

**CHRISTIAN SCIENCE:
THE GOSPEL OF THE
KINGDOM**

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Christian science: The Gospel of the kingdom by Clifford P. Smith

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CLIFFORD P. SMITH

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A LECTURE BY

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Christian Science :

The Gospel of the Kingdom

THE better part of the human race seeks a greater dominion over adverse conditions, in order to gain and enjoy a more abundant life. The actual need of mankind, and its highest aspiration, is that freedom of thought and action which constitutes full and perfect manhood. Accordingly, the use of true religion is to expel evil from human experience, to the end that each individual may reflect the Life that is God, divine good.

It is also true that whatever progress is being made toward this goal ought to be, and will be, manifest in present experience. Progress, truly considered, implies that human conditions and conduct are being made to conform to an ideal; and the only worthy ideal is that which is furnished by the absolute truth of being. The majority of believers, however, do not expect to realize full salvation without dying. They depict heaven as a situation on the other side of death. In the mean time they look for more

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discord than harmony, for more subjection than dominion; even though bondage to evil is often not recognized as such.

The Founder of the Christian religion referred to his message as "the gospel of the kingdom;" and of this kingdom of heaven or kingdom of God he said much in parables but several things explicitly. He said it is "at hand" (that is to say, it is present and within reach); he said it is "within you" (which is to say, it is a state of consciousness); and he said it comes upon you as devils or evils are cast out. Heaven, therefore, is not the sequence of death; it is an active state of goodness. It is gained by overcoming evil; not by dying, but by right living. The kingdom of heaven is the consciousness of good. It is the reign of Life, Truth, and Love in man. We are in heaven here and now to the extent that we realize the actual qualities of true being.

BASIC QUESTIONS

How would you like to be sure that in the reality of your being you image and reflect divine Life and Truth and Love, while the only devil, evil, or hell is the illusion in human consciousness?

How would you like to know that infinite good is the Principle—the cause and substance—of all that really is, and that this divine Principle is always available to you for the overcoming of any evil condition?

How would you like to be certain that heaven and hell, health and disease, happiness and misery, are simply opposite mental states, resulting from contrary modes of thought, and that one of these states is real and true and enduring, while the other is a bad dream?

How would you like to learn that there is a way by which you can progressively awaken from this dream and thereby enter into the kingdom of God?

For the proof of these propositions Christian Science relies on four distinct grounds of assurance: First, the verbal instruction of inspired teachers as found in the Bible; second, the object-lessons or so-called miracles furnished by Christ Jesus and his followers in the first three centuries of the Christian era; third, the evident spirit of Truth which pervades the works on Christian Science written by Mrs. Eddy; fourth, the results of Christian Science in the experience of the multitudes who have sought its benefits according to its own rules. With this data

Christian Science is able to satisfy the highest sense of reason; but, not content with the verdict of any human faculty, it makes its ultimate appeal to the understanding which is spiritual and divine.

Among the better human qualities are hope and faith. In them the message of Christian Science finds a glad response. To read without hostility the Christian Science text-book, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," is to hope that its teaching may be true, and to have some degree of faith that it is true; and if hope and faith induce the study and practise of its precepts, understanding will sooner or later furnish the demonstration of its truth in your own experience; and this is the highest order of proof. Seeking "first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," in the way illuminated by this commentary on the Bible, the earnest and persistent seeker will find that the appropriate benefits, both temporal and eternal, will be added unto him.

SCIENCE AND THE SENSES

I do not mean to say that Christian Science coincides with the testimony of the physical senses. It does not. Neither does any science.

Every system of science admits that sense impressions are always imperfect and often misleading; indeed, that knowledge is superior to the evidence of the senses is the proposition with which science begins. The science of astronomy began when knowledge corrected the belief of the senses respecting sunrise and sunset. The science of aviation began when knowledge overcame the belief of the senses that a heavier-than-air machine could not be made to fly. Perhaps nothing is more real to the senses than pain, yet there have been cases where one who has lost a limb still has pain in the severed member which seems as real as pain in one that is connected with the brain. Discoveries in the way of invention frequently set aside the testimony of the physical senses; and there is no limit beyond which material sense cannot be forced to yield. Christian Science declares that actual knowledge is not in the least material; it is purely spiritual.

Fortunately for each and all of us, this purely spiritual sense is ever present in human consciousness. It is the actual manifestation of Life. It is that which lives and does not die. Through the presence in human consciousness of this divine element, God is with us and we

"have our being" in Him. It is by reason of the presence and power of spiritual sense or spiritual understanding that we have a dependable assurance of heaven, for it is that with which we can discern and realize the divine nature. What is the divine nature? What are the character and the attributes of God? What is man? These questions are the most important that can engage our attention, and when truly answered they dispose of the age-long mystery, What is evil?

The New Testament shows that Christ Jesus defined God by the use of the words "good," "truth," "life," and "Spirit." His names for Deity were "God" and "Father;" and in his use of the latter we find not only "my Father," but "the Father," "our Father," and "your Father." There must have been good reasons why he so often used this name for God. He employed it because he aimed to lift thought above human generation and mortal conditions and point to God as the only author of man; also, because this name as used by him denotes God's divinely parental power, government, and care with respect to man. Also, because the love of a parent is the highest type of human love, and it would serve as the semblance of the