

The Abuse of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*

Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible. Malachi 1:7

Introduction

How frequently we pray, “Give us this day our daily bread”! ¹

How does our spiritual sustenance reach us? Largely through the Bible, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, and for many the *Christian Science Quarterly* published by the Christian Science Publishing Society.²

A short article by Mrs Eddy entitled “Advice to Students” was published in *The Christian Science Journal*, Volume IX No. 5, August 1891, pages 179-183. This was in the three-year period between the dissolution of the state-chartered Church of Christ (Scientist) in 1889,³ and the establishment, by Deed of Trust, of the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts in 1892.⁴ When “Advice to Students” was written and first published, this period was drawing to a close. In 1897 the article was included by Mrs Eddy in *Miscellaneous Writings*, pages 298 to 303, so that its message would stand for all time. In the latter version, editing removed some references to historical events in the movement.

One such event casts some light on the purpose of “Advice to Students.” There was an attempt to protect the purity of Christian Science by setting up a General Association for Dispensing Christian Science Literature.⁵ This proposal was condemned in strong language privately by Mrs Eddy,⁶ who expressed her disapproval more formally in a Card inserted as the last page in the *Journal* of June 1892.⁷ These historical events indicate the concern at this time that the teachings of Christian Science might be polluted – or as our Leader put it, at the “proposed burial of SCIENCE AND HEALTH beneath the rubbish of human opinions.”⁸

This concern returns today.

Synopsis of “Advice to Students.”

The article opens with a brief analysis of the state of being unconscious of an error. Then the question is posed, “ ‘Is it right to copy your works and read them for our public services?’ ”⁹

Answering this question is Mrs Eddy’s purpose, but she immediately makes the following arresting statement: “The good which the material senses see not is the only absolute good; the evil which these senses see not is the only absolute evil.”

This alerts us to the depth of the question. We can relate the above words to *Science and Health* page 559, where in the chapter “The Apocalypse,” by the marginal heading “Truth’s volume,” Mrs Eddy asks, “Did this same book contain the revelation of divine Science, the ‘right foot’ or dominant power of which was upon the sea, — upon elementary, latent error, the source of all error’s visible forms?” We might say, then, that the latter is the “absolute evil” which the “senses see not.” Is it not this which must now be dealt with, through the understanding of the book? If in belief the integrity of the book is lost, the revelation of divine Science will be lost, and no amount of argument in the relative will maintain the “secondary power” over “visible error and audible sin” upon the earth.¹⁰

Mrs Eddy begins her defence from casual misuse of *Science and Health* by drawing a parallel with the purloining of fashion garments.¹¹ At this time, 1891, the Christian Science services of the day were evolving from personal preaching, traditional from ancient times, to the impersonal pastor supplied through the *Christian Science Quarterly*.¹² Some were “copying my published works *verbatim*, compiling them in connection with the Scriptures, taking this copy into the pulpit, announcing the author’s name, then reading it publicly as [their] own compilation.” This Mrs Eddy regards as “a mistake...an *ignorant* wrong.”¹³ She points out that printing and publishing the copy of her works would be theft under copyright law. She maintains that by publishing her works by reading from copies of them in the pulpit without permission, “you...evade the law, *but not the gospel.*”¹⁴

Mrs Eddy’s objection therefore rests upon nothing less than “*the gospel.*” Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* of 1828 defines this as:

The history of the birth, life, actions, death, resurrection and doctrines of Jesus Christ; or a revelation of the grace of God to fallen man through a mediator, including the character, actions, and doctrines of Christ, with the whole scheme of salvation, as revealed by Christ and his apostles.

Does not the authority of Mrs Eddy’s objection rest upon her position as the revelator of truth to this age, following in the footsteps of the Master? Does not *defiance* of

this authority, in this question of the use and protection of *Science and Health*, imperil “the whole scheme of salvation”?

Mrs Eddy *had* given a very specific permission to her own church, The Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston,¹⁵ to cite passages from her book *Science and Health* in the *Christian Science Quarterly*, *provided* that these passages gave “the spiritual meaning of the Bible texts.” Maintaining her authority to determine this arrangement, she states that “this was a special privilege, and the author’s gift.”

Next, the importance of *precedent* is emphasised. In preaching as in healing, it is necessary to adhere to Jesus’ second commandment; and it must be adhered to in relation to the author of *Science and Health*.¹⁶

Finally in this first part of the article, she warns conventional print plagiarists of their “law-breaking and gospel-opposing system of authorship.”¹⁷

At 301:18 the article rises to a higher level. Mrs Eddy is now addressing her “true-hearted students.” The message will not be heard by those who are not “true-hearted.” And if the “true-hearted students” do not hear, who will hear?

Lines 21-25 state:

...It is not right to copy my book and read it publicly *without my consent*. My reasons are as follows:-

First: This method is an unseen form of injustice standing in a holy place.

It is the *method* that is objectionable. What is this method? It is the cutting-up and republishing of *Science and Health*. The error is unseen to material sense, and logic based on material sense. And to whom is it a form of injustice? To Mrs Eddy only? Or to every man, woman, and child on this planet? Who will come to stand in such a “holy place”? Surely, every man, woman, and child on this planet.

The article continues with lines 26-27:

Second: It breaks the Golden Rule, - a divine rule for human conduct.

Who is affected by this breaking of the Golden Rule? Surely the same: every man, woman, and child on this planet, for is not the “little book” the means of unlocking the

Scriptures and divine reality for everyone? Should not our love extend to every single one of these? Then should not we stand against the adulteration of the “little book,” and protect the unerring accuracy of the final edition of 1910?

Then, lines 28-32:

Third: All error tends to harden the heart, blind the eyes, stop the ears of understanding, and inflate self; counter the commands of our hillside Priest, to whom Isaiah alluded thus: “I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me.”

Error makes sin more obdurate. “Our hillside Priest” leads us out of sin. The quotation from Isaiah shows Christ Jesus working alone, without human aid, to give us the inspiration necessary for our salvation. Has not Mrs Eddy followed the Master by doing the same? Is not the second Comforter predicted by his lips?¹⁸ She has given us the “little book” of Revelation completely unaided by society. She tells us it was “the divine power of Truth and Love, infinitely above me, which dictated ‘Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures.’”¹⁹ Are we to obey Mrs Eddy’s commands about use of her book? Who do we think we are to disobey our Leader?

The first publication of “Advice to Students” in the August 1891 *Journal* appears to have brought enquiries from the field. Mrs. Eddy inserted an un-numbered page at the front of the September 1891 *Journal*, Volume IX Number 6, bearing a Notice. The relevant part is reproduced here:

QUESTION: - Shall we continue to read in the pulpit, on Sunday, extracts from SCIENCE AND HEALTH?

If you comply with my terms relative to these Sunday services, published in the August issue of this year’s JOURNAL, you should. I have consented to this as above, and see no other causes than those designated in August JOURNAL for changing the form you had already adopted for your Sunday sermons. I gave no permission for you to use my writings as aforesaid, except it be in place of a sermon delivered in your established pulpits.

The phrase “established pulpits” indicates that Mrs Eddy did not wish to cause a sudden alteration in existing churches. This September 1891 *Journal* notice allows extracts

to be taken and published from *Science and Health* for no purpose except replacing personal preaching; and the August *Journal* first publication of “Advice to Students” shows this permission to be then current; but six years later the 1897 amended article re-published in *Miscellany* shows the permission to have been withdrawn, and a thing of the past.

From what our Leader writes, we conclude that it is a major sin to read from the desk manuscript extracts from *Science and Health* – a sin that has major consequences for the world.

The next question to arise is whether members of the congregation should read-along with products such as the *Christian Science Quarterly Bible Lessons Full-Text Edition*, or electronic derivatives. If it is wrong for the Readers to do so, must it not equally be wrong for members of the congregation?

What of private study away from church? Our Leader tells us to “Take divine Science. Read this book from beginning to end. Study it. Ponder it.”²⁰ If we take the Lesson-Sermon in manuscript as in the *Full-Text Edition* or an equivalent electronic format, are we taking “the little book”? Are we not taking mere extracts from the little book? Even if the electronic format is an image of the original page, with or without accessories which give us access to entries in *Webster’s Dictionaries* approximately contemporary with Mrs Eddy, along with Hebrew and Greek lexicons, are not these also extracts? Are not these devices a cul-de-sac solution to the pace of modern life, a concession based on the belief that ready access to an electronic manuscript version during our busy day will keep our thinking scientific?

This brings us to the nub. “As a man thinketh, so is he.”²¹ We practice when we *think* Christian Science, that is, *think* true knowledge. To be taught of the book, the book must stand integral, and its knowledge be integral in thought.

Hence the summary of the matter given in “Church and School:”

No copies from my books are allowed to be written, and read from manuscripts, either in private or in public assemblies, except by their author.²²

Dictionary definitions of “manuscript” have broadened over the years. *Webster’s New International Dictionary*, second edition, 1957, defines “manuscript” as “an author’s copy of his work in handwriting or typewriting; a written or typewritten document of any kind as distinguished from a printed copy.” The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 1993, gives: “a written composition which has not been printed, an author’s written or (now) typed copy of a work for printing or publication.”

A current definition from Wikipedia is: “an accepted manuscript (by its merit not its format), not yet in a final format (but reviewed), published with non-final-format in ahead, as *preprint*.”²³

Given the above, it is sophistry to hold that Mrs Eddy was advising merely against the use of *handwritten* copies, and would have approved the use by her students of her works republished in the format of the *Christian Science Quarterly Bible Lessons Full-Text Edition*, or indeed of any of its electronic derivatives. Her clear intention was to advise against the use of any extract from her books, or any copy not printed in its entirety, bound and published in its latest edition, which for us is that of 1910. Can anything else be regarded with certainty as “my book”?

The Consequences of Ignoring our Leader’s Advice

“Advice to Students” states:

Behind the scenes there is an evil you can prevent. It is a purpose to kill the reformation begun and increasing through the instructions of “Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures;” it encourages infringement of my copyright, and seeks again to “cast lots for his vesture;” – while the perverter preserves within his own consciousness and teaching the name without the Spirit, the skeleton without the heart, the form without the comeliness, the sense without the Science, of Christ’s healing. My students are expected to know the teaching of Christian Science sufficiently to discriminate between error and Truth, thus sparing their teacher a task and themselves the temptation to be misled.²⁴

Do we follow Mrs Eddy’s advice?

If I ever wear out from serving students, it shall be in the effort to help them to obey the Ten Commandments and imbibe the spirit of Christ’s Beatitudes.²⁵

Straws in the Wind

Are we in the time of “the possible evil of putting the divine teachings contained in ‘Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures’ into human hands, to subvert or to liquidate?”²⁶

Two examples can be given.

Firstly, from the second un-numbered edition of *Science and Health* printed during the year 1907, to the final edition printed before Mrs Eddy’s passing in 1910, on line 11 of page 328 there is a comma after the word “Science.” This was how the author left it. In 1911 the book was altered: the comma was removed, changing the sense of the sentence.

For one hundred years this error has lain undetected. Does not this indicate that our textbook can be subtly altered, and that vigilance is necessary to maintain its purity?

Secondly, in the Lesson Sermon of February 8-14, 2016,²⁷ the 25th citation from *Science and Health* is 85:2. At first sight this is a neat follow-on from the previous citation 325:10-15, as follows:

In Colossians (iii. 4) Paul writes: “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear [be manifested], then shall ye also appear [be manifested] with him in glory.” When spiritual being is understood in all its perfection, continuity, and might, then shall man be found in God’s image.^{325:10-15} It is the illumination of the spiritual understanding which demonstrates the capacity of Soul, not of material sense.^{85:2-4}

But the effect of this follow-on is to change “It” (85:2) from object to subject. “It” stands for Mind-reading (85:1), as follows:

This Mind-reading is the opposite of clairvoyance. It is the illumination of the spiritual understanding which illustrates the capacity of Soul, not of material sense.^{85:1-4}

Starting the citation on 85:2 changes the meaning of the final sentence. Is the illumination of the spiritual understanding achieved by the human mind? Or is it achieved by Mind-reading? Furthermore, starting at line 2 leaves “not of material sense” (85:4) as a

dangling clause with the implication that material sense actually has some capacity capable of demonstration.

No one reading the *Christian Science Quarterly Bible Lessons Full-Text Edition* or its derivatives could be expected to detect this error, not having the context of the citation. In this way error gains distribution, and the terms of the Explanatory Note on page two of the *Quarterly* are broken. Thereby the Sunday sermon is adulterated, and thought misguided. And let us recall from page 3 above that permission was given to cite passages from her book *Science and Health* in the *Christian Science Quarterly*, provided that these passages gave "the spiritual meaning of the Bible texts."

Is not this adulteration of our daily bread and weekly sermon precisely what our Leader warns of?

Conclusion

Mrs Eddy was faced with the problem that students were using manuscript extracts from *Science and Health* to read from the pulpit. She foresaw dire consequences stemming from this practice. Her temporary permission for this to continue in established churches, provided the manuscripts were destroyed, was withdrawn by 1897.

With the development of modern means of reproducing text, the dictionary definition of *manuscript* has extended to include all text up to the point of intended final publication in a form agreed by the copyright holder.

The *Christian Science Quarterly Bible Lessons Full-Text Edition*, copyrighted and published by The Christian Science Publishing Society, along with its electronic derivatives, and other such offerings on the web, defy Mrs Eddy's advice.

Mrs Eddy's "true-hearted students" will take seriously that "Advice to Students" is "intended to forestall the possible evil of putting the divine teachings contained in 'Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures' into human hands, to subvert or to liquidate."²⁸

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Footnotes.

1. *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, by Mary Baker Eddy, p. 17.
2. See Daystar Foundation and Library, *Library Notes* Volume 21 Number 1, Winter 2015.
3. See *Retrospection and Introspection* pp. 44-45.
4. See *Church Manual* pp. 128-135.
5. “Advice to Students,” *Journal* Vol. IX, August, 1891, pp. 181-182.
6. See two letters from Mrs Eddy to Mr Nixon dated June 24 and June 26, 1891, in Grekel, Doris: *The Founding of Christian Science*, Science in Education 1986, pp. 80-81.
7. *Journal* Vol. IX, June 1891, un-numbered page after final advertisement on page xx. Subsequently, and probably mainly after 1916, this “tip sheet” page was cut out or torn out from many of the bound volumes of the *Journal* on the shelves of Christian Science Reading Rooms. Its facsimile is given in *The Continuity of the Cause of Christian Science*, Christian Science Foundation, England, Revised Edition 2014, Exhibit 2:D. It is reprinted in Grekel, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
8. “Advice to Students” *Journal* Vol. IX, August 1891, p. 182.
9. *Miscellaneous Writings* 299:13-14.
10. See *Science and Health* 559:1-8.
11. *Miscellaneous Writings* 299:18-2.
12. See Daystar Foundation and Library, *Library Notes* Volume 21, Number 1, Winter 2015, pages 1-6.
13. *Miscellaneous Writings* 300:3-8.
14. *Ibid.* 300:15-16. Italics in the original.
15. *Ibid.* 300:23. In the original *Journal* article this is styled the First Church of Christ (Scientist): *CS Journal* Vol. IX, August 1891, p. 180.
16. *Ibid.* 300:29.
17. *Ibid.* 301:10-11.
18. John 14:16-18.

19. My 114:23-25.
20. *Science and Health* 559:20-21.
21. *Ibid.* 166:3.
22. *Miscellaneous Writings* 315:6.
23. The fuller definition from Wikipedia is:-

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manuscript#Modern_variations (June 19, 2016).

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manuscript_\(publishing\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manuscript_(publishing)) (June 19, 2016).

Manuscript (publishing)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Manuscript is a broad concept in [publishing](#), that can [be] about one or both:

- the formatting of a *short story manuscript*,
- an accepted manuscript (by its merit not its format), not yet in a final format (but reviewed), published with non-final-format in ahead, as *preprint*.

A **manuscript** is the work that an author submits to a publisher, [editor](#), or producer for [publication](#). Even with the advent of [desktop publishing](#), making it possible for anyone to prepare text that appears professionally [typeset](#), many publishers still require authors to submit manuscripts within their respective guidelines.

Modern variations[\[edit\]](#)

In other contexts, however, the use of the term "manuscript" no longer necessarily means something that is hand-written. By analogy a *typescript* has been produced on a typewriter.^[9]

24. *Miscellaneous Writings* page 302:1.
25. *Ibid* 303:16.
26. *Ibid* 302:28
27. *Christian Science Quarterly Bible Lessons, January-March 2016*, subject Soul.
28. *Miscellaneous Writings* 302:28.

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