

The Healing Physician

“They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick.”

—Mark 2:17

THE SETTING OF OUR LESSON

son is the experience in which Jesus and his disciples walked along the road leading out from the Temple in Jerusalem and encountered a man who was blind from birth. As they looked at him, the disciples asked Jesus, “Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?”—John 9:2

The disciples’ question to Jesus was the result of a concept apparently common in their day—that suffering is a punishment for sin. This philosophy was not new. As far back in history as Job’s time this idea was expressed. Job’s three comforters attributed the calamities which came into his life as God’s punishment for his hidden sins. Even today this belief is still quite prevalent. Many people express the conviction that many of the diseases, natural disasters, wars, and other calamities which come about in our present world, are an expression of God’s punishing judgment, either upon the wicked, or upon mankind in general.

If we could see a consistent pattern in the application of such a principle, perhaps it would appear more credible to believe that those who are the worst sinners experience the worst punishment—pain, disabilities, etc. This, however, is not the case. Some of the most wicked seem to suffer the least—and vice versa. The Prophet Malachi, observing this very situation, was moved to write, “Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up.”—Mal. 3:15

Jesus’ reply to the disciples emphatically denied this philosophy, when he said, “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.” (John 9:3) A similar thought was expressed in the account of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Jesus told the witnesses at that momentous event that Lazarus’ sickness was “not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.” (John 11:4) Lazarus did, in fact, die, but he was brought forth from the grave and no doubt lived a normal span of life until he died again.

WHY GOD PERMITS EVIL

One of the “deep things” of the Truth is a knowledge concerning why God permits evil. Many in the world would like an answer to this question. The Bible explains that all the calamities, poverty, sickness, and evil befalling mankind, which finally culminate in that ultimate enemy—death—will eventually work to man’s everlasting benefit.

The Scriptures teach that a powerful contrast is to be soon experienced by mankind. After having had their experience with “evil” during this lifetime,

they will in due time be awakened from the sleep of death and brought forth into Christ's glorious kingdom to then experience "good." At the close of that period of being exposed to the benefits of living righteously, each individual will be able to make an intelligent decision in the choice offered them—to serve God and live, or to follow the Adversary and die. For the vast majority this will not be a difficult decision.

Christ taught us to pray for his coming kingdom, saying, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) During this period, God's love and mercy will be manifested to all mankind, and they will learn to prize those blessings which God will pour out freely. The kingdom will bring man close to God and to their Redeemer, Jesus Christ, through a correct understanding of their loving and wise characters. Through an understanding of God's plan as it unfolds to its climax, mankind will gain as full an appreciation of his wisdom, justice, love, and mighty power as is possible for human beings to reach. This will lead them to the point where they will praise and glorify the Heavenly Father's name forever!

Jesus, using a blind man as the basis for his lesson, said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." (John 9:4) The "day" spoken of here refers to the earthly ministry of Jesus, during which he preached the "gospel of the kingdom" and performed miracles among the people as illustrations of blessings to flow to mankind at that future time. We read in Luke 8:1, "It came to pass, . . . that he went throughout every city and village, preaching

and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God.” This was Jesus’ commission when he was upon earth. In addition, he had to lay down his life as a ransom for all. Thus, as he went about preaching and healing, he was also engaged in the process of sacrificing his life as man’s Redeemer.

The “night” mentioned in John 9:4 refers to the death of Jesus. For him, as for all mankind when they die, there is “no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.” (Eccles. 9:10) Jesus knew his life was drawing to a close and that he must be diligent and zealous to do the work for which God sent him. There would be no more opportunity to bless mankind with the illustrations of good to come after he lay silent in the grave. This included healing all manner of diseases, which was a manifestation of the far greater healing work that will be performed in the kingdom by that Great Physician.

JESUS, OUR MINISTER OF RECONCILIATION

Jesus was our “minister of reconciliation,” making us right with God. The Apostle Paul said, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.” (II Cor. 5:17,18) Then, in verses 20 and 21, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*, Paul continued, “On behalf of Christ, therefore, we are ambassadors; as if God were inviting through us, we entreat, on behalf of Christ,—be you reconciled to God! For him who knew no sin, he made a sin offering on

our behalf, that we might become God's righteousness in him."

In the above verses is described the twofold work of Jesus on our behalf. First, he paid the ransom in order that we might be "reconciled" to God and justified—made right—in his sight. Second, during the three and one half years of his ministry, Jesus was made a sin offering for us by being developed, through his experiences, as a sympathetic High Priest. He was "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" and was "in all points tempted [tested] like as we are. (Heb. 4:15) As a result of this twofold work of Jesus, we can be made part of the glorious family of God—sons of God—and receive the "ministry of reconciliation" now as Christ's "ambassadors."

Paul continues in II Corinthians 6:1, saying, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." If we have been accepted into the family of God by grace, having received justification to sonship with him, and are daily appropriating the benefits of his offering on our behalf as a sympathetic High Priest, we must be diligent in the work that is set before us. To be considered as "workers together with him" is nearly an incomprehensible privilege, and we certainly must not receive this grace of God in vain. Rather, we must be zealous and diligent to carry on this ministry of reconciliation to the best of our abilities, to the glory of God, "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed."—vs. 3

Returning to the account in John 9, Jesus stated, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (vs. 5) On another occasion he also said to

his followers, “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. 5:14-16) We have the same work to do which Jesus performed when he walked upon the earth. We must shine as lights, proclaiming the Gospel message, and heralding forth the glad tidings of the blessings that will occur during the Messianic age, when Christ’s kingdom is abroad upon the earth, and when “the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”—Isa. 26:9

We today cannot raise the dead or heal the sick, as Jesus did. However, we can spread abroad the Gospel with its good news concerning the time when all will be raised from the dead, and receive the ministry of reconciliation made available to them. The psalmist, when speaking of Christ’s kingdom, said that all mankind’s diseases will be healed, and their transgressions removed. (Ps. 103:3,12) All will possess the ability to “do his commandments,” “bless the LORD,” and “do his pleasure.” Having thus received the ministry of reconciliation made available to them in that day, all the willing and obedient will themselves become “ministers of his.”—vss. 20-22

JESUS HEALED THE BLIND MAN

After Jesus explained to his disciples that the blind man was not in his pitiable condition due to either his own sin, or that of his parents, he

proceeded to heal him. "He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam. . . . He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing."—John 9:6,7

It is interesting to note that this healing of the blind man occurred on the Sabbath day. (vs. 14) In the Scriptures the Sabbath points forward to the kingdom, when Christ will be the Lord of the Sabbath. (Luke 6:5) However, this miracle affected only one man. Think of the billions, the world over, throughout the centuries of man's history, who have gone down—sick, suffering, and dying—into death.

The Lord did not plan only to heal the few which his gentle hands touched during his earthly ministry. His plan includes every child of Adam. "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so [all] in Christ shall . . . be made alive." The account further states that God will give these resurrected ones "a body as it hath pleased him." (I Cor. 15:21,22,38) It would not "please" God to raise mankind from the dead with maimed and deformed bodies. As his gentle hands lift all members of the human race in their turn out of the grave, they will also be healed, and returned to life on earth with whole bodies and minds. Thus they will be in a condition to receive the glorious news that Christ's kingdom—the great Sabbath Day—will give them the first full chance they have had to truly know and love the Creator and his son, Christ Jesus, their Redeemer.

THE BLIND MAN'S PART

The blind man had a part to play also to make this miracle happen. He had to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. He had to demonstrate his obedience, and his faith. On other occasions also, when people were healed by Jesus, a measure of faith had to be evidenced. For example, when healing the paralytic man, Jesus instructed him to demonstrate his faith by picking up his bed and walking, which he did, to the amazement of those gathered there.—Mark 2:9-12

The man who was blind is figurative of the blindness of the world. There are many blind in the world today, but very few who receive their spiritual eyesight. Soon there will be a day when all the blind eyes will be opened, and all the deaf ears will hear. (Isa. 35:5) As stated in the words of our opening scripture, the entire world is “sick” and “in need of the physician” to heal them of all their diseases—those of the body, the mind, and the character. This will be the glorious work of Christ’s kingdom.

At the present time, we who are among the footstep followers of Jesus have been blessed by being dipped in the pool of Siloam. We have been healed, not physically, but spiritually. Our ears have been privileged to hear, and our eyes to see, the beauties of God’s plans and purposes.—Matt. 13:16

The word Siloam means “Sent.” Jesus was the one sent of God to draw disciples after him to follow in his footsteps and carry on the work of preaching the Gospel throughout this age. Those who respond to this call draw nigh to the Lord—the Sent one—and there they receive the Holy Spirit of enlightenment and are healed.

THE NEIGHBORS

“The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.”—John 9:8-11

The blind man's neighbors might represent our associates, coworkers, friends or even family members. These may be skeptical when we tell them how our eyes have been opened by Jesus to receive spiritual healing, and when we give witness to them of the wonderful message of the Gospel of the kingdom for all the world of mankind. Not all men have faith at the present time to believe these things. However, some might be moved by our message, and come to Christ to present themselves a living sacrifice also and to be spiritually healed. Not many today will do this, but we are thankful that there will be a day soon when all men will be drawn to Christ, which we look forward to with eager anticipation and yearning.

THE PHARISEES AND “OTHERS”

The account continues: “They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. Therefore said some of the Pharisees,

This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.” (vss. 13-17) Sadly, a variety of opinions were expressed, and interpretations given—some very critical—of what had happened, instead of a straightforward acceptance and belief in what everyone’s eyes had clearly seen. The blind man, however, realized simply that Jesus was a prophet.

Verse 18 states: “But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.” The Jews in general, and especially their religious leaders, had little faith in Jesus. They were particularly offended and enraged by the fact that many of his miracles were performed on the Sabbath Day. Being spiritually blind themselves, they did not realize that Jesus chose to heal on the Sabbath as an illustration of the greater healing work which he would accomplish during his Messianic kingdom—the Greater Sabbath Day.

THE BLIND MAN’S PARENTS

When the Jews called the parents of the man whose blindness was healed, “they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes,

we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.” (John 9:19-21) The Jews then went back to the man who had been blind, and said, “We know that this man [Jesus] is a sinner.” The man replied, “Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.”—vss. 24,25

Later, after the angry and frustrated Jewish leaders had cast the man out, Jesus spoke again with him, and asked, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” The man replied, “Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?” Jesus then said, “Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.”—vss. 34-38

There are many levels of understanding, or lack of understanding, in response to the message we preach, as shown in the various reactions to the healing of the blind man by Jesus. For the most part, however, the response to the Gospel message at the present time gives evidence of a lack of faith. Indeed, faith is a precious commodity in the world, and in order to be pleasing to God we must have full faith in him and his Son, as exemplified by the blind man of our lesson.

WHEN ALL EYES WILL BE OPENED

For all the promises of the Bible to be fulfilled, the exercise of divine power in the resurrection of the dead is essential. When Jesus was raised from the dead by his Father, he was highly exalted to the right hand of God. Another exercise of divine power which is a major factor in the plan of God is the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus' footstep

followers at the due time. This is spoken of in the Bible as the “first resurrection,” which we believe began to take place at the beginning of our Lord’s Second Presence. (Rev. 20:6) Upon the completion of the first resurrection, these faithful ones, having been raised to divine power, will administer from their heavenly position with Christ, the necessary blessings, guidance, and teaching in the restoration of mankind upon the earth as perfect human beings. This work, too, will begin with the raising of mankind from the sleep of death, “both of the just and unjust.” (Acts 24:15) Christ’s Messianic kingdom, the blessed period during which this restoration work is accomplished, is described by the Apostle Peter as “times of restitution of all things.” He informs us that this loving feature of the divine plan was foretold by all God’s holy prophets since the world began.—Acts 3:20,21

Only then will the true and living God, and his only begotten Son, Jesus, be exalted and worshipped by all mankind. At that time will be fulfilled the Apostle John’s prophecy, “Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, . . . and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” (Rev. 5:13) The throne is here used as a symbol of the Creator’s sovereignty over his creatures, and the lamb is a symbol of Christ, who meekly gave himself in sacrifice, that mankind might be restored to life.

We rejoice greatly that in due time both the Father and the Son will be universally recognized and acclaimed. Then all false gods, theories, and teachings will have been destroyed. The people,

gradually enlightened and restored to human perfection, will rejoice to worship and serve the true God, and by obediently doing so from the heart will themselves live forever in peace and happiness upon a restored and perfect earth.

The “pleasure” of the Lord referred to earlier in Psalm 103:21 is God’s great desire to provide for the redemption and recovery of the fallen human race from sin and death. The Great Physician, Jesus, has made this possible through his own sacrifice on Calvary’s cross. He became a “propitiation through faith in his blood”—that is, a satisfaction for our sins—and “not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” (Rom. 3:25; I John 2:2) The Apostle Paul also wrote: “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”—I Tim. 2:3-6

This salvation of all mankind was pictured by Moses when he led the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt, across the Red Sea, and eventually, under the leadership of Joshua, into the promised land of Canaan. When the world of mankind reaches the land of promise—Christ’s kingdom—and are released from their bondage to sin and death, their eyes of understanding will be opened, just like the blind man’s literal eyes. As they come to know and appreciate the love of God through Christ, the vast majority will willingly and joyfully take advantage of the opportunity for perfect everlasting life being offered to them.

THE HEAVENLY REWARD

A still more glorious opportunity has been offered to those who believe during the present Gospel Age. If faithful, these will be exalted to heavenly glory to be with Jesus and to share in the rulership of his kingdom. (Rev. 2:10; 3:21) It is to these that Jesus said, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," and to whom he promised, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."—Luke 12:32; John 14:2,3

How merciful is our God! He has made provisions for us, formerly the fallen sons of Adam, that we might now come into his family and be called the sons of God. In the kingdom we will, if faithful, have the privilege of being members of the Great Physician class—of working with our Lord Jesus to open all the blind eyes and to help mankind walk up the highway of holiness. (Isa. 35:5-8) May the kingdom soon come for which we have all prayed, and the great work of healing the world of mankind from all their diseases, both spiritual and physical. ■

"In Jerusalem there was at this time a man by the name of Simeon. He was an upright man, devoted to the service of God, living in expectation of the restoration of Israel. . . . He had been led by the spirit to go into the Temple, and when Jesus' parents brought the child, . . . he took him up in his arms, blessed God and said, Now, Lord, you are dismissing your servant in peace! . . . For with my own eyes I have seen your salvation which you have made ready for all peoples to see—a light to show truth to the gentiles and bring glory to your people Israel."
—Luke 2:25-32, Phillips Translation