

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE JOURNAL

*"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but
mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds"*

Volume XXIII

FEBRUARY, 1906

Number 11

HEALING AS PRACTISED BY JESUS.

SAMUEL GREENWOOD.

THE thought of Christians in general respecting the use of material remedies in sickness is that they are the only available means for combating disease, and that their use is therefore not out of keeping with Christian conduct. Some have gone so far as to say that *materia medica* is the legitimate successor of Jesus' healing method, notwithstanding that material means had already been in use for two thousand years before Jesus appeared, and were doubtless as much sought after and relied upon then as now. Just how they could succeed that which came after, has not been explained. One thing is certain, that Jesus preferred his own system to any other, and healed the worst diseases with better success than *materia medica* can heal to-day after another period of two thousand years in which to perfect itself. It is but just to assume that the Founder of Christianity was the best judge as to the healing power of his teaching, and whether his followers should practise his own system or another, and an examination of the history of material medicine does not warrant the conclusion that it is the successor of Jesus' method.

Those who defend the resort to drugs and medical doctors as in keeping with their Christian profession, do so on the belief that the Christ healing which Jesus practised has long since passed out of human reach. In assuming this they beg the whole question, for there is not only no Scriptural reference to such a deprivation, but the facts disprove it.

657

Copyright, 1906, by Mary Baker G. Eddy.

Human reason also is opposed to such an assumption; for if we accept the healing work of Jesus as done in evidence of God's goodness and power, it naturally follows that similar evidence must always be forthcoming under similar conditions. To say that the age of Christian healing has passed because Christians, as a rule, have ceased to practise it, is as unreasonable as it would be to assume that God's forgiveness of sin had passed because there are so many sinners who do not avail themselves of it. If through neglect the telephone should fall into disuse, and remain thus for centuries, the conclusion would be erroneous that it therefore had ceased to exist as a possibility. It would be ready at any time to respond to the touch of re-discovery, and the re-utilization of its capabilities. In like manner human reason must dispose of the question of Christian healing. That it has lapsed into disuse for so many centuries is neither an argument for its temporary character nor against its restoration.

The discovery of Christian Science by Mrs. Eddy, and her subsequent establishment of the movement bearing its name, are strong protests against the decadence of Christian healing, and the apathy of the church on this subject. If Christ, Truth, is still present with men, always available as the Saviour from evil,—and this is the insistent plea of Christian Science,—then there can be no logical grounds for the assumption that we cannot expect the healing of the sick as in former days. The facts that have accumulated in support of Christian Science are too numerous and well authenticated to be passed over without careful and just consideration, or to be set aside as coincidences. Christian Science, endorsed as it is by the demonstration of its claims through the healing of disease, is pressing this issue upon Christendom. The world's religious teachers and leaders are being compelled either to defend the practice of material medicine as in harmony with Christianity or to admit that Jesus' method of healing the sick is the only one that conforms to his teaching. Christians must acknowledge that the injunction of Jesus regarding healing remains a perpetual command to his followers, or that his remarkable healing work had no relation to his no less remarkable teaching. In either case they are in a dilemma, for in the first instance they condemn themselves if they do not obey, while in the second they forfeit the very foundation of Christian belief. Jesus said, "Believe me for the very works'

sake;" implying plainly the direct relationship between his works and his words. However Christians may view this question, it is certain that the office or position of a Christian has not to-day the same significance or breadth of meaning which Jesus attached to it; nor can it have this compass unless Christianity is seen to meet as much of the world's need as it did once. The modern acceptance of Christianity includes too much worldliness, too much materialism and not enough spirituality, else there were more concern to learn of Christ Jesus the way to health and holiness, the kingdom of heaven. He said, "I am the way."

The common tendency evidently has been to regard the Master's "miracles" as the exhibitions of a wonder-worker, a sort of spectacular performance, instead of the natural and legitimate result of his understanding of Truth as applied to special cases. Such a belief centers Jesus' healing work in himself as a superhuman personality; although he distinctly disclaimed that the power proceeded from himself, declaring, "I can of mine own self do nothing;" "the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." His entire teaching substantiates these statements, and further implies that the ability thus to do the will of the Father was not resident in him alone, but pertains to all who conform to God's requirements. It is plainly the failure to fulfil these conditions which has caused the passing of divine healing out of general Christian practice, not that God has changed His purpose or withdrawn the opportunity from mortals to know Him aright.

The defence of the practice of material medicine as being divinely authorized and sustained, and in keeping with Jesus' teaching, is manifestly an attempt to excuse Christians from their obedience to Jesus' command to "heal the sick,"—a command that is positive, definite, and unqualified. One need only examine the attitude of Jesus and that of *materia medica* regarding the cause of disease and suffering, to discover that no similarity whatever exists between them. In his treatment of sickness Jesus rested his case entirely with God; while *materia medica* ignores God altogether and rests its case with matter, holding the issue as wholly within material law. To aver that any or all of the various medical and surgical systems are the legitimate successors of Jesus' spiritual system is to ignore the logical inference of his own words. Such a condition of thought would seek to engulf the spiritualizing truths of

Christianity in the densest materialism, from whence no ray of light could lighten the pathway of mortals Spiritward. The particularly sad phase of this question is that so many Christian ministers, whose office it is to guide their people in the way of truth, have espoused the claims of *materia medica* in opposition to the appeal of Christian Science for the revival of primitive Christian healing. What a pitiful outlook for those unfortunates who have traveled through all the by-ways of material methods, who have spent their all in the search for health, and have found it not, and who are left stranded in despair with nothing to look for but death! What a parody of Jesus' Christianity to tell them that these material systems are all they can now expect of the Christ-healing to which earth's burdened mortals were bidden to come for rest!

The belief that the sick in these latter days can have no hope of being healed except what these material systems offer them, is a delusion which Christians, with the memory of their Master's life, should be ashamed to hold. The way of humanity has not been growing brighter "unto the perfect day" if *materia medica* is the best balm left to mortals for their trouble and sorrow. This is not progress, but retrogression, when we remember how abundantly Jesus proved, so many hundred years ago, that neither God nor man requires drugs to heal the sick successfully. *Materia medica* was the popular resort for the diseased then as it is now, yet Jesus healed its "incurables" without drug, operation, or hypnotism. He did this in evidence of what Christianity, the then new religion, could do for afflicted mortals, proving thereby the existence of a higher way than matter by which to reach God. It is true that the generation in which these marvels were performed soon passed away, but is it true that nothing remained to the next generation, and the next on till now, save history, a mere record of what had been? Was there no vital Principle expressed in the truths which Jesus taught that is capable of producing the same results under similar conditions to the very end of time? If this it not so, Christianity was little more than an ephemeral idea, a mere shooting-star across the heavens of human consciousness, giving a passing burst of brightness and then vanishing forever. God pity the future of the race if the voice of the healing Christ is never again to be heard this side of death, stilling the tem-

pests of human want and woe, healing the broken heart, and making whole the diseased.

Human misfortune and misery are here to be overcome as in the time of Jesus; sin and disease are just as rampant; and death, as a dreaded spectre, still stalks among us, gathering in its prey. Surely if mortals ever needed Christianity to redeem them from these conditions they need it to-day. The sufferers throughout the earth to whom *materia medica* has given no relief, and whom it confesses it cannot save, need help as sorely as did the Jews whom Jesus healed in Palestine so many years ago. Why should not the Christ-truth be applied to their needs also? Why not? Has Christianity worn itself out, while *materia medica* has come down the centuries gathering new strength and helpfulness? Has God ceased to respond to the prayer of faith, or have Christians ceased to trust in Him,—which is it? Has Christianity ceased to heal the sick because it is not able, or because there is a better way?

These are not superficial or idle questions but are of the deepest concern and import to mankind. All the conditions exist to-day such as Jesus encountered during his ministry. There are the same physical needs, the same sense of separation from God, the same bondage to the material senses, the same love of evil, and also the same ability to understand and receive truth. What then has been lost, what is lacking to-day, the truth of Christianity or the understanding of it? It is an accepted historical fact that the Christians of the early church healed the sick through their religion alone; while the Christians of the present day generally repudiate this sacred duty as having nothing to do with their religion. Has the church another and a better name than that of Jesus Christ whereby to save men from the grasp of disease?

The basic law of mathematics never wears out, its intelligent application brings the same results to-day that it did five or ten thousand years ago. It never gives sign of decay or of making way for substitutes.

What, then, of Christianity! What of the teachings of Jesus, who said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away"! What of his healing, when he said that his followers should do the same works and even greater! What of the world-wide preaching of the gospel in obedience to his command, and the world-wide disobedience to his command to heal the sick as well! What of the excuses, and the unbelief, beside the remembrance of

Jesus' parting words, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"! What of all this, with the world so full of woe and heart-ache and misery,—and so full withal of professed followers of the great Way-shower!

How can Christians seriously believe that they have nothing better than *materia medica* wherewith to minister to the sick and dying, while they have such a wonderful heritage as the life of Jesus? When he left his students there was no suggestion of there ever being any other right way than his own of healing either the sick or the sinful. At what point, then, or by whose authority did *materia medica* supplant the Christ-way of doing this work? There should be some definite and reliable data to support the common plea that the time of Christian healing has long since passed. This data should be at least as definite and reliable as that upon which we base our belief in Jesus' "miracles," and those of his disciples. Bald statements are not conclusive on any subject, much less on one which so vitally concerns the destiny of mankind. But no data have been presented, absolutely nothing, either in Scripture or out of it, to justify such a position. Facts are demanded of Christian Science and are given; why are they not also given by those who deny it and the healing efficacy of Christianity?

Christ Jesus said, "I will not leave you comfortless;" "Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest." Have these words lost their original meaning for physical sufferers, or are material medicines the only fulfilment which they can expect of these sweet promises? When distress of body, or the persistent fretting and turmoil of worldly worries, so disturbs the sufferer that he cannot rest, which shall he turn to,—the Christ-remedy, or a soporific drug that may perchance be the beginning of a degrading appetite? When the body is burning with fever or racked with pain, is it the best and wisest a Christian can do to turn to *materia medica*, instead of to the truth of the Christ-presence, although Jesus said, "My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth"? These were the statements of the great, Godlike man who understood the reality of being better than has any other in all history, and who gave abundant proof that Truth would do all he promised of it. All Christendom is resting its hope of salvation hereafter on his teachings, and yet many reject them as having no value or application concerning the sufferings mortals encounter here. The Master himself placed no such limitation on

the truth he taught, either as to time, or place, or person; and he who understood best should know best what Truth can do. The only limitations to which he referred pertained to the faith and obedience of his followers.

Jesus alluded, in unmistakable terms, to the coming of even a fuller revelation of Truth than he had given, when mortals should learn plainly of the Father. It is but natural to believe that as his followers progressed towards that more perfect knowledge of God, their ability to do the works of their Master would increase. This growth in spirituality should bring an enlarged understanding of spiritual law and power, and a corresponding departure from materialistic beliefs. It is a proper expectation, which experience does not disappoint, that the better one understands any truth the better one is able to demonstrate it. If, then, we admit that it is true, the same rule applies to Christianity. If disease was healed by Jesus and his disciples through their understanding of the Christ-truth and power, these results should not diminish but increase as Christianity becomes better understood and more widely accepted. That this has not been the case certainly suggests the absence or decrease of the faith and loyalty of Christians, but it gives no ground for the argument that *materia medica* now fills the office of the Christ-physician. Indeed it is difficult to conceive how any one who is at all conversant with ordinary medical methods can think of them as presenting in any degree the evidence of Christian truth, such as marked the healing work of Jesus; or that *materia medica* can be in the remotest sense a legitimate substitute for the method employed by Jesus and his disciples. Apart from its use of dangerous and poisonous drugs, of whose good or bad effect in different cases it has no certain knowledge, its appalling record of mistakes and failures should overwhelmingly nullify any claim of its relationship, either in theory or practice, to Jesus' unfailingly beneficent and successful healing work. Let no earnest Christian be deceived by such a fallacious claim. When God requires a substitute for the Christ-method in healing the sick He will require one also in saving the sinner. Jesus associated both of these as belonging to Christian practice; who since then has had the rightful authority to separate them?

Materia medica gives only "as the world giveth." Knowing nothing but matter, it has no spiritual knowledge to impart. It has no quality of love or mercy. It has no balm

for sorrow, no antidote for hatred, no remedy for worry, no salvation for the profligate, no release from the fear of death. It has no hope, and acknowledges none outside of matter. It has little confidence even in itself, and none whatever in God, Spirit. It has written "danger" all over its practice. Jesus said, "Be not afraid," while the message of *materia medica* abounds with the word fear. It surrounds its patients, whom it should lift into the atmosphere of security and peace, with the fear of one thing or another every moment of the day, everywhere they go, everything they do. What a pitiful substitute, if such it claims to be, for Christian faith and trust, or for that healing ministry of Jesus in which there was no danger or fear, failure or mistake. What is there in *materia medica*, or what has there been throughout all the four thousand years of its existence, that has ever touched even the hem of the Great Physician's garment?

The teachings of Jesus and the teachings of *materia medica* should have something in common if they are from the same source and are accomplishing the same work; yet how do they compare with each other? Jesus taught his followers of God's protecting care, not even a sparrow falling without the Father's notice; while *materia medica* teaches that we are constantly liable to all kinds of disease and misfortune. Jesus taught that nothing had power to hurt them who believed on him, not even though they chanced to drink some "deadly thing." *Materia medica* denies all such statements. It denies that Christianity is any protection from poisons or from the infractions of the material laws of health. It denies the healing power of Christian faith and prayer, or that God can heal any disease which has been pronounced incurable by physicians. This is surely a strange attitude for that which so many Christians defend as a divinely appointed healing system, supposedly using the remedies that God has provided.

How can *materia medica* be rightfully occupying the healing office of Christianity, when it makes no difference in the physician's success whether he be a Christian or an infidel? According to its own theories it is not requisite that its patients or practitioners believe in God or Christ at all; it is not even necessary for them to be honest, or upright, or pure. How, then, is it that Christians of all classes resort to a system so entirely "separate from God," in the belief that it is the way God has provided for them?

How can any Christian minister or layman say of such a system that it so divinely ministers to the needs of men that Christians are no longer required to heal as did their Master? What possible fraternity can this method have with that of Jesus, when they teach exact opposites and lead their believers in contrary directions? One leads towards Life, the other towards death; one towards freedom from the flesh, the other towards slavery to it; one towards hope and joy and health, the other towards fear, despair, disease. In which of these directions does Christianity lead men? Who has ever been made a better Christian because of the medicines he has taken, or the surgical operations he has undergone, or the dieting he has practised? Yet if it be true, as so many people have claimed, that these material means and methods are of God, their use should lead people Godward, and bring out the Godlike qualities which He expressed in man, but which disease as well as sin obscures. If these material agencies are of God and therefore good, surely no harm can come from them; yet where is the physician of any school who will take such a position? Who of those who accept this premise will abide by the conclusion, true and logical though it must be?

Jesus taught through all his ministry that God is the Life of man; *materia medica*, on the contrary, teaches that life is in matter. Jesus said, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink;" *materia medica* says you must be very careful what you eat or drink, lest life and health be imperiled. Jesus said that those who kept his sayings should not die; *materia medica* says you must die,—no matter what you do, no matter what you believe, no matter how good a Christian you are. Jesus taught that those who believed on him should heal the sick in his name; *materia medica* says that one's belief in Christ has nothing to do with the healing of disease. Which of these testimonies are we as Christians to accept? Which of these contrary teachings is calculated to make the best Christians of us,—hasten our approach to God-likeness?

Christianity is from God. Jesus said, "I came forth from the Father." *Materia medica* had its birth in paganism, and was swaddled in superstition and delusion. All through the forty centuries of its career it has ever been true to its parentage, never leaving the line of materialism, never ascending an infinitesimal fraction towards Spirit, God, nor perceiving the first gleam of spiritual law.

In all that time it has never discovered one remedy upon which it can absolutely rely in any case; and to-day, with all its long history of experiment, investigation, and practice, it stands helpless in the presence of a long list of diseases for which it confesses it has no cure. Jesus said, "No one who comes to me will I ever turn away;" and again, when referring to his disciples' faith even as "a grain of mustard seed," he said, "you will find nothing impossible." (Twentieth Century New Testament.)

Whatever may have sufficed in the past to prevent Christians from practising the healing power of Christianity, their duty in this respect is no longer an open question. In the presence of what Christian Science is demonstrating in their midst, healing all manner of disease by no other means than the prayer of faith and understanding, the former excuses that these things are not possible or are not required of them, no longer afford a refuge. Christian Science protests against the divorcement of healing and Christianity, which centuries of ignorance and unbelief have tried to execute, and maintains the duty of Christians to observe all Jesus' commands, to keep the whole law and gospel if they would be whole Christians and be wholly saved.

The success of Christian Science disproves all that has been claimed for *materia medica* as being in any sense a God-appointed substitute for the Christ-method of our Master. It not only heals the sick successfully without drug or operation or hypnotism, but heals what these material methods have found impossible. It has no poisonous after-effects to contend with, no aftermath of bad habits, no fatal mistakes from faulty prescriptions or wrong operations. It never frightens or discourages its patients, but surrounds them with the truth of God's absolute infinitude. It endeavors to lift human thought above the atmosphere of its belief in evil to the sunlit heights of Christian hope and faith, even to the recognition that God, good, is the only Life of man. In all seriousness and aside from prejudice, in the presence of the momentous problem of human salvation, and looking out over the great mass of humanity struggling as it has done for ages with its ceaseless woe and anguish, which of these two systems, judged by their teaching, history, and success, better deserves the name of Christian and of Science? which approaches nearer the Christ-method of Jesus?

Let it be understood that this article is in no sense an

arraignment of physicians, most of whom command the highest respect as earnest men and women. They are giving their lives to the sacred endeavor of alleviating human suffering, and that they are mistaken in their beliefs and methods is the misfortune of an education which they would as deeply deplore as do we, did they but know the better way of Christian Science. Christian Science is not fighting the medical profession or any other, but it does plead for that full recognition of Christianity which is presented in the text-book of Christian Science as providing the only way of salvation for mortals from disease and sin and death.

PUBLIC opinion is, in nine cases out of ten, public folly and impertinence. We are slaves to one another. We dare not take counsel of our consciences and affections, but must needs suffer popular prejudice and custom to decide for us, and at their bidding are sacrificed love and friendship and all the best hopes of our lives. We do not ask, What is right and best for us? but, What will folks say of it? We have no individuality, no self-poised strength, no sense of freedom. We are conscious always of the gaze of the many-eyed tyrant. We propitiate him with precious offerings; we burn incense perpetually to Moloch, and pass through his fire the sacred first-born of our hearts. How few dare to seek their own happiness by the lights which God has given them, or have strength to defy the false pride and the prejudice of the world and stand fast in the liberty of Christians! Can anything be more pitiable than the sight of so many, who should be the choosers and creators under God of their own spheres of utility and happiness, self-degraded into mere slaves of propriety and custom, their true natures undeveloped, their hearts cramped and shut up, each afraid of his neighbor, and his neighbor of him, living a life of unreality, deceiving and being deceived, and forever walking in a vain show.

John G. Whittier