

A PRESCRIPTION FOR SICK CHRISTIANS.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

Dr. Horace Bushnell was an invalid during the last years of his noble and useful life; and when people of Hartford enquired of him "How is your health?" he used to reply playfully "*I have not got away.*" This might be the honest answer of many a professed Christian in regard to their souls. Their spiritual pulse is feeble; their appetite for God's Word is poor; they are more fit for the hospital than for service. They no more enjoy their religion than a fever patient would enjoy a slice of roast beef, or a plum-pudding.

Their sickness is their own fault, and it is their business and duty to get well as soon as possible. Since spiritual disease is the result of sin, and spiritual health is obligatory upon every Christian, how shall the invalids be restored? "I will restore health unto thee, saith the Lord." Christ is still the Great Physician. He works cures, not by miracles but by means, and by medicines. One of these is the powerful purgative of truth faithfully administered. That pungent preacher Charles G. Finney understood how to apply this heroic treatment, and it would be well if all ministers could read his "Lectures on Revivals" once every year. But whether the truth comes to you from the pulpit or from your own reading of the Word, or from any other quarter, it will do you no good, my sick friend, unless you swallow it and let it work. If it produces some sharp grippings of conscience, all the better.

Then too you are in sad need of exercise. Your Master has given you faculties and affections and capacities to serve Him with. Yet for utter want of use, those limbs of the soul are as feeble as the bodily limbs of a man who has been on his back for a month with typhoid fever. Never will you recover your appetite, never will the flush of spiritual joy mant up your countenance until you get out of your hammock and go to work. You are dying from confinement and indolence. Probably a constipation of purse has set in, so that you have ceased to give much money to the Lord, or if you give at all, you do it grudgingly. There is but one cure for spiritual laziness, and that is work; but one cure for stinginess and selfishness, and that is sacrifice; but one cure for bashfulness, and that is to open your lips for Christ, or to plunge into some difficult duty before the shiver has time to come on. A thorough course of feeding on Bible-diet on Sunday, and of practicing Bible-duties during the week, will soon put you on your feet again. You can throw away your

crutches and run without growing weary, and walk without becoming faint. How glad your minister will be to see you out again! How happy you will feel when your congestion of lungs and purse and heart is cured; and the sleep of the laboring man will be sweet.

All the above mentioned prescriptions must be honestly taken; but remember that Jesus Christ is the great physician and health-giver. No permanent cure without Him. Jesus not only gives life, but can give it more abundantly, when "the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings." There is hygienic power in physical sunshine for sick plants and sick people. It would bring speedy recovery to many a diseased and enfeebled soul to come back into the warm light of Christ's countenance. A great deal of spiritual sickness arises from bad atmosphere. The heavenly winds of the Divine Spirit alone can sweep away this malaria. "My Spirit I will give unto you," is Christ's promise; and with that powerful breath from above will come a new, and purifying and bracing atmosphere. I was once addressing a crowded audience in a small room on a wintry night, and the air became so foul that the candles went almost out. As soon as the door was opened, and the oxygen of the wintry air rushed in, every candle flamed up immediately. Your lamp is going out brother! You need fresh air. What a glorious oxygen would pour into our hearts and into our prayer-meetings, our Sunday-schools and our churches, if the Holy Spirit should come like a mighty rushing wind, purifying, arousing, and quickening souls unto the very life of God! That would be a *revival*—a living-again from dead works and decay into the glow and gladness of vigorous health.

Such recovery cannot be reached by a wholesale process. God says to each individual Christian who has been made sick by sin, "Return unto Me, and I will heal thy backslidings." The persons who came to Jesus were not afraid to show Him their loathsome disease. You must not be gingerly in your confessions, or seek to hide your sins, or cover them with plasters of apology. Let your honest prayer be "*Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquities.*" This prayer means—as Dr. Maclaren truly says—"Wash me, beat me, hammer me with mallets, rub me with caustic niter, do anything with me, if only those foul spots melt away from the texture of my soul!"

Such penitence, such prayer will bring pardon for the past. Not only pardon, but peace and purity and power. You will be restored to health. Reconverted yourself, you will be able—like restored Peter—"to