

## THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

### THE GIFT OF MIRACLES.

In a dispatch from Beverly, Mass., an incident of recovery from sickness as a result of prayer is related. It appears that a young lady engaged in missionary work became ill with nervous prostration. She was considered beyond hope, and expressed a desire that her friends should pray for her, presumably that she might be enabled to pass without fear through the valley of the shadow of death. Fervent prayers were then offered up in her behalf at a meeting and soon afterwards word was received that the patient had completely recovered. At the very hour her friends were praying for her, all pain left her. She rose from the bed able to continue her work on the mission field.

The case, if the circumstances stated are correct, is particularly remarkable because it excludes the supposition now often offered as an explanation of miraculous healing, that it is but the power of mind over matter; that a strong imagination is sufficient to arrest pain and even death. She was evidently preparing for the supreme moment; her friends, at least, thought her beyond recovery and those engaged in supplication for her were so informed. Yet, death fled as the sweet incense of prayer ascended to the throne of grace. The enemy retreated, as did once Amalek arrayed in battle against Israel, as a result of Moses lifting holy hands in supplication toward heaven. It was not imagination; it was the finger of God.

Incidents of miraculous healing are not numerous in the experience of Christian denominations. Still there are some, and a few have become historical. Martin Luther, for instance, according to his biographers, was at one time snatched from the jaws of death in answer to the fervent prayers of Melancthon and others. The remarkable work of Dorothea Trudel, to whose home thousands flocked for relief in pain and sickness, is also well known. Such manifestations of divine power are a strong testimony from above, condemning the orthodoxy that denies the necessity of miraculous gifts after the first century of our era. They prove to the world the truth of the Gospel preached by the inspired servants of the Almighty in this age, according to which God is still willing and able to endow His people with the power and authority to perform mighty works in the name of the Holy One of Israel.

The question of the true value of spiritual gifts in the Church is of much importance and is likely to receive more attention in the future as the fact becomes clear that their existence or non-existence in any denomination is the criterion of divine power. On that ground one of the great battles between churches will undoubtedly be fought. The commonly accepted view is that such gifts were merely intended

to confirm the truth of Christian doctrines when first preached, and to promote their rapid dissemination. Now, it is said, they are not needed.

This assertion is contradicted by the Scriptures. When authority was given to men to preach the Gospel it was expressly stated that some would believe and others reject it. To the first class was promised salvation and also the power to lay hands on the sick for their recovery. This power was therefore not only for the confirmation of the Gospel, but it was a proof to the believer himself that he had accepted the truth and was on the road to eternal salvation. When miraculous gifts do not follow faith, as Christ said they should, there is no proof whatever that the doctrines on which that faith is founded are true. The commission to teach is so worded (Mark 16:14-20) that no one reasonably can claim the promised salvation unless the promised signs follow his faith.

We are aware that modern critics are inclined to hold that the verses referred to in Mark are a later interpolation because not found in Tischendorf's codex; but even if this be so, the fact remains that the addition must have been made at a very early period and it would prove that in the Church at that time the truth of it was generally recognized; it is, besides, in full harmony with the teachings of the New Testament everywhere and if it must be discarded, a large portion of the sacred writings has to be erased with it.

When the miraculous gifts are lacking, there is no proof that the authority to forgive sins has been exercised. Christ states this important truth thus: "That ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (He said to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed and go." (Mark 2:10, 11.) This is one of the essential reasons why spiritual gifts are bestowed. Were they given, as modern teachers say, to disseminate the Gospel among unbelievers, we would find our Lord working miracles chiefly among that class of people, whereas the fact is that their unbelief was an obstacle to the manifestation of divine power. It came with faith as a proof that sin, demons, sickness and death had at last encountered their conqueror.

Through the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the attention of the world has again been directed to the fact that to true Christianity belongs supernatural gifts, without which no progress toward unity in faith and perfection in holiness is possible. This truth has been proclaimed and confirmed by mighty works, as in the first century of our era. Will the world believe it, when by the special interference of Providence the sick are rescued from death in answer to the prayer of those who professedly claim that such miracles are no longer a part of the Gospel? It seems that proof should be convincing and suggest an honest investigation into the claims of a Church that for half a century, amid untold opposition, has upheld this scriptural doctrine in theory and practice as no other religious denomination

on earth since the first centuries of our era.

### PRESERVE YOUR HEALTH.

With the discussion and development of sanitary science and the general increase of knowledge regarding hygienic laws, there has been a very material reduction during the past century in the death rate which attends the collecting places of civilization—villages, towns and cities; and as information and practice in respect to the laws of health are augmented among the people we may look for a still further cutting down of the list of premature deaths. Some people are singular fatalists; they believe that dissolution cannot come to any individual except by the decrees of fate, which mortal efforts cannot overturn. Yet the actual experience of mankind points to an opposite conclusion. Not that people are not fated to die at a given time; for they are, when the circumstances which control them are directed that way and are unchanged. For instance, in times of epidemic, or with unhealthy surroundings or climates, when people are stricken with disease, medical skill oft fails in having the effect which usually might be expected to follow its employment. The conditions are such that the applied skill cannot overcome or control them. But when a disease which produces death is a result either of uncleanness or carelessness, care and cleanliness will prevent the operation of the disease and consequently the death which otherwise would come. The cause being for health and longevity, its effect is the one to be naturally expected; so the cause being for death produces that result. That is the extent of the fatalism referred to, and no more. Human experience has shown that in a very large measure the ability to reach the cause and direct its operations one way or another is within touch of human beings both by spiritual and material means; hence the importance of ascertaining how to exercise this ability to the greatest advantage.

With each change of the seasons, the human body is exposed to new dangers against which the intelligence of the community and the individual, acting in harmony with the "first law of nature," should guard. For instance, now that spring is fairly upon us and everything breathes easier through the freedom from winter's cold, how rich is the harvest of death, which in many respects could be materially lessened. How to do this is a timely topic. And in this respect there is something worth deep study in the advice of that eminent German writer on health, Dr. Gotthelf. He declares that the method successfully to combat climatic variations is "to toughen our bodies against changes in weather."

But the toughening process is the difficulty which appears before many people; yet, as the German writer shows, and as every student of sanitary and medical science is aware, it is within the reach of most persons. It is nothing more or less than plenty of fresh air and reasonable exercise. Some people close their houses so tightly that the occupant must breathe the air many times over; they