

## Programs

### *Caring for Christmas*

Many are unaware that Christmas, a much-loved holiday, was not always so beloved, especially in colonial-era New England and other parts of colonial America. Puritans and other early settlers to America came out of an experience in Europe where Christmas was often a time of excess, encouraging violence and decadence. So, initially many regions suppressed the holiday. In the nineteenth century, Americans refashioned its celebration with a family-friendly focus. On Sunday, December 6, The Mary Baker Eddy Library brought this history to life with a dramatic and musical revue titled, "Caring for Christmas: A Nineteenth-Century American Story."

At the helm of this program were two narrators, Leah Huenneke, a student in the Christian Science Sunday School, and Mark Montgomery from The Mary Baker Eddy Library. Huenneke and Montgomery traded dialogue and repartee in evoking the culture and history of nineteenth-century America around the subject of Christmas.

Montgomery played the part of the incredulous innocent, amazed that anyone could ever have not wanted to celebrate Christmas. Huenneke indulged her fellow narrator's protests and jokes as she explained how Christmas moved from the margins to a central place in

the public's heart in nineteenth-century New England and America. After learning that early New Englanders often only had Thanksgiving as a holiday, as a special time for expressing gratitude, Montgomery noted that he liked gratitude, and on Thanksgiving he was especially into *gravytude*.

The script was written by Library Programs Manager Jonathon Eder and included several traditional Christmas songs which helped tell the story. The music was performed by the New England Conservatory Children's Chorus, under the direction of Dr. Jamie Kirsch, with piano accompaniment by Na Yeon Kim.

The musical pieces ranged from the amusing to the moving. A rendition of "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" gave special punch to the lines, "We won't go until we get some, So bring some right here," revealing how this sixteenth-century carol had associations with the rowdy Christmas of earlier times. Mary Baker Eddy's poem, "Christmas Morn," set to music, evoked the tender side of Christmas. In introducing the piece, Huenneke noted how Eddy recognized the "murky clouds" that could sometimes weigh on people during the season, but that the Christmas message of love shines through for all.

The program offered an opportunity to partner with local charities. During the nineteenth century, caring for those in need at Christmastime became a popular activity, and

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Left to right: Library Educational Programs Coordinator Kelli Alvarez with Scott Inman of The Home for Little Wanderers. Leah Huenneke and Mark Montgomery discuss Christmas in America. Members of the New England Conservatory Children's Chorus.

## Mission Statement

*"The Mary Baker Eddy Library provides public access and context to original materials and educational experiences about Mary Baker Eddy's life, ideas, and achievements, including her Church. The Library promotes exploration and scholarship through its collections, exhibits, and programs."*



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many charities sprang up. For several weeks leading up to the event, the Library provided gift boxes in the reception area where visitors placed donated items for three charities: On the Rise; Friends of Boston's Homeless; and The Home for Little Wanderers. On the day of the program, many attendees also made monetary donations to representatives on hand from the charities. All three organizations reported a generous outpouring of monetary and item donations.

For the Library, it was also a pleasure to collaborate with a neighboring cultural institution, the New England Conservatory, in producing this program. By all accounts, the standing-room-only audience thought so, too. You can enjoy this lively blend of history and entertainment through a video of the event at <http://www.mbelibrary.org/events/programs/caring-christmas>.



## Programs

### *Special Year of Centenary Programming on Mary Baker Eddy*

One hundred years since her passing in 1910, Mary Baker Eddy remains a figure of fascination, controversy, and inspiration. Beginning in January 2010, The Mary Baker Eddy Library is featuring regular programming on how contemporary artists, writers, historians, and others are engaging with her life and ideas. The series kicks off with three dynamic programs: playwright Christine Buxton; actor/screenwriter Val Kilmer; and biographer Gillian Gill.



In January, Buxton discussed the challenges and inspirations involved in bringing Eddy's life story to the stage. In February, Kilmer will talk about his film project in which Eddy stands above her age as a giant in thought and action, becoming a fascination to another towering figure of the period, the celebrated satirist, Mark Twain. Gill will come to the Library in March to speak about a quartet of biographies that she has written on women of extraordinary achievement. She will compare and contrast the lives and careers of Mary Baker Eddy, Queen Victoria, Agatha Christie, and Florence Nightingale.



Other programming will follow in April and May, including a follow-up to last year's program on nursing and spirituality. Noted Florence Nightingale historian, Barbara Dossey, and Giulia A. Nesi, a Christian Science practitioner and teacher, will participate. Please see the schedule of upcoming programs on page 6.

## Programs

### *First Night at the Library*

Nearly 550 visitors, up more than one hundred people from last year, turned out to celebrate New Year's Eve 2010 at the Library—a hit for all ages. With snow lightly falling on the city of Boston, the coat racks were chock full of parkas, hats, and the like.

Children—and adults indulging their inner child—enjoyed decorating crowns with jewels, feathers, and stickers. There was also a word scramble, scavenger hunt, and free refreshments in the café. The Mapparium and the rest of the Library's exhibits were open all day for folks to enjoy and explore.

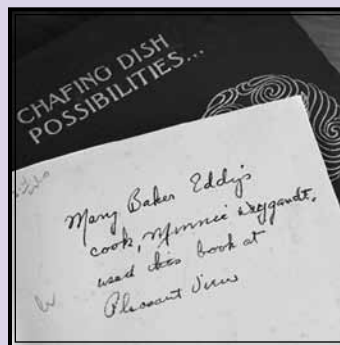


Three different performance groups also provided special entertainment. First up was Project STEP, a group of youth string instrument players from the program founded by the Boston Symphony Orchestra. In the early afternoon slot, moods—and toe tapping—picked up a bit as Stajez performed. The group, which is a hip-hop dance ensemble, is part of an arts organization founded in 1994, which brings cultural programs to underserved children. Topping off the day's schedule was SCIM Youth Band, a Chinese dulcimer group. Refreshments were made possible by a generous donation from Library Trustee Charles Wyly.

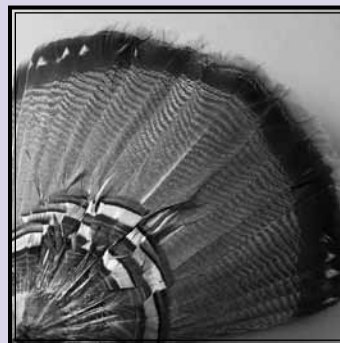
## Exhibits

### *Object of the Month*

Take a look at Object of the Month on the Library's Web site. Each month we showcase an object, letter, document, photograph, or textile from the Library's collections. In addition to the objects listed below, learn about Christian Science souvenir spoons, preservation treatments applied to Mary Baker Eddy's letters, and many other interesting items.



**February 2010:**  
*Chafing Dish Possibilities.*  
A recipe book by Fannie Merritt Farmer used by Minnie Weygandt, Mary Baker Eddy's cook from 1899-1907.



**January 2010:**  
*Turkey Feather Fan.*  
A gift to Eddy from Elizabeth Earl Jones and Lily Hazzard, which sheds light on the early history of African-Americans in Christian Science in South Carolina.



**December 2009:**  
*Winter at Pleasant View.*  
Two early twentieth-century photographs show glimpses of life at Mary Baker Eddy's Pleasant View home in Concord, N.H., in the wintertime.

Go to <http://www.mbelibrary.org/collections/research/objects/> to see the latest item and to view past selections.



## Research Room

### *Query of the Quarter*

#### **How did Mary Baker Eddy use quotations from other authors in her work?**

“By necessity, by proclivity, and by delight, we all quote,” wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson in his essay, “Quotations and Originality.” This truism is well illustrated in the writings of Mary Baker Eddy. An avid reader since childhood, Eddy had in her mind an enormous library of references to call upon when she wanted to.

In the second volume of his biography of Eddy, *Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Trial*, Robert Peel points out that many of Eddy’s passages contain “verbal echoes” of phrasings from other works. Edward Young’s *Night Thoughts* was a frequent source of inspiration; so, too, were the writings of Shakespeare and English poet Hannah More. Biblical quotations abound, both in direct quotation and in allusion.

It is important to note that “plagiarism,” as we understand it today is a late twentieth-century concept, shaped by the expansion of copyright law as well as by different attitudes toward “original” thought. Eddy’s use of phrases—almost always the “verbal echoes” that Peel references—would have been considered a sign of her erudition and literacy, not plagiarism. Her fluency in quoting from Shakespeare in one line and the Bible in the next was a way of validating, for her audience, her intelligence and learning.

Ralph Waldo Emerson took this same viewpoint in his essay “Shakespeare; or, the Poet.” He begins the essay by saying that “great men are more distinguished by range and extent than by their originality.” Emerson praises Shakespeare for turning phrases—many of which had existed in previous works—into greater, cohesive works of genius. Shakespeare’s use of others’ words, according to Emerson, was a necessary part of his success, as it enabled him to be more in tune with the people of his time and place.

Quoting Shakespeare and the Bible, as well as other popular and prominent authors, was a validation—but

it was not necessarily a subterfuge, either. If writers were proving themselves by quoting others, the assumption was that readers would know and recognize the sources they quoted, even without explicit citation. The Bible was such a frequent and pervasive cultural reference that educated readers would never have believed that when Eddy wrote “Thus far and no farther,” on page 124, line 24 of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, she intended it to pass as her own work. The phrase was—and is—recognizable as part of God’s rebuke to Job: “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further” (Job 38:11).

Tracking down the precise origin of common phrases such as Eddy often used is only occasionally a linear exercise. For example, the phrase “while there’s life, there’s hope,” which appears on page 40, lines 12-13 of *Science and Health*, is still frequently quoted today with little or no attribution to its original source. That exact phrase appears in Miguel de Cervantes’ seventeenth-century novel *Don Quixote*, but Cervantes was paraphrasing something he had read elsewhere. The Library’s research found a version written by Marcus Tullius Cicero in a letter to his friend Atticus, several decades before the birth of Jesus: “While the sick man has life, there is hope.” It seems highly likely that while Eddy may have found the phrase in Cervantes, and Cervantes in Cicero, Cicero himself was using a commonly repeated phrase.

Such was the intellectual atmosphere in which Eddy used phrases from other writers to garnish her own ideas. She loved words, and appreciated a beautiful turn of phrase. Her borrowings are nearly always of the illustrative kind, tools used to further the concepts she was premiering in her writings, sometimes with the words changed slightly to better fit her intentions for a passage. For example, Edward Young’s line “What night eternal, but a frown from thee?” from *Night Thoughts* became “There is no night but in God’s frown” from a communion address included in *The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, on page 129. Accusing her of violating our current standards of plagiarism does not place her in the proper context.

Eddy herself felt very strongly about plagiarism of her own work. We have voluminous correspondence in which she defended her own copyright, and she oc-

casionally brought lawsuits to further that end. Her defense, however, was based primarily on her concerns that others would copy entire passages of her text—not occasional glancing references—without giving her the proper credit. Often, these copiers would then go on to use her texts to subvert or misrepresent Christian Science.

Many critics of Eddy have charged her with plagiarism in an attempt to discredit her ideas. One of the most frequent accusations is that the article “Taking Offense,” included in *Miscellaneous Writings 1883-1896*, was not actually written by Eddy and was instead plagiarized by her.

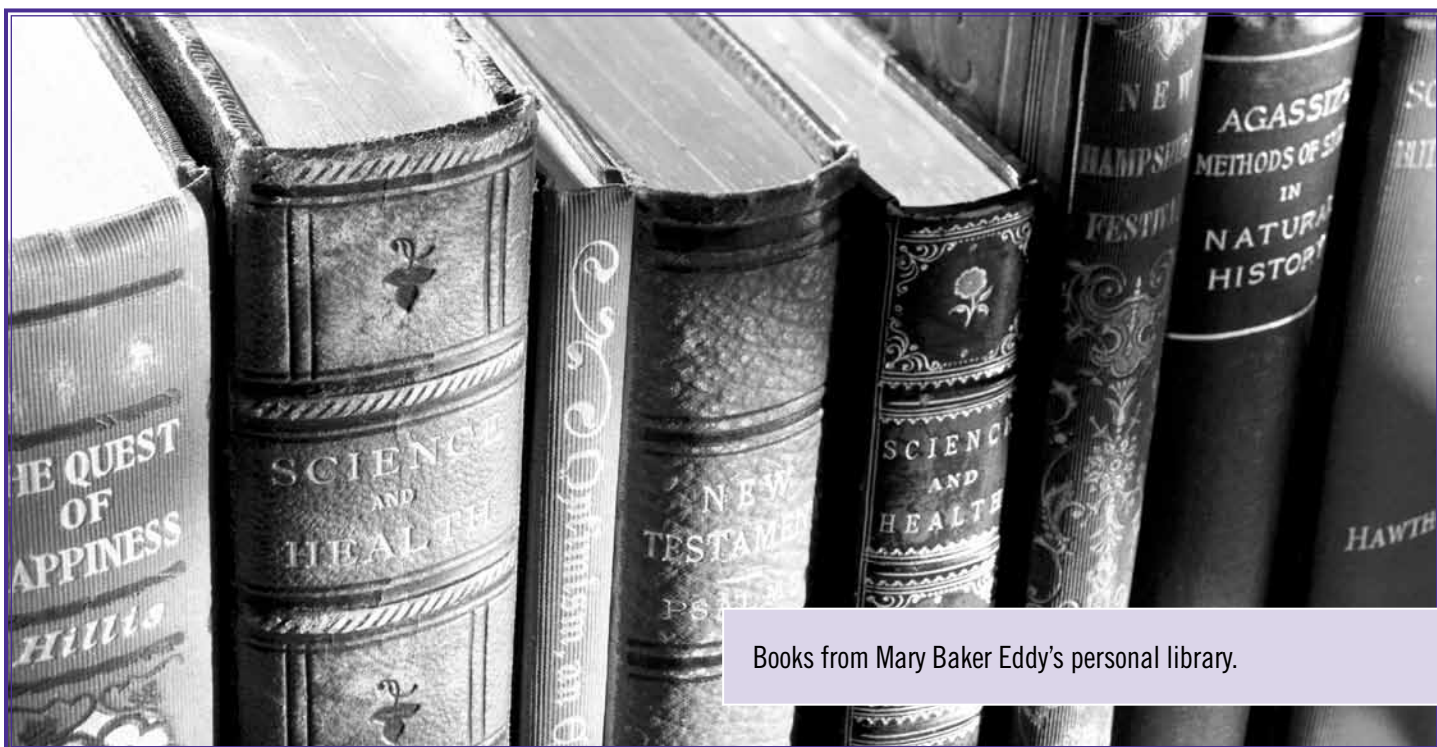
“Taking Offense” was first published in *Godey’s Lady’s Book* in February 1870, where it appeared anonymously. On April 14, 1883, it was published anonymously in the first issue of *The Christian Science Journal*, and later in June 1886 was excerpted in the *Journal* with the preface “SOMEBODY has written these wise words.” The essay was then gathered and included, along with many other articles of Eddy’s, in the first issue of *Miscellaneous Writings* in 1897. In 1901, several of Eddy’s articles were included in a thirty-volume compilation titled *Masterpieces of Great Literature*. Irving Tomlinson, Eddy’s secretary, was in charge of selecting which of her writings would be sent for inclusion, and selected “Taking Offense.” When Eddy received the final

published compilation, her only comment was that she was “a little surprised to find so many of her articles in it” (L10241). Researchers have worked extensively, most recently using the tools of the Internet, to find further references to this, but have not found any other instances of its publication, or any further clues as to its authorship.

Although no one ever charged Eddy with plagiarizing this piece while she was alive, in 1929, critics began to claim that Eddy had not, in fact, written “Taking Offense.” They cited the anonymous publications of the article in both *Godey’s Lady’s Book* and the *Journal* as proof. Peel makes the same claim in his biography. The truth is that the authorship of the article is still unknown. Given, however, its publication in multiple sources under Eddy’s name during her lifetime, we strongly suspect that the article was written by her.

The question of plagiarism can be a complex one. One of the Research Room’s most important functions is to offer historical context for Eddy’s writings and experiences so that they can be better understood.

If you have a question about Mary Baker Eddy or the history of Christian Science, please contact the Research Room at 617-450-7218 or [research@mbelibrary.org](mailto:research@mbelibrary.org).



Books from Mary Baker Eddy's personal library.



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An eager scavenger hunter on First Night.

<b>March 11</b> 7 p.m.	<b>AUTHOR TALK</b> Author Gillian Gill will discuss her four biographies, which examine the lives of Mary Baker Eddy, Florence Nightingale, Queen Victoria, and Agatha Christie.
<b>April 6</b>	<b>NEW EXHIBIT</b> "Mary Baker Eddy: A Life of Service" opens. The exhibit explores how Eddy's local and global giving touched lives then and continues to make a difference today.
<b>April 8</b> 2 p.m.	<b>LIVE WEB FORUM</b> "Your Thoughts?—Engaging with Mary Baker Eddy 100 Years Later." Share questions and comments about the Library's centenary series.
<b>April 20-23</b>	<b>FREE SCHOOL VACATION WEEK PROGRAM</b> "Make a Difference"—offers ways for families and youths to volunteer.
<b>April 29</b> 7 p.m.	<b>PANEL TALK</b> "In Word and Deed: Public Service and the Press"—Xanthe Ackerman and Corinne Almquist join David Scott, of <i>The Christian Science Monitor</i> , to speak about their public service projects and how the <i>Monitor</i> has helped propel their work.
<b>May 6</b> 7 p.m.	<b>DISCUSSION</b> Barbara Dossey joins Giulia A. Nesi, in revisiting the topic of last year's program "Nursing's Spiritual Roots in Contemporary Practice."