# Christian Science

by Karl Holl

## Editor's Note

This article was originally published in a German periodical (*Zeitschrift für die gesamte Strafrechtswissenschaft*) in 1916, then revised slightly for inclusion in the edition of Holl's collected essays *GesammelteAufsâtze zur Kirchengeschichte* (J.C.B. Muhr, Tübingen, 1921-28, Vol. 3, pp. 460-79).

"Szientismus," in the title as well as in the body of the text, has been properly rendered "Christian Science" or "the teaching of Christian Science" according to the context, rather than "Scientism." The term "Szientismus" was in general used as a kind of shorthand academic reference to Christian Science when Holl wrote, before the more workable though still inadequate term "Christliche Wissenschaft" came into general use. (See entry "Szientismus" in Brockhaus Enzyklopädie, Vol. 18, p. 409, 1973 edition.)

Holl obviously had no intention of associating Christian Science with the narrow faith in the methodology of the physical sciences suggested by the word "scientism" as ordinarily understood. Rather, he sought to explore the substance of Christian Science as a religious teaching for German readers at a time when it was gaining numerous adherents and considerable notoriety. Holl's essay is an admirably balanced treatment of a minority religious group by an eminent church historian who, while frankly in disagreement with its teachings, maintained scrupulous standards of fairness and accuracy in representing them.

In making this essay more widely available to English-speaking readers, this translation, originally by Theodor Stanger and revised by Mary Gottschalk, incorporates Holl's entire text, with the exception of some introductory and concluding material bearing on the local German situation at the time it was written, as well as a few footnotes in which he takes issue at some length with several contemporary but now forgotten articles on Christian Science. Holl's footnotes are not included with this translation, but a number of editorial notes have been added in order to clarify points in Holl's text for the present-day English-speaking reader. The sources of the many quotations Holl uses from Mary Baker Eddy's writings can be readily found in concordances published by the denomination.

**The founder**, or as she prefers to call herself, the discoverer of "Christian Science," has given in her writings sufficient information as to how she arrived at her peculiar Weltanschauung. In giving these explanations she has, of course, presented an account of her life with due consideration of her ultimate attainment; but she has done so far less forcefully than, for instance, Henry Newman in the *Apologia pro vita sua* or Sören Kierkegaard in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript.*

Born on July 16th, 1821, in Bow near Concord (New Hampshire), Mary Baker – this was her original name – was reared in the Congregational Church. She grew up in a Puritan atmosphere, and the spirit of devotion was dominant throughout her life. This faith in God which she imbibed in the parental home, together with the sickliness with which she was afflicted from early childhood, constituted the lever for her inner development.

She points to two events of great consequence in her childhood days. She tells of having frequently heard at the age of eight a divine voice – an experience similar to that of young Samuel. In this may be seen (apart from the influence of her Congregational training) an early awakening of the faculty of imagination. This trait coincides with another mentioned by her. She says that verse-making was natural to her from an early age. As a matter of fact her poems testify to a certain poetic faculty. As for the development of her strength of will, the second incident is characteristic: When she is to be confirmed at twelve years of age, she raises objections. She takes offense at the doctrine of predestination and would rather be damned together with her brothers and sisters than be the only one to partake of salvation. The attitude of the little girl so impresses the pastor that despite this fact he admits her into the church. Until 1879, the year when she officially founded a new church, she remained formally a Congregationalist.

For some time then her life follows the usual course. She was attractive and always dressed with good taste; no wonder that she repeatedly received offers of marriage. She married for the first time in 1843, her husband being G. W. Glover, of South Carolina, a building contractor and business friend of her brother's. He died, however, the following year of yellow fever, and nine years later (1853) she contracted a second marriage with a dentist by the name of Patterson.

From this point events take place which have a decisive influence upon her inner development. From the start there was a certain shadow over her relation to her husband. In her decision to marry she had been led by the hope of being able to take back her child by her first marriage, whom her family had turned over to a nurse. This failed, however, because of her husband's opposition. The nervous trouble with which she was afflicted now caused her increasing suffering. She tried various methods: allopathy, homeopathy, hydropathy, and finally magnetism.

The latter proved effective. A certain Quimby wrought a surprising cure in her case in 1862. This led to an exchange of thought between her and Quimby relative to the general question as to the nature of disease and its cure. Mrs. Eddy doubtless was strongly impressed by Quimby's method and for a time fully considered herself to be his follower. Yet later on she resisted, with a certain justification, the contention that she had taken over her fundamental ideas from Quimby. That which connected her with Quimby was

her conviction that all disease in the last analysis has its roots in the mind, and that healing therefore must be effected through mental influence. But it was her earnest Puritan faith in God which separated her from Quimby from the beginning.

She was urged on further in the direction which her thought took from that basis by an experience she had in February 1866. Through a fall on the ice she sustained serious and, as it was feared, internal injuries. Given up by the physician, she asked for the Bible. Her eyes fell on Matthew 9:2, and the Word raises her in every sense. She is able to get up alone and dress and feels better than ever before.

This was a new starting point for her. She was firmly convinced of having experienced a divine miracle. But the thought that occupied her mind was how this wonder had taken place. She was not inclined at first to exclude all medical means totally in addition to the divine activity, but now really began to devote herself to the investigation of medicine and especially of homeopathy.* Homeopathy suggests to her that medicine as such has no potency. It was a discovery for her when she observed that a homeopathic drug, attenuated to such a degree that no vestige of the drug was left, still wrought a cure in a case of typhoid fever. This led her to conclude that the drug as such never effects the cure, but that the result must be attributed solely to the patient's faith in it. Her position was strengthened, on the other hand, by an impression received through a renewed study of the Bible: Jesus did not use medical means of any kind in performing his cures, and he specifically promised his disciples that they should be able to do the same works that he did. Both of these facts led her to the conviction that healing should be expected in every instance directly through the divine activity operating exclusive of all material means. To her this meant as well an ever sharper contrast to magnetism.

During that time she had occasion to prove the depth of her conviction in a practical way. Her husband forsook her for another woman. She entered a suit against him and in 1871 obtained a divorce. But this left her virtually without any means of support. In her straits she could have had assistance from her relatives. Her sister was willing to take her, but on the condition that she attend the services of the local church and give up her strange beliefs. She preferred to struggle on through life in order to be able to follow her inner call.

One is reminded of the founder of the Jesuit order (with whom she has more than one trait in common) by the fact that she at once began to teach others before she had reached absolute conclusions herself. As far back as 1867 she had opened a school at Lynn (Massachusetts), although with only one pupil at first. At the same time she was now active among her acquaintances making notes of Scriptural exposition and distributing them in manuscript form. Thus in the midst of teaching and learning she arrived at the point where she was able to shape her fundamental idea into a formal ideology. A treatise (not published at first) from 1870 constitutes her first attempt at a written statement. Five years later she came forward with her great work *Science and Health.*

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* Editor's Note: Holl puts Mrs. Eddy's interest in homeopathy after the experience in 1866 which she identified as the discovery of Christian Science, probably because she takes up this subject in her autobiography Retrospection and Introspection after discussing that experience. Actually, however, Mrs. Eddy's interest and experiments in homeopathy were confined to the years between 1853 and 1862.

This book was revised once more by her in 1891 and in this form was declared the canonical book of Christian Science.† She herself described it as divinely inspired, thus prohibiting any further progress beyond it. The sole concession made by her was in the year of her death (1910). She permitted the publication of a German translation – which, by the way, is very unskillful.‡ However, it is to be printed and used only side by side with the English text. To use an obvious comparison – the Vulgate is valued only in conjunction with the original text.

*Science and Health* is not a methodically worked out textbook. It consists of a number of loosely connected treatises and suffers therefore from all the defects incident to its form, or rather lack of form: on the one hand there is no end of repetitions, on the other the elucidation of the subject appears to be desultory. Besides, its didactic purpose greatly impairs the manner of presentation. A dry tone prevails, and there are only occasional glimpses of the author's poetic gift. Nonetheless, what she intends to say as a whole is plain and expressed clearly.

A metaphysical system drafted along strict lines and starting from a concept of God constitutes its basis.

God is Spirit, and as Spirit He is Life and reality. All limitation, thus all corporeality, is utterly impossible with Him. Only with this reservation does the term *Personality* apply to God, but it may then be used with full assurance.

It is in the nature of Spirit to manifest itself, or else it would remain unexpressed, without witness and proof of its own nature. However, what proceeds from it [Spirit] must of necessity be spiritual. Not only man but the whole creation as it really proceeds from God is a reflection of His spiritual nature. But only a reflection For the difference between creator and creation must not be blurred. And while man is spiritual, he is not Spirit. But man and the universe as His likeness can never be conceived of as apart from God. God is continuously present in His universe and in this sense He is All-in-all.

The reverse of these propositions is the declaration that matter has no claim to reality. If God is Spirit and if Spirit is the sole reality, matter can be only an illusion. It is just as impossible for it to have been created by God as it is for it to have life within itself. In the first case this would lead to the absurdity that Spirit is manifested through its opposite, perfection through imperfection; in the second, that God is actually left out of His creation. There is indeed a universe external to man. But this universe consists of forces, and these forces are really thoughts. Also, the laws of nature, so far as they deserve this name at all, are nothing other than laws of Spirit.

Like matter itself, everything connected with matter proves to be an illusion. Sin, disease, evil, death are not realities. The Bible and right thinking both testify that God has created the universe and man perfect. The Bible declares expressly that God's work was finished and that it was good. It designates man as the image and likeness of God. This means that he

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† Editor's Note: Actually it underwent six major revisions

‡ Editor's Note: A thoroughgoing revision of the German translation of *Science and Health* appeared in 1975.

was, is, and ever will be perfect. The reverse would be an inconsistency. If God created man partly good and partly evil, man would have to remain thus. What can improve the work of God? The same is true of disease and evil. "If God causes man to be sick, sickness must be good, and its opposite, health, must be evil.. .it is right to be sick; and we cannot if we would, and should not if we could, annul the decrees of wisdom." But all these things are utter impossibilities. "God is as incapable of producing sin, sickness, and death, as He is of experiencing these errors." God must be eternally in harmony with Himself and His creation, else He would not be the perfect One, and would not be All-in-all.

What, then, do corporeality, sin, sickness, death – which certainly do torment man – signify? In truth, they are but deception and misapprehension on the part of man, present only to his consciousness but not existing as realities. Mrs. Eddy furnishes indications as to the origin of these illusions through an allegorical use of the record of creation. She cites the Adam dream (that is, Adam's deep sleep before the creation of woman) as the cause of all this deception. The metaphor aside, this means that evil and all other wrong originated from a forgetting of God that was unintentional and unconscious in the beginning – for this forgetting of God led to the erroneous notion that the universe is something self-active and self-generating. This at once resulted in a coarsening of man's entire state of mind; "mortal mind," to use her language, came into being. "Mortal mind sees what it believes as certainly as it believes what it sees. It feels, hears, and sees its own thoughts." If one believes in real, self-acting matter he will perceive it through his senses. A further result is the descent into sensual pleasure and carnal gratification. Sickness, too, has the same origin. The forgetting of God causes fear, and fear is the foundation of all disease; indeed it is sickness itself. Man believes he has to become sick, hence he becomes sick. Fear, through association of thoughts, produces a certain image of sickness, and this is manifested in the body. "You say a boil is painful; but that is impossible, for matter without mind is not painful. The boil simply manifests, through inflammation and swelling, a belief in pain, and this belief is called a boil."13 Such false beliefs are being implanted into the present generation through education, fostered by descriptions of disease from physicians and the influence of adults on children. Thus the steadily growing legion of diseases has come into being.

Mrs. Eddy, however, is emphatic in her declaration that none of these things ever touch the real, the spiritual man. The image of God has not been lost. It could not be lost or destroyed. For God's work is eternal, and evil is no real entity. Evil "is unreal, because it presupposes the absence of God, the omnipotent and omnipresent." "The only power of evil is to destroy itself. It can never destroy one iota of good.'" Neither can evil affect the image. "When fear disappears, the foundation of disease is gone." Behind all these illusions the true, eternal, spiritual man continues to exist in every individual. He is only as though enveloped by a mist, just lost from consciousness.

The dark cloud which had settled on mankind as a result of these false beliefs has been rent by Jesus. Through word and deed he again brought to light the truth about God and reality. He was not God, for how could the infinite enter the finite? Neither did he reconcile God to men; for the divine Principle of Christ is God, and how could God propitiate Himself? But he was the embodiment of Truth. His miracles, his resurrection and ascension again evidenced to men true reality and the unity of man with the Father.

This message of Jesus has been curtailed in the existing churches. They have retained but one element, namely the battle of Jesus against sin, but have dropped the battle against disease and death. At the same time they have evolved a doctrine of salvation which resulted in clinging to the person of Jesus instead of to his active power. Yet Jesus wanted *followers*; followers who would emulate him in all his ways and, according to his explicit command, should imitate his great works. The command he gave his disciples to heal the sick is as valid today as it was centuries ago.

Starting from this point, Mrs. Eddy understands her experience as a divine commission. She feels called to rouse dormant Christendom and to restore the original, the whole Gospel.

She has not – it must be admitted – handled her task superficially. She does not mean that people merely need to be told that there is no reality in either sin or disease, so they need not be concerned about either.

To be sure, she appeals primarily to thought; for she is imbued with the conviction that what she presents is Christian *Science*, not an ideology based on blind faith, but one based on right reasoning and facts derived from experience. "The time for thinkers has come. . . . Ignorance of God is no longer the stepping-stone to faith," she exclaims enthusiastically. But along with this, she insists upon the fact that the understanding she is talking about includes a *moral* task as well. No one may hope to accomplish the change from error to truth at a single bound. "To reach the heights of Christian Science, man must live in obedience to its divine Principle." "We apprehend Life in divine Science only as we live above corporeal sense and correct it."

It is just for this reason that she can lay stress on the fact that to her as to the rest of Christendom, healing is not the most important element of Christianity. In the Scriptural passage that she so often quotes (Mark 16:17) about the signs following, she underscores the word "following." "These signs are only to demonstrate its divine origin, —— to attest the reality of the higher mission of the Christ-power to take away the sins of the world." The main thing to her is the battle against sin, the healing being only an attendant though indispensable result.

Still she will not permit natural, human will-power to be called into play as a help in this battle. She regards human will-power, as such, as something allied only with corporeality – something animal and therefore more harmful than not.

Rather, according to her view, the right way leads from the top down. Everything depends upon this point: that the true image of God must dawn on man, that he should catch a clear glimpse – directly or indirectly through someone else's word or deed – which reveals true being to him. At such a moment – when he apprehends God as Spirit – man becomes conscious of both his relationship to God and his eternal unity with Him. And in this way he is immediately freed from his self-centeredness. For self-centeredness always results from man believing in many ruling spirits. As soon as he knows that there is but one Spirit, he feels united with all others as brethren.

But when this illumination takes place – Mrs. Eddy does not hesitate to describe this experience as the new birth – then it is necessary to maintain the direction one has taken toward the spiritual. "Look away from the body into Truth and Love, the Principle of all happiness, harmony, and immortality. Hold thought steadfastly to the enduring, the good, and the true, and you will bring these into your experience proportionably to their occupancy of your thoughts." Man is now confronted with the task of dissolving within himself all false beliefs about corporeality, sin, sickness, and death. This requires persistent work on the individual's part, constant watchfulness, concentration, and purification. This is what Mrs. Eddy is wont to call "taking up the cross and following Christ in the daily life."

That which cultivates both the highest and most refined means toward this end is prayer – prayer, to be sure, as she would have it understood. For in this instance Mrs. Eddy fully discloses herself as a Puritan – indeed she goes beyond Puritanism into Quakerism. She is a pronounced opponent of any kind of worship that even distantly resembles "materialization." Audible prayer in any form appears to her highly questionable; she is apprehensive that love of applause and egotism may underlie it.[§] True prayer is a silent yielding of self to God, an ever closer relationship to God, until His omnipresence and love are felt effectively by man. "Lips must be mute and materialism silent, that man may have audience with Spirit, the divine Principle, Love, which destroys all error." This, however, does not imply aimless dreaming, it does not mean submergence in God, whereby the human self would be absorbed. To her, the only valid prayer is that which bears within itself the resolve to live a life consistent with that prayer. The self remains intact, and the object of prayer is to reconcile one's own will to the divine.

At this point, evil collapses for man into its own nothingness. Fear also vanishes, fear which gives rise to the so—called disease; for divine Love casts out all fear. When subordinate to the divine Spirit, man cannot be controlled by sin or death.

The right conclusion to be reached through this line of reasoning would be that each individual heals himself. Mrs. Eddy recognizes this, but only as a future possibility. For the present, she takes into account actual conditions – that is, the varying degrees of understanding and the fluctuating mental state of individuals, all of which explains the necessity for a corps of professional healers.

From what has been said, it will be quite apparent that she strictly forbids the use of medicine to these healers, in fact to them in particular, in order that they may rely exclusively on their spiritual capabilities. No one can serve two masters: it is a question of relying either on God or on matter. Reliance on matter is, as a matter of fact, anti-Christian and a transgression of the First Commandment. (Let it be said, however, that Mrs. Eddy has always given credit to the physicians for their good intentions.) Neither is the description of diseases, of their symptoms, location and fatality in accordance with the spirit of Christian Science.

But whatever elements of this sort she may omit she believes it possible to replace abundantly in other ways. If all disease originates in mind, the healer's prime endeavor must

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[§] Editor's Note: The Lord's Prayer is prayed audibly in every Christian Science church service.

be to perceive the thought-pictures which control the sufferer unaware of them. Mrs. Eddy is convinced that this is possible. "When sufficiently advanced in Science to be in harmony with the truth of being, men become seers and prophets involuntarily." Thus they are able to read the mind of the sick as well. "They copy or reproduce them (these pictures of thought) even when they are lost to the memory of the mind in which they are discoverable."** Mrs. Eddy finds authority for this in her own experience. "I have discerned disease in the human mind," she says, "and recognized the patient's fear of it, months before the so-called disease made its appearance in the body." This mind-reading, however, is completely different from clairvoyance. Her contention is that clairvoyance is something purely human and questionable from the moral point of view. This mind-reading, on the other hand, presupposes union with God. Whoever attains it beholds things from above; he sees, as it were, with God's eyes, and judges the thoughts of the sick in accordance with the divine rule and standard. "Error of any kind cannot hide from the law of God. It does not matter whether the persons concerned are present or not, for space is no obstacle to Spirit. "Though bodies are leagues apart and their associations forgotten, their associations float in the general atmosphere of human mind.

As mind-reading takes the place of diagnosis, prayer takes the place of medical means. Prayer may be resorted to with all the more trust, since the question involved is not that of having to force something out of God. "Shall we ask the divine Principle of all goodness to do His own work? His work is done, and we have only to avail ourselves of God's rule...."A God conceived of as corporeal may be implored to heal the sick out of His personal volition. But he who understands God as Spirit and goodness knows that not only is the will to heal always present with Him, but that the healing itself is in reality already accomplished. The object of prayer, therefore, is only to gain the understanding of God's work already completed and to encourage this understanding in the sick.

Hence the instruction to the healer is simply: "Realize the presence of health and the fact of harmonious being, until the body corresponds with the normal conditions of health and harmony." The healer entertains the healthy condition in his thought and thus makes it possible for the sick person to experience it. But Mrs. Eddy warns the healer specifically not to use his natural human will—power. He shall not arouse and strengthen the will of the other through his own human will, but simply open the way in the consciousness of the sick person for the divine activity. By lifting his thought to God, the Omnipresent, and at the same time coming into sympathy with the sick, he causes in the latter a process of "chemicalization," as Mrs. Eddy calls it. "[The effect of this Science is] to stir the human mind to a change of base, on which it may yield to the harmony of the divine Mind." Then the beautiful result is that the patient is healed both in body and in spirit.

Basically there are no limits to the healing power of Christian Science, and Mrs. Eddy prides herself on having healed organic disease as readily as functional. She already dreams of a future when even the so—called laws of nature will be wholly subordinate to Spirit.

At present, to be sure, she has to acknowledge limitations. These, for one thing, are due to the varying abilities of the individual healers. The ability to heal depends on the progress

** Editor's Note: Holl misreads this particular sentence, which refers to the phenomenon of clairvoyance rather than to the spiritual discernment of thought that Eddy saw as part of New Testament healing.

one has made in understanding. Besides, no one maintains the same level of inspiration at all times. A person may heal in one instance and in another be dependent on a healer. Also the sum total of understanding thus far attained by mankind puts definite limitations upon mental activity. Just as it would go beyond our present understanding to stop eating and drinking at this stage or to attempt the raising of the dead and walking on the water, it is necessary in healing work to take into account the assumed imperfection of understanding. Mrs. Eddy herself declares that it is better to leave the setting of broken and dislocated limbs to the fingers of a surgeon, although it is claimed that here, too, instances of healing have already been effected in a purely mental way. She gives the same advice with regard to obstetrics. Indeed, she goes so far as to permit a hypodermic injection if the Christian Scientist should not be able to get relief himself or through the help of a healer.

When one stops to consider the unique aspect of this teaching, one realizes the difficulty of Mrs. Eddy's task in establishing an appropriate organization. Mrs. Eddy's first attempts in this direction convey to the casual observer the impression of a certain inconsistency. After she started teaching in Lynn in 1867, she believed it was possible to take a forward step in 1875 at the same time *Science and Health* was published. Plans were evolved for the establishment of a congregation. However, dissension immediately arose between her and her students, and plans for a church came to naught. All she was able to achieve in the following year (1876) was to form a loosely organized society, the Christian Scientist Association.

Shortly thereafter better prospects became apparent in Boston. She lectured in that city and was invited by a few denominations to preach to them, for instance by the Baptists in 1878. She also found a strong support in her third husband, Asa Gilbert Eddy, whom she married in 1877, thereafter calling herself Mary Baker Eddy. Thus in 1879 she dared to found a church, this time in Boston, the result being what has since become the "Mother Church" of Christian Science. The members extended a call to her to become its pastor, and in 1881 she was formally ordained. In January, 1881, she also founded an institution, the Massachusetts Metaphysical College, for which she obtained a state charter. Husband and wife shared the work, he attending chiefly to the work of instructing at the college, she to leading the services of the denomination.

Soon again, however, the work came to a standstill. Again there were dissensions between her and her students, and in 1882 her husband died. This forced her to resume teaching at the Metaphysical College herself, though the church services suffered in consequence.

She did not yield to discouragement, however. The Association was still in existence when, in 1883, she founded a periodical, the *Journal of Christian Science*, as a rallying-point for the growing number of her adherents. In the following year (1884) she decided to push forward into the central part of the country, to Chicago. The success she had there encouraged her to enlarge her society into an organization covering the whole of North America (National Christian Scientist Association). The large meeting that she was able to hold again in Chicago in 1888 showed how far her influence had already spread.

But just at the time her cause was getting under way she made startling changes. In 1889 she dissolved the Metaphysical College and in 1890 the church in Boston. This was not,

however, a conclusive termination. After completing her new edition of *Science and Health*, she established The Mother Church of Boston in 1892 on a new foundation. She devoted her chief attention during the following years to this work, that is to her church. Not until 1899, seven years after the reorganization of the church, did she reopen the Metaphysical College.

She was not living in Boston during this time, having retired to New Hampshire in 1892[††] where she remained until 1908. From this point on she was not seen publicly as much as before. She confined herself to writing articles for the *Journal*, sending messages to the church, visiting it, and receiving delegations. But as a matter of fact, she was directing it all from behind the scenes with a mastery that Mark Twain regarded with grim admiration. Also when she moved back to Boston in 1908 to the suburb, Chestnut Hill, she avoided being seen much even by those close to her. But until her death – or, scientifically speaking, until her disappearance from our plane of consciousness (Dec. 3, 1910) – she held all the reins firmly in hand.

The difficulties which she had to overcome went beyond those usually attending the founding of any new church. Her fundamental concept of things gave rise to difficulties of a peculiar kind. What she presents she considers to be a science. The result was that her first efforts were in the direction of a school. But where there is a school there are always heretics. It was not possible for Mrs. Eddy, either, to prevent her ideas from being enlarged upon and mixed with similar ideas, especially since spiritualism had sprung up not long before and mesmerism had just begun to come into prominence at the same time. Naturally she found her first adherents within circles which had responded to such influences. Her endeavor was, however, to draw a sharp line between her own teaching and teachings akin to hers, and above all to preserve its purely religious character. But not all her students were able to follow her on this road, and this is where she failed in her first attempts. As often as she tried to unite her adherents in a church, centrifugal forces started pulling it apart.

Hence, reorganizing in 1892, she starts from the other end. The church now comes first, while the school is temporarily eliminated so that it does not disturb the growth of the church, and is reopened only after the church has been securely established. The by-laws that Mrs. Eddy gave Christian Science and the position she created for herself aroused Mark Twain's particular ire. He noted shrewdly that the wording of the by-laws clothes in harmless-sounding provisions the crucial position that Mrs. Eddy secured for herself. However, Mark Twain as an American basically has no right to be shocked at this. For the example that inspired Mrs. Eddy is nothing more than the American Constitution, her own position corresponding to that of the President of the Union. As in the American Constitution the dictatorship of an individual is established along with (apparently) the strictest guarantee of the rights of the people, so it was in the case of Mrs. Eddy.[‡‡]

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[††] Editor's Note: actually in 1889.

[‡‡] Editor's Note: Though Holl's naiveté in regard to the American presidency has the flavor of Kaiser Wilhelm's Berlin rather than Adolf Hitler's, it leads him to miss the real analogy between the government of the Church of Christ, Scientist and the American constitutional system. This is its "federal" structure, setting up a balance between the strong centralized authority of The Mother Church and the democratic self-government of the branch churches.

And after she had in this manner bound her church firmly to her person, Mrs. Eddy made further provision against any heresy arising within the ranks of her adherents. Not only did she declare *Science and Health* to be the canonical book, but she also forbade the writing of commentaries on it.

In like manner she excluded from the church service every possibility of individuals advancing their own spiritual views. There is no preaching at the services, but only reading of selections from the Bible and correlative passages from *Science and Health*, according to a plan worked out by her. Neither is there any church office for the improvement of her teaching. There are only administrative offices or those concerned with the dissemination of the teaching. In addition, every individual church is closely affiliated with The Mother Church in Boston.

The theologian in this instance is completely eliminated – at least so far as intent is concerned – more completely than either the Catholic Church or Islam has dared to eliminate him.[§§]

Under this firm control, Christian Science has experienced tremendous growth, its teachings having already spread throughout five continents. It is interesting to note from what social strata Christian Science draws its adherents. So far as can be observed, it has spread more widely in Protestant than in Catholic countries – in the latter, Lourdes and similar places offer a substitute; it is more strongly represented by the middle and upper classes than by the lower, and more by women than by men.

The reasons for this quick rise may be seen without difficulty. The most effective element about it is doubtless what Zola has called the cry for health. But it is just because this demand is so natural and so self-evident that a better explanation must be sought as to why this desire should have led in our day to the formation of a large church. It is not sufficient to point out that at all times certain pious circles have entertained doubts as to the propriety of calling in a physician, or to the fact that in our times more anxious care is taken of the body than in former days – at least during the period preceding the war. The puzzling question is really how this kind of healing could have originated side by side with a highly developed medical science. This would be utterly impossible if cures had not actually been accomplished through Christian Science, and that not only in cases of imaginary disease. But the bypassing of the physician, which in part accounts for the reception of Christian Science, suggests another question. Since the skill of physicians today cannot be doubted, it must be inferred that the personal trust in the physician as a man has somewhat diminished. One cannot but admit that a certain popular tone assumed among the medical profession, the cynical vaunting of a materialistic concept of life, "Weltanschauung," is in large part responsible for this condition.

Still, it would be underestimating Christian Science should one attempt to trace it back to the mere natural desire to live. Where there is the founding of a new church, there must also be impulses of a higher order.

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[§§] Editor's Note: Actually, it could be said that the opposite is true: Eddy's teaching makes every church member a theologian.

These I find primarily in the simplification of the image of the world presented by Christian Science. Every monistic view of life, whether conceived on a materialistic or a spiritualistic basis, derives its strength from this simplification. The consciousness of being able to explain the whole world on the basis of a single law always confers a feeling of assurance or even of superiority.

To this are added the high moral forces which are awakened through Christian science. Sometimes when Mrs. Eddy talks enchantingly about the sole reality of Spirit, one fancies himself hearing Emerson. As a matter of fact, there is a certain affinity between them, although Mrs. Eddy denies having learned from Emerson. Fearlessness with regard to sin and disease, which results from a feeling of being secure in God's love, represents in and of itself a high moral value. But the relation in which morality and health are brought together here acts as an especially strong lever. The Scientist is able to ascertain at any time the scale of his own moral status within himself. Every disturbance of his well-being, every anxiety that may befall him, every uncertainty with regard to his actions is to him an indication that something is not as it should be within himself. On the other hand, the conviction that false belief exercises power makes it easy for him to consider opposition on the part of others as mere misunderstandings. This results in people of considerable self-control, business ability, and charming nature.

Finally, Christian Science – particularly in the larger cities – shares the advantages enjoyed by every sect. These smaller congregations are still truly congregations of brethren, whereas our big churches are barely congregations of hearers.

These advantages also easily cause the Scientist to bear the problems imposed on him by the North American business spirit. The financial demands on the members are greater than is generally the case even with sects. The very fact that each Scientist must spend precious money for *Science and Health* is no small burden. In addition to this comes the fact that the business spirit prevailing within the organization easily spreads to the individual members. And this is the characteristic that in the public eye is justifiably viewed as being offensive. But it must be acknowledged that, at least within the German movement, there are signs of some effort to counteract this unpleasant side.

I do not intend here to pass conclusive theological judgment upon Christian Science. Still, I may be permitted, for the sake of avoiding misinterpretation, to call attention to the following considerations:

First of all, it would be tasteless in the case of Christian Science to try to prove the existence of matter with a profound philosophical air, or to try to view it historically by ranking it with the systems beginning with Parmenides and Plato. It is rather necessary to become clear on two points:

1.The statement that God is the sole reality is the basis of every true religion, not of a degenerate religion. The intellectual converse of this proposition is that the world is an illusion. The highest exponents of religion have been the very ones who have at all times touched upon this proposition. A sufficient number of statements could be adduced, not only from Neoplatonic, mystic, and Buddhistic writings, but from the Old and the New

Testament, the purport of which is that the world is only smoke and vapor before God. No religion with the exception of Buddhism, it must be said however, is willing to draw this conclusion. Hence, in order to hold onto both the reality of God and the reality of the world, explanations resort to saying that there is a higher reality above the lower, a true reality behind that of the senses, that there are stages of being, etc. Intellectual analysis shows all these explanations to be mere expedients. The concept of being eliminates gradations. A thing either is or it is not. It is either real or it is unreal.

2. To be sure, when Mrs. Eddy fearlessly draws these conclusions it is not because of a delight in a clear mode of thinking, but because of other very evident reasons. He who wishes to encourage another to accomplish a difficult task must tell him that the thing properly considered is easy to accomplish. He who wishes to remove another's timidity must assure him that there is no danger. Mrs. Eddy applied these simple principles of the art of education. Her contention that evil and disease are but an illusion in its final analysis means that these conditions are not intended by God, and therefore they may be overcome. Thus the question involved is a simplification of the concept of life, resulting from *practical* considerations.

But even when trying to become acquainted with the practical and religious aspects of Christian Science, it is not easy to approach it from the generally accepted Christian or religious basis. The deepest thoughts of Christianity are lost on a plane where man's hope is founded solely upon the fact that he is created by God. The Protestant Christian in particular will feel separated from Christian Science as if by an abyss. As soon as one goes beyond this intrinsic element, judgment becomes uncertain. The fundamental view of Christian Science would lead one to conclude that there is no place in it for any religious thought which presupposes the reality of the corporeal world -- the view that man has been placed by God into an order to which he has to adjust himself, the concept of suffering as a means of instruction or punishment, the thought of retributive justice by God, the duty in respect to patience, submission, humility, etc. But opposed to this we have the fact that Mrs. Eddy speaks about all these things in *Science and Health*, and in part very beautifully.8 It may be argued that this is only a remnant of her Christian education which could be said not to agree with her fundamental views. That may be so. But these things are to be found in the bible of the Scientists and have a certain connection with its basic point of departure. Because of this they affect the practical outlook of Christian Science as well.