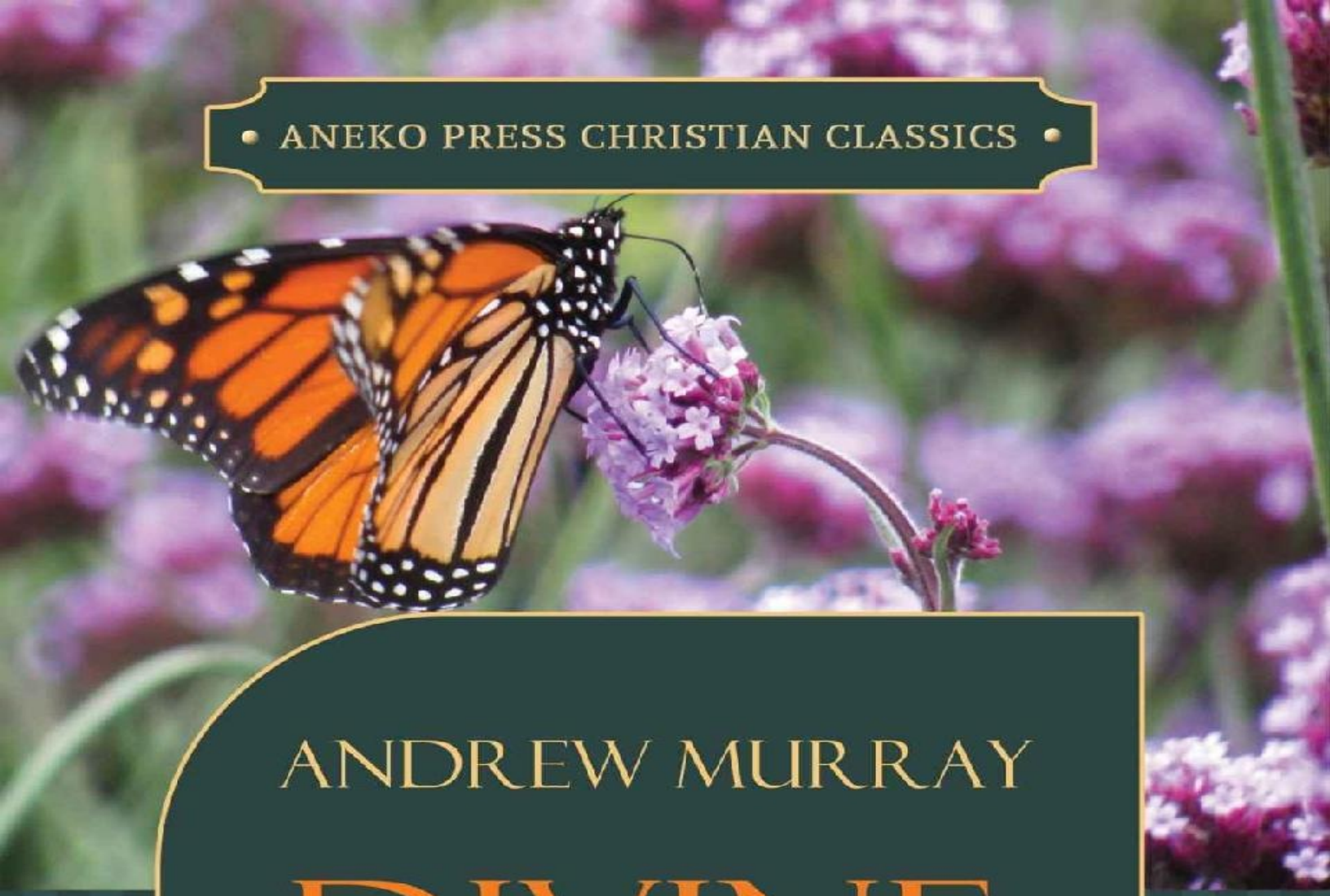


ANEKO PRESS CHRISTIAN CLASSICS

ANDREW MURRAY

DIVINE HEALING

He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of weakness. (Matthew 10:1)

UPDATED EDITION

Table of Contents

Preface
Forgiveness and Healing
Because of Your Unbelief
Jesus and the Doctors
Health and Salvation by the Name of Jesus
Not Because We're Good
According to the Measure of Faith
The Way of Faith
The Temple of the Holy Spirit
The Body for the Lord
The Lord for the Body
Not Limited by Your Body
Discipline and Dedication
Sickness and Death
The Holy Spirit the Spirit of Healing
Persevering Prayer
Let Him That Is Healed Glorify God
The Need for a Manifestation of God's Power
Sin and Sickness
Jesus Bore Our Sickness
Is Sickness Discipline?
God's Prescription for the Sick
The Lord Thy Healer
Jesus Heals the Sick
Fervent and Effectual Prayer
Praying for One Another
The Will of God
Obedience and Health
Job's Sickness and Healing
The Prayer of Faith
Anointing in the Name of the Lord
Full Salvation Our High Privilege
We Are the Branches
About the Author

DIVINE HEALING

HE GAVE THEM POWER AGAINST UNCLEAN SPIRITS, TO CAST THEM OUT AND TO HEAL ALL MANNER OF SICKNESS AND ALL MANNER OF WEAKNESS – MATTHEW 10:1

ANDREW MURRAY

ANEKO PRESS

Preface

This work may be considered a testimony of my faith in divine healing. After being unable to serve in my ministry for more than two years, I was healed by the mercy of God in answer to the prayer of those who see Him as *the Lord thy Healer* (Exodus 15:26).

This healing by faith has been the source of rich spiritual blessing to me. I have clearly seen that the church possesses in Jesus, our Divine Healer, a priceless treasure she does not yet know how to appreciate, convinced anew of what the Word of God teaches us in this matter, and of what the Lord expects of us. If Christians learned to realize the practical presence of the *Lord thy Healer*, I am convinced their spiritual life would be developed and sanctified as a result.

For these reasons, I can no longer keep silent. I publish this series of meditations with the view of showing, according to the Word of God, that *the prayer of faith* (James 5:15) is the means appointed by God for the cure of the sick. Also, how this truth is in perfect accord with Holy Scripture, and how the study of this truth is essential for everyone who wants to see the Lord manifest His power and His glory in the midst of His children.

– Andrew Murray, 1828-1917

Chapter 1

Forgiveness and Healing

But that ye may know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins (then said he to the paralyzed man), Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house (Matthew 9:6).

In man two natures are combined. He is at the same time spirit and matter, heaven and earth, soul and body. On one side he is the son of God, and on the other he is doomed to destruction because of the fall. Sin in his soul and sickness in his body bear witness to the right death has over him. It is this twofold nature that has been redeemed by divine grace. When the psalmist calls upon all that is within him to bless the Lord for His benefits he cries, *Bless the Lord, O my soul, . . . Who forgives all thine iniquities; who heals all thy diseases* (Psalm 103:1, 3). When Isaiah foretells the deliverance of his people he adds, *The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be absolved from sin* (Isaiah 33:24).

This prediction was accomplished beyond all anticipation when Jesus the Redeemer came down to earth. How numerous were the healings performed by Him who came to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth! Whether by His own acts or afterward by the commands He left for His disciples, He shows us clearly that the preaching of the gospel and the healing of the sick went together in the salvation He came to bring. Both are given as evident proof of His mission as the Messiah, *The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk . . . and the poor have the gospel preached to them* (Matthew 11:5). Jesus, who took upon Himself both the soul and body of man, delivers both in equal measure from the consequences of sin.

This truth is nowhere more evident or better demonstrated than in the account

of the paralytic. The Lord Jesus said to him, *Thy sins are forgiven thee … Arise, and walk* (Matthew 9:5). The pardon of sin and the healing of sickness complete each other because, in the eyes of God who sees our entire nature, sin and sickness are as closely united as the body and the soul. In accordance with the Scriptures, our Lord Jesus regarded sin and sickness in another light than we have. With us, sin belongs to the spiritual domain. We recognize that sin is under God's righteous displeasure, rightly condemned by Him. While sickness seems only a part of the present condition of our nature with nothing to do with God's condemnation and His righteousness. Some go so far as to say that sickness is a proof of the love and grace of God.

Neither the Scripture nor Jesus Christ Himself ever spoke of sickness in this light. Nor do they ever describe sickness as a blessing, a proof of God's love, that should be borne with patience. The Lord spoke to the disciples of various sufferings they would have to bear, but when He speaks of sickness it is always as an evil caused by sin and Satan from which we should be delivered. He declared that every disciple of His would have to *take up his cross* (Matthew 16:24), but He never taught one sick person to resign himself to being sick. Jesus healed the sick, He dealt with healing as one of the graces belonging to the kingdom of heaven. Sin in the soul and sickness in the body both bear witness to the power of Satan, and *the Son of God appeared, that He might undo the works of the devil* (1 John 3:8).

Jesus came to deliver men from sin and sickness that He might make known the love of the Father. In His actions, in His teaching of the disciples, and the work of the apostles, pardon and healing are always found together. Either may appear more clearly and obviously, according to the development or the faith of those to whom they spoke. Sometimes it was healing that prepared the way for the acceptance of forgiveness. Other times forgiveness preceded the healing, which coming afterwards became a seal to it.

In the early part of His ministry Jesus cured many of the sick, finding them ready to believe in the possibility of their healing. In this way He sought to

influence hearts to receive Himself as He who is able to pardon sin. When He saw the paralytic could receive pardon at once, He began by that which was of the greatest importance; after which came the healing that put a seal on the pardon that had been granted to him.

We see, by the accounts given in the gospels, that it was more difficult for the Jews at that time to believe in the pardon of their sins than in divine healing. Now it is just the opposite. The Christian church has heard so much preaching about the forgiveness of sins that the thirsty soul easily receives this message of grace. It is not the same with divine healing; this is rarely spoken of and believers who have experienced it are not many.

It is true that healing is not given today as it was in those times, to the multitudes whom Christ healed without any previous conversion.[1] In order to receive healing, it is necessary to begin by confession of sin and a decision to live a holy life. This is without doubt the reason why people find more difficulty believing in healing than in forgiveness. This is also why those who receive healing receive at the same time new spiritual blessing, feel more closely united with the Lord Jesus, and learn to love and serve Him better. Unbelief may attempt to separate these two gifts, but they are always united in Christ. He is always the same Savior both of the soul and of the body, equally ready to grant pardon and healing. The redeemed may always cry, *Bless the LORD, O my soul . . . Who forgives all thine iniquities; who heals all thy diseases* (Psalm 103:1, 3).

[1] Publisher's Note: While this statement may have been true when the author wrote this book, it certainly is not true anymore. Today, we're often seeing the same order of healing first, then believing, as Jesus saw in his day.

Chapter 2

Because of Your Unbelief

Then the disciples came to Jesus apart and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unfaithfulness; for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove from here to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you (Matthew 17:19-20).

When the Lord Jesus sent His disciples into different parts of Palestine He gave them a double power, that of casting out unclean spirits and that of healing all sickness and all weakness (Matthew 10:1). He did the same for the seventy who came back to Him with joy, saying, *"Lord, even the demons are subject unto us in thy name"* (Luke 10:17). On the day of the transfiguration, while the Lord was still upon the mountain, a father brought his son who was possessed with a demon to His disciples beseeching them to cast out the evil spirit, but they could not. After Jesus had cured the child, the disciples asked Him why they had been unable to do it themselves as in other cases. He answered them, *"because of your unbelief."* It was their unbelief and not the will of God that had been the cause of their defeat.

Today, there is very little belief in divine healing because it has almost entirely disappeared from the Christian church. One may ask the reason, and here are the two answers that have been given. More people think miracles, the gift of healing included, should be limited to the time of the primitive church because their purpose was to establish the first foundation of Christianity, but since that time circumstances have changed. Other believers say unhesitatingly that if the church has lost these gifts, it is by her own fault. It is because she has become worldly that the Spirit acts weakly in her. It is because she has not

remained in direct and habitual relation with the full power of the unseen world. But they believe that if she were to see anew springing up within her men and women who live the life of faith and of the Holy Spirit, entirely consecrated to their God, she would see again the manifestation of the same gifts as in former times.

Which of these two opinions coincides most with the Word of God? Is it by the will of God that the “gifts of healing” have been suppressed, or is it man who is responsible for it? Is it the will of God that miracles should not take place? Because of this, will He no longer give the faith that produces them? Or again, is it the church that has been guilty of lacking faith?

What does Scripture say?

The Bible does not authorize us, either by the words of the Lord or His apostles, to believe the gifts of healing were granted only to the early times of the church. On the contrary, the promises Jesus made to the apostles when He gave them instructions concerning their mission shortly before His ascension, appear to be applicable to all times (Mark 16:15-18). Paul places the gift of healing among the operations of the Holy Spirit. James gives a precise command on this matter without any restriction of time. The entire Scriptures declare these graces will be granted according to the measure of the Spirit and of faith.

It is also alleged that at the outset of each new dispensation God works miracles, that it is His ordinary course of action. It is nothing of the kind. Think of the people of God in the former dispensation, in the time of Abraham, all through the life of Moses, in the exodus from Egypt, under Joshua, in the time of the judges and Samuel, under the reign of David and other godly kings up to Daniel’s time. During more than a thousand years miracles took place.

It is said, miracles were much more necessary in the early days of Christianity than later. But what about the power of unbelief even in this day, wherever the gospel seeks to combat it? It is impossible to admit that miracles were more needed by the unbelievers in Ephesus (Acts 19:11-12) than for the unbelievers of Africa in the present day. If we think of the ignorance and

unbelief that reign even in the midst of the Christian nations, aren't we driven to conclude there is a need for manifest acts of the power of God to sustain the testimony of believers and to prove that God is with them? Besides, among believers themselves, how much doubt and weakness there are! How their faith needs to be awakened and stimulated by some evident proof of the presence of the Lord in their midst. One part of our being consists of flesh and blood, so God shows us His presence in flesh and blood.

In order to prove it is the church's unbelief that has lost the gift of healing, let us see what the Bible says about it. Doesn't it often put us on our guard against unbelief, against everything that can estrange and turn us from God? Doesn't the history of the church show us why these warnings are necessary? Doesn't it furnish us with many examples of backward steps, of world pleasing, in which faith grew weak in the exact measure in which the spirit of the world took the upper hand? Such faith is only possible to him who lives in the invisible world.

Until the third century, the healings by faith in Christ were numerous, but in the centuries following they became more infrequent. Don't we know from the Bible that it is always unbelief that hinders the mighty working of God?

Oh, that we could learn to believe in the promises of God! God has not gone back on His promises. Jesus is still He who heals both soul and body. Salvation offers us, even today, healing and holiness. The Holy Spirit is always ready to give us some manifestations of His power. Even when we ask why this divine power is not more often seen, He answers us, *"because of your unbelief."*

The more we give ourselves to the personal experience of sanctification by faith the more we will also experience healing by faith. These two doctrines walk side by side. The more the Spirit of God lives and acts in the souls of believers the more the miracles by which He works in the body will multiply. These miracles help the world recognize what redemption means.

Chapter 3

Jesus and the Doctors

And a certain woman, who had an issue of blood twelve years and had suffered many things of many physicians and had spent all that she had and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse; when she had heard of Jesus, came from behind among the multitude and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be saved. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.

And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned to the crowd and said, Who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee and sayest thou, Who touched me?

And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith has made thee saved; go in peace and remain whole of thy plague (Mark 5:25-34).

We can thank God for giving us doctors. Their vocation is one of the most noble, because a large number of them truly seek to do, with love and compassion, all they can to alleviate the evils and sufferings that burden humanity as a result of sin. Some are zealous servants of Jesus Christ and they also seek the good of their patients' souls. Still, it is Jesus Himself who is always the first, the best, the greatest physician.

Jesus heals diseases about which earthly physicians can do nothing because

the Father gave Him this power when He charged Him with the work of our redemption. Jesus, in taking upon Him our human body, delivered it from the dominion of sin and Satan. He has made our bodies temples of the Holy Spirit and members of His own body (1 Corinthians 6:15, 19). Even today, many who have been given up on by the doctors as incurable or who have had tuberculosis, gangrene, paralysis, edema, blindness, or deafness have been healed by Him! Isn't it astonishing that so few sick people go to Him for healing?

The method of Jesus is quite different from that of earthly physicians. They seek to serve God in making use of remedies found in the natural world, and God makes use of these remedies according to natural law and the natural properties of each. The healing from Jesus is totally different. It is by divine power, the power of the Holy Spirit, that Jesus heals. So the difference between these two modes of healing is great.

To understand it better, let's look at an example. A physician who is an unbeliever but extremely clever in his profession has many patients who credit him with their healing. God gives this result by means of the prescribed remedies and the physician's knowledge of them. Another physician, who is a believer, prays God's blessing on the remedies he uses. In this case also, many are healed, but neither situation brings with it any spiritual blessing. The doctors are preoccupied, even the believing doctors, with the remedies they use much more than with what the Lord may be doing with them. In such a case their healing will be more hurtful than beneficial.

On the contrary, when it is Jesus only whom the sick person asks for healing, he learns to rely no longer on remedies or medical treatment, but to put himself into direct relation with Jesus' love and His almightiness. To obtain this healing, he must begin by confessing and turning away from his sins and exercising a living faith. Then healing will come directly from the Lord, who takes possession of the sick body, so the healing becomes a blessing for the soul as well as for the body.

"But isn't it God who has given medical knowledge to man?" it is asked.

“Doesn’t the doctors’ power come from Him?” Without doubt. On the other hand, isn’t it God who has given us His Son with all power to heal? Shall we follow the way of natural law with all those who do not yet know Christ and also with those of His children whose faith is still too weak to abandon themselves to His almightiness? Or do we choose the way of faith, receiving healing from the Lord and from the Holy Spirit, seeing in that healing the result and the proof of our redemption?

The healing done by our Lord Jesus brings with it and leaves behind it more real blessing than the healing obtained through physicians. Healing has been a misfortune to more than one person. On a sickbed serious thoughts occupied his mind, but from the time of his healing how often this sick man has been found once again far from the Lord! It’s not this way when it is Jesus who heals. If sin is involved, healing is granted after the confession of sin (John 9:3). Therefore, it brings the sufferer nearer to Jesus and establishes a new link between him and the Lord. It causes the healed man or woman to experience His love and power, and a new life of faith and holiness begins in him or her. When the woman who touched the hem of Christ’s garment felt that she was healed, she learned something of what divine love means. She went away with these words of Jesus, *Daughter, thy faith has made thee saved; go in peace* (Mark 5:34).

To those who are suffering from some sickness, know Jesus the sovereign healer is still with us. He is close to us, and He is giving His church new proofs of His presence. Are you ready to break with the world, to abandon yourself to Him with faith and confidence? Then fear not, remember that divine healing is a part of the life of faith. If nobody around you can help you in prayer, if no elder is at hand to pray the prayer of faith, don’t be afraid to go to the Lord yourself in the silence of solitude like the woman who touched the hem of His garment. Commit the care of your body to Him. Get quiet before Him and like the poor woman say, “I will be healed.” It may take some time to break the chains of your unbelief, but you can be sure that no one who waits on Him shall be ashamed (Psalm 25:3).

Chapter 4

Health and Salvation by the Name of Jesus

> *And in the faith of his name, unto this man whom ye see and know, has confirmed his name; and the faith which is by him has given this man this perfect soundness in the presence of you all . . . Be it known unto you all and to all the people of Israel that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him does this man stand here before you whole . . . Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men in which we can be saved* (Acts 3:16; 4:10, 12).

When, after Pentecost, the paralytic was healed through Peter and John at the gate of the temple, it was *in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth* they said to him, *"Rise up and walk."* As soon as the people, in their amazement, ran together to them, Peter declared that it was the name of Jesus that had so completely healed the man.

As a result of this miracle and Peter's words, many people who heard the Word believed (Acts 4:4). The next day, Peter repeated these words before the Sanhedrin, *"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth . . . does this man stand here before you whole"* and then he added, *"There is no other name under heaven given among men in which we can be saved"* (Acts 4:12). Peter's statement declares to us that the name of Jesus both heals and saves. We have here a teaching of the most importance for divine healing.

We see that healing and health form part of Christ's salvation. Doesn't Peter clearly state this in his remarks to the Sanhedrin where, having spoken of healing, he immediately goes on to speak of salvation by Christ? (Acts 4:10, 12). In heaven, even our bodies will have their part in salvation. Salvation will not be

complete for us until our bodies enjoy the full redemption of Christ. Why then should we not believe in this work of redemption here below? Even now here on earth, the health of our bodies is a fruit of the salvation Jesus has acquired for us.

We also see health as well as salvation is to be obtained by faith. The natural tendency of man is to bring about his salvation by his works, and it is only with difficulty that he comes to receive it by faith. But when it is a question of healing the body, he has even more difficulty grasping that truth. As to salvation, he accepts it because there is no other way to open the door of heaven. For the body, he makes use of well-known treatments. Why then should he seek divine healing?

Happy is he who understands it is the will of God to show the power of Jesus and to reveal to us His fatherly love. By doing so, He increases and confirms our faith and teaches us that He demonstrates the power of redemption in the body as well as in the soul. The body is part of our being; even the body has been saved by Christ. For that reason, it is in our body that our Father wills to demonstrate the power of redemption and to let people see that Jesus lives.

Oh, let us believe in the name of Jesus! Was it not in the name of Jesus that perfect health was given to the impotent man? And were not these words, *Thy faith hath saved thee* (Mark 5:34), pronounced when the body was healed? Let us seek then to obtain divine healing.

Wherever the Spirit acts with power, there He works divine healings. Wouldn’t it seem that if miracles were ever superfluous or unneeded, it was at Pentecost because then the word of the apostles worked mightily, and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit was abundant? Well, it’s precisely because the Spirit acted powerfully that His working must be visible in the body. If divine healing is only seen rarely in our day we can attribute it to no other cause than the Spirit does not act with power. The unbelief of human beings and the lack of zeal among believers stop His working. The healings God is giving here and there are the signs of all the spiritual graces that are promised to us, and it is only the Holy Spirit who reveals the almightiness of the name of Jesus to accomplish

such healings. Let us pray earnestly for the Holy Spirit, place ourselves unreservedly under His direction, and seek to be firm in our faith in the name of Jesus, whether for preaching salvation or for the work of healing.

God grants healing to glorify the name of Jesus. Let us seek to be healed by Jesus so that His name may be glorified. It is sad to see how little the power of His name is recognized and seldom it is the end result of preaching and prayer. Treasures of divine grace, of which Christians deprive themselves by their lack of faith and zeal, are hidden in the name of Jesus. It is the will of God to glorify His Son in the church; and He will do it wherever He finds faith. Whether among believers or among unbelievers, He is ready with virtue from on high to awaken consciences and bring hearts to obedience. God is ready to manifest the all-power of His Son and to do it in a striking way in body as well as soul.

May we believe it for ourselves and for others, for the circle of believers around us and also for the church in the whole world. Let us believe with firm faith in the power of the name of Jesus and ask great things in His name counting on His promise. If we do, we will see God still do wonders by the name of His Holy Son.

Chapter 5

Not Because We're Good

And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own virtue or godliness we had made this man walk? (Acts 3:12).

As soon as the paralytic man had been healed at the gate of the temple through Peter and John, the people ran to them. Peter, seeing that this miracle was being attributed to their power and holiness, loses no time in setting them straight by telling them that all the glory of this miracle belongs to Jesus and it is in Him we must believe.

Peter and John were undoubtedly full of faith and holiness. Perhaps they were even the most holy and zealous servants of God in their time because if they hadn't been, God might not have chosen them as instruments in this case of healing. But they knew that their holiness was not of themselves, that it was of God through the Holy Spirit. They think so little of themselves they ignore their own holiness and know only one thing – all power belongs to their Master. They rush to say that in this healing they count for nothing and it is the work of the Lord alone. This is the object of divine healing: to be a proof of the power of Jesus, a witness in the eyes of men of what He is, proclaiming His divine intervention, and attracting hearts to Him, not by our own virtue or godliness. The Lord uses people with faith to help others. It is necessary to insist on this because of the tendency of believers to think the opposite. Those who have recovered their health in answer to *the effectual prayer of the righteous* (James 5:16) are in danger of focusing too much on the human instrument God is pleased to use, and think the power lies in man's righteousness.

Doubtless, the prayer of faith is the result of real godliness, but those who

possess it will be the first to acknowledge that it does not come from themselves, nor from any effort of their own. They fear robbing the Lord of the least particle of the glory that belongs to Him, and they know that if they do so, they will compel Him to withdraw His grace from them. It is their great desire to see the souls God has blessed through them enter into a direct and increasingly intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, since that is the result their healing should produce. Thus they insist that it is not caused by their own power or holiness.

Such testimony, on their part, is necessary to reply to the erroneous accusations of unbelievers. The church of Christ needs to hear clearly stated that it is on account of her worldliness and unbelief that she has lost these spiritual gifts of healing (1 Corinthians 12: 9), and the Lord restores to those who, with faith and obedience, have consecrated their lives to Him. This grace cannot reappear unless a renewal of faith and holiness comes first. But then, says the world, and with it a large number of Christians, “You are laying claim to the possession of a higher order of faith and holiness; you consider yourselves holier than others.”

To accusations like these, this word of Peter is the only reply before God and man, *not by our own virtue or godliness* (Acts 3:12), confirmed by a life of deep and real humility. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth* (Psalm 115:1). This testimony is also necessary because of our own heart and the deceitfulness of Satan. As long as, through the church’s unfaithfulness, the gifts of healing are only rarely given, the children of God who have received these gifts are in danger of taking pride in them and imagining they have in themselves something exceptionally praiseworthy.

The enemy does not forget to persecute them through such insinuations, and woe to them if they listen to him. They are not ignorant of his devices. Therefore, they need to pray continually to the Lord to keep them humble, which is the true way to continually obtain more grace. If they persevere in humility, they will recognize that the more God makes use of them, the more they will be

penetrated with the conviction that it is God alone who works by them and all the glory belongs to Him. *Not I, but the grace of God which was with me* (1 Corinthians 15:10). Such is their motto.

Finally, these words, *not by our own virtue or godliness*, are useful for the feeble ones who long for salvation and desire to receive Christ as their healer. They hear of full consecration and entire obedience, but they form a false idea of it. They think they must, in themselves, attain a high degree of knowledge and perfection, and they fall prey to discouragement. No, it is not by our own power or holiness that we obtain these graces, but by a faith quite simple, a childlike faith, which knows that it has no power nor holiness of its own. This faith commits itself completely to Him who is faithful and whose almightiness can fulfill His promise. Oh, let us not seek to do or to be anything of ourselves! It is only as we trust in our own powerlessness and expect everything from God and His Word that we realize the glorious way the Lord heals sickness *by faith in His name* (Acts 4:12).

Chapter 6

According to the Measure of Faith

> *Then Jesus said unto the centurion, Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in that same hour* (Matthew 8:13).

This passage of Scripture presents one of the principal laws of the kingdom of heaven. In order to understand God's ways with His people and our relationship with the Lord, we must understand this law thoroughly and not deviate from it. Not only does God give or withhold His gifts according to the faith or unbelief of each person, but the gifts are granted in greater or lesser measure in proportion to the faith that receives them. God has given us the right to choose, and He respects that right. Therefore, He can only bless us in the measure in which each yields himself up to His divine working and opens his heart completely to Him. Faith in God is nothing else than the full opening of the heart to receive everything from God. For that reason, man can only receive divine grace according to his faith. This applies as much to divine healing as to any other grace of God.

This truth is confirmed by the spiritual blessings that can result from sickness. Two questions are often asked: Isn't it God's will that His children should sometimes remain in a prolonged state of sickness? Also, since we know that divine healing brings with it greater spiritual blessing than the sickness itself, why does God allow certain of His children to continue sick for many years, and while they are in this condition give them blessing in sanctification and in communion with Himself?

The answer to these two questions is that God gives to His children according to their faith. We have already said that in the same degree in which the church

has become worldly, her faith in divine healing has diminished until it has disappeared. Believers do not seem to be aware that they may ask God for the healing of their sickness and by that they can be sanctified and fitted for His service. They have come to seek only submission to His will and to regard sickness as a means to be separate from the world. In such conditions, the Lord gives them what they ask. He would have been ready to give them yet more, to grant them healing in answer to the prayer of faith, but they lacked the faith to receive it.

God always meets His children where they are, however weak they may be. The sick ones, who have desired to receive Him with their whole heart, will receive from Him the fruit of the sickness in their desire that their will should be conformed to the will of God. They might have been able to receive healing as proof that God accepted their submission. If this hasn't happened, it is because faith has failed them to ask for it.

As thou hast believed so be it done unto thee. These words answer another question: How can you say that divine healing brings so much spiritual blessing when one sees that most of those who were healed by the Lord Jesus received nothing more than deliverance from their present sufferings, without any evidence that they were also spiritually blessed? Here again, as they believed, so was it done unto them.

Many sick people, having witnessed the healing of others, gained confidence in Jesus just far enough to be healed. Jesus granted them their request without adding other blessings for their souls. Before His ascension, the Lord did not have as free an entrance as He now has into the heart of man because *the Holy Spirit was not yet given* (John 7:39). The healing of the sick was at that time hardly more than a blessing for the body. It was only later, in the dispensation of the Spirit, the conviction and confession of sin have become for the believer the first grace to be received, the essential condition for obtaining healing, as St. Paul tells us in his epistle to the Corinthians and James in his to the twelve tribes scattered abroad (1 Cor. 11:31-32; James 5:16). Thus the degree of spiritual

grace it is possible for us to receive depends on the measure of our faith, whether it is for its external manifestation or for its influence on our inner life.

We recommend for every suffering one who looks for healing and who seeks to know Jesus as his divine healer, to not let himself be hindered by his unbelief, not to doubt the promises of God, and thus to be *strengthened in faith, giving glory to God* (Romans 4:20), as is His due. *As thou hast believed so be it done unto thee* (Matthew 8:13). If with all your heart you trust in the living God, you will be abundantly blessed; do not doubt it.

The part of faith that is always easy to lay hold of is that which appears impossible or strange to human eyes. Let us be willing to be considered fools for Christ's sake (1 Corinthians 4:10). Let us not be afraid to seem weak-minded in the eyes of the world and of Christians who are ignorant of these things because, on the authority of the Word of God, we believe that which others cannot yet admit. Do not, then, let yourself be discouraged in your expectation even though God delays in answering you, or if your sickness gets worse. Once you have placed your foot firmly on the immovable rock of God's own Word and have prayed for the Lord to manifest His almightiness in your body because you are one of the members of His Body and the temple of the Holy Spirit, persevere in believing in Him with the firm assurance that He has undertaken for you. He has made Himself responsible for your body, and His healing virtue will come to glorify Him in you.

Chapter 7

The Way of Faith

And straightway the father of the child crying out with tears, said, Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief (Mark 9:24).

These words have been a help and strength to thousands of souls in their pursuit of salvation and the gifts of God. Notice it is in relation to an afflicted child they were spoken in the fight of faith when seeking healing from the Lord Jesus. In them we see that in one and the same soul there can arise a struggle between faith and unbelief, and it is not without a struggle that we come to believe in Jesus and His all-power to heal the sick. In this we find the necessary encouragement to realize the Savior's power.

I speak here especially to sufferers who do not doubt the power or the will of the Lord Jesus to heal in this day without the use of earthly remedies, but who lack the boldness to accept healing for themselves. They believe in the divine power of Christ; they believe in a general way in His good will to heal. They have acquired either by the Scriptures or from healings by the Lord alone that have taken place in our days, the intellectual persuasion that the Lord can help even them, but they shrink back from accepting healing and from saying with faith, "The Lord has heard me, I know that He is healing me."

Take notice first that without faith a believer will not be healed. When the father of the afflicted child said to Jesus, *If thou canst do anything, help us, having mercy on us* (Mark 9:22). Jesus replied, *"If **thou** canst believe."* (Mark 9:23). Jesus had the power to heal and He was ready to do it, but He cast responsibility on the man. *If thou canst! All things are possible to him that believes.* In order to obtain your healing from Jesus, it is not enough to pray. Prayer without faith is powerless. It is *the prayer of faith* that saves the sick

(James 5:15). If you have already asked for healing from the Lord, or if others have asked it for you, you must, before you are conscious of any change, be able to say with faith, “On the authority of God’s Word I have the assurance that He hears me and that I shall be healed.”

To have faith means, in your case, to surrender your body absolutely into the Lord’s hands and leave yourself entirely to Him. Faith receives healing as a spiritual grace that proceeds from the Lord even while there is no conscious change in the body. Faith can glorify God and say, *“Bless the Lord, O my soul . . . Who heals all my diseases”* (Psalm 103:1-3, author paraphrase). The Lord requires this faith so that He may heal.

But how is such faith to be obtained? Tell God the unbelief you find in your heart and count on Him for deliverance from it. Faith is not money by which your healing can be purchased from the Lord. It is He who desires to awaken and develop in you the necessary faith. *“Help my unbelief,”* cried the father of the child.

It was his ardent desire that his faith should not come short. Confess to the Lord all the difficulty you have in believing Him on the ground of His Word. Tell Him you want to be rid of this unbelief, that you bring it to Him with a will to listen only to His Word. Do not lose time in deploring your unbelief, but look to Jesus. The light of His countenance will enable you to find the power to believe in Him (Psalm 44:3). He calls on you to trust in Him. Listen to Him and by His grace, faith will triumph in you. Say to Him, “Lord, I am still aware of the unbelief which is in me. I find it difficult to believe that I am sure of my healing because I possess Him who accomplishes it. And nevertheless, I want to conquer this unbelief. You, Lord, will give me the victory. I desire to believe, I will believe, and by Your grace I dare to say I can believe. Yes, Lord, I believe, for You come to the help of my unbelief.” It is when we are in intimate communion with the Lord, and when our heart responds to His, that unbelief is overcome and conquered.

It is also important to testify to the faith you have. Be resolved that you will

believe what the Lord says to you and you will believe, above all, who He is. Lean fully on His promises. *The prayer of faith shall cause the one who is sick to be saved* (James 5:15). The prayer of faith shall save the sick. *I am the Lord thy Healer* (Exodus 15:26). Look to Jesus, who *bore our sickness* (Matthew 8:17) and who healed all who came to Him. Count on the Holy Spirit to manifest in your heart the presence of Jesus who is also now in heaven and to work in your body the power of His grace.

Praise the Lord without waiting to feel better or to have more faith. Praise Him and say with David, *"O Lord, my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me"* (Psalm 30:2). Divine healing is a spiritual grace that can only be received spiritually and by faith, before feeling its effect on the body. Accept it, and give glory to God. When the Lord Jesus commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the child, *rending him sore came out; and he remained as one dead, insomuch that many said that he was dead* (Mark 9:26). So if your sickness does not yield at once, if Satan and your own unbelief attempt to get the upper hand, do not heed them, but cling closely to Jesus your healer, and He will surely heal you.

Chapter 8

The Temple of the Holy Spirit

> *Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of a harlot? In no wise . . . What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom ye have of God, and that ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's* (1 Corinthians 6:15, 19-20).

The Bible teaches us that the body of Christ is the community of the faithful. These words are taken generally in their spiritual sense, while the Bible asks us whether we know our bodies are members of Christ. In the same way, when the Bible speaks of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit or of Christ, we limit Their presence to the spiritual part of our being. But the Bible clearly states, *Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?* When the church understands that the body also has a part in the redemption by Christ, by which the body ought to be brought back to its original destiny, to be the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, to serve as His instrument, to be sanctified by His presence, she will also recognize the many references to divine healing in the Bible and in the counsels of God.

The account of the creation tells us man is composed of three parts. God first formed the body from the dust of the earth, after which He breathed into it *the breath of life.* He caused His own life, His Spirit, to enter into it. By this union of Spirit with matter, the man became a *living soul.* The soul, which is essentially the uniqueness of man or woman, finds its place between the body and the spirit; it is the link that binds them together. By the body, the soul finds itself in relation to the external world; by the spirit, with the spiritual world and with God. By

means of the soul, the spirit can subject the body to the action of the heavenly powers and thus spiritualize it; by means of the soul, the body also can act upon the spirit and attract it earthwards. The soul, subject to the needs of both spirit and body, is in a position to choose between the voice of God, speaking by the Spirit, or the voice of the world, speaking through the senses.

This union of spirit and body forms a combination unique in the creation – it makes man the jewel of God's work. Other creatures had existed already; some, like angels, were all spirit, without any material body, and others, like the animals, were only flesh, possessing a body animated with a living soul, but devoid of spirit. Man was destined to show that the material body, governed by the spirit, was capable of being transformed by the power of the Spirit of God and led to participate in heavenly glory.

We know what sin and Satan have done with this possibility of gradual transformation. By means of the body, the spirit was tempted, seduced, and became a slave to the senses. We know also what God has done to destroy the work of Satan and accomplish the purpose of creation.

> *For this purpose, the Son of God appeared, that he might undo the works of the devil* (1 John 3:8).

God prepared a body for His Son. *A body hast thou prepared me* (Hebrews 10:5).

> *The word was made flesh* (John 1:14).
>
> *In him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily* (Colossians 2:9).
>
> *He himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree* (1 Peter 2:24).
>
> *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of the Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of the Christ?* (1 Corinthians 10:16).
>
> *Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of a harlot? In no wise* (1 Corinthians 6:15).

Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular (1 Corinthians 12:27).

Faith gives us all that the death of Christ and His resurrection purchased for us, and it is not only in our spirit and our soul that the life of the risen Jesus manifests its presence here below. It is also the body that acts according to the measure of our faith.

Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? Many believers think the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in our body as we dwell in a house. Nothing of the kind. I can dwell in a house without it becoming part of my being. I may leave it without suffering; no vital union exists between my house and me. It is not this way with the presence of our soul and spirit in our body. The life of a plant lives in and pervades every part of it; and our soul is not limited to dwell in such or such part of the body, the heart or the head for instance, but penetrates throughout, even to the end of the lowest members. The life of the soul pervades the whole body; the life throughout proves the presence of the soul. In the same way, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in our body. He penetrates its entirety. He animates and possesses us infinitely more than we can imagine.

As the Holy Spirit brings to our soul and spirit the life of Jesus, His holiness, His joy, and His strength, He also comes to give the sick body all the vigorous vitality of Christ as soon as the hand of faith is stretched out to receive it.

When the body is fully subject to Christ, crucified with Him, renouncing all self-will and independence, desiring nothing but to be the Lord’s temple, it is then that the Holy Spirit manifests the power of the risen Savior in the body. Only then can we glorify God in our body, leaving Him full freedom to demonstrate His power in it, to show that He knows how to set His temple free from the domination of sickness, sin, and Satan.

Chapter 9

The Body for the Lord

Foods are for the belly, and the belly for foods; but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body (1 Corinthians 6:13).

One of the most learned theologians said that having or being an actual material body is the goal of the ways of God. As we have already seen, this is indeed what God has accomplished in creating man. It is this that makes the inhabitants of heaven wonder and admire when they contemplate the glory of the Son. Clothed with a human body, Jesus has taken His place forever on the throne of God to partake of His glory. It is this that God has willed. It will be recognized in that day when regenerated humanity, forming the body of Christ, is truly and visibly the temple of the living God (2 Corinthians 6:16), and when all creation in the new heavens and new earth share the glory of the children of God. The material body will be wholly sanctified, glorified by the Spirit. This body, thus spiritualized, shall be the highest glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and His redeemed.

It is in anticipation of this new condition of things the Lord attaches a great importance to the indwelling and sanctification of our bodies, in our present condition, by His Spirit. So little is this truth understood by believers that less still do they seek the power of the Holy Spirit in their bodies. Many, also believing this body belongs to them, use it as it pleases them. Not understanding how much the sanctification of the soul and spirit depends on the body, they do not grasp the full meaning of the words, *the body is for the Lord*, in such a way as to receive them in obedience.

The body is for the Lord. What does this mean? The apostle said, “*Foods are*

for the belly, and the belly for foods; but God shall destroy both it and them." Eating and drinking give the Christian an opportunity to carry out this truth, *the body is for the Lord.* We must indeed learn to eat and drink to the glory of God. By eating, sin and the fall came about. It was also through eating that the devil sought to tempt our Lord. Thus Jesus Himself sanctified His body in eating only according to the will of His Father (Matthew 4:4). Many believers fail to watch over their bodies. They fail to observe a holy sobriety to avoid rendering their bodies unfit for the service of God. Eating and drinking should never impede communion with God; their purpose is to facilitate communion by maintaining the body in its normal condition.

The apostle speaks also of fornication, this sin defiles the body and is in direct opposition to the words, *the body is for the Lord.* It does not mean simply a lack of self-control outside the married state, but in that state also. All sensuality, all lack of sobriety of whatever kind is condemned in these words: *Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit* (1 Corinthians 6:19).

In the same way, all of what goes to maintain the body, to clothe it, strengthen it, rest it in sleep, or afford it enjoyment, should be placed under the control of the Holy Spirit. Under the Old Covenant, the temple was constructed solely for God and for His service. Similarly, our body was created for the Lord and for Him alone.

One of the chief benefits of divine healing will be to teach us that our body ought to be set free from the yoke of our own will to become the Lord's property. God does not grant healing to our prayers until He has attained the end for which He has permitted the sickness. He wants this discipline to bring us into a more intimate communion with Him. He desires for us to understand that we have regarded our body as our own property while it belonged to the Lord, and that the Holy Spirit seeks to sanctify all its actions. He leads us to understand that if we yield our body unreservedly to the influence of the Holy Spirit we will experience His power in us, and He will heal us by bringing into our body the very life of Jesus. He leads us to say with full conviction, *The body is for the*

Lord!

There are believers who seek after holiness, but only for the soul and spirit. In their ignorance they forget the body and all its systems of sensory nerves – the hand, the ear, the eyes, the mouth – are to testify directly to the presence and grace of God in them. They have not sufficiently taken in these words:

Your bodies are the members of Christ (1 Corinthians 6:15).

If through the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live (Romans 8:13).

The very God of peace himself sanctify you completely, that your spirit, soul, and body be preserved whole without reprehension for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

Oh, what a renewing takes place in us when, by His own touch, the Lord heals our bodies, when He takes possession of them and by His Spirit He becomes life and health to them! It is with an indescribable consciousness of holiness, fear and joy that the believer can then offer his body a living sacrifice to receive healing, and to have for his motto these words: *The body is for the Lord.*

Chapter 10

The Lord for the Body

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1).

There is reciprocity in God's relations with man. That which God has been for me, I ought in turn to be for Him. And that which I am for Him, He desires to be for me. If, in His love, He gives Himself fully to me, it is in order that I may lovingly give myself fully to Him. In the measure in which I more or less really surrender to Him all my being, in that measure also He gives Himself more really to me. God, in this way, leads the believer to understand that this abandonment of Himself involves the body. The more our life bears witness that the body is for the Lord the more we experience that the Lord is for the body. In saying, "*the body is for the Lord,*" we express the desire to regard our body as wholly consecrated, offered in sacrifice to the Lord and sanctified by Him. In saying, "*the Lord is for the body,*" we express the precious certainty that our offering has been accepted, and by His Spirit the Lord will impart to our body His own strength and holiness, and that henceforth He will strengthen and keep us.

This is a matter of faith. Our body is material, weak, feeble, sinful, and mortal. So it is difficult to grasp all at once the full extent of the words, *the Lord is for the body.* It is the Word of God that explains to us the way to bring together the body and the spirit. The body was created by the Lord and for the Lord. Jesus took upon Himself an earthly body. In His body He bore our sins on the cross and thereby set our body free from the power of sin. In Christ the body has been raised again and seated on the throne of God. The body is the habitation of the Holy Spirit; it is called to eternal partnership in the glory of heaven. Therefore,

with certainty and in a wide and universal sense, we can say, “Yes, the Lord Jesus, our Savior, is for the body.” This truth has many applications. In the first place, it is a great help in practical holiness. More than one sin derives its strength from some physical tendency. The converted drunkard is horrified by intoxicating drinks, yet, his appetites are sometimes a snare to him, gaining victory over his new convictions. If, however, in the conflict he gives over his body with confidence to the Lord, all physical appetite and desire to drink will be overcome. Our temper also often results from our physical constitution. A nervous, irritable system produces words that are sharp, harsh, and lacking in love. But let the body with this physical tendency be taken to the Lord and it will soon see that the Holy Spirit can deflate the urges of impatience and sanctify the body, rendering it blameless.

The words, *the Lord is for the body*, are also applicable to the physical strength the Lord’s service demands of us. When David cries, *“It is God that girdeth me with strength,”* he means physical strength, for he adds, *“He makes my feet like hinds’ feet . . . a bow of bronze shall be broken by my arms”* (Psalm 18:33-34). Many believers have experienced that the promise, *those that wait for the LORD shall have new strength* (Isaiah 40:31), touches the body, and the Holy Spirit increases the physical strength.

But it is especially in divine healing that we see the truth of these words: *The Lord is for the body.* Yes, Jesus, the sovereign and merciful healer, is always ready to save and cure. Some years ago, a young girl with tuberculosis in Switzerland was near death. The doctor had advised a milder climate, but she was too weak to make the journey. She learned that Jesus is the healer of the sick. She believed the good news, and one night when she was thinking of this, it seemed to her that the body of the Lord drew near to her and she ought to take these words literally, *His body for our body*. From that moment she began to improve. Sometime later, she began to hold Bible readings, and later she became a zealous and much-blessed worker for the Lord among women. She had learned to understand that the Lord is for the body.

Dear sick one, the Lord has shown you by sickness what power sin has over the body. By your healing, He would also show you the power of redemption of the body. He calls you to show what you have not understood before now, that *the body is for the Lord*. So give Him your body. Give it to Him with your sickness and with the sin, which is the original source of sickness. Believe always that the Lord has taken charge of this body, and He will manifest with power that He really is the Lord who is for the body. The Lord, who has Himself taken upon Himself a body here on earth and regenerated it from the highest heaven where He is now clothed with His glorified body, sends us His divine strength willing to manifest His power in our body.

Chapter 11

Not Limited by Your Body

> *He did not weaken in faith: he considered not his own body now dead when he was about one hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb; he doubted not the promise of God, with unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, being fully persuaded that he was also powerful to do all that he had promised* (Romans 4:19-21).

When God promised to give Abraham a son, the patriarch would never have been able to believe in this promise if he had considered his own body, already aged and worn out. However, he saw nothing but God and His promise and the power and faithfulness of God who guaranteed him the fulfillment of His promise.

This enables us to understand the difference between the healing that is expected from earthly remedies and the healing that is looked for only from God. When we look to medical treatment for healing, all the attention of the sick one is upon the body, considering the body. Divine healing calls us to turn our attention away from the body and abandon ourselves, soul and body, to the Lord's care, occupying ourselves with Him alone.

This truth also enables us to see the difference between the sickness that continues for the purpose of providing a blessing and the healing received from the Lord. Some are afraid to take the promise, *The prayer of faith shall cause the one who is sick to be saved* (James 5), in its literal sense because they say sickness is more profitable to the soul than health. It is true in the case of healing obtained by earthly treatments, many people would be more blessed by remaining ill than recovering health, but it is quite otherwise when healing comes directly from the hand of God. To receive divine healing, sin must be so

truly confessed and renounced, one must be so completely surrendered to the Lord, self must be so completely yielded up to be wholly in His hands, and the will of Jesus to take charge of the body must be so firmly counted on that the healing becomes the commencement of a new life of intimate relationship with the Lord.[1]

From this we learn to give up to Him completely the care of our health. The smallest indication of the return of the evil is regarded as a warning not to consider our body, but to focus on the Lord only.

What a contrast this is from the majority of sick people who look for healing from medical treatment. If a few of them have been sanctified by the sickness, having learned to lose sight of themselves, how many more are there who are drawn by the sickness itself to be constantly occupied with themselves and with the condition of their body? What infinite care they exercise in observing the least symptom, favorable or unfavorable! What a constant preoccupation to them is their eating and drinking, the anxiety to avoid this or that! How much they focus on what they consider due to them from others, whether they are sufficiently thought of, whether well enough nursed, whether visited often enough! How much time is in this way devoted to considering the body and what it exacts, rather than the Lord and the relationship He seeks to establish with their souls! Oh, how many are they who, through sickness, are occupied almost exclusively with themselves!

All this is totally different when healing is looked for in faith from the loving God. Then the first thing to learn is: Stop being anxious about the state of your body. You have trusted it to the Lord and He has taken the responsibility. If you do not see a rapid improvement immediately, but on the contrary the symptoms appear to be more serious, remember that you have entered on a path of faith, so you shouldn’t consider the body, but cling only to the living God.

The commandment of Christ, *Take no thought . . . for your body* (Matthew 6:25), appears here in a new light. When God called Abraham not to consider his

own body, it was so that He could call him to the greatest exercise of faith that could be, so he would learn to see only God and His promise. Sustained by his faith, he gave glory to God, convinced God would do what He had promised.

Divine healing is a marvelous tie to bind us to the Lord. At first, we might be afraid to believe that the Lord will stretch forth His mighty hand and touch the body; but in studying the Word of God, the soul takes courage and confidence. At last one decides, saying, “I yield up my body into the hands of God, and I leave the care of it to Him.” Then the body and its sensations are lost sight of, and only the Lord and His promise are in view.

Dear reader, will you also enter into this way of faith, which is very superior to what we call natural? Walk in the steps of Abraham. Learn from him not to consider your own body and not to doubt through unbelief. Considering the body gives birth to doubts, but clinging to the promise of God and focusing on Him alone lets us enter into the way of faith, the way of divine healing, which glorifies God.

[1] Publisher’s Note: It must be remembered that not all sickness is the result of sin. Some sickness is solely so the Lord may have glory through man being healed.

Chapter 12

Discipline and Dedication

For they verily for a few days chastened us as it seemed good unto them, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness (Hebrews 12:10).

If a man . . . purges himself . . ., he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and profitable for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work (2 Timothy 2:21).

To sanctify anything means to set apart, to consecrate or dedicate it to God and His service. The temple at Jerusalem was holy, meaning that it was consecrated, dedicated to God so it could serve Him as a dwelling place. The vessels of the temple were holy because they were devoted to the service of the temple. The priests were holy, chosen to serve God, and ready to work for Him. In the same way, the Christian should also to be sanctified, at the Lord's disposal, and *prepared unto every good work.*

When the people of Israel left Egypt, the Lord reclaimed them for His service as a holy people. *"Let my people go that they may serve me"* (Exodus 7:16), He said to Pharaoh. Set free from their hard bondage, the children of Israel were indebted to God and required to enter immediately into the service of God and to become His happy servants. Their deliverance was the road that led to their sanctification.

Again today, God is forming for Himself a holy people, and it is so that we can be part of them that Jesus sets us free. He *gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works* (Titus 2:14). It is the Lord who breaks the

chains by which Satan would hold us in bondage. The Lord wants us free, wholly free to serve Him. He wants to save us, to deliver both the soul and the body, so that each of the members of the body can be consecrated to Him and placed unreservedly at His disposal.

Many Christians do not yet understand all this. They do not know how to grasp that the purpose of their deliverance is so they can be sanctified, prepared to serve their God. They make use of their life and their members to obtain their own satisfaction. Consequently, they do not feel free to ask for healing with faith. It is for that reason, to chasten them that they may be brought to desire sanctification, that the Lord permits Satan to inflict sickness upon them and by it keep them chained and prisoners (Luke 13:11, 16). God chastens us *for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness,* (Hebrews 12:10) and that we may be sanctified, *profitable for the Master's use* (2 Timothy 2:21).

The discipline that inflicts the sickness brings great blessings with it. It is a call to the sick one to reflect. It leads him to see that God is occupied with him and seeks to show him what still separates him from Himself. God speaks to him; He calls him to examine his ways, to acknowledge that he has lacked holiness, and to understand that the purpose of the chastisement is to make him a partaker of His holiness. He awakens within him the desire to be enlightened by the Holy Spirit down into the inmost recesses of his heart, so he is able to get a clear idea of what his life has been up to the present time, a life of self-will, very unlike the holy life God requires of him. He leads him to confess his sins, to entrust them to the Lord Jesus, to believe the Savior can deliver him from them. He urges him to yield to Him, to consecrate his life to Him, to die to himself so that he can live for God.

Sanctification is not something you can accomplish yourself. It cannot even be produced by God in you as something you can possess and contemplate in yourself. No, it is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of holiness alone, who can communicate His holiness to you and renew it continually. So it is by faith you can become *partakers of his holiness*. Having understood that Jesus has been

made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30), and it is the Holy Spirit's work to give you His holiness that was demonstrated in His life on earth. Surrender yourself to Him by faith so that He can enable you to live that life from hour to hour. Believe the Lord will, by His Spirit, lead you into and keep you in this life of holiness and dedication to God's service. Then live in faithful obedience, always paying attention to His voice and the guidance of His Spirit.

Now that this fatherly discipline has led the sick one to a life of holiness, God has achieved His purpose, and He will heal him who asks it in faith. Our earthly parents *for a few days chastened us . . . no chastening at present seems to be cause for joy, but rather for grief; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto those who are exercised by it* (Hebrews 12:10-11).

Yes, it is when the believer realizes this peaceable fruit of righteousness that he is in a condition to be delivered from the correction.

Far too many believers still don't understand that sanctification means a total devotion to God, and as a result, they cannot really believe that healing will quickly follow the sanctification of the sick one. Good health is too often for them only a matter of personal comfort and enjoyment that they can use as they wish, but then God cannot minister to their selfishness. If they understood better that God requires of His children that they should be *sanctified, and profitable for the master's use,* they would not be surprised to see Him giving healing and renewed strength to those who have learned to place their entire body at His disposal, willing to be sanctified and employed in His service by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of healing is also the Spirit of sanctification.

Chapter 13

Sickness and Death

Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler and from the mortal pestilence … Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flies by day, nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor for the destruction that wastes at noonday . . . With long life I will satisfy him and show him my saving health (Psalm 91:3, 5-6, 16).

They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be vigorous and flourishing (Psalm 92:14).

This objection is often made to the words of the apostle James, *The prayer of faith shall cause the one who is sick to be saved* [healed] (James 5:15): If we have the promise of being always healed in answer to prayer, how can it be possible to die? And some add, how can a sick person know whether God, who fixes the time of our life, has not decided that we will die by such a sickness? In this case, wouldn't prayer be useless, and wouldn't it be a sin to ask for healing?

Before replying, we should say that this objection doesn't touch only those who believe in Jesus as the healer of the sick, but also the Word of God itself and the promise so clearly declared in the epistle of James and elsewhere. We are not at liberty to change or limit the promises of God whenever they present some difficulty to us; neither can we insist that they must be clearly explained to us before we can bring ourselves to believe what they state. It is for us to begin by receiving them without resistance. Only then can the Spirit of God find us in the state of mind in which we can be taught and enlightened.

Also, in talking about this divine truth that has been for a long time neglected in the church, this truth cannot be understood immediately. Only gradually,

through study and obedience, can its importance be understood. After this truth has been accepted by faith, proportionately as it revives the believer, the Holy Spirit will accompany it with new light and insight. Let us remember that it is because of the unbelief of the church that divine healing has left her. Bible truths do not depend on the preaching or explanations of anyone because the Bible stands on its own. *A light has shined in the darkness upon the upright* (Psalm 112:4), for the *upright* who are ready to submit themselves to the Word of God.

To those who ask how, with the promise of healing, it is possible to die, the answer is easy. Scripture says that seventy or eighty years is the ordinary length of human life. The believer who receives Jesus as the healer of the sick will rest satisfied then with the declaration of the Word of God. He will feel at liberty to expect a life of seventy years. Besides, the man of faith places himself under the direction of the Spirit, who will enable him to discern the will of God if something should prevent him from attaining the age of seventy. Every rule has its exceptions, in the things of heaven as in the things of earth. But we are sure according to the Word of God, whether by the words of Jesus or by those of James, that our heavenly Father wills, as a rule, to see His children in good health so that they can labor in His service.

For the same reason, He wills to set them free from sickness as soon as they have made confession of sin and/or prayed with faith for their healing. For the believer who has walked with his Savior, strong with the strength that comes from divine healing, and whose body is consequently under the influence of the Holy Spirit, it is not necessary that when his time comes to die, he should die of sickness. To fall asleep in Jesus Christ is the death of the believer when the end of his life comes. For him death is only sleep after fatigue, the entering into rest. The promise, *That it may be well with thee, and thou may live long on the earth* (Ephesians 6:3), is addressed to us who live under the New Covenant. The more the believer has learned to see in the Savior, Him who took our infirmities, the more he has the liberty to claim the literal fulfillment of the promises: *With long life will I satisfy him* (Psalm 91:3) and *They shall still bring forth fruit in old*

age; they shall be vigorous and flourishing (Psalm 92:14).

The same text applies to the second question: How can a sick person know whether God, who fixes the time of our life, has not decided that we shall die by such a sickness? In this case, wouldn't prayer be useless, and wouldn't it be a sin to ask for healing?

The sick person sees in God's Word that it is His will to heal His children after the confession of their sins, and in answer to the prayer of faith. It does not follow that they will be exempt from other trials; but as for sickness, they are healed of it because it attacks the body, which is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. The sick person should then desire healing so the power of God is made manifest in him and he can serve Him in accomplishing His will. In this, the individual clings to the revealed will of God, and for what is not revealed, he knows that God will make known His mind to His servants who walk with Him.

It is important to say here that faith is not logical reasoning that ought in some way to oblige God to act according to His promises. It is rather the confiding attitude of the child who honors his Father, who counts on His love moving Him to fulfill His promises, and who knows that He is faithful to communicate to the body as well as to the soul the new strength that flows from the redemption, until the moment of departure comes.

Chapter 14

The Holy Spirit the Spirit of Healing

> *Now there is dispersal of gifts, but the same Spirit . . . For to one is given by the Spirit a word of wisdom; to another, a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another, faith by the same Spirit; to another, gifts of healing by the same Spirit; . . . one and the same Spirit operates all these things, dispersing to each one his own gift as he wills* (1 Corinthians 12:4, 8-9, 11).

What is it that distinguishes the children of God from others? It is that God dwells in the midst of them and reveals Himself to them in power (Exodus 33:16; 34:9-10). Under the New Covenant, this dwelling of God in the believer is even more apparent than in former times. God sends the Holy Spirit to His church, which is the body of Christ, to act in her with power, and her life and her prosperity depend on Him. The Spirit must find in her unreserved, full liberty to act and lead, so that she can be recognized as the church of Christ, the Lord's body. In every age, the church can look for manifestations of the Spirit, for they bind us together in *one body and one Spirit* (Ephesians 4:4).

The Spirit operates differently in various members of the church. It is possible to be filled with the Spirit for one special work and not for another. There are also times in the history of the church when certain gifts of the Spirit are given with power, while at the same time ignorance or unbelief can hinder other gifts. Wherever more abundant life of the Spirit is found, we can expect Him to demonstrate all His gifts.

The gift of healing is one of the most beautiful manifestations of the Spirit. It is recorded of Jesus, *how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth . . . who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil* (Acts 10:38). The

Holy Spirit in Him was a healing Spirit, and He was the same in the disciples after Pentecost. Thus the words of our text express what was the continuous experience of the early church (compare carefully Acts 3:7; 4:30; 5:12, 15-16; 6:8; 8:7; 9:41; 14:9-10; 16:18-19; 19:12; 28:8-9). The abundant pouring out of the Spirit produced abundant healings. What a lesson for the church today!

Divine healing is the work of the Holy Spirit. Christ's redemption extends it, powerfully working in the body, and the Holy Spirit is responsible both to transmit it to and maintain it in us. Our body shares in the benefit of the redemption, and even now it can receive the promise of it by divine healing. It is Jesus who heals, anoints, and baptizes with the Holy Spirit. Jesus, who baptized His disciples with the same Spirit, is He who sends us the Holy Spirit here on earth, either to keep sickness away from us or to restore us to health when sickness has taken hold of us.

Divine healing accompanies the sanctification by the Spirit. It is to make us holy that the Holy Spirit makes us partakers of Christ's redemption. Hence His name "Holy." For that reason, the healing He does is an intrinsic part of His divine mission. He bestows it either to lead the sick one to be converted and believe (Acts 4:29-30; 5:12, 14; 6:7-8; 8:6-8), or to confirm his faith if he is already converted. In so doing, He calls him to turn away from sin and consecrate himself entirely to God and His service. In 1 Corinthians 10:31, we read, *Whether therefore ye eat or drink or whatever ye do, do everything for the glory of God*. (See also James 5:15-16; Hebrews 12:10).

Divine healing tends to glorify Jesus. It is God's will that His Son should be glorified, and the Holy Spirit does this when He comes to show us what the redemption of Christ does for us. The redemption of the mortal body appears almost more marvelous than that of the immortal soul. In these two ways God wants to live in us through Christ and triumph over the flesh. As soon as our body becomes the temple of God through the Spirit, Jesus is glorified.

Divine healing takes place wherever the Spirit of God works in power. Proof of this can be found in the lives of the Reformers and in those of certain

Moravians in their best times. But there are still other promises about the pouring out of the Holy Spirit that have not been fulfilled yet. Let us live in a holy expectation, praying that the Lord will accomplish them in us.

Chapter 15

Persevering Prayer

And he spoke a parable unto them to this end, that it behooves us always to pray and not faint, saying, there was in a city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man; and there was a widow in that city, and she came unto him, saying, Defend me from my adversary. And he would not for a while, but afterward he said within himself, Though I do not fear God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me, I will do her justice, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, hear what the unjust judge says. And shall not God avenge his own elect who cry day and night unto him though he bears long regarding them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, shall he find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:1-8).

The necessity of praying with perseverance is the secret of all spiritual life. What a blessing it is to be able to ask the Lord for such and such a grace until He gives it, knowing with certainty that it is His will to answer prayer. We also need to persevere in prayer, to knock in faith at His door, to remind Him of His promises, and to do so without tiring until He arises and grants us our petition! Isn't the assurance that our prayer can obtain from the Lord what He would not otherwise give, proof that we have been created in the image of God, that we are His friends and co-workers, and that the believers who form the Body of Christ participate in His intercessory work in this way? It is to Christ's intercession that the Father responds and grants His divine favors.

More than once the Bible explains the need for persevering prayer. There are many grounds for this, the main one being the justice of God. God has declared that sin must bear its consequences; sin therefore has rights over a world that

welcomes and remains enslaved by it. When the child of God seeks to quit this order of things, it is necessary that the justice of God should consent to this. So time is needed for the privileges Christ has purchased for believers to be considered by the court of God and applied. Besides this, the opposition of Satan, who always seeks to prevent the answer to prayer, is a reason for continuing fervently in prayer (Daniel 10:12-13). The only means by which this unseen enemy can be conquered is faith. Standing firmly on the promises of God, faith refuses to yield and continues to pray and wait for the answer even when it is delayed, knowing that the victory is sure (Ephesians 6:12-18).

Finally, perseverance in prayer is good for us. Delay in the answer is intended to prove and strengthen our faith. It ought to develop in us the steadfast determination to cling to the promises of God, realizing we can do *nothing* in ourselves but we can do *everything* by trusting in God alone. It is then that God, seeing our faith, finds us ready to receive His favor and grants it to us. He will avenge speedily, even though He waits. Yes, regardless of the delays, He will not make us wait a moment too long. If we cry to Him day and night, He will avenge us speedily.

This perseverance in prayer will become easy to us as soon as we fully understand what faith is. Jesus teaches us in these words, *And all things, whatever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive* (Matthew 21:22). When the Word of God authorizes us to ask anything, we ought to immediately believe that we receive it. God gives it to us; this we know by faith, and we can say between God and us that we have received it, although it might be only later that we are permitted to realize the effects here on earth. It is before having seen or experienced anything at all that faith rejoices in having received, perseveres in praying, and waits until the answer is shown. But even after having believed that we are heard, it is good to persevere until it has become an accomplished fact.

This is of great importance in obtaining divine healing. Sometimes the healing is immediate and complete; but it may happen that we have to wait, even when a sick person has been able to ask for it in faith. Also, sometimes the first

symptoms of healing are seen immediately, but afterward the progress is slow and interrupted by times when progress stops or the evil returns. In such cases, it is important for both the sick person and those who pray with him to believe in the effectiveness of persevering prayer, even though they may not understand the mystery of it. That which God appears at first to refuse, He grants later to the prayer of the woman of Canaan, the widow, and the friend who knocks at midnight (Matthew 15:22; Luke 18:3; 11:5).

Regardless of the apparent answer, faith that is grounded on the Word of God and continues to pray with urgency ends by gaining the victory. *Shall not God avenge his own elect who cry day and night unto him though he bears long regarding them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily* (Luke 18:7-8). God knows how to wait all the time necessary and still act speedily without waiting longer than needed.

The same two things should be true of our faith. Let us lay hold with a holy promptness of the grace promised us, as if we had already received it. Let us wait with untiring patience on the answer that is slow to come. Such faith belongs to living in Him. It is in order to produce in us this faith that sickness is sent to us, and that healing is granted to us, for such faith above all glorifies God.

Chapter 16

Let Him That Is Healed Glorify God

Jesus answered, Neither has this man sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him (John 9:3).

Many think that piety (holiness or obedience) is easier in sickness than in health. They think silence and suffering incline the soul to seek the Lord and enter into communion with Him better than the distractions of active life, and sickness causes people to lean more heavily upon God. For these reasons sick people hesitate to ask for healing from the Lord because they say to themselves, "How can we know whether sickness might not be better for me than health?" But this thinking ignores the fact that the healing and its fruits are divine.

We need to understand that though a healing through ordinary means may at times run the risk of making God relax His hand, divine healing, on the contrary, binds us more closely to Him. Because of this today, as in the time of the early ministry of Jesus Christ, the believer who has been healed by Him can glorify Him far better than the one who remains sick. Sickness can only glorify God in the measure in which it gives occasion to manifest His power. We read in John 11:4, *This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby*.

The sufferer who is led by his sufferings to give glory to God does it, so to speak, out of necessity. If he had health and liberty to choose, it is quite possible that his heart would turn back to the world. In such a case the Lord must keep him on one side; his piety depends on his sickly condition. This is why the world thinks that religion is not very useful anywhere but in sick rooms, on deathbeds, or for people who don't need to grapple with the ordinary situations of life. To convince the world of the power of religion against temptation and sin, it must

see the believer who is in good health walking in calmness and holiness even in the midst of work and active life. Undoubtedly, many sick people have glorified God by their patience in suffering, but He can be even more glorified by a health He has sanctified.

“Why then,” we are asked, “should those who have been healed in answer to the prayer of faith glorify the Lord more than those who have been healed through medical treatment?” Here is the reason. Healing by means of medical treatment shows us the power of God in nature, but it does not bring us into living and direct contact with Him. Divine healing is an act proceeding from God, without anything but the Holy Spirit.

In divine healing, contact with God is the essential thing, and it is for this reason that examination of the conscience and the confession of sins should be the preparation for it (1 Corinthians 11:30-32; James 5:15-16). One who is healed in this way is called to dedicate himself anew and entirely to the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:13, 19). All this depends on the act of faith that lays hold of the Lord’s promise, yields to Him, and does not doubt that the Lord immediately takes possession of what is consecrated to Him. This is why the continuance of health received depends on the holiness of the life and the obedience in always seeking to please the divine healer (Exodus 15:26).

Health obtained under such conditions ensures spiritual blessings. The mere restoration to health by ordinary means does not. When the Lord heals the body it is so that He may take possession of it and make it a temple that He may dwell in. The joy that then fills the soul is indescribable. It is not only the joy of being healed; it is joy mingled with humility and a holy enthusiasm that recognizes the touch of the Lord and receives a new life from Him. In the exuberance of his joy, the healed one exalts the Lord, glorifies Him by word and deed, and all his life is consecrated to his God.

It is evident that these fruits of healing are not the same for all and sometimes there are steps made backwards. The life of the healed one has a solidarity with the life of believers around him. Their doubts and inconsistencies might, over

time, make his steps falter, although this generally results in a new beginning. Each day he discovers and recognizes afresh that his life is the Lord's life. He enters into a more intimate and joyous communion with Him; he learns to live in habitual dependence upon Jesus and receives from Him the strength that results from a more complete devotion.

Oh, what the church could become if she lives in this faith. If every sick person recognizes in sickness a call to be holy and expect from the Lord a manifestation of His presence, when healings are multiplied, producing in each a witness of the power of God, all ready to cry with the psalmist, *Bless the Lord, O my soul . . . who heals all thy diseases* (Psalm 103:2-3).

Chapter 17

The Need for a Manifestation of God's Power

> *And now, Lord, behold their threatenings and grant unto thy slaves that with all boldness they may speak thy word, that thou might stretch forth thine hand so that healings and signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy slave Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness* (Acts 4:29-3:1).

Is it permissible to pray in this way now and ask the Lord, *"Grant unto thy slaves that with all boldness they may speak thy word, that thou might stretch forth thine hand so that healings and signs and wonders may be done"?* Let us look into this question.

Doesn't the Word of God meet with as many difficulties in our day as in the days of the early church, and aren't the needs now equally serious? Imagine the apostles in the midst of Jerusalem and her unbelief; on the one hand, the rulers of the people and their threatenings; on the other, the blinded multitude refusing to believe in the Crucified One. In modern times, the world has not always been so openly hostile to the church because it lost its fear of her, but its flattering words are more to be dreaded than its hatred. Dissimulation, or hiding under a false appearance, is sometimes worse than violence. And isn't Christianity in name only, in the sleep of indifference, just as inaccessible as an openly resisting Judaism? God's servants need an obedient faith today so that the Word can be preached with all boldness and the power of God is clearly shown among them.

Isn't the help of God as necessary now as it was then? The apostles knew well that it was not the eloquence of their preaching that caused the truth to

triumph, but they knew the necessity for the Holy Spirit to manifest His presence by miracles. It was necessary that the living God stretch forth His hand that there might be healings, miracles, and signs in the name of His Holy Son Jesus. It was only by God's displays of power that His servants rejoiced, and strengthened by His presence, could speak His Word with boldness and teach the world to fear His name.

Don't the divine promises concern us also? The apostles counted on these words of the Lord before He ascended, *Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. . . . And these signs shall follow those that believe: . . . they shall lay hands upon the sick, and they shall be healed* (Mark 16:15, 17-18). This charge indicates the divine occupation of the church. The promise that follows it shows us her armor and proves to us that the Lord acts in concert with her. It was because the apostles counted on this promise that they prayed for the Lord to grant them this proof of His presence. They had been filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, but they still needed the supernatural signs His power works. The same promise is for us, because the command to preach the gospel cannot be severed from the promise of divine healing with which it is accompanied. It is nowhere to be found in the Bible that this promise was not for future times. In all ages God's people greatly need to know that the Lord is with them and to possess the irrefutable proof of it. Therefore, this promise is for us. Let us pray for its fulfillment.

Should we count on the same grace? We read in Acts when the apostles had prayed, *they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness … And by the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were wrought in the people. . . . And those that believed in the Lord increased in number, multitudes both of men and women* (Acts 4:31; 5:12; 5:14). Oh, what joy and new strength would God's people receive today if the Lord would again stretch forth His hand in this way! How many wearied and discouraged laborers grieve that they do not see more results, more blessings on their labors. What life would come into their faith if signs of this kind arose to prove to them that God

is with them. Many who are indifferent would be led to reflect. More than one doubter would regain confidence, and all unbelievers would be reduced to silence. And the poor unbeliever! How he would awake if he saw by facts what words had not allowed him to grasp, if he were forced to acknowledge that the Christian’s God is the living God who does wonders, the God of love who blesses!

Awake, awake, put on your strength, church of Christ! Although, because of your unfaithfulness you have lost the joy of seeing, joined with the preaching of the Word, the hand of the Lord stretched out to heal. The Lord is ready to grant this grace again. Acknowledge that it is your own unbelief that has for so long deprived you of it, and pray for forgiveness. Clothe yourself with the strength of prayer.

As we read in Isaiah 51:9, *Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days*.

Chapter 18

Sin and Sickness

The prayer of faith shall cause the one who is sick to be saved, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he shall be forgiven them. Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another that ye may be whole (James 5:15-16).

Here, as in other Scriptures as well, the forgiveness of sins and the healing of sickness are closely linked. James declares that pardon of sins will be granted with the healing; and for this reason he desires to see confession of sin accompany the prayer that claims healing. We know that confession of sin is indispensable to obtain from God the pardon of sin; it is not less so to obtain healing. Unconfessed sin presents an obstacle to the prayer of faith and for this reason the sickness might soon reappear.

The first duty of a physician, when he is called to treat a patient, is to diagnose the cause of the disease. If he succeeds, he stands a better chance of fighting it. Our God also goes back to the primary cause of all sickness – that is, sin. It is our part to confess and God's to grant the pardon that removes this cause so healing can take place. In seeking healing by means of earthly remedies, the first thing to do is to find a clever physician and then to follow his instructions exactly. When we look for healing by the prayer of faith, we must fix our eyes, above all, on the Lord and see how we stand with Him. James points out to us a condition essential to the recovery of our health, namely, that we confess and forsake sin.

Sickness is a consequence of sin. It is because of sin that God permits sickness to show us our faults, chasten us, and purify us from them. Sickness is therefore a visible sign of God's judgment on sin. It's not that the one who is

sick is necessarily a greater sinner than another who is in health. On the contrary, it's often the most holy among the children of God whom He chastens, as we see from the example of Job. Neither is it always to cure some fault in us that we can easily identify. It is especially to draw the attention of the sick one to what remains in him of the egotism of the "old man" that hinders him from a life entirely consecrated to God.

The first step the sick one has to take on the path of divine healing will be to let the Holy Spirit of God probe his heart and convince him of sin. After this will come sorrow, the decision to break with sin, and confession. To confess our sins is to lay them down before God as in Achan's case (Joshua 7:23), to subject them to His judgment with the goal of falling into them no more. A sincere confession will be followed by a new assurance of forgiveness.

This is the promise: *If he has committed sins, he shall be forgiven them* (James 5:15). When we have confessed our sins, we must receive also the promised pardon, believing that God gives it. Faith in God's pardon is often vague to the child of God. Either he is uncertain or he returns to old memories of the time he first received forgiveness. But the pardon he now receives with confidence, in answer to the prayer of faith, will bring him new life and strength. The soul then rests under the effectiveness of the blood of Christ and receives from the Holy Spirit the certainty of the pardon of sin and the fact that nothing remains to hinder the Savior from filling him with His love and grace. God's pardon brings with it a divine life that acts powerfully on the one who receives it.

When the soul has consented to make a sincere confession and has obtained pardon, it is ready to lay hold of the promise of God. It is no longer difficult to believe that the Lord will raise up His sick one. It's when we keep far from God that it is difficult to believe. Confession and pardon bring us quite near to Him. As soon as the cause of the sickness has been removed, the sickness itself can be arrested. Now it's easy for the sick one to believe that if the Lord chastened him for his sins, He also wills that now that the sin has been forgiven, this same body

should receive the grace that manifests His love. His presence is revealed, a ray of His divine life comes to quicken the body, and the sick one proves that as soon as he is no longer separated from the Lord, the prayer of faith does save the sick.

Chapter 19

Jesus Bore Our Sickness

> *Surely he has borne our sicknesses and suffered our pain. . . . By his knowledge shall my righteous slave justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities. . . . He shall divide the spoil unto the strong because he has borne the sin of many* (Isaiah 53:4, 11-12).

Do you know this beautiful chapter, the fifty-third of Isaiah, which has been called the fifth gospel? In the light of the Spirit of God, Isaiah describes beforehand the sufferings of the Lamb of God, as well as the divine graces that would result from them.

The expression *to bear*, meaning to carry, had to be part of this prophecy. It is, in fact, the word that must accompany the mention of sin, whether as committed directly by the sinner or transmitted to a substitute. The transgressor, the priest, and the substitutionary victim must all bear the sin. In the same way, it is because the Lamb of God has borne our sins that God smote Him for the iniquity of us all. Sin was not found in Him, but it was put upon Him. He took it voluntarily upon Himself. And it's because He bore it, and in bearing it He put an end to it, that He has the power to save us. As we see in Isaiah 53:11-12 above, it is because our sins have been borne by Jesus Christ that we are delivered from them as soon as we believe this truth. Consequently, we no longer need to bear them ourselves.

In this same chapter (Isaiah 53) the expression *to bear* occurs twice but in relation to two different things. It is said not only that the Lord's righteous Servant has borne our sins (v. 12), but also that He has borne our sicknesses (v. 4). In this manner, His bearing our sicknesses as well as our sins forms an integral part of the Redeemer's work. Although He was without sin, He has

borne our sins and He has done the same for our sicknesses. The human nature of Jesus could not be touched by sickness because it remained holy. We never find in the account of His life any mention of sickness. Participating in all the weaknesses of our human nature such as hunger, thirst, fatigue, and sleep – He still had no trace of sickness, because these things are a consequence of sin. Since He was without sin, sickness had no hold on Him, and He could die only a violent death and could only do that by His voluntary consent. Thus it is not *in* Him but *on* Him that we see sickness as well as sin. He took them upon Himself and bore them of His own free will. In bearing them and taking them upon Himself, He has triumphed over them and has acquired the right to deliver His children from them.

Sin had attacked and ruined equally the soul and the body. Jesus came to save both. Having taken upon Himself sickness as well as sin, He is in a position to set us free from the one as well as the other. To accomplish this double deliverance, He expects only one thing from us: our faith.

As soon as a sick believer understands the meaning of the words, *Jesus has borne my sins*, he does not fear to say also, "I need no longer bear my sins; they are upon me no longer." In the same way, as soon as he has fully taken in and believed for himself that Jesus has borne our sicknesses, he does not fear to say, "I need no longer bear my sickness. Jesus in bearing sin bore also sickness, which is its consequence, for both He has made substitutionary payment. He delivers me from both."

I have myself witnessed the blessed influence that this truth had one day on a sick woman. For seven years she had been almost continually bedridden. A sufferer from tuberculosis, epilepsy, and other sicknesses, she had been assured that no hope of cure remained for her. She was carried into the room where the late Mr. W. E. Boardman was holding a Sunday evening service for the sick and was laid in a half-fainting condition on the sofa. She was barely conscious enough to remember anything of what took place until she heard the words, *He took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses* (Matthew 8:17), and then she

seemed to hear the words, “If He has borne your sicknesses, why then bear them yourself? Get up.” But she thought, *If I attempt to get up and fall upon the ground, what will they think of me?*

But the inward voice began again, “If He has borne my sins, why should I have to bear them?” To the astonishment of all who were present, she arose and although still feeble, sat down in a chair by the table. From that moment her healing made rapid progress. At the end of a few weeks she no longer had the appearance of an invalid, and later her strength was such that she could spend many hours a day visiting the poor. With what joy and love she could then speak of Him who was *the strength of her life* (Psalm 27:1). She believed that Jesus had borne her sicknesses as well as her sins, and her faith was rewarded. It is in this way Jesus reveals Himself as a perfect Savior to all those who will trust themselves unreservedly to Him.

Chapter 20

Is Sickness Discipline?

For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would examine ourselves, we should not be judged. But being judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world (1 Corinthians 11:30-32).

In writing to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul felt it necessary to rebuke them for the manner in which they observed the Lord's Supper, drawing upon themselves the chastisements of God. Here we see sickness as a judgment of God, a chastisement for sin. Paul sees it to be a real chastisement since he afterwards says, *"chastened of the Lord,"* and he adds that it is in order to hinder them from falling yet deeper into sin, to prevent them from being *"condemned with the world,"* that they are sick. He warns them that if they didn't want to be judged or rebuked by the Lord, to show them the cause of their sickness so that they turned from their sins, the Lord would no longer need to exercise severity. Isn't it evident here that sickness is a judgment of God, a chastisement of sin, and that we can avoid it by examining and condemning sin in ourselves?

Yes, sickness is more often than we believe it, a judgment, a chastisement for sin. *For he does not afflict nor grieve the sons of men* (Lamentations 3:33). It is not without a cause that He deprives us of health. Perhaps it may be to render us attentive to some sin we can recognize, *Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee* (John 5:14), perhaps because God's child has become entangled in pride and worldliness. It may be that self-confidence or inconsistency has been mixed with his service to God.

Again, it is quite possible that chastisement may not be directed against any particular sin, but it may be the result of the preponderance of sin that weighs on

the entire human race. When, in the case of the man born blind the disciples ask the Lord, *"Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" and He answered, "Neither has this man sinned nor his parents,"* (John 9:2-3). He does not by any means say that there is no relation between sin and sickness, but He teaches us not to accuse every sick person of sin.

In any case, sickness is always a discipline that should make us pay attention to sin and turn us from it. So a sick person should begin by examining himself (1 Corinthians 11:31) by placing himself before his heavenly Father with a sincere desire to see anything that could have grieved Him or could have rendered the chastisement necessary. In doing this, he can completely rely on the Holy Spirit's light, who will clearly show him his failure. Let him be ready at once to renounce what he might discern and place himself at the Lord's disposal to serve Him with perfect obedience. However, he must not imagine that he can conquer sin by his own efforts. No, that is impossible. But let him, with all his power of will, be on God's side in renouncing what is sin in His sight, and let him believe that he is accepted by Him. In doing this, he will be yielding himself, consecrating himself anew to God, willing to do only His holy will in all things.

Scripture assures us that if we examine ourselves in this way, the Lord will not judge us. Our Father only chastens His child as far as is necessary. God seeks to deliver us from sin and self. As soon as we understand Him and break with these, sickness may cease. It has done its work. We must come to see what the sickness means and recognize in it the discipline of God. One may recognize vaguely that he commits sins while scarcely attempting to define what they are, or if he does, he may not believe it is possible to give them up. If he decides to renounce them, he may fail to rely on God to put an end to the chastisement. And yet, how glorious is the assurance Paul's words give us!

Dear sick one, do you understand that your heavenly Father has something to correct in you? He wants your sickness to help you discover it, and the Holy Spirit will guide you in the search. Then renounce at once what He points out to you so you can be close to your heavenly Father. It is His will to forgive your sin

and heal your sickness.

In Jesus we have both pardon and healing; they are two sides of His redemptive work. He calls you to live a life of dependence on Him more than you ever have before. Abandon yourself to Him in a complete obedience and walk from now on as a little child, following His steps. Your heavenly Father will joyfully deliver you from chastisement to reveal Himself to you as your healer. He will bring you nearer to Him through this new tie of His love, and He will make you obedient and faithful in serving Him. If as a wise and faithful Father He had to discipline you, it is also as a Father that He desires to heal, bless, and keep you from now on.

Chapter 21

God’s Prescription for the Sick

> *Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the* congregation*; and let them pray for him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall cause the one who is sick to be saved, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he shall be forgiven them* (James 5:14-15).

This text, above all others, clearly tells the sick what they have to do to be healed. Sickness and its consequences abound in the world. What joy, then, for the believer to learn from the Word of God the way of healing for the sick! The Bible teaches us that it is the will of God to see His children in good health. The apostle James has no hesitation in saying, *“the prayer of faith shall cause the one who is sick to be saved, and the Lord shall raise him up”* (James 5:15). May the Lord teach us to listen and to simply receive what His Word tells us.

Notice first, James makes a distinction here between affliction (or suffering) and sickness. He says, *“Is any among you afflicted? Let them pray”* (James 5:13). He does not specify what to ask in such a case; still less does he say to ask for deliverance from suffering. No, suffering that can result from various exterior causes happens to every Christian. Let us therefore understand that the object of James is to lead the tried and tested believer to ask for deliverance only with a spirit of submission to the will of God, and above all, to ask for the patience he considers to be the privilege of the believer (James 1:2-4, 12; 5:7-8).

But in dealing with the question, *Is any sick among you?* James replies quite differently. Now he says with assurance that if the sick one asks for healing with confidence he shall obtain it, and the Lord will hear him. So we see that there is a great difference between suffering and sickness. The Lord Jesus spoke of

suffering as being necessary, as being willed and blessed of God; while He says of sickness that it ought to be cured. All other suffering comes to us outwardly and will only cease when Jesus triumphs over the sin and evil in the world. Sickness is an evil in the body itself, in this body saved by Christ so that it can become the temple of the Holy Spirit, which ought to be healed as soon as the sick believer receives by faith the working of the Holy Spirit, the very life of Jesus in him.

What is the direction given here to the sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let the elders pray for him. In the time of James there were physicians, but it is not to them the sick believer must turn. The elders then were the pastors and leaders of the churches, called to the ministry not because they had passed through schools of theology, but because they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and well known for their righteousness and for their faith. Why should their presence be needed by the sick one? Could not his friends have prayed? Yes, but it is not so easy for everybody to exercise the faith which obtains healing, and that is one reason why James desired that men should be called whose faith was firm and sure. Besides this, they were representatives to the sick one of the church, the collective body of Christ, for it is the communion of believers which invites the Spirit to act with power. In short, they should, after the pattern of the great Shepherd of the sheep, care for the flock as He does, identify themselves with the sick one, understand his trouble, receive from God the necessary discernment to instruct him and encourage him to persevere in faith. It is to the elders of the church that the healing of the sick is committed. It is they, the servants of the God who pardons iniquities and heals diseases (Psalm 103), who are called to transmit to others the Lord’s graces for soul and body.

Finally, there is a promise still more direct – that of healing. The apostle speaks of it as the certain consequence of the prayer of faith. *The prayer of faith shall cause the one who is sick to be saved, and the Lord shall raise him up*. This promise ought to stimulate in every believer the desire and expectation of healing. Receiving these words with simplicity and as they are written, shouldn’t

we see in them an unlimited promise, offering healing to whomsoever shall pray in faith? The Lord teach us to study His Word with the faith of a truly believing heart!

Chapter 22

The Lord Thy Healer

I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord thy Healer (Exodus 15:26).

How often have we read these words, without daring to take them for ourselves, and without expectation that the Lord would fulfill them to us! We have seen in them that the people of God ought to be exempt from the diseases inflicted upon the Egyptians. We have believed that this promise applied only to the Old Testament, and we who live under the economy of the New Testament cannot expect to be kept from or healed of sickness by the direct intervention of the Lord! However, as we were obliged to recognize the superiority of the New Covenant, we have come, in our ignorance, to allege that sickness often brings great blessings, and consequently God had done well to withdraw what He had formerly promised, and to be no longer for us what He was for Israel, *The Lord thy Healer*.

In our day we see the church awakening and acknowledging her mistake. She sees that it is under the New Covenant that the Lord Jesus passed on His power of healing to His disciples. She is beginning to see that in charging His church to preach the gospel to every creature, He has promised to be with her *always even unto the end of the age* (Matthew 28:20). As the proof of His presence, His disciples should have the power to lay hands on the sick, and they should be healed (Mark 16:15-18). She also sees that in the days following Pentecost, the miraculous pouring out of the Holy Spirit was accompanied by miraculous healings, which were evident proof of the blessings brought about by the power from on high (Acts 3:16; 5:12; 9:40). There is nothing in the Bible to make her believe that the promise made to Israel has been since retracted, and she hears

from the Apostle James a new promise.

The prayer of faith shall cause the one who is sick to be saved [or healed] (James 5:15). She knows that at all times it has been unbelief which has *limited the Holy One of Israel* (Psalm 78:41), and she asks herself if it is not unbelief which hinders in these days this manifestation of the power of God. Who can doubt it? It's not God or His Word which are to blame here. It's our unbelief which prevents the miraculous power of the Lord, and which holds Him back from healing as in past times. Let our faith awake, let it recognize and adore in Christ the all-power of Him who says, *"I am the LORD thy Healer."* It is by the works of God that we can best understand what His Word tells us. The healings which again are responding to the prayer of faith confirm, by gloriously illustrating, the truth of His promise.

Let us learn to see in the risen Jesus the divine healer, and let us receive Him as such. In order that I may recognize in Jesus my justification, my strength, and my wisdom, I must grasp by faith that He is really all this to me. Equally, when the Bible tells me that Jesus is the sovereign healer, I must myself appropriate this truth, and say, "Yes, Lord, it is Thou who art my healer." And why may I hold Him as such? It is because He gives Himself to me that *we have been planted together* (Romans 6:5), and inseparably united to Him, I in this way possess His healing power. It is because of His love that He is pleased to bless His beloved with favors, to communicate Himself with all His heart to all who desire to receive Him. Let us believe that He is ready to extend the treasure of blessing, contained in the name, *The Lord thy Healer*, to all who know and who can trust in this divine name. This is the treatment for the sick indicated by the law of His kingdom. When I bring my sickness to the Lord I do not depend on what I see, feel, or think, but on what He says. Even when everything appears contrary to the expected healing, even if it should not take place at the time or in the way I had thought I should receive it, even when the symptoms seem only to be aggravated, my faith, strengthened by the very waiting, should cling immovably to this word which has gone out of the mouth of God, *"I am the Lord*

thy Healer." God is ever seeking to make us true believers. Healing and health are of little value if they do not glorify God and serve to unite us more closely with Him. In this way, regarding the matter of healing, faith must always be put to the proof. He who counts on the name of his God, who can hear Jesus saying to him, *"Did I not say unto thee that if thou wouldest believe thou shalt see the glory of God?"* (John 11:40), will have the joy of receiving from God Himself the healing of the body, and of seeing it take place in a manner worthy of God, and conformably to His promises. When we read these words, *I am the Lord thy Healer*, let us not fear to answer eagerly, "Yes, Lord, Thou art the Lord my Healer."

Chapter 23

Jesus Heals the Sick

> *When evening was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils, and he . . . healed all that were sick that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, He took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses* (Matthew 8:16-17).

In a preceding chapter we have studied the words of the prophet Isaiah. If the reader still has any doubt as to the interpretation of it, which has been given, we remind him of that which the Holy Spirit caused the evangelist St. Matthew to write about it. It is expressly said regarding all the sick ones whom Jesus healed, *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet*. It was because Jesus had taken on Him our sicknesses that He could, that He ought to heal them. If He had not done so, one part of His work of redemption would have remained powerless and fruitless.

This text of the Word of God is not generally understood in this way. It is the generally accepted view that the miraculous healings done by the Lord Jesus are to be looked upon only as the proof of His mercy, or as being the symbol of spiritual graces. They are not seen to be a necessary consequence of redemption, although that is what the Bible declares. The body and the soul have been created to serve together as a habitation of God. The sickly condition of the body is, as well as that of the soul, a consequence of sin, and that is what Jesus came to bear, to redeem, and conquer.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, it was not in the character of the Son of God that He cured the sick, but as the Mediator who had taken upon Himself and borne sickness. This enables us to understand why Jesus gave so much time to His healing work, and why also the evangelists speak of it in a manner so

detailed. Read for example what Matthew says about it:

> *Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every sickness and every bodily weakness among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with diverse diseases and torments and those who were possessed with devils and those who were lunatic and those that were paralyzed; and he healed them* (Matthew 4:23-24).
>
> *And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every sickness and every weakness among the people* (Matthew 9:35).
>
> *Then calling his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of weakness* (Matthew 10:1).

When the disciples of John the Baptist came to ask Jesus if He were the Messiah, to prove it to them, He replied, *"The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them"* (Matthew 11:5).

After the cure of the withered hand, and the opposition of the Pharisees who sought to destroy Him, we read that *great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all* (Matthew 12:15). When later the multitude had followed Him into a desert place, it is said, *And Jesus went forth and saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick* (Matthew 14:14). Farther on, *They sent out into all that country round about and brought unto him all that were sick and besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment, and as many as touched were made perfectly whole* (Matthew 14:35-36).

In the next chapter of Matthew, it is said also of the sick who were among the multitudes that they *cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them,* and

Matthew adds, *insomuch that the multitude wondered when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see, and they glorified the God of Israel* (Matthew 15:30-31). And finally when He came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan, *a great multitude followed him, and he healed them there* (Matthew 19:2).

When we add to these many texts, those that give us in detail the account of healings done by Jesus, we must ask ourselves if these healings give us only the proof of His power during His life here on earth, or if they are instead the undoubted and continual result of His work of mercy and of love, the manifestation of His power of redemption, which delivers the soul and body from the dominion of sin?

Yes, that was indeed the very purpose of God. If, then, Jesus bore our sicknesses as an integral part of the redemption, if He has healed the sick *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet,* and if His Savior-heart is always full of mercy and love, we can believe with certainty that to this very day it is the will of Jesus to heal the sick in answer to the prayer of faith.

Chapter 24

Fervent and Effectual Prayer

> *Pray one for another that ye may be whole. The effectual prayer of the righteous* is *very powerful. Elijah was a man subject to passions* [or nature] *like unto ours, and he asked in prayer that it might not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit* (James 5:16-18).

James knew that a faith able to obtain healing is not the fruit of human nature. For that reason, he adds that the prayer must be *effectual*, which means fervent, or earnest. Only this kind of prayer can be effective. In this he stands on the example of Elijah, a man of the same nature, subject to passions like unto ours, that we are implying that our prayer can be and ought to be of the same nature as his. How then did Elijah pray? This will shed some light on what the prayer of faith should be.

Elijah had received from God the promise that rain was about to fall on the earth (1 Kings 18:1), and he had declared this to Ahab. Strong in the promise of his God, he mounts Carmel to pray (1 Kings 18:42; James 5:18). He knows he believes that God's will is to send rain, and nevertheless he must pray, or the rain will not come. His prayer is no empty form; it is a real power, the effectiveness of which is about to make itself felt in heaven. God wills that it shall rain, but the rain will only come at Elijah's request, a request repeated with faith and perseverance until the appearance of the first cloud in the sky. For the will of God to be accomplished, this will must on one side be expressed by a promise, and on the other it must be received and laid hold of by the believer who prays. He must persevere in prayer to show God that his faith expects an answer and

will not grow weary until it is obtained.

This is how prayer must be made for the sick. The promise of God, *The Lord will raise him up,* must be rested on, and His will to heal must be recognized. Jesus Himself teaches us to pray with faith that counts on the answer of God. He says to us, *"Everything that ye ask for, praying, believe that ye receive it, and it shall come upon you"* (Mark 11:24). After the prayer of faith that receives in advance what God has promised, comes the prayer of perseverance, which does not lose sight of what has been asked for until God has fulfilled His promise (1 Kings 18:43). There may be some obstacle to the fulfillment of the promise; whether on the side of God and His righteousness (Deuteronomy 9:18), or on the side of Satan and his constant opposition to the plans of God, something that still delays the answer to the prayer (Daniel 10:12-13). It may be also that our faith needs to be purified (Matthew 15:22-28). Whatever it may be, our faith must persevere until the answer comes. He who prays six times fervently and stops there, when he ought to have prayed seven times (2 Kings 13:18-19), deprives himself of the answer to his prayer.

Perseverance in prayer, a perseverance that strengthens the faith of the believer against everything that may seem opposed to the answer, is a real miracle; it is one of the impenetrable mysteries of the life of faith. Doesn't it say to us that the Savior's redeemed one is truly His friend, a member of His body, and that the government of the world and the gifts of divine grace depend in some sense upon his prayers? Prayer, therefore, is no empty request. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, who intercedes here on earth in us and by us. Because of this, our prayer is as effective and indispensable as the work of the Son who intercedes for us before the throne of God.

It might seem strange that after having prayed with the certainty of being heard, and having seen in that matter the will of God, we should still need to continue in prayer. But that is true. In Gethsemane Jesus prayed three times in succession. On Mt. Carmel Elijah prayed seven times. We, if we believe the promise of God without doubting, will pray until we receive the answer. Both

the troublesomely urgent friend at midnight and the widow who beseeched the unjust judge are examples of perseverance in seeking an end result.

Let us learn from Elijah's prayer to humble ourselves, to recognize why the power of God cannot be more manifested in the church, whether in the healing of the sick, conversion, or sanctification. *Ye have not that which ye desire because ye ask not* (James 4:2). Let it also teach us patience. In the cases where healing is delayed, let us remember that obstacles may exist over which only perseverance in prayer can triumph. Faith which ceases to pray, or which is allowed to relax in its fervor, cannot gain what God has nevertheless given. Let not our faith in the promises of Scripture be shaken by those things which are as yet beyond our reach. God's promise remains the same, *The prayer of faith shall cause the one who is sick to be saved* (James 5:15).

May the prayer of Elijah strengthen our faith. Let us remember that we must imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises (Hebrews 6:12). If we learn to persevere in prayer, its fruit will be always more abundant and more evident. We will obtain, as Jesus obtained when He was on earth, healing of the sick, often immediate healing, which will bring glory to God.

Chapter 25

Praying for One Another

> *Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another that ye may be whole. The effectual prayer of the righteous is very powerful* (James 5:16).

James begins by speaking to us of the prayers of the elders of the church; but here he addresses all believers in saying, *"pray one for another that ye may be whole."* Having already spoken of confession and pardon, he still adds, *pray one for another*.

This shows us that the prayer of faith that asks for healing is not the prayer of one isolated believer, but that it ought to unite the members of the body of Christ in the communion of the Spirit. God certainly hears the prayer of each one of His children as soon as it is presented to Him with living faith, but the sick one does not always possess such faith as this. Therefore, so that the Holy Spirit may come to act with power, there must generally be the union of several members of the body of Christ together claiming His presence.

This dependence on our brothers and sisters should be exercised in two ways. First, we must confess our faults to any we may have wronged and receive forgiveness from them. But besides this, if one who is sick has been shown a sin he has committed as the cause of his sickness and has recognized in it a chastening of God, he ought in such a case acknowledge his sin before the elders or brethren in Christ who pray for him and who are in this way able to do so with more light and more faith. Such confession will also be a guide that tests the sincerity of his repentance, for it is easier to confess our sins to God than to man. Before he does it, his humiliation must be real and his repentance sincere. The result will be a closer relationship between the sick one and those who intercede

for him and their faith will be strengthened again.

Pray one for another that ye may be whole. Does not this clearly answer what we often hear, “What is the use of going to M. Zeller in Switzerland, Dr. Cullis in America, or Bethshan in London? Doesn’t the Lord hear prayer wherever it is offered?”

Yes, undoubtedly wherever a prayer in living faith rises up to God, it finds Him ready to grant healing; but the church has so neglected to believe in this truth that it is a rare thing in the present day to find Christians capable of praying in this manner. Accordingly, we should be extremely grateful to the Lord that He has inspired certain believers with the desire to consecrate their lives, in part, to witnessing to the truth of divine healing. Their words and their faith awaken faith in the heart of many sick ones who, without their help, would never come to such faith. It is precisely these very people who always say to everybody: “The Lord is everywhere to be found.”

Let Christians learn not to neglect even the smallest part of the marvelous power of their God, and He will be able to show everyone that He is always the *Lord thy Healer* (Exodus 15:26). Let us be careful to obey the Word of God, to confess one to another, and to pray one for another that we may be healed.

James notes here still another essential key to successful prayer: It must be the prayer of the righteous. *The effectual prayer of the righteous is very powerful*. The Scripture tells us that *he that does righteousness is righteous, even as he* [Jesus] *also is righteous* (1 John 3: 7). James himself was surnamed *The Just* on account of his holiness and tender conscience. Whether an elder or a simple believer, it is only after one is wholly surrendered to God and living in obedience to His will that one can pray effectually for the brethren. John says as much, *“Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him because we keep his commandments and do those things that are pleasing in his sight”* (1 John 3:22). It is therefore the prayer of one who lives in intimate communion with God that *is very powerful*. It is to such prayer that God will grant the answer, which He would not be able to give to others of His children who are not living that way.

We often hear these words quoted, *The prayer of a righteous man is very powerful,* but very rarely is this quotation taken in its context or remembered that it is especially divine healing in question here. Oh, may the Lord raise up in His church many of these righteous men, animated with living faith, whom He can use to glorify Jesus as the divine Healer of the sick!

Chapter 26

The Will of God

Thy will be done (Matthew 6:10).

If the Lord wills (James 4:15).

In days of sickness, when doctors and medicines fail, we generally turn to the words here quoted, and they can easily become a stumbling block in the way of divine healing. “How can I know,” it is asked, “whether it’s not God’s will that I should remain ill? And not knowing this, how can I believe for healing, how can I pray for it with faith?”

Here truth and error seem to touch. It is indeed impossible to pray with faith when we are not sure that we are asking according to the will of God. “I can,” one may say, “pray fervently in asking God to do the best for me, believing that He will cure me if it is possible.” As long as one prays in this way, one is indeed praying with submission, but this is not the prayer of faith. That is only possible when we are certain we are asking according to the will of God. The question then resolves itself into making sure what the will of God is. It is a great mistake to think that the child of God cannot know what is His will about healing.

In order to know His divine will, we must be guided by the Word of God. It is His Word that promises us healing. The promise of James 5 is so absolute that it is impossible to deny it. This promise only confirms other passages, equally strong, that tell us that Jesus Christ has obtained for us the healing of our diseases because He has borne our sicknesses. According to this promise, we have a right to healing because it is a part of the salvation we have in Christ, and therefore we can expect it with certainty. Scripture tells us that sickness is, in God’s hands, the means of chastening His children for their sins, but that this

discipline ceases to be exercised as soon as His suffering child acknowledges and turns from the sin. Doesn't this say clearly that God desires only to make use of sickness to bring back His children when they are straying?

Sick Christian, open your Bible, study it, and see in its pages that sickness is a warning to renounce sin, but whoever acknowledges and forsakes his sins finds in Jesus pardon and healing. This is God's promise in His Word. If the Lord had in mind some other plan for those of His children He was about to call home to Him, He would make known to them His will, giving them by the Holy Spirit a desire to depart. In other special cases, He would awaken some special conviction. As a general rule, the Word of God promises us healing in answer to the prayer of faith.

"Nevertheless," some might say, "isn't it better in all things to leave it to the will of God?" And they quote the instance of such and such Christians who would have, so to speak, forced the hand of God by their praying without adding, "Thy will be done," and who would not have experienced blessing in the answer to their prayers. They say, "How do we know whether sickness wouldn't be better for us than health?" Notice here that this is not forcing the hand of God, since it is His Word that tells us it is His will to heal us. *The prayer of faith shall cause the one who is sick to be saved* [healed]. God wills that the health of the soul will have a blessed influence on the health of the body, and the presence of Jesus in the soul is seen in the good condition of the body. And when you know this is His will, you cannot, when saying something like this (that maybe God's will is that sickness is better for us than health), say truthfully that you are completely leaving it to Him. It is not leaving it to Him when you make use of all possible medical treatments to get healing instead of laying hold of His promise. Your submission is nothing else than spiritual laziness in view of what God commands you to do.

As to knowing whether or not sickness is better than health, we do not hesitate to reply that the return to health that is the result of giving up sin, of consecration to God, and of an ultimate communion with God, is infinitely better

than sickness. *The will of God is your sanctification* (1 Thessalonians 4:3), and it is by healing that God confirms the reality of this. When Jesus comes to take possession of our body and cures it miraculously, when it follows that the health received must be maintained from day to day by an uninterrupted communion with Him, the experience we gain in this way of the Savior's power and His love is a result very superior to any sickness has to offer. Doubtless, sickness may teach us submission, but healing received direct from God makes us better acquainted with our Lord and teaches us to confide in Him better. It also prepares the believer to better accomplish the service of God.

Christian who is sick, if you will really seek to know what is the will of God in this thing, don't let yourself be influenced by the opinions of others or by your own former ideas, but listen to and study what the Word of God has to say. Examine whether it tells you that divine healing is a part of the redemption of Jesus, and that God wills that every believer has the right to claim it. See whether it promises that the prayer of every child of God, for this thing shall be heard and health restored by the power of the Holy Spirit, demonstrates the glory of God in the eyes of the church and the world. Ask this as you read your Bible and it will answer you and let you know that, according to the will of God, sickness is a discipline occasioned by sin (or shortcoming) and healing granted in answer to the prayer of faith, bears witness to His grace which forgives, sanctifies, and takes away sin.

Chapter 27

Obedience and Health

> *There he gave them statutes and rights, and there he proved them and said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God and wilt do that which is right in his sight and wilt give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the LORD thy Healer* (Exodus 15:25-26).

It was at Marah that the Lord gave His people this instruction. Israel was just released from the yoke of Egypt when their faith was tested in the desert by the waters of Marah. It was after He had sweetened the bitter waters that the Lord promised He would not put upon the children of Israel any of the diseases He had brought upon the Egyptians as long as they would obey Him. They would be exposed to other trials, they might sometimes suffer the need of bread and water and encounter great dangers. All these things might come upon them in spite of their obedience, but sickness would not touch them. In a world still under the power of Satan, they might be a subject of outward attacks, but their bodies would not be oppressed with sickness, for God had delivered them from it. For He said, *"If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God and wilt do that which is right in his sight and wilt give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the LORD thy Healer.*" Again elsewhere he said, *"Ye shall serve the LORD your God, . . . and I will take all sickness away from the midst of thee"* (Exodus 23:25). (See also Lev. 26:14, 16; Deut. 7:15, 23; 28:15-61).

This calls our attention to a truth of the greatest importance, an intimate

relation exists between obedience and health, and between sanctification (the health of the soul) and the divine healing that ensures the health of the body. Obedience and health are both part of the salvation that comes from God. It is noteworthy that in several languages the words *salvation, healing,* and *sanctification* are derived from the same root and present the same fundamental thought. (For instance, the German word *heil* means salvation; *heilung* means healing; *heilichung* means sanctification.) Salvation is the redemption the Savior has obtained for us; health is the salvation of the body, which also comes to us from the Divine Healer; and lastly, sanctification reminds us that true salvation and true health consist of being holy as God is holy. So, it is in giving health to the body and sanctification to the soul that Jesus is really the Savior of His people.

Our text clearly declares the relationship between holiness of life and the healing of the body. The expressions that bear this out seem to be purposely multiplied in Exodus 15:25-26, *If thou wilt diligently hearken . . . and wilt do that which is right . . . and wilt give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee.*

Here we have the key to all true obedience and holiness. We often think we know well the will of God revealed in His Word, but why doesn't this knowledge result in obedience? It's because in order to obey we must begin by listening. *If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God . . . give ear.* As long as the will of God reaches me through the voice of man or through the reading of a book, it may have only a little power with me. If I enter into direct communion with God and listen to His voice, His commandment is quickened with living power to facilitate its accomplishment.

Christ is the living Word and the Holy Spirit is His voice. Listening to His voice means to renounce all our own will and wisdom, to close our ears to every other voice so that we look for no other direction but that of the Holy Spirit. One who is redeemed is like a servant or child who needs to be directed. He knows that he belongs entirely to God and that all his being, spirit, soul, and body ought

to glorify God.

But he is equally conscious that this is beyond his strength and he needs to receive, hour by hour, the direction he needs. He knows also that the divine commandment, as long as it is merely a book or a piece of paper to him, cannot give him strength and wisdom. It is only as he attentively listens that he will obtain the desired strength. For this reason, he listens and learns by doing this to observe the laws of God. This life of attention and action, of renouncement and crucifixion, constitutes a holy life. The Lord brings us to it in the first place by sickness and makes us understand that which we are lacking, and then also by the healing that calls the soul to this life of continual attention to the voice of God.

Most Christians see nothing more in divine healing than a temporal blessing for the body, while in the promise of our holy God its end is to make us holy. The call to holiness can be heard stronger and more clearly every day to be in the church. More and more believers are coming to understand that God wants them to be like Christ. The Lord is beginning again to make use of His healing virtue, seeking thereby to show us that still in our own days the Holy One of Israel is *the Lord that thy Healer*, and it is His will to keep His people both in health of body and in obedience.

Let the person who looks for healing from the Lord receive it with joy. It is not a legal obedience that is required of him, an obedience depending on his own strength. No, God asks instead for the carefree trust of a little child, the attention that listens and consents to be led. This is what God expects of us. The healing of the body will be the result of this childlike faith, for the Lord will reveal Himself as the mighty Savior who heals the body and sanctifies the soul.

Chapter 28

Job’s Sickness and Healing

So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto the crown of his head (Job 2:7).

The veil that hides the unseen world from us is lifted for a moment in the mysterious history of Job. It reveals to us heaven and hell busily occupied with God’s servants on earth. We see in it the temptations peculiar to sickness and how Satan makes use of them to dispute with God and seek the destruction of the soul of man. While God, on the contrary, seeks to sanctify it by the very same trial. In the case of Job, we see in God’s light the source of sickness, the result it should have, and how it is possible to be delivered from it.

Does sickness come from God or Satan? Opinions on this point vastly differ. Some believe it is sent of God. Others see in it the work of the wicked one. Both are in error as long as they hold their view to the exclusion of that held by the other party, while both are in the right if they admit that there are two sides to this question. Let us say then that sickness comes from Satan, but it cannot exist without the permission of God. On one hand, the power of Satan is that of an oppressor who has not himself any right to pounce on man and attack him, and on the other hand the claims of Satan on man are legitimate in that the righteousness of God decrees that he who yields himself to Satan places himself under his domination.

Satan is the prince of the kingdom of darkness and of sin. Sickness is the consequence of sin. Sin gives Satan the rights to the body of sinful man. He is the prince of this world, so recognized by God, until such time as he is legally conquered and dethroned. Consequently, he has a certain power over all those who remain down here under his jurisdiction. It is he, then, who torments people

with sickness and seeks to use it to turn them from God and cause their ruin.

But, we would be quick to say, the power of Satan is far from being almighty. He can do nothing without God's authorization. God permits him to do all he does in tempting men, even believers, but it is in order that the trial will bring forth in them the fruit of holiness. It is also said that Satan has the power of death (Heb. 2:14), that he is everywhere at work where death reigns, and nevertheless he has no power to decide as to the death of God's servants without the express will of God. It is even so with sickness. Because of sin, sickness is the work of Satan, but since the supreme direction of this world belongs to God, it can also be regarded as the work of God. All who are acquainted with the Book of Job know how very clearly this is brought out there.

What ought to be the result of sickness? The result will be good or evil depending on whether God or Satan has the victory in us. Under Satan's influence, a sick person sinks always deeper in sin. He does not recognize sin to be the cause of the chastisement, and he occupies himself exclusively with himself and his sufferings. He desires nothing but to be healed, without dreaming of a desire for deliverance from sin. On the contrary, wherever God gains the victory sickness leads the sufferer to renounce himself and to abandon himself to God. The history of Job illustrates this. His friends accused him, unjustly, of having committed sins of exceptional gravity and by them to have drawn upon himself his terrible sufferings. It was, however, no such thing, since God Himself had borne witness that he was *a perfect and an upright man, one that fears God and has departed from evil* (Job 2:3). But in defending himself, Job went too far. Instead of humbling himself in abasement before the Lord and recognizing his hidden sins, he sought in all self-righteousness to justify himself. It was not until the Lord appeared to him that he came to say, *"I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes"* (Job 42:6). To him, sickness became a powerful blessing in bringing him to know God in quite a new way and to humble himself more than ever before Him. This is the blessing God desires that we also receive whenever He permits Satan to strike us with sickness, and this end is attained by

all sufferers who abandon themselves unreservedly to Him.

How are we to be delivered from sickness? A father never makes the chastisement of his child longer than the time necessary. God, also, who has His purpose in permitting sickness, will not prolong the chastisement longer than is needed to gain His goal. As soon as Job understood Him, from the time that he condemned himself and repented in dust and ashes, through hearkening to what God had revealed to him of Himself, the chastisement was at an end. God Himself delivered him from Satan's hand and healed him of his sickness.

I wish the sick in our day understood that God has a distinct purpose in permitting the chastisement and as soon as it is achieved, as soon as the Holy Spirit has led the sick person to confess and forsake his sins and consecrate himself entirely to the service of the Lord, the chastisement will no longer be needed – that the Lord could and would deliver them! God makes use of Satan as a wise government makes use of a jailer. He only leaves His children in his power for the given time, after which His good will is to join us in the redemption of Him who has conquered Satan, who has withdrawn us from his domination by bearing our sins and sicknesses Himself.

Chapter 29

The Prayer of Faith

> *The prayer of faith shall cause the one who is sick to be saved* [healed], *and the Lord shall raise him up* (James 5:15).

The prayer of faith! Only once does this expression occur in the Bible, and it relates to the healing of the sick. The church has adopted this expression, but she hardly ever has recourse to the prayer of faith except for the sake of obtaining other graces; while according to Scripture it is especially intended for the healing of the sick.

Does the apostle expect healing through the prayer of faith alone, or should it be accompanied by the use of remedies and medical treatment? This is generally the question raised. It is easily decided if we take into consideration the power of the church's spiritual life in the early ages – the gifts of healing bestowed on the apostles by the Lord, augmented by the subsequent pouring out of the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:30; 5:15-16), what Paul says of these gifts of healing by the same Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:9), what James here insists upon when, in order to strengthen the reader in the expectation of faith, he recalls Elijah's prayer and God's wonderful answer (James 5:14-17). Doesn't all this clearly show that the believer is to look for healing in response to the prayer of faith alone and without the addition of remedies?

This prompts another question. Does the use of remedies exclude the prayer of faith? To this we believe our reply should be no, for the experience of many believers testifies that in answer to their prayers God has often blessed the use of medical treatment and made it a means of healing.

We come here to a third question. Which is the line to follow to prove with the greatest certainty and according to the will of God, the effectiveness of the

prayer of faith? Is it, according to James, in setting aside all remedies or in using remedies as believers do for the most part? In a word, is it with or without medical treatment and medicine that the prayer of faith best obtains the grace of God? Which of these two methods will be most directly to the glory of God and for blessing to the sick one? Is it not perfectly simple to reply that if the prescription and the promise in James apply to believers of our time, they will find blessing in receiving them just as they were given to believers then, conforming to them on all points, expecting healing only from the Lord Himself, without trying remedies as well? It is, in fact, in this sense that Scripture always speaks of effectual faith and of the prayer of faith.

Both the laws of nature and the witness of Scripture show us that God often makes use of intermediary agencies to manifest His glory, but whether by experience or by Scripture, we know also that under the power of the fall and the realm of our senses, our tendency is to attach more importance to the remedies than to the direct action of God. It often happens that remedies so occupy us as to intercept the presence of God and turn us away from Him. In this way the laws and the properties of nature, which were meant to bring us back to God, have the opposite effect. This is why the Lord, in calling Abraham to be the father of His chosen people, was not limited to the laws of nature (Romans 4:17-21). God would form for Himself a people of faith, living more in the unseen than in the things visible. In order to lead them into this life it was necessary to take away their confidence in ordinary means. We see that it was not by the ordinary ways that He has shown in nature that God led Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, the judges, David, and many other kings of Israel. His object was to teach them by this, to confide only in Him, to know Him as He is, *Thou art the God that doest wonders* (Psalm 77:14).

God desires to act in a similar way with us. It is when we seek to walk according to His prescription in James 5, abandoning the things that are seen (2 Corinthians 4:18) to lay hold of the promise of God and so receive directly from Him the desired healing, that we discover how much importance we have

attached to earthly remedies. Doubtless there are Christians who can make use of remedies without damage to their spiritual life, but the larger number of them are inclined to count much more on the remedies than on the power of God. Now the purpose of God is to lead His children into a more intimate relationship with Christ, and this is just what happens when, by faith, we commit ourselves to Him as our sovereign healer, counting solely on His invisible presence.

Renouncing remedies and medical treatment strengthens faith in an extraordinary manner. Healing becomes far more than sickness; it becomes a source of numberless spiritual blessings. It makes real to us what faith can accomplish. It establishes a new tie between God and the believer and starts in him a life of confidence and dependence. The body equally with the soul is placed under the power of the Holy Spirit, and the prayer of faith, which saves the sick, in this way leads us to a life of faith strengthened by the assurance that God manifests His presence in our earthly life.

Chapter 30

Anointing in the Name of the Lord

> *Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the* congregation*; and let them pray for him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord* (James 5:14).

Anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. These words have given rise to controversy. Some have sought to conclude from them that instead of saying the answer is the prayer of faith alone without the use of medical remedies, James had, on the contrary, mentioned anointing with oil as a remedy to be used and meant that to anoint in the name of the Lord had no other significance than to rub the patient with oil. But since this prescription applies to all kinds of sicknesses, that meaning would attribute to oil a miraculous virtue against all sickness. Let's see what Scripture tells us about anointing with oil and what meaning it gives these words.

It was the custom of the people in the East to anoint themselves with oil when they came out of the bath; It was most refreshing in a hot climate. We see also that all those who were called to the special service of God were to be anointed with oil as a token of their consecration to God and the grace they would receive from Him to fulfill their vocation. Thus the oil used to anoint the priests and the tabernacle was looked upon as "most holy" (Exodus 30:22-32), and wherever the Bible speaks of anointing with oil, it is an emblem of holiness and consecration. Nowhere in the Bible do we find any proof that oil was used as a remedy.

Anointing with oil is mentioned once in connection with sickness, but its place there was evidently as a religious ceremony and not as a remedy. In Mark 6:13 we read that the twelve *cast out many demons and anointed with oil many that were sick, and they were healed.* Here the healing of the sick runs parallel

with the casting out of devils, both the result of miraculous power. This was the kind of mission Jesus commanded His disciples to undertake when He sent them two and two. *He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of weakness* (Matthew 10:1). So it was the same power that allowed them either to cast out devils or heal the sick.

But what was symbolized by the anointing administered by the twelve? In the Old Testament, oil was the symbol of the gift of the Holy Spirit. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me* (Isaiah 61:1), is one example. It is said of the Lord Jesus in the New Testament, *God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power* (Acts 10:38), and it is said of believers, *Ye have the anointing of the Holy One* (1 John 2:20). Sometimes man feels the need of a visible sign, appealing to his senses, which may come to his aid to sustain his faith and allow him to grasp the spiritual meaning.

For this reason, the anointing should symbolize to the sick person the action of the Holy Spirit who gives the healing.

So do we need the anointing as well as the prayer of faith? It is the Word of God that prescribes it, and it is to obey its teachings that most of those who pray for healing receive the anointing. Not that they regard it as indispensable, but to show that they are ready to submit to the Word of God in all things. In the last promise made by the Lord Jesus, He ordained the laying on of hands, not the anointing, to accompany the communication of healing virtue (Mark 16:18). When Paul circumcised Timothy, and when he took upon himself a special vow, it was to prove that he had no objection to observing the institutions of the Old Covenant so long as the liberty of the gospel did not thereby suffer loss. In the same way, James, the head of the church of Jerusalem, faithful in preserving as far as possible the institutions of his fathers, continued the system of anointing to symbolize the working of the Holy Spirit. And we also should regard it, not as a remedy but as a pledge of the mighty virtue of the Holy Spirit, as a means of strengthening faith, and as a point of contact and communion between the sick person and the members of the church who are called to anoint him or her with

oil.

I am the Lord thy Healer (Exodus 15:26).

Chapter 31

Full Salvation Our High Privilege

Son, thou art always with me, and all that I have is thine (Luke 15:31).

Some time ago, when at Northfield, I was told by Mr. D. L. Moody that the best thing he had heard at Keswick two years ago was this verse, given by some parting minister as a closing or ending text, and Mr. Moody said to himself, “Why did I not see that before?”

We talk a great deal and write a great deal about the father’s love of the prodigal, but when we think of the way he treated the elder brother, it brings to our hearts a truer sense of the wonderful love of the father, and so I want to speak about this verse.

I imagine that many reading this book are Christians who have “full salvation”; but perhaps more than half do not have it, and if I were to ask you, “Have you got it?” You would probably say, “I don’t understand what you mean by *it*, what is *it*?”

My desire is to help you see that full salvation is waiting for you now, God wants you to experience it, and if you feel you have not got it, I want you to see how wrong it is to be without it and then show you how to come out of the wrong life into the right one here and now. Oh, may all who have not got the experience pray very humbly, “Oh, my Father, bring me into the full enjoyment of Your full salvation.”

First, let’s discuss the high privilege of God’s children.

The elder son having always been with his father had, if he liked, the privilege of two things: unceasing fellowship and unlimited partnership. But he was worse than the prodigal, for although always at home, he had never known nor enjoyed nor understood the privileges that were his. All this fullness of

fellowship had been waiting for and offered to him but not received. While the prodigal was away from home in the far country, his elder brother was far from the enjoyment of home, while he was at home.

Unceasing fellowship – an earthly father loves his child and delights to make his child happy. God is a God of love, and He delights to pour out His own nature to His people. Many people talk about God hiding His face, but only two things ever caused God to do so, sin or unbelief. Nothing else can. It is the very nature of the sun to shine, and it can't help shining on and on. *God is love*, and speaking with all reverence, He can't help loving. We see His goodness toward the ungodly and His compassion on the erring, but His fatherly love is manifested toward all His children. *Ever with me*, but you say, "Is it possible to be always happy and dwelling with God?" Yes, certainly, and there are many Scripture promises of this. Look at the epistle to the Hebrews where we read that *we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters even into that which is within the veil* (Hebrews 6:19). David speaks often of hiding *in his tabernacle; in the secret of his tent* (Psalm 27:5) and dwelling *in the secret place of the most High . . . under the shadow of the Almighty* (Psalm 91:1).

The Lord your God desires to have you living continually in the light of His countenance. Your business, your temper, your circumstances, about which you complain as hindering, are they stronger than God? If you come and ask God to shine in and upon you, you will see and prove that He can do it and that you as a believer can walk all day every day in the light of His love. That is "full salvation."

Unlimited partnership – *All that I have is thine*. The elder son complained of the father's gracious reception of the prodigal, of all the feasting and rejoicing over his return, while to him had never been given a kid that he might make merry with his friends. The father, in the tenderness of his love, answered him, "Son, you were always in my house; you had only to ask and you would have got all you desired and required." And that is what our Father says to all His children.

But you are saying, “I am so weak, I can’t conquer my sins, I can’t manage to keep right, I can’t do this and the other thing.” No, but God can, and all the time He is saying to you, “All that I have is thine; for in Christ I have given it to you. All the Spirit’s power and wisdom, all the riches of Christ, all the love of the Father; there is nothing that I have but is thine. I, as God, am God, that I may love, keep, and bless you.” In this manner God speaks, but it seems all a dream to some. Why are you so poor? God’s Word is sure, and doesn’t He promise all this? See in John, chapters 14 to 16, how He tells us that we may have wonderful answers to prayer if we come in Jesus’ name and abide in Him. Do we really believe that it is possible for a Christian to live such a life?

We looked at this high privilege that is for all, so now we consider our second point: the low experience of many of God’s dear children. What is it? Just living in poverty and starvation. The elder son, the child of a rich man, living in utter poverty *never had a kid*, while all that was his father’s was his, just exactly the state of many a child of God. The way He wants us to live is in the fullest fellowship of all His blessings, yet what a contrast!

Ask some if their lives are full of joy. Why, they don’t even believe it’s possible to be always happy and holy. “How could we manage this way in business?” they say. They imagine the life of fullest blessing possible to them must be one of sighing, sadness, and sorrow.

I asked a dear woman at the Cape, a devoted Christian woman, how she was getting on. She answered that in her experience it was sometimes light and sometimes darkness and argued that, as this was so in nature, the same thing held true in the kingdom of grace. So she just gave herself up to a wretched experience.

I don’t read in the Bible that there is to be any night or darkness in the believer’s experience. On the contrary, I read, *Thy sun shall set no more* (Isaiah 60:20); yet there are many who actually believe that there is nothing that good for them. As I said already, nothing can hide God from us but sin and unbelief. If you are in spiritual poverty with no joy, no experience of victory over sin,

temper, wandering, why is it so?

"Oh," you say, "I'm too weak, I must fall." But doesn't the Scripture say that He is *powerful to keep you without sin and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy?* (Jude 1:24). A minister once told me that, although God is *able*, the verse does not say He is *willing* to do it. God does not mock us, beloved. If He says He is *able*, then it is proof of His willingness to do it. Let us believe God's Word and examine our own experience in light of it.

Again, are you working and bearing much fruit for God, and do people by observing your life see and say, "God is with that man, keeping him humble, pure, and heavenly minded"? Or are they forced to confess that you are just a very ordinary Christian, easily provoked, worldly, and not heavenly minded? That is not the life God wants us to live, brothers and sisters. We have a rich Father, and as no true earthly father would like to see his child in rags or without shoes and proper clothing, etc., neither does our heavenly Father; but He wishes to fill up our lives with richest and choicest blessings. How many Sunday school teachers teach and hope for the conversion of their scholars, but yet they can't say God uses them to convert any of them. They enjoy no close fellowship with God, no victory over sin, no power to convince the world.

To which group do you belong? The low-level, or the fully possessed? Confess it today. These two sons represent two classes of Christians: the prodigal – away and backslidden; the elder son – out of full fellowship with God. They were both poor, and the elder son needed as great a change as did the prodigal. He needed to repent and confess and claim his full privileges, and so ought all low-level Christians to repent, confess, and claim full salvation.

Oh, both of you come today and say, "Father, I have sinned."

Now, we ask, what is the cause of this terrible discrepancy? Why the great difference in the experience I wonder? Ask yourself, "What is the reason I am not enjoying this full blessing? God's Word speaks of it, others speak of it, and I see some who are living in it." Oh, do ask the reason. Come to God and say, "Why is it I never live the life You want me to live?"

You will find the answer in our story. The elder son had an un-childlike spirit and entertained wrong thoughts about his father. If he had known the real character of his father, his life would have been all right. He said, “I never got a kid to make merry; my Father is rich, but He never gives. I have prayed quite enough, but God does not answer me. I hear other people say that God fills and satisfies them, but He never does that for me.”

A dear minister told me once that such a life was not for everybody, that it was of God’s sovereignty to give this to whomsoever He pleased. Friends, there is no doubt as to God’s sovereignty. He dispenses His gifts as He will. We are not all Pauls or Peters; places at the right and left hand of God are prepared for whomsoever He will.

But this is not a matter of divine sovereignty; it is a question of a child’s heritage. The Father’s love offers to give to every child in actual experience His full salvation. Now look at an earthly father. His children are of various ages, but all have equal right to the joy of their father’s countenance. True, he gives to his son of twenty years more money than to the son of five, and he has more to speak of to the boy of fifteen than to the child of three; but as regards his love toward them, it is all the same. In their privileges as children they are all alike.

God’s love to His dear children is all the same. Oh, do not try to throw the blame on God, but instead say, “I have had hard thoughts of Thee, O God, and I have sinned. As a father, I have done for my children what I did not believe God was able and willing to do for me, and I have been lacking in childlike faith.” Believe in the love, willingness, and power of God to give you full salvation, and a change will surely come.

Now let us consider the way of restoration: how to get out of this poor experience. The prodigal repented and so must those children of God who have been living within sight of, but not enjoying, His promises. Conversion is generally sudden and a long repentance usually follows a long unrepentance. Many in the church of Christ think it must take a long time to get into full salvation. Yes, it will take a long time if you are to do it yourself. Indeed, you

never will. No, friend, if you come and trust God, it can be done in a moment. By God's grace give yourself up to Him. Don't say, "What's the use? It will do no good." Put yourself, as you are in sin and weakness, into the bosom of your Father. God will deliver you, and you will find it is only one step out of the darkness into the light. Say, "Father, what a wretch I have been, in being with You and yet not believing Your love to me!"

Yes, I come today with a call to *repent*, addressed not to the unsaved but to those who know what it is to be pardoned. For haven't you sinned in the hard thoughts you have had of God, and isn't there a longing, a thirsting, and a hungering after something better? Come then, repent and just believe that God blots out the sin of your unbelief. Do you believe it? Oh, do not dishonor God by unbelief, but come today and confidently claim full salvation. Then trust in Him to keep you. This seems difficult to some, but there is no difficulty about it. God will shine His light on you always, saying, "Son or daughter, you are ever with me." All you have to do is to dwell in and walk in that light.

I began by saying there are two classes of Christians: those who enjoy full salvation and those who do not understand it. If it is not clear to you, ask God to make it clear. But if you *do* understand it, remember it is a definite act. Just let yourself go into the arms of God. Hear Him say, *"All that I have is thine."* Then you say, "Praise God, I believe, I accept, I give up myself to Him, and I believe God gives Himself now to me!"

Chapter 32

We Are the Branches

I am the Vine, ye are the branches: he that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing (John 15:5).

What a simple thing it is to be a branch – the branch of a tree or the branch of a vine! The branch grows out of the vine or out of the tree, and there it lives and in due time bears fruit. It has no responsibility except just to receive from the root and stem sap and nourishment. And if we only, by the Holy Spirit, knew our relationship to Jesus Christ, our work would be changed into the brightest and most heavenly thing on earth. Instead of there ever being soul-weariness or exhaustion, our work would be like a new experience, linking us to Jesus as nothing else can. Isn't it often true that our work comes between us and Jesus? What folly! The very work He has to do in me, and I for Him, I take up in such a way that it separates me from Christ. Many a laborer in the vineyard has complained that he has too much work and no time for close communion with Jesus, and that his usual work weakens his inclination for prayer, and that his too much conversation and interaction with people darken the spiritual life. Sad thought, that the bearing of fruit should separate the branch from the Vine! That must be because we have looked upon our work as something other than the branch bearing fruit. May God deliver us from every false thought about the Christian life!

Now just a few thoughts about this blessed branch-life.

In the first place, it is a life of absolute dependence. The branch has nothing; it just depends on the Vine for everything. That phrase, *absolute dependence*, is one of the most solemn, large, and precious of phrases. A great German

theologian wrote two large volumes years ago to show that the whole of Calvin's theology is summed up in that one principle of absolute dependence upon God; and he was right. If you can learn every moment of the day to depend on God, everything will come out right. You will get the higher life if you depend absolutely upon God.

You may ask, "Does that mean that when I have got to work, when I have to preach a sermon or address a Bible class or go visit the poor neglected ones, all the responsibility of the work is on Christ?

That is exactly what Christ wants you to understand. Christ desires that in all your work the very foundation should be the simple, blessed consciousness: Christ must take care of it all.

And how does He fulfill the trust of that dependence? He does it by sending down the Holy Spirit, not now and then only as a special gift, for remember the relation between the Vine and the branches is such that hourly, daily, unceasingly, the living connection is maintained. The sap does not flow for a time and then stop and then flow again, but from moment to moment the sap flows from the Vine to the branches. And just so, my Lord Jesus wants me to take that blessed position as a worker, morning by morning, day by day, hour by hour, and step by step, in every work I have to go out to, just to abide before Him in the simple, utter helplessness of one who knows nothing, is nothing, and can do nothing.

Absolute dependence on God is the secret of all power in work. The branch has nothing but what it gets from the Vine, and you and I can have nothing but what we get from Jesus.

Secondly, the life of the branch is not only a life of entire dependence, but of deep restfulness. Oh that little branch, if it could think, feel, and speak, and if we could have a little branch today to talk to us, and if we said, "Come, branch of the Vine, tell me, I want to learn from you how I can be a true branch of the living Vine," what would it answer? The little branch would whisper, "I hear that you are wise, and I know you can do a great many wonderful things. I know you

have much strength and wisdom given to you, but I have one lesson for you. With all your hurry and effort in Christ's work, you never prosper. The first thing you need is to come and rest in your Lord Jesus. That is what I do. Since I grew out of that Vine I have spent years and years, and all I have done is just to rest in the Vine. When the time of spring came I had no anxious thought nor care. The Vine began to pour its sap into me, and to give the bud and leaf. When the time of summer came I had no care, and in the great heat I trusted the Vine to bring moisture to keep me fresh. In the time of harvest, when the owner came to pluck the grapes, I had no care. If there was anything in the grapes not good, the owner never blamed the branch; the blame was always on the Vine. And if you would be a true branch of Christ, the living Vine, just rest on Him. Let Christ bear the responsibility."

You say, "Won't that make me lazy?" I tell you it will not. No one who learns to rest on the living Christ can become lazy, for the closer your contact with Christ, the more of the Spirit of His zeal and love will come into you. Begin to work in the midst of your entire dependence by adding to it deep restfulness. A man sometimes tries and tries to be dependent on Christ, but he worries himself about this absolute dependence. He tries and he cannot get it. But let him sink down into entire restfulness every day.

Rest in Christ, who can give wisdom and strength, and you do not know how that restfulness will often prove to be the very best part of your message. You plead with people and you argue, and they get the idea: There is a man arguing and striving with me. They only feel two men dealing with each other. But if you will let the deep rest of God come over you, the rest in Christ Jesus, the peace and rest and holiness of heaven, that restfulness will bring a blessing to the heart, even more than the words you speak.

But a third thought. The branch teaches a lesson of much fruitfulness. You know the Lord Jesus repeated that word *fruit* often in that parable. He spoke first of fruit, then of more fruit, and then of much fruit. Yes, you are ordained not only to bear fruit, but to bear much fruit. *In this is my Father clarified, in that ye*

bear much fruit (John 15:8). In the first place, Christ said, *"I am the true Vine, and my Father is the husbandman"* (John 15:1) who has charge of Me and you. He who will watch over the connection between Christ and the branches is God. It is in the power of God, through Christ, that we are to bear fruit.

O Christians! You know this world is perishing for the lack of workers. And it needs not only more workers. The workers are saying, some more earnestly than others, "We need not only more workers, but we need our workers to have a new power, a different life that the workers are able to bring more blessing."

What is lacking? There is lacking the close connection between the worker and the heavenly Vine. Christ, the heavenly Vine, has blessings He could pour on tens of thousands who are perishing. Christ, the heavenly Vine, has power to provide the heavenly grapes. But *ye are the branches*, and you cannot bear heavenly fruit unless you are in close connection with Jesus Christ.

Do not confuse work and fruit. There may be a good deal of work for Christ that is not the fruit of the heavenly Vine. Do not seek to work only. Study this question of fruit-bearing. It means the very life and the very power and the very Spirit and the very love within the heart of the Son of God. It means the heavenly Vine Himself coming into your heart and mine.

Stand in close connection with the heavenly Vine and say, "Lord Jesus, nothing less than the sap that flows through Yourself, nothing less than the Spirit of Your divine life is what we ask. Lord Jesus, I pray You will let Your Spirit flow through me in all my work for You." I tell you again that the sap of the heavenly Vine is nothing but the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is nothing but the life of the heavenly Vine, and what you must get from Christ is nothing less than a strong inflow of the Holy Spirit. You need it exceedingly, and you need nothing more. Remember that. Do not expect Christ to give a bit of strength here, and a bit of blessing yonder, and a bit of help over there. As the Vine does its work in giving its own peculiar sap to the branch, so expect Christ to give His Own Holy Spirit into your heart. Then you will bear much fruit. And if you have only begun to bear fruit and are listening to the word of Christ in the parable,

more fruit and *much fruit*, remember that in order to bear more fruit, you just require more of Jesus in your life and heart.

A fourth thought. The life of the branch is a life of close communion. Let us again ask, “What has the branch to do?” You know that precious, inexhaustible word that Christ used: Abide. Your life is to be an abiding life. And how is the abiding to be? It is to be just like the branch in the Vine, abiding every minute of the day. There are the branches, in close communion, in unbroken communion with the Vine from January to December. And can’t I live every day, it’s to me an almost terrible thing that we should ask the question, can’t I live in abiding communion with the heavenly Vine?

You say, “But I am so occupied with other things.” You may have ten hours of hard work daily, during which your brain has to be occupied with temporal things. God orders it so. But the abiding work is the work of the heart, not of the brain, the work of the heart clinging to and resting in Jesus, a work in which the Holy Spirit links us to Christ Jesus. Oh, do believe that deeper down than the brain, deep down in the inner life, you can abide in Christ, so that every moment you are free, the consciousness will come: Blessed Jesus, I am still in Thee. If you will learn for a time to put aside other work and get into this abiding contact with the heavenly Vine, you will find that fruit will come.

What is the application to our life with regard to this abiding communion? What does it mean? It means close fellowship with Christ in secret prayer. I am sure there are Christians who long for the higher life, and who sometimes have received a great blessing, and have at times found a great inflow of heavenly joy and a great outflow of heavenly gladness; Yet, after a time, it has passed away. They have not understood that close, personal, actual communion with Christ is an absolute necessity for daily life. Take time to be alone with Christ. Nothing in heaven or earth can free you from the necessity for that if you are to be happy and holy Christians.

Many Christians look upon it as a burden, tax, duty, and difficulty to get much time alone with God. That is the great hindrance to our Christian life

everywhere. We need more quiet fellowship with God, and I tell you in the name of the heavenly Vine that you cannot be healthy branches, branches into which the heavenly sap can flow, unless you take plenty of time for communion with God. If you are not willing to sacrifice time to get alone with Him and give Him time every day to work in you and keep up the link of connection between you and Himself, He cannot give you that blessing of His unbroken fellowship. Jesus Christ asks you to live in close communion with Him. Let every heart say, "O Christ, it is this I long for, it is this I choose." And He will gladly give it to you.

Then my last thought. The life of the branch is a life of entire surrender. These words, *entire surrender*, are great and solemn words, and I believe we do not understand their meaning. But yet the little branch preaches it.

"Have you anything to do, little branch, besides bearing grapes?"

"No, nothing."

"Are you fit for nothing?"

"Fit for nothing! The Bible says that a bit of vine cannot even be used as a pen; it is fit for nothing but to be burned."

"And now, what do you understand, little branch, about your relation to the Vine?"

"My relation is just this: I am utterly given up to the Vine, and the Vine can give me as much or as little sap as it chooses. Here I am at its disposal, and the Vine can do with me what it likes!"

How we need this entire surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is one of the most difficult points to make clear and one of the most important and necessary points to explain – what this entire surrender is. It is an easy thing for a man or a number of men to offer themselves up to God for entire consecration and to say, "Lord, it is my desire to give up myself entirely to You." That is of great value and often brings very rich blessing.

But the one question we ought to study quietly is: What is meant by entire surrender? It means that just as literally as Christ was given up entirely to God, I am given up entirely to Christ. Is that too strong? Some of you think so. Some

think that never can be. Just as entirely and absolutely as Christ gave up His life to do nothing but seek the Father's pleasure and depend on the Father absolutely and entirely, I am to do nothing but to seek the pleasure of Christ. But that is actually true. Christ Jesus came to breathe His Own Spirit into us, to make us find our very highest happiness in living entirely for God, just as He did.

O beloved brethren, if that is the case, I ought to say, "Yes, as true as it is of that little branch of the Vine, so true, by God's grace, I would have it be of me. I would live day by day that Christ may be able to do with me what He will."

Here comes the terrible mistake that lies at the bottom of so much of our own religion. A person thinks, *I have my business and family duties, and my relations as a citizen, and all this I cannot change. And now alongside of all this I am to take in religion and the service of God as something that will keep me from sin. God help me to perform my duties properly!* That is not right. When Christ came, He came and bought the sinner with His blood. If there was a slave market here and I were to buy a slave, I would take that slave away to my own house from his old surroundings, and he would live at my house as my personal property, and I could order him about all day. And if he were a faithful slave, he would live as if he had no will or interests of his own, his one care being to promote the well-being and honor of his master. And in like manner I, who have been bought with the blood of Christ, have been bought to live every day with the one thought – *How can I please my Master?*

We find the Christian life so difficult because we seek God's blessing while we live in our own will. We would be glad to live the Christian life according to our own liking. We make our own plans and choose our own work, and then we ask the Lord Jesus to come in and take care that sin won't conquer us too much and we won't go too far wrong. We ask Him to come in and give us so much of His blessing. But our relation to Jesus ought to be such that we are entirely at His disposal and every day come to Him humbly and straightforwardly and say, "Lord, is there anything in me that is not according to Your will, that has not been ordered by You, or that is not entirely given up to You?" If we would wait

and wait patiently, there would spring up a relationship between us and Christ so close and so tender that we would afterwards be amazed how far distant our intercourse with Him had previously been.

I know there are a great many difficulties about this question of holiness. I know all do not think exactly the same about it. It wouldn't matter much to me if I could see that all are honestly longing to be free from every sin. But I am afraid that unconsciously there are in hearts often compromises with the idea, believing we cannot be without sin; we must sin a little every day. We cannot help it. Oh, that people would actually cry to God, "Lord, keep me from sin!" Give yourself utterly to Jesus, and ask Him to do His very utmost for you in keeping you from sin.

Let me conclude. Christ Jesus said, *"I am the Vine, ye are the branches."* In other words, "I, the living One who have so completely given Myself to you, am the Vine. You cannot trust Me too much. I am the Almighty Worker, full of divine life and power."

Christians, you are the branches of the Lord Jesus Christ. If there is in your heart the consciousness: *I am not a strong, healthy, fruit-bearing branch, I am not closely linked with Jesus, I am not living in Him as I should be*, then listen to Him saying, "I am the Vine, I will receive you, I will draw you to Myself, I will bless you, I will strengthen you, I will fill you with My Spirit. I, the Vine, have taken you to be My branches. I have given Myself utterly to you. Children, give yourselves utterly to Me. I have surrendered Myself, as God, absolutely to you. I became Man and died for you that I might be entirely yours. Come and surrender yourselves entirely to be Mine."

What shall our answer be? May it be a prayer from the depths of our hearts, that the living Christ may take each one of us and link us close to Himself. Let our prayer be that He, the living Vine, will so link each of us to Himself that we will go on our way with our hearts singing, "He is my Vine, and I am His branch. I want nothing more. Now I have the everlasting Vine." Then when you get alone with Him, worship and adore Him, praise and trust Him, love Him and

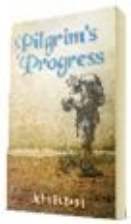
wait for His love. “You are my Vine, and I am Your branch. It is enough, my soul is satisfied.”

Glory to His blessed name!

About the Author



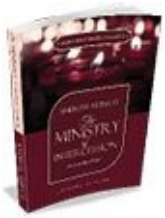
Andrew Murray (1828-1917) was a well-known South African writer, teacher, and pastor. More than 2 million copies of his books have been sold, and his name is mentioned among the other great leaders of the past such as Charles Spurgeon, T. Austin-Sparks, George Muller, D.L. Moody, and more.



Often disguised as something that would help him, evil accompanies Christian on his journey to the Celestial City. As you walk with him, you'll begin to identify today's many religious pitfalls. These are presented by men such as Pliable, who turns back at the Slough of Despond; and Ignorance, who believes he's a true follower of Christ when he's really only trusting in himself. Each character represented in this allegory is intentionally and profoundly accurate in its depiction of what we see all around us, and unfortunately, what we too often see in ourselves. But while Christian is injured and nearly killed, he eventually prevails to the end. So can you.

The best part of this book is the Bible verses added to the text. The original Pilgrim's Progress listed the Bible verse references, but the verses themselves are so impactful when tied to the scenes in this allegory, that they are now included within the text of this book. The text is tweaked just enough to make it readable today, for the young and the old. Youngsters in particular will be drawn to the original illustrations included in this wonderful classic.

Available from Aneko Press, and wherever books are sold



If the answer to prayer is so positively promised in scripture, why are there so many unanswered prayers today (often misinterpreted as a “no”)? Scripture teaches us that answer to prayer depends upon certain conditions. Christ spoke of faith, of perseverance, of praying in His name, of praying in the will of God. But all these conditions were summed up in the one central statement: If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. It becomes clear that the power to pray the effectual prayer of faith depends upon the life.

Let Andrew Murray show you what it means to live in Christ, and let his challenge for genuine intercessory prayer change your life – and the lives of those you are praying for.

Available from Aneko Press, and wherever books are sold

Divine Healing – Andrew Murray
Revised Edition Copyright © 2016
First edition published 1900
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means – electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission from the publisher.
Scripture quotations are taken from the Jubilee Bible, copyright © 2000, 2001, 2010, 2013 by Life Sentence Publishing, Inc. Used by permission of Life Sentence Publishing, Inc., Abbotsford, Wisconsin. All rights reserved.
Cover Design: Natalia Hawthorne (BookCoverLabs.com)
eBook Icon: Icons Vector/Shutterstock
Editors: Barbara Kois and Heather Thomas

Printed in the United States of America
Aneko Press – *Our Readers Matter™*
www.anekopress.com
Aneko Press, Life Sentence Publishing, and our logos are trademarks of
Life Sentence Publishing, Inc.
203 E. Birch Street
P.O. Box 652
Abbotsford, WI 54405
BODY, MIND & SPIRIT / Healing / Prayer & Spiritual
Paperback ISBN: 978-1-62245-337-5
eBook ISBN: 978-1-62245-338-2
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Available where books are sold
Share this book on Facebook