

Divine Healing.

By Rev. S. E. Wishard, D.D.

All Christians believe that God is the healer, that "every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Health and healing are among the good things that come from him. All intelligent Christians believe and acknowledge that our daily bread comes from him. He has taught us to ask for "our daily bread." We believe also that it would be mockery to ask him for it, and then sit down and wait for him to bring it to us miraculously. He did bring it miraculously to Elijah. He did the same to the widow whose barrel of meal did not waste and whose cruse of oil did not fail. He did it miraculously for forty years in the wilderness. He supplied Israel with 234,844 bushels of manna every day, which was equivalent to more than three miles of solid freight train loads, during all the journey in the wilderness. Why should we not sit down, therefore, and pray and wait for the divine supply? God could furnish it. We can not furnish it without his help. He has taught us to ask for it. Will he not give it? Yes, on condition that we comply with his direction. He has told us what that condition is: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Toil and trust obtain the bread. Use the means and ask God to prosper you and give his blessing. "Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." It is along the line of doing that the bread comes. The man who toils for his bread is doing good. "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel."

It is perfectly plain, therefore, that some provision is to be made for the life and health of the family. Food, raiment and occupation must be provided, or the family will die. If health should be impaired, shall we cease to provide at that point? By what process of reasoning, or on what principle of trust, shall we cease to use the means necessary for the health of the family at that particular crisis?

The advocates of divine healing without the use of medicine reply that we are commanded to get our bread by toil, as above quoted, but have no such command to use medicinal agencies. Is that correct? The careful student of God's Word will discover precisely the opposite.

Our Savior gave us the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke x. 34), who turned aside to the wounded man, "and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine." He gives us a picture of the best aspects of benevolent life, and enforces it by his command, "Go and do thou likewise."

The veriest tyro in Biblical knowledge knows that oil and wine were the great medicinal agencies in the East in the time of our Savior. They were the cure-alls, as truly as any popular medicine of to-day. Our Savior not only commends the good Samaritan for using them as such, but commands us to "do likewise"—to look after the suffering and helpless and use such remedies as are known to be efficacious.

There is unquestionable authority for the use of means in relieving suffering and disease, in Paul's direction to Timothy. Timothy was suffering from his infirmities—and the original means, sicknesses—and needed some remedy. Paul directed him to "use a little wine" for his relief. The single point here is this: Wine was then considered a remedial agency, whether it was the best or not is not now in question. It was popularly so regarded, as much so as the best tonic is to-day. Paul directed Timothy to take it as medicine.

Why did he not tell Timothy that medicines dishonor God; that he should pray and rely upon God for divine healing, without the instrumentality of medicine? Paul evidently did not mean to count God out. He did not

mean to dishonor God by a lack of faith. Rather, he would honor God by "showing his faith by his works." Had he not believed that God would bless and use the remedy for Timothy's recovery, he certainly would not have prescribed it.

In replying to the Pharisees, who criticised our Lord for his sympathy with sinners, for his efforts to heal them spiritually and restore them to God, he replied: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." The application was pertinent. The Pharisees claimed to be spiritually whole, and on their own assumption they did not need him. He was a spiritual physician. He came to the sin-sick souls with remedies adapted to their diseases. The sinners needed him, his remedial agency, his atoning work. To make the application he indorsed the universal verdict of common sense, that while people in health do not need a physician, they that are sick do. There were physicians at that time. There always have been and always will be. Of course, these Scriptural authorities for the use of medicines for the recovery of health, are no indorsement of quackery or poisonous drugs.

The Scriptures do not attempt to settle the question as to what were the proper remedies to be used; nor is that question under discussion now. The question is, Do the Scriptures sanction the use of medicines for the removal of disease? And both the Old and New Testaments furnish numberless allusions to the custom, and with approval. The case of Hezekiah is exactly in point, as recorded in II. Kings xx. 1-7: He was "sick unto death." He prayed earnestly for recovery, and the Lord heard his prayer and sent Isaiah with the message: "I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears; behold, I will heal thee; on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord, and I will add unto thy days fifteen years." But something further was to be done for his recovery. 'And Isaiah said, Take a cake of figs. And they took and laid it upon the boil and he recovered.' He had the promise of recovery, but something must be done to secure the fulfillment of the promise; and the prophet of the Lord gave direction to have it done; it was done, and God fulfilled his promise.

Both the leaves and the fruit of the fig tree were in use as medicinal remedies. The poultice of figs is known to be an excellent remedy for allaying inflammation. Hence it was used in the case of Hezekiah and received the divine blessing.

But our friends who discard remedies turn at once to the case of Asa, as a sufficient answer and an insuperable objection to the use of medicine.

It is written (2 Chron. xvi. 12, 13): "Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great. Yet in his disease he sought not the Lord, but the physicians, and Asa slept with his fathers and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign. The plain inference from this record is that if Asa had sought the Lord he would have blessed the remedies, and he might have recovered. His mistake was not in seeking medical aid—Isaiah had employed it for Hezekiah's recovery, but in not seeking God's blessing. For unless the blessing of God accompany the use of means in healing the body as well as the soul, there is no help for man, spiritual or temporal.

Paul spoke in Col. iv., 14, of "Luke, the beloved physician." Dr. Conley, in discussing this subject calls attention to the precise language. Paul did not say the beloved Luke, the physician, but "Luke, the beloved physician." If the practice of medicine had been wrong, in the same category with necromancy and witchcraft, as Christian Science claims, Paul certainly would not have called Luke "the beloved physician." He certainly would not have consented that Luke should company with him and be a sharer with him in his arduous yet glorious work. It has been reasonably conjectured that Luke became the compan-

ion of Paul that he might, by his professional skill, be of service to him in his numerous exposures, and the physical infirmities with which he had to contend. This most reasonable conclusion would explain the endearing term in which Paul speaks of him.

It is known that oil was used as a remedy for many of the diseases in the East. That fact explains the frequent reference to its use in recovery from disease. Mark says of the Apostles that "They cast out devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them." There can be no question but that this anointing was remedial, just such as was used by the physicians. The same is the intent of the passage in Jas. v. 14: "Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil." The marginal reading is, "having anointed him with oil." Having used the appropriate remedy, pray for God's blessing upon it, and the prayer of faith will secure the blessing, and the sick will recover. And yet this anointing and prayer must be in submission to the wisdom and will of God. It is time to discard the assumption that those who refuse medical aid are the only persons who believe that God heals the sick. The reverent use of instrumentalities and trust in God are in perfect harmony. —Herald and Presbytery.

Like Christ.

By Phoebe A. Holder.

In our own world of hidden thought,
We meet most often with the Lord;
Walking as in the Eden shade,
Calling to us with tender word.

The listening soul His whisper hears,
Perceives the fragrance all around,
A holy presence pure and sweet,
Making the place a hallowed ground.

And as we meet the Blessed One,
We pray that He His grace would give
To be like Him, His Spirit share,
In loving kindness ever live.
The inner beauty of a soul.

With constant kindness of thought,
Still grows, 'expands in heavenly light,
The likeness of our Lord is caught.

Kind words are music of the world,
As if they were some angel's strain,
Who, in a ministry of love,
Had come to earth to sing again;
And smiting still our human hearts
With sweetest wounds of tenderness,
Angelic nature giving us,
That still our lives may others bless.

To such is life a brightness still,
All things are fragrant, restful calm;
The dust is laid, the fever cooled,
And all the air is sweet with balm.
All sounds grow softer as the ray
Of evening's tender light is given,
The sunset gold illumines our way,
Makes joy of earth like peace of heaven.

In the New York Observer Rev. Ira S. Dodd discusses the question of extemporaneous preaching. On one occasion when unable to go to the church he asked one of his elders to read to the people a sermon of Phillips Brooks. Then to a little daughter he said: "Papa will stay at home with you to-day and Mr. H.—will read a great deal better sermon than any I could preach to the people. Don't you think it would be nice if papa could do that always?" At once the child replied: "No, you ought to be there to explain it to them and make them understand, or else it wouldn't be preaching." That child had a happy conception of what constitutes true preaching.

Men do not complain of the sixth commandment, which protects their persons; nor of the eighth, which protects their property; why, then, should they complain of the fourth, which protects their rightful heritage, a weekly day of rest?