

# Lesson 6: Christian Science

2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:16-21; 1 John 4:1-3

**Introduction:** Christian Scientists study metaphysical pantheism and physical healing (not medicine or miraculous).

## I. Historical Background

A. **Date started:** 1879

B. **Founding/instrumental leader:** Mary Baker Eddy - born in New Hampshire in 1821

### C. Location and events:

- Experienced frequent physical and emotional illness until age 22
- Her brother, Albert, died in 1841
- Married George W. Glover in Dec. 1843 who died 7 months later of yellow fever during a business trip
- This left her widowed, pregnant (6 months), and emotionally unstable – bedridden for months
- In Nov 1849, her mother died
- Three weeks later, her fiancé, John Bartlett died
- Her son, George Washington II, was sent away at the age of four; they would not see each other again for 30 years
- Mary Baker remarried in 1853 to Daniel Patterson, a dentist (later divorced)
- Real or imagined, Mary Baker was often ill and throughout her life relied on morphine
- 1862 – met Phineas Quimby to help her with her illness; taught that the mind had the power to heal the body
- In 1866 a fall caused a spinal injury which she claimed God healed her of three days later
- She became convinced that healing could be acquired through awakened thoughts with clearer perceptions of God and rejected the use of drugs, medicine, or hygiene
- Eddy divorced Daniel Patterson in 1873 for desertion and adultery
- She published her book, *Science and Health*, in 1875
- In 1877 she married Asa Gilbert Eddy who died in 1882 after moving to Boston
- In 1879, organized the Church of Christ (Scientist) in Boston claiming to be the restoration of the original New Testament Church
- In 1881, she opened a metaphysical college and charged \$300 for 12 healing lessons
- She died in 1910 as a millionaire

E. **Current headquarters:** Boston, MA

## II. Authoritative basis

A. **Leader:** Mary Baker Eddy

### B. Writings, books, publications:

- *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*; (companion to the Bible)
- Bible – together with S&H are called the Pastor of Christian Science
- *Christian Science Monitor* (Newspaper);
- *Christian Science Sentinel*;
- *The Christian Science Journal*

## III. Beliefs and Teachings

A. **Bible:**

- It is not inerrant;
- Eddy taught that the Bible had many mistakes
- She was the key for interpreting it – Rev. 3:7 and Rev. 12.

“Referring to Genesis 2:7: Is this addition to His creation real or unreal? Is it the truth, or is it a lie concerning man and God? It must be a lie.” (524)

#### B. God/Trinity:

- God is the Father-Mother
- God is a “Divine (or Universal) Principle” or “Divine Mind”;
- Deny the personhood or personality of God;
- The “Trinity” consists of Truth, Life, and Love
- Belief in the traditional Trinity is polytheism

“The theory of three persons in one God (that is, a personal Trinity or Triunity) suggests polytheism, rather than the one ever-present I am.” (256)

#### C. Jesus Christ:

- Deny that He is God
- The incarnation and bodily resurrection did not occur.
- Jesus did not really die on the cross.
- He was not God in flesh.
- He made no atonement in shedding His blood

"If there had never existed such a person as the Galilean Prophet, it would make no difference to me." (*The First Church of Christ Scientist and Miscellany*, pp. 318, 319).

"The sacrifice of Jesus was not sufficient to cleanse from sin," *S&H* 25:6.

#### D. Man:

- There is no literal, physical existence of the material universe.
- Man is God’s image and likeness
- Man did not originate from dust, materially, but from Spirit, spiritually

#### E. Sin:

- There is no devil and no sin or death (an illusion);
- Good and evil are not real, do not exist;

“Sin, sickness, and death are to be classified as effects of error. Christ came to destroy the belief of sin.” (473)

“Hence, evil is but an illusion, and it has no real basis. Evil is a false belief, God is not its author.” (480)

- Matter and Sickness are only illusions

"Matter, sin, and sickness are not real, but only illusions," *S&H* 335:7-15; 447:27-28.

#### F. Redemption

- To achieve "salvation," one needs only to find the true reality of understanding -- as revealed in Christian Science teachings

"One sacrifice, however great, is insufficient to pay the debt of sin. The atonement requires constant self-immolation (sacrifice) 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" (*S&H* 23:3-7).

"True healings are the result of true belief," *S&H* 194:6.

- Prefer not to use doctors, medicine, or immunizations.
- Christian Science Practitioners are used to help people through the false reality of illness.
- Proper prayer and training are employed to battle the "non-reality" of illness.