

CHRISTIANS AND SUFFERING.

CURING PHYSICAL DISEASE.

WORK OF THE CHURCH?

Principal A. E. Garvie, M.A., D.D. (London), speaking at the forty-first anniversary of Christ Church, Penarth, on Sunday last, put forward the interesting proposal that the churches take up the task of curing physical disease by spiritual means, and that they should work hand in hand with medical science. He also asked if the Christian nations had forgotten Christ's cry of forgiveness from the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." That cry should now be sounded throughout the world.

Christ cared for the bodies of men, and relieved their physical sufferings. It was not Christian to be indifferent to the sufferings of our fellows. It was Christian to welcome and endure suffering for others, but not to be indifferent to the sufferings of others.

"I wonder how many of you realise what is going on in Europe. I am in close touch with it." He knew a professor in Germany, a lover of this country, with an intellect of priceless value to the world, who died a short time ago from overwork and undernourishment. There was another great scholar who could not afford to live in a house. He was now living in a barn. Some of the finest minds and greatest spirits in Germany were at the present moment dying from hunger. "It may be my weakness, but I cannot bear to hear of suffering. It is heartbreaking."

Of course, continued the preacher, we have unemployment, privations, and hardships; but we have not got the widespread starvation; we have not got pestilence stalking through our land. If we have Christian hearts, we will respond to the cry of misery.

As Christians, we dare not be indifferent to suffering. We should be prepared to investigate every claim to remove suffering. Christian churches should take up the task of spiritual healing, and the churches should have special agencies for dealing with physical disease. There was no doubt at all of the relationship between physical suffering and spiritual distress. Submission to God was remedial to the body as well as to the mind, even if it were not included in the remedies of men of science. He was looking for closer relationship between men of science and the Christian Church.

Reprinted from "Penarth Times," Nov. 1st, 1923.