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CHRISTIAN HEALING MISSION

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR
SPIRITUAL HEALING

An Appeal to Patients



SYDNEY:

Church Stores, Daking House, Rawson Place,

CHRISTIAN HEALING MISSION.

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The healing missions conducted by Mr. James Hickson are altogether different from other kinds of "faith-healing." They are a reverent attempt to realise the healing presence and power of Christ in and through His Church. Some patients have not yet had a chance of understanding the purpose and spirit of Mr. Hickson's mission. Other patients, who have grasped the true idea of the mission, are asking already how they are to prepare themselves for spiritual healing. These notes are offered as a call and a guide to that preparation.

1. First of all, a word about *the method of the mission*. Mr. Hickson's custom is to hold a healing mission service on the mornings of certain days in one central church in each diocese, mostly the Cath-

edral. At this service he lays his hands with prayer upon each patient at the altar rails, and the bishop or a priest follows to give each patient the blessing of the Church. In the afternoon Mr. Hickson's ministers in the same way to a limited number of bed-ridden sufferers at home or in hospital. If you wish to receive Mr. Hickson's ministrations, you would be wise to give your name at once to your parish priest, who will give you all information and advice about the time and place and other arrangements of the mission. You would be wise also to tell your doctor what you are intending to do; Mr. Hickson's desire is to work in friendly and sympathetic co-operation with the medical profession. The skill and knowledge of the doctor are themselves divine gifts, part of God's provision for the relief of human suffering. On the other hand, many physicians and surgeons recognise that spiritual forces play a large part in the causing and the curing of physical disease, and have given Mr. Hickson's missions their active sympathy and support.

2. Now with regard to *your preparation*. Look forward to this mission as a means of grace, and try to prepare for it in the same spirit and way as you would for your Confirmation or your first Communion. Here again ask your parish priest to help

you with instruction and advice. Help him yourself by telling him quite frankly about any spiritual trouble or difficulty or doubt that disturbs the peace of your soul, and follow his advice faithfully.

3. For your own guidance, remember *what spiritual healing means*. Mr. Hickson believes that he has a divine gift of healing influence, but he regards this gift first and foremost as enabling him to serve as the instrument of the healing ministry of our Lord Himself. We are beginning to realise once more that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, living and working in our midst in His Church to-day as He did in the days of His earthly ministry, is able to heal our whole nature—not only the diseases of our souls, but in many cases the diseases of our bodies. This healing ministry of Christ is called **spiritual healing** in two senses.

(a) It is, in the first place, the healing of the spirit; the spirit itself needs healing of its sin and doubt and other infirmities.

(b) Secondly, it is the healing of the body through the spirit. This bodily healing comes through the working of the Spirit of Christ upon the body through the spirit. Even where bodily healing does not follow, the **healing min-**

istry brings a new spiritual strength which alters the whole tone and outlook of the sufferer's life.

4. You will understand now why it is that spiritual preparation is needed if we are to look for spiritual healing. Your whole spiritual life should be set in order as far as can be done. You are looking forward to the healing touch of Christ upon your whole nature. Look into your life, and see whether you are reaching out now for the sanctifying touch of Christ upon your present life. Is there any means of grace that you are neglecting or misusing? Are you praying as you ought and could if you tried? Are you reading your Bible, and thinking about its message for your life? Have you sought the blessing of the Spirit in Confirmation? Have you ever sought the Presence of Christ in Holy Communion? Or are you coming to Communion without any real effort to come in penitence, faith and charity? Set these things right now, as far as you can. You can scarcely expect to receive the blessing of healing if you are refusing or wasting the blessings within your reach already. If, on the other hand, you are actually trying to realise your union with Christ in all the ways that He has made possible for you in His Church, you will come to seek His healing touch

in this mission in a spirit which may enable Him to transform your whole life, soul and body.

5. The two chief conditions of all spiritual blessing are penitence and faith. They are therefore the conditions of spiritual healing. Read S. James v. 14-17; two things that stand out clearly are the confession of sins and the prayer of faith. Read the story of our Lord's healing ministry in the Gospel; notice how again and again He expects or awakens the consciousness of sin and the confidence of hope.

In a short leaflet only a few brief suggestions can be offered to guide your thoughts and prayers.

(a) **Penitence.**—Read and think over Matthew ix. 1-8 (Mark ii. 1-12). Try to put yourself in the place of that sufferer in the presence of Christ. And in thinking of the sins that you are going to ask God to forgive, remember there are some sins, not commonly realised as such, which may delay or hinder healing—such as jealousy and bitter unloving thoughts, or such fear of disease as implies a want of trust in God.

(b) **Faith.**—Read and think over such passages as Matthew vii. 7-12, viii. 1-17, ix. 27-31, Mark x. 46-52, xi. 20-26 (notice here how faith depends upon a pen-

itent and forgiving spirit), Philippians iv. 4-8 (notice here how the power of prayer depends upon a spirit of thankfulness as well as a sense of need). Notice how our Lord asks and helps people to believe (1) that He is able to heal, (2) that He is willing to heal. Of course the prayer of faith must always be also the prayer of obedience—"nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done." S. Paul's prayer for the removal of the stake in the flesh was answered by strength to bear the affliction (2 Cor. xii. 8-10). There have been cases of disease in which neither entire nor partial recovery has resulted from these healing missions; but there have been cases of recovery from diseases which are commonly regarded as hopeless. While we must be prepared to accept such limitations when they are revealed, both faith and experience forbid our setting any limitations beforehand. What is at work in these missions is not any merely human agency, but the power of Christ; we must not actually limit that power by thinking and saying beforehand that such and such a disease simply cannot be healed. Remember how even our Lord found Himself unable to do much because people did not think He could (Mark vi. 5-6). Above all, no limit should be set to the hope of spiritual restoration.

(c) **Intercession.**—Pray for the missionary and the mission as a whole, for the awakening of the faith of the whole Church, and for a blessing upon all other sufferers, known or unknown. "Pray one for another that ye may be healed" (S. James v. 16). The love that remembers others is as needful a part of your preparation as the penitence and the faith that concerns yourself. Attend the services of preparation and intercession in church if you can.

(d) **Service.**—Notice the sequel to Christ's healings. Women whom He had healed worked for Him (Luke iv. 39, viii. 1-3). The restored cripple was warned against relapse into a careless life (John v. 14). The blind man who received sight was led on to deeper faith and worship (John ix. 35-38). The one thankful leper was given a richer blessing (Luke xvii. 18-19). Why do you want to be healed? Surely not merely to enjoy health and strength, but to use them for the service of God and man. The future happiness of a life that has been healed depends upon its future holiness and helpfulness. The very blessing of healing itself may depend upon its being sought in an unselfish spirit of consecration.

PRAYERS FOR THE USE OF PATIENTS.

V.: I shall not die, but live.

R.: *And declare the works of the Lord.*

Almighty Father, giver of all health and source of all healing, Who didst send Thy Son to redeem mankind from sin and death: grant me such faith and earnest desire to be in all things what Thou wouldst have me be, that by the working of Thy Spirit I may be healed of all my infirmities of soul and body, and know evermore the strength and joy of Thy service; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

V.: The Lord is my Shepherd.

R.: *Therefore can I lack nothing.*

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who didst heal the sick and suffering, and didst entrust Thy healing ministry to the hands of Thine Apostles: prepare my soul in penitence and faith to seek the blessing of healing through the ministry of Thy servant, that I may be restored to health and strength of soul and body, and feel in all my life and work the presence and power of Thy redeeming love, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Spirit, one God evermore. *Amen.*

V.: O give me the comfort of Thy help again.

R.: *And stablish me with Thy free Spirit.*

O Comforter Divine, Spirit of the Father and the Son, Who hast bestowed the gift of healing upon the Church of the living God: revive Thy work in our midst, and grant unto me and all others who are seeking the blessing of healing that we may come in spirit and truth, desiring only to be so restored from all disease and evil, that our bodies may become indeed the temples of Thy holy indwelling, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Son, one God evermore. *Amen.*

PRAYERS FOR THE MISSION.

V.: The Lord shall give strength unto His people.

R.: *The Lord shall give His people the blessing of peace.*

Almighty Father, Who didst send Thine only Son to reveal to mankind the power of Thy redeeming love, grant us the guidance of Thy Spirit in preparing for the mission of healing in Thy Church. Deepen our penitence, strengthen our faith, enlarge our love, spread abroad in our hearts the spirit of expectancy, that the visit of Thy servant James

Hickson may be richly blessed; that many of Thy children, being made whole in soul and body, may surrender themselves to Thy service, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The following Collects lend themselves readily to the purpose of prayer for the mission:—

Sundays after Trinity, vi., xii., xiv.