

# “FAITH HEALING OR SCIENTIFIC HEALING: ADDRESSING THREE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT CHRISTIAN SCIENCE”

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# Background on Christian Science

- 1875 – year Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures is first published
- Discoverer and Founder, Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910)
- 1866 – year Eddy discovered Christian Science and was restored to health
- Spent remaining 45 years of her life as author, publisher, founder of a Church



# Three Distinctions/Clarifications

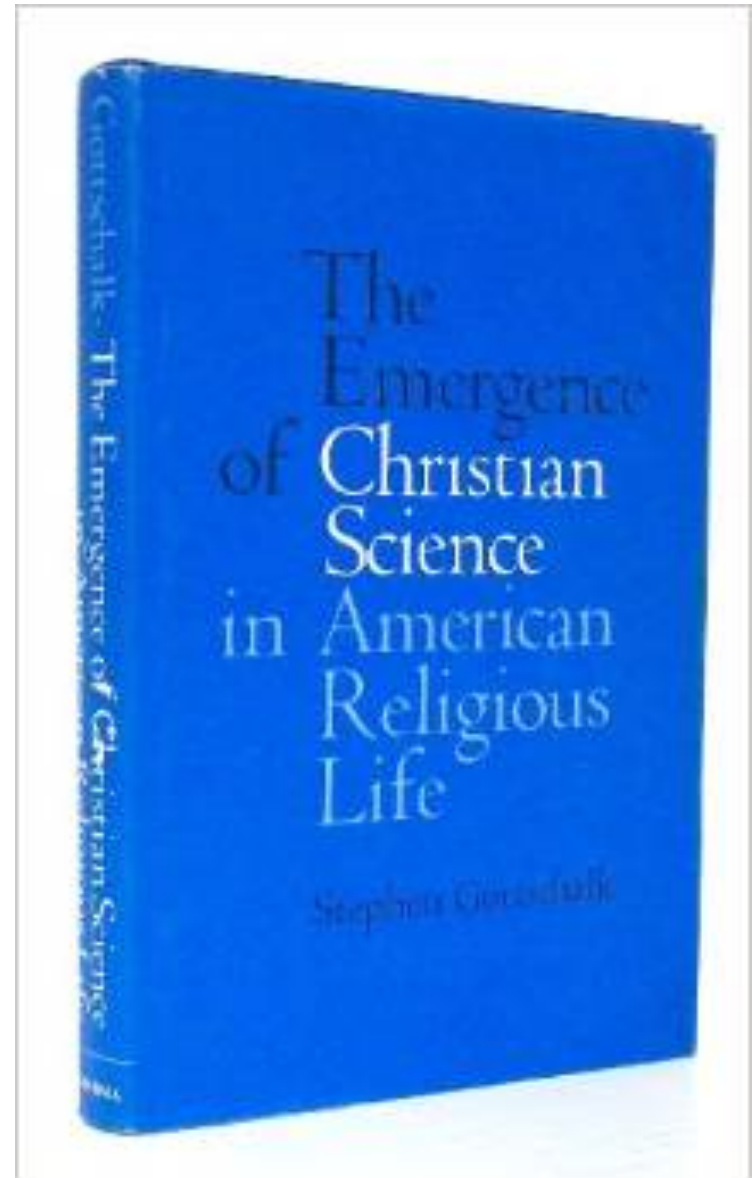
1. Between Harmonialism and Christian Science
2. Whether Mary Baker Eddy started a Church to promote faith healing or healing based on the spiritual laws of God
3. That Christian Science is a 'high demand' religion making excessive demands on adherents

# #1 – Distinction between Harmonialism and Christian Science

- A common way Christian Science is classified
- Harmonialism considered at the root of New Thought movement
- Christian Science: Gospel-based with Christian themes of redemption and salvation at its core, with the Bible as its primary source book.

# Stephen Gottschalk

- *"Eddy and her followers saw her teaching as opening a new stage for Christian experience, restoring 'primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing'".*
- From: *The Emergence of Christian Science in American Religious Life*



# Self-Understanding Document

“The theological premise in Christian Science that God is infinite and omnipotent Love guides the Church’s mission to and blessings for the world. Christ Jesus’ message that the kingdom of God is here is the authority from which his disciples (then and now) heal suffering of all kinds in the world. True healing prayers are “deep and conscientious protests of Truth – of man’s likeness to God and of man’s unity with Truth and Love.”<sup>21</sup> Prayer, therefore, is considered the greatest blessing to oneself as well as the greatest service to the world. Physical cure through prayer demonstrates God’s unconditional and powerful love for all.”

# Addressing Collective Problems through Healing

*The* CHRISTIAN SCIENCE  
**MONITOR**

“The object of the Monitor is to injure no man, but to bless all mankind” – Mary Baker Eddy



## #2 – Motivation to start a church based on faith healing, or healing based on spiritual laws of God?

- Eddy's purpose in founding her Church:

“...to reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing.”



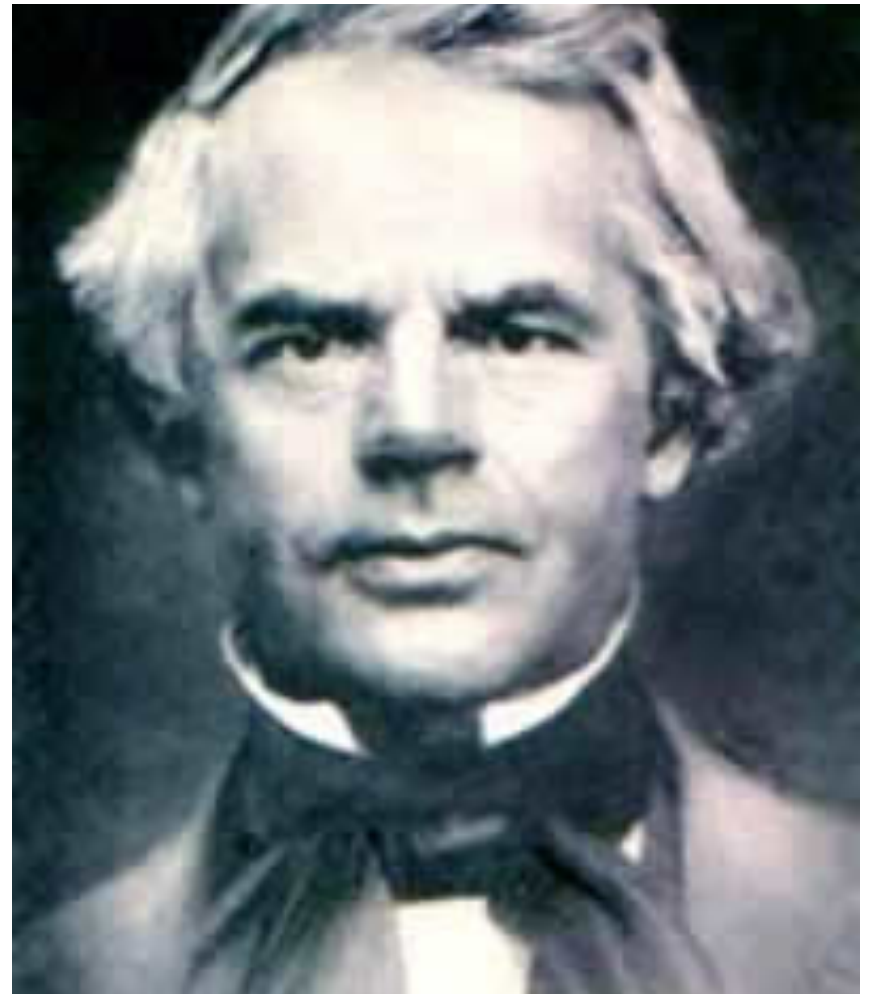


# Oklahoma and Oral Roberts



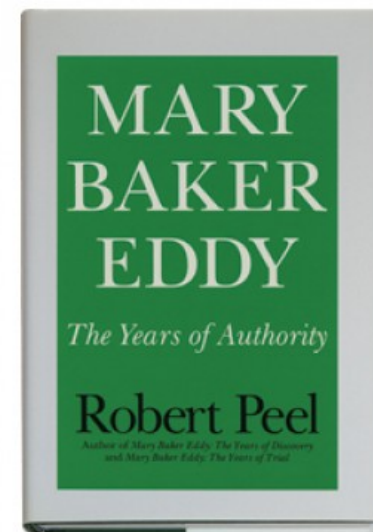
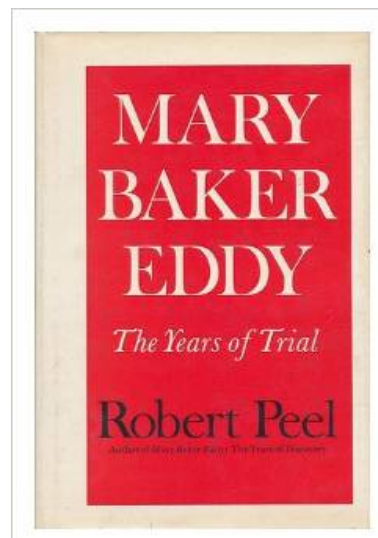
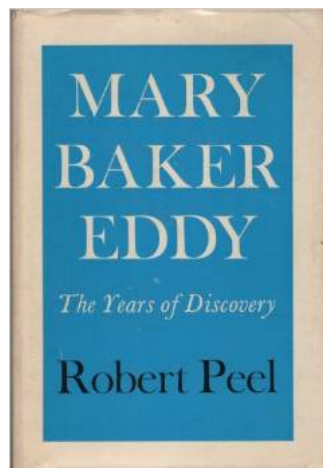
# Faith healers

- Distinction between faith-healing and what Eddy taught -- spiritual laws of God that were universally reliable -- to avoid relapses such as she experienced with Phineas Quimby.



# Robert Peel, Eddy Biographer

- “At first she had been far from wanting to start a new denomination. Her mission, as she saw it, was to Christianity, and through that, to the world. But when organized Christianity itself had treated her spiritual radicalism as an unreasonable disturbance of the religious status quo, she had seen nothing for it but to have a church of her own” (Years of Authority, p. 67).



# ‘Animal Magnetism’

- Thinking rooted in material appearances that had no intention of acknowledging a transcendent spiritual power.
- Same resistance Eddy thought Christ Jesus encountered such as the demoniac who cries in Luke 4:34 – ‘What have we to do with you’?
- William Brassey Hole, 1846-1917, The Gadarene



# Eddy Founded her Church

- Empower a beleaguered Christianity
- Challenge an over-confident scientism dismissive of Christian healing





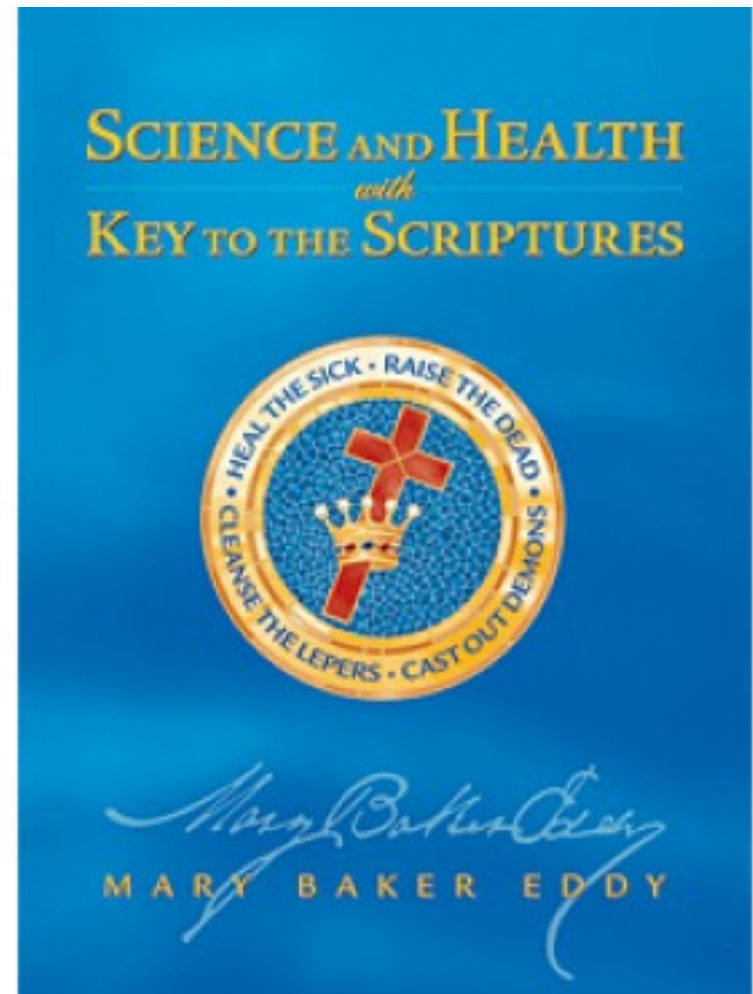
# 1<sup>st</sup> Sentence in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*

*“The prayer that reforms the sinner and heals the sick is*

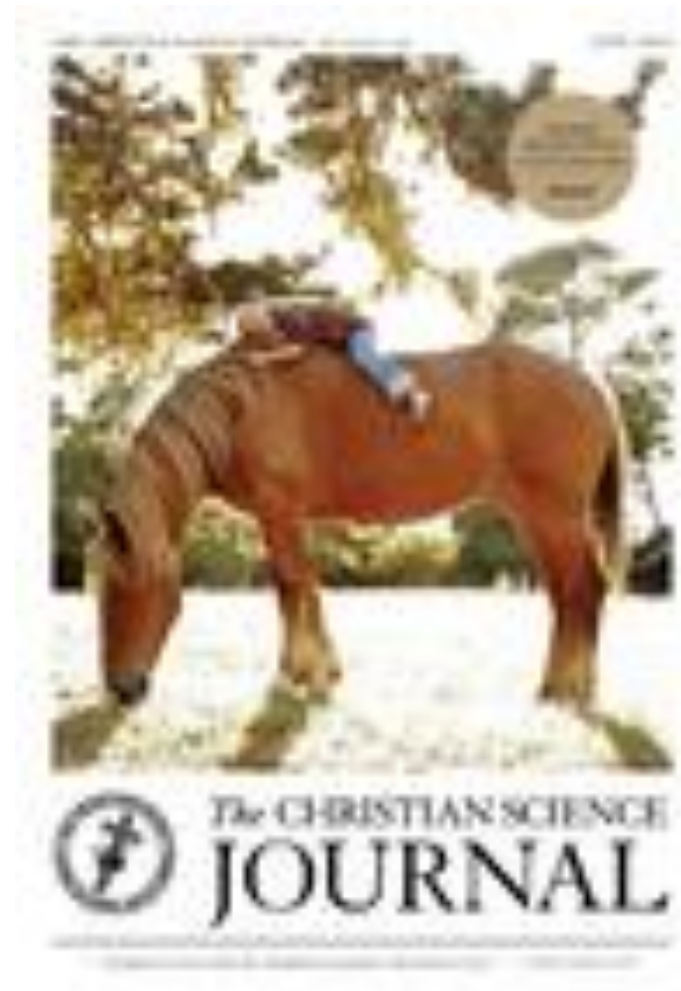
*--an absolute faith that all things are possible to God, —*

*--a spiritual understanding of Him,*

*--an unselfed love.”*



# 100 Years of Published Healings

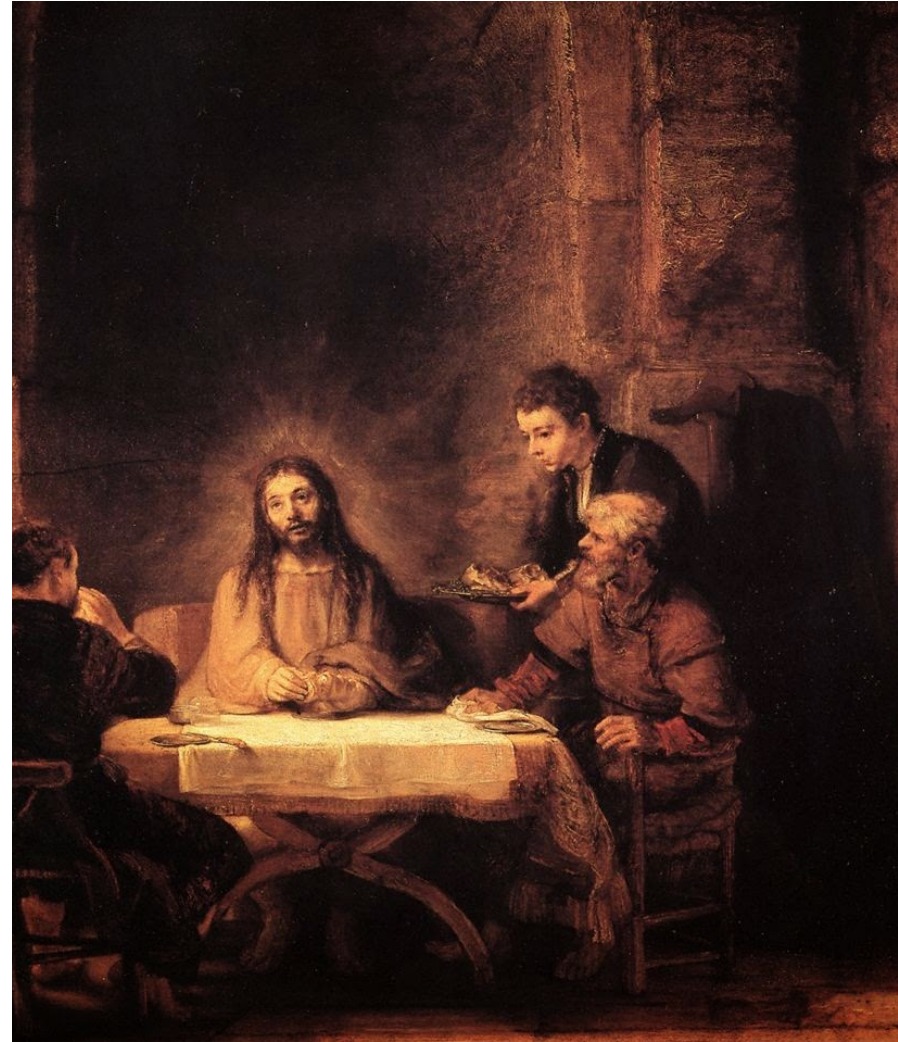


# Healing a *Result* of Understanding God

- ...A sign of following Christ Jesus' admonition:

*Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.*

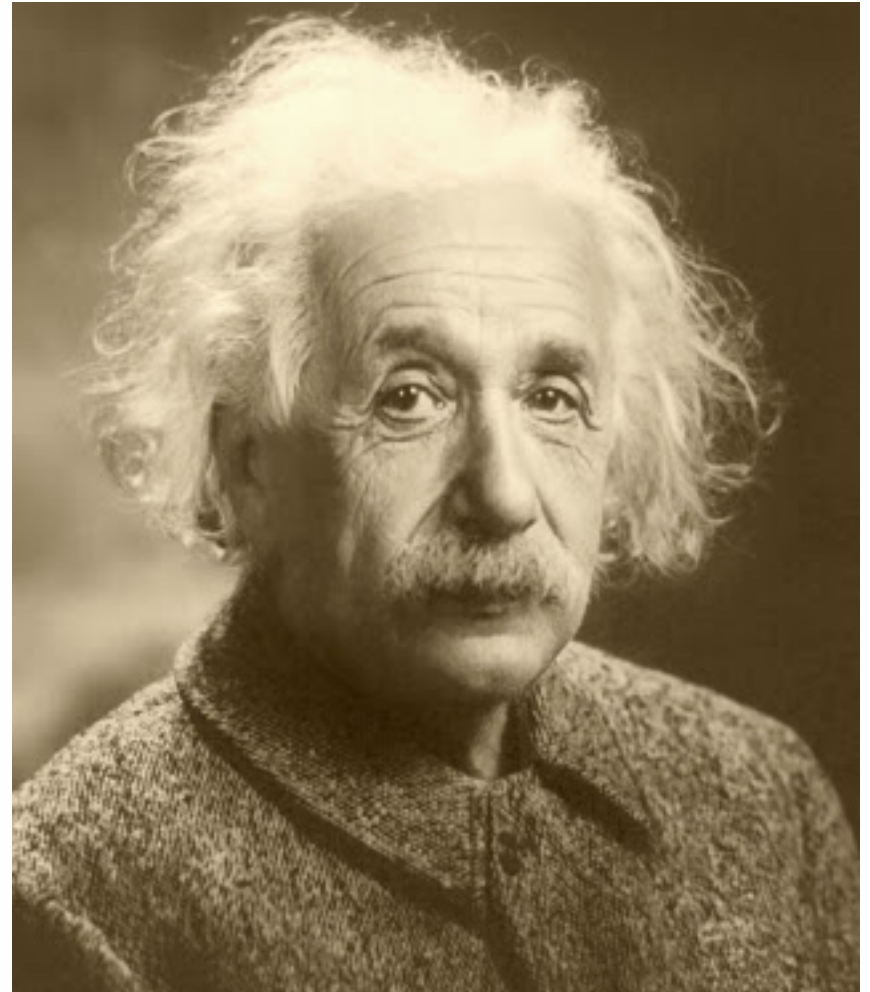
NRSV: John 8:31, 32





# The nature of matter

- To Einstein and quantum physicists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, matter would no longer be considered 'substance'.
- *"It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life."*
- John 6:63



## Robert Peel: “Spiritual Healing in a Scientific Age”

*“The purpose of spiritual healing is never simply to produce physical ease. It is rather to put off the limited, physical concept of man, which binds thought to matter, and thus bring to light Paul’s ‘new’ man. Bodily conditions they view as effect rather than cause – the outward expression of conscious and unconscious thoughts. The purpose of turning to God for healing is therefore not merely to change the evidence before the physical senses but to heal the deeper alienation of human thought from God.”*

## #3 – That Christian Science is a ‘high demand’ religion

- ‘Normalization of disease’
- Medicine should be a natural monopoly...but it isn't.
- 50% of population in developing countries pursue alternative healthcare. Why?
  - Mercurial nature of medical theories
  - Common practices in some areas antithetical in others
  - High rate of misdiagnoses
  - Differing levels of care dependent on facility, ie current Veterans Administration Hospital scandal
  - Drug lobbies 2<sup>nd</sup> only to arms lobby in Washington DC
  - Growing understanding/acceptance of mind-body connection



# Modeling the Master Christian



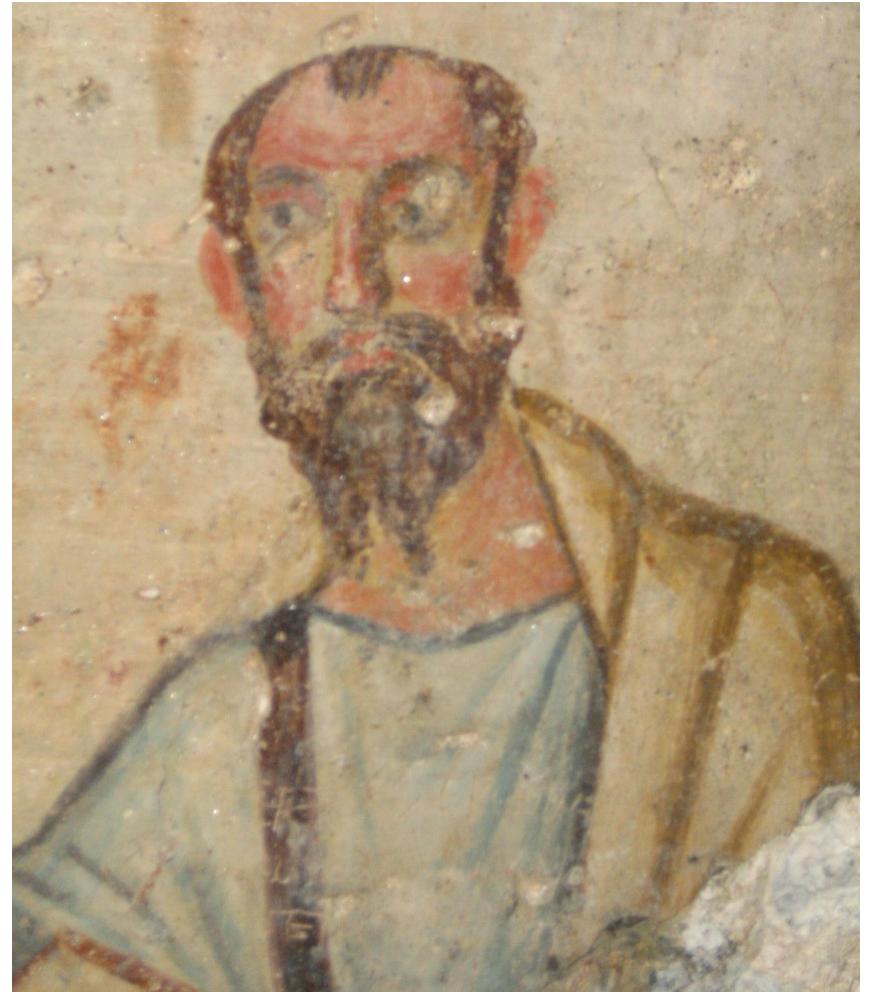
Rembrandt



# Paul the Apostle

- Romans 7:19,20

*I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.*



# Christian Scientists are free to choose...

- No church hierarchy tells a lay person what care to seek
- ‘Temporary means’ provided for if problem not resolved through prayer
- *“If Christian Scientists ever fail to receive aid from other Scientists, — their brethren upon whom they may call, — God will still guide them into the right use of temporary and eternal means.” (Science and Health, p. 444)*

THANK YOU

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