



Visiting Christian Science Nursing Service of New Jersey

From a talk given on October 2019 by Brad Stock (Religious Studies Dept., Principia College) at the Annual Meeting of the Visiting Christian Science Nursing Service of New Jersey.

Illumined Scriptures: Mary Baker Eddy & The Bible “Our thoughts of the Bible utter our lives.” (Mary Baker Eddy, *The Message for 1902*)

SOME MILESTONES IN MRS. EDDY’S JOURNEY WITH THE BIBLE

Mrs. Eddy once said: “You will always find that what I have been thinking about and talking about has its counterpart in Scripture. . . . The Bible and I are inseparable. It has always been so.” (Irving Tomlinson, *Twelve Years*, p. 105)

Childhood: “From my very childhood I was impelled, by a hunger and thirst after divine things, — a desire for something higher and better than matter, and apart from it, — to seek diligently for the knowledge of God as the one great and ever-present relief from human woe.” (Mary Baker Eddy, *Retrospection and Introspection*, p. 31)

1844-1846: As a young widow, Mrs. Glover (Mrs. Eddy) begins “trying to trace all physical effects to a mental cause” (*Retrospection*, p. 24)

She also writes: “As long ago as 1844 I was convinced that mortal mind produced all disease, and that the various medical systems were in no proper sense Scientific.” (Mary Baker Eddy, “Mind-healing History,” *The Christian Science Journal*, June 1887, p. 116)

1862-1865: Mrs. Patterson (Mrs. Eddy) embarks upon a deeper phase of Bible study. “As early as 1862 she began to write down . . . the results of her Scriptural study, for the Bible was her sole teacher; but these compositions were crude . . . only infantile lispings of Truth.” (Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, pp. viii-ix)

She also begins healing others on a spiritual basis. For example, she heals a woman of consumption, who is mentioned in *Science and Health*. (pp. 184-185)

1866: While reading her Bible, she is healed of a severe injury, presumed to be fatal.

She called this healing “the falling apple that led me to the discovery” of Christian Science. She adds: “. . . in the latter part of 1866 I gained the scientific certainty that all causation was Mind, and every effect a mental phenomenon.” (*Retrospection*, p. 24)

1866-1869: She embarks upon three years of intensive Bible study.

She writes: “In following these leadings of scientific revelation, the Bible was my only textbook. **The Scriptures were illumined**; reason and revelation were reconciled, and afterwards the truth of Christian Science was demonstrated.” (*Science and Health*, p. 110)

She begins healing an increasing number of people on a spiritual, scriptural basis, begins teaching others how to heal, and writes a full exegesis of “Genesis.” (See *Science and Health*, pp. ix and 109. Also see *Retrospection*, pp. 24-25 and 27.)

1872: She decides to write her textbook, *Science and Health*, after praying about next steps and opening to Isaiah 30:8: “Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever.” (*Mary Baker Eddy: Christian Healer*, pp. 95-96)

1875: Her textbook of Christian Science, *Science and Health*, is published. over, please →

1879: She organizes a church on a biblical basis. The first tenet of Christian Science reads: "As adherents of Truth, we take the inspired Word of the Bible as our sufficient guide to eternal Life." (*Science and Health*, p. 497)

1894-1895: She ordains the Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* to be the pastor of all Christian Science churches. (See *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 313.)

She also makes the weekly Bible Lesson the sermon in all Christian Science churches.

Summary: By the end of her life, Mrs. Eddy could say, with absolute certainty: "Christian Science explains all cause and effect as mental, not physical." (*Science and Health*, p. 114)

The following quotes illustrate Mrs. Eddy's lifelong relationship with the Bible.

"To my sense the Sermon on the Mount, read each Sunday without comment and obeyed throughout the week, would be enough for Christian practice." (*Message for 1901*, p. 11)

"If the Bible and my work *Science and Health* had their rightful place in schools of learning, they would revolutionize the world by advancing the kingdom of Christ." (*No and Yes*, p. 33)

"Christian Scientists are fishers of men. The Bible is our sea-beaten rock. It guides the fishermen. It stands the storm. It engages the attention and enriches the being of all men." (from "A Tribute to the Bible" in *Miscellany*, p. 295)

"Acquaintance with the original texts, and willingness to give up human beliefs (established by hierarchies, and instigated sometimes by the worst passions of men), open the way for Christian Science to be understood, and make the Bible the chart of life, where the buoys and healing currents of Truth are pointed out." (*Science and Health*, p. 24)

"Students who strictly adhere to the right, and make the Bible and *Science and Health* a study, are in no danger of mistaking their way." (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 284)

"Adhere to the teachings of the Bible, *Science and Health*, and our Manual, and you will obey the law and gospel." (*Miscellany*, p. 251)

"Finally, brethren, . . . abound in faith, understanding, and good works; study the Bible and the textbook of our denomination; obey strictly the laws that be, and follow your Leader only so far as she follows Christ." (*Message for 1901*, p. 34)

AN EXAMPLE OF HOW MRS. EDDY WEAVES THE BIBLE THROUGH HER WRITINGS:

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:" (Eph 4:13)

Mrs. Eddy quotes this passage directly only once (see *Science and Health*, p. 519). However, she echoes this concept throughout her writings, in passages such as these:

- his followers must grow into that stature of manhood in Christ Jesus (*Science and Health*, p. 350)
- the fulness of the stature of man in Christ (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 15; *No & Yes*, p. 19)
- the nature and stature of Christ (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 101)
- the stature of manhood in Christ Jesus (*Unity of Good*, p. 2)

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