CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

Christian Science was founded by Mary Baker Eddy in 1866 and is practiced by members as well as others who are non-members of The First Church of Christ, Scientist (also called The Mother Church) in Boston, Massachusetts. "On April 12, 1879, it was voted at a Christian Scientist Association to organize a church to commemorate the words and works of our Master, a Mind-healing church, without a creed, to be called the Church of Christ, Scientist, the first such church ever organized." At this meeting, "on motion of Mrs. Eddy, it was voted—To organize a church designed to commemorate the word and works of our Master, which should reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing." "The charter for this church was obtained in June, 1879." (Emphasis added)

The Church of Christ, Scientist, consists of The First Church of Christ, Scientist, (The Mother Church) and over 1,700 branch churches and societies throughout the world. They are united in working to fulfill Mary Baker Eddy’s vision of “a church which makes Christ Jesus works more universally understood and practiced.”

Christian Science is presented as a resurgence of primitive Christianity as a demonstrable scientific system. It is described as Science because it is based upon a set of spiritual principles or laws which relate to the nature of God and His creation that can be applied with expected, consistent results. Mary Baker Eddy describes her religion as a complete and coherent Science which is both demonstrable and provable. Its central texts are The Bible and the Christian Science textbook, Science & Health With Key to the Scriptures by Mary Baker Eddy.

The name includes Christian because it uses the Bible as its basis of theology and practice as Christian Scientists seek to follow the teachings and ministry of Christ Jesus. The virgin birth, the crucifixion, the resurrection and ascension of Christ Jesus, etc, are all central to Christian Science theology.

Christian Science might be considered an extreme form of philosophical idealism or as a form of theistic monistic idealism in that there is but one substance which is God and in whom all are embraced in love. Therefore immortality is not only possible but inevitable. The reality of each person is believed to be a spiritual idea only and not born of the flesh. Therefore, just as the material body is an illusion, so are sin, disease and death. This means that humanity and the universe as a whole are spiritual rather than material in nature and truth and good are real, whereas evil and error are illusive products of a fictitious material existence.

Furthermore, they believe that Jesus overcame death as the ultimate demonstration of spiritual reality.
Christian Science claims that Christian Science, like Buddhism, believes in the illusory nature of the world of the senses, but unlike Buddhism it does not believe that aging and death are inevitable. It is their belief that they can overcome sin or the mortal mind according to their understanding of John 8:51 in which Jesus claims:

“I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.”

Christian Scientists focus on prayer believing that it is through prayer, knowing and understanding, all things are possible for good through God.

It was through the recovery from an injury in 1866 after reading a Bible passage describing one of Jesus' cures that Mrs. Eddy wrote that she learned the Christian Science method of healing.

Mrs. Eddy became convinced that healing was lost after the early centuries of Christianity. She was also persuaded through her study of Scripture that the healing Jesus Christ practiced is available to everyone as much today as in biblical times.

BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Fundamental to Christian Science is the belief that God and His creation are entirely good and spiritual because He who is Spirit has made everything in His likeness. Therefore spiritual reality or divine idea is the only reality. Everything else is an illusion. Although it is acknowledged by Christian Science that all people “seem” to be experiencing a material existence, it is that very experience which ultimately results in a true spiritual understanding of God and creation. And it is by healing through prayer that makes it possible.6

Rather than viewing prayer as a way of having God intervene, Christian Science sees prayer as a process of learning more of God's reality—spiritual reality—that is. Health care is the typical approach of Christian Science toward those who seek help. Instead of attempting to find health through drugs, surgery or other conventional methods, Christian Science treats the person with a “specific form of prayer intended to spiritualize thought.”7

Even though Christian Science does not put down the medical profession, it cannot work together in any meaningful way since the medical profession approaches illness from the standpoint that something is physically broken and needs to be treated physically, whereas Christian Science holds that since the spiritual reality is harmonious and perfect any belief that contradicts such a notion needs to be challenged and corrected. This fits with Eddy’s definition of Christian Science: "... the law of God, the law of good, interpreting and demonstrating the divine Principle and rule of universal harmony."8 This is "... the natural law of harmony which overcomes discord."9 It is no wonder that Eddy claims that Christian Science is the Divine Comforter mentioned in the gospel of John.
THEOLOGY

BIBLE

Mary Baker Eddy grew up in the Congregational Church in New England and learned early to believe and love the Bible. This is why she considered the Bible to be central to the study and practice of Christian Science and its system of healing. It was through the study of the Bible that Eddy found not only inspiration and guidance, but what she considered to be the spiritual laws of health and healing that undergirded Jesus’ teachings and works. She testified in her book, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, that the Bible was her “chart of life”:

“The Bible has been my only authority . . . my only textbook . . . [and] contains the recipe for all healing.”

Yet she also believed that the Bible was filled with internal contradictions:

"The decisions by vote of Church Councils as to what should and should not be considered Holy Writ; the manifest mistakes in the ancient versions; the thirty thousand different readings in the Old Testament, and the three hundred thousand in the New—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."

GOD THE FATHER/MOTHER

Christian Science believes that

“God is incorporeal Spirit—creative Principle, supreme, omnipotent Father-Mother, omnipresent, omniscient—the only intelligence and all that actually exists. God is Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, and Love. ‘God is All-in-all.’"

God then is “one, infinite God who is All and all-good.” God is not distant and unknowable, but all-encompassing and omnipresent. Each person is loved by God, cared for by Him and made in His image, a spiritual, not material image
God is regarded as being both Father and Mother who has both qualities traditionally considered feminine (gentleness, kindness, compassion, nurturing, etc) and qualities traditionally considered masculine (strength, power, support, protection, etc.). According to Christian Science, because people are made in God’s image, every person embodies those very qualities as well.16

**JESUS AND CHRIST**

Christian Scientists believe that Jesus’ teachings and healing work expressed scientific Christianity, that is, He applied the laws of God, laws which are still practical and provable today, by anyone, anywhere. Therefore the Commandments and Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount are considered central to their life and practice of Christianity.17

“Jesus” the man, and ”Christ” the divine manifestation, are distinguished in Christian Science theology:

Jesus Christ has a dual nature—Jesus the mortal man and Christ the spiritual idea of man.

“Christ is the ideal Truth, that comes to heal sickness and sin through Christian Science, and attributes all power to God. Jesus is the name of the man who, more than all other men, has presented Christ, the true idea of God, healing the sick and sinning and destroying the power of death. Jesus is the human man, and Christ is the divine idea; hence, the duality of Jesus the Christ.”18

(Emphasis added)

Because Christian Science defines God as ”The great I AM,” Christ is the ”divine manifestation of God, which comes to the flesh to destroy incarnate error.”19 Christ, who is completely divine and spiritual, therefore, is not material. Thus Jesus, the son of God—the promised Messiah—embodied Christ to such a degree that He, and He alone, can carry the title Christ. As a corporeal being, however, he was not the totality of Christ. Christian Scientists argue that Jesus never claimed to be God and that he implicitly denied it in Matthew 19:16-17 when He said:

“Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, ‘teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?’

‘Why do you ask Me about what is good?’ Jesus replied. ‘There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.’”
Mrs. Eddy writes, "Throughout all generations both before and after the Christian era, the Christ, as the spiritual idea—the reflection of God—has come with some measure of power and grace to all prepared to receive Christ, Truth." She believed that even today, the Christ, the Truth, continues to offer to mankind the truth of a greater understanding of its spiritual identity through healing and thereby the destruction of sin.

Christian Science rejects the substitutionary atonement of Christ while accepting the virgin birth and the resurrection of Jesus—a spiritual resurrection—that is.

The claim is that Jesus only seemed to die on the cross. Jesus’ triumph was His victory over the belief in death since disease and death are not real. Therefore Jesus’ shed blood had no power to cleanse from sin.

“His disciples believed Jesus to be dead while he was hidden in the sepulcher, whereas he was alive, demonstrating within the narrow tomb the power of Spirit to overrule mortal, material sense . . . . Our Master fully and finally demonstrated divine Science in his victory over death and the grave.”

“Does erudite theology regard the crucifixion of Jesus chiefly as providing a ready pardon for all sinners who ask for it and are willing to be forgiven? . . . Then we must differ. . . .

The efficacy of the crucifixion lay in the practical affection and goodness it demonstrated for mankind. The truth had been lived among men; but until they saw that it enabled their Master to triumph over the grave, his own disciples could not admit such an event to be possible. . . .

The spiritual essence of blood is sacrifice. The efficacy of Jesus’ spiritual offering is infinitely greater than can be expressed by our sense of human blood. 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 as he went daily about his Father’s business.”

“One sacrifice, however great, is insufficient to pay the debt of sin. The atonement requires constant self-immolation on the sinner’s part. That God’s wrath should be vented upon His beloved Son, is divinely unnatural. Such a theory is man-made.”

When Mrs. Eddy was asked how she knew there ever was such a person as Christ Jesus, she replied:
"If there had never existed such a person as the Galilean Prophet, it would make no difference to me. I should still know that God's spiritual ideal is the only real man in His image and likeness."\textsuperscript{24} (Emphasis added)

Although Eddy was undoubtedly making a basic metaphysical point, nevertheless such a point distorts the Person of Jesus Christ we find in Scripture.\textsuperscript{25}

Since Christian Science teaches that death is an illusion, it is not surprising that there are contradictory statements on the question of the death of Jesus in Eddy's writings.

\textbf{THE HOLY SPIRIT}

Christian Science \textbf{denies that the Holy Spirit is a personal being}. In fact, it claims that the Holy Spirit is Christian Science:

"\textit{This Comforter I understand to be Divine Science.}"\textsuperscript{26}

This means it is the infinite mind of God and the unfolding of His thoughts.\textsuperscript{27}

The historic Christian concept of God, the Holy Spirit, indwelling a person then is impossible.\textsuperscript{28}

\textbf{THE TRINITY}

Unlike orthodox Christianity, Christian Science \textbf{subsumes the trinity in the unity of God}. Christ and divine Science, or: "God the Father-Mother; Christ the spiritual idea of sonship; divine Science or the Holy Comforter."\textsuperscript{29}

In the after-life there is a period of "probation" and spiritual development or progress based upon one’s progress of spiritual enlightenment in this life. The experience of the deceased is in proportion to their ability to avail themselves of the unlimited love of God. A person dying in a state of sin would experience God's love as suffering (like a person used to darkness whose eyes are hurt by the light) while someone who passed on in a state of spiritualized consciousness would experience a corresponding level of happiness.\textsuperscript{30}

Mrs. Eddy clearly repudiates the trinitarian Godhead:

"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."\textsuperscript{31}
Instead,

"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."$^{32}$ (Emphasis added)

Christian Science considers the orthodox concept of the trinity as paganistic with its "heathen gods."$^{33}$

DEATH, HEAVEN AND HELL

According to Christian Science:

“Death is the belief in death. There is no death as humans are immortal spirit. After that which we call "death," spiritual development toward Truth continues until all evil, or ‘error,’ destroys itself. Heaven and hell are not places, but states of consciousness that continue after death. ‘Heaven’ is the self-made eternal bliss of realizing oneness with God. ‘Hell’ is the self-made anguish of believing in pain and death.”$^{34}$

The concept of eternal punishment then is absent in Christian Science thinking. Hell and heaven are not places of punishment and reward, but states of thought that correspond to the presence or absence of self-centeredness that characterize the individual undergoing the experience of death. What this means is that a person who seems to die (since death is merely an illusion) does not go to a place or location. Rather he/she simply adjusts to another level of consciousness which is inaccessible to those they have left behind. The ultimate, and inevitable, goal of all people is the experience of heaven or harmony which in reality is divine Love. This does not mean that death is necessary for the experience of heaven, but that heaven or harmony can be experienced here and now to the extent that one's thought is elevated to a spiritual level.$^{35}$

THE RESURRECTION

Because Christian Science teaches that Jesus never physically died on the cross to atone for sins that mankind cannot commit, then the resurrection must have a unique and twisted meaning.$^{36}$
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."\(^{37}\)

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 PROBLEM OF EVIL**

Instead of following other philosophical systems that would pit “good versus evil” as in orthodox Christianity or “spirit versus matter” as in Gnosticism, Eddy reduced everything to the spiritual realm.

The problem of evil is solved in Christian Science theology by the belief that evil is not real but is an illusion:

“**Evil is the belief in evil.** God is all that is real and God is completely good; therefore, good is real and evil is an illusion/delusion. The only power evil has is to destroy itself; attempts to destroy good naturally result in punishment for the evildoer. Sin creates its own hell. Not realizing one's true nature as spirit results in selfishness, which can lead to error and disharmony.”\(^{38}\) (Emphasis added)

Christian Science claims that the Bible does not mention Adam as having “awakened.” Such an awakening is considered by Christian Science as a “revolution in thought.”\(^{39}\) According to Christian Scientists, if one’s belief in evil is replaced by the understanding of the true universality of good, one's perception will also change thus rendering the question meaningless and irrelevant.

**PRAYER AND HEALING**

It was because of her own ill health through her childhood and into adult years that motivated Mrs. Eddy to study the Bible concerning the issue of healing. This led her to alternative methods of healing which were considered unorthodox by those who used medical techniques which had failed her. She became interested in the various “healers” at that time and at the age of 41 sought a cure from a healer, Phineas P. Quimby (1802-1866). Although Quimby had been a clockmaker with relatively little education, he had developed a method of natural healing which involved techniques of hypnotism and animal magnetism with emphasis on the
role of the human mind in achieving physical health. Quimby felt that the key to healing was in mutual faith or trust. This meant that the healer needs to have confidence in the patient’s recovery and vice versa.  

Mrs. Eddy became a student and an associate-in-training under Quimby until his death in 1866. Although her health initially improved under his care, she later suffered a relapse and shortly thereafter fell on an icy sidewalk and was severely injured. It was on what she believed to be her deathbed that she read one of Jesus’ healings and suddenly realized that healing comes not from internal bodily processes, or from the power of a person's mind, but from the Divine Mind, God. As a result she was instantly cured.

Unlike Quimby who was antagonistic towards Christianity, Mrs. Eddy saw herself as deeply committed to Christian beliefs. Although Mrs. Eddy was clearly influenced by Quimby’s emphasis on the role the mind played in healing, she, however, came to the conclusion that it was the Divine Mind—God—who healed, not the human mind. Thus through a spiritual interpretation of the Bible, Mrs. Eddy believed she had rediscovered its original truths as practiced by the early Christian church.

Prayer is an understanding of God and the nature of His creation—a spiritual creation. The world we claim that appeals to the senses is in reality a distorted version of the world of spiritual ideas—the only true reality.

It is through prayer that that very distortion is brought into the Kingdom of Heaven (in biblical terms), that is, spiritual reality. Prayer enables us to see the spiritual creation more clearly. This is analogous to adjusting the lens of a telescope or microscope until a clear image appears. The result is healing. In Christian Science thinking then, there are not two creations—a spiritual one and a material one—but only a spiritual creation which is perceived as material even though in reality it is spiritual.

Christian Scientists believe Jesus was "the Wayshower" of the divine method of healing sin, sickness and death. This means there are no limits to the type of medical conditions that can be healed through prayer. They believe that faith is the key that unlocks all possibilities. In fact, they claim that followers of Jesus can calm a storm (Lk 8:22-25) or raise the dead (Lk 8:49-50) as Jesus did if they exercise that faith.
Unlike orthodox Christianity, Christian Science does not teach that one needs to pray through Jesus Christ as a sole mediator. Because Jesus of Nazareth was not God, but the Son of God, He is not necessary for prayer to be effectual.

It is the conviction of Christian Science that prayer works through love and point to biblical texts such as Mark 16:17-18; Matthew 10:8 in support of their contention that Christian faith requires results, that is, actual demonstration in healing. They cite Luke 17:5-6 to show that such faith is a demonstration of their belief in the omnipotence of God:

“The apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith!’

He replied,

‘If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you.’”

Christian Scientists take Jesus’ promise literally:

“If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer” (Mt 21:22).

They also cite Matthew 7:7-11 to show that Jesus taught that we should claim good as being present, right here and now, and that this will result in healing. Christian Scientists point to Jesus’ teaching in John 14:12 that His followers would do "greater works" than He did and that a person who lived in conformity with His teachings would not be subject even to death (Jn 8:51).45

Christian Science is clear that effectual prayer and moral regeneration are intricately tied together:

"... signs and wonders are wrought in the metaphysical healing of physical disease; but these signs are only to demonstrate its divine origin, to attest the reality of the higher mission of the Christ-power to take away the sins of the world.”46 (Emphasis added)

Disease is considered mental since it is rooted in ignorance, mortal fear or sin which considers ill-health an eventual necessity. Such a lack of belief is an ignorance of God's love, goodness and power. They believe that when the erroneous belief—unbelief—is corrected, the sickness will disappear. Suffering, therefore, is lodged in one’s belief. It occurs only when one believes—whether consciously or unconsciously—in the supposed reality of a given problem. It is by changing one's understanding that the belief is exposed as being false and thus the acknowledgement breaks the cycle of the power of sickness. This is why the regeneration of heart and mind that brings about physical healing is a most significant element of healing.
Eddy makes an important distinction between the healing of sin (or moral evil) on the one hand, and the healing of sickness or disease on the other:

"The only difference between the healing of sin and the healing of sickness is, that sin must be uncovered before it can be destroyed, and the moral sense be aroused to reject the sense of error; while sickness must be covered with the veil of harmony, and the consciousness be allowed to rejoice in the sense that it has nothing to mourn over, but something to forget."  

The material world is an illusion due to a misperception of the true spiritual world. By the reorientation of thought or prayer the illusion can be dispelled, revealing the present spiritual reality. It is such a result which is perceived as healing.

The Christian Science Church does not forbid the use of medicine by its members except in the case of Christian Science Centers which may require certain employees to sign a statement of principles. Most of them prefer to use prayer and to rely on God even though they may respect medical practitioners. Yet most of them are practical when it comes to using material aids such as vision correction, splints for broken bones and dental services and will use what they consider appropriate or useful at the time. At the same time, they do claim that numerous claims of healings of near- and far-sightedness, dental problems and broken bones have been cured. According to Eddy:

"If Christian Scientists ever fail to receive aid from other Scientists—their brethren upon whom they may call – God will still guide them into the right use of temporary and eternal means."  

She also stated:

"It is impossible to gain control over the body in any other way [divine Mind-Prayer]. On this fundamental point, timid conservatism is absolutely inadmissible. Only through radical reliance on Truth can scientific healing power be Realized."  

It is not blind faith that brings healing, but a growing understanding of God and a recognition of one's identity as God's reflection gained through the study of Christian Science. In fact, it is the byproduct of drawing closer to God through the increasing knowledge of the loving kindness of His divine laws and the perfection of His spiritual creation.

Christian Scientists often pray for themselves and find healing. If one feels the need for additional prayerful assistance, however, he or she can call a Christian Science practitioner. Practitioners are men and women who devote their full time to helping others through prayer.
The practitioners claim no personal healing power, nor do they act as intercessors. God alone heals. The practitioner, like the patient, turns to God and humbly seeks His direction and follow His guidance.

MAN

Christian Science views "man" as the perfect reflection or expression of God who is wholly good and perfect:

The universe and humans are reflections of God's likeness and image, which is Spirit—without beginning or end."\(^50\)

Furthermore it is believed that

“Illusions, or delusions, of a material world and material body result from error in thought and ignorance of the true and only nature of reality, which is spiritual."\(^51\)

Therefore, ‘God is all that truly exists.’\(^52\)

Because God is the creator of all, He loves every individual.

Christian Scientists teaches that we are all sons/daughters of God, though not at the level of understanding of Christ Jesus. Jesus was a divine Exemplar, and Christ is the divine idea of ‘sonship’—the Master. Jesus showed the way (the “wayshower”) for all to realize Truth, which is God.”

LOVE

In rejecting the “futility” of mere intellectualism or "coldness" of traditional philosophy, Eddy emphasized the importance of spiritual love as well as abstract thought and the integration of thought and feeling. To her it is not enough to think true thoughts, rather our consciousness must be imbued with the love which is God. And that love must spring into action. It must be lived as well as felt:

"If we would open prison doors for the sick, we must first learn to bind up the broken-hearted. If we would heal by the Spirit, we must not hide the talent of spiritual healing under the napkin of its form, nor bury the morale of Christian Science in the grave-clothes of its letter. The tender word and Christian encouragement of an invalid, pitiful patience with his fears and the removal of them, are better than hecatombs of gushing theories, stereotyped borrowed speeches, and the doling of arguments, which are but so many parodies on legitimate Christian Science, aflame with divine Love."\(^53\) (Emphasis added)
If love is to be legitimate it must be in a spiritual or Christian sense by accepting only the spiritual identity of each individual as God's likeness, expression or idea. Such an identity consists of an individual's own particular reflection of the qualities or attributes of their Maker such as love, purity, innocence, spiritual understanding, etc. These are the real qualities that constitute our true spiritual being, while eternally known to God and maintained by Him regardless of what our finite material senses may testify to. Since these qualities cannot be perceived materially but only through a spiritual sense—"a conscious, constant capacity to understand God"—an understanding of what God is and what man’s relationship to God is.\(^5\)

### EVIL AND SUFFERING

According to Christian Science, evil is as follows:

"Evil is a negation, because it is the absence of truth. It is nothing, because it is the absence of something. It is unreal, because it presupposes the absence of God, the omnipotent and omnipresent. Every mortal must learn that there is neither power nor reality in evil."\(^5\) (Emphasis added)

This statement does not mean that Christian Scientists ignore the belief of evil and its effects, but they do not see evil as either an aspect of God or as a real power separate from God. Evil is not fundamentally "real" because it is not part of God's being or His creation. But it may appear to be real as a mistaken concept of God and man, and consequently must be "seen through" rather than ignored. Christian Scientists believe God and His creation—spiritual creation—to be only good.\(^5\)

Suffering is explained as being illusory:

"Though appearing real, suffering (and illness) is a false belief or error of mortal thought. Suffering is overcome by asserting the truth of one's being as an idea of God. Often, a trained Christian Science practitioner is called to support the patient's thought through prayerfully ‘knowing the truth.’"\(^5\)

Because evil does not exist since God has created all and all is good, God does not punishes evil-doers. However, any thought or action that is contrary to a person's God-given goodness results in some kind of suffering just as the misunderstanding of a mathematical principle results in incorrect answers. It is not that the principles of mathematics cause the mistakes, but that the mistakes are the result of a misconception of the principle.\(^5\)
SIN

Christian Science denies not only the existence of all matter, including man's physical body, but also claim that man is "incapable of sin, sickness and death." They claim sin, like sickness and death, are the "effects of error," thereby denying the reality of sin.\(^{59}\)

This is a consistent with the notion that God is all and God is good and since the man never left his original state of perfection, he does not need salvation. He is safe in the bosom of the Father. Since man is always held in the divine consciousness, and since sin and evil have no reality, all ideas of sin and evil are illusions—the product of the mortal mind. It is then not sin that is sinful, but a sense of sin.

Man's real problem is the belief of sin. This is why "Christ came to destroy the belief of sin":

"Jesus came to seek and to save such as believe in the reality of the unreal; to save them from this false belief; that they might lay hold of eternal Life . . ."\(^{60}\)

This means that Jesus came to save mankind from the false belief that sin and death are real.

SALVATION OR ETERNAL LIFE

In Christian Science

"Salvation lies in bringing oneself into harmony with one's true nature as God's reflection, through good works, patience, meekness, love, watchfulness, prayerful gratitude, devout obedience in following Christ's example. There are two basic commandments: that one turn only to God, perfect Mind, for guidance—the Mind that was also in Christ; and that one 'love thy neighbor as thyself.'

Healing and immortality are realized by becoming conscious that the only true reality is God, which is Love, and that one's true and only nature is in God's likeness. As one realizes the error of belief in the reality of suffering and evil, these images of thought impressed upon the mortal mind can be altered, thus banishing sickness, death, and sin—testimony to the power of faith in God, of Mind over matter."\(^{61}\) (Emphasis added)
Although Christian Scientists do not have an organizational creed, the following is a brief exposition of the important points, or tenets, of the religion as given in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy:

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.  

Seeking and finding God is central to the practice of Christian Science. God is understood as the all-loving, omnipotent Father-Mother, and Christ Jesus as His Son. Jesus' human life characterized the kind of sonship that Christian Scientists believe is provable for all as the children of God. He is seen as the Exemplar. The divine nature He expressed is the Christ, and the Christ-God's expression of Himself-is eternal and ever-present.

No one is beyond redemption and no problem is too great for God to heal. Rather than seeing salvation occurring at some point in the future, Christian Scientists view it as the presence of God’s goodness which can be experienced by everyone in the present. Understanding man's pure, indestructible relationship with God is what results in regeneration and healing.

**SCIENCE**

Christian Scientists have no intellectual problem with the theories of contemporary geology, cosmology or biology as to the origin of mankind since they are not biblical literalists and because they regard the material world as fundamentally unreal. Yet some of their literature periodically cite developments in cosmology and physics as pointers to how contemporary science is coming to an understanding of “the illusory nature of time and materiality.”
They regard the story of the creation in the book of Genesis as having symbolic rather than literal meaning. However, Eddy believed that the theory of evolution wrongly portrayed man as mortal rather than spiritual:

"Theorizing about man's development from mushrooms to monkeys and from monkeys into men amounts to nothing in the right direction and very much in the wrong."\(^64\) (Emphasis added)

This means both creationism and evolution are false because they both proceed from the premise of belief in the reality of a material universe.

**CHURCHES AND READING ROOMS**

In addition to regular churches, there are Christian Science "branch churches" in which church members hold services where citations are made from the Bible and *The Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures* by lay members of the church. These Readers are voted into office by the members of the church for a limited period of time (usually for three years). Churches will most often hold mid-week public Testimony Meetings, a time in which anyone can testify to the healing power of the Christ in their lives.\(^65\)

Reading Rooms are maintained in most major cities in the world, in which Eddy's writings can be read, borrowed or purchased, together with the Bible, related concordances and commentaries etc. Many Reading Rooms also have bound volumes that contain articles on Christian Science and claims of healing spanning more than 125 years. The Christian Science church publishes a weekly periodical called the *Christian Science Sentinel*, a monthly publication called the *Christian Science Journal*, and the international, award-winning news website, formerly a newspaper, the *Christian Science Monitor*.\(^66\)

Christian Science Practitioners are lay persons who have had class instruction on how to heal effectively and who, after years of healing, have gone into the public practice of healing. These Practitioners devote all of their time to healing and charge for their services but do not require fees of those who are unable to pay. In their healing treatment, there is no manipulation or laying on of hands. Such treatments are often accomplished without a Practitioner meeting the patient in the case of those who may live a great distance away from the Practitioner.\(^67\)

**SOCIAL AND POLITICAL VIEWS**

Christian Scientists generally defend the separation of church and state as affording a protection for civil freedom and religion. Yet Eddy insisted on obedience by Christian Scientists to state laws in regard to health care. She was in favor of women's rights and rejected the "corporeal punishment" of children. While she generally steered clear of politics per se, she stated her support of the Monroe Doctrine as well as her opposition to imperialism and economic
monopoly. The Christian Science Monitor, which she founded, has traditionally been a staunch
defender of civil liberties and individual freedom, though it did support the prohibition of alcohol.  

Eddy’s writings encourage a morally decent life. There is some dissent among Christian Scientists as to what exactly the position with regard to homosexuality ought to be. It is often regarded negatively with a belief that such a condition requires healing through Christian Science practices. The Mother Church, however, has not announced its opposition to homosexuality. As in other matters such as abortion, the Church refuses to have an official position and leaves the decision to each individual Christian Scientist to seek their own sense of what is right through prayer. This is curious since abortion would clearly not be in harmony with seeing God’s child as perfect and divine.  

MEDICAL CONTROVERSIES

Critics point to scientific studies showing higher mortality rates among Christian Scientists than those using conventional medicine and a lack of evidence for the efficacy of Christian Science aside from anecdotal evidence. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention compared graduates of Principia College to graduates of a Seventh-day Adventist college (Loma Linda University). Again, the Christian Science graduates had a higher overall mortality rate than the comparison students (though the dietary habits of Seventh-day Adventists may make them less susceptible to some diseases than the bulk of the population, thus biasing the result).  

Eddy counseled that Christian Scientists should obey the law (respecting quarantine, for example) and that sometimes Christian Scientists will be examined by a doctor for informational purposes (although Eddy disapproved of physical diagnoses, as tending to induce disease).  

CHURCH GROWTH

Christian Science experienced rapid growth during the first half of the 20th century, but membership leveled out by 1950 and has since gradually declined. "... the closing of hundreds of branch churches over the past two decades suggests that attrition is the biggest threat the Church faces." Current membership data is unknown since the Church does not publish statistics. One source estimates about 400,000 people follow Christian Science teachings, although many are not affiliated with a congregation. Another estimate is that there are 150,000 members, and 100,000 members in the U.S., 15,000 in Germany and Great Britain, and others in over 60 countries.
Christian Science has about 2,300 branch congregations in 60 countries. There are about 1,600 congregations in the US and about 60 in Canada. They operate Christian Science Reading Rooms, where the public is invited to read the Bible and literature published by the Church. In 1908, Mrs. Eddy founded The Christian Science Monitor, an international newspaper, whose employees have won 6 Pulitzer prizes. A cable TV channel launched in 1991 was short lived and was terminated for financial reasons.

IS CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHRISTIAN?

Christian Scientists have spiritualized the Bible by using terms with allegorical and metaphysical definitions that are completely different from normal usage. To complicate matters worse, they have given new meanings to many traditional theological doctrines.

Does Jesus Christ have a dual nature? Is Jesus the mortal man and Christ the spiritual idea of man biblical?

The Bible uses the names Jesus and Christ interchangeably, pointing away from the dual nature presented in Christian Science. “Christ” and “Messiah” both find their origins in the word “anointed.” Jesus Christ, therefore, means “Jesus, the anointed.” “Christ” and “Messiah” refer to a person’s title rather than to a “spiritual idea.” The Bible makes it very clear that Jesus and Christ are the same person.

After talking with and following Jesus, Andrew found his brother Simon and told him,

“...” (Jn 1:41).

"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that by believing you may have life in His name." (Jn 20:31)

"Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son" (1 Jn 2:22).

Jesus is identified with both Christ and the Son of God:

“...” (Mt 16:13,16).

The Bible tells us to believe in Jesus and in Christ:

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”  
(Ac 16:31)
“For it has been granted to you **on behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him**, but also to suffer for Him” (Php 1:29).

The Bible frequently describes Christ in human terms more appropriate to a physical man (like Jesus) than to a “spiritual idea of man.” For example:

**Christ was born:**

“Today in the town of David a **Savior has been born to you; He is, Christ the Lord**” (Lk 2:11).

**Christ had a human ancestry:**

“Does not the Scripture say that **the Christ will come from David’s family and from Bethlehem**, the town where David lived?” (Jn 7:42)

“For you know that it was not from perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with **the precious blood of Christ**, a lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Pe 1:18-19).

**Christ was crucified:**

“...but we preach **Christ crucified**; a stumblingblock to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles” (1 Co 1:23).

**Christ physically suffered, died and rose from the dead:**

“...explaining to them that **the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead.**”

(Ac 17:3)

“...that **the Christ would suffer**, and, **as the first to rise from the dead**, would proclaim light to His own people and to the Gentiles” (Ac 26:23).

The Bible is clear that Jesus Christ is not the divine idea of God but was God uniquely manifested in the flesh, truly God and truly man—the God-Man—one divine Person with two indivisible natures, who is the only Savior and the only Truth, Way and Life and sovereign Lord (Jn 1:1-3, 14; Col 2:9; Php 2:6-7; Jn 14:6).] Contrary to what Christian Science teaches, Jesus was/is God and the only way to heaven (Jn 20:31; 1 Jn 4:2-3), not merely the “Exemplar” or "Wayshower."
Jesus physically died on the cross to pay for the sins of mankind. His sinless nature made him uniquely qualified to bear the judgment and punishment that God’s holiness and divine justice demand. The Jewish system of animal sacrifice had provided a temporary covering for sin and had pre-figured Jesus’ sacrifice; Jesus’ shed blood and death paid the debt “once for all” for all who are willing to believe.
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