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Faith Cure Notes

To the Editor of The Advance.

DEAR SIR,—In my last was mentioned a sad case of an invalid, which by common consensus of opinion, should have been healed, if so be that God specially healed persons of their maladies. This lady conversed with him as a child would with a parent. She was indeed possessed with a rich divine influence, yet she took refuge in the promise to Paul, "my grace is sufficient for thee." And this is not an isolated case. The Scriptures are not wanting in instances witnessing against (not the power of God nor his wisdom or goodness) but to a theory, fenced about with a mysteriousness advocated and accepted by the devotees of this faith cure association: The apostle Paul had a thorn in the flesh for which he prayed to be delivered thrice! Was he delivered? He was not! And why? Using Mrs Fletcher's explanation, he was not instructed to believe properly, and therefore failed. Certainly Paul was a man of prayer and faith, and inspiration was upon all he did. Hear what God says to him: "My grace is sufficient for thee." When Timothy had often infirmities and his stomach wasn't well—indigestion or maybe bilious attacks sometimes. This same Paul advised a little wine for his sickness. If he had been skilled in faith cure ways he should have advised him to exercise himself to more faith and prayer, and to refuse all other means, so that his diseased stomach might become sound. But there were no faith cure associations for gain or otherwise in those days. It is evident Paul did not understand matters as the faith curers do. In his own case he submitted himself to the will of God, as his master did before him. "Not my will, but thine be done." But nevertheless, Paul is quoted to support their dogmas?

Granting them all that sincerity and piety mean, there is an obvious danger of harm. How many have strong sympathies, nay more, strong faith in their doctrines, and who believe all that they teach, and when sickness overtakes them, utterly refuse to obtain the advice of skilled physicians. Representatives of this institution are called, but the poor victim, not apprehending the precise mode of believing, or his case is so acute that the mind becomes at once disqualified to respond and he dies. This is no imagination picture, facts like these have actually transpired, and are indisputable. The city of Toronto itself has witnessed them, in her courts of law and otherwise? A sincere christian recognizes God's wisdom and goodness in providing for the ills of humanity. The vegetable as well as the mineral kingdom are rich in productions for the ailments of man's body and are equally applicable to diseases of the righteous as they are to the wicked. There is no possible distinction. By using them they are using the results of the wisdom of God and the power of God, and all are well pleasing in his sight. This society, if correctly reported, draws a distinction. Their motto is, faith cure for the righteous, but medicines for the sinner! Wouldn't it be better to compromise and mix them, at least sometimes? It is certain faith and prayer are very salutary adjuncts. There are also the Christian Scientists, another body holding anti-Scriptural views. They look upon God as a principle only, denying his personality, they also deny the reality of matter, contending that the mind is the real, and the diseases of the body are only imaginary. They believe that the God principle is goodness, and that this principle is manifested in Jesus Christ, and that He is the highest expression of goodness; hence if we come in possession of this goodness we become like Christ in the fullness of this divine power, and therefore diseases become extinct. They are called Christian Scientists, because Christ was the first great teacher.

While Christian Scientists believe as above, the faith cure people believe in the personality of God, having an independent power to heal; that diseases are real; that by consecration they are placed in such a relation to God that he is compelled, unconditionally and without option, to heal their diseases. Here the orthodox Christian takes issue. But their faith need not be repeated just here.

It is held as an irrefutable axiom, that all law connected with the animal economy is of God, and is to be regarded as much so as any law of morals and religion, or their forces, and as unchangeable as the hills. Psychological research has developed, and is developing important laws and phenomena, and as they appear are being utilized for the benefit of humanity. The brain of man is said to be a well furnished laboratory for the developement of magnetic forces. May it not, by way of accommodation, be styled a battery having its positives and negatives, and is the chief agent in controlling its own intricate mechanism, as well as that of the body—depending, however, upon the will generally for its application in very many respects. Whatever its products may be termed—nerve power or animal magnetism—it is certain that their intensity is affected by dynamic concentration in one's self, and also by outside sympathy and suggestion in contact with it. One product of the mind is faith, or expectancy. The machinery and action of faith are always the same, its results depending upon the object on which it rests, whether in the arena of physics or religion, modified by the force and intelligence exercised. This truism explains much of what appears miraculous in connection with our bodies. That it has much to do with successful healing will appear. It is this law of expectancy or faith, that so marvellously enters into our business transactions, our journeys, our attainments and our success in life, and it is no less noticed in its power to alleviate, if not cure, the diseases of the body. Any given medicine, with this force attached, always of course with discretion as to medicine is increased in its power of cure. That this law is true may be seen in the simple fact of excrescences of the body, say a wart. How often simple expedients, such as fasting, sputa, or a bit of stolen beef, rubbed over them, dissipates them. And why? Because of mental expectancy. If only an excresence, why not a small tumor? And which, too, has often occurred. Therefore we should not be incredulous for larger results or more serious troubles? Look at the phenomenon of mind from another point—hypnotism. Here is a physician, say, who is treating patient. He takes control of her mind, forcing it to do his bidding, upon the principle of a positive brain acting upon a negative one, or a positive brain brought into a negative state. This of itself is a very strange phenomenon. But notice the effects, when done for purely medical purposes. Every avenue to the patient's mind is closed but one, and all her energies are forced upon the important object, the cure of her disease—and the impressions for cure upon the patient's mind are engraven as upon steel and when awakened, they remain, and this law of expectancy, active now as it is, becomes strengthened, and by repeated applications the person in many cases is healed, without any injurious effect whatsoever to her constitution. Having confidence in her physician, and desirous of cure, the operation afterwards becomes simple and pleasant. This will suffice to prove that the mind has much to do with the functions of the body. The results of the application of those laws depend much upon their diligent application. Note: every man and woman has them in their constitution. Sometimes people call phenomena will power, but it is not a true synonym. The will must have some lever upon which to act, and so it has. This mental magnetism, acted upon by the will, compels a response of the body to the desires of the mind. The body is usually passive to its power. Let me state once more, and plainer, that this law of response between body and mind, invoked by the principle of expectancy, holds good whether done in the name of God or man, providing the conditions are the same. Explicitness has been my aim, to show that those professed faith cures, a very large percentage of them i not all, are bettered or cured independently of the special act of God at all, but all the same, by laws sanctioned by God long before this association came into existence. All things being equal, they are a ligitimate agency and worthy to be used in all meekness as the instruments of God. The physician will by kindly suggestions, bring them into activity. As well will the nurse do the same. But mark, it is very wholesome and Godly to always assist them by prayer and application. Happier results may be expected thereon than by using those means alone.

In addition to what is said, there are also the quiet involuntary forces of nature in which the mind takes no active part. The system often gets out of order; fever is present; the body is lacerated by accident or otherwise. God has wonderfully provided material in one's self for healing and restoration. The plastic elements for wounds and the avenues of elimination for poisons, these are at work independent of active faith or prayer. I need only to mention this to have it endorsed by every person of intelligence. It may be stated as a fact that the natural tendency of nature, when the body is sick, is to heal. This tends to emphasize the possibilities, nay the certainty, that the so-called healing by such acts of God as annunciated by faith cures is nothing more than by or through agencies always present, always ready to work. Such undoubtedly is the case with the young paralysed lady mentioned by Mrs. Fletcher, now abiding at the "Home." She is being gradually restored by the very laws I have mentioned! So is the young man residing in Proton equally paralysed, but is being gradually restored by the same, aided by suitable remedies, though he never saw a faith cure institution. And these are not isolated cases.

Listen! When God resorts to special healing he requires not months or weeks but does it at once, instantaneously, miraculously! What about persons who have wilfully and continuously broken the laws of health until they become a wreck, and thereby have entailed diseases which are leading to enevitable death? Just imagine such people demanding healing unconditionally on the part of God! Better far for them to seek the healing of their soul—for there is no law in heaven or earth that can cure their bodies under such circumstances. If there be, God has not revealed it.

In closing these remarks it will be seen that it would be impossible for me to endorse this institution—as a "faith cure" institution, with its mysteries and errors. Ascribing every benefit to a special act of God is undoubtedly an error of judgment, but not of heart. They present God as having no options. To pray "if it be the Lord's will" is erroneous! It seems to be a new gospel. Christ teaches us when we pray to say, "thy will be done." The apostle says, for that ye ought to say, "if the Lord will, we will do this or that." Surely the servant is not greater than his lord. John Wesley was a good man, so everybody will say, but according to faith cure people he must have been exceedingly silly to publish a manual of remedies for the sick. In his day it was largely used. Evidently he proved that by using God's productions the sick were healed. But you may search his works in vain to find out that he limited the power of God. He was too wise to teach that every act of healing was for the righteous only, and by a special act of God. Nevertheless he taught a wise providence of God—teaching that in all humility the creature should in all cases say, "thy will be done." Many of his followers, however, have itching ears, and run after every new fad that appears. For my own part, I am satisfied with the old landmarks and the unchangable Gospel. —C.

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