

## Dissolving Barriers

*The Healing Work of Christian Science --John L. Morgan*  
**PART IV: THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE TEXTBOOK**

All that any one of us knows and understands about Christian Science comes direct from God. As students of the Word of God, the Bible and Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures by Mary Baker Eddy are our guides. Mrs Eddy says of the textbook that it “contains the full statement of Christian Science, or the Science of healing through Mind” (S&H 456:28).

For many years we have heard people say such things as: Science and Health is too difficult and abstract, give me something simpler and relevant; or they ask: What is the basis for your attitude that this book has divine authority, spiritual sanctity, and a healing effect?

Christian Science teaches that healing is as possible today as it was in Jesus' time. Jesus healed by knowing the divine Principle of wholeness; and this knowledge was not something exclusive to Jesus and his immediate followers. When one investigates this barrier that so many people believe is between themselves and the message of Science and Health, one finds that the book is not seen first as a textbook to be read from beginning to end before being used as a reference book. The Bible is so often treated in a similar piecemeal way. The power of these books lies in their coherently integrated wholeness. It is only from the standpoint of the whole that a detail remains valid and powerful and not self-contradictory and self-destructive.

In Christian Science we refer to the Bible and Science and Health as our twin textbooks. The latter shows us why the former is truly the ‘book of life.’ When Mrs Eddy discontinued personal pastors (including herself) in the churches she ordained the Bible and Science and Health to take their place, calling them “Your dual and impersonal pastor” (Mis 322:10). She said in an article called “Science and Philosophy,” “I foresee and foresay that every advancing epoch of Truth will be characterized by a more spiritual apprehension of the Scriptures, that will show their marked consonance with the textbook of Christian Science Mind-healing, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures” (Mis 363:30). On another occasion, in a letter to a New York newspaper, Mrs Eddy said, “Christian Science presents the demonstrable divine Principle and rules of the Bible, hitherto undiscovered in the translations of the Bible and lacking in the creeds” (My 299:13). In no place in her writings does she indicate that Science and Health supercedes the Bible, supplements or replaces it. Indeed its full title, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures clearly states its relationship.

If we are seriously interested in any subject, we are prepared to go further than listening to lectures or asking questions about it, and we naturally turn to a textbook in order to make the elements of the subject clear. So what is the Christian Science textbook about? There is no quicker way of getting to the heart of what a book is about than to scan the Contents page. This is also the way that one sees the whole picture in one glance. So let us now look at the Contents page itself.

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What can we learn from our first glance at this table of contents? We note that there are eighteen chapters and that the last four are headed Key to the Scriptures. (There are also seven hundred pages, so it is a long book.) There is first a PREFACE which introduces us to the twin points that dominate the book: the fact that God can be understood aright, and that healing power follows from this understanding.

Chapter I is PRAYER. All our work in spiritual things naturally begins with prayer. There is the hunger of the human heart for God, — there is the deep desire to know what reality is, what substance is. But what are we really praying for? Prayer is sometimes an earnest request for health or a blessing or for well-being. But when we look further into this question we realize that what we are fundamentally praying for is something much deeper: surely it is for our conscious union with God, with our divine source. Isn't this the basic longing? The Lord's Prayer, common to us all, begins with the words, Our Father, words that are both comforting and express the nature of what we are seeking. "Prayer is our acknowledgement of this desire to be at-one with the divine, with our Parent-source.

The second chapter is ATONEMENT AND EUCHARIST. The word atonement as used in theology means unity, reconciliation, and its derivation is literally at one. At-one-ment therefore is not just a play on words. Some dictionaries even include Mrs Eddy's words, "Atonement is the exemplification of man's unity with God, whereby man reflects divine Truth, Life, and Love" (S&H 18:1). But the chapter is called Atonement and Eucharist, and in this context eucharist focuses on the price we are required to pay to experience at-one-ment. This price is that we have to give up all personal sense of a separate self. Jesus' sinless life depicts the surrender of the mortal sense of a life of one's own; he had no sense of himself as a separate person called Jesus. His divine identity as the Christ was his whole being; it demonstrated man reunited with, or reconciled to, God.

Our prayer for the at-one-ment of humanity with divinity leads us to the third chapter, MARRIAGE. What "God hath joined together" is the true human and the divine — the manhood and womanhood of God. Our humanity is found to be in wedlock with our divinity. All there is to you and me engaged in our rightful activities is the divine operating as you and me. So there is a beautiful state of marriage, when the divine is operating not through us but as us.

The fourth chapter is CHRISTIAN SCIENCE VERSUS SPIRITUALISM and it handles the belief of mediumship in any form. If you think of God working through a person He is requiring a medium, but if you think of God operating as what is called you and me, that is what is meant by the term Christian Science. We are not persons who have to take the ideas of God and do something with them, rather we are the direct operating of these ideas of God. Just as when we are honest, or intelligent, or loving, these qualities operate as you and me, not through us as persons. A Christian is not someone with a will of his own, he is a spiritual Scientist. There is not really a person in the picture; there is only the direct operation of God. It is this that uncovers or unmask the lie or false influence.

The fifth chapter is ANIMAL MAGNETISM UNMASKED. Animal magnetism is the term used in Christian Science to denote all error, but essentially the error of personal sense, personal will. It is this that keeps all humanity in bondage. Christian Science unmask this attempted personal despotic control of man and shows that animal magnetism has no power of its own and no authority. Unmasking this error at the same time reveals the truth in our hearts and lives that "man is properly self-governed only when he is guided rightly and governed by his Maker, divine Truth and Love" (106:9). This is God's man. This is a real Christian Scientist.

Chapter six, SCIENCE, THEOLOGY, MEDICINE, is such an encouraging confirmation of this point, for it begins: "In the year 1866, I discovered the Christ Science or divine laws of Life, Truth, and Love" (107:1). It was Mary Baker Eddy who, in making this discovery, named it Christian Science and wrote the textbook. But we can never act with conviction if we merely accept something we have been told, therefore the I that makes the discovery of the divine laws is not only Mary Baker Eddy but is also any student who has been prepared through the steps of the five previous chapters. Unless we make discoveries ourselves, we do not really understand.

The first five chapters enable the student to participate in an orderly way in what Mrs Eddy describes as God's gracious preparation of the heart and the mind and the life before the discovery of spiritual reality makes sense to us. What really makes sense is this fact that God operates through divine laws, not haphazardly.

The method by which the falsity of material evidence is changed to that of spiritual reality, as we have already seen, is by translation.

At this point the book shows that the divine laws are beginning to pour into our consciousness, leavening, translating and transforming everything. The Science of God and man comes to us as a true theology — "I and my Father are one," as Jesus defined it — and that conviction medicines or heals the human condition of apparent separation from our Father. Science gives us the Christ view, which heals and changes and resurrects everything in the human. We see evidence of this in the next chapter.

Chapter seven, PHYSIOLOGY, deals first with the physiological sense of body, which we tend to think of as the working of organs and as being subject to disease and death. But as we let that Christ translation come into consciousness and overturn our false conceptions, we experience body, not as organic or physiological, but as the embodying of the activities and faculties and powers of God. This chapter shows us a transitional stage where the five physical senses yield to God; we learn that Mind, not brain, controls the body. The famous pianist, Ashkenazy, was once asked how it was that he reached the pitch of being able to play music so supremely well. His answer was, 'I practise, and practise, and practise until it is no longer me playing the music but the music playing me.' So you might say that the physiology of Ashkenazy is transformed; it is not him sitting there consciously telling his fingers to do this and that, but the music is pouring through him, as him, translating the personal physical sense of himself. We've all experienced this from time to time in some degree.

The eighth chapter is FOOTSTEPS OF TRUTH. We now realize that these longed-for footsteps to Truth which we are faithfully trying to fulfil are only possible of fulfilment because they are in fact footsteps leading out from Truth. It is a cycle. Perfection may seem to be an absolute goal, an impossible ideal, but these demands of Truth upon us can be fulfilled because our footsteps are actually the footsteps of Truth itself. At the end of this chapter we are told, "The divine demand, 'Be ye therefore perfect,' is scientific, and the human footsteps leading to perfection are indispensable" (253:32).



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