

MARKS OF SPIRITUAL HEALTH.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

WHAT is the state of your pulse, my brother? How is your appetite for Bible food? Are you thoroughly alive, or only gasping? Remember that our Lord came into this sin-sick world, not only to give life, but that those who secure it might "have it more abundantly." Bodily health is not possible to everybody, but spiritual health is within the reach of every Christian who really desires it and does what is necessary to have it. Three things are certainly attainable:

(1) One of those is an increase of faith. This is more than an opinion, more than a sentiment, it is an act of the soul. The faith you need is just the taking of Jesus Christ into your soul, appropriating Him and giving Him full lodgment there. The more you are filled with Jesus, the more strength you will possess. "This is the victory that overcometh, even our faith." To wrestle with stubborn sin, to vanquish doubts, to keep selfishness under, to carry heavy loads, to do all these things and other spiritual feats is beyond your power unless you are grappled to Christ, and He to you. When the galvanic current enters a great horse shoe magnet, it can lift heavy iron weights, and the moment that the current is drawn off, the weights drop. A Christ faith is precisely such a vital current in the soul of a true believer. All the mighty Christians, from Paul to Luther, and from Luther to Spurgeon, have been mighty in faith. "According to your faith be it unto you." That is the measure of spiritual health and strength. When our Lord rebuked the cowardly disciples in the high storm, His question was, "Where is your faith." Lacking that, they were as weak as other men. The omnipotent Jesus stands behind the precious promise, "All things are possible to him that believeth." Bind that promise as a frontlet between your eyes. Let every Sunday-school teacher pin it into his or her class-book. The pastor who is entering now upon his year's work, determined to trust Christ alone and to s reap his Gospel seed in prayer, will not lack a spiritual harvest. He will have a bearing year and full waggons.

(2) With this increase of faith will come an increase of spiritual vigor. When a farmer or nursery-man discovers that his pear trees yield more blossoms than pears, he digs around them and puts a bushel or two of fertilizer about their roots. Then the more abundant life in the tree yields a more abundant fruitage. The simple reason why any Christian does not yield the fruits of the Spirit is the lack of inward vigor. The soil of his heart has become impoverished. He needs the subsoling of repentance and self-emptying and a new inpouring of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus. "If a man abide in Me," saith Jesus, "he shall bring forth much fruit."

Our churches are full of weaklings, and it is the debilitated folk who catch all the fevers that are going. In most physical sickness there is a battle between the disease and the constitution, and no doctor can do much for a patient who has not a reserve of vitality to slough off the disease. The difficulty with thousands of church-members is a low spiritual vitality, and too many of them are dying of "heart failure." The only recovery for all these feeble and pitiable invalids must come from the tonic which Jesus Christ gives when He gives His purifying and quickening Spirit. There is a vague way of talking about a "revival" but there is no such thing as a genuine revival, either for a Christian or a whole Church, except by a living again of Christ in the soul, and a living again for Christ in the

daily conduct. Every other sort of so called revival is a temporary spasm or a pious sham. Harken to the voice of Him who says "I am come that ye might have life more abundantly!" The revival that Christ brings with Him is like that which He brought to the tomb of Lazarus; it can set even a corpse on its feet.

(3) There is one more blessing that will come with an increase of the Christ-life in your soul, and that is genuine joyfulness. How can people expect sunshine in their rooms who keep the shutters barred up? Joy depends on more than nervous exhilaration or happy surroundings: it is not to be got for the asking, but for *the acting*. We have got to walk with our Master every day if we expect to walk in the sunlight. There is a lamentable lot of moping, peevish, sour-spirited Christians so called, who are a disgrace to the name they bear. Who is ever converted by the sight of them? Such parents disgust their children with the bare name of religion. On the other hand, a healthy Christian carries a letter of recommendation in his cheerful countenance and sunny temper. What music did that brace of Apostles make when they sang their holy duet in the depths of Philippi's dungeon! Those early Christians drew honey out of the flintiest rocks, and the black waves of tribulation and persecution phosphoresced with the sparkles of a holy gladness.

Now here are three marks of spiritual health—more faith, more vigor, and more joy in the Lord. Christ offers them all to you, my friend, if you will accept them—in His way and on His terms. Quit that wretched hospital in which you have been lying, nearer dead than alive! Take up thy bed and walk! Then shall "your light break forth as the morning and your healing shall spring forth speedily." Thy faith will make thee whole, and you can go on, leaping and praising God.

"GO BECAUSE IT RAINS."

"I suppose that you won't go to Sabbath school to-day, Lucy?" said her mother, one stormy Sabbath morning, settling herself to read.

"Please let me go to-day, mamma; I want to go because it rains."

"Why, Lucy, that is my excuse for staying at home. How can you make it a reason for going?"

"Our teacher always goes, mamma, in all weather, although she lives so far away. She told the class that on Sabbath, when she went through the storm, and did not find even one scholar, she was so discouraged that she could not help crying. She asked us, too, if we did not go to our day schools in the rainy weather, and she said, while we must obey our parents, if we ask them pleasantly to let us go, they would likely be willing. Mamma, will you please let me go to-day?"

"Well, I am willing, my dear, if you wear your school suit. Go and get ready."

But the mother no longer took any interest in her book, but said to her husband (a lawyer) who came in from the library, "Lucy is going to Sabbath school to-day because it rains, so that her teacher may be encouraged by the presence of, at least one pupil. Suppose we go to the chapel for the same reason, if not for a better."

"Agreed. I never could plead a cause to an empty court-room, and the minister must find it hard work to preach to empty pews."—*English Paper*.

Good and evil are in conflict for the souls of men.