

GEORGE Q. CANNON,
BISHOP OF THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

Friday, December 23, 1879.

THE "FAITH CURE."

A CORRESPONDENT to the *Christian Union* quotes the advice given by the Apostle James to the Church how to act in case of sickness, and asks the editors: "Does this mean what it says?" He refers to the challenge of Tyndal in regard to a scientific test of the virtue of prayer, and also, as proof that the sick may be healed by faith, to some remarkable cures said to have been effected through prayer in Massachusetts. The passage to which the writer refers is a familiar one to the Latter-day Saints, and reads as follows:

"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," etc.

The *Christian Union* responds as follows:

"We advise none of our readers to rely upon anointing with oil, with or without prayer, as a specific in case of any ordinary illness. The simple fact is that in James' time, oil was one of the remedies in common use, in an age when therapeutics was not a science. And James advised if any one was sick, instead of resorting to incantations and medicine men and exorcists, let him use the best medicine he can get and ask his brethren to pray for him. And that is sensible advice now as it was then."

Comparing these two extracts, does not the saying of the Savior to the Pharisees become strikingly applicable to the "blind guides" of these latter times? "Ye do make the word of God of none effect through your traditions." The inspired Apostle gave the rule of the Church in cases of disease of every character. There is abundant evidence in the Acts and Epistles of the Apostles to show this, and to prove that the remedy was very efficacious. One of the signs promised by Christ to follow believers was, "They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." This was one of the means by which faith was exercised and its results manifested. It was a mark of divine power in the Church, and its entire absence is evidence of the withdrawal of that power.

The *Christian Union* places itself as a religious teacher in direct opposition to the inspired Apostles and tells its readers not to follow his instructions on this matter. Christ and his disciples taught and encouraged faith—without which "it is impossible to please God"; the *Christian Union* ridicules it, and attempts to make an ordinance of the Church a mere therapeutic remedy, suitable only for times of medical ignorance. But it is not only anti-Christian in this respect, it is misleading and misrepresenting. Were the ancient unacquainted with any "science" of healing? We think not. What about Democritus? If he mixed divination with his methods, how about Hippocrates, Praxagoras and other celebrated writers on medical science, who flourished before the Christian era? Was not the Alexandrian school of medicine established before the time of the Apostles, and did not many of its celebrated disciples write learned and able treatises on therapeutic subjects, which made them famous? Did Celsus know nothing of medical science, and was Galen ignorant, who, though born in A. D. 130, gained much of his information from the works and experience of his predecessors, and achieved an imperishable reputation, physicians to this day being called "disciples of Galen?"

This rule of the Christian church evidently had no reference to any medical system or method of therapeutics known to the Jews, Greeks or Romans, but was a mode for the exercise of faith, by which, as the Apostles declared, the sick were healed, healed, healed, the blind made to see, the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak, the dead were raised, access was had to the things within the veil, and knowledge was obtained direct from God the holiest of all.

That this gift of faith is an accompaniment of the true gospel is clear from the Old and New Testaments, and is abundantly corroborated by the experience of the Elders and members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We published, on Wednesday evening, a letter from a missionary in the Southern States, relating a few of the manifestations of healing which had occurred in his travels. If the journals of the Elders, who have traveled among most of the nations of the earth, preaching the gospel "without purse and scrip," could be published, there would be found a record of healings and "miracles" which would eclipse anything contained in the sacred writings of the Moslems and Christian dispensations combined.

Skeptics like the *Christian Union*, and other pretended religious teachers who take such portions of the gospel as suit them and reject and ridicule the rest, will ask why disease is not always cured; why "miracles" there do not spend all their time in administering to the sick; and why epidemics prevail in Utah as well as other parts of the world? Perhaps they will be kind enough to tell us why Paul, who had so much of the healing power that comes through faith, that handkerchiefs were taken from him to the bedside of the sick, who recovered through the touch, was compelled to leave his traveling companion, Trophimus, at Miletum, sick, (1 Tim. iv. 23.) and why he advised Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake, and his "often infirmities." Also why the Apostles tried, on a certain occasion, to cast out a devil, and failed, although the casting out of devils was part of the mis-

sion on which they were sent? Further, why there were "many lepers in Israel in the time of Elishus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian?" These are the kind of queries are like the taunt of the murderers of Jesus to Christ, "Why then be the son of God, save thyself and come down from the cross."

Disease, suffering and death be long to this lower sphere and are a part of the experiences for which immortal spirits dwell for a season in mortal flesh. All are measurably subject to their influence while in the state of probation. There are means of alleviating but at present not of destroying them. And faith is one of the most potent remedies. It is a fact, a power, a force, as positive as magnetism, but not fully understood. The unbeliever will say, "show me a sign, a miracle, and I will believe." And the sneering opposer will say, "if there is any such power as you claim, go and heal the diphtheria or the scarlet fever wherever it breaks out, and we will accept your religion." This was the cry of "sign seekers" in the days of the Savior. But apart from the fact that faith does not spring from the will, it should be understood that healings, and what are called "miracles," are not the cause but the effects of faith. In proof of this, take the acts and sayings of the Savior. When he performed any of the "wonderful works" recorded of him he said "thy faith hath made thee whole," and when he went into his own country where the people did not believe in him, he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." (Matt. xiii. 58.) If healings and signs were to create faith, that was the very place of all places to perform them. But they are the results of faith and therefore are not given to the skeptical.

If it be asked why the sick are not healed in Utah, we answer they are, in hundreds of instances. It is a common thing for the old and the young to be healed through anointing with oil and the laying on of hands. But physicians, who are in the land and among the people, and the habits of the world are adopted or returned to by the Saints, their faith in the ordinances of God become weaker, and though they may be as firmly secured as ever that the Church of which they are members is the only true Church of Christ on earth, yet, like Trophimus and Timothy of old, they suffer sickness and cannot muster faith enough to be healed.

But if the faith of the Saints in Utah should become so weak that the healings and signs which have been so abundant should die out entirely, the fact would remain that by the exercise of faith the sick may be healed, the elements be controlled, the veil be pierced by the spiritual vision, the deep things of God be fathomed and communion obtained with the Great Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness nor even the shadow of turning.

BY TELEGRAPH.

THE MEXICAN OCCUPATION.

NEW YORK, 20.—The *World's* Washington special has the following: "The Mexican occupation of the district of Matamoros, which made them famous? Did Celsus know nothing of medical science, and was Galen ignorant, who, though born in A. D. 130, gained much of his information from the works and experience of his predecessors, and achieved an imperishable reputation, physicians to this day being called 'disciples of Galen?'"

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THE BULGARIAN OCCUPATION.

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The *Byzantine*, a vessel of 900 tons