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## ARTICLE V.

## CHRISTIANITY AND THERAPEUTICS.

BY THE REVEREND A. A. BERLE, D.D., CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

AMONG the most remarkable manifestations of the larger applications of religion in our times is its invasion of the field of therapeutics. Not that there has not always been a subconscious relation between religion and medical practice, but that, until lately, it had not attained the distinct consciousness of itself or attempted to define those relations as it is doing with increasing emphasis to-day. It is not an extravagant estimate to say that this emphasis will increase as time goes on. In a certain sense, the relation will become more and more accentuated and lead to very considerable modifications of medical practice, as, in some quarters of the world, it has already.

But it would be a great mistake to suppose that this is a new thing or one that ought to excite a great deal of surprise. It is merely when historically examined the resumption of a very old relation and one that came most naturally and almost inevitably with the introduction of Christianity into the world. But even long before Christianity appeared, in the ruder forms of social life, the medicine man and the priest were one and the same person. In some of the forms of primitive life, which, in remote quarters of the world, still remain, the functions of medical practitioner and minister of religion still reside in the same individual and are practiced as the normal domain of the religious teacher. To what may

relatively be considered a late period of civilization, this alliance of therapeutics with religion still continued, though it generally took forms which we are now pleased to call superstition.

Considering the question, however, within the period called Christendom, even into the period when there emerged what we now call science, and even to the present day, that hereditary connection between medical service and religion has never quite disappeared. Though subjected in the more recent years to every form of ridicule and shown to be scientifically worthless and often distinctly harmful to both body and soul, the belief has continued that there was somewhere a definite relation between the thing which a man calls his religion and the welfare of his body. Nor is it at all strange that this should be the case. Here again we are faced with the fact that Christianity brought to the world a very distinct conception of the value and influence of bodily relations and states upon spiritual conditions and expectations. The Hebraic origin of Christianity made it inevitable that the Christian church should have a very large consciousness on this particular subject. The earliest Christians were Hebrews, and the Hebrew literature on this subject is so full, so minute, and affects so directly so many things which act immediately upon the physical conditions of men, and is withal so accurate, especially on the side of symptoms, that it is held in the highest repute by medical science of the most advanced kind to-day. Indeed, it is among the most likely things that we shall see in the not too distant future that the sanitary codes of the Hebrews, found in the so-called Mosaic books, will be studied with even greater care than they already have been. One thing is very certain, and that is, that if a modern city block were subjected to the severe regimen of the Hebrew

codes seven-tenths of the troubles in them would disappear. Not only did the Hebrews legislate for the relations of the sexes, the relations of parents and children, of special groups to each other, but in a thousand ways, too minute for detailed description here, made their religion govern almost the very breath that its adherents took into their lungs. Ablutions, dress, food, sexual relations, childbirth, dietary, and almost every other form of what we should now regard as the special field of medical supervision were not only controlled, but highly organized, — so highly, that it remains a wonderful thing to this day, and many of its precepts, as already stated, have the sanction of expert medical authorities. Religion and medicine were one, not so much through the practice of medicine, as through the sanitary regulation which made the religion of the devotee, his physical salvation. It broke down in the presence of plagues, and other scourges which it did not understand, of course. It was not science, of course, unless that term be extended to include this kind of control. But it affirmed so absolutely the necessary relation between the religion of the people and their bodily welfare, that it remains to this day.

This conception Christianity inherited. There is no doubt whatever that the most complicating problem which Christianity faced in its earliest history was one which grew out of this very matter. What should be done with the Gentile believers who had not been reared in the sanitary codes of the Hebrews was a very vital matter, and caused the earliest schism in the ranks of the Christian community. It was the subject of fierce contention among the apostles, and was settled only by the appeal to the fundamental law of Christian liberty, a signal illustration of the principle which we have laid down in the previous paper. It was desirable of course

to have the future church of Christ as able, physically as pure, and as cleanly as the ideal Hebrew was supposed to be. But desirable as these things were, and soundly established as they were in the theory and practice of Jews, they could not be imposed upon the Gentile Christians, because they were not a part of the fundamental law upon which Christianity alone sought to appeal to the world for its salvation.

In fact, precisely the contrary happened, which shows at once the nature of the motivation of Christianity and its prompt and definitive acceptance of the practical problems with which it was confronted. There happened just what has occurred on our missionary fields in recent times. Paganism was submerged in general debauchery. Not only were there no adequate restraints upon men, but the human body was not regarded in any manner which made the appeal to self-preservation in the slightest degree available. Christianity met the situation by declaring that the body is the "temple of the Holy Ghost." This was a new phase and a totally fresh idea to the debauched and decadent pagan mind, and by its assertion on this point, Christianity became the instrument for social regeneration almost instantaneously, and that by the simple assertion of the spiritual nature of man. But even more than this occurred. The Christians, seeing the prevailing license all about them, asserted their principle of the spiritual character of the body as the habitation of the Holy Ghost to such a degree, and with such emphasis, that it actually led to a reaction which undertook to make asceticism a special form of Christian virtue. Even in the New Testament, marriage was held to be a lower form of spirituality than celibacy, and great numbers of men and women hastened to enroll themselves in brotherhoods and sisterhoods organized for this purpose. The history of this

movement forms one of the most impressive chapters in the development of Christendom. But its origin lies directly in the conception that there is a relation between religion and the care, nurture, and control of the human body. And this relation has never been lost sight of in the history and practice of the Christian church.

It would be folly to suppose that the earliest Christian teachers, indurated as they were with the Hebrew teachings on the subject of bodily care, with its attendant rites and observances and its exacting demands as to diet, sex relations, and sanitary procedure, did not see that universal celibacy would mean the extinction of the race. But characteristically they faced a problem, which, as appears even from the pages of the New Testament, was so important to the spiritual life of the church that they had to take decisive measures. Hence they did not hesitate to lean backward in their determination to fight what they saw, with horror and dismay, made spiritual religion and social salvation impossible. But it would be equal folly to assume that they did not see here certain interests which had to do both with the future of the church and the happiness and usefulness of the believers, which must be made the subject of discussion and reflection. The practical aspects of the matter are fully discussed in the New Testament, and have formed the *terminus a quo* of the discussions in the Christian church ever since.

But, even aside from all this, there were the sacred writings and the practice of the Founder. It is not necessary to hold any particular theory of the healing work of Christ to state that he was a healer, and that this portion of his ministry was so large a portion of it that no conception of his work in the world can ignore it. Whether it was of a supernatural

character, or whether it was the utilization by him of natural laws unknown to his contemporaries, or whether it was through psychic influences not yet fully understood, the facts are undeniable. The tradition of Jesus must include his healing work as a large and effective portion of his ministry. It is impossible to separate Jesus the Healer from Jesus the Teacher. He must have been both, and this one fact is large enough and pregnant enough with significance to make some sort of a relation between the religion which he founded and the physical well-being of believers, a permanent element in Christian thought. Nor has any modern science been able to shake this consciousness very much, though it has driven the expression of it into the dark corners and among the dernier resources of Christian necessity. But prayer for the sick, however explained, has always been made and is made now. When all other means have been exhausted, the appeal to God for help has not been wanting.

That this should bring about, almost of necessity, a perpetual conflict between medical science and the teachers of religion is not to be wondered at. On the one hand, the teachers of religion saw one of their means of power and influence being taken away from them. It is not surprising that they did not willingly see themselves superseded in a field in which they had long held a monopoly. On the other hand, the leaders of science were men who loved to display their independence of what they felt to be ecclesiastical tyranny and superstition, and did not hesitate to make demonstrations which might easily have been identified with moral anarchy. That their doctrines were revolutionary is not to be denied. The world is grateful to them for being revolutionaries even to the scaffold and the stake. But it should not strike the modern student as strange that they should have been regarded with anx-

iety and fear by those who saw the authority of religion threatened, and themselves cast away as custodians of the spiritual well-being of humanity. There are innumerable parallels to this in other fields of human action, and religion has no particular monopoly of persecution of what is new and strange. Medical annals and legal lore furnish all the evidence necessary to show that human nature is essentially the same, whether it operates in law, medicine, or religion.

But the main fact is not altered, that such a relation as the one indicated was not only declared, but that time proved that the relation was real and vital. This is the important truth to be kept in mind. The Christian adaptation of the Hebrew doctrine was of the kind which would distinguish the difference between the application of the same law under a theocracy and a democracy. When Christianity affirmed the holiness of the body, and when it designated the Christian church as the "body" of Christ, it made a confluence of ideas which made the thought of a therapeutic function of Christianity as inevitable as anything can be. Events and experience proved that the generalization which was first made as a protest against license, embodied a very fundamental human concern; and the more the church experimented with the matter, the more it found that it had struck a lead which was destined to have great results in the moral and spiritual future of men. Without knowing it the early Christians struck the fundamental philosophical and practical problem of human life.

Our own time is furnishing ample evidence that this relation was of the importance just indicated. There is to-day a world-wide cult which has linked together the names of Christianity and science. Ludicrous as this combination must seem to the scientific mind, yet the conjunction of terms

is significant and wholly natural. Our age has had the word "scientific" as its distinctive epithet of intellectual freedom and illumination. Science has held sway in the university, on the platform, and in the legislative hall. Not to be "scientific" was to be beyond the pale of the intellectual movement of the age. Hence the cult promptly took on the term "science" as a challenge to the spirit of the age, and in the face of scientific ridicule and opposition has made converts in every land in the civilized world. Nor will it quite do simply to style this a new form of superstition. Natural laws have their revenges, like all other forces which are temporarily thrust to one side or unduly suppressed. What has happened is the reassertion of the primitive relation which modern science refused to recognize, and which it refused to give its proper place in the theory and practice of medicine. Assuming a purely materialistic attitude for the most part, medical science arbitrarily suppressed a relation which is as vital as any relation in this world. It refused to recognize that there is anything spiritual about the bodily life of men; and when the suppression had reached a point where it could no longer be endured, the outraged natural law broke forth, and what we could not have given to us naturally, we had to take unnaturally. There is nothing strange or unexpected about it. It is a perfectly normal reaction from a condition which was impossible and untrue. But the cult in question has done more than merely erect itself into a position of prominence in the modern world. It has caused the whole question of the therapeutic office of religion to be reopened, and has already caused very material modifications of medical procedure, and is likely to cause more. The criticism of medical practice which hitherto was assumed to be the private business of medical men is now known to be the business of human be-

ings everywhere. The reassertion of a man's right to be the final arbiter over the affairs of his own body is what is being rediscovered, and the sentence of death is not going to be pronounced by anybody again, for a long period certainly, without the patient's consent. And if the patient be a person who has some sort of a spiritual conception of his own life and destiny, he is going to be increasingly unwilling to have judgments pronounced without reasons or explanations being given. That this contention is soundly grounded, medical evidence itself proves beyond the possibility of reasonable doubt. Medical chaos and crime have accumulated a mass of testimony, which is simply overwhelming in proof, that a medical papacy is no more to be trusted than a theological one. The reason why medical authority could grow to the vast proportions and power that it has assumed in our own time is, that for the most part it meets men at a time of great need and helplessness, — in fact, at the point when rational scrutiny and protest are least able to assert themselves. Moreover, it disguises its operations, generally in an unknown tongue, and buries its blunders and defeats under a mass of unintelligible jargon, which nobody not trained therein can comprehend. This could not result in anything but tyranny, and in fact it did so terminate. It was impossible that the modern mind should subject itself to this kind of bondage forever. It was also impossible that relief should come by a mastery of the medical science itself, in the terms in which it utters itself and declares its judgments. Hence the modern mind took the only way out possible. It matched the finalities of medical science by the finalities of religion. In the more drastic forms of the revolt it threw medical science out of the window altogether. It refused to deal with what had over and over again proved to be false, misleading,

and even criminal. It pointed to the authentic records of the history of medical science itself. It raised up a vast cohort of "cured" persons who dumbfounded the world and medical science alike with their positive assertions of physical transformation without recourse to any of the "proved" methods of medical science. It awoke the latent skepticism of medical science abroad in the world, and organized it, and brought the whole world into a fresh consciousness of something fundamental that had been overlooked. In this juncture the medical men behaved just as the theologians have under similar circumstances. They saw their prerogative threatened, and they raged, ridiculed, and stormed. They called names and invoked the law, and in fact exhausted the whole gamut of possibilities to suppress what they held to be the destruction of their science and a menace to humanity. But all to no purpose. Bullying by medical men has gone the way of bullying by theologians. The facts were too widely known, the excesses of medicine too pronounced, and the materialism too gross and sensual to be denied.

One of the first results of this movement was one which could hardly have been expected. The lesser members of the medical fraternity and the ones who had themselves latent feelings on the subject of religion began to announce themselves and raise up their voices. To be sure they kept on using the old nomenclature; but, in general, they tried to include the new relation under some medical formula and tried to explain the new "phenomena" by the old medicine. In fact it was just like the effort of the old religious devotees, the primitive as well as later theologians trying to meet the new facts by the statement that they had always suspected some such thing and tried to make it their own. But

the effort is likely to prove futile, because the break was too complete, and we shall see a bitter war of these two elements for a generation at least. In fact so far has the movement now gone, that there is a distinct resistance to many legitimate forms of medical science; and everywhere grim and dire rumors are heard of "medical monopoly," one of the most interesting of which is the opposition to a national board of health, on the ground that it is the establishment of a national monopoly in medical practice. Certainly such a board will have difficult steering if it is to provide for the medical supernaturalists as well as all others. It is merely the fact which we are now noting, without respect to the rights or wrongs of the controversy.

Why did this revolt from so well-established and so highly regarded a science as medical science gain such enormous headway? That is the main question. Men who believe in the law of cause and effect must know that there must be somewhere a sound and adequate reason for this world-wide protest, which, beside organizing itself and developing a vast propaganda of its own, has impregnated all forms of religion and all classes of society. The answer is perfectly clear when one looks at the question from the historical side. Christianity is reasserting the old doctrine that the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. It is reasserting the sanctity of the bodily habitation of the soul. It is extending its area of control and coming back to its Hebraic sources. Moreover it is doing this, because it found that the motive of self-interest was not sufficient to secure attention to these things. Men could not be induced to be pure in body, merely because destruction awaited them if they were not pure. But it was found that if they had any spiritual sense of any kind, if that spiritual sense could be extended to control the mental and

bodily life, the result would be secured. This simply means that men would do as religion what they would not do as science. It merely meant that a dynamic was found in spiritual conceptions which could not be found in materialistic persuasion. Perhaps this is the essence of superstition. But whether it is or not, it is real and vital, and nobody with a thimbleful of sense will deny it. Medicine, like everything else, must submit ultimately to the test and the corrective of the universal experience. If this world-wide experience is to be styled superstition, the position of science is rather pitiful. What use has it made of its splendid opportunity, how has its almost unquestioned authority been used, that this should be the outcome of it all? What is the use of a "science" that throws the whole world into a spasm of superstition? Plainly either horn of the dilemma is painful.

But there is no more reason for pessimism here than in the consideration of any other phase of social growth. Two forces of immense power are here acting in conjunction, and together they are usually irresistible. The first has already been indicated. The spiritual nature of man is finding itself again, and reasserting itself under the influence of Christianity throughout the world. The democratic spirit, which is inherent in Christianity, is lifting men out of the sense of bondage, whether it is to a social program, a medical program, or any other kind. We are really in a kind of new reformation. The contempt for popular intelligence which had reached its greatest intensity among medical men, with the legal men a close second, is bearing its natural fruit — revolt. Human values have been raised, and the medical men knew it not. The spirit of democracy has found that the individual is a creature of vast value if he is properly conserved. It sees that a very large part of this conservation rests upon

his freedom, especially his spiritual freedom, and so, under the joint influence of religion and democracy, health begins to be regarded not as an asset, but as an obligation. The moment health begins to assume a moral quality, the doom of materialistic science is sounded. Because it is absolutely certain that as soon as health is regarded as a personal moral obligation, its social nature will also become recognized, and it will become a public moral obligation. And, from this point onward, democracy is acting with entire consistency. It has hospitals, to be sure, and does not abandon the old science; but it taxes itself for playgrounds, parks, bathhouses, and a vast variety of things which it can comprehend without the aid of a medical dictionary. And the more it does this, the more it sees its ultimate emancipation from a bondage which, as freedom is attained, seems more costly, more cruel, and less valuable than ever.

These national health movements are therefore to be regarded as a part of the moral movement of the world. They rest upon a distinctly new conception of the value of human life and of its spiritual quality. More and more the forces of social redemption are seen to be linked with forces which are distinctly spiritual in quality and character. It is this discovery that makes the social crisis which the world, as well as the church, is facing. It is so like the situation prevailing at the time the Christian religion faced the Roman Empire at the beginning of Christianity's career, that it is not difficult to see what the end will be. There will come a time for meditation, when all things have to be proved and that which is good preserved, while the rest is cast away. How shall this come about? The answer is at hand; and, unless something unforeseen occurs, what is likely to happen is, that the Christian church will become the agency for the reconciliation of

medicine and religion. By its character and by its constitution the one agency which can deal with this problem is the Christian church. Its vast numbers, its democratic nature, its simple and inclusive platform, its social life and aim, form the natural channels for the adjustment of the sound and proper relations of medical science and the spiritual aspirations and consciousness of men. This will never mean what it once meant — medical science under the dominion of ecclesiastics. There will never be a “Roman Catholic” medicine and a “Presbyterian” medicine and a “Protestant Episcopal” medicine. But there are, and there always will be, Holy Ghost hospitals and Presbyterian hospitals, and probably various other kinds; and all these will simply be reminders to medical science, that men will not have their spiritual natures insulted, and fundamental movements of the human soul left out of the calculation, in dealing with their bodily ills. Very likely a broken arm of a Presbyterian elder will not differ fundamentally from the broken arm of a Roman Catholic priest. But it may make, and probably will make, to both Presbyterian elders and Catholic priests, a very great difference whether the gentleman who comes to set that arm be a man who recognizes certain facts about human nature and the spiritual nature of man. And given the choice, he is already being given a great deal more than he used to be, both the Presbyterian and the Catholic will prefer to have his trouble handled by somebody with whom he has some social interest in common. That is the fundamental factor in the future of this matter.

There is no argument here for the resumption of the mediæval ecclesiastical control over medical science or any science. What there is here is, the evidence that, as, in the non-Christian lands, the social expression of religion has

taken on the form of medical assistance and supervision and has, in accord with the social tendencies of the time, magnified the spiritual nature of social service; so in this country there will grow a closer alliance between that form of religion which speaks directly to the spiritual experience of men and that which speaks directly to his bodily condition. And it does not need a seer to predict that the medical science which speaks both tongues will be the one which will prevail. And it will prevail simply because it is more real, more vital, and more true to the facts of human life and experience. It will still be possible to say that a typhoid fever has absolutely no relation to the inspiration of the Bible; but it will make a difference as real as the rise and fall of the tides whether the man who is treating the typhoid fever is or is not hostile to the believer's ideas on the latter subject. Nor will this be at all in the nature of a theological test. It will simply be symptomatic of a state of mind, an attitude toward belief and faith, and faith will simply recognize itself; and, the common bond discovered,—whether it be inspiration or the transformation of the sacrament is entirely immaterial,—there will be a gain to all concerned. It will be simply because a social bond is discovered which will make for confidence, for dynamic power. The medical man can still have fun with himself about "placebos" and the like, but his fun will not be all his own. His patient will have some of it also. If he does not, his friends will have it for him. And all this will come about simply because the demand and necessity for some expression of the social tie will make the progress of genuine science more steady and more real. But this progress will be the surer because it has a corrective in the form of a demand for the recognition of the spiritual nature of man. It may be unreasonable and not

altogether logically defensible. But it will be human, and perhaps it may not be so unjustifiable as at the first glance it appears.

The part which the Christian church will have in this movement will of course be very large. How large may be guessed from the wide extent for the original movement referred to at the beginning of this discussion. But, with the increasing spiritualization of religion through the socializing and democratizing movement within its special sphere, its influence must also enormously increase, because religion will never be without a social institution to embody and express its aspiration. If the Christianity of the future grows more spiritual, it will more and more insist upon the spiritual qualities of its own nature, for the direction of those with whom it retains its influence. In other words, it will come back to its original Hebraic doctrine. Its high priests, whether they be in the church or the medical school, will have to be men specially cleansed and specially capable in their functions, but they will have to be "priests" in their calling. They will have to maintain a character consistent with their high and spiritual function, because no man will be permitted to meddle with the temple of the Holy Ghost who does not know what such a temple is or ought to be. Those who hold a pigsty theory of the human frame will doubtless find their own kind of ministers, to abet them in their monstrous rites of bodily degradation and self-indulgence. But the spiritualized man will demand clean hands and a pure heart, in exactly the same sense as he now, theoretically at least, demands it of his spiritual adviser. Medicine itself will be baptized in a bath of some spiritual antiseptic, which will not divest it of one single principle which is true, one single discovery which is real, one atom of liberty for research which is hu-

mane and just, or one resource which is consistent with the Christian estimate of humanity. No theological dogmas will be imposed upon it; but, dealing with high and holy things, it must come with clean hands and a pure heart, as befits a priest of the temple of the Holy Ghost.

It is impossible to contemplate this result without seeing, also, that it will have important effects upon the development of medical science and medical education. Already social service departments are being organized everywhere in connection with hospitals. Already "social welfare" appears among the subjects which are to have a place among legislative committees. The present widespread agitation in connection with the social evil, the establishment of great foundations for the special investigation of sexual crimes and the diseases allied to them point the way toward the erection, in the medical school itself, of departments which must not only organize medical knowledge of these things themselves, but hardly less coördinate that knowledge with the social movement and find the point of communion and coöperation. That religion must figure largely in this synthesis nobody can doubt. That the Christian Church must be brought into the alliance for the effective enforcement of the new program is equally beyond doubt. Already the relation of this particular phase of medical investigation is being related to industry. It will also be related, even more than it already has been, with religion; and, through this means, religion will become more scientific, and the practice of medicine more spiritual and refined, and the power of both made more effective in the life of the individual and in the common standards of society.