

Written for this Paper.

WHAT IS THERE IN IT?

It is not now remembered how many schools of medicine took part in the late controversy, consequent on proposed legislation; but some seven or more (if memory serves) claimed the privilege of ministering to all "the ills that flesh is heir to." The more fierce the contention, however, the more the spirit of rivalry and professional maintenance seemed to come to the front. The idea as to who had the most knowledge of the human system; as to who knew best the nature and effect of medicines; as to what would most assuredly secure for a patient a return to health and life, was not in the question at all, apparently.

Civilized methods seem to be less like common sense than those of "the heathen Chinese," of whom it is asserted that they employ their physicians to keep them in health, and that when sickness comes remuneration suddenly ceases. By this procedure all effort is exercised in a preservative direction.

The very controversy itself demonstrates that the practice of medicine is not as yet an exact science; in other words, it is still in the experimental stages, from which it may never fully emerge.

There was no doubt as much sarcasm as truth in the saying attributed to Voltaire, that the physician's art consists "in the supplying of element of which he knows nothing, to bodies of which he knows less." But this is surely an error, for those who have made any subject a life-long study must have acquired more than an empirical acquaintance with the elements of their profession. One thing, however, has often been noted by observers, that is, the frequency of change of medicine to a person who is sick. Surely the assimilating processes of the human system are not so rapid as such change (daily, sometimes more often) would seem to suggest, and where there is quite a degree of confidence in the profession, the query is not infrequent: Can the most keen observer tell the action of any drug, and under similar circumstances prescribe the same, and predict the results with the absolute certainty of applied science in all other directions? Can it be told beyond controversy whether the continued and changing drench of the allopathist, or the infinitesimal trituration of the homeopathist effected the cure of any patient? Or did nature and nursing, spite of schools, by her own inherent forces of recuperation achieve the final issue—health?

There has been a way made known by which "health will come to the navel and marrow to the bone." But this did not come from the schools. No man teaching that science got his diploma from any college. The One who fashioned the body "according to His own image," prescribed the regime, and even pointed out the remedy for unwitting violations of the prescribed conditions. Yet ignorance, tradition and anxiety, with trine force, press weak, faithless humanity in its worry and fear to seek the "magicians and soothsayers," and confidence in them is paramount, while hecatombs of the human race annually demonstrate that they are not all-powerful in

checking the ravages of disease, or setting at naught the claims of death, until from sheer old age and decrepitude man is wasted away! While Professor Playfair declared that an immense proportion of the diseases of humanity were preventable, he might also have declared that vast hosts have been pushed from earth's stage by the mistakes and malpractice of professionals. The basic idea of the homeopathist appears to involve a great truth, (whether established or otherwise the writer cannot say); that is, the providing of "a specific for every disease." If this is true, it but needs experience to determine that character, then apply the remedy.

Humanity is in a similar dilemma spiritually. There are conditions both of spiritual health and disease. There are professional physicians in countless numbers and of diverse schools. These acknowledge that religion is an essential element of human nature; that according to its activity or otherwise, its perversion or proper training, depends not only true religious life, but the fruits thereof as seen in the moral, social, political and financial affairs of a state or nation; that upon the education of this sentiment all other interests swing. But while acknowledging the vast importance of this cult, there is a development of schools, agreeing as to the patient and the disease, yet as to the remedy "as far apart as the poles." Each school administers its dose; each looks upon its associate laborer as more or less of a charlatan and an empiric; and just as in the medical world there are those who claim that all disease is in the blood and that their nostrum will purify the vital fluid, so in the religious world there are nostrums (we would not say quacks as well); for one prescribes antiquity, another authority, another faith, another baptism, another organization, and so on through the entire series of medicated detail, with as much rivalry and contention as can be found in politics, finance or physics.

As the body is in the express image of Deity, so is the spirit the product of the some overruling Head. As He provided for the well-being of the lower and more transitory organization, so analogy would assume—and righteously—that He provided for the higher. But from the Divine materia medica, men in their own wisdom have selected individual element, have applied that to all conditions until "the head is sick and the whole heart faint," and "there is none that doeth good, no not one." While the parallel may not in every feature be perfect and complete, there can be no hesitancy in declaring that the Divine prescription can alone bring restoration; that even well intending so-called administrators may have said unto them, "Physician, heal thyself!"

Just as men have wondered at the rival schools of practice, and, while allotting to each a measure of truth, have believed that out of confusion and contrariety there would arise somewhere the Divine Eclectic; so in the religious world, some in all ages have believed that from "the confusion of tongues" there would yet come the pure language, or, setting figure aside, that sectarianism would prove itself unworthy and unreliable, and that then

the panacea of the restored Gospel would be introduced for the full and complete salvation of the human race!

Now, men may have accomplished good who were associated with all schools of medicine, as men have done good who were not allied with any. And so in the moral and spiritual world, men have done good in connection with all organizations, as men have done good in art, science, literature and general thought, and yet belonged to none; while reason, revelation, and some school theories claim to have or look forward to that divine order which, accepted and practiced, implies inevitable regeneration.

The Divine method of securing the vigor, elasticity and ripeness of the physical man may not be accepted, or if deemed worthy of consideration, the inspirational origin thereof may be eliminated; in the same way that the Gospel may be accepted as sustained of historic books, but its re-revelation through Joseph Smith officially, may be utterly scouted and denied. But, to use a half vulgar expression, "the proof of the pudding is not in chewing the string"—not in accepting the theory, but in giving one or other the absolute vitality of practical application and life. Hearty acceptance of revealed theory as to a promise made in regard to the body, leads to obedience, more or less implicit; and the same style of acceptance of revealed religious truth is only satisfied by proof. But once proved, all forms of man's device, all organizations howsoever old or potent, all claims, whether of antiquity or other quality; all doctrines, no matter how plausible, are subjected to unflinching scrutiny, contrast and ultimate reflection if tubarmonious with that already tested and established.

Some attribute this mental stability to bigotry, to an overweening confidence in leaders or self. They say that this asserted knowledge of right is in violation of all charity. But there can be no misunderstanding here; truth is eternal, truth brings its own testimony; it comes to the receptive man "in power and much assurance;" and thus it is neither bigotry nor uncharitableness to vindicate the known and reject the unknown; to prefer Divine order, Divine methods and Divine results, to uncertainty or assumption, no matter how much wealth, talent, influence, or education may be associated therewith. To be widespread and popular is not argument; to have simply been the promoter of good is not complete logic; to possess vast organization and the magic of numbers is not absolute evidence of truth or right; and to prosper and grow is not full evidence of Divine approval. In fact, this class of truth is more likely to be rejected than received. Its representatives are more likely to be contemned and despised than to be honored. For "the servant is in no wise greater than his master," though destiny will some day make Truth and all its lovers immortal and triumphant as itself!

THE OLD notion that the opal brings bad luck to its possessor has received fresh proof in the arrest of a sleek Mexican who tried to squeeze through the custom house with about a thousand of the gems hidden in the lining of his coat.