

## FAITH-HEALING AND KINDRED PHENOMENA.

(SUPPLEMENTARY ARTICLE.)



UNDER this same title in THE CENTURY for June, 1886, I presented some of the results of many years' investigation of this subject, by raising and answering these questions: "What are the facts, and how may they be explained?" The conclusion reached was that the claims of the Christian faith-healers—technically so called—to supernatural powers are discredited by the facts that they exhibit no supremacy over Pagans, Spiritualists, Mormons, magnetic healers, etc; that they cannot parallel the works of Christ and of the apostles; and that all they really accomplish can be accounted for by natural causes. The article gave rise to much public discussion and private correspondence, but no statement of fact has been disproved and no induction invalidated.

### DEFENSE OF FAITH-HEALERS EXAMINED.

CONFIDENT assertions of supernatural powers, and vehement denials of the sufficiency of natural causes to account for their results, and the quotation of misapplied passages of Scripture, have been the only defensive weapons of the faith-healers. They have, however, been compelled to avow that "they keep no record of failures, as they do not depend upon phenomena or cases, but upon the divine Word."

This admission is fatal. If they cannot do the works, either they have not the faith, or they misunderstand the promises they quote. Christ and the apostles depended upon the phenomena to sustain their claims; and when the apostles failed in a single instance Christ called them a faithless and perverse generation. The failure of these religious thaumaturgists to surpass other manipulators in the same line in the nature and extent of their mighty works has compelled them to say that they do not depend upon phenomena, and make no record of unsuccessful attempts and relapses.

\* Brainerd, in his narrative of his work among the American Indians, confesses his great embarrassment as follows:

"When I have instructed them respecting the miracles wrought by Christ in healing the sick, etc., and mentioned them as evidences of his divine mission, and of the truth of his doctrines, they have quickly referred to the wonders of that kind which [a diviner]

The difficulty is that they apply promises which relate to the power of working miracles to the ordinary Christian life. That they misunderstand and misapply them is clear also from the fact that the most spiritually minded Christians in the greatest emergencies have been unable to work miracles. The reformers—Calvin, Knox, Luther, etc.—could not. John Wesley, in his letter to the Bishop of Gloucester, enumerates all the miraculous gifts possessed by the apostles, and expressly denies that he lays claim to any of them. Judson, Carey, Martyn, Duff, Brainerd,\* and other eminent missionaries trying to preach the Gospel among Pagans, Mohammedans, and Pantheists, most of whose priests are believed by the people to be able to work miracles, were unable to prove their commission by any special power over disease, or by other mighty works. In Algiers, after its conquest by the French, the power of juggling priests was still so great that it was impossible to preserve order until Robert Houdin, the magician, was sent over, whose power so far surpassed that of the priests that their ascendancy over the people was broken.

When any Christian presses the faith-healers with these points, they turn upon him and declare that he "does not believe in answer to prayer;" to which the reply is, that a belief that God may, and sometimes does, restore health in answer to prayer in connection with the use of means medical, hygienic, or surgical, without any visible interference with the laws of cause and effect which he has made, is very different from holding that instantly, at the touch of a hand, the repetition of a phrase, the application of a drop of oil, a glance at a sacred relic, the touch of the hand of a dead ecclesiastic, or the drinking of a glass of water from a miraculous spring, he exercises his power and cures disease without the use of other means.

The charge that the writer is not a spiritually minded man was to be expected: this is the common cry of the superstitious when their errors are exposed. But the most extraordi-

had performed by his magic charms, whence they had a high opinion of him and of his superstitious notions, which seemed to be a fatal obstruction to some of them in the way of their receiving the Gospel."

Yet, though Brainerd could do none of these mighty works, he was the means of the conversion of that very diviner by the influence of his own life and the spiritual truths which he taught.

nary allegation was made by the Rev. A. B. Simpson, of the city of New York. He states his belief that the cases "of healing and other supernatural phenomena ascribed to Spiritualism cannot be explained away either as tricks of clever performers or the mere effects of will power, but are, in very many instances, directly supernatural and superhuman"; and then says: "The cures to which Dr. Buckley refers among heathen nations, the Voodoos of the negroes, and the Indian medicine men, are all of the same character as Spiritualism." On the subject of Roman Catholic miracles he says:

"Where there is a simple and genuine faith in a Romanist,—and we have found it in some,—God will honor it as well as in a Protestant. . . . But when, on the other hand, they are corrupted by the errors of their Church, and exercising faith, not in God, but in the relics of superstition, or the image of the Virgin, we see no difference between the Romanist and the Spiritualist, and we should not wonder at all if the devil should be permitted to work his lying wonders for them, as he does for the superstitious Pagan or the possessed medium."

This means that if the Roman Catholics are devout, it is God who does the mighty works for them; if superstitious, it is the devil. As many of the most remarkable phenomena connected with Roman Catholicism have occurred where the Virgin is most prominent, as at the Grotto of Lourdes, and at Knock Chapel (a girl having been cured recently by drinking water with which some of the mortar of the chapel had been mingled), it is pertinent to ask, if supernatural operations are involved in both, whether the works of God might not be expected to be superior to those of the devil?

Mr. Simpson proceeds to impute to the writer an unconscious league with the devil. Referring to some of the phenomena attested as having occurred under my superintendence, Mr. Simpson says: "We believe the devil will surely possess every heart that is not constantly yielded to God, and we should not be at all surprised if Dr. Buckley on that occasion was actually, without the slightest intention on his part, assisting at a real spiritualistic *séance* conducted by the devil in the background." Here the Spiritualists and the faith-healers unite as to the supernatural origin of these phenomena, the Spiritualists declaring that there is a subtle force behind these things which they call the spirits of the departed, Mr. Simpson affirming that that force is the devil. He then says: "Those who have been used as mediums always lose their power when they become Christians, and the writer [Simpson] has had them come to have the devil cast out of them."

It is not wonderful that these manifestations

should excite suspicions of supernatural agencies in minds not accustomed to the phenomena or to close observation. About seventeen years ago, at the request of a committee, I lectured in a church in Simsbury, Connecticut. In the presence of a large audience some remarkable things occurred. Among others a young artist who was visiting in the place passed into the state of trance. I whispered in his ear, "You are a temperance lecturer; the audience is waiting to hear you"; and he who had never spoken in public in his life delivered quite an eloquent address. Then it was suggested, "You are defending a young man on trial for murder, and the judge has just ordered you to proceed." For fifteen minutes he spoke eloquently, more so than most lawyers. Then he was asked to cast his eyes upward and describe what he could see. He instantly began such a rhapsodical description of the heavenly world as to produce a thrilling effect upon the assembly. A gentleman with a reverent aspect said, "Are you quite sure that this is not of the devil or supernatural?" The young man had described certain thrones and figures seated thereon. I asked him what little animal that was which was coming out from under one of those seats. He immediately began running to and fro in front of the audience crying "Kitty! Kitty! Kitty!" The assembly was at once convinced of the natural origin of the phenomena. He was simply dreaming upon all these subjects.

As the object of the lecture was to destroy belief in the superhuman origin of Spiritualism, it is in order, if Mr. Simpson's theory be true, to inquire precisely what point the devil thought he was gaining when he assisted at that performance.

Mr. Simpson goes so far as to say that what he calls "divine healing" is "a great practical, Scriptural, and uniform principle, which does not content itself with a few incidental cases for psychological diversion or illustration, but meets the tens of thousands of God's suffering children with a simple practical remedy which all may take and claim if they will." Such propositions as this are as wild as the weather predictions that terrify the ignorant and superstitious, but are the amusement and scorn of all rational and educated persons; as the following, from the "Congregationalist" of Boston, shows:

"We have taken pains, before publishing it, to confirm, by correspondence, the singular case of a woman's death in a religious meeting at Peekskill, N. Y. Rev. Mr. Simpson, formerly a Presbyterian preacher, was holding a Holiness Convention, Major Cole, the 'Michigan Evangelist,' being a helper. In an 'anointing service' an elderly lady, long afflicted with heart disease, who had walked a long way after a hard day's work, presented herself for 'divine heal-

ing,' and was anointed by Mr. Simpson. A few minutes after, she fainted and died, the finding of the jury of inquest being that her death was from heart disease, but hastened by the excitement of the service. One would suppose that the case would be a warning against the danger of such experiments, if not a rebuke of the almost blasphemous assumption of miraculous power."

#### ERROR IN MENTAL PHYSIOLOGY.

A RADICAL error in mental physiology which most of these persons hold relates to the will. Referring to the theory which explains the cure of many diseases by bringing the person to exercise special will power, Mr. Simpson says:

"Why is it that our physicians and philanthropists cannot get the sick to rise up and exercise this will power? Oh! that is the trouble to which we have already adverted. The will is as weak as the frame, and the power that is needed to energize both is God; and Faith is just another name for the new divine WILL which God breathes into the paralyzed mind, enabling it to call upon the enfeebled body to claim the same divine power for its healing. We are quite willing to admit the blessed effect of a quickened faith and hope and will upon the body of the sick. This is not all. There must also be a direct physical touch."

The reader of the former article will recall the cure performed by the late Dr. Krakowitzer, who said to the young woman, "Get out of bed, put on your clothes, and go downstairs and meet your mother in the parlor." Her voluntary will power was inadequate to the effort, but the concentration of her mind by an extraordinary stimulus, a command from a stronger will than her own, developed latent strength.

A hotel-keeper in New Hampshire, lingering at the point of death, as was supposed, for weeks with typhus, saw the flames burst from his barn. "Great God!" cried he, "there is nobody to let the cattle out!" He sprang from the bed, cared for the cattle, broke out in a profuse perspiration, and recovered. The burning barn gave him no strength, but the excitement developed latent energy and will.

Mrs. H., whom I often visited, had long been ill, was reduced almost to a skeleton, and could not raise a glass of water to her lips. One day the house got on fire. She sprang from the bed, seized a chest full of odds and ends, and carried it out-of-doors. This chest, as a result of an effort of the will, she could not have moved without help when in health.

A letter recently received from the Rev. J. L. Humphrey, for many years a missionary in India, now of Richfield Springs, N. Y., says:

"The following instance came under my observation in India. An officer of the Government was compelled to send native messengers out into a district infected with cholera. As he sent them out they took the disease and died; and it came to such a pass among the Government peons under his charge that a man thought himself doomed when selected for that duty.

A German doctor in that region had put forth the theory that inoculation with a preparation of quassia was a specific for cholera—a simon-pure humbug. But this gentleman seized the idea; he cut the skin of the messenger's arm with a lancet so as to draw some blood, and then rubbed in the quassia, telling them what the doctor had said about it. Not a man thus treated died."

The surprising strength and endurance exhibited by lunatics and delirious persons constantly show that the amount of power which can be commanded by the will under an ordinary stimulant is by no means so great as the latent. Equally true is it that mental and emotional excitement often renders the subject of it unconscious of pain, which would otherwise be unendurable. Even without any such experience, a sudden shock may cause a disease to disappear.

The following was narrated to me by an eminent physician:

"I was once called to see a lady, not a regular patient of mine, who had suffered for months with rheumatism. Her situation was desperate, and everything had been done that I could think of except to give her a vapor bath. There was no suitable apparatus, and I was obliged to extemporize it. Finding some old tin pipe, I attached it to the spout of the tea-kettle and then put the other end of the pipe under the bed-clothes, and directed the servant to half fill the kettle, so as to leave room for the vapor to generate and pass through the pipe into the bed. I then sat down to read, and waited for the result. The servant girl, however, desiring to do all she could for her mistress, had filled the kettle to the very lid. Of course there was no room for steam to form, and the hot water—boiling, in fact—ran through the pipe and reached the body of the patient. The instant it struck her she gave a shriek and said, 'Doctor, you have scalded me!' and as she said this she leaped out of bed. But now," said the physician, "came the wonder. The rheumatism was all gone in that instant, nor did she have any return of it, to my knowledge."

#### A "MISSING LINK."

IF there were no other, a fatal stumbling-block in the way of the faith-healers is their failure in surgical cases. They have caught up everything that could even point at supernatural interference with the order of nature. The following case is taken from the "Provincial Medical Journal" of Leicester and London, June 1, 1886, and is an illustration of the subject:

"Another 'wonderful cure' at the Bethshan. T. M. N., during a voyage from Liverpool to New York on board the steamship *Helvetia*, sustained a compound fracture of the left humerus at about the line of junction of the middle with the lower third. The injury was treated for a few days by the mercantile surgeon. On his arrival at New York on December 29, 1883 (four days after the accident), he was transferred to a public hospital. He was at once treated, the fracture being fixed in a plaster-of-Paris dressing, and this mode of mechanical fixation was continued for three months, when the surgeon, perceiving no progress toward union, performed the operation of resetting the fractured

ends. The arm and forearm were again put in plaster-of-Paris, and retained until his arrival in Liverpool, five months after the date of the injury. On June 10, 1884, he submitted his arm for my inspection, when on removal of the dressing I found there was no attempt at repair, and that the cutaneous wound pertaining to the operation had not healed. The method of treatment I pursued was the following: The forearm was first slung from the neck by its wrist; the ulcer was attended to, and an area inclusive of the fracture partially strangulated by means of india-rubber bands. This was continued for three months, but without appreciable result. I therefore, in addition to this treatment, percussed the site of fracture every three weeks. Four months passed, and yet no change. After seven months the ulceration was healed, and the limb slung as before, partially strangulated and percussed monthly, but, in addition, maintained well fixed by a splint, and carefully readjusted on the occasion when percussion was employed. At length I found evidence that repair was progressing, for at this date, December, 1885, it required some force to spring the connection. I now knew it could only be a question of a few weeks for consolidation to be complete, but thought it wise for some little time to leave the arm protected, lest rough usage should destroy the good attained. However, the patient suddenly disappeared, and on the 13th of April I received the following interesting document:

“No. 2 WOODHOUSE ST., Walton Road,  
Monday, April 12th.

“DEAR SIR: I trust after a very careful perusal of the few following words I may retain the same share of your favorable esteem as previously, and that you will not think too hardly of me because, although I have done a deed which you would not sanction, and which was against your injunctions. Still, I must write and let you know all about it, because I know you have been so kind to me from a purely disinterested motive. I dare say you remember me mentioning the “faith-healing” some time ago, and to which you remarked that “it would do no harm to try it, but that you thought I should require *mighty* faith.”

“Well, I have tried it, and I am sure that you will be glad to hear that my arm is not only in my sleeve, but in actual use, and has been for the past three weeks. The pain I bore after the last beating was something dreadful, and being in great trouble at my lodgings at the time, I was downhearted. I was thrown out of my lodgings, and being quite destitute, I reasoned in myself, and came to the conclusion that if I really asked God to make it better right away he would, and I was told that if I would do away with all means and leave it to him, it would be all right. So I just took off all your bandages and splint, and put it in my sleeve. I have now the use of my arm, and it is just the same as my right one—just as strong. Several times I called at your house when on my way to the Bethshan, George’s street, but Dr. Gormley slammed me out, and therefore I did not like to come again.

“I cannot describe how thankful I am, doctor, for your past kindness and goodness to me, and that is one reason I have not seen you. I know you will be glad to see me with it in my sleeve.

“Yours very truly,

“TOM M. NICHOLSON.

“DR. H. O. THOMAS.

“P. S.—Any communication will reach me if addressed to me at the above, *should you desire to write.*”

“There is very little to add to this case. . . . It affords, however, a typical instance of the way a Bethshan thrives. The surgeon tells a patient all but recovered to be cautious lest the results of months of care be nullified, and ‘fools rush in’ and tell him ‘to dispense with means and all will be well.’ In this particular instance the result was harmless, but it would

be interesting to inquire how many poor deluded victims are consigned to irremediable defects by an ignorant and fanatical display which is a satire upon our civilization.”

In this country the case that has been the most frequently used is narrated by the late W. E. Boardman, who says the story was told him by Dr. Cullis, and gives it thus:

“The children were jumping off from a bench, and my little son fell and *broke both bones of his arm below the elbow.* My brother, who is a professor of surgery in the college at Chicago, was here on a visit. I asked him to set and dress the arm. He did so; put it in splints, bandages, and in a sling. The dear child was very patient, and went about without a murmur all that day. The next morning he came to me and said, ‘Dear papa, please take off these things.’ ‘Oh, no, my son; you will have to wear these five or six weeks before it will be well!’ ‘Why, papa, it is well.’ ‘Oh, no, my dear child; that is impossible!’ ‘Why, papa, you believe in prayer, don’t you?’ ‘You know I do, my son.’ ‘Well, last night when I went to bed, it hurt me very bad, and I asked Jesus to make it well.’ I did not like to say a word to chill his faith. A happy thought came. I said, ‘My dear child, your uncle put the things on, and if they are taken off, he must do it.’ Away he went to his uncle, who told him he would have to go as he was six or seven weeks, and must be very patient; and when the little fellow told him that Jesus had made him well, he said, ‘Pooh! pooh! nonsense!’ and sent him away. The next morning the poor boy came to me and pleaded with so much sincerity and confidence, that I more than half believed, and went to my brother and said, ‘Had you not better undo his arm and let him see for himself? Then he will be satisfied. If you do not, I fear, though he is very obedient, he may be tempted to undo it himself, and then it may be worse for him.’ My brother yielded, took off the bandages and the splints, and exclaimed, ‘It is well, absolutely well!’ and hastened to the door to keep from fainting.”

Afterward the Rev. Mr. Gordon introduced the above alleged occurrence into his “Mystery of Healing.”

This case was thoroughly investigated by Dr. James Henry Lloyd, of the University of Pennsylvania, and in the “Medical Record” for March 27, 1886, Dr. Lloyd published a letter from the *very child*, who is grown up and become a physician.

“DEAR SIR: The case you cite, when robbed of all its sensational surroundings, is as follows: The child was a spoiled youngster who would have his own way; and when he had a *green stick* fracture of the forearm, and, after having had it bandaged for several days, concluded he would much prefer going without a splint, to please the spoiled child the splint was removed, and the arm carefully adjusted in a sling. As a matter of course, the bone soon united, as is customary in children, and being only partially broken, of course all the sooner. This is the miracle.

“Some nurse or crank or religious enthusiast, ignorant of matters physiological and histological, evidently started the story, and unfortunately my name—for I am the party—is being circulated in circles of faith-curites, and is given the sort of notoriety I do not crave. . . .

“Very respectfully yours,

“CARL H. REED.”

## THE EVILS OF THIS SUPERSTITION.

MANY well-attested cases of irreparable damage to religion, individuals, and to the peace of churches and families have been placed in my hands or ascertained by investigation, both before and since the publication of my former article. From them I select the following:

"A lady, a member of the Christian church, aged about fifty-five years, had been ailing for two or three years. She fell and bruised her side, and was confined to her bed for some weeks. She was better for a month perhaps, and then the disease developed into internal abscess of the stomach, and she slowly declined until her death, which occurred about five months afterwards. She and her family became very anxious for her recovery, and, being very devout, their minds turned to faith-cures and faith-healers. A month before her death she was in correspondence with one of these persons. This lady appointed an hour in which to pray, and directed that friends in the place where she resided should meet and pray at that time. Her pastor went and prayed. At the close of this interview the patient told him she had received just then a great blessing, so that now she felt reconciled to die, and subsequently said nothing about healing, but much about the heavenly rest which she expected soon to enter. For a long time her nourishment had been, and then was, taken entirely in the form of injections of beef tea. On a certain day a layman who had been healed, and was himself a healer and a prime mover in faith-healing conventions, visited her about noon and staid until near evening. He told the lady and her children that the Lord had sent him there that she might be instantly healed, read and expounded the book of James, brought out his phial of oil, anointed her forehead, knelt by her bedside, holding her hand in his, and prayed very earnestly for her immediate cure, claiming present conscious testimony by the Holy Spirit that the cure was wrought. On rising from his knees, still holding her hand, he lifted the lady in bed to a sitting posture, and pronounced her cured in the name of the Holy Trinity. A member of the family protested that it was hazardous for her to sit up in that way, as she had not been able to sit up for many weeks. Finally the patient laid down exhausted, and the visitor left, assuring the family that 'in four days mother would be up and about.' Shortly after this (perhaps an hour) intense pain in the stomach began and kept increasing until the agony became unendurable, so that groans and screams of distress were wrung from her. This continued for twelve hours, when exhaustion and stupor ensued, which lasted until her death, the next day. An autopsy was held by physicians who had been in attendance, and they reported a lesion of the stomach, caused, in their opinion, by the exertion of the patient in arising and sitting up in bed. When our informant met the visiting brother who had had a revelation of the Spirit that the patient was to recover, he inquired after the case, and on being told that our informant was about to go to the funeral, he expressed great surprise and said, 'It sometimes happens that way.'"

Can anything more blasphemous be imagined than the presumptuous claim of a revelation of the Holy Spirit to a matter of fact, and the pronouncing the dying cured in the name of the Holy Trinity?

Families have been broken up by the doctrine taught in some of the leading faith-homes that friends who do not believe this

truth are to be separated from because of the weakening effect of their disbelief upon faith, and a most heartrending letter has reached me from a gentleman whose mother and sister are now residing in a faith-institution not far from this city, refusing all intercourse with their friends, and neglecting the most obvious duties of life.

Certain advocates of faith-healing and faith-homes have influenced women to leave their husbands and parents and reside in the homes, and have persuaded them to give thousands of dollars for their purposes, on the ground that "the Lord had need of the money."

This system is connected with every other superstition. The Bible is used as a book of magic. Many open it at random, expecting to be guided by the first passage that they see, as Peter was told to open the mouth of the first fish that came up and he would find in it a piece of money. A missionary of high standing with whom I am acquainted was cured of this form of superstition by consulting the Bible on an important matter of Christian duty, and the passage that met his gaze was, "Hell from beneath is moved to meet thee at thy coming." Paganism can produce nothing more superstitious than this, though many other Christians, instead of "searching the Scriptures," still try to use the Bible like a divining rod.

It feeds upon impressions, makes great use of dreams and signs and statements foreign to truth and pernicious in their influence. A young lady long ill was visited by a minister who prayed with her, and in great joy arose from his knees and said, "Jennie, you are sure to recover. Dismiss all fear. *The Lord has revealed it to me.*" Soon after, physicians in consultation decided that she had cancer of the stomach, of which she subsequently died. The person who had received the impression that she would recover, when met by the pastor of the family, said, "Jennie will certainly get well. The Lord will raise her up. He has revealed it to me." "Well," said the minister, "she has not the nervous disease she had some years ago. The physicians have decided that she has cancer of the stomach." "Oh, well," was the reply, "if that is the case, she is sure to die."

A family living in the city of St. Louis had a daughter who was very ill. The members of this family were well acquainted with one of the leading advocates of faith-healing in the East, who made her case a subject of prayer, and wrote her a letter declaring that she would certainly be cured, and the Lord had revealed it to him. The letter arrived in St. Louis one day after her death.

These are cases taken not from the operations of recognized fanatics, but from those of leading lights in this *ignis fatuus* movement.

It is a means of obtaining money under false pretenses. Some who promulgate these views are honest, but underneath their proceedings runs a subtle sophistry. They establish institutions which they call faith-homes, declaring that they are supported entirely by faith, and that they use no means to make their work known or to persuade persons to contribute. Meanwhile they advertise their work and institutions in every possible way, publishing reports in which, though in many instances wanting in business accuracy, they exhibit the most cunning wisdom of the children of this world in the conspicuous publication of letters such as the following:

"DEAR BROTHER: The Lord told me to send you fifty dollars for your glorious work. I did so, and have been a great deal happier than I ever was before; and from unexpected quarters *more than three times the amount has come in.*"

In one of the papers devoted to this subject this letter recently appeared:

"DEAR BROTHER: Please announce through the 'Crown of Glory' that I will sail for the western coast of Africa to preach a full salvation in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to heal whomsoever the Lord will by faith, as soon as the Lord sends the balance of the money to pay my fare. I have denounced all rum, wine, cider, tobacco, beer, ale, and medicines—only Jesus! Only Jesus my Savior! I will sail October 10, if the Lord sends the balance of the money to Brother Heller, 48 Orchard st., Newark, N. J.

"Yours, in Christ,  
"S. B. MYLER."

A prominent English advocate of this method of raising money, who, it must be confessed, has done a most extraordinary and useful work, on one of his missionary tours in this country explained his curious system with so much eloquence that the founders of certain faith-homes in the United States called upon the editors of various religious papers and endeavored to induce them to set forth that there are institutions in this country conducted on the same principle, naively observing that they did not wish his presence and eloquence to divert to England money that should be expended here. Yet they "do not use means"! The whole system is a use of the shrewdest kind of means. But as in the case of the supposed faith-healings, for every successful instance there are a large number of unrecorded grievous failures; and many subjects of delusion who have established faith-homes to which the public has not responded have suffered the agonies of death. Some have starved, others have been relieved by benevolent Christian friends, and still others have been taken to asylums for the insane. Similar wrecks are to be found all through the land, dazzled and de-

ceived by the careers of a few persons who have succeeded in getting their enterprises under way and enjoy a monopoly of their limited method of obtaining revenues. Some of those who succeed are doubtless as sincere men and women as ever lived. Others oscillate between knavery and unbridled fanaticism.

The horrible mixture of superstition and blasphemy to which these views frequently lead is not known to all persons. I quote from a paper published in Newark, N. J., in the interest of faith-healing:

"DEATH.—Three of the richest men in Ocean Park, N. J., have died. Faith-healing has been taught in the place, but was rejected by them, so death came."

"CHARLESTON, S. C.—A few years ago the Holy Ghost sent me to preach in that city. But they rejected the Gospel and me. A wicked man shot at me and tried to kill me, but God saved me so that I was not harmed. . . . But I had to leave Charleston and do as the great Head of the Church said: . . . 'when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.' Earthquake, September 1, 1886; one-half the city in ruins. It has a population of about fifty thousand people. Ye wicked cities in the world, take warning! 'God lives!'"

#### SUPPOSED DIFFICULTIES.

It has been suggested that if faith-healing, as I have claimed, can be demonstrated to be subjective, what is called conversion can be accounted for in the same way. If by conversion is meant the cataleptic condition which occurred among the Congregationalists in the time of Jonathan Edwards, certain Presbyterians and Baptists in the early part of this century in the South and West, and the early Methodists, and is still common among the colored people, the Second Adventists, and the Salvation Army, and not wholly unknown among others, I admit that such phenomena are of natural origin.

But if conversion is understood to mean a recognition of sinfulness, genuine repentance, and complete trust in the promises of God, accompanied by a controlling determination to live hereafter in obedience to the law of God, this is a radically different thing. Such an experience may be sufficiently intense to produce tears of sorrow or joy, trances, or even lunacy. Neither the lunacy, the trances, nor the tears, however, are essential parts of the conversion. They are simply the results of emotional excitement, differing in individuals according to temperament and education. If believed to have a divine origin, especially when the subjects are exposed to the contagion of immense crowds swayed by a common impulse and acted upon by oratory, hundreds may succumb to the epidemic who do not experience any moral change, while others who are thus excited may be the subjects of genuine reformation of character.

The inquiry has been made why the writer does not apply the same considerations to the miracles of Christ; why he does not sift the evidence in the same way, and explain the facts on the same principles. This question is relevant, and consists of two parts. What does the New Testament say, and is it rational to believe it?

The first relates to the issue with the faith-healers. If they performed such works as are recorded of Jesus Christ, a writer professing to believe in his divinity would be compelled to admit their claims to supernatural assistance. But the point made against them is that they do *not* perform works similar to his.

The credibility of the record concerning Christ's works is a question which cannot be raised between Christians, whether they hold the superstitions of the faith-healers or not.

It is conceded that probably no such sifting of the evidence was made as can be made of what takes place in this scientific age, that there was a predisposition to believe in miracles, and that the ascendancy of religious teachers was maintained largely by the belief of the people in their power to work miracles. To say, however, as some do, that there was no investigation, is an exaggeration. The Jews, who did not believe Christ, had every motive to examine the evidence as thoroughly as they could. Still, we have but the testimony of those who thought they saw. If they saw and understood, their testimony is conclusive; but standing alone it would not be sufficient.

Yet I believe that it is rational to accept the record, though we have not the opportunity of seeing the miracles or testing the evidence by the scientific method. A miracle of wisdom may be as convincing as a miracle of physical force. The resurrection from the dead declared of Jesus Christ could not be more contrary to the laws of nature than the conception of such a life and character as his if he never existed. His discourses, especially the Sermon on the Mount, the Parable of the Prodigal Son, and that of the Good Samaritan, are as far above human wisdom as his works transcend human power.

The prophecies which the Jews then held and still preserve, taken in connection with their character and history as a nation, raise a powerful presumption of the truth of the narrative. In the ordinary course of human events the death of Christ, after he had made such claims, would have destroyed the confidence of his apostles and scattered them; but their lives were transformed after his death, which is inexplicable unless he appeared to them again and sustained them by miraculous gifts.

Of the effect of a belief in the teachings of

Christ I have had much observation. It convinces me of their truth; for what reforms human nature, developing all that is good, sustaining it in the endeavor to suppress what is evil, supporting it in the difficulties of life and in the struggle with death, furnishes evidence of its truth, not in the scientific method, but in a way equally convincing. Because the record of facts concerning Christ is inseparably connected with these teachings, it is rational to believe it.

Later ages have had no experience of what God does when he is making special revelations to men; but these things were performed at such a time. To allege the experience of modern times against the credibility of extraordinary events *then* appears no less unphilosophical than to bring forward that record in favor of miracles *now*.

When Professor Faraday, "the father of modern experimental chemistry," delivered his great lecture on the Education of the Judgment, he began thus:

"Before entering upon the subject, I must make one distinction which, however it may appear to others, is to me of the utmost importance. High as man is placed above the creatures around him, there is a higher and far more exalted position within his view; and the ways are infinite in which he occupies his thoughts about the fears or hopes or expectations of a future life. I believe that the truth of that future cannot be brought to his knowledge by any exertion of his mental powers, however exalted they may be; that it is made known to him by other teaching than his own, and is received through simple belief of the testimony given. Let no one suppose for a moment that the self-education I am about to commend in respect of the things of this life extends to any considerations of the hope set before us, as if man by reasoning could find out God. It would be improper here to enter upon this subject further than to claim an absolute distinction between religious and ordinary belief. I shall be reproached with the weakness of refusing to apply those mental operations which I think good in respect of high things to the very highest. I am content to bear the reproach. Yet, even in earthly matters, I believe that the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; and I have never seen anything incompatible between those things of man which can be known by the spirit of man which is within him, and those higher things concerning his future which he cannot know by that spirit."

I would not shield myself behind a great name from the charge of inconsistency, but have brought forward this passage because it states, what the life of the author illustrated, the compatibility of intense devotion to the scientific method in its proper sphere, with a full recognition of its limitations, of the value of moral evidence, and of the difference between the grounds of belief in nature and revelation.

*J. M. Buckley.*