

Faith Cure
DIVINE HEALING.

A CRITICISM.

BY

T. E. McDONALD,

*General Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association,
Portland, Me.*

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
REV. N. T. WHITAKER, D.D.

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"The Christian Witness."

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PREFACE.

THIS little brochure is worthy of careful study. Its author is by no means a tyro in his work. Mr. McDonald is not a superficial writer or thinker. He has given much careful thought and personal investigation to the subject that he here treats. He is a man of deep piety, sound common-sense, and an active worker in the cause of Christ. He is a close Bible student, a sincere lover of humanity, and writes under the conviction of an intense desire to promote the spiritual welfare of the believer in Christ.

The work is opportune. A prevailing tendency of this age leads Christians into error through want of distinction between Scripture doctrine and theological dogma. It is very strong among Christians whose circumstances

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Domestic Theology

and want of early culture in Biblical studies tend to superficiality in their creeds.

This is one explanation of the various and antagonizing theories which have appeared under different systems of Christian science and divine healing.

It leads to the organization of Simpsonian churches, of which the one under the pastoral care of Rev. C. W. Ryder in Providence, R.I., and the "People's Church of God," with Miss C. S. Carter as pastor, in Windham Centre, Me., are illustrations.

The theological dogmas of the leaders in the Simpson movement show their growing divergence from Bible truths, and their approach to fanaticism or superstition.

In his work entitled "The Gospel of Healing," Rev. A. B. Simpson says that for more than twenty years he was a sufferer "from many physical infirmities and disabilities," from which he was healed, by faith, in "a few moments." About his condition when healed

he adds, "I do not know whether my body felt better or not. . . . I believe I should have lost my healing if I had waited until I felt it. . . . Physically I do not think I am more robust than ever."

It is time that the Christian Church, ministry and laity, should know the unscriptural character and the disastrous tendencies of the Simpsonian phase of divine healing.

Mr. McDonald, as well as the publishing house of McDonald, Gill & Co., has placed all Christian believers under a debt of gratitude for producing, without any monetary consideration, this clear, concise, and Biblical representation of a topic whose significance it vitally concerns the Church to understand.

Our pastors would do well to scatter it freely among their church members, and thereby may prevent many from making a shipwreck of their faith.

N. T. WHITAKER.

DIVINE HEALING.

THIS subject has attracted considerable attention for some time, and for various reasons continues to attract. An active propaganda is at work, which, to spread its ideas, uses conventions large and small (some of them appear to be growing smaller!), which are widely advertised so as to awaken curiosity without arousing antagonism.

Public addresses are given and private conversations held, combined with a mass of literature widely circulated, in which are used an adroit nomenclature, well adapted to perplex by its elusiveness. "Homes," or "colleges," are in operation, in which the system is taught, whose graduates (sometimes taking the title of "pastor") form committees under various names, in which they gather disciples and spread the ideas held in various ways. These groups contain the seeds of schism, both in their temper and methods.

It is denied that secession is intended ; but the tendency is plainly defined, and the course of some of the prominent advocates of divine healing, who have already left their former communions and now pose as independents, is schismatic, according to the ordinary meaning of the word.

We do not wonder at the fact that the people are attracted and listen eagerly to what falls from the lips of these teachers.

Anything which seems to offer relief from the sufferings of life will be eagerly grasped. The suffering is real, and the sufferers hope the remedy is, and do not usually wait to assure themselves of it, preferring rather to know experimentally.

Those who investigate the subject should not approach it with any degree of antagonism or prejudice. What is claimed is, if true, a boon so great as to defy comparison with any other except the salvation of the soul. If God has good gifts for His children which they do not enjoy, they should gladly welcome the teacher who would lead them to see their privileges and secure them. Many of those who hold this doctrine are our personal

friends, whose integrity we do not question. We have the greatest respect for them and their sentiments, whatever may be our opinion of their judgment.

With this thought and in this spirit, let us conduct our inquiry. In the first place, we must not confound divine healing with any of the other systems or doctrines of healing, of whatever name ; and that we may understand it as taught by its principal exponents, we must take their definition. Briefly stated, it is the healing of all our physical ailments, diseases, and infirmities, by the direct power of God, without the use of any material means (except anointing with oil in the name of the Lord, no value being put upon the oil as a remedial agent), in answer to the prayer of faith. The doctrine and the reasons given for believing it to be true are set forth in "The Gospel of Healing," a small book written by Rev. A. B. Simpson, who is possibly as prominent in the work as anyone, and who, while he does not agree in his theories with all the other teachers, probably expresses their essential ideas. I have chosen this book because it gives the

reasons for the faith in a more systematic way than any other that I have been able to procure.

Mr. Simpson says, on the first page of his book, "Man has a twofold nature. He is both a material and spiritual being. And both natures have been equally affected by the fall. His body is exposed to disease; his soul is corrupted by sin. We would therefore expect that any complete scheme of redemption would include both natures, and provide for the restoration of his physical as well as the renovation of his spiritual life." Mr. Simpson then pictures the Saviour as holding out both hands, one containing salvation, the other, healing, and says, "He offers Himself to us as a complete Saviour; His indwelling Spirit the life of our spirit, His resurrection body the life of our mortal flesh."

On page sixty-four, under "Principles of Divine Healing," he says: "If sickness be the result of evil spiritual agency, it is most evident that it must be met and counteracted by higher spiritual force, and not by mere natural treatment. And again,

on the supposition that sickness is a divine discipline and chastening, it is still more evident that its removal must come, not through mechanical appliances, but through spiritual causes. It would be both ridiculous and vain for the arm of man to presume to wrest the chastening rod from the Father's hand by physical force or skill, . . . so that from whatever side we look at disease, it becomes more and more evident that its remedy must be found alone in God."

I will now give the Scripture offered to prove the doctrine. I shall give the quotations as fully as is necessary to convey the meaning, and in the order in which they appear, beginning at page nine of the "Gospel of Healing."

1. "There he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, and said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Exod. 15: 25, 26).

2. "He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes" (Ps. 105: 37).

This is said to show the fulfilment of the promise.

3. Job, first and second chapters, "gives an unmistakable view of the source from which sickness comes, — Satan, — and the course which brings healing."

4. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases" (Ps. 103: 2, 3).

5. "And 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 to the Lord, but to the physicians. And Asa slept with his fathers" (2 Chron. 16: 12, 13).

6. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows . . . and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53: 4, 5).

Quoted by the evangelist (in Matt. 8: 17) "as the explanation of His universal works of healing." "Therefore, in the same full

sense as He has borne our sins, Jesus Christ has SURELY BORNE AWAY and CARRIED OFF our sicknesses; yes, and even our PAINS, so that, abiding in Him, we may be fully delivered from both sickness and pain."

7. "He . . . healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. 8: 16, 17).

"This is quoted as the reason why He healed all that were sick. It was not that He might give His enemies a vindication of His divinity, but that He might fulfil the character presented of Him in ancient prophecy. . . . Now this [*i.e.*, healing] was the work of His life."

8. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14: 12).

9. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And

these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16: 15-18).

This, Mr. Simpson says, is the commission, the twofold gospel, and we have no right to preach part of it only. "In First Corinthians, the twelfth chapter, ninth to the thirtieth verses, the 'gifts of healings' are spoken of as widely diffused and universally understood among the endowments of the Church. But now the apostolic age is closing, is this to be continued, and if so, by whom? By what limitations is it to be preserved from fanaticism and presumption?" He finds the answer as follows:—

10. "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (Jas. 5: 14, 15).

Mr. Simpson calls attention to the position of James among the apostles and in the Church and says, "He it is who rightly transmits the apostolic gifts to the ordinary and permanent officers who are to succeed them in the oversight of the flock of Christ."

11. "Beloved, I wish [pray] above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2).

"A tender prayer by which we may know our Father's gentle care for our health."

12. "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph. 5: 30).

"These words recognize a union between our body and the risen body of the Lord Jesus Christ, which gives us the right to claim for our mortal frame all the vital energy of His perfect life. His body is ours. His life is ours, and it is all-sufficient."

13. "If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8: 11).

"This cannot refer to the future resurrection. That will be by the 'voice of the Son

of God,' not the Holy Spirit. . . . And it is a quickening of the 'mortal body,' not the soul. . . . It was the Spirit of God that wrought all the miracles of Jesus Christ on earth. • (Matt. 12: 28.) And if we have the same Spirit dwelling in us we shall experience the same works."

14. "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in our mortal flesh. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal body" (2 Cor. 4: 10, 11).

"This is Paul's physical experience, constant peril, infirmity and physical suffering, . . . in order that the healing, restoring, and sustaining power and life of Jesus might be the more constantly manifest in his very body. . . . His life was a constant miracle."

15. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever" (Heb. 13: 8).

Then, under the head of "Practical Directions," we find, beginning on page twenty-six:—

(1) "Be fully persuaded of THE WORD

OF GOD in this matter. . . . You must be so sure that this is part of the gospel and the redemption of Christ that all the teachings and reasonings of the best of men could not shake you."

(2) "Be fully assured of THE WILL OF GOD TO HEAL YOU. . . . The prayer for healing 'if it be His will' carries with it no claim for which Satan will quit his hold. This is a matter about which we ought to know His will before we ask. . . . There is much subtle unbelief often in the prayer, 'Thy will be done.'"

(3) "Be careful that you are yourself RIGHT WITH GOD, . . . and then

(4) "COMMIT YOUR BODY TO HIM AND CLAIM HIS PROMISE OF HEALING, in the name of Jesus, by simple faith. Do not merely ask for it, but humbly and firmly claim it."

(5) "ACT YOUR FAITH. . . . Begin to act as one that is healed. . . . You must ignore all symptoms.

(6) "BE PREPARED FOR TRIALS OF FAITH . . . and

(7) "USE YOUR NEW STRENGTH AND HEALTH FOR GOD."

Among the "Principles of Divine Healing," Mr. Simpson says, in effect, that it is not optional with us how we shall be healed, but that it is God's prerogative to deal with the bodies He has redeemed, and an impertinence for man to tamper with them, and an equal impertinence to choose some other way than God's. Then, in closing, he adduces the instances of healing recorded in the Bible, beginning with Job, including Hezekiah with his poultice of figs (which is said to have been merely a sign, with no medicinal properties), going through the entire Bible, and then gives his own at some length, with others that have come under his observation.

Now to briefly criticise these premises and conclusions:—

First, notice the assumptions that man has two natures, a material and a spiritual, both equally affected by the fall, and that any complete scheme of redemption would include and provide for both. No proof of these is offered—they are merely announced, as though unquestioned, and in the latter the whole question is begged. Allowing, for the sake of argument, the first,

the second seems preposterous enough when we think of the difference between physical life here and spiritual life hereafter,—the limitations of each, and of the impossibility of their being equally affected by anything.

What can be meant by saying that, "The Saviour's resurrection body is the life of our mortal flesh," and that, "The healing which He gives us is nothing less than His own new physical life infused into our body from his own very heart," we do not know, unless it be the distortion of a figure.

It seems like a literalization of that which is clearly figurative, and of applying to the physical what belongs to the spiritual,—a blind groping, or a barefaced distortion; and when it is said, in the same connection, that we "eat His flesh and drink His blood," and that "this is the great and vital principle of physical healing," it seems like anthropophagy, and, as it is applied, like bald nonsense.

Mr. Simpson next gives us some suppositions about the cause of sickness, claiming that, whether it results from evil spiritual agency or is a divine discipline and chastisement, only

spiritual things can be efficient in its removal, as in the first case the material has no power over the spiritual, and in the second, it is "ridiculous and vain" for man to attempt to evade God's power. And having, it would seem, from his standpoint, proved the inefficiency of means to heal, a little farther on, in a different section, seeming to ignore this point, he says, "It is not optional with us how we shall be healed": it is God's prerogative, and an "impertinence to choose some other way than God's."

When Mr. Simpson first claims that sickness is not produced by natural causes, and claims that therefore it cannot be cured by natural means, and then tapers off by saying that it is our duty to be healed by faith, and that it is impertinent to "tamper" with our bodies or allow others to do so, and then goes still further in his contradiction and says that, if we will not choose what he calls God's way, that we should employ the best physicians, one wonders why such contradictory notions should pass current for wisdom. The fact that so many millions have been cured by the use of material remedies would seem to show

that Mr. Simpson is one of those who do not know all about the cause of disease; for it does not require an extraordinarily logical mind to see that when the case is stated,—Man is sick, sickness is the result of spiritual agency; therefore, material things cannot remove it,—the logic is all right, but the fact that the conclusion is proved to be false by experience, makes it rather difficult to hold the premises.

Whatever may be our opinion of the fate of those who, "not having the law, do by nature the things contained in the law," we do not hold out any hope to those who have the law of grace and know all its requirements and privileges and deliberately reject them. So those who have never heard of divine healing might be excused for using means, and might reasonably expect recovery, but those who reject the "light" offered should always die. Unfortunately for the system, they somehow or other get better with exasperating frequency.

The idea seems to be, in the minds of the advocates of this doctrine, that from the fall of Adam issues two great streams of woe,

one being sin and the other being sickness, or sin spiritual and sin physical, and that the atonement is the only barrier to either and both, — the only thing that will stop their onward course, — and that in each case the desired result is to be obtained in the same way and to the same degree.

Let us examine the doctrine of sin and the atonement and see how the idea fits it. Briefly stated, we find it as follows: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3 : 23); "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jas. 2 : 10); and, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6 : 23).

Now the remedy: "Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" (Rom. 3 : 24, 25); "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3 : 16); "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. 1 : 7). Then comes the declaration, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other

name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4 : 12). It is not God's will that any should perish, — "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3 : 9). The promise is to "whosoever will," and "Now is the accepted time."

To make the comparison complete, we must find the same conditions in the spiritual and physical realms; and from this it follows that physically all are sick, and the result of every case of sickness is death, except when faith in Jesus is exercised, for there is no salvation (healing) in any other, for there is none other name (way) under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved (healed).

Then, of course, we should believe that it is God's will that no one should be sick a moment, that in every case sickness is a curse, and so on. If we believe that sickness is sometimes a "divine discipline and chastening," who of us believes that sin also is? If we continue in spiritual sin, does God allow us to be saved in any other way than that which He has provided? If not, why

does He allow any other way of physical healing?

Now let us briefly examine the Scripture offered to prove the doctrine:—

1. In Exodus 15: 25, 26, note the circumstances. The people, just after witnessing God's power, were murmuring because of lack of water. God supplies the need, and as an incentive to faithfulness, promises them exemption from the diseases, He, not Satan, has inflicted upon the Egyptians, — a warning, by implication, that punishment would follow transgression, — a declaration of His will concerning them, affixed to which, as to all law, there is a declaration of penalty incurred by infraction.

2. Psalm 105: 37 is a declaration of a fact, wonderful, but certainly containing no doctrine of the kind we are discussing.

3. In the case of Job, he is said (Job 1: 1, 8) to be perfect and upright, — none like him on the earth, — and the cause of his sickness is given, so that it cannot be said to proceed directly from the fall. Speculations about Job's case are plentiful and fanciful, and we shall not add to their number, merely

remarking that his "friends" didn't understand the meaning of sickness and affliction much better than some of our latter day comforters, and made the mistake, so common now, of darkening counsel by words without wisdom. They had the fact of Job's affliction, and built up a theory to fit it according to their idea of the requirements of the case, — an example of a kind of reasoning not wholly unknown to-day. Had they lived after the nineteenth Psalm was written, they might, and probably would, have joined heartily in praying, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins." Maybe they prayed the idea if not the words.

4. To say that Psalm 103: 2, 3, refers to physical health, etc., is to say that the statement is not true, for God did not heal all who were sick, unconditionally. Moreover, the following clause in the fourth verse, "Who redeemeth thy life from destruction," is not true in any case if it refers to physical existence here. The words are true regarding spiritual health and life, but have no force in the present case. Even if we think they might refer, if only by analogy, to physical things, they would not prove what is desired.

All Christians believe that God is the ultimate source of strength and healing, as of every other blessing, but it does not follow that these are to come to us in some miraculous way without any effort on our part. God certainly expects us to use the common-sense He has given us.

5. Next we have the case of Asa (2 Chron. 16: 12, 13). In the book we are considering, this case is adduced as an example of the uselessness of physicians, and the words, "And Asa slept with his fathers," are said to be "sad" and "sarcastic." We cannot help admiring the superior acumen of one who can distinguish the "sarcasm" contained in the words "slept with his fathers" when applied to Asa, which, when applied to so many others, are a mere record of fact. Asa certainly showed his lack of faith in God, but to say that this establishes a doctrine regarding healing seems to be rather risky. It will hardly be claimed that all who "sought the physicians" "slept with their fathers" as a result, for if such had been the case we probably would have heard of a scarcity of doctors about that time, caused by a custom similar

to that of the Indians, who, when a medicine-man fails to cure a chief, send the doctor to keep his unfortunate patient company in the happy hunting grounds.

6 and 7. Isaiah 53: 4, 5 and Matthew 8: 17. It does not seem to follow that because in the atonement there is provision for the physical nature therefore Mr. Simpson's position is assured, and it would hardly seem that he thought it was, judging from the desperate wrench he gives the passage when applying it. In his comment on the passage in Matthew, he says that the healing was not accomplished to give Christ's enemies a vindication of His divinity, but that He might fulfil the character presented of Him in ancient prophecy; and a little farther on says, "This [*i.e.*, healing] was the work of His life." If this is not an attempt to make the lesser include the greater, such an attempt was never made. To make the concerns of the physical body, which is given for a temporary purpose, of more importance and more worthy of attention from the Saviour than the interests of the life eternal, is surely an inversion of God's order. It does not seem

that anything should be necessary to disprove a proposition so entirely at variance with the tenor of the Scriptures, but if it were, we have the plain statements of the Saviour Himself, who declares, in opposition to the statement that His works were not intended as a vindication of His divine character, "The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me" (John 5: 36).

Again, in Mark 2: 3-11, containing the account of the case of the paralytic healed by Christ at Capernaum, the Saviour declares (v. 10) that the object of the miracle was to *prove* that He had power to forgive sins. Furthermore, it is evident from John 20: 30, 31, that the apostle understood that the great aim of Christ's life was not to heal the body, as Mr. Simpson contends, but that the purpose of the signs was, "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ." See also John 17: 1, 2, and many other similar passages.

On the second statement, that healing was the work of Christ's life, let us hear again

the testimony of the Redeemer Himself. When sought by the multitude who had witnessed His healing power just before, He said to the disciples, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for *therefore* came I forth" (Mark 1: 38). Certainly this could be reasonably interpreted as a fulfilment of Isaiah 61: 1, — "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound," — which the Saviour read and applied to Himself in Nazareth; and the statement of His mission is emphatic. If healing the body was *the* "work of His life," here was plenty to do and faith manifested; and surely He would not have left it undone for the purpose of preaching in the next towns.

8. Referring to the next passage (John 14: 12), Mr. Simpson says it is of no use to say that this means that the Church was to have greater spiritual power and do greater spiritual work, by the Holy Ghost, than

Jesus did, because they were to do the same works and greater also, etc. Now if Jesus meant works greater in degree than those He wrought, what greater works have they done or could they do than raise from the dead one who had lain four days in the darkness of the tomb? Then it cannot mean greater in kind than His work of salvation, unless the healing of the body is greater than the redemption of the soul; but must refer to the greater *number* of works they performed after Pentecost, and the greater effects they had upon the people, and the greater number of persons who were converted to Him through their works in His name and by His Spirit; in other words, the greater works were spiritual works with greater results.

9. Next, referring to Mark 16: 15-18, Mr. Simpson asks what right we have to preach one part of the "twofold" gospel without the other. Adopting his plan, we should call it the "sixfold" gospel, and ask why all six are not proclaimed. Casting out devils, speaking with tongues, handling snakes, and drinking poison with impunity, and laying hands

on the sick, are all included. Why confine it to a *twofold* gospel? Then as to the right to preach salvation: If this passage did not exist, we have plenty of authority for preaching it in Matthew 28: 19, 20, where nothing is said of the signs. Again, considering the doubts about the authenticity of the last twelve verses of Mark, in which section the "twofold" gospel we are discussing is located, one would hardly care to lean very heavily upon them alone in support of any doctrine.

10. Now comes the passage always quoted in this connection and relied upon more than any other, — James 5: 14. This is interpreted to suit the other ideas advanced, and understood to mean that in every case of sickness the child of God should be anointed with oil and pray in faith, with others, and recovery would follow. A fair interpretation of the passage would seem to be that they were directed to use the ordinary means at hand, — anointing with oil being prevalent in the East, medication consisting chiefly of external applications, — and then invoke God's blessing, the design being to encourage them

in the use of these means with a strong hope that they would be effectual. The promise, "Shall save the sick," must be understood as such promises are everywhere, with this restriction, — if it be the will of God.

The anointing, as practised by Mr. Simpson and his followers, does not bear much resemblance to the custom alluded to above, except upon homœopathic principles. Again, if so much stress is to be laid upon the *anointing*, it would seem reasonable to suppose that all the other details of the ceremony should correspond. An examination of the passage and comparison with a regular anointing service will show whether they do or not.

Mr. Simpson makes the fanciful statement that it is James, whom he calls the "President of the Apostolic Board," etc., "who rightly transmits the apostolic gifts." He does not give his reason for saying that James had any such authority, or that any peculiar gifts were to be transmitted by the apostles in the way indicated, — and some people are not so sure as he seems to be that the author of the epistle of James was an apostle. Then, if this healing was an "apostolic

gift," to be transmitted by recognized authority, how are we to know who are in the line of this new "apostolic succession"?

It is well known that praying for the sick and anointing with oil, as practised by the faith healers now, is not confined to "the elders of the church." Any peripatetic charlatan seems to answer the purpose, judging from the abundant testimonials they offer regarding their success.

II. It hardly seems necessary to drag in the expression, by a person, of a wish for the prosperity and health of a friend, in order to prove that our Father cares for our health of body as well as of soul. This would seem to be so obvious as to require no statement. It is, however, a favorite device with some to hurl at an opponent some statement about which there is no dispute, but which has no bearing upon the point at issue, triumphantly challenging refutation, hoping by such means to disconcert and so snatch a verdict. Mr. Simpson says, "We must not forget that our health will be *even as* our soul prospereth." The robust physique of some notorious sinners, who break the laws of God and man,

and the fragile and pain-racked bodies of some of God's saintly ones, do not seem to corroborate this idea very emphatically.

12, 13, and 14 are beautiful specimens of grotesque exegesis. Those who can satisfy their minds with them can probably be induced to accept anything, and must be left to their idols.

In the book under review there are very many perversions and absurdities. To enumerate and deal with them would unduly prolong our task. This study is only suggestive. Those who wish to go into the subject more fully can take a course in mental gymnastics and contortions by following the arguments in the book itself.

The passages we have referred to are offered in support of a fantastic and obscure idea that, through some process of transfiguration, Christ's new resurrection life is made part of our physical being,—an opinion which Mr. Simpson or any one else can hold without asking leave; but something less strained and more in harmony with common-sense is required by practical and sincere students of the Word, who have no hobby to ride.

The "Practical Directions" now come under our notice. We hardly know how to estimate the mental calibre of the "director" or the "directed," if these are to be taken seriously. Listen to this: "You must be fully persuaded . . . so sure that this is part of the gospel . . . that all the teachings and reasonings of the best of men could not shake you." Verily, the writer of that is under no stringent necessity to use the Scotchman's prayer, "Lord, gie' us a gude conceit o' oursels!" Pray, who is this new prophet, whose teachings regarding the meaning of the Word of God are to be held so blindly that "all the teachings and reasonings of the best of men" cannot avail to the contrary? Surely the sublime modesty of such an utterance can only be complemented by the credulity of those to whom he speaks. When the head which contains such ideas wags sagaciously, surely the rapt hearers, with upturned, longing eyes, hold their breath lest they should lose a syllable of the wonderful revelation pouring from those infallible lips! He only has the correct interpretation! "All the wisest and best of men" who differ from him are in error! Well, well!

Next, he says: "Be fully assured of the will of God to heal you"; "the prayer for healing if it be His will, carries with it no claim for which Satan will quit his hold." "Claim His promise" — not merely ask for it. We should consider it rather bad manners for a person not to "ask" for, but to "claim" a gift which only the goodness of the giver entitled us to expect. But when we come into the presence of the Almighty, His unfathomable purposes are to be open to us, and we are to absolutely know His will concerning a particular case, and claim what we "know" to be due us!

Such miscalled "faith" is mischievous, ignorant, and impertinent presumption, — blasphemy in all but intention.

Next, he directs, "begin to act as one that is healed" — "ignore all symptoms." This is Christian science (?) with a vengeance! Illustrating this point, we may cite the case of one whom we heard on the platform of a divine healing convention. He sat at the back, keeping very quiet (for him). Suddenly he rose, came forward, and recounted his experience during the morning. He said, As he lay in bed before rising in the

morning, he felt very badly, and the temptation came that he was sick, too sick to get up. After a short discussion with himself, he told the devil that he wouldn't believe he was sick, and got up. He came to the meeting, and while sitting on the platform, he felt as though a red hot iron was being passed up and down his spine, and suffered a great deal. But he put the feeling aside as a temptation of the devil, and declared that there was nothing the matter with him; that his spinal meningitis was cured, no matter how he felt. Many other similar testimonies have been given, which show to what expedients it is sometimes necessary to resort in order to hold this doctrine.

A testimony from one who claimed to believe that God *would* heal, and that he trusted for healing in this way, would have some weight, and we would be glad to believe in the sincerity of the person offering it; but a testimony which claimed that God *had* healed, notwithstanding every throb of the heart was accompanied by pain through every fibre, only convinces that the person is blindly fanatical.

Such teachings as these, disparaging means or material things, and making faith or spirit the only reality, are calculated to change a life from one of robust, manly effort, in the fear and love and strength of God, to one of dreamy folding of the hands, and reliance upon mysticism. If God intended that only through such experiences should the soul find its way to Him, it is strange that so much effort is necessary in carrying on the affairs of the world. Toil and activity are incessant, in business and religion, and those who are busiest seem most useful. Means are everywhere and are everywhere used. Why should they be disparaged or minified? The facts of life show us that we are expected to use efforts to attain results. God did not continue the manna to the Israelites when circumstances were such that they could provide for their wants naturally, neither were their shoes or clothing preserved after the passage of the Jordan.

We are not fed as the four thousand and the five thousand were; we do not walk on the water as Peter did; and probably not many of us will find a fish with a coin in

its mouth to enable us to pay our poll-tax. Why not, though, if faith is all that honors God and "works" are a hindrance to the free course of His love?

The question will be asked, What about the testimony offered by those who claim to have been healed in this way? The answer is, Experiences do not make doctrine. They can serve as corroboratives, but not as foundations.

Many of the testimonies are offered by persons of whose sincerity and integrity we are convinced, and we must believe that they believe them. But we certainly cannot accept all of them as facts, but make large allowances for imagination and lack of knowledge of disease, etc. It is a peculiarly significant fact that very many of these testimonies fail at vital points. This is notably so in the case of one who has published his experience in a tract entitled "A New Lung." The statements made would be wonderful, if true, but the difficulty is that, according to the testimony of the physician in charge of the hospital where the man was treated, they are fancies, to a large extent.

At the time of writing, the man with the alleged new lung is dangerously sick with disease of the said lung, having been confined to his bed for some time, and unable to retain food. Poor fellow!

Another prominent exponent of the doctrine has an experience about which much is said. Several very serious troubles, spinal meningitis, dropsy, paralysis, and others, were alleged to have been entirely removed. The testimony of others (including his own brother), who were in a position to know, — as the diseases, if existent, were not easily concealable, — seems to leave no doubt as to the fact that fancy played a large part here also.

Many others have been investigated, and the results are very similar.

We do not wish to appear to impugn the intended honesty of these people, — we are willing to concede it, in most cases, — but honesty of purpose is not always accompanied with accuracy of statement or knowledge of facts. Nor do we wish to appear to deny that God sometimes, in answer to prayer, has healed the sick. But this does not prove that the use of medicine and medical skill should

be generally dispensed with. Many of these people give reasons for their beliefs that they were sick with various diseases, that would pass for good jokes in a comic paper, and only the earnestness and character of the narrators save them from being so treated.

Instances of this may be given. One who testified that he had been healed of varicose veins in his leg, was contradicted by his wife. When, to settle the matter, he was asked to give physical proof of the alleged healing, by submitting the leg for examination, he said, "I am healed in the promise."

Another, an old lady, suffered from rheumatism in her ankles. As she professed faith in divine healing, she was asked why she didn't get cured. She said she was cured. When the person to whom this astounding declaration was made had recovered his breath, he asked her why she was limping around and apparently suffering so much pain if she was healed. She said *she* was "healed in the promise."

Another case is that of one who was badly crippled, but didn't want to be cured of his lameness, as he thought it helped him in

his work. But he had a lingual trouble, being unable to pronounce the elements of the letter *w*, when it occurred at the beginning of a word, but was compelled to give the sound of *r*. For instance, instead of saying "water," "Walter," "will," etc., he would say "rater," "Ralter," "rill," etc. He said he believed the Lord could and would cure him, and was assured by the person in charge of the convention that he was right. He accepted the declaration, and said he was healed. At the close of the convention, he recounted his experience, declared he was entirely cured, winding up by saying, "I *rould* give God the glory." He knew, and every one else did who heard him speak, that he couldn't pronounce the troublesome letter any more than he ever could, but he was "healed in the promise," and stuck to it.

Had the first case been healed in the leg, the second in the ankles, and the third in the tongue, where they needed it, instead of in the "promise," which wasn't troubled, it would have been better for them and more convincing to us.

When we remember how easy it is to read an advertisement of some quack medicine (a panacea for all the ills that flesh is heir to, but a specific for some one in particular), and then feel all or some of the symptoms described as sure indications of the presence of disease, we need not wonder that people think they are sick, when all they need is a little more energy. This will account for the readiness of the people to be deceived by Christian scientists, spiritualists, mind curists, metaphysical hearers, and the numberless other frauds which flourish at the present time.

Some of the "divine healing" disciples, in their eagerness to prove their doctrine, admit the truth of the claims of these impostors, and of the cases of healing at shrines containing the bones or a bone of a saint, in the former case ascribing the cure to the agency of the devil, who, they say, is the cause of the trouble, and who, for a purpose, allows the patient to recover under the "treatment" of his disciples that he may further his own ends, — a case of Satan casting out Satan! The miracles at the shrines they

allow to be of a more respectable character, and the assigned reason is that, though the bones or other *bric-a-brac* have no virtue, God honors the faith, though it is misdirected. To this we may say that, though God might honor a misdirected faith in Himself in some way, we don't know that He honors it when it is misdirected toward a "bone," and gives the result desired, thereby increasing the tendency to make the said "bone" a stumbling-block.

There is an influence, of which we know little, of mind over matter, which is recognized by physicians, which will explain many alleged faith cures. All sorts of schemes of healing are abroad, and all have fervent advocates. Many of the latter are sincere, many are, no doubt, impostors. But under and over all, God is, in healing power, and we can lovingly trust Him; and if means fail, as sometimes they do, we do not doubt that our Father sometimes interposes in unusual ways.

We do not wish to appear to limit His love or power, realizing that now we see as in a glass, darkly. We are anxious, for the glory

of God, to walk in the light, and pay our Father most abundant honor, for there is no good gift of God to His own that we do not desire to possess.

We "covet earnestly the best gifts," but "there is a more excellent way" than repudiating the use of the means so often blessed by God, which is involved in the principles of the falsely called "divine" healers.

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