Is Christian Science Scientific? Is it Christian?

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Background

Although Christian Science is one of the smaller cults (reporting about 400,000 members worldwide) it has been highly influential since its beginnings in the 19th century. Headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, it has often been referred to as a religion of intellectuals. Significant numbers of leading people in the 20th and 21st centuries in many fields, including sports, motion pictures, journalism, literature, music, politics, and the military, were either raised by parents who were Christian Scientists or embraced it as adults. The *Christian Science Monitor* newspaper, founded in 1908, and its 21st-century successors on the internet and radio, have been highly influential in promoting liberal political, social, and religious views well beyond the cult's core of followers.

Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910) was the founder of the cult of Christian Science. The movement still holds her book, *Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures*,[1] to be divinely inspired, and Eddy herself to be the sovereign of the church. More than 1200 Christian Science Reading Rooms around the world sell her books and promote her philosophy. But she was neither a Christian nor a scientist, and the false religion she founded is neither scientific nor Christian.

Not Science

The so-called "science" of Christian Science is based on the premise, actually drawn from Hegelian philosophy, that "there is no life, truth, intelligence, or substance in matter."[2] Therefore, says Eddy, matter does not exist and is evil. (How something that does not exist can be evil, she does not explain.) "Mind" is the only true reality, and is good. Mankind must be led into deeper knowledge of "Mind," and this is the purpose of Christian Science. This teaching echoes the philosophy of the ancient Gnostics, who taught that matter,

including the human body, is an evil substance that prevents man from attaining a higher, truly "spiritual" existence, and that human teachers who have gone further in attaining that "higher" existence must lead their followers in that quest.

Not Christian

As for the "Christianity" of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy stated plainly that Jesus is not God and is not Christ,[3] but that Jesus the "man" and Christ the "idea" are separate and distinct.[4] He was born of the virgin Mary, she said, but "a portion of God could not enter man; neither could God's fullness be reflected by a single man."[5] Jesus was not conceived by the Holy Spirit, but "was born of the Virgin Mary's spiritual thoughts of Life and its manifestation."[6] The material blood of Jesus, according to Eddy, was not efficacious to cleanse from sin[7] and the idea of the shedding of blood to propitiate God's justice and bring about His mercy is "a heathen conception."[8] According to Eddy, Jesus did not die on the cross, He was alive while in the tomb, and His resurrection was the triumph of Mind over matter.[9] Jesus' ascension was His "exaltation above all material conditions" in which He "rose above the physical knowledge of his disciples."[10]

Authentic Christianity in Contrast

By contrast, Scripture clearly teaches the reality of the material universe from the Genesis creation record onward, its perfection prior to the Fall, the effects of the Curse on man and the created order, and God's plan to redeem both a people from among fallen mankind and the created order itself. Furthermore, the Bible teaches that God's nature and attributes, including His eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen in the material order. But men suppress the truth in unrighteousness, worshipping and serving the creature above the Creator, and professing themselves to be wise when they have actually become fools (Romans chapter 1).

Scripture also clearly teaches the following about Jesus Christ: the hypostatic union of God and man in the person of the God-man Jesus so that all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in a body (John 1:1-18, John 10:30, 2 Corinthians 5:19, Philippians 2:5-11, Colossians 2:9); His virgin birth by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:26-38); the necessity, efficacy, and propitiatory nature of Christ's atonement for sin (Hebrews 9:19-28); His voluntary death for sinners (Matthew 27:50, Luke 23:46, John 10:15-18, John 19:30); His bodily resurrection from the

dead (Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20, Acts 1); His bodily ascension for the purpose of ruling, reigning, and coming again to judge the world (Acts 1:2-11, 2:33, 17:31; 1 Corinthians 15:23-28; Hebrews 10:12).

As with all other false religions and their writings, the Biblical answer to Christian Science centers on the fact that God declared two thousand years ago that the canon of Scripture is closed, and nothing can be added to it or subtracted from it (Revelation 22:18-19). The sixty-six books of Scripture, revelation from God given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, form God's full and final word to mankind.

References:

1. Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures* (Boston: Allison V. Stewart, 1918).
2. *Science and Health*, 468.
3. *Science and Health*, 84, 361.
4. *Science and Health*, 361.
5. *Science and Health*, 336.
6. Eddy*, Miscellaneous Writings, 1883-1896* (Boston: Joseph Armstrong, 1897), 261.
7. *Science and Health*, 25.
8. Eddy, *Christian Science: No and Yes* (Boston: Mary Baker Eddy, 1887), 54.
9. *Science and Health*, 44-46.
10. *Science and Health*, 46.

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