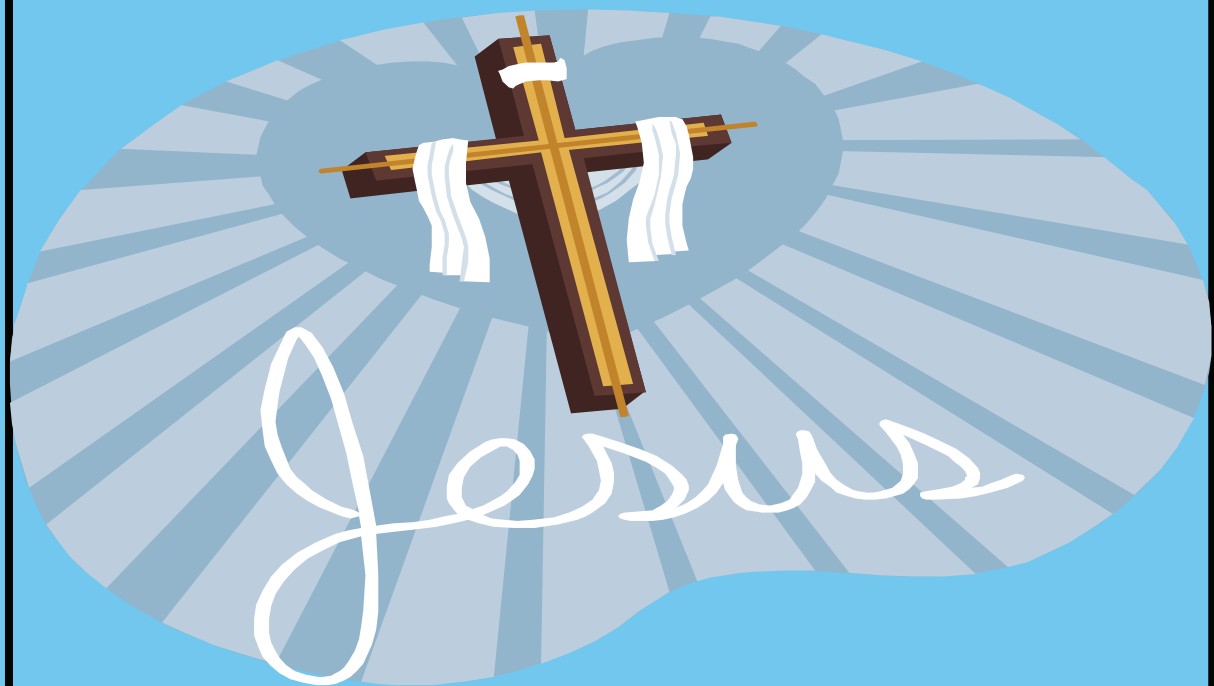


The Great Physician

Diagnoses and Heals



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“I have trouble controlling my appetite.” Or...“My problem is not too serious, but I keep losing my temper.” Or...“I keep complaining, and I am unmindful of the needs of others.” Or...“I have trouble controlling my tongue. I have a vicious habit of backbiting.” Or...“It is the cares of this life...I am covetous.” Or...“My thoughts are not what they should be, and I have trouble controlling them.” Or...“I am lazy. When there is a job to do, I keep putting it off, or run away from it.”

And so the Great Physician begins to do some examination. Just as an earthly doctor begins by taking a stethoscope and examines the heart, so the Great Physician begins by examining our hearts. He proceeds with a diagnosis that will help us to understand the **cause** of our problems. The stethoscope of the Spirit of God discerns the inward motives of the heart, and the Faithful and True Witness renders His verdict: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” Jer. 17:9.

Next the doctor usually checks the tongue. The Great Physician says: “The tongue can no man tame: it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.” James 3:8. This description of all men, be they Jews or Gentiles, the Lord speaks through Paul the apostle, “Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.” Rom. 3:13-14.

Now the Great Physician says, “Let us take a look at your thoughts.” “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continuously.” Gen. 6:5.

This is speaking of the natural mind of all men. From the margin we see that “imagination” sig-

nify “purposes and desires.” Every purpose and every desire, of the natural heart is evil continually. And the apostle Paul declares that our natural minds are “enmity against God,” and that by nature we are “alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works.” Rom. 8:7; Col. 1:21.

A good physician will want to know about your hereditary, family tree, and record of past health. To this we must add: “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me.” “The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.” Ps. 51:5; Ps. 58: 3. “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way...” Isa. 53:6. Indeed, sin has wrought its ravages upon our souls: “He that sinneth against Me wrongeth His own soul...” Prov. 8:36.

“The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your alters.” Jer. 17:1.

And as the Great Physician reads our whole life and renders a true witness, we maybe think that He has been dwelling too much on the negative side. So we think to ourselves, “I have some good qualities, such as my generosity, my strict moral principles, and my religious zeal.” But when He examines all our “righteousnesses,” He renders the verdict: “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”

Isa. 64:6.

We begin to protest in despair to the Great Physician, “Can you not say one good thing about our spiritual condition?” The True Witness declares sorrowfully and faithfully, “From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.” Isa. 1:6. “He that committeth sin is of the devil.” I John 3:8. “Ye are of your father the devil.”

John 8:44.

A further Diagnosis from the Testimony of Jesus

Because of our sickness, our sight is poor, and we are hard of hearing. We do not truly hear the Word of God and see its message, therefore, the Lord in His mercy, has given us the Spirit of Prophecy to make the diagnosis clear and plain that we need not err. Let us hear what it says:

“The natural heart is full of hatred to the truth, as it is to Jesus.” My Life Today, p. 261.

Do we ever pride ourselves that we love the truth? Let us not fool ourselves, the natural heart is full of hatred to the truth, and not only to the truth, but to Jesus.

“The human heart is selfish, sinful, and vicious.” Review & Herald, May 5, 1885.

“Man is Satan’s captive and is naturally inclined to follow his suggestions and do his bidding.” T. vol. 5, p.294.

“When man transgressed the divine law, his nature became evil, and he was in harmony, and not at variance with Satan. There exists naturally no enmity between sinful man and the originator of sin.” G.C. p. 505.

“In the human heart there is a natural selfishness and corruption....” T. vol. 4, p. 496.

“There is in his nature a bent to evil....” Education, p. 29.

“(his) posterity was born with inherent propensities of disobedience.” SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 1128.

“All are in just as helpless a condition as Satan himself.” SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 1077.

What we need to do, is to personalize the above statements, and apply them to ourselves.

From the Cross of Calvary

Because we do not naturally accept the truth, and

because it is so hard for us to see our true condition, the Lord has had to demonstrate the facts to us. Let us see how He has done that.

When sin was introduced by Lucifer to the heavenly beings above, he did not present it as the ugly, vicious disease that it was. He presented it as something to be desired, and that would improve upon the statutes of God. One third of the angels thought that sin would bring them a higher, nobler existence than they had. So did Eve, when she ate of the forbidden fruit. When the Son of God looked down upon the fallen race, sunken in the great pit of sin, He knew that man was deceived as to what constituted sin. There was only one way that He could reveal to man the deep-seated evil of his heart. He must come down to earth and allow man to have a face to face look at the infinite love of God, and through this demonstration, uncover to him what was in his own heart.

Jesus’ ministry lasted only three and a half years. The human race could not tolerate the Light of Life in active ministry longer than that. The human race and devils confederated to crush out the life of the Son of God. Jesus tried to tell the chosen people what was in their hearts. “This is the heir; come, let us kill him....” Matt. 21:38. He told them sorrowfully that they were possessed of the spirit of their father the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning. John 8:48. Only in the light of the cross can the true character of sin be discerned.

“At the cross of Calvary, love and selfishness stood face to face. Here was their crowning manifestation. Christ had lived only to comfort and bless, and in putting Him to death, Satan manifested the malignity of his hatred against God. He made it evident that the real purpose of his rebellion was to dethrone God, and to destroy Him through whom the love of God was shown.” Desire of Ages, p. 57.

“Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer.”

Desire of Ages, p. 761.

“Upon all rests the guilt of crucifying the Son of God.”
Desire of Ages, p. 745.

“By every sin Jesus is wounded afresh. . . .”
Desire of Ages, p. 300.

“The inheritance of children is that of sin. Sin has separated them from God.” –
Child Guidance, p. 475.

Is it any wonder that the Scripture says that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked? Upon all rests the terrible crime of murder of the Son of God. Calvary is God’s demonstration that the natural heart is full of hatred to the truth, as it is to Jesus.

“The existence of sin is unexplainable; therefore not a soul knows what God is until he sees himself in the light reflected from the cross of Calvary, and detests himself as a sinner, in the bitterness of his soul.” Testimony to Ministers, p. 264-5.

Until we see ourselves in the light which streams from the cross and which lays bare the gross wickedness of the human heart, we cannot know God, much less ourselves. Sin is rebellion, hatred, and murder of God. This is the true nature of our disease. Can we understand now why Jesus prayed as they were nailing those hands which blessed the world to the cross, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Yes, we know of some things that we do that are not right, but do we really understand the true nature of the terrible disease of sin.

Importance of Correct Diagnosis

In the light of all these things, the Bible, Spirit of Prophecy, and the cross of Calvary, the Great Physician renders His verdict. He gives a faithful diagnosis of our state of being. Why is it vital that we have a true and faithful diagnosis of our condition? Because there are false physicians. Do you know what they do? “They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, peace, peace; when there is no peace.” Jer. 6:14.

It is hard for some people to believe that the heart of man is as desperately wicked as inspiration states. They say, “Why, there are some people who do not even profess to believe the gospel, yet they are kind, decent, and generous people. They love their families. How is it that the Bible verdict is so severe? Most people do not understand that the restraining Spirit of God surrounds this world with an atmosphere of grace as real as the air we breathe. Let Christ cease His ministration in the sanctuary above, and withdraw that restraining influence from men, and all the elements of evil hidden in the hearts of men will burst forth. The earth will become a scene of unprecedented carnage. There will be no such thing as human affection. Mothers will eat their own children as they did during the siege of Jerusalem. That we have joy in the common blessing of this life is no credit to our goodness, but to the loving mercy of our High Priest.

Lesson from Abraham

Why the stressing of the utter sinfulness of human nature? Is this to drive you to despair? No, certainly not. There is only one thing to recommend us to the Great Physician, and that is **our great need**. This we must learn and understand. Abraham was taught this lesson. When he was 75 years of age, God came to him and told him that he would have a son. Through this experience, God designed to teach Abraham something about righteousness by faith. However, there was one problem that confronted Abraham..his wife Sarah, was past child bearing age. Abraham could not depend on Sarah, because she was too old. But Abraham was not too old to father a son. While he could not rely on Sarah, he could still rely on himself. Sarah made the suggestion that he could take Hagar to wife. When he did, a son was born. But did God accept this son? Was he the son of promise? God said to Abraham, “I cannot accept this seed. Sarah shall have a son.” Now Abraham was becoming older, and God tarried until he too, was past age. Let us read the record:

“Who against hope believed in hope (that is

when there was no hope, he kept on hoping), that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb." Rom. 4:18-19.

It took God 25 years to teach Abraham the lesson. We have the same lesson to learn, that we have nothing to hope for in ourselves. None of us can look to himself and see anything that will give us any comfort. When Abraham learned that he was in a hopeless condition, not being able to depend upon either Sarah or himself, he looked solely to God in his extremity. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God: And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able to also perform. And therefore, it was imputed to him for righteousness." Rom. 4:20-22.

We have nothing to present to God, but that which is tainted and corrupted. The only thing that recommends us to Christ is our great need. They that are whole need not a physician, but those who are sick. Jesus calls not the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He is the Great Physician. He is my Physician, and He is your Physician. The Spirit of Prophecy says that "The hope we have in Christ is because we are sinners." Testimonies to Ministers, p. 265. That is our title to Jesus. God loves the sinless angels that surround His throne, but who can understand the infinite love exercised toward us? "Only he who discerns his own sinfulness can discern the preciousness of the Saviour." Desire of Ages, p. 495.

The Great Physician's Healing Power

Jesus is the Great Physician, and He does not shrink from coming into contact with our sinful hearts. The leper in all his pollution sought out the Great Physician. The crowd fell back crying, "Unclean!" They dared not come into his contaminating presence. But Jesus did not draw aside. He went to meet the leper and placed His hand upon that corrupt flesh, and received no pollution. The leper was healed from the loathsome disease. So Jesus comes into the lives of every sin-sick soul that calls on Him for healing. As we see our great need, let us be assured that there is a balm in Gilead, and a Physician there. He is the Sun of righteousness, and He will arise with healing in His wings. He draws nigh to heal. Will He heal such a sinner as me?

"Oh Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips. Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in Thee the fatherless findeth mercy. I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him." Hosea 14:1-4.

What does the Great Physician say He will do? "I will heal their backsliding." "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities: who healeth all thy diseases?" Ps. 103:3

"There is none that seeketh after God." Rom. 3:11. We do not seek Him. Adam and Eve did not seek God after they had sinned. It is the Lord who seeks us out in our great need. He searches out His own, the objects of His great love, saying, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Rev. 3:20. He is not far from every one of us. He knows the condition of the soul, and He has the remedy. He is the Creator, and He loves to heal us. He does not condescend. It is His great delight to cure the most grievous disease.

Since our first parents sinned, we have become the subject of God's judgment. We have become entangled in the curse of sin. Not only has punishment fallen on us from Adam and Eve, but a contagion imparted by them resides in us, which justly deserves punishment. We humans carry the 'seeds of sin by birth'. And the apostle himself most eloquently testifies that "death has spread to all because all have sinned." Rom. 5:12.

But God in His love and mercy, through the sanctuary service, absolves us of our sins and sinful natures. Let us respond with love and joy in our hearts as He brings us home.

