

Cults

Week 15

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notes and other materials available at:
<http://cults.sohmer.net>

The Church of Christ, Scientist

a.k.a.

Christian Science

Overview:

Founder: Mary Baker Eddy

Founding

Date: August 23, 1879

Scriptures: *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures,
Miscellaneous Writings,
Manual of the Mother Church*

Official

Publications: *Retrospection and Introspection,
Christian Science Journal,
Christian Science Sentinel*

Overview:

Organizational

Structure:

The founding and pillar church in Boston serves as headquarters and is governed by a Board of Directors. All other churches are considered branches of the "Mother Church." Instead of preachers, Christian Science uses readers who read prescribed passages from the Bible followed by an interpretive reading from Science and Health.

Overview:

Unique Terms: Christian Science utilizes "practitioners" who pray for the sick. Eddy believed in "Malicious Animal Magnetism" (M.A.M.), which is negative mental energy or power, on the level of black magic. "Reading Rooms" are local Christian Science libraries where members go to read Eddy's works to aid their spiritual evolvment.

History:

- 1821: Mary Baker Eddy born in Bow, NH to devout Christians. She joined a Congregational church at age 17. She was chronically sick with paralysis, hysteria, seizures, and convulsions.
- 1843: At age 22, she married her first of 3 husbands, George Glover, who died within 6 months of yellow fever.
- 1853: Marries Daniel Patterson, a dentist and homeopathic practitioner.

History:

1850's: It was during this time she met mental healer P. P. Quimby, whose influence would shape her belief of Christian Science. Quimby believed that illness and disease could be cured through positive thoughts and healthy attitudes, by changing one's beliefs about the illness. She claimed that Quimby cured her; she suddenly improved, but later the symptoms returned.

1866: Death of Quimby. Eddy was determined to carry on his work.

History:

- 1866: Eddy claimed to have had a near fatal fall on icy pavement but was instantly healed when "the healing Truth dawned upon my senses," and the divine healing ministry was born (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 24; *Science and Health*, p. 107). Testimony from her attending physician as well as other correspondence from Mrs. Eddy at that time strongly dispute Mrs. Eddy's "official" version of those events (Anthony Hoekema, *Christian Science*, pp. 12-13).
- 1875: *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, written by Mary Baker Eddy, first published

History:

1882: One 50-member church

1908: *The Christian Science Monitor* newspaper started

1910: Death of Mary Baker Eddy

1932: 2,466 churches and 350,000 members

1972: 3,200 churches

1993: 150,000 members

Church Controversy:

The church nevertheless began to experience decline due to several factors. There have been numerous well publicized criminal and civil lawsuits brought against Christian Scientist parents who allowed their children to die of curable diseases by neglecting medical treatment in favor of "spiritual healing" (*Another Gospel*, p. 174). There are significant and complicated issues raised over the right to exercise religious beliefs free of governmental infringement, versus the state's "compelling interest" in protecting seriously ill minors from neglect.

Church Controversy:

Also controversy intensified in 1992 when it was discovered "that the church had secretly transferred \$46.5 million from endowments and pension funds to help cover huge losses on the Monitor [TV] Channel," which had lost over \$325 million (*Chicago Tribune*, January 27, 1993, p. 2).

Additionally, there were losses of \$36 million and the resulting termination of World Monitor, a newspaper begun in 1988. *The Christian Science Monitor* is said to be losing \$13 million annually (Martin Gardner, *The Healing Revelations of Mary Baker Eddy*, p. 218).

Church Controversy:

More internal controversy occurred in 1993. A book, *The Destiny of the Mother Church*, written by a former President of the Mother Church, Bliss Knapp, was published and promoted by the church's board in return for the Knapp family estate bequest of \$98 million. Knapp, who was a church leader and close friend of Mrs. Eddy, wrote that Mrs. Eddy was the fulfillment of the coming of the Holy Spirit foretold in John 16, the literal manifestation of God and the prophesied second-coming of Christ (pp. 213, 274–278). Moreover he claimed that these teachings were affirmed by Mrs. Eddy herself (pp. 267–278). Though put forward by the official publishing arm of the church, this teaching is considered heresy by many in the church. Over twenty percent of the individual Reading Rooms refused to carry it.

The Trinity:

"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" (*Science and Health*, p. 256).

"Life, Truth, and Love constitutes the triune Person called God....God the Father-Mother; Christ the spiritual idea of sonship; divine Science or the Holy Comforter" (*Science and Health*, p. 331–332).

The Trinity:

For an exhaustive Biblical defense of the "Trinity," please see *Jesus Christ, God, and the Bible*, which you can download for free at:

<http://www.sohmer.net/media/JCGB.pdf>

please note the CAPITAL letters 

God the Son:

Christian Science denies that Jesus Christ is God incarnate. It 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 idea, 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).

God the Son:

"The Virgin-mother conceived this idea of God, and gave to her ideal the name of Jesus.... Jesus is the name of the man who, more than all other men, has presented Christ, the true idea of God.... Jesus is the human man, and Christ is the divine idea; hence the duality of Jesus the Christ," (*Science and Health*, pp. 29 & 473). "Christ, or the spiritual idea, appeared to human consciousness as the man Jesus," (*Retrospection and Introspection*, p. 93). "The spiritual Christ was infallible; Jesus, as material manhood, was not Christ," (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 84).

God the Son:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:1,3,14)

"For in [Jesus] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9)

many, many more scriptures...

God the Holy Spirit:

Christian Science denies that the Holy Spirit is a personal being. It teaches that the Holy Spirit is Christian Science, "This Comforter I understand to be Divine Science" (*Science and Health*, p. 55). It is the unfolding of the thoughts and infinite mind of God (*Science and Health*, p. 502–503).

God the Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit is God: has intellect (1 Cor 2:11), sensibilities (Rom 8:27, 15:30), and will (1 Cor 12:11); personal acts performed by him; he is eternal (Heb 9:14), omniscient (1 Cor 2:10, John 14:26, 16:12), omnipotent (Luke 1:35), omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-10); Spirit created (Gen 1:2, Job 33:4, Psalm 104:30), inspired scriptures (2 Peter 1:21, Acts 1:16, 28:25), raised the dead (Rom 8:11), etc.

Jesus Christ, God, and the Bible

<http://www.sohmer.net/media/JCGB.pdf>

Man's Destiny:

Christian Science teaches that since God is all good and nothing that is real exists outside God, then sin, sickness, and death are mortal error or an illusion. Christ, as the Truth, therefore came to set man free from these false beliefs by His teachings and example (*Science and Health*, pp. 473, 475, 108). Christian Science denies the penal, substitutionary atonement of Christ saying, "The material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin when it was shed on 'the accursed tree,' than when it was flowing in his veins as he went daily about his Father's business" (*Science and Health*, p. 25).

Man's Destiny:

"Jesus taught the way of Life by demonstration. There is but one way to heaven, harmony, and Christ in Divine Science shows us this way" (*Science and Health*, p. 242). "Universal salvation rests on progression and probation.... No final judgment awaits mortals..." (*Science and Health*, p. 291).

Man's Destiny:

"Final deliverance from error,... is not reached... by pinning one's faith without works to another's *vicarious* effort," (*Science and Health*, p. 22).

"In Christian Science it is plain that God removes the punishment for sin only as the sin is removed... hence the hope of universal salvation. ... To lose the sense of sin we must first detect the claim of sin; hold it invalid... sin disappears, and its unreality is proven," (*Message*, 1901, p. 13).

Man's Destiny:

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"
(Hebrews 9:27)

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23)

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul:
but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"
(Matthew 10:28)

"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to
hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto
judgment" (2 Peter 2:4)

"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the
second death" (Revelation 20:14)

The Bible is clear: sin is real, judgment is real, and hell is real.

The Resurrection:

It is obvious that if Jesus never physically died on the cross to atone for sins that mankind cannot commit (*Science and Health*, pp. 45-46), then the resurrection must also have a unique meaning in Christian Science. Eddy explains, "When Jesus reproduced his body after its burial, he revealed the myth or material falsity of evil; its powerlessness to destroy good and the omnipotence of the Mind that knows this: he also showed forth the error of nothingness of supposed life in matter, and the great somethingness of the good we possess, which is of Spirit, and immortal" (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 201). Jesus resurrection was thus the manifestation of the error of evil. He demonstrated that sin and death are illusions and that if one wishes to rid themselves of these illusions, they only need to deny their reality.

The Resurrection:

Jesus, who possessed the Christ consciousness as do all men to a lesser extent, went to the cross, not to bring about forgiveness of sin, for sin is an illusion, but rather to demonstrate that death is an illusion. On the morning of the resurrection, the supposed physical body of Jesus was reproduced in its original illusionary form, for all matter is illusion, and thereby demonstrated to mankind that all could do the same by denying the reality of sin and death.

Jesus' "seeming" death on the cross was not intended to pay for our sins, but to prove the unreality of sin, disease, and death. The Bible is full of mistakes. Jesus' words were recorded by "dull disciples ... in a decaying language," and must be spiritually interpreted through Christian Science.

The Resurrection:

"Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures... he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

"we have testified of God that he raised up Christ"
(1 Corinthians 15:15)

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9)

"And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist" (1 John 4:3)

Sickness:

Sickness and disease are illusory, the product of a false belief, and not an actual result of sin (*Science and Health*, pp. 348, 386). "The cause of all so-called disease is mental, a mortal fear, a mistaken belief..." (*Science and Health*, p. 377).

No true Christian Science member should ever go to a doctor, hospital, or take any kind of medicine, for to do so is to deny "Divine Science" (*Christian Science Sentinel*, May 9, 1942, p. 469).

Sickness:

Whereas the Christian Science approach to healing may help psychosomatic illnesses, it has been scientifically demonstrated that it is not effective with real illness. Studies comparing the cumulative death rates of practicing Christian Scientists with control groups have shown significantly higher death rates among the Christian Scientists (*Journal of the American Medical Association*, September 22/29, 1989, pp. 1657–58, and *Morbidity Weekly Report*, August 23, 1991, pp. 579–582).

Plagiarism:

Christian Scientists believe that Mary Baker Eddy received the Truth through divine revelation (*Science and Health*, p. 110). The fact is that she plagiarized much of what she wrote from metaphysician George Hegel, P.P. Quimby, Francis Lieber and others (Walter Martin, *Christian Science*, pp. 7–13; Martin Gardner, *The Healing Revelation of Mary Baker Eddy*, pp. 145–158).

Overview:

Christian Scientists believe:

- Eddy received the Truth through divine revelation
- rejection of the Trinity
- distinction between "Jesus" and "Christ"
- Holy Spirit is not a personal being, but is Divine Science
- spirit is real and eternal; matter is unreal and temporal
- sin and sickness do not exist
- rejection of doctors and medicine
- man is not material, but spiritual
- no final judgment for mankind
- hell is not a real place
- sin is an illusion
- Jesus did not raise from the dead

Conclusion

Christian Science is neither Christian nor Science. It is a dangerous cult that has cost the lives of many in this world, and led many more people away from eternal life.

Tips on Witnessing to a Christian Scientist:

Have them read:

- When we read they don't listen, but think about their next statement/argument

Affirm the reality of matter and death:

- They believe matter is an illusion
- They deny the reality of sickness
- Express the reality of these.

Affirm Universal Ethics:

- Universal ethics can not come from an impersonal concept (the Christian Science God)

Tips on Witnessing to a Christian Scientist:

Stress that they are following another gospel:

- Galatians 1:8

The Word of God is powerful:

- God will use His Word to change hearts

Tips on Witnessing to a Christian Scientist:

Be nice!

- And of some have compassion, making a difference (Jude 22)

Be firm!

- And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. (Jude 23)
- Jesus held false religious leaders to a higher standard

Resources:

(no particular order)

The Watchmen Fellowship - <http://watchman.org/>

<http://www.christiananswers.net>

Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry - www.carm.org

Christian Research Institute - www.equip.org

<http://www.apologeticsindex.org>

Notes and Files from this class - <http://cults.sohmer.net>