**Facts about Christian Science**

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**Question:** What is Christian Science?

**Answer:** Christian Science is a religion based on the words and works of Christ Jesus. It draws its authority from the Bible, and its teachings are set forth in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, by Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science. A distinctive part of Christian Science is its healing of physical disease as well as sin by spiritual means alone.

The Church of Christ, Scientist, was founded in 1879 when 15 students of Mrs. Eddy met with their teacher and 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” (Manual of The Mother Church by Mary Baker Eddy, p. 17).

A few years later the church took its present and permanent form as The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Science, in Boston, Massachusetts, which together with its branch churches and societies throughout the world, constitutes the Christian Science denomination. Some 80 years after its founding there were more than 3,200 branches in 48 countries, as well as numerous informal groups not yet organized, and over 200 organizations at universities and colleges.

**Question:** What are its basic teachings?

**Answer:** The Tenets of Christian Science are found on page 497 of *Science and Health* and read as follows:

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.
**Question:** What is the relationship between the religious teachings and the healing work of Christian Science?

**Answer:** The first chapter of Genesis states that God created man in His own image and likeness, and that He pronounced all that He had made “very good.” Man in the image of God, Spirit, must be wholly spiritual and as perfect as his creator. Then it follows that the sick and sinning mortal man who appears to the physical senses is a false representation of man, a material misconception of man as he really is.

The Apostle Paul in the fourth chapter of Ephesians writes of the need to “put off the old man” or imperfect material sense of man and to “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” To exchange the false concept for the true is to bring healing and regeneration into human experience. Mrs. Eddy writes in *Science and Health* (p. 475): “Jesus beheld in Science the perfect man, who appeared to him where sinning mortal man appears to mortals. In this perfect man the Saviour saw God’s own likeness, and this correct view of man healed the sick.”

**Question:** How does Christian Science healing differ from faith cure, suggestion, or psychotherapy?

**Answer:** It does not rest on a blind faith in the unknown but on an enlightened understanding of God as infinite, divine Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, and Love. It recognizes God as acting through universal, immutable, spiritual law, an understanding of which constitutes the Science of Christianity.

This Science draws an absolute distinction between the divine Mind, God, and the false mentality of which Paul declared, “The carnal mind is enmity against God” (Rom. 8:7). On the basis of this distinction it repudiates the use of suggestion, will power, hypnotism, and all those forms of psychotherapy which employ the human mind as a curative agent. Instead, Christian Science turns human thought to the enlightening and saving power of divine Truth.

Christ Jesus said (John 8:32), “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Science and Health declares (p. 390), “It is our ignorance of God, the divine Principle, which produces apparent discord, and the right understanding of Him restores harmony.”

**Question:** What is the purpose of Christian Science as a religion?

**Answer:** Its aim is a full salvation for mankind, and this includes salvation from every phase of evil – from all that denies the perfection of God and of man in His image and likeness. Thus sin, sickness, lack, sorrow, selfishness, ignorance, fear, and all material-mindedness are included within the range of mortal errors to be corrected and overcome by a scientific understanding of God.

The man who has no need of bodily healing still confronts the sharp challenges of the twentieth century. To him Christian Science speaks of a salvation that begins here and now, releasing him into a more abundant sense of energy, purpose, identity, and joy. The word “healing” as used in Christian Science extends to the healing of family and business problems, of social injustices, intellectual limitations, psychological tensions, and moral confusions.
Question: What is the reason for the special emphasis Christian Science puts on healing the sick?

Answer: Such healing is only a small part of Christian Science, but its role is quite as significant as that which the healing ministry of Jesus plays in the New Testament. It is the most conspicuous proof of the validity of Christian Science and is regarded as one of the natural results of drawing closer to God in one’s thinking and living. Since the discovery of this religion in 1866, a large body of evidence has accumulated that it heals every sort of disease, organic as well as functional, and many times after patients have been told by competent medical authority that their cases were hopeless.

Spontaneous testimonies of healing are given at the midweek meetings held in Christian Science churches all over the world. Carefully verified healings are printed in the Christian Science periodicals: The Christian Science Journal (monthly), the Christian Science Sentinel (weekly), and The Herald of Christian Science (monthly and quarterly in eleven different languages). Further testimonies which have undergone thorough investigation are included in regular weekly broadcasts.

The writers of testimonies are identified by name and city. They are known to others in their communities, and facts of their healings are easily verifiable by any local inquirer. In many instances there are hospital records, X rays, insurance reports, and other types of medical evidence which corroborate the nature of the healing.

Question: What help is available to the person who seeks healing in Christian Science?

Answer: The last one hundred pages of science and Health are filled with testimonies by people who have been healed of serious illnesses simply by reading and studying the book. Those who need help in their application of Christian Science to a particular problem may turn to a Christian Science practitioner listed in the monthly directory of The Christian Science Journal. These practitioners are experienced Christian Scientists who devote themselves to the healing ministry.

A patient who is receiving Christian Science help but needs practical care during the course of his healing may avail himself of the services of a Christian Science nurse. The Journal contains a monthly directory of nurses who are qualified to perform the practical duties necessary in the care of the sick but who give no medication or any physical application beyond the normal measures of cleanliness.

[There are many Christian Science care facilities in the United States and other countries that are specifically recognized by law. Many in the United States are eligible for Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement, as well as certain types of individual health care insurance policies.]

Question: Can Christian Science be combined with reliance on medical aid?

Answer: No. Christ Jesus, who never used material remedies of any sort, declared (John 6:63), “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing,” and again (Matt. 6:24), “No man can serve two masters.” Mrs. Eddy writes in Science and Health, (p. 167), “Only through radical reliance on Truth can scientific healing power be realized.” Experience has shown that the attempt to combine Christian Science treatment with medicine is fair to neither system and lessens the efficacy of both.
There are a few exceptions to the rule that a Christian Science practitioner and a doctor may not be employed on the same case. As required by law, a doctor or qualified midwife is employed in childbirth. Where bones have been broken, a surgeon is sometimes employed to set the bones, if the patient so desires, since no medication is involved. But there are hundreds of cases healed by reliance on Christian Science alone. In the case of contagious or infectious disease, Christian Scientists in general are scrupulous about reporting such diseases to the proper authorities as required by law, and about observing rules of quarantine; but they prefer to rely wholly on spiritual means for healing in those cases.

Where medical treatment for minor children is required by law, Christian Scientists are, as always, strictly obedient to the requirement; but in such areas they seek eventual recognition by law of their right to rely wholly on Christian Science healing for themselves and their children. The widespread legal recognition which this right has already won rests on the proven ability of Christian Science to heal not some but all sorts of disease. Christian Science treatment in lieu of medical treatment has received full recognition by an increasingly large number of insurance companies.

Christian Scientists do not ignore or neglect disease, but they seek to heal it by the means they have found most efficacious, in accordance with the Master’s promise (John 14:12), “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also.”

**Question:** In what other ways does Christian Science show practical concern for meeting the needs of the world?

**Answer:** Healing the sick is the most practical illustration of the power of divine Love, as scientifically explained in Christian Science, to meet the human need. But The Mother Church reaches out in many ways to help humanity.

It carries on widespread relief activities in connection with war and disaster, extending this in many cases to those of all faiths. Its large-scale relief work in World War II brought special commendation and official expression of gratitude from many national and local governments, as well as from innumerable individuals. Charitable provision is made for needy members of its local congregation, and for the victims of flood, earthquake, and hurricane in many localities.

A special department of The Mother Church ministers to the needs of individuals serving in the Armed Forces of several countries. Qualified civilians, experienced in the healing work, are appointed Christian Science Ministers to the Armed Forces, supplemented by volunteer workers from within the forces. Services are held in military installations and outposts, and special ministrations are provided for patients in military hospitals. In the United States approved Christian Scientists serve as Protestant chaplains in the Armed Services. Under the auspices of branch churches, work is also carried out in other institutions such as prisons, mental hospitals, and refugee camps.

One of the best-known activities of The Mother Church is its daily newspaper, *The Christian Science Monitor*. Founded in 1908 by Mrs. Eddy, then in her eighty-eighth year, its purpose was described by her as being: “To injure no man, but to bless all mankind.” Its freedom from sensationalism, its editorial balance, and its news coverage, which has repeatedly been commended for its accuracy, impartiality, and incisiveness, have won it a world-wide reputation and circulation. Behind the acclaim it has won, however, is the basic Christian Science purpose of healing – in this case the “healing of the nations.”
**Question:** What missionary work does the Church carry on?

**Answer:** There are no missionaries in the usual sense of the word. Christian Science has been spread largely through the lives of individual Christian Scientists and often through the healings which are part of their faith and worship. In addition, members of The Christian Science Board of Lectureship give free public lectures throughout the world under the auspices of branch churches and societies. In a typical year more than 4000 lectures are given.

The periodicals and other publications of The Mother Church likewise serve as missionaries. The literature may be read, borrowed, or purchased at any Christian Science Reading Room. Each branch church maintains a free public Reading Room, and here the earnest seeker or casual inquirer may learn the facts about Christian Science and its Discoverer and Founder.

**Question:** What are the facts about Mrs. Eddy?

**Answer:** Mary Baker Eddy was born in Bow, New Hampshire, in 1821, the youngest daughter of devout, well-educated parents who were highly respected in their community. From her earliest years she showed an intense hunger for spiritual things. Early widowhood, protracted ill health, and an enforced separation from her only child increased her desire to find a deeper, more practical understanding of God. Various experiments during the course of her search for health led her to believe that the origin of all disease is mental, but it was not until 1866 that she received the revelation that was to change her life and lead to the establishment of Christian Science.

In that year she was healed of the effects of a serious accident, as she pondered one of Jesus’ healings recorded in the New Testament. The spiritual influx she received at that time led to a consecrated study of the Bible to discover the divine Science of the Master’s healings and of her own remarkable recovery. As she demonstrated through further healings the great Truth that was unfolding to her thought, students began to gather around her; and in 1875 she published the Christian Science textbook, later known as “Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures.”

Following the establishment of her church, she devoted herself – in the face of persistent opposition and misrepresentation – to perfecting its organization and inaugurating its various activities, to teaching and counseling her students, to writing new books and revising *Science and Health* to make its statement of Christian Science clearer, stronger, and more applicable to every human need. In all this her effort was to establish Christian Science on the rock of Principle and not on human personality. Christian Scientists feel unstinted love and gratitude to her for these unselfish labors, but in no wise do they deify or worship her. Her own admonition was to “follow your Leader only so far as she follows Christ” (Message to The Mother Church for 1901).

Various biographies of Mrs. Eddy are available at all Christian Science Reading Rooms and at many public libraries. Among these are: “The Life of Mary Baker Eddy,” by Sibyl Wilbur, “Christian Science and Its Discoverer” by E. Mary Ramsay, “Mary Baker Eddy: A Life Size Portrait” by Lyman P. Powell (an Episcopal clergyman) “Twelve Years with Mary Baker Eddy” by Irving C. Tomlinson (a former Universalist minister who later became one of Mrs. Eddy’s secretaries), “Mary Baker Eddy and her Books” by William Dana Orcutt (a non-Scientist who was intimately associated with Mrs. Eddy in the printing of her books), and “Historical Sketches from the Life of Mary Baker Eddy and the History of Christian Science,” a
documentary study by Clifford P. Smith. *[For a list of additional biographies published since this booklet, see note at the end of the booklet]*

**Question:** How is the Church governed today?

**Answer:** The government of The Mother Church is vested in the Church Manual by Mrs. Eddy. The Manual provides that a Board of Directors of five members shall administer the affairs of the Church. When a vacancy in the Board occurs, it is filled by a member of The Mother Church elected to that office by the remaining members of the Board.

Each branch of the Church of Christ, Scientist, has its own distinctly democratic government and is not subject to the general official control of The Mother Church except in those relations with it which are governed by the Church Manual. However, each such church or society derives its legitimacy from its recognitions as a branch of The Mother Church. A Christian Science Society is an organized branch which has not yet met the requirements for becoming a church.

The first branch church in a community is designated as First Church of Christ, Scientist, (name of community; the second as Second Church of Christ, Scientist, (name of community); and so on.

**Question:** How are the Christian Science services conducted?

**Answer:** The Church of Christ, Scientist, has no clergy. It is a church of laymen, any one of whom, without distinction of sex, may rise to any position for which he has demonstrated fitness. In a branch church the services are conducted by a First and a Second Reader elected by and from the membership for a limited period of time. In The Mother Church the two Readers are appointed by the Board of Directors for a three-year period.

The Sunday service consists, in part, of the reading of a Lesson-Sermon composed of correlative citations from the Bible and *Science and Health*. There are 26 subjects which Mrs. Eddy chose for these Lesson-Sermons, which are repeated twice a year, but the citations chosen to illustrate these subjects are varied each time and provide a constantly fresh, unfolding, and timely application to current needs. The references from these passages are listed in the *Christian Science Quarterly*, so that Christian Scientists may study each lesson during the week preceding the Sunday service.

The Wednesday meeting includes testimonies by members of the congregation to the healing, saving, and guiding power of God, as found in Christian Science.

**Question:** How do Christian Scientists regard those of other faiths?

**Answer:** They feel a spiritual fellowship with all who worship a supreme and righteous Deity. In her book, “Rudimental Divine Science” (P. 1) Mrs. Eddy defines Christian Science as “the law of God, the law of good, interpreting and demonstrating the divine Principle and rule of universal harmony.” It is evident that this definition reaches beyond denominational boundaries. Wherever the law of God has been glimpsed and demonstrated in any degree by men of any faith, there is evidence of the essential unity of good.

While this is true of non-Christian as well as of Christian religions, it should be noted that Christian Science is rooted wholly in Christianity. Christian Scientists accept the words of
Christ Jesus, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” They see the Master as the supreme demonstrator and embodiment of good in human life, and their endeavor is to follow in his footsteps. Distinguishing between the human Jesus and his eternal, spiritual selfhood as the Christ, or Son of God, they recognize that the Christ has been expressed in varying degree by good men and women throughout the ages and that Christianity has always reflected a generous portion of the Christ-spirit.

Their own religion they regard as a revelation of the Science of Christi, as Christianity in its most practical and scientific form. They accept its profoundly new insights into the nature of reality as explaining the basis of Jesus’ marvelous works. Thus Mrs. Eddy writes in “Unity of Good” (p. 9):

“What is the cardinal point of the difference in my metaphysical system? This: that by knowing the unreality of disease, sin, and death, you demonstrate the allness of God. This difference wholly separates my system from all others. The reality of these so-called existences I deny, because they are not to be found in God, and this system is built on Him as the sole cause. It would be difficult to name any previous teachers, save Jesus and his apostles, who have thus taught.”

This radical metaphysical position differentiates Christian Science from traditional interpretations of Christianity which accept both evil and good as real and powerful. It also insists on works of healing and regeneration as proofs of scientific Christian discipleship. But it unites with all forms of Christian faith in worshiping God as the supreme power whose infinite love for man has been revealed to the world through the life of Jesus the Christ.

*Biographies of Mary Baker Eddy published since 1959:

- Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Discovery, Robert Peel
- Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Trial, Robert Peel
- Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Authority, Robert Peel
- Mary Baker Eddy: Christian Healer, Yvonne Cache Von Fettweis & Robert Townsend
- Mary Baker Eddy: Persistent Pilgrim, Richard Nenneman
- Mary Baker Eddy: Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, Louise A. Smith
- We Knew Mary Baker Eddy, Collection of reminiscences
- Rolling Away the Stone: Mary Baker Eddy’s Challenge to Materialism, Stephen Gottschalk