

## Christian Science

By Rebecca S. May

- *Where did Christian Science come from?*
- *What do Christian Scientists believe?*
- *Are Christian Science teachings consistent with the Bible?*

### History

Christian Science, or “The Church of Christ, Scientists” as it is formally known, was created by a woman living in Massachusetts named Mary Baker Eddy. Eddy suffered with physical ailments most of her life and was constantly looking for answers. “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” (Mary Baker Eddy, “Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures” [SH] 107:1-6).

Eddy claimed unique revelation from God. However, her “discovery” was actually the work of a doctor she visited in 1862 named Phineas P. Quimby. He believed that he was practicing the healing methods used by Christ, which he called, “The Science of Christ.” After Quimby’s death, Eddy began the Church of Christ, Scientist, in 1879. In 1892 she formed the First Church of Christ, Scientists in Boston. That church still exists today and is known as the mother church.

### Beliefs

**Healing**--The basis of the denomination is healing of the sick and injured. They actually have a threefold purpose, however, that of health, happiness, and holiness. According to the “Handbook of Denominations in the U.S. ” (HDUS), Christian Scientists believe that “healing is not miraculous but divinely natural; disease is understood to be basically a mental concept that can be dispelled by active Christian discipleship, spiritual regeneration, and application of the truths to which Jesus bore witness” (p. 106).

**God the Father**--Christian Scientists (CS) believe in the power of the mind to heal because they regard God as divine Mind. Eddy believed “the Principle of all harmonious Mind-action to be God” (SH 465:9-10). Furthermore, illness or injury only exists in the mind, since they are, in and of themselves, not real.

All reality, according to CS, is in God which exists harmoniously with His creation. “Therefore 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” (SH 473:6-7).

God is “the infinite and divine Principle of all being, the ever-present I AM, filling all space, including in itself all Mankind, the one Father-Mother God” (Eddy, “Rudimental Divine Science,” p. 2).

**The Son of God**--Jesus is an important historical figure for CS because it is His healing abilities which they are trying to mimic. They do not believe, however, that Jesus was God. Rather, He is referred to as Master or Way-shower. His desire to be a savior demonstrates not His divinity but His love for humanity. Christ came not to save man from his sin but to “destroy the belief of sin” (SH 473:6-7). His real purpose on earth, however, was the same purpose for which Eddy was called, to be a healer.

**Sin and Salvation**--The forgiveness of sin spoken of in the Bible is merely the ability God gives man to understand that evil and sin are not real. Since sin is not real, there is no reason for salvation unless you are speaking of being saved from the illusion that you are wicked.

**Humanity**--When it is said that man is made in the image of God, it means that man is coexistent with God because God is all in all. Since God is eternal, we are eternal. We could not exist after death unless we also existed prior to birth. Death, however, "is another phase of the dream that existence can be material. The body cannot actually die because matter has no life to surrender" (SH 291:9-11).

**Scriptures**--In 1875, Eddy completed "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures." This more than 700-page commentary, along with the Bible, are the two sources of authority for CS. Eddy used the Bible as her guide and yet admits that "the material record of the Bible, ... is no more important to our well-being than the history of Europe and America" ("Miscellaneous Writings," 170:19-21). The true meaning of the Bible can only be found in "Science and Health," a book which, Eddy claims, unlike the Bible, is reliable, error free, and uncontaminated by human prejudices. "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" (SH 109:20-23).

## Christian Science Today

CS is represented in 70 countries, with the highest concentration in English and German-speaking areas. There are approximately 2,400 local Churches of Christ, Scientists in the U.S., all of which are branches of the mother church.

"Important in the CS movement are the Readers, teachers, and practitioners. There are two readers in each branch church, usually a man and woman elected by the church members; in all services on Sundays and Thanksgiving Day, they read alternately from the Bible and from Science and Health. The Lesson-Sermons of Sunday services are prepared by a committee and issued quarterly by the Christian Science Publishing Society. This system is followed by all Christian Science churches throughout the world. A midweek meeting, conducted by the first Reader alone, features testimonies of healing from sin and sickness" (HDUS, p. 107).

## Christian Science and the Bible

Christian Science is a cult of Christianity because it claims to be Christian and yet it rejects the deity of Christ. The teachings of CS are in direct contradiction to the teachings of the Bible. "Even though Christian Science claims to be a restatement of primitive, pure Christianity, it denies everything that is considered sacred to God's Word" ("Handbook of Today's Religions," p. 126). Actually, Christian Science is neither "Christian" nor "Science."

*Christian Science is a philosophical mysticism, with an emphasis on healing through a pantheistic mind set.*

"Hindu philosophy based on monism" ["the doctrine that there is only one ultimate substance or principle, whether mind (idealism), matter (materialism), or some third thing that is the basis of both," "Webster's Dictionary," p. 930], "with its teaching of truth-realization, absorption into the Infinite, and freedom from the bondage of illusion and ignorance, seems to have found a revival under a new name, Christian Science" (Irvine Robertson, "What the Cults Believe," p. 178).

The Bible teaches that man was created (Genesis 1:27), sin is real, *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God* (Romans 3:23). Man has a desperate need for a Savior, *For the wages of sin is death ...* (Romans 6:23). The Bible also teaches that Jesus, being God (John 10:30), came to earth and died to pay for the sins of the world (Hebrews 10:12-14). He rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:3-4) and ascended into heaven to prepare a place (John 14:1-6; Hebrews 9:28) for those who choose to accept and believe the fact that He is God and Savior. *God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life* (1 John 5:12-13).

The Bible is very clear about people like Mary Baker Eddy and cults like Christian Science—*Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits...* (Matthew 7:15-16).

## Questions and Answers

**Q:** *Where did Christian Science come from?*

**A:** The Christian Science religion was started by a woman named Mary Baker Eddy, who claimed that God revealed true Christianity to her so that she could continue the healing ministry that Jesus started.

**Q:** *What do Christian Scientists believe?*

**A:** Christian Scientists believe bad things such as pain, sin, and evil, are not real. God, who is good and real, is all that is. Man, being a part of God, has the ability to heal himself of any pain, whether caused by his so-called sin or by some physical ailment, simply by convincing himself that it is an illusion.

**Q:** *Are Christian Science teachings consistent with the Bible?*

**A:** Even though Christian Science claims to be a restatement of primitive, pure Christianity, it denies everything that is considered sacred to God's Word.