

Quotes from the Word: Healing Our Blindness

OLD TESTAMENT

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 forgives all your iniquities,
Who heals all your diseases,
Who redeems your life from destruction,
Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies,
Who satisfies your mouth with good things,
So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
(Psalm 103:1-5)

The Lord opens the eyes of the blind;
The Lord raises those who are bowed down;
The Lord loves the righteous.
(Psalm 146:8)

Be strong, do not fear!
Behold, your God will come...and save you.
Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
Then the lame shall leap like a deer,
And the tongue of the dumb sing.
For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness,
And streams in the desert.
(Isaiah 35:4-6)

The eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness (Isaiah 29:18).

I will bring the blind by a way they did not know;
I will lead them in paths they have not known.
I will make darkness light before them,
And crooked places straight.
(Isaiah 42:16)

Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for You are my praise.
(Jeremiah 17:14)

Behold, I will bring it health and healing;
I will heal them and reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth.
(Jeremiah 33:6)

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NEW TESTAMENT

“The blind receive their sight and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them” (Matthew 11:5).

Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. And he looked up and said, “I see men like trees, walking.” Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly (Mark 8:22-25).

[A]s He was coming near Jericho...a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, “What do you want Me to do for you?” And he said, “Lord, that I may receive my sight.” Then Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has saved you.” And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God (Luke 18: 35-43).

“A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed, and I received sight.... One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see” (John 9:11, 25).

“Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them” (Matthew 4:24).

HEAVENLY DOCTRINE

THE LORD IS THE DIVINE HEALER

All the miracles performed by the Lord always involved what is meant in the internal sense by the healing of the blind, of the lame, of the lepers, the deaf, the dead, and the poor. For this reason the Lord’s miracles were Divine, as also were those performed in Egypt and in the wilderness (see *Arcana Coelestia* 2383:9).

As diseases symbolized the hurtful and evil things of the spiritual life, therefore by the diseases which the Lord healed is meant liberation from various kinds of evil and falsity which infested the church and the human race, and which would have led to spiritual death (*Arcana Coelestia* 8364:6).

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All the diseases healed by the Lord symbolized the spiritual diseases that correspond to these natural diseases. Spiritual diseases can be healed only by the Lord, and in fact by looking to His Divine omnipotence and by repentance of life. This is why He sometimes said, “Thy sins are forgiven thee; go and sin no more” (see *Apocalypse Explained* 815:5).

A miracle is what is done by the Lord, when there is something that concerns Himself, belief in Him, His Heaven, or the Church as a whole, which then passes through His Heaven, and is then carried out by spirits without any of their own cooperative power [entering into it]. This is a miracle, and is called “the finger of God” [Ex. 8:19, 31:18, Deut. 9:10, Luke 11:20] (*Spiritual Experiences* 655).

Miracles therefore are the effects of the Divine Omnipotence, and take place according to the influx of the spiritual into the natural world, with this difference only, that such things as actually exist in the spiritual world are actually introduced into such things in the natural world as correspond. The cause of such things being done and being possible, is due to the Divine Omnipotence, which is meant by the finger of God, by which the Lord produced His miracles (*True Christian Religion Additions* 1).

The Lord’s miracles are but lightly esteemed if we think merely that some blind people received their sight, some deaf their hearing, and so on. For they all symbolize and involve Divine things, namely the heavenly state of His Kingdom and His church (*Miracles and Signs* 3).

All the Lord’s miracles were Divine because they symbolized the various states of those with whom the church was to be set up anew by the Lord. Thus when the blind received sight, it meant that they who had been in ignorance of truth should receive intelligence. When the deaf received hearing, it meant that they who had previously heard nothing about the Lord and the Word should hearken and obey. When the dead were raised, it meant that they who otherwise would spiritually perish would become living, and so on.... Moreover, all the miracles related in the Word contain in them such things as belong to the Lord, to heaven, and to the church. This makes these miracles Divine, and distinguishes them from those which are not Divine (*Sacred Scripture* 17).

HEALING THE BLIND

The “blind” whom the Lord restored to sight symbolized the spiritually blind, who are those that do not know and understand truths (*Apocalypse Explained* 239:20).

“To open the eyes of the blind” is to instruct those who as yet are ignorant of truths, but nevertheless have a longing for them (*Apocalypse Explained* 152:13).

By all “the blind” whom the Lord healed those were meant who are in ignorance, and who receive Him and are illustrated by Him through the Word (*Apocalypse Explained* 239:21).

Quotes from the Word: Healing Our Blindness

On Healing the Man Blind from Birth: Why the Lord [anointed the blind man's eyes with clay] no one understands unless he knows the internal or spiritual sense of the Word. In that sense, "a man blind from birth" means those who are born outside of the church and who therefore could not know anything about the Lord, or be taught out of the Word. "The clay that the Lord made from spittle on the ground" stands for reformation by means of truths from the sense of the letter of the Word. "The ground" is the church where the Word is. "Clay" is the ultimate Divine forming. "Anointing the eyes of the blind with it" is to give thereby the understanding of truth. "The pool of Siloam" also stands for the Word in the letter. "To be washed there" is to be purified from falsities and evils (*Apocalypse Explained* 239:19).

On Healing the Blind Man from Bethsaida: All things that the Lord spoke and all things that He did in the world contained spiritual things in order from things highest to the ultimates, thus in fullness as do all miracles and the accounts of them. The "blind" whom the Lord restored to sight symbolized the spiritually blind, who are those that do not know and understand truths. The blind man here was "led out of the town" of Bethsaida, because "Bethsaida" stood for damnation, on account of its not receiving the Lord [see Matt. 11:21, and Luke 10:13]. "Spitting on his eyes" has the same meaning as "making clay of the spittle," before. That He then touched his eyes means that he was illustrated from the Divine. Then the blind man at first "saw trees as men walking," which means common and obscure perception of truth from the sense of the letter—"trees" meaning knowledges, and "to walk" meaning to live. "His seeing all clearly" after he was touched by the Lord, means that after instruction and illustration from the Lord he understood truths. This meaning is in these words and this meaning is perceived by the angels (*Apocalypse Explained* 239:20).

It would have been possible for the Lord to heal the understanding in every person, and so cause him to think not evil but good, and this by means of fears of various kinds, by miracles, by conversations with the dead, and by visions and dreams. But to heal the understanding alone is to heal a person outwardly only. For the understanding with its thought is the external of a person's life, while the will with its affection is the internal of his life. Therefore, the healing of the understanding alone would be like palliative healing, by which the interior malignity, shut in and prevented from coming out, would destroy first the near and then the remote parts till the whole would become mortified. It is the will itself that must be healed, not by means of an influx into it of the understanding, for that is not possible, but by means of instruction and exhortation by the understanding (*Divine Providence* 282).

FAITH IN THE LORD

Acknowledging the Lord and acknowledging that all salvation comes from Him constitute the beginning of the life from God with a person (*Arcana Coelestia* 10083:6).

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The Lord often said, when sick people were being healed, that they should have faith, and, "Let it be to you according to your faith." The reason why He said it was that the very first thing a person needs to do is to acknowledge that the Lord is the Savior of the world. For unless he acknowledges this no one can receive any truth or good at all from heaven.... And since it was the very first and most essential thing, therefore in order that He might be acknowledged when He came into the world the Lord questioned the sick, when He healed them, about their faith; and those who had faith were healed. This faith was that He was the Son of God who was to come into the world, and that He had power to heal and save. Furthermore every healing of sickness by the Lord when He was in the world served to mean a healing of spiritual life, thus served to mean the things that belong to salvation (*Arcana Coelestia* 10083:5).

The Lord healed this person [the boy of the centurion] and others according to their faith, because the first and primary thing of the church then to be established was to believe that the Lord is God Almighty. Without that faith no church could have been established. For the Lord was the God of heaven and the God of earth, with whom no conjunction is possible except by an acknowledgment of His Divinity, which acknowledgment is faith (*Apocalypse Explained* 815:3).

The first faith with all is a historical faith, and this afterwards becomes a saving faith when a person by his life becomes spiritual. For first of all it is to be believed that the Lord is the God of heaven and earth, and that He is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, infinite, and one with the Father. These things must be known. But so far as they are merely known they are historical, and a historical faith presents the Lord as present, because it is a looking to the Lord from His Divine nature. And yet that faith does not save until a person lives the life of faith, which is charity. For he then wills and does what he believes, and to will and to do is of the love, and love conjoins to Him whom faith presents as present (*Apocalypse Explained* 815:9).

The Lord's presence is unceasing with every person, both the evil and the good, for without His presence no person lives. But His Coming is only to those who receive Him, who are such as believe on Him and keep His commandments. The Lord's unceasing presence causes people to become rational, and gives him the ability to become spiritual. This is effected by the light that goes forth from the Lord...and that a person receives in his understanding. That light is truth, and by means of it a person has rationality. But the Lord's coming is to him who joins heart with that light, that is, love with truth (*True Christian Religion* 774).

SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

Thought from the eye closes the understanding, but thought from the understanding opens the eye (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 46).

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No one can be reformed in a state of intellectual blindness.... Such people...do not know any truths, and so neither do they lead a life in accordance with them. For the intellect has to teach truths, and the will do them, and when the will does what the intellect teaches, it then acquires for itself a life in accordance with truths. However, when the intellect has been blinded, the will also is obstructed, and it does nothing in freedom in accordance with its reason except the evil it has justified in the intellect, which is falsity.

The intellect is blinded not only by ignorance but also by a religion that teaches a blind faith. So, too, by the teaching of falsity. For as truths open the intellect, so falsities close it. They close it above but open it below, and an intellect opened only below is not capable of seeing truths, but only of affirming whatever it wishes, especially falsity.

The intellect is also blinded by lusts for evil. As long as the will is caught up in these, it impels the intellect to justify them; and to the extent lusts for evil are justified, the will cannot be moved by affections for good and be impelled by them to see truths and so be reformed (*Divine Providence* 144).

THE OMNIPOTENCE OF THE LORD

God is omnipotent because He has from Himself all power; while all others have power only from Him. His power and His will are one. And as He wills only what is good, He can do nothing but what is good (*True Christian Religion* 56:3).

Faith in the Lord healed these [people] because they acknowledged His Divine omnipotence, and that He was God. Secondly, because faith is acknowledgment, and from acknowledgment intuition; and all intuition from acknowledgment makes another to be present. This is a common thing in the spiritual world. So now, when a New Church was to be established by the Lord, it was this intuition from an acknowledgment of the Lord's omnipotence from which they were first to look to the Lord; and from this it is clear what is here meant by faith (see *Apocalypse Explained* 815:8).