

Max Kappeler

The Christian Science Textbook:
Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures
by Mary Baker Eddy
– our way of life and our teacher

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Abbreviation for the work of Mary Baker Eddy

S&H Throughout the text of this booklet you will find various quotations from the Christian Science textbook *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. Where these quotations occur the page number is given from the Textbook, for example: (254:19).

1. The Textbook: Our Way of Life

The irrefutable order of the way of Life. When surveying the spiritual history from *Prayer* to the chapter *The Apocalypse*, one is deeply impressed by the overwhelming fact that in the search for truth, for our oneness with Being, the Textbook leads us in a definitely planned and compelling way. It guides us according to an indispensable and unchangeable order of spiritual unfoldment. Moreover, we gain the firm conviction that we will reach the highest goal of this path—unity with the divine Being—if we follow the ordered steps without deviating.

Every step has to be lived by experience. Divine Being itself is ordered, and the Christ compels every one of us to pursue this spiritually vital order in our lives. The ordered way, outlined through the order of the chapters of the Textbook, needs not only to be pondered thoroughly, but it also needs to be *lived*. The sublime goal cannot be reached faster by trying to go forward with big leaps in theory. It only works step-by-step, and every step has to mold our lives. These steps are laid out in the Textbook. As its order is learned today, we are able to follow it in our lives. In doing so, we will experience continual unfoldment as well as continual progress. But if we try to skip one step and live from a standpoint not yet reached through experience, we will appear to “suffer.”

Mary Baker Eddy makes this very clear in her article “PUT UP THY SWORD.”¹ There she points out that mortal mind tends to move from one extreme to the other. The more immature and inexperienced the student of Christian Science is, the more that student is tempted to adopt an extreme standpoint because they did not work out the first and preliminary steps in the line of development. She warns: “But let us not seek to climb up some other way, as we shall do if we take the end for the beginning or start from wrong motives. Christian Science demands order and truth ... My students are at the beginning of their demonstration; they have a long warfare with error in themselves and in others to finish, and they must at this stage use the sword of Spirit ... They cannot in the beginning take the attitude, nor adopt the words, that Jesus used at the *end* of his demonstration.” This article ends with the promise of attaining a Sabbath rest, in which we have to first do our work in order to come to that rest.

Willingness to begin in the right way. The way of Life in the Textbook leads us from *Prayer* to the day of rest in the Holy City of *The Apocalypse*, that is, from the first to the last chapter. But unless we are willing to begin in the right way with the chapter *Prayer* and to live it as well as living the following chapters in

1. Mary Baker Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, pp. 214–216.

the order stated, there is no chance in our lives to reach that culmination of the “rest” as symbolized by the Holy City. To begin aright and to continue correctly in the order of Being is accomplishing much. Many try to simply take over the state of consciousness of those who, after much work, have gained a more mature stage through spiritual progress. They are neither prepared nor willing to go the way themselves in achieving spiritual understanding. Are those students, assuming that attitude and using those words which are characteristic of Mary Baker Eddy’s advanced years, willing to go through the necessary purifying trials and experiences that have led to that stage? Are they prepared to let the Christ-idea purify false claims from their whole way of life, step-by-step, so that there is room for the divine revelation to pour in? Mary Baker Eddy proved with her life that she lived the ordered way of Life.

Progressing in a loving manner. Although we cannot avoid going the way of Life, the single steps cannot be humanly enforced. Any pushing and pulling is useless. The Kingdom of Heaven cannot be taken by force. Spiritual order translates itself to the human level in the form of patient steps. Every step has to mature within us and this requires time. Only in this manner can the way of Life lovingly unfold. First of all, the unfoldment of the human self is important. “But the human self must be evangelized. This task God demands us to accept lovingly today, and to abandon so fast as practical the material, and to work out the spiritual which determines the outward and actual” (254:19).

A great love for the Textbook is needed with its promise that the way outlined leads inevitably to the spiritual goal. As long as we nourish this great admiration for all that the Textbook is able to accomplish for us and the whole human race, we are willing to give all our love and consecration to understanding its message. Then any sacrifice or persecution will not be able to hinder us from loving the way of Life and pursuing it. We then stand in awe of the impressive fact that the 600 pages of the Textbook can give the answer to any life-problem; that these pages contain an answer that will hold enough authority over the next centuries to lead mankind out of its mental dream-existence. Moreover, when we think of the millions of unprejudiced minds that will love and value this spiritual history of life, then our hearts will be filled with gratitude that we have the privilege to carry on the banner of the Christ Science that Mary Baker Eddy has given us.

Our spiritual biography. The manner in which we follow the way of Life individually can be considered as our true biography. The spiritual record of the sequence of the chapters describes the true spiritual evolution that takes place in

consciousness and in the life of every single person. “The true theory of the universe, including man, is not in material history but in spiritual development” (547:25). Perhaps we may think that it is easy to accept perfection, which is impartially available for everyone at any time. But when we actually follow the way of Life, we will soon find out that we need great inner strength and much courage for the journey. Someday everyone will have to tackle this task and solve it. Basically, we all travel the same spiritual path individually in one’s own way. We should not forget, however, that our aim in life is much higher than finding fulfillment in healing disease only. More is at stake than demonstrating “the Science of physical harmony.”² Our aim is the “Science of spiritual harmony,” which fulfills itself in the individual realization of our spiritual origin.

I. The way of Life in the Textbook: a brief summary³

The spiritual ordered steps outlined in the chapters which the student has to follow in the search for Truth are briefly summarized:

1. *Prayer*. In Christian Science, prayers are mental. In order to pray correctly, we have to be filled with the thoughts of a deep and sincere desire to know God as God is. If we do not seek God, God cannot be found. In opening ourselves unprejudicedly to God’s nature we allow God in. In this way our longing desire is divinely molded until everything in us corresponds with the divine nature and we receive God’s blessings. When we accept the divine nature as our own, we are living “answered” prayer.

2. *Atonement and Eucharist*. As a result of this prayerful attitude, we no longer ask God to conform to our wishes or to be reconciled with us. We are, rather, willing to reconcile ourselves with God by being ready to give up our human will and to submit to the demands of God (Eucharist). In order to attain the atonement, the divine must overcome the human at every point. The necessary power of manifestation is based on our oneness with God, achieved through prayer. The at-one-ment with God gives us the powerful authority to accept our reconciliation with God.

3. *Marriage*. In accepting these demands of God and putting them into practice in our daily life according to our highest understanding, we experience a higher state of manhood. Thereby, we are giving up a lower level of thought and activity to gain a higher sense of all things. Through our oneness with the nature of God we are one in God, that is, one with all the divine qualities of God. Through this we accomplish and experience a superior, more harmonious, and more permanent sense of existence and manhood.

2. Mary Baker Eddy, *Unity of Good*, p. 6:10.

3. See also: Max Kappeler, *The Structure of the Christian Science Textbook—Our Way of Life* (Seattle: Kappeler Institute Publishing USA, 1954).

4. *Christian Science versus Spiritualism*. At this point we are confronted with the question about what part the material and the human actually play; whether the spiritual or the material or both are real; or if Spirit and matter work together. Which is the final authority we can depend upon to definitely decide this question? Only a spiritual, scientific understanding can furnish a valid answer. The first part of the chapter points out that the true identities of being are spiritual and consist of ideas. Ideas never mingle with the material nor cooperate with it. The second part goes on to show that we are enabled, through the Mind of Christ, to discern what is real and what is unreal; what are ideas and what are illusions. This gives us the certainty not to mistake the unreal for the real and vice versa. The third part shows the way out of the enigma of mortal existence. Here we are asked to claim only the spiritual, which is of the nature of idea. Thus, the chapter provides a clear-cut analysis by presenting the nature and reality of God to be Spirit *only*, the only good.

5. *Animal Magnetism Unmasked*. Recognizing merely the *onliness* of Spirit is not yet sufficient. The claim that both good and evil have power and influence has to be seen as well. The so-called power and influence of evil—animal magnetism—must be understood as nothing. Anything that is not derived from God has neither power nor influence. God, good, alone translates itself constantly to mankind, putting mankind only under the influence of God.

6. *Science, Theology, Medicine*. Only the influence of God's nature comes to mankind, translating itself to man as the Christ-translation through the fundamental constituents of the divine nature of Being, namely: Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love. These fundamental constituents of the nature of God uncover the false constituents of mortal existence: mortal mind, matter, sense testimony, material concepts of science, material life, medicine, imperfection, and so on, as unreal. They must give way to the true constituents of Being.

7. *Physiology*. Thus, through the new concept of Being, the mortal basis is exchanged for an immortal one. As a result, we experience our concept of mortal manhood yielding to a higher concept of immortal manhood. Then we find that our physiological concept of man has nothing in common with the true idea of man and we awake to the recognition of the fact that man is the idea of God. The first part of the chapter shows that the physiological man has no divine reality and is nothing but a mortal illusion fading away into nothingness. In the second part, thought rises to the grand fact that man is spiritual.

8. *Footsteps of Truth*. The translation of the physiological man into spiritual manhood, however, cannot be accomplished by trying to get rid of the material body,

but by laying down the material concept of it. Everything is a question of consciousness. The mortal consciousness has to be translated into immortal consciousness. The first part of the chapter presents the divine constituents that make up a scientific consciousness. The second part shows how mankind will express an improved and higher developed human consciousness by gradually exchanging mortal, unscientific consciousness for a divine scientific consciousness and thus making progress.

9. *Creation*. Once we have clearly realized that everything is determined by the state of consciousness, we then understand the scientific constituents of a divine consciousness and a completely new universe opens up to us: the universe of ideas. The mental limitations and restrictions fall away, and thought yields to an infinitude of ideas. Everything appears in the light of ideas, in the light of true creation. The further we expand our consciousness of ideas, the larger and more comprehensive our concept of man and the universe becomes.

10. *Science of Being*. With this concept of the universe of ideas, the world of illusions, of matter, of sense-testimony, must recede; for every idea causes the disappearance of the opposing belief, regardless of whether it refers to invisible, latent error as presented in the first part of the chapter, or to visible, concrete error as in the second part. The third part, the platform, furnishes the explanation of why an idea can cause the disappearance of an illusion. The resulting power of manifestation is caused by “the divine infinite calculus” of Word, Christ, Christianity, Science (see 520:15 and 575:18). This power of manifestation is omni-active in the realm of ideas and demonstrates itself unfailingly.

11. *Some Objections Answered*. If these demonstrations do not occur, it is not due to the inadequacy of Christian Science, but is a hint that we have not understood all the aspects of the teaching. Fundamental objections of the human mind can interfere with a scientific, theoretical Christianity demonstrating itself as a practical Christianity. All the objections that prevent us from seeing every idea in its perfect spiritual reflection have to be dropped. Only pure reflection results in demonstration. When all the objections in our thoughts are removed, nothing can stop the complete demonstration.

12. *Christian Science Practice*. When this point is reached we have grown to that degree of understanding which enables us to let the Christ-idea demonstrate itself in every situation. The four parts of this chapter present this scientific method. The *first* part shows that all Christian Science practice proceeds from the culmination of Christianity; from an inward attitude of the perfection of Love and the allness of

Mind operating throughout all space. In order to be a practitioner, we must have grown to an understanding of the perfection of being by having lived the lessons in all of the previous chapters. With such an understanding, we are able to know the truth about every case by starting from the summit of Love, which holds in thought only perfection. Now we have the requirements for the solving of problems, as the *second* part points out. The *third* part explains that the practitioner has to stay unchangeably with the truth perceived, and not be influenced by opposite arguments. Finally, the *fourth* part shows that the truth the practitioner knows is purely spiritual; that it is a fact that reflects itself universally. Truth, which the practitioner knows, is the same truth that the patient knows. This is the basis and reason why the patient can be healed.⁴

13. *Teaching Christian Science.* When we stop at this point of unfoldment one may feel not quite satisfied. Why? Because the final aim (ultimate goal) of Christian Science is not confined to correcting error through an understanding of Truth, nor always to overcome inharmony through harmony. The aim is, rather, to embody the Truth of being, to *be* it. The way of Life does not permit us to stop half-way and to find all of our satisfaction in the demonstration of physical harmony; instead, it forces us to proceed to the demonstration of spiritual harmony. So the aim of our devotion is not primarily to correct mistakes, but to avoid mistakes. The prophylactic or preventive art of Christian Science, not the curative one, has to have the first place in our lives. Teaching Christian Science means, in this chapter, that we teach ourselves to be a Scientist. Throughout this chapter we are taught to train ourselves in knowing ourselves *only* as the idea of Principle. The moment we adhere to Principle we are no longer a personal self but a scientific idea, a Scientist.

14. *Recapitulation.* After having accepted ourselves as the idea of Principle, the question concerning the form of the manifestation of the idea arises. The form is “wholly symmetrical.”⁵ A principle of a science manifests itself as a system. In this way a principle can be grasped. Starting from the divine Principle and deducing from the categories and classifications of this Principle, we understand the scientific structure (gestalt) of man, which reveals itself as a calculus of divine ideas and contains the answer to all questions of life-existence.

15. *Genesis.* Man is a calculus of ideas based upon the system of Christian Science. As such, we are involved in a continual process of re-creation through the restructuring of the divine factors of Being that constitute the divine system of reference. There is a perpetual God-genesis going on that impresses on every new creation a form or gestalt which is inherent in the system. This continual genesis,

4. See also: John W. Doorly, *Christian Science Practice* (London: The Foundational Book Company for the John W. Doorly Trust, 1950).

5. Mary Baker Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 167:6.

however, as the first part of the chapter shows, proceeds within God's infinite self-containment, within the "matrix of immortality" (250:5). Therefore, every creation that does not have its origin in God must be rejected as a wrong concept (second part of the chapter). As a conclusion, the third part shows that there is only *one* creation, the creation of God, and it exists because God exists.

16. *The Apocalypse*. In understanding that "Principle and its idea is *one*" (465:17) and that therefore the creator includes its own creation, we are led to the recognition of the one infinite Principle that is operating on all levels of existence as the omni-action of Principle's idea. Now we understand that there is only *one* Being and therefore there is nothing going on but God and its infinite idea. Whatever may happen on any level of thought or experience, through a consistent analysis, can finally be reduced to the operation of the infinite Principle's own idea. Outside the one Being there is no other being.

II. The basic order of the 16 chapters: "The 4"

Every science pursues the goal of presenting a highly complex subject as simply as possible, that is, to reduce the multitude of single facts to a few categories. The more we succeed in that, the more clarity we gain and the more distinct the fundamental factors appear. Only in this way do we recognize the central point of a subject without being confused by thousands of irrelevant questions.

The question then arises whether the 16 chapters of the Textbook⁶ are 16 steps of ordered unfoldment and whether they can be further reduced to an even more fundamental and more concise order. In fact, we recognize in them the 4-fold operational order of unfoldment of *Word, Christ, Christianity, and Science*. Each of these four phases comprises four chapters. This shows clearly that the infinite One has to be understood first in its 4-fold *modus operandi*. What is it?

Word: The first four chapters point out to the student the importance of finding a method by which God's nature, which is reflected in the true nature of man, is revealed. The Word always presents *God's nature*. If this nature is not searched for, recognized, and understood, all further conclusions have no more substance than beliefs.

Christ: God has a Christ, an all-saving and correcting power. As long as the Word of God, God's nature, is not recognized, one will ascribe power to something that is not of God, to the anti-Christ. Therefore, the second four chapters show the *Christ-translation*, that is, the *modus operandi* of how the Christ-idea translates God to man, to the point of idea, and thereby retranslates the misconception of

6. The last two chapters (17: Glossary and 18: *Fruitage*) are, according to Mary Baker Eddy, "additions" (579–700). There is no structural relation to the continuity of the main text.

existence into the right sense of being. In this way, the true idea of being comes to the fore. Then we become conscious that God always manifests itself as God's own idea.

Christianity: Since God (Word) only manifests itself through its Christ as idea (Christ), next the issue of the nature of the ideas comes up. Therefore, the four Christianity chapters deal with the *realm of ideas*, that is, the nature of the infinite universe of ideas, the dynamics of the ideas, the infinite reflection, and the correlation of the synergetic effect, as well as the practical applicability of ideas. Along with that, the concept of a material universe with its erroneous triad of sin, sickness, and death disappears.

Science: Ideas are obedient only to divine Principle, not to persons. Therefore, only the operation of divine Principle as its idea is of importance. Hence, infinite being consists of the *oneness of Principle and idea*. In the last four chapters, Christian Science interprets Principle through its system of ideas that operates imperatively on the spiritual level of existence as well as on the human and material one.

III. The Matrix of Christian Science (Textbook - matrix)

absolute stand- point (i) relative standpoint (j)	WORD <i>Revelation of God's nature</i>	CHRIST <i>Translation of God to idea</i>	CHRISTIANITY <i>The realm of ideas</i>	SCIENCE <i>Principle and idea is one</i>
Word <i>Accepting the proposition</i>	Chapter I Revelation of God's nature by accepting God's nature in us	Chapter V As we accept the Christ-translation, the ungodlike is translated back into its native nothingness	Chapter IX As we accept the realm of ideas, the ideational universe reveals itself to us	Chapter XIII By accepting our one- ness with Principle, we are Principle- idea
Christ <i>Power of mani- festation in spite of error</i>	Chapter II God's nature mani- fests itself in us in spite of the ungodlike in us	Chapter VI The Christ-translation manifests itself by translating the false constituents into the true con- stituents of Being	Chapter X The dynamic power of manifestation of ideas dissolves both latent and concrete error	Chapter XIV Principle-idea mani- fests itself as a calculus of ideas and corrects the calculus of human beliefs
Christianity <i>Exalted being</i>	Chapter III God's nature demon- strates itself in us as a higher human- hood	Chapter VII The Christ-translation translates mortals into immortals	Chapter XI The perfect reflec- tion of ideas exalts a theoretical Chris- tianity to a prac- tical Christianity	Chapter XV In the oneness of Principle and idea, creation is exalted in its divine Principle
Science <i>Scientific understanding</i>	Chapter IV God's nature can be understood only by scientific methods of understanding	Chapter VIII The Christ-translation translates an unscien- tific consciousness into a scientific consciousness	Chapter XII A scientific under- standing of ideas heals	Chapter XVI Scientific understand- ing recognizes that on all levels of exis- tence, only the idea of Principle is ever going on

2. The Textbook: Our Teacher

Structural concept of Science. In the middle of the 20th century, the structural concept of science began to supersede the atomistic concept. The atomistic concept of science reduces the infinite to the smallest part through analysis and investigates it as separated from the whole, down to the most exact detail. This concept of science began to develop in the 19th century. The Christian Scientist, who has generally grown up with this concept of science, studies the Textbook this way, which results in knowledge of only single truths. The major interrelationships thus remain concealed. The divine Truth, however—the *wholeness* of Being—was presented through revelation in Mary Baker Eddy’s Textbook (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*), which was in accordance with the structural concept of today’s science. The concept of science of the 20th century is anticipated within the Textbook, though it was written in the 19th century. Mary Baker Eddy knew that the thought of the 19th century in which she lived could not yet grasp the whole of Christian Science, that it would need more centuries to be understood. Even today, more than a century later, this new concept of science has not yet entered into the consciousness of the general public. This is also true for students of Christian Science, who are generally confronted with the following situation: with the atomistic concept of science of the 19th century, students still try to understand a Textbook that corresponds with the structural concept of science of the 20th century. They can only understand fragments, but never the sense and meaning of the whole.

Therefore, the Christian Scientists experience an inner conflict. As long as students do not know the divine system of reference, they are unable to comprehend either the structure of Being or the structure of the Textbook. This supports the opinion that the Textbook as a whole, as well as its single chapters or its paragraphs, do not have any definite order or structure. Students may then be content to use the Textbook simply as a mere religious book without studying it structurally. This holds an unspoken admission that we do not consider Christian Science as Science but as religion. Mary Baker Eddy, however, never characterizes her discovery in the Textbook as “the religion of Christian Science.” She proposed that Christian Science is the Science of all sciences, that it is the prime or proto-Science.

Understanding and demonstration. A fundamental law of Christian Science says that our consciousness determines our experience, not the other way

around. If our consciousness is filled with erroneous views and beliefs, we will reap inharmony. If our consciousness, however, is molded by divine understanding, we experience harmony. Therefore, the main concern of the student of Christian Science is to grow in divine scientific understanding in order to consciously partake in the harmony of Being. How do we gain more understanding? This question suggests the desire to know more about the healing method, although the purpose of this booklet is not to deal with Christian scientific healing extensively. This subject is treated in other books.⁷ The phenomenon of physical healing has to be considered rather critically. We know that medicine, or mental, spiritistic, and psychic methods can heal; that blind faith in God can heal as well as the belief in medicine or in a doctor. Faith-cures are often accomplished faster than healings through Christian Science.⁸ Single truths also have certain healing effects in a sense. At first many, for lack of a more grounded understanding, may cling to the words: "A grain of Christian Science does wonders for mortals, so omnipotent is Truth..." (449:3). Phrases detached from their context often have a value and effect of their own. So someone seeking help may open the Bible or the Textbook at random, trusting that the verse or phrase accidentally viewed will furnish the answer to the problem. With such an atomistic concept of Science based on atomistic truths, only atomistic results can be obtained. Atomistic solutions are, however, not true solutions and only postpone the comprehensive solution of a problem.

What one too often neglects in regard to this atomistic method, is the fact that the statement quoted above, for instance, is only the beginning of a sentence that goes on: "... but more of Christian Science must be gained in order to continue in well doing." What does that mean: "to gain more of Christian Science"? By adding more atomistic single truths? No! This would be a long, tiresome, and unscientific way leading nowhere. Today, we see that a structural understanding is necessary. A structure can be presented in the form of a matrix, and this method makes it incomparably easier to survey a complex subject. It gives more insight than a great number of single truths.

Understanding and demonstration are one. A profound, higher, and comprehensive understanding will result in a more profound, higher, and comprehensive demonstration. We have to bear in mind, however, the following point: a higher structural understanding does not furnish us with a better atomistic solution.

7. John W. Doorly, *Christian Science Practice* (London: The Foundational Book Company for the John W. Doorly Trust, 1950); Max Kappeler, *The Development of the Christian Science Idea and Practice* (Seattle: Kappeler Institute Publishing USA, 1970).

8. See Mary Baker Eddy's article "Faith Cure," in *Retrospection and Introspection*, p. 54–55.

Structural understanding always brings forth a structural demonstration. Therefore, demonstrations based on atomistic knowledge cannot be compared with demonstrations of structural understanding. Many demonstrations strived for are not realized because the problem in question is stated atomistically. In order to get a comprehensive structural solution, the problem has to be stated structurally.

The one Being interprets itself through the categories of divine metaphysics. The central subject of the Textbook is the one Being. The infinite one Being interprets itself through the categories of divine metaphysics. And Science is the wonderful tool that embraces all classifications and categories of the infinite One in one fundamental system. It integrates within itself the presentation and explanation of the 7 synonymous terms for God, the 4-fold operation of Being (the four sides of the Holy City), and the 4 levels of Science. It includes the absolute and the relative standpoint, as well as the subjective and objective; the temporal and eternal point of view; the aspect of understanding and demonstration; in short, all aspects necessary for a theoretical and practical scientific Christianity.

The Textbook: a complete presentation of Christian Science. The more insight we gain into the ordered and balanced structure of the Textbook, our conviction grows that the Textbook is indeed the voice of Truth to this age. So it shows clearly, that every sentence is of importance for the presentation of the holistic structure of Being. With this insight into the Textbook-structure as a whole, we no longer just believe in the Textbook, but we can trust and *know* that we are provided with a complete statement of the fundamentals of the Christian scientific teaching. Any doubt that the Textbook would not contain the entire revelation of Truth or that the earlier editions would be more inspired or more scientific than the last one, breaks down because of our recognition of the divine structure. The impersonal authority, not personal views, on this issue of the structure-content of the Textbook convinces us of its value and its invaluable importance. Consequently, we can accept the Textbook and not a person as authority.

The Textbook: a revealed text. The more distinctly we see how exact and well-balanced down to all details the text of the Textbook is, the more we become fully convinced that Mary Baker Eddy could not have formulated and composed it on her own. When we consider how many standpoints have been skillfully interwoven in this text, we see clearly that it could not have been written humanly according to a preconceived plan. There must have been the authority of divine revelation behind it. Mary Baker Eddy writes: "It was not myself, but the divine power of Truth and Love, infinitely above me, which dictated 'Science and Health

with Key to the Scriptures.’”⁹ And moreover: “I should blush to write of ‘Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures’ as I have, were it of human origin, and were I, apart from God, its author. But, as I was only a scribe echoing the harmonies of heaven in divine metaphysics, I cannot be super-modest in my estimate of the Christian Science textbook.”¹⁰

The last edition of the Textbook is authoritative. Although in the year 1866 Mary Baker Eddy received Christian Science as a sudden revelation, the Textbook was not written “overnight.” The first edition appeared in 1875, and from that moment on it was edited repeatedly, time after time. The author still made changes during the last year of her life (1910). Mrs Eddy made important changes concerning the structure of the 50th edition (1891). For the first time this edition contains not only all chapters of the Textbook, but in every chapter the text is also rearranged with changes of highest importance. Comparing the 49th edition with the 50th edition, one notices that basically, the truths stated, had not been changed, but rather that the text had been entirely rearranged. It seems as if the old text had been cut with the editor’s scissors, sentence by sentence and section by section, and then put together again in a new arrangement. This rearrangement means that it is not merely a textual regrouping, but that it contains a divine, scientific order.¹¹ In this edition of 1891, we find the statement: “...the natural order of heaven comes down to earth” (118:31). Correspondingly, the earlier text was rearranged in such a way that the subjects of each chapter now follow this “natural order” in the form of one of the three fundamental categories of the divine system of reference.

The first and the last edition of the Textbook differ from each other very distinctly, although they refer fundamentally to the same revelation. The first edition is fresh, spontaneous, and powerful, written in an appealing, impressive, vivid, and vigorous style. But the subjects are still incomplete and without spiritual order and arrangement, in other words: they are presented atomistically. The last edition is quite different. It is concise, complete, and scientifically structured. A comparison with earlier editions is instructive; it affords an insight into the changes the author underwent in her own spiritual development.¹² Therefore, we become aware of how she prayed and worked so that she could be pure and transparent enough to let herself be used as a channel of divine Truth for a complete and clear presentation of Christian Science. She spent years of dedication, love, and self-sacrifice in

9. Mary Baker Eddy, *The First Church of Christ, Scientist and Miscellany*, p. 114:23.

10. *ibid.* p. 115:4.

11. For a more detailed explanation of this subject see Max Kappeler, *The Development of the Christian Science Idea and Practice* (Seattle: Kappeler Institute Publishing USA, 1970), pp. 7–17.

12. For instance, the steps of unfoldment she took in connection with the subject of animal magnetism are presented in Max Kappeler, *Animal Magnetism Unmasked* (Seattle: Kappeler Institute Publishing USA, 1975).

giving us a complete statement of divine Truth in its Science. The deeper we gain an insight into these interrelationships, the more our estimation for her lifework grows.

The Textbook as revelation. The following question may arise: when Mary Baker Eddy received Christian Science as a revelation in 1866 and wrote it down under divine dictation in her first edition of the Textbook (1875)—why did she revise it again and again? Shouldn't the first edition be regarded as the pure, unadulterated direct revelation? Such an argument starts from the erroneous assumption that a revelation comes like a bolt from the blue, that it reveals a new model of thought in a split second, down to the smallest detail. Revelations are, in fact, sudden enlightenments that make everything appear in a new light; but the details of this totally new idea are not yet exactly described and put in the right context. This exact context is *discovered* only step-by-step afterwards. Therefore, Mary Baker Eddy denoted Christian Science as both revelation and discovery.

Revelation is not static; revelation is dynamic. It contains within itself the capacity to shift from the old standpoint, step-by-step, into the new light. Divine revelation is infinite and for that reason it is going to unfold itself continually. After the initial sudden enlightenment in the year 1866, this revelation continually unfolded through discovery. Mary Baker Eddy obtained the proof for the rightness of these discoveries by submitting them to practical tests and verifying them exactly. In this way, all the details of the one vast revelation were grasped distinctly and integrated into the overall framework as we find it in the Textbook today. This process of further development called for constantly new revisions of the text. Once a revelation found its textual expression, it could also be understood by others and demonstrated.

Science reveals. Christian Science teaches that it is always Science that reveals. The Textbook never says: "God reveals," it always says: "Science reveals," "divine Science reveals," or "Christian Science reveals." Mary Baker Eddy's unique revelation reveals that the Science of God is a continual source of revelation, and this Science will go on with "the revelation of Christian Science." *Being itself*, as well as the Science that reveals it, is infinite. Therefore, there are no limitations for divine revelation and the capability of discovery. Through the constantly revealing Science of God, everyone who accepts it thoroughly consciously takes part in the unlimited revelation.

The Textbook itself was Mary Baker Eddy's teacher. Mary Baker Eddy was a dedicated student of her own Textbook. She makes the interesting remark

that, at the time when she wrote the Textbook, she could not fully grasp the deeper meaning and she writes: “When I wrote ‘Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures,’ I little understood all that I indited,”¹³ and also, “I have been learning the higher meaning of this book since writing it.”¹⁴ Only six months before she left us, she said to one of her students: “I feel I am just really beginning to understand ‘Science and Health.’”¹⁵

Revelation and a revealed text. When Mary Baker Eddy writes about her discovery of Christian Science, she speaks of “... *this* final revelation of the absolute divine Principle of scientific mental healing” (107:5).¹⁶ The expression “this” refers to the “final revelation of the absolute Principle” and not to its textual presentation in the Textbook. She writes that the system of metaphysics is presented in “a form comprehensible by and adapted to the thought of the age in which we live” (146:32). This “age” to which she refers belongs to the last century and is no longer our age. Were the author here today, she could not help but write her Textbook for our age and, consequently, the text would look quite different. She would have to use the language of today, a new terminology, and to take into consideration the present models of physics, medicine, biology, psychology, theology, cosmology, etc. Would the spiritual structure of the text change with a new terminology? Never, for the structure of the meaning is implied in the structure of Being and does not change.

The essentials of the Textbook are not to be found in the form of the words of the text, but in the tonality of the structure which is presented through it. The tonality of the spiritual structure would always remain the same, even in the garment of a different textual wording. Since Mary Baker Eddy’s revelation is still up to date and therefore authoritative for us today, it is best expressed in the most precise way by its inspired language. Therefore, it is necessary to preserve the Textbook unchanged, even if its language and examples go out of fashion. This does not touch the spiritual substance of its divine structure. The same is true for the Bible.

The Textbook accomplishes a far bigger task than is generally ascribed to it. Its basic function is to acquaint the student with the divine categories, system, and symbols so that these categories open up new insights for the student. It is not a catechism or reading book that one reads over and over again. The text of the Textbook, in itself, is not the source of revelation; but it is the spiritual way to arrive at the

13. Mary Baker Eddy, *The First Church of Christ, Scientist and Miscellany*, p. 271:4.

14. *ibid.* p. 114:25.

15. Edward E. Norwood, CSB, “*Reminiscences of Mary Baker Eddy*,” from *Miscellaneous Documents* (Providence: The Carpenter Foundation, 1961), p. 141.

16. Italics added by the author.

infinite source of all revelation, which is God in its Science. The authority of the Textbook is not restricted only to about 600 pages. Its inestimable value lies in the fact that—though limited to a book—it opens up the possibility for every person, through the structured presentation of the categories of Being, to progress to more advanced spiritual discoveries. This presupposes, however, that it is studied according to its structure. That means that the student’s intentions have to be primarily true to the meaning of the structure stated in the Textbook, rather than clinging to its “wording.” Our interest is directed towards the spiritually structural explanation and not only to the textual explanation.

Every advancing age needs new interpretative explanations of the timeless structure of Being. Mary Baker Eddy did not close her mind to this fact. She wrote: “A student can write voluminous works on Science without trespassing, if he writes honestly... .”¹⁷ Even with the interpretation of our age this development has just begun.

The Textbook is our only teacher. As we learn how to understand the Science of Christian Science by finding the structural relationships within the framework of the Textbook, the more clearly we see that the Textbook itself—and not a personal interpreter—is our most reliable teacher. Then we no longer have to depend on human teachers. Mary Baker Eddy longed to see the day when the students would accept the Textbook as their only teacher. At the publishing of the 50th edition of the Textbook, *The Christian Science Journal*, under the guidance of Mary Baker Eddy, published a leading article (April 1891, p. 5): “Is not the new ‘Science and Health’ intended to be the teacher of the future, thus to do away with incorrect teaching, and oral instruction of human teachers? ... The Work is intended for all ages, grades and classes; for the child just beginning to prattle, and for the aged grandsire; for the novitiate just entering upon the study of Christian Science, and for the student who has made, as human language expresses it, the greatest advance. Without wishing to establish any dictum, the writer cannot refrain from giving expression to his conviction that this volume gradually will supersede all teaching, in the technical sense of the word; and further, that it will prove great gain for the Cause of Truth when that day arrives.”

The Christian Scientist has always acknowledged the Textbook as the great teacher. Yet, as the Textbook is grasped in its spiritually scientific structure, the clearer it interprets itself to the students and makes its interpretation through personal teachers unnecessary. The leading authority for the student is the structure of Being itself, and not some person. The student does not need to turn to a per-

17. Mary Baker Eddy, *Retrospection and Introspection*, p. 76:4.

teacher with questions in order to receive an answer, and is not dependent upon the knowledge of someone else. The answer is found in the structure of Being that forms the foundation of the Textbook. The structure of the Textbook itself, through its structural laws, teaches the method of structure-recognition. In this way, the Textbook reveals itself to everyone through newer and deeper insights.

An unlimited field of research. The student of Christian Science has the big task at first of becoming well acquainted with the divine system of reference, spiritually—not only intellectually. This takes time. Humanly regarded, “centuries will intervene before the statement of the inexhaustible topics of ‘Science and Health’ is sufficiently understood to be fully demonstrated,”¹⁸ for “scarcely a moiety, compared with the whole of the Scriptures and the Christian Science textbook, is yet assimilated spiritually by the most faithful seekers; yet this assimilation is indispensable to the progress of every Christian Scientist.”¹⁹ When the author states at the end of her Textbook that she herself had only a “feeble sense of Christian Science” (577:28), we can imagine what an enormous spiritual adventure of new discoveries and fields of research lie ahead for us.

It becomes possible to receive these unlimited, further revelations of the Textbook when we understand the spiritual system of reference as found in the Textbook itself which opens the way to comprehending new, scientifically consistent structural patterns of Being. The practical range of application is immense.²⁰

Bible and Textbook constitute a whole. Although the Textbook holds an eminent place for the Christian Scientist, one should not have the impression that the Bible can be pushed aside. Quite the contrary! The clearer we grasp the message of the Textbook, the more distinctly we see that the Bible and the Textbook not only complement each other, but that they are also insolubly linked together in *one* grand spiritual history. They both present the systematically ordered revelation of the four sides of the Holy City: *Word, Christ, Christianity, Science.*

Through the historical books of the Old Testament, we get to know *the creative Word of God*. The beginning of the Bible describes the creative will of God in the seven days of creation, emerging in beauty and grandness and permeating the whole biblical text. With the prophetic books, the great thinkers of that time became aware of *the Christ-idea*. In the New Testament, it was Jesus who

18. Mary Baker Eddy, *Retrospection and Introspection*, p. 84:1.

19. Mary Baker Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 317:14.

20. See, for example, the “Christ-matrix” in Max Kappeler, *The Minor Prophets in the Light of Christian Science* (Seattle: Kappeler Institute Publishing USA, 1962), as well as the “Christianity-matrix” in Max Kappeler, *The Epistles in the Light of Christian Science* (Seattle: Kappeler Institute Publishing USA, 1962).

demonstrated the Christ and thus introduced *Christianity*. Inspired with authority and power, he welcomed the Christ-idea, which translated God to every detail of his human existence and set an example of the perfect man for us. He inspired humanity to follow his example, and in this way—as Paul did—to spread Christianity all over the world. Finally, Mary Baker Eddy gave an explanation to a scientific age that was soon to outgrow ignorance and mysticism. She gave us the Science that was basically underlying all the preceding spiritual periods: the Science of divine ideas. This Science is presented in the Textbook.

Thus, Bible and Textbook unite in a grand spiritual design of unfoldment. Without the Bible, the Textbook would have no foundation. Without the Textbook, the Bible would remain a closed book, sealed with seven seals. Only the divine system of reference found in the Textbook furnishes the *key* to the Scriptures—to the opening of these seven seals.