

Christian Science

Sin, sickness, and death. Christian Science teaches that sin, sickness, and death are illusions that can be conquered by correct thinking. The rationale for this unusual idea is that all things in the universe are ultimately God. Since *everything* is God, there can be no sin and no matter. Since matter does not exist, neither can sickness, pain, or death exist.

If *everything* is God, however, one must wonder where this widespread, universal delusion about the material nature of the world emerged. Is delusion a part of God? Further, the Christian Science worldview seems utterly unlivable. Why lock the front door at night if there is no sin? Why go to the dentist if there is no pain? Why buckle seatbelts in the car if there is no death? According to the Bible, God created the material universe (Genesis 1; Ps. 102:25; Isa. 44:24) and pronounced it “very good” (Gen. 1:31). The emergence of sin (Genesis 3), however, brought ruin to the creation (Rom. 8:20; cf. Gen. 3:17) and introduced the realities of sickness and death (Gen. 2:17; 5:5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31; cf. Rom. 5:12).

God. Christian Science holds to a pantheistic view of God (i.e., God and the universe are the same reality). Biblically, however, God is distinct from his creatures and is a personal loving Father unto whom believers may cry, “Abba” (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). This personal God is a conscious being who thinks, feels, plans (Jer. 9:23–24; cf. Isa. 46:10), and engages in personal relationships with others (e.g., Gen. 5:22, 24; 6:9). This personal God created all things out of absolute nothingness (Heb. 11:3; cf. Gen. 1:1; Neh. 9:6; Ps. 33:8–9; 148:5). While he is omnipresent (Ps. 139:7–9), he is not “one with” the universe; he remains eternally distinct from the creation that he made and from humankind (Num. 23:19; Eccles. 5:2; Heb. 11:3).

Jesus Christ. Christian Science teaches that Jesus was a mere human who, as an adult, embodied “the Christ” (i.e., a manifestation of divinity), as other humans also can. Biblically, however, Jesus did not become the Christ as an adult, but rather was the one and only Christ from the very beginning (Luke 2:11; cf. 1 John 2:22). The precise NT counterpart of the OT word “Messiah” is “Christ” (John 1:41). The OT presents numerous prophecies regarding the coming of a single Messiah (e.g., Isa. 7:14; 53:3–5; Mic. 5:2; Zech. 12:10). *Jesus alone* fulfilled these prophecies, and hence he alone is the Christ (Luke 9:20). He is also absolute deity (John 1:1; 8:58; 10:30; 20:28).

Humanity. In keeping with its pantheistic views, Christian Science teaches that human beings, too, are God. Biblically, however, human beings are creatures (Gen. 1:26–27; 2:7) who remain eternally distinct from God (Eccles. 5:2) and are intrinsically weak and dependent upon God (Ps. 95:6–7; 100:3; Mic. 6:8; John 15:5; 2 Cor. 3:5; James 4:6). Christian Science proponents would do well to consider: if the essence of human beings is God, and if God is an infinite, *changeless* being, then how is it possible for

man (if he is a manifestation of divinity) to go through a *changing* process of enlightenment, by which he discovers his divinity? Biblically, God does not “blossom” or grow to maturity; he has always been in “full bloom” as the perfect and unchanging God (Ps. 90:2).

Salvation. Christian Science teaches that when one ceases believing in sin, sickness, and death, one becomes “saved.” Theologically, a weak view of sin blinds one to the need for a savior. Such is the case with Christian Science. A biblical view of sin (e.g., Rom. 5:12), however, points to a dire need for salvation—*especially* dire in view of the hard biblical realities of death (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 6:23) and hell (Rev. 20:14–15) as the wages of sin.

Biblical salvation is based wholly on the sacrificial death of Jesus (Rom. 5:8; cf. Isa. 53:6) and is received as a grace-gift (Rom. 5:1–11; Eph. 2:8–9) by faith in him (John 3:15–16; 5:24; 11:25; 12:46; 20:31).

Heaven and hell. Christian Science teaches that people make their own hell by thinking wrongly and their own heaven by thinking rightly. Biblically, however, heaven is the splendor-filled eternal abode of the saved (1 Cor. 2:9; 2 Cor. 12:4; Col. 1:12; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1–2), while hell is the horrific eternal abode of the unsaved (Matt. 13:42; 25:41, 46; 2 Thess. 1:8–9; Rev. 19:20; 20:14–15).

ESV study bible.