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A critique of Christian science

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A CRITIQUE OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

by

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In the year 1866 Mrs. Mary Baker Glover Eddy, was given up to die from the effects of an internal injury. From the sick bed she arose and went about her daily duties.

Three years later, she began to teach the doctrines of mind healing, issuing a small pamphlet for private use, which was later expanded into "Science & Health and Key to the Scriptures." which is now in its 100th edition.

Mrs. Eddy formed a church, was elected its first pastor, and organized a college of which she was President until 1889. She has now retired to private life and advertises in her book that "She does not receive patients and declines medical consultation."

Christian Science has increased to a considerable extent. They have 280 places of worship and a large number of practitioners. The course required for the practitioners, in the Massachusetts Metaphysical College, covers from one to four courses, of six lectures each. The primary course costs \$300. and a person who passes through this is supposed to be sufficiently advanced to begin practice. After a year's practice, they take the normal course (costing \$200.) and in their order the courses on Therapeutics, (costing \$100.) and Theolo-

gy (costing \$200.)

In the case of an indigent student, the only reduction they will make is \$100. and that only on the first course. However, they will make a difference in a case of a man and wife, provided they both enter the courses at the same time, giving the instruction to both, at the same price as to a single person.

Science and Health is a book of 663 pages and is divided into 17 chapters as follows,-

- I. Science, Theology, Medicine.
- II. Physiology.
- III. Footsteps of Truth.
- IV. Creation.
- V. Science of Being.
- VI. Christian Science & Spiritualism.
- VII. Marriage.
- VIII. Animal Magnetism.
- IX. Some Objections Answered.
- X. Prayer.
- XI. Atonement and Eucharist.
- XII. Christian Science Practice.
- XIII. Teaching Christian Science.
- XIV. Recapitulation.
- KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES.
- XV. Genesis.
- XVI. Apocalypse.
- XVII. Glossary.

On page seven we find these words, "The fundamental propositions of Christian Science are summarized in the four following, to me, self-evident propositions. Even if read backward, these propositions will be found to agree in statement and truth.

- I. God is ALL.
- II. God is Good. Good is Mind.
- III. God, Spirit, being all, nothing is matter.
- IV. Life, God, Omnipotent Good, deny death, evil, sin, disease, -Disease, sin, evil, death,

deny Good, Omnipotent God, life.....

The Metaphysics of Christian Science, like the rules of mathematics prove the rule by inversion. For example: there is no pain in Truth, and no truth in pain; no matter in Mind, and no mind in matter; no nerves in Intelligence, and no intelligence in nerves: no matter in Life, and no life in matter; no matter in Good, and no good in matter."

While the Christian Scientists profess to have no creed, they still have a platform of thirty-two articles of which we will give the most essential ones.

"II. God is what the scriptures declared him to be, - Life, Truth, Love. God is spirit, and Spirit is Divine Principle. Principle is Divine Mind, and Mind is not both good and bad, for God is Mind; therefore Mind is Good only, and there is but one Mind, because there is but one God.

"III. God is Good, and evil cannot proceed from Good. The notion that evil and goodness can be combined in one nature is a delusion of material sense, which must yield to Science. In the Saxon language good was the term for God. The Scriptures declare all that He made to be good, like himself, - good in Principle and in idea. In infinite good there is no room for evil.

"V. The Scriptures say that God is ~~All-in-all~~. From this it follows that nothing possesses reality or existence except Mind, God. The Scriptures also declare that God is Spirit and Life, therefore in Spirit all is harmony, and there can be

no discord; and in Life there is no Death. In infinite Good there is no evil. Everything in God's universe is His idea.

"XVII. Spirit is infinite. There is but one Spirit, because there can be but one infinite, and therefore but one God. There are neither spirits many nor gods many. There is no evil in Spirit, because Spirit is God.....

"XVIII. Spirit has created all, in and of Spirit. God never created matter for there is nothing in Spirit out of which matter could be made.....

"XXI. The Ego is deathless and limitless, for limits would imply and impose ignorance. Mind is the only Ego or infinitude.....

"XXII.....Men are emanations of Him who is Life, Truth and Love.

"XXIV. God and man, principle and idea are inseparable.... God is the parent Mind, and man is His offspring.

"XXV.According to Christian Science, man is as perfect as the Mind, which forms him.....

"XXX. The destruction of sin is the divine method of pardon. Divine Life destroys death, Truth destroys error, and Love destroys hate. Being destroyed, sin needs no forgiveness.....

"XXXII.....To get rid of sin, through Science, is to divest sin of any supposed mind or reality and never admit that sin can have any intelligence or power, pain or pleasure. You conquer error by denying its verity.....

"Divine Love, is infinite, therefore all that really exists is divine Love."

We will turn from this phase to that of the criticism of the above stated doctrines.

I. As To Its Origin.

Mrs. Eddy claims to have discovered Christian Science in 1866, but when we examine the "Upanishads," and find these words, "Nothing really exists but one universally present Impersonal Spirit - and that the whole visible world, was to be identified with that Spirit." - "Then it followed as an article of faith that man's spirit, deluded into a temporary false idea of separate independent personal existence, by the illusion of ignorance, was also identical with that One Spirit, and ultimately to be re-absorbed into it," and in the Vedic Poems we find this, "Matter does not exist but is the production of Brahma, the mystic power by which the Supreme Being has an illusion and temporary matter which seems to exist and does not in reality. There is no real existence for matter." And finally turning to the works of Bishop Berkely, and the German Metaphysicians find them denying the existence of matter and claiming that it is merely ideas, ^{we fail to see} How ^{can} Mrs. Eddy consistently claim to have discovered Christian Science, when it has existed for twenty-five-hundred years, and, during this time, countless millions have died firmly believing in the central thought of Christian Science, and which, if taken away, would leave nothing of

Christian Science.

II. As To The Book.

In a book that "contains all of Christian Science" one would expect to find the ^{Scientists} beliefs systematically set forth, but what do we find? A conglomerate mass of assertions,-a great deal of lame logic,-re-iteration used for proof,- weak and arbitrary exegesis, without a single reference to other portions of God's Word for proof of their interpretations,- not a single topic, which they pretend to treat, clearly worked out. And yet "if the teachings of Science and Health are followed out one cannot err" and it is as much inspired as the Bible.

It is evident that Mrs. Eddy is densely ignorant of Hebrew and has not carefully studied the Revised Version or she would not have been ignorant that where the word "Lord" is capitalized, it is the word "Jehovah," that should be used and is not a title.

Her key to the Scriptures unlocks nothing.

Out of the thousands of terms used in the Bible, Mrs. Eddy gives the meaning of but 124, and this in an arbitrary manner, and without giving any principle for so using the word as the following random selections will show:-

"Christ. The divine manifestation of God, which comes in the flesh, to destroy incarnate error.

"Dust. Nothingness; the want of substance, life, or intelligence.

"Gihon. (river) The rights of woman acknowledged- morally civilly, and socially.

"Holy Ghost. Divine Science; The developments of eternal Life, Truth, and Love.

"In. A term obsolete in Science, if used in reference to Spirit or Deity.

"Mother. God; divine and eternal Principle, Life, Truth, and Love.

"Wine. Inspiration: understanding: error: temptation: passion: fornication."

Mrs. Eddy denies the existence of matter and in this she ranks among the Idealists, Theosophists, Budhists and Hindoos, for the more complete refutation of this I will refer the reader to the writings of the Materialist.

III. As A Science.

In order that any system may be called scientific, it must possess three requisites.

It must have a subject matter of its own, distinct from all other subjects.

It must treat this subject matter in a strictly scientific manner.

It must present a body of direct results.

Christian Science, so called, fails on all three of these counts:~

It has no subject matter of its own.

It does not treat what little ^{Scientific} they do treat, in a

scientific manner,- their logic is lame,- they say that because a part is true, per se the whole must be true,- they present no arguments worthy of the name,- and as for direct results, they are conspicuous by their absence.

We find no eminent scientists among their followers.

IV. As a Therapeutic System.

Christian Science resulted from Mrs. Eddy's healing herself and its chief claim for recognition is, that it is able to cure all bodily complaints.

Christian Science
Art. 5 of the platform states, "God is Spirit and Life, therefore in Spirit all is harmony, and there can be no discord: and in Life there is no death." "God is All." "God, Spirit, being all, nothing is matter." "There is no pain in Truth, and no truth in pain: no matter in Mind, and no mind in matter: no nerves in Intelligence, no intelligence in nerves: no matter in Life, and no life in matter: no matter in Good, and no good in matter."

Arguing from these statements they reason that we need never be tired for our bodies are no more material than the wheel, which we would not say is tired, and also that we need not sleep for "the right understanding of Christian Science would rest us more than hours of sleep." In this they forget that even iron machinery lasts longer when it is allowed to rest.

As there is no mind in matter, we need suffer no more from heat and cold, all we have to do is to imagine that we

are warm and we are, whether we have fire and clothing or not.

There being no matter, we can have no stomach, arms or gastric juices and, as a consequence, the dyspeptic can eat beef-steak, farina or nails and suffer no inconvenience.

"If food preserves life it cannot destroy it, either by quality or quantity." "Food neither strengthens nor weakens the body." So we can go without as well as not. Still the Christian Scientists, sleep, eat, use fire and clothing. Christ says "therefore take no thought, saying what shall we eat, or what shall we drink? Or wherewithal shall we be clothed..... for your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things."

"There is no mind in matter." and "there is no discord in Spirit, therefore there can be no sickness, Still "A" and "T" of Buffalo were sick yet their doctors advertised to cure sickness and demand cash down for doing it. Mr.A. had typhoid fever and in spite of the fact that two of the family were Christian Science physicians, and the daily visits of another, the fever ran its course.

They claim that Christ ~~used~~ their method of curing, but on examining the records of his cures we find him simply saying "Arise and walk!" "Stretch out thy hand!"- "Go and wash!" and making spittal and placing it on the eyes of the blind.- This is not Mrs. Eddy's method. She says they are to argue with the body,- to tell them, silently, that they are not sick, and to believe that they are well, and, when they awake from the dream that they are sick, they are well.

It is a well known fact that Nature is the true restorer and that physicians are simply servants, and are to put forth their efforts in aid of nature. And it is for the simple reason that the Christian Scientists get the patient's mind off from himself, and allow nature to work, that they succeed at all. In 1884 Prof. Townsend offered, - through Zion's Herald, - Mrs. Eddy One thousand Dollars to cure a case of dislocated ankle or hip with ^{out} manipulation, and Two thousand Dollars to cure a case of paralysis, but she declined saying, "They were then engaged in another department of Christian work, 'There shall no sign be given them.'" Let them cure a case of blindness, paralysis or fever as soon as Christ did and we will then believe.

"Death is an illusion", still Dr. Cowdry, while lecturing on this subject, and having just said "Christian Science can defy death", was stricken with paralysis and died.

We will acknowledge that they do cure many, but so does "Water-cure," "Faith-cure," "Diet-cure" and a lot of other "Cures." but what they do cure are known to the medical profession as cases of "Hysteria" which take the appearance of almost any disease and what is required is to get the patient aroused and desirous of recovery, and the battle is more than half won.

The only reason that one suffers from drugs is that "Mortal mind confers the only power a drug can ever have" and "human belief has decreed that certain results shall follow the use of them". No matter though the individual arises in the

dark and takes them, not knowing he has any in the house. According to their theory, he should suffer no inconvenience, but the contrary is the case. A Christian Scientist took poison and, as they gave him no antidote, he died.

In this connection let me ask a couple of questions,- How was it first discovered that certain things were harmful? Was it not by their producing harmful effects?

How did the idea of sin, sickness and death originate? Was it not from the fact that these phenomena were observed and these names were given to describe them?

V. As Christian.

As a means of deciding this point I know of no better authority than the Word of God.

They do not accept any of the fundamental Christian dogmas in their usual interpretations. They nowhere set them forth.

"God is Spirit, and Spirit is divine Principle." "God is Mind." "There is neither a personal Deity, a personal Devel nor a personal man." And all through Science and Health we find God spoken of as a Principle and not as a person. The Bible, on the other hand, teaches that "God is a Spirit." "A Father." And all through we find him spoken of as a person.

A creation implies a creator, and not an inactive Brincipple.

As "Man is as perfect as the Mind which forms him," as "Man is an emanation from God" and as "man is God's offspring"

then it follows that Christ is no more divine than it is possible for us to become. But Christ taught "that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father, he that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father."

"Jesus is the man and Christ the divine Principle".

Jesus was a Christ and not the Christ, and as a Christ was nothing but what man is, in his true nature. This is to deny Christ in the most subtle and dangerous way.

"God is all" "All is God" "God is Good, and evil cannot proceed from Good. . . . In infinite Good there is no room for evil." "In infinite Good there is no evil" From these we see there can be no sin, and without sin, there can be no sinner, and without a sinner there is no need of a Savior. Indeed "God and man are inseparable". "Man is as perfect as the Mind which forms him". How are we to reconcile these with the following,- "The wickedness of man was great," "Land filled with sin". "All manner of sin shall be forgiven" "Wages of sin is death".

"One sacrifice, however great, is insufficient to pay the debt of sin. The atonement requires constant self-immolation on the sinners part. That God's wrath should be vented upon"

His beloved Son is divinely unnatural, Such a theory is man
made." "Atonement is the exemplification of man's unity with
God". Whereas the scriptures teach that "we were reconciled"
(another word for atonement)"unto God by the death of his Son".
"It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul", "We
have redemption through His blood". "This man when he had
offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right
hand of the throne of God." For by one offering he hath
perfected forever them that are sanctified". Which of
these authorities are we to believe?

Christian Science says "there is no death" The writer
of Hebrews says, "it is appointed unto man once to die."

Christ said "Freely ye have received, freely give" But
Christian Scientists will give neither tuition nor healing for
nothing.

Christ said "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life"
Mrs. Eddy says, "Spirit cannot believe in God, Spirit is God."

Buddhism teaches that salvation is to be reached through
subjection of self and suffering, Christian Science follows
in their lead.

The mere denial of sin does not do away with it, and yet

~~Christian Scientists~~

~~these people~~ lay claim to the name Christian; - Was there ever such arrant blasphemy? We fail to see where ^{Mrs. Eddy's} she has made good any of her claims.

I would not dare to teach the following doctrines to a child, and, I am sure that what is not fit for children is not what I want for myself. "God will not punish man for doing what he created him capable of doing." "There is no sin" that "he could not be separated from God" and that "the motions of the arm is no more dependent upon the direction of mortal mind, than are organic action and secretions of the viscera," according to this, man would not be responsible for any of his actions, whereas Paul says "every one shall receive the things done in the body whether good or bad." One of the great dangers of Christian Science, so-called, is that man will make it a cloak to cover sins.

There is not a moral element in it.

The conclusion I arrive at from the foregoing is, that it is not a new theory, it is not logical, it is not a success as a healing art, it is not scientific, and above all, it is not Christian or moral.