

the account of the paradise enjoyed by the saved after the conflagration all suggest use of Christian material, notably the Book of Revelation. The mention in stanza 65 of the coming of “the powerful, mighty one, he who rules over everything,” has also often been interpreted as referring to Christ and Christianity. Interestingly, however, this stanza is not included in the *Codex Regius* version and found only in Arnarnagnæan Manuscript 544 4to (*Hauksbók*) in a hand from the middle of the 14th century. The stanzas describing the holocaust have been seen to have parallels with a section of a sermon by the 11th-century Anglo-Saxon Archbishop Wulfstan, although a direct link is far from assured. In addition, similarities to the scene on Golgotha or Calvary (Matt 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19) have been noted in the description of Odin’s self-sacrifice in stanzas 138–41 of *Hávamál* (“The Sayings of the High One”), a composite work consisting of as many as 6 sections. The stanzas, which appear in the so-called *Rúnatal* (“List of Runes”) section of the poem, relate that, wounded with a spear, Odin hung for nine nights on a windswept tree with unknown roots and cried out as he grasped the runes. While the possibility of Christian influence on the scene cannot be excluded, it is recognized that nearly every element in the Norse myth can be explained as part of pagan tradition. The date of the poem is disputed, but proof of the influence of Latin collections of proverbs suggests that in its extant form the poem should be seen as the product of the late 12th or early 13th century, using a wealth of older material. Finally, it has been maintained that the social myth in *Rígsþula* (The List of Ríg), which some assign to the pre-Christian period and others to the 11th or 12th century, may have origins in Christian thought. The poem, which reflects a degree of Irish influence, describes how the three classes of society (slaves, freemen, and nobles) all descend from a single progenitor, Ríg, and the Bible or medieval writers such as Honorius Augustodunensis have been cited as sources for the social tripartition.

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See also → Snorri Sturluson

## Eddinus

→ Jøduthun

## Eddy, Mary Baker

Mary Baker Eddy (1821–1910) discovered and founded Christian Science. From childhood until her last years her life is intertwined with Bible read-

ing, Bible interpreting, and Bible living. Her lifetime spans the Victorian age, the Civil War, and reaches into the age of scientific discovery and invention. Her unique method of biblical interpretation will be of interest to biblical scholars around the world, independently of the religion she founded and the healing-system she established. Whether it is gender bias or religious fundamentalism that is preventing an unprejudiced look at Eddy’s ideas remains for future scholarship to determine.

**1. Short Biography.** Mary Baker Eddy was an influential American author, teacher, and religious leader, noted for her groundbreaking ideas about spirituality and health. The religion and system of healing connected with her name grew out of an intense interaction with the Bible, and she articulated her ideas in her major work, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, first published in 1875. Four years later she founded the Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts, which today has branch churches and societies around the world. In 1908 she launched *The Christian Science Monitor*, a leading international newspaper, the recipient, to date, of seven Pulitzer Prizes.

Born on a farm in Bow, New Hampshire, she was the youngest of Mark and Abigail Baker’s six children. Her formal education was often interrupted by periods of sickness, but when not in school she read and studied extensively at home, writing prose and poetry from an early age. Her first poem was published in 1848. Raised in a deeply religious Congregational home, she rebelled against the Calvinist doctrine of predestination at an early age, and regularly turned to the Bible and prayer for hope and inspiration. A turning point in her life occurred in 1866 when a severe fall on an icy sidewalk in Lynn, Massachusetts, left her in a critical condition. She asked for her Bible and, while reading an account of Jesus’ healing, found herself suddenly well. Eventually, she referred to this as the moment she discovered Christian Science. She spent the following years trying to understand what had healed her. She writes:

For three years after my discovery, I sought the solution of this problem of Mind-healing, searched the Scriptures and read little else, kept aloof from society, and devoted time and energies to discovering a positive rule. The search was sweet, calm, and buoyant with hope, not selfish nor depressing. I knew the Principle of all harmonious Mind-action to be God, and that cures were produced in primitive Christian healing by holy, uplifting faith; but I must know the Science of this healing, and I won my way to absolute conclusions through divine revelation, reason, and demonstration. (Eddy 2000: 109)

The textbook of Christian Science, first published in 1875 and revised several times until her passing in 1910, *Science and Health* is in itself a testament of biblical interpretation. On every page, allusions to

the Bible can be found as much as direct or indirect quotations, from the first chapter on prayer to the last chapter entitled “Recapitulation,” culminating in the final “Key to the Scriptures” focusing on Genesis, Revelation, and a detailed “Glossary” with the spiritual meaning of 125 biblical terms. Although there is an emphasis on the books of Genesis and Revelation, on the four Gospels, and on the letters of Paul, the Bible as a whole is the constant focus of Eddy’s life and study. It astonished her that existing Christian churches would not embrace her new reading of the Bible with its discovery of the “final revelation of the absolute divine Principle of scientific mental healing” (Eddy 2000: 107) and that her 19th-century contemporaries did not welcome the marriage of religion and science. As a result, in 1879 Eddy secured a charter for the Church of Christ, Scientist, established “to commemorate the word and works of our Master [Christ Jesus], which should reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing.” In this church the Bible and *Science and Health* are installed as “pastor” instead of an ordained clergy. In 1895, she published a church manual, establishing guidelines that are followed to this day. In this slim volume she made provisions for a lay ministry in Christian Science churches around the world, with locally elected readers who read a weekly “Bible Lesson-Sermon” of passages from the Bible and *Science and Health*. This Bible lesson is studied worldwide.

Eddy’s approach to the Bible is characterized by two basic assumptions: first, that the Bible is a book that invites continuous thoughtful attention, and, second, that it is a book whose meaning is timeless. Let us consider these points, each in turn.

The Bible in Eddy’s view is a book that calls for openminded, inquisitive study, active thought, and consecrated practice more than belief. Eddy closed the modern split between religion and science by regarding true religious practice as scientific, self-reflective, and thoughtful. In this light of great consequence, she wrote:

Jesus of Nazareth was the most scientific man that ever trod the globe. He plunged beneath the material surface of things, and found the spiritual cause. (Eddy 2000: 313)

For Eddy, Christian Science, though regarded as a religion with an institutionalized church, is more a science than a religion, explaining to a scientific age the spiritual laws which Christ Jesus understood and practiced. The healings of Jesus are in her view not miracles but proofs of everpresent Spirit, Love, and the unreality of matter. In *Science and Health* she writes:

The revelation consists of two parts: 1. The discovery of this divine Science of Mind-healing, through a spiritual sense of the Scriptures and through the teachings of the Comforter, as promised by the Master. 2. The proof, by present demonstration, that the so-called miracles of Jesus did not specially belong to a dispensation now

ended, but that they illustrated an ever-operative divine Principle. The operation of this Principle indicates the eternity of the scientific order and continuity of being. (Eddy 2000: 123)

The individual experience she calls for is supported by the spiritual meaning of the Bible which takes on active potential in daily practice. She installs not subjective achievements, but a discovery that distills contemporary meaning from biblical truths, inviting readers to rethink and practice Christian healing in individual ways.

This brings us to the second main aspect of Eddy’s view of the Bible: for Eddy, the Bible as the book of books has a meaning for all time – past, present, and future. This meaning transcends history and is not fulfilled in a mere historic reading and interpretation, but rather moves beyond orthodox practice and specific language barriers. The true meaning of the Bible is found in its spiritual dimension and it has practical implications for all time.

**2. God.** Eddy derives sanction to call God “Father-Mother” through the interpretation of the book of Genesis and its emphasis on the pure spirituality of the creator. It is only the 20th century which explains that God’s spirit, as it is called in Gen 1, is originally a feminine noun. The focus on the love of God is the central aspect of the Gospels, and she writes:

In divine Science, we have not as much authority for considering God masculine, as we have for considering Him feminine, for Love imparts the clearest idea of Deity. (Eddy 2000: 517)

As synonyms for the often misunderstood term “God,” she proposes terms that are either directly voiced in the Bible – Truth, Life, Love, Spirit – or suggested to her in indirect ways – Mind, Principle, Soul.

**3. Christ Jesus.** In the history of Christianity few texts show deeper reverence for Christ Jesus than the chapter “Atonement and Eucharist” from *Science and Health*. In this chapter she writes:

Jesus of Nazareth taught and demonstrated man’s oneness with the Father, and for this we owe him endless homage. His mission was both individual and collective. He did life’s work aright not only in justice to himself, but in mercy to mortals, – to show them how to do theirs, but not to do it for them nor to relieve them of a single responsibility. (Eddy 2000: 18)

The “Master Christian” proved the allness of Spirit and the nothingness of matter, overcoming every material obstacle and introducing humanity to a different world – the kingdom of heaven. The astonishing healings the Bible talks about are explained thus:

Jesus beheld in Science the perfect man, who appeared to him where sinning mortal man appears to mortals. In this perfect man the Saviour saw God’s own likeness, and this correct view of man healed the sick. Thus Jesus

taught that the kingdom of God is intact, universal, and that man is pure and holy. (Eddy 2000: 477)

**4. Genesis.** Within Eddy's Bible reading, it is especially Gen 1 that holds a special place. That the Bible contains two different, historically distinct records of creation, is crucial to her theology. In the first record with the active creator God (Elohim) creation is brought forth in purely spiritual terms and represents a creation without beginning or end, being pronounced completely perfect and assigning equal worth to the male and female. The second record presents with the Lord God (Jehovah) a different acting subject standing for the mythological nature of matter and a legendary fable. It is the perfection of the first record which overturns the seeming reality of the second record. In Eddy's view the second is useful in understanding the claims against God and His/Her spiritual creation.

With a single command, Mind had made man, both male and female. How then could a material organization become the basis of man? How could the non-intelligent become the medium of Mind, and error be the enunciator of Truth? Matter is not the reflection of Spirit, yet God is reflected in all His creation. Is this addition to His creation real or unreal? Is it the truth, or is it a lie concerning man and God? ... In this narrative, the validity of matter is opposed, not the validity of Spirit or Spirit's creations. Man reflects God; mankind represents the Adamic race, and is a human, not a divine, creation. (Eddy 2000: 525)

Within the framework of feminist endeavors to challenge misogynist interpretations of the book of Genesis, Eddy's approach is unique and far-reaching. Already Sarah Grimké (1792–1873) in her *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes* distills different readings from the biblical text, and Eddy approaches the subject in a creative way already in the first edition of *Science and Health* in 1875. Seeing a great potential in Eve's acknowledgment of having been betrayed and fooled ("the serpent beguiled me ..."; Gen 3:13, KJV), Eddy goes in her interpretation completely against the Bible commentaries and theological convictions of her own time. Her interpretation of Genesis turns over time into the most comprehensive, coherent, and logical interpretation of that biblical book, emphasizing the equality of the sexes as much as the need for both sexes to move beyond doubt and guilt to unselfish action with the help of the opening three chapters. This is done by raising Eve to unprecedented heights:

She has already learned that corporeal sense is the serpent. Hence she is first to abandon the belief in the material origin of man and to discern spiritual creation. This hereafter enabled woman to be the mother of Jesus and to behold at the sepulchre the risen Saviour, who was soon to manifest the deathless man of God's creating. This enabled woman to be first to interpret the Scriptures in their true sense, which reveals the spiritual origin of man. (Eddy 2000: 534)

As biographer Gillian Gill has noted: "What other woman's writing is written and read side by side

with the Bible? What other woman dared to subtitle her own work *Key to the Scriptures*?" By crossing gender boundaries and transcending rigid, orthodox notions with the help of God-inspired and self-empowering Bible-reading, Eddy worked towards, as Gill notes, "a woman-inclusive theology and church governance" (Gill 1998: XV).

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## Eden (Person)

Eden was the son of Joah and grandson of Zimmah, Levites of the Gershonite clan. Eden became part of the group who re-consecrated the temple during the early reign of Hezekiah in Jerusalem (2 Chr 29:12). Several men from this initial entourage, including Eden, are mentioned again as part of the ongoing organization of religious functionaries who maintained the temple system at Hezekiah's command (2 Chr 31:11–15). Eden was assigned with those who insured fair distribution of practical provisions for the families of the Levites serving the temple (see also Num 35:1–5). Eden's name may have been taken from that of the well-known garden in the creation account (Gen 2).

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## Eden, Garden of

- I. Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible/Old Testament
- II. New Testament
- III. Judaism
- IV. Christianity
- V. Islam
- VI. Literature
- VII. Visual Arts
- VIII. Music
- IX. Film

### I. Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

Garden (Heb. *gan*) and the proper name Eden (Gk. *Ἔδεμ*; Gen 2:8, 10; 4:16) are closely connected, as evident in the combination *gan ʿEden* "the Garden