



Christian Science: A Religious Belief and a Therapeutic Agent

B. O. Flower

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From the INTRODUCTION.

THAT we in America are living in the presence of one of the most remarkable spiritual movements known to history will not be questioned by any thoughtful person who is cognizant of current events, where a new religious movement that a few years ago was as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, heeded by few, has become a great moral and religious factor in the nation and the world. Fifteen years ago Christian Science had no church building; today there are hundreds of handsome church edifices, besides the magnificent temple in Boston, which cost two million dollars to erect; while the spread of the faith among the people and its wonderful influence in bringing health, peace and happiness while kindling anew spiritual idealism in tens of thousands of hearts, speaks of the presence of a truth vital to help in a world hungering and thirsting for something better than the husks of dogmatic and creedal theology and the materialistic externalism of forms and rites.

Nor is this all. The new truth crossed the seas and has already been gladly received in various quarters of the globe. Seldom in history has a religious movement spread so swiftly and appealed so compellingly to highly intellectual and deeply earnest men and women; and the rapid growth has been made in the face of a persistent campaign of misrepresentation, misinterpretation and slander rarely surpassed in the annals of spiritual advance.

This fact suggests an objection constantly advanced against Christian Science by those who are more given to echoing the sophistry of conventionalism than to thinking for themselves. It is claimed that Mrs. Eddy never received a university education, is not what is termed a learned woman; but this is merely the repetition of an objection that has been advanced time and again against great moral leaders and reformers. Indeed, from the standpoint of the learned Jews and Romans of Jesus' day, would He not have been regarded as ignorant — too ignorant, indeed, to merit serious consideration being given His words on the part of those who seem to imagine that scholastic learning is a necessary accompaniment to a vital moral or spiritual message? In the case of the great Nazarene, His lack of scholastic training did not prevent His doing mighty works or winning the heart of the people to a nobler ideal of life and promulgating the loftiest code of ethics the world has ever known. As a matter of fact, is it not true that almost every religious leader has been denounced either as ignorant or as a charlatan, an imposter and a dangerous character? More than this. How many of these have escaped being denounced as corrupt, immoral and beneath the respect of those who claimed to be pillars of religion, society and the state? Look, for example, at Socrates, whose lofty moral precepts have been an inspiration to the high-minded for over three thousand years. He was condemned to death on the charge of corrupting the youths of Athens and of impiety. His corruption lay in teaching them to think for themselves and to think broadly and honestly. We have no records that voice the charges of the enemies of Jesus or the calumnies and slanders that doubtless were industriously circulated in regard to the Nazarene, save those which incidentally crop out in the writings of His followers; but from these we see how He was criticized. Thus on one occasion, it will be remembered, Jesus admitted that His enemies described Him as a wine-bibber and a friend of publicans and sinners, or in other words, as one addicted to strong drink and who associated with those whom the Jews held to be the vilest members of society....

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