

CHAPTER X

EXPERIENCES IN BATTLE CREEK

BY DR. D. H. KRESS

AFTER taking up the practice of medicine, naturally the two ways of helping people—physically and spiritually—were combined in my work. In the treatment of drug addicts, while physiological means within my reach were made use of, the efficacy of the gospel was not ignored. Not a single case am I able to recall of a patient's being permanently cured of drink or drug addiction, without the aid of the gospel.

Morphine is difficult to give up. I have heard medical men say that a morphine addict is never permanently cured. This may be true when reliance is made wholly on the customary way of treating them. I have treated a great many drug addicts, and I am glad to say that morphine addiction is curable. I can here refer to only a case or two and give the results.

A physician who for more than twenty years had been using the hypodermic, having formed the morphine habit while a medical student, was brought to the institution by a well-known surgeon of Rochester, New York. I have found that it is best, in treating these cases, to bring them to the point where they are ready to make a complete surrender at once, instead of attempting to withdraw the drug from them gradually. In this case, owing to his demand and the advice of the surgeon who accompanied him, we agreed together to cut the quantity down gradually, stating the definite amount to be taken each day.

After ten days' trial the patient was almost beside himself. The nurse in charge requested me to come to his room, saying the doctor was about to leave, that he had said he could not endure the torture any longer.

When I entered the room, he said, "Doctor, I cannot stand this any longer."

I replied, "I am not surprised. I am surprised you have stood it as long as you have."

I then told him of some other cases that had been treated, and how they conquered, assuring him that when he came to the point where he was willing to give up the drug forever and to follow God's way,—“If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee,” he would have divine help and the impossible would be possible.

Again and again he had attempted the gradual withdrawal method, only to fail. He knew that a complete break was the only method that offered any hope. With tears in his eyes he said, "Doctor, I will." Together we knelt beside his bed and had prayer. When we arose from our knees, he went to the closet and brought out a hypodermic syringe and some morphine tablets and handed them to me. These he had concealed so that in case the suffering was too severe, he might resort to them. This mental reservation was responsible for his defeat. In a few weeks he was able to return home, greatly improved physically.

Patients can be spoken to with assurance of God's ability and willingness to help them, and urged to rely upon His promises.

One other case worthy of mention is that of a morphine and cocaine addict. After he had appealed to the University of Michigan for help and they had failed, he came with a note from one of the physicians, stating they

could do nothing for him, and that possibly with our facilities we might be able to help him. We placed a nurse with him and proposed to him that the drug be withheld. He expressed willingness to have it withdrawn at once; he had repeatedly tried the gradual withdrawal and had failed. On the second day he became desperate, and demanded his hypodermic. He was really abusive and said, "No one would treat a dog like this!" Nothing could be done but hand it to him. He left the institution.

Two weeks later he returned and said, "I am willing now to surrender and try your method." Several times during that day, and for several days, I prayed with him and read to him a portion of the fortieth Psalm. This man recovered and later became an evangelist. The medical treatments received very little of the glory. He ascribed the victory to God's word and prayer.

I am confident that a mistake is made by physicians when they sever from their medical practice this spiritual ministry in the treatment of drug addicts or alcoholics. There are numerous cases, aside from these, which appeal to physicians, that can never be helped by diet or medical treatment alone.

Several months after this, while in attendance at a camp meeting where not less than 2,000 people were gathered on Sunday afternoon, I was asked to give a talk on health. My friend, Mr. Behenna, was there, and requested the privilege of singing. Before singing, he related his experience, referring to his marvelous conversion. He told the people of the torture he suffered, and said it seemed to him that he could not live, when he said God sent an "angel" in the form of Dr. Kress to his bedside, and he was healed.

I remembered the circumstance. I was about to take my morning plunge and swim at the sanitarium,

when I felt so keenly impressed that I should call on this patient that I went to his room instead of to my home for breakfast.

As I entered the room, he merely stared at me. His eyes were fixed. He lay motionless, and said not a word. I then read to him the portion of the fortieth Psalm:

“I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.”

After having read this, I knelt beside his bed, and offered a simple prayer, and then left him. Not a single word was said by him. It was at this time, he said, that deliverance came to him.

After relating this experience, Behenna sang, “And I shall see Him face to face, and tell the story, Saved by grace.” There were many moist eyes in that assembly. Before his addiction he had been an operatic singer.

Behenna later married a Christian young woman. He lived for a number of years. He had reverses and trials. His wife, on a visit to Washington thirty years later, assured me that her husband never returned to the use of either morphine or cocaine. His daughter was then a medical missionary in China. Somehow I believe Behenna, my friend, will see “Him face to face,” and will have the opportunity to “tell the story, Saved by grace.”

In aiming to help the class of men that came to our medical mission in Chicago, we recognized the need of divine aid. The work was carried forward on our knees. To help them even physically, we found it necessary to help them spiritually. Hence we combined in our labors

as therapeutic agencies both physiologic and psychologic measures.

Possibly I may be pardoned in relating another experience of a morphine addict. I was at a large gathering of our people in west Pennsylvania. While conversing with a friend at the entrance of the book tent, I heard someone ask, "Is Dr. Kress here?"

I stepped forward and said, "I am Dr. Kress."

He said, "O Dr. Kress, I am so glad to see you again! You do not know me? Don't you remember coming to Johnstown, Pennsylvania, fifteen years ago, and praying with me?"

I was then able to recall the incident. He was a man sixty-five years of age at that time, and as I had entered his home he was seated on a chair in the kitchen. In talking with him, I had told him I was well aware of his inability to free himself from the drug, but that provision was made in the gospel to release Satan's captives. I had quoted some of God's promises. I had then knelt in prayer with him, after which I had left the home.

He now said to me, "Doctor, I have never touched morphine from that day to the present." Fifteen years had passed. He assured me God at that time took away all desire for the drug. That was one of the modern miracles. The day of miracles is not all in the past.

The next day he came to me and said, "Doctor, I have not told you all. A few nights before you came to our city, I had a dream." I will relate this just as he related it to me. He said, "I was told that a healer would come to our city and would pray for me, and I would be healed."

It ought not to be thought strange, since God repeatedly, in the past, in dreams directed petitioners who felt their need of help to the one who was prepared to

give the help needed. Through the ministry of an angel He brought together Cornelius and Peter, Saul of Tarsus and Ananias, and Philip and the eunuch. (See Acts 10; Acts 8:26-39. These scriptures are worth reading.) The records given in the Bible are not to be regarded as mere history. They were not placed in the Book of books merely to make known to us *how God worked in the past*. They have been recorded to teach us *how He worked then and how He works today*, that we through the reading of the Scripture may have hope. God is the Unchangeable One, the same yesterday, today, and forever. This man, at the advanced age of eighty, was engaged in selling gospel literature.

One of the cases that received help stands out a little clearer in my mind than others, possibly because he appeared to be so hopeless. He came to appeal to us for help in overcoming the drink habit. He was a highly educated man. I will not attempt to describe him. Suffice it to say he was one of the most hopeless-appearing cases that could be found in the city of Chicago. He came chiefly for the purpose of securing an order to the Washingtonian Home for Inebriates. He was on the point of having delirium tremens, and wanted help badly. I wrote out an order for him, addressed to the superintendent of that institution.

He returned later with the note in his hand. On the back of it was written the words, "He is a hopeless case. We can do nothing for him." Having witnessed before what had been accomplished in other cases, I told him that if he was in earnest, we would do all we could for him, and allowed him to remain with us, although our accommodations were very poor.

Each day, after giving him his treatment and dressing his sores, I would study the Bible and pray with him. It

was a surprise how easily he gave up drink. He was also an inveterate smoker. I said nothing to him about this habit, fearing he might give up in despair should too much be demanded of him.

A few days after taking charge of him, he came to me with the inquiry, "Why do you not smoke?" I then told him that tobacco was defiling to body and mind, and that Jesus, after taking possession of the heart, cleansed men from all such habits and practices. He handed over his tobacco and pipe, saying, "Take it; I am not going to smoke any more."

I told him he would have a hard time of it, I feared, to which he replied, "The Lord has given me victory over drink; He can also give me victory over tobacco." I never from that moment heard him express even a desire for either drink or tobacco. He seemed to experience no difficulty in giving up either. In speaking to him one day and expressing surprise that he had no longing for tobacco or drink, he quoted a text which we had studied together, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

Some time after this he came to see me and said, "On my way up here a priest passed me on the other side of the street. He was smoking a cigar. I said to myself, 'You are a nice representative of the meek and lowly Jesus.'" He then informed me that his brother was a priest, and that he had been brought up in the Catholic faith.

Shortly before leaving Chicago, I received a letter from him, written in a beautiful, even hand, in which he asked me in regard to the observance of the Sabbath. He said he had been reading his Bible, and he made reference to the text, "He that keepeth the whole law, and yet offendeth on one point, is guilty of all." I had never mentioned the Sabbath to him.

I wrote a letter to him, encouraging him all I could, and merely urged him to continue to read the Bible prayerfully and with an open mind, and the Spirit of God would guide him into all truth.

Later his old syphilitic ulcers developed again in his throat, and he was taken to a hospital. I left Chicago to return to Ann Arbor to complete my senior year in the university. I have never heard from him since, but for a long time I continued to pray for John Ferren, and even now at times, as I pray for different ones, he looms up before me among others. Somehow, if I am so fortunate as to be among the redeemed, I expect to meet my friend, John Ferren.

I have witnessed remarkable restorations in answer to prayer. Some of these cases bordered on the miraculous.

Mrs. S. M. I. Henry, a national evangelist of the W.C.T.U., who had been an invalid for several years and was confined to her wheel chair, came to the sanitarium for treatment. Her heart was so extremely dilated that the least exertion was exhausting. It was customary in the institution for doctors and the chaplain to meet each day for prayer for cases which could not be benefited greatly medically. This patient occasionally met with us, but considering her case beyond hope, she never felt free to ask for special prayer in her own behalf. Prayer had been offered for her repeatedly by ministers of the gospel before coming to the sanitarium. She had reached the point where she felt that as in the case of Paul, this was "a thorn in the flesh" permitted for her salvation.

While we were engaged in prayer one day, she felt keenly her helpless condition, and began to plead with God in her own behalf. Others followed, offering prayer for her. She arose from her knees, and looking at the invalid's chair she had occupied for three or more years,

she said, "I will never sit in that chair again." Knowing her condition, I feared she was presumptuous, but she walked out of the chapel unaided.

The next Sabbath day she walked to the Tabernacle, where she addressed between 2,000 and 3,000 people. She spoke for fully one hour, and was distinctly heard. At the close of the meeting, instead of taking the conveyance, she walked back to the sanitarium. It was winter and the walk uphill was rather difficult. Still unbelieving, I felt that I must assist her. I turned to her and said, "Mrs. Henry, will you allow me to assist you?" She gently reproved my unbelief by saying, "Dr. Kress, will you allow me to assist you?"

After this Mrs. Henry and I attended camp meetings and together conducted revival services. These meetings were very much out of the ordinary and were witnessed by an *outpouring of God's Spirit and corresponding reforms in the habits of living of those who were converted there*. Mrs. Henry's daughter, referring to this experience of her mother's, said:

"I was astonished when I received a letter which, after stating various reasons why the seventh day should be observed as the Sabbath, said, 'I have believed in the soon coming of Christ, so I suppose that in all essential points I am now really one with this people.' This happened in November. The following April, just after Easter, I received a still more surprising communication, a typewritten letter saying that my mother had been healed by prayer, accompanied by a note in her own handwriting, dated April 17, stating that she was gaining in strength. I was greatly alarmed, and wrote to my mother, begging her to be careful and not to presume on the strength she had gained; above all, not to make public her belief that she had been healed by faith until

she had tested the fact by time as well as by effort. For a week after that, every day I fully expected to receive at any moment a telegram stating that she had fallen dead.

“I came to the sanitarium to visit my mother, and shall never forget the indescribable sensation I experienced to see her going about everywhere like a young woman, with a most radiant expression of happiness upon her face. *I had left her a hopeless invalid; I found her a vigorous woman spending more energy and accomplishing more work in a day than many people do in a week. She took the greatest pleasure in wheeling patients about who were confined to wheel chairs, remembering the kindness of others to herself and delighting in the thought that she was able to render this service.*”

For some time after the truth regarding the Sabbath came to Mrs. Henry, she felt greatly perplexed in regard to the relation Ellen G. White's writings, termed the “Testimonies for the Church,” sustained to the Bible. She had been reared by godly parents; the Bible had always been her textbook. She had been taught that it was all-sufficient for salvation, and that nothing additional was needed. Naturally she said, If that is so, why are these writings, which are regarded as so essential to the remnant church? She had been schooled never to accept any doctrine without careful and prayerful study.

On several occasions I attempted to explain to her that these “Testimonies for the Church” are not designed to give new light or additional light, but to impress upon the heart the truths of inspiration revealed in the Bible, that by their aid these great truths were simplified and more clearly seen. These efforts for the time seemed to be of no avail.

Some time later, a meeting was held in the city of

Chicago, at which leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church were assembled to consider and plan for a special effort to be carried forward along medical missionary lines in the large cities of the United States. Gatherings of this kind were usually recognized as special occasions to receive renewed grace and spiritual fitness for the work of God.

Mrs. Henry was at this meeting. Here we witnessed an unusual outpouring of God's Spirit. Mrs. Henry took a very active part in the meetings, but again there loomed up before her the "Testimonies" and their relation to the truths revealed in the Bible. Again efforts were made to explain this as we understood it, but she failed to see the matter clearly. With a feeling of intensity expressed on her countenance, she said, "I must have this matter made clear. Let us pray." Two or three prayed and then Mrs. Henry began most earnestly to plead with God for light. For just a moment her pleading ceased, and then she began to praise God. When we arose from our knees, she related to us what was revealed to her while she was pleading with God. She afterward wrote this experience for the *Gospel of Health*, a medical missionary paper then published by us. It appeared in the January, 1898, number. *We quote here her own words:*

"We all bowed in prayer, and I stated my case to God with as deep a sense of need as I have ever known in my life. All the great and marvelous blessings of my life were for the time forgotten in this present need, and as must always be true, I was heard. The manifestation of the power of the Spirit of God was as clear as sunlight, and in that light I saw the 'Testimonies' as simply a lens through which to look at the truth. It at once grew from a lens to a telescope, a perfect, beautiful telescope, subject to all telescopic conditions and limita-

tions, directed toward the field of the heavens—that field—the Bible. In their proper office as a medium of enlarged and clearer vision, as a telescope, the ‘Testimonies’ had a wonderful, beautiful, and holy office. Everything depends upon our relation to them and the use we make of them. In the hand of the Divine Director, properly mounted at the right angle and adjusted to the eye of the observer, with the field clear of clouds, it will reveal truths that will quicken the blood and gladden the heart.

“My failure has been in understanding what the ‘Testimonies’ are and how to use them. They are not the heavens palpitating with countless orbs of truth, but they do lead the eye and give it the power to penetrate into the glories of the mysterious and living word of God. This has been the most beautiful experience which has ever been granted me. It grows on me from day to day.

“I think I feel very much as Galileo must have felt when with his first telescope before him he was bringing himself into position to look, just to look at first, beyond the stars which he had seen, into the vast unexplored field, where worlds on worlds were keeping rhythmic time to the throbbing heart of the Infinite One whose steady strokes of power set the pace for every moving thing. The simple possession of it must have given a sense of might even before one glimpse had been taken through it. He knew that revelations such as eye had never seen or ear heard were awaiting him as soon as he humbled himself to the instrument, acknowledging its right to control his vision and fix his eye upon the point of observation.

“I have tried to imagine how Galileo’s heart must have throbbed and his whole soul been thrilled even before he obtained one glimpse, and now I think I know.

I have that sense of power which the possession of such an instrument must give. Do you understand me? I realize that my words fall far short of anything which I would like to say, but, oh, how much they mean to me! It is a fresh token of my heavenly Father's care, one more beautiful than I have ever received before. *You think it was wonderful when the Lord took me out of my wheel chair, and so it was, but I would be willing to go back to my wheel chair if by doing so I could get another glimpse of the hitherto unseen such as this has been to me. I would go through fire if I knew that out of it would come a corresponding revelation of the glory of God and His love for me.*

"This experience has given me confidence in this small body of people, and confidence in the organization. I do not believe that God would ever have given me to see the things that I have seen and to feel what I have felt, to see Him as I have seen Him in these circumstances, if there were not life and power in this organization to lift it up out of all shadow and doubt into the glory of His presence and to carry it safely through. This conviction came to me with all the rest, and has made me rejoice as never before, and I believe that something just as sweet and just as rich is for every one of my brethren and sisters if they will only come to God for it and follow in His own way."

Not merely did light come to Mrs. Henry, but it helped all who were present to see more clearly the relation that the Spirit of prophecy sustained to the law and to the other prophets; that the Testimonies were not an addition, but rather a further unfolding of Bible truths.

The purpose of this important gathering of our leading men was to place the medical work in its proper setting in the gospel.

Among the children of Israel the priest was also the doctor. To him the people came for physical healing, as they did for spiritual help. This union should always have been maintained. Just to the extent these two are combined will success attend the work of the physician. In the work of Christ, physical healing occupied a large place.

The palsied man who was brought by his four friends to Christ for physical healing was not healed of his physical malady at once, as his friends had expected. Jesus saw that this man was conscious that he had brought upon himself this physical infirmity. The patient felt more concern about his spiritual condition than he did about his physical condition. He felt that if he could only have the consciousness that his sins were pardoned, he would gladly endure the physical malady. Knowing his desire, Jesus said, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." These were the most welcome words that could have fallen upon his ears. Happy in the consciousness of sins forgiven, he was then healed of his bodily affliction. He had to be healed of the former to make possible the latter.

Sometimes a very little dietetic error is responsible for mental unrest, insomnia, nervousness, or pain. The body can be helped through the mind, and the mind can be helped through the body. Both body and mind need attention in most cases of disease in order to get the best results.

Jesus ministered to the mind and to the body. In sending forth the twelve apostles and later the seventy evangelists, He instructed them to heal the sick and to preach the gospel. The gospel gives not merely assurance of sins forgiven, but it brings into the life the desire and purpose to live to benefit others. The one who lives to

bless is on the highway to enduring health. Selfishness breeds disease, while a life of unselfish ministry brings a benediction to every organ and cell of the body. To do for others is the gospel in practice.

“If you are feeling blue,
Something for someone go do.”

This prescription, if obeyed, will aid in the restoration of many an invalid.