

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

Our only source of information on religious practices or organizations not found in the pages of God's Word is writings of those who brought it into being and who practice its tenants. For this reason, we turn to the writings of one Mary Baker Eddy for the origin of Christian Science. "In the year 1866, I discovered the Christ Science or divine laws of Life, Truth, and Love, and named my discovery Christian Science. God had been graciously preparing me during many years for the reception of this final revelation of the absolute divine Principle of scientific mental healing." The claim is made that Mary Baker Eddy herself was healed from a severe spinal injury during the early stages of her discovery. The injury that the doctors had announced would be fatal, became healed in an instant, together with years of ill health. She determined to discover the science of the process that had healed her, which she proved by healing others. Many of these were cases that the medical doctors had given up. Later, the doctors she consulted said they never diagnosed a disease that would be fatal to Mrs. Eddy.

She further wrote: "About the year 1869, I was wired to attend the patient of a distinguished M.D., the late Dr. Davis of Manchester, N. H. The patient was pronounced dying of pneumonia, and was breathing at intervals in agony. Her physician, who stood by her bedside, declared that she could not live. On seeing her immediately restored by me without material aid, he asked earnestly if I had a work describing my system of healing. When answered in the negative, he urged me immediately to write a book which should explain to the world my curative system of metaphysics."

In 1875 she published the first edition of her textbook on Christian Science, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. She had hoped at first that many of the churches would accept her discovered Science of Christ healing as she claimed that it re-instituted the long lost element of primitive healing. This did not happen. Consequently she saw herself forced by this rejection to create her own church, the Church of Christ Scientists.

Mrs. Eddy wrote: "After my discovery of Christian Science, I healed consumption in its last stages, a case which the M.D.'s, by verdict of the stethoscope and the schools, declared incurable because the lungs were mostly consumed. I healed malignant diphtheria and carious bones that could be dented by the finger, saving the limbs when the surgeon's instruments were lying on the table ready for their amputation. I have healed at one visit a cancer that had eaten the flesh of the neck and exposed the jugular vein so that it stood out like a cord. I have physically restored sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, and have made the lame walk."

WHAT DO THE CHRISTIAN SCIENTISTS BELIEVE?

The formulation of Mrs. Eddy's doctrine seems to have been influenced by her rejection of Calvinism. She stated in her book, *Retrospection and Introspection*, 13:5-9, "The doctrine of unconditional election or predestination, greatly troubled me: for I was unwilling to be saved, if my brothers and sisters were to be numbered among those who were doomed to perpetual banishment from God." In her reaction to one false doctrine, she proceeded to create another.

Concerning God the Christian Scientists say, "God is incorporeal, divine, supreme, infinite Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love." Further they state that these terms are synonymous. "They refer to one absolute God. They are also intended to express the nature, essence, and wholeness of Deity. The attributes of God are justice, mercy, wisdom, goodness, and so on." Concerning the concept of polytheism, they say there is not more than one God or Principle. "Principle and its idea is one, and this one is God, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent Being, and His reflection is man and the universe. Omni is adopted from the Latin adjective signifying all.

Hence God combines all-power or potency, all-science or true knowledge, all-presence. The varied manifestations of Christian Science indicate Mind, never matter, and have one Principle.”

They subscribe to what they call “the scientific statement of being.” That is, “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.”

They deny having any “creed” in the sense of doctrinal beliefs. But, they set forth what they call the “exposition of the important points, or religious tenets, of Christian Science” as follows:

1. As adherents of Truth, we take the inspired Word of the Bible as our sufficient guide to eternal Life.
2. We acknowledge and adore one supreme and infinite God. We acknowledge His Son, one Christ; the Holy Ghost or divine Comforter; and man in God's image and likeness.
3. We acknowledge God's forgiveness of sin in the destruction of sin and the spiritual understanding that casts out evil as unreal. But the belief in sin is punished so long as the belief lasts.
4. We acknowledge Jesus' atonement as the evidence of divine, efficacious Love, unfolding man's unity with God through Christ Jesus the Way-shower; and we acknowledge that man is saved through Christ, through Truth, Life, and Love as demonstrated by the Galilean Prophet in healing the sick and overcoming sin and death.
5. We acknowledge that the crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection served to uplift faith to understand eternal Life, even the allness of Soul, Spirit, and the nothingness of matter.
6. And we solemnly promise to watch, and pray for that Mind to be in us which was also in Christ Jesus; to do unto others as we would have them do unto us; and to be merciful, just, and pure.”

A CRITICAL LOOK AT THEIR BELIEFS

Looking deeper into their writings, we find that there are many doctrines to which they subscribe that are not found in the Bible. Look carefully at the following list which is referenced to the book, Science and Health with a Key to the Scriptures {S&H}:

1. God is infinite...and there is no other power or source, S&H, 471:18.
2. God is Universal Principle, S&H 331:18-19
3. God cannot indwell a person, S&H 336:19-20
4. God is the only intelligence in the universe, including man S&H 330:11-12
5. God is Mind, S&H 330:20-21; 469:13
6. God is the Father-Mother, S&H 331:30; 332:4
7. The Trinity is Life, Truth, and Love, S&H 331:26
8. Belief in the traditional doctrine of the Trinity is polytheism, S&H 256:9-11
9. Christ is the spiritual idea of sonship S&H 331:30-31
10. Jesus was not eternal, only the Christ “idea,” S&H 333:3-15; 334:3
11. "Jesus Christ is not God, as Jesus himself declared..." S&H 361:12-13
12. Jesus did not reflect the fullness of God, S&H 336:20-21
13. Jesus did not die, S&H 45:32-46:3
14. The Holy Spirit is divine science, S&H 331:31
15. There is no devil, S&H 469:13-17
16. There is no sin, S&H 447:24

17. Evil and good are not real, S&H, 330:25-27; 470:9-14
18. Matter, sin, and sickness are not real, but only illusions," S&H 335:7-15;447:27-28.
19. Life is not material or organic, "S&H, 83:21
20. The sacrifice of Jesus was not sufficient to cleanse from sin, "S&H, 25:6.
21. True healings are the result of true belief, "S&H, 194:6"

Additionally, Christian Scientists prefer not to use doctors, medicine, or immunizations. Christian Science Practitioners are used to help people through the false reality of illness. Proper prayer and training are employed to battle the "non-reality" of illness. They have no ordinances like the Lord's Supper or baptism. Church services are interspersed with Bible reading and readings from Science and Health.

Now, let's look at the teachings of the Christian Scientists in the light of God's Word, which Jesus says is "Truth" {John 17:17}.

Authority for the Christian Scientists rests in the Bible and Mrs. Eddy. Mary Baker Eddy is highly regarded as a revelator of God's word, almost equal to Jesus. On page 107, in her work Science and Health, Mrs. Eddy quotes the Apostle Paul: "But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." She follows the quotation with this claim: "In the year 1866, I discovered the Christ Science or divine laws of Life, Truth, and Love and named my discovery Christian Science. God has been graciously preparing me during many years for the reception of this final revelation of the absolute divine Principle of scientific mental healing" (Science and Health, 107:1-6). She goes on to say, "Whence came to me this heavenly conviction ... When apparently near the confines of mortal existence, standing already within the shadow of the death-valley, I learned these truths in divine Science" (Science and Health, 108:1, 19-21). She concludes: "I won my way to absolute conclusions through divine revelation, reason, and demonstration. The Revelation of Truth in the understanding came to me gradually and apparently through Divine Power" (Science and Health, 109:20-23). Mrs. Eddy's claims are clear: The revelation she received while near death was divine. She also claims exclusive truth: "Is there more than one school of Christian Science? ... There can, therefore, be but one method in its teaching" (Science and Health, 112:3-5). Needless to say the one method is her method.

All the while, Mary Baker Eddy maintained that "as adherents of Truth, we take the inspired Word of the Bible as our sufficient guide to eternal Life" (S&H, p. 497). Nonetheless, Christian Science interprets the Bible in light of Mrs. Eddy's writings, particularly her book Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, in which she interprets it according to her metaphysical presuppositions. Also, Mrs. Eddy seemed to question the textual reliability of the Bible blaming "the manifest mistakes in the ancient versions . . . these facts show how a mortal and material sense stole into the divine record, with its own hue darkening to some extent the inspired pages" (S&H, p. 139). The Bible is the only source of divinely inspired Scripture. No single person or church can claim an infallible interpretation. Mrs. Eddy's metaphysical approach fails to adhere to sound principles of biblical interpretation (see 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21). She ascribes arbitrary spiritual meanings to common biblical terms. For example "Jerusalem" is defined as "Mortal belief and knowledge obtained from the five corporeal senses" (S&H, p. 589). "Holy Ghost" is defined as "Divine Science; the development of eternal Life, Truth, and Love" (S&H, p. 588).

Along this same line of reasoning, God is synonymous with Mind, Truth, Love. "God is incorporeal, divine, supreme, infinite Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love" (S&H, p. 465). These are synonymous terms that "refer to one absolute God. They are also intended to express the nature, essence, and wholeness of Deity. The attributes of God are justice, mercy, wisdom,

goodness, and so on" (S&H, p. 465). The Trinity is redefined as life, truth, and love. "The theory of three persons in one God (that is, a personal Trinity or Tri-unity) suggests polytheism, rather than the one ever-present I AM" (S&H, p. 256). The Bible teaches us that there is only one true God (see Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10, 44:6-8) who exists eternally in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (see Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14). The Christian Scientist's use of impersonal synonyms for God diminishes His personal nature as revealed in the Bible. The Bible says "God is love" (1 John 4:8), not "love is God."

Christian Science denies that the incarnation of Christ was the fullness of deity dwelling in human flesh, denies the perfection of the man Jesus, and attempts to explain away the historical death and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ (Science and Health, pp. 336, 29, 332, 53, 398, 313, 593; Miscellaneous Writings, p. 201) Christian Science believes that Mary's conception of Jesus was spiritual -- on pages 332 and 347 of Science and Health, the virgin birth of Christ is described and explained: "Jesus was the offspring of Mary's self-conscious communion with God. ... Mary's conception of him was spiritual." Christian Science believes that the names "Jesus" and "Christ" do not refer to the same person -- that Jesus is the human man and Christ is the "divine idea" (i.e., "dualism"). They teach that the spiritual (good) cannot dwell in material bodies because they are evil; thus Jesus could not have been both God and man. [To the contrary, the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is not the divine idea of God but was God uniquely manifested in the flesh, truly God and truly man, one divine Person with two indivisible natures, who is the only Savior and the only truth and Lord (John 1:1-3,14; Col. 2:9; Phil. 2:6-7; John 14:6).] Christian Science believes that Jesus was not God and the only way to heaven, but only the "wayshower" (cf. Jn. 20:31; I Jn. 4:2,3).

Christian Science not only denies that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, it also denies that Jesus is one Person with two natures -- fully God and fully man. Christian Science presents Jesus Christ in terms of a Gnostic duality: "The spiritual Christ was infallible: Jesus as material manhood was not Christ" (Miscellaneous Writings, p. 84). "Christ as the true spiritual ideal, is the ideal of God now and forever ..." (Science and Health, p. 361). "The Christ is incorporeal, spiritual ..." while, "The corporeal [physical] man Jesus was human only (Science and Health, p 332). Yet "matter is mortal error, matter is the unreal and temporal" (Miscellaneous Writings, p. 21). So what Christian Science actually concludes is that the physical humanity of Jesus was an illusion, "as it seemed to mortal view" (Science and Health, p. 315).

Concerning the blood atonement of Jesus Christ: "The material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin when it was shed upon 'the accursed tree,' than when it was flowing in his veins ..." (Science and Health, p. 25). Christian Science teaches that the death of Jesus Christ for sin was a "man-made" theory, and that Jesus was alive in the tomb, demonstrating the "power of Spirit to overrule mortal, material sense" (Science and Health, p. 44). Eddy states, "Christ was not crucified ... Jesus, being the man who possessed the Christ consciousness, was the one who went to the cross and who appeared to die." Thus, according to the theology of Christian Science, the Bible only appears to say that Jesus died on the cross and His body was laid in the tomb; it must instead be understood that Jesus actually never died, but was rather in the tomb denying death's reality!

Further, they tell us that "Spirit" Is Real; "Matter" Is Not. Since God's essential essence is spirit or mind, and only that which reflects His nature is real, then matter does not really exist. "Spirit is immortal Truth; matter is mortal error. Spirit is the real and eternal; matter is the unreal and temporal" (S&H, p. 468). While simple observation tends to show the fallacy of this reasoning, we find that the Bible clearly disputes this doctrine. Indeed, God is Spirit (see John 4:24). He is creator of all that exists, including the material universe (see Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 11:3).

God declared the entirety of the created order "very good" (Genesis 1:31). Jesus was God incarnate in a material body (see John 1:14; Colossians 2:9) and was resurrected physically (see Luke 24:36-39; John 20:26; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8).

Christian Science says that people are divine spirits. Since matter does not exist and humanity reflects God's nature then humanity is not really made of matter. "Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore man is not material; he is spiritual" (S&H, p. 468). God's Word says that humanity has both a spiritual and physical dimension (see Genesis 1:26-27). God created humanity as living souls (see Genesis 2:7). Our future resurrection will be both spiritual and physical (see 1 Corinthians Chapter 15).

They also tell us that the problems we face today are the result of humanity's illusions. Since only those ideas that reflect God's nature actually are real, then sin, death, disease, and pain are not real, but only illusions. "The only reality of sin, sickness, or death is the awful fact that unrealities seem real to human, erring belief . . . They are not true, because they are not of God" (S&H, p. 472). "The cause of all so-called disease is mental, a mortal fear, a mistaken belief or conviction of the necessity and power of ill-health" (S&H, p. 377). The Bible tells us that sin is a reality and all people (except Christ) are sinners by virtue of misconduct before God (see Romans 3:23; 1 John 3:4). It is a result of humanity's willful disobedience to God and His will. Sin alienates people from God and produces suffering, disease, and death (see Genesis Chapter 3; Roman 5:12-23).

The center point of their teaching is spiritual healing. Since matter, sin, disease, and death are illusions and unreal, then people are not subject to them. "Through immortal Mind, or Truth, we can destroy all ills which proceed from mortal mind" (S&H, p. 374). Thus when people fully realize this principle, disease should disappear. "When one's false belief is corrected, Truth sends a report of health over the body" (S&H p. 194). From a biblical perspective, sickness is real. Christians believe God can cure through prayer if it is His will. Inevitably, however, the physical body deteriorates and dies. Medical science is an appropriate adjunct to prayer in curing and maintaining physical health (see 1 Corinthians 12:9,30; James 5:14-16). Luke (writer of the gospel of Luke and Acts) is identified as a physician (see Colossians 4:14).

As hard as it may be to believe, Christian Science teaches that death is nothing more than an illusion. Since God and man are immortal spirit or mind, death is also only an illusion. It is a transition from the illusion of the material to ultimate reality of immortal spirit. "So, when our friends pass from our sight and we lament, that lamentation is needless and causeless" (S&H, p. 386). The Bible tells us that death is a reality and a result of mankind's sin (see Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:20; Romans 6:21-23, 8:6). It is both physical and spiritual. The spirit of the believer, however, at death, goes to be with the Lord (see 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23-24) and awaits a reunion with the body at the Lord's return (see 1 Corinthians 15:23; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Those who are unsaved will face judgment (see Hebrews 9:27) and eternal separation from God in hell ("the second death"). (See Revelation 20:1-15).

Christian Science denies the existence of hell and eternal punishment, and, therefore, there is no devil (Science and Health, p. 469). Hell is defined as "mortal belief; error; lust; remorse; hatred; revenge; sin; sickness; death." They believe that hell is a self-imposed "mental anguish," emanating from the guilt of one's imagined sin. The Bible says sin is real! All accountable persons have committed sin (Romans 3:23) and all will account for their sins in the last day (2 Corinthians 5:10). Like nearly every other manmade religious organization, the Christian Scientists have their own unique twist on the subject of Salvation. Since sin and death are false beliefs (illusions), salvation involves overcoming the false idea that they exist with a realization of our divine spirit and mind. "We acknowledge that the crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection served to uplift faith to

understand eternal Life, even the allness of Soul, Spirit, and the nothingness of matter" (S&H, p. 497). The Bible says Salvation is not realized through some special knowledge. It is received only by obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ (see Acts 2:38; 3:19, 26:20; 1 John 1:9; Hebrews 5:8,9) having put one's faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (see John 1:12; Romans 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:8,9).

Conclusion

Christian Science offers some real enticements -- a "spiritually scientific" method for healing, victory over life's circumstances, and guaranteed salvation. All one has to do to receive these blessings is to study Eddy's writings and obey them to the letter. She claimed to be God's messenger to this age and her writings must be considered infallible. Just obey her teaching, and learn to think as she thought, and you will be victorious.

The physical dangers of Christian Science are obvious. Since they are taught that learning about their bodies is spiritually harmful, Christian Scientists are ill equipped to understand the symptoms of illness. They often suffer needlessly from treatable ailments and neglect life-threatening conditions that could be cured if treated in their early stages.

The spiritual dangers of Christian Science carry with them eternal consequences. Pretending that nothing we see around us is real, and denying the existence of sin and ultimate condemnation is more than wishful thinking – it is a denial of the truths which God has revealed, and thus blasphemous.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW & DISCUSSION

1. Who claims to be the founder of the Church of Christ Scientists? _____

2. What event in her life does she claim led her to “discover Christian Science?” _____

3. What other false doctrine seems to have motivated the founder to look for another answer to life, death and eternity? _____

4. What do the Christian Scientists say about God and His nature? _____

5. What is the “scientific statement of being” and what does it tell us about their beliefs? ____

6. Take each of the six points in the “exposition of the important points, or religious tenets, of Christian Science,” and explain what is TRUE and what is FALSE about each one.
 1. _____

 2. _____

 3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. Where do Christian Scientists turn for ultimate authority in religious matters? _____

8. What does Mrs. Eddy claim that belonged to those appointed as apostles of Jesus Christ, and what did one of the TRUE apostles write that would cause us to call her teachings in question? _____

9. What does Mrs. Eddy do with common biblical terms in an effort to promote her doctrines? _____

10. What do the Christian Scientists teach concerning the incarnation of the Christ, and how does this measure up to the revealed word of God in the Bible? _____

11. How do the Christian Scientists see the shedding of Christ's blood on the cross, and how does this vary from what the Bible teaches? _____

12. What do they say about the death of Christ, and how does this compare to eyewitness testimony from those who were there at the time? _____

13. What is their conclusion on the subject of "Spirit" and "Matter" and what is wrong with this conclusion? _____

14. What is meant by the Christian Scientist when he says that people are divine spirits? _____

15. On what do they blame all of humanity's problems today, and what is the truth on this point?

16. What do they believe about "death," and what does the Bible say on this subject? _____

17. In what ways does the doctrine of the Christian Scientists differ from the Bible on the subject of salvation? _____

18. What are the physical dangers that are the results of practicing the doctrines set forth by Mrs. Eddy? _____

19. What are the spiritual dangers that are the results of practicing the doctrine set forth by Mrs. Eddy? _____
