

Preface to this Review

It is one hundred years since Mrs Stetson obtained the copyright to *Vital Issues in Christian Science* in 1914.

As the human organisation of the Christian Science movement has deteriorated, it has wisely been said: “as goes Christian Science, so goes the world.” This relationship becomes apparent as we review dispassionately the sad history of both the world and the Christian Science movement over the past century. Churchill regarded 1914 to 1945 as a second Thirty Years’ War¹, and since then the collapse of the Christian religions, and of moral standards in most societies, has gathered pace. Mrs Eddy predicted that it would be instructive in 1975 to review the beginnings of the movement²; but the necessary condition “if the lives of Christian Scientists attest their fidelity to Truth,” attached to the further prediction of the synonymy of Christianity and Christian Science in her Note in the same volume³ has not been met; so there remains a great distance between Christianity in general, and Christian Science.

The calamitous war that befell the world in 1914 came close on the heels of the failure of Christian Scientists to uphold the establishment of Christly church government at the end of the twentieth century’s first decade. Can it possibly be true that the revelator of the Science of Christianity to this age left us without the means to sustain her revelation? Mrs Eddy attached the status of Holy Writ to three books: the Holy Bible, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, and The Manual of The Mother Church⁴. Christian Science is the second Comforter⁵. It being sent by and through the Christ, the acme of love, is there *any* justification for believing our troubles are due to an omission by its revelator? – and not due to our *own* failing to search for and perceive what is already here?

The opening words of *Christian Healing* state a great truth of the human condition: “History repeats itself; tomorrow grows out of today.”⁶ *Vital Issues* serves as a historical record that breaks this mesmerism of repeated wrong.

The purpose of this review is to indicate the salient points of *Vital Issues* in our own context of the early twenty-first century, seeing it across the one hundred years that have elapsed. As with all historical documents, it is the individual reader and thinker *alone* who can assess the import to his own consciousness of *Vital Issues*. To do this the book itself must be consulted: all a review can do is to provide a synopsis in contemporary context – a threshold of opportunity. Nevertheless, perhaps reviewer and reader can strike one immediate point of agreement: that there should have been much less sin, disease, and death in the last one hundred years of human history.

Footnotes to Preface

1. Churchill W.S.: *The Second World War* Volume 1, p. vii.
2. *Pulpit and Press* p. vii.
3. *Pul* 22: 9.
4. *Miscellany* 251: 29-2.
5. John 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7; *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* 55:27; 127:9.
6. *Christian Healing* 1: 6-7.

Review of Vital Issues in Christian Science With Facsimile Letters of Mary Baker Eddy

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*And, behold, there are last that shall be first, and there are first that shall be last. –
 Luke 13:30*

(See also Chapters XXIX and XXX below)

Chapter I. Preliminary Statement

A justification for the Record that follows.

Chapter II. The Mother Church Manual and Branch Church Government

This chapter goes some way to explain our Leader's "deeper perception of The Mother Church than merely an ecclesiastical organisation."⁷ It quotes from her letter of November 13, 1909: "Abide in Truth, in fellowship and obedience to The Mother Church, and in this way God will bless and prosper you. This I know, for God has proved it to me for forty years in succession."⁸

This passage is often taken to mean, "obey the directors!" However, *Vital Issues* points out that the present organisation only started in 1892, long after 1869, the latter

date being the beginning of the forty year period to which Mrs Eddy refers. Going further, in 1869 there was no human organisation, and similarly from 1889 to 1892, as both the Massachusetts Metaphysical College and the church organisation of 1879 were dissolved in 1889.⁹ On both these counts then, and since the phrase “in succession” indicates that Mrs Eddy’s statement applies continually across the period 1869 to 1909, The Mother Church to which our Leader refers cannot be merely the material organisation.

The chapter goes on to liken the Manual to statute law, distinct from the common law of the Bible and *Science and Health*. The Manual is thus a help in obeying the fundamental law laid down in these textbooks. References by Mrs Eddy to self-government support the necessity for branch churches to be self-governed, as a duty as much as a right; a contention which is further supported by Manual references. Membership of The Mother Church and a branch church is discussed as the unified oneness of vine and branch.¹⁰ The limitations placed on the Board of Directors by the Manual are noted, as confirmed by Mrs Eddy’s *Take Notice* of October 12, 1909¹¹. The Manual’s bar¹² to any alteration of its terms is also noted.

Then follows an analysis of the Directors’ infringements of the Manual in conducting their case against Mrs Stetson, which includes their complete failure to follow Article XI Section 4 in relation to Matthew 18: 13-17. The “Findings and Orders,” promulgated by the Directors against Mrs Stetson on September 25, 1909, are listed¹³. It is shown these were issued in breach of Manual Article XII Section 2, and Article XI Section 6, and that the so-called trial of Mrs Stetson of November 13-19 was in breach of Article XI Section 5, the First Reader of The Mother Church having been present.

Footnotes to Review of Chapter II.

7. *Vital Issues* p. 8.
8. *Christian Science Sentinel* vol. xii p. 270; *Miscellany* 360:20. The rendition in *Vital Issues* is Mrs Eddy’s final version printed in the *Sentinel* of December 4, 1909. See footnote in *My* p. 360.
9. See *Retrospection and Introspection* pp. 44-49.
10. Scriptural confirmation of this view may perhaps be found in Luke 22:18. When Jesus partook of the fruit of the vine for the last time on earth, taking *vine* as the symbol for *church* indicates his meaning in this verse, which may be paraphrased: “This will be my last demonstration until the complete authority of God is expressed in me.” Confirmation of this may be found in *Science and Health* 72:28-2. See also *Science and Health* 35:19 – from which we can say, “our wine comes from our vine!” The marginal heading is Spiritual Eucharist. Can anyone be deprived of this? Can anyone be deprived of The Mother Church?
11. *Miscellany* 358:29-15.

12. *Manual of The Mother Church The First Church of Christ Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts* p. 105, Article XXXV Section 3.
13. *Vital Issues* pp. 21, 22. They are also reproduced with associated correspondence in *Vital Issues* Chapter VI pp. 50-55. An analysis of the Seven Findings is given in *Vital Issues* Chapter XXVII pp. 303-347 with supporting evidence from Mrs Stetson's students. *Vital Issues* Chapter IX p. 76 notes that FCCS NY refuted the Seven Findings by accepting the report of that Church's Committee of Inquiry at a special meeting on November 4, 1909. Mrs Stetson's own refutation is given in her work *Reminiscences, Sermons, and Correspondence* pp. 531-572.

Chapter III. Mrs Stetson Before the Directors of The Mother Church

For convenience, the chronology given in this chapter is here expanded using data from other chapters: –

1. November 30, 1908. *New York World* and other press allege FCCS, NY involved in plans to form a new branch church.
2. December 5, 1908. *Christian Science Sentinel* accuses FCCS, NY.
3. July 1909. First charges. Hearing by CSBD of Mrs Maude Kissam Babcock, who was examined by CSBD and cross-examined by Mrs Stetson.
4. August 3, 1909. The first charges dismissed.
5. September 1909. Boston "Conference." 25 practitioners from FCCS NY summoned at 48 hours' notice ostensibly to confer but in the event for questioning by CSBD. Mrs Stetson neither present nor represented, therefore not allowed to cross-examine; nor even advised of the investigation. Concluded on September 24.
6. September 25, 1909. "Findings and Orders" issued by CSBD to Mrs Stetson, whose card is removed from the *Journal* and licence revoked.
7. September 27, 1909. Steps taken to establish an Inquiry at FCCS NY.
8. October 12, 1909. First witness, Virgil O. Strickler, called to FCCS NY Inquiry.
9. October 16, 1909. Mrs Stetson tenders her resignation from Board of Trustees, FCCS NY.
10. November 4, 1909. Report of Committee of Inquiry, FCCS, NY.
11. November 15-17, 1909. Boston "Trial." Mrs Stetson present. All the evidence was presented by affidavits; no witnesses present; therefore no opportunity for the evidence to be tested by examination or cross-examination. Mrs Stetson dropped from the roll of The Mother Church membership.
12. November 22, 1909. Mrs Stetson resigns from FCCS NY.
13. December 23, 1909. "Admonitions" of The First Reader of The Mother Church issued to FCCS, NY Trustees comprising the Committee of Inquiry.

14. January 18, 1910. Trustees of FCCS, NY retire and are replaced; prevented by majority vote of the members' meeting from reading their reports, except that of the Treasurer.
15. February 12, 1910. "Three Test Questions" to practitioners.
16. March 8 and 11, 1910. "Admonitions" to practitioners in New York by Judge Clifford P. Smith.
17. March 1910. "Admonitions" to practitioners in New York by Virgil O. Strickler.
18. March 1910. Trustees of FCCS, NY newly elected.
19. April 3, 1910. Mr Hatfield resigns from FCCS, NY.
20. March and April 1910. Fifteen Practitioners before the newly elected Board of FCCS, NY.
21. April 2, 1910. Fifteen practitioners dismissed from FCCS, NY.
22. April 2, 1910. Sixteen practitioners make a public statement.
23. April 4, 1910. The First Reader of The Mother Church submits complaints to CSBD about sixteen practitioners; CSBD issues Two-Count Complaints and Directors' Orders Governing Trial to sixteen practitioners.
24. April 8 – 15, 1910. Sixteen practitioners reply to the above.
25. July 8, 1910. Sixteen practitioners dropped from membership of The Mother Church.

With regard to procedures of evidence, questioning, and cross-examination, the chapter cites and quotes from *Pocket Code of Evidence* by Professor John H. Wigmore, Professor of the Law of Evidence in the Law School of Northwestern University.

Chapter IV. Beginnings of the Controversy

FCCS NY first learned of what might lie ahead at the Boston "Conference" of September 24, 1909, to which most of the Board of Trustees of FCCS NY had been summoned at forty eight hours' notice. Six of the nine members of the New York board were present; of the three absent, Mr Hatfield had been unavoidably detained, Mrs Isabelle C. Dam, the board's chairman, had not received the notice, and Mrs Stetson, at that time a regular member of the board, had not been invited. Besides the five members of the Christian Science Board of Directors, also present were Mr Clifford P. Smith, First reader of The Mother Church, Mr V. O. Strickler, First Reader of FCCS NY, and Miss Ella Garrison Young, Second Reader of FCCS NY.

Archibald McLellan, presiding at the meeting and Chairman of the CSBD, "stated that the Board of Directors had been making an investigation based upon 'a widespread impression,' and on the story of a travelling salesman, about conditions said to exist in First Church of Christ, Scientist, New York City. It was disclosed furthermore that, with Clifford P. Smith, First Reader of The Mother Church, acting in the capacity of examiner, some time

had been spent in making inquiry of practitioners as well as hearing statements by both Readers of First Church, New York City.”¹⁴ These inquiries had been over the previous two weeks. Copies of the stenographic notes taken during the investigation were refused to those practitioners who asked for them. Mr Strickler was present during most or all of the investigation.

The investigation “centred upon certain expressions or words alleged to have been used within the preceding nine months or less, by Mrs Augusta E Stetson...alleged to be contrary to Christian Science... Although the alleged expressions...were not regarded by Judge Smith as having any force, and even though Mr McLellan referred to them as an occasion of amusement...nevertheless the Board of Directors, the very next day...formally issued the ‘Findings and Orders’ attempting to deprive Mrs Stetson...of her status as a practitioner and teacher.”¹⁵ It is also noted that “the refusal of some of the twenty-five practitioners to answer yes or no to certain complex questions...was construed as highly culpable misdemeanour.”¹⁶

Also noted is that Manual Article XI Section 4 was not complied with.

Having conducted an inquiry for two weeks without informing the Board of Trustees of the branch church it is considered that Article XXIII Section 10 was violated.

Ten pages of extracts from stenographic notes indicate the nature of the meeting.

Footnotes to Review of Chapter IV.

14. *Vital Issues* p. 31.

15. *Ibid* pp. 43, 44.

16. *Ibid* pp. 44.

Chapter V. Decision of the Trustees After Boston Conference

The Board of Trustees of FCCS NY decided they must launch their own investigation, because of: –

1. The variance between the information given at the Boston “Conference” and their own understanding;
2. The involvement of the First Reader of FCCS NY which appeared contrary to the *Manual Article XI Section 13*;
3. The issuance of “Findings and Orders” which affected the whole membership of FCCS NY;
4. The question of what was contained in Mrs Stetson’s teaching, and whether it conformed with the teachings of *Science and Health*, and whether the fundamental

principle of individual interpretation of the Scriptures, and by extension, the writings of Mary Baker Eddy, could legitimately be abrogated by the CSBD.

Chapter VI. Findings and Orders of September 25, 1909

Within forty eight hours of the Boston “Conference” preparations were begun for an immediate inquiry by the FCCS NY Trustees into conditions in their branch church. The associated correspondence is laid out; as are the “Findings and Orders” of Saturday 25, 1909, which in synopsis are that Mrs Stetson:

1. Teaches that FCCS NY is the only legitimate Christian Science church in New York City;
2. Gives an erroneous sense of Christian Science particularly in regard to human needs and conditions;
3. Endeavours to control students, tending to hinder moral and spiritual growth;
4. Endeavours to obtrude herself upon students’ attention and so turn them away from divine Principle;
5. Practices and teaches pretended Christian Science contrary to *Science and Health*, particularly by treating without consent and teaching some students to do so;
6. Attempts to control and injure people by mental means;
7. Has so strayed as to be unfit to teach.

The Directors removed Mrs Stetson’s card as practitioner and teacher; revoked her licence to teach at least until satisfied under *Manual* Article XII Section 1; and sent her a written admonition.

Chapter VII. Nature and Scope of Inquiry by the New York Trustees

The Board of Trustees of FCCS, NY could not accept a merely *outside* inquiry verdict on its own church members, of whom one was a board member. Clearly that would be a dereliction of duty, and an infringement of the *Manual* which requires every branch church to be responsible for its own discipline. Equally the inquiry should not have covered the whole membership; three members of the CSBD held the membership to be very fine. The inquiry was confined to members mentioned in the Findings and Orders, the 25 New York practitioners, and Mrs Stetson. The inquiry sought a copy of the Boston “Conference” testimony on the “teaching and practices in FCCD, New York City,” to avoid duplication of effort and inconvenience to those interviewed. Judge Smith had declined a previous request for this, and now it was declined with aspersions.

On October 21, the Inquiry wrote asking for the complaints and complainants. It seems only reasonable, and responsible, to have to hand such a written statement at the start of any disciplinary inquiry. The CSBD reply of October 23 declined the request, with more aspersions, and took the extraordinary step of publishing the two letters in the *Sentinel*¹⁷. This indicated a fundamental change of attitude of the CSBD, from resting on the *Manual* requirement that branch church discipline is a matter for the branch church alone to declaring that the CSBD was itself responsible for disciplining branch church members. Not only that, but by moving the issue to the public domain, it was committing itself to a test of strength on the point.

The specific points of the CSBD's letter of October 23 are that the CSBD

1. Denied knowledge of complaints or notices from FCCS NY members;
2. Stated their inquiry had received oral evidence only, and
3. Had since received many letters from FCCS NY members and non-members, none of which were complaints, and most of which supported "house cleaning" at FCCS NY;
4. Advised that the absence of complaints "need not hamper your inquiry" there being plenty of witnesses available, members and non-members of FCCS NY, whose names Mr Hatfield, the FCCS NY board chairman should know;
5. Stated that the Manual Article III Sections 7 and 8 required the First Reader of FCCS NY to be a members of the FCCS NY inquiry;
6. That he would furnish witnesses and take evidence;
7. Considered the purpose of the FCCS NY may now be merely to defend Mrs Stetson;
8. Considered the exclusion of Mr Stickler and the inclusion of a person unheeding of his admonition and de-listing by the CSBD indicated a lack of good faith within the FCCS NY inquiry;
9. Considered that at their meeting at The Mother Church on Saturday 29, 1909 the majority of the FCCS NY inquiry appeared merely to seek to defend Mrs Stetson.

From the above, it may be noted that:

- a. In a matter of great importance to all concerned which in human terms might come to a matter of life and death, the CSBD stated it had taken no written evidence and showed that it considered this to be of no import;
- b. The CSBD believed it wielded the power to admonish and de-list a Christian Science practitioner without applying the Matthew Code cited in the *Manual* Article XI Section 4 (p. 51).
- c. Contrary to its position in its letter of August 4, 1909 to Mrs Stetson which announced the charges against her dismissed in the ground of the *Manual* Article III Section 7, the CSBD now took it upon itself to interfere with the disciplinary and internal affairs of a branch church despite Article III Section 7 and despite Article XIII Section 10 (pp. 73, 74) headed "No Interference."

The letter of October 23, 1909 goes on to discuss Mr Hatfield's alleged attitude to Mrs Stetson's work of self-defence as reported by Mr Strickler, and regards Mr Hatfield's position as "anomalous."

In reply on October 29, Mr Hatfield and Mr Crowell, respectively chairman and secretary of the FCCS NY Committee of Inquiry, set out the branch church's position in six points, that FCCS NY was loyal to The Mother Church, stood on non-interference, and that our textbook imposes the duty on all to "realize and declare" that every individual involved is an individual "manifestation or reflection of the divine Mind, and is governed by that Mind." Their letter continued that the daily papers had published erroneous reports, and contrary to the CSBD's aspersions, the trustees of FCCS NY had started the inquiry as soon as possible after hearing the allegations. They closed calling on the CSBD to see all concerned as the reflection of Principle, the branch church being as inseparable from The Mother Church as man is inseparable from God, idea from Principle.

The CSBD's reply of November 3, 1909, put into plain language the complete power it had abrogated to itself: "...the jurisdiction of this Board extends to every matter affecting the Cause of Christian Science as a whole. Also, that this Board may deal with such matters directly, or take them up with the officers of branch churches, according to the exigency of each case, and in accordance with the by-laws of this church. The relation between The Mother Church and its branches necessarily gives to this Board such supervision over the branches as may be necessary to preserve the purity and integrity of the Christian religion which it represents." This statement pre-dates by a little over one year that which was issued after Mrs Eddy's passing¹⁸.

The letter went on to state that the preceding letter from New York was erroneous in its concept of Christian Science, alleging it claimed that mortals are the reflection of infinite Mind, and that it required the CSBD to attribute to the Committee of Inquiry in New York, as mortals, the infallibility of divine Mind.

This chapter of *Vital Issues* closes with an invitation to the reader to determine which position is correct by referring to *Instruction by Mrs Eddy*¹⁹.

The letter of October 23 claims authority to rule the whole movement. This reveals that the CSBD had come to see themselves as the supreme authority over Christian Scientists even whilst Mrs Eddy was with us, and without any transfer whatever of authority having been agreed upon or executed between that board and Mrs Eddy. Surely this can only be seen as a seizure of power over the movement from Mrs Eddy by the CSBD. The sudden manifestation of the stance of the CSBD at such an early date illustrates our Leader's prophecy in conversation with Sue Harper Mimms: "I could not have avoided telling you that when my students become blinded to me as the one through whom Truth has come to this age, they go straight down."²⁰ Mrs Eddy must have been aware of this, but made no

moves to restrain the board. Clearly she understood that the government of her church was adequately established by the *Manual* and her various deeds of trust, and that any further correction on her part could not improve the situation. The directors at this time evidently stood on the sandy ground that man is mortal, that Mrs Eddy was mortal, and that the time had come to recognise the expiration of her position as Leader and to take the reins of the movement into their own hands²¹.

Publishing the two letters had the effect of notifying the field that this was the case, and that as Mrs Eddy's time was up the future lay with their ecclesiastical authority, for which they expected and required the recognition of the members of The Mother Church. Is it any wonder then that they and the members shortly came to witness the passing of their Leader as if her thinking were as mortal as theirs? As our Leader has written at God's dictation²² "Mortal mind sees what it believes as certainly as it believes what it sees. It feels, hears and sees its own thoughts" and "Mortals waken from the dream of death with bodies unseen by those who think that they bury the body."²³ How many of all Jesus healed and taught stayed with him at the cross? Only Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary her sister, Mary Magdalen, and John²⁴.

The nature and scope of the New York branch church's Inquiry therefore included far more than at first appears: mortality versus immortality, the God-ordained nature of Mrs Eddy, the provisions she left for the continuity of Christian Science, and the necessity to understand the true human history of Christian Science and its Founder in order that the serpents of envy and pride, place and power be handled through calling on the aid of Love²⁵.

Footnotes to Review of Chapter VII.

17. *Christian Science Sentinel* volume xii pp. 170-171.
18. See Hartsook: *Christian Science After 1910*, p. 2.
19. *Christian Science Sentinel* September 3, 1910, reprinted in *Miscellany* pp. 241-242. In view of later events, it is significant that the question leading to this answer came from the San Jose branch church of which Mr Herbert Eustace was a member. Mrs Eddy's letter to this church on page 197 of *Miscellany* is a reply to a letter from the San Jose church signed by Mr Eustace and printed in *The Christian Science Sentinel* of December 23, 1905. See Hugh Studdert Kennedy, *Christian Science and Organized Religion* p. 160 (The Farallon Press, 1930) which further refers to *Miscellaneous Writings* p. 278:17. Mrs Eddy's Instruction appears to be confirmed in *Science and Health* 285:32 and her article *Principle and Practice*, published in the *Christian Science Sentinel* September 1, 1907. It is also referred to by Mrs Stetson in *Sermons and Other Writings* p. 583.
20. *We Knew Mary Baker Eddy* Volume I, Edition of 2011, p. 300.
21. The passage in "Fallibility of Human Footsteps," *Miscellaneous Writings* 353:13-33 n.p. may be regarded as referring to this state of mind in our church government. "Return to their vomit" is drawn from Proverbs 26:11 and II Peter 2:22. The latter is the

culmination of a chapter of discussion of miscreants in church government and “the madness of the prophet” (v. 16). “Return to their vomit” suggests the “repetition of evil” referred to in *Science and Health* p. 73:8-18 which bears the marginal heading “One government.” In her 1893 address “Obedience” in *Miscellaneous Writings* 119:22 our Leader refers to insubordination leading to the tearing up of landmarks and the need for disobedient “professors of Christian Science ... to obey implicitly each and every injunction of the divine Principle ... or repeat their work in tears.”

22. See *Miscellany* 114:23, 115:4.
23. *Science and Health* 86:29-31; 429:18.
24. John 19:25-26.
25. See *Christian Science Journal* August 1890, volume VIII 1890-91 p. 193, *A Card* by Mary B. G. Eddy.

Chapter VIII. Why the Committee of Inquiry Was Formed

From the point of view of FCCS NY, several factors led to the Committee of Inquiry. The allegations about Mrs Stetson’s activities were of such a serious nature that the future of FCCS, New York must have appeared to be at stake. The by-laws of FCCS, New York required either or both the church’s Board of Trustees and First Reader to maintain discipline. Mr Strickler had the allegations for many months without informing the New York Board of Trustees, who upon hearing of them from Mrs Stetson formed an inquiry within days.

Mr Strickler had also acted contrary to the *Manual* Article XI Section 13, which forbids a Reader from reporting branch church members to The Mother Church, and requires branch churches to be responsible for their own discipline. This section caused the Board of Directors in Boston to dismiss the charges against Mrs Stetson on August 4, 1909, which fact Mr Strickler also kept from the Board of Trustees of FCCS, NY.

Chapter IX. Report of the Committee of Inquiry.

The Committee reported to a special meeting of the members of FCCS NY on November 4, 1909. It had met thirty five times, usually twice a day, and had produced over one thousand pages of type-written evidence. The first part, concerning Mrs Stetson, was printed in pamphlet form for the membership and came to twenty nine points.

The first part of the report begins with a brief historical review. Despite FCCS NY considering itself loyal to Mrs Eddy, two decades previously a number of Mrs Eddy’s students had left to form other New York branch churches even though FCCS NY was at that time small and “apparently feeble in power.” There had been a “character of opposition” in

this which spread through the country and intensified through twenty years, manifested in false reports about Mrs Stetson and some other members. These alleged personal ambition and control, malpractice, mesmerism, disloyalty to the Cause, and an expectation to supplant Mrs Eddy. The branch church was accused of love of material possessions and power, and an ambition to overshadow The Mother Church.

The report considered these reports false and to be “circulated by persons who did not properly protect themselves against malicious animal magnetism,” citing Manual Article VIII Alertness to Duty Section 6. Potential visitors were deterred. The report held the branch was loyal to every Manual By-Law and would be loyal to any new By-Laws “lawfully promulgated...as understood by the constituted authorities of this branch church.”

It is perhaps significant that this anticipates the spurious promulgation of *Manual* By-Laws and the claim by an authority outside the branch church to force its own interpretation on the branches.

The evidence taken from witnesses focussed on a central issue. In defending oneself mentally from sustained mental attack, when one is aware of the individual who is the vehicle for the attack, should one use his name in one’s work of defence? Mrs Stetson did so at the practitioners’ meetings when defending herself and her church during the previous twelve months from attacks which in some cases amounted to attempted mental assassination. (A fuller explanation of this question is given in Chapter XXVIII below.) A majority of the practitioners at FCCS NY thought this method acceptable. A minority of four or five thought the naming of names amounted unrequested treatment and therefore mental malpractice.

The question appears to develop itself into the following: if the top of a hierarchy feels free to control those lower down the hierarchy, and ultimately insists on imposing this control, are those at the bottom of the hierarchy free to defend themselves by mental means from control by mental means? This is a modern development of the biblical issue, “who shall be the greatest?”²⁶ It can be seen in terms of freedom and slavery. If one loves another, he will seek to increase the freedom of he whom he loves. If he hates another sufficiently, he will reduce his freedom to the point of enslavement.

Clearly this is a question for each individual to settle alone with God.

Footnotes to Review of Chapter IX.

26. See Mark 9:23, Luke 9:46, and Luke 22:24-26.

Chapter X. Mrs Stetson's Resignation from New York Board of Trustees and from the Branch Church.

Writing on October 16, 1909, Mrs Stetson resigned from the Board of Trustees of FCCS NY, desiring no human sympathy, and calling upon them to continue "wholly spiritual" building²⁷. On the same day she wrote Mrs Eddy that she had "heard [Mrs Eddy's] dear voice" in the Leader's letter published in the *Sentinel* of October 16, and would "strictly not oppose the orders of the Board of Directors" given in their letter of September 25, 1909. On November 22 she sent in her resignation from FCCS NY, having been dropped from membership of The Mother Church, which she felt might place the Board of Trustees of FCCS NY in an embarrassing position.

The content and tone of these letters appear to indicate that these were held to be progressive steps in following her, and their, Leader Mary Baker Eddy, in demonstrating church on a higher plane than mere material organisation. It cannot be gainsaid that in Science, the proper resolution of any difficulty involves an upwards step. An incorrect and merely human resolution would have led to destruction, perhaps such as detachment of FCCS NY from The Mother church, or resignations *en masse*. Our Leader and her true followers were evidently working to see a divine solution that would protect the progress of all concerned. One hundred years later it can be seen how the outcome separated the wheat from the tares, and supplied an exemplar experience which demonstrated that no sincere follower of the Revelator of the Second Comforter can be trapped and controlled by an authority endowed by the mistaken interpretation of *The Manual of The Mother Church*.

Footnotes to Review of Chapter X.

27. *Christian Science Sentinel* volume xi p. 390.

Chapter XI. Secret of a Great Church Work.

This brief chapter indicates how the arrangements at FCCS NY developed naturally from the early days of Mrs Stetson's pioneer work in New York. From the beginning, healing based on radical reliance on spiritual means was at the centre of every effort. Patients became practitioners, and the demand for their work grew in proportion to their success in destroying the most malignant sin and disease. In the various hired buildings used, the Reading Room became the natural location of this extensive and continual work, and when their edifice came to be built, as a natural development practicing students were supplied with rooms for treatment. Others worked from home or their own offices. A letter from Mrs Eddy of October 25, 1903, is reproduced in facsimile as support for this arrangement.

"For the handling of their cases effectively, conference and counsel came to be a regularly established part of the daily routine of the Reading Room practitioners. From this

arose the necessity of practitioners' meetings, at which naturally the one who had given instruction to nearly all of the practitioners acted in a presiding capacity."²⁸ *Manual Article XXVI, Care of Pupils Section 2*, is cited in support. Practitioners were required to progress and work out their own salvation to the utmost of their ability before seeking assistance from Mrs Stetson. Perhaps inevitably in such a large and progressive group, the rigorous moral standards required caused a small number to seek to displace a teacher who expected all to continue the ascent. In support of these methods is cited *Retrospection and Introspection* page 85: "... and at present [teachers] can employ any other organic operative method that may commend itself as useful to the Cause and beneficial to mankind;" and a letter dated July 2, 1905 from Mrs Eddy to "Mrs Augusta Stetson CSD and the practitioners in the RR of her church NY," of which the written manuscript is reproduced.

Footnotes to Review of Chapter XI.

28. *Vital Issues* p. 107.

Chapter XII. Practice of Healing in First Church of Christ, Scientist, New York City.

In a branch church of 1800 members, not all would be fully aware of the proceedings at practitioners' meetings, and it may be from this that the allegation of "secret meetings" arose. The various employees of the church and the Reading Room Committee were aware in general of what was taught at the meetings, and Trustees attended frequently. "By their acquaintance with the Scriptures, and by their...ability to apply the teachings of their Leader, Mary Baker Eddy, in diagnosing and dealing with mental conditions, [the practitioners] had demonstrated a power which...seemed...a restoration of the Apostolic days, when the deaf were made to hear, the lame to walk, and the blind to see."²⁹ These were the practitioners who were cast out by the Board of Directors.

The Annual Report of the Reading Room for 1908 stated:

"When we consider that every ill of human experience has been brought about by wrong thinking, we are ready to acknowledge how vital to the interests of the individual and of the community is the ability to think rightly. The Christian Science Reading Room offers a place, provides an environment where the habit of wrong thinking may be dropped, and the new or real thinking may be acquired; where human opinions and human experiences do not obtain; where the spiritual perceptions are exercised, instead of physical sense; where Mind speaks, and matter is silent; where Love reigns, and self has no kingdom."³⁰

Does one know of such a Reading Room one hundred years later?

Three Articles under which the Reading Room was organised are given, indicating its democratic self-government. The 1908 report numbers 52,555 visitors received during the

year, up 10,000 on 1907. A table of statistics indicates that in the same year 3,004 patients were treated for 4,704 diseases, of which 3,331 diseases were healed. This was achieved by less than two score full time practitioners, elected from the members of the branch church, and all members of The Mother Church. A Reception Committee of 148 members, divided into 14 working committees, one for each half-day of the week, and two for evenings, met and received the public.

Within months this work became the object of condemnation.

Footnotes to Review of Chapter XII.

29. *Vital Issues* p. 114.
 30. *ibid.* p. 115.

Chapter XIII. Editorial Criticism of First Church of Christ, Scientist, New York City.

In 1908 FCCS NY had two or three hundred people standing during the Sunday morning service. An overflow service was provided in the Reading Room, but ceased immediately *Manual Article XVII, Overflow Meetings Section 4* appeared: “A Church of Christ, Scientist, shall not hold two or more Sunday services at the same hour.” The possibility of some members setting up another branch of The Mother Church was discussed within the membership of FCCS NY and by its Trustees. A plot on Riverside Drive, New York, became available and was purchased by some members to secure it, should the establishment of another branch of The Mother Church develop. Some persons took the unwarranted view that material aggrandisement and ambition were being satisfied. The *Sentinel* of December 5, 1908 contained a public attack on FCCS NY entitled “One Mother Church in Christian Science,” and an editorial by Archibald McLellan entitled “Consistency.”

Both articles are reprinted in *Vital Issues* with critical commentary. The first quotes from “an unwarranted, inaccurate, unauthorised statement from a New York daily paper³¹ of November 30th without any attempt to verify it by communicating with the New York Trustees.” In their letter of December 14, 1908 to Mr McLellan putting the record straight, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, FCCS NY, points out that there were a number of “exaggerated and wholly unwarranted” statements in respect of the land purchase in the public press, but that “so great has been the perversion of fact, that out of loving regard for the present and future peace of the Church in general this transaction has been promptly cancelled, the property transferred to a waiting purchaser, and the contributions [from FCCS NY members towards the price] refunded without loss to anyone.”³³ This letter, which protested the use of a Christian Science publication to discipline a branch church, and which stood squarely on *Manual Article XI Section 5* and *Article XXIII Section 1*, requested it be

given equal prominence to the accusatory articles in the *Sentinel*. It was not even acknowledged.

Nevertheless *The New York World* of December 15, 1908 carried a short general denial that there was a crisis, or that “Mrs Augusta E Stetson [was] about to seize control of the denomination.” It was signed by J V Dittemore, who was then the Committee on Publication for the State of New York, and subsequently a Director of The Mother Church, Clerk of that Church, and Secretary of the Board of Directors. Within twenty years he would also be a plaintiff in litigation against the Board of Directors, and co-author of a biography hostile to Mrs Eddy.

Footnotes to Review of Chapter XIII.

31. This appears to have been *The New York World*. x
32. *Vital Issues* p. 127.
33. *Ibid.* p. 131.

Chapter XIV. Material Concept of Composite Letter.

A further editorial by Archibald McLellan in the *Sentinel* of July 31, 1909, entitled “None Good But One,” castigated without naming them Mrs Stetson and a number of her students. These students had written to Mrs Stetson letters, which, assembled together, made a composite letter of appreciation. By selecting quotations out of context, and avoiding the numerous references to Mrs Eddy, the editorial did what today would be called a “hatchet job,” and berated what appeared to be their unscientific basis. By arranging the full letters and the extracts in two columns over nine pages, *Vital Issues* leaves the reader to draw his own conclusions.

Chapter XV. The Composite Letter – How Originated and What it Was.

The letter arose from the suggestion of a student at a meeting not attended by Mrs Stetson late on a Friday evening, that the students join in sending Mrs Stetson a gift of appreciation, after so many years of joint endeavour. The idea of an assembly of individual letters was a natural adjunct. These came as a complete surprise when presented to Mrs Stetson in the morning of July 10. With equal spontaneity, Mrs Stetson immediately forwarded the accompanying gift of gold, with copies of the letters, to Mrs Eddy, to whom she felt she owed her own progress in Christian Science, after some decades of close association and correspondence. Her letter of gratitude, reminiscence, and prophecy is given³⁴ with Mrs Eddy’s loving reply³⁵. This letter³⁶, in the different context of selective extracts from correspondence and notices relating to FCCS NY in *Miscellany*, and with the

background of the one-sided version of events given in Mr Peel's biography³⁷ is often read as a cold rebuke. Yet if one reads the second paragraph as a prophesy of the events to come, and the penultimate paragraph as a warning, it is seen as a warmly grateful letter from Mrs Stetson's teacher to her most faithful student.

Footnotes to Review of Chapter XV.

- 34. *Vital Issues*, pp. 153-155.
- 35. *Ibid.* pp. 153-155.
- 36. *Miscellany* pp. 357-358.
- 37. See Peel, *The Years of Authority*, Chapter X.

Chapter XVI. The Physical Versus the Spiritual Personality.

Here is a discussion of the level at which an individual is perceived, in relation to the above two letters, and Mrs Eddy's further letter of July 23, 1909³⁸ If each individual perceives and is perceived in the understanding of Truth as the Christly reflection of deity, the expressions of the above two letters are natural and beautiful. If perception of the nature of the individual is merely at the currently normal unelevated level, such expressions amount to an attempt to attach deific qualities by and to a mere mortal view of an individual, an essentially false procedure. This amounts to claiming or making a god out of dust, an act that participates in the delusion of animal magnetism, and leads only to failure and ruin. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image...thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them..."³⁹ The difficulty was that a minority of the practitioners at FCCS NY had slipped to the latter position, as evident from their inability to distinguish between legitimate mental defence and unrequested treatment. Mrs Eddy was calling on Mrs Stetson and her students to handle this claim. Bearing in mind that every false claim on every individual, including Mrs Stetson, that would hinder our advancement from sense to Soul, is ultimately the product of our own false thinking, this was a reasonable and loving instruction.

This puts this letter in an entirely different light to that in which it is usually seen one hundred years after the event, read in the context of Mr Peel's account in *The Years of Authority* which relies exclusively on material supplied by the CSBD. In this shallow view Mrs Eddy was seeking to save Mrs Stetson from the evil forces driving an insane contest of "who shall be the greatest." In fact, the boot was on the other foot. The CSBD later enlarged their boot by authorising Ms Gill's biography, extending their attack on Mrs Eddy, in step with their 1991 disavowal of the 1943 CSBD document *Mrs Eddy's Place*⁴⁰. The result of their error is, naturally, the reverse of what they claimed in 1909. Far from ending the worshipping of Mrs Eddy as a false god, it has raised such a god in the figure of a wonderful human personality who as a mere "Persistent Pilgrim"⁴¹ overcame misogyny to pioneer

feminism and establish a remarkable humanly organised world-wide religion, as also described by Ms Gill⁴² and repeated in other authorised biographies, with the CSBD at the top of the hierarchy.

Mrs Stetson did reply immediately, the next day July 24, 1909. This has yet to be published by The Mother Church. It states her understanding of “the relation of her Leader to herself; the relation of herself as teacher to her students; the relation of Truth as spiritual power, as she understands her Leader’s teachings, to its bearing on human conditions.”⁴³

Mrs Eddy’s reply of August 30, 1909, is reproduced in facsimile.

Footnotes to Review of Chapter XVI.

38. *Vital Issues* p. 159; reprinted with an editorial note in *Miscellany* pp. 359-360.
39. *Exodus* 20:3-5.
40. See *Christian Science Sentinel* June 5, 1943 Vol. 45 Part I pp. 985-986; *Christian Science Journal* July 1943 Vol. 61 pp. 412-413; Hartsook, *Christian Science After 1910* pp. 75-76 and pp. 177-179.
41. Nenneman, *Mary Baker, Eddy, Persistent Pilgrim*.
42. Gill, *Mary Baker Eddy*.
43. See *Vital Issues* pp. 160-163.

Chapter XVII. Treatment of Sixteen Practitioners by The Mother Church Directors.

The experiences during the two weeks preceding November 24, 1909 of the New York practitioners at their individual “conferences” with the Directors, sometimes with others present, are indicated by eight accounts. They were not permitted to make statements or explanations, but were required to answer “yes or no” to questions, some of great length including a number of questions to which some required a negative and some a positive answer. Considerable anger was displayed in the questioning, particularly if the practitioner objected to the method of questioning. Requests for transcripts were declined on the grounds that these were never issued by the Board of Directors; subsequently Mr V O Strickler was known to have received a partial or complete transcript. A careful analysis is given of the Board’s infringement of the *Manual* by the proceedings.

Chapter XVIII. Position of the Sixteen Practitioners.

“Out of the twenty-six practitioners who had had their offices in First Church of Christ, Scientist, New York City, nineteen adhered to their original position in supporting the

teachings which they had received from Mrs Stetson, as being in accord with the writings of the Leader, Mary Baker Eddy.”⁴⁴

The relations of this group with the first Reader and Directors of The Mother Church went through four stages:

1. The Boston “Conference” ending September 24, 1909.
2. The Directors’ letter of “Three Test Questions”, to nineteen practitioners of FCCS NY, dated February 12, 1909.
3. Three “admonitions”, one from the First Reader of FCCS, NY and two from the First Reader of The Mother Church, to sixteen practitioners.
4. The dropping of the names of fifteen of those practitioners from membership of FCCS NY, followed by the “Two-Count Complaint” against them from the First Reader of The Mother Church to the CSBD, after which their names were dropped from The Mother Church membership.

The three test questions were in brief:

- Did Mrs Stetson teach in accordance with Christian Science?
- Are you living in Christian fellowship with the present officers of FCCS NY?
- Are you complying with Mrs Eddy’s letter read at FCCS NY on November 15, 1909?

The answering letters of sixteen of the practitioners are given.

Footnotes to Review of Chapter XVIII.

44. *Vital Issues* p. 184.

Chapter XIX. The Mother Church Admonitions of Sixteen Practitioners.

Judge Clifford P. Smith, First Reader of The Mother Church, admonished some of the practitioners verbally in New York, accompanied by his witness Mr Jackson, and a stenographer, on March 8 and March 11, 1910. Most occurred at the branch church, Mr Hatfield’s at his residence. Six are reproduced at length and a paragraph added from a seventh. The reader can draw his own conclusions.

Chapter XX. Admonitions by First Reader of New York Church.

The “admonition” given by Mr Virgil O Strickler, First Reader of FCCS, NY, to Miss Mary E Pearson on March 25, 1910, as recalled by Miss Pearson, is given as an example. One can draw one’s own conclusions from it.

Chapter XXI. Practitioners Before the New Trustees.

In late March, early April, 1910, fifteen of the practitioners were interviewed by the newly elected board of FCCS, NY. They were required to show loyalty to the CSBD rather than their teacher or their Leader. The new board chairman announced them to be neither practitioners nor Christian Scientists. One can review the record.

Chapter XXII. The Sixteen Practitioners Make a Public Statement.

This refuted misleading statements in the press and stands as a concise statement of religious freedom.

Chapter XXIII. Two-Count Complaint to the Directors of The Mother Church Analysed.

This complaint to the CSBD against the sixteen practitioners was issued by the First Reader of The Mother Church on April 4, 1910, two days after the fifteen who were still members of FCCS, NY were dropped from membership. Each practitioner received papers noting:

“Count One: that [name] has been found trying to practise Christian Science contrary to the statement thereof in its textbook...and admonished to desist from such practice, as provided in Article XXII, Sect 2 of the By-Laws of this Church; notwithstanding which he persists in this offense.

“Count Two: that [name] persists in working mentally and otherwise against the interests of the members of this church who are not personal adherents of Mrs Augusta E Stetson.”

Count One fails to specify an act enabling the accused to order his defence, a breach of procedure inadmissible in legal proceedings, and a failing which has attended many of the CSBD’s persecutions since. Count Two does not state the By-Law violated, nor the acts constituting the offence. The latter avoids the necessity of producing witnesses. Both the “Complaint” and the “Directors’ Orders Governing Trial” were typewritten throughout with no signature and no accompanying letter.

Chapter XXIV. Do Not Orders of April Fourth Violate Justice?

This is a six-page analysis of the arrangements the CSBD had laid down to fulfil the provision of *Manual Article XI*, Departure from Tenets Section 1, “the offender’s case shall be tried.” The refusal to supply copies of alleged evidence held in Boston, the right the CSBD gave itself to rely entirely on affidavits, the ridiculously short timetable, put the accused at such disadvantage that the arrangement could not be regarded as a fair trial, nor even a “trial” at all.

Chapter XXV. Practitioner’s Answers to the Two-Count Complaint.

Every practitioner made a prompt reply to the “Two-Count Complaint.” All sixteen are recorded fully or in part. That of Mr Arnold Blome⁴⁵ is a particularly fine statement in the face of arbitrary authoritarianism.

After a three month silence, on July 8, 1910 the Clerk of The Mother Church wrote to each advising he was dropped from membership of The Mother Church.

Footnotes to Review of Chapter XVIII.

45. *Vital Issues* pp. 261-265.

Chapter XXVI. So-Called “Admonitions” by the First reader of The Mother Church to the New York Trustees Comprising the Committee of Inquiry.

In their letter of October 4, 1909, the CSBD called upon the seven Trustees of FCCS, NY who constituted that church’s Committee of Inquiry to “make your own investigation and act without fear or favour.” On December 3, 1909, The First Reader of The Mother Church claimed to act by its By-Laws in seeking an interview in New York with each of the seven in order to admonish him for having done so.

The “admonitory” letter handed to each at the start of the interview held up to five numbered points, which amounted to abandoning Mrs Stetson and adhering to the CSBD. As each was a member of a branch church, this was flatly contrary to *Manual Article XI*, Members in Mother Church Only Section 6: “A complaint against a member of The Mother Church, if said member belongs to no branch church, and if this complaint is not for mental malpractice, shall be laid before this Board...” It was equally contrary to *Manual Article XXIII*, No Interference Section 10 “...each branch church shall be distinctly democratic...no individual, and no other church shall interfere with its affairs.”

Each of the five points of “admonition” is analysed and refuted. When Mr Whitney requested proof of some specific delinquency on his part, Judge Smith made an extraordinary statement, which was written down, read over to him, and admitted by him

to be correct. It is: "I cannot form it into a phrase, and you must take the whole paper as the basis of the charge, which is not so much for the past as the future." Here was the admission that this nebulous exercise in discipline was not to punish specific past conduct, but to alter future behaviour.

The extensive notes of Mr Whitney's conversation with Judge Smith⁴⁶ show the prime concern of the CSBD to a) decide all issues of importance and b) preserve a public image of dignity and respectability.

The notes on Mr Taylor's lengthy interview with Judge Smith⁴⁷ are particularly interesting in indicating some of the areas in which the CSBD considered Mrs Stetson's teaching faulty.

The interview with Mr Higgins reveals the Directors were waiting for Mrs Eddy to die, and were concerned the New York Inquiry might provide a springboard for an independent movement; and also an interest in suppressing Miss Colston's testimony of Mrs Eddy's statements or teachings, as Mrs Eddy might not be able to review them.

In the interview with Mrs Dam, she affirmed that the New York Trustees would always support the Board of Directors "when they worked in obedience to *The Manual of The Mother Church*". Significantly, Judge Smith attributed a comment to Mrs Stetson the like of which Mrs Dam had never heard, and which imputed to Mrs Stetson a vicarious position between her students and God. Mr Smith and Mrs Dam disagreed about using names in treatment.

Interviews of six of the seven Inquiry members are noted.

Footnotes to Review of Chapter XXVI.

46. *Vital Issues* pp. 286-292.

47. *Ibid.* pp. 294-297.

Chapter XXVII. Analysis of the Seven Findings.

These seven findings were the outcome of Mrs Stetson's "trial" by the Directors and were part of the "Findings and Orders" sent to her on September 25, 1909. The Directors sought disavowal of her teachings. Most of her students declared she taught accurately Mrs Eddy's revelation. The matter became a contest between Christian Science and a version of it. Which is correct? Most have conceived them as the spiritual and the material concepts of Christian Science.

"Finding" No 1 concerned Mrs Stetson's view that FCCS, NY was the only legitimate Christian Science church in New York City. At the time various of Mrs Eddy's students split away from FCCS NY it was feeble and its survival appeared uncertain; they left due to dissent, discord, and personal ambition. The new branches may be impeccably organised, but having arisen from those qualities, they must have lost some purity, and fallen short of

"the structure of Truth and Love."⁴⁸ Such was the unrelenting logic of Mrs Stetson's position.

"Finding" No 2 concerned an "erroneous sense of Christian Science...in regard to...human needs and conditions," a euphemism for sexual and marriage relations. "The application of the spiritual import of Christian Science to human relations in domestic, in civil, or in public life is bound to impair the foundations which are laid in the animal nature."⁴⁹ The Directors disapproved of such rigour and austerity.

"Finding" No 3 alleged control over students. Yet Mrs Remer testified that the teaching freed from "hypnotism, mesmerism, spiritualism...we were enabled to know and prove that man is immortal..."⁵⁰ The question of hindering control is investigated carefully by the testimony of several witnesses over 23 pages.

"Finding" No 4 alleged obtruding personality. There are three pages of testimony on the point.

"Finding" No 5 alleged pretended Christian Science and treating without request or consent. The difference between treatment and self-defence is analysed. "At least nineteen out of the twenty-five witnesses who gave evidence at these hearings were unanimous in recognising the difference between self-defence and treatment of another person."⁵¹ There are six pages of testimony on the point,

"Finding" No 6 alleged mental control and injury. There are five pages of discussion and testimony on this point. One witness otherwise opposed to Mrs Stetson answered a question on Mrs Stetson's degree of forgiveness for wrongs done to her: "I think Mrs Stetson has been Christlike on that point. She has been kind, and made every effort, I think, to be forgiving."⁵²

In view of the history, it is interesting that one testifier stated that the attitude of the field towards FCCS NY was engendered by envy and jealousy, and that the channel of its most general distribution through the field was the newspapers.

In the same vein, one might also reflect that since the effect of the malpractice by the Christian Science field, brought on by newspapers and articles such as those in the *Sentinel* of December 5, 1908, required specific defence work by the practitioners of FCCS NY, the malpractice by the field over the last hundred years of regarding the CSBD as the spiritually superior tip of a legitimate ecclesiastical hierarchy of Christian Science, has not been adequately recognised, nor properly met; with results for all to see.

Footnotes to Review of Chapter XXVII.

48. *Science and Health* 583:12.

49. *Vital Issues* p. 308.

50. *Ibid.* p. 309.

51. *Ibid.* pp. 335-336.

52. *Ibid.* pp. 342.

Chapter XXVIII. Self-Defence in Christian Science As Taught by Mary Baker Eddy.

This brief chapter discusses mental self-defence as taught by Mrs Eddy and Mrs Stetson. This question is central to the controversy. “Spiritual mental self-defense in Christian Science is the veritable ‘whole armour of God’ divinely provided to defeat error.”⁵³ The clear distinction between mental self-defence and treatment without consent is supported by an extract from the testimony of Mrs Rowbotham before the FCCS NY Inquiry on November 1, 1909, by the Manual Article VIII, Alertness to Duty Section 6, “It shall be the duty of every member...to defend himself daily...”, and by *Science and Health* 451:19: “Every Christian Scientist...knows that human will is not Christian Science...”. An extract from the testimony of Mrs Mary H Freshman, a student of Mrs Stetson’s who introduced Christian Science to London, England, gives an illustration of Mrs Eddy destroying malpractice for a visitor, including using the name of the malpractitioner. A very clear explanation is given by Mrs Stetson, as published in a New York paper on November 8, 1909. Again, let the reader, alone with God, judge where stands the truth.

Footnotes to Review of Chapter XXVIII.

53. *Vital Issues* p. 348.

Chapter XXIX. Summary.

This three-page chapter is possibly the best place to start the book. Five essential rights, expressed in extreme précis are:

- Branch self-government
- Individual spiritual interpretation of Scripture and Mrs Eddy’s writings
- Self-defence as taught by Mary Baker Eddy
- Fair trial by due process
- The right and duty to maintain and practice genuine Christian Science.

Chapter XXX. Defence of Spiritual Facts in Divine Law and Order.

A historical statement by Mrs Stetson, supported by extracts from Mrs Eddy’s letters to her. After Chapter XXIX, this is possibly the second best chapter at which to start the book, which is itself historical evidence of Mrs Stetson’s statement.

Appendix: Facsimile manuscript letters of Mary Baker Eddy.

Conclusion to this Review.

One hundred years after the event, the movement's view of the conflict between the CSBD and Mrs Stetson is generally grounded on Mr Peel's account.⁵⁴ This is entirely based on evidence from the CSBD, who from November 23 onwards acted consistently as sole prosecutor, judge and jury on the whole matter, permitting no scintilla of a defence. Indeed, under the doctrine of "Authorized Literature" Christian Scientists have, since 1915, been banned from reading Mrs Stetson's books, which supply her defence.⁵⁵ Miss Gill's major biography⁵⁶, lauded by the directors of the day, expands the superstructure grounded on sand, principally because she rejects any notion that malicious animal magnetism, that "one rancorous and lurking foe"⁵⁷ has any practical relevance to human life.

In contrast, Mrs Grekel's three-volume biography⁵⁸, which carries much evidence in favour of Mrs Stetson, has in public been studiously ignored by the CSBD, and it would seem from the attitude of listed teachers and practitioners that it has been spoken against in private. Whatever the individual's present view of Mrs Stetson's church in New York⁵⁹, it would be reasonable and normal to weigh the whole of the historical record before drawing one's own conclusions.

Our success or failure in practicing CS is inevitably linked to our understanding of who Mrs Eddy was, or rather, *is*; and this understanding determines who we understand to be Mrs Eddy's successor. If Mrs Eddy is the divinely appointed revelator of Divine Science to the world, who received *Science and Health* and the *Church Manual* at the hand of the one divine Mind, her only successor must be as she herself states.

When all the evidence is considered, it does not support the contention that Mrs Stetson ever regarded *herself* as the equal of or the personal successor to Mrs Eddy; indeed one would expect her to be horrified at such a suggestion. Yet the achievement of Mrs Stetson's life work; the establishment of FCCS NY and its unrivalled record of radical Christian Science healing; her survival at the hands of ecclesiastical despotism; her continued practice and demonstration of God's truth on earth outside the material organisation of church; her conscientious correction of the human historical record; and her complete lack of calumny against her persecutors, all indicate that she was the follower of her Leader who blazed the trail in demonstrating that the successor to Mary Baker Eddy can never be an ecclesiastical organisation equipped with hierarchy and human self-righteousness, but is to be found, by each and every one of us, as our Leader states in her final published word on the subject: – "I did say that a man would be my future successor. By this I did not mean any man today on earth. Science and Health makes it plain to all Christian Scientists that the manhood and womanhood of God have already been revealed in a degree through Christ Jesus and Christian Science, His two witnesses. What remains to lead on the centuries and reveal my successor, is man in the image of Father-Mother God, man the generic term for mankind."⁶⁰

Footnotes to Conclusion to this Review.

54. Peel, *Mary Baker Eddy, The Years of Authority*.
55. The imposition of this doctrine, and its effects, are considered in *The Continuity of the Cause of Christian Science*, *Christian Science Foundation*, pp. 11.2-11.3; also *Paul Revere Pamphlets 1-12* pp. 27-34.
56. Gill, *Mary Baker Eddy*.
57. *Miscellany* 213:8.
58. Grekel, *The Womanhood of God*: Volume 1 *The Discovery of the Science of Man*; Vol. 2 *The Founding*; Vol. 3 *The Forever Leader*.
59. For Mrs Eddy's use of this term, see *Vital Issues* p. 371, and the facsimile reproduction of Mrs Eddy's manuscript letter pp. 388-390.
60. *Miscellany* 346:27-5.

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