

Christian Science

The Church of Christ (Scientist), is neither Christian nor scientific. As anyone who reads *Science and Health* will discover, its theology is buried in volumes of semi-Biblical language, separated from the Bible by a host of redefinitions and allegorical interpretations. A clear collection of doctrines exists only in the works of CS critics such as the Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry. The six *Tenets of Christian Science* are only the barest surface description of their theology. In fact, *Tenet 1*, which declares the sufficiency of the Bible is frequently violated in *Science and Health*.

It is curious to note that all of the heresies we have studied in one way or another claim the Bible as the foundation of their belief. Catholics add tradition in large doses, but claim that their tradition does not contradict the Bible. Mormons add the Book of Mormon and Pearl of Great Price, again claiming non-contradiction. Jehovah's Witnesses vigorously defend the Bible, but use a seriously suspect translation to avoid their obvious problems. Eternal Security advocates use the Bible, as do Christian Scientists. In each case, these "Christians" claim to follow the Bible, yet, as we have examined carefully, each group seriously violates their claim by holding to doctrines which are contrary to scripture. In fact, not one of them teaches the core doctrines of the gospel given by Jesus and taught by the apostles. This prevents any of them from being considered to be Christian. Only by actually allowing scripture to speak will one truly learn the message contained in it. We must be cautious not to allow any preconceived ideas on doctrine to prevent us from accepting God's word as the highest authority.

As we begin to examine the details of Christian Science, we find (Q1) that the CS church teaches that prophets learned how to become prophets by advancing in their knowledge of CS. This implies that Mary Baker Eddy was able to learn to become a prophet, and she claims exactly that. Further, anyone in theory can develop the ability to become a prophet. This means that God is not required in man's advancement into spiritual awareness. For any Christian, this should immediately raise a red flag. As we open the Bible, to which CS pays lip service, we find that prophets were always chosen by God. In particular, when Saul (Paul) was chosen, we find a very different picture of the selection process. Saul was traveling to carry out persecution of Christians and God struck him blind. In his blindness, Jesus revealed himself to Saul and changed his name to Paul. There is no hint of any progressive advancement in Paul's knowledge. In a flash, he was changed from a great oppressor of God's people to their greatest champion. Saul was changed into God's image, but CS would have us to believe that prophets of Almighty God can be made in man's image rather than reflecting the image of the Master.

The virgin birth is the next area where CS denies the Bible. Holy Writ describes the overshadowing of Mary by the Holy Spirit (Q2). Yet CS insists that Mary, having advanced in her own knowledge, "conceived this idea of God" and gave birth to Jesus. In other words, Jesus was Mary's idea. Having developed the idea, she had a child while remaining a virgin, simply because of her own spiritual abilities. We have repeatedly discussed the idea of God in Man's image with regard to other churches, but here is a most blatant example. Not only does God come down as man's idea, he created by man's idea! Taken to its logical extreme, God does not even exist except as he is invented by man. Such an awful idea cannot be permitted, and fortunately, scripture does not support it.

Of course, Jesus was not actually real, according to CS. But then, neither are we. We are figments of our own imagination. All of the physical sciences are imaginary. When put to the test, the CS *Tenet 1* is shown to be a lie, for Eddy herself declares that the Biblical account (Q3) of God forming Adam of matter (dust of the earth) is a lie. When a supposedly Christian religion cannot go two chapters into the Bible without contradicting it, is there anything about it that we should consider seriously?

Following this logic, the CS concept of the Messiah bears no resemblance to that of the Bible (Q4). They declare that Jesus never actually died, but in the tomb he worked out the true mysteries of CS so that when he arose and fulfilled his probationary time after the tomb, he eventually reached such a perfect understanding of CS that he faded from physical view into a purely spiritual realm of truth. Once again, CS flatly contradicts the Bible, which tells us that Jesus is now again God, but with a human body.

In order to sound Christian, CS uses Biblical language. The concept of the Trinity as conventionally understood is trashed in favor of an invented "Life, Truth, and Love" Trinity (Q5). But of course, the "person" called God is not a person at all, but the principles themselves are God. And the Father has morphed into the "Father-Mother" to represent the nurturing aspect of God. And Christ has changed from a person into the "true idea of voicing good." "The Christ is incorporeal, spiritual..." In other

words, when a Christian Scientist has sufficiently advanced in knowledge, he can then say that he has the Christ. In CS, the conventional Trinity of three persons in one being is declared to be polytheism (Q6) in contradiction to scripture which clearly defines three person, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as all being God, yet different persons.

As we have just discovered, CS defines "Christ" as a principle, and therefore says that Jesus was "endowed with the Christ." (Q7) This stands in stark contrast with the Bible (Q8) where "Christ" is the Messiah, a person. Never in scripture does the term Christ mean anything other than the person of Jesus. Peter identifies Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God." Others ask if Jesus is "the Christ." This expressly identifies "the Christ" as a person, not a principle. But if you are going to invent your own religion, there is no need to be bound by any particular structure. You can invent your own, as Ms. Eddy did, using Biblical language to make it seem acceptable.

Paul tells us (Q9) that the mission of Christ was die for our sins. This requires that sin is real and a threat to us. CS gets around this by denying that sin (Q10) is even real! In CS, sin is simply an illusion which comes from a misunderstanding of reality. Sin is error, not an error in keeping the law, but an error in understanding. It is destroyed by unmasking its unreality. Obviously, then, the various atrocities we see on the daily news are not actually real. The brutal murders and tortures are imaginary. The evidence of our senses must be ignored. But as those of us in medicine see, the truth of the proposition is tested when the Christian Scientist suffers a serious illness or injury. It may seem a bit callous, but there are no Christian Scientists with appendicitis.

While the CS believes that sin is not real, the Bible (Q11) makes it very clear that sin is violation of God's law. Where Jesus bore our sin in reality, CS redefines the terms to avoid the clear testimony of the text (Q12). Physical terms are changed into spiritual ones to avoid having to recognize the message in the scriptures. This is called an allegorical method of interpretation, where the stories are not real, but are created solely in order to carry a message, or allegory. But this is not enough for CS. The terms must be redefined to get the allegory in place. Stripes (Gr. *molops*) means a wound which trickles blood (Q13). But CS redefines stripes to be Jesus' "rejection of error." In other words, he was not actually beaten with a whip. The scourging predicted in Isaiah 53 and seen in the gospel accounts is changed in form to an attack on Jesus' understanding of truth. In fact, in CS, Jesus "never suffered."

The twisting to avoid the plain teaching of scripture never ends. CS declares that Jesus sacrifice was "insufficient to pay the debt of sin." (Q14) In fact, they deny the substitutionary atonement altogether. But this is not enough. CS declares that the Christian understanding of the cross is that God's anger was vented on his Son, and therefore this is a man-made idea. CS is unwilling to recognize that God stood back and allowed sin to kill his Son in an ultimate act of sacrifice. Jesus died as payment of a debt required by the law, not as a victim of his Father's anger. However, they do admit that, even though sin is imaginary, that it requires atonement. But this atonement is a "constant self-immolation" by the sinner. In other words, it is salvation by works, if salvation is indeed a word which can properly be applied in the CS scheme of things.

We must contrast this with the Biblical declarations (Q15). Our sins require an atoning sacrifice, and it is a blood sacrifice. This sacrifice by Jesus is sufficient to cleanse us completely from our sins. There is no part we can play to add to it. CS is not satisfied to remake God in man's image, it requires that the Bible be pulled down to the status of a purely human book on a par with Science and Health, which, as we saw earlier, is the product of Eddy's own "advancement in knowledge." There is no recognition that the Bible is the supreme written authority. In Fact, S&H is placed on a plane above the Bible by the claim that the Bible has many errors, notwithstanding *Tenet 1*.

The number of incredible distortions of the scriptures in CS defies the imagination. CS declares that Jesus underwent probation AFTER the cross (Q16). Yet scripture flatly denies this. When Jesus was raised from the dead, he was given the highest position in the heavenly kingdom. There was no delay in this honor. There was no probation to pass through, since he had done that already with his sinless life prior to the cross.

The key point of the gospel, the death and resurrection of Jesus is flatly denied by CS (Q17). Eddy declares that Jesus did not die, but was alive in the tomb. He spent the time figuring out the final mysteries of CS. Once He got CS right, he was then ready to come out of the tomb. This makes a mockery of all of the Bible (Q18). The entire Bible is devoted to the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan. The OT points forward to the cross and the ultimate victory over sin. The NT speaks of Jesus' fulfillment of the OT prophecies and the reality of the victory. Yet CS denies the event which is the victory:

the death of our sinless substitute, followed by his resurrection. This is what defines Christianity, and CS denies it. We are not saved by Jesus' blood in CS.

"The sin and error which possess us at the instant of death do not cease at that moment, but endure until the death of these errors. To be wholly spiritual, man must be sinless, and he becomes thus only when he reaches perfection." (S&H 290:23-27)

"No final judgment awaits mortals, for the judgment-day of wisdom comes hourly and continually, even the judgment by which mortal man is divested of all material error." (S&H 291:28-31)

The contrast between the Biblical standard of salvation and the CS standard could not be greater (Q19). Jesus taught us that the way to eternal life was to have a relationship with the Father. Since CS defines the Father as a principle, there is no one to have a relationship with. Further, since in CS there is in fact no sin, there is nothing for Jesus to atone for, and the cross is merely a play-acted demonstration. It is even a fraudulent demonstration since Jesus pretended to be dead when he truly was alive. Salvation in CS is an individual process of learning and growth, as opposed to being a gift from God.

Spiritual healing (Q20) is taught by CS in a two week course. Anyone is supposed to be able to learn it. Yet when we see the Biblical standard, it is one of the gifts of the spirit. There are many gifts, and the Holy Spirit anoints the appropriate persons with the various gifts. No one should expect to get all of them, and none of them can be taught. They are all gifts which are manifested by the power of God, not the power of an individual.

If it seems that this study has been a bit disjointed or incoherent, that is because the writings of Ms. Eddy are exactly that. Mary Baker Eddy (Q21) perpetrated an immense fraud. She did it in the same manner as Joseph Smith. She claimed to be a prophet, and began with Biblical sounding material. It had no substantial relationship to the Bible, but it satisfied her interests. Due to the force of her personality people followed her. She created a system which promised the miraculous and which did not encourage true Bible study. This tended to keep her converts from discovering the truth. A couple of final quotes from S&H will complete our study.

"Mortal man has made a covenant with his eyes to belittle Deity with human conceptions. In league with material sense, mortals take limited views of all things." S&H 255:11-14

"Christian Science can be taught only by those who are morally advanced and spiritually endowed, for it is not superficial, nor is it discerned from the standpoint of human senses. Only by illumination of the spiritual sense, can the light of understanding be thrown upon this Science, because Science reverses the evidence before the material senses and furnishes the eternal interpretation of God and man." S&H 461:7-15

It is interesting to see that the God of all eternity, whose thoughts are as far above our thoughts as the sky is above the earth (Isa 55:8-9) has been presented in purely human conceptions by Mary Baker Eddy. She found a few passages that seemed to confirm her ideas, and forgot to fit them into the marvelous revelation given to us by God. She then, without the help of anyone but herself, declared that there was secret knowledge which she had discovered and would reveal. She was so pure and elevated in spiritual things that only she could do this.

This is exactly the conceit of the Gnostics about which the apostles fought so hard. Just like these early pagans, one modern pagan remade God in man's image, and that anthropomorphic god has no power. But Ms. Eddy did not stop with Gnostic secret *gnosis*. She adopted their false idea that spirit is good and material things are bad. This is the root of her doctrines of unreality. It denies God's statement at creation that everything was "very good." Satan will grasp hold of those who are so deceived, and will bring them to destruction if we do not seek them out with the true gospel of Jesus.

Christian Scientists are very poorly versed in the Bible. They make a show of using it, but do not have any serious knowledge of what it contains. If we present the simple pure truth of the greatest gift ever given to mankind, some will be saved. We can do no less.

A Few Tough Questions for Christian Scientists:

1. CS teaches that God is in everything and is purely good. If that is so, where did evil come from?
2. If everything is an interpretation of the divine mind, why do people have different understandings of God?
3. If sickness is an illusion, why do CS churches have practitioners who go out to Christian Scientists in attempts to heal them?
4. Why would Mary Baker Eddy directly contradict Jesus' own claim of Himself? She said that "Jesus is not God, as Jesus himself declared, but the Son of God." (S&H 361:12-13) Is she calling Jesus a liar?
5. If "Man is incapable of sin, sickness, and death" a Eddy says (S&H 475:28), then why do people die? Why does the Bible say that the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23)?
6. Why would Mrs. Eddy say that Jesus did not die (S&H 45:32-46:3) when the Bible clearly states that He died (Rom 8:34, 1 Thess 4:14, 1 Cor 8:11, 1 Pet 3:18)?
7. If our physical senses do not tell us the truth about the material world then how can we trust them when we read the book Science and Health with Key to Scriptures or hear its message with our ears?