

**THE TRUTH AND
ERROR OF
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE**

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BY M. CARTA STURGE

(MORAL SCIENCES TRIPOS, CAMBRIDGE)
AUTHOR OF "THOUGHTS TRANSCENDENTAL AND PRACTICAL"
AND "SOME LITTLE QUAKERS IN THEIR NURSERY"

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

It is some ten years since my attention was first drawn to Christian Science by one of its accredited lecturers, and the interest I took in it led me to study it with considerable care, to read many of the books written upon the subject, and to become associated with some of its genuine followers. Consequently, the criticism attempted in the following pages is by no means a hasty expression of dissent, such as is often at first aroused by its somewhat startling tenets, nor the result of a superficial, ill-digested study carried on through a few weeks or months. But it is the outcome of a genuine and sympathetic effort to understand and appreciate it, made through the course of several years.

Nor are the passages taken from Mrs Eddy's "Science and Health" (the work which has been mainly instrumental in spreading Christian Science) quotations taken at random after a hasty glance through the contents of the book. I am aware how easy it is to take isolated passages without reference to the context, and so to misrepresent the whole teaching of a book. I have endeavoured to avoid such superficial treatment, and, with that view, have not only read the book many times, but have pored over it in the manner necessary when one desires to be "steeped" in a subject, and thoroughly intimate with it, taking each point I have dealt with separately, and tracing it throughout the book, as well as endeavouring to see it in relation with all the other points taken as a whole. I have, however, met with extraordinary difficulty in trying to get a connected idea of the contents of "Science and Health," owing to one of its most striking characteristics, namely, its entire want of sequence, both in thought and in expression. It abounds in contradictions, not

only to be found in the same page, the same paragraph, the same sentence, but often between two words used consecutively. I have, therefore, been compelled to quote isolated passages. At first sight, this may give the impression that these quotations have been torn from their context; this, however, is not the case, for I have made a conscientious effort to become so thoroughly acquainted with the spirit of the teaching, as to feel as sure, as might be, of taking the quotations fairly, and not wrenching them from the meaning they are intended to convey.

The numbers in the margin, giving the page from which a passage is taken, refer to the eightieth edition of "Science and Health," but this has been carefully compared with one of the very latest, the two hundred and twentieth,¹ in order to make sure that the

¹ In still later editions of "Science and Health," the chapters have been so transposed as to make the reference to given pages no longer correct, but with the exception of one or two unimportant passages, all I have quoted still stand as before, but transposed.

teaching given in the later editions has not been radically altered.

I have made little allusion to the various, more or less mutually opposed, schools of Healing by Thought, and have not even mentioned Mr Dowie, who has had a following rivalling in numbers that of Mrs Eddy, and who is alleged to have produced quite as striking cures without physical means. But he has attached his healing to no new theory of Metaphysic, or of Christian doctrine, and therefore does not propagate a belief in his cures which is subversive of ordinary doctrine or of common sense. Consequently there is nothing new in his teaching to criticise; and as regards his healing, if there is any truth in the theory given as accounting for the cures of Christian Science, namely, the calling out, by some means, of a latent vitality residing in the sub-consciousness of the patient, it will equally account for those of Mr Dowie.

I gladly take this opportunity for tendering my warm thanks to the Bishop of Stepney, at

whose suggestion I have written the book, for much helpful criticism, and to my friends Lady Low and Mrs George Boole for sympathetic aid, as well as to others, who have kindly given me assistance on special points.

The treatment of Christian Science given in the book does not pretend to be an exhaustive one, but it is hoped that it may prove helpful to those who have not time to study the subject, and disentangle the truth from the error, for themselves.

M. CARTA STURGE.

8th November 1902.