

whether the funds come from a central body or are provided for each separate local effort; whether the plans of service which have been here suggested are thought satisfactory or not—of this at least I am quite sure, that if the Church of England is to continue to provide for the masses of the people that form of religious teaching which every member of our Church believes to be the purest and the best, we must not be content to neglect a most important part of the Church's duty, which is of vital interest to the extension of true religion. When the Established Church abandons to others the work of making known the message of salvation to the outcast and the indifferent, she will have already entered upon the period of decadence, and will have lost all her claim to the support and the sympathy of the earnest and devout.

JOHN F. KITTO.

ART. II.—FAITH HEALING.

AMONG the varied phases of active religious life in the present day, we see one which is founded on a single isolated Apostolic utterance; which includes in tenet the highest manifestation of Divine power committed to renewed man, and which abrogates the office of physician. The supporters of this doctrine, there is reason to believe, are increasing in numbers. They are not limited to any particular denomination, although all hold decidedly evangelical views. It may be said, too, that the adage "Extremes meet" is fulfilled in them, inasmuch as the poor and ignorant, as well as the affluent and in a strictly religious sense highly cultured, approach to the same end—arrive at the same conclusion.

It will be apparent from the heading of this paper that we refer to certain who advance the doctrine of healing by prayer of faith, to the exclusion of remedial agencies—"Faith Healers," as we shall term them. Virtually such. For although it may be plausibly urged that anointing with oil is a medicinal agency; although in remote times it did enter somewhat largely into use, chiefly for outward injuries and diseases, as well as for supposed invigorating and beautifying properties; although, moreover, at the present day a general inunction of the body by oil in certain forms of fever has found advocates in the medical profession—it yet may reasonably be assumed that, by the cultured¹ advocates of "faith healing," the act is regarded in the same light as those by which the Great Physician

¹ We use the word in distinction from the "Peculiar People" sect.

brought potentially and visibly home to man His wondrous cures. In other words, just as our Church Catechism speaks, with reference to baptism, of water as "An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," so does anointing stand with relation to the body and disease at their hands.

That the procedure is an outcome of faith—faith, too, in its highest aspect and exercise—may not be questioned. Its promoters are individuals whose supreme object, when ministering to sufferers, is the exaltation of the Redeemer. The Divine prerogative involved and, subordinately, the eminently Christian walk of the exponent, alike demand reverential and respectful consideration.

We venture to advance that there is harm from the doctrine thus put forth; harm to the Christian, harm to the cause of Christ from the world without.

The subject may be regarded (1) in its human relationship and procedure, (2) from Scriptural authority and precedent, and (3) in the issue for good or evil, present and prospective.

(1) Truly, "extremes meet." There are the educated and well-to-do, to whom we have referred; and there are also the uneducated and poor, known by the name of "Peculiar People." Very untoward results as concerns the practice of the latter are, from time to time, brought before us by the newspapers. The instances in which their tenets are illustrated are inquests, consequent on death from acute disease; cases which shock the instincts of humanity as we read of them. Maternity revolts at the thought of tender infants left to do battle against disease uncombated by God-given science—by God-given medicines.¹

With the educated class, conditions are very different both as to the individual and the ailment, though the standpoint be the same. The ministering agent is ordinarily a lady, and the invalid be found almost invariably among women.

Physicians well know how much light is revealed by the simple word "sex" in its relation to disease.

For the word foreshadows on the one hand complaints, protean indeed in form and number, but often of no serious import. Some are incidental to age and conditions when the mind, if it be not actually warped from a healthy standard, yet looks within too much; when the imagination is a motive-power too often on the wrong side. Temperament, hereditary

¹ Within the present century an able but eccentric gentleman—at one time a legislator—adopted toward his children the usage of the Indian race. As far as possible (*i. e.*, within doors) clothing was dispensed with, and a coating of oil to the whole body substituted. The procedure, much commented upon at the time, was untoward in result, and found no followers.

predisposition—moral as well as physical, let us remember—social surroundings, may all cause departure from the standard of health, when the individual is debarred from salutary maternal and domestic activities. How nobly such rocks ahead are shunned by women who throw themselves heart and soul into self-denying Christian work, is also well known. But there is another, far sadder aspect. Sex (in relation to middle age) is associated in the minds of Physicians with disease of a dire character.

Through the more direct transgression of the “mother of all living,” we read came the fall of man. May we venture to ascribe to such event the greater suffering which is the lot of the weaker being? The All-Wise and Good alone knows, and “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” The “mystery of pain” is indeed profound, and it should be the last subject for dogmatism. This much in its finite relation we indeed verify, that the palm of fortitude, of submission, of faith triumphant, rests with the “daughters of Abraham.”

We have sought to put before our readers two very diverse states of health in womankind, because we deduce, from such, an important relationship to the subject of “faith healing.” In the minor one the imagination and will are strong factors. The invalid needs to be lifted from self, from introspection—perhaps morbid. Here faith, mundane and working by human agency and means, is rewarded.

But alas, we see the reverse side of the picture—a picture which no hand may pourtray in colour too vivid. To its consideration the eye of the reader is especially invited.

We reverentially contemplate the fiat of the Most High in which is seen the extreme of physical suffering—whether natural or against nature—and the extreme of unselfish joy, meeting in weak woman. The Gospel Prophet tells us in imperishable verse of the one when speaking of maternal love, and it is among the familiar metaphors of Holy Writ. Not so of the other. In the fell disease of which we speak, the fabled story of Prometheus finds literal fulfilment. Remedies, the more potent of recent discovery—let us devoutly acknowledge such boon—mitigate suffering, but as yet heal not the sufferer. And here it is that we join issue with those persons of whom we write. For cases of cancer form a large proportion of those who are the objects of their ministrations. Faith, setting aside more abstruse definition, can be grasped by all under two aspects—active and operative, passive and enduring. Each finds due place in the Testament, old and new. Suffice it for the present to ask if the latter of the two bearings is not by Faith Healers ignored, or else, so to speak, absorbed into the former wholly?

This naturally leads on to the question of human procedure, curative and otherwise, in which the physician is concerned.

Is this man the appointed channel of Divine mercy to sufferers from "the thousand ills" to which human flesh is heir? Is he, too, when the skill vouchsafed to him, as a talent, finds its limit, the instrument by whom timely warning to "set the house in order" is ordinarily imparted? And has not the Creator Himself, has not the Incarnate Son, has not "the chiefest of Apostles," when no great issue as to Truth Eternal called for the supernatural, worked by human means?

What, otherwise, the object or gain in discoveries by science? By whom are they given? Are such to be recognised in all that contributes to enjoyment in home life; in all that affects commerce and prosperity in nations, while in the highest bearing, the gracious gifts of God are set aside? Are we (virtually) to say, "No, we acknowledge Divine operation by secondary cause in subordinate matters, but healing is to be sought by miracle."

(2) As to Scriptural authority and precedent. The foundation of the tenet rests mainly, if not wholly, on a certain passage in the Epistle General of James. No additional weight is fairly deducible from Messianic and Apostolic teaching elsewhere. The writer, we learn, was identified prominently with the Judaic party in the early Church;¹ and this circumstance is not without import in the matter.

In the Old Testament we find no reference made to anointing by oil, in association with disease, except at Leviticus xiv. 18, *when the sufferer is healed*. Then indeed might it be the "oil of gladness" and thanksgiving, typical of health to soul and body alike, as in the case of the Samaritan leper. As an emblem of Divine Grace, and of temporal prosperity, the word often recurs, particularly in the Psalms.

In the New Testament there is one, and that an apposite illustration of the use of oil for surgical purposes. It is found in the parable of the Good Samaritan. The soothing oil mingled with the stimulant wine is poured into his wounds. What was the condition of medical science in those days? and more, how far were remedies, if we except outward application, conducive to recovery? Quite possibly more harmful than useful in many cases. Simple recumbent rest, either demanded by the complaint itself, or else rendered expedient by the anointing, would be no unimportant factor toward recovery then, as it is now, when this restorative power of nature is fully and *scientifically* recognised.

Seventy, and at another time "the twelve" Disciples were

¹ See "Life of St. Paul," by Canon Farrar, D.D.

Divinely commissioned to heal the sick. Yet they returned rejoicing in unqualified success.

Anointing was not enjoined by the Master. True, St. Mark speaks¹ of the twelve employing such means. But may we not fairly consider the act as unauthorised, though not forbidden, by the Saviour? As in fact one of those Judaic rites which the followers of Jesus, either by way of conciliation or concession to their Jewish brethren, or, possibly indeed, from lingering attachment on their own part to ritual of the old dispensation, retained in the new?

In the first recorded miracle after the Ascension, and indeed in all following, we read of an invocation of the name of the Great Physician—nothing more.

It is with death—preparation for death—and as a tribute of love rather than as an attribute of power; it is with incidents hallowed through all time in the person of our Redeemer, that we chiefly read of anointing.² The act itself may be alleged by those of whom we write as wholly subordinate, symbolical of, not accessory to, faith. Granted. Yet take away this accessory as a tenet from the uneducated class known as “Peculiar People,” and how long as a distinct body would they exist?

Some twenty years ago the religious world at Zurich, and afterwards in this country, was much stirred by events which occurred at Mannedorf. These events centred round the person of an unmarried young woman in humble circumstances and position in life—Dorothy Trudell. Reference to her character and work may be fittingly made here, inasmuch as it is on lines then formulated that “faith healing” has been followed, and even a hospital for its exercise established in London. Pure and single-minded, we may regard her as a Joan of Arc going forth in fervour and faith to combat sickness with the sword of “all prayer.” By occupation she was a flower-maker, and the first manifestation of her religious views was put forth when four or five of her work-women fell ill. The precise ailment is not stated, but it is said the doctors were at fault, and their treatment inoperative; that then the passage in St. James came to her mind; that she followed fully the injunction laid down by the Apostle, and that the patients recovered. The outcome later on was an institution for those suffering from disease of every kind. There, cases of sudden death occurred, probably from heart disease, and investigation at the hands of civic authorities of Zurich was demanded by the medical faculty. Judgment was at first adverse, but on appeal to a higher court, favourable, on the ground that no medicines were used, and no payment was sought.

¹ See Acts xxi. 20-26.

² St. John xii. 3-7; St. Luke vii. 37-47.

Setting aside at present the higher issue concerned, let us glance at the bearings of the matter from a medical point of view.

Artificial flower-making is recognised *now* as an exceptionally unhealthy occupation. Deleterious pigments, such as arsenic, enter into the fabrication of the articles, and would fully account for protracted sickness; and on withdrawal for a time from the source of danger, recovery. Moreover, chemical analysis was less advanced, less resorted to, then; while it is not too much to add, a village practitioner in Switzerland at such date might not be highly skilled in his profession.

In the brief memoir of Dorothy, there are certain features in her character which to the physician versed in the more psychological branch of his profession, would at once arrest attention, and throw light on manifestations which to other eyes would be associated with the supernatural. Thus there was a distinct hereditary tendency to insanity. Again, she was the subject of spinal disease, an affection which reacts on the whole nervous system, and is prone to cause mental development of a morbid kind.

An epidemic of typhoid broke out at Mannedorf, and among its victims was Dorothy Trudell. Her age was but forty-nine years.

Let us again look at the words of St. James, primarily in their application to the early Church, and secondarily to the age in which we live.

Two questions meet us at the outset, (1) Does the exhortation apply only to the Church of Apostolic days, viewed in light *Judaic*, or to that of all future time? (2) If observed, was it in the sense now applied? For certain gifts, such as speaking with tongues, exorcising evil spirits, ceased to exist.

Our argument points to universality, but in a sense divergent from that of "Faith Healers."

We find no endorsement in the Acts of the Apostles—written, we may remark, by an inspired Physician—nor in those Epistles which treat exhaustively of sickness and suffering in the body, with relation to both present and future state. Outward procedure, anointing, has indeed been retained and handed down to us in connection with doctrines which Protestants generally hold to be subversive of truth. It is here unnecessary to do more than name the Roman Catholic and Greek Churches. They differ, noteworthy, in that the first practises "Extreme Unction" as a death-bed rite, while the latter looks to it as both channel of grace and (possible) instrument in recovery. We do not see the Physician's aid dissevered and disowned in the Greek Church, a marked point of divergence from the Healers' procedure. Yet which procedure would commend

itself to the eye of what has been well designated "sanctified common sense"?

It may be urged by them, "Yes, but with the Greek Church the motive-power is superstition, unsound doctrine; but with us faith—faith pure and unalloyed." And again, "To the Romanist the oil symbolizes hope, but hope departed as to this world. To us Protestant 'Healers' the converse signification obtains—a renewal of life here below." In reply, we turn for light to Holy Writ. An aspect of truth profound and momentous appears to have been lost sight of. It is that of Divine Will wrought out in and by suffering. Here we tread on no uncertain ground. Apart from the Great Exemplar of whom we read, He was thus "made perfect," we have recorded the life of the chief Apostle. And there is not only the personal experience of St. Paul, but—a point of especial relevancy to our subject—*his relation to sick friends*. Reverentially passing by that highest aspect of suffering, which reached an acme unfathomable in the passion of our Redeemer, we yet from Scripture and human experience arrive at a great fact. It is the universality of disease, of pain and of death, to *all* men, good and evil. The providence of God demands this exercise of faith in humble, uncomplaining obedience. It is recognised by Christians as a fundamental principle of their belief. They are permitted to see so far within the veil: to be so far recipients by grace of the mind of Christ, that what to the outside world is a problem insoluble, to them is no enigma. Such principle is acquiesced in, as a principle, by the people of whom we speak. Why then in practice ignore it? This dual contemplation, the wicked prosperous, the righteous suffering, tried the mind of righteous Job, only for a moment, and faith emerged triumphant in words unsurpassable as its exponent.¹ And the believer echoes the language of the Patriarch when those in full tide of life and of activity and of blessing to others pass through "much tribulation," by disease, to their rest.²

In a remarkable work,³ anonymous, of the present century, an hypothesis is advanced that all pain is traceable up to and resolvable into the highest type of pleasure; that this latter principle underlies suffering. A "hard saying," perhaps, yet, within due limits, intelligible. In one form it may have been illustrated in martyrs of every age.

St. Paul speaks of a "thorn" in the flesh. What was it?

¹ Job xiii. 15.

² Cases, recent, of several pre-eminent for piety and usefulness are before the writer; no more painful maladies could fall, as a scourge, upon the wicked.

³ "The Mysteries of Pain."

Opinion has differed as to its source, moral or material. The first rests on shadowy hypothesis ; the other on certain passages in his letters which scarcely admit of other interpretation than that of bodily ailment.¹ They point to disease of the eyes and eyelids as a sequence of that blindness which befell the Apostle when on the road to Damascus. We may reasonably conclude too (as Dr. Farrar remarks) that it took a chronic, painful form, liable to aggravation under the exposure and hardship incident to "journeyings oft" and sudden vicissitudes of life.² And how distressing was such visitation may be gathered from the supplication thrice made for deliverance. Divine support in large measure we know was vouchsafed in answer, and he remained unhealed. Again, we read that a dearly loved friend was sick "nigh unto death." The friend recovered, we may reasonably infer by human means blessed to the sufferer. No supernatural agency by the hand of Paul is manifested. Rather the words of tender pathos and gratitude in which he speaks of Epaphroditus' recovery are just those in which a mother would pour out her heart to God when the instrumentality of a physician was successful in the restoration of an only child. We read too of Trophimus left sick at Miletum. Yet even handkerchiefs taken from the person of the Apostle effected cure. But then God wrought "special miracles" with special objects, and at a special period in the history of the Church.

What is the reasonable deduction from these incidents ? Is it not that the Most High fulfilled His purposes then, as now, *whenever demonstration by the supernatural was uncalled for in the Divine economy.* Even in the temptation of our Redeemer, we see subversion of nature in relation to the sustenance of the body invited by Satan and cast aside by the Saviour.

So we believe that the exercise of healing by faith at the hands of the Apostles accomplished certain providential ends with relation *only* to a particular era in the Church ; that these ends were promulgation of the Gospel and the accrediting to the world of His ministers ; and also that the operation of the Holy Spirit in after-days was to be manifested in subjective rather than objective form.

When weighing the words of St. James, it is obviously of importance to view the latter clause of the verse in close relation to the former. Thus taken, the whole may well be rendered as an exhortation in general terms to commit the sick, soul as well as body, to the tender mercies of God. Moreover, the

¹ Galatians iv. 14, 15.

² See "Life and Writings of St. Paul," by Conybeare and Howson ; "Horæ Subsecivæ," by Dr. John Brown ; and "Life of St. Paul," by Canon Farrar, D.D. Tarsal ophthalmia from disease of the eyelids is a very distressing and intractable malady.

elders (presbyters) of the Church, men set apart to fulfil certain offices in it, were the instruments, and not friends and relatives.¹

(3) The outcome of the movement, for good or evil. It is much to be feared, the latter; that the faith of "weaker brethren" will be shaken, and distress and self-accusation accrue, sooner or later, to the prime movers themselves. To the less grave order of bodily ailment of which mention has been made, and in which the patient needs a "spur" to lift out of self and into action, the issue is comparatively of small moment. It is in cases of disease malignant, and in the *present* condition of medical science incurable, though happily mitigable,² that grave evil has come. The physician is dismissed. The consequence ere long is a reaction, downwards, which hastens a fatal issue. Excitement of the system, perhaps unnoticeable at the time to an unskilled eye; more rapid combustion in the lamp of life; suspense albeit fortified by religion, and then the end, not unfrequently sudden.³ And this is in lieu of peace!—perfect peace, otherwise attainable.

What or where then is the way, it may be asked, in which faith equally with "common sense sanctified" may go hand in hand? The reply is so obvious and simple as scarcely to need mention. And it is that, moreover, to which we believe firmly that the tenour of the passage in James, as a whole, points. Prayer—prayer by all, minister, physician, relative—for a blessed instrumentality of every means by God's infinite love and wisdom given to mankind, and with such prayer entire submission of issue to His will. It is sufficiently apparent that this latter bearing of the matter is virtually put in the background along

¹ Disease as a direct consequence of sin is implied, at least in some instances, from the words of the Apostle, as indeed from those of our Lord in St. John v. 14. Dr. Farrar reminds us that anointing with oil was enjoined in the first Prayer-book of Edward VI. "if the sick man desire it." But there was a reservation, most cogent, in the petition, which stands thus: "Our Heavenly Father vouchsafe for His great mercy *if it be His blessed will* to restore to thee thy bodily health." Canon Farrar adds that the anointing was "wisely dropped" in the Prayer-book of 1552.

² Chloroform, that inestimable boon to the sick, may well furnish an illustration of what has been said as to the goodness of God in alleviating through medical science what He does not see fit to remove. As grace to the inner man (*e.g.*, 2 Cor. xiii. 9), so may we not reverentially regard this remedy—put forth, moreover, by an eminently Christian physician, Sir James Simpson—in relation to the outer man? relief and support to the diseased body thus afforded.

³ Instances have come to the writer's knowledge of persons in the last stage of lung disease rising from bed, going to a place of worship, the power of prayer in faith extolled in such evidence of approaching recovery, and of death immediately afterwards. Also cases where the beneficial effects of medicine were evident—acknowledged—but at the suggestion of a friend discarded in favour of prayer only. The issue was fatal.

with skill (divinely appointed) and remedies. The prayer of faith thus rendered is intelligible. It is a placing of the hand of a trustful child within that of a loving Father; it is the assured confidence that all is well; that neither life nor death shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, be the issue what it may. It is above all the embodiment of that principle which underlies prayer divine from the mouth of the Master Himself.¹

There is a feature in this movement painfully suggestive. It is this. When restored health has not followed prayer, when the shadow of coming departure has fallen, such result is attributed not to natural causation, not to the good providence of the Father, but to lack of faith in the Holy Spirit's power in the person of the ministering friend, or—alas that it should be said!—in the poor sufferer. Is the trial by disease not enough in itself without superadded distress—a “strain” on faith diverted from its true channel and object? Nay, is there not in the procedure some analogy to that procedure condemned by the Prophet, and a “making sad the heart” of those whom the Most High would not grieve?² For there is such a thing, we know, as being taken from the “evil to come”—evil in some shape known but to the prescience of the loving God, and from which death is the harbinger of mercy and not of judgment.

A safe basis of action we believe is attainable. It is to recognize the physician, however feeble and fallible, as the instrument of the Most High.³ While He tells us there is a shadow of hope—nay, while there is no *material* evidence to the contrary which annuls hope—pray. We have again and again known cases of disease where hope hung but on the gossamer thread of a remedy which would declare itself within a brief hour in an issue for life or death. Prayer as oft has been made—and answered.

FREDERICK ROBINSON.

¹ St. Mark xiv. 36.

² Ezekiel xii. 22.

³ Reference has been made to certain institutions at home and abroad in connection with our subject. There is one in this country which may not pass unnoticed in these remarks. It has accomplished, is now accomplishing, a work which speaks for itself, of faith, operative in fruit. We refer to the Müller Orphanage at Bristol, and its associated missionary branches. Some years ago an epidemic of typhoid disease attacked its inmates. Was medical science disregarded? No. Its operation went hand in hand with prayer, and the happiest result was the outcome. “While we desire to use all precaution, and are far from acting fanatically, yet we desire to own, especially, the hand of God in this very heavy affliction” (See “Brief Narrative of Facts,” 1875, by George Müller).