no. 20.

A SERMON

ON THE

MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

OF

PHYSICIANS.

ADDRESSED TO THE MEDICAL STUDENTS OF PHILADELPHIA,

ON SUNDAY EVENING, FEB. 6th, 1848,

BY JOEL PARKER, D.D.,

Pastor of the Clinton Street Presbyterian Church.

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OF THE

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CORRESPONDENCE.

JEFFERSON MEDICAL COLLEGE, MONDAY, FEB. 7, 1848.

REV. DR. PARKER.

Dear Sir:—At a meeting of the Jefferson Medical Class, held this evening, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:—

"*Resolved*, That the thanks of the Class be presented to Dr. Parker, for the able and appropriate Sermon delivered by him to the Medical Students of this city, on Sunday evening last; and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication."

In conveying to you the sentiments of the Class, we, as their honored organs, cannot withhold our earnest solicitation that you will place at their disposal, a sermon so replete with sound moral instruction, and one calculated to exert so benign an influence upon the Medical profession, and through it, upon society at large.

We have the honor to be, Sir,
With great respect,
Your ob't servants,
CHAS. FRED. STANSBURY, D. C.
D. J. JOHNSON, Penn.
J. M. D. CHAMBERS, Md.
Committee.

W. W. CARR, Geo., Chairman.
R. H. OLDHAM, Tenn., Sec'y.

PHILADELPHIA, TUESDAY, FEB. 8, 1848.

Gentlemen,—Your note of yesterday was duly received. I am greatly obliged by the kind sentiments contained in it, and by the manner in which those whom you represent, have been pleased to express themselves in respect to my Sermon addressed to the Medical Students of this city.

I need not say that the production bears the marks of haste. It would have been agreeable to my own feelings to have so changed the arrangement, and modified the style, as to send it forth in a more creditable and scholar-like costume. My time, however, is too much occupied to allow me to recast the entire discourse, nor do I think that much would be added to its usefulness by such a process.

In placing it in your hands, I can only say, that it is accompanied with sincere prayers for your success in your honorable and useful prospective profession, and for the best of blessings to rest on yourselves and your associates.

With sentiments of affectionate respect,
I remain, Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,
JOEL PARKER.

TO MESSRS. CHAS. FRED. STANSBURY,
D. J. JOHNSON,
J. M. D. CHAMBERS, } Committee.

SERMON.

"PHYSICIAN HEAL THYSELF"—*Luke* IV, 23.

This brief aphoristic saying is one of a number of instances in which our Savior compares the functions of the spiritual teacher to those of the professor of the healing art.

The reasons for such a comparison are obvious and striking. There is a peculiar analogy between them. Both aim at benefitting the persons of men. Neither the Clergyman nor the Physician, have anything to do directly with the estates, the social position, or the political relations of their fellow citizens. In their professional capacity they propose to exert no direct influence, except upon the persons of those to whom they stand in the relations respectively of Pastor and Physician.

They both aim also, primarily, at correcting deranged action in the human system. Their chief business is cure. True, both have something to do with the preservation of health. But there would be no call for such a profession as that of medicine if men were never sick. There would be no need of the clerical office, if our moral nature were not diseased. The primary object, then, of these two professions, is to heal human maladies. They might be advantageously united in one as in Luke the beloved Physician. But division of labor is indispensable to a high degree of culture and the advancement of every art and profession. Physiology and the healing of bodily diseases are the study and labor of the physician. Psycology, and the cure of souls are the things which chiefly demand the attention of the clergyman.

But the two professions, also, overlap each other, in that which is secondary to each. Bodily disease has something to do with spiritual maladies. It modifies their character. It often acts as a chastisement in moral discipline. On the contrary, spiritual distempers affect bodily disease. Plato maintains, that "the body's mischiefs proceed from the soul, and if the mind be not first satisfied, the body can never be cured." Others have contended that all diseases originate in the body and thence infects the spirit. The truth here, as in most cases, doubtless lies between the two. That is to say, the body and mind reciprocally affect each other. The clergyman must sometimes inform his parishioner, that his spiritual malady will not yield to instruction, to pious counsel, or to the comforting influence of the gospel.—He must advise him to send for his physician. So, on the other hand, the physician must sometimes tell his patient that a diseased spiritual state counteracts all the usual effects of medical treatment, that he must send for his pastor—that he needs some one to pluck from his mind a rooted sorrow, and to pour into his soul the cordial of gospel hope and comfort.

You will perceive, then, that the medical profession is, in some sense, a sacred one. Christ has honored it, both by terming himself a physician, and by healing the bodies as well as the minds of men. Lord Bacon has said, with his characteristic terseness and beauty, that "the nobleness of the healing art hath been well shadowed by the Poets, in that they made Esculapius to be the progeny of the sun—the one being the fountain of life, the other as the second stream : but that it was infinitely more honored by the example of our Savior, who made the body of man the object of his miracles, as the soul was the object of his doctrine."

I am not about to treat of the medical profession at large, or to travel out of my proper sphere as a preacher of the Gospel.—Nor shall I speak of your responsibleness to the public and to God to employ the faculties which he has given you, in the enlargement of your knowledge, the acquisition of skill and tact in the practical part of your profession, and a conscientious fidelity in

your endeavors to relieve men from the ills to which they are subject, and for the removal of which they will confide to you their dearest earthly interests. I wish rather to solicit your attention to your responsibilities, just in that department where, as I have intimated, the medical and sacred professions overlap each other.

The aphorism selected as my text may be misapplied. Our Savior saw that it would be unfairly used in respect to himself. The general truth cannot be denied, that if a man professes any peculiar and advantageous art he ought to make a successful application of it to himself, and by just consequence, to those in whom he is most nearly interested.

Our Lord was in Nazareth where he had been brought up.—He addressed the people, by first quoting a pertinent and beautiful passage from the Prophet Isaiah. He read this paragraph—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." When he had finished the reading he gave the book to the minister and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the Synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, this day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bear him witness and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said is not this Joseph's son?"

Our Savior saw in this inquiry a disposition to detract from his character and to make unreasonable demands for displays of his power. "And he said unto them, ye will surely say unto me this proverb—'Physician heal thyself, whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here, in thy country.'" He did not deny the general truth contained in the proverb, but, he excepted to the justness of its application in this case, and maintained that enough had been done to authenticate his mission, but that they rejected him from the unworthy spirit of envy by which

men are so apt to deny the worth and superiority of one brought up with them. "And he said, verily I say unto you no prophet is accepted in his own country." The application would be most just, however, if one should profess to be able to heal with *infallible certainty*, a given form of disease, and at the same time should allow himself or any of his family to suffer from its influence. So, if a spiritual teacher should profess great skill in reforming the community, in healing moral maladies, and should himself remain vicious, it would be altogether just to apply to him the proverb, "Physician heal thyself."

Such an application would be a deserved rebuke. It might also be regarded as a piece of grave and friendly advice. Granting that the principles of his art are sound, and adapted to the best practical effect, how can he secure the confidence of others, or acquire facility in the application of those principles, unless he employ them where he has the best opportunity to do so with success. If you are in possession of a medicine of sovereign efficacy in a given disease, you have power to try it upon yourself and family, if they be afflicted by it with greater advantage than elsewhere. You have the patient under your own eye and control. You can direct every thing, in respect to diet, exercise and repose. You have the best opportunity of watching the influence of the remedy itself as distinguished from the recuperative powers of nature when unassisted by medicinal agents. You need perfect health also, to secure a well-balanced and vigorous exercise of your mental powers in the enterprise of restoring others. As a mechanic remits his usual labor to put the implements of his trade in the best possible order, so it would be wise, every way, for a physician, thus situated, to heal himself, that he might be in the best condition for exercising his skill on others.

Now, if this be so in regard to the physical part of his work, it is not less so in respect to that part which is moral. He cannot exercise the influence of a good man without *being* a good man. He cannot banish bad moral influences, without being himself personally averse to them. He cannot use the influence of the

divine chastisement in disease and pain, to induce a calm resignation to the will of God, without being himself of a subdued spirit before his Maker. He cannot breathe those inspirations of hope into the spirit of his dying patient, which the gospel warrants, without himself resting upon a gracious Redeemer by faith.

Can you doubt, gentlemen, the influence of true goodness in your own character as a means of inspiring a confidence in your patient, that shall be at the same time influential in aiding his recovery, and in securing his moral well-being?

Cicero maintains, that "a good orator can alter affections by the power of his eloquence alone; that he can comfort such as are afflicted, sustain those that are depressed, and expel or mitigate fear, lust and anger." And "How powerful," says father Burton, "How powerful is the charm of a discreet and dear friend?"

"*Ille regit dictis animos, et temperat iras.*"

He soothes them with gentle language, and subdues their angry tempers. And what may not he effect? Yet the power of persuasion, as both Tully and Quintillian maintain, depends very greatly upon the orator's being a good man. How kindly, how advantageous then are the persuasions of a physician, who is a good man, in the sick chamber. If there be added to a reliance upon his professional ability, a confidence also in the goodness of his moral character, the entire influence of his counsels and his remedies is greatly enhanced. The cheering confidence of a patient in his physician, does much to overcome the depression that sometimes produces disease, and often aggravates every unfavourable symptom. Galen says, "confidence and hope do more good than physic." Paracelsus assigns it as the only cause why Hyppocrates was so fortunate in cures, "not for any extraordinary skill he had, but, *because the common people had a most strong conceit of his worth.*"

But, if you will exercise this species of influence, you must possess genuine goodness. I know that some naturally generous

traits, and a *seeming* goodness will be temporarily useful. But, you greatly underrate the powers of your fellow citizens, or overestimate your own shrewdness, if you suppose that you can for a long time pass for more than your real worth. You will find men in every part of our country, who are able to sound the depths of your capacity and to estimate fairly your character.

A cunning conformity to the peculiarities of men, possessing the most opposite moral characters may seem to be advantageous, but when it is once well understood that you are acting a part, you will lose the confidence of one of the parties—but what is worse for you, that party will be the good.

Your friendships will be formed by your moral affinities. If these be corrupt, though you have a degree of success arising from extraordinary talent, you will accomplish far less than you might have done, if you had added to such talents, the character of a good man. No artful management, no trick can prevent your character from developing itself truly. There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, nothing secret that shall not be known and come abroad. You must form your character on *bona fide* good principles, or you cannot exert a powerful moral influence on others. If you would use this means of cure, you must first possess the requisite moral qualities. You must heal yourself.

It is often of great consequence, that bad moral influences should be banished from the sick chamber. Seneca forbids "All sad companions, and such as lament." He says that "A groaning associate is an enemy to quietness. Or, if there be any such party at whose presence the patient is not well pleased he must be removed: gentle speeches and fair means must first be tried: no harsh language used, or uncomfortable words: not expel, as some do, one madness with another—he that doth so is more mad than the patient himself." The general thought contained in this citation is to our purpose. You either will not be able, or will not be sufficiently desirous to banish improper companions and influences from the sick room unless they are repulsive

to yourself. If you find your own moral sensibilities wounded, if you are yourself disgusted with them, you will appreciate more highly the necessity of their removal, and be more prompt and determined in securing their banishment. You must also be able to present those thoughts, to call up those objects to a patient which minister a calm exhilaration to the spirit. Lord Bacon, in speaking on this point, says, that a sick man "must avoid envy, anxious fears, anger, fretting inwards, subtile and knotty inquisitions, joys and exhilarations in excess, sadness not communicated. That he must entertain hopes, mirth, rather than joy, variety of delights, rather than surfeit of them; wonder and admiration, and therefore novelties; studies that fill the mind with splendid and illustrious objects, as histories, fables, and contemplations of nature." We may go further and say, that as bodily indisposition often springs entirely from deep mental perplexity, or is greatly aggravated by it, a plain, religious exhortation will sometimes prove of the greatest efficacy. There is good sense and philosophy, as well as piety, in the counsel of Burton, "If it be sickness that oppresses thee, oppose to it an invincible courage, fortify thyself by God's word." The advice of Commineus, to Charles, Duke of Burgundy, is as applicable to a peasant as to a prince. "First," says he, "pray to God, and lay thyself open to him; and, then, to some special friend whom thou holdest most dear, to tell all thy grievances to him. Nothing so forcible to strengthen, recreate and heal the wounded soul of a miserable man."

But, you will not be able to minister such counsel to a patient, unless you yourself are accustomed to resort to the throne of the heavenly grace. In the first place you will not perceive its power, as one will who has from his own experience learned the influence of prayer in removing burdens, that were crushing the body and the spirit together. And, then, again, you will feel an apprehension of being found in an attitude of hypocrisy if you attempt to administer spiritual consolation—you will be afraid, at

least, that the good effect will be lost by the patient's saying in heart, if not in words, "Physician heal thyself."

And here allow me to solicit your attention to a common mode of action in respect to the calling of clerical counsel to the bedside of the sick. I am willing that a full share of the blame should be imputed to a want of wisdom in the sacred profession. It is not uncommon for Physicians to resist the visits of a clergyman till the last hope from medical remedies is extinct. That there are cases which demand such a procedure, no thoughtful person can doubt. But when it is made a rule to pursue this course, it creates an impression in the community of such a character, that the moment the clergyman is sent for, the sustaining influence of hope is suddenly taken away, and you might as well sound his funeral knell in the ear of the patient, as to propose a visit from the minister of the gospel. Besides, religion, as taught in the sacred scripture, has no power to change the spiritual state of man, that cannot be exercised with more hope of success in almost any other time than in a dying hour. We leave it to the untaught heathen, and to the corrupted forms of Christianity to pronounce incantations over the dying, and anoint the extremities with oil, and exorcise evil spirits by shreds of unclassical Latin. Christianity is a religion addressed to the intelligence and the conscience of man. Its best influence, its transforming power is exercised, when the body is in comparative comfort, and when the mental faculties can be calmly concentrated upon the subject. In the sick chamber spiritual counsel is least effective in the dying hour—next to this in disadvantage, is the season of great bodily distress. Better hope attends efforts with those whose disease is not accompanied with great suffering nor immediate danger, though a fatal termination may be expected. But, the best of all states for exerting a salutary spiritual influence over the sick, is when the crisis of distress and of danger is past, and the mind is naturally softened by unexpected experiences of the Divine goodness. The Physician will often do well for his patient if he will call for the clergyman to sit with

him for half an hour, to cheer him, as he ought to know how to do, and to draw his attention to animating views of a state where none of the inhabitants shall say, I am sick—where there is no sorrow, nor pain, nor any more death.

I am aware that it may be said, with great plausibility—but we do not know that the clergyman will act with judgment. We are afraid that he will present religion in its gloomy aspects and agitate the patient with oppressive fears, or fill his mind with hot and injurious excitement. There may be occasion for such apprehensions in respect to some in the clerical profession. Of the influence of such you are to judge, and the responsibility is yours, gentlemen, to judge rightly. The sick chamber is subject, or ought to be subject to your absolute authority. If you possess incorrect views of the nature of an evangelical religious influence, however, you will be likely to forbid it when it ought to be admitted and fostered. Your own mind ought to be conversant with its benefits, or you will be extremely liable to drive it from the sick chamber when it would have quieted a distracted mind; liable to act as inconsistently in the premises as did the Gergessenes towards its founder, when they besought him to depart out of their coasts though he had just restored two maniacs to the use of their reason.

Thus far, I have limited my remarks mainly to your responsibilities in a wise use of moral influences as subsidiary to your success in the healing art.

Let me now call your attention to another and more important ground of obligation.

All men are bound to contribute according to their capacity and opportunity, to the spirtual well-being of their fellow men. In the sacred profession, higher qualification and greater opportunities, for this species of usefulness may be reasonably expected. Responsibility is, of course, proportionably enhanced. But, every man is bound to exercise a salutary moral influence over those with whom he is associated; to repress vice, to encourage virtue, and, indeed, to form the characters of others to true piety,

and thus to secure their everlasting happiness. Now, it happens, gentlemen, that your profession, more than any other position in life, shares with the sacred office the highest advantages for promoting the spiritual well-being of men. There are two great departments of influence by which human character is formed and men are fitted for a better life. These are *instruction* and *discipline*. Teaching is the primary influence. The word of Christ is spirit and life. If this instruction be once imbibed, if its principles become the cherished sentiments of the soul, they remain; they are "a well of water springing up into everlasting life." But, by what means shall men be led to receive the truth? I answer, as far as outward means are concerned, it is mainly by the discipline of the divine Providence.—God hath chosen his people in "The furnace of affliction. He scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." It is generally perceived that men must be instructed in the truths of Christianity ere they can be expected to become genuine disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not as generally acknowledged, though equally obvious to an observing mind, that very few ever do, in fact, learn the lessons of true piety till they have been compelled, by the chastening rod of their heavenly father, to pause in the career of worldliness, and to reflect on those great principles which the gospel inculcates. The first part of this work mainly devolves on the clergy. The proclamation of the gospel to the great congregation, and the catechismal instruction of the young, are, in a great degree, entrusted to their hands. But, the opportunity of mixing pious counsel with the most effective discipline is in your hands. Connected, as sickness, and indeed as all suffering is with second causes, it is God's chastisement. When you are called into that sick room, it is as if you were present where a father had drawn his son aside for correction with the rod. You are under high responsibility to co-operate in forwarding his merciful designs, because you have the best opportunities for doing so.

I have said that there are two methods by which God

acts on human character to form it aright. These are instruction and discipline. They possess each a peculiar place of influence, a throne of power, a position, where *par excellence*, their true energy is exhibited. The high place of instruction is the cross of Christ. All Christian doctrine revolves around it, and tends to it as its centre. There is also a high place of disciplinary influence, a scene of suffering and trial. This discipline was announced immediately after the fall of our first parents and coupled with the promise of an incarnate Saviour. The peculiar and direct influence of the teaching—the public manifestation—the cross is connected with the male portion of our race. The Redeemer was a man. The highest disciplinary influence, the most effective chastisement of the race is connected with the allotments of woman. Let me call your attention then, to your responsibility in relation to that discipline.

It is but a few years since the Physician was admitted to the exercise of his proper functions in the most anxious hours of domestic trial. Precious lives, that were formerly entrusted to empyrical women, are now happily confided to "the science, the masculine nerve and will of the profession." And here permit me to invite your attention to a passage of holy writ as connected with this point. I do so, because I think it has been so misinterpreted as to create sceptical objections to its inspiration, and because its true exposition yields us beautiful instruction. The passage is found in the 1st Epistle of Paul to Timothy, the second chapter and sixteenth verse. In speaking of woman, the apostle says,—"She shall be saved in child-bearing *if* they continue in faith and charity, and holiness with sobriety." To this it is asked, are the lives of pious females spared more than others? I answer, the term *saved* here employed, refers not to the preservation of *life* in the hour of peril, but to *the salvation of the soul.* Nor, does the τεκνογονια, here translated "child-bearing," refer exclusively to the birth of children. Wahl, in his Greek Lexicon, informs us, that the word has a far wider signification; that it includes all the burdens and pains and

anxieties and toils involved in the maternal relation from the earliest period of her sufferings to her latest endurances on behalf of her offspring.

The scope confirms this interpretation. The apostle, in the preceding context, has been assigning different positions to men and women as distinguished from each other. He says he would have *men* to pray in the public assemblies, and indeed in all public assemblies, and indeed in all places. But women, he maintains, must move in a subordinate sphere. They must, be modest in their personal adornments, and learn in silence with all subjection. He then meets a spontaneous difficulty, which must arise in every mind, that has followed him only thus far. If the difficulty felt were expressed in words, it would be something like this. It is hard, indeed, that poor woman should remain in simple subjection, with no sphere of great usefulness and promise, in the filling of which she may be assured of her own salvation, and influential in promoting that of others. The verse cited is an answer to this complaint. If we should express the idea by an expanded and free paraphrase, the sense should be thus unfolded :—Wait a little, Woman's sphere is not so limited and uninfluential as you might, at first view, suppose. It is quiet and retiring, to be sure in its nature, and so falls in with the general truth, that "the Kingdom of God cometh not with observation." But it is mighty. She shall have a large scope for suffering, for self denial, and success in doing good. She shall find her sphere in the family, that nursery of all good character in this world. She shall work out her salvation, and secure salvation to others especially in her maternal relations. Hers shall be a sphere for suffering and toil and care while life shall last.—Her pains and sicknesses and perils shall chasten and subdue her own spirit, and thus fit her for the commencement of her work. Her weeping infant shall awaken sensibilities that shall exert a heavenly influence. Her nights of watching, over the sick couch of her babe, shall lead her to God for comfort. Her moans and sighs, as she sees the loved form of her little one

committed to the dust, shall thrill like the cords of an Aeolian harp upon the heart-strings of her sterner companion. If her children are spared, that whole household shall be saved from the blight of indolence by her example in bearing up, with true womanly fortitude, under the toils and cares of her weary working sphere. If her sons and daughters rise to maturity and contract matrimonial alliances, as they leave the paternal mansion they shall seem torn from her embrace, rent away, as by the agonies of a second parturition. And yet her work is not done till she has taken her grand-children in her arms, and experienced over again the solicitudes of early life. Ask what shall subordinate, retiring woman be permitted to do? She gave birth to a Savior—she shall still, as a mother, exert a prime influence in carrying out those glorious purposes for which a Savior became incarnate. Now, gentlemen, you are to be present in that chamber where discipline, more than in any other spot on earth, does its perfect work; where mercy and judgment meet, where the groan of agony and the shout of joy commingle; where a lovely young creature, who may have hitherto neglected prayer, cries to God; where the voice, that has hitherto warbled only to pleasure, breaks forth in praise for the divine goodness.

In the sacred office, as I have intimated, we have one spot of paramount influence; a spot, where sacred teaching is blended with associations that cluster about the cross, the blood, the death-cry of Jesus. You will think it monstrous that a man should stand at that communion table and attempt to exercise the functions of the sacred office without the fervor and fire of true piety. If he would there exhort and console others with mere words, when his own spirit is not refreshed by the scene, you might justly say to him "Physician heal thyself." So, if you enter that chamber of sorrowful discipline, where God imparts more than in any other spot on earth salutary lessons of trial, and, where he is leading the chastened spirit to sing of mercy and of judgment—if you consent to be there, without the sympathies which the gospel inspires, without uttering its cheering promises,

without encouraging the prayer that spontaneously breaks from the lips of your suffering patient, without joining in the thanksgiving and praise, you can never answer it satisfactorily to your own conscience and to God. What right have you to refrain from exercising a hallowed moral influence, when placed by the divine Providence amid the most trying and effective of his disciplinary dispensations.

Your profession, also, places you in circumstances for reproving sin with singular advantage. Men will apply to you to heal diseases occasioned by intemperance, or other vicious indulgences. A sound ethical code undoubtedly requires it of you, not to injure the reputation of those who entrust you with a knowledge of their faults. When you know their secret sins, however, and when you are careful not to use that knowledge to their disadvantage, you have the finest opportunity to employ the power of reproof successfully. You can prescribe virtue as a remedy. You can repress vice by a display of its penal consequences. You can urge, with solemnity and power, a due consideration of the folly of violating any of God's laws, and direct transgressors to the Great Physician, Jesus Christ, who, alone, can heal their spiritual maladies and save them from eternal death.

But, you can do none of these things effectively without first securing right principles and the prevalence of right moral sentiments in your own heart. You cannot win for yourself the esteem, the heart-felt confidence that is cheerfully awarded, by almost every one to a pious physician, without being a good man; without fearing God and keeping his commandments. You may think you are doing it by substituting a spiritual finesse for piety; by speaking gravely of Providence, of prayer, and of Christian hope and immortality. Yet, if you be not a true Christian, men will penetrate your sinister management, and will say in their hearts, if not in words, and say it in tones of bitter irony,

"Consistency thou art a jewel."

"Strange ! that a man like you should offer to counsel me in regard to my spirtual interests. Physician heal thyself."

But, you will not be likely so much as to make the attempt to soothe and comfort an afflicted fellow creature by the gospel, unless you yourself relish those consolations. It is difficult to speak on a theme in which the heart is not interested. If attempted, the effort is commonly faltering and artificial. Then, there is nothing, that more effectually and quickly destroys a man's self respect than hypocrisy in religion. You will not be likely to make the slightest endeavor to perform the moral and spiritual duties of your station without being yourself a genuine Christian.

Your patient calls you to his bed-side. You examine his symptoms. He is diseased, to be sure, but his difficulty originated in a deep mental disquietude. He has discovered the hitherto hidden, but fatal workings of a spiritual distemper. Sin like a leprosy is seen by him to be polluting his entire inner man. Yet he knows nothing of the remedy for such a case.—He is ashamed to apply to those who might instruct him, because he fancies that he is the only man thus affected, or, he is so mortified with the discovery which he has made, that he cannot bear to speak of it. It incidently reveals itself to you, because it is complicated with the symptoms of bodily ailments. You cannot call in the aid of another. Your patient would shrink from the proposal. He did not intend that even you should have known the nature of the influence that is drinking up his spirits. What will you do? Without piety diversion will be likely to be your only spititual remedy. It is true, that this may often be the proper remedy for mental depression. But to prescribe it always is the most stupid impiricism. Such a procedure differs nothing in principle from that of a vulgar quack who pretends to a nostrum that is good for sick folks and prescribes the same remedy for all possible forms of disease. Men sometimes discover their guilt in such a clear light, that nothing can give them relief but the blood of Christ. If that Savior were

then exhibited, faith in his sacrifice should impart to them a permanent peace of mind. Yet, having no sympathy with a case of this character, your diversions resemble not so much the prescriptions of a discriminating mind, suiting remedies to symptoms, as they do the arts of the sorcerer who attempted to turn away the deputy of Paphos from the faith of the gospel; and scarcely less applicable to you than to him, will be the rebuke of the Apostle, when he set his eye on Elymas and said, "O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness; wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

How can you be secure against exercising such a perverse influence? Only in one way. Only by becoming yourself experimentally acquainted with the true remedy. "Physician heal thyself." You enter that sick chamber before alluded to, where mercy and judgment meet together, where woman experiences that chief discipline among all the chastising strokes of our heavenly father—a chastisement coupled with the promise of an incarnate Redeemer, and announced with that promise immediately after the fall. You are present to witness a discipline which is not found elsewherein the whole history of the race, a discipline where threatenings and promises are strangely blended; where a dark cloud of wrath overhangs the couch of suffering, and yet a brighter bow of promise spans it than can be found in any other spot on earth. That chamber is a sanctuary. A sordid, earthly mind has no business there. The tendencies of the scene are to excite to prayer, and throbbing hearts are raising their aspirations to the God of mercy. Faith is demanded and the promises of the Lord incite to its exercise. Praise is elicited. How unmeet is it that a physician should have none of the moral and religious sympathies of the occasion; that he should feel no sentiments of praise, utter no words of faith and comfort, nor raise one secret aspiration of prayer!

Yet, if you do not possess the faith of the gospel, if you feel not a vital and delightful interest in the service of your Redeemer,

you cannot exercise the moral influence which is plainly appropriate to your sphere. As a preparation for exercising such an influence, you must acquire spiritual health. "Physician heal thyself."

You stand by the bed of the dying Christian. The powers of life are suddenly giving way. He is taken with such a surprise, that his spirits sink, at first, under the astounding intelligence that death draws near. He would like a friend to kneel by his bed, and guide his faltering powers in prayer. His physician is his friend, but you never pray. Anon, the scene changes.

A re-animated faith chases away the overhanging darkness, and the death-bed is lighted up with the beamings of a Saviour's countenance. But you have no sympathy with his joy. He is released from the body. The free spirit, shaking from its pinions "the dust of earth and the dews of death," mounts up on exulting wing, singing as it soars, till we can almost catch the sound of outbursting rapture, as it is received to the company of the ransomed.

We turn again to that solemn scene, and listen to the sobs of the widow and the orphan, and there stands the physician, a cold skeptic, or an indifferent man of the world. How shall he administer spiritual comfort? He cannot do it. He is himself bereaved. In his patient, he has lost a friend. He has need to heal himself.

Gentlemen, you may think that I am endeavouring to impose upon you responsibilities which belong only to my own profession. I do not think so, and I am sure you will not, if you will allow yourselves to reflect fully on the subject. Our duties arise from our relations and our opportunities for doing good. It is the pride and glory of your profession, that while you are healing the bodies of men, you are incidentally brought into contact with individuals and families, in such a way, as to interest their affections, and to mix yourself up with that discipline of a kind providence, by which he sanctifies and saves the souls of men.

There are two positions from which, above all others, I should deprecate to be called suddenly and unprepared to the bar of God. I should not like to stand at the table of the Lord, handling the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus, and speaking to his disciples of his sacred passion, and be called thence without any sincere piety. I should almost equally deprecate being placed in the chamber of the sick, as their physician, where God chastens men for their good, and by the bed-side of the departing, where some fall asleep in Jesus, and some die in their sins, and being called thence an impenitent sinner—one destitute of genuine faith in the Redeemer. May God grant that neither I may be found in the one position, nor you in the other, when we all, as we soon shall do, stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.