

FAITH-CURES.

In taking up the scriptural argument in connection with this important subject, in order to show that the Bible does not teach that the healing of the body is on the same basis as healing of the soul, and that just as all may come to God through the atonement made by Christ, and claim pardon and cleansing, so all can claim freedom from all sickness by simple faith. We premise a few observations.

In the first place, we maintain we do not need such a rule, even presuming it to be true. On the day of Pentecost Peter promised to the multitude of penitents, that so soon as they accepted Christ by faith they were eligible to the reception of the Holy Ghost, even as they had received Him. Now Christ had described Him in one of His offices as guide into all truth, and this included, as we have shown in previous writings, guidance as to when we might use the prayer of faith for sickness.

Again we remark that in all fairness to this doctrine of physical healing for all it should rest upon passages in the New Testament somewhat analogous to those which teach the forgiveness of sins, both as to number and clearness of teaching. We are prepared for the statement that the healing of the body is not as important as the healing of the soul, but admitting that, still our reasonable demand is for a fair proportion of such passages. Now let anyone take up the epistle to the Romans, for example, and try to count the passages wherein the forgiveness of sin for all men is taught, and see how numerous they are. Why, the letter is full of them, until you are led to conclude that the whole letter is one elaborate argument to establish the doctrine of forgiveness and cleansing from sin for all men. Now continue your researches through all Paul's epistles and you find that they constitute but different changes rung out boldly and clearly on these doctrines. But mark, you will not find one passage which either positively or by implication teaches this presumed doctrine of healing for all. But you will find several passages which it has taxed all the ingenuity of modern faith-cure teachers to explain away, lest they might

seem to conflict with their teachings. As for example, Paul's advice to Timothy, "Take a little wine for thy stomach's sake and oft infirmities." Any modern faith-cure apostle who would give such advice now to a Christian would be promptly ruled out of the circle as heterodox. Again, where he discourses concerning his friend Trophimus, whom he left at Miletan sick, or Epaphroditus, who was sick nigh unto death, but who recovered, how opportune the circumstances to bring out clearly the modern doctrine of healing for all, but by no means can his language be made to give any aid or comfort to those who are striving to establish this dogma. Much less when he minutely describes his own bodily ailment, of which he did not recover at the time, but obtained the mind of God that it, the thorn in the flesh, was designed to remain for his spiritual benefit, can any supporting evidence be obtained from the whole account to strengthen the faith-cure extreme doctrine.

But note in the passing into what rare contradictions they fall in trying to explain away the whole matter. Paul calls this visitation an infirmity, and glories in it, as a blessing in disguise, saying "most gladly then will I glory in my infirmities." Our critics explain infirmities to mean something, anything else than a bodily ailment, for the only reason, as far as we can see, that it would destroy their doctrine if not so explained away. And manifestly they are right, for if it was impaired eyesight, or any other bodily infirmity, then Paul would have to be accepted as an opponent to their doctrine, or as failing to live up to its privileges. Hence to a man they maintain that infirmities in this passage means something not included in the atonement. But the passage "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses," Matt. 8. and 17, is often quoted by them as teaching that sickness and infirmities were atoned for by Christ, the same as sin, and they are thrown into confusion in the attempt to reconcile the different passages. Some seem disposed to chisel out infirmities altogether from this sentence, and use only the word sicknesses as in the atonement. Others try to show that infirmities in the one place means quite a different