

# **The Christian Science Monitor:**

An example of the practical application of the theology of Christian Science, on a global scale, through the medium of journalism.

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## Introduction

This presentation will argue that the Monitor practically expresses the theology of the religious organisation that owns it, *The Church of Christ Scientist* (referred to as The Church). It does this through the motivation behind the decisions and actions of its staff; and its journalistic content, the publication of news in a non-religious way that is of interest and import to the world.

In this presentation I will:

1. Explain the relevance of the theology of Christian Science to the history of the Monitor's establishment, and its object, as stated by its founder Mary Baker Eddy, "to injure no man, but to bless all mankind" (Eddy, *Miscellany*, p. 353).
2. I will detail how the theology of Christian Science and its practice of healing is an expression of the purpose of The Church to "reinststate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing" (Eddy, *Science and Health*, p. 17). And how this purpose is based on the identity of Jesus and his denouncement of evil.
3. I will show how this theology is reflected in the healing mission of the Monitor "to spread undivided the Science that operates unspent "(Eddy, *Miscellany*, p. 353). This will include articles that demonstrate how the Monitor operates on a global scale and provide examples of how the object and healing mission is supported through journalism.

## Definitions

To gain a greater understand of the theology of Christian Science some terms need explanation in relation to there meaning in Christian Science. A full understanding of these terms requires a study of the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by the discoverer and founder of Christian Science Mary Baker Eddy.

**God** is "The great I am; the all-knowing, all-seeing, all-acting, all-wise, all-loving, and eternal; Principle; Mind; Soul; Spirit; Life; Truth; Love; all substance; intelligence" (Eddy, *Science and Health*, p. 587). God and His creation are good (Genesis 1:31 and Eddy, *Science and Health*, pp. 113, 583).

**Healing** in Christian Science differs from faith healing because it is more than a request for God to heal the sick and a hope that he responds. It involves transforming thought, through Spirit, replacing discord with harmony. Healing is not a supernatural miracle but a revealing of nature. Man and the universe are not governed by material law, which God sometimes sets aside, but by universal divine law (Eddy, *Science and Health*, pp. 12, 83, 122, 140, 241). Eddy states that, “The physical healing of Christian Science results now, as in Jesus’ time, from the operation of divine Principle, before which sin and disease lose their reality in human consciousness and disappear as naturally and as necessarily as darkness gives place to light and sin to reformation” (Eddy, *Science and Health*, p. xi).

**Christ** is not the human Jesus but the divinity of the man Jesus; the divine nature and godliness which animated him; the divine message from God speaking to human consciousness (Eddy, *Science and Health*, pp. 26, 473, 332). The Bible gives evidence of the presence of the Christ both before and after Jesus’ era, through the healings and teachings of Abraham, Jacob, Moses, the prophets; and the Apostles, as well as Paul and others in the early Christian church who often felt it as the Holy Ghost (Eddy, *Science and Health*, pp. 43, 333).

**Redemption and Salvation.** Two tenants of Christian Science sum up the concepts of redemption and salvation. “We acknowledge God’s forgiveness of sin in the destruction of sin and the spiritual understanding that casts out evil as unreal. But the belief in sin is punished so long as the belief lasts.” and “We acknowledge Jesus’ atonement as the evidence of divine, efficacious Love, unfolding man’s unity with God through Christ Jesus the Way-shower; and we acknowledge that man is saved through Christ, through Truth, Life, and Love as demonstrated by the Galilean Prophet in healing the sick and overcoming sin and death” (Eddy, *Science and Health*, p. 497). Salvation comes as both a future and released eschatology.

#### The Monitor’s history and object.

The Monitor, a mainstream newspaper first published in 1908, is now published on the web and weekly in print. It was established by the directors and trustees of The Church under the direction of Eddy, in her eighty-sixth year.

In 1906 the dedication of the extension to the Mother Church, the headquarters of Christian Science in Boston USA, received extensive media attention but Eddy was

deliberately absent. Her absence, together with her address read to the membership entitled *Choose Ye*, sent a powerful message to her followers by highlighting fundamental teachings in the theology of Christian Science (Gill, *Mary Baker Eddy*, pp. 469 - 470).

Eddy, in an attempt to stop personality worship, and out of concern that some of her students had become complacent; self-congratulator; and overly concerned with grand buildings, as a result of the rapid progress Christian Science she (Gill, *Mary Baker Eddy*, pp. 470, 476) warns her students that, “The pride of place or power is the prince of this world that hath nothing in Christ.” She asks how many of them are “following the Way-shower [Christ Jesus]?” and reminds them that, “We follow Truth only as we follow truly, meekly, patiently, spiritually, blessing saint and sinner with the leaven of divine Love.” She states that, [Christian] Science is “a law of divine Mind, a persuasive animus, an unerring impetus, an ever-present help... [It] comes to reveal man as God’s image, His idea, coexistent with Him — God giving all and man having all that God gives” and that, “The First Commandment and the Golden Rule are the all-in-all of Christian Science”, which when realised heals. Relevant in relation to the challengers she was to face from the media was the following, “Whatever is not divinely natural and demonstrably true, in ethics, philosophy, or religion, is not of God but originates in the minds of mortals” (Eddy, *Miscellany*, pp. 3 - 5).

In October 1906, John Pulitzer’s New York *World* claimed Eddy was near death, senile and in-prisoned by her minders. Pulitzer persuaded others, to join in a “Next Friends Suite” although the paper itself pulled out of the suite. The aim was to establish her incapacity and gain control of The Church and her finances. After extensive interviews by reporters, medical authorities, and court officials Judge Aldriche’s, ruling, confirmed Eddy’s competence, and Christian Science as not an insane belief but a religion protected by the Constitution and the law (Peel, *Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Authority*, pp. 280-289 and Gill, *Mary Baker Eddy*, pp. 472, 518 - 520).

Eddy’s handling of these challenges put into practice the theology she professed in *Choose Ye*. She did not retaliate with resentment and reproach but with love and forgiveness. When informed of the court decision, she wrote a letter of forgiveness to one who had brought the suite (Peel, *Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Authority*, p. 291). Her responses were not personal attacks but solely correctives (Eddy, *Miscellany*, pp. 307 - 316). Eddy’s application of the theology of Christian Science motivated her, and was the

source of the energy and power that enabled her to act with wisdom and clarity. She followed the Way-shower in loving her enemies (Matt 5:44 - 45); living the Golden Rule; and showing that, we should “At all times and under all circumstances, overcome evil with good. Know thyself, and God will supply the wisdom and the occasion for a victory over evil. Clad in the panoply of Love, human hatred cannot reach you” (Eddy, *Science and Health*, p. 571).

In August 1908 Eddy requested the offices of The Church begin a daily newspaper, named the *Christian Science Monitor*, to be established within ninety day. Her experiences had shown her the press’s reliance on sensationalism and disregard for truth (Gill, *Mary Baker Eddy*, p. 532). They also told her, “Christian Scientists needed to be bolder in their involvement in the world” (Collins, 2012, *The Christian Science Monitor: Its History, Mission and People*. Chapter 1, Challengers and Growth). That they needed to be informed of the world’s problems, healing those as well as their own. Her intention was not to explain the letter of Christian Science through the Monitor but to demonstrate its spirit (Collins, *The Christian Science Monitor*, Chapter 1, Challengers and Growth). It would give it’s readers a way of looking at the world that was dedicated to the reform of thought and supported the insistence of Christian Science that God does not know or cause evil ( Eddy, *Science and Health*, pp.103, 127, 398).

Many obstacles needed to be overcome and Eddy instructed her team to turn to God in prayer for guidance, rather than human will and personal ability, and to move ahead with wisdom and economy (Collins, *The Christian Science Monitor*, Chapter 1, Challengers and Growth).

Her choosing of the Monitor’s object to “injure no man, but bless all mankind” (Eddy, *Miscellany*, p. 353) aligns with Jesus’ instructions to “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you” (Matt 5:44). However, Eddy insisted that evil be exposed. The Monitor was to inspire people to take the mental steps that bring reform to human thought — overcoming evil in their lives and the world (Collins, *The Christian Science Monitor*, Chapter 2, Deeper Purpose).

Jesus’ healing ministry, his denouncement of evil and the theology of Christian Science  
Eddy stated that the purpose of The Church is to “reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing” (Eddy, *Science and Health*, p. 17).

Modern theologians like Remus and Marshall place [Click](#) Jesus' healing at the centre of his teaching and ministry and Jesus as the embodiment of Christ, a saving and healing power in all dimensions of human life (Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*, pp. 11 - 13). Eddy's own experience of healing and her study of the Scriptures lead to her discovery of the divine Science behind Jesus' works. She believed Jesus demanded healing of his followers (Eddy, *Science and Health*, pp. 52, 94, 108) when he stated, "the works that I do shall they do also" (John 14:12).

Jesus' ministry also involved the exposing and destruction of evil. Eddy defines the Devil not as a personification of evil but as "a lie; error; neither corporeality nor mind; the opposite of Truth; a belief in sin, sickness, and death" (Eddy, *Science and Health*, p, 584) In her exegesis of Genesis Eddy explains that the first biblical statement about evil comes through the fable of the serpent suggesting that there could be more than one God, Mind and that man, created from dust or matter, could become as gods. Else where she state that, "We lose the high signification of omnipotence, when after admitting that God, or good, is omnipresent and has all-power, we still believe there is another power, named evil. (Eddy, *Science and Health*, pp.

In the third tenet stated earlier she instruct that we destroy evil with the "spiritual understanding that cast out evil as unreal" and that as Christian Scientist's we have enlisted to follow Jesus by overcome sin, sickness and death "by understanding their nothingness and the allness of God, or good" (Eddy, *Science and Health*, p450). Eddy believed, one of the worst sins of mankind, was to conceal evil when it should be exposed and that Christian Scientist's should actively work in destroying its influence. She states that, "You uncover sin, not in order to injure, but to bless the corporeal man" (Eddy, *Science and Health*, p. 453).

When Jesus was tempted by the Devil, or lie, (Luke 4) he destroys any power this temptation would seem to have by refusing to worship it, as all power belongs to God.

The recognition of Jesus as the Christ is significant to healing, reformation and the denouncement of the devil or evil. This can be seen in the case of the Gadarene demoniac (Mark 5:1 - 20, Matthew 8: 28 - 34, Luke 8:26 - 39) who recognises Jesus as the Holy One of God or the Son of God signifying Jesus' identity, power and authority as the Christ.

Eddy (*Science and Health*, pp. 461) counsels that to heal sin you first need to identify it and that the destruction of error of all kinds, including disease and lack, comes from mental self-knowledge and “dissecting of thoughts to discover their quality, quantity and origin” (Eddy, *Science and Health*, p. 462). Also needed is the acknowledgement of the presence of the Christ and acceptance of Jesus, as the exemplar, the Son of God (Eddy, *Science and Health*, pp. 5, 203, 461, 496, 519). You can see these ideas expressed in the journalism of the Monitor. Evil is detected and uncovered, but it is not dwelt on with long descriptions that increase fear and hopelessness, giving it power. Rather, the Monitor shines a spiritual light on these situation, helping it’s audience to build an understanding of the powerlessness of evil, to acknowledge the Christ, and see evidence of the power of truth in governments, populations and cultures, helping to refine, purify and strength the good. (*The Christian Science Journal*, June, 2016)

#### Putting into practice the Monitor’s healing mission

The Monitor’s mission “to spread undivided the Science [or laws of God] that operates unspent ”(Eddy, *Miscellany*, p. 353), is evidenced in its international distribution, its courageous and uncompromising uncovering of evil, and its reliance on the infinite God for its operation and source for healing suggestions (Canham, *Commitment to Freedom: The Story of the Christian Science Monitor*, pp. xv - xviii).

Editor, Erwin Canham, saw the role of Monitor reporters as “uncover[ing] the deeper moral and spiritual forces shaping mankind and then shar[ing] what [they have] discovered in ways that help readers respond constructively” (Collins, *The Christian Science Monitor*, Chapter 7, Spiritual Values). Under his leadership Monitor reporter Edmund Stevens won, in 1950, the first of seven Pulitzer Prizes with his series of 43 articles, This is Russia — Uncensored.

Stevens’ reporting showed his love of the Russian people and warned the West to distinguish between the police state and Soviet people. He wrote, “The common denominator of naziism and communism is in the appeal to materialism, in the conviction that violence and coercion can settle any issue, ..... the rejection of fixed standards of right and wrong, true and false. Without these moral compass points to steer by, no nation can cleave to the course of progress” (Collins, *The Christian Science Monitor*, Chapter 7. Monitors First Pulitzer).

In the 1960's and 70's the Vietnam war was at the centre of public opinion and rebellion against traditional authority and conservative thinking. The Monitor's editor, DeWitt John, spoke out against the war in his editorials. Monitor journalist, Elizabeth Pond, who was taken hostage in Cambodia reported how her non-confrontational approach and her loathing of war contributed to her release. These and the Monitor's continued accurate and factual reporting on the war were opposed by its conservative readers. However, John did not compromise his integrity to appease critics. He saw, honesty and willingness to speak the truth, no matter what the consequences, as an expression of Love (Collins, *The Christian Science Monitor*, Chapter 8, Noble Behaviour).

In 2001 the Monitor published a series of [cartons by Clay Bennett](#) on the events and aftermath of September 11. Bennett's first cartoon was rejected as sorrow and loss were not the tone the Monitor wanted. His subsequent cartoons which focused on resolve; restriction of civil liberties; prejudice of Islam; and the government's intrusion into private lives won him the Pulitzer Prize (Collins, *The Christian Science Monitor*, Chapter 8, Noble Behaviour)

In 2016, Monitor article, [To better integrate refugees, Nuremberg aims at unlikely foe: gossip](#), offered a balanced report of Germany's attempt to overcome intolerance in lights of the world refugee problem. It shows how truth acts on human consciousness, causing morals and attitudes towards others to improve. "[Why China hacks the world](#)" addresses the mental cause rather than condemning, and "[How to save kids from ISIS](#)" gives evidence of a healing solution.

### Conclusion

The Monitor has not always upheld its object and mission to the highest level. Over caution in its earlier years prevented it from uncovering the evil necessary to allow healing. Later personal ego caused friction between staff and then economic crisis and unwise decisions resulted in spiralling debt (Collins, *The Christian Science Monitor*, Chapter 3, 4, 9, 10). However, the Monitor's ability to look at itself critically; adapt and change; and the recognition received from its peers has shown it to be doing something right in its striving to live up to its object and healing mission.

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In the context of science, when an anticipated outcome happens over and over, a theory is said to be established. But it's still a theory until it's proven. However, the theory is based on logic, and so it is often believed that the anticipated outcome is more likely than just relying on a coin-like probability. A good example is the implications of Newtonian mechanics' planetary orbital dynamics. A lot of observations were made by researchers that planets simply did not orbit the way Newton proposed in his theory. An example of a practical implication is a student who doesn't want to do his homework. Another practical implication, using the same model, is that the same student is not doing things he should be doing at home. The author concludes by briefly considering the method with a global perspective. Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications: Some traditions have failed to contextualise the biblical message, whereas other ministry practice has radically altered its message in an attempt to be contextually sensitive. Recent research has resulted in a confusing array of conflicting methods with drastically different practical applications. A basis of theology is mediated in and through the community of belief, and that structures of belief in and through the life of the corporate community of faith modify individuals' and application of contextualisation. As with the definitions of liberal theologians, it ultimately comes to a question of hermeneutics and theological method. Practical Theology is the branch of Christian theology that focuses on the everyday or modern day implications of Christian theological beliefs. This area of theology is often the focus of pastoral ministry students, missionaries, Christian education directors, and other vocational ministry roles in Christian colleges and seminaries. The definition of one well-known seminary notes Practical Theology as, "Practical theology is the application of theological truth to all of life, particularly the life and work of the church." One English Puritan writer named Richard Baxter (1615-1691) has often been associated with the area of Practical Theology due to his authorship of a large, four volume book called A Christian Directory of Practical Theology. Besides being the principal source of Christian theology, the Bible is the ultimate arbiter of all of that theology. Concepts from any other source must accord with the Bible (or at least with the interpretation of the Bible being used in the situation at hand). Christian tradition is rooted in the Bible because many of the concepts proposed as traditions are supposedly based on undocumented statements or acts by the Apostles, and these men are identified by the Bible. These are based on a version published in 1881 after having been slowly cobbled together by Brooke Westcott (the Anglican Bishop of Durham) and Cambridge theologian Fenton Hort. These two scholars primarily used two 4th century Egyptian manuscripts, the "Sinaiticus" and the "Vaticanus."