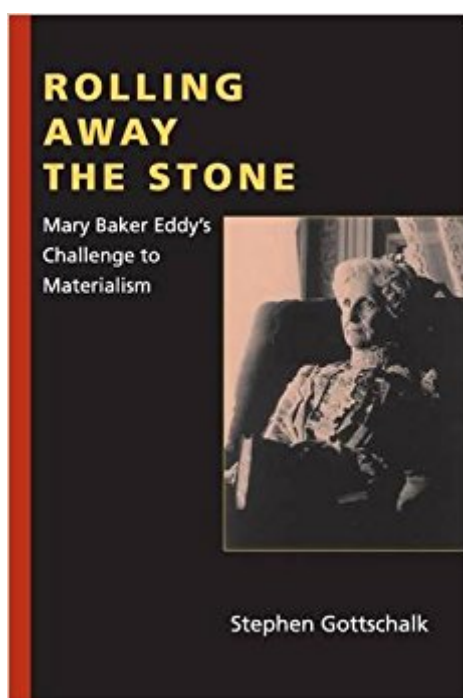


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# Rolling Away The Stone: Mary Baker Eddy's Challenge To Materialism (Religion In North America)



## Synopsis

This richly detailed study highlights the last two decades of the life of Mary Baker Eddy, a prominent religious thinker whose character and achievement are just beginning to be understood. It is the first book-length discussion of Eddy to make full use of the resources of the Mary Baker Eddy Collection in Boston. *Rolling Away the Stone* focuses on her long-reaching legacy as a Christian thinker, specifically her challenge to the materialism that threatens religious belief and practice.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gottschalk, an independent historian and author of *The Emergence of Christian Science in American Religious Life*, completed this significant intellectual biography of Mary Baker Eddy before his death earlier this year. As with that earlier work, Gottschalk distinguishes himself by placing Christian Science in the larger context of American religion, rather than examining it as a mere curiosity or one-off sect. Eddy, he argues, should be taken seriously as a religious innovator whose radical theological teachings were intended not only to start a new religious movement, but also to reform all of Christianity from within. The biography focuses on the last two decades of Eddy's life, when the "retired" leader spent her seventies and eighties overseeing the construction of the Mother Church in Boston, revising *Science and Health*, battling external critics and internal dissension, and founding the *Christian Science Monitor*. Gottschalk, who was a Christian Scientist himself and once worked for the denomination, shows a clear pro-Eddy bias at times, especially when he is turning

the tables on bombastic critics like Mark Twain or Joseph Pulitzer, but in general the book demonstrates copious and painstaking research. In fact, this is the first major biography of Eddy to be published since the opening of the denomination's archives to researchers a few years ago, and its command of primary sources sheds new light on Eddy's life and work. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Gottschalk's account is well told and enriched by fresh material now available from the Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity." —Christian Science Monitor

"Gottschalk does a superb job of providing historical context for the chaotic events of Eddy's final decades. He analyzes frequently oversimplified disagreements between Eddy and Mark Twain, deftly highlighting the many points of agreement and parallel thinking that led Eddy and Twain to very different conclusions. Finally, Gottschalk makes accessible Eddy's mature theology, the product of controversy as well as deep reflection: a thoroughgoing rejection of all materialisms affirmed by her contemporaries (scientific, medical, ecclesiastical, spiritual) in order to seek 'something higher and better than matter, and apart from it.'" —Choice

Mary Baker Eddy (1821, 1910) has had more than her share of biographers: admirers, detractors, scholars, and members of her church. In this posthumous work, Gottschalk, who belongs in the last two categories, accepts the daunting task of examining the years between Eddy's 1889 move from Boston to Concord, NH, and her death. This period, ostensibly her retirement from active leadership and public life, was punctuated by acrimony, lawsuits, and highly publicized conflicts over Eddy's physical and intellectual/spiritual property, and the usual attacks upon her character and theology. Gottschalk does a superb job of providing historical context for the chaotic events of Eddy's final decades. He analyzes frequently oversimplified disagreements between Eddy and Mark Twain, deftly highlighting the many points of agreement and parallel thinking that led Eddy and Twain to very different conclusions. Finally, Gottschalk makes accessible Eddy's mature theology, the product of controversy as well as deep reflection: a thoroughgoing rejection of all materialisms affirmed by her contemporaries (scientific, medical, ecclesiastical, spiritual) in order to seek something higher and better than matter, and apart from it. All libraries should own this book. Summing Up: Highly recommended. Lower-level undergraduates through faculty/researchers; general readers. D. Campbell, Colby College, 2006 oct. CHOICE "The book includes a great deal of fresh research and honest scholarship... [F]or the individual wanting to sink his or her teeth into a serious study of Eddy... you have a lot to look forward to in reading this book." —The Christian Science Journal, Vol. 129, No. 5 May

2011 "Gottschalk has provided readers with a masterful account of Christian Science in its heyday. The book is a first-rate read for students of American religion and provides a look into how one of the country's more complex religious figures dealt with materialism in the late nineteenth-century America." Religious Studies Review

This is a wonderful book about Eddy. My only criticism is that the author who is clearly a Christian Scientist (as I am) tries too hard sometimes to remain objective in his appraisal of Eddy. This "objectiveness" is probably not always believable to the non-Christian Scientist who may read this, and the author sometimes makes light or seems to make some editorial comments of the incredible healings done by Eddy which will not be taken very well by the true believing Christian Scientist who reads this. Also, the author often reminds us of Eddy's advanced age during much of her most productive years and seems to emphasize that Eddy had the typical weaknesses of a person at this age but does not discuss the amazing health and strength that was noted by many that knew her during this age. Many commented on how briskly she walked and how she could run up stairs into her advanced age. But, maybe that is the correct balance for a general audience.

An extremely detailed chronology of the final 22 years of Ms. Eddy's life as it relates to her founding of the Christian Science movement, enumerating on the challenges she had to overcome. This is NOT an inspirational metaphysical book, like her publications, rather the historical backdrop that took place during this period, that if carefully read, should add great perspective for sincere students of Christian Science. Recommended for advanced students of Christian Science seeking the sociological, religious and historical significance of Ms. Eddy's work.

The book is well-written and provides some new information about Mary Baker Eddy's life, documented from the Mary Baker Eddy Library. As a Christian Scientist, I was interested in learning about the last class Mrs. Eddy taught, and that it dealt with the Trinity. Quoting from new sources, I was able to learn more about what Mrs. Eddy believed about the Trinity. As the book dealt with just the last 20 years of her life, mostly when she lived at Pleasant View, I found it interesting how she came to find people to live with her there and help her, as well as new observations of students who lived with her. If you have read other biographies about Mrs. Eddy, I think you will find this a helpful adjunct.

This was not what I had expected. It tells of Mrs Eddy's fight to bring to the world what, to me,

makes me Bible real and the only thing that answers many questions that a simple perusal or deeper study of the Bible up. This was one great woman and far ahead of her time. Thank you Mr Gottschalk for giving us this view of a strong lady with vision.

In her struggles with prevailing public opinion, established clergy, unyielding world thought, and controlling men in general, Mary Baker Eddy was a true woman warrior in the best sense of the term. This slight, yet powerful woman was on the verge of passing on from a fall on the ice-- her doctor had given up on her survival, let alone recovery-- when she reached out in prayer for healing. The methods she was led to take then, based on the teachings of Christ Jesus, she tried to share with all mankind ever since. Through her textbook, Science and Health, with Key to the Scriptures, and the Christian Science religion she subsequently founded, Mrs. Eddy fought every adversary with confidence, courage, and determination. Embattled from the beginning, Mrs. Eddy's efforts were unyielding, and 120 years later, ultimately successful. Mrs. Eddy is regarded as one of the finest religious leaders in world thought, and certainly one of the most valiant. Highly recommended.

The book portrays Mrs. Eddy as a real human being, warts and all. I thoroughly enjoyed it, even the overly strong students wanting to usurp her leadership in the C.S. church. In no way does it diminish her role as "discoverer and Leader" of the CS movement. It increases my admiration of her. Her trials were unbelievable. The human mind, she calls "mortal mind," tried its best to defeat her, but she prevailed. Remarkable book. Bennett Penix

A well written book that tells of the many challenges and human resistance that Mary Baker Eddy found in bringing forth a new way of thinking of religion, God and our relationship to our divine parent. Her devotion to God and to helping mankind better understand Christ Jesus' healing mission and teaching took fortitude and commitment beyond anything most people ever encounter. The book is well worth reading and helps one to gain an understanding of this remarkable woman and her contributions to society.

Excellent. Insightful. Engaging right from the start. Well researched. An important contribution to the list of bios of MBE. Will read it again, sooner rather than later.

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