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Divine Healing.

In view of the many claims being made, and great prominence being given to the subject of faith healing at the present time, it is thought well to present the following article from our brethren of "The Dawn" in U.S.A., for the benefit of all our readers.

We feel sure that the Scriptural presentation of this subject in this article, will prove helpful to all who love the Lord and desire to know His truth above everything else in this world.

DISEASE is a terrible blight upon the human race. Nobody enjoys suffering, or being handicapped by one or more of the hundreds of maladies which fasten themselves upon us and eventually drag us down to death. In ancient times little or nothing was known of scientific medical treatment, and this gave opportunity for witch doctors and other unscrupulous practitioners to exploit the people, taking advantage both of their fears and superstitions, and of their very understandable desire to be relieved of pain.

Today the situation is somewhat different. Tremendous progress has been made in medical science, yet withal there still remain millions of incurables who continue to hope against hope that some day a remedy will be discovered, or a means found to restore them to normal health. This understandable hope of finding a cure exposes many of the unfortunate members of the human family to exploitation today, even as in ages past.

Government control over traffic in drugs helps to protect some from: being victimized. The licensing of physicians, dentists and others whose work is to relieve human suffering, is a further protection of the public against exploitation. But these provisions are only a partial safeguard against the evil practice of preying upon the unfortunate and taking advantage of their pitiful plight for selfish purposes.

When medical science fails to relieve pain, cure disease, or restore sight, many begin to wonder about the possibility of a miracle being performed for them. Those who have no faith in a higher power are not tempted along this line, but those who do believe in God, and have faith that He is able to do all things, are often easily convinced that they should expect Him to heal them. With this thought in mind, they appeal to God for help, either directly, or through the assistance of a faith healer. Sometimes improvement is noted. In many other cases the "patient" is sorely disappointed, for no "miracle" takes place.

The healing of disease without the use of medicine or surgery is not new. It was practised by the magicians of ancient Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon. Holy men of India perform what they claim are miraculous cures. They did in the past, and are still doing so.

In America and Europe today the idea of treating ailments of the mind and body through psychiatric methods is becoming more and more popular. It is described by some as mind over matter. Sometimes hypnotism is employed. It is said that some physicians and dentists, for example, are able to hypnotize their patients before operating and thus do away with the need of gas or local anaesthetics.

We are calling attention to these various methods of curing disease and killing pain that are outside the realm of medical orthodoxy, not with the thought of either condemning or condoning them, but rather to show that, quite apart from professions of belief in Christ, or in the power of God to heal disease, phenomenal things have been and are still being accomplished. Obviously this leaves us with the necessity of admitting that professing Christian faith healers are accomplishing nothing more startling than are others who, in their practices, do not call upon the name of Christ at all, or if they do invoke the power of deity, it is that of a heathen god.

Christ Performed Miracles

The argument is often advanced that since Jesus performed miraculous cures, and the apostles in the Early Church healed the sick, by miracle-working power, Christians today should be able to do the same. Our attention is called to a statement Made by Jesus to the effect that His disciples would be able to accomplish the same mighty works, and even “greater works.”—John 14:12.

It is true that Jesus healed the sick by miracle-working power. It is also true that He assured His disciples that they would be able to do even greater works than they had seen Him; accomplish. But it is also true that Jesus raised the dead. Lazarus, for example, had been dead for four days and his body had begun to decay, yet Jesus restored him to life. The Apostle Peter, by invoking divine power, raised Dorcas to life. If Christians today are to practise divine healing because Jesus and the apostles did, then it should be possible, by faith, to raise the dead.

No matter how successful faith healers of today may claim to be, they must admit some failures; yet Jesus never failed. And even the most enthusiastic must also agree that they are utterly unable to restore the dead to life. Thus we are presented with inescapable facts which must be given consideration in the appraisal of the modern practice of healing the sick in the name of Christ.

First, we should remember that others are doing the same thing apart from all claims of being Christians, and have been doing so for centuries. Second, there are many failures in the attempts that are being made by faith healers today to restore the sick to health; and third, they cannot raise the dead as Jesus did, hence ‘their claims of following His example come far short of actually doing so, thus raising a question as to whether they are really acting by His authority.

No More Pain

However, there is no denying the fact that the Bible has much to say about divine healing. God is represented as a Great Physician who heals all the diseases of His people. (Psa. 103:3.) The Prophet Isaiah foretold a time when “the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.” (Isa. 33:24.) The same sacred writer prophesied that all the blind eyes would be opened, and all the deaf ears unstopped. He also promised that the lame would leap and the dumb sing.—Isa. 35:5, 6.

Diseases of all kinds are simply an evidence that the human race is dying. They are the concomitants of death, and the Apostle Paul informs us that Christ must reign until He has destroyed death. (1 Cor. 15:25, 26.) The destruction of death will include the destruction of disease which leads to death. The Apostle John, describing the meaning of the vision given to him by Christ on the Isle of Patmos, said that a time

was coming when there would be no more death, that God would wipe away tears from off all faces, that there would be no more pain, and sorrow and sighing would end.—Rev. 21:4.

.Not only do the Scriptures thus promise that it is God's purpose to make an end of sin and death, but the prophecies also reveal that, this would be done through Christ, that through Him health and life would come to the people. The fact is emphasized by a message Jesus sent to John the Baptist. John had been imprisoned, and while previously he had announced

Jesus as the foretold Messiah, and thoroughly believed that He was, he later wondered and sought reassurance.

In this frame of mind he sent two of his disciples to Jesus asking, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"--Matt. 11:3.

Jesus asked the messengers to return to John and tell him what they had seen, that the sick were being healed, that blind 'eyes were being opened, that the dead were being raised, and that the poor were having the Gospel preached to them. Jesus knew that John the Baptist would take these things as proof that the Messiah, the Christ, truly had come, for John knew that these were the works which God had promised the Messiah would accomplish on behalf of the people.

In view of this clearly established purpose of God, through Christ, as we find it in the Bible, no true believer in the Scriptures will deny that divine healing is a part of the Christian programme for the sin-cursed and dying race. On the other hand, a moment of honest reflection upon the experiences ,of Christians throughout the centuries since Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead should be sufficient to convince any sincere searcher after truth that if the divine programme for restoring the human race to health and life is to accomplish no more for the people than has been done by the various faith healers and miracle workers who have claimed to operate in the name of Christ, the divine health programme has been, and continues to be, a miserable failure.

To see and acknowledge this should, in turn, cause us to search more deeply into the Word of God in order to discover, if possible, the manner and time in which His health-giving provision for the people will become a reality. Thus, and thus only, will we find harmony between the testimony of the Bible and the experiences of the followers of Jesus, past and present. Regardless of what our theories and our wishes may be, they should not be allowed to weigh anything as against the facts, and the facts are that no such programme of divine healing as that promised in thee Word of God has yet reached the dying race. And why not?

Times of Restitution

As we have already seen, the apostles as well as Jesus practiced divine healing. An example of this was the healing by Peter of the lame man who sat "at the beautiful gate of the temple," asking alms. (Acts 3:1-11.) This man had been lame from the time of his birth, but when Peter gave the words of authority he was restored to soundness of limb. When the people inquired by what authority and power this man had been healed, Peter explained that it was through Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified.

But Peter did not stop with this answer to their question. Instead, he called upon his listeners to repent, telling them that their sins would be blotted out if they did so, and that great refreshing would come from the presence of the Lord. But further, he explained that when Jesus Christ would return, these would be "times of restitution of all things." This time of general restitution, or restoration, Peter further explained, had been foretold by the mouth of all God's holy prophets since the world began.—Acts 3:20-23.

The lesson here is clear, and the conclusion unmistakable. Peter had healed a lame man. It was accomplished through his belief in Christ. Using this as the basis of his sermon the apostle explained that there would be a time of general restoration following the second coming of Christ, and that it was this which all God's prophets foretold. God's programme of health and life for the people, therefore, was not due to be inaugurated until after the second coming of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom.

This feature of the divine plan has not failed, nor will it fail. When put into operation it will result in a complete fulfilment of all the divine promises of health and life. All the blind eyes will be opened all the deaf ears will be unstopped; all the lame will be healed. No one the wide world over who accepts the provision of God's grace through Christ will then need to say, "I am sick."

Reality of Sickness and Death.

Disease and death are man's greatest enemies. We know this from observation and experience, for the germs of disease and decrepitude are working in all of us leading gradually to disability, old age, and finally death. In spite of the best efforts of twentieth century medical science, millions are struck down by death while they are still young. Every aspect of life is made uncertain by the certainty of death. One of the things which stamps the Bible with the mark of authenticity is the fact that it proclaims the reality of death and explains its origin.

We wish to stress this point, for there are millions in the world today who, in an attempt to escape reality, are trying to believe that disease and pain, and even death, do not actually exist, that these evils are merely figments of the imagination. The further claim is that if one will simply make up his mind that pain does not exist, he won't be afflicted with pain. It is a fanciful theory which does not work out in practice.

Disease eventually leads to death; but those who claim to do away with disease simply by insisting that it does not exist should not, by process of sound logic, need to die! But they do die nevertheless. No matter what viewpoint faith practitioners may have—whether it is believing that the risen Christ works through them to heal disease, or inducing the patient to believe that there is no disease—no one in all the centuries since Christ came into the world, has been kept from dying. On the other hand, the Bible assures us that the divine programme of healing will result in there being "no more death."—Rev. 21:4.

Why Jesus Healed the Sick

No Christian will deny that Jesus actually healed the sick, and that He did so by divine power and in keeping with the will of His God. However, those whom Jesus healed, subsequently died, and those whom He raised from the dead ultimately went into death again. So the question arises as to why even His cures were not permanent.

Perhaps the most Scriptural answer to this question, as it relates to the miracles Jesus performed, is found in the statement recorded by John concerning the miracle of turning water into wine. "This beginning of miracles," said John, "did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory." (John 2:11.) The thought of this text is that by His miracles Jesus displayed His glory to the people of His day, in advance of the time when it would be revealed to the whole world by a health programme that would bring everlasting life to all mankind.

This was then a necessary part of His ministry in order that His teachings and the fact of His messiah-ship might be established. The people of ancient times were more accustomed to displays of the so-called supernatural than is the world today. Oriental mysticism was rife with claims and practices of the occult and the alleged miraculous.

Besides, God had performed many actual miracles on behalf of the nation of Israel. These began with Moses. When this great leader of his people appeared before Pharaoh to demand the release of the Israelites, he presented miraculous signs in order to establish the fact of his divine sponsorship. The magicians of Egypt were quick to duplicate these— that is, all except one which they could not.

Thus we see that the public mind in ancient times expected some outstanding demonstration of divine authority and power on the part of those whom they accepted as having been sent by God. Israel's God had fought for them in battle and destroyed their enemies. Some of His prophets had raised their dead. Could they be expected to accept Jesus as the greatest of all their prophets, the One indeed who all their prophets said would come, if He could do less than those who had promised His coming.

This was one reason that Jesus' ministry was accompanied by miracles—the healing of the sick, and the raising of the dead. And in doing this, He was also giving object lessons of what He, as the promised Messiah, would do for the whole world, and upon a permanent basis, when God's due time would come for this feature of the divine plan to be inaugurated.

It is God's will that ultimately all who accept Christ and obey the laws of His kingdom will be restored to health and live forever as human beings. Each of the holy prophets, in one way or another, foretold a world wide programme of health and life. Jesus referred to it as a time of "regeneration." (Matt. 19:28.) As already noted, the Apostle Peter described it as the "times of restitution of all things." (Acts 3:20, 21.) But Jesus did not initiate this programme at His first advent, nor did He promise any of His disciples that they could expect to be divinely cured of their physical ailments because of their faith in Him.

Invited to Die

An interesting case in point is that of the rich young ruler who came to Jesus and asked' what he could do to inherit eternal life. In addition to telling this young man that he would need to dispose of his wealth, using it for the benefit of others, Jesus told him to take up his cross and follow Him into death. He promised the young man that upon this condition he would have treasure in heaven. Jesus said not a word about physical healing. The only assurance He gave this young man was that if he laid down his life in sacrifice he would receive a heavenly reward in the resurrection.— Matt. 19:16-26; Mark 10:17-27; Luke 18:18-27.

And thus is brought before us the divine programme for this present Gospel age. It is not a programme of healing physical ailments, but rather the sacrifice of human life by following in the footsteps of Jesus. Jesus asked two of His disciples, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with (Matt. 20:22; Mark 10:35-40). To the church at Rome Paul wrote: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." —Rom. 12:1.

There is no way to lay up treasure in heaven except by sacrificing treasures on earth, and some of the earthly treasures which Christians are called upon to sacrifice in the service of the Lord might well be physical health and strength. We do not mean by this that a Christian is recklessly to throw his life away, yet physical health and strength are not to be his chief consideration.

It should be freely acknowledged by all Christians that God has the power to heal diseases, and that He does restore the sick to health when it is His will to do so. God is abundantly able to perform miracles now, through whatever agencies He may choose, even as He was able to perform miracles through His beloved Son Jesus nearly two thousand years ago. The point we are stressing is that the main objective of God's programme for the present age is not that of physical healing.

In this connection some interesting facts come to our attention in the New Testament. Take the case of the Apostle Paul. At the time of his conversion he lost his eyesight as a result of the blinding light which shone from heaven— above the brightness of the sun at noonday. At first he was apparently totally blind, but partial vision was restored a few days later.

However, after his conversion Paul was never able to see well. He spoke of his affliction as a “thorn in the flesh.” (2 Cor. 12:7.) Apparently he reasoned that if this “thorn” could be removed — if he could enjoy normal eyesight—he could accomplish a great deal more in the Lord’s service. So he prayed to God to remove his affliction. In fact, he made it a matter of special prayer on three different occasions. Finally God answered his petition, not by restoring his sight, but by explaining that His grace would be sufficient for him. In other words, so far as a miraculous restoration of Paul’s physical sight was concerned, the Lord’s answer to Paul was “No.”

We cannot suppose that Paul’s failure to have his sight restored by divine power was in any sense due to a lack of faith, nor inability to present the matter properly to the Lord. Nor was the apostle disheartened over the fact that the Lord did not restore his sight, which he certainly would have been had he understood that physical healing was the divine programme for this age, for it would have proven his own unworthiness of the blessings God had promised.

Paul knew that God had not promised to give physical health to the followers of Jesus during this age. He knew that it was his privilege to suffer and to die with Jesus. He did not expect to be favoured above His Master and Lord. As he saw it, he thought he might be able to render more efficient service if he had better physical vision, and he therefore made it a matter of prayer. But when the Lord ruled otherwise, Paul was contented, and explained that since it was the divine will for him to continue being handicapped by this “thorn in the flesh,” he would glory in his infirmities.

From this standpoint it is proper for every Christian to leave the matter of his physical health in the Lord’s hands, even as he looks to Him for guidance and blessing along all other lines. There have doubtless been many cases when the Lord used His power to give physical health and strength to His sacrificing people. In many instances the Lord designs certain work for individual followers of the Master to accomplish, and He gives them strength until that job is done. But in all such instances; the work to be accomplished is the important consideration, not the physical health of those whom the Lord may call to do it.

Spiritual and Human Life

Broadly speaking, there are to be found in the Bible two separate and different sets of promises pertaining to life everlasting. The best known of these are the promises of God which assure Christians of this present age that upon conditions of faithfulness they will be rewarded with immortal life in heaven, being raised up in the “first resurrection” to live and reign with Christ a thousand years. But there are also many divine promises which present the hope of being restored to physical health as human beings, and of living forever on the earth. In an effort to harmonize these with the promises of heavenly life, most students of the Bible spiritualize them; but when this is done, their real meaning is lost.

Others, by taking these promises of physical healing and health out of their setting, use them as a basis for their claims that the Lord will now heal His people of their sicknesses while they are waiting to die and go to heaven. But in this also, the real meaning of these many promises of physical health is overlooked, and the Bible made to appear contradictory.

The harmony of these two lines of thought is found only in recognition of the fact that in the divine plan for human recovery from sin and death, two salvations are promised—one a heavenly salvation, and the

other an earthly, a restoration to health and everlasting life right here on the earth. Promises of the heavenly salvation belong to the followers of Jesus during this present age, while to the human race as a whole the promises of perfect human life apply.

These promises of perfect and unending earthly life are not applicable in human experience today, but present a wonderful hope for the future—that future age during which Jesus will reign as King over the earth .and His faithful followers of this age will reign with Him. This restoration of the human race to life on the earth is the great objective of the divine plan, hence much consideration is given to it in both the Old and New Testaments.

The work of restoring the human race to life is to be accomplished during the thousand-year reign of Christ.

The Scriptures clearly teach that Christ's kingdom is not established until after His return. (Acts 3:20, 21.) During the short period of Jesus' first advent ministry, and in connection with His oral message He gave many practical demonstrations of what kingdom blessings would mean for the people when the due time arrived for the promises of God to be fulfilled.. Jesus' miracles, as we have already noted, were not designated to initiate a programme of miracles for this present age, but were intended to be illustrations of the divine programme for the kingdom age.

Leprosy was prevalent in Jesus' day and, even as now, it was considered incurable. Because of this, it was a fitting symbol of sin which, from the standpoint of human ability, is also incurable. Death came into the world as a result of sin, so when Jesus cleansed the lepers of His day, He was illustrating the divine intention ultimately to remove the blight of sin from the earth and to destroy death, the result of sin.

On this point the Lord had promised, through the Prophet Isaiah, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land." (Isa. 1:18, 19.) Notice the promise does not assure a home in heaven, but that the willing and obedient shall "eat the good of the land," and this, because their sins have been cleansed away.

Blind Eyes Opened

The Prophet Isaiah, in his forecast of the time when the human race would be restored to health and life, wrote that all the blind eyes would be opened. It was in keeping with this that Jesus, in order to show forth the glory of His coming kingdom work, restored sight to some of the blind in His day.—Isa. 35:5, 6.

Isaiah also prophesied that the time would come when "the lame man shall leap as an hart," and Jesus restored some of the cripples of His day, and thus foreshadowed still further the coming "times of restitution of all things."

Even death itself will be destroyed by divine power. The Lord "will swallow up death in victory," we are assured in this same Old Testament prophecy, "and the Lord God shall wipe away tears from off all faces." (Isa. 25:8.) Jesus illustrated this promised victory over death by awakening some from the sleep of death, thus demonstrating that death does not stand in the way of the divine plan for restoring the people to health and life.

Greater Works

Jesus promised that His followers would be empowered to do even greater works than He, had undertaken up to that time. (John 14:12.) What did He mean? One explanation of this promise is that it has reference to the work of converting sinners and thus saving them from eternal death. Associated with this would, of course, also be the work of co-operating with the Lord in healing the ailments of the mind and hearts of those who are converted—their spiritual diseases. The thought is that this work is on a higher level than that of healing physical ailments, hence is referred to as “greater works.”

This promise is sometimes associated with Mark 16:17, 18, where Jesus is quoted as saying, “In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” However, all Bible scholars agree that this passage is spurious, having been added to the inspired text by some unauthorised person long after the original manuscript was penned.

It is true that the holy spirit later empowered some to speak with tongues. This was in order that those of other tongues could have the Gospel witnessed to them. It is also true that some in the Early Church were given the gift of healing. But this was to serve a temporary purpose only, and the Apostle Paul makes it plain that these special gifts of the spirit would cease, and they did. (1 Cor. 13:8.) There is only one recorded instance of a disciple’ being protected against the bite of a ‘serpent’ and that was the case of the Apostle Paul when, together with other prisoners en route to Rome, he was shipwrecked on an island. There is nothing about this incident that suggests a fulfilment of Mark 16:18.

James wrote that if anyone in the church was sick the elders should be called, that they would anoint him, and that “the prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord would raise him up.” (James 5:14, 15.) The word “sick” in the 15th verse of this passage is from a Greek word meaning “faint,” or “weariness.” It is the same word translated “wearied” in Hebrews 12:3, where the apostle admonishes Christians not to be wearied and faint in their minds. This Greek word is also used in Revelation 2:3, and is translated “fainted.”

The evident meaning in James, as in Hebrews, is spiritual illness, not physical disease. Discouragement and other forms of spiritual weariness might well lead to a measure of physical sickness. Where this occurs, the curing of the spiritual sickness would automatically result in better physical health. Certainly it is the privilege of all the elders in the church, and of all the brethren, to help one another along these lines whenever and wherever possible.

While this explanation is reasonable, and may well have been included in what Jesus promised, we think, nevertheless, that His chief reference was to the work of His thousand-year kingdom, that great project of restoring all mankind to health and life. Many promises of the Bible assure us that the faithful followers of the Master will share in that future kingdom work. Together with Him, they will minister to the people as the promised “seed of Abraham” through which all the families of the earth are to be blessed.—Gal. 3:8, 16,

And how, much “greater” will be that future work of the kingdom than that represented in’ the few miracles performed by Jesus as examples of what later is to be done for all mankind! He opened only a few blind eyes; but in His kingdom, all the blind eyes will be opened! And this will include the spiritual blindness of the people as well as their physical blindness. No matter what form of disease may be involved, the future work of healing will be universal, not merely dealing with a few individual cases as at the time of Jesus’ first advent.

And not only so, but that future work will also be “greater” in that for all who believe and obey, it will be permanent, whereas in the case of illustrations given by Jesus it was temporary. There was no assurance then that those whom Jesus healed would not become ill again. But this will not be the experience of those who are restored to health during the thousand years of Christ’s reign “the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”—Acts 3:20, 21.

Besides, while Jesus awakened some who were asleep in death, they did not remain alive, as will be the case with all who are awakened during the Millennium and who then obey the laws of that new kingdom. The purpose of their awakening will be to give them the opportunity to believe and obey and live forever. It will be only those who do not obey that will be “destroyed from among the people.”—Acts 3:23.

Truly that will be a “greater” work than anything accomplished by Jesus at His first advent. And yet the mighty works which He did perform were quite ample to give assurance that when the due time comes there is nothing which the Lord has promised that will not be possible for Christ and His church to do. It is obvious that if divine power was able to heal a few of the sick, it will be able to heal all the sick. If it was able to awe Ices a few of the dead, it will be able to awaken all the dead. And it is also plain that those same provisions of divine grace will enable all the willing and obedient to live forever.

What a wonderful programme of healing and restoration that will be ! It is symbolically described in the prophecy of Malachi as the rising of the “Sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings,” (Mal. 4:2.) What a meaningful illustration! For about 6,000 years the people have been enshrouded in the darkness of sin, sickness, and death. Satan, the god of this “present evil world,” has blinded their minds concerning the true God of love. (2 Cor. 4:4; Gal. 1:4.) Not knowing God, they have stumbled on in darkness over the “broad road” that leads to destruction.--Matt. 7:13, 14.

But when the kingdom of Christ becomes operative for the blessing of the people, how different it will be! The “Sun of righteousness” will then be shining. Associated with Jesus in this work of enlightening and blessing the world will be His church. Concerning these, Jesus Himself said that they would “shine forth as the sun” in that glorious kingdom.—Matt. 13:43.

Yes, they will share with Him in these “greater works” which Jesus promised. And how much better that will be than, the healing efforts sometimes attempted today in the name of Christ! God’s ways and plans are always better than those of men, so let us continue to pray for His kingdom to come, and for His will to be done on earth, even as it is now done in heaven. When this prayer is answered it will be true, as foretold by the Prophet Isaiah, that “the inhabitant (of that day) shall not say, I am sick.”—Isa. 33:24.

Of Jehovah, the Great Physician, the Psalmist wrote, “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” (Psalm 103:3-5.) How clearly is thus set forth the Creator’s ultimate purpose concerning the human race. It was sin—disobedience to divine law— that brought sickness and death to the human race. But in this reassuring promise we are informed that through the redeeming love of God iniquity will be forgiven, resulting in the healing of all diseases.

And how wonderful is the promise that those who are thus blessed by the Lord shall renew their youth! This blessed experience will be literally true in the case of all who, during the thousand years of Christ’s reign, accept the grace of God as represented in the atoning blood of the Redeemer and obey the righteous laws of the Messianic kingdom.

No one then will need to grow old and die. No one then will need to die of disease. No one then will need

to die at all, for, as so clearly stated by the Revelator regarding that time when the divine provision of health will be available, “God shall wipe away tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.”— Rev. 21:4.

Another comprehensive promise of the blessings of health and life that will be vouchsafed to all under the administration of Christ’s kingdom is that of Revelation 22:1, 2, 17. Here the provisions of divine love are symbolized as a mighty “river”—“a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb.” The “throne of God” is symbolic of the divine authority that will be exercised in the earth through Christ’s kingdom. The association of the “Lamb” with this picture reminds us that the blessings of life represented by the river will be available only because of the shed blood of the “Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.”

And note the reference in verse 2 to the “tree of life,” and that the leaves of this tree (or trees, as it is in the Greek text) are for “the healing of the nations.” Yes, thank God, the people of all nations are to be given an opportunity to be healed, to partake of the “tree of life” from which the human race was once barred because of sin. (Gen. 3:24.) In verse 17 we are informed that when the “river of life” is thus flowing for the blessing of the people, the invitation to partake of its life-giving waters will be extended to “whosoever will.” Then “the spirit and the bride shall say, Come And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” The “bride” who says “Come,” is the church of Christ united with Him in glory, having proved worthy of this high position by suffering and dying with Him during this age. In the divine plan these are rewarded, not with physical health now, but with glory, honour and immortality to live and reign with Christ for the purpose of sharing with Him in healing all mankind of their diseases, and extending everlasting human life to all who will accept the invitation, “Come, and take the water of life freely.”

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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord ‘ with the Lord’s Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported.

Convention News

It is a pleasure to report a very profitable four-day Convention arranged and conducted by the brethren of the Berean Bible Class in Melbourne over the recent Christmas period. All the friends able to attend these gatherings gave evidence of receiving much blessing, and we thank God, the Giver of all good things, for His favours granted especially throughout this season of refreshing.

Very good attendances were maintained throughout the gatherings; the presence of visiting brethren from Adelaide, Canberra, Tasmania, and other parts of Victoria added greatly to the benefits received. All these dear friends were welcomed by the Melbourne brethren and made to feel at home in the spirit of true fellowship. We were very sorry also that illness had prevented some other dear brethren from attending in person this year, but we felt that they were with us in spirit.

Each day's gatherings were opened with praise and prayer, and each day a selected passage of Scripture was taken for Bible Study, in the following order:—Psalm 46; Rev. 19:1-9; Dan. 12:1-4; and 2 Cor. 5:1-10. These studies proved most helpful and instructive, and gave scope for covering a great amount of Bible truth. In both the Old Testament passages the end of the present order of things was found to be well defined, but God's loving provision for the protection and care of His people gives much consolation and encouragement, as the streams of heavenly truths "make glad the city of God" —the Church of Christ, during the closing years of her pilgrimage. The assurance also that the Lord would ultimately cause all wars to cease, when the needed lessons were learned by all mankind, also gave confidence respecting the future for the whole world of mankind, at which time also they "that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake," to inherit the earthly kingdom. The portion in Rev. 19 revealed God's judgments upon the false religious systems of earth, and showed what rejoicing there will be when "the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready"; while the passage in 2 Cor. 5 gave hope and encouragement to all who are "walking by faith, and not by sight" as they long for their heavenly home—"a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Addresses were given during the Convention days by twelve of the brethren, and these provided very helpful thoughts on many subjects of Bible truth. The selected topics were—"Love, the Final Test"; "Changed Into the Same Image"; "From Bethany to Calvary"; "The Presence of God"; "The Wise Shall Understand"; "What Does the Bible Teach?"; "How Readest Thou?"; "Boldness and Assurance"; "Rejoicing in the Lord"; "Awake"; "Fruits of Obedience" and "Peace and Good Will." Some of these addresses will be appearing in later issues of "Peoples Paper," while a brief outline of all these addresses and other sessions of the Convention will be found in the Convention Notes, compiled by one of our brethren, and now available to all who desire copies.

The Fellowship Meetings were also helpful periods during which the friends took the opportunity to express their appreciation and thanksgiving to the Lord for His blessings and care over them during the past year in particular. This also gave them good hope and renewed confidence for all the days ahead, despite the gloomy outlook from the natural standpoint. The session on "Hymns We Love and Why" was equally as popular as at past Conventions, as the friends selected their favourite hymns and sang them wholeheartedly, also adding their reasons why particular hymns gave special appeal.

The friends were very pleased to receive the messages with greetings and Scriptural passages from other Classes and brethren in various other parts of Australia; one letter being also received from a deaf and dumb brother in Germany through another member in another State. By this means the friends in Convention were assured of the vital interest in the gatherings being manifest by a goodly number of brethren in other parts of the harvest field. At the closing fellowship session, the friends in Melbourne

selected the passage in Psalm 46:1-5 as a Convention message to be sent to our brethren in every place, with the warm Christian love of all who were present at the gatherings.

The four days of assemblies around the Lord's table were thus concluded for another year in Melbourne, the appropriate Love Feast being accompanied with the singing of "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love," as all the friends filed round in a circle, and with a hearty handshake wished each other the Lord's blessing in all the days ahead. With the closing hymn "God be with you till we meet again," and prayer of thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father for all mercies and favours, with petition for His protecting care to be over His people everywhere, another Convention season of refreshing was brought to a close.

Convention Notes.

Notes covering the Melbourne Christmas Convention have been prepared by one of our brethren, and are available free from this office to all who apply for them.

Adelaide Easter Convention.

The brethren of the Adelaide Class wish to announce that their Easter Convention is to be held this year, D.V., commencing on Good Friday, 30th March, and continuing till Easter Monday evening, 2nd April. The gatherings will be held in the Builders and Contractors Rooms, 17 Waymouth Street, Adelaide, and all friends able to attend this Convention are cordially invited to do so. Further information is procurable from the secretary—Mrs. H. Bartel, 10 Winston Avenue, Clarence Gardens, Adelaide, S.A.

Passover Memorial, 1956

The anniversary of the institution of the Memorial of our Lord's death falls this year on the evening of Sunday, 25th

March; after sundown on this date will therefore be the appropriate time to observe the Lord's Supper by the true followers of the Master.

Friends desiring the unleavened bread and wine may procure these from this office. Early application should be made, preferably early in March, and please state the number of persons to be served.

Memorial Services.

Melbourne.—Sunday, 25th March, at 7 p.m., at Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond.

Adelaide.—Sunday, 25th March, at 6.45 p.m., at Builders and Contractors Rooms, 17 Waymouth Street, Adelaide..

Perth.—Sunday, 25th March, at 5.30 p.m., at The Literary Institute, 1st Floor, Corner Hay and Pier Streets, Perth.

Books Available.

“God’s Promises Come True”—£1.

“Daily Heavenly Manna,” birthday pages-10/6.

“Tabernacle Shadows”-6/-.

“Emphatic Diaglott” — New Testament —18/-.

“Our Most Holy Faith.”—This is a splendid volume of most helpful articles and sermons by the author of Studies in the Scriptures, published by the brethren of -The Dawn” in U.S.A. Containing 719 pages, including Index, and well bound. with silver lettering, it is priced at 20/- post paid.

“Hymns of Dawn Music Book.”--Containing the original 333 hymns, 27 additional in an Appendix, well bound in strong cloth, with silver lettering, this new edition is priced at 10/- post paid.

Further copies of this “Peoples Paper” are gladly supplied free; also the booklet “Does the Bible Teach Divine Healing for Today?” and the tract—”Does God Perform Miracles of Healing Today?” The last mentioned tract is available in quantities for all who can use them to advantage. Apply to-

BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE,

19 Ermington Place, Kew, E.4, Melbourne.

Our next of kin, our Brother now, Is He to whom the angels bow; They join with us to praise His name,
And we the nearest interest claim, —John Newton.

FRANK & ERNEST TALKS

Geelong, 3GL, 222 M. Sundays 10 a.m. Sydney, 2KY, 294 M. ,, 8.15 a.m. Brisbane, 4KQ, 435 M. ,,
9 a.m.

Perth, 6KY, 227 N. ,, 4.45 p.m.