

EXPANDING USE OF BIBLE TRANSLATIONS
A Response

Valda M. Schaller
(as an individual)
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For many months now the Field has been seized with the issue of using in Christian Science church services translations of the Bible other than the Authorized King James Version. Arguments are advanced on both sides of a question on which *The Church Manual* may, at first glance, seem to be silent. In favour of the use of alternate translations, the argument is advanced that other translations were used in the early days of the Bible Lesson and that the movement is simply reclaiming a freedom enjoyed when Mrs. Eddy was still with us. Academic theologians often claim for newer translations that they incorporate improved Biblical scholarship, made possible by the discovery, since the early seventeenth century, of manuscripts not available to King James's committee. We have heard concerns regarding translation styles, the intrusion of un-Scientific theological beliefs, *Science and Health's* indebtedness to the King James Version, and Mrs. Eddy's clear preference for that translation.

Though it is doubtful that anyone has taken a survey, speculation suggests that the number of Anglophone Mother Church members worldwide, who can read the ancient texts in their original languages and make sense of an *apparatus criticus*, may now range somewhere between two and three dozen. As the holder of a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Classics, this writer is one of the few Christian Scientists who can still read the New Testament in the original Greek—and in Canadian universities, you can't earn a graduate degree in Classics without being able to cope with an *apparatus criticus*. Perhaps, therefore, some additional light can be shed on the current issue, from a perspective different from those already advanced.

Let us, then, address a significant consideration: accuracy. Accuracy is, after all, a moral imperative in translating. It is an attribute of the Principle that is Truth. How did our Leader view the question of translation? While addressing a theological topic, Mrs. Eddy did in fact answer our question, in passing:

“Do you believe in translation?”

If your question refers to language, whereby one expresses the sense of words in one language by equivalent words in another, I do.”

Miscellaneous Writings 67: 24-27

There's our Leader's standard: expressing the **sense** of words in one language by **equivalent words** in another.

Part 1: Precedence, Evidence, and Observations

Recently cited as precedent for the use of non-KJV Bible translations in upcoming Bible Lessons, is a sequence of Lessons from over a century ago, in which another translation was used instead of the Authorized King James Version. Lest facts quoted selectively be accidentally misinterpreted, we need some historical context.

In 1888, the *Christian Science Journal* began publishing notes on the Universal Series of the International Sunday-School Bible Lessons, topics and Bible citations used by Protestant churches, including Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians; these *Journal* comments provided a Christian Science perspective on the Protestant curriculum. In January, 1890, those Christian Science comments on the Protestant curriculum began to be published in a separate leaflet.

In April, 1890, the first *Christian Science Quarterly* was published, still using the topics and citations from the International Series Protestant curriculum, but with correlative citations from *Science and Health* instead of comments, as earlier. It wasn't until 1895 that Mrs. Eddy put a complete end to personal preaching in branch church services by naming the Bible and *Science and Health* as dual pastor. In July, 1898, our twenty-six Lesson subjects were first introduced. That is, the Bible Lessons didn't assume a form Christian Scientists today would recognize until July, 1898.

After July, 1898, the Revised Version was used fourteen (14) times in all: July 31, 1898; January 1, 1899; October 29, 1899; February 25, 1900; July 1, 1900; January 27, 1901; March 3, 1901; March 31, 1901, August 25, 1901; November 17, 1901; April 19, 1903; January 24, 1904; July 22, 1906; and February 1, 1914. The main sequence, 1898-1906, had ended four and a half years before Mrs. Eddy left us. The Revised Version enjoyed its "last hurrah" eight years later, and then was completely dropped. Evidence indicates that none of the other Bible translations available at the time, and included in our Leader's personal library, was ever used in a Bible Lesson. Examples of the use of free translations are non-existent.

Now, let's take a close look at the passages, themselves.

July 31, 1898, Morning Lesson

Subject: Spirit

Golden Text: John 4: 24

πνευμα ο θεος, και τους προσκυνουντας αυτον εν πνευματι και αληθεια δει προσκυνειν. *

God (is) **Spirit**, and it is necessary for those who worship him to worship him in spirit and in truth. (This writer's halting literal translation)

God is **Spirit**: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.
(Revised Version)

God is a **Spirit**: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.
(King James Version)

* The writer apologizes that the Greek font on her computer does not provide breathings or accents.

January 1, 1899 Afternoon/Evening Service

Subject: The True Light (International Series)

Golden Text: John 1: 9

ην το φως το αληθινον, ο φωτιζει παντα ανθρωπον, ερχομενον εις τον κοσμον.

He/It/There was the true light, which lights every man coming/who comes into the world.
(literal translation)

There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man coming into the world.
(Revised Version)

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. (King James Version)

In this Lesson from the International Series, the Lesson Text was quoted from the King James Version John 1: 1-14, including the verse 9 that had already appeared in the Golden Text.

October 29, 1899

Subject: Adam and Fallen Man

Golden Text: I Corinthians 15: 45, 47

ουτως και γεγραπται, Εγενετο ο πρωτος ανθρωπος Αδαμ εις ψυχην ζωσαν, ο εσχατος Αδαμ εις πνευμα ζωοποιουν.... ο πρωτος ανθρωπος εκ γης χοικος, ο δευτερος ανθρωπος εξ ουρανου.

And so it has also been written, The first man Adam came into being (to) a living soul, the last Adam (to) a life-making spirit.... The first man from earth made of dust, the second man from heaven. (literal translation)

... the first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit... The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven. (Revised Version, as used)

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. (King James Version)

February 25, 1900

Subject: Man

Golden Text: Ephesians 4: 23, 24

ανανεουσθαι δε τω πνευματι του νοος υμων και ενδυσασθαι τον καινον ανθρωπον τον κατα θεον κτισθεντα εν δικαιοσυνη και οσιοτητι της αληθειας.
[or, in some manuscripts: και αληθεια]

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the new man who was created according to God in righteousness and **holiness of truth** [or: **and truth**].
(literal translation)

February 25, 1900, continued

Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and **holiness of truth**. (Revised Version)

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and **true holiness**. (King James Version)

(Because of a difference of one letter in the Greek, between ἀνανεωσθαί and ἀνανεωσθε, the manuscripts disagree on whether verses 23 and 24 are a continuation of verse 21 or stand as a separate sentence. The Revised Version took the "new sentence" interpretation; the King James Version took the "continuation" interpretation. The difference has no major effect on the overall meaning.)

July 1, 1900

Subject: God

Responsive Reading: Psalm 47: 1-3, 7-9; 48: 1-3, 9-14

(Original Hebrew not available for this research)

- 1 O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.
- 2 For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.
- 3 He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.
- 7 For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.
- 8 God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.
- 9 The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God: he is greatly exalted.
- 1 Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.
- 2 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.
- 3 God is known in her palaces for a refuge.
- 9 We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.
- 10 According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness.
- 11 Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.
- 12 Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof.
- 13 Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.
- 14 For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide **(King James Version) forever. (Revised Version, margin)**

Compare:

14 For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide **forever**. (Revised Version)

with:

14 For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide **even unto death** (King James Version)

January 27, 1901

Subject: Love

Golden Text: I Corinthians 13: 4, 5

Η αγαπη μακροθυμει, χρηστευεται η αγαπη, ου ζηλοι, η αγαπη ου περπερευεται, ου φυσιουται, ουκ ασχημονει, ου ζητει τα εαυτης, ου παροξυνεται, ου λογιζεται το κακον,

God's-love-for-man-and-man's-love-for-God — *agape* — is longsuffering, *agape* is kind, it is not envious, *agape* does not vaunt itself, it is not puffed up, it does not behave unseemly, it does not seek its own things, it is not provoked, it does not take evil into account. (literal translation).

Love suffereth long, and is kind; **love** envieth not; **love** vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil. (Revised Version)

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; **charity** envieth not; **charity** vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; (King James Version)

March 3, 1901

Subject: Man

Golden Text: II Corinthians 5: 17

ωστε ει τις εν Χριστω καινη κτισις, τα αρχαια παρηλθεν, ιδου γεγονεν καινα.

Consequently, if anyone (is) in Christ, (he is) a new **creation/creature**; the old things passed away; behold, they have become new. (literal translation)

If any man is in Christ, there is a new **creation**: the old things are passed away; behold they are become new. (Revised Version, margin)

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new **creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (King James Version)

March 31, 1901

Subject: Unreality

Golden Text: I Corinthians 13: 8

Η αγαπη ουδεποτε πιπτει. ειτε δε προφητειαι, καταργηθησονται. ειτε γλωσσαι, παυσονται. ειτε γνωσις, καταργηθησεται

Agape never falls short: but whether (there are) prophecies, they will be abolished; whether (there are) tongues, they will cease; whether (there is) knowledge, it will be abolished. (literal translation)

Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. (Revised Version)

March 31, 1901, continued

Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. (King James Version)

August 25, 1901

Subject: Christ Jesus

Golden Text: John 20: 30, 31

Πολλα μεν ουν και αλλα σημεια εποιησεν ο Ιησους ενωπιον των μαθητων αυτου, α ουκ εστιν γεγραμμενα εν τω βιβλιω τουτω. ταυτα δε γεγραπται ινα πιστευσητε οτι Ιησους εστιν ο Χριστος ο υιος του θεου, και ινα πιστευοντες ζων ηχητε εν τω ονοματι αυτου.

So, on the one hand, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. On the other hand, these things have been written in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and in order that, believing, you may have life **in** his name. (literal translation)

Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life **in** his name. (Revised Version)

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life **through** his name. (King James Version)

November 17, 1901

Subject: Soul and Body

Golden Text: Philippians 3: 20, 21

ημων γαρ το πολιτευμα εν ουρανοις υπαρχει, εξ ου και σωτηρα απεκδεχομεθα κυριον Ιησουν Χριστον, ος μετασχηματισει το σωμα της ταπεινωσεως ημων συμμορφον τω σωματι της δοξης αυτου κατα την ενεργειαν του δυνασθαι αυτον και υποταξαι αυτω τα παντα.

For our **citizenship** exists in (the) heavens from which also we wait/look for a Saviour, (the) Lord Jesus Christ, who will change the form of the body of our low condition (to be) conformed to the body of his glory according to power of his being able even to subject all (things) to him. (literal translation)

For our **citizenship** is in heaven, from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself. (Revised Version)

For our **conversation** is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. (King James Version)

April 19, 1903

Subject: Probation After Death

Responsive Reading: Psalm 88: 1-13

(Original Hebrew not available for this research)

- 1 O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee:
- 2 Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry;
- 3 For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.
- 4 I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength:
- 5 Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand.
- 6 Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.
- 7 Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah.
- 8 Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.
- 9 Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: Lord, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee.
- 10 Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah.
- 11 Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction?
- 12 Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? **(King James Version)**
- 13 But unto thee, oh Lord, have I cried, and in the morning shall my prayer come before thee **(Revised Version)**

Compare:

13 But unto thee, oh Lord, have I cried, and in the morning shall my prayer **come before** thee. (Revised Version)

with:

13 But unto thee have I cried, O Lord; and in the morning shall my prayer **prevent** thee. (King James Version)

January 24, 1904

Subject: Love

Golden Text: I Corinthians 13: 2

και εαν εχω προφητειαν και ειδω τα μυστηρια παντα και πασαν την γνωσιν και εαν εχω πασαν την πιστιν ωστε ορη μεθισταναι, αγαπην δε μη εχω, ουθεν ειμι.

And if I have the gift of prophecy and see all the mysteries and all knowledge and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have **agape**, I am nothing. (literal translation)

If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all the mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not **love**, I am nothing. (Revised Version)

January 24, 1904, continued

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not **charity**, I am nothing. (King James Version)

July 22, 1906

Subject: Love

Golden Text: I Corinthians 13: 13

νυνι δε μενει πιστις, ελπις, αγαπη, τα τρια ταυτα. μειζων δε τουτων η αγαπη.

And now remain faith, hope, **agape**, these three, but the greatest of these is **agape**. (literal translation)

Now abideth faith, hope, **love**, these three; and the greatest of these is **love**. (Revised Version)

And now abideth faith, hope, **charity**, these three; but the greatest of these is **charity**. (King James Version)

February 1, 1914

Subject: Love

Golden Text: Colossians 3: 14, 15

επι πασιν δε τουτοις την αγαπην, ο εστιν συνδεσμος της τελειοτητος. και η ειρηνη του Χριστου βραβευετω εν ταις καρδιαις υμων...

In addition to all these things (put on) **agape**, which is the bond of perfectness. And may the peace of the Christ rule in your hearts... (literal translation)

Put on **love**, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts... (Revised Version)

And above all these things put on **charity**, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts,... (King James Version)

A February 19, 2008, e-mail from the Directors and Trustees to Mother Church members suggested that “other Bible translations (*plural*) were used in the *Christian Science Quarterly* during Mary Baker Eddy’s lifetime” and that “we are simply returning to and following a *pattern* set during Mary Baker Eddy’s lifetime of occasionally using a non-KJV Bible in the Golden Text *and* Responsive Reading.” An examination of the *Quarterlies*, themselves, shows that...

- ◆ After the Bible Lesson reached its permanent form in 1898, only one (*singular*) non-KJV Bible translation was ever used, the Revised Version, a very literal translation, as the foregoing comparisons of translations reveal.
- ◆ Of the fourteen (14) non-KJV translation occurrences, twelve (12) involved the Golden Text only.
- ◆ In the majority of the twelve Golden Texts from the Revised Version, the critical difference between the RV and the KJV involved **one word**:
 - * 5 times: αγαπη (*agape*) = “love” (RV) vs “charity” (KJV)
 - * 1 time: κτισις (*ktisis*) = “creation” (RV) vs “creature” (KJV)
 - * 1 time: εν (*en*) = “in” (RV) vs “through” (KJV)
 - * 1 time: πνευμα (*pneuma*) = “Spirit” (RV) vs “a Spirit” (KJV)
 - * 1 time: πολιτευμα (*politeuma*) = “citizenship” (RV) vs “conversation” (KJV)

- ◆ it's stretching the facts to the breaking point to say a non-KJV Bible was ever used in a Responsive Reading at all:
 - * July 1, 1900: of 15 verses, 14¾ from KJV and one phrase from RV — “forever” (RV) vs “unto death” (KJV)
 - * April 19, 1903: of 13 verses, 12 from KJV and one verse from RV — “come before” (RV) vs “prevent” (KJV)
- ◆ None of the fourteen examples cited used more than two (2) verses from a non-KJV Bible in any one Lesson.
- ◆ In the 97 months between July 31, 1898, and July 22, 1906, a total of 19¼ verses was taken from a non-KJV translation.

According to Webster, “pattern” means “something being imitated”, “a regular, mainly unvarying, way of doing.” Having a total of 19¼ verses from the Revised Version, sprinkled lightly one or two verses at a time over a span of 97 months, scarcely constitutes a *pattern* for the 11 verses in one great splash in one week, May 12-18, 2008.

When considering what type of non-KJV translation was used, we can see why, according to the announcement in the March *Journal*, Mrs. Eddy did not comment to the Bible Lesson Committee regarding choice of Bible translations. There was nothing to comment about:

- ◆ the Revised Version and the King James are virtually identical; and
- ◆ the Revised Version and the King James are both literal translations.

Further searching reveals that, in instances where Mrs. Eddy praised a translation other than the King James, the favoured one represented the original text *more accurately* than the King James. There are *no* extant precedents for her preferring a translation that was *less literal* than the King James Version.

The Revised Version translations used during the early stages of the Lesson, while Mrs. Eddy was still here, and the sole RV translation used after she left us — all satisfied Mrs. Eddy's criterion: expressing the **sense** of the words in one language by **equivalent words** in another.

Can the same virtue be demonstrated in the translations proposed for us this coming May, from the New International Version? Again, let's take a close look at the passages, themselves.

May 18, 2008

Subject: Mortals and Immortals

Golden Text: Romans 8: 14

οσοι γαρ πνευματι θεου αγονται, ουτοι υιοι θεου εισιν.

For as many as are led by the spirit of God, these are the sons of God. (literal translation)

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. (New International Reader's Version)

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (King James)

Here, the differences between the NIRV and the literal meaning of the text, clearly represented in KJV, may seem minor. What is lost in the NIRV rendering is the strong sense of correlation between responsiveness to the divine influence and the realization of true spiritual identity. The

Greek ὅσοι (*hosoi*)...οὗτοι (*houtoi*)..., “as many as...these...”, places emphasis on this correlation. Since Saul’s privileged education in Roman-occupied Tarsus included instruction in Greek, we may assume that Paul was competent in Greek and chose this verbal emphasis advisedly. The NIRV changes the emphasis. For the Lesson’s immediate purposes, the loss of emphasis may not be serious...though, whether we have the ethical right to tamper with the original intent of a text we’re translating, because it suits the purpose of the moment, ...that’s open to question. Incidentally, one might be able to cite the true meaning of this verse to dissolve the misapprehension that only a hundred and forty-four thousand, literally, are going to make it into heaven.

In NIRV, the translation “children of God” may be attempting to be politically correct, gender-inclusive. The term θεου υἱος (*theou huios*), “son of God”, is, however, often a special expression in Bible terminology (son of God/son of man) and Paul may have chosen it intentionally: Greek did have in common usage several other words, including παιδες (*paides*) and τεκνα (*tekna*), meaning “children”, both of which may be gender-inclusive. παιδες and τεκνα both emphasize physical descent, slightly akin to heredity or geneology. παιδες also has a sense of children as members of a particular age bracket, as our word “children” often does. υἱος (*huios*), meaning “son,” the word Paul selected, evokes the relationship between father and son in its more mental aspects, as well as the status as heir. Paul’s choice of υἱος, “son”, is more consistent with the context of the chapter than are the other words. The *apparatus criticus* indicates a transposition at this point, but not variant readings of the words, themselves.

The NIRV translation sounds smooth, but does not accurately represent the full import of the original text, as does the King James translation. There is a modest loss of “metaphysical content”.

Responsive Reading: I John 3: 1-3

ΙΔΕΤΕ ΠΟΤΑΠΗΝ ΑΓΑΠΗΝ ΔΕΔΩΚΕΝ ΗΜΙΝ Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ, ΙΝΑ ΤΕΚΝΑ ΘΕΟΥ ΚΛΗΘΩΜΕΝ, ΚΑΙ ΕΣΜΕΝ. ΔΙΑ ΤΟΥΤΟ Ο ΚΟΣΜΟΣ ΟΥ ΓΙΝΩΣΚΕΙ ΗΜΑΣ, ΟΤΙ ΟΥΚ ΕΓΝΩ ΑΥΤΟΝ. ΑΓΑΠΗΤΟΙ, ΝΥΝ ΤΕΚΝΑ ΘΕΟΥ ΕΣΜΕΝ, ΚΑΙ ΟΥΠΩ ΕΦΑΝΕΡΩΘΗ ΤΙ ΕΣΟΜΕΘΑ. ΟΙΔΑΜΕΝ ΟΤΙ ΕΑΝ ΦΑΝΕΡΩΘΗ, ΟΜΟΙΟΙ ΑΥΤΩ ΕΣΟΜΕΘΑ, ΟΤΙ ΟΨΟΜΕΘΑ ΑΥΤΟΝ ΚΑΘΩΣ ΕΣΤΙΝ. ΚΑΙ ΠΑΣ Ο ΕΧΩΝ ΤΗΝ ΕΛΠΙΔΑ ΤΑΥΤΗΝ ΕΠ’ ΑΥΤΩ ΑΓΝΙΖΕΙ ΕΑΥΤΟΝ, ΚΑΘΩΣ ΕΚΕΙΝΟΣ ΑΓΝΟΣ ΕΣΤΙΝ.

Look at what kind of *agape* (God’s-love-of-man-and-man’s-love-of-God) the Father has given us, in order that we may be called children of God, and we are. Because of this, the world does not perceive us, because it did not perceive him. *Agapetoi* (loved-of-God), now are we children of God, and it was not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he is made manifest, we shall be like him, because we shall see him just as he is. And every man, having this hope towards him, purifies himself as that one is pure. (literal translation)

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. (New International Version)

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. (King James Version)

Let's first dispense with technicalities. There are variations in the manuscript readings:

- ◆ the words for “and we are” do not appear in all manuscripts;
- ◆ manuscripts disagree about some of the personal pronouns—we/us↔you;
- ◆ some manuscripts have the word for “gave” in verse one, some the word for “have given”.

None of the textual variants has any bearing on the metaphysical meaning of the passage or accounts for the way the NIV strayed from the basic text.

Technicalities out of the way, let's look at the actual passage. There are significant problems with the NIV translation of the first sentence of *I John* 3: 1

- ◆ In Greek, that sentence is not an exclamation; it's an instruction.
- ◆ ιδετε (*idete*) is a plural imperative of the verb meaning “look at, behold”; this first word is a command to look at something. Now, the singular imperative, ιδε, is often used as an exclamation, “Look!” But the plural imperative is here followed by what grammarians call an Indirect Question (ποταπην...πατηρ). That is, in this sentence there is a subordinate clause that needs a main, principal, verb to depend on. Structurally, subordinate clauses don't depend on interjections. ιδετε (*idete*), “behold”, is not an exclamation; it is a main verb, giving an order or instruction.
- ◆ ποταπην (*potapen*) is an interrogative adjective meaning “what *kind* of?”; it refers to *quality*, *not quantity* (as in NIV).
- ◆ αγαπη (*agape*) is a word that may have slightly different connotations in different contexts and that we can't really translate; we can just try to describe it—God's love for man and man's love for God.
- ◆ δεδωκεν (*dedoken*) means “has given” —nothing stronger than that; “lavished” (NIV) is a major overtranslation, with just slightly sensual overtones, and intensifies the mistaken interpretation of ποταπην as referring to quantity instead of quality.
- ◆ ινα...κληθωμεν (*hina...klethomen*) is what grammarians call a Purpose Clause and tells the reason for the preceding instruction.
- ◆ αγαπητοι (*agapetoi*) in verse 2 is the adjective formed from αγαπη (*agape*) and means “beloved, what-God-loves-and-what-loves-God-back”. In English, the word “friend” is used quite indiscriminately but the typical popular connotation refers to human beings showing affection for other humans beings.

Let's start with αγαπη (*agape*). Explicitly, the αγαπη referred to in this context is God-imparted. What “man” is it that God loves? Surely, His spiritual image. We have in αγαπη a concept similar to “reflection”: God loving man and man loving God; Mind contemplating its own content; Love cherishing its own idea. αγαπη fits squarely into the list of third degree qualities identified in *Science and Health* 116: 1-3.

We are being instructed to look at something: the *quality* of that spiritual love. We are to pay attention to the question, “What *kind* of love did God impart?” We are to behold, “fix our gaze” on, the spiritual reality, the third degree.

Then we are told the reason for the instruction: so that we can be called “children of God”.

The idea in this sentence is parallel to *II Corinthians* 3: 18 — “...we...beholding...the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image...”

This passage, *I John* 3: 1, is a succinct statement of a basic principle of Christian Science metaphysics: “**Look away from the body into Truth and Love.... Hold thought steadfastly to the enduring, the good, and the true, and you will bring these into your experience proportionably to their occupancy of your thoughts.**” *Science and Health* 261: 2 (emphasis added)

The King James translation of *I John* 3: 1 is correct. The New International Version is not. The NIV expresses a pleasant idea, which one could hear expressed in any orthodox denomination, and which is compatible enough with Christian Science that we might not question it. But it is **not what the Greek says**. The King James translation satisfies Mrs. Eddy’s criterion for translation: it expresses the **sense** of the original, and it does so in **equivalent words**. Unfortunately, the NIV does not.

I John 3: 1 is clear, strong, metaphysics. NIV’s blissful exclamation, “Isn’t it great!”, misses the point. **The metaphysical teaching just went “poof” into the air.**

The announcement in the March *Journal* states that “when [Mrs. Eddy] was in touch with the Bible Lesson Committee, her comments dealt with *metaphysical content*, not with issues such as *what Bible translation* was used....”. In NIV *I John* 3: 1 we have one instance where the use of a *poor translation* has resulted in a significant *loss of metaphysical content*.

Some may suggest that the foregoing comments are just personal opinion or mere academic fussiness. However, there are such things as objective facts. The statement “2 + 2 = 4” is not personal opinion; it’s fact. The statement “Our planet orbits the sun” is not personal opinion; it’s fact. Dictionary definitions of words are not personal opinion; they’re facts. A language’s basic rules of grammar are not personal opinion; they’re facts.

Our Leader considered *I John* 3: 1-3 an exceedingly important passage of scripture, so much so that she established for all time that all Christian Science churches should read it at all Sunday services. She considered it correlative to the “Scientific Statement of Being” and reversed the normal order, *Bible* first and *Science and Health* second, to place this scripture in the rhetorically-emphatic end position, before the Benediction. This scripture is just too important for conscientious Christian Scientists to endorse a flawed translation of it.

Here comes a *caveat*. We need to be fair to the translators of the New International Version. Their work was initiated in the mid-1960’s by representatives from the Christian Reformed Church and the National Association of Evangelicals. As the preface informs us, the translation committee comprised biblical scholars from universities and seminaries representing a wide range of traditional theologies, including Anglican, Baptist, Christian Reformed, Lutheran, Mennonite, Presbyterian, and many others. As the reader may have noticed from pp. 2-8 herein, strictly literal translations sound dreadfully plodding. They are not marketable. If translators are going to interest commercial publishers, like Zondervan who also publish *The Message*, they have to perform an incredibly difficult balancing act between literal accuracy and marketable

style. It is not possible to overestimate how difficult this is, especially when dealing with a body of literature as complex and diverse as the Bible. Given their goals and parameters, the NIV translators did a splendid job.

But the goals and parameters of traditional theology and big-box churches are different from the goals and parameters of Christian Science. No traditional denomination or megachurch claims to teach Bible-based healing by spiritual means alone. We do. In selecting Bible translations, the Church of Christ, Scientist, cannot apply the same criteria as other denominations, if it's being honest with itself...because it's a *science*, and science requires precision of statement. For articulating scientific principles, "flow" may sometimes be less important than accuracy. Mind you, this science is also an art: Christian Scientists need not settle for ugly translations. But given the nature of God's word, a true translation will be spiritually beautiful. Any decent biography of Mrs. Eddy illustrates how important the exactly-right wording was to her. How many editions did *Science and Health* go through before reaching its final form? The translators of the New International Version may not have had much-studied copies of *Science and Health* open before them on their desks. If they missed the finer metaphysics of *I John 3: 1*, they may be excused. *We may not.*

We need a reality check here.
To assume (*Journal*, March 2008, p. 57) that
the question of which Bible translation will be used
can be an issue separate from
the question of metaphysical content
—is seriously naïve.

Part 2: Metaphysics, Ethics, and Progress

A. Metaphysics

One of the healings frequently quoted in our Bible Lessons is the healing of the woman with the issue of blood. The episode is recorded in all three synoptic gospels.

Luke 8: 42 (But) - 44, 47 - 48

42 ...But as he went the people thronged him.

43 ¶ And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

44 Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchd.

47 And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

48 And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace. (King James Version)

Of special interest here is verse 48:

θαρσει*, θυγατηρ, η πιστις σου σεσωκεν σε: πορευου εις ειρηνην.

Take courage*, daughter, your faith has saved you. Go into peace. (literal translation)

The cultural context may shed light on the thought processes here. Women with this lady's affliction were treated as ceremonially unclean and rabbinical law legislated:

Leviticus 15: 25, 28

25 And if a woman have an issue of her blood many days out of the time of her separation, or if it run beyond the time of her separation; all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation: she shall be unclean.

28 But if she be cleansed of her issue, then she shall number to herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean.

Numbers 5: 2-3

2 Command the children of Israel, that they **put out of the camp** every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead:

3 Both male and female shall ye put out, **without the camp** shall ye put them; that they **defile not their camps**, in the midst whereof I dwell.

The fringe on the border of the garment was intended as a reminder of the covenant the children of Israel had with their God:

Numbers 15: 38-39

38 Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the **borders of their garments** throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:

39 And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may **look upon it**, and **remember all the commandments** of the Lord, and do them; ...

* The Greek word, θαρσει (*tharsei*), "take courage", does not appear in all the manuscripts of *Luke 8: 48*. It does appear in the parallel accounts in *Matthew* and *Mark*.

This lady was not even supposed to be in town, let alone in a public place where people were thronging Jesus. She must have known this: she tried to hide. But her longing to be healed must have overridden fear of consequences from disobeying *Numbers*. In reaching for the hem of Jesus' garment, was she symbolically reaching out to a higher sense of law, the healing law of Love?

Our Master healed by instantaneous realization. Though he frequently required patients to do something (Take up thy bed. Stretch forth thine hand.), he rarely voiced a complete treatment. Yet here, though the woman already had her healing, perhaps to dispel public anxiety and censure, we have, in a compressed form, all the main elements of a treatment:

- ◆ “be of good comfort”: where this appears in the manuscripts, it comes first in the Greek sentence. Jesus began his treatment by allaying the fear (*Science and Health* 411: 27-28).
- ◆ “daughter”: he affirmed her true identity as God's child, exempt from claims of “women's problems”.
- ◆ “thy faith”: she had already done something, had taken action on a higher sense of law than the restrictive statutes that condemned her. This handled animal magnetism.
- ◆ “hath made thee whole”: he realized her present perfection as a daughter of God.
- ◆ “go in peace”: he sealed the treatment. Peace precludes delay or reversal.

There we have it. A treatment. The Authorized King James Version records it all. Let's look at how a popular contemporary version handles this passage:

“Daughter, you took a risk trusting me, and now you're healed and whole. Live well, live blessed.” *Luke* 8: 48. Eugene Peterson. *The Message*.

Three of the five treatment elements from the original are captured in this dynamic rendering:

- ◆ “daughter”: affirmation;
- ◆ “now you're healed and whole”: realization;
- ◆ “Live well, live blessed”: handling delay or reversal (?).

Two of the five elements are missed:

- ◆ “be of good comfort”: allaying fear (apparently Rev. Peterson accepts the manuscript tradition which omits this word in the Greek—fair enough!);
- ◆ “thy faith: handling animal magnetism (a truly unfortunate omission).

Most worrisome is the addition of a clause that has **absolutely nothing in the original Greek to correspond to it:**

- ◆ **“you took a risk trusting me”**: where did that come from???

Jesus identified himself as “The Way”; he warned us that the way is straight and narrow...but not risky! Why would any Christian theologian, of any denomination, suggest that someone took a risk trusting Jesus? On the surface it's almost beyond comprehension. For a Christian Scientist, that inserted observation makes the translation completely unacceptable, because it specifically contradicts a statement by our Leader:

“He risks nothing who obeys the law of God, and shall find the Life that cannot be lost.”

Miscellaneous Writings 211: 23-25

Once again we see that the choice of a translation has a profound effect on the metaphysical content. Rev. Peterson's editorializing in mid-translation introduces a concept that is just plain wrong. Accuracy, fidelity to the original text, matters.

What could Rev. Peterson have been thinking? Is it possible that, when he inserted the clause, "you took a risk trusting me", he was alluding to the rabbinical prohibitions in *Leviticus* and *Numbers*? If so, the inserted statement constitutes a *commentary*, not a translation. Again, there is nothing in the original Greek that corresponds to the inserted comment. Frequent readers know that this happens rather often in *The Message*. This makes it, in some respects, a useful tool for occasional reference, in somewhat the same way as is true of *The Amplified Bible*.

However, the presence of commentary embedded within the run of the translation **disqualifies** *The Message* as a potential non-KJV Bible suitable for the Christian Science Bible Lesson and church services. Christian Scientists will recognize that the insertion of **remarks** into the Biblical text conflicts with a provision in *The Church Manual*:

"They [the Readers] shall make **no remarks** explanatory of the LESSON-SERMON at any time, This By-Law applies to Readers in all the branch churches."

The Church Manual 32: 20

According to the reminiscences of Daisette McKenzie, in 1895 Mrs. Eddy put a permanent end to all personal preaching in branch churches because the sermon copies she was receiving, even from her own students, contained a worsening hodgepodge of beliefs incompatible with Christian Science (*We Knew Mary Baker Eddy I*, pp. 47-48). Mrs. Eddy's approach was not eclectic. Now, in branch churches, Readers must be members of The Mother Church (*Man.* 32: 18-19); they are usually branch church members who have enjoyed enough respect from their fellow-members to be elected to a responsible office. Many branch churches require their Readers to be class-taught. Some are blessed enough to have Readers who are listed practitioners and authorized teachers. Yet, as Readers, none of these experienced Christian Scientists is ever permitted to make any remarks on a text from the Bible or *Science and Health*. Why a preacher — who is steeped in traditional theology, is not a member, has not been elected, is not class-taught, has not proven an ability to heal spiritually, is not an authorized teacher — should be allowed to sneak his remarks into our church services...*defies rational explanation*.

Dynamic renderings of the Bible seem to be all the rage these days. They are not progressive. In their bid to express spiritual ideas in terms applicable to the present age, they embody mortal mind's attempt to grasp and express Truth within the parameters of its own limitations. They delude themselves into thinking they have become more spiritual, by resolving some things into other things, exchanging some objects of sense for other objects of sense. "Metaphysics resolves things into thoughts, and exchanges the objects of sense for the ideas of Soul" (*Science and Health* 269: 14). That's real translation. The only truly progressive translation of the Bible is *Science and Health*. Many denominations are realizing that the Bible needs to be understood spiritually. By promoting imaginative renderings instead of adopting *Science and Health*, they are in fact, perhaps unwittingly, rejecting the final revelation. Dynamic renderings are counterfeits of *Science and Health*. Why would a Christian Scientist, who has the genuine article, be found trumpeting the counterfeit? Christian Scientists do not need another key to the Scriptures. Perhaps we need to ask ourselves, "Do we really believe that Christian Science is the final revelation?" Christian Scientists should be wary of climbing onto bandwagons, knowing, as they do, that fads are a form of animal magnetism.

Here accuracy requires us to make a distinction. There is a difference between “reading” something and “studying” something. Christian Scientists “read” the periodicals; they “study” the books—by which they mean the Bible, *Science and Health*, *The Church Manual*, *Prose Works* and at times the *Hymnal*. Most serious Bible students have several different Bible translations, as well as commentaries and dictionaries, to consult from time to time for a different perspective on a passage. If Christian Scientists take this approach, they are following their Leader’s example. In private, they “read” and consult these secondary references selectively and with due discrimination, accepting as “gospel” only what can be verified in “the books”. However, the Bible Lesson comes under the “study” category. Members are expected to be its daily students. Thousands turn to the Lesson for healing, trusting that they are receiving there the unadulterated truth, impeccably accurate. A Bible version chosen for use in the Lesson must be “study-grade”.

The Golden Text and Responsive Reading are certainly part of the Lesson and must rise to the same level of linguistic and metaphysical rigour as the body of the Lesson. Although there’s no such thing as a perfect translation, the King James Version’s flaws do not interfere seriously with metaphysical content. The King James translators may not have been any better metaphysicians than most twentieth-century translation teams; but when they got to passages they found obscure, they had the humility to transfer them in “equivalent words” instead of replacing the puzzling parts with shallower renderings at the estimated level of popular comfort. The King James Version is time-tested and “healing-tested”; other renderings are not.

The February 19, 2008, e-mail indicated that the Directors and Trustees found “no letter or document by Mary Baker Eddy, or recollection in any reminiscence, which stated a particular translation of the Scripture is to be used in Church services.” The *Christian Science Sentinel* for April 12, 1913, contained an article, entitled “Bible Study”, by Annie Knott. This statement by Annie Knott is of deep significance because it has the status of an eye-witness account. Annie Knott was appointed to the Bible Lesson Committee by Mrs. Eddy in 1904; that is, she worked on that committee under our Leader’s supervision for six years, and continued to serve there until 1918 when she joined the Board of Directors. Annie Knott’s experiences working under Mrs. Eddy’s supervision are recorded in *We Knew Mary Baker Eddy, Third Series*. She testifies that Mrs. Eddy wanted the King James translation used in our church services.

Her comments, quoted here, were clearly aimed at the English-speaking Field, as they were published in the *Sentinel*, not the *Herald*; they in no way undermine the desirability of Bible translations in other languages, such as German or French:

“Many years ago *Mrs. Eddy decided* that the Authorized Version of the Bible, known as the *King James Version*, should be used at all our services, because it expressed the truth with sufficient clearness to enable every earnest student to demonstrate its power. It is true that the authorized revision of the Bible [i.e. the Revised Version, which we saw in pages 2-8 herein], representing the consecrated work of scholarly men for many years, gives in certain passages a better sense of the original, but its agreement with the King James, in the majority of cases, would make unauthorized and *differing versions* of very *uncertain value*, even for private study, except a few which *adhere very closely to the original text.*”

Compare this with Mrs. Eddy’s own words:

“Do you believe in translation?

If your question refers to language, whereby one expresses the sense of words in one language by *equivalent words* in another, I do.”

Miscellaneous Writings 67: 24-27

What if we use only the “good parts” of non-KJV Bibles and leave the questionable passages alone? There are two problems with such a proposal.

The first difficulty is that having the Readers at our services read from a particular translation without introductory disclaimer has the effect of giving the public the impression we endorse the whole translation. If The Mother Church selects a Bible translation to be read aloud from the desk at English Sunday services, required to be the same around the world, it has *de facto* endorsed that translation as official text. Very few modern translations deserve such endorsement. For example, any translation that renders *Genesis* 1: 27 as “God created human beings in his own image” must be immediately disqualified: if it obscures the distinction between the second and third degrees (*Science and Health* 115: 25-116: 3) it will certainly mistranslate passages later on. Error in the premise must lead to errors in the conclusions (*Science and Health* 277: 27-28), as we see in *The Message*:

“The physical part of you is not some piece of property belonging to the spiritual part of you. God owns the whole works.” *I Corinthians* 6: 19. *The Message*.

“The fourth erroneous postulate is...that man has a material body which is part of himself.” *Science and Health* 91: 32

Mrs. Eddy did not fail to make all useful provisions for our spiritual growth: on Wednesday evenings, item #6 does provide for “experiences, testimonies, and **remarks**.” In that venue, a member of the congregation (or Reader) who has found something helpful in a non-KJV Bible or commentary, is free to share it, hopefully prefacing his remarks with a disclaimer, such as, “We won’t agree with everything in this translation, but it was helpful on this point...” However, the *Manual*-prescribed Orders of Service provide for no such disclaimer prior to readings from the desk. When church officers, charged with conducting formal public services, read an extract without disclaimer, the whole version assumes the colour of official church teaching, including the incorrect parts. Have we then represented Christian Science honestly and accurately?

The second difficulty of selective quotation springs from the word “canonical.” There are many different categories of Biblical exegesis: textual, historical, grammatical, literary, canonical, and others. By definition, a “canon” is an approved collection. The Biblical canons differ among faith communities: the Catholic canon is different from the Protestant or Jewish canon, for example. Whichever one it is, a canon is a whole collection. Canonical study has its own parameters:

“A canonical approach *avoids the atomization* and thus the *isolated interpretation* of texts. A text is to be read as *part of the Bible in its entirety*, not as an independent, single unit. [It] is the Bible as a whole that possesses final canonical authority.... The believing community reads and hears the Scriptures, assuming the canon’s internal cohesion. Thus, even a passage from the Old Testament read in the church will be heard in light of the New Testament.... The assumption is...that the *understanding and interpretation of an individual text* must conform to the constraints resulting from the text’s existence as *part of a larger work*.”

John H. Hayes & Carl R. Holladay. *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner’s Handbook*. Westminster John Knox Press. pp. 125-126. (*emphasis added*)

This is apparently something even a beginner in Biblical exegesis is supposed to know! Our Explanatory Note draws attention to “canonical writings.” Mrs. Eddy’s writings indicate that her approach to Bible study included a canonical perspective:

“The term Lord, as used in our version of the Old Testament, is often synonymous with Jehovah, and expresses the Jewish concept, not yet elevated to deific apprehension through spiritual transfiguration. Yet the word gradually approaches a higher meaning. This human sense of Deity yields to the divine sense, ...”

Science and Health 576: 26-1

“From Genesis to the Apocalypse, sin, sickness, and death, envy, hatred, and revenge, — all evil, — are typified by a serpent, or animal subtlety.”

Science and Health 564: 24-26

“The correlative Biblical texts in the Lesson-Sermon shall extend from Genesis to Revelation.”

The Church Manual 58: 15

This perspective reflects the canonical criterion: “...even a passage from the Old Testament read in church will be heard in light of the New Testament.” Our Bible Lessons do this all the time. The requirement that “the understanding and interpretation of an individual text must conform to the constraints resulting from the text’s existence as part of a larger work” — this requirement of canonical exegesis precludes our adopting a smorgasbord appropriation of isolated agreeable passages from translations whose fidelity to the original text is inconsistent and that are not wholly compatible with Christian Science...that is, if we’re being honest about what we’re doing.

B. Ethics

One significant aspect of this issue revolves around what constitutes fair treatment of Eugene Peterson. Anyone who has “googled” *The Message* knows that several websites discuss it, some of them downright vicious. Increasing reference to *The Message* in our periodicals is provoking some antipathy from many Christian Scientists who are deep students of the Bible. They rarely add anything substantial to the line of reasoning; they come across mostly as window-dressing. Many critiques of *The Message* complain that it is a flawed translation. Such critiques are not valid. So-called thought-for-thought dynamic renderings are governed by different groundrules than pure translations. *The Message* is not precisely a translation, as is recognized by those rare souls who will actually read a preface:

“Keep in mind that *The Message* is a *reading* Bible. It is not intended to replace *study* Bibles”.

The Message. Introduction. (*emphasis added*)

“Read” versus “study”... the same distinction made by Christian Scientists. Criticizing *The Message* as a bad translation makes no more sense than criticizing Picasso for not painting people’s eyes in the right place...unless a museum tries to tell us Picasso’s paintings are realistic, or a church tries to tell us *The Message* is a study Bible. Even in such cases, our issue would not be with Picasso or Peterson, but with the institutions. Only a genuine study Bible qualifies to be used in any part of the Bible Lesson, because members are committed to study the Lesson. Out of fairness to Rev. Peterson, our fellow-Christian, we should obey our Leader’s injunction:

“Also the spirit in which the writer has written his literature shall be definitely considered.”

The Church Manual. 43: 26-2

Rev. Peterson has made “the spirit in which [he] has written his literature” very clear: “it is not intended to replace study Bibles.” It’s to be hoped that The Mother Church will not place branch churches in the position of being complicit in a misuse of Rev. Peterson’s work. It behooves us as Christians to respect his wishes.

An equally-pressing ethical issue revolves around the relationship of Christian Science branch churches with each other and with The Mother Church. The *Manual* spells this out:

“In Christian Science each branch church shall be distinctly democratic in its government, and no individual, and no other church shall interfere with its affairs.”

The Church Manual. 74: 5

Many branch churches have by-laws establishing The Holy Bible, Authorized King James Version, as the first component of their dual pastor. If the *Manual* had specified the King James Version in Article XIV, section 1, that would have prevented Christian Science church services in other languages. However, absence of explicit reference to the King James Version does not compel English-speaking churches to use other translations. A church which chooses to use only the King James Version is not violating the *Manual*. Unless a branch church is actually violating the *Manual*, the quotation above is in force.

English-speaking Christian Science branch churches have solid reasons for determining to adhere to the King James Version in all their services. One reason is the superior overall uncontaminated accuracy of the translation, as we have already discussed. Another is the corroboration of the two elements of our dual pastor. A third is that this corroboration enables the lessons from the desk to rise above personal preaching.

Students of Christian Science cherish the stability and assurance imparted by an awareness that the Science they are studying rests firmly on Biblical foundations. That Mrs. Eddy considered the Bible and *Science and Health* inseparable, is revealed in a comment in the *Manual*:

“...the Christian Science textbooks (*plural*), — The BIBLE, and SCIENCE AND HEALTH WITH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES, ...” *Manual 42: 12-14 (emphasis added)*

Mrs. Eddy apparently considered it important that this Biblical foundation be clear to all, whether seasoned student or first-time church visitor. In her own words:

“Christ’s Christianity is the chain of scientific being reappearing in all ages, maintaining its *obvious correspondence with the Scriptures*, and uniting all periods in the design of God.”

Science and Health 271:1-5 (emphasis added)

“[O]bvious correspondence with the Scriptures.” How could such a correspondence be made obvious? On at least three separate occasions, when preparing revisions of *Science and Health*, Mrs. Eddy specified that the wording of Scriptural references should conform to that of the King James Version. Not only some 700 explicit quotations, but countless verbal echoes link *Science and Health* with the King James Version.

“Which *hope* we have as an *anchor* of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within *the veil*; Whither the *forerunner* is for us entered, even *Jesus*...”

Hebrews 6: 19-20 (emphasis added)

“The nature of Christianity is peaceful and blessed, but in order to *enter into* the kingdom, the *anchor of hope* must be cast beyond *the veil* of matter into the Shekinah into which *Jesus has passed before us*.”

Science and Health 40: 31-2 (emphasis added)

These subtle resonances are often deadened by the rewordings of non-KJV translations. Yet it is these reciprocal verbal echoes that voice the unquestionable bond between the two elements of our dual pastor.

In a certain branch church, a dedicated First Reader regularly offered Wednesday evening readings that were clearly focused and uplifting. After the meetings, the members would compliment him on his readings. His consistent response was, “I didn’t write them; I just read them.” Anyone who has been a First Reader is alert to the subtle temptation to try to make “the books” say something they don’t really say. There’s a plethora of Bible translations available on the market. Quality varies immensely; few, if any, are devoid of theological agendas, since many have been produced by groups of theologians who want the Bible to voice their preconceived theological positions more clearly. If, over the years, it becomes normal practice for First Readers to feel free to shop around for Bible translations that say what they, themselves, want them to say — at what point will we have strayed into the domain of personal preaching? The King James Version is accurate and, therefore, especially free of denominational bias. Because of the verbal echoes, the corroboration between books is clearly audible from the desk. These factors combine to relieve our church services of a sense of personal responsibility — and credit — for the message.

Branch churches have valid conscientious rationales for determining democratically in by-laws to use only the King James Version in their services. Because of the central importance of the Bible Lesson in Christian Science practice, for the Publishing Society to use non-KJV Bible citations in the *Quarterly* has the effect of forcing them onto unwilling branches and placing those branches in an untenable position:

- ◆ Are they to violate their own democratically-constituted by-laws, against their conscience?
- ◆ Are they to allow another church to interfere with their affairs, by changing their by-laws, against their conscience?

The *Manual*’s declaration that “each branch church shall be distinctly democratic in its government, and...no other church shall interfere with its affairs,” is reinforced by another clause:

“The branch churches shall be individual...”

The Church Manual 72: 16-17

A branch church which so elects
has every right
 to adhere to the King James Version of the Bible
 in all parts of its church services.

C. Progress

The announcement in the March *Journal* seems to imply that, in our Bible Lessons, it's the metaphysics that counts, translations don't matter...as if the fact that we have *Science and Health* revealing the spiritual import of the Scriptures, makes it less important that we be meticulous about the accuracy of our Bible translations. That's a logical fallacy which may arise from a cursory reading of a comment in *Miscellany*:

“The different renderings or translations of Scripture in no wise affect Christian Science. Christianity and Science, being contingent on nothing written and based on the divine Principle of being, must be, are, irrefutable and eternal.”

The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany. 179: 23

Of course, this is true, just as it is true that a poorly-written mathematics textbook can never make $2 + 2 = 5$ or a pre-Columbus geography tract make the world flat. The laws of mathematics exist, independent of any textbook; but if the pupil is going to learn those laws efficiently, he needs good textbooks. There's no excuse to settle for textbooks that contain obvious errors. Similarly, we know in Science that “home” is a spiritual concept, embraced in divine Love and perfect. That's no excuse for ignoring building codes. We know that ultimately we shall discern spiritual reality entirely through direct communion with our divine Mind. Eventually we won't need books....or human organization, for that matter. But we're not there yet. As long as we seem to be human, we need accurate metaphysical texts.

Our First Tenet gives primacy to the Bible. Does our translation have to be literal?

“Question. — How can I progress most rapidly in the understanding of Christian Science?

Answer. — Study thoroughly the letter and imbibe the spirit.”

Science and Health 495: 25-28

We can't “study thoroughly the letter” if our study texts are not “letteral” (literal). We deem the Biblical texts worth studying, because they represent a level of spiritual understanding we have not yet attained. However, when scholastic theology hits a text the popular ear doesn't understand, does it have the modesty to consider that the problem might not be with the text? Sometimes translators' academically-preoccupied assumptions, that the problem is with the text, lead them to “rework” a puzzling passage into something they consider more understandable, more palatable; academic work, a potentially useful handmaid of metaphysics, then becomes an obscurer of metaphysics, clouding the deeper spiritual meaning that a spiritually sensitive reader might have been able to discern behind the slight awkwardness of a literal translation. Of course, that reader would eventually discern, anyway; but the duty of his textbooks is to make it easier, not harder, to imbibe the spirit. To do so, they must be accurate.

Matthew 6: 11

τον αρτον ημων τον επιουσιον δος ημιν σημερον.

Give us today our bread for today. (literal translation)

Give us this day our daily bread. (King James Version)

Give us grace for today; feed the famished affections. (*Science and Health* 17: 5)

* When a hungry heart petitions the divine Father-Mother God for bread, it is not given a stone, — but more grace, obedience, and love. (*Misc. Wr.* 127: 11-12)

* God gives you His spiritual ideas, and in turn, they give you daily supplies. (*Misc. Wr.* 307: 1-2)

Keep us alive with three square meals. (*The Message*).

Part 3: The Future

The human mind does not take kindly to discipline. Given a choice between the easy and the challenging, it will choose the easy in the preponderance of cases. If we allow ourselves to slide comfortably into the use of easy-sounding but inaccurate modernized Bible translations, what comes next?

“There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all. Spirit is immortal Truth; matter is mortal error. Spirit is the real and eternal; matter is the unreal and temporal. Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore man is not material; he is spiritual.

Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures 468: 9 (There)

“There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in material human mind. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all. Spirit is divine Truth; matter is human error. Spirit is the real and eternal; matter is the unreal and temporal. Spirit is God, and person is Spirit’s image and likeness. Therefore person is not material, but is spiritual.

21st Century Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures. Cheryl Petersen.

“While some versions of the Bible other than the **King James** are helpful to the student, none of them has the place the King James Bible occupies among Christian Scientists.... Our Leader studied it daily, and **desired and required that it be used in all our public church services.**”

“From the Directors,” *Christian Science Journal*, August 1923, pp. 256-257.
(emphasis added)

“We do not intimate that Christian Scientists should confine their study of the Bible to the King James Version. We do, however, express the view that if a Christian Scientist should desire to consult another translation or other translations, he ought to ***choose for himself***, and ought to ***beware*** of preferring another version merely because it is different or ***recent***. The many translations of the Bible ***differ in their spiritual qualities*** as well as in their scholarship. Mrs. Eddy examined the new translations of her time, including some of the best of the modern versions, but she used them only to a very limited extent.”

“From the Directors,” *The Christian Science Journal*, March 1928.
(emphasis added)

“[The King James Version] continues to hold first place among English-reading students by reason of its diction, its fidelity to the original text, and its spirituality.... **In our church services no other English translation should be used.**”

“From the Directors,” *The Christian Science Journal*, August 1938. Repeated in *The Christian Science Journal*, February 1946. (emphasis added)

“The Bible Lesson “Mortals and Immortals” that will be studied [May 12-18] and read **in churches** on Sunday, May 18, will contain passages in the Golden Text and Responsive Reading from **a Bible translation other than the King James Version.**”

“Behind the Scenes”, *The Christian Science Journal*, March 2008.
(emphasis added)

“You may have seen in an upcoming *Christian Science Quarterly* that **another Bible translation** is being used in the Golden Text and Responsive Reading of the May 18, 2008, Bible Lesson, “Mortals and Immortals.” This is announced and explained in *The Christian Science Journal* for March 2008, in the article “Expanding use of Bible translations.”

e-mail to Mother Church Members from The Christian Science Board of Directors and Board of Trustees of The Christian Science Publishing Society. February 19, 2008.

“No change is being made in the text of *Science and Health*, in the book itself or in the *Quarterly*, despite discussion in the Field about “modernized” English versions of the textbook. The Mother Church **does not intend to authorize any modernized English versions of *Science and Health*** nor is the Publishing Society authorizing the exhibition or sale of such versions of *Science and Health* in Reading Rooms.”

e-mail to Mother Church Members from The Christian Science Board of Directors and Board of Trustees of The Christian Science Publishing Society. February 19, 2008.

“? ? ? ? ?”

“From the Directors,” maybe February, 2068?

Webster tells us a “precedent” is “an act, statement, legal decision, case, etc. that may serve as an example, reason, or justification for a later one.” Our publications are justifying the unprecedented introduction into the Bible Lesson of non-literal Bible translations: they cite some aspects of church history and overlook evidence and testimony that make clear that...

- ◆ the use of non-KJV translations had all but ceased four years before Mrs. Eddy left us;
- ◆ the only Bible translations Mrs. Eddy ever deemed appropriate for our deep study of the Bible Lesson were scrupulously literal translations.
- ◆ in the handful of instances where Mrs. Eddy recommended translations other than the King James—for example, the seal and the motto of *The Christian Science Monitor*—the preferred translations are more literal than the King James, not less so.
- ◆ the translations chosen for the May 18 Bible Lesson diverge from the literal meaning of the original texts, as translated in the King James Version, in ways that have nothing to do with variants in recently-discovered manuscripts; they cannot prove they are based on updated scholarship.

For decades Boards of Directors asserted the movement’s commitment to the Authorized King James Version for deep study of the Bible Lesson and for church services.

This year we have seen the Board of Directors and Trustees of the Publishing Society override the precedent-setting declarations of previous Boards regarding Bible translations. This introduction of “modernized” Bible translations impacts *Science and Health* as the articulation of the Science of Christianity. Our First Tenet declares “...we take the inspired Word of the Bible as our sufficient guide to eternal Life.” (*Science and Health* 497: 3) This tenet in effect declares that, if it’s in the Bible, it’s part of Christian Science. Therefore, changing the articulation of Bible content does change the articulation of Christian Science.

In the same e-mail announcement which overrode previous Boards on the “modernized” Bible translations issue, the Board and Trustees now say they have no intention of supporting “modernized” versions of *Science and Health*. But if this Board can override a Board decision from the past regarding one component of our dual pastor, does not a Board from the future now have a precedent for overriding the decision of this Board regarding the other component of our dual pastor? Setting precedents is serious business.

We all know the difference between packaging and content; it resembles the difference between style and substance. The *Deed of Trust Organizing the Christian Science Publishing Society* authorizes the Trustees to...

“...change the name or style of [the] *Quarterly* publication...”
Deed of Trust §7

The changes now in the works are not just changes to the style of the *Quarterly* as a publication; they presage changes to the substance of the Bible Lessons as metaphysical teaching. The Deed of Trust imposes legally on the Trustees — and ethically on all loyal Christian Scientists— the obligation to be...

“...advocates of the principles of Christian Science as taught by me in my book,
 “Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures.”
Deed of Trust §9

Science and Health declares Science’s “obvious correspondence with the Scriptures.” One step Mrs. Eddy took to illustrate that correspondence was to require uniformity of wording between Biblical references in *Science and Health* and the King James Version of the Bible. To the degree that other translations change the style and meaning, to that degree they lose the uniformity our Leader took such great pains to establish.

And most powerful of all...

“... as taught by me...”

Our Leader’s resounding appeal in perpetuity for *accuracy!*

Loyal Christian Scientists acknowledge Mary Baker Eddy as our Leader. We acknowledge that her articulation of the Science of Christianity is the final revelation and that her vision of “church” is complete. On this issue of fundamental change to the Christian Science Bible Lessons, as Mrs. Eddy left them for us, it is to be hoped that the Christian Science Board of Directors and the Trustees of the Christian Science Publishing Society may yet reconsider.