

6. Faith and Healing (2Q 2010—Health and Healing)

Biblical material: Gen. 3:8–10; Ps. 118:6; Prov. 17:22; Matt. 6:27-34; Heb. 13:6; 1 John 4:18, Isaiah 26:3.

Quotes

- Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint. *Mark Twain*
- Faith is the effort to believe what your common sense tells you is not true. *Elbert Hubbard*
- Faith, n. Belief without evidence in what is told by one who speaks without knowledge, of things without parallel. *Ambrose Bierce*
- Faith may be defined briefly as an illogical belief in the occurrence of the improbable. *H. L. Mencken*
- Faith is believing what you know ain't so. *Mark Twain*
- The deepest sin against the human mind is to believe things without evidence. *Thomas H. Huxley*
- Millions of Germans had absolute faith in Hitler. Millions of Russians had faith in Stalin. Millions of Chinese had faith in Mao. Billions have had faith in imaginary gods. *Steve Allen*

Questions

Why is the concept of healing so important? How does this relate to faith? Can we assume that if we pray sincerely, healing will happen? How does our trust in God result in healing of the damage done? Why is trust vital to healing? How do we relate such issues to the spiritual realm? What does this say about God?

Bible discussion

The immediate result of broken trust in God was fear (Gen. 3:8-10). However if God is with us, we have nothing to fear (Ps. 118:6, also Heb. 13:6). A cheerful heart is good medicine (Prov. 17:22), while Jesus pointed out the pointlessness of worrying (Matt. 6:27-34). There's no fear in love (1 John 4:18), while Isaiah 26:3 promises "You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you."

Comment

On the wall of my parents' bedroom hung an old print of a forest scene that I would stare at for hours during my seemingly many childhood illnesses. A springtime of bluebells in the woods, with gnarled boughs and sun-dappled leaves, and everywhere the shimmering evanescent blue of the flowers, as if the sky had fallen and was flooding color among the trees.

But what held my attention was the far distance. A path led up the center of the picture, and seemed to disappear into a misty haze. My eyes were held by that distant future. It looked inviting, and I longed to run up the path and see what was there.

As I gazed into that hazy presence on the edge of perception, it came to me that this must be like God, standing almost invisibly at the borders of our sight. He was there, but you couldn't quite see him. Yet he was the One inviting you onward, calling for you to run up the path, inviting you into his presence. And the fact that he was there by the

path gave you the encouragement to continue, knowing that he would be there with you, walking beside you on the way.

In my sickness that image became a powerful reminder of the healing, saving God who truly is there, even if we do not see him. He comes to us, and walks our journey with us, and carries us when we cannot walk any more. He is the ever-present companion, and yet also stands like the haze of the future, ready to welcome us home when our journey is complete.

The more I thought, the more real and important that presence of God became. I so wanted to make out some person standing in the shimmering haze up the pathway, and sometimes I believed I could. "If only I could really see him," I thought to myself, "then that would be enough."

Like Philip, who was with Jesus, who had seen all the wonderful miracles of healing, heard the glorious truth of salvation, recognized the special nature of Jesus, and yet still asked, "Show us the Father, and that will be enough."

The words of Jesus to Philip are God's answer: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?" John 14:9, 10 NIV.

If you've seen Jesus, you've seen God. In the life and actions of Jesus, you see the true character of God. That's why Jesus came. The way Jesus speaks is the way God speaks. The way Jesus heals is the way God heals. The way Jesus loves is the way God loves. Jesus speaks to Thomas, and these words prompt Philip's question: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." John 14:6, 7 NIV.

Jesus is the way because he *is* God. The God who rescues us from our fatal situation, and who cures us from our fatal disease. He is the God of salvation-healing.

Comment 2

"What is it that heals us? Is it not the truth? What is it that has power to save and to heal, but the good news—the truth about God? If we have come to the place where we have lost the very capacity to respond to this truth, then there is nothing that can heal us. Too often religion has suggested, though, there are other ways of healing people. Some shortcuts, some arbitrary ways... There are not! This is an orderly universe in which we live, or it could not be free. If we tamper with evil, and play fast and loose with the truth, then because this is an orderly universe, there are inexorable changes taking place all the time. There are great laws that govern the world of nature and spiritual things are controlled by principles equally certain. It works this way. That's what was meant when the Bible said, you will reap what you've sown. This is the orderly way things work in this universe." *A. Graham Maxwell, "Faith, Righteousness, and Salvation," Tape #16.*

Ellen White Comments

Jesus... employed his human, God-given powers for the benefit of men, while in every act of mercy and healing he drew upon the divine power, even the power that made the worlds... It is in this way that the character of God, the perfection of Christ and the Father, is brought before the world. {RH, October 14, 1902}

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