

and it represents the divine 'treasure' strangely in 'earthen vessels.'

In the Life of Temple Gairdner of Cairo there is a chapter on 'the musician.' He had a genius for music and he was very critical. 'How did this critic tolerate the sloppy amateur performances that were Cairo's average, or the ragged-edged drag of the hymns at some little missionary gathering, or the piercing tunelessness of Egyptian voices forced into European airs? . . . The fact remains that he so threw himself into these little amateur performances that the amateurs excelled themselves.'

Of his own music his friend Brother Douglas Downs wrote: 'I never knew that music could be so spiritual and sacramental until I heard his interpretation of some passages of Elgar. He showed me for the first time in my life that music may be the very language of heaven.'

So let us end by addressing the text directly to all of us, and more particularly to all who are members of the choir: 'Be filled with the Spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord.'

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## The Christian Gospel and Physical Health.

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THE least observant person cannot fail to notice the growth of certain movements in our time, which have for their aim the prevention and the elimination of disease by purely mental or spiritual methods. These movements are not essentially new: the 'new' thing about them is the denial of the 'reality' of disease, and the consequent necessity of ridding the world of physicians, surgeons, nurses, hospitals, and clinics, and installing in their place readers who, by expounding a certain philosophy, can clear the human mind of its 'false beliefs,' and so banish the 'false belief' that diseased tissues have any existence. What does not exist cannot harm, therefore the supposed harm vanishes when the bogey is exposed. It is all very simple, and the simplicity of it has created a body of men and women who, despite their profession that they are only returning to primitive Christianity, and their adoption of two great names 'Christian' and 'Science,' are nevertheless in direct opposition to the Christianity which has been known for nineteen centuries, and also to that science which, partly through the microscope, has revealed the hitherto hidden things of man's physical and mental nature. 'Christian Science' draws its clientele mainly from the orthodox Christian Churches, and an analysis of that clientele is very instructive. It consists, for the most part, of persons who suffer from neuroses, and who probably have nothing whatever the matter with them; of persons who have sought in vain medical aid, and persons who have never had any intellectual groundwork of their religious faith. The last

named are particularly liable to be victimized by any plausible philosophy which seems to hold the promise of happiness.

Other healing movements are associated with Apocalyptic theology. An artificial framework is constructed into which religion must be fitted 'four-square.'

And other movements, notably that of 'New Thought,' have no necessary connexion with religion at all other than a vague pantheism. All our recuperative powers are 'within' ourselves. We have simply to assert the 'God within,' and fulness of life and power flow into us.

In the Church of England sporadic movements appear. Yesterday it was Mr. Hickson. To-day it is a Brighton clergyman. To-morrow another will appear.

Meanwhile Rome goes on its way, indifferent to all such movements, being content with S. Winifred's Well, Lourdes, and La Salette.

Without entering into a detailed analysis of these various systems, it will be sufficient to say that each of them can boast of its cures, and that in many cases the cures are genuine. Nothing is gained by denying this. The psychologist can quite easily account for many of them, but there are others of which it is best to say, 'This is the finger of God.' None, however, can say exactly where the separating line should be drawn. Perhaps it is not necessary to draw a line at all. The fatal thing in every system is that for the most part the cure is announced *without any diagnosis having been made.*

Patients allege that they have been cured of cancer, or of some other malady, but in a vast number of cases we have only their word for it, and it is notorious that nothing is easier to misunderstand than a symptom. Persons who have little more than the most elementary knowledge of physiology are often quite confident that they are suffering from diseases which a competent diagnosis cannot discover, and which later are clearly demonstrated not to have existed. Such persons, 'cured' of an imaginary malady, become the apostles of a cult which thrives upon cases of this kind and advertises them as evidence of the truth of its doctrines. The falseness of the whole conception is easily concealed from those who have 'the will to believe' anything that promises them relief from their obsession. The thing passes into tragedy when a victim of a disease, which diagnosis reveals as malignant, refuses to accept the fact that it can only be treated by the removal of the physical cause of the *malaise*, and, disdaining the aid which science offers, finally passes beyond all aid. Coroners are justified in describing as almost criminal the wilful ignorance of 'healers' who, in the interests of a metaphysical theory, condemn to death 'patients' who might be saved by the use of proven remedies. The ghastly failures of 'Christian Science,' which it is often sought to hide, but which despite desperate efforts to conceal become public, should suffice to make men and women cautious in accepting, without careful examination, a system which ruins as many lives as it delivers.

Criticism of these various systems is of course easy. Each of them has so many vulnerable points that it is not difficult to make a breach and to storm the citadel. 'Christian Science' in particular lends itself to this treatment, and indeed invites it, on account of its claim to be something *in advance* of Jesus. There can be no question whatever that Mrs. Eddy herself made claims which practically, and sometimes in specific terms, place her in the first position. At every public address her name is advanced as the 'discoverer' of Christian Science. No human being taught her. Her revelation was received from on High. Emblazoned on the arches of many a Christian Science 'Church' is her name, side by side with that of 'Jesus' (*never* 'our Lord'). It is *her* comments on the Bible that constitute the true interpretation of the Sacred Writings. The fact that many editions of 'Science Health' have appeared, each of them correcting previous editions, makes a big drain upon that faith which accepts the theory of a specially revealed system. The average person may be

excused if he inquires *which* edition preserves the authentic Divine message, and how the crudities of the early editions can be reconciled with later 'revelations.'

The critic who is in possession of the 'official' life of Mrs. Eddy, and also corrects this by the documentary evidence supplied later by Dakin, and especially by John V. Dittmore, finds himself compelled to erase from his mind the legendary picture of a woman who, from the first, was well educated, a linguist, a genius, and a saint, and to substitute for it the banal portrait of a neurotic girl, self-willed, ill-educated, confused in thought, and finally developing into a Dictator, with an abnormal love of power and a lust for money. And he sees also a woman who, despite her teaching, had a defective memory concerning her humbler days, convenient but not convincing explanations of the passing away of her former linguistic accomplishments, and who also wore false teeth, resorted to glasses for defective vision, called in the aid of physicians to inject morphia into her veins, and who to the end was terrorized by the haunting thought of 'malicious mesmerism'—in fine, a victim of *fear*.

The critic who knows the history of psychology, and the story of former healing movements, has no difficulty in disposing of the Eddy claim to have received a special revelation. He finds the 'revelation' to be very old, very mixed, very contradictory and incoherent. Yet he discovers in the system certain truths which it is well to preserve, but which in no way are original. They have been taught for centuries, even before Christ. What the critic properly resents as an impertinence is the claim that these are the exclusive property of a modern prophetess, who has plagiarized and copy-righted.

It is not with criticism, however, that this article is mainly concerned. Its purpose is constructive. If it be true that 'every heresy' is a call to truth to free itself from its accretions, and assert itself in its purity, we may say that the modern healing systems, ragged and disjointed as they are, are a challenge to the Church to rediscover something which she may have obscured, or overlooked—'Christian Science' is such a challenge. It comes at an appropriate moment, when psychology has opened up new vistas, and interpreted old things in a new and better way.

When the 'Elder' prayed for the 'beloved Gaius' that he might 'prosper in every way and keep well—as indeed your soul is keeping well' (3 Jn 2, Moffatt), he was offering not only a perfect prayer,

but expounding a spiritual philosophy. It has taken the world many centuries to discover the profound truth which underlies these words. To-day, it is an accepted commonplace that the healthy mind is the surest way to secure true prosperity, and especially health of body. The day has passed when disease is accepted as the will of God. To science, as well as to a truer conception of the Christian gospel, we owe the insistence upon the dominance of life and health in the scheme of things. Our Lord's word, 'I came that they might have life and have it in abundance' (Jn 10<sup>10</sup>), is charged with fuller meaning, and is seen to extend to the entire life of man. Men are beginning to appreciate, as never before, the glory of the old Saxon 'hal'—hale—whole. The salutation 'hallo' has yielded a higher meaning—'health to you.' Life is now conceived of as an equality and harmony of *all* the parts of our human nature. The quest for health has become a passion. The 'pallid beauty' of the Victorian Age has vanished in favour of glowing cheeks, eyes darting with fire, gladness, content, and an overplus of physical life. The 'goddess of health' has reappeared.

Many who refuse to follow Christ as the Lord of all good life invoke Him as the great Healer. Even 'Christian Science' had to annex the holy name of Christ in order to be respectable. The Holy Figure of the Gospels is surrounded with a circle of light. The Divine Teacher and Revealer of God and Saviour of Mankind is placed in the margin, where He remains in obscurity, while the Healer fills the canvas. *So far as it goes*, the picture is true, imperfect though it be. For our Lord did treat disease as contrary to God's will. It burdened Him, and He banished it by His Word and inflow of His Life and Power. But He came to do very much more than that.

They who claim to have Him on their side in the abolition of disease are right. They are wrong, however, when they see in Him no more than a Healer. In confining themselves to physical health they omit the main factor of His work, which deals with ultimate causes and not alone with nearer causes.

We may freely admit that suffering has its uses. It corrects the aberrations of men, compels them to think and to review their manner of living, tends to destroy their native selfishness and creates new sympathies. The Saints and great souls have risen above it. The 'unconquerable soul' has triumphed over the weakness of the flesh. Yet there is no necessity in the nature of things that disease should attack man and reduce his power of useful-

ness. We must still believe that it is not the direct will of God for His children. Most disease is brought upon man by man himself. It is a significant fact that wild animals and birds are generally healthy, and that when temporary indisposition overtakes them, they are guided by a natural instinct to the natural remedies. But, in captivity, the wild animals are often attacked by maladies which an artificial life creates. When they are free to obey the law of their life they are healthy. When that freedom is denied they suffer.

Why, then, does man suffer? Because he is ignorant of the laws of his life, or he disobeys them, wittingly or unwittingly. And by the law of solidarity he causes the innocent to suffer. Man has many invisible enemies—germs and the like—which have to be resisted. But in the human body there are millions of corpuscular soldiers whose business it is to deal with these enemies. They fail because man *starves* them and they succumb. Man also has marvellous helpers, food, air, light, water; but he abuses them by his artificial manner of living. He excluded from his cities and houses the pure air and fills his lungs with vitiated air. We are told that few people understand the art of proper breathing. 'Deep breathing' is not practised by the majority.

We cook our food badly, boiling out the salts and minerals from vegetables, and throwing them away as refuse, while we serve for food the remainder. We eat badly. Most people will not be at the trouble to inquire what foods, and in what proportions, are necessary for body-building. We are allured by our palate rather than by common sense and knowledge. We lower the value of the natural digestive juices by reducing them with liquids. And few people ever flush their inner canals. In a word, the body is badly treated, and it rebels, and disease is the result. What men have forgotten is that the body is a temple of the Holy Ghost. It is often turned into a slum.

Now, what has the Christian gospel to say to all this? None will deny that it has inspired physicians and scientists to understand the body and to urge men to obey its laws. It has also set itself through many agencies to cure disease, not only by denying the obvious fact that disease is of the tissues as well as of the mind, but by operations (where necessary) and by remedies which deal with the blood, and with local troubles. To speak of cancer, tumours, fevers, and the like as having no existence save in 'mortal mind,' or to say that poisons cannot poison, is to speak the language of the insane. Healing must regard the actual state of the body.

But the special emphasis of the gospel is upon man's state of mind or soul. It is not said that 'the body is nothing,' or that its ailments do not require material treatment. It does say that the health of the body is largely dependent upon the health of the soul. And it is this that modern psychology has rediscovered.

It is notorious that an unhealthy mind adversely affects the body. Evil thinking leads to practices which imperil the flesh. The person who feeds his mind upon moral garbage will, sooner or later, incarnate in his features and in his entire body the filth of his spirit. Grief, anger, unkindness, jealousy, anxiety, and the like literally poison the body. Dr. Hadfield mentions cases of mothers who through wrong mental states have poisoned their babes at their breasts. On the other hand, the perfectly healthy mind offers both food and medicine to the body. 'A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.'

Modern systems of mental healing proceed upon such facts as these. But their limitations are manifest. They tend to confine their actions within the man himself. 'All your resources are within yourself.' The healing consists in making the mind dominant over the flesh; and within that limit there is a certain success. But it is a *selfish* success. The man never escapes from his own limitations. His ego remains his centre. Hence we find that altruism dies. Or if 'God' be invoked, it is in order to exploit Him in the personal interests. 'Christian Science' is essentially selfish. 'Happiness' is its great word. *The gospel goes all the way*, and takes man beyond himself and his personal happiness. Its message is 'Your mind is not sufficient. You must become one with the mind of God. He is your life and health, but the health He offers you is not for yourself alone, it is solely that you use it for the accomplishment of His Will and purpose.' Is not that the real meaning of our Lord's linking of healing with the forgiveness of sins? The healing was more than an act of benevolence, beginning

and ending with itself. It was the answer to the prayer, 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.'

Christianity has far more than a vague word about 'God.' The God it offers is mediated through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is through union with His Divine Personality that *our* personalities are really brought into 'tune with the Infinite.' For what Christ gives to man is a new outlook upon life, a new inner adjustment to God, carrying with it a new power of self-control, and a new insight into the relation of the body to the soul, and the soul to God. He is Redeemer as well as Healer. So the Christian gospel alone has a gospel of complete health, for it alone binds man to God. The life and power of Christ flowing into the spirit of man cleanses and invigorates it, and makes it one with His Spirit. And so the body becomes not only the servant of man's spirit, but the servant of Christ.

It is this specifically Christian gospel that is ignored both by 'Christian Science' and by most of the modern systems, from Mesmer to Coué and Trine.

The modern systems, with their religious jargon, constitute a definite challenge to the Christian Church to re-think the truth and implications of its gospel. It may be that our emphasis has been only partial; that on the one hand we have been too much occupied with the 'salvation of the soul' as to forget that man is physical as well as psychical; and, on the other, to be caught with the nearer thing and to place so much confidence in physical means as to forget the great fact which psychology is now emphasizing. The balance needs restoring. Strange and weird cults always arise when Christianity is only partially presented, and they always perish when the truth sets men free.

The way to deal with the menacing systems of our time is not to denounce them, but to counter them. It is in the partial light that error flourishes. In the complete light, error, unable to bear the revealing beam, fades away.

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## Recent Foreign Theology.

### Varia.

THE second Heft of the *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* (Mohr, Tübingen) for 1935 contains five studies and addresses on aspects of the Church,

especially as affected by the contemporary situation in Germany. Professor Hans Gerbert opens with a thoughtful paper on Church and State, in which he is obviously careful about giving more than general directions; as a jurist and a religious man, he