

Mayest Thou Prosper in Health

“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.”—3 John 2

THOUGH THE WORD *health* appears many times in the Bible, only in this one instance is it given its full significance—in all other passages it is used wholly and only as a figure of speech. In this particular verse the apostle differentiates, in a very definite manner, between the welfare of the physical body and that of the soul: “I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” Being practical, John emphasizes the fact that there is such a thing as physical righteousness and, if we interpret him aright, he considers it of equal importance with spiritual righteousness.

What John might have said, but didn’t, is that health and holiness are synonymous. Our great mentor, Max Heindel, very succinctly paraphrased the same thought when he wrote, “Matter is crystallized spirit.” And again, “An unclean vessel can not contain pure and wholesome water.” A purified body is a healthy body, and the relation of health to holiness is always significant—in proportion. Whatever makes for health makes holiness possible, and from time immemorial happiness has been known to be their effect.

To be well is the first duty of man. To be strong in health is a duty we owe to ourselves, to our posterity, to our God. But man is so engrossed with the evolution of his soul that he woefully, if not willfully,



Oil on canvas (1877), John William Waterhouse (English Pre-Raphaelite painter), 1849-1917. Private Collection

A Sick Child Brought into the Temple of Aesculapius

God of medicine and healing, Aesculapius presided over a mystery cult in Epidaurus, near Athens. He had four daughters, Hygeia and Panacea being the most famous. A healing center of Hygeia, or Salus, was introduced in Rome in 293 B.C. by Sybilline prophecy, to overcome a plague. Hygiene normally refers to the cleanliness that is vital to vigor and good health. A serpent-entwined rod is iconic to the art of healing.

neglects his physical body, the body which Paul tells us is the living “temple of the Holy Ghost.”

How strange that ecclesiastic education scarcely acknowledges the importance of physical righteousness; yet no true sense of spiritual orientation is possible without the background of physical well-being. Physical health assures that mental peace and security and self-expansion which bring a sense of buoyancy to life. When this truth is recognized and appreciated, and the knowledge of it intelligently applied, the soul grows by leaps and bounds, by throes and throbs. A flash! and a glory stands revealed for which you have been groping

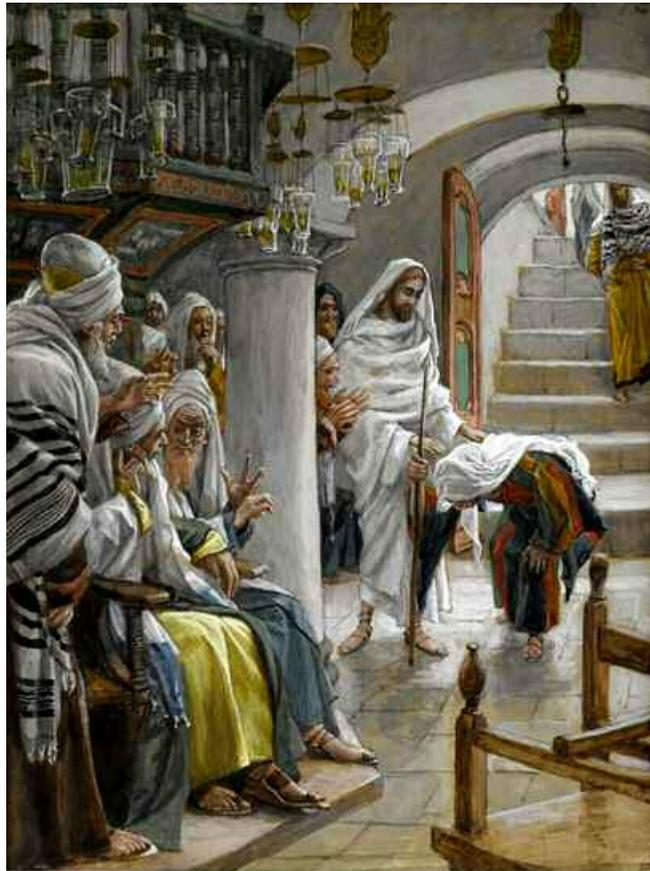
blindly through the years.

Man cannot rise above nature; below nature man cannot fall. When the intrinsic standards that nature has erected for physical vigor were neglected or denied by the superstitions of any society, or the shibboleths of any age, disease and pestilence destroyed the people. There is no difference between the principles of physical or mental or spiritual hygiene. When the inherent needs that nature has erected for physical normality are neglected or denied by the superstitions of the social order, physical disease and spiritual pestilence deform the people, and as long as the individual believes in, fears, or yields to the perverting practices or the false teaching, he will be or become neurotic. Indeed, the search for physical righteousness consists in the discharge of all ideas and opinions, values and ideals, that are against human development and evolution, whether they are embodied in the customs and conventions of one's own day, or found in the traditions and sanctions of an earlier century. Physical health requires treatment of the body according to the implicit needs of the body, and this requirement brooks no interference and no neglect.

Nature's laws are inexorable, her penalties inevitable, her rewards gloriously wonderful. Never can any advantage be taken of nature by a trick. The spirit of the world, the great calm presence of the Creator, comes not forth to the sorceries of opium or of wine. The sublime vision comes to the pure and simple soul in a clean and chaste body.

Nature's methods are evolutionary, not revolutionary. Nature makes the crabapple, but without man's help she could never evolve the pippin. Nature makes the man, but unless the man takes charge of himself, he will never evolve into a master. He will remain a crabapple man. So nature requires men to cooperate with her.

Jesus himself was a firm believer in this principle. He never exercised His power of healing without first suggesting that the patient do something for himself—co-operate. This spirit of cooperation is just as imperative today as it was 2,000 years ago. If the patient cooperates with nature, and the doctor cooperates with nature, all will be done that can be done, for nature (God) does all the curing.



Opaque watercolor over graphite on wove paper. J. J. Tissot, 1836-1902. Brooklyn Museum

The Woman with an Infirmary of Eighteen Years

Belief in the power of healing is the precondition for its operation. If the patient acts on that belief, co-operates with the healer, he or she can be restored to health.

Health is born of knowledge; disease is the child of ignorance. Those who would have health, with all that magic word implies, will have to outgrow their lazy shiftlessness and become intense. A subject is either worth one's whole and undivided attention or it isn't worth anything. The subject of health is either worth enough effort to get it or it isn't. Every person should practice attention and concentrate. Learn to think. It's really worthwhile, yet how few use the grand prerogative of mind? How few think justly of the thinking few, and how many never think who think they do?

The chief obstacle to health is proud ignorance, that is to say, a congenital incapacity for thinking. People in general, including physicians, would have you believe that they think, but candidly, they only think they think. Thought does not easily cross the threshold of their understanding. What

they call thought is an aggregate of stereotyped ideas borrowed from someone else and never rigorously questioned or improved upon. Since these individuals have not yet elected to think for truly themselves, they are temperamentally allergic to ethical ideas concerning the law of cause and effect.

Neither profession nor people appear to have the slightest conception that they might, with a small mental effort, secure a knowledge of fundamental principles that would elucidate the law of cause and effect and assure them health through right living. Because of a lack of this knowledge, sickness has become more to be expected than health.

definite formula whereby he may obtain, retain, and radiate good health.

So far as we are able to judge, man is a transient, thinking, conscious, reasoning, and sometimes unreasonable, manifestation of Divine Energy. As such he enters this life with two all-important biologic characteristics; namely, the foodal instinct to keep the individual alive, and the sexual instinct to keep the race alive.

Fundamentally, then, the life of man rests on nutrition and sexuality. Around and about these primary instincts revolves everything in man's life. The manner in which he satisfies these vital urges

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Sickness is looked upon by the people, the state, the nation, as inevitable; and precautions, immunizations and preventions are in keeping with these false ideas. The reverse is true: If we live for health, and seek health instead of disease, we find it. Postmortems, vivisections, and laboratory investigations are all in the line of looking for disease—and we have found disease galore. If we look for health, it too can be found.

Obviously, all progress in mind, body, material things, and spiritual attainment has come to man through the study of cause and effect. And just in degree as he abandons the study of disease as futile and absurd, and applies himself to right living, here and now, will he prosper. The more we know of the unchanging laws of cause and effect the better we are able to use them for our personal advancement.

Man evolves from a cell; his entire evolution is cellular. Everything that influences him leaves its effect on the cells of his body. If the influence is favorable, the state we call health prevails; if the influence is unfavorable, the state we call disease prevails. Man's study of himself, then, becomes of significant importance; for an adequate understanding of the effect of all influences gives him a

determines his moral status and his moral status marks the degree of health and the length of life which he enjoys.

Since the human body is procreated by Divine Energy, it must be a suitable dwelling place for the power that creates and maintains it in accordance with laws which are identified in physiology and anatomy. The powers of life act through the functions of various organs, and in the human body, as in the animal body in general, the primary function is nutrition. The crucial importance of nutrition is emphasized by the fact that in the human body, as in all metazoal animal forms, the first step in embryonic development is the turning in of the outer layer of the embryo to form the body cavity, which is the beginning of the digestive tract.

Biologically considered, man is nothing but a peripatetic stomach with its appendages, an organized group of organs, clustered about his food tube. Now these organs, together with the food tube, constitute an exquisitely delicate mechanism, the orderly working of which depends entirely upon the nutrition of one's body.

Proper nutrition is achieved only by an individual's conscious effort—it requires a faculty known

as self-discipline and no mental massage or hypodermic injection of facts can take its place. It means living by knowledge, not by chance.

Nutrition, digestion, assimilation—one and all depend upon one's manner of eating. Awkward and untutored as we are in the art of living, we choose the wrong articles of food; we eat too much; we eat too fast; we eat when there is no need for food and often when absolute rest would do us more good. As man eats and digests his food so is he. It is altogether impossible to have peace in the head and war in the stomach. A sour stomach means a sour disposition. Intestinal fermentation commonly ends in intellectual fermentation. In order to sweeten up the mental process we must sweeten up the digestive process.

Maximum mental efficiency demands that intelligent attention be given to the diet. Balanced thinking goes hand in hand with balanced eating. Pure food is a direct aid to pure thoughts. Over-eating, hasty eating, and the eating of indigestible mixtures of food, all subtract from brain power and mental health and thwart spiritual attainment—in most instances by producing in the digestive tract certain poisons that are worse than alcohol in their paralyzing influence upon the delicate brain cells. Dullness, heaviness, or at times irritability of mind are the result of this toxemia resulting from undigested food stuffs. This accounts for the fact that many of our mental afflictions, such as worry, anxiety, fear, hate, and avarice, which were supposed in no way to be influenced by eating, subside or wholly disappear when the diet is corrected.

It is a wise thing to eat right. Not only for the stomach's sake, but for the sake of improved nutrition with its resulting health and happiness. In truth, there is no single measure that would so positively, so immediately contribute to the physical,

mental, moral, and spiritual welfare of the human race as inculcating the laws of health and right living. The ill man can be made well by teaching, and the healthy man can be made efficient by teaching. That is all there is to it.

The most important of the digestive processes, and the only one over which we have voluntary control, takes place in the mouth by thorough mastication and commingling of the food with the the saliva. Thorough mastication assures effective and complete digestion. It is also a sure way to avoid overeating. When thorough mastication is practiced, the taste buds on the tongue will say "enough" long before the stomach becomes overloaded. As individuals we must learn our respective digestive limitation, and be guided thereby.

It is a part of our sin that we are sick; it is a part of our religion and duty to be well. As a rational being, man

should not be forever thinking of his body nor yet of his soul. Rather he should be thinking of his job and his God. Good health or any other physical circumstance is not the chief end of life; nevertheless, good health is the supreme condition of our highest work and it greatly facilitates those intellectual, moral, and spiritual attainments in which consist the true worth and dignity of human life.

Health is nature's own reward for getting into harmony with her laws; by the same token man attains sympathy, moderation, equanimity and poise. Indeed, each and all of these cosmic attributes are concomitants of health—the reason being that thought is just as biologic as any physical function of the body.

Sympathy is a mark of attainment; the greatness of men can safely be gauged by their sympathies. Sympathy and the exuberance of health are twins. In health your heart goes out to all men; the high, the low, the rich, the poor, the learned, the

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unlearned, the good, the bad, the wise and the foolish—it is necessary to be one with them all, else you can never comprehend them. Empathy! It is the touchstone to every secret, the key to all knowledge, the open sesame of all hearts. Put yourself in the other man's place; then you will know why he thinks certain things and does certain deeds. Put yourself in his place, and your blame will dissolve itself into pity, and your tears will wipe out the record of his misdeeds.

The saviors of the world have simply been men with wondrous sympathy. But knowledge must go with sympathy, else, the emotions will become maudlin and pity may be wasted on a poodle instead of on a child; on a guinea pig instead of on a human soul. Knowledge in use is wisdom, and wisdom implies a sense of values—you know a big thing from a little one, a valuable fact from a trivial one. Tragedy and comedy are simply questions of value; a little misfit in life makes us laugh, a great one is tragedy and cause for expression of grief.

Poise is the strength of body and mind to control your sympathy and knowledge. Unless you control your emotions, they run over and you stand in the slop. Sympathy must not run riot, or it is valueless and bespeaks weakness rather than strength. In every hospital for nervous disorders are to be found many instances of this loss of control. The individual has sympathy but not poise, and therefore his life is worthless to himself and to the world. He symbolizes dependence, not helpfulness.

Poise reveals itself more in voice than in words; more in thought than in action; more in atmosphere than in conscious life. It is a spiritual quality, and is felt more than it is seen. It is not a matter of bodily size, nor of bodily attitude, nor of personal comeliness. It is a state of recollected inward being, of knowing your cause is just. And so you see it is a great and profound subject after all, great in its ramifications, limitless in extent, implying the entire science of right living.

Being the control of our sympathy and knowledge, poise implies possession of these attributes, for without sympathy and knowledge you have nothing to control but your physical body. To practice poise as a mere gymnastic exercise or study in etiquette is to be self-conscious, stiff, and ridiculous.

Spring's Sacraments

Lift up your hearts! The holy dews
Asperge the woodland throng;
Dawn after dawn the lark renews
His miracle of song;
While taper-like the crocus pricks
Athwart the yearning sod;
The primrose lifts his golden pyx,
And God looks forth to God.

The symbols blind, the visions fail,
Our souls strain out to Thee;
Within the leaf, the light, the veil,
Is Thy felicity.
O Hear of all the world's desire,
Breathe from around, above,
The mystic kiss of Fire to fire
That Love will yield to love.

—Harold E. Goad

We get knowledge by coming close to nature. That man is the greatest who best serves his kind. Sympathy and knowledge are for use—you acquire that you may give out; you accumulate that you may bestow. And as God has given unto you the sublime blessings of health, sympathy, knowledge, and poise, there will come to you a desire to show your gratitude by giving them out again; for the wise man is aware that we retain spiritual qualities only as we give them away.

Let your light shine. To him that hath shall be given. The exercise of wisdom brings wisdom; and at the last the infinitesimal quality of man's knowledge, compared with the Infinite, and the smallness of man's sympathy when compared with the source from which ours is absorbed, will evolve an abnegation and a humanity that will lend a perfect poise. In general, we may say that wherever a dynamic urge to live life wholeheartedly is in command of consciousness, health with all its cosmic attributes will be attained. □

—Leon Patrick, D.O., M.D.