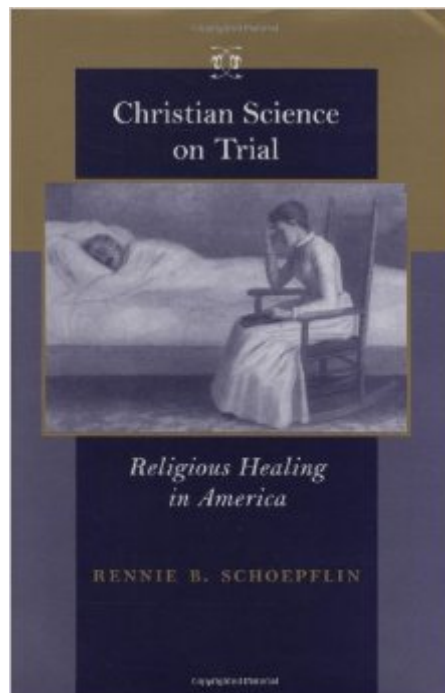


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Christian Science On Trial: Religious Healing In America (Medicine, Science, And Religion In Historical Context)



Synopsis

In *Christian Science on Trial*, historian Rennie B. Schoepflin shows how Christian Science healing became a viable alternative to medicine at the end of the nineteenth century. Christian Scientists did not simply evangelize for their religious beliefs; they engaged in a healing business that offered a therapeutic alternative to many patients for whom medicine had proven unsatisfactory. Tracing the evolution of Christian Science during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, *Christian Science on Trial* illuminates the movement's struggle for existence against the efforts of organized American medicine to curtail its activities. Physicians exhibited an anxiety and tenacity to trivialize and control Christian Scientists which indicates a lack of confidence among the turn-of-the-century medical profession about who controlled American health care. The limited authority of the medical community becomes even clearer through Schoepflin's examination of the pitched battles fought by physicians and Christian Scientists in America's courtrooms and legislative halls over the legality of Christian Science healing. While the issues of medical licensing, the meaning of medical practice, and the supposed right of Americans to therapeutic choice dominated early debates, later confrontations saw the legal issues shift to matters of contagious disease, public safety, and children's rights. Throughout, Christian Scientists revealed their ambiguous status as medical practitioners and religious healers. The 1920s witnessed an unsteady truce between American medicine and Christian Science. The ambivalence of many Americans about the practice of religious healing persisted, however. In *Christian Science on Trial* we gain a helpful historical context for understanding late- and twentieth-century public debates over children's rights, parental responsibility, and the authority of modern medicine.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have been class taught in Christian Science and left the cult to practice true Christianity. I read many, many books on the history and teachings of Christian Science. This is the first book that clearly explains the history of medicine and how the time was ripe for Eddy to be successful. The book deals with some doctrines and history of Eddy. I think it is important to read for example "God's Perfect Child" by Caroline Frazer first to get a solid background of Eddy, her teachings and the history of Christian Science. I have wondered for a long time why Eddy flourished and what the early conflicts between medicine and Christian Science (faith healing, New Thought) were. Rennie Schoepflin includes a lot of fresh material and clearly explains the so called "healing" practices of Christian Science Practitioners. To my knowledge this is the only book available that deals with this subject. Christian Science on Trial is well written, and not another biography of Eddy and Christian Science. The author documents court cases that I have not read elsewhere. If you read only one book about Eddy this is destined to be a classic.

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