

FROM THE DIRECTORS

Our pastor and the place of the King James Version of the Bible

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In a step that can hardly be overestimated, our Leader ordained the Bible and her book *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* as pastor for The Mother Church and its branches.¹ The King James Version, while not specifically named in the ordination, has served and continues to serve as the sole version of the Bible to be used as pastor in our English-speaking churches.

This is the translation through which our Leader, Mary Baker Eddy, gained the revelation of divine Science. It is the one she primarily uses throughout her published writings; in all her books there are relatively few occasions where she quotes other translations.

The King James Version was adopted for use in the Christian Science Lesson-Sermons in 1891, with Mrs. Eddy's full knowledge and approval. It continued to be so used throughout her lifetime, even though a number of major new translations appeared during those years, found a place in her library, and had her careful attention.

Mrs. Eddy drew extensively upon Bible dictionaries, commentaries, and translations in her study and in her writings in order to elucidate the original meaning. In line with this, most Reading Rooms offer several Bible aids, and the Christian Science periodicals publish articles and features employing the findings of Biblical scholarship.

But the close correlation between the King James Version and *Science and Health* enhances the unity of the Bible and the Christian Science textbook. Mrs. Eddy drew from the King James Version over five hundred different verses for *Science and Health*. In 1890 she allowed another translation to be tried for

the Bible Lessons—the Revised Version. It was at the end of that year that the King James Version was restored.

Because of these facts, the King James Version should be the exclusive translation that English-speaking branches use in services and Sunday Schools and also in Reading Rooms for sets of books marked for study of the Bible Lessons. Thus these churches unite with each other as well as with The Mother Church in this common version. In selecting the translations authorized for the Bible Lessons and thus for Christian Science church services in non-English-speaking countries, The Mother Church makes every effort to choose translations compatible with the King James Version and as close to its meaning as possible.

Our Leader recognized the contribution that enlightened scholarship can make. But above all, she encouraged Christian Scientists to look for the spiritual meaning of the Bible—the inspired healing message—as brought out in the Christian Science textbook. The King James Version has a unique helpfulness in shepherding them into practical Christian Science healing. Various commentaries and other translations may be useful in clarifying certain obscure passages. Yet it is *Science and Health*, drawing extensively on the King James Version, that brings out the pure spiritual Bible teachings as demonstrable Science—“with signs following” in lives regenerated, healed, and fulfilled.

“On the swift pinions of spiritual thought,” our Leader writes, “man rises above the letter, law, or *morale* of the inspired Word to the spirit of Truth, whereby the Science is reached that demonstrates God. When the Bible is thus read and practised, there is no possibility of misinterpretation.”²

¹ See *Manual of The Mother Church*, Art. XIV, Sect. 1, and *Miscellaneous Writings* 313:25-2, 382:32-7. ² *The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, p. 298.

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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CHRISTIAN SCIENCE SENTINEL

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The King James Version continues to be the best-liked rendering of the Bible into English. This translation continues to hold first place among English-reading students by reason of its diction, its fidelity to the original text, and its spirituality. While its wording has become archaic, its text has become sacred.

"For almost three centuries the Authorized, or King James, Version has been the Bible of the English-speaking world" (The Ancestry of Our English Bible, by Professor Ira Maurice Price, ninth edition, 1934, p. 282).

Mary Baker Eddy consistently maintained her preference for the King James Version. In all her writings there are only six or seven quotations from other translations, and some of

them are only incidental. (See Science and Health 313:19, 360:22, 525:12; Miscellaneous Writings 97:22, 373:7; Unity of Good 31:1; Message for 1902 16:1.) Once when she received a copy of a recent translation, her acknowledgment of the gift included the following comments: "I am not fond of new things unless they are more spiritual than the old. . . . In some instances the text seems clearer, e.g., where 'deadly thing' is changed to the word 'poison.' Yet this lucid word may be objectionable."

Because of the extent to which the King James Version of the Bible is the basis of and enters into our Leader's writings, it is and should be the accepted English translation for Christian Scientists. In our church services no other English translation should be used; and in the study of Christian Science other English translations should be consulted or used only as additional reference works. The Bible Notes in the *Christian Science Sentinel* contain information intended to be useful in this way.

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