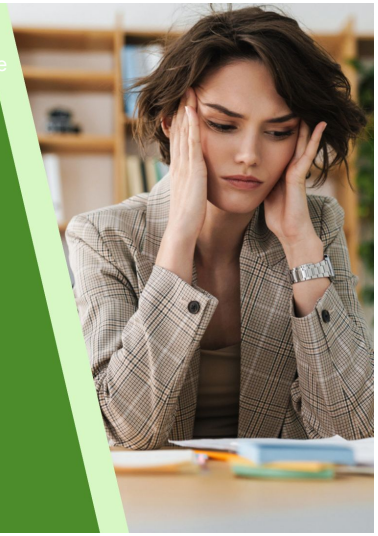
Fellowship of Former Christian Scientists 2021 FFCS Weekend Virtual Conference

THE STORY OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE AND GNOSTICISM



Pastor Chris Smith

July 30, 2021

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

At a meeting of the Christian Scientist Association, April 12, 1879, on motion of Mrs. Eddy, it was 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



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CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

CHRSTIAN SCIENCE IS NOT
Primitive Christianity
BUT RATHER
Primitive *Heresy*





BRIEF TIMELINE OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

1866 – Fall on the Ice in Lynn, MA

1875 – Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures

1879 – Church of Christ Scientist founded in Boston

CS - PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY OR PRIMITIVE HERESY?

- **Heresy** – a teaching that compromises an essential doctrine, losing sight of who God is. Literally heresy means "choice"—that is, a choice to deviate from traditional orthodox teaching in favor of one's own insights. Heresy is not the same thing as error. Error can be harmful, but heresy is catastrophic.

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- **Orthodoxy** – the teaching that best follows the Bible & summarizes what it teaches—best accounts for the paradoxes & apparent contradictions, best preserves the mystery, and best communicates the story of forgiveness offered in the gospel. The Apostle's Creed is a good example of a summary of orthodox teaching.

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Heresies – Ancient, but persistent

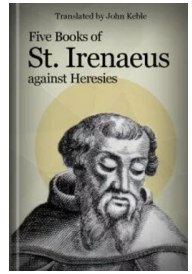


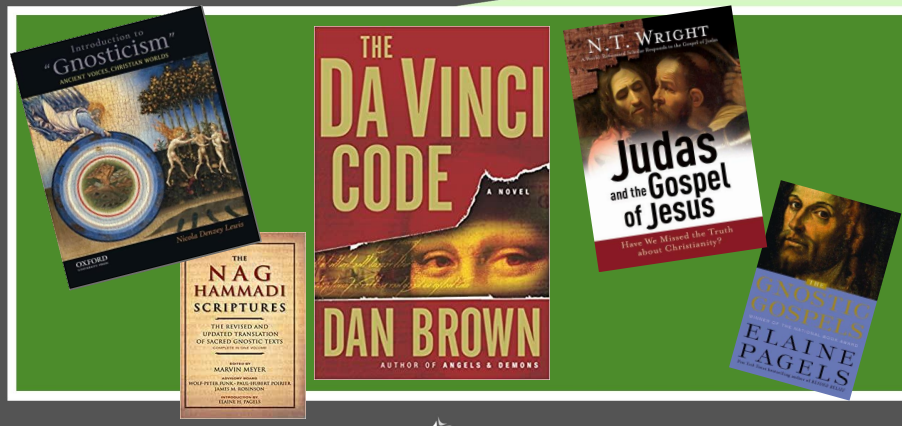
"There is nothing new under the sun"

Ecclesiastes 1:9

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY OR PRIMITIVE HERESY?

- Gnosticism – One of the earliest heresies to plague the Christian Church, as early as the 2nd century AD.
- Gnosticism is an umbrella term that refers to many different movements that arose in Syria, Egypt, Persia, and throughout the Middle East.
- Gnosticism comes from the Greek word ***gnosis*** which simply means knowledge.





Sophia of Jesus Christ

c. 150-250 AD

"The perfect Savior said: 'I want you to know that he who appeared before the universe in infinity, Self-grown, Self-constructed Father, being full of shining light and ineffable, in the beginning, when he decided to have his likeness become a great power, immediately the principle (or beginning) of that Light appeared as Immortal Androgynous Man, that through that Immortal Androgynous Man they might attain their salvation and awake from forgetfulness through the interpreter who was sent, who is with you until the end of the poverty of the robbers…First Man has his unique mind, within, and thought - just as he is it (thought) - (and) considering, reflecting, rationality, power. All the attributes that exist are perfect and immortal. In respect to imperishableness, they are indeed equal. (But) in respect to power, they are different, like the difference between father and son <, and son> and thought, and the thought and the remainder. As I said earlier, among the things that were created, the monad is first.'"

Gospel of Thomas
c. 130-180 AD

"These are the secret sayings which the living Jesus spoke and which Didymos Judas Thomas wrote down.

(1) "And he said, 'Whoever finds the interpretation of these sayings will not experience death.'

(114) "Simon Peter said to him, 'Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life.' Jesus said, 'I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven.'"

GNOSTICISM

MAIN TENETS

- **RADICAL DUALISM – Spirit vs. Matter**
- **GOD – Transcendent but not Immanent; therefore Unknowable**
- **SECRET KNOWLEDGE – Esoteric and only for the Elite**

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RADICAL DUALISM – SPIRIT & MATTER

"My first plank in the platform of Christian Science is as follows: 'There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all. Spirit is immortal Truth; matter is mortal error. Spirit is the real and eternal; matter is the unreal and temporal. Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore man is not material; he is spiritual.'"

Scientific Statement of Being, S&H, 468

RADICAL DUALISM

SPIRIT vs. MATTER

- Immaterial Material
- Spirit/Mind Body
- Abstract/Timeless Particular/Historical
- Infinite Finite

- Matter is where the problem is, it's limiting, it's contaminated, it's base and mundane and THEREFORE it is denigrated, disparaged, avoided, ignored, disregarded. In fact matter is so disparaged, CS maintains it's an illusion.

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GOD – IMPERSONAL & UNKNOWABLE

"Intelligence is omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. It is the primal and eternal quality of infinite Mind, of the triune Principle,--Life, Truth, and Love—named God…Mind is God."

S&H, 469.

GOD – IMPERSONAL & UNKNOWABLE

- Christian Science reduces God to a philosophical universal principle. God is entirely distant, abstract, and impersonal.
- Difficult to be devoted to an amorphous, impersonal principle.
- Less devotion to God—because after all, who is God, God is unknowable—and more devotion to a system.

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SECRET KNOWLEDGE – ESOTERIC GNOSIS

"No human pen nor tongue taught me the Science contained in this book, *Science and Health*…" S&H, 110.

"In the year 1866, I discovered the Christ Science or divine laws of Life, Truth, and Love, and named my discovery Christian Science. God had been graciously preparing me during many years for the reception of this final revelation of the absolute divine Principle of scientific healing." S&H, 107

SECRET KNOWLEDGE – ESOTERIC GNOSIS

"I should blush to write of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* as I have, were it of human origin, and were I, apart from God, it's author. But, as I was only a scribe echoing the harmonies of heaven in divine metaphysics, I cannot be super-modest in my estimate of the Christian Science textbook."
The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany, 115.

SECRET KNOWLEDGE – ESOTERIC GNOSIS

"The literal rendering of the Scriptures makes them nothing valuable, but often is the foundation of unbelief and hopelessness. The metaphysical rendering is health and peace and hope for all." S&H, 502-503

"…no honest overseer can overlook the fact that the Christianly scientific rule which she established and interpreted for mankind had not been previously discovered by any of the countless students of these same Scriptures in the centuries that had passed since they were recorded." *Why I am a Christian Scientist*, 171.

SECRET KNOWLEDGE – ESOTERIC GNOSIS

- Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures. This is where the real gnosis is found. The KEY gnosis that unlocks that which is unavailable to those who don't have the key.

- What is that key? Knowing the truth.
  - About God (Impersonal & Unknowable)
  - About yourself (Spiritual not Material),
  - About reality (Wake up to it).

- Esoteric Secret Knowledge often leads to Elitism – Graduate School Christians

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Recycled and Repackaged Version of the Primitive Gnostic Heresy

