

RESTITUTION, FAITH CURES, PRAYER CURES AND THE GIFT OF HEALING.

**– (CONCLUDED FROM OUR LAST.) –
PROOF-TEXTS CONSIDERED.**

Although we have already considered the principle proof-texts for Faith Cures, it may not be amiss to examine a few more passages of Scripture supposed to imply that it is the duty of Christian people to pray for their recovery from sickness and not to resort to medicines.

(1) Psalm 103:2-4. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction."

It should not be forgotten that the great work begun at Calvary (and which in its ultimate effects is to bring blessings to every member of the human family who will accept of them upon God's terms), has not yet reached its completion. The sacrifice for sins is "finished," "once for all;" and those who believe and obey the gospel, the "saints," have their sins "covered" under the robe of Christ's righteousness, so that they may have access to and communion with their Heavenly Father; but their sins wait to be "*blotted out*" (Acts 3:19) until the end of the "better sacrifices" of this antitypical "Day of Atonement;" when their sins shall be completely blotted out – new unblemished spiritual bodies being granted them instead of the present imperfect ones upon which the marks of sin and imperfection are all too manifest. The work of Christ for the Church, of blotting out sins and healing all blemishes or diseases of mind and body, will not be complete until the Millennial morning; and this Psalm must be understood from this standpoint. It cannot be understood from any other standpoint, for in no other way is it true. Those who have received physical healing either by "gifts" or "prayers of faith" have never yet been completely healed of all their diseases. At very most they receive a temporary blessing and must wait

until the "Morning," when the Redeemer shall heal all the diseases of all his people by giving them the bodies prepared for those who love God.

So long as the "night" continues, disease and discomfort will continue. Not only does the whole creation groan and travail in pain together until now, but "ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body [the Church, the body of Christ]." (Rom. 8:23.) "Weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning." – Psa. 30:5.

(2) "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." – Matt. 8:17; Isa. 53:4.

To apply this passage of Scripture as our Faith-Cure friends do is utterly wrong; a total misapplication of the words, and a violation of the context. This passage is quoted to prove that none of the saints should have sicknesses and infirmities. But the Evangelist, to the contrary, affirms that these words of the prophet *have had their fulfilment*. He says that the fulfilment took place in his day, at the first advent, in the healing, not of the saints, but of the multitudes.

A comparison of Isa. 53 with Heb. 4:15 and Mark 5:30 and Luke 6:19 shows us clearly that this prophecy was completely fulfilled; and that the object was that our Lord should suffer pain from the infirmities of those whom he relieved, because, being without sin, he was also without sickness and pain, except as he thus "took" and "bare" it from others that he might be touched with a feeling of our infirmities.

Those who misunderstand this passage ask: If Christ bore our sins and sicknesses, why should we have them to battle with? We answer: He bore the *penalty* of our sins in order that in God's due time he might justify and, by a resurrection, deliver from death all who accept his grace. And he was touched with a feeling of our infirmities in order

that he might be a faithful and sympathetic high priest, and that we might realize him as such.

(3) The case of Hezekiah's healing in answer to his prayers and tears is cited as a proof of a proper course. – 2 Kings 20:1-7.

We reply that it is not denied that God at sundry times has been pleased to grant miraculous answers to prayers as evidences of his own power. But nothing about Hezekiah's case indicates that such healings were common occurrences. On the contrary, the prophet did not pray with him, nor suggest prayer, but evidently was surprised when sent back to inform Hezekiah [R2029 : page 206] that he would recover. Moreover, Hezekiah, although very sick, does not seem to have prayed for healing until told that death was near. In the healing, a lump of figs, a human instrumentality, a poultice, was used; but many who believe in faith healing today would object to a fig poultice or any other human instrumentality.

(4) King Asa was diseased in his feet, "yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians; and Asa slept with his fathers" – died. (2 Chron. 16:12.) This is cited to prove that to call a physician was a sin, and that *therefore* Asa died.

Not so, we reply. The whole case must be kept in memory, if we would understand this portion of the [R2029 : page 207] record. Israel was separated from the nations of the world by divine providence, and a special agreement made between God and that nation, called The Covenant of the Law. This was instituted formally at Mt. Sinai in the wilderness of Zin, after God had brought Israel out of Egypt. While that Covenant made nothing perfect and none of the Israelites got or could get eternal life under its provisions, until Christ who as the Prince of Israel fulfilled all of its requirements and inherited its reward of eternal life, it had special provisions relating to the physical health and prosperity of Israelites. (See Deut. 7:11-15 and 28:1-12,15,21,27,28,37-42,45-53,59-61.) If faithful to God, they would be blessed in temporal things above all other nations; but, on the contrary,

if Israel would not obey the Lord, they were to receive extraordinary punishments.

Asa, as the king or representative of this nation, was specially subject to the foregoing conditions. He had sinned (See preceding verses: 2 Chron. 16:7,10), although in general a worthy king (See 2 Chron. 15:16,17,18); his sickness was in the nature of a punishment for his sin according to the Israelitish covenant with God. His heart should have repented and turned toward God, but instead he imprisoned God's servant, trusted to physicians, defied God and was cut off according to the covenant.

Thousands of Israelites were destroyed by plagues, sometimes for national sins, under the operation of their covenant above cited. On such occasions the rulers understood that it was a punishment and made no effort to use medicines nor to stop the plagues by sanitary laws or arrangements, but offered sin-offerings and prayed for divine mercy. – See 2 Samuel 24:12-15-25; Joshua 7:7-11-25,26; Numbers 21:5-7-9.

But such a course would not be the proper one for the rulers of other nations, then or now. It was the proper course for Israel because of God's special covenant with that nation. They were slow to learn this lesson, and inclined to think of their calamities as similar to those of other nations; and hence the Lord more than once through the prophets reminded them that, so far as they were concerned, if they had his good favor, it was manifested in their *prosperity*; if they had his disfavor, it was manifested in the calamities (evils) under which they suffered. (See Isa. 45:7.) He assures them (Amos 3:6) that, if there were in their cities calamities or plagues or disasters (physical evil things of any sort – not moral evils), he was their author. But this does not apply to other nations. Consequently the intelligent people of to-day are quite right in not regarding as manifestations of special divine anger the London plague and the Chicago fire and the St. Louis cyclone and the Chinese floods and the Japanese earthquake and tidal-wave and the Russian famine and coronation disasters and the Egyptian cholera and other less

natural disorders and disasters and accidents by rail, water, fire, famine, fever, consumption, etc., etc.

Not only has God no such covenant with the nations of the world to-day, but he has never made such a covenant of temporal prosperity with his saints. Quite to the contrary, they are called to walk with God by faith and not by sight – not by outward evidences of divine favor. The Gospel Church is specially told that her calling is to *suffer* with Christ for well-doing. She is invited to *sacrifice* present prospects and earthly favors, and is offered instead heavenly joys and blessings – a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. She is to look not for the things which are seen, but for those which are unseen and eternal. She is to realize the divine wisdom and submit gladly to such experiences of prosperity or adversity, health or sickness, as the Lord may see to be to the highest interests of her members, all of whom, as true members of the body of Christ, are dear to the Bridegroom Head who promises, graciously, that he will not suffer his members to be tempted above what they are able to bear, but will succor them, cause all present experiences (bitter and sweet) to work for their good, and no really good thing withhold from them.

(5) Romans 8:11 is sometimes cited as a proof that Christians are to expect physical healings. This is as much of a mistake in one direction as some well meaning Christians make in an opposite direction, when they understand this verse to teach the *resurrection* of our present identical bodies (in exact opposition to 1 Cor. 15:37,38). The expression, "If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you," should be interpreted in harmony with the context. Verse 10 declares, "If Christ be in you, the body is *dead*" – not literally dead, but reckonedly dead, in that the human will has died and the will of God in Christ has been accepted instead. The will is dead to sinful things; it does not love nor practice them, as it once did. The Apostle's argument is that such a deadness to sin, although desirable, should not be satisfactory to us; we

should not stop there; we should by God's grace seek to get *alive* to righteousness and active in its service as once we were alive to sin and its service. He proceeds to show that this, although a great change, is possible to us; and he tells us how. He says that the mighty spirit of God which could and did resurrect our Lord from literal death is able to quicken (make alive) to the service of righteousness these very bodies once alive to sin but now by God's grace mortified, killed, "dead to sin." He therefore urges all who have the spirit of Christ not [R2029 : page 208] only to be dead to sin but to permit the spirit of Christ in them to make them alive to holiness and in general to God's service. He shows them further that the new spirit (mind) of Christ which they have received is a spirit of adoption into God's family as sons, and that if they are sons they not only are "free" but must have fruit unto holiness, and that their joint-heirship with Christ as sons depends upon this quickening of their mortal bodies – "if so be that we suffer with him [Christ], that we may be also glorified together."

All who catch the real sense of the passage will see that it has no reference to physical quickening and immunity from sickness and pain, but to a quickening or energizing by the Lord's spirit so as to be, not only willing, but glad, to "*suffer* with him." Nor could it possibly refer to a literal resurrection of the mortal body, for not only are we assured that the body which is buried is not the one which will be raised, but we know that the spirit of Christ does not dwell in dead bodies: it is "the body *without* the spirit [of life that] is dead."

(6) If sickness cannot come upon God's consecrated people contrary to his permission, would not the taking of medicine be putting ourselves in conflict with God's will?

No. It is God's will that every member of the "body of Christ" should be touched with a feeling of the world's infirmities, in order that, when exalted to the Kingdom, they may be very tender, sympathetic and generous, when, as the royal priesthood, they shall judge the world. (1 Cor. 6:2.) Our Lord and Master, who had none of the imperfections

of the fallen race, but was holy, harmless and separate from sinners, needed to take from men their sicknesses and infirmities (Matt. 8:16,17), in order that he might be touched with a feeling of our infirmities and be a faithful High Priest. It would be thoroughly illogical to suppose that the lessons necessary to the preparation of the High Priest for his office and service are not necessary to the underpriests who are called to suffer with him and to reign with him.

Hence, those who see their high calling should not expect immunity from sufferings and trials and difficulties; and the usual aches and pains – headaches, toothaches, etc., etc. – which come to the Lord's people, as well as to the world, in a natural way, should be treated as the world treats them, but with greater patience and cheerfulness: that is, they should be avoided by reasonable care as to food, clothing, etc., and they should be alleviated by the use of such cures as may come under our notice. We need not fear thwarting God's will; that is impossible: he will take care of that part. See also our comments on this subject in our issue of July 15, page 168.

SCHLATTER, MARK SMITH AND OTHER HEALERS.

From Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Colorado, Illinois, New England and Australia come seemingly well authenticated accounts of miraculous healings of some diseases. Some of the healers pray with the sick, some do not; some lay on hands and anoint with oil, but mostly they merely grasp the hands of the sick. Some get all the money they can from the sick; others, like the Master, will receive no compensation. Some love to be called Rabbi and Reverend, others are plain, unassuming Christians. In answer to many inquiries **[R2030 : page 208]** respecting these healers and the source of their power, we answer: –

We believe that some of them are God's agents, thus used in order to make a beginning of restitution work and to break it gradually to the people. It is, however, copied and sought to be offset in its effects by others whose powers are from the prince of darkness, who still

endeavors to blind the minds of men to God's goodness and plan. (2 Cor. 4:4.) It is not possible for us to be sure from the meager and often incorrect newspaper reports, which are servants of God and which the servants of the adversary. Nor is it necessary that we should decide; God is at the helm and will direct his own, and whatever of the wrath of men or devils would not serve some useful purpose, either of trial or sifting, will be restrained.

In thinking of these healers, we draw the line on their profession of faith in Jesus (as their Redeemer and Lord), and the doing of the healing in his name and by his power. Here we are on guard, however, against Spiritists, Christian Scientists and such like, who use the name Christ in a deceptive manner, meaning thereby *themselves; i.e.*, denying any power or authority from *Jesus*, they claim that his power was merely because he was one of them – one of the Christ *class* possessed by their spirit, which is really deceptive and anti-Christ, – against Christ and in opposition to a true interpretation of the Bible.

And amongst those seeming to us to be on the right side of the line of faith, we feel that those who refuse to make merchandise of their gifts or prayers and those who reject human titles and manifest most of humility and zeal and faith are most worthy of confidence and respect. But we know of none claiming these healing powers who are acquainted with and accept the divine plan and present truth as we understand it.

Salvation! O ye toiling saints,
By faith ye have it now;
The promise is your daily strength,
While to God's will ye bow.

Salvation! O the blessed theme
Shall fill the world with joy!
When all its mighty work is seen,
Praise shall all tongues employ.
