

**PREMINISTERIAL AND CHRISTIAN WORKERS'
BIBLE COLLEGE CORRESPONDENCE COURSES
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COURSE NO. 1: HEALTH - HEALING - HOLINESS

LESSON 2

PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL CAUSES OF SICKNESS

When any good physician sets to work on a case, the first thing he does is to ascertain the possible or probable causes of the sickness, and then eliminates those causes.

Even so, when we come to God for healing, we find that He deals not so much with symptoms as with causes.

The pain of an acute attack of appendicitis may be eased temporarily by the use of narcotics, but as a result of this false relief the appendix may burst even while the person is unaware of pain, and death may result. Carelessness in finding the cause of suffering has resulted in great damage being done, or even in the loss of life. Finding and relieving the cause is more important than relieving the pain.

Much harm has also been done because some who have encouraged men and women to believe that God heals have failed to note the conditions which must be met before God can be expected to heal. Many have lost confidence in God and in His promises because of failure to remove the cause of the sickness; failure to meet God's conditions for healing; failure even to understand that God has made conditions which must be met.

In seeking healing through faith, it is just as urgent to remove the spiritual causes of sickness as to remove the physical causes. Failure to comply with the natural laws of health, which God Himself ordained, may prevent a person from receiving healing, or from keeping his healing after it has been received.

SIN - THE CAUSE OF SICKNESS

It may be said without fear of contradiction that in a very real sense, SIN is the cause of the existence of SICKNESS in the world.

There was no sickness in the Garden of Eden before the first sin was committed. None of us expect to find sin in heaven, nor do we expect to find sickness there. Where sin is, there is sickness.

On the day that Eve yielded to the suggestion of Satan and took the fruit that God had forbidden her to eat, both sin and sickness entered the world for the first time.

“Sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Rom. 5:12.

Sickness is death beginning to work in the human body. In this sense ALL sickness is the result of sin.

In some cases a specific sickness or disease can be readily traced to a specific sin. Perhaps the best example of this is the so-called “social diseases,” the venereal diseases that haunt those whose lives are immoral.

In many other cases, the connection is not so readily apparent, especially to those who cannot discern the things of the Spirit.

But God has said: “If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law... then the Lord will make thy plagues . . . great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sickness, and of long continuance. . . Moreover, he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of;. . . Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the Lord bring upon thee,” Deut. 28:58-61.

(Are you studying with your Bible open? Turn to Deuteronomy and read the entire 28th chapter. Never forget the amazing truths found there.)

SIN AND SICKNESS ARE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Sin and sickness are as closely associated in the New Testament though as in the Old.

Jesus Himself, in healing one who was sick, said, “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.” Mark 2:5.

To another He said, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." John 5:14.

James admonishes the sick, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." James 5:16.

His instruction to those who are in need of healing is: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; AND IF HE HAVE COMMITTED SINS, THEY SHALL BE FORGIVEN HIM." James 5:14,15.

GOD HAS NOT CHANGED.

The testimony of David, speaking by inspiration of the Holy Ghost: "Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near into the gates of death. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word, and healed them." Psa. 107:17-20.

In Num. 12 there is a story which brings God's people a very solemn warning.

Miriam, a sister of Moses and a prophetess, who had been greatly blessed and used of God, became lifted up with pride and was "Not afraid to speak against my servant, Moses." Num. 12:8. God heard her evil speaking, and the anger of the Lord was kindled (Num. 12:9) against Miriam and against Aaron, her brother, who had entered with her into criticism against Moses. As a result of her sin, Miriam became leprous, as white as snow, and would have remained so had Moses not prayed for her deliverance.

How marvelous that God will forgive the cry of the repentant, and that He would hear the prayer of Miriam's forgiving brother, Moses, and heal her. But note that Miriam would never have needed this healing if she had not sinned.

CRITICISM IS SIN!

Sin breaks down the hedge that God builds around you to protect you, thus permitting Satan to afflict you.

Satan's complaint in Job's case was, "Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the

work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.” Job 1:10.

“There is no respect of persons with God,” Rom. 2:11.

If God would make a hedge about Job and his household, God will make a hedge around about YOU! Satan cannot enter that hedge from the outside, until it has first been broken down from the inside by sin, ignorance, fear, or unbelief.

Job broke down the hedge through fear. “The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me,” (declared Job). Job 3:25.

Miriam broke down the hedge through the sin of murmuring.

YOU CAN REPAIR THE HEDGE.

God has given us instructions in His Word to build the hedge.

“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 that healeth thee.” Exo. 15:26.

“And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth.” Deut. 28:1

Promises of health are given specifically with the giving of certain commandments.

“Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.” Eph. 6:2, 3.

If it is not well with you (physically) your sickness could be the result of breaking this commandment, or it could be the result of breaking other commandments, or of disregarding the plans and purposes of God in some way.

GOD PINPOINTS A CURSE OF SICKNESS IN OUR AGE.

In the book of I Cor., Paul deals very specifically with the subject of sickness among Christian people.

“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” (ie. Die prematurely.) I Cor. 11:30.

This entire chapter deals with one of the most perpetual and important ordinances of the church, the Lord’s Supper, or Communion. Instituted by the Lord, the same night in which He was betrayed, this ordinance became to the followers of Jesus the visible symbol of all He has purchased for us: salvation through the shedding of His blood, and healing through His sufferings at the whipping post. It is essential to the believer’s life to become a partaker of these sacraments.

Since the Word of God points to a definite cause and declares, “For this cause. . .” I Cor. 11:30, certainly we must give attention to this explanation in any attempt to discover the causes of sickness. Before proceeding with the study of this lesson, turn, therefore, to I Cor. 11, and read the entire chapter.

Now take special note of those verses that state the cause, the reason why many are weak and sickly among God’s people, and many even “sleep.”

“Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.” I Cor. 11:27, 28.

Many professing Christians have refused to take the Lord’s Supper, because of this warning. They fear that because of some unworthiness, known or unknown, they would bring a curse upon themselves should they partake. Remember this: if you are unworthy to partake of the SYMBOLS of His blood and body, surely you are even more unworthy to be a partaker of His blood and body in reality. If you are unworthy to partake of the Communion, how can you expect to have part in the Rapture? Do not expect to stay out of trouble by a passive, neutral refusal to partake of the visible symbols. The only way to be sure of being right is to search out carefully the points that make you unworthy, and remedy those things.

Worthiness does not imply that one is sure he has fully attained the goal of sinless perfection, and can no longer find any room for improvement and growth. Christ Himself served the first Communion to twelve men who very quickly demonstrated the fact that they were still subject to human weaknesses, and short of

perfection. (See Matt. 26; Mark 14; Luke 22; John 18 and 21.)

You may say, “Then what does it imply?” The word “worthiness” as used here has a threefold implication:

1. Attitude.

First and most simple is the attitude of the believer at the time of partaking of the symbols. There should never be any frivolity nor irreverence at such a solemn time. Never should it be approached lightly, nor as a mere formal ceremony. In partaking of these emblems, we “do shew the Lord’s death till he come.” I Cor. 11:26. The thought of the suffering and death of Christ for our sakes should surely be a solemn thought.

By all means, a worthy attitude would never be a proud, haughty spirit, characterized by a superior or worthy feeling, but rather a deep realization of the individual’s great need of a redeemer. Humility at the foot of the cross, sorrow for that sinful nature which made it necessary that the spotless Christ should be required to die for our sins, the just for the unjust (I Peter 3:18). This is a necessary part of the attitude of one who may partake worthily of the symbols of Christ’s suffering.

Appreciation for His suffering, realization that “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:” I Peter 1:18, 19. This, too, must be a part of our worthiness. This realization and appreciation means that we can no longer direct our own lives through self-will. We belong to Him! We are aware of it. Being free forever from sin, we are bound to Him forever by the cords of love, a love so strong that it cannot be broken. Unless this is true, we are unworthy to partake of His body and His blood. “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” I Cor. 6:20.

Partaking of the symbols of Christ’s body and blood, the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper, is, if taken worthily, an open confession that the price has been paid, and accepted, the sale has been completed, and we are no longer our own but His! Every deed, thought and word, then, should be kept under subjection to His will. He knows that we are but dust, and will forgive our failures, when we confess them to Him, should we fall short of perfection through ignorance or weakness. (1 John 2:1; Psalms 103:14). He who professes to be a partaker of Christ, yet stubbornly claims the right to rule his own life, by disregarding the will, the commands, and the desires of Christ, and by refusing to submit to the principles of the law of love as set forth in the

New Testament, “eateth and drinketh damnation to himself,” I Cor. 11:29.

2. Not Discerning the Lord’s Body - Overlooking a Privilege (1 Cor. 11:29).

The blood of Christ was shed for the remission of sins, but it was His body that bore the stripes whereby we are healed.

“Who his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: BY WHOSE STRIPES YE WERE HEALED.” I Peter 2:24.

Many, in partaking of the Communion, drink the wine with happy realization and praise to God for the glorious deliverance from sins through the shedding of the blood. Yet eat the bread without any realization that this also typifies a definite price paid at a definite time for a definite blessing, which is ours if we will but accept it. This blessing is HEALING.

Only as we believe and accept the blood of Christ for salvation do we find salvation. Drinking the wine of the Communion, alone will not wash away our sins. A young man who had been brought up in a home where God’s Word was not read and God was not honored, attended a church service for the first time on Communion Sunday. For the first time in his life, at the age of sixteen, he saw people taking Communion. Very little explanation was made, and when the elements of Communion were passed and his friend took a portion, he joined in just as he would join in the treats at a party. He had no realization of the meaning of the wine or the bread. There was no change in his life as a result of taking the wine. There must first be an inward understanding of the cleansing of the blood, before the outward form can have any meaning.

Many fine Christian people receive no more benefit from partaking of the bread than this young man did in taking the wine, and for the same reason. They have never learned that when “Christ our passover . . . (was) sacrificed for us:” I Cor. 5:7, the blood was sufficient to deliver from spiritual death, and the Body provided healing and physical strength. (Read the account of the first passover, Exo. 12.)

When the death angel passed over the houses of Israel, he was not concerned with what was on the table, or on the pantry shelf. God said, “when I see the BLOOD, I will pass over you,” Exo. 12:13. Thus the curse of death was set aside by the blood.

But the command of God was not completed with the applying of the blood to the door posts, for God had also commanded that they should eat the flesh on that night, and thereby receive strength for the journey which lay ahead.

Even so, the blood of Christ shed upon Calvary is fully sufficient to make atonement for our sins. This being true, His sufferings at the whipping post and in Pilate's judgment hall were all in vain unless we accept healing.

But they were not in vain. BY HIS STRIPES WE ARE HEALED!

As we discern by faith the power of the blood of Christ, we are set free from the guilt and bondage of sin.

As we discern the Lord's body, we are set free from the bondage of sickness.

We are living under a better covenant than that of Moses, established upon better promises. (Hebrews 8:6.)

Moses' covenant was strong enough that when his people partook of the blood and the body of their passover lamb, it was sufficient to deliver them from both death and sickness.

"He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes." Psa. 105:37.

Our new covenant is strong enough, too, to bring health and healing to every child of God, if they would but believe His Word and obey His commands.

Many churches today, if they were consistent, would use only the wine for Communion, since they believe in the blood for salvation, but reject the broken body for our healing. No wonder so many are sick, for they have rejected the only remedy that is guaranteed to heal every disease, if used according to the directions!

The reason the minds of so many have been unable to grasp this glorious truth may be found in the third phase of unworthiness, which goes beyond and includes both the others:

3. Failure to Discern the Lord's Body Alive in the World Today – His Church

To discern is to recognize, or to understand, as well as to see or perceive. Many

Christians have been unwilling or unable to recognize His body as it is alive and working and moving in the world today. Their last glimpse of His body was as it was taken, dead and mutilated, from the cross and carried to Joseph's tomb. They visualize His body hanging, bleeding, upon the cross, but they live and move and work in a world where His LIVING body is all around them. They see Him day after day, and fail to recognize Him. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-32), they fail to perceive that it is really He!

True enough, Christ Himself has ascended into the heavens (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-11), but He left in the world a representative, which He has called "His body"! That body is alive in the world today, still doing the same things which He did while He was here.

"Now YE are the body of Christ, and members in particular." I Cor. 12:27.

Because of failure to recognize this fact, many have been guilty of causing division in the body, of injuring other members of the body, of setting at naught the work of others in the body.

This is sin!

"God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members, rejoice with it." I Cor. 12: 24-26

Sin kills faith. You cannot possibly claim the blessing which was purchased for you through the sufferings of Christ's body on the cross, while you continue to break and tear and destroy His body by criticizing, belittling, slandering, backbiting, and otherwise hurting the members of His body all around you!

If you have been guilty of causing division in the body of Christ, either by talebearing, which separates others from one another, or by pride and self-righteousness, which separates YOU from the body, confess this as sin and turn from it so that your faith may grow. (See Proverbs 6:16-19; Matt. 24:48-51 and James 3.)

Take your proper place in the body, whether it be small or great, and help others to do the same. (See I Cor. 12:12-31.)

Accept the blood of Christ for the cleansing of your sins. Then by faith accept

the body of Christ for the healing of your body. This is yours, all of it. Jesus bought it for you. Do not be satisfied to receive only a part of what He purchased at such a great cost. Satan will shortchange you if he can. He will cause you to accept a partial shipment, and think that God just did not send, or provide all that was purchased. Even if you have not yet received visible manifestation of all that Jesus purchased for you, determine now to do your part. The part that God in His Word asked you to do, not that which you or some other person may feel your part should be, for God Himself has set the conditions. Then praise Him by faith for all these benefits!

“Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;” Psalms 103:1-3.

Forget not ALL His benefits! Who healeth ALL thy diseases! Your part is to believe ALL his promises, to heed ALL His commands, to keep ALL His statutes, and to praise Him and honor Him with ALL your soul and ALL your living.

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” Col. 3:17.

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” I Cor. 10:31

So now, discern the Lord's body. (1) Recognize by faith the importance of His sacrifice in bearing the stripes as a substitute for your sufferings. Remember that your bearing of that suffering NOW will not diminish the suffering he has already borne. He is not PAYING the price; He has already PAID it! Honor it. Believe it. Accept it. It is YOURS! (2) Recognize and honor the other members of Christ's body, the Church. Treat every member - regardless of church affiliation or the lack of it - with respect and honor that is due Christ Himself, for they are members of His own body. Seek and find your own place in the body. Seek it humbly, not thinking of yourself more highly than you ought to think. (Romans 12:3) Yet do not assume a false humility which prevents effective service. “Think soberly,” Romans 12:3. Think of yourself as a son, and heir of God; a child of the King. Think of yourself as one, who by His Spirit and by the power of His might, can do anything He asks you to do. “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Phil. 4:13. Do not think of yourself above the other members of the body, for they share the same Lord, the same Father, the same promises, and the same power.

Do not be afraid to step out on the promises of God. You are His child (if you have believed). His promises are yours.

In striving for honor or recognition, never step on the other members of the body. That is the WORLD'S way of rising. God's way up is DOWN! Serve your fellowmen in humility, and God Himself will exalt you in due time! (I Peter 5:6)

HEALED, BUT SICK AGAIN.

There are many sick today who once experienced marvelous healings. Some of these even complain of the same sickness from which they had once been so gloriously delivered. The enemy has used this as an occasion to speak reproachfully, and to destroy the faith of some. A prominent magazine carried a headline, "DO THESE HEALINGS LAST?" The stories listed under that headline were all accounts of healings lost! Our own experience over the years is that these healings DO last!

A man who is our neighbor now, living at Warren, Arizona, twenty miles from Miracle Valley, was healed when two vertebrae in his back had disintegrated and doctors had said that the slightest jar would bring death. Immediately, he turned a handspring as the Spirit of God rested heavily upon him. Then he bent over and lifted a heavy tool box before the people while leaving the ramp after prayer. Six months later, he attended another campaign in Dallas, Texas. He drove his own car. He helped take down the tent, then drove a car and house trailer to Philadelphia, Penna., where the next campaign was held, and before returning to his home, helped set up the tent there. He even drove tent stakes, using a sixteen pound sledge. His picture and testimony have been carried in Miracle Magazine at two different times. First, at the time he was healed, and later as he drove stakes for the setting up of the tent. That man is well, holding a job, and feeling fine today. He frequently attends services at Miracle Valley.

I could fill pages with case histories equally decisive, of those who have been instantly healed of visible and organic diseases and afflictions many years ago, and whose healings have lasted through the years.

Yet it is true, and Christ Himself said it would be so, that not all who receive healing remain healed. This does not mean that it is not God's will that these people should be well, or that they cannot be permanently healed. To one whom Christ healed, He gave this warning, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." John 5:14.

God does not heal anyone to give him more strength to continue in sin. Sickness returns to many because of their own carelessness and disobedience to God.

A later lesson will deal more fully with the subject of keeping your healing.

HEALED OF INFIRM SPIRIT.

“And behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.” Luke 13:11.

According to the Bible, much sickness is due to afflicting spirits. This is not demon possession. It does not have its roots in the soul, but in the flesh. The individual so afflicted or tormented may be a fine Christian, with a sweet, beautiful soul. Yet year after year, the affliction remains. Even medical science fails to give any permanent relief. These cases frequently respond very readily to the ministration of laying on of hands and the healing command of a man or woman of faith. The difficulty is caused by the presence of a demon, and when the demon goes, the difficulty goes.

Some have felt very much offended when the thought is suggested that they or their loved one might be afflicted because of a demon. They fail to recognize the distinction between possession that affects the soul and demon oppression or vexation, which may touch only the body. Note this description of the work of Christ:

“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.” Acts 10:38.

HEALING all that were OPPRESSED OF THE DEVIL: this, then, is a definite act of healing, and a definite spiritual cause of physical sickness.

This does not infer that all who are sick are oppressed of the devil. We are told that Jesus healed lepers, yet we do not infer that all who were healed were lepers. Neither do we infer that all who were healed were oppressed of the devil. In Mark 16:17 and 18, Jesus speaks separately of casting out devils and of laying hands on the sick for healing.

Nevertheless, it is very apparent that at least a part of the mental and physical troubles that people suffer today originate in demon oppression. Jesus recognized the presence of afflicting spirits in certain cases, and drove out those spirits with His command.

“Behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake:” Matt. 9:32, 33.

“Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.” Matt. 12:22.

(Search out other cases throughout the gospels in which these and other afflictions are attributed to the presence of demons.)

In dealing with these cases of demon activity, Christ used a very direct approach. Many fail along these lines today because they are afraid to command the demon to depart, or because they do not have faith to believe that he will go at their command. Some have been heard to humbly plead, “Please, Mr. Devil, won’t you go away?” Of course he won’t. He is not that polite. The only thing that will drive him out is the word of AUTHORITY! That authority comes only from a life wholly surrendered to God, a knowledge of the Word of God regarding these matters, a firm faith, and firmly believing that God meant what He said: they shall “cast out devils;” Mark 16:17. It requires that Satan be allowed no bridgeheads in the life of the individual who steps forward to use such power.

Jesus said, “Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him.” Mark 9:25.

He also said, “The prince of this world cometh (ie: Satan), and hath nothing in me.” John 14:30. That was the secret of His power over the devil.

Seven sons of one Sceva attempted to cast out a devil, saying, “We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.” Acts 19:13. (Read the story, Acts 19:11-20.) They did not have power in their own lives. They had neglected to make a personal connection with the power of God. The demon possessed man answered, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?” Acts 19:15. He turned upon them, and overcame all seven, tearing off their clothing, so that they fled naked and ashamed.

As Spirit filled Christians, we need have no fear. God has given us power over all devils. They are subject to our command, but they will bluff their way and ignore that command and that power, unless we approach them with absolute confidence and faith in God’s Word, and with assurance that God’s power is in operation in our lives.

There are different kinds of infirm spirits, each having power to afflict the body in a different manner. Many are deaf, mute, or both, because of the presence of deaf or dumb spirits. There are demons that cause blindness. Cataracts, especially, which are caused by a living organism growing over the eye and shutting out the light, may

be definitely classified as receiving their life from an inhabiting spirit, or demon. Other growths such as cancer, tumor, or goiters are living organisms invading the body and having life within themselves, receive their life from demons which inhabit the growth itself. When the demon is cast out, the growth dies and in the normal process of healing begins to diminish. In the case of a miracle, these growths may disappear instantly, but there is no cause for discouragement if the healing process is slower. Occasionally, the physical process of the body's throwing off the dead body of the demonic growth is very painful for a short period of time, but when it is gone, healing is very soon complete.

Nervous disorders and mental diseases seem to be very closely related to the operation of tormenting demons. (See Mark 5.) Here a legion of demons had taken possession of one man. Physically he was so strong that chains could not hold him, but mentally he was a very sick man. In bringing deliverance, Christ cast out the unclean spirits (Mark 5:13). There were so many that upon leaving him they entered into about two thousand swine, causing them to run violently into the sea and drown. As soon as the demons were gone, the man was normal. The people who came from the city observed that he was clothed and in his right mind (Mark 5:15).

MEDICAL CARE IS NECESSARY FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT TRUST GOD

We have no quarrel with the medical profession. Rather, we thank God for trained men who are relieving the suffering of many whom do not have faith to trust God. Yet they cannot help in every case, and do not claim to. Although many people in the world today have received help from physicians, many others are like the woman in Luke 8:43, 44:

“And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd.”

Surgery, no matter how skillfully done, cannot remove a demon spirit. Surgery often does bring relief, and sometimes by removing the invaded area from the body, makes way for nature to cure the parts that remain. But this is no guarantee that the demon so disposed from his living habitation will not return to invade some other area of the same body.

A woman in a recent campaign told me that she had undergone three operations, and that now her doctor informed her she must undergo a similar operation annually as long as she lives. It was impossible for surgery to bring a

permanent cure.

THERE ARE PHYSICAL CAUSES OF SICKNESS - ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD.

God created and planned the human body, as well as its environment.

God has given certain natural laws that are necessary for the welfare of the body. Ignoring these laws will bring discomfort, disease, and eventually death to the body. The laws of nature are GOD'S LAWS for physical health, and cannot be broken without punishment in the form of sickness and infirmity. Divine healing was never intended to take the place of proper care of the body. This care includes rest, exercise, right eating, sanitation, and avoidance of weakening habits.

LACK OF REST MAY CAUSE SICKNESS.

God commanded His people to rest one day out of each seven.

“Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.” Exo. 20:9,10.

While we are no longer under legal bondage to keep the sabbath, which the New Testament tells us was a shadow of a better rest to come (see Hebrews 4:9), Jesus Himself stated that “The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.” Mark 2:27. In other words, man needs one day of rest in seven. Even in countries where God and His law are not regarded, scientists have proven that man needs to rest, to change his routine, to relax one day in seven as a necessity for maintaining physical and mental alertness. Those who cannot find time to rest, who keep themselves too busy with the cares of life to attend worship in the house of God make themselves liable for the inroads of disease. Even some who have given themselves without reserve to the work of God, and have failed to take the time to rest and to keep up their spiritual relationship with God, have found that eventually God, through nature, gives them time to rest! Many of these have been stricken down with sickness for a time, and unable to carry on any work, because they could not break away from their “necessary” work long enough to rest as God commanded. Many times, better management would make it possible to achieve even a larger volume of work, while still having the proper rest.

Nervous disorders and mental and physical breakdowns are on the increase. Much of this is attributed to overwork. This seems strange in a land where a shorter and shorter work week has become common. Look around you. Those who work forty hours per week many times are continuing to carry out other programs of their own choosing during the remaining hours, and even on Sunday. Many of them work far into the night, "having fun"! There is no rest for body or soul. Sickness comes, and there is no faith to reach out and receive healing, for "FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD." Rom. 10:17. The person who is too busy driving his body either in work or play to keep in touch with God lays himself open for the inroads of sickness.

THERE ARE DEFICIENCY DISEASES.

Many diseases are called, by the medical profession, "deficiency diseases," meaning that they are caused by a lack of essential elements in the diet. It is well for the Christian, in choosing his diet, to consider the value of various foods, which God has placed in the world, and choose from among them the foods that will keep his body strong and well, if it is at all possible for him to do so. This is not a matter of the soul's salvation, but is vitally concerned with the body's welfare.

In the beginning, God gave man the herbs and fruits for food. (See Genesis 1:29).

After the flood, God gave Noah and the entire race through him, an addition to their diet: the flesh of living moving things. He made one restriction: the blood of animals was not to be eaten with the flesh. (See Genesis 9:3,4.) This one restriction is carried forward into the New Testament. (See Acts 15:28, 29.)

"For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." I Tim. 4:4, 5.

Selection should be made intelligently, providing for all the needs of the body: protein, vitamins, minerals, fruits and vegetables, and a reasonable amount of meats and dairy products. Taste and appetite often perverted by misuse and habit, are not the best basis for selection.

SOME SICKNESS IS CAUSED BY OVER-EATING.

More people in America are sick as a result of over-eating, or of eating foods that are too heavy and too rich than as a result of malnutrition. Over-eating is the

direct cause of some sicknesses, and a contributing factor in many others. The work of all the organs of the body is so increased by over-eating and over-weight that it becomes impossible for these organs to carry on their normal duties, and sicknesses ranging from gout to stomach and heart troubles result. Even the deficiency diseases are frequently prevalent among those who over-eat, because they choose their foods on the basis of taste appeal, rather than the body's needs. Too many rich, sweet, or starchy foods, fat meats, and the like, make the body fat, overburden the heart and digestive organs, at the same time failing to provide the food elements needed to rebuild the body cells and maintain health.

Many who seek prayer for their bodies would not need prayer if they would take a little care and choose the proper foods, limit their eating to the necessary amounts, and give their bodies the proper rest.

Many of these would be benefited very little by an instant miracle of healing, for they would immediately begin again the process of tearing down their own bodies through the same disobedience to the laws of God and of nature that originally caused their sickness.

Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone," Matt. 4:4. The eternal values of the kingdom are far greater than the present enjoyment of pleasant food and drink. "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." I Cor. 9:25.

LACK OF EXERCISE MAY CAUSE SICKNESS.

"For bodily exercise profiteth.. ." I Tim. 4:8.

True enough, the King James version renders this, "Bodily exercise profiteth little:" however, the literal rendering from the original text, is rather, "For a little time." Godliness profits more.

Nevertheless, in any consideration of the Christian's way of life regarding health, it should be remembered that physical exercise is necessary to maintain muscle tone and to keep the body strong.

As Christians, let us not become worshippers of the "body beautiful," or more concerned with exercise, meats and drinks than with godliness. Yet we can serve God best when we serve Him with a clean soul in a strong body.

WEAKENING HABITS CAUSE SICKNESS.

There are many that weaken their bodies through injurious habits. It is a well known fact, substantiated by the best medical authorities, as well as athletes, coaches, and others interested in building strong bodies, that the use of liquor, tobacco and narcotics is injurious to the body. Many diseases of the heart and liver, as well as cancer of the lungs and other diseases, have been attributed to one or more of these habits.

A man is brought for prayer, trembling in agony upon a stretcher, coughing and spitting blood and tissue from his lungs, too weak to lift a hand, but an attendant stands by, ready to light and hold his cigarette for him'. Of course he wants healing! No one likes to suffer like that, but he clings to the cause of his sickness more than he clings to life itself!

“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” I Cor. 3:17.

Knowing this, it seems unthinkable that any person would call himself a Christian and continue in these debasing habits, defiling his body with these recognized poisons! If you are among those who are still in bondage of any of these habits, make this the time when your body shall be set free from such bondage. No doubt, when you attempt to set them aside, you will soon realize as never before, how great is this bondage! Any wholesome food can easily be replaced by another of the same food value, but what can take the place of tobacco, liquor, or dope, to the one who has lived under their sway?

God has said, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” John 8:36. Jesus can set you free!

EXPOSURE TO WEATHER OR TO DISEASE MAY CAUSE SICKNESS.

Carelessly exposing the body to extremes of temperature, or to the germs of contagious diseases, comes under the heading of tempting God. (See Matt. 4:7.) If any of these are necessary in our service for God, we may claim God's protection, and need not be in bondage to fear, as long as we walk by faith.

God has chosen to take up His abode in human bodies, as is shown by many Scriptures, “What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?” I Cor. 6:19. All of us who are His are made caretakers of His temples. This is a sacred trust and responsibility. God is not glorified by our abuse of our bodies.

THE PSYCHOSOMATIC DISEASES ARE TO BE DEALT WITH.

Those who preach and practice healing through prayer and faith are frequently accused of treating only these psychosomatic diseases or pains, caused by abnormal contraction of nerves and muscles due to emotional disturbances: fears, tensions and worries. While we who are familiar with case histories, know that this is not true (for we have seen broken bones healed and organs replaced which had been removed by surgery), still it is very true that many of those suffering from psychosomatic ailments do receive healing.

We shall pause here for only a moment to mention these emotional disturbances as one of the causes of sickness.

Even the best of doctors are not above attempting to relieve these very real pains. Their attempts are mainly a matter of the use of soda pills, or other “psychological medicines,” giving a short period of psychological relief. Meanwhile they attempt to find the reason for the emotional disturbance and adjust the environment of the patient in such a way as to finally get at the real cause. Frequently such pains may be treated with sedatives, tranquilizers, or even narcotics. They are not just in the patient’s mind. They are not just something that he can think his way out of. If relieving these sufferings were that easy, the doctors certainly would not permit them to continue to suffer. Medical science recognizes these ills as real, and worthy of real treatment.

Then, should we not praise God and glorify His name, when faith brings healing?

Being rooted in the emotions, it is obvious that deliverance from fear, worry, unbelief, hatred, anger, malice, and many other habits of thought which the Scripture treats as undesirable, would and does bring immediate deliverance from the sufferings of psychosomatic ailments.

When God has promised His children, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid,” John 14:27, there is no reason for Christians to continue to suffer from these psychosomatic pains, or from nervous and emotional diseases. Claim that peace for your own life. It will strike at the very cause of many ills.

SUMMARY

So then, we have learned that sickness is caused by:

- (1) **Sin.** The sin of the race, or a specific sin on the part of the individual. (Warning: do not, like “Job’s comforters,” add to the sorrows of the sick and afflicted by probing for the cause. Like them, you may find yourself seeking that person’s assistance to relieve your own suffering! (See Job 4:5-8 and 42:7-10.)
- (2) **Ignorance.** Failure to appropriate the blessings which Jesus has purchased for us, because of failure to realize that they belong to us. Based upon failure to read and understand the promises given in God’s Word.
- (3) **Unbelief.** Having read and heard God’s promises, persisting in the kind of thinking which does not take those promises into account, remember this: it is not so much WHAT you believe as WHO you believe! Believe for healing, not because it is a thing that is pleasant to believe, but because God has promised it, and God cannot lie! Believe HIM!
- (4) **Division.** Failure to discern the Lord’s body, your own place in the body, and the intimate relationship between yourself and other members of the body. A willingness to hurt other members of the body, not realizing that as members of the same body, they are a part of yourself. Having hurt others, you must surely suffer with them!
- (5) **Spiritual oppression.** The work of demons, or of infirm spirits, while possible even among Christians, and probable among those who are not Christians, does not necessarily possess the soul, but rather afflicts the body. May be a means of entry into the soul, in which case actual possession would occur.
- (6) **Physical causes:**
 - (a) Deficiency of certain food elements necessary to the body’s health.
 - (b) Over-eating. Gluttony. This can become sin.
 - (c) Inactivity. Lack of proper exercise.
 - (d) Lack of proper rest and recreation.

- (e) Careless and negligent exposure to weather and disease.
- (f) Wrong, mental and emotional habits, or should we say wrong spiritual habits. Fears, worries, hatred, failure to find rest and peace and trust in Christ.

Examine yourself carefully for any of these causes. Once you have found the cause of your own sickness, and have faced it squarely, it is not too hard to remove the cause. When the cause is gone, the affliction often goes, or if the physical loss has already been too great, God is still a MIRACLE WORKING GOD! He CAN and WILL restore that which Satan has stolen away! Be sure that everything is right in your own heart, and then look to God in perfect confidence. He WILL meet your need!