

We have only now to consider Mrs. Eddy's claim to be an inspired interpreter of the inspired volume. The name given by the author herself to the last two chapters of her great work, "Science and Health," is "Key to the Scriptures": "No human pen or tongue taught me the science contained in this book, 'Science and Health,' and neither tongue nor pen can ever overthrow it." It is thus that she raises our expectations, for we take the science she here refers to as including the science, so-called, of Biblical interpretation, which in theology goes by the name of exegesis, or hermeneutics. The task of the exegete is a labor of great and complicated difficulty; that he must needs be a scholar, competently equipped for grammatical and philological inquiries, above all he must be familiar with the results of modern criticism as applied both to the Old and the New Testament; he must know something of the writings of the great critics — French, German, English and American, fifty names at least between Jean Astruc and Robertson Smith. Mrs. Eddy does not appear to have ever breathed in the region of the higher criticism, but even if she had, it appears that all her learning miraculously disappeared the moment she discovered Christian Science. This is how she modestly enough refers to her attainments:

"My father was taught that my brain was too large for my body, so kept me much out of school, but I gained book knowledge with far less labor than is usually requisite. At ten years of age I was as familiar with Lindley Murray's grammar as I was with the Westminster Catechism, and the latter I had to repeat every Sunday. My favorite studies were natural philosophy, logic, and moral science. To my brother Albert I was indebted for lessons in the ancient tongues — Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. After my discovery of Christian Science, most of the knowledge I had gleaned from school books vanished like a dream."

From this *naïve* confession, it may readily be inferred that Mrs. Eddy's exegesis of Scripture is not a very formidable affair. In the first place, the only Scriptures subjected to the "key" are the first four chapters of the book of Genesis and a few selected verses of the Revelation of St. John. We may be apt to think it strange that the exegesis of a few unconnected passages in an obscure book should be called the "key" to that book; but when we come to understand the real principle of interpretation—the trick, as it were—we are no longer amazed. The trick is neither more nor less than to destroy whatever meaning there may be in the passage by turning it into jargon. In her treatment of Genesis, Mrs. Eddy, as it may well be imagined, eschews all manner of controversy. There are no Pentateuchal difficulties in her way, no nice balancing of Jehovistic and Elohistie documents to undertake; she has not a word to say even on the burning question of the length of a creation day. The following may be taken as a fair specimen of the "key." Quoting the first verse of the Bible, she goes on to say:

"The Infinite hath no beginning. This word beginning is employed to signify the