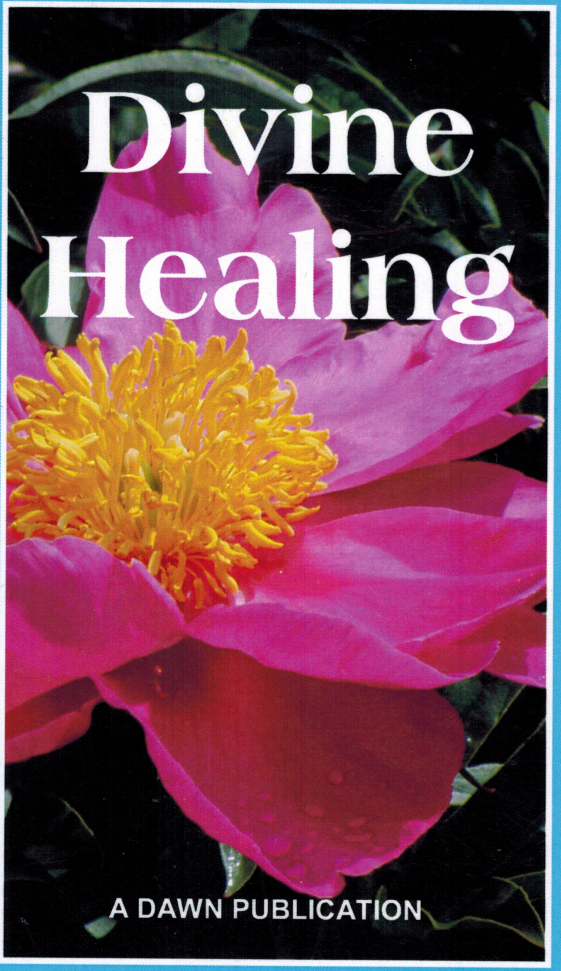
Divine
Healing
A DAWN PUBLICATION

Divine Healing

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 it 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 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 practiced 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 various countries 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 treating them and thus do away with the need of certain anesthetics.

We are calling attention to these various methods of curing disease and killing pain that

are outside of 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.

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 practice 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 Christian, 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. (Ps. 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. (I 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 that 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 program 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 program 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 program 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 program of divine healing as that promised in the 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 word 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 explained that after Jesus Christ returned there 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 3:19-23

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 had foretold. God's program 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 fulfillment 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 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 program 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 direct 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 program 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 messiahship might be established. The people of ancient times were accustomed to displays of the so-called supernatural. Mysticism was rife with claims and practices of the 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 did 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 worldwide program 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 3:19-21) But Jesus did not initiate this program 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

Thus is brought before us the divine program for this present Gospel Age. It is not a program 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 treasures 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 to throw his life away recklessly, 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 program 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." (II 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 to 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, as he certainly would have been had he understood that physical healing was the divine program 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 favored 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 is 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 the promises of perfect human life apply to the human race as a whole.

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 3:19-21) During the short period of Jesus' First Advent ministry, he preached the hope of the kingdom, 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 program of miracles for this present age, but were intended to be illustrations of the divine program for the kingdom age.

Leprosy was prevalent in Jesus' day, and 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 that 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 another Old Testament prophecy, "and the Lord God will 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 cooperating with the Lord in healing the ailments of the minds 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 unauthorized translator long after the original manuscript was penned.

It is true that the Holy Spirit later empowered some to speak with tongues, that is, in other

languages. This was in order that those of other nations 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. (I 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 fulfillment 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 shall 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 "wearied." 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 here, 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. 3:8,16,27-29

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 is to be done later for all mankind! He opened only a few of the 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 dealing merely 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 the illustrations given by Jesus, it was temporary. There was no assurance then that

those whom Jesus healed would not become ill again. 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 path spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."—Acts 3:19-21

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 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 awaken a few of the dead, it will be able to awaken all the dead. It is also plain that those same provisions of divine grace will enable all the willing and obedient to live forever.

What a wonderful program 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 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. (II 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

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 in 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." (Ps. 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.

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."

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 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, honor, 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." ■

"The wilderness and desert will be glad in those days. The wasteland will rejoice and blossom with spring crocuses.
Yes, there will be an abundance of flowers and singing and joy! The deserts will become as green as the mountains of Lebanon, as lovely as Mount Carmel or the plain of Sharon. There the LORD will display his glory, the splendor of our God.
With this news, strengthen those who have tired hands, and encourage those who have weak knees. Say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, and do not fear, for your God is coming to destroy your enemies. He is coming to save you."
And when he comes, he will open the eyes of the blind and unplug the ears of the deaf.
The lame will leap like a deer, and those who cannot speak will sing for joy!
Springs will gush forth in the wilderness, and streams will water the wasteland.
The parched ground will become a pool, and springs of water will satisfy the thirsty land.
Marsh grass and reeds and rushes will flourish where desert jackals once lived.
And a great road will go through that once deserted land. It will be named the Highway of Holiness."
—Isaiah 35:1-8