ed., *The Church and Healing*, 323.

95. Professor H. Mitchell, "The Christian Mission of Healing," *Canadian Churchman*, 1 July 1920.

96. Ibid., 1 March 1900.

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ists most clearly shared a common enemy in the phenomenon of Christian Science, and Mary Baker Eddy's "book of tactics . . . for fighting the flesh."

Christian Science was not considered by mainstream Protestants to be a development within the fold, but a heresy thought up by a disturbed woman. Frequent and hostile attacks in the *Christian Guardian* and the *Canadian Churchman*, as well as in the plethora of anti-Christian Science tracts and books from all Protestant denominations, accused Mary Baker Eddy of elevating herself to divine status and making claims (and charging fees) for cures she could not really effect.[97] While Eddy also argued for a practice of reading that could reorient one cosmologically, her version went too far in the eyes of her detractors. Through reading and meditating on Eddy's text in conjunction with the Bible, Christian Science claimed, one could be aligned with the all-powerful Mind and/or God and be freed from the illusion of matter, thus abrogating any need for medical techniques of healing.[98]

With its insistence that matter was error and sickness illusion, and its discovery by a woman, Christian Science was considered an offense not only to Christianity and science, but also to manliness. In a review of William Purrington's critique of Christian Science (placed directly beside an ad for "exercisers: boxing gloves and punching bags"), one reviewer commented approvingly: "Mr. Purrington strikes out from the shoulder, and it is difficult to see how his antagonist can parry his sledge hammer blows inasmuch as his arguments are based upon clearly demonstrated facts. The book is an excellent example of 'destructive criticism' in the realm of Christian Science."[99] Similarly, W. W. Colpitts, in a letter headlined "The Challenge Accepted," wrote in a tone of great moral outrage when criticizing a Christian Science lecture given at Massey Hall, Toronto's finest concert hall, since the "special pleader" dared to compare the American divorcée Eddy to the "virtuous widow at Windsor," Queen Victoria.[100] The tight connection among Protestantism, Britishness, masculinity, and scientifically verifiable facts was again evident in critiques of Christian Science.

97. See Mark Twain, *Christian Science* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Gillian Gill, *Mary Baker Eddy* (Reading, Mass: Perseus, 1998); Raymond J. Cunningham, "The Impact of Christian Science on the American Churches, 1880–1910," *American Historical Review* 72 (April 1967): 885–905; Stephen Gottschalk, *The Emergence of Christian Science in American Religious Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).
98. See Rennie Schoepflin, *Christian Science on Trial*; and Gill, *Mary Baker Eddy*.
99. *Christian Guardian*, 18 September 1901.
100. Ibid., 3 January 1900.

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An even more obvious example of the particularly textual anxieties underlying Protestant critiques of Christian Science is found in responses to the opening of the new Christian Science mother church in Boston in 1906, upon whose walls were engraved matching quotations from the New Testament and from *Science and Health*.[101] Quoting on its front page from Charles Parkhurst's comments in Boston's *Zion's Herald*, the *Christian Guardian* emphasized the "self-delusion" of Christian Science's "high priestess" and her "wealthy, . . . well-dressed congregation:"

> They dare to parallel (engraven everywhere on the walls of their building and read as the substance of every service) the sublimest utterances of Holy Writ, the choice words of Jesus Christ and St. Paul, with lucubrations and vaporizations, the platitudes, obscurities, absurdities, inanities, and mock profundities, of the one who is to them evidently greater than all the prophets and apostles, if not a little superior to the Lord himself. Had we space to give quotations from Mrs. Eddy's words, even those read at this service, or those cut deep into the stone . . . no unbiased person could rank them for a moment with those by whose side they are flauntingly displayed.[102]

At the same time that Protestants were attacking Christian Science for its epigraphic and lectionary sins, however, some within their fold argued that Christian Science was not all quackery. As Yale professor George Ladd suggested in an article reprinted in the *Christian Guardian*, there was some truth to the claims of Christian Science: "Among these truths the most precious and important is the truth of the indwelling divine presence in the whole world of matter and mind. Theology and philosophy are more and more elaborating this truth in sane and rational ways."[103] Although Christian Science distorted these truths, he argued, Protestant ministers failed in their responsibility to present a sane version of the connection between God, mind, and matter: "The multitudes of the people have long been hungry,

101. The inscriptions, still extant in the Christian Science Mother Church in Boston, are the following. On the left front wall: "He shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not. But ye know him for he dwelleth in you. Christ Jesus." This is a slight alteration of John 14:16–17 AV. On the right front wall: "If sin makes sinners Truth and Love can unmake them. If a sense of disease produces suffering and a sense of ease antidotes it, disease is mental. Hence the fact of Christian Science that the human mind alone suffers and the divine mind alone heals it. Mary Baker Eddy." This is an earlier version of the passage in the current edition of *Science and Health* 270:22. Also on the right front wall: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all wrong suffering and doctrine. Paul": 2 Timothy 4:2 AV.
102. *Christian Guardian*, 27 June 1906.
103. Ibid., 7 August 1901.

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have been almost starving for the clear, authoritative and convincing presentation of these truths. And the clergy of all the different sects have been, and still are—either through lack of training or of courageous manliness, or of spiritual insight or of a powerful sense of their mission—incapable and ineffective, as a body of men, in respect of the teaching of these truths."[104]

Methodist and Anglican writers both offered similar discussions of the possibilities of a scientifically based role for Christianity in discerning truths about healing. As British Anglican cleric Percy Dearmer wrote in his 1909 text, *Body and Soul*, "All things indeed come of God, both high and humble, for spirit, soul, and body; all means of health and healing, spiritual, psychic, material, may be used under God and with his blessing. But mighty works may be done by spiritual means when all others have failed."[105] For Protestants to forswear the principles behind Christian Science altogether would be to deny God's effectiveness in the world. Instead they were to find a middle ground between thoroughly idealist Christian Science and thoroughly materialist biomedicine.[106]

The critiques of Christian Science grew increasingly sarcastic after Eddy's death in 1910, persisting as a sign both of the threat that Christian Science continued to pose and of the concern of some Protestants to claim an alliance with an increasingly aloof medical science. While critics of Christian Science were offended by its Christian pretensions, they were also affronted by its claims to be scientific, especially as Protestants sought to establish harmonious relations with scientific medicine. To this end, they depended on texts not only as paths to devotion, but as the grounds for truth claims about Christianity's essential role in the new age of medical and scientific progress.

VI. Proof Texts: The Scientific Method and the Bible

The text-based cosmology of Canadian Anglo-Protestantism was both powerful and vulnerable as it tried to align itself as a complement, and not a competitor, to the nascent biomedical worldview. Biomedicine was steadily moving toward a less patient focused and more disease specific approach, which, as several scholars have suggested, sought to de-spiritualize healing, while cultivating a biomed-

104. Ibid.

105. Percy Dearmer, *Body and Soul: An Enquiry into the Effect of Religion upon Health, with a Description of Christian Works of Healing from the New Testament to the Present Day* (London: E. P. Dutton, 1909), 117–18.

106. On idealism and "medical materialism," see William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

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ical account (or perhaps cosmology) of the "real" body.[107] One approach to aligning Christianity with evidence-based biomedicine was Protestantism's clear and harsh criticism of movements considered heretical such as Pentecostalism and Christian Science. A related and more proactive approach was to establish through textual means (as well as through hospitals and medical schools) the compatibility among Protestantism, medical science, and the social sciences. In this approach, Anglicans and Methodists somewhat awkwardly fused the spiritually edifying practices of reading and writing with the legitimacy borne of scientific methods and documentation. As historian Timothy Lenoir argues, science itself emerged as a discourse authorized by the "constitutive powers of inscription" in which inscribed texts—whether those of scientific articles, telegraphy, or even x-rays—were thought to transparently convey truth.[108] Science, as another cosmology expressed through the materiality of texts, remained a source of ambivalence for Protestants wary of coming under the sway of materialism—science that had lost all perception of the work of God in the universe and in the body.

Protestantism, which from its beginnings was linked with the concurrent development of scientific discourses, has long held up reading texts as a religious practice with a particular kind of authority and ability to bring forth the truth. This faith in the text to reveal and even nurture truth—whether via *sola scriptura* or the ritual exactness of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer—also grew within a developing print culture in which documentation made ineffable things real.[109] In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, both Anglicans and Methodists argued that correct practices of reading and writing, in concert with a kind of "Baconian" scientific method based on the accumulation of facts, could establish proof for properly scientific

107. Boddy, "Spirit Possession Revisited," 421; Deborah Gordon and Margaret Lock, ed., *Biomedicine Examined* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988); Opp, *The Lord for the Body*; and Charles Rosenberg, *The Therapeutic Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979).

108. Timothy Lenoir, "Inscription Practices and Materialities of Communication," in *Inscribing Science: Scientific Texts and the Materiality of Communication*, ed. Timothy Lenoir (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), 1–19. See also Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves and Writing Machines*; and Opp's discussion of the use of x-rays to contest testimonial evidence for faith healing: Opp, *The Lord for the Body*, 184–91.

109. Johns, "The Physiology of Reading." See also the discussion of writing as "recordation," in Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 94–96; and Michel deCerteau's discussion of writing, citing, and belief: *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 188–89. Also see Peter Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism, and the Rise of Natural Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Lisa Jardine, *Ingenious Pursuits: Building the Scientific Revolution* (London: Little, Brown, 1999).

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claims about the blend of religion and healing.[110] At the same time, scientific documentation could contradict unscientific and false claims about Christian healing—a prominent criticism of Christian Science healings was their lack of proper documentation according to the format of scientific experimentation.[111]

This argument sometimes led to the risky contention that religion should be open to principles of verifiability as was science, and to the assertion that the Bible should not be abused to protect irrational religion. A *Christian Guardian* article critical of Christian Science declared: "either in science, religion, or finance, when a person adopts a principle which contradicts reason, philosophy and the laws of nature, and then, if it happens to touch the subject of religion, distorts every passage of Scripture to make it agree with his irrational theory, he can believe anything."[112] The opening up of religion to the verifiability of reason occurred in the midst of insistent mainstream Protestant declarations of the compatibility of Christianity—including Scripture—and science that were very different from the creationism of later fundamentalists.[113]

Boldly charting a course between the "bald materialism" of scientific detractors of religion and the "mentally defective" idealism of Christian Science, an Anglican reviewer of P. N. Wagget's 1904 book *Religion and Science* argued that "science, really science, is tending to corroborate revealed religion."[114] A coalition with science would lay the grounds for mainstream Protestant relevance, and the grounds of its verifiability, in a modernizing world. Depending on scientific standards of proof and truth, however, could become self-defeating, as shown already in the 1871 controversy provoked by British physicist John Tyndall's skeptical call for a "prayer gauge," which would serve as a scientifically controlled test for the efficacy of healing prayer by comparing the results of two hospitals, one with healing

110. Gauvreau, *Evangelical Century*; and Marguerite Van Die, *An Evangelical Mind: Nathaniel Burwash and the Methodist Tradition in Canada, 1839–1918* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 98.
111. For example, "The Christian Science Case," *Christian Guardian*, 31 May 1905; "Table Talk," *Christian Guardian*, 1 November 1905; J. M: Waggett, "An Editor and Christian Science," *Christian Guardian*, 18 July 1917; "Superstition and Spiritualism," *Canadian Churchman*, 24 May 1900; Rev. A. Haire Forster, "Christian Science," *Canadian Churchman*, 26 June 1919.
112. *Christian Guardian*, 31 January 1900.
113. Even Christian Scientists and evangelical proponents of faith healing were caught up in the language of truth and empirical verifiability with their stress on public witnessing and testimonies of healings. See Wacker, *Heaven Below*; Schoepflin, *Christian Science on Trial*.
114. *Canadian Churchman*, 7 April 1904.

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prayer and the other without.[115] Though challenging "experiments" such as the prayer gauge probably contributed to the anxieties of Wagget's reviewer, optimism about the mutual corroboration of medicine and religion often prevailed. As one Methodist writer argued, "As time goes on it will be ever more and more clearly established that the art of healing is essentially a diverse one and that the work of the physician of men's souls and that of the physician of men's bodies is most intimately correlated."[116] Again, medical missions came to the fore as a prime example of the potential benefits of such an alliance between Christianity and science. As British missionary R. Fletcher Moorshead contended in 1926, medical missions "stand essentially for that union between Science and Religion which can provide the antidote to the ravages of materialistic science as well as to non-Christian superstitions."[117] As Christians committed both to science and faith, these writers claimed a parallel methodology for evoking the truths of both science and Christianity—a methodology rooted in textual means of demonstration and proof.

British Anglican cleric Percy Dearmer—a combination of Ruskinesque reviver of liturgical art, hymn writer, historian of Anglican tradition, supporter of psychical research, and Christian socialist—dramatically underscored the symbolic power of the book in this marriage of science and religion.[118] In his 1909 *Body and Soul,* which evaluated multiple approaches to healing, he made the following vow: "I do not in this humble work propose to prove the truth of religion; it is one of my postulates, and the truth of natural science another. If natural science should change again, I shall have to rewrite this book; if religion should be disproved, I would burn it."[119] Whether Dearmer's book-burning vow suggested that he would abandon his faith or protect it in the face of scientific invalidation, it was an extreme promise coming from a man who loved the texts of his tradition:

> the Bible is given a place supreme, as the sacred library of the Christian revelation. It is the greatest book in the world; but next to it, among English books, the English-speaking nations of the world would place the Book of Common Prayer. That is to say, we have in all the churches and chapels of the Anglican Communion from New

115. Mullin, *Miracles and the Modern Religious Imagination,* 46, 97.
116. *Christian Guardian,* 19 May 1909.
117. Moorshead, *The Way of the Doctor,* 60–61.
118. Donald Gray, *Percy Dearmer: A Parson's Pilgrimage* (Norwich, U.K.: Canterbury, 2000).
119. Dearmer, *Body and Soul,* 120–21.

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> Zealand to the Himalaya, from Alaska to the Cape of Good Hope the two greatest books of the English language in common daily use.[120]

Given his intense devotion to these traditional texts and, as a prolific writer, probably to books in general, his dramatic promise to burn his book were his "postulated" but beloved Christianity disproved resonates as a profoundly symbolic act with biblical referents.[121] His later foray into otherworldly texts as the editor of his second wife's book of "automatic writing," in which she was the entranced scribe for the musings of a soldier killed in World War I, showed Dearmer's eclectic commitment to textuality as proof of the divine, or at least as proof of messages from beyond.[122]

The controversy prompted by Dearmer's colleague in the Society for Psychical Research, Sir Oliver Lodge, also revealed the profound Methodist dedication to textual proofs. Lodge, esteemed scientist and pioneer of radio and wireless telegraphy, had embarked on controversial investigations of spiritualist phenomena, buttressing his psychic research through both his scientific competence and his Christian orthodoxy.[123] Treading a middle path similar to the one that tried to critique Christian Science without giving up the God-infused body, a *Christian Guardian* editorial cautiously praised Lodge's psychic research into telepathy, automatic writing, and the admittedly "Christian belief in man's survival of bodily death." Openly impressed by Lodge's many titles, inventions, and publications, the editorial closed with a reassuring tone: "at least, it is a source of satisfaction to know that this whole question of spirit communication is not to be left entirely in the hands of charlatans, but that men of the scientific temperament and undoubted honesty are giving careful and painstaking attention to it."[124] A flurry of letters responded with outrage, calling Lodge "Christless and Godless" and demanding that the "*Christian Guardian* will be true to its name, and sound an alarm," or

120. Percy Dearmer, *Everyman's History of the Prayer Book* (London: Mowbray, 1912).
121. In Acts 19:19 NRSV, Paul's preaching and acts of healing in Ephesus are so convincing to the Ephesians that "a number of those who practiced magic collected their books and burned them publicly."
122. Percy Dearmer, ed., *The Fellowship of the Picture: An Automatic Script Taken Down by Nancy Dearmer* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1920). On automatic writing and its relationship to the uses of texts as scientific evidence, see Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines*. Mullin classifies Dearmer as a sacramentalist for his championing of anointing the sick—given his spiritualist interests, I would argue that he was equally "thaumaturgical," though not in a Pentecostal sense. See Mullin, *Miracles and the Modern Religious Imagination*, 199–202.
123. See John D. Root, "Science, Religion, and Psychical Research: The Monistic Thought of Sir Oliver Lodge," *Harvard Theological Review* 71 (July–October 1978): 245–63.
124. *Christian Guardian*, 26 January 1910.

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the influence of its article would be "deadly."[125] Invoking the biblical proof of Deuteronomy 18:10–12, which forbids those loyal to God from obtaining the services of one "who consults ghosts or spirits, or who seeks oracles from the dead," C. L. Bedson insisted: "Nothing should come from a church paper which in the least would seem to support or give color to those ideas."[126]

Another letter-writer, George A. Bainborough of Toronto, quickly came to Lodge's defense by citing Lodge's 1907 *The Substance of Faith Allied with the Sciences* as an example of his orthodox Christian creed, and by making the point that Christian faith would only be strengthened were "respectable science" to "succeed in establishing a communication between the seen and the unseen worlds."[127] Critics of Lodge, however, also turned to the authority of scientific method. The unreplicable vagaries of Lodge's messages from the spirit world rendered them suspect: "the puerility . . . of these messages has been admitted by its best friends. The investigator in this field will not go far until he reaches the ridiculous as well as the mysterious."[128] Despite such vociferous critics, the editors of the *Christian Guardian* continued in their open-minded approach to Lodge, responding with brief and cheeky assertions that to view their editorial as supportive of spiritualism instead of science was a gross misinterpretation. Trying to forestall the twin attack from biblical proof-texts and scientific proofs, they offered this nod to the vexed and unpredictable power of writing: "Our words must have had some occult meaning altogether unsuspected by us."[129] The debate about the soundness of Lodge's psychical research—both from a Christian and a scientific perspective—fit within a long tradition of Christians who turned to science and Scripture to discount oracular spirit voices of all kinds, while still hoping to preserve the scriptural voice of the Christian God.[130]

Another illuminating example of the uses of texts to adjudicate truth in disputes over healing was the publication within the pages of

125. Ibid., 9 February 1910, 2 March 1910.
126. C. L. Bedson, "We Have Not Turned Spiritualist," *Christian Guardian*, 26 January 1910.
127. George A. Bainborough, "Sir Oliver Lodge's Creed," *Christian Guardian*, 16 February 1910.
128. C. E. Naylor, "Sir Oliver Lodge and Psychic Research," *Christian Guardian*, 2 March 1910. In another exchange of letters in January–February 1915, one pro-Lodge writer took care to mention that he "receives communications in writing from many of his old friends who have passed away": John Murphy, *Christian Guardian*, 3 February 1915.
129. *Christian Guardian*, 2 March 1910. For an Anglican clergyman parallel to Lodge, see Rev. F. H. DuVernet's discussions of his experiments with "radio mind": "Telepathic Testimonies," *Canadian Churchman*, 1 November 1923.
130. See Leigh Schmidt, *Hearing Things*.

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the *Christian Guardian* of the "Price Report," a lengthy, multi-authored discussion of the highly controversial 1923 Vancouver healing revival of Charles Price. Other scholars have provided detailed histories of the Price controversy—of importance here is the role of the *Christian Guardian* as a central conduit for the anti-faith healing message, and the importance of textual means to this message.[131] When Charles Price, over the course of three weeks, attracted almost 250,000 people (including repeat visitors) to his healing campaign in the Vancouver hockey arena, many mainstream Protestant ministers were horrified. Faced with an audience mostly comprised of women, of whom a select proportion ended up lying on the floor in spiritual ecstasy after having been anointed by Price, these Protestant ministers gathered together a committee to investigate such bodily sensations. Made up of ministers, doctors, and one lawyer, the committee came up with a lengthy majority report that cast serious doubt on the legitimacy of Price's claims to heal. Based on testimonies of some of the healed, follow-up examinations by doctors, and analyses of x-rays (then a new technology of inscription that could read the insides of the body), the majority report was published in full—minus the x-rays and photographs—in the *Christian Guardian*. On the grounds of fair play, a few readers harshly condemned the editor, Creighton, for his decision not to publish simultaneously the more sympathetic minority report written by two committee members supportive of Price. Though Creighton tried somewhat weakly to defend his choice, he eventually did publish a shortened version of the minority report.[132] From his editorials, and from the appearance shortly after the Price revivals of a regular series on public health written by the director of the Canadian Medical Association, it was clear that Creighton sought to use the power of the press, and of the investigative, scientific text, to challenge the legitimacy of faith healing as a properly Christian or properly scientific endeavor.[133]

The melding of Christian conviction and scientific method found other channels as well, as in the enthusiastic reception of social scientific research techniques by liberal Protestant church leaders who wished to evangelize through social service, including public health. Utilizing surveys, statistics, and medical reports, social gospel Meth-

131. Opp, *The Lord for the Body;* and Burkinshaw, *Pilgrims in Lotus Land.*
132. "The Special Committee's Report on the Dr. C. S. Price Healing Campaign," *Christian Guardian,* 16 January 1924; and "The Price Campaign: The Minority Point of View," *Christian Guardian,* 19 March 1924. The *Canadian Churchman* printed brief articles about Price but did not print the report.
133. For example, T. C. Routley, "Canadian Health Service: Article 1, The Waste of Ill Health," *Christian Guardian,* 3 December 1924.

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odists and Anglicans carefully documented the social situation of early-twentieth-century urban and rural Canadians, both for the purposes of planning revivals and for lobbying governments to develop policy innovations such as mothers' allowance, education regarding social purity (including sexually transmitted diseases) and child welfare reform.[134] The power of the scientific text to forward the goal of "Christianizing the social order" lay not only in its effects on others, but also in its reform of Anglicans and Methodists themselves, both lay and clerical. In a paler version of the heroism of the medical missionary, forwarding progressive Christian social goals through social scientific reports also made ministers more relevant in light of an increasingly bureaucratic, report-based environment.[135]

At the dawn of what many Christians considered to be the morally ambiguous media of moving pictures and radio, the ambivalent power of texts themselves to purify or defile souls was keenly felt by Christians. As one Methodist asserted in 1910, "Few things are more mightily effective in giving character and stamina to a people than good reading and, on the other hand, few things will sooner and more surely devitalize and vitiate and coarsen a people than the constant reading of trash."[136] In the Protestant text-based cosmology, the morality of literature was a prominent factor in determining what constituted good reading, but so too was the imprimatur of scientific legitimacy. The respect and prominence given to documentation and inscription within the scientific method emphasized textuality as a means to truth.[137] The kind of healing that could be tested, written up, and therefore proven, was much more intelligible than that which seemed to defy both nature and Scripture in its unverifiable personal testimony.[138] Scientific proofs displayed through textual recordation were a mirror—however warped—of the divine proof proclaimed through holy writ.

VII. Concluding Words

Mainstream Protestants read and wrote their faith in Bible studies and analytical commentaries, in church newspapers, in diaries, letters,

134. Christie and Gauveau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity*, 129.
135. Phyllis Airhart and Roger C. Hutchinson, *Christianizing the Social Order: A Founding Vision of the United Church of Canada*, Special Issue of *Toronto Journal of Theology* 12:2 (1996); Christie and Gauveau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity*, 77, 220; Paul T. Phillips, *A Kingdom on Earth: Anglo-American Social Christianity, 1880–1940* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), chap. 3.
136. "Good Reading Popular," *Christian Guardian*, 5 October 1910.
137. Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism, and the Rise of Natural Science*.
138. See Opp, *The Lord for the Body*.

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reports, and memoirs. But all this writing and reading did not limit their piety to that of body- and spirit-denying "bookworms," as one of their Pentecostal detractors scornfully charged.[139] Their love of the text and texts was rooted in an often unacknowledged conviction that in addition to being intellectually persuasive, all this reading and writing could have physical effects—could heal. The tracts dispensed in the waiting rooms of medical missions, the Bible reading prescribed to a nervous patient, the dangerous effects of heretical texts, and the power of documentation within scientific reasoning all showed that reading, writing, and the physical presence of words themselves mattered. The cosmology that underlay their faith sought to unify science and Christianity; texts were the indispensable grounds for helping that marriage to come to pass and for striving to stave off divorce.

The vision of a Christianized medicine embraced by such dedicated writers (and readers) as Percy Dearmer or the successive editors of the *Christian Guardian* and the *Canadian Churchman* has not survived to the degree that they would have liked, but it still has life, as evidenced by the growth of Anglican and United Church healing centers and such innovations as parish nursing. Any analysis of the Christianized medicine espoused by early-twentieth-century Protestants must understand that their arguments for merging Christianity and medicine were formed in relation not only to scientific or secular critics, but perhaps even more profoundly by more intimate foes such as Pentecostals and Christian Scientists that often came from within, and the curious but often obstinate non-Christians that came from without. In thwarting or transforming such foes, texts were often the most important of weapons or medicines.

Healing, as an orienting and encompassing concept that absorbed many Protestants, was constitutive of the confident Christianity of early-twentieth-century Canadian Methodists and Anglicans; claiming healing as religious offered the means both to embrace modernity by allying with medicine and to make space for the power of the Christian God at the same time. Texts were central to this claim and to its iteration and embodiment, as they connected magical, rhetorical, and cultural forms of power. A text-based cosmology allowed mainstream Protestants to mediate therapeutic, sacramental, and thaumaturgical approaches to healing when encountering medical experts, mission-field disbelievers, or faith healing enthusiasts. Meeting these varieties of difference with temperaments combining missionary ar-

139. Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 31.

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dor, scientific rigor, and compassionate entitlement, Canadian Protestants practiced a form of textual healing. Connecting the seemingly disparate realms of the bedside in a Chinese missionary hospital, the wooden prayer stall of an Ontario holy woman, the shockingly engraved walls of the Christian Science Mother Church in Boston, and the carefully documented investigations of the medical doctor, the Protestant alchemy of text and healing sought a remedy that could at once enlighten, revive, and Christianize.

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