

PRAYER FOR THE SICK

Ellen G. White



Chapter 1

Scriptural Assurance and Promises

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." (3 John 2)

"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." (Ex. 15:26)

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." (Ps. 103:13, 14)

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. 55:6-9)

"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He

retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." (Micah 7:18, 19)

"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; 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. 103:1-5)

"Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak: O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed. ... I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye is consumed because of grief. ... The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping. The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer." (Ps. 6:2-9)

"I will extol thee, O Lord; for Thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me. O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. O Lord, Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness." (Ps. 30:1-4)

"And the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to Myself for a house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people; if my people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attend unto the prayer that is made in this place." (2 Chron. 7:12-15)

"Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto 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, and delivered them from their destructions. O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" (Ps. 107:17-21)

"There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities,

in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." (2 Cor. 12:7-10)

"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. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:14-16)

"And these signs shall follow them that believe; 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." (Mark 16:17, 18)

What Is Prayer?

Prayer is the one connecting cord
That keeps us ever near the Lord,
A link of love, a vital spark
That lights the world 'mid conflicts dark,
A solace 'neath affliction's rod
That draws us daily nearer God.

When faithless ones our spirits vex
And galling cares and doubts perplex,

When passion's varying powers annoy,
How dear the hour of hallowed joy
That brings us in communion sweet
To rest in peace at Jesus' feet!

In self-reliance, helpless, weak,
We, turning to the Father seek,
Through anxious, simple faith combined,
The strength we never fail to find;
It brings us treasures from above,
Sweet pledges of His wondrous love.

Though worldlings scoff, what need we fear?
The soul is safe while He is near.
When saddened, worn, and sore oppressed,
Through trustful prayer He gives us rest.

L.H. Griswold

Chapter 2

Christ's Example of Healing

This world is a vast lazar house, but Christ came to heal the sick, to proclaim deliverance to the captives of Satan. He was in Himself health and strength. He imparted His life to the sick, the afflicted, those possessed of demons. He turned away none who came to receive His healing power. He knew that those who petitioned Him for help had brought disease upon themselves; yet He did not refuse to heal them. And when virtue from Christ entered into these poor souls, they were convicted of sin, and many were healed of their spiritual disease, as well as of their physical maladies. The gospel still possesses the same power, and why should we not today witness the same results?

Christ feels the woes of every sufferer. When evil spirits rend a human frame, Christ feels the curse. When fever is burning up the life current, He feels the agony. And He is just as willing to heal the sick now as when He was personally on earth. Christ's servants are His representatives, the channels for His working. He desires through them to exercise His healing power. ...

To many of the afflicted ones who received healing, Christ said, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." Thus He taught that disease is the result of violating God's laws, both natural and spiritual. The great misery in the world would not exist did men but live in harmony with the Creator's plan.

Christ had been the guide and teacher of ancient Israel, and He taught them that health is the reward of obedience to the laws of God. The Great Physician who healed the sick in Palestine had spoken to His people from the pillar of cloud, telling them what they must do, and what God would do for them. "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God," He said, "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." (Ex. 15:26) Christ gave to Israel definite instruction in regard to their habits of life, and He assured them, "The Lord will take away from thee all sickness." (Deut. 7:15) When they fulfilled the conditions, the promise was verified to them. "There was not one feeble person among their tribes." (Ps. 105:37)

These lessons are for us. There are conditions to be observed by all who would preserve health. All should learn what these conditions are. The Lord is not pleased with ignorance in regard to His laws, either natural or spiritual. We are to be workers together with God for the restoration of health to the body as well as to the soul.

And we should teach others how to preserve and to recover health. For the sick we should use the remedies which God has provided in nature, and we should point them to Him who alone can restore. It is our work to present the sick and suffering to Christ in the arms of our faith. We should teach them to believe in the Great Healer. We should lay hold on His promise, and pray for the

manifestation of His power. The very essence of the gospel is restoration, and the Saviour would have us bid the sick, the hopeless, and the afflicted take hold upon His strength.

The power of love was in all Christ's healing, and only by partaking of that love, through faith, can we be instruments for His work. If we neglect to link ourselves in divine connection with Christ, the current of life-giving energy cannot flow in rich streams from us to the people. There were places where the Saviour Himself could not do many mighty works because of their unbelief. So now unbelief separates the church from her divine Helper. Her hold upon eternal realities is weak. By her lack of faith, God is disappointed, and robbed of His glory.--The Desire of Ages, pp. 823-825.

Chapter 3

Resting in God's Promises

It is our privilege to pray with the sick, to help them to grasp the cord of faith. Angels of God are very near to those who thus minister to suffering humanity. The consecrated ambassador of Christ who, when appealed to by the sick, seeks to fasten their attention upon divine realities, is accomplishing a work that will endure throughout eternity. And as he approaches the sick with the comfort of a hope gained through faith in Christ and acceptance of the divine promises, his own experience becomes richer and still richer in spiritual strength.

With awakened conscience many a troubled soul, suffering bodily ailments as the result of continued transgression, cries out, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner; make me Thy child." It is then that the minister, strong in faith, should be ready to tell the sufferer that there is hope for the penitent, that in Jesus everyone who longs for help and acceptance may find deliverance and peace. He who is meekness and love thus brings the gospel to the afflicted soul so much in need of its message of hope, is a mouthpiece for the One who gave Himself for mankind. As he speaks helpful, appropriate words, and as he offers prayer for the one lying on a bed of suffering, Jesus makes the application. God speaks through human lips. The heart is reached. Humanity is brought into touch with divinity.

The minister should understand by experience that the soothing power of the grace of Christ brings health and peace and fulness of joy. He should know Christ as the One who has invited the weary and heavy-laden to come to Him and find rest. Let him never forget that the Saviour's loving presence constantly surrounds every human agent ordained of God for the impartation of spiritual blessing. The remembrance of this will give vitality to his faith and earnestness to his petitions.

Then to those who call upon him for help he can impart the health-giving power of God's truth. He can talk of the words of healing wrought by Christ, and direct the minds of the sick to Him as the great Physician, who is light and life, as well as comfort and peace. He can tell them that they need not despair, that the Saviour loves them, and that if they surrender themselves to Him, they will have His love, His grace, His keeping power. Let him urge them to rest in God's promises, knowing that He who has given these promises is our best and truest Friend. As he endeavors to direct the mind heavenward, he will find that the thought of the tender sympathy of the One who knows just how to apply the healing balm, will give the sick a sense of rest and quietude.--Gospel Workers, pp. 213-214.

Clay to Potter

Lord, make of me a vessel fit,
Through which Thy gifts may flow
To weary souls and eager feet,

Wherever I may go.

If through afflictions I must pass,
Or sorest trials face,
Give me abundance of Thy love,
Sufficient of Thy grace.

Mold me, O Master Workman true;
When in the furnace fire,
No trace of workman false allow
Thy plans to change or mar.

Help me unflinchingly to yield
My will to Thine alone;
Mold me as Thou wouldst have me formed,
And use me forThine own.

Mrs. M.E. Hillhouse

Chapter 4

Prayer for the Sick

The Scripture says that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint;" and if ever there is a time when they feel their need of prayer, it is when strength fails and life itself seems slipping from their grasp. Often those who are in health forget the wonderful mercies continued to them day by day, year after year, and they render no tribute of praise to God for His benefits. But when sickness comes, God is remembered. When human strength fails, men feel their need of divine help. And never does our merciful God turn from the soul that in sincerity seeks Him for help. He is our refuge in sickness as in health.

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." (Psalm 103:13, 14)

"Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto 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, and delivered them from their destructions." (Ps. 107:17-20)

God is just as willing to restore the sick to health now as when the Holy Spirit spoke these words through the psalmist. And Christ

is the same compassionate physician now that He was during His earthly ministry. In Him there is healing balm for every disease, restoring power for every infirmity. His disciples in this time are to pray for the sick as verily as the disciples of old prayed. And recoveries will follow; for "the prayer of faith shall save the sick." We have the Holy Spirit's power, the calm assurance of faith, that can claim God's promises. The Lord's promise, "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:18), is just as trustworthy now as in the days of the apostles. It presents the privilege of God's children, and our faith should lay hold of all that it embraces. Christ's servants are the channel of His working, and through them He desires to exercise His healing power. It is our work to present the sick and suffering to God in the arms of our faith. We should teach them to believe in the Great Healer.

The Saviour would have us encourage the sick, the hopeless, the afflicted, to take hold upon His strength. Through faith and prayer the sickroom may be transformed into a Bethel. In word and deed, physicians and nurses may say, so plainly that it cannot be misunderstood, "God is in this place" to save, and not to destroy. Christ desires to manifest His presence in the sickroom, filling the hearts of physicians and nurses with the sweetness of His love. If the life of the attendants upon the sick is such that Christ can go with them to the bedside of the patient, there will come to him the conviction that the compassionate Saviour is present, and this conviction will itself do much for the healing of both the soul and the body.

And God hears prayer. Christ has said, "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." (John 14:14) Again He says, "If any man serve Me, ... him will My Father honor." (John 12:26) If we live according to His word, every precious promise He has given will be fulfilled to us. We are undeserving of His mercy, but as we give ourselves to Him, He receives us. He will work for and through those who follow Him.

Obedience to Precede Prayer

But only as we live in obedience to His word can we claim the fulfillment of His promises. The psalmist says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." (Psalm 66:18)

If we render to Him only a partial, half-hearted obedience, His promises will not be fulfilled to us. In the word of God we have instruction relative to special prayer for the recovery of the sick. But the offering of such prayer is a most solemn act, and should not be entered upon without careful consideration. In many cases of prayer for the healing of the sick, that which is called faith is nothing less than presumption.

Many persons bring disease upon themselves by their self-indulgence. They have not lived in accordance with natural law or the principles of strict purity. Others have disregarded the laws of health in their habits of eating and drinking, dressing, or working. Often some form of vice is the cause of feebleness of mind or body. Should these persons gain the blessing of health, many of them

would continue to pursue the same course of heedless transgression of God's natural and spiritual laws, reasoning that if God heals them in answer to prayer, they are at liberty to continue their unhealthful practices and to indulge perverted appetite without restraint. If God were to work a miracle in restoring these persons to health, He would be encouraging sin.

It is labor lost to teach people to look to God as a healer of their infirmities, unless they are taught also to lay aside unhealthful practices. In order to receive His blessing in answer to prayer, they must cease to do evil and learn to do well. Their surroundings must be sanitary, their habits of life correct. They must live in harmony with the law of God, both natural and spiritual.

Confession of Sin

To those who desire prayer for their restoration to health, it should be made plain that the violation of God's law, either natural or spiritual, is sin, and that in order for them to receive His blessing, sin must be confessed and forsaken.

The Scripture bids us, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." (James 5:16) To the one asking for prayer, let thoughts like these be presented: "We cannot read the heart, or know the secrets of your life. These are known only to yourself and to God. If you repent of your sins, it is your duty to make confession of them." Sin of a private character is to be confessed to Christ, the only mediator between God and man.

For "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1) Every sin is an offense against God and is to be confessed to Him through Christ. Every open sin should be as openly confessed. Wrong done to a fellow being should be made right with the one who has been offended. If any who are seeking health have been guilty of evil-speaking, if they have sowed discord in the home, the neighborhood, or the church, and have stirred up alienation and dissension, if by any wrong practice they have led others into sin, these things should be confessed before God and before those who have been offended. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

When wrongs have been righted, we may present the needs of the sick to the Lord in calm faith, as His Spirit may indicate. He knows each individual by name, and cares for each as if there were not another upon the earth for whom He gave His beloved Son. Because God's love is so great and so unfailing, the sick should be encouraged to trust in Him and be cheerful. To be anxious about themselves tends to cause weakness and disease. If they will rise above depression and gloom, their prospect of recovery will be better; for "the eye of the Lord is upon them ... that hope in His mercy." (Psalm 33:18)

Submission to God's Will

In prayer for the sick it should be remembered that "we know not what we should pray for as we ought." (Rom. 8:26) We do not

know whether the blessing we desire will be best or not. Therefore our prayers should include this thought: "Lord, thou knowest every secret of the soul. Thou art acquainted with these persons. Jesus, their Advocate, gave His life for them. His love for them is greater than ours can possibly be. If, therefore, it is for Thy glory and the good of the afflicted ones, we ask, in the name of Jesus, that they may be restored to health. If it be not Thy will that they may be restored, we ask that Thy grace may comfort and Thy presence sustain them in their sufferings."

God knows the end from the beginning. He is acquainted with the hearts of all men. He reads every secret of the soul. He knows whether those for whom prayer is offered would or would not be able to endure the trials that would come upon them should they live. He knows whether their lives would be a blessing or a curse to themselves and to the world. This is one reason why, while presenting our petitions with earnestness, we should say, "Nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done." (Luke 22:42) Jesus added these words of submission to the wisdom and will of God when in the Garden of Gethsemane He pleaded, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." (Matthew 26:39) And if they were appropriate for Him, the Son of God, how much more are they becoming on the lips of finite, erring mortals!

The consistent course is to commit our desires to our all-wise heavenly Father, and then, in perfect confidence, trust all to Him. We know that God hears us if we ask according to His will. But to

press our petitions without a submissive spirit is not right; our prayers must take the form, not of command, but of intercession.

There are cases where God works decidedly by His divine power in the restoration of health. But not all the sick are healed. Many are laid away to sleep in Jesus. John on the Isle of Patmos was bidden to write: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." (Revelation 14:13) From this we see that if persons are not raised to health, they should not on this account be judged as wanting in faith.

We all desire immediate and direct answers to our prayers, and are tempted to become discouraged when the answer is delayed or comes in an unlooked-for form. But God is too wise and good to answer our prayers always at just the time and in just the manner we desire. He will do more and better for us than to accomplish all our wishes. And because we can trust His wisdom and love, we should not ask Him to concede to our will, but should seek to enter into and accomplish His purpose. Our desires and interests should be lost in His will. These experiences that test faith are for our benefit. By them it is made manifest whether our faith is true and sincere, resting on the word of God alone, or whether depending on circumstances, it is uncertain and changeable. Faith is strengthened by exercise. We must let patience have its perfect work, remembering that there are precious promises in the Scriptures for those who wait upon the Lord.

Not all understand these principles. Many who seek the Lord's healing mercy think that they must have a direct and immediate answer to their prayers or their faith is defective. For this reason, those who are weakened by disease need to be counseled wisely, that they may act with discretion. They should not disregard their duty to the friends who may survive them, or neglect to employ nature's agencies for the restoration of health.

Often there is danger of error here. Believing that they will be healed in answer to prayer, some fear to do anything that might seem to indicate a lack of faith. But they should not neglect to set their affairs in order as they would desire to do if they expected to be removed by death. Nor should they fear to utter words of encouragement or counsel which at the parting hour they wish to speak to their loved ones.

Remedial Agencies; Bible Examples

Those who seek healing by prayer should not neglect to make use of the remedial agencies within their reach. It is not a denial of faith to use such remedies as God has provided to alleviate pain and to aid nature in her work of restoration. It is no denial of faith to cooperate with God, and to place themselves in the condition most favorable to recovery. God has put it in our power to obtain a knowledge of the laws of life. This knowledge has been placed within our reach for use. We should employ every facility for the restoration of health, taking every advantage possible, working in harmony with natural laws. When we have prayed for the recovery

of the sick, we can work with all the more energy, thanking God that we have the privilege of co-operating with Him, and asking His blessing on the means which He Himself has provided.

We have the sanction of the word of God for the use of remedial agencies. Hezekiah, king of Israel, was sick, and a prophet of God brought him the message that he should die. He cried unto the Lord, and the Lord heard His servant and sent him a message that fifteen years should be added to his life. Now, one word from God would have healed Hezekiah instantly; but special directions were given, "Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaster upon the boil, and he shall recover." (Isa. 38:21)

On one occasion Christ anointed the eyes of a blind man with clay and bade him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam. ... He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing." (John 9:7) The cure could be wrought only by the power of the Great Healer, yet Christ made use of the simple agencies of nature. While He did not give countenance to drug medication, He sanctioned the use of simple and natural remedies.

When we have prayed for the recovery of the sick, whatever the outcome of the case, let us not lose faith in God. If we are called upon to meet bereavement, let us accept the bitter cup, remembering that a Father's hand holds it to our lips. But should health be restored, it should not be forgotten that the recipient of healing mercy is placed under renewed obligation to the Creator. When the ten lepers were cleansed, only one returned to find Jesus and give

Him glory. Let none of us be like the unthinking nine, whose hearts were untouched by the mercy of God. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17)--Ministry of Healing, pp. 225-233.

A Prayer

Bless us, O Lord; make Thou our hearts
 As are the flowers after a spring rain--
Washed free from dust, with heads uplift,
 And hearts o'erful of blessings from Thy hand,
With life renewed and faces turned to heaven,
 Showering their fragrance upon all who pass.
Refresh our thoughts, and fill our hearts with love,
 That we may give to others from our store;
Cleanse us from worldly sin, guide all our ways,
 And keep our eyes on Thee forevermore.

Arlene Pruette

Chapter 5

Conditions of Answered Prayer

In order to be purified and to remain pure, Seventh-day Adventists must have the Holy Spirit in their hearts and in their homes. The Lord has given me light that when the Israel of today humble themselves before Him, and cleanse the soul-temple from all defilement, He will hear their prayers in behalf of the sick and will bless in the use of His remedies for disease. When in faith the human agent does all he can to combat disease, using the simple methods of treatment that God has provided, his efforts will be blessed of God.

If, after so much light has been given, God's people will cherish wrong habits, indulging self and refusing to reform, they will suffer the sure consequences of transgression. If they are determined to gratify perverted appetite at any cost, God will not miraculously save them from the consequences of their indulgence. They "shall lie down in sorrow." (Isaiah 50:11)

Those who choose to be presumptuous, saying, "The Lord has healed me, and I need not restrict my diet; I can eat and drink as I please," will ere long need, in body and soul, the restoring power of God. Because the Lord has graciously healed you, you must not think you can link yourselves up with the self-indulgent practices of the world. Do as Christ commanded after His work of healing--"go, and sin no more." (John 8:11) Appetite must not be your god.

The Lord gave His word to ancient Israel, that if they would cleave strictly to Him and do all His requirements, He would keep them from all the diseases such as He had brought upon the Egyptians; but this promise was given on the condition of obedience. Had the Israelites obeyed the instruction they received, and profited by their advantages, they would have been the world's object lesson of health and prosperity. The Israelites failed of fulfilling God's purpose, and thus failed of receiving the blessings that might have been theirs. But in Joseph and Daniel, in Moses and Elijah, and many others, we have noble examples of the results of the true plan of living. Like faithfulness today will produce like results. To us it is written: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9)

O, how many lose the richest blessings that God has in store for them in health and spiritual endowments! There are many souls who wrestle for special victories and special blessings that they may do some great thing. To this end they are always feeling that they must make an agonizing struggle in prayer and tears. When these persons search the Scriptures with prayer to know the expressed will of God, and then do His will from the heart without one reservation or self-indulgence, they will find rest. All the agonizing, all the tears and struggles, will not bring them the blessing they long for. Self must be entirely surrendered. They must do the work that presents itself,

appropriating the abundance of the grace of God which is promised to all who ask in faith.--Testimonies, Vol. IX, pp. 164-166.

The Isle of Prayer

DO you ever feel discouraged
 With the story of the past?
Have you tried to do your duty—
 Tried and tried, and failed at last?
Does your life seem vain and useless,
 Crushed and desolate your heart?
Would you give earth's richest treasure
 Just to get another start?

Then I know a little island
 That is just the place for you,
Where your soul may find refreshment
 And your life begin anew.
I have often found fresh courage
 In its purifying air,
In the place where God meets mortals—
 'Tis the sacred Isle of Prayer.

Winifred Davidson

Chapter 6

Submission and Faith

Before engaging in prayer there should be the closest self-examination to discover if there are not sins which need to be repented of, confessed, and forsaken. Deep humility of soul before God is necessary, and firm, humble reliance upon the merits of the blood of Christ alone. Fasting and prayer will accomplish nothing while the heart is estranged from God by a wrong course of action. [Read Isa. 58:6, 7, 9-11.]

It is heart work that the Lord requires, good works springing from a heart filled with love. All should carefully and prayerfully ... investigate their motives and actions. The promise of God to us is on condition of obedience, compliance with all His requirements. [Read Isa. 58:1-5.]

Faith and Calmness

I was shown that in case of sickness, where the way is clear for the offering up of prayer for the sick, the case should be committed to the Lord in calm faith, not with a storm of excitement. He alone is acquainted with the past life of the individual and knows what his future will be. He who is acquainted with the hearts of all men knows whether the person, if raised up, would glorify His name or dishonor Him by backsliding and apostasy. All that we are required to do is to ask God to raise the sick up if in accordance with His

will, believing that He hears the reasons which we present and the fervent prayers offered. If the Lord sees it will best honor Him, He will answer our prayers. But to urge recovery without submission to His will is not right.

What God promises He is able at any time to perform, and the work which He gives His people to do He is able to accomplish by them. If they will live according to every word He has spoken, every good word and promise will be fulfilled unto them. But if they come short of perfect obedience, the great and precious promises are afar off, and they cannot reach the fulfillment.

All that can be done in praying for the sick is to earnestly importune God in their behalf, and in perfect confidence rest the matter in His hands. If we regard iniquity in our hearts the Lord will not hear us. He can do what He will with His own. He will glorify Himself by working in and through them who wholly follow Him, so that it shall be known that it is the Lord and that their works are wrought in God.

Faith and Obedience

Said Christ: "If any man serve Me, him will My Father honor." When we come to Him we should pray that we may enter into and accomplish His purpose, and that our desires and interests may be lost in His. We should acknowledge our acceptance of His will, not praying Him to concede to ours. It is better for us that God does not always answer our prayers just when we desire, and in just the

manner we wish. He will do more and better for us than to accomplish all our wishes, for our wisdom is folly.

We have united in earnest prayer around the sickbed of men, women, and children, and have felt that they were given back to us from the dead in answer to our earnest prayers. In these prayers we thought we must be positive and, if we exercised faith, that we must ask for nothing less than life. We dared not say, "If it will glorify God," fearing it would admit a semblance of doubt. We have anxiously watched those who have been given back, as it were, from the dead. We have seen some of these, especially youth, raised to health, and they have forgotten God, become dissolute in life, causing sorrow and anguish to parents and friends, and have become a shame to those who feared to pray. They lived not to honor and glorify God, but to curse Him with their lives of vice.

We no longer mark out a way nor seek to bring the Lord to our wishes. If the life of the sick can glorify Him, we pray that they may live, nevertheless, not as we will but as He will. Our faith can be just as firm, and more reliable, by committing the desire to the all-wise God, and, without feverish anxiety, in perfect confidence, trusting all to Him. We have the promise. We know that He hears us if we ask according to His will.

Our petitions must not take the form of a command, but of intercession for Him to do the things we desire of Him. When the church are united, they will have strength and power; but when part of them are united to the world, and many are given to covetousness,

which God abhors, He can do but little for them. Unbelief and sin shut them away from God. We are so weak that we cannot bear much spiritual prosperity, lest we take the glory, and accredit goodness and righteousness to ourselves as the reason of the signal blessing of God, when it was all because of the great mercy and loving-kindness of our compassionate heavenly Father, and not because any good was found in us.--Testimonies, Vol. II, pp. 146-149.

The Prayer of Faith

Although a Babel host of tongues
 Surrounds us on this sphere,
The prayer of faith ascends to God
 Distinct and sweet and clear.

The music of the heavenly choirs
 Cannot its song submerge,
That rises from the hearts of men
 To heaven's sacred verge.

More swift than fancy spans the vault
 Of empyrean space,
It wings aloft, where mercy smiles
 Above the throne of grace.

Although a Babel host of tongues
 Surround us on this sphere,

The prayer of faith shines through to God,
And brings all heaven near.

N.D. Anderson

Chapter 7

Faith and Works

In praying for the sick, it is essential to have faith; for it is in accordance with the word of God. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16) So we cannot discard praying for the sick, and we should feel very sad if we could not have the privilege of approaching God, to lay before Him all our weaknesses and our infirmities, to tell the compassionate Saviour all about these things, believing that He hears our petitions. Sometimes answers to our prayers come immediately; sometimes we have to wait patiently and continue earnestly to plead for the things that we need, our cases being illustrated by the case of the importunate solicitor for bread. "Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight," etc. This lesson means more than we can imagine. We are to keep on asking, even if we do not realize the immediate response to our prayers. "I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." (Luke 11:9, 10)

We need grace, we need divine enlightenment, that through the Spirit we may know how to ask for such things as we need. If our petitions are indited by the Lord they will be answered.

Sometimes a Testing Delay

There are precious promises in the Scriptures to those who wait upon the Lord. We all desire an immediate answer to our prayers and are tempted to become discouraged if our prayer is not immediately answered. Now, my experience has taught me that this is a great mistake. The delay is for our special benefit. We have a chance to see whether our faith is true and sincere or changeable like the waves of the sea. We must bind ourselves upon the altar with the strong cords of faith and love, and let patience have her perfect work. Faith strengthens through continual exercise. This waiting does not mean that because we ask the Lord to heal there is nothing for us to do. On the contrary, we are to make the very best use of the means which the Lord in His goodness has provided for us in our necessities.

I have seen so much of carrying matters to extremes, in praying for the sick, that I have felt that this part of our experience requires much solid, sanctified thinking, lest we shall make movements that we may call faith, but which are really nothing less than presumption. Persons worn down with affliction need to be counseled wisely, that they may move discretely; and while they place themselves before God to be prayed for that they may be healed, they are not to take the position that methods of restoration to health in accordance with nature's laws are to be neglected. ...

The human agent should have faith and should cooperate with the divine power, using every facility, taking advantage of

everything that, according to his intelligence, is beneficial, working in harmony with natural laws; and in doing this he neither denies nor hinders faith.--Counsels on Health, pp. 380-382.

Prevailing Prayer

O holy time, you are to me a fragrant breeze
fresh blown from sea,
That grasps my ship from stormy gale, sad
derelict with wounded sail,
And tows me gently in to shore, then mends
the sail to sail once more;
That wraps my heart in tender love and thank-
fulness to him above,
And calms the clouds that will arise, then
paints a rainbow in the skies;
That cools my fevered, aching brow, bids lift
my cross as even Thou
Didst journey o'er the thorn-strewn way, but won
the resurrection day.
While thus Gethsemane I know, prayer tempers
all the winds that blow,
And bids me at its shrine to kneel, while all
life's wounds and sorrows heal.

Helen McCollum Johnston

Chapter 8

Reformation Called For

The grace of God is always reformatory. Every human being is in a school, where he is to learn to give up hurtful practices, and to obtain a knowledge of what he can do for himself. Those who ignore these things, who take no precautions in regard to getting pure air to breathe and pure water to drink, cannot be free from disease. Their systems are defiled and the human structure injured.

Such people are careless, reckless, presumptuous, and self-destroying. Knowledge is strewn along their pathway, but they refuse to gather up the rays of light, saying that they depend on God. But will God do those things that He has left for them to do? Will He supply their neglect? Will He wink at their willing ignorance, and do great things for them, by restoring soul, body, and spirit, while they ignore the most simple agencies, the use of which would bring them their health? While day by day they indulge their appetite by eating that which brings disease, can they expect the Lord to work a miracle to restore them? This is not the Lord's way of working. By doing this, they make the Lord altogether such an one as themselves. Faith and works go together. ...

Let all examine their own hearts, to see if they are not cherishing that which is a positive injury to them, and in the place of opening the door of the heart to let Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness in, are complaining of the dearth of the Spirit of God. Let these

search for their idols, and cast them out. Let them cut away every unhealthful indulgence in eating or drinking. Let them bring their daily practice into harmony with nature's laws. By doing, as well as believing, an atmosphere will be created about the soul that will be a savor of life unto life.--Medical Ministry, pp. 226, 227.

Chapter 9

Laying a Foundation for Ill Health

A misuse of the body shortens that period of time which God designs shall be used in His service. By allowing ourselves to form wrong habits, by keeping late hours, by gratifying appetite at the expense of health, we lay the foundation for feebleness. By neglecting to take physical exercise, by overworking mind or body, we unbalance the nervous system. Those who thus shorten their lives by disregarding nature's laws are guilty of robbery toward God. We have no right to neglect or misuse the body, the mind, or the strength, which should be used to offer God consecrated service.

All should have an intelligent knowledge of the human frame, that they may keep their bodies in the condition necessary to do the work of the Lord. Those who form habits that weaken the nerve power and lessen the vigor of mind or body, make themselves inefficient for the work God has given them to do. On the other hand, a pure, healthy life is most favorable for the perfection of Christian character and for the development of the powers of mind and body.--Counsels on Health, p. 41.

Teach Me to Pray

When I'm sad and tired
Of the weary way,
And the teardrops fall,

Teach me to pray.

When a light goes out
At the end of the day,
And a dear friend's failed,
Teach me to pray.

When a joy comes home,
Though it may not stay,
And my life is song,
Teach me to pray.

Del R. Romine

Chapter 10

Why Some Are Not Healed

In the matter of praying for the sick ... I have been considering many things that have been presented to me in the past in reference to this subject.

Suppose that twenty men and women should present themselves as subjects for prayer at some of our camp meetings, this would not be unlikely, for those who are suffering will do anything in their power to obtain relief and to regain strength and health. Of these twenty, few have regarded the light on the subject of purity and health reform. They have neglected to practice right principles in eating and drinking and in taking care of their bodies, and some of those who are married have formed gross habits and indulged in unholy practice, while of those who are unmarried, some have been reckless of health and life, since in clear rays the light has shone upon them; but they have not had respect unto the light, nor have they walked circumspectly. Yet they solicit the prayers of God's people and call for the elders of the church.

Should they regain the blessing of health, many of them would pursue the same course of heedless transgression of nature's laws unless enlightened and thoroughly transformed. ...

Sin has brought many of them where they are,--to a state of feebleness of mind and debility of body. Shall prayer be offered to

the God of heaven for His healing to come upon them then and there, without specifying any conditions?--I say, No, decidedly no. What, then, shall be done? Present their cases before Him who knows every individual by name.

Present these thoughts to the persons who come asking for your prayers: We are human; we cannot read the heart or know the secrets of your life. These are known only to yourself and God. If you now repent of your sin, if any of you can see that in any instance you have walked contrary to the light given you of God and have neglected to give honor to the body, the temple of God, but by wrong habits have degraded the body which is Christ's property, make confession of these things to God. Unless you are wrought upon by the Holy Spirit in special manner to confess your sins of private nature to man, do not breathe them to any soul.

Christ is your Redeemer; He will take no advantage of your humiliating confessions. If you have sin of a private character, confess it to Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1) If you have sinned by withholding from God His own in tithes and offerings, confess your guilt to God and to the church, and heed the injunction that He has given you: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse." (Malachi 3:10) ...

The Lord "doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men." (Lam. 3:33) "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He

remembereth that we are dust." (Ps. 103:13, 14) He knows our heart, for He reads every secret of the soul. He knows whether or not those for whom petitions are offered would be able to endure the trial and test that would come upon them if they lived. He knows the end from the beginning. Many will be laid away to sleep before the fiery ordeal of the time of trouble shall come upon our world. This is another reason why we should say after our earnest petition; "Nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done." (Luke 22:42) Such a petition will never be registered in heaven as a faithless prayer.--
Counsels on Health, pp. 373-375.

A Daily Prayer

Our Father, grant my life to be
 A bright and shining light for Thee,
A witness to Thy loving care
 To all I meet in daily fare.

Help me to speak a word of cheer
 To those to whom the day seems drear,
A word to comfort those who weep,
Encourage those whose way is steep.

May nought of self-obscure the light,
 Which should be ever burning bright,
That all who pass this way may see
 The Christ life shining out through me.

Grant this petition in the name
Of Him who bore my sin and shame,
Who, on the cross, was crucified
That we might all be glorified.

Ina White Bottsford

Chapter 11

An Illustration

My husband and myself once attended a meeting where our sympathies were enlisted for a brother who was a great sufferer with the phthisic. He was pale and emaciated. He requested the prayers of the people of God. He said that his family were sick and that he had lost a child. He spoke with feeling of his bereavement. He said that he had been waiting for some time to see Brother and Sister White. He had believed that if they would pray for him he would be healed. After the meeting closed, the brethren called our attention to the case. They said that the church was assisting them; that his wife was sick, and his child had died. The brethren had met at his house, and united in praying for the afflicted family. We were much worn, and had the burden of labor upon us during the meeting, and wished to be excused.

I had resolved not to engage in prayer for anyone unless the Spirit of the Lord should dictate in the matter. I had been shown that there was so much iniquity abounding, even among professed Sabbath-keepers, that I did not wish to unite in prayer for those of whose history I had no knowledge. I stated my reason. I was assured by the brethren that, as far as they knew, he was a worthy brother. I conversed a few words with the one who had solicited our prayers that he might be healed, but I could not feel free. He wept, and said that he had waited for us to come, and he felt assured that if we would pray for him he would be restored to health. We told him that

we were unacquainted with his life, that we would rather those who knew him would pray for him. He importuned us so earnestly that we decided to consider his case and present it before the Lord that night; and if the way seemed clear, we would comply with his request.

That night we bowed in prayer and presented his case before the Lord. We entreated that we might know the will of God concerning him. All we desired was that God might be glorified. Would the Lord have us pray for this afflicted man? We left the burden with the Lord and retired to rest. In a dream the case of that man was clearly presented. His course from his childhood up was shown, and that if we should pray the Lord would not hear us; for he regarded iniquity in his heart. The next morning the man came for us to pray for him. We took him aside and told him we were sorry to be compelled to refuse his request. I related my dream, which he acknowledged was true. He had practiced self-abuse from his boyhood up, and he had continued the practice during his married life, but said he would try to break himself of it.

This man had a long-established habit to overcome. He was in the middle age of life. His moral principles were so weak that when brought in conflict with long-established indulgence they were overcome. The baser passions had gained the ascendancy over the higher nature. I asked him in regard to health reform. He said he could not live it. His wife would throw graham flour out of doors if it were brought into the house. This family had been helped by the church. Prayer had also been offered in their behalf. Their child had

died, the wife was sick, and the husband and father would leave his case upon us for us to bring before a pure and holy God, that He might work a miracle and make him well. ... Here was a man debasing himself daily, and yet daring to venture into the presence of God and ask an increase of strength which he had vilely squandered, and which, if granted, he would consume upon his lust. What forbearance has God! If He should deal with man according to his corrupt ways, who could live in His sight?

What if we had been less cautious and carried the case of this man before God while he was practicing iniquity, would the Lord have heard? Would He have answered? "For Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with Thee. The foolish shall not stand in Thy sight: Thou hatest all workers of iniquity." (Ps. 5:4, 5) "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." (Ps. 66:18)--Testimonies, Vol. II, pp. 349-351.

Chapter 12

Preparation for Death Not A Denial of Faith

In praying for the sick, we are to pray that, if it is God's will, they may be raised to health; but if not, that He will give them His grace to comfort, His presence to sustain them in their suffering.

Many who should set their house in order neglect to do it when they have hope that they will be raised to health in answer to prayer. Buoyed up by a false hope, they do not feel the need of giving words of exhortation and counsel to their children, parents, or friends, and it is a great misfortune. Accepting the assurance that they would be healed when prayed for, they dare not make a reference as to how their property shall be disposed of, how their family is to be cared for, or express any wish concerning matters of which they would speak if they thought they would be removed by death. In this way disasters are brought upon the family and friends, for many things that should be understood are left unmentioned because they fear expression on these points would be denial of their faith. Believing they will be raised to health by prayer, they fail to use hygienic measures which are within their power to use, fearing it would be a denial of their faith.

I thank the Lord that it is our privilege to co-operate with Him in the work of restoration, availing ourselves of all the possible advantages in the recovery of health. It is no denial of our faith to

place ourselves in the condition most favorable for recovery.--
Counsels on Health, p. 376.

Chapter 13

A Work of Cooperation

Many have expected that God would keep them from sickness merely because they have asked Him to do so. But God did not regard their prayers, because their faith was not made perfect by works. God will not work a miracle to keep those from sickness who have no care for themselves, but are continually violating the laws of health and make no efforts to prevent disease. When we do all we can on our part to have health, then may we expect that the blessed results will follow, and we can ask God in faith to bless our efforts for the preservation of health. He will then answer our prayer, if His name can be glorified thereby. But let all understand that they have a work to do. God will not work in a miraculous manner to pre serve the health of persons who are taking a sure course to make themselves sick, by their careless inattention to the laws of health.--
Medical Ministry, pp. 13, 14.

Power in Prayer

In the beauty of the morning,
 When all nature comes to life,
When refreshing rest has brought us
 Courage new for daily strife;
Then it is we need to ponder
 And in prayer renew our vows,
And remember that our Saviour

For each day new strength endows.

When the falling shades of evening
 Turn the light to drab and gray,
There is still the need of going
 To our Lord to kneel and pray.
Every day will bring its conflicts,
 Every day may bring its joys,
But in Him, when oft confiding,
 We will find that perfect poise.

Burton Castle

Chapter 14

Our First Duty

The Saviour presents to us something higher to toil for than merely what we shall eat and drink, and wherewithal we shall be clothed. Eating, drinking and dressing are carried to such excess that they become crimes. They are among the marked sins of the last days, and constitute a sign of Christ's soon coming. Time, money, and strength, which belong to the Lord, but which He has entrusted to us, are wasted in superfluities of dress and luxuries for the perverted appetite, which lessen vitality and bring suffering and decay. It is impossible to present our bodies a living sacrifice to God when we continually fill them with corruption and disease by our own sinful indulgence. Knowledge must be gained in regard to how to eat and drink and dress so as to preserve health. Sickness is the result of violating nature's law. Our first duty, one which we owe to God, to ourselves, and to our fellow men, is to obey the laws of God. These include the laws of health.--Counsels on Health, pp. 24, 25.

Chapter 15

Health Maintained Through Service for Others

One of the surest hindrances to the recovery of the sick is the centering of attention upon themselves. Many invalids feel that everyone should give them sympathy and help, when what they need is to have their attention turned away from themselves, to think of and care for others.

Often prayer is solicited for the afflicted, the sorrowful, the discouraged; and this is right. We should pray that God will shed light into the darkened mind and comfort the sorrowful heart. But God answers prayer for those who place themselves in the channel of His blessings. While we offer prayer for these sorrowful ones, we should encourage them to try to help those more needy than themselves. The darkness will be dispelled from their own hearts as they try to help others. As we seek to comfort others with the comfort wherewith we are comforted, the blessing comes back to us.

The fifty-eight chapter of Isaiah is a prescription for maladies of the body and of the soul. If we desire health and the true joy of life we must put into practice the rules given in this scripture. Of the service acceptable to Him, and its blessings, the Lord says:

"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry,
And that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?
When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him;

And that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?
Then shall thy light break forth as the morning,
And thine health shall spring forth speedily."

--Ministry of Healing, p. 256.