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A table of contents for *The Baptist Quarterly* can be found here:

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The Faith of a Surgeon

(An address delivered at the Baptist Union Assembly, 1952.)

I BELIEVE that all true healing is "Spiritual" in nature and, therefore, unless it is realised that Christ is Himself at the very heart of all healing processes, and that all methods of healing are the gifts of God, there is no true healing at all. Christ—the Lord—is the Divine Master of all healing and, in the ultimate, God alone gives us health.

It is more than twenty-five years since I started to "walk the boards," as we call our hospital work. In the vast teaching hospital where I started my clinical work there is a long central corridor. At intervals little alcoves extend from the main corridor, where patients' relatives may sit and talk, and students gather and discuss their cases. Around the walls of each alcove there were printed in Latin, biblical texts. One such text commenced "Nisi Domine" (we used to call it the "Nisi Domine" alcove) :

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain" (*Psalm cxxviii. 6.*).

In the past quarter of a century since I first saw that text in the alcove of my beloved alma mater, I have become more and more conscious that unless our attempts at healing are so blessed our work fails utterly. The spiritual side, therefore, of our healing work is more important than the physical side—although I do not for one moment belittle the physical side of disease.

Now in our dealings with patients, we must always remember that they are *patients* and not cases. We are not treating diseases; we are treating patients. Indeed, in Nature there are no diseases; there are only sick persons. Our patients are like ourselves, living people with personalities and minds. This means that we must always remember the nature of man. He is a compound of dust and deity. He may be moulded in earth, but there is also a spark of Divinity. We touch Heaven when we lay our hands on a human body—a piece of divine mechanism, the very stuff of Divinity. The human body is the Temple of God. A human person is not merely some sort of complicated machine, capable of description in terms of electronics and biochemistry. A patient is not a test-tube obeying the laws of Chemistry and Physics; he is a compound of body and soul, and our job is to treat the whole man, physical and mental. A man's body and soul are like horses

in double harness, inasmuch that if one falls lame the other suffers and has to adjust itself to the situation. There is complete interdependence and interaction between spirit and flesh. Man is body—mind—soul, all inseparably connected and what affects one part affects another. The human is a complete being, and one cannot divide him into three packages—body, mind and spirit—and send one to the doctor, another to the psychiatrist and the third to the priest.

Now what is disease? It would give a more correct idea of what this word means if we spelt it with a hyphen between the dis-ease. We must get rid of the notion that "Disease" is something that a patient "has got," much as one "gets" a packet of cigarettes, or a box of chocolates. There are two component parts in illness, a physical part and mental part (which, in our medical jargon, we call the psychic part and the somatic part). Bodily and mental adjustment are so intimately associated and, indeed, united that they must be regarded as component and complementary parts of a single entity. It is a universal principle that a physical maladjustment implies a mental one and vice versa. Therefore, when a person is ill there are two things wrong—the physical and the mental, or the bodily and the spiritual. Every bodily ailment produces its own mental accompaniment; therefore, mental adjustment becomes necessary in every illness. In other words we cannot bring about the cure of disease without the corresponding mental (or spiritual) adjustment. This is often very difficult to do, and if there is spiritual maladjustment it can, and often does, interfere very seriously with recovery and convalescence from illness or operation. This was known to Plato who said: "This is the greatest error in the treatment of sickness that there are physicians for the body and physicians for the soul, and yet the two are one and indivisible." This is another way of saying that bodily disease and mental disease are one. Bodily illness, then, affects the mind—the whole personality, dynamically.

Our Lord referred to His work as that of the Physician, and the statement that He went about healing "all manner of disease" applies to the spiritual as well as to the mental and physical. His own words in connection with a mighty work of healing, "I made a man every whit whole," reveal the fact that He dealt with the whole personality. Christ, therefore, concerned Himself with spiritual, moral and physical malady. Jesus never divided the physical from the mental; this was Christ's way, and we must do likewise, for He is the same yesterday, today and for ever.

THE MEANING OF ILLNESS

This, I believe, gives us the clue to the meaning of physical

disease. For over a quarter of a century, it has been my privilege to deal surgically with organic disease. Now what is the mystery behind all this suffering? What is the problem of Pain? I do not know, with finality, any more than you. A man is pursuing his ordinary mundane path of life—working, sleeping, eating, perhaps occasionally enjoying himself, perhaps too busy to think more than very occasionally about God and Eternity and the eternal verities—when suddenly a stab of abdominal pain brings him low. He is rushed to hospital, where an emergency operation snatches him from otherwise certain death. In a moment his world is shattered, the everyday things of his life are taken from him, and slowly he is made to realise how unimportant these little things of his life really are after all, and that his true good is in another world. He becomes more and more conscious of how utterly dependent he is on God, from whom he draws his strength and gradually gets better. He is made to realise the truth, as Bernard Shaw says in *St. Joan*: “Sometimes if you’re worthy enough He will snatch you out of the jaws of death.” May it not be that tribulation in these circumstances often becomes a terrible necessity?

Illness and suffering can be a way to an enriched personality. This is the experience of many, although there are exhausting and enervating diseases which do not produce so obvious an effect. I believe, however, that the only rational view of illness is to regard it as a sacrament and, although in our human limitations we cannot understand, yet God has some good purpose in it. I think this is what Robert Louis Stevenson had in mind when he prayed “that the Celestial Surgeon would stab his soul awake.” How often have we experienced, in a metaphoric way of speaking, that God has taken our sight away in order that our souls might see? “Through much tribulation we must enter into the Kingdom of God” (*Acts* xiv. 22).

It may not be the whole truth but there is, I feel, at least some truth in the idea of salvation through suffering, in the idea that tribulation brings at least a sensation of the power of God and perhaps a better understanding of His purpose. “For the Lord shall comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places; and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord.” Sickness, then, is often a means of grace, and illness brings many blessings in its train, and we should never forget to return thanks to Him who, alone, is the Giver of life and health and the Giver of every good and perfect gift. I believe, therefore, that the ultimate purpose of illness is good. Often when people discover themselves to be seriously ill, the cry of many is “Why has God done this to me?” Well, I do not believe that God sent their illness; I believe He simply permitted

it, just as He permitted Satan to afflict Job—to Job's eternal salvation and perfection. We, too, when illness strikes us down can turn our thoughts inwards and thence outwards, crying to God for His help and mercy, and so we can make perfect our imperfect lives. In this, is the only meaning of illness for me. And, daily, I see the ravages of pathological processes in all their stark horror! In a way that I do not understand, I demand that the meaning of all the suffering and pain and death that I see every day must be good. Indeed I would find life insupportable if I did not believe this, and if I felt that man was the victim of impersonal forces which were destined to crush him. If I felt this were possible, I would give up Surgery tomorrow. I have, therefore, all through the years been on the look-out for tangible evidences of the good that illness has done to my patients, and now the evidence is overwhelming. In sickness, I have seen my patients rise to the sublimest heights of courage and faith. Surely this has made them better people and prepared them for Eternity, which is really the only true purpose of living?

As an operating surgeon, I have to deal with so many apparently ghastly pathological aberrations of the human body that sometimes I think it is wonderful that anybody has ever believed in the goodness of God. When the sun is shining and you are feeling well, it is easy to believe that

"God's in His Heaven
All's right with the world."

But what when illness strikes in all its pathological horror? Dr. Leslie Weatherhead has told us where his own mind finds a bit of anchorage: "We can say, quite definitely, that no good man would send blindness or paralysis or cancer upon his fellowmen. Which of us could snatch a baby from its mother and kill it? Which of us could part two aged people who were all in all to one another? Which of us could send a young husband a tumour of the brain, so that he dies after a ghastly death following months of suffering during which all that made his charming personality slowly disintegrates, and he leaves a widow and two young children? Which of us could send cancer to a young and beautiful young woman on the very threshold of her life? None of us could do such a thing! And surely, therefore, we need not ask ourselves if we are better than God to know that whatever He does, or allows, we can at least assert this, that He does not do it because He is cruel. We cannot understand why God allows pathological disease and so many things to happen, but if God is at all (and most of us are in no doubt whatever about that) He must be better than us; He must be more loving, more kind, more just. It is incredible that we possess and honour funda-

mental values, like kindness, goodness and justice and that God does not possess them, or that He could be callous and cruel. In spite of much mystery and bewilderment, and in spite of many arguments that seem to deny God's goodness, man holds on to the thought that God is good because man finds that at his best he himself is good. Jesus told men to argue like that. "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give good gifts to them that ask Him?" Justice is a good thing so God must finally be just. Love is the best thing in the world, so He must be loving."

Now this argument of Dr. Weatherhead is a great help to me. Whatever the meaning of illness—and we must confess we do not know—it cannot be based on a hypothesis that man is the victim of cruel forces destined to destroy him, but it must be based in some mysterious way on the Eternal Love of God. Dr. Weatherhead tells a story of a little boy who was one day suddenly stricken with infantile paralysis, leaving him permanently lame and crippled. "Mummy," he said, "if I can never walk or run again like other boys, will you go on loving me?" You can imagine that mother's answer as she stabbed back her tears. "Then," said the little chap, "I can stick anything." We can never really discover the causes why many of us suffer in body or mind. It may be that our suffering comes from the folly or ignorance or the sin in the great human family of which we are part. And in belonging to this vast human family we must share in its assets and liabilities—in the knowledge of science for good and evil, in the gifts of medicine and surgery for the relief of pain and in the devastating possibilities of the atomic bomb. Much suffering must be regarded as accidental; an accident being defined as an event which God did not intend and man could not foresee. Sick people must not torture themselves by thinking that their suffering is their fault, or that God has picked them out for punishment.

When we are ill what are we to do? The thing to do with suffering is not to torture the mind by seeking its cause, or asking why it should happen to us, but to look ahead and say, "How can I turn this into gain?" In this way the sufferer—the patient—can turn the liability of sickness into an asset not only for himself, but for the whole community. Sooner or later, illness comes to us all, high and low, rich and poor, and in this respect, may I with all humility and gratitude recall the illness and passing of our late beloved King, whose bearing and fortitude under the most grievous and terrible disease that can afflict mankind, will remain for all time a lesson and example to us all and will give ineffable comfort and inspiration to sufferers the world over; truly in death, as in his glorious life of blessed memory our King has set

a high standard for us all. Under the bludgeonings of his dread disease his Faith never faltered, and he showed us even in dire illness that the path of duty is the way to glory.

There are some things we must accept, but to accept an accident (or illness) resentfully or bitterly, to torture one's mind as to whether one deserves it or whether it is good or just, or to moan "Why did this happen to me?" is to doubt God's good purpose, and it actually increases the suffering for ourselves and everybody round us. When we are ill the thing to do is to accept it with a determination to get well, if that is God's will, and a determination to bring good out of evil. This will not only minimise the suffering we have to bear—indeed in many situations it is the first step to recovery—but it will also benefit the community through the witness of courage and, best of all, it will be the means of co-operating with God in such a way that enables Him to use our suffering in His mighty redemptive work for the world. Behind all suffering, therefore, is the Eternal Goodness of God.

We must wrestle goodness out of our illnesses, remembering always that God is love. In this fight God is on our side. God's love did not spare Jesus the Cross, but Jesus faced it, and by co-operating with God accepted the awful liability of the Cross and turned it into the greatest spiritual asset the world has ever known. When Mrs. Josephine Butler's little daughter ran from her bedroom to greet her mother, fell over the bannisters and was picked up dead, her mother devoted herself to motherless girls. Now thousands thank God, not that Mrs. Butler lost her child, but for what she did with her sorrow: what she made out of it. This is the eternal secret behind all illness and sorrow—the secret Jesus taught us of not escaping the thorns of life, but the secret of wearing them as the Crown of Life.

My thesis, therefore, is that illness in humans is for our good and, although I cannot prove it nor explain it, that is my unshakeable faith. I could not bear to treat the ravages of cancer if I did not believe this in my heart. So often do I see it destroy the bodies of people who are particularly good and kind (indeed, cancer is a disease that seems to single out the outstandingly good and kind people of this world, to strike down) that I cannot help feeling that in some mysterious way God is thus working His purpose out. I admit that this is outside my understanding and I leave it at that. Sometimes when I wonder at the suffering and sorrow caused by malignant disease, I remember that:—

The flowers live by the tears that fall
From the sad face of the skies,
And life would have no joys at all
Were there no watery eyes."

Quoted by the late Professor G. Grey Turner.

God has placed within us great resources for bringing good out of evil and for alleviating our trials in sickness. Our illnesses can become pearls of great price. The cutting and irritating grain of sand gets within the shell of the oyster which it incites and stimulates to secrete from its own resources the means of coating the grain of sand and making it into a pearl. May it not be the same with us in sickness, that we, too, may turn our diseases into pearls? So my own questionings were silenced about the meaning of illness. I had seen so often that the effect of illness was to make people better in mind and soul. God allows their physical illnesses to improve their personalities and after the body has gone the enriched soul would live on for ever. Therefore, what a reward for so transient a physical penalty, so slight an affliction to win so great a prize! In other words, I argued that the mental accompaniments of so enriching a kind were the purpose of illness.

Then, one day, I was called upon to operate on a baby a few hours old. What could possibly be the worth-while mental accompaniments to recompense the helpless and innocent child for its physical pain? It is difficult to reconcile the suffering of a child with the Love of God. I was in a dilemma again. Whenever I operated upon a child, I could not understand why children must suffer pain. A medical professor wrote the other day. "I have seen too many children die of leukaemia or nephritis to believe that 'Man is the object of God's love'." This is, of course, a terrible problem and, is indeed, the stumbling-block of many thinking persons on the threshold of religion. Then the answer came. I was operating upon a baby a few weeks old. For this particular operation the child is brought into the operating theatre wrapped gently, and heavily cotton-wooled, on to a cross; in our surgical jargon we call it a "Cruciform splint." Now here at last was the answer to all illness—A CROSS—the necessary accompaniment to every phase of human life. Suffering in children can be explained on no other hypothesis; it is part of the eternal Cross which lifts mankind to Heaven and is part of God's good plan. There stands the Cross—Eternal, stark, inescapable—at the very heart of mankind.

PRAYER AND WORKS

Now I want to ask an important question as to whether prayer can alter the course of the pathological progress of a disease? I believe it can. Dr. Alexis Carrel in one of his books wrote: "I have actually seen the cancerous tissues made new while someone was in the process of prayer." We have seen the effect of prayer on innumerable occasions. Many times when science indicated that the patient's condition was hopeless, their recovery has been rapid and complete. The materialist says that

"imponderable factors" have been at work and that a "spontaneous cure" has taken place. I believe that, in many cases, these so-called "imponderable factors" and "spontaneous cures" are spiritual phenomena; they are the answer to prayer. Spiritual forces have, in fact, influenced the outcome of the disease, and in their absence the patient would have died. Of course, I cannot prove these things in black and white, but my experience leads me to believe they are true. The annals of Medicine are full of instances where the faith and love and courage of relatives—especially mothers—have won the day in the face of the most gloomy and grave medical prognoses. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much in its working." Dr. Alexis Carrel says: "Prayer is a force as real as terrestrial gravity. As a physician, I have seen man, after all the other therapy had failed, lifted out of disease and melancholy by the serene effort of prayer." This has also been the experience of innumerable people.

Now prayer does not mean dispensing with effort or perseverance, nor does it mean that the answer is always one we could recognise or desire. But prayer does mean that, whatever the outcome, it is the one God wishes for us. He knows best, and it is not for us to question. Prayer is vital to the course of healing. While I admit this freely, we must not be sentimental about this matter; prayer alone is not sufficient. The patient must do his part and we must do our parts. We must pray, but keep our powder dry. The patient must do all he can to help himself, and while I believe more firmly than ever in the infinite potential in people, their improvement must come always from within themselves. I have no faith in hand-outs of any kind, economic or spiritual. Abraham Lincoln once said, "You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they should and could do for themselves." Now sometimes we have to chivvy our patients and be cross with them, to stimulate them to get better. A young Welsh miner aged twenty-three suddenly lost his sight in a pit explosion. He was shattered by the loss of his sight, and felt life had ended for him. He went on aimlessly for a year. Then the head of a rehabilitation centre, who was also blind, gave him a wiggling and spoke sharply to him, and told him in effect to "pull his socks up." That boy is now an expert stenographer; you can dictate to him at 120 words a minute, which he records on a Braille shorthand machine, and then he transcribes from that on a typewriter, and gives you a faultless piece of work.

To bring about recovery, then, prayer should be the motive force, guiding all our other activities. Jesus said "Watch and pray." We must do both; then the power of prayer is great and overwhelming. Prayer and works; both are necessary. For all

"physic and art and excellent industry is to no purpose without calling on God" and "it is vain to seek for help except God bless us."

I must now refer to the great revolution that has come over the face of Medicine in the last four or five years. I refer, of course, to the fact that the hospitals have been nationalised. I know you will not think I am being political in this matter for I can assure you that I am no politician myself, medical or otherwise. Our hospitals have now been nationalised, and the Welfare State provides vast materialistic resources for the medical care of the Nation. That is all very well. But there is a great peril that an over-emphasis on the material side may cause us to lose the voluntary side of the hospital work—the Christian side—the "Prayer" side of it, if you will. I tell you the Hospital which has no prayers said for it is as dead as the Dodo. Nothing in the State Service must be allowed to destroy this side of our work. The Welfare State is producing a changing social order with increased reliance on the State and lessening personal responsibility. The danger of this is a grave weakening of the moral backbone of the people with more emphasis on "rights" and less consciousness of duties. The danger of this attitude is that people tend to ask, "What can I get out of the State?" which is a symptom of moral decay. The ideal of service is our precious heritage and must be re-introduced into the nationalised Service of our profession. Is it not "our proud office to attend the fleshly Tabernacle of the immortal Spirit"? (Lister).

The foundation of hospitals was an expression of deep Christian feelings. They are not merely places provided for the healing of the sick, but are also for solace of the soul. The hospital tradition is that the patients are its guests and must be treated as such. In the new Health Service we must guard this tradition with all our might. A Hospital is not just an assembly of bricks and mortar, of wards and operating-theatres, and Path. Labs. etc. It is a living thing, a collection of suffering and often very frightened human beings, and of the people who minister to their needs. A hospital is not only a matter of finance and construction. Surely this great living organism requires the help of God? That can only come through prayer. Every true hospital should be worthy of having emblazoned over its portals: "This is the House of God and the very Gate of Heaven." The other night a lady rang me up to ask what time the following morning I was proposing to operate on a certain patient. This was a particularly hazardous operation on a critically ill patient, the chances of success being remote. The lady informed me that a group of the patient's friends were meeting in church at the time of the operation to pray for its success. I know that great help

came to us all on that morning, while the prayers of this patient's friends were storming the bastions of Heaven seeking succour for their friend.

I am quite sure that many of you conduct your own powerful prayer circles. In Amersham the pastor of the local Church, a valued personal friend of mine, conducts a prayer circle, and we have had many experiences of the power of this group of holy people. I could give you many examples, some of them very personal ones, about this work, and I speak about it with deep gratitude. I commend the work of these prayer circles to you all. In America almost every church has its own prayer circle, and if a member of the church is suddenly taken ill and goes into hospital, he or she is prayed for at once, and steadily. The work of these prayer circles throughout the world has been richly blessed—and they know, "From Thee all skill and science flow." The New Testament specifically exhorts us to form prayer circles: "Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him . . . and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up. . . . Pray one for another, that ye may be healed." (*James* v. 14-16). Medical science and religion must be united as co-partners in the service of humanity. As I have said, body and soul are closely allied. The parson has his job with the souls of men, but again and again he cannot do it without the help of the doctor. The doctor has his job with the bodies of men, but again and again he cannot do it without the help of the parson. The parson and the doctor cover the same ground and belong to one another, as they always have from the beginning of the Christian era. The historic Christ Himself was a supreme physician, restoring health and life to many who believed in Him.

We who deal with sickness—doctors, surgeons, nurses—must regard the body as our study and our continual care, our active willing earnest care, and we must allow nothing to make us shrink from it. In its weakness and infirmities, in the dishonours of its corruption, we must still value it, still stay by it, to mark its hunger and thirst, its sleeping and waking, its heat and cold, to hear its complaints, to register its groans. Our interest in all this must be greater, far greater, than ever a painter or sculptor took in the form and beauties of its health. Whence comes this interest? A sense of duty may engender it. But what sustains it and keeps it alive, vests it with a moral motive and makes it something of our hearts? Surely only the Lord Himself can build this House! So religion must animate this great work of Healing. Thus the real doctor, one of Christ's disciples, finds his whole mind, his moral nature, and his spiritual being all harmoniously engaged in the daily business of his life, dispensing

mercy to his fellow-creatures and worshipping God in his daily life. This is a mighty task, and how can he accomplish it without the ever-present help of Christ Himself? We doctors and nurses must remain always calm, faithful, effective servants of the sick, and we cannot do this unless the Lord in us is "building the House." Our patients take our skill for granted, and it is only right for them to expect skill; but what they really want, whether they know it or not, is someone who, in addition to knowing his work, would give them confidence, patience, courage, hope and faith. The great majority of our patients, in their hearts, whatever they may say or do, expect us to be to them, "like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." How can we doctors do all this without the help of our pastoral colleagues?

It has been said of doctors that the majority of them lack the higher and inner life and are strangers to divine things. If this be true of us our work must fail miserably. The great need of our age is an integration between the Christian Faith and the profession of Medicine—between the Christian Ministry and Medical men. Clergy and Doctors must unite, for theirs is one indivisible work. Their objective is identical; the whole man, healthy in soul and body. The Church and Medicine are one profession, and must unite in their great work. Healing and health for the whole man is our objective. We doctors must toil to keep abreast of professional advances, but we must liaise more and more with our ministerial colleagues. Our job, your job and mine, is to serve man in his own person and in his family, relieving his distresses of mind, body and soul because he is not a case, or an average, or a bit of statistics, but a fellow creature bound to us and we to him as members one to another in the family of God whose nature is Love. If our job is the same, then our faith must be the same, the faith that impels us to value, care for, respect each man—in short to love the brethren. Clearly then we both depend on Christ and He must build the House. Such faith is not credulity; it is creative power, whose limit is the heavens. The Ministry of Healing, then, is a joint one in which both professions are united. In this Ministry of Healing we see God's handiwork, answering our prayers and restoring the sick.

In this great work of healing, prayer is the energising force in the application of Medical Science. Very often, even in the bravest of patients, a cold fear amounting to a panic clutches at their hearts as they face a grave surgical ordeal. I have often seen this fear dispelled when their spiritual advisor has visited them and said a word of prayer. A great calm comes over them, their strength is renewed as they wait upon the Lord and they face the grim ordeal with the courage of a giant refreshed. This makes the success of a surgical venture almost certain before we

start. Aristotle said the success of all depends upon the blessing of God, and this is certainly true of surgical operations. That great surgeon, the late Lord Moynihan, used to say that there were always three people present when he operated—the patient, God and the surgeon. As he lifts his knife no true surgeon should be too proud to pray, "Come, Jesus, be our guest and bless what Thou has given us to do. Stand by me, in this truly important task! Grant me success—for without Thy loving counsel and support man can avail but naught." The true surgeon knows in his heart that what Jesus said is true: "Without me ye can do nothing." This is true today even though Penicillin and other advances have brought an almost incredible safety in the technique of modern surgery.

I was passing a church the other day when, on a notice board outside it, I saw the following words, forming a wayside text: "If you are too busy to pray, you are too busy." If this is true of everyday life it is ten thousand times more true when you are ill, because if during illness you are too busy to pray, you are not only too busy, but you are too ill! We perish if we cease from prayer. When grateful patients used to thank Harvey Cushing, the great brain surgeon, he used to tell them "Don't thank me—thank the Lord." This is so true, for a man can receive nothing except it be given him from Heaven.

In the Ministry of Healing it is a great joy to us when our patients get better and return home to their loved ones. But, finally, what about those who are not to return to their earthly homes any more, and who are facing death, the last enemy, as St. Paul says? So often in our work we are conscious that "The Angel of Death is abroad in the land—and you can almost hear the beating of his wings." Can we really see an Angel in the bereavement and anguish of death? Here again we come up against another stern mystery, a great and solemn mystery. Death is the supreme crisis of human experience. It sometimes comes when we least expect it and, indeed, to patients whom we think should get better. All goes well at the operation and yet, maybe after many days of a grim struggle, the patient crosses the Rubicon, leaving his relatives, and all of us, numb with disappointment. In surgery as in other things, "The best laid schemes of mice and men oft gang aglie." This is sometimes our experience. Quite recently I was asked to operate upon a man whose life I was particularly anxious to save. His wife had been in close professional relationship to myself for many years, and he also had become a close friend of mine, and the family were most anxious that I should perform the operation. It was a serious operation, but one that I had performed many hundreds of times. The operation went well and there was every reason to hope

that he would make a speedy recovery. Complication after complication ensued and after fifty days, in spite of all our attempts to restore him to health (when it seemed that we were trying to defeat the very Will of God), he passed from this life leaving us all numb with grief and disappointment. Yes, death is often a great mystery, but surely the only answer is that God wanted our friend for Himself. Man proposes, but God disposes. Enoch walked with God—and Enoch was not for God took him!

In our grief we must always recall that Christ Himself suffered the agonising experience of real, painful, physical death. (Were you there when they crucified my Lord?) We must, therefore, remember that even in the great mystery of death—so often shattering our little world—God is really answering our prayers. Consequently, when we pray for God “to restore health and strength to those who are sick” we should always add, “if it be Thy Will.” If we do this we shall know in our hearts that death is no longer the King of Terrors, but the Angel of a Father’s Love, and the day when He comes is the Christian’s birthday of Eternity. The trumpet shall sound and we shall be saved!

In our war against disease our battle is never ending; but if there is a battle God is in it. If you are fighting for something fine God is at your side and the battle is His. We who are privileged to work with sick people, we who bear with the infirmities of the weak, ministering to those in sickness and even in death, have a great reward. Our reward is great because in this task it is the Lord Himself who builds the House and keeps the City for us.

W. D. LOVELOCK-JONES.

Picture Map of the Holy Land (Francis Chichester, large edition, 6s. 6d.; desk edition, per dozen, 15s.)

This is an attractive map designed to show the places named in the New Testament. Round the map and in a decorative border are fifty-three small pictures by Lawrence Stone illustrating events connected with the life of Christ, and there are also biblical references at the foot. Teachers would find it a useful visual aid in their work. The map has also been produced in the form of a 234-piece jig-saw puzzle which, for children, will doubtless have an educative as well as entertaining value.