

*Spiritual
Healing* ▼

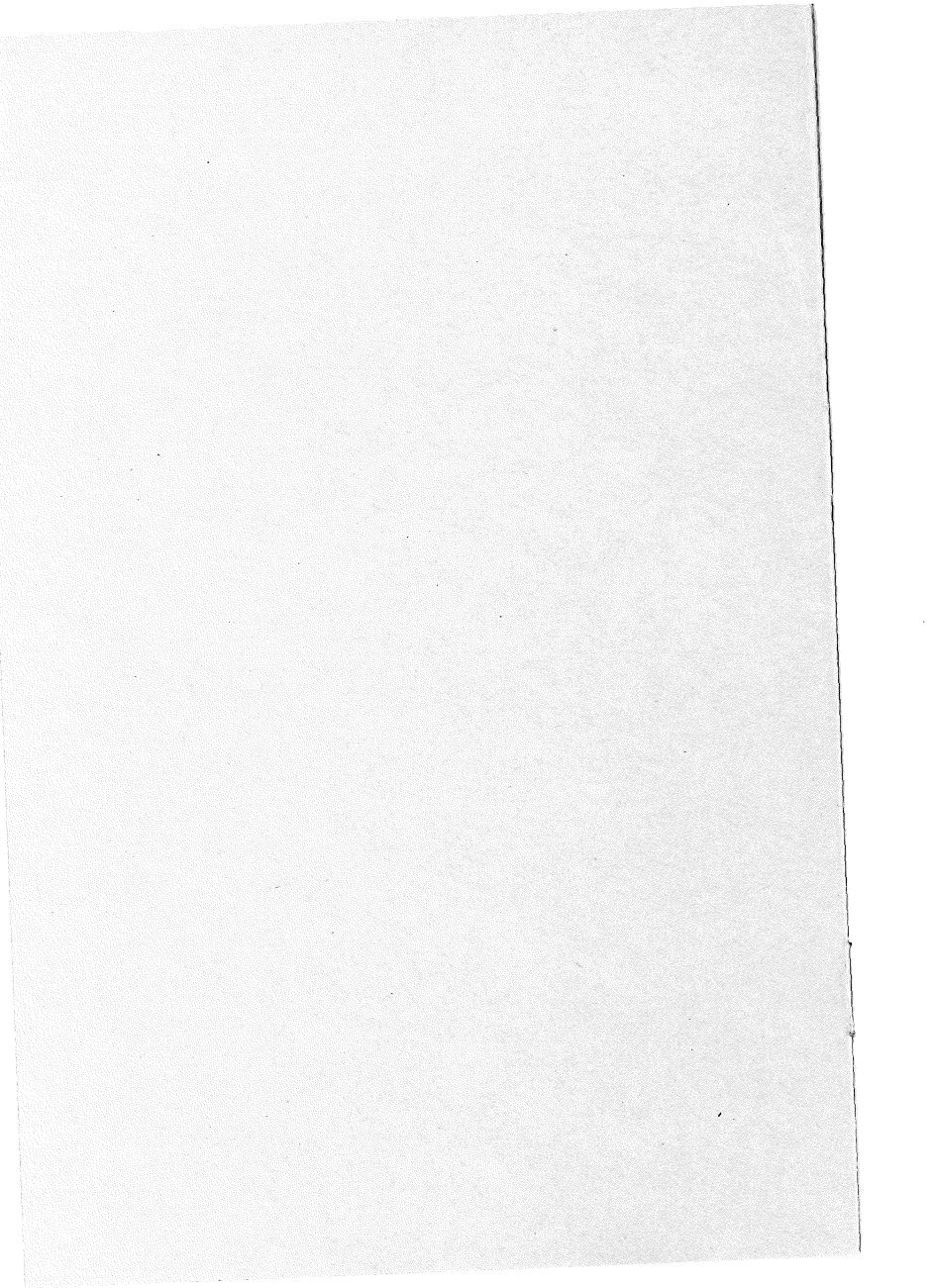
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Spiritual Healing

Hon. Arthur C. Smith

(Address delivered at N. S. A. Convention held in Boston, October, 1928.)

“The first requisite to success in life is to be a good animal, and to be a nation of good animals is the first condition to national prosperity.”—(Herbert Spencer)

To aid man to conserve his most valued possession—health—and to assure or to extend the gainful period of his days, that there may be an excess of joy over sorrow, health over disease, life over death, that the race may go on its upward course, doctors of varied cults and of different degrees of proficiency practice divers healing arts.

Among all the words in English applied to the efforts of physicians to repel disease and restore health, “heal” takes precedence in age and in comprehensiveness. It comes to us from the Old Saxon, *hel* to make whole or hale, and *holy* (meaning sacred) comes to us from the same root word. So a healer is one that makes whole and hale—the most holy of earthly things—the human body.

Man's own welfare and happiness and his contributions to the race are vitiated by disease in proportion to his degree of illness; either he may be a philanthropist bountifully contributing of his means and of his vitality, or by his negative weakness and inability playing the pauper; either in active alms taking or in the invisible purloining of the vitality of fellow mortals with whom he comes in contact. By his misfortune of birth or indiscreet conduct he is not only a burden to himself, but to his relatives and society. Man does not live to or for himself alone; hence the matter of the health of the individual is one that concerns all and not the invalid alone, but society, as well, in its organized bodies, local, state and national. Witness the activities induced by the presence or threat of an epidemic. Let the public but imbibe the fear of smallpox, for instance, and how they rush to vaccination and orthodoxy—seeking by any and all means to save themselves.

Believing that a part is greater than the whole a one time medium established a new school of healing—Christian Science—whatever you can translate that term to mean.

We grant that the mental attitude has much, very much, to do with physical condition; but we know that magnetic treatments reach cases that have proved beyond the power of mind alone to cure. Though faith has made the sick whole far too much has been claimed for it, and so much is postulated that lacks the basis of facts, as we observe everyday conditions, that its very weight becomes a menace to its stability. Futurity will, we believe, incorporate what is valuable in that system with the psycho-magnetic method.

“Its waters, returning
Back to their springs, like the rain, shall fill
them full of refreshment;
That which the fountain sends forth returns
again to the fountain.”

Were the medical fraternity infallible, never the subject of error, one could more easily understand the reverence shown them, but when we review known facts we come to accept the statement of one of their number, Oliver Wendell Holmes, who, in addressing a group of medical students at Harvard College, at a lecture on medicines, said this: “Young men, you are going from this institution Doctors of Medicine, and I regard you as

the most dangerous class of men that could be turned loose upon an unsuspecting public." Thirty years ago I was here in Boston during a smallpox scare and compulsory vaccination prevailed. 'Tufts' College threatened with expulsion students that were inclined to resist, and all vaccinated persons suffered from the virus of a heifer kept for virus culture purposes, and when the excitement died out, the bovine, having been healed and fattened was taken to a well known *abattoir*, slaughtered and promptly condemned by the federal inspector. The creature that furnished the poison to inoculate thousands was unfit for food because of tuberculosis. The Massachusetts Legislature, then in session, was besieged by the doctors of the Commonwealth to enact stringent laws, to protect the poor unschooled public against the dangers of employing magnetic clairvoyants to minister to their medical needs. One of these "dangerous magnetic clairvoyants" of Boston was Andrew Jackson Davis. Incidentally, I may add that Moses Hull was one of us to appear before the committee to which the bill was referred.

Far too many of the medicine men of civi-

lization are unfitted for their profession; their call to the ministry of health was a duet rendered by two very insidious vocalists; Place, lauding the doctor's position in the social world, and Cash, accompanying, in praise of a fat fee and gold-given power, and the physicians are thrown off the scent of their real game—a cure—by the red herring of a prospective big fee and away they go in pursuit of Mammon: with the patient landing in the hospital.

A retired physician, formerly head surgeon of Bellevue Hospital, told a friend of mine that of 240 consecutive cases operated on for appendicitis, six were necessary, forty-four were fatal. Draw your own conclusions as to why the operations were performed. I am making no tirade against the skilled conscientious practitioner, and there are many such, gentlemen due the highest esteem, men that spare not themselves, that in epidemics often stand by and serve to their injury, even to the supreme sacrifice.

In the evolution of medical practice there is no question but that the magnetic treatments were first. We can conceive this picture of many thousands of years ago; beside

some sheltering bluff along whose base ran a purling stream gathered a family group of Paleolithic people in their squatting place home. Some afflicted child's moans touched the heart of motherhood, beating in the hairy, unclad bosom of a primitive parent, and embracing the little sufferer with one arm the free hand of that mother manipulates and soothes her offspring. Such I feel may have been the origin of intelligent magnetic healing; but whoever is acquainted with the humble dwellers of the wilds, even though their observation be limited to visits to the zoo, may know that the simians fondle and treat their children, and far lower in the scale of animal life parents and fellows treat their sick, though it be but with rough tongues.

Kipling has the teller of Ghunga Dingh laud his hero thus: "He lifted up my head and he plugged me where I bled," an act all bear hunters will tell you Bruin often performs if he be wounded; plugging the wound to stop the flow of blood. Some kinds of treatment would seem to be the heritage of man from his animal fellows; such because of following the commands of the injunction

Pope voices, "Thus then to man the voice of Nature spake: Go, from the creatures thy instructions take."

It is the claim of the red medicine man with whom I am best acquainted that the use of herbal remedies is justified, since the healer may by their use be of service to a greater number and employ remedial agents where he cannot be, which are at all times active, even during the sleep of the patient. Also, he asserts that each clime and country yields medicines curative of the diseases of its section; instance, the white pine; its cone and bark are remedies incomparable for pulmonary and bronchial affections, to which dwellers in the realm of the pines are very subject. One of New England's most gifted sons, Ralph Waldo Emerson, sings,

"Who leaves the pine tree, leaves his friend,

Unnerves his strength, invites his end."

Here in New England, where catarrh is the ever active advance guard of tuberculosis, the mullein and the elecampane yield their panacea. Bark of the apple tree, red cherry and, most favored by the Indian guides, dogwood, are tonics effective as the famed bark

of Peruvian cinchona—quinine; while the humble mayweed, bonset, and perhaps a dozen other common herbs, or weeds, are as valuable in the prevention of fevers. Cancer specialists employ as the last resort teas made of the blossom of the red clover, and as a preventive agent for acidity of the blood nothing surpasses ambrosia—the all too common ragweed.

Buchu possesses no greater virtue in its field than does the fragrant, lowly Mayflower, trailing arbutus. These and very many other local herbs, roots, barks and flowers and seeds, grow ready to the hand of the natural healer, taught by ancestors who used them, and they often learned their use by observing the animals with which their modes of life made them familiar.

This same Indian teaches me that one must discriminate against mineral drugs; largely for the reason that in the case of herbal remedies the residue of the dose when its work is done is eliminated from the system, whereas the mineral residue is so heavy that like gravel of a stream it settles and remains to clog and perhaps to poison.

Though many successful healers are not

familiar with human anatomy and physiology, it is well for them to know, of themselves, the machine that they are to operate and repair. Such a knowledge may be valuable to the patient and the practitioner alike; leading to quicker aid to the sufferer and less drain upon the powers of the healer; since it is by co-operating with nature that diseases are to be cured, making the sick whole and hale. An incident in the life of one of Maine's most prominent healers will bear telling. A patient came to the doctor in the early days of his practice and striving to discredit the new healer, said, sneeringly, "Why, Ben Colson, what do you know about doctoring? You don't even know how many bones there are in your body?" "No," said Nicawar, the controlling influence, "me don't know how many bones in the human body, but me know who to ask, and him right here, and he say most men of your age have 208, but you have 209. You swallowed one with your breakfast this morning." "My God! That's so," cried the patient, "and it nearly choked me; you can doctor me all right—you seem to know all about me."

Just as raw oysters are frequently pre-

scribed as food for the very weak because the chemicals contained in the stomach of the raw bivalve are potent to digest it; and the nourishment it contains is thus freed and imparted to the consumer with no tax upon his digestive system, so is Spiritual Healing the very best form of treatment for the ills that afflict mankind; since it is imparted direct to the vital force of the patient without any tax upon the diseased system; or the danger of enslavement to bestial habits due to the administration of appetite-creating drugs.

In this rambling talk on Healing no attempt is being made by me to instruct in method. I leave this to my colleagues who are far better fitted for that task; but I would be glad to impress upon my listeners that are still wedded to the old schools of medicine that you are enjoying but a part of the blessings of Spiritualism. Touching upon this subject I will quote from that able Historian-Philosopher, H. T. Buckle. He said: "It is certain that, in the immense majority of cases, men are so tenacious of the opinion they imbibe that whatever, in any pursuit, first occupies their understanding is likely to

mold all that comes afterwards. In ordinary minds, associations of ideas, if firmly established, become indissoluble, and the power of separating them, and of arranging them in new combinations is one of the rarest of our endowments. An average intellect, when once possessed by a theory, can hardly ever escape from it.

The most powerful intellects are most accustomed to new arrangements of thought and are, therefore, most able to break up old ones. On them belief sits lightly, because they well know how little evidence we have for many of even our oldest beliefs. But the average, or as we must say, without meaning offense, the inferior minds are not disturbed by these refinements. Theories which they have once heartily embraced they can hardly ever get rid of, and resent every attack upon them as a personal injury. Having inherited such theories from their fathers, they regard them with a sort of filial piety and cling to them as if they were some rich acquisition, which no one has a right to touch.

To this latter class nearly all men belong, who are more engaged in practical pursuits than specialized ones. Among them are the

ordinary practitioners, whether in medicine or in any other department. What chiefly characterizes the most eminent physicians and gives them their real superiority, is not so much their theoretical knowledge—though that, too, is often considerable—but it is that fine and delicate perception which they owe partly to experience and partly to a natural quickness in detecting analogies and differences which escape ordinary observers. The process which they follow is one of rapid and, in some degree, unconscious induction and that is the reason why the greatest physiologists and chemists, which the medical profession possesses are not the best curers of disease. If medicine were a science they would always be the best. But medicine, being still essentially an art, depends mainly upon qualities which each practitioner has to acquire for himself, and which no scientific theory can teach. The time for a general theory has not yet come, and probably many generations will have to elapse before it does come. To suppose, therefore, that a theory of disease should, as a matter of education, precede the treatment of disease, is not only practically dangerous, but logically false.”

Often the mental attitude of the physician is a big factor in the battle the invalid fights with the disease. A large percentage of old M. D.'s are materialists—acquainted with death but not with life—and one has but little to expect in the way of consolation or of hope from him who expects that his patients are being swept on toward complete annihilation. His practice, his treatment and his theory are materialistic, like the so-called rational school of science he ignores a great class of phenomena and as a physician, fails to treat, in many cases, the real seat of the disease. How infinitely better for the patient to be visited by one that is cheered by the knowledge of the Continuity of Life and the mending of death-broken ties. Often the most serious of life's thinking is done on the sick bed; and the healer-servant of the arisen becomes a spiritual, as well as physical doctor, in a way combining the two offices of blood-letter and confessor.

When President Garfield died, after a day had been appointed for the specific purpose of a stricken people uniting in prayer for his recovery the faith of the thinker in the remedial power of prayer sunk to a low ebb;

for if the petitions of a great nation—the Nth, million power of the individual—went unanswered the conclusion seemed justifiable that the prayer of one person would pass unheeded.

Reverend William T. Walsh, Rector of St. Luke's Church, New York City, not long ago, said this in one of his sermons: "One of the real rocks upon which the religion of Christ was built was the rock of health. Aesculapius (Pagan God of Medicine) was the last pagan deity overcome by Jesus and Christianity, because his priests taught a religion of healing. Matthew thus sums up the ministry of Jesus, He went about teaching in the synagogues, preaching the gospels, and healing all manner of sickness, and His disciples considered the power to heal one of their most valued assets."

For years I have contended that we are the real Christians; adducing the alleged saying of Jesus, "They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

Along with the glad tidings of great joy that Spiritualism brought to the world—its message of life's continuity, it brought the boon of health to many afflicted and for a per-

son to claim Spiritualism as his "ism" and in the hour of sickness flee to the old school doctor is past my comprehension. The clairvoyant tells you, he does not ask. And distance is no bar to his activities; many, very many stubborn cases yield to magnetic treatment after the "regular" has exhausted the means at his command. Clairvoyants disclose things that the x-ray fails to reveal, and "the man behind the guns" is probably one that knew and practiced medicine here and is continuing his mission from a higher viewpoint; and if practice makes perfect, he has the better claim since his experience extends over longer time.

Publicists declare that to be guilty of such treatment of your body as lowers your vital tone is criminal; that there is physical sin as there is ethical sin. See how carefully soldiers are picked when needed for national defense, and from this realize how much the welfare of the nation depends on the health of the individual.

We of the United States paid six and a half billion dollars last year in doctor's fees and attendant expenses; and on the average one-fortieth of the life of the individual is spent

in the sick bed. We who have escaped that levy should regard ourselves as fortunate.

Know that the old adage, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," still holds true; and applies to your case and to mine. Study nature's laws, know thyself, and remember what Oliver Wendel Holmes said about every man at forty being either his own physician or a fool, and try to sidestep the dunce's stool and cap. Acknowledge your responsibility. Physician, heal thyself! Live in harmony with the laws of your being; observe care and moderation in eating, drinking, labor and recreation, learn that the right kind of exercise is a sovereign remedy for most ills; observe this, affirm in thought, though you say it not in words, I am well. Be optimistic. Do your best, give nature a chance, then if you need a physician call one that has the power to see your condition, and the ability to improve it if improvement be humanly possible.

Patient Reader—Should your reception of this booklet be as cordial as its first reading, a chapter on the theory of pain and one on the source of power in healing shall be added before the next issue.

—Author