A Good Name Is Better than Great Riches:  
The Reputation of Mary Baker Eddy

by

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A Project in American Studies  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for a Master of Arts Degree  
In American Studies  
The Pennsylvania State University at Harrisburg  
August 2015

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Abstract

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In order to create a lasting legacy, a person must first form a reputation which can weather the vicissitudes of life. Mary Baker Eddy, the discoverer and founder of Christian Science, shaped a reputation which appealed to the religious and social climate of the nineteenth century. Through her identification as a Messiah figure, she established trustworthiness in the eyes of many who were familiar with Jesus and his miracles. Through borrowing from the other religious practices of the day, Eddy attracted those who sought faith through spiritual or scientific means. Her embracing of the role of mother not only drew her followers close to her through the image of a mother’s love and concern, it also established her religious authority as the duty of mothers during Eddy’s lifetime was to instruct their children in the faith and to preserve morality through their own lifestyles. Eddy’s adept use of marketing strategies advertised Christian Science to the world and gave it credibility. Through mirroring contemporary writing styles, offering print materials similar in form and function to others of the day, and employing her followers as zealous, free advertisement, the message of Christian Science spread rapidly.

The attacks on Eddy’s reputation—for they were numerous—were met with quick, decisive action. The charisma of Eddy’s own personality and her skill with a pen changed what
may have been a disaster into a triumph. Even in her declining years, those closest to her maintained her reputation giving her a legacy which persists to this day.
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Acknowledgements

Thank you to Dr. Anthony Buccitelli and Dr. Simon Bronner for their excellent help in advising me through the thesis process and to Dr. Charles Kupfer who said, “You know, you could write your thesis on this topic.” Many thanks to my “pretend cohort”—Cory Hutcheson and Kate Holmes—who read drafts and listened to me ramble on about Mary Baker Eddy. A special thanks to Christina Keenan who always greets me with a smile and does a fabulous job with all the details. I am grateful for the help of the Christian Science Reading Room in State College, Pennsylvania. To my family—James, Nathan, Breanna, David, Libby, Michael, Rachel—and to my mom I also say thank you for all the encouragement.
“Mother! The baby! It’s coming!” moaned Lottie James to her mother, Abby Corner. The baby was not due for several weeks yet, and the surprised household sprang into action. A nurse-midwife arrived while Lottie’s mother, Abby, began applying the techniques of Christian Science to the childbirth. After a quick, painful labor, Lottie gave birth to a stillborn daughter. The midwife tried to revive the baby, but it was dead. Instead, she turned her attention to Lottie who was writhing in agony. “Please, mother, send for a doctor!” pleaded Lottie. Abby Corner continued to practice the principles of Christian Science and instructed her daughter that she was not really suffering. If she would put her trust in God and in the prayers of Christian Science, all would be well. Lottie began convulsing, and her mother called in another Christian Science practitioner to pray with her and consented to the midwife calling a physician. However, before the doctor could make the ten minute trip to the Corner home, Lottie had died of a massive hemorrhage.

The shock and grief over this death in March 1888 caused many to question the validity of Christian Science. It seemed that everyone had heard of at least one story where a person trusted a Christian Science practitioner, refused to go to a doctor, and later died. Newspapers picked up the attack on the faith. The *Boston Daily Globe* wrote,” The prayer test has been tried...with fatal results...a faith so ineffectual that it will stand calmly by while an innocent
mother and an unborn baby die needs correction if not extermination.”¹ Mrs. Corner was indicted for manslaughter. On June 9, 1888, she was acquitted by a jury on the grounds that medical science also could not have prevented the bleeding which was the cause of her daughter’s death, but, by then, great damage had already been done in the press and public sentiment to the cause of Christian Science and to its leader, Mary Baker Eddy.

Aware of the damage to her reputation and to that of the faith she had worked so hard to promote, Eddy put a notice in the June 1888 issue of The Christian Science Journal: “For Christ’s sake and humanity’s sake gather together; meet en masse at the annual session of the National Christian Scientist Association...Let no consideration bend or outweigh your purpose to be in Chicago on June 13.”² Eddy’s plea worked. The first day of the convention, 800 delegates crammed into the meeting hall for a Christian Scientists-only assembly. The next night, Central Music Hall in Chicago throbbed with over 4,000 bodies—some devout Christian Scientist and some members of the curious public. All of the city’s newspapers published on the event.

“More than a hundred good-looking, well-dressed women occupied chairs on the stage...and gazed upon an audience of as many thousands of equally good-looking and well-dressed women as could be crowded into the place,”³ reported the Chicago Daily Tribune. The paper went on to say that Eddy “is really a woman of impressive appearance and intellectual force...with a strong frame and the face of an ascetic...there is a ring of terrible conviction in [her voice].”⁴ The Boston Evening Traveler stated that only a quarter of those in attendance at

¹ Schoepflin, Christian Science on Trial, 83.
² Christian Science Journal, June 1888.
this meeting were Christian Scientists, yet for over an hour after her speech: “Up came the crowds to her side, begging for one-hand clasp, one look, one memorial of her whose name was a power and a sacred thing...A mother who failed to get near held high her babe to look on her helper. Others touched the dress of their benefactor, not so much as asking for more.” The fervor continued that evening at a reception at the Palmer House where Mary Baker Eddy was staying. Sybil Wilbur wrote, “They pressed forward upon her regardless of each other...silks and laces were torn, flowers crushed, and jewels lost.” Eddy had turned the tide. The ebullient triumph of the Chicago meeting eclipsed the news of the Corner manslaughter trial. Mary Baker Eddy’s reputation and that of her faith seemed to be restored due to the force of her personality and the actions of those who supported her.

What Is a Reputation?

Any person who wishes to become a public figure must cultivate a reputation that causes people to respond favorably. Sociologist Gary Alan Fine defines reputation aptly as “the recognition of a social persona or an organizing principle by which the actions of a person (or a group, organization, or collectivity) are linked into a common assessment.” Reputation forms when a group assesses the actions of a person and makes a judgment. These judgments pass through a multi-layered filter system defined by countless factors such as the moral code of the person who assimilates the views of society at the time or the social standing of the one being assessed. The same individual can garner radically different reputations based upon the group

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5 Boston Evening Traveler, June 1888, in Fettweis and Warneck, 130.
6 Wilbur, The Life of Mary Baker Eddy, 311.
7 Fine, Difficult Reputations, 78.
who judges him or her. Margaret Sanger, the founder of The American Birth Control League (which later became Planned Parenthood), received praise and censure in equal measure for the same actions. Her activism regarding family planning and desire to end unsafe abortion practices vilified her in the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church. However, to middle-class and low-income women, she seemed to be a hero. The person and her actions did not change; the people who assessed were different. As such, her reputation varied depending upon who was asked.

Reputation becomes a type of social capital that can be spent to further one’s social standing or to exculpate a wrongdoer. When someone earns a positive reputation, society seems more willing to overlook infractions of the moral or social code to which they adhere. Numerous sports figures, politicians, and movie stars fall into troubles of all sorts. Actor Hugh Grant was caught in 1995 the backseat of a car with a prostitute, an elevator camera captured NFL running back Ray Rice hitting his wife in the face in 2014, President Bill Clinton brought new meaning to blue dresses and cigars in his 1998 affair with intern Monica Lewinsky—all of these men’s previous reputations allowed them to ride the storm of their scandal and buy their way back into the good graces of the public due to the social capital their reputations granted them.

But how does a reputation form? While living a good life and being kind to others may earn a person a good reputation, someone cannot make a reputation on his or her own. Gary Alan Fine discusses the social aspects of reputations in his 2001 book, Difficult Reputations:

“Reputations are collective representations enacted in relationships. A reputation is not the

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8 Sanger received censure from many groups for her beliefs on eugenics. In this section, I am simply referring to her advocacy of birth control. Encyclopedia of Science, Technology, and Ethics, 1678-1680 and Science and Its Times, 383-384.
opinion that one individual forms of another; rather, it is a shared, established image. Reputations are embedded within social relations, and as a consequence, reputation is connected to the forms of communication embedded within a community.”

Just because one person thinks positively or negatively about another does not establish a reputation. It takes a group of people to create a reputation. This community can vary in number from a family unit to an entire nation. Whatever the size, it is the shared values and beliefs of this community which form the analysis that creates a reputation. The beliefs they hold about a certain individual become a type of communication between the members of the group.

A reputation first begins, however, with those closest to the individual. “Identification and reputation begin within circles of personal intimates, then they spread outward,” writes Fine. The people closest to a person have the first chance to shape the reputation. These people function as “reputational entrepreneurs,” those who make claims about another person. When a person gains enough status, the media, biographers, and historians assume the role of reputational entrepreneur. Each one has a specific reason for advancing the reputation of the individual. In so doing, the person who tells the story advances his or her own reputation by association with the famous person.

Parasocial Relationships

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9 Fine, Difficult Reputations, 3.
10 Fine, Difficult Reputations, 3.
11 Fine, Difficult Reputations, 21.
This type of parasocial relationship occurs frequently in modern America. Parasocial relationships exist when an individual feels a personal connection to someone he or she does not personally know but feels close to. Donald Horton and R. Richard Wohl first coined the term “parasocial interactions” in 1956 when they pointed out that “some television viewers engage in one-direction, quasi-social interactions with media performers.”

People talked to their televisions as if the people on screen could hear them. They looked forward to certain shows not merely for the entertainment value but because they considered the viewing time to be the equivalent of a visit with a friend. These relationships began to extend beyond the time of the show into “parasocial relationships.” These relationships mimic a traditional social relationship in that one person feels affection and interest in the media figure. Unlike a traditional relationship, parasocial relationships are one-sided. John L. Caughey describes the realm of parasocial relationships and reports on why these relationships exist by stating, “Media figures are better than ordinary people. They have godlike qualities that are impossible for mortals to sustain. Furthermore, the emotional attachment is not complicated by the ambivalence that characterizes actual relationships; admiration is unchecked by the recognition of faults and limitations.”

Since people cannot see the faults of the person on the television or in the movies, the media figure reaches mythic proportions. Individuals engaged in parasocial relationships begin to fantasize about their hero or heroine. Daydreams become frequent, imaginary conversations occur, plans for how to meet this person or how to get closer to him or her fill the spare moments of life. Caughey writes, “Once the initial identification has been

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13 Caughey, Imaginary Social Worlds, 53.
made, patterned forms of behavior typically develop...The individual collects totemlike jewelry, T-shirts, locks of hair, photographs...The individual reads the author’s work repeatedly...or travels long distances to attend a concert.”

While the current research on parasocial relationships focuses on television and movie stars, a similar pattern has occurred throughout history. Through media representations or public appearances, those in the public sphere, through virtue of their reputations, caused the formation of parasocial relationships. Barry Schwartz describes the “cult of George Washington” which sprang up transforming a shy farmer into a national hero. While Washington’s exploits and sacrifice on behalf of the country are clear, the iconic status he received was a direct result of reputational entrepreneurs at work. Paintings, songs, statues, currency, holidays, buildings, and schools bear Washington’s image or name. Whether Washington sought out such fame is irrelevant. Those in society chose a hero and treated him as such. Joshua Gamson notes, “Although fame of ‘the great man’ was generally one of distinctive inner qualities, they were qualities that could potentially exist in any man.”

Washington possessed a distinctive resolve and sacrificial nature; yet the characteristics he possessed were not unique to him alone causing a two-fold reaction. Since these qualities seemed obtainable, the population emulated Washington. His Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior found their way into countless copybooks throughout the nation. These rules seemed attainable: “Shift not yourself in the Sight of others nor Gnaw your nails,” “Eat not in the Streets, nor in the House, out of Season,” and “When you speak of God or his attributes, let it

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14 Caughey, Imaginary Social Worlds, 55-56.
16 Gamson, Claims to Fame, 19.
be seriously & with reverence. Honor & obey your natural parents although they be poor.\textsuperscript{17} struck a chord with readers. These rules could be followed. And if people followed them, they could be just like the great man. In another vein, the aggrandized exploits of the first president could not be emulated by common men. How could someone ride through many battles in the thick of musket fire and never be hit by a bullet? While some of his reputation made him approachable, the mythic aspects kept him distanced from the general population as someone to be respected and admired.

It is not only George Washington who profited from reputational entrepreneurs. Mary Baker Eddy gained prominence through reports of miraculous healings; yet, like Washington, her writings made it seem as if any person who sincerely followed her faith could do likewise. Her devotees felt a personal connection to her and hailed her as “Mother,” a parental, familiar title, similar to George Washington’s sobriquet, “Father of our Country.” While she never had a holiday in her honor or saw her face on bank notes, Eddy’s leadership of the Church of Christ, Scientist remains unquestioned—over 100 years after her death—and her rise from penniless, abandoned wife to multi-millionaire, religious leader seems astounding.

Mary Baker Eddy’s reputation as a great leader grew from three ideas which were important to contemporary Americans. She styled herself as a Messiah-figure, playing upon the rich, Christian heritage of America while acknowledging the new thoughts about spirituality that circulated through church and parlor of the day. She also portrayed herself as a mother. In the nineteenth century, a mother not only represented someone who gave birth to children; her responsibility was the moral care of those children and the spiritual focus of the home.

\textsuperscript{17} Washington, \textit{George Washington’s Rules of Civility & Decent Behavior}. 
Eddy modeled these functions in creating converts and taking responsibility for their spiritual training and by faithfully caring for her church, making sure that disputes and troubles received speedy redress. Finally, Eddy proved to be a capable business mogul through shrewd management decisions, marketing strategies, and book sales.

Despite Eddy’s personal care in establishing her reputation and the dutiful attention of her followers who functioned as reputational entrepreneurs, critics and detractors abounded. In her later years, Eddy’s sanity and the efficacy of her methods was repeatedly questioned over the course of several courts trials. Some of these trials stemmed from Eddy’s belief in Malicious Animal Magnetism, a kind of evil thinking which she blamed for the misfortunes in her life. Even though she won most of these trials, the negative publicity damaged her reputation to those outside of her faith. However, due to the social capital that she had earned through over thirty years of leading the Church of Christ, Scientist, Eddy weathered the storms surrounding her reputation and came through with her dignity intact.

Who was this woman that so many hailed as a type of Christ or branded a charlatan?
Chapter 1: MARY: A BIOGRAPHY OF THE LIFE OF MARY BAKER MORSE GLOVER PATTERSON EDDY

On July 16, 1821, Mary Morse Baker was born on a modest farm in Bow, New Hampshire. She was the youngest of Mark and Abigail Baker’s six children. For most of her childhood, Mary’s paternal grandmother, Mary Ann Baker, lived with them. Grandmother Baker was widowed, and although she lived with Mary’s father, her other son was also supposed to be responsible for some of her expenses. The care of their needy, elderly mother caused constant contention between the two brothers. This was Mary’s first—but certainly not last—exposure to financial dependency.

Mary suffered from poor health, and many of the Baker family letters discussed Mary’s illnesses, but no specific diseases were cited. The health of the entire family seemed precarious at times, but considering the preoccupation of the day with discussing one’s health, it is not surprising that who had been taken ill or was recovering would figure prominently in correspondence. However, Mary’s illnesses caused drama. Edward Dankin’s biography states, “Records of these occasions, supplied by eye-witnesses, are not lacking. Sometimes there were convulsions, sometimes screams of apparent agony, sometimes the rigidity of catalepsy.” The

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18 Gill, Mary Baker Eddy, 7.
19 Dakin, Mrs. Eddy, 9.
doctor who often treated Young Miss Baker believed she had “hysteria mingled with a bad temper.”

Mary’s maladies frequently prevented her from attending school. Her father’s beliefs in the cause of her ill-health contributed to her lack of formal education. Eddy wrote, “My father was taught to believe that my brain was too large for my body and so kept me much out of school, but I gained book-knowledge with far less labor than is usually requisite.” She claimed her “favorite studies were natural philosophy, logic, and moral science” and from her brother she “received lessons in the ancient tongues, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.” Despite her professions of knowledge, she states that “after [she] discovered Christian Science, most of the knowledge she had gleaned from school books vanished like a dream.” Robert Peel’s 1966 biography mentions that even fifty years after her death, stories circulated in her hometown that young Mary used to slip away while the rest of the children played and was often found reading a book while sitting on a large rock. While there exist no reports of Mary’s precociousness written at the time she was a child, numerous people who knew her later reported on her brilliance, her sober thought, and her love of learning. She did receive some formal education later in life, possibly at both the Holmes Academy at Plymouth when she was seventeen and the Sanbornton Academy at Sanbornton Bridge when she was twenty-one, but biographers debate the validity of these claims.

20 Dakin, Mrs. Eddy, 9.
21 Eddy, Retrospection and Introspection, 10.
22 Eddy, Retrospection and Introspection, 10.
23 Eddy, Retrospection and Introspection, 11.
24 Peel, Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Discovery, 14.
25 Smith, Historical Sketches from the Life of Mary Baker Eddy, 36 and Peel, Discovery, 54.
Regardless of her actual education, she was widely acknowledged to be a bright girl who was interested in religious matters. In her autobiography Eddy related a story of how she was upset by her Congregational church’s stand on predestination and was “so perturbed...by the thoughts aroused by this erroneous doctrine, that the family doctor was summoned, and pronounced [her] stricken with a fever.”

The love and religious instruction of her mother brought Eddy through this crisis of faith. Eddy wrote, “My mother, as she bathed my burning temples, bade me lean on God’s love, which would give me rest, if I went to Him in prayer.”

Although Mary Baker reported great religious struggles in her youth, her teenage years appeared to be rather ordinary. Described as “exceptionally good-looking” with “big, gray eyes...[which had] the gift of emotional expression,” Mary was also “a witty, interesting, effervescent girl who was popular with her peers.” Peel remarks, “Mary, as an aspiring young authoress, was determined to become as learned as she could, but during these years the bluestocking never overwhelmed the belle or caused her to neglect good ton.” Mary placed great emphasis on manners and on appearing her best.

Her vivacious manner and beauty caught the attention of Colonel George Glover. He met nineteen year-old Mary at the wedding of her brother and his sister, “placed [her] on [his] knees, and said, ‘I shall wait for you to be my wife!’” After a courtship of several years, twenty-two year old Mary Baker became Mrs. George Glover in December 1843 and followed her new husband to North Carolina. Glover was filled with schemes for making money and

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27 Peel, *Discovery*, 53.
29 Peel, *Discovery*, 40.
invested all they had in a venture to build a cathedral in Haiti. Before he could realize the success or failure of this plan, he contracted yellow fever and died just seven months after their marriage.

Mary was left penniless—and pregnant. She was able to return to her parents’ home thanks to the kindness of strangers and Glover’s Masonic brothers. Never a healthy person, Mary’s constitution was taxed by the combined stresses of pregnancy, sorrow, and the difficult journey home, and after the birth of her son, she was virtually bedridden. Baby George was sent out to a wet nurse as his mother was unable to care for him.

Eddy wrote little about the birth of her son which seems surprising given her propensity to reflect upon major life events and view them from the spiritual perspective of an elderly woman. Therefore, the true circumstances of baby George’s birth may never be known. However, the fact that a young woman who married again yet never conceived another child hints of an injury. It is known that her son screamed incessantly and could not be comforted, behaviors typical of babies who experienced trauma at birth. Mary’s complete inability to care for her son also lends credence to the theory that childbirth, for Mary Baker Glover, proved injurious.

After her lengthy illness following the birth had passed, Mary was faced with the challenge of how to support herself and her infant son. She chose journalism. Between 1845 and 1849, Mary Glover wrote poems, essays, and newspaper articles; she even had some of her

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32 Peel, *Discovery*, 78.
writing accepted to the most successful ladies’ magazine of the era, *Godey’s*. A sympathetic biographer, Gillian Gill, writes, “I could not recommend any of this published work to a reader today, and the poetry is dreadful.” Mary Glover wrote in a highly sentimental style, often peppered with French phrases of which she did not quite comprehend the meaning. As her writing was not bringing the income that she hoped, Mary opened a preschool. Such schools were “the dearest hope of distressed gentlewomen...since a school offered the possibility of providing a modest income, an independent residence...a socially valued role, and status in the community” notes Gill. Although this school failed after only a few months, the idea of teaching was firmly ensconced in Mary’s mind.

These years of financial and social struggle proved disastrous for Mary’s health. She suffered from nervous paralysis, chronic weakness, and perhaps anorexia. However, Mary found time for romance. She entered into a secret engagement with John Bartlett, a law student at Harvard Law School. At that time, he could not provide a secure home for the widow Glover and her son, so he went to Sacramento, where opportunities abounded, to establish a law practice. It seemed as if life had at last offered some happiness to this suffering woman, but this was not to be the case for long.

In November 1849, her beloved mother, Abigail, died at age sixty-five. Only three weeks later, John Bartlett died in Sacramento. Within a year, her father had remarried and informed his daughter that although she could stay with him and his new wife, her rambunctious, poorly

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36 Gill, *Mary Baker Eddy*, 84, 123.
37 Peel, *Discovery*, 92.
behaved, six-year-old son was not welcome. Mary was still too ill to care for the boy, so he was sent away to live with a family servant, Mahala Cheney, and her husband. The loss of her son sent Mary into further decline. Gillian Gill remarks, “As with so many women of her generation, sadness merged into depression, economic dependency and nonproductivity into frustration and a sense of valuelessness, and when these combined with those physical ailments...the result was a woman who could barely get up from her couch.”

Mary retreated to sentimental poetry writing to help her cope with the loss of her son and penned “Mother’s Darling.” The last stanza reads:

“Thy smile through tears, as sunshine o’er the sea,
Awoke new beauty in the surge’s roll!
Oh, life is dead, bereft of all, with thee,--
Star of my earthly hope, babe of my soul.”

She also turned to more practical channels to try to get her son back—she married again. Beset with a bad toothache, Mary visited a local dentist and homeopath, Daniel Patterson. Seven months later in 1853, she married this charming dandy as he had assured her that he could help her get her son returned to her. Instead, a “plot was consummated for keeping [Mary and her son] apart” as Eddy later described the event. A more sympathetic view of the situation is that Patterson understood his wife’s frail health and realized that dealing with her boorish son would further incapacitate the already weak woman. The son bore little resemblance to his refined, intelligent mother. He was not much liked by those who knew

38 Gill, Mary Baker Eddy, 96.
39 Eddy, Retrospection and Introspection, 21.
40 Eddy, Retrospection and Introspection, 21.
him and was described as wayward and headstrong.\textsuperscript{41} Patterson took an aversion to him, as apparently Mary’s own father had several years earlier when he insisted the boy could no longer live with him. When Daniel Patterson discovered that the Cheneys were moving to Enterprise, Minnesota, it was agreed that George should accompany them.

The Cheneys moved west, taking young George with them. Mary’s family felt the wisest course of action was not to tell her about the move until after it had happened, and once the boy was gone, cut off all communication between mother and son. The Cheneys told George that his mother was dead, and Mary did not see her son again for twenty-two years.\textsuperscript{42} The next thirteen years of Mary Patterson’s life were fraught with illness and penury. Her husband repeatedly abandoned her, leaving her with no money, and her increasing ill-health reached the point where she could no longer leave her bed. Although it would be another seven years before Daniel Patterson was officially out of her life, Mary summed up this twenty-year period in her autobiography with a single sentence: “My second marriage was very unfortunate, and from it I was compelled to ask for a bill of divorce, which was granted me in the city of Salem, Massachusetts.”\textsuperscript{43}

It was in the middle of the suffering that Mary sought out Phineas Quimby for a cure. In 1862, Mary wrote to Quimby explaining her years of illness and said, “I have entire confidence

\textsuperscript{41} Peel, Discovery, 117 and Gottschalk, Rolling Away the Stone, 64-65.  
\textsuperscript{42} Gill, Mary Baker Eddy, 112-113.  
\textsuperscript{43} Eddy, Retrospection and Introspection, 21.
in your philosophy.”

What was Quimby’s philosophy and how did bedridden Mary Patterson hear of it? His methods were described in a circular.

“He gives no medicine and makes no outward applications, but simply sits down by the patients, tells them their feelings and what they think is their disease. If the patients admit that he tells them their feelings, &c, then his explanation is the cure; and, if he succeeds in correcting their error, he changes the fluids and the system and establishes the truth, or health. The Truth is Cure.”

After less than a month under Quimby’s care, Mary felt herself cured and even wrote a letter to the Portland Evening Courier proclaiming the good news and lauding Quimby. Quickly, she became not only a proponent of his healing methods but a student of them. Her health and enthusiasm continued to grow until October of 1865 when her father, Mark Baker, died. Three months later, Phineas Quimby also died suddenly, surrounded by rumors of overwork, but some believe that he died from stomach cancer, the symptoms of which he ignored. A few weeks later, Mary herself slipped on an icy sidewalk in Lynn, Massachusetts, and hit her head which left her unconscious.

This fall marked a turning point in Mary Glover Patterson’s life and became what Christian Scientists claim as the birth of their faith. Bereft of her father and beloved healing mentor, abandoned by her husband, and weakened from years of ill-health, there was little hope for a quick recovery. Mary requested a Bible and read an account from Matthew 9 where Jesus healed the paralytic. After three days, Mary rose from her bed and walked. It was at this point that she announced she had discovered the principle for healing by faith. In her

44 Gill, Mary Baker Eddy, 126.
45 Gill, Mary Baker Eddy, 129.
46 Thomas, With Bleeding Footsteps, 114; Gottshalk, Rolling Away the Stone, 3; and Leishman, Why I Am a Christian Scientist, 188-190.
autobiography, she wrote, “My immediate recovery from the effects of an injury caused by an accident, an injury that neither medicine nor surgery could reach...led me to the discovery [of] how to be well myself, and how to make others so.”

For the next three years, Mary Glover Patterson “withdrew from society...to ponder [her] mission, to search the Scriptures, to find the Science of Mind.” She asserted that she used the Bible as her only textbook and saw in it the rule of spiritual Science and metaphysical healing. She wrote her thoughts in a book which eventually became known as *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, the backbone of the Christian Science faith. The first edition of this book was published in 1875 and outlined the general principles of healing and truth. Her most notable belief was that the material body was not real. She wrote, “I learned these truths in divine Science: that all real being is in God, the divine Mind, and that Life, Truth, and Love are all-powerful and ever-present; that the opposite of Truth, --called error, sin, sickness, disease, death,--is the false testimony of false material sense, of mind in matter; that this false sense evolves, in belief, a subjective state of mortal mind which this same so-called mind names *matter*, thereby shutting out the true sense of spirit.”

While she was working on her book, Mary Glover Patterson was virtually penniless and needed some way to support herself. In the fall of 1866, just months after her life-changing accident, Mary moved in with Hiram and Mary Crafts. They were firmly middle-class people—Hiram was a shoemaker—and the middle class continued to be where Christian Science found its widest audience. In exchange for her room and board, Mary taught Hiram her principle of

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healing. He was her first of many students. Things went well for several months, yet personal problems crept in, and Mary was forced to find different lodging. This pattern was repeated again and again—ten times alone in 1866—until in 1875 with the income from teaching her healing methods, she was able to purchase her own home. Two years later, Mary Baker Glover Patterson married one of her students, Gilbert Eddy, and finally became Mary Baker Eddy.

These years were busy ones for the new Mrs. Eddy. In 1879, the Christian Science Association voted to form a church. That same year, she was reunited with her son. In 1881, Eddy began the Massachusetts Metaphysical College. Far from being a penniless invalid, Eddy was becoming a sensational teacher and preacher, and her writing endeavors persevered as she continually revised *Science and Health* and wrote numerous other commentaries and sermons. Tragedy struck in 1883 when her beloved husband died. Eddy asserted he had been mentally poisoned with arsenic which had stopped his heart. A doctor called in to do an autopsy explained to an unbelieving Mrs. Eddy that her husband had died of heart disease. Trying to dissuade her of her mesmeric belief, the doctor went so far as to bring the diseased heart on a tray for her inspection. Eddy remained unconvinced.

Not only did she feel that her enemies practiced Malicious Animal Magnetism (MAM) against her husband, she was convinced she was the constant target of mental malpractice. Eddy believed that when things went wrong—from disease in her own life to simple household matters—it was a direct result of evil thoughts focused against her. In 1877, before she married Asa Gilbert Eddy, Mary was on the edge of a nervous breakdown from overwork and fatigue. However, her doctrine which claimed the body and all material things did not exist would not allow for such a diagnosis. Instead, Mary “diagnosed herself as a victim of various
kinds of metal attacks” and begged an associate to “tell people to stop thinking about her.”\textsuperscript{50} In 1902, Mary wrote, “For the last decade the mental malpractice of some disloyal students...have been continually aimed at me.”\textsuperscript{51} To defend herself against such attacks, Mary appointed “watchers” or spiritual staff who worked round the clock in shifts to meet the challenges of the day and to combat MAM. These workers were a type of prayer warrior who watched over the ailing Mary Baker Eddy and were never to exert their own MAM against the enemies of the church.

Although her private life was plagued by the demon of MAM, her public life seemed a business and financial success. Eddy formed the \textit{Christian Science Journal} in 1883, a monthly magazine, and during 1898, she founded the \textit{Christian Science Weekly}, whose title was soon changed to \textit{The Christian Sentinel}. At age 70, she moved to Pleasant View, an estate in Concord, Massachusetts, where she continued to work to perfect her textbook of healing and developed the \textit{Manual of the Mother Church} which would guide the administration of the Boston Church for years to come.

These years were not free from troubles by any means. Eddy faced challenges to her authority both from within her church and from those without who viewed her faith as a scam and a money-making venture injurious to the health of those duped by its tenets. She endured vilification in the press and in the courts, and to help combat the negative press she often received, she started her own newspaper, \textit{The Christian Science Monitor}, in 1908. Eddy suffered from kidney stones and the inevitable effects of aging. There is evidence that Eddy was

\textsuperscript{50} Gill, \textit{Mary Baker Eddy}, 246.  
\textsuperscript{51} Eddy, \textit{Footprints Fadeless}, 133.
obsessive in her behavior. She was strict and somewhat irrational with her staff, and they said that “what made their service the hardest was her anger, the fury of her rebukes, the storm of criticism and reproach and invective that might fall upon their heads at any time.”\textsuperscript{52} One reported, “Even the different lengths of pins had their respective corners in her pincushion ... No one would have thought of changing a pin on her pincushion.”\textsuperscript{53} Eddy remained lucid and active until December 3, 1910, the day she died. She was carried to her desk where she penned her last written words, “God is my life.” She passed away peacefully in her sleep that evening, a victim of old age and pneumonia.

\textsuperscript{52} Gill, \textit{Mary Baker Eddy}, 401.
\textsuperscript{53} Gill, \textit{Mary Baker Eddy}, 402.
Mary Baker Eddy’s life, in many ways, mirrors that of a hero figure in literature. Joseph Campbell defines a hero as “the man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations to the generally valid, normally human forms. Such a one’s visions, ideas, and inspirations come pristine from the primary springs of human life and thought. Hence they are eloquent, not of the present, disintegrating society and psyche, but of the unquenched source through which society is reborn.”\(^5^4\) His book discusses the typical patterns in the life of a hero, and while Eddy’s life does not match up exactly with that of Gilgamesh or Oedipus, many of the vestiges of the heroic are found in her story. For example, Eddy’s miraculous recovery from her fall on the ice and discovery of Christian Science healing mirror Campbell’s view that “a hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.”\(^5^5\)

Folklorist Alan Dundes, using a structural analysis, considers narratives about Jesus figuring into a hero pattern. Dundes raises the question: “If the same narrative exists in a variety of cultures, why is one version of the story singled out as being true or valid while all

\(^{54}\) Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 19.
others are dismissed as being false or untrue?" His essay draws parallels between the life of Jesus and heroes from mythological stories in numerous cultures. Through this analysis, he shows the heroic qualities of Jesus’ life. Mary Baker Eddy was not born of a virgin, visited by shepherds, or literally crucified by her opponents; however, she and her reputational entrepreneurs highlighted links—real or fabricated—between Eddy’s life and that of Jesus.

**Childhood Messiah**

Those that Mary Baker Eddy taught or healed described her in Messianic terms, and Eddy did little to dispel this view. In fact, in a type of revisionist history, Eddy recounted tales from her youth that portrayed her as a person set apart for religious leadership. Most of her stories compare to the miracles and life events of Jesus Christ in the Bible. If Eddy was to gain a reputation as a worthy religious leader, a Messiah-like reputation would enhance her credibility.

Hagiographers tell stories that even before Mary’s birth, it was evident that this unborn baby was destined for great things. Irving C. Tomlinson, the author of *Twelve Years with Mary Baker Eddy*, told this story about Abigail Baker when she was pregnant with her youngest daughter: “Suddenly [she] was overwhelmed by the thought that she was filled with the Holy Ghost...At that moment, she felt a quickening of the babe.” This account is similar to the story of Jesus’s conception as found in Luke 2: “The angel answered, ‘The Holy Spirit will come on

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you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.”⁵⁸ It also mirrors the account of Elisabeth, the cousin of the mother of Jesus. Chapter 1 of Luke relates the story that soon after the Virgin Mary found herself with child, she visited her cousin Elisabeth: “And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.”⁵⁹

Two possible interpretations can be made from these parallels. If the story of Eddy’s mother more closely relates to the Virgin birth, it provides credibility both to the later cause and to Eddy’s reflections on her childhood. Being set apart from the womb for a life of distinct, Spirit-filled service gave Eddy a cachet that other preachers and teachers of the day did not have. While spiritual leaders claimed to have revelation from God or special insight into the scriptures, their calling to God’s service happened as adults when they studied the scriptures or metaphysical teaching for themselves; their calls did not happen before birth. While the youngest child in a family of six could not claim a virgin birth such as Jesus had, by referencing the story of the immaculate conception, Eddy links her healing ministry with that of Jesus by claiming that her birth was just as Spirit-filled.

The second interpretation centers on Eddy’s birth being compared to that of John the Baptist, the son Elisabeth later bore. The story of John the Baptist is found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. This man wore a tunic of camel’s hair, ate locusts and wild honey, and lived in the desert. He preached a message of repentance to the Jewish people in the region of Judea. Yet throughout his preaching, John announced that he was a forerunner for

someone greater who would come after him and said, “But he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear.”⁶⁰ John later baptized Jesus, an honor he felt unworthy to perform. After John’s eventual beheading, Jesus said of him, “Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.”⁶¹ While John did no healing, his mission was to point people toward the Way. In John’s case, the Way was Jesus Christ. In Mary Baker Eddy’s case, the Way was Christian Science.

The majority of Americans would have been familiar with both of these biblical accounts. For those who followed Eddy and claimed her Messiah qualities, the tale clearly points to the story of Jesus’ birth. But for those skeptics who questioned the truth of Eddy’s methods and ministry, the ambiguity of the tale allows her to be seen simply as a servant to a greater power who calls attention to something bigger than herself. She is not the creator of truth; she is merely “a voice crying out in the wilderness.”⁶² However, Eddy’s stories became more and more linked to those of Jesus.

*Teenage Messiah*

Eddy reported that she healed sick animals as a child and that she even healed her brother’s leg with just a touch after he had sliced it with an axe. Several people reported the story of how Mary calmed an insane man who appeared at her school. The next day, she said that the insane man “forced his way into their home...rushed up to her father who was reading

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⁶⁰ KJV Bible, Matthew 3:11.
⁶¹ KJV Bible, Matthew 11:11.
from the Bible, and took it away from him. Handing it to Mary, he said, ‘Here! You are the one to read God’s word.’ The account of Jesus’ healing of an insane man is found in Mark 5 and Luke 8. The man Jesus healed ran naked through a graveyard and could not be bound by any chains but fell at Jesus’ feet “and cried with a loud voice, and said, ‘What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God?’” Jesus held a brief conversation with the man (ostensibly with the demons which possessed the man) before healing him of his insanity by commanding the demons to enter a herd of pigs.

Besides the obvious parallels of healing by speaking and curing a man of his insanity, a less obvious link appears to those who know the Bible well. While Jesus gained popularity from his healing ministry, few people recognized Him as the Son of God. In fact, to His Jewish audience, claiming to be the Son of God equaled proclaiming Himself to be God. (It was for this reason the Jews wanted to kill Jesus.) Yet demons routinely cried out that Jesus was the Son of God thus giving Him credibility. He did not have to announce his divinity; others did it for him. These others were not his followers or religious leaders but those who were strangers to Jesus and to his ministry. Eddy’s insane man fulfilled a similar purpose. He did not know the young girl, and he had no reason to proclaim her worthiness to read the Bible. Yet by announcing that she was the one, he elevated her status due to the unlikeliness of the decree.

Eddy wrote in her autobiography that when she was twelve she grew agitated over her church’s doctrine of predestination. She went before the pastor and congregation and avowed,

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64 KJV Bible, Mark 5:7.
“Never could I unite with the church, if assent to this doctrine was essential thereto.”65 After an examination by the “doleful” pastor, Mary’s answers were “so earnestly said, that even the oldest church-members wept. After the meeting they came and kissed [her]. To the astonishment of many, the good clergyman’s heart also melted, and he received [her] into their communion.”66 Also at age twelve, Jesus debated with the leaders of his religion: “[T]hey found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.”67

The most interesting aspect of this story seems to be the clearly staged historical revision of Eddy’s memory. Edwin Dakins, an Eddy biographer, writes, “When it was later pointed out to Mrs. Eddy that the official church record shows she was received into the Tilton Congregational Church when she was seventeen and not twelve, she merely replied: ‘My religious experience seemed to culminate at twelve years of age. Hence a mistake may have occurred as to the exact date of my first church membership.’”68 Was Eddy’s memory so poor as to mistake her twelve year-old self for her seventeen year-old self? Or was the necessity to parallel the life of Jesus the primary consideration in the recounting of this story? While biographers and hagiographers debate such points in the life of the founder of Christian Science, the facts remain that Eddy specifically chose to tell stories that had definite parallels to the life of Jesus.

A Woman of Miracles

As she grew older, the stories grew in scope and did not always mirror the healer from Nazareth. She was able to heal livestock “with her loving thought” and a Bible that she had given to a Civil War soldier stopped a bullet and saved his life. All of these miracles were reported to have happened before she discovered the principles of metaphysical healing. No recorded miracles by Jesus happened before he began his three-year public ministry. There are no stories of the boy or teenage Jesus healing or performing any supernatural acts. Perhaps Eddy needed to show that the gift of metaphysical healing that she did not discover until her forty-fifth year and her special insights into mankind resided in her from her earliest recollections.

Just like Jesus, Eddy appeared to control the weather and other elements of nature. As the leader of Christian Science, she dispersed thunderstorms and cyclones, and as a young woman, well before she understood the principles of Christian Science, was able to calm a storm at sea. She explained that she and her new husband George Glover sailed to South Carolina where their ship was caught in a violent storm. “[The captain] had no hope that the ship could be saved.” But the Glovers prayed together, and George read her a poem. Miraculously, the storm stopped, and they were delivered safely to shore.

Mark 4 and Matthew 8 recount the story of Jesus speaking to a storm. Jesus and his disciples boarded a small boat at night and attempted to sail across the Sea of Galilee. After

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69 Eddy, Retrospection and Introspection, 27.
70 Fettweis and Warneck, Christian Healer, 284 and 269.
71 Fettweis and Warneck, Christian Healer, 15-16.
Jesus fell asleep, a violent storm appeared causing waves so high that the disciples, most of whom were experienced fishermen, to fear the boat would be capsized. In their panic, they woke Jesus. “And He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.”\(^{72}\)

Being able to claim authority over the elements speaks to a different level of power than simply being able to heal someone. Nature is indifferent. While a man or a woman might be persuaded to falsify a story to bring credit to someone else, a thundercloud cannot be bribed. A human can imagine him or herself healed merely by the power of positive thinking, but an ocean cannot be controlled by good intentions. Only someone who truly had supernatural powers could control weather and seas. By claiming that she shared this ability with Jesus, Eddy enhanced her reputation as a mythic figure.

Eddy further demonstrated her control over non-human elements in mirroring another of Jesus’ miracles. One of Eddy’s secretaries, Calvin Frye, reported that there was a tree in the yard which was dying, and the gardener was going to cut it down. Eddy told the man to wait and “took the question up with Christian Science,” and soon the tree was thriving again.\(^{73}\) This closely parallels the story of Jesus cursing a fig tree in Mark 11, although Eddy healed a tree, and Jesus caused one to wither. Once again, Eddy showed her dominance over nature by one-upping Jesus. His tree merely withered and died, but her tree came back from the brink of death.

\(^{72}\) KJV Bible, Mark 4:39.  
\(^{73}\) Fettweis and Warneck, *Christian Healer*, 211.
Up From the Grave They Arose!

Raising a tree from the dead seems much less impressive than raising a person from the dead, and Eddy claimed to have affected this miracle several times. Her student Sue Harper Mims testified, “She told us that three times she had raised the dead. I could not help thinking of Jesus, first raising the little maid, then the young man, and then Lazarus. She told us of one instance; she did not tell us of the others.”74 The story that Eddy related to her students is repeated several times in Eddy’s own writing and in several biographies:

“Once a little child was put into my hands. I did not come soon enough...the doctors said he was gone...I could not feel a pulse. The mother was crying and said, ‘He is dead; you have come too late.’ I said, ‘Go out a little while.’ She did and that little creature rose right up, yawned, and rubbed his eyes. I set him down. He walked to the door and his mother took him.”75

Another account adds that Eddy “took the child in her arms” and that it took an hour for the healing to occur.76

Obvious parallel arise when comparing that story to the account of Jesus raising a child from the dead:

“While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. ‘Your daughter is dead,’ they said. ‘Why bother the teacher anymore?’ Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, ‘Don’t be afraid; just believe.’ ...When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. He went in and said to them, ‘Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.’ But they laughed at him. After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him,

74 Mims, “An Intimate Picture of Our Leader’s Final Class,” in We Knew Mary Baker Eddy, Second Series, 46.
75 Fettweis and Warneck, Christian Healer, 229.
76 Mims, “An Intimate Picture of Our Leader’s Final Class,” in We Knew Mary Baker Eddy, Second Series, 46.
and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, ‘Talitha koum!’ (which means ‘Little girl, I say to you, get up!’). Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old).”\(^{77}\)

While these two stories are not identical, the parallels are unmistakable. Both healers arrived “too late” when an outside source had already pronounced the patient dead. Both disagreed with the judgement of the authority in the situation. The healing only occurred after people were sent away (although Eddy was alone and Jesus had a small band of faithful followers and the child’s parents as witnesses). Both healings required the touch of the healer, and after healing, both children began to walk immediately after being healed. One notable difference is that in the biblical account, the healing seems to be instantaneous, but in Eddy’s account, the healing process took an hour. Perhaps this concession to time functions as a way to remind her faithful followers that even though she had this healing power, she also had to persevere.

The only other written report of another person reportedly being raised from the dead occurred when her secretary fell down the stairs. A member of the Board of Directors of the Church of Christ, Scientist, told this story of what happened when he arrived for an appointment with Mary Baker Eddy: “Calvin Frye [Mary’s secretary]...pitched head first to the foot of the stairs, apparently with a broken neck caused by the fall. Mrs. Eddy...noticed Mr. Frye lying on the floor. She said, ‘Calvin get up on your feet.’ She said it again, ‘Calvin get up at once.’ The third time she said calmly, ‘Calvin arise immediately you are all right.’ Mr. Frye arose at once.”\(^{78}\) While this story does not parallel any of Jesus’ healings, the three times Eddy spoke echoes instances of Jesus asking Peter three times if he loved him before Peter’s eventual

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\(^{77}\) KJV Bible, Mark 5:35-42.

\(^{78}\) Fettweis and Warneck, *Christian Healer*, 147.
denial. Additionally, the image of three as a sign of completion runs throughout much of Christian doctrine.

**Resurrection of the Christ**

Eddy’s fall on the ice and “return from the dead” to proclaim her discovery of Christian Science mirrors Jesus’ resurrection three days after his crucifixion. It is no surprise that some of her followers expected Eddy to return to life after her 1910 death. After her interment, the Boston Post ran the headline “Armed Men to Guard Mrs. Eddy’s Tomb Day and Night” and explained, “Each night and day during the long winter months...a guard will be on duty about the tomb. Not a single hour will the body of the famous woman be without a watcher.”

This image is reminiscent of the behavior of the Roman government after Jesus’ crucifixion as recorded in Matthew 27: “The chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first... So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.”

In the story of Jesus, it was reported by the officials that Jesus’ body has been stolen, but his followers claimed that he had indeed risen from the dead. By

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79 *Boston Post*, “Armed Men to Guard Mrs. Eddy’s Tomb Day and Night,” December 1910. The newspaper also reported that “a telephone instrument was installed in the receiving vault which holds the body of Mrs. Eddy, so that at the least sign of danger, the guards who will be on duty day and night may call for assistance from the Cambridge police.”

80 KJV Bible, Matthew 27: 62-64 and 66.
setting up a similar guard on Eddy’s tomb, not only is her burial linked to that of Jesus, it also
would provide testimony if indeed she rose from the dead.

One of the staunchest advocates of the hope of Eddy’s resurrection was Augusta
Stetson who had earlier been excommunicated from the church. Even though she was barred
from leadership and from church membership, Stetson firmly clung to Christian Science beliefs
and to its founder whom she called “Holy One” and “our great forever Leader.”
She was
“shocked by the announcement of the [Christian Science Board of Directors] that they did not
look for Mrs. Eddy’s return to this world.” She began a crusade against what she saw as the
faltering spirituality of the directors. The Honolulu Star in Honolulu, Hawaii, picked up this story
and reported a transcript of an interview with Stetson.

Question from reporter: “Has Mrs. Eddy died?”
Stetson’s answer: “No, her students who are able to grasp upon teachings of the allness
of life and the illusion of death look to her to make a demonstration of her teaching and
believe that she is doing this and will reappear as did Jesus Christ. Just as Jesus met this
claim...and appeared to his disciples, so will Mary Baker Eddy destroy ‘the last enemy,”
death, and will reappear to justification of her teachings.”

Despite Stetson’s best efforts, Eddy did not rise from the dead.

It is no wonder that many of her followers suggested that Eddy must embody the
second coming of Jesus. She ambiguously denied this claim in a telegram to a newspaper: “Am I
the second Christ? Even the question shocks me. What I am is for God to declare. I claim
nothing more than to be the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science—the blessing this is
to mankind, eternity enfolds.”

However, in Christian Science beliefs, “Jesus is the Way-

81 Gill, Mary Baker Eddy, 539.
82 Bryan Wilson, Sects and Society, 147.
84 Mary Baker Eddy, Footprints Fadeless, 140.
shower, and the Holy Ghost is understood to be Christian Science—the promised Comforter.” 85

Therefore, if Eddy was the one who showed the way, then she equated herself with Jesus.

Eddy downplayed the deity of Jesus Christ, thus further elevating her own status. In a 1900 letter to Augusta Stetson, a prominent church leader, Eddy wrote, “Jesus was not Christ. Christ is spiritual. Jesus was a Godlike man. I am ... a Godlike woman.” 86 In Science and Health, Eddy used the term “Christ Jesus” to refer to the man from Nazareth in the Bible. She seemed to indicate that Jesus was “a Christ,” giving room for there to be other Christs when she wrote, “Jesus was the highest human concept of the perfect man. He was inseparable from Christ, the Messiah, — the divine idea of God outside the flesh.” 87 She later defines the term “Christ” as “The divine manifestation of God, which comes to the flesh to destroy incarnate error.” 88 As the truth of Christian Science destroyed such error, Christian Science functions as a type of Christ. And since Eddy is the Founder and Discoverer of Christian Science whose mission is to rebuke, error, she elevates herself to the level of a Christ-figure. While she never explicitly links herself to the term “Christ” or says that there are other Christs, much of her writing is ambiguous on this point. In Article VIII Section 7 of the Manual to the Mother Church, called “One Christ,” she indicates that Christian Scientists are not to believe in more than one Christ. However, who or what this Christ may be is not clear. 89 By never formally announcing she was equal with or an incarnation of the Christ, but by merely hinting at it, she could inspire her followers who felt her

85 Bryan Wilson, Sects and Society, 121.  
86 Knee, Christian Science in the Age of Mary Baker Eddy, 13.  
87 Eddy, Science and Health, 482.  
88 Eddy, Science and Health, 583.  
89 Eddy, Manual of the Mother Church: Article VIII Section 7  In accordance with the Christian Science textbooks, — the BIBLE, and SCIENCE AND HEALTH WITH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES, — and in accord with all of Mrs. Eddy’s teachings, members of this Church shall neither entertain a belief nor signify a belief in more than one Christ, even that Christ whereof the Scripture beareth testimony.
to possess divine wisdom but could continue to appear to be merely another successful religious teacher to those who would have considered her insane to elevate herself to the level of divinity.

**Reports of Healing**

While Eddy worked hard to ensure her reputation as a Messiah figure, she also needed to make sure that her new faith garnered a spotless reputation. If people only felt that Eddy possessed healing abilities, there would be no reason for people to take her classes, buy her books, or set up their own healing practices. To advertise the efficacy of her methods, Eddy employed print media to spread the message of the miracles of healing performed through Christian Science. The introduction to final chapter in *Science and Health*, “Fruitage,” states, “Thousands of letters could be presented in testimony of the healing efficacy of Christian Science...For the assurance and encouragement of the reader, a few of these letters are here republished from *The Christian Science Journal* and *The Christian Science Sentinel*.90 Ninety-nine pages of testimonials follow with headings describing the complaint of the person who had been healed by Christian Science. Maladies included dyspepsia, cancer, consumption, deafness, cataracts, tumors, insanity, lung disease, and dropsy. Christian Science also overcame less specific complaints such as “suffering,” “a restless sense of existence,” and “moral failings.”

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A Religion of the Spirit of the Age

Mary Baker Eddy not only needed to establish her faith as having successful results, but she also needed to show that its tenets were viable for a nineteenth century population who understood the Bible but were also faced with the new beliefs of Darwinism and spiritualism, and who lived in a society that was becoming increasingly commercialized and capitalistic. Linking herself with Jesus Christ personally elevated her status, but by borrowing from other faiths of the day, Eddy’s new religion appealed not only to those familiar with the Bible but to those who explored new ways of thinking about the spiritual. Christian Science doctrines blend almost seamlessly with many of the prevailing religious beliefs of the nineteenth century. Perry Miller writes, “We have become certain...that ideas are born in a time and place, that they spring from specific environments, that they express the forces of societies and classes.”

Religious doctrines are no exception.

Eddy first published her seminal text, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures. This work has been described by historians Howard Kerr and Charles Crow as “an historical hourglass in which the sands of witchcraft, popular ghostlore, mesmerism, Swedenborgianism, and scientism pour[ed] through the channel of spiritualism then to disperse into Theosophy and parapsychology.” America was pulling away from the Calvinistic doctrines of its forefathers and was embracing the search for the divine in Nature. Eddy “experienced the spiritual seeker culture of her age” and capitalized on it. As such, the doctrines and beliefs of Christian

91 Perry Miller, Errand into the Wilderness, 187.
94 Albanese, Republic of Mind and Spirit, 284.
Science exhibit a patchwork of theology culled from the scope of American religious experiences.

At first glance, the doctrines of Christian Science do not readily appear to fit into a specific mold. Eddy’s main belief was that the body—an all its accompanying emotions and diseases—were not real. She wrote, “What is termed matter, or relates to its so-called attributes, is a self-destroying error....” The assertion that there can be pain or pleasure in matter is erroneous... The only reality is the Spirit, and that Spirit is God.” Individual people do not have a spirit or soul; there is only one Spirit, and it is the goal of Christian Science to eschew the mortal and material and become one with the Spirit. There is no sin because all that God made is good, and only a false belief in sickness and death could possibly be sin. Even though the main belief of Christian Science is that disease is not real, it is a religion whose primary focus is on healing. Healing occurs by coming in line with the Truth—that there is no such thing as disease. “If sin, sickness, and death were understood as nothingness, they would disappear. As vapor melts before the sun, so evil would vanish before the reality of good.”

Eddy insisted her new faith was simply a new interpretation of the Bible based on the principles she discovered from the accounts of Jesus’ ministry of healing. She explained Jesus’ death on the cross and atonement as “not to appease the wrath of God, but to show the allness of Love

95 Eddy, No and Yes, 10.
96 Eddy, Science and Health, 478.
97 Eddy, Science and Health, 465-466.
98 Eddy, Science and Health, 472-473.
99 Eddy, Science and Health, 480.
and the nothingness of hate, sin, and death, that Jesus suffered ... He suffered because of the shocking human idolatry” that man believes matter is real.  

The novelty of these views grounded in a belief in the Bible sparked interest in the ideas of Americans. The country looked to the “new and improved” in its consumer goods and manufacturing techniques—why not in its religion? Eddy’s ability to conflate familiar Biblical concepts with a self-empowering interpretation based on “science” fit perfectly with new ideas such as Darwinism which occupied thoughts of the society.

Eddy did not wish to reject Christianity, and yet many nineteenth century Americans “thought nothing about rebelling against traditional Christianity.” They had rebelled against England and had no trouble with expressing their freedom and their ideas about what was right and wrong in a religious venue as well as in a political one. Felix Adler, the founder of the Society for Ethical Culture cried out in an 1876 speech, “Oh America! America! That hast broken the bonds of despotism, and given political liberty to the world, if it were thine to break also those subtle bonds that fetter our spiritual life, and hamper the soul’s free flight toward the Infinite!...that freedom is religion, and that religion is freedom!” Americans were searching for freedom in their spiritual lives—freedom to believe as individuals, to explore the world of God and man, and to make personal peace with it.

The historical Calvinistic roots of New England America seem to be updated for the modern age in the teachings of Christian Science. The practice of covenantal theology—if man

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100 Eddy, No and Yes, 35.
101 Prothero, American Jesus, 47.
102 Schmidt, Restless Souls, 143.
claimed the covenant of salvation and acted accordingly, a rational God would have no recourse but to admit that man to heaven—\textsuperscript{103} was a doctrine that “appeal[ed] to experience and reason.”\textsuperscript{104} Perry Miller writes, “God is seen condescending to behave by reason because in man there exists at least a potential rationality...\textsuperscript{105} [Many Calvinistic writers] insist that we can reach God through science as well as through revelation.”\textsuperscript{106} Reaching God through Science was exactly what Mary Baker Eddy intended to do. To Eddy, Science was a set of divine laws which governed how man should think; they were not a set of natural laws. She wrote, “Deductions from material hypotheses are not scientific. They differ from real Science because they are not based on the divine law.”\textsuperscript{107} Eddy claimed that if one clung to the divine law of Science—that matter was not real—then one would be healed. The Spirit (who is God) would have no choice but to act as He is Truth. This claim mirrors the Calvinistic notion of covenantal theology.

The view of God as Truth and not as deity was advanced in the Transcendentalist movement which gained momentum in 1836 when Ralph Waldo Emerson published his America-changing essay, \textit{Nature}. Transcendentalists viewed Nature as a key to understanding the divine. It was not God that Transcendentalists were seeking but a connection to the oneness of the world around them. Perry Miller writes, “Ralph Waldo Emerson believed that every man has an inward and immediate access to...[the] Over-Soul,...which is beauty, love, wisdom, and Power all in one, is present in Nature and throughout Nature.”\textsuperscript{108} Transcendentalists sought truth in the world around them. They did not confine themselves to

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Perry Miller, \textit{Errand into the Wilderness}, 55.
\item Perry Miller, \textit{Errand into the Wilderness}, 70.
\item Perry Miller, \textit{Errand into the Wilderness}, 74.
\item Perry Miller, \textit{Errand into the Wilderness}, 77.
\item Eddy, \textit{Science and Health}, 273.
\item Perry Miller, \textit{Errand into the Wilderness}, 185.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
a particular creed or church. Instead, all of creation existed as their holy book. God could be found in every living thing, and as such, “nature” became “Nature.” The idea of renaming God is echoed in Christian Science. The glossary of *Science and Health* lists God as “Principle, Mind, Soul, Spirit, Life, Truth, Love.”

God was not a person, but a concept. Eddy also borrowed heavily from a contradictory view of Nature that Transcendentalism presented: Was matter “really real, the embodiment of Spirit” or was it “illusion and unreality, ultimately a trap from which one needed to escape”? Eddy firmly believed that matter was unreal and based most of her doctrines on this concept. She claimed that Jesus disregarded matter, and so should all good Christian Scientists: “Matter and its effects — sin, sickness, and death — are states of mortal mind which act, react, and then come to a stop. They are not facts of Mind. They are not ideas, but illusions ... Man is not matter; he is not made up of brain, blood, bones, and other material elements.” Not only did Eddy deny the existence of matter, she claimed that humans did not possess their own individual spirits because there was only one Spirit. All that remained was a person’s thoughts. Emerson said that “Nature meant all that is ‘NOT ME,’ with the ‘me’ in question being consciousness.” This closely reflects Eddy’s ideas of becoming fully spirit and not material.

Becoming Spirit in Christian Science was very different than the current trend of mediumship in America. Spiritualism, the contacting of the departed dead via séances and hypnotic trances or the displays of seemingly-magical demonstrations of power, captured

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113 Eddy, *Science and Health*, 466.
114 Albanese, *Republic of Mind*, 164.
America’s fascination in the mid-1800s. It is estimated that by 1885, one million Americans (or 3.5% of the population) identified themselves as Spiritualists. The number of people who were interested in the activities of Spiritualists was much higher. Margaret and Kate Fox, celebrated mediums, held public sittings for a fee of $1.00 per person. The Fox sisters easily earned $100 a day. New magazines devoted to the activities of Spiritualists appeared. One such publication, The Banner of Light (Boston, 1857-1907), contained sermons, essays on Spiritualist topics, short fiction pieces, and a section devoted to communications “from the departed to their friends in earth-life.” Although Eddy was loosely associated with the Spiritualist movement before she discovered Christian Science, she disavowed all relationship with them and spent thirty pages in Science and Health explaining the erroneous teaching of Spiritualism. In an uncharacteristically brief and clear statement, Eddy said simply, “I never could believe in spiritualism.”

While she may not have believed in the doctrines of Spiritualism, Eddy adopted many of the consumer practices of the movement. Most mediums were women. A religious profession was an acceptable role for a woman of this era to have, and becoming a medium required no education or formal training. One did not have to have a certain social status, and for some, becoming a seer was a way out of poverty. Due to these factors, many women looked to the religious realm for employment. Five times as many women as men were Christian Science

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115 Albanese, Republic of Mind, 221.
116 Albanese, Republic of Mind, 223.
117 Deveney, “The International Organization for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals.”
118 Eddy, Science and Health, 71.
119 Albanese, Republic of Mind, 235.
healers. One could take a course at the Metaphysical College to become a healer, but just studying under a healer and mediating on Eddy’s written texts was the way most women became healers. Healing practitioners charged for their services, and some even left regular, middle-class employment as healing proved to be a more lucrative profession. Eddy published her own magazines, *The Christian Science Sentinel* and *The Christian Science Journal*. These weekly publications mirrored the topics in *Banner of Light*, but from a Christian Science perspective, and instead of messages from the dead, they contained testimonials of healing.

Mary Baker Eddy’s health drove her to look for healing cures in all the methods of the day: homeopathy, hydropathy, and finally mesmerism. Phineas Quimby, a known mesmerist, treated Eddy (then known as Mary Glover Patterson), and she later became one of his ardent disciples. Quimby based his healing ideas on the work of Franz Anton Mesmer who believed that health was controlled by the flow of an invisible magnetic fluid which came from the heavens and went into every person. This fluid could be controlled by something called “animal magnetism.” Quimby altered this theory somewhat and proposed that not only was there a fluid, the fluid and its imbalances emitted a certain odor. This odor was similar to the invisible fluid as they were both attracting forces. Quimby’s philosophy also shows evidence of influence from Emmanuel Swedenborg, a seventeenth century Swedish scientist who was “a master and adept of altered states and an archaeologist of the deep recesses of the human mind.” Swedenborg advanced a type of correspondence in which what is “as above” is replicated in the “so below.” God is diffused through heaven and hell and exists in every

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120 Albanese, *Republic of Mind*, 299.
122 Albanese, *Republic of Mind*, 140.
human, and heaven and hell were also internal states. Practical application of these philosophies changed Quimby’s healing methods. From his stint as a traveling lyceum performer who mesmerized his partner to diagnose and cure disease, Quimby came to the belief that healing was all in the mind, and through his mesmeric training, he felt could heal people. “When I [Quimby] am in communication with the patient, I feel all his pains and his state of mind, and I find that by bringing his spirit back to harmonize with the body he feels better.” He tied his healing beliefs into the Bible and interpreted scripture to fit his own views. He conflated the Jewish priests who were deceived in doctrine with the doctors of his own day and said, “[T]he people had been deceived by the priests and doctors, and if they learned wisdom, they would be cured.”

Like Quimby, Eddy believed that healing was all in the mind. Although Quimby felt that the body and disease were real and present, Eddy denied the existence of everything material: “Admit the existence of matter, and you admit that mortality (and therefore disease) has a foundation in fact. Deny the existence of matter, and you can destroy the belief in material conditions.” Harmony was only achieved through believing that man was not mortal, only spirit, and that the disease one had (be it cancer or deafness or a bad case of indigestion) could only be cured by bringing one’s mind in line with the truth. She wrote, “The unreality of sin, disease, and death, rests on the exclusive truth that being, to be eternal, must be harmonious. All disease must be — and can only be — healed on this basis.” Like Quimby, Eddy used scripture to defend her method of treatment: “We never read that Luke or Paul made a reality

123 Albanese, Nature Religion, 112.
125 Eddy, Science and Health, 368.
126 Eddy, No and Yes, 4.
of disease in order to discover some means of healing it. Jesus never asked if disease were acute or chronic, and he never recommended attention to laws of health, never gave drugs...”

Christian Science shared Swedenborg’s beliefs in heaven and hell not simply being actual places but also existing internally: “The sinner makes his own hell by doing evil, and the saint his own heaven by doing right.”

Although Eddy’s new faith fit in well with the prevailing religious beliefs of the day, it achieved even more resonance with nineteenth century Americans in its appeal to the mother. The central pillar of the nineteenth century home was no longer the patriarchal father. Instead, the emphasis for religious training had shifted to the mother. It was her loving and patient hand which guided her children and created a refuge for her husband. Mary Baker Eddy capitalized on this theme in both literature and society and styled herself, not only as a Messiah figure and religious teacher, but as Mother, the gentle, wise matriarch of her faith.

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128 Eddy, *Science and Health*, 266.
Chapter 3: MOTHER: CREATING A REPUTATION OF LOVE

To further establish her reputation as a leader, Mary Baker Eddy chose to present herself as a mother figure. However, in order to appreciate the reason for this decision, it is important to gain an understanding of the role and function of women in American society in the nineteenth century.

During Mary Baker Eddy’s lifetime from 1821 to 1910, the role of women underwent numerous changes. J.S. Kleinberg writes of women in the later years of the nineteenth century, “Female roles in the family had developed from republican motherhood to true womanhood at mid-century, and ... entered the social motherhood phase, in which women gave birth to fewer children, looked after them more intensively, and expanded their maternal horizons to embrace a wide range of social and political issues.”\textsuperscript{129} While these terms do not represent set time periods and the ideologies expressed in each era can be found in some form in the goals of mothers even today, these terms show a progression in the role of women, particularly mothers, in American society.

\textit{Republican Mothers}

The era of Republican Motherhood began soon after the American Revolution ended. In the new era of freedom, the role of women needed to be addressed. It did not seem

\textsuperscript{129} Kleinberg, \textit{Women in the United States}, 150.
appropriate that a woman should express political views and opinions, yet American woman needed to be thoughtful and intelligent to contribute to the newly formed country. The tension in these views can be encapsulated in a single page from Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Emile: Or a Treatise on Education*. Rousseau begins by saying, “Improvement of the [woman’s] mind is the only thing capable of rendering conversation [with her husband] agreeable...Besides how should a woman unused to reflection be capable of educating her children? How would she know what is proper for them? How shall she train them to virtues to which she herself is a stranger?” It would seem by these words that Rousseau advocates for the education of women and for a woman to have opinions and to speak her mind on issues. However, in the next paragraph, he writes, “A witty woman is a scourge to her husband, to her children, to her friends, her servants, and to all the world. Elated by the sublimity of her genius, she scorns to stoop to the duties of a woman.” Rousseau’s contradiction reflects the confusion over just what role women ought to play in post-Revolutionary America.

A compromise between these disparate roles occurred in the guise of motherhood. Historian Linda Kerber writes, “The republican ideology that Americans developed included—hesitantly—a political role for women. It made use of the classic formulation of the Spartan Mother who raised sons prepared to sacrifice themselves to the good of the *polis*. It provided an apparent integration of domestic and political behavior, in a formula that masked political purpose by promise of domestic service.” These Republican mothers raised sons to be true patriots. They served their country by serving their families. She was “dedicated to the service

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130 Rousseau, *Emile*, 104.
131 Rousseau, *Emile*, 104.
of civic virtue; she educated her sons for it; she condemned and corrected her husband’s lapses from it,” writes Kerber.\textsuperscript{133} Her efforts remained private, never to be praised by anyone other than her husband and her children.

In addition to the virtues of patriotism she was to instill in her sons, Kerber notes, “The model republican woman was to be self-reliant (within limits); literate, untempted by the frivolities of fashion.”\textsuperscript{134} She should be able to care for herself and her family, but not so much that she sought independence through divorce. Practical matters of daily living filled her days and nights leaving no room for idleness or frippery. As America grew older and more sure of itself, the role of women and mothers began to change.

\textit{True Womanhood}

From 1830 to 1860, American women entered a phase described by Barbara Welter as “The Cult of True Womanhood.” Welter explains her term through listing the attributes and achievements a woman needed to possess to be thought of as true woman during this era which she culled from numerous contemporary writers of the time. Essentially, the woman was to embody every noble grace and virtue. Welter writes, “Religion or piety was the core of woman’s virtue, the source of her strength. Religion belonged to woman by divine right, a gift of God and nature,”\textsuperscript{135} and “Home was supposed to be a cheerful place, so that brothers, husbands and sons would not go elsewhere in search of a good time. Woman was expected to

\textsuperscript{133} Kerber, “The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment—an American Perspective,” 158.
\textsuperscript{134} Kerber, “The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment—an American Perspective,” 158.
\textsuperscript{135} Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood,” 44.
dispense comfort and cheer.” Women were to be moral pillars of strength who shaped their whole families by their behavior. In the era of Republican Motherhood, women focused on shaping good patriots. This new generation attempted to form men and women of good character who embodied all the upright morals that a person could hope to attain.

The woman wishing to embrace the role of a True Woman must be married, as she first must learn to manage her own household. Schools such as Sarah Pierce’s Litchfield Female Academy and Mount Holyoke lauded household skills over traditional academic coursework, as would have been found in a men’s university. Welter reports that students “attained the perfection of their characters when they could combine their elegant accomplishments with a turn for solid domestic virtues.” The True Woman’s first ministry addressed her husband. J.R. Miller, a popular writer of the era states, “No matter how the world goes with him during the day, when he enters his own door he meets the fragrant atmosphere of love ...When gloom comes down and adversity falls upon him, her faithful eyes look ever into his like two stars of hope shining in the darkness. When his heart is crushed, beneath her smile it gathers itself again into strength.”

Researcher Carroll Smith-Rosenberg writes, “The True Woman was emotional, dependent, and gentle—a born follower. .. was expected to be strong, self-reliant, protective, an efficient caretaker in relation to children and home. She was to manage the family’s day-to-day finances, prepare foods, make clothes, compound drugs, serve as family

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137 Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood,” 60.
138 J.R. Miller, Home-Making, 70.
nurse—and, in rural areas as physician as well.”

A woman who proved mastery over all of these areas was held up as an example for others.

“Let it be granted that woman’s chief sphere is the home, and that her most important function is maternity,” writes nineteenth century reverend W.C. Black. Historian Ellen M. Plante says, “For the middle-class Victorian woman, motherhood was the answer to her higher calling ... Motherhood was portrayed as the most noble work on earth in popular song, poetry and fiction, and behavior manuals and advice books underscored the importance of child rearing at every turn.” She continues by noting that “the bonds of love between a mother and child were recognized as the most potent in the world.” This wholehearted devotion to the proper rearing of children manifested itself most clearly in their religious education.

Mother as Priest and Her “Bible”

The nineteenth century marked a change in the former pattern of Protestant religious practice in the family. The Puritan practice of family worship featured the father as a type of “high priest” who offered prayers for the family and expounded upon Biblical doctrines while the mother kept the children attentive and quiet. However, with the changing society, the religious experience in the home also changed. Religious scholar Colleen McDannell writes, “Paternal leadership in domestic religion was eroding...Comments on the father’s princely duties seemed out of place in an increasingly democratic American society ...As men looked to

139 Smith-Rosenberg, Disorderly Conduct, 199.
140 Black, Christian Womanhood, 294.
141 Plante, Women at Home in Victorian America, 70.
142 Plante, Women at Home in Victorian America, 70.
the world outside of their families for fulfillment, challenge, and edification, their role as
domestic patriarch became shallow.”\textsuperscript{143} Women stepped in to fill the gap left by husband who
worked away from home. McDannell states, "Moral instruction—a teaching ritual—came to
replace worship as the primary goal of Protestant family devotions. This instruction was child-
centered, mother-directed, and individual.”\textsuperscript{144} Daniel Schelereth notes that women depended
on “the written word, especially as presented in the Bible but also as it appeared informally in
hymns, sermons, tracts, novels, and children’s stories...Reading and teaching formed the basis
of Protestant ritual.”\textsuperscript{145} The rise in literacy rates, the education of women, and new
developments in printing contributed to the reliance on the written word for religious
instruction.

Women’s studies scholar Mary Ryan writes, “This process [relying on the written word]
could not begin until a mass literate audience had been created. Literacy had, in fact, grown
rapidly between the American Revolution and 1840, when ninety percent of the native-born,
male and female, could read and write.”\textsuperscript{146} Another scholar on Victorian America states, “From
1876 to 1915, the rate of illiteracy in the United States fell from 20 percent to 6 percent.”\textsuperscript{147}
(The discrepancy in these figures potentially relates to immigrant and black populations being
included in the second statistics.) To meet the needs and desires of this highly literate
population, publishers had to keep up. As such, “The output of America’s printing presses

\textsuperscript{143} McDannell, \textit{The Christian Home in Victorian America}, 123.
\textsuperscript{144} McDannell, \textit{The Christian Home in Victorian America}, 152.
\textsuperscript{145} McDannell, \textit{The Christian Home in Victorian America}, 106.
\textsuperscript{146} Ryan, \textit{The Empire of the Mother}, 14.
\textsuperscript{147} Schlereth, \textit{Victorian America}, 253.
increased ten-fold between 1820 and 1850,” notes Ryan. What were these printing presses churning out that literate woman read and used to instruct their children? The desire to present God and religion in a non-fearful way led to the introduction of new forms of religious material. McDannell says, “What developed out of this desire to present religion ‘in a pleasant way’ was a literature geared to inculcate religious values through fiction. This fiction, directed toward women and children, was read at home as an alternative to sectarian theology and, at times, the Bible. Reading religious fiction—anything from moral fables to the retelling of biblical adventures—function as a way to apprehend ‘true religion.’”

While many viewed the secular novel with distrust and remained confident “that girls could be ruined by a book,” fiction which addressed religious themes gained immense popularity. McDannell states, “Such fiction showed women and men overcoming personal and societal odds and achieving self-fulfillment. It also helped reinforce new perspectives on religion—that God preferred love over money, that perfection was achieved through trial and self-sacrifice, and that true religion was interior and devoid of institutional structure.” No longer did mothers only have the examples of Noah or Daniel to teach morality; they could use “Little Johnny” who obeyed his mother and gained great happiness and blessing as the example to use in the instruction of their children. Mary Ryan points out, “The popularity of the novel, which provided an emotion-charged immersion in an ersatz domestic setting, suggests that masses of American readers had so internalized a set of propositions about the family that didactic instruction was no longer necessary. Domesticity could now be played out on the level

148 Ryan, The Empire of the Mother, 13.
149 McDannell, The Christian Home in Victorian America, 100.
of fantasy and imagination."\textsuperscript{152} The indoctrination of the ideal mother reached such a level of acceptance that it had become a literary device, and Mary Baker Eddy used this image to enhance her reputation.

**Eddy Embraces Motherhood**

Why was it important for Eddy’s followers to think of her as a mother? Women in this time period did not typically hold leadership positions. They did not work outside the home. They did not have authority over men. Although a few other new faiths, such as the Unitarian Church and the New Thought movement, allowed women to be ordained, few mainstream denominations permitted women’s leadership. How then could a woman pastor a church and form a new religion? Eddy assumed a role which was acceptable and encouraged—that of mother. Since American society at the time venerated the role of mother, by portraying herself as a mother, Eddy established her credibility. By transforming God from a purely masculine figure to a “Mother-Father God,”\textsuperscript{153} she was able to make her faith more personal for women. She became not only a mother figure; she was also a role model and a source of hope. Eddy embraced the exalted role and image of mother found in literature to foster her own reputation. Mothers anchored the home and performed the religious instruction of their children. The image of their patient, sacrificial tutelage evoked tender feelings in the hearts of Americans. It made great sense for the leader of a new church to assume than the most highly exalted religious role in the nineteenth century—a mother.

\textsuperscript{152} Ryan, *The Empire of the Mother*, 11.
\textsuperscript{153} Eddy, *Science and Health*, 16.
Martha Wilcox, a woman who attended the elderly Eddy, reminisces, “The characteristic that endeared Mrs. Eddy to every member of her household was her motherliness.”\(^{154}\) One of Eddy’s students, Emma Newman, writes, “I was struck by her loving manner towards those who served her. She addressed them usually as ‘dear,’ and they addressed her, lovingly, as ‘Mother.’”\(^{155}\) Eddy assumed the role of a mother in her methods of instruction, her sermons and religious texts, her private correspondence, and in her name. Early in her ministry, Eddy’s followers adopted the name “Mother” as a term of endearment and respect. Eddy embraced this moniker and often signed letters showing the maternal relationship. The signature on a letter to student Julia Barrett, “Lovingly my dear child. Mother Mary,”\(^{156}\) encapsulates Eddy’s practice of referring to her students as “children” and to herself as “mother.” Her 1896 Message to the Annual Meeting of The Mother Church, Boston begins “Beloved Brethren, Children, and Grandchildren.”\(^{157}\) The Mother Church, the Boston flagship church of the Christian Science faith, contains a room in the building created especially for Eddy’s private use that is called “The Mother’s Room.”

Although Eddy employed the mother image to her benefit, when the term began to damage her reputation, she abandoned it. An early version Eddy’s *Manual of the Mother Church* contained the section “The Title of Mother” which read:

In the year 1895, loyal Christian Scientists had given to the author of their text-book, the founder of Christian Science, the individual endearing term of mother. Therefore, if any student shall apply this title either to herself or to others, except as a term of kinship

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\(^{154}\) Wilcox, “A Worker in Mrs. Eddy’s Chestnut Hill House,” in *We Knew Mary Baker Eddy*, Fourth Series, 89.  
\(^{155}\) Newman, “The Primary Class of 1889 and Other Memories,” in *We Knew Mary Baker Eddy*, First Series, 30.  
\(^{156}\) Peel, *Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Trial*, 109.  
\(^{157}\) Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 125.
according to the flesh, it shall be regarded by the church, as an indication of disrespect for their pastor emeritus, and unfitness to be a member of the Mother Church.\textsuperscript{158}

While this term of endearment created a bond within the church, outsiders used it as a way to mock the faith. Although the press had used “Mother Eddy” as a satirical title in news articles, it was Mark Twain’s ridicule through his letters and articles which spurred Mary Baker Eddy into action. In 1903, she added yet another amendment to her \textit{Manual of the Mother Church} to deal with this reputational problem.

\begin{quote}
Article XXII Section 1 The Title of Mother Changed. SECTION 1. In the year eighteen hundred and ninety-five, loyal Christian Scientists had given to the author of their textbook, the Founder of Christian Science, the individual, endearing term of Mother. At first Mrs. Eddy objected to being called thus, but afterward consented on the ground that this appellative in the Church meant nothing more than a tender term such as sister or brother. In the year nineteen hundred and three and after, owing to the public misunderstanding of this name, it is the duty of Christian Scientists to drop the word mother and to substitute Leader, already used in our periodicals.\textsuperscript{159}
\end{quote}

The attacks on the mother term did not end with her amendment. When Mark Twain compiled his articles on Christian Science and released them as a book, he included a satirical account by Frederick Peabody of a visit to the Mother’s Room in the Mother Church in Boston. He lampooned the room and the awe-struck visitors to the shrine of their mother. After the publication of this account, Eddy reacted by passing a bylaw: Article XXII Section 17 Mrs. Eddy’s Room. SECT. 17. The room in The Mother Church formerly known as “Mother’s Room” shall hereafter be closed to visitors.\textsuperscript{160}

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\textsuperscript{158} Peabody, \textit{Eddyism}, 37.  \\
\textsuperscript{159} Eddy, \textit{Manual of the Mother Church}, 64-65.  \\
\textsuperscript{160} Eddy, \textit{Manual of the Mother Church}, 69.
\end{flushright}
In addition to embracing the name of “Mother” (at least for a while), Eddy took a mother-like stance with her followers, particularly those closest to her. In her later years, she had a household staff of “watchers” and caretakers, all devout Christian Scientists. Many report the stern rebukes she gave to them, although Eddy stated she was rebuking the “error” (their non-Christian Science way of thinking) and not the person. John C. Lathrop worked as a Christian Science practitioner and attended Mary Baker Eddy for eighteen months during the last years of her life. He reports this story of an encounter with “Mother.”

“One day, she called me to her study and asked me if I was doing my work. I replied, ‘I am trying to do it, Mother.’ She repeated her question. I replied as before and attempted to explain. She said, ‘Stop! Stop!...I asked you if you were doing what I gave you to do...You are either doing a thing or you are not doing it. Were you doing it?’ ‘No, Mother, I was not doing it,’ I replied... ‘Let me see you do it now,’ she said sternly.”

This didactic encounter between two adults mirrors a conversation a mother might have with a young child. However, those who served her as domestics, secretaries, prayer watchers, or in other household roles readily submitted themselves to the idea that Eddy had the authority of a mother.

Eddy extended the authority of the mother and coupled it with the authority of God. She rewrote the Lord’s Prayer found in Matthew and replaced “Our Father who art in heaven” with “Our Father-Mother God, all-harmonious” using this metaphor to explain that women were not inferior to men, but equal. She wrote, “The Lamb’s wife presents the unity of male and female as no longer two wedded individuals, but as two individual natures in one; and this

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162 Eddy, Science and Health, 16.
compounded spiritual individuality reflects God as Father-Mother, not as a corporeal being.”

Her grateful followers embraced this image as one which gave comfort and made sense to them. “A. C. L.,” a Christian Scientist from Kansas City, Kansas, wrote to Eddy and said, “Through Christian Science, Mrs. Eddy had given me what had longed for all my life, — a Mother, a perfect ‘Father-Mother God.’” Eddy’s inclusion of the feminine in the image of God reflected what many Americans experienced in their education. Their mothers taught them the religious morality; it only made sense that God would contain vestiges of the feminine.

**Eddy’s Appeal to Mothers**

Mary Baker Eddy’s sermons and writings directly addressed the prevailing belief of mothers as dispensers of moral virtue: “A mother is the strongest educator, either for or against crime. Her thoughts form the embryo of another mortal mind, and unconsciously mould it, either after a model odious to herself or through divine influence.” Through her direct address to mothers, she reinforced the pattern already found in the religious life of the family. As this structure existed already, both men and women felt comfortable with the image of the mother assuming the religious instruction for the family.

In addition to portraying herself as a mother, Mary Baker Eddy directly appealed to mothers in her writing. She wrote, “Mothers should be able to produce perfect health and

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perfect morals in their children," and explains how a mother might convey these truths: “The sapling bends to the breeze, while the sturdy oak, with form and inclination fixed, breasts the tornado. It is easier to incline the early thought rightly, than the biased mind. Children not mistaught, naturally love God; for they are pure-minded, affectionate, and generally brave. Passions, appetites, pride, selfishness, have slight sway over the fresh, unbiased thought. Teach the children early self-government, and teach them nothing that is wrong.” Eddy modeled the education of children in the way she taught her children in the faith. She brooked no nonsense from her “children,” yet she loved them dearly. She further instructed her children, not only in her textbook, Science and Health, but through numerous letters, articles, sermons, and poems.

Although the majority of her prose was written to edify and instruct, Mary Baker Eddy’s writing style mimicked popular women’s fiction of the day. Even though her final edition of Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures may seem like a more analytical text, much of her writing throughout her years as the leader of the Church of Christ, Scientist was sentimental in that it relied on emotion, drama, and flowery phrasing. Mark Twain, a contemporary of Eddy said her writing was marked by, “puerility, sentimentality, affectations of scholarly learning, lust after eloquent and flowery expression, repetition of poetic picturesqueness, confused and wandering statement, metaphor gone insane, meaningless words used because they are pretty or showy or unusual, and sorrowful attempts at the epigrammatic.” These adjectives also describe the writings of many other women of the day. Claudia Stokes, an Eddy researcher,

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166 Eddy, Miscellaneous Writings, 4.
167 Eddy, Miscellaneous Writings, 240.
writes, “Eddy carefully and conscientiously imported sentimentalism’s formulas and beliefs into her spiritual doctrine at the same time as she presented her own life as the unfolding of a triumphal narrative.”\textsuperscript{169} Instead of preaching dogmatic doctrines, Eddy chose to present her faith in terms of motherhood and suffering which “attracted women already familiar with those devices through the medium of literature,” comments Stokes.\textsuperscript{170}

In contemporary literature, Stokes notes, “Sentimental heroines typically had little power to alter their woeful circumstances” but “by correcting their attitudes...sufferers could effect immediate change, whether relief from worldly cares, increased physical attractiveness, or the arrival of good fortune.”\textsuperscript{171} The doctrines of Christian Science mirror this popular literary trend. Letter after letter of life-changing experiences due to the teachings of Christian Science poured into the offices of the church. The letters were published with enticing headlines such as “Saved from Insanity and Suicide,” “Health and Peace Attained,” “From Despair to Hope and Joy,” and “Prejudice Overcome.” These titles could easily have been mistaken for the titles of books written by sentimental novelists of the day: \textit{The Struggle of a Soul} (E.D.E.N. Southworth), \textit{Getting Along} (Caroline Chesebro), \textit{The Struggle for Immortality} (Elizabeth Stuart Phelps), or \textit{Fashion and Famine} (Ann Sophia Winterbotham Stephens).

The theme of motherhood manifested itself in a different way in Christian Science as it found a ready market in obstetrics. Many of the cases of Christian Science healing occurred in the delivery room. At this time in history, the medical profession saw pregnancy as an illness, not as a natural part of life. As such, women were convinced that giving birth would be

\textsuperscript{169} Stokes, “The Mother Church: Mary Baker Eddy and the Practice of Sentimentalism,” 440.
\textsuperscript{170} Stokes, “The Mother Church: Mary Baker Eddy and the Practice of Sentimentalism,” 441.
\textsuperscript{171} Stokes, “The Mother Church: Mary Baker Eddy and the Practice of Sentimentalism,” 443.
debilitating, causing new mothers to be weak or bedridden for a lengthy recuperation. Additionally, many women knew of at least one person who had died while giving birth or shortly after. Daniel Schlereth cites, “A New York study claims that one mother died for every 154 babies born alive in 1910; another report in 1917 put the total at 5,000 women dying each year.”¹⁷² Ellen Plante, in her book on women in the nineteenth century, cites Elizabeth Donaghy Garrett, a social historian: Childbirth “was the cause of untold apprehension that followed women throughout pregnancy. The fear of dying as a result of childbirth ‘far outweighed their dread of dying in any other manner.’”¹⁷³

Christian Science directly addressed the fear which Eddy believed caused people to think they suffered. “Deny the existence of matter, and you can destroy the belief in material conditions. When fear disappears, the foundation of disease is gone.”¹⁷⁴ Countless women wrote to Eddy and to the *Christian Science Journal* with letters praising their healers for allowing them to give birth painlessly and to be up and out of bed within a day. Eddy received a letter from a appreciative Christian Scientist John B. Housel who reported, “Five months ago my wife gave birth to a child, without pain or inconvenience, has done all the housework since, and has been every minute perfectly well. Neither she nor the child have been ill, — as was constantly the case with former children, — so we have thought it right to name the child Glover Eddy.”¹⁷⁵ Not only does Mary Baker Eddy receive praise for her teachings; she receives the honor usually accorded to a family member. The grateful family took the surnames from Eddy’s first and third marriages to christen their child.

**The Absent Mother**

In the sentimental literature of the nineteenth century, maternal “separation encourages an idealization of the mother, who thereby becomes an object of worship and fervent longing.”\(^{176}\) comments Stokes. As Eddy’s practices relied heavily on sentimentality, this idea served her well. From 1890 to 1908, Eddy retreated to her rural home in Concord, Massachusetts, did not appear publicly, and would not communicate with anyone except the closest of friends. However, instead of diminishing her role, as Stokes comments, “sentimental maternity helped to transform this controversial absence into an asset that fortified Eddy’s authority...the absent mother becomes accessible through the metonymic adoption of her faith and the execution of her religious instruction. That is to say, religious obedience functions in sentimentalism as a conduit for maternal intimacy.”\(^{177}\)

Her followers became even more attached to her because she represented an idealized being, not a present reality. Eddy wrote, “I, as a corporeal person, am not in your midst: I, as a dictator, arbiter, or ruler, am not present; but I, as a mother whose heart pulsates with every throb of theirs for the welfare of her children, am present, and rejoice with them that rejoice.”\(^{178}\) Even though she supposedly resigned from the day-to-day operations of the church and made few public appearances, Eddy’s presence remained as she loved with the love of a mother.

*Science and Health* states, “A mother’s affection cannot be weaned from her child, because the mother-love includes purity and constancy, both of which are immortal. Therefore

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\(^{176}\) Stokes, “The Mother Church: Mary Baker Eddy and the Practice of Sentimentalism,” 458.

\(^{177}\) Stokes, “The Mother Church: Mary Baker Eddy and the Practice of Sentimentalism,” 459.

\(^{178}\) Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 152.
maternal affection lives on under whatever difficulties."\textsuperscript{179} Although Christian Science stated that the body did not exist, a mother’s love would exist forever, even if the mother herself were absent. Eddy wrote in her autobiography (perhaps somewhat penitently as this is exactly what she did to her newborn son), “The true mother never willingly neglects her children in their early and sacred hours, consigning them to the care of nurse or stranger.”\textsuperscript{180} Eddy was a careful mother at the start of her burgeoning church and directed its every step. Yet, once the church was established, Eddy’s physical presence lessened.

Eddy furthered this ideal of the absent mother in the hymns she wrote for the church. She often vented her passion, whether it be sorrow, suffering, or joy, by writing sentimental poetry. One of these poems, “The Mother’s Evening Prayer,” became a standard hymn in the Christian Science hymnal, set to six different tunes. It calls for God to protect a child after his mother is gone. The final stanza reads:

“No snare, no fowler, pestilence or pain;
No night drops down upon the troubled breast,
When heaven’s aftersmile earth’s tear-drops gain,
And mother finds her home and heav’nly rest.”\textsuperscript{181}

One can clearly see Eddy’s sentimental style as she evokes the image of a mother’s tender love and concern for her child even as she has earned her heavenly rest and is forever absent.

\textsuperscript{179} Eddy, \textit{Science and Health}, 60.
\textsuperscript{180} Eddy, \textit{Science and Health}, 75.
Teaching Her Daughters

Eddy assumed the role of a mother to all women, not just serving as an example for mothers alone. She functioned as a type of surrogate mother to the women of time. Nancy M. Theriot explores the interplay between mothers and daughters in the nineteenth century. She writes, “The mother-daughter relationship was the core experience of nineteenth-century feminine acculturation.”\(^{182}\) It was through a relationship with her mother that a girl not only learned religious doctrines but understood what it was to be a woman. Eddy assumed this role instructed her spiritual daughters in what it meant to be a woman of Christian Science in their day and age.

Women of this time period were supposed to be paragons. Barbara Welter comments on the beliefs held during the era of the Cult of True Womanhood: “The attributes...by which a woman judged herself and was judged by her husband, her neighbors, and society could be divided into four cardinal virtues—piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.”\(^{183}\) Women were not only supposed to be good; they were supposed to be beyond reproach. Christian Science offered the possibility of perfection on earth, not after death, as many other Christian faiths claimed. In fact, there is very little discussion of the afterlife in Christian Science.\(^{184}\) The rewards and benefits of this faith are for the here and now. Unlike most Christian doctrines, Christian Science did not promote suffering on earth in hopes of an eternal reward. The blessings would be immediate and constant for those who followed the teachings of Christian Science.

\(^{182}\) Theriot, *Mothers and Daughters in Nineteenth-Century America*, 64.
\(^{183}\) Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood,” 44.
\(^{184}\) Christian Science asserts that with the right amount of faith, one could conquer death. Therefore, there was no need to dwell on the afterlife because supposedly one could live forever.
Science. “Heaven is a present possibility for here on earth. Heaven here on earth—one who tries to follow *Science and Health* to its fullest level—is a spiritually-minded person,” 185 reports one Christian Scientist. As an older woman, Eddy had already been through many of the experience that women of the day might encounter—the death of a spouse, poor health, the loss of a child, abandonment, the death of her mother, poverty—and as such, she could consider herself an authority on suffering. Through her writing and personal interactions with other women, Eddy established herself as an overcomer and held out the possibility to others that if they followed her teachings, they too would meet with the same success. Eddy wrote, “Know, then, that you possess sovereign power to think and act rightly, and that nothing can dispossess you of this heritage and trespass on Love. If you maintain this position, who or what can cause you to sin or suffer?”186 Women could grasp this belief—that they could think and act the way a true Christian Scientist would—and could pass it on to their children.

Regardless of her station in life, women of the nineteenth century were supposed to bear trials and sorrows without complaint. However, Christian Science teaches there is no reality in either sorrow or suffering. Eddy gives multiple illustrations in *Science and Health* to highlight this doctrine. “A blundering despatch [sic], mistakenly announcing the death of a friend, occasions the same grief that the friend’s real death would bring. You think that your anguish is occasioned by your loss. Another despatch, correcting the mistake, heals your grief, and you learn that your suffering was merely the result of your belief. Thus it is with all sorrow, sickness, and death.”187 In another section of her textbook, Eddy writes, “Suffering, sinning,

dying beliefs are unreal.”¹⁸⁸ Women did not need to worry about their sorrows. Their Mother explained to them that it was only their mistaken view that caused them to suffer. Just like a little child who fears a monster under her bed and has her fears allayed by her mother’s insistence that the monster does not exist, Eddy’s spiritual children took solace in the fact that their trials—no matter how real they may seem—did not actually exist.

Due to the primary religious role that nineteenth century women assumed, Mary Baker Eddy’s appeal to motherhood enabled her to establish a reputation as a religious leader. Not only did she receive recognition as the mother of her new faith, through her direct appeal to mothers and her modeling of the mother/daughter relationship, Eddy instructed women in a different set of beliefs to instill in their children. Her focus on obstetrical healing provided another avenue for women to feel comfortable in the healing hands of Christian Science practitioners. However, Mary Baker Eddy’s image as Messiah and Mother needed to be marketed for her faith to achieve even further success.

¹⁸⁸ Eddy, Science and Health, 76.
Chapter 4: MARKETING: PROMOTING A REPUTATION

A radical shift in the advertising and marketing of products of all kinds occurred in nineteenth-century America. Print advertising for products appeared in eye-catching form in newspapers, books, and magazines. Advertisers began to market to specific audience, particularly to women who made eighty-five percent of the purchases of manufactured consumer goods. Branding and brand recognition came into existence. No longer did a housewife go to the store to purchase soap. She went to purchase Woodbury Soap or Pears Soap or Ivory Soap—whichever brand’s advertisements had been the most successful at earning her dollars.

Branding in Religion

Mara Einstein expands the notion of brand identity to describe specific religions as possessing brands. While her research focuses mostly on modern-day faiths, the ideas she poses relate to earlier eras. She writes, “Religious organizations have taken on names, logos or personalities, and slogans that allow them to be heard in a cluttered, increasingly competitive marketplace.” In the same way nineteenth century manufacturers had to distinguish their brand of flour or laundry detergent from the similar products offered by their competitors,

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189 Hill, Advertising to the American Woman 1900-1999, 85.
190 Einstein, Brands of Faith, xi.
religions follow the same paradigm. “Branding faiths is also necessary because religion is a commodity product. The majority of religions offer the same end benefit for the consumer (salvation, peace of mind, etc.). Though packaged differently, fundamentally they are the same product, no different than buying one shampoo versus another,”\textsuperscript{191} Einstein notes. She explains how a religious brand forms: “Branding also occurs through the creation of stories or myths surrounding a product or a service. These stories are conveyed through the use of advertising and marketing and are meant to position a product in the mind of the consumer.”\textsuperscript{192}

With these principles in mind, Einstein lauds Mary Baker Eddy’s advertising and marketing practices:

“Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, was arguably the most innovative promoter of religion the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Long before the current explosion in religious publishing, she used a number of now-commonplace marketing techniques to publicize and sell her belief system. She distributed her book \textit{Science and Health} in a secular bookstore; she aggressively used endorsements on the cover her book; and in a particularly innovative move, she designed \textit{Science and Health} to look like a Bible, thus marrying the attributes and benefits associated with that best-selling tome to her own.”\textsuperscript{193}

\textit{Patent Medicine, Magazines, and Door-to-Door Salesmen}

In addition to the aforementioned techniques, Eddy picked up on the medical advertising of the day and mimicked those promotions in her own publications. Historian Daniel Pope “estimated that of the 104 companies that spent more than $50,000 on national

\textsuperscript{191} Einstein, \textit{Brands of Faith}, 13. 
\textsuperscript{192} Einstein, \textit{Brands of Faith}, 12. 
\textsuperscript{193} Einstein, \textit{Brands of Faith}, 37.
promotions in 1893, over half were manufacturers of patent medicines.”¹⁹⁴ These medicines promised cures for any ailment a man, woman, or child could possess. Some of these patent medicines, like Pinkham’s Vegetable Compound and Doan’s Liver Pills gained national recognition. A common advertising technique for patent medicines was to print a booklet containing helpful advice and miraculous stories of healing. The Dr. Williams Medical Co. from Schenectady, New York, published such a pamphlet in 1898 entitled *How to Get Well: Useful Information on the Care of the Sick and the Treatment of Disease*. Interspersed with advice on what to do in case of drowning or accident are story after story of miraculous healing due to pills and potions offered by the Dr. Williams Medical Co. These stories are introduced with eye-catching headlines such as “Where Nine Doctors Failed: The Remarkable Manner in which a Little Sufferer Was Cured of Spinal Meningitis” and “Excruciating Agony: How a Spokane Woman Found Relief from Rheumatism.”¹⁹⁵

Mary Baker Eddy employed this technique in many of her publications. *Science and Health* contains ninety-nine pages of testimonials to the efficacy of metaphysical healing and contain headlines similar to the ones found in patent medicine advertisements. The *Christian Science Journal* filled four pages each month with letters from patients and practitioners. Although the letters forgo the attention-grabbing headlines of the patent medicine ads, the topics were such that would encourage and challenge those reading the letters but also intrigue someone who was not a Christian Scientist. The October 1894 edition of the *Journal* printed letters from patients cured from not being able to sit up, from back strain, the inability to speak

¹⁹⁴ Schlereth, *Victorian America*, 283.
¹⁹⁵ Hanson, *How to Get Well: Useful Information on the Care of the Sick and the Treatment of Disease*. 67
for twenty-one years, and dyspepsia. Other letters explained how a strict Baptist came to Christian Science, the report of a practitioner who cured an insane woman and then cured “all over the city,” and a man who reported the spiritual problem of having his letters containing his per capita tax and *Journal* renewal payment sent back to him. He claimed it was not that he failed to affix postage (which he had forgotten to do); the problem was that he had not sent his $5 tax with a spirit of love, and he felt that in repentance for such selfishness, he should order four extra *Journal* subscriptions for family and friends.¹⁹⁶ Not only did Eddy’s *Journal* copy the magazine-like format of patent medicine advertising, it mirrored the subscription magazines of the day.

Historian Daniel Schlereth writes, “Magazines flooded homes and newsstands. Whereas in 1885 there were only four monthly magazines with circulations of one hundred thousand, ... by 1905 there were twenty such magazines... with a combined circulation of 5.5 million.”¹⁹⁷ Human interest stories in magazines “helped personalize the anonymity of city life for urban readers,”¹⁹⁸ reports Schlereth. However, a magazine was not successful unless “it ceased to be ‘an inanimate printed thing’ and became ‘a vital need in the personal lives of its readers,’” says economic researcher Christopher Wilson.¹⁹⁹ He goes on to say “that to succeed fully the magazine had to generate trust, a sense of participation, and even proprietorship in the mind of the reader. This was best accomplished by a careful balance of the new and familiar that both stimulated the reader’s attention yet reassured him—the lure of ‘new improved,’ the stability

¹⁹⁷ Schlereth, *Victorian America*, 160.
¹⁹⁸ Schlereth, *Victorian America*, 184.
A sense of proprietorship in the publication occurred through letters from readers who commented on the articles or reported on their interactions with the topics discussed it the magazines.

The Christian Science Journal, Eddy’s primary magazine, accomplished these goals. During Mary Baker Eddy’s lifetime, the forty-four page monthly journal reflected the format of other magazines of the day. Each issue blended the new in the variety of sermons and articles offered, but the format remained the same. Each issue always contained a number of articles to edify and instruct, excerpts from newspapers or magazines that spoke favorably of Christian Science or of Mary Baker Eddy, a section of letters from readers called “Notes from the Field” (later called “Testimonies from the Field”), an article from the editor, and a closing page of advertisements for books and products. Interspersed in the small spaces at the ends of articles were poems by Christian Scientists and announcements of events of interest to readers (such as when the next membership class was to be held, where contributions to the Church Building Fund should be sent, or how to pay the yearly capitation tax). Mary Baker Eddy often inserted a letter she wrote to a student or a direct address to the readers of the Journal in each issue. The 1895 Journal ran a series showcasing the new edifice of The Mother Church in Boston. The informal notices, the friendly letters, and the thought-provoking discussions of Christian Science created a sense of trust and belonging and made people feel like they were part of the movement.

Christian Scientists handed out free copies of the Journal, and early editions advertised that anyone who got three new subscribers would get the Journal free for a year, and finding

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six new subscribers earned a copy of *Science and Health*.\(^{201}\) This practice is similar to the distribution scheme of the Sears Catalog in 1904. Regina Blaszczyk reports, “That year, Sears ...ask[ed] loyal customers in Iowa to distribute twenty-five catalogs to people in their communities. As a reward, the distributors received prizes based on the value of the orders received. When Iowa sales soared, Sears tried the plan elsewhere. The circulation of the Sears catalog doubled, from 541,000 in fall 1903 to 1.1 million in spring 1904.”\(^{202}\) In a similar way to the Sears catalog, Eddy advertised items for sale—from books to Bibles to the healing courses at her college, all Christian-Science approved and only advertised in Christian Science publications. However, the most successful promotions did not come from the printed page.

Christian Scientists eagerly sharing their faith provided the majority of the advertising for Eddy’s religion. Rennie Schoepflin describes the activities of newly trained Christian Science practitioners:

“After Christian Science healers arrived, they posted signs outside their homes advertising themselves as Christian Science practitioners, took offices in the business districts of towns, ... distributed or inserted in the local newspapers business cards listing their business addresses and office hours ... Advance notice was undertaken by a distribution of cards, circulars, and a few letters.”\(^{203}\)

Additionally, Christian Science teachers who did not set up urban healing practices preached, taught, distributed literature, and established churches and schools across the United States. Schoepflin writes, “Christian Scientists advertised public lectures or church services in newspapers, through handbills and broadsides, or door-to-door and distributed or

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\(^{202}\) Blaszczyk, *American Consumer Society*, 89.
\(^{203}\) Schoepflin, *Christian Science on Trial*, 49.
sold literature...Every convert considered herself a missionary committed to teaching.”

Every Christian Science practitioner was also a book dealer, offering Eddy’s publications for sale to those they healed. This tireless promotion caused Eddy’s name and reputation to spread across America.

Additional publicity came through the sale of jewelry and trinkets. These items were not promotional items such as many advertisers of the day offered, like baseball cards in a pack of cigarettes. Instead they functioned more like souvenirs or keepsakes. Georgine Milmine, a contemporary of Eddy, writes, “The manufacture of Christian Science jewelry was at one time a thriving business, conducted by the J. C. Derby Company of Concord. Christian Science emblems and Mrs. Eddy’s ‘favourite flower’ were made up into cuff-buttons, rings, brooches, watches, and pendants, varying in price from $325 to $2.50.” Another profitable item was the “Mother Spoon,” a silver teaspoon with Eddy’s portrait embossed on it; a picture of her Concord home, Pleasant View; Eddy’s signature; and the motto, “Not Matter but Mind Satisfieth.” These spoons sold for $5.00 each, and Mary Baker Eddy enjoyed giving them as gifts to her students. She encouraged the sale of these spoons by running a notice in the February 1899 issue of the Christian Science Journal which read in part: “Mother requests that Christian Scientists shall not ask to be informed what this motto is, but each Scientist shall purchase at least one spoon, and those who can afford it, one dozen spoons, that their families may read this motto at every meal, and their guests be made partakers of its simple truth.”

The notice went on to explain where the spoons could be purchased. Turning her faith into

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204 Schoepflin, Christian Science on Trial, 52.
205 Cather and Milmine, The Life of Mary Baker Eddy, 451.
tangible commodities reflects the growing emphasis on consumer culture of this era.

Nineteenth century Americans purchased items to reflect their values and the place in society they wished to attain. These items identified the owners as followers of Mary Baker Eddy. As her status rose, by association so did the people who chose to be connected to her.

*Opportunities for Women*

In 1906, twenty years after the first six-member Christian Science Association meeting occurred, 72.4 percent of all Christian Scientists were women. All other Christian denominations averaged together at this time showed a 56.9 percent membership of women.\(^{207}\) Women found comfort in the writings of Christian Science because they found hope for their present lives. They saw in Christian Science the possibility to combine religion with income-generating potential. Eddy needed to market her faith as a viable option in a world of expanding economic possibilities for women.

With the growth of American urbanization and consumerism, job opportunities for women increased. Reverend W.C. Black wrote in 1881, “The stupid prejudices which have hitherto kept woman out of the certain callings for which she is pre-eminently fitted are rapidly giving way.”\(^{208}\) Many historians commented on the rising percentage of women in the workforce. S.J. Kleinberg writes, “In 1840, about 10 percent of free women held jobs, climbing to 15 percent in 1870 (when all African-American women would have been included in the

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\(^{207}\) Albanese, *Republic of Mind*, 299.

\(^{208}\) Black, *Christian Womanhood*, 303.
totals or the first time) and to 24 percent by 1920.” S.J. Kleinberg notes the types of jobs nineteenth century women held: “70 percent of female professionals taught school or gave music lessons, while another 14 percent were trained nurses. The next largest category (5 percent) consisted of semi-professional pursuits, mostly keepers of charitable institutions and religious, charity and welfare workers.”

Due to the rising need for skilled workers, more secondary training institutions for women developed. Kleinberg notes, “In 1870 ... only two-fifths of the 582 colleges and universities in the United States admitted women. By 1890, the number of institutions of higher education had doubled and over three-fifths accepted female applicants. The beginning of the twentieth century almost all publicly funded institutions of higher education took women.” Additionally, Schlereth comments that women did not always have to attend a university for training: “Some learned their tasks directly on the job, but many took courses in the rapidly growing business schools, at the YWCA, or in commercial courses in the new high schools.” The lower birth rate left many women who normally would have spent their entire lives in child rearing without anything to occupy their time. While some involved themselves in charity work or social causes or found employment, many women faced years of ennui and

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213 Collen McDannell states on page 8 of *The Christian Home in Victorian America 1840-1910*: “The nineteenth century also saw the decline of the large American family. In 1800 the average number of children born to a woman before she reached menopause was 7.04. By mid-century, this number dropped by 23 percent to 5.42, and by the end of the century, to 3.56.”
aimlessness which led to neurasthenia\textsuperscript{214} and nervous disorders unless they could occupy their minds elsewhere.

Although Eddy’s faith focused on mental healing, the practical aspects of Christian Science provided women with employment opportunities in a way that did not offend social norms. Society encouraged the ideal woman to care for the sick and to participate in religious activities. Becoming a practitioner of Christian Science healing filled both of these requirements. As women did not manipulate (touch) patients but only prayed for them and countered their fears, it was acceptable for a woman to treat both female and male patients. As doors were opening for women to receive training and work outside the home, the stigma of employment no longer held firm.

Eddy’s Massachusetts Metaphysical College mirrored other training institutions of the day. Robert Peel notes, the “Massachusetts Metaphysical College invited amusement. Here was a college with one faculty member (who was also its president) and one course (which lasted less than three weeks) and one textbook.”\textsuperscript{215} However small her college may have been, Mary Baker Eddy’s reputation grew through this avenue of education. She enhanced the public’s perception through advertising herself in the mid-1880s as a “Professor of Obstetrics” as she had taken a course in obstetrics from Rufus Noyes, a surgeon at Boston City Hospital. Because of this scant training, Eddy felt she had “a requisite knowledge of accouchment.”\textsuperscript{216} Eddy first taught metaphysical obstetrics during one-week sessions in June and December 1887

\textsuperscript{214} For further reading on the topic of neurasthenia, consult Francis Gosling’s \textit{Before Freud: Neurasthenia and the American Medical Community 1870-1910}; David Schuster’s \textit{Neurasthenic Nation: America’s Search for Health, Happiness, and Comfort, 1869-1920}; and Andrew Scull’s \textit{Hysteria: The Disturbing History}.

\textsuperscript{215} Peel, \textit{Trial}, 158.

\textsuperscript{216} Schoepflin, \textit{Christian Science on Trial}, 98.
with a tuition of $200, an astronomical sum given that women employed in factory work earned approximately 91 cents per day at this time. Most students reported that the cost was a value compared to the wealth of spiritual growth and knowledge they gleaned from their time under Eddy’s instruction even if the medical advice they received smacked of the ridiculous. Despite the questionable curriculum, Christian Science was viewed as a viable alternative to attending a traditional doctor.

The career path offered by Christian Science offered a reputable profession akin to that of a doctor or nurse, yet with little training required. An intriguing interview appeared in the *New York Times* in 1900. Charles Griffin Pease, a medical doctor, dentist, and Christian Science practitioner, faced charges for signing death certificates for patients he had not treated but who died under the care of Christian Science practitioners. The cross examination of Pease’s defense highlighted the following conversation:

“Attorney: What is your profession?
Pease: A doctor and a dentist.
Attorney: What do you mean by adding C.S. [to your business cards]?
Pease: That I was a Scientist by thought.
Attorney: Did you attended [a healing class]?
Pease: Yes.
Attorney: How many lessons did you receive?
Pease: Twelve.
Attorney: How long did you study medicine?
Pease: Four years.

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217 Schoepflin, *Christian Science on Trial*, 98.
219 Rennie Schoepflin reports on Dr. Alfred E. Baker’s notes which he used to teach the June 1900 Obstetrics class at the Metaphysical College. Included in his notes are the following: “Sperm and ovum do not physically conjoin in conception, for sperm is Truth, Mind, and the expression of Mind and the seed of God is the angels, and women should lay aside the superstition that menstrual function accompanies egg formation;” “True birth is not the expulsion of a child from a woman’s pelvis but revelation and understanding;” and “since there is no pain in conception, there can be none in birth.” (Schoepflin, *Christian Science on Trial*, 102-105.)
Attorney: How long did you study dentistry?
Pease: Three years.
Attorney: Then it took you four years to become a doctor, three years to become a dentist, and twelve days to become a Christian Science healer?
Pease: Yes.”

Many healing practitioners set up shop after studying Science and Health or after receiving some instruction from a practicing healer. Success stories of those cured by metaphysical healing inspired women (and many men) that they too could achieve success using Eddy’s methods. Rennie Schoepflin cites, “An 1895 survey taken by the editors of the National Medical Review put the average income of all the regular physicians in Washington, D.C. at $2,000; however, in the 1890s the Washington Pension Bureau hired newly graduated male physicians at annual salaries that ranged from only $1,200 to $1,800.” In contrast, Schoeplin writes that Christian Science practitioner James Neal reported, “My practice during that six months [ca. 1888], while very much of it was charity, netted me a little better than $3500,” and “Two practitioners, one practicing in Chicago during the 1880s and the other in New York during the early 1900s, each reputedly grossed between $5,000 and $6,000 a year, and that may not have been uncommon for large urban practices.” While not all healers earned such significant sums, the possibility of being able to support herself could not fail to appeal to women of the nineteenth century. Additionally, the disease that Christian Science methods was best suited to cure—hysteria—ran rampant in nineteenth century America.

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221 Schoepflin, Christian Science on Trial, 72-73.
Hysteria and Its Treatment

Historian Carroll Smith-Rosenberg gives an excellent overview of the hysterical disease of neurasthenia (a term coined in 1881 by neurologist Dr. George Bard222) in her book Disorderly Conduct. “Hysteria did not emerge as an endemic disease among bourgeois American women until the mid-nineteenth century. We must see it, therefore, as a disease peculiar to the Victorian bourgeois family and as a disease related, as well, to the role changes and conflicts bourgeois matrons experienced between the 1840s and 1890s.”223 Doctors of the day believed that hysteria was caused “caused either by the indolent, vapid, and unconstructive life of the fashionable middle- and upper-class woman, or by the ignorant, exhausting, and sensual life of the lower- or working-class woman.”224 As such, Smith-Rosenberg states, “Many doctors—and, indeed, a significant proportion of society at large—tended to be caustic, if not punitive, toward the hysterical woman.”225 Those called upon to treat the symptoms of hysteria found themselves frustrated by the symptoms. Samuel Ashwell, a leading gynecologist of the time, wrote in 1833, “Its symptoms are so varied and obscure. So contradictory and changeable, and if by chance several of them, or even a single one be relieved, numerous others almost immediately spring into existence.”226 Smith-Rosenberg reports, “Doctors commonly described hysterical women as highly impressionable, suggestible, and narcissistic... their moods changing suddenly, dramatically, and for seemingly inconsequential reasons.”227

222 Schlereth, Victorian America, 289.
223 Smith-Rosenberg, Disorderly Conduct, 198.
224 Smith-Rosenberg, Disorderly Conduct, 204.
Symptoms of this condition ranged widely: paraplegia, aphonia, hemianesthesia, violent epileptoid seizures, hallucinations, hypochondriasis, depression, ambulatory schizophrenia, insomnia, dyspepsia, and headaches. The hysteric might mimic tuberculosis, heart attacks, blindness, or hip disease, while lungs, heart, eyes, and hips remained in perfect health.  

When faced with such a staggering array of symptoms with no apparent physical cause, doctors resorted to any means they felt necessary to cure their patients. Some felt the physical maladies stemmed from boredom or lack of exercise and prescribed physical activity or mentally stimulating activities to heal their patients. Others resorted to more violent means. Smith-Rosenberg highlights some of these draconian methods: “Doctors frequently recommended suffocating hysterical women until their fits stopped, beating them across the face and body with wet towels, ridiculing and exposing them in front of family and friends, showering them with icy water.”  

The general idea was to make “some strong and sudden impression on the mind…through fear.” These treatments sometimes met with instant success, but as the symptoms originated in the mind, any trauma or boredom could trigger the symptoms again. Smith-Rosenberg states, “Hysterical symptoms not infrequently followed a death in the family, a miscarriage, some financial setback which forced the patient to become self-supporting; or they were seen by the patient as related to some long-term, unsatisfying life situation.”  

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228 Smith-Rosenberg, Disorderly Conduct, 197 and 203; Plante, Women at Home in Victorian America, 165.  
229 Smith-Rosenberg, Disorderly Conduct, 211.  
230 Smith-Rosenberg, Disorderly Conduct, 211.  
231 Smith-Rosenberg, Disorderly Conduct, 202.
It was not only women who suffered from neurasthenia, however; men’s symptoms sometimes manifested themselves differently, often taking the form of irritability, anxiety, or impaired judgement. John Kellogg (of cornflake fame) penned a book discussing neurasthenia. He claimed that neurasthenia was a “national malady” and that “many crimes, multitudes of suicides, great numbers of divorces, and other social calamities may be rightly regarded as among the natural results of neurasthenic conditions.”232 The *Chicago Daily Tribune* ran an article in 1890 which summarized the prevalent view of male neurasthenia using the example of a fictitious, prosperous businessman with a happy life and family who encounters hard times: “[Business] complications arise…he becomes nervous and irritable, worn out, fatigued…his once strong self-reliance is changed into vacillating puerility…the result is cerebral bankruptcy.” The article asks, “Will medicine help such a case?” And it answers with a resounding, “No.”233

As Eddy’s practitioners treated the mind, not the body, diseases from hysterical causes found ready healing. Christian Science practitioners typically discussed their patients’ lives with them. They did not want to hear the supposed symptoms of disease; instead they wanted to hear their patients’ thoughts and the process through which they came to possess the “error that had bound their patients to their false belief.”234 After assessing a patient’s history, the Christian Science practitioner would rebuke the error (never referred to as an illness, disease, or sickness) through silent prayer and advice. Treatments lasted between fifteen and thirty minutes.235 Where doctors sometimes failed to cure, Christian Scientists had success because

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233 *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “Neurasthenia,” June 1890.
234 Shoepflin, *Christian Science on Trial*, 64.
practitioners addressed the mind, not the body, and for the hysterical patient, the mind contained the disease.

Grateful patients wrote thousands of testimonials attesting to the miraculous efficacy of the healing methods of Christian Science. This overwhelming endorsement of her healing methods propelled Mary Baker Eddy to the level of sensation. When things went wrong, as they often did, Eddy could rebuke her practitioners that if they just had more faith and were more pure in the ways of Christian Science, they would have been able to address the error and bring the patient into a right line of thinking where there are no such things as disease or suffering which is similar to Jesus’ rebuke of his disciples for not being able to cast out a demon. Yet there was a great deal of suffering for many American women, if not in their bodies but in their pocketbooks, and Christian Science provided encouragement and hope for those women who faced financial struggles due to poor marriages or divorce.

Divorce
In the early nineteenth century in America, women and children and all their possessions legally remained the property of the husband. Yet many people began to highlight the plight of women due to such laws. Reverend W.C. Black writes, “New England law-makers have already (since 1879) decreed that a woman may legally own the clothes she wears. The

236 For the story of Jesus rebuking his disciples, read Matthew 17: 14-21: “When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. ‘Lord, have mercy on my son,’ he said. ‘He has seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him.’ ‘You unbelieving and perverse generation,’ Jesus replied, ‘How long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me.’ Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed at that moment. Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, ‘Why couldn’t we drive it out?’ He replied, ‘Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.’”
time is not far distant when they will pronounce it cruel for a husband to turn his wife and babe out-of-doors in the night-time, with the thermometer below zero.”\textsuperscript{237} Researcher Mary Ryan reports, “The call for relaxed divorce laws was also raised by feminists during the 1850s. At a woman’s rights convention in 1860, Elizabeth Cady Stanton presented a rationale for divorce that bore the imprint of the popular view of marriage, ‘Nothing is sacred in the family I home, but just so far as it built up and anchored in love.’”\textsuperscript{238} Calls for reformation issued not only from pulpits and podiums but from the legal profession as well. A Philadelphia court decreed in 1881: “We do not look upon the wife and the children as mere servants to the husband and father, and as therefore held, subject to his will.”\textsuperscript{239} Such decisions recognized the individual rights of women and children. Due to the changing perceptions of a woman’s role in the marriage and society, the rate of divorce increased with two-thirds of all divorce proceedings initiated by the wife.\textsuperscript{240} Daniel Schlereth notes, “Divorces increased fifteenfold in Victorian America, making the United States the country with the highest divorce rate in the world in 1915.”\textsuperscript{241} S.J. Kleinberg elaborates on this comment: “The number of divorces accelerated in the 1870s and 1880s and continued to climb through 1920... In 1860 there were 1.2 divorces for every 1000 marriages, 4 divorces per 1000 marriages by 1900, and nearly 8 by 1920.”\textsuperscript{242} Mary Baker Eddy understood the troubles faced by a single or abandoned woman who needed to survive on her own. She too had been divorced. The desire to escape from poverty led Eddy to

\textsuperscript{237} Black, \textit{Christian Womanhood}, 291
\textsuperscript{238} Ryan, \textit{The Empire of the Mother}, 107.
\textsuperscript{239} Kleinberg, \textit{Women in the United States}, 141.
\textsuperscript{240} Kleinberg, \textit{Women in the United States}, 141.
\textsuperscript{241} Schlereth, \textit{Victorian America}, 280.
\textsuperscript{242} Kleinberg, \textit{Women in the United States}, 141.
make financial decisions regarding her new church which took her from unknown pauper to internationally known multi-millionaire.

Unlike many Christian denominations which curtailed the rights of women and reminded them they were to be subject to their husbands, Eddy felt that women should have the right to manage their own finances. The indelible marks of her marriage to Daniel Patterson can be seen in Science and Health which directly addresses the issue of abandonment: “If a dissolute husband deserts his wife, certainly the wronged, and perchanced impoverished, woman should be allowed to collect her own wages, enter into business agreements, hold real estate, deposit funds, and own her children free from interference.”

These views aligned with the changing views on divorce in society. While Eddy did not campaign for women’s rights or other feminist causes, her liberal views on marriage and divorce gave her capital with those who were not interested in religion or metaphysical healing.

**Men and Membership**

While many researchers cite the huge numbers of women who found a home in Christian Science, men found logic and good business practices in the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy. Researcher Paul E. Ivey comments on the draw for nineteenth century professionals: “Businessmen were undoubtedly attracted to Christian Science for many reasons. Certainly one important reason was that they could meet others who approached business transactions

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similarly and create important spiritual and material support networks.”

The principles laid out in *Science and Health* combined business and religion. One man wrote, “[It] has unclasped the Bible...Now it’s my business guide.”

Eddy’s business of religion, which Mark Twain called “one of the most successful business monopolies in America,” boasted membership of some of New York City’s most prominent businessmen in 1907. Included in these numbers were “the president of Otis Elevator company, the president of the Aetna National Bank, the president of Western Union Telegraph Company, a prominent attorney, a well-known author, and a Broadway playwright.”

Eddy found a way to appeal to the rising business class through her organizational structure. As her converts were influential, powerful men of business and society, Christian Science’s reputation thrived.

How did so many come to Christian Science? *The Daily Tribune* of Salt Lake City stated, “The body of Christian Scientists is made up of people who have first come to be healed and then investigated the science and have become members.” The sensational healing claims of the faith attracted seeker and skeptics alike—people from all walks of life. The paper went on to report, “[Christian Scientists] are representative professional and business men and women, teachers, literary people, and tired mothers.” While many affluent individuals embraced Eddy’s teachings, the congregation consisted of people of various financial and educational backgrounds.

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Although Eddy did not limit her membership to the wealthy, in many ways membership was exclusive. Most Christian denominations welcomed all who repented and came forward. However, Eddy had a different system. Mark Twain astutely observes, “She does not beseech and implore people to join her Church. She knows the human race better than that...She knows that if you wish to confer upon a human something he is not sure he wants, the best way is to make it apparently difficult for him to get it.”²⁵⁰ One could only become a member after filling out certain forms and having a current members vouch for his or her loyalty and beliefs in the teachings of Christian Science. If one had gone through Eddy’s teaching class, the Board of Directors had to approve the membership application. Membership came with a yearly fee called a “capitation tax,” which was, according to the by-laws, “not to be less than a dollar.”²⁵¹ This practice further ensured that membership felt like it was worth something, plus it provided a great deal of income for the church. Additionally, members were required to subscribe to Eddy’s publications²⁵² which ensured that her promotion of the faith would arrive each month in her member’s mailboxes and that even more income would come in to the church.

Marketing through Literature

²⁵⁰ Twain, Christian Science, 157-58.
²⁵¹ Eddy, Manual of the Mother Church, Article VIII Section 13.
²⁵² Eddy, Manual of the Mother Church, Article VIII Section 14. Church Periodicals. It shall be the privilege and duty of every member, who can afford it, to subscribe for the periodicals which are the organs of this Church; and it shall be the duty of the Directors to see that these periodicals are ably edited and kept abreast of the times.
Eddy did not limit her publishing ventures to magazines and religious texts. She penned two autobiographical tomes, *Retrospection and Introspection* (1891) and *Footprints Fadeless* (1901). Both of these books served as a vehicle for Eddy to give her view of her life and history. Through these stories, she furthered the identity she had cultivated through the years. Joshua Gamson writes, “Intimacy is offered and identification fostered through accounts of personal traumas or idiosyncrasies or stories.”\(^{253}\) The books overflowed with tales of Eddy’s childhood, her personal struggles and triumphs, and tales of interactions with others. She offered a glimpse into her personal world. Gamson writes of the close relationship the audience feels with a writer after reading such a book: “Audiences are continually offered, and gladly accept, tidbits of the ‘private’ selves of public figures, are approached by and seek out celebrities as first-name familiars; yet audience-celebrity relationships are of course not reciprocal or close at all. There is no question that what is actively created by the celebrity industry is an ‘illusion of intimacy’ in texts.”\(^{254}\) These autobiographies continued Eddy’s practice of familiarity which she fostered through her mother-like image.

Mary Baker Eddy’s textbook of the faith, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, generated massive income. Church documents claim that Eddy took no salary for leading the Church of Christ, Scientist, and her secretary Calvin Frye wrote, “Her only source of revenue is from the sales of her books and the interest accruing from her savings.”\(^{255}\) However, church members were strongly encouraged to purchase a new revision of her book every time one was published. Eddy was rather obsessed with perfecting her text, and from its first publication in

\(^{253}\) Gamson, *Claims to Fame*, 190.  
\(^{254}\) Gamson, *Claims to Fame*, 172.  
\(^{255}\) Eddy, *Footprints Fadeless*, 129.
1875 until Eddy’s death in 1910, the book went through 432 revisions. Mark Twain, who was quite familiar with the book publishing and writing business of the day, wrote that Eddy’s “little book...[was] distributed in hundreds of editions...at a clear profit per volume...of seven hundred percent!” In addition, Eddy wrote numerous other commentaries and teaching materials which were sold by her and by practitioners of the faith. This financial success in a world that began to measure reputation with a yardstick of dollars did not fail to go unnoticed.

Researcher Bryan Wilson writes, “Manual workers, factory workers, the poor and the uneducated are not drawn to Christian Science, which demands something of a willingness to attribute poverty to the wrong set of mental attitudes...Serious reading is a necessary exercise for since Christian Scientists, and although its appeal is not to those who read widely at an academic level, the demand for literateness is sufficient to affect the class composition of the movement.”

Eddy’s faith resonated with those who had both the extra money to purchase her books and the leisure time necessary for studying them. However, to cast her dragnet on the other side of the boat, Eddy developed a method which allowed not only a place where people could read her literature for free but also a place where all her writings could be collected in one place and sold, the Christian Science Reading Room.

“In terms of distribution, Eddy again showed her ingenuity,” comments Mara Einstein, “She created Christian Science Reading Rooms, quiet spaces similar to public libraries where anyone could sit and read her books for free. Some have even called the Reading Rooms the

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256 Wright, Mary Baker Eddy’s Church Manual & Church Universal and Triumphant, Chapter V.
257 Eddy, Footprints Fadeless, 129.
258 Bryan Wilson, Sects and Society, 201.
first franchise." Article 21 of the Manual of the Mother Church describes how Reading Rooms should function. One section states, “The literature sold or exhibited in the Reading Rooms of Christian Science Churches shall consist only of *SCIENCE AND HEALTH WITH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES*, by Mary Baker Eddy, and other writings by this author; also the literature published or sold by The Christian Science Publishing Society.” Not only did this practice ensure that her church members would have a place to purchase her books, but it also limited the types of literature about Christian Science to which they would be exposed. Mary Baker Eddy advocated only reading Christian Science material: “I recommend students not to read so-called scientific works, antagonistic to Christian Science, which advocate materialistic systems; because such works and words becloud the right sense of metaphysical Science.”

Advocating that church members refrain from reading texts which might cause them to question their beliefs safeguarded those already in the church, but Mary knew she’d need to have converts if her religion were to flourish. She encouraged new healers to set up practices in urban areas. Cities were “ample to supply many practitioners, teachers, and preachers with work.” There existed great wisdom in this suggestion as the majority of the population moved from rural locations to urban centers. Historian Regina Blaszczyk reports, “Between 1860 and 1900...approximately 65 percent of Americans lived and worked [in what is commonly known today as “The Rust Belt], the area was framed by the Atlantic Ocean to the east, the Great Lakes to the north, The Ohio River to the south, and the Mississippi River to the west.”

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261 Eddy, *Retrospection and Introspection*, 64.
262 Eddy, *Retrospection and Introspection*, 68.
Christian Science thrived primarily in this region with the vast majority of Christian Scientists residing in this area.

With effective marketing, Christian Science grew at a phenomenal rate. According to the United States Census, in 1890 there were 8,724 Christian Scientists. By 1906 membership in the Church of Christ, Scientist had risen to 40,011, a stunning net gain of 2,500 percent. For roughly the same period (1890 to 1910) two other indigenous American religious sects, Seventh-day Adventism and Mormonism, experienced only 125 percent and 142 percent net gains, respectively. Mary Baker Eddy’s faith-based healing business had grown from a sickroom in Lynn, Massachusetts, to a world-wide movement that sometimes drew the wrong kind of attention.

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With fame comes the risk of being vilified. When one is a religious leader, this risk intensifies as every activity falls under the scrutiny of church members, outsiders, and the media. Mary Baker Eddy’s radical healing practices laid her and her faith open for censure. Eddy’s monomaniac belief in Malicious Animal Magnetism (or Malicious Mesmerism) created discord in the lives of her followers and brought ridicule from those outside her church. Threats to her leadership from multiple sides gave hope those who eagerly waited for a chance to pounce upon her reputation and destroy it. Yet through all the trials—both literal and metaphorical—Eddy recovered the scattered threads of her reputation and created a garment even more splendid than the one before.

**Her Students Turn Against Her**

Eddy’s first troubles began even before she published *Science and Health* in 1875. To support herself and advertise her newly found teaching methods, Eddy began contracting with students for private instruction in metaphysical healing. Richard Kennedy, a charismatic young man, took up housekeeping with his teacher (who then went by Mary Glover). Although his practice grew successful, personality conflicts with Mary Baker Glover occurred frequently enough that he ripped up the contract between the two of them which had promised he would
pay a further $750 for her teaching although he had already paid $250 plus 50% of the profits from his healing business for a three-year period. She took Kennedy to court to force him to pay the money. While the municipal court awarded the settlement to Mrs. Eddy (she had married again by this time), a later court overturned the decision. This event marked the beginning of a tempestuous relationship with Kennedy and with several other students.

In 1878 alone, Eddy’s name appeared in courts for Barry vs. Eddy (Barry wished to be paid for the work he did in copying Science and Health and for numerous incidental expenses); Eddy vs. Tuttle and Stanley (Eddy sued these students to determine the amount of money their healing practices had earned and get her cut of their businesses); Eddy vs. Spofford (another case where Eddy sought to get the royalties from a student’s practice); and Brown vs. Spofford (Eddy represented the plaintiff, Lucretia Brown, who claimed Daniel Spofford harmed her through the powers of his mind. This case was later dubbed “The Salem Witchcraft Trial of 1878.”). In October of that year, Eddy’s husband, Asa Gilbert Eddy, and a close Christian Science associate, Daniel Arens, appeared in court on charges that they had murdered Daniel Spofford. When Spofford later appeared alive and well, the odd case was dismissed.

Eddy’s fixation on Malicious Animal Magnetism (MAM) caused division and discord among her students. Cather and Milme write, “They were discouraged and dissatisfied...They were tired of being dragged as witnesses into lawsuits...discouraged by the outbursts of rage which Mrs. Eddy apparently made no effort to control which they believed helped to bring on the violent illnesses which they were perpetually called to treat her...Above they were tired of
Malicious Mesmerism.” 265 In October 1881, eight students drafted a letter to the Board of Directors which accused Eddy of “temper, love of money, and hypocrisy” and said she was unfit to lead the church. 266 Eddy considered these eight to be close colleagues, and their letter took her completely by surprise. The resignation two days later of the church secretary and the woman whose home was used for church services left Eddy reeling. However, this was far from the death blow to her beleaguered church.

A few months later, on February 3, 1882, the few, remaining members of the Christian Science Association posted resolutions in the Lynn Union (the local newspaper) denouncing the charges in the original letters and stating, “We do understand her to be the chosen messenger of God to bear his truth to the nations, and unless we hear ‘Her Voice,’ we do not hear ‘His Voice.’” 267 Eddy’s students reasserted that they still believed in Eddy as the sole leader and divine instrument of the cause of metaphysical healing. Their resolutions continued by stating, “We look with admiration and reverence upon her Christ-like example of meekness and charity, and will, in future, more faithfully follow and obey her divine Instructions.” 268 While her reputation was partially salvaged, Eddy felt that she needed to leave Lynn, Massachusetts, for a fresh start, and in the winter of 1882, she moved to Boston.

**Christian Science on Trial**

While she may have had a change of scene and a new audience for her healing methods, troubles followed Eddy to the city. In 1883, Julius A. Dresser began publishing articles which

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266 Fettweis and Warneck, *Christian Healer*, 100.
267 Cather and Milmine, *The Life of Mary Baker Eddy*, 278.
268 Cather and Milmine, *The Life of Mary Baker Eddy*, 278.
stated that Christian Science originated with Eddy’s former healer, Phineas Quimby. Eddy vehemently denied these charges and claimed in her book *Footprints Fadeless*, “He never intimated to me in two years that he treated the sick metaphysically. He did not pray for me when treating me...[he] failed to cure me.”\(^{269}\) However, the evidence of own writings proved these words to be untrue. In 1862, Eddy penned a glowing letter to the Portland (Maine) *Evening Courier* stating that Quimby “heals as never a man healed since Christ” and “P.P. Quimby rolls away the stone from the sepulcher of error. And health is the resurrection.”\(^{270}\) When confronted with evidence such as this, Eddy relied on MAM as a scapegoat: “Did I write those articles purporting to be mine? I might have written them...for I was under the mesmeric treatment and my head was so turned by animal magnetism ...that I might have written something as hopelessly incorrect as the articles.”\(^{271}\) While the court of public opinion raged for years, a legal court determined that Eddy’s methods differed enough from Quimby’s that she had not plagiarized his ideas.

If Eddy’s own legal troubles were not enough to shine a glaring spotlight on the difficulties of the Christian Science church, the healing practices of her students brought them center stage. While Abby Corner’s 1888 manslaughter trial over the death of her daughter and granddaughter serves as the most well-known malpractice case of that era involving Christian Science, Rennie Schoepflin reports of many others: Emma Nichols faced charges of unlawful practice of medicine, Mr. Bushwell underwent extensive questioning in the death of a nine year-old girl with diphtheria, Irving Tomlinson defended his reasoning for reading a passage of

\(^{269}\) Eddy, *Footprints Fadeless*, 90.  
\(^{271}\) Cather and Milmine, *The Life of Mary Baker Eddy*, 103.
Science and Health to a woman in severe pain from appendicitis, and many other similar stories of ineffective, sometimes fatal, healing attempts.\textsuperscript{272} The New York Times reported in one case that Coroner Banning of White Plains, New York, not only wanted a manslaughter indictment for Christian Science parents who failed to seek proper medical treatment for their seven year-old daughter who died from diphtheria, but he also wanted “a presentment against Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy...for the publishing of books dangerous to public welfare.”\textsuperscript{273}

Despite the obvious emotional and financial strain these legal proceedings placed on Eddy and the adherents to Christian Science, she frequently reinterpreted these struggles as evidence for the efficacy of her methods. Eddy felt that her court trials against former students proved that her faith was not a humbug and was a legitimate teaching worthy of monetary remuneration. While the judges often did not agree with this assessment, Eddy held fast. Additionally, although the press was negative, Christian Science and its practices garnered interest and speculation causing many to seek out the actual writings about this healing and not just rely fully on what the press had said. Eddy chose to distance herself from the cases of other practitioners who faced charges. In the case of Abby Corner, Robert Peel reports, “Mrs. Eddy’s attitude was one of thoughtful concern,” and she did not permit the Board of Directors to give church funds for Mrs. Corner’s defense.\textsuperscript{274}

\textit{A Radical Reconstruction}

\textsuperscript{272} Schoepflin, “Occasions for Hope” in \textit{Christian Science on Trial}, 55-81. For further reading, see Christian Science in the Age of Mary Baker Eddy by Stuart E. Knee, 93-111.
\textsuperscript{274} Peel, \textit{Trial}, 231 and 241.
After the sensational nature of all these trials, Mary Baker Eddy took drastic measures to ensure that her church and her personal reputation would recover. In May of 1889, Eddy resigned as the pastor of the Boston church. In September, she dissolved the Christian Science Association, and a month later closed the Massachusetts Metaphysical College. Finally, in December, she formally disorganized the church. While these measures seem antithetical to her cause, like a phoenix, Eddy planned to recreate something more enduring and powerful from the ashes of the former structures.

In 1892, Eddy began the reconstruction of her organization. She formed a corporation for the First Church of Christ, Scientist and chose twelve followers (once again imitating the picture of Jesus beginning his ministry to the world when He chose twelve disciples). Her church needed to have a home, so in 1893, she “advised the he Directors … to lay the foundation for a church building the following October.”\(^{275}\) During the 1893 Columbian Exhibition in Chicago, Robert Peel reports, “Christian Scientist had a good-sized space in an unusually advantageous position, a well-designed exhibit built around Mrs. Eddy’ books, a flood of interested visitors, and compliments from all concerned.”\(^{276}\) During this World’s Fair, a World’s Parliament of Religions took place, and Peel reports, “Christian Science was the only faith invited both to hold a denominational ‘Congress’ of its own and to make a presentation of its teachings at a plenary session of the ‘Parliament.’”\(^{277}\) Not long after, 4,000 Christian Scientists flocked to Washington to have their own congress. These public displays showed Christian Science to be a religion with a large following, but they also served as a curiosity to those who came to the Fair to be

\(^{275}\) Armstrong, 1. For a full account of every step of the stages of the construction of the church, consult Joseph Armstrong’s *The Mother Church.*

\(^{276}\) Peel, *Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Authority,* 48.

\(^{277}\) Peel, *Authority,* 49.
entertained. Either way, Christian Science appeared in a positive light, and its reputation as a viable and legitimate faith grew.

**Embarrassing Times**

However, those who sought to discredit Eddy or capitalize on the sensationalism of her life continued to wreak havoc. A popular Christian Science teacher and healer, Josephine Woodbury, claimed that her son born in 1890 whom she christened “Prince of Peace” had been conceived not by man, but by the divine principles of Christian Science. Woodbury based her claim on Eddy’s teaching in the 1886 edition of *Science and Health*: “An egg never was the origin of a man...the belief that life can be in matter, or soul in body, and that man springs from dust or from an egg, is the brief record of mortal error.” After Eddy publically lambasted the idea of this immaculate conception (but never used any names), Woodbury sued Eddy for libel. *The New York Times* reported that Woodbury brought seven separate lawsuits: *Woodbury vs. Eddy* for $150,000, *Woodbury vs. The Church of Christian Science* for $100,000, *Woodbury vs. The Board of Directors* for $50,000, and four others against other church officials for $25,000 - $50,000 each. Despite the wide net Woodbury cast, she lost all her cases as it could not be proven the statements Eddy made were specifically addressed to Woodbury. The farcical nature of this trial provided ripe pickings for those looking to glean a sensational story.

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278 Eddy, *Science and Health* (1886), 472. This passage is omitted from later editions of *Science and Health.*
Frederick Peabody led the first attack with his 1901 publication of the pamphlet *A Complete Exposure of Eddyism or Christian Science and the Plain Truth in Plain Terms Regarding Mary Baker G. Eddy*. Peabody writes that Christian Science is “the greatest humbug, imposition, and fraud of all the ages.”

His fifty-three page pamphlet discredits Eddy throughout her whole life, mocks her secretary Calvin Frye, resurrects the Quimby plagiarism case, highlights the lucrative nature of Eddy’s teaching and healing business, and questions Eddy’s motives as to Christian Science. Due to this pamphlet, journalist Georgine Milmine changed the view of the series of articles she was writing for *McClure’s* magazine. Her articles, co-authored by the now-famous Willa Cather, spurred Joseph Pulitzer of the *New York World* to run the headline on Sunday, October 28, 1906: “Mrs. Mary Baker G. Eddy Dying: Footman and ‘Dummy’ Control her Finances.”

Prompted by the success of this article, *World* funded a lawsuit entitled “The Next Friends Suit” which ostensibly would rescue the aged and insane Mary Baker Eddy from the hands of nefarious individuals who controlled her fortune. Eddy’s son, George Glover; her granddaughter, Mary Glover; her adopted son, Ebenezer Foster Eddy; and two cousins were named as plaintiffs in the case.

*The Boston Sunday Post* ran an article entitled “The Money Involved in the Christian Science Fight” which contained an excerpts of an interview with Eddy’s son, George Glover. Glover reported that he had approached his mother and “asked for a loan...not a gift, and offer[ed] her my patents on valuable mining properties as security.”

Eddy hesitantly agreed to the loan—in the amount of $5000—and wrote Glover a check. However, when Eddy’s

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281 Peel, *Authority*, 263.
secretary Calvin Frye appeared, he angrily escorted Eddy to her daily carriage ride. This encounter convinced Glover that his mother’s finances were being controlled by Frye. The fact that Glover’s incessant demands for money had wearied and troubled his elderly mother did not seem to play into his reasoning.

The plaintiffs hope to prove that Mary Baker Eddy was either dead or mentally incapable of conducting business. The Bee from Earlington, Kentucky, listed the allegations set forth by the Next Friends including that Mrs. Parmella J. Leonard of the Brooklyn Christian Science Church was impersonating Mary Baker Eddy and was the one taking the daily carriage ride through Concord. Newspapers as far away as Washington state weighed in on the debate of Eddy’s mortality. The Wenatchee Daily World ran a letter from a Christian Scientist who reported, “Mrs. Eddy has repeatedly proven herself to be alive, healthy, and happy and personally conducting her affairs at Chestnut Hill, her home in Brookline, Mass.” When it seemed unlikely to prove that anyone was pretending to be Mary Baker Eddy, the suit turned its attention to the supposed millions of dollars which were unaccounted for in Eddy’s estate due to alleged mismanagement or embezzling of funds by those who were closest to her. The Boston Sunday Post wrote that some claimed Eddy’s estate to be $10,000,000 while others reported it was less than $1,000,000. The Washington Post reported, “Mrs. Eddy is unfitted in any respect for the transaction of business and that business has been done or is done in her name by others.”

Eddy issued a statement regarding the charges: “This suit was brought without my knowledge and is being carried on contrary to my wishes. I feel that it is not for my benefit in any way, but for my injury, and I know it was not needed to protect my person or property... My personal reputation is assailed and some of my students and trusted personal friends are cruelly, unjustly, and wrongfully accused.”

She granted interviews to three major newspapers in an effort to sway public opinion and end the lawsuit. However, this case persisted until Eddy herself appeared for a court interview and explained the rationale behind her church, gave her personal history, and discussed financial matters with the judge. After this hearing, the lawyer for the plaintiffs, ex-senator William E. Chandler of New Hampshire, was heard to remark, “She’s smarter than a steel trap.” He moved for a dismissal of the suit three days later.

After being maligned by the press, Eddy decided to take offensive action and wrote to the Trustees of the Publishing Society on August 8, 1908, “It is my request that you start a daily newspaper at once, and call it the Christian Science Monitor. Let there be no delay. The Cause demands that it be issued now.” Some of her advisors strongly opposed the title of the new paper fearing that having Christian Science in the title would exclude secular audiences, but Eddy insisted that the “title represented exactly the opposite; it was an identification of the paper with the premise that no human situation was beyond healing or rectification if approached with sufficient understanding of man’s God-given potentialities.” The high quality and unbiased reporting of this newspaper earned Christian Science more respect in the secular world than Eddy might have imagined. This newspaper, founded less than two years

287 Eddy, First Church of Christ Scientist and Miscellany, 138.
288 Peel, Authority, 289.
289 Peel, Authority, 310.
290 Peel, Authority, 313.
before her death, would ironically receive seven Pulitzer prizes—the award named for Joseph Pulitzer whose publication and lawsuit spurred the creation of Eddy’s newspaper.\footnote{291 “About the Christian Science Monitor.”}

**Who Will Inherit the Throne?**

Having spent years focusing on building both her personal reputation and that of her church, it was only natural for this elderly woman to consider what would happen after her death. She and her son, George Glover, did not get along, so appointing him the heir of her vast enterprise could not be considered. In what her biographers call one of the worst decisions she ever made, Eddy adopted a son, a 41 year-old homeopathic physician and one of her former students, Ebenezer Foster. Biographers assume that Eddy wished to have someone to work with her in her final years and potentially assume the mantle of leadership. Foster Eddy (also known as “Bennie”) quickly proved to be dishonest and disloyal to his adopted mother, engaged in an affair with a married woman, and disobeyed Mary Baker Eddy’s instructions and commands. Other possible contenders for the title of Heir Apparent lost their positions in the church due to conflicts with Eddy.

One woman, Augusta Stetson, led the highly successful First Church, New York. In order to handle the huge overflow, Stetson planned to build a branch church. However, in Stetson’s blueprints, the size and splendor of the new edifice eclipsed the grandeur of the Mother Church in Boston. When Eddy discovered these plans, she ordered Augusta Stetson to stop the construction project which she did immediately and returned all the money that she had
collected for the new building. However, this penitence failed to satisfy Eddy who felt her protégée’s “methods were mental malpractice by any reckoning.” This accusation enabled Eddy to bring Stetson before the Christian Science Board of Directors because of the law in the *Manual of the Mother Church* which describes what should be done to a teacher or practitioner who uses mental malpractice. Otherwise, the *Manual* states that branch churches are to handle their own discipline. Robert David Thomas, an Eddy biographer, writes that mental malpractice may not have been the cause of the schism: “Stetson admired [Eddy] in order to be admired...she elevated Mrs. Eddy in order to rise with her.” But as soon as Augusta Stetson’s demands for admiration overstepped Eddy’s prominence, no longer could “Mrs. Eddy...genuinely admire the speaking and healing gifts that made Stetson a highly attractive figure.” The *New York Times* reported on this story stating, “It was also charged that [Stetson] had complied in letter but not in spirit that the director of the church should be changed every year.” The article continued by listing other supposed infractions which showed that Augusta Stetson, not Mary Baker Eddy, led the First Church of Christ, Scientist in New York City, and Eddy refused to take second place to anyone when it came to matters of her church. Eddy wrote to Stetson in 1894, “You see, Mother cuts off right hands if they are made offensive.”

Eddy began the process of cutting off the hand that offended her when the Board of Directors summoned Augusta Stetson on July 24, 1909, to appear before them and answer

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293 *Manual of the Mother Church* Article XI, Sections 6, 7, and 9.
charges of mesmerism. It took until mid-November before the board drew up final charges against Stetson. During this final trial, she endured twenty-six hours of cross-examination which culminated in her excommunication from the church.\textsuperscript{297} After Stetson’s dismissal, the Board dropped from membership in the church those practitioners who continued to defend her and follow her teachings.

As Mary Baker Eddy discovered that no one could live up to the high expectations she set for their personal behavior or for their ability to lead the cause of Christian Science, she decided the best way to preserve her reputation and that of her religion was to make the only teacher “the Founder and Discoverer of Christian Science,” Eddy herself, and the textbook which she wrote. Peel says, “The future of the church—and thereby of Christian Science itself—hinged on assuring government by impersonal law rather than by charismatic leadership. The problem of authority was to be solved by the spiritual authority of \textit{Science and Health} in conjunction with the temporal authority of the Church Manual.”\textsuperscript{298} Eddy publically declared her intent for the future of preaching in a letter in 1894: “\textit{The Bible} and \textit{Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures} shall henceforth be the Pastor of the Mother church...Personal preaching has more or less of human views grafted into it. Whereas the pure Word contains only the living, health-giving Truth.”\textsuperscript{299} The \textit{Manual of the Mother Church} contains the outline for Sunday school, Sunday service, Wednesday service, and special services. All services begin with a hymn, and the \textit{Manual} states that hymns Eddy authored must be sung during Sunday services at least once a month. Gill reports, “Church bylaw required that Eddy’s authorship [of the hymn] be

\textsuperscript{297} Gill, \textit{Mary Baker Eddy}, 541.
\textsuperscript{298} Peel, \textit{Authority}, 344.
\textsuperscript{299} Peel, \textit{Authority}, 72.
publicly announced before the hymn was sung." The people appointed as First and Second Readers read from both the Bible *Science and Health* on the Lesson-Sermon which comes from Eddy’s own outline of how her textbook and the Bible should be studied throughout the course of the year. Due to this exclusionary system, no one else would be able to change or interpret the doctrines of Christian Science, thus preserving Eddy’s reputation and not having the ability to violate Article XI Section 8 of the *Manual of the Mother Church*: “If a member of this Church were to treat the author of our textbook disrespectfully and cruelly, upon her complaint that member should be excommunicated.” Through her manual, Eddy cemented her reputation as Pastor Emeritus of her church in perpetuity.

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300 Stokes, “The Mother Church: Mary Baker Eddy and the Practice of Sentimentalism,” 449.
CONCLUSION

From a small farm in Bow, New Hampshire, to the borrowed rooms of a house in Lynn, Massachusetts, to the seclusion of her million-dollar estate in Concord, New Hampshire, Mary Baker Morse Glover Patterson Eddy’s life resonated with vicissitudes. Although she had been penniless in 1866, Mary Baker Eddy’s personal estate at the time of her death in 1910 was estimated by the New York Times to exceed $1,500,000 which included the copyrights to her books, her Pleasant View estate (worth over $50,000) and other real estate, and municipal bonds worth over $1,000,000. Eddy’s financial success was possible due to the successful implementation of numerous techniques to enhance her reputation and that of Christian Science.

Linking her image to that of Jesus Christ gave Eddy instant credibility in the eyes of many of her followers. As she performed miracles just like Jesus did and was able to pass on this ability so that others could heal (like Jesus’ followers Paul and Peter did), she received mythic status in the eyes of her church members. To those outside her church, the accounts of healing generated interest and gave credence to her faith. As Christian Science in many ways culled doctrines and practices from both the prevailing religions of the day as well as the marketing and advertising industry, the faith gained acceptance as it fit in with ideas and concepts already familiar to nineteenth century Americans.

Eddy’s embracing of the role of mother created both comfort and authority in her audience. As the role of mother generated an image of care and concern, those in her faith felt

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loved by their Leader. In the realm of religious instruction, the nineteenth century advanced the role of mothers as the ones responsible for the morality and religious instruction of those in the home. Eddy capitalized on both of these facets of motherhood and created a persona of mother to meet the needs and expectations of those to whom she marketed her faith.

In terms of literal marketing, Eddy’s use of advertising, business contracts, educational fees, and numerous publications earned her both a generous income and world-wide name recognition. Through her use of Reading Rooms, she provided both a place for Christian Scientists to meditate on her writings but also for the curious to sample her books without charge and talk with those who could further advance the cause of the faith. Her magazines and newspaper gave her credibility as those publications mirrored other popular news sources of the day. It was through these publications that she was able to address those who sought to damage her reputation.

Biographer Clifford Smith reports, “In 1932, when the National Council Women, through the Ladies’ Home Journal, invited American women to name the twelve greatest women leaders in the United States during the past one hundred years, the ballot gave first place to Mrs. Eddy.” Mark Twain, whose writings often accused Eddy of less-than-noble motives wrote:

“In several ways, she is the most interesting woman that ever lived, the most extraordinary. The same may be said of her career, and the same may be said of its chief result. She started from nothing...When we do not know a person—and also when we do—we have to judge his size by the size and nature of his achievements, as compared with the achievements of others in his special line of business...Measured by this

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303 Smith, Historical Sketches, 35.
standard, it is thirteen hundred years since the world has produced any one who could reach up to Mrs. Eddy’s waistbelt.\textsuperscript{304}

The difficulties Eddy faced in establishing and maintaining her reputation and that of Christian Science echo throughout the events of her life. However, her legacy is clear. The Mother Church in Boston boasts thousands of visitors each year. \textit{The Christian Science Monitor, Christian Science Journal, and Christian Science Sentinel} continue publication today. New biographies and scholarly articles roll off the press each year. Mary Baker Eddy wanted always to be known as the “Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science,” and that title and its accompanying reputation persists to this day.

\textsuperscript{304} Twain, \textit{Christian Science}, 102-103.
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