

and holden, but by thought never' as the *Cloud of Unknowing* boldly declares. Through relinquishing past attitudes of self-centredness, a warm self-acceptance emerges, genuinely open to one's own and to others' inadequacies. We desire to place ourselves increasingly at God's service. We learn to rest and trust in the divine work of loving the hell out of us, just as a child grows in their sleep. Such openness to God within shows itself in outgoing concern for one's neighbour - near or far. One corollary of this is a deepening psychic empathy which enables healing to flow through one to another in need. Life's journey is from selfishness to kindness as we follow Dorothy Kerin's Little Way of Prayer:

Let us by an act of will place ourselves in the presence of our divine Lord and by an act of faith ask that he will empty us of all desire save that His most blessed will be done and that it may illumine our hearts and minds. We can then gather together all those for whom our prayers have been asked and hold them silently up to Him making no special request - neither asking nor beseeching - but just resting with them in Him desiring nothing but that our Lord may be glorified in them.

See also

Leaflet 6 (a)
Natural Healing Gifts

Leaflet 6 (b)
Christian Healing and Theology

CFPSS Occasional Leaflets

1. Sensitivity or Mediumship in a Christian Context
2. The Death of a Baby: Giving Words to Sorrow
3. Deliver us from evil . . .
4. The Psychic – What does the Bible say?
5. The Spiritual and the Psychic
6. (a) Natural Healing Gifts
(b) Christian Healing and Theology
(c) Christian Healing and Mysticism

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Further advice and information
may be obtained from
The General Secretary of the CFPSS:
The Rural Workshop, South Road,
North Somercotes, Louth,
Lincolnshire LN11 7PT
Telephone and fax. **01507 358845**
E-mail: gensec@churchesfellowship.co.uk
Website: www.churchesfellowship.co.uk

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The Churches' Fellowship

for Psychical and Spiritual Studies



Occasional Leaflet 6 (c)

Christian Healing and Mysticism

by the Revd Neil Broadbent

Healing - God's ceaseless work -
Mystical and spiritual perspectives
on the Christian journey to wholeness

*'Under your healing touch, hour by hour,
day by day, I shall be set free,
until the intention of my heart is pure love.'*

(anon)

This is one of a series of three leaflets on God's power to heal. There is no implied ranking in these. They are different ways of looking at the topic and any may be more applicable according to your circumstances.

Healing is God's ceaseless work. Endlessly he desires our wholeness, our perfection in love. God looks upon all 'with pity, not with blame.' The natural sciences show us that there are ages and stages in human growth and development. Dean Inge simplified them into three: the young adult's need for action, the middle-aged person's growing reflection and the elder's concentration on loving. None supercedes another; the thought is that age may bring increasing wisdom and broadening horizons of awareness, both being aspects of healing.

The Christian gospel is that God has united himself with us, as shown fully in Jesus of Nazareth, 'for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health,' in this life and the next. This is whether we know it or not, like it or not, wish it or not. This is known as God's at-one-ment with us and is the basis of mysticism. His desire is that every breath we take and every step we make should be one of growth in love. The basis of prayer is offering oneself to the Divine that he may change us more into his likeness. That is more loving, more whole, more Christ-like.

We are so made that we need air for every breath in this life and prayer for every breath in this life and the next. Prayer, then, is both the essential action of spiritual

growth and also the core work of the Churches' ministry of healing. Listening is an essential prerequisite. As the French mystic Simone Weil wrote 'absolute undivided attention is prayer.' The practice of paying attention to our inner responses and the right use of silence bring considerable healing. As Jesus taught, we should pray 'Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.' This is the bottom line on the Churches' ministry of healing.

As none of us lives perfectly in and from divine love, also known as God; as we don't always live in harmony with ourselves, our family, our community, environment or Creator, dis-ease is ever a possibility, often a reality.

The ultimate origins of suffering are perhaps not for us to know in this life. And one hesitates to presume on human grief and pain. Even so, tentative points may be made. Much human suffering is caused by people doing damage to one another. This harm will cease as we learn, less to condemn and separate ourselves from our brothers and sisters, and more to take care of each other. Human flesh is so frail precisely that we may learn to take great care of our bodies. Those who are psychically open, whether through natural gifting, damage or suffering, quickly learn that people are porous and that feelings are contagious. Hidden strong feelings are a root cause of bitterness and some forms of illness.

Sickness may become, for some, a time of inner growth. Pain and suffering often herald

the means by which one comes to one's senses. Being laid aside from the everyday pressures of life gives one time to rethink (i.e. repent) one's priorities and lifestyle. There is a clarification of delusions and fears, a veritable harrowing of our hells, and we are led into new and greener pastures of compassion and tolerance. Tears bring cleansing to the soul.

Disease becomes a teacher, leading us into greater awareness of the need for illness prevention and social and political education. Humiliation leads to humility wherein we acknowledge, simultaneously, the truth of our frailties and that all God's creatures are held within the ever-present arms of Divine and infinite love. So it is that a six-year old child may be both dying and whole. Great sickness, even death, is no barrier to our being made whole and thus holy. We may say that it is through such dark journeyings that we are brought to a place of greater respect and freedom from those group norms based on fear. In Christian terms, this is what the events of Jesus' last days before his execution (Holy Week) show.

Growing maturity brings a simplification of our desires. Pride is being replaced by prayer and one more deeply desires that love should prevail regardless of circumstances. As our healing, salvation and redemption slowly progress - and it is God's will that this happens - we realise that 'Our failings never hinder Him loving us,' as Julian of Norwich wrote. We discover that 'By love He may be gotten