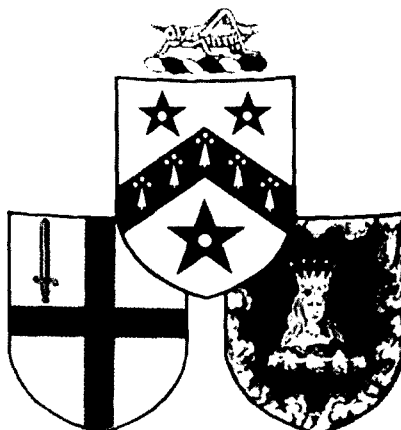


G R E S H A M

C O L L E G E



Reproduction of this text, or any extract from it, must credit Gresham College

HEALING AND THE SPIRIT: ANCIENT AND MODERN

Four lectures given at
Sion College, John Carpenter Street,
Victoria Embankment, London EC4

5 March 1990

ANCIENT MEDICINE

The Reverend R.J.C. Chartres
Gresham Professor of Divinity
and President of Sion College

12 March 1990

HOLISTIC BIOLOGY

Dr Roger Taylor
Sometime lecturer in the Bristol University Medical
School and member of the Dove Project

19 March 1990

WHOLE PERSON MEDICINE - A GP'S PERSPECTIVE

Dr Christine Stone

26 March 1990

THE HEALING TEAM

The Reverend C.K. Hamel Cooke
Founder of the St.Marylebone Health Centre

GRESHAM LECTURE

Healing and the Spirit: Ancient and Modern

Ancient Medicine

by

The Reverend R.J.C. Chartres
Gresham Professor of Divinity

Sion College, Victoria Embankment, London EC4

Monday 5th March 1990

This is the last series of lectures at Sion College with which I will be concerned and I have abused my position by deciding to introduce it myself, for reasons that I hope to make clear in a rather personal introduction.

One thing is clearer every day and that is, in this field of healing and the spirit, how much we lose by living in compartments. It is not so much a case of striving for the mastery of one healing way or another, it is at the moment a business of listening very carefully to representatives of different healing traditions. I know that this evening we actually have medical students, doctors, there is somebody from the National Federation of Healers who I hope will make himself known and contribute afterwards, and representatives of all kinds of approaches to healing. It is a time for attending to one another and seeing what we can gain by coming out of our compartments a little.

Last Monday I had a dream. I had the impression that I was wearing grey flannel trousers and I was confronted by a snake. I did not seem to be very alarmed, even when the snake bit through my trousers to my thigh. The bite did not seem to be attended with any fatal effects and I was left wondering on awaking whether there was any significance in my encounter with an animal so prominent in the healing cult of Asclepios. That cult will be part of my story about ancient medicine.

I did not have to look any further than the ancient sources themselves, in the writings of the Hippocratic corpus in fact, to discover a rationalist counterblast. There in the treatise "On Dreams" I read, "The appearance of monstrous and strange creatures in your dreams which appear during sleep indicate a surfeit or unaccustomed food". Very deflating indeed. I am using the translation made by John Chadwick in his excellent selection from the medical works of Hippocrates.

I was brought up to prefer the second explanation. My father worked for a pharmaceutical company and the atmosphere in the home was a compound of trust and respect for the marvels of modern medical science, a great confidence in doctors to combat and cure the ills to which flesh is heir and a profound distrust of healers and their ilk. This was not of course itself a very scientific outlook but we believed that it was.

It survived well into the time when, as a young priest, I was sent to work in Bedford. There I met Ken Hebblethwaite, a most remarkable man, sometimes known in Bedford by the honorific 'Councillor' Hebblethwaite because he was a pillar of the community, a member of the Watch Committee and all sorts of other worthy things. It was Councillor Hebblethwaite who really opened my eyes to some extent. I was the Bishop's Chaplain and Councillor Hebblethwaite had telephoned to complain that his work was being very unfairly criticised by some local clergy who had attitudes rather like mine. I was summoned to his presence. He had none of the piercing eyes, the craggy profile or the intensity of manner that one associates with the Elmer Gantry style of healer. There was no form or comeliness in him that we should desire him. He was if the truth be told extravagantly corpulent and a chain smoker. I sat down and he unfolded a most remarkable story.

He had been brought up in the quintessence of middle England, in Midland Road which leads down to the station in Bedford, in the bicycle shop of which his parents were the proprietors. When he was nineteen, working in this shop, he became aware of a great kerfuffle outside. The lamplighter (you can tell that we are some way in the past) had fallen off his ladder while attempting to light one of the street lights, and had sustained a considerable injury. Time passed and this injury resulted in very great pain for the man whom Ken knew well, and for the first time in his life, at the age of 19, he experienced, as a very dour and matter-of-fact young man, an intense sense that he had to go and lay hands on this character. Not actually lay hands on him, but he was already quite portly and he was impelled to rub his belly up and down this man's spine. He took him into the back of the bicycle shop and there the operation took place. Ken said that the symptoms were greatly alleviated and the lamplighter experienced very considerable relief and was able to go back to work in course of time. Then Ken forgot all about it. I think that this is also an experience which is often paralleled in the lives of people who have some sort of a healing gift.

From that bicycle shop he set out to conquer the world. He was a notable estate agent in Bedford and merely used his healing gift to cure headaches among the typists and apart from that he let it alone. He became a member of the Watch Committee and one day, when he was in his early fifties, for the second time in his life this intense sense of being impelled to lay hands on someone descended upon him. It descended upon him when he heard that the Chief Constable was not able to attend a meeting of the Watch Committee because he was laid up with arthritis. He had this enormous sense that he had to go and lay hands on the Chief Constable. He did indeed, in a more conventional manner this time, lay hands on him. The Chief Constable also experienced a considerable alleviation of his symptoms and was so impressed by all this that he wrote it up in the Police Gazette. Having secured this publicity, before very long Ken discovered that his front garden was full of people who demanded that he do something for them. It was then, under very great pressure, that he began to give up his work as an estate agent to devote himself more and more to healings, and laying-on of hands.

I sat with him during some of his consultations. His speciality was undoubtedly arthritis and he taught me a very great deal about prayer. He was one of the very few laymen I

have ever met who loved the Holy Trinity with an enormous passion although of course he didn't particularly like clergymen. He was not free from anti-clericalism and indeed when I asked him the question, "Do you find any group of people hard to help?", he said "Yes, clergymen". He wasn't all that gracious, that was another thing that was very convincing about him. "I have got very little time for clergymen", he said. Nevertheless, he didn't pretend to explain all this.

I was able to talk to a great many of the people who experienced his ministrations, people who undoubtedly had experienced a considerable alleviation of their symptoms. I remember one particularly remarkable woman who had come to Ken to be healed on a second occasion after experiencing relief from her arthritis after his first ministrations. When she came the second time, she said to me "The first time I just couldn't have borne it if nothing had happened, I just couldn't live with the thought that I was going to become progressively incapacitated. This time my attitude has changed. Ken has helped me in another way as well by helping me to accept the fact that the arthritis might very well go on. I can cope with it now." That was also something he did for people.

He found it very difficult to minister to himself. This is something that is also true about all healers. He was a chain smoker and died quite early from lung cancer. But the challenge had been left, the door had been opened, there was something here that was not a fraud, there was something which had to be respected and taken seriously, although it was very difficult for me, the son of a man at a pharmaceutical company, to quite fit it in to my understanding of the world.

The challenge is very clear. Salvation in the New Testament included the idea of healing. Jesus sent out his disciples to heal the sick and to proclaim the Kingdom of God almost in the same breath. That salvation was good news indeed. I began to feel more and more that so much of my religion was good advice, rather than good news, addressed to minds with frequently very little observable impact on lives. I began to be worried about that. Was it good news really or just good advice. I was confused then, and I still haven't reached a great resolution.

This series of lectures is yet another attempt to make some progress in the very important field which proceeds from a recognition that we all tend to live in compartments and there may be much to be discovered from attending to one another. This attending to one another from different traditions of healing is one of the characteristics of our own day. There are, at the moment, several scientifically based projects which involve the work of healers in orthodox hospital clinics in an attempt to understand the phenomenon a little more clearly. This is a time when people are ready to listen to one another and perhaps come out of their compartments. This is obviously a very important field for fruitful relations between science and religion. It is an important field for faith itself and it is a particularly important field for the church's capacity to minister the points of real need to modern people. So for all those reasons I hope that you will bear with us this next four weeks as we try and explore some of the aspects of this subject.

I am beginning with a brief consideration of healing in the ancient world because it sometimes refreshes thought to see things worked out within an alien cultural context and scheme of concepts. I am far from believing that the experience of many centuries is not without value. People knew silence and a depth of darkness free from electricity and the noise of the internal combustion engine, and I think that, despite our evident technical and theoretical superiority, there is something to be learnt from the experience that comes from observation and thought and meditation during such periods.

Next week we have got Roger Taylor who is an orthodox scientist. He worked at the medical faculty of Bristol University. He has done original research into the scientific basis of the body system, pre-supposed by acupuncture and he has got some very interesting ideas about what constitutes life and death. He is actually a Buddhist and will be drawing on the traditions of the East. I will be unashamedly Europocentric this evening.

Christine Stone, our third speaker, has for some years past been a National Health Service doctor in London and she has been trying to work in the context of whole person health and has been dedicated to that ideal.

In the final talk, a great example of people coming out of their compartments to attend to one another and even to work together, Christopher Hamel Cooke will be discussing his pioneering work which has resulted in the establishment of the St Marylebone Health Centre where practitioners of several complimentary healing disciplines work together as a team. I would suggest, although I expect Christopher would be horrified by the suggestion, that this is not too far from the spirit of the great healing sanctuary of Asclepios on the island of Cos where my story begins.

Cos, close to the coast of Asia Minor, as well as being one of the centres of the cult of the healing god Asclepios, was of course also the birthplace of Hippocrates who made a vital contribution to the development of medical science by putting the accent, not so much on generalized philosophical notions but on precise observation of patients, disease and environment. This was one of his great contributions, precision of observation, this empirical method, while he also took care to ensure that the experience gained by such observations could be communicated to succeeding generations, first of all by the word of mouth and then by the written word. His work marked a vital stage in the partial emancipation of the practice of medicine from the realm of general philosophical concepts.

Hippocrates lived at the same time as Socrates in the latter part of the 5th century BC. It is indeed rather difficult to reconstruct what might have been his own particular doctrine because, although we have many texts which go under the name of the Hippocratic Corpus and are ascribed to Hippocrates, it is by no means certain that any one of them is from the hand of the master himself. These texts belong to a school which followed in his tradition. The texts we have now, and we have a great number of them, are from a compilation of works of Hippocrates made in the great library of Alexandria where research flourished under the aegis of the Greek Ptolemies, the rulers of Egypt at the time in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC.

So we have quite a lot of texts from this medical tradition in the ancient world but nothing that we can confidently point to and say "Yes, that is by Hippocrates himself".

You get the flavour of this particular approach to healing from one of the greatest of the works in The Hippocratic Corpus, The Aphorisms. The Aphorisms begin with this statement: "Life is short, science is long (ars longa, vita brevis) opportunity is elusive, experiment is dangerous, judgement is difficult. It is not enough for the physician to do what is necessary but the patient and the attendants must do their part as well, and circumstances must be favourable." This is a modest tradition, this is a circumspect tradition and you will notice something very important which comes out of so much of the teaching of the ancient world about healing and medicine. There is an emphasis on the responsibility of the patient, the part played by the patient. This is very much echoed in another great text from that corpus, The Regimen for Health. "A wise man ought to realise that health is his most valuable possession and learn how to treat his illnesses by his own judgement."

One of the questions that I want to ask about the way in which I was brought up and the way in which I thought is this: Do we really load too many and unreasonable expectation on our own doctors? Do we sometimes fail to do our part? Is the culture of the patient, the prone and passive body, suffering as a mere battleground, the clash of technologist and ailment at some point above us, really an idea conducive to healing? Is it not true that very often the worst patients make the quickest recoveries? Those are questions that arise in my mind looking at the Hippocratic Corpus. Don't we abuse our doctors by loading too much onto them? What about the whole culture of the patient?

The corpus also has some very wise things to say about doctors. "He (female doctors were a great rarity in the Roman Empire in this Greek period) should look healthy and as plump as nature intended him to be. For the common crowd consider those who are not of this excellent bodily condition to be unable to take care of others. Then he must be clean in person, well dressed and anointed with sweet smelling unguents. (The doctrine of the aftershave lotion and its importance for the doctor is very ancient.) In appearance let him be of a serious, but not of a harsh countenance, for harshness is taken to mean arrogance and unkindness, while a man of uncontrolled laughter and excessive gaiety is considered vulgar, and vulgarity must be avoided." A very great emphasis on the whole spiritual atmosphere the doctor brings with him as he attends the sufferer.

The Hippocratic Corpus is the place to go if you want to see the classical statement of how the ancient world understood health and illness. There is another text called 'The Nature of Man' which contains a presentation of the characteristic doctrine, that of the humours. It says, "The human body contains blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile. These are the things which make up its constitution and cause its pains and health. Health is primarily that state in which these constituent substances are in the correct proportion to each, other both in strength and quantity and are well mixed. Pain and illness occurs when one of the substances presents either a deficiency or an excess or is separated in the body and not mixed with the others". As collected in the works of the 2nd century AD doctor, Galen, also a Greek speaking doctor from

Pergamum in Asia Minor, this doctrine of the four humours was to dominate medicine until well into the 16th century of our own era. So it was a doctrine which emphasised the importance of balance and proportion in the body system.

The main treatments, if you have this understanding of health and illness, were cupping, to remove some of the excess fluids. The symbol of so many ancient doctors was the cup with which they took their blood. Also, and perhaps more important, it was an enormous emphasis on diet. This was absolutely at the centre of the work of the doctor in the Hippocratic tradition. When one goes into a hospital today, of course dietetics is an important part of the whole culture, but I wonder whether the emphasis which this particular approach to healing has in the work of the ancient doctors, receives quite its due need of attention in our own time.

The tradition of the Hippocratic doctors was not one which excelled greatly in surgery. One of the things was of course that there was a great taboo against dissecting human bodies at this period. That taboo was for a brief moment lifted in the Alexandria of the turn of the 3rd and 4th centuries BC. You remember that Alexander the Great had conquered Egypt and had set up a Greek regime, and under the leadership of one of his generals Ptolemy there was established the great library of Alexandria and the Museum. Here for a brief time, as Greek thought met native Egyptian medical experience, there was a lifting of the taboo on dissecting human bodies. There was even a lifting of the taboo (which very much shocked later commentators, notably Tertalian who was understandably apoplectic with rage as he thought of it) on the vivisection of human beings in 3rd century Alexandria. Convicted criminals were released from the jails into the keeping of the doctors for this purpose. With this sort of practical research possible, surgery, anatomy and other studies made great strides in the Alexandria of the 3rd century BC. We are all in debt to Professor von Staden who last year produces a most remarkable, beautiful piece of work in itself, a lovely critical edition of the fragments of Herophilus, who was the most distinguished, the doyen of these Alexandrian doctors. Born himself in Asia Minor, in Calcidon, Herophilus identified, after these dissecting and vivisectioning researches, the sensory and the motor nerves. He made some very profound observations on the nervous system. He discovered things like the Fallopian tubes, and he of course presided over a very considerable advance in the techniques of surgery.

So, with its centre at Cos which was where the Hippocratic tradition had its headquarters, and at Alexandria, ancient medicine became really, even in our terms, quite sophisticated, and by the beginning of the Roman imperial period four distinct medical "schools" of thought had developed.

There were the Dogmatists. They were not very keen on practical research. They were the people who really lectured about medicine and they developed theories on the hidden causes of disease. So they were the philosophical doctors.

Then there were the Empirics who turned their back on these kind of researches and speculations and concentrated on observing and treating symptoms without trying to arrive at any general propositions.

There were the Methodists, the people who put the accent on dietary regimes. That was the whole centre of their healing art.

Then there were the Pneumatics who were those who saw disease in terms of food residues trapped inside, rotting, the result of poor diet, releasing gases which came into conflict with the health giving pneuma. It was the duty of the pneumatic doctor to know how to reduce the one and increase the scope and potency of the other.

The heart of healing in these schools was still dietetics, pharmacology and, after that Alexandrian experience, surgery.

At the same time as there were these remarkable advances in medicine, which all came to be compiled, collected and crystallized into the works of the great 2nd century AD doctor Galen, there was another tradition which was inter-related with the careers of the people I have been describing. The healing deities also flourished alongside scientific medicine. If you think perhaps of scientific medicine entering the field which had been occupied by superstition and the work of temples and priests, and gradually one receded before the other, you would have got it quite wrong, because the healing sanctuaries and the work of the healing deities actually developed in parallel with the new scientific understanding and scientific methods. One was not eclipsed by the other.

The emergence of medicine in the tradition of Hippocrates in 5th century Greece coincided in time and in place with the elevation of Asclepios to divine status and the spread of his cult. He was the most significant figure in the world of the healing deities. It was hand in hand with the spread of the cult of Asclepios that Greek medicine finally came to Italy to influence the Romans. After a plague in 295 the Romans invited the priesthood of Asclepios to establish a temple, not within the city walls - they were rather frightened at this stage of these foreigners and these foreign gods. They put the Temple of Asclepios on an island in the middle of the Tiber, but as the plague, which had caused the invitation to be issued, abated, so in Rome, despite the resistance of many stout and robust characters like the elder Cato, the influence of this healing cult of Asclepios grew and grew. The older traditions of the Romans continued alongside the new importations and they were a marvellous mixture of folk medicine which, if you are to believe the elder Cato, dwelt a good deal on the medicinal usefulness of cabbage. Pliny says of Cato's attitudes to cabbage (this is the old Roman medicine) "It would be too lengthy a task to enumerate all the praises of the cabbage. Cato recommends the urine of a person who has been living on cabbage should be carefully preserved. When it is warmed it is a very good remedy for diseases of the sinews". Cato himself said, "If you wash little children in the urine of somebody who has been living on cabbage, they will never be weak or puny". That is one lesson from the ancient world which I for one do not propose to test on my own two children.

I think they had a right to be suspicious of the new Greek medicine in Rome. There were an awful lot of quacks around then, as in all ages. You can see testimony to the number of quacks in a number of bitter epigrams in the Greek anthology. I particularly like this epigram which reads as follows: The physician Marcus laid his hand yesterday on a stone statue of

Zeus, and though he is of stone and though he is Zeus, he is to be buried today. That gives a sort of flavour of some great bitterness about cranky and quackish doctors who came in to Rome in the wake of the conquest of Greek medicine of the old Roman ways.

Romans of course also put an awful lot of energy into preventive medicine, public health and proper water supplies. If some of the horror stories about London are to be believed, that is certainly a leaf we can take out of the book of those who cared for the health of the ancient world because our own Victorian sewers are groaning a terribly horrible way.

The career of Galen of Pergamum shows the close relationship between doctors of what we might call a scientific tradition and the healing cults. While he was growing up in Pergamum, a great new temple dedicated to Asclepios was being built in the city. Galen, himself the great figure in ancient medicine, who was to dominate medicine until 16th century, chose a medical career after Asclepios had appeared to him in a dream. His first post was as doctor to the gladiators of Pergamum which must have given him a lot of practical experience in looking inside people. That was obtained through the agency of the High Priest of the Temple of Asclepios in his home city Pergamum.

The third ode of Pindar describes the origins of Asclepios. Asclepios was the son of a god Apollo. His mother Coronis was a mortal princess from northern Greece. While pregnant by Apollo, the girl was tactless enough to take a mortal husband, and Apollo had them both killed, but as the bodies were burning on the pyre, Apollo tore the child from the mother's womb. The child was Asclepios and he was sent to be brought up on Mount Pelion where he was taught the art of healing by the centaur Chiron. Asclepios's daughter was the other great figure in the cult of the healing deities, Hygieia, the personification of health.

Asclepios went too far. Jealous of Asclepios's success, even in bringing about resurrections, Zeus, fearing for the moral order of the world, polished him off with a thunderbolt. That began the process by which this heroic, gifted, half-human doctor was actually in course of time translated into God-like form. His most distinctive attribute was the snake entwined staff which is still to be seen as the emblem of the British Medical Association. The snake didn't have any of the malign associations of the Book of Genesis. It was a symbol of wisdom, it was a symbol of rejuvenation, of restored health. The idea of the snake sloughing its skin was very important in the ancient world as an image of rejuvenation and restored health. Snakes were all over the place in the shrines of Asclepios. When you went to a great healing sanctuary you would see the snakes and the dogs roaming around. You can see why I was so astonished when last Monday I had a dream of a snake biting through my flannel trousers.

The cult spread quickly, and particularly in the island of Cos. Hippocrates himself was of the family of Asclepiads, hereditary priests of the healing god. If you visit Cos today, you will see symbols of both these approaches in close proximity. There is the plane tree which is no more than about 500 years old, but it stands in a square in the town. Underneath that plane tree Hippocrates is supposed to have taught and held his

classes. Then up on the hill underneath a marvellous grove is the great sanctuary of Asclepios. The susurrations in the grove and the beauty of the place is all part of its healing spell. You can see the two symbols very close together.

Unlike so many other Olympian gods, Asclepios did not keep his distance. You were welcomed into the sanctuary. When you arrived you went through a noble gateway, up the sacred way. You came as a suppliant or a devotee. First of all, your whole person was enlisted by your being involved in various preparatory or purificatory rites. You obviously washed, there were ablutions, and all sorts of other rites. Then you were led to the sacred dormitory, the abaton. What was characteristic of the cult of Asclepios was temple incubation. In the sacred dormitory you lay down, and after a pep talk or a soothing talk from the clergy, you went to sleep. What very often happened, according to the records which survive in abundance from the ancient world, is that Asclepios appeared in a dream, and either healed directly or gave instructions by a sacred snake or a dog. You would then discuss these instructions with the clergy who recommended various regimes. The regimes used in the healing sanctuary were not so very different from those recommended by all doctors - bathing, massage, diets, exercises and the like. So that was the method, the approach.

Afterwards you would leave a thank offering, and there are many of these surviving from the ancient world, quite a few of them because these sanctuaries tended to specialise. Specialisation took place even then, in a day of holistic medicine, some of them in legs, in arms, in other kinds of diseased bodies. One can tell what the specialisation was from the votive offerings left behind of previously afflicted parts of the body. The votive offerings were very similar in character to many of those you can see today in so many of the churches of the Mediterranean area.

We have got a marvellous description of the temple medicine of the period of Galen from one of the most remarkable documents from the ancient world, too little known, the diaries of Aelius Aristides. These are extraordinary records of his experiences of healing in, chiefly the great Temple of Asclepios in Pergamum, Galen's home city. Aelius, let us be frank about it, was a bit of a hypochondriac. He was born in 118 AD and was very well educated, and destined for a brilliant career in public service, but had some sort of breakdown at the age of 26 and became a devotee of Asclepios and in fact spent 2 years doing his incubation at the great Temple of Asclepios in Pergamum. There is a wonderful description of how not only the symptoms were relieved but also for the ill-health that remained, Aelius found in his experience in Pergamum a kind of acceptance which enabled him to function at least, although he was never free from some of the distressing manifestation of his sickness. "I gave up my career during the first year of my sickness, I was in such great physical discomfort and at the same time I became despondent. While I rested in Pergamum because of a divine summons, I received from the god a command and an exhortation to go to the Temple stoa which is at the theatre and to offer him the very fruits of these improvised and competitive orations. To speak in competition with fellow speakers I was in terrible difficulty. I could scarcely catch my breath, but as I proceeded in my introduction, under the influence of the God I became more comfortable and was able to

breathe. As my speech proceeded further I was filled with strength and lightness. Once, the greatest expert of the Greeks of our time in the knowledge of rhetoric, dared to say and affirm to me that I had become ill through some divine good fortune so that by my association with the god I might make this improvement."

They worked their charm partly because of the use of all these common therapeutic techniques, but also because of beauty. As I said, the grove of trees around the Sanctuary of Asclepios in Cos was a place which healed through the susurrations, through the sound of the wind going through the trees. I wonder whether there is anything to be learnt here in our own places of healing. Perhaps it is not a very possible, or a popular, or a practical suggestion in a time of cuts and stringency but decor is important. Beauty in hospitals is part of the healing process. Hospitals must look very carefully at the kind of noises that surround those who suffer. If sometimes you enter hospices, I think they are learning this truth, that it is part of the healing process to produce a place of soothing beauty and tranquillity. The fact that so often people say to you in hospital, "This isn't a place to rest", the fact so often that there does seem to be so much banging around and so much pressure. Maybe one of the very obvious ways in which we are the losers by living in compartments in our whole approach to healing.

With that very superficial taste of the complimentary healing styles of the ancient world, particularly as you might have found them in the healing sanctuary of Asclepios, I would simply like to hand over to you and ask you to contribute from your own experience if any of this strikes a chord, or if it is all terribly alien and I should just have gone back to the rationalistic strain, the Hippocratic Corpus, and decided that my snake was the result of eating too much.

Bibliography

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Ralph Jackson | Doctors and Diseases in the Roman Empire
BM Publications 1988 |
| John Scarborough | Roman Medicine 1969 |
| John Chadwick | The Medical Works of Hippocrates
Trans. 1950 |
| Danielle Gourevitch | Le Triangle Hippocratique dans le monde
Greco-Romain 1984 |
| H.von Staden | Herophilus. The art of medicine in early
Alexandria 1989 |
| Geoffrey Lloyd | Early Greek Science 1970 |
| " " | Greek Science after Aristotle 1973 |
| " " | Magic Reason and Experience 1979 |
| Michael Frede | Essays in Ancient Philosophy 1987 |

GRESHAM LECTURE

Healing and the Spirit: Ancient and Modern

Holistic Biology

by

Dr Roger Taylor

Sion College, Victoria Embankment, London EC4

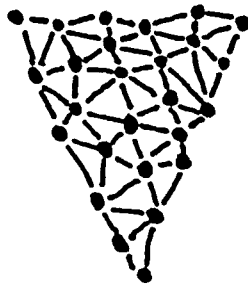
Monday 12th March 1990

Holism is like seeing the trees within the larger pattern of the wood; its opposite, reductionism, is seeing them in isolation, so that one fails to see the wood at all. After spending 30 years in reductionist science, I am at last seeing the point in trying to widen my vision and seek a more holistic perspective.

My subject was immunology. In its job of defending the body, the immune system has to distinguish foreign molecules from those belonging to the body. I have some 10^{12} (1,000,000,000,000) cells, which wander around the body encountering billions of molecules as they go. In common with other immunologists, I used to talk about how a cell could "recognise" a foreign molecule, but this word is inappropriate because it indicates a very complex function. A single brain cell cannot recognise your friend, only the whole brain can. Likewise it is the whole immune system which performs what is really a mental task, of comparing a molecule with the millions of molecules in the body and deciding whether it is sufficiently different as to call for defensive action. This means that all the 10^{12} cells of the immune system must, like brain cells, be in communication with each other. Much of my research was to show that this is actually so.

However, at the same time I became impressed by how capricious and unpredictable the immune system is. It had a "will of its own" which could not be reduced to the kind of scientific laws with which we are familiar in chemistry and physics. Although so many immunological papers are still being published, the useful output, in terms of medical procedures which significantly benefit humanity, remains disappointingly small. I think this is because we are trying to manipulate it at a too reductionist level by fiddling about with its cells and molecules. We need to develop ways of addressing the system as a whole; and this, as I shall point out later, becomes less like manipulating and more like gentle persuasion.

In order to help myself to see the cells within the larger pattern of the immune system, I began drawing them in the shape of a triangle:



Each dot represents a cell, while the lines represent the potential routes of communication between them. I then realised that such a diagram could serve as a metaphor, not only for the immune system, but for the whole body. Without bothering to draw the dots, I now make the squiggles stand for all the chemical and cellular goings-on in the body, as they appear from the point of view of conventional medical science:



The triangle shape then represents all the holistic properties of the living person; those which are so far unexplained by science at this reductionist level. One of these is the very shape of the body. In spite of centuries of study of embryology we have scarcely a clue about how this arises. Another is the function of the immune system, and how, like a brain it forms an "idea" of what self should be like in terms of molecular shapes. There are many more - not least the unitary idea of self which somehow forms in our brains out of the seething activity of all those brain cells.

I shall return to the triangle later, but now we must ask how the gap could be crossed. How could all the squiggles, the chaotic molecular and cellular activity, conspire to create the triangle - the simple and beautiful living being? There are two exciting new developments in fundamental science which look like giving us an answer. The first is the mathematical theory of chaos. What we have needed is a theory of how order can arise out of chaos. Such a theory has grown up quite suddenly in the last few years, and is now setting the scientific world on fire.

The second law of thermodynamics gave us a depressing picture of the universe running down - one from which philosophers such as Bertrand Russell drew gloomy nihilistic conclusions. What scientists did not think worthy of note was that, although it was correct about the Universe as a whole, the second law did not prohibit local accumulations of order. The new theory of chaos accounts for how such local accumulations (of which you and me are examples) can come about. You might say that science has now allowed God to be creative!

Now that this has been understood, people are seeing it everywhere; not only in living beings, but in the winds and the weather, turbulent waters, crystals, the shapes of clouds and of

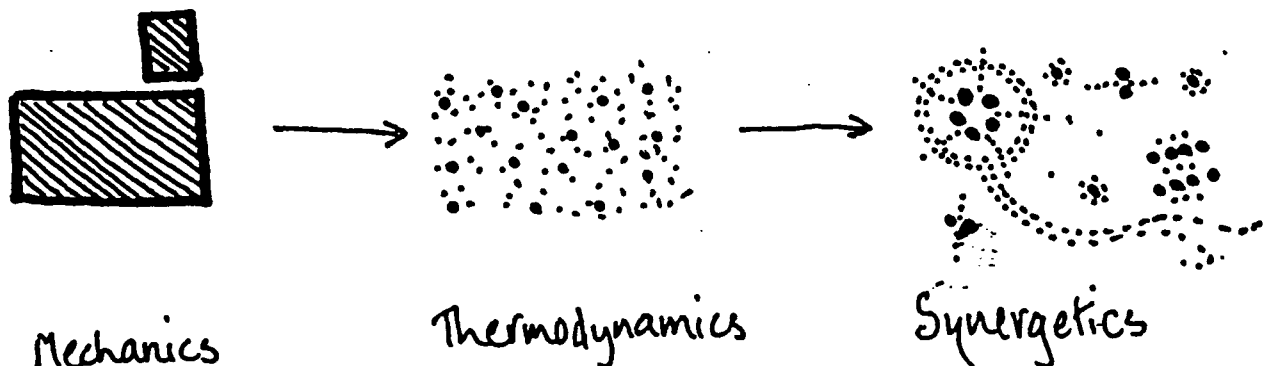
the landscape. In fact, as Paul Davies says, "In the real world, non-chaotic systems are nearly as rare as hen's teeth". These processes have been modelled on computer, with strange and beautiful results, which some of you will have seen. I saw one on a T-shirt the other day. There are also a number of chemical models, in which beautiful patterns can arise within liquids.

It is important, in relation to what I shall say later about complementary medicine, that these patterns can be extremely sensitive to small influences. Thus chaologists speak of the "butterfly effect", because in principle it is possible for the flick of a butterfly's wing to have an effect on the weather - though very unlikely of course.

The second exciting development is quantum physics. Although this has been with us for some time now, what is new is that its implications are just now beginning to filter down into biology. The essential idea of quantum physics is not hard to understand. All you have to do is think in terms of waves (or vibrations) rather than particles. (Think of "the music of the spheres" and you can't go far wrong.) After all, if matter is made of fundamental particles, then these cannot be made of matter. So they cannot really be the little hard balls we might like to picture. And indeed they are not - in fact they do behave more like waves. Thus, when a number of them get together to form an atom, they sink their individuality, and "harmonise" to form a more complex pattern of vibration. Likewise, when atoms get together to form a molecule, new harmonies arise. There is nothing in principle to prevent the same thing happening with larger and larger units. It's just that it happens less easily. You can't just throw a lot of molecules together and expect them to harmonise. They have to come into some kind of ordered relationship, as in a crystal, or a living being.

There is an easy experiment which makes a striking illustration of the relationship between vibration and ordered structure. Put sand on a metal plate. When you make the plate vibrate (say by drawing a violin bow over the edge) the sand heaps itself into intricate patterns. There's a beautiful book by Hans Jenny, entitled "Cymatics" which explores this theme a lot further.

Between them chaology and quantum physics amount to a far reaching revolution in human thought. We have hardly begun to grasp its implications. The figure below is meant to summarise the progress of the exact sciences over the past 300-400 years:

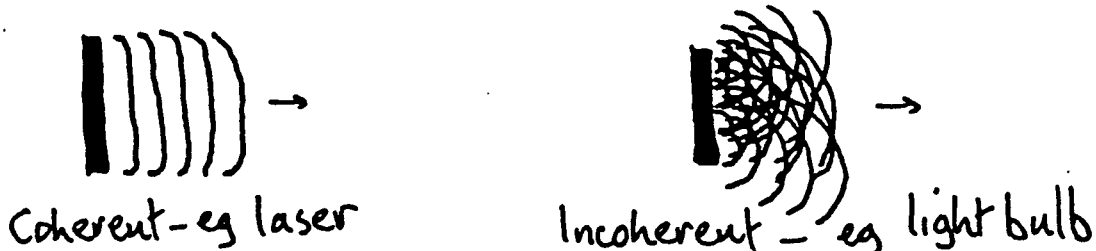


In Newtonian mechanics we thought of everything in terms of lumps of matter, with no internal structure, acting forcibly on each other. The first revolution took place when we realised that this was no use at all for understanding chemistry. So was

born thermodynamics. Here we thought of each mass of matter as being made up of a disordered chaos of smaller lumps (molecules) rattling about like pease in a pan. Modern medicine is based almost entirely on these two. Especially on thermodynamics; your body is regarded as a bag of biochemicals. The second revolution, which is only just beginning, is to understand how order can arise out of chaos. Some have used the word "synergetics", but it has not caught on yet.

The purpose of exact science is generally thought to be to enable us to predict the outcome of any situation, and thus to control it. But this purpose is very poorly fulfilled by synergetics, which tells us that, on the contrary, Nature is basically unpredictable. Thus no matter how good our computers, we shall never get much better at predicting the long-term weather. This seems to me to be extraordinarily significant. Now at last we know exactly why we can never know exactly. We know now why our knowledge, and therefore our power to control our destiny, will always remain strictly limited.

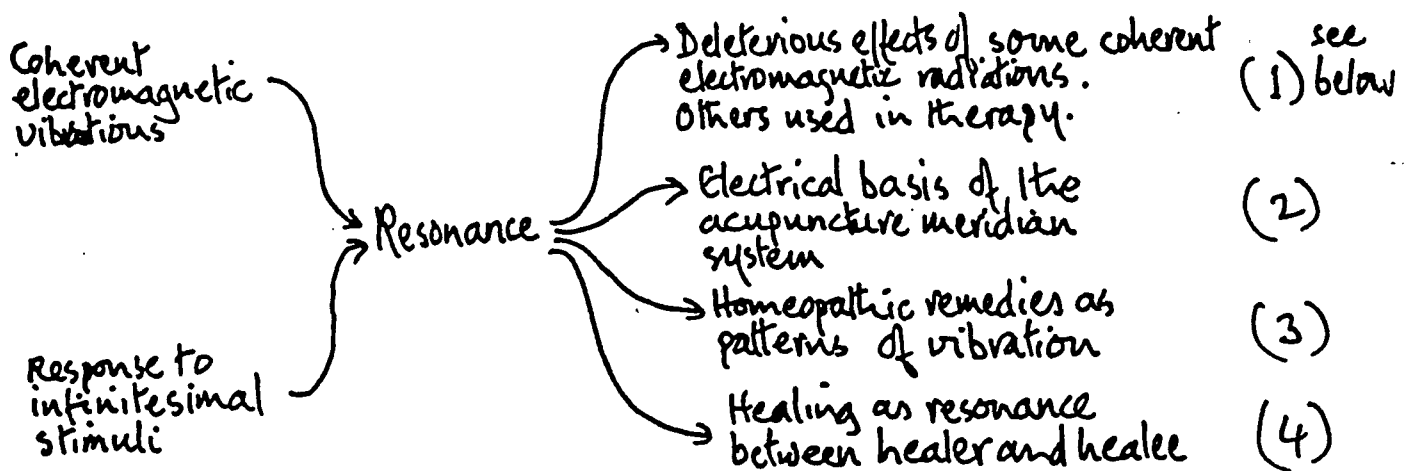
To come back to quantum physics, I'd like you to think of a living being as a harmonious pattern of vibration - a little symphony. As the electrons in an atom, the molecules within a cell sink their individuality into the larger pattern, likewise the cells within the body. Why have we not noticed this before? Because the vibrations (which are both sound and electromagnetic) are so extraordinarily weak. Scientists are only just beginning to be able to detect them. The critical point is to detect coherent vibrations - that is, where the waves come in ordered sequence as they do from a radio or a laser. (see Figure below):



Of course there is a lot of incoherent vibrations as well, such as the heat our bodies give off.

These new theories make a lot of sense in relation to some of the things which are inexplicable according to conventional medical science - including for example acupuncture and homeopathy. A critical concept here is that of resonance. Just as a soprano breaks a wineglass (but not our ears) with her beautifully coherent sound waves, so extremely weak electromagnetic waves can have very powerful effect - provided that they are coherent, and come at exactly the right frequency to resonate with the vibratory properties of the structure with which they interact.

The figure below gives some examples:



1. Some people may resonate to certain electromagnetic radiations - eg the mains, or microwave transmitting stations - and become ill as a result. Conversely, some therapists are now using new instruments to treat patients with coherent vibrations - both sound and electromagnetic.

2. There is increasing evidence that the meridian system of chinese acupuncture is real, and can be detected by means of its electrical properties. It seems likely that the meridians are routes by which unifying coherent vibrations travel. Significantly, acupuncturists are making increasing use of very weak lasers instead of needles - thus putting coherent radiation into the acupuncture points to be treated.

3. Some physicists are finding that even liquids, such as water, can carry complex patterns in the ways that their molecules vibrate; i.e. they are nothing like as random as peas in a pan. This makes sense in quantum, but not in classical physics. It can explain how it is that homeopathic remedies could possibly work, even though they are often so dilute as to contain nothing of the original substance - only water. But as you might expect, the homeopath has to go to a lot of trouble to find exactly the correct remedy to resonate with the patient.

4. It is not impossible that some healers may work in this way - harmonising their own vibrations with those of the patient. Interestingly, the brain waves of healer and healee have been observed to tune in with each other.

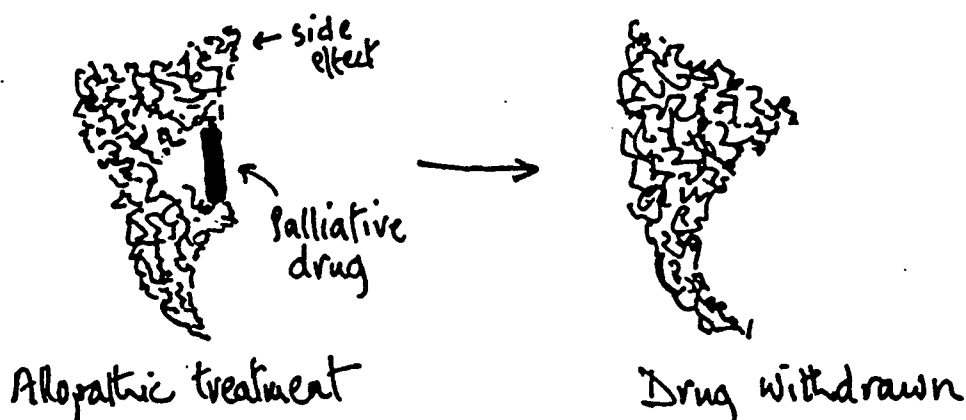
So, now that we have some idea of how the squiggles get together to form the triangle, I would like to suggest how this metaphor might be used to illustrate some medical situations.

Before a person becomes ill enough to be medically diagnosed there is an earlier stage when he feels ill yet, according to all clinical tests, appears to be normal. But the normal range for these tests may be quite wide, so that small changes are missed. Nevertheless, I suggest, something quite distinct may be happening at the holistic level, which I have represented as a bend in the triangle:



This , I believe, is what is detected by the acupuncturist, with his sensitive fingers on your pulse; or the homeopath with his elaborate questionnaire. In addition, there are now a number of new electrical methods, which show up changes in the meridians.

Although it may be alleviated by taking a palliative drug, a state of sickness has its own stability - especially if it is chronic. Thus it will tend to return when the drug is withdrawn:



The role of complementary therapies, by and large, is to act on the shape of the triangle itself. This they can best do at the early stage, before medically-diagnosable disease sets in. If left too late, then structural changes may have been set in motion (e.g. gall stones, cancer, etc.) which are not easily reversed in this way. These will require the sort of "first-aid" measures for which modern medicine is so effective. Nevertheless, after the immediate problem has been coped with, the patient should attend to his general health, perhaps with complementary therapy, in order to get the triangle back into shape, and stop the problem recurring.

It is here that we have to recognise the mind-like behaviour of the body. (For mind and body are not separate). There is a holistic aspect of illness (represented by the bend in the triangle) which is really an attitude of mind. The stability it shows is like the "resistance" a person shows towards changing his attitude, which is so well-known in psychotherapy. Although threats will force a person to act in certain ways, just as strong drugs will force the body, neither will change the basic attitude. The more holistic the level at which the doctor or therapist addresses the person, the more he needs to think in psychological terms, and the more subtle his treatment needs to be in order to dissolve the resistance. In becoming more subtle, the treatment becomes progressively less like persuasion and more like love. Any kind of medical treatment, and more especially the subtle treatments like homeopathy and acupuncture, work much better within an atmosphere of caring and kindness. Love is thus the ultimate holistic medicine.

GRESHAM LECTURE

Healing and the Spirit: Ancient and Modern

Whole Person Medicine - A GP's Perspective

by

Dr Christine Stone

Sion College, Victoria Embankment, London EC4

Monday 19th March 1990

My lecture comes from my experience as a general practitioner for many years in the south east corner of London in a group practice with about 12,000 people and 6 doctors. I attend a local Church of England church and have been a member of the Churches Council for Health and Healing for many years and have enjoyed the contact between medicine and religion and church and the healing aspect of the Council, because all denominations are brought together and all in the joy of healing. It has been a very healing process in itself.

Our local school organised a 'Health Week' and the children have had talks about 'Nutrition in their Lunch Boxes' and 'First Aid'. They have had parents hopping up and down on benches, measuring their pulse rate. They have had parents running around the field. They have had talks about immunisation. It was really a joy to go to an evening with them and see them discovering the wonders of the human body. It made me think afresh of this wonderful machine that we have been given - the actual systems that work, and the coordination between them.

Last week you were hearing about the immune system and the developments there. The wonders that one finds, the more you discover the more there is to find. This is an incredible creation and all the years I have been in medicine I still find it is absolutely marvellous and that there is so much to discover and to praise God for.

What happens when the body is really functioning well? What is your picture of perfect health? Is it physical fitness, vitality, functioning well, fulfillment, life in abundance? Marvellous, but what happens to most of us is we don't quite fulfill that picture.

First of all I would like to discuss some of the things that might go wrong before we think about healing and the spirit. Some of the causes for illness - and I certainly won't present a comprehensive list - are very much related to the world in which we live.

Illness can be caused by infections, which is pretty obvious to those of us who have had the common cold, this can be related to social conditions. More illness is caused in the world by impure water. A friend of mine working in Ethiopia, sinking

wells and improving the water supply, has probably saved more lives than many doctors put together. The body has got a wonderful way of coping with infection.

Pollution can make the body fail to function fully. If we could stop people smoking, or be aware of the dangers of smoking, a tremendous amount of illness could be prevented. The children at the exhibition I mentioned earlier pointed out that there are about 4,000 different poisonous chemicals in smoke and £70,000,000 is spent by children under a certain age who had started smoking already. That sounds horrific when you think of the damage that is going to be caused there.

Accidents cause failure of health. Drink-driving can cause problems obviously. Carelessness, preoccupation, thoughtlessness - so many things can break in to the natural function and rhythm of our healthy lives.

I have just skimmed through some of the causes and now I want to think about ways in which a breakdown in health is dealt with. I want to first of all think of the medical role and then the role of the community, the role of politics and the role of the church and Christ. I hope that our brief look at some of these aspects may stimulate further thought and discussion and reach perhaps the point where each one of us is at at the moment and where our responsibilities and our needs lie.

Firstly, the medical side. When people come into our surgery we often see them at a point of real need - either physical, emotional or mental - and it is a great privilege to be receiving them at the door at which they enter. The team is important. When somebody comes in who is worried, a smiling receptionist and the re-assurance is worth a tremendous amount. Healing perhaps starts at that point. When people come in, often the things they present don't really give the true picture. People will come in with neurotic symptoms and perhaps their family will be complaining about their behaviour at home. But the fascinating thing about the human body is the balance between the physical and the mental side and the effect that the mental side can have on the physical functioning of the body. Some illnesses can alter peoples behaviour, can give them labels in the community and in their family. They know that they are behaving amiss and cannot do anything about it.

Somebody whose thyroid is overactive and is very jumpy and very anxious and cannot cope with things can improve tremendously with some drug treatment. It is always very encouraging when someone has a long history of anxiety to actually find that there is something you can do about it and show they are not inadequate or they are not incapable of living their own lives. If a thyroid is underactive, people can be very lethargic and life can be a struggle. Premenstrual tension is a typical problem. Years ago this was not accepted as being a reality but I can assure you from the husbands who have come in and said, 'my wife is a Jeckel and Hyde', this is something that certainly does exist. Finding the right medication and the balance for that person can make a tremendous difference, not just to their quality of life, but also to the management of the children and the relationships in the family. Menopausal symptoms can cause problems. To someone who has always coped and had a joy of life, to suddenly hit a barrier where they are depressed, they are arguing with their children, they are not

coping, they cannot remember things, they cannot think straight is a major problem. Finding the medication that will balance their biochemistry and help them to cope again and to live again and enjoy life again is wonderful for them, because they aren't inadequate. Something has just gone out of balance and it can be put right. Elderly people are often thought to be confused, they are looked after but not considered as being people any more. Sometimes you can find a chest infection or a urinary tract infection which can be treated adequately and the confusion disappears. This is where the science of medicine meets the art of medicine and wholeness can come in that form of healing.

The reverse side of the coin occurs when people are under tremendous stress. I am not sure if this was mentioned in your lecture last week, but stress can certainly affect the immune system and lay us open to a tremendous number of diseases. I expect you all know of the association of duodenal ulcer and heart disease that are caused by continual stress. Depression which follows prolonged periods of anxiety is perhaps one of the hardest illnesses to cope with. Stress causes people to take less care of themselves and to value themselves less because of their preoccupation and anxieties. These problems will cause physical changes in the body. It is not all in the mind, it can be physical changes.

Another cause of change in behaviour may be seen in hyperactive children. They can be an absolute pain and be exhausting and not have very much fun in life at all. We may find that the food that they are eating is affecting them and by eliminating certain things from their diet they can be made more at peace and at ease and not be chasing around and getting into trouble and causing all the people around them to be exhausted. It worries me sometimes when people attend healing services and are advised to give up their medication. I have known this to occur. I have also seen the disastrous results that this can produce. I think it is very much in the wholeness and partnership of healing that the place of medication and of science and of medicine is recognized - but as a partner.

We have talked about the medical side of healing and this involves a teamwork as we have already discovered. Writing a prescription is certainly not the complete answer. In our practice we have practice nurses and district nurses, at one time we were also lucky enough to have a clinical psychologist working with us. We have got health visitors and social workers linked with the practice. All these people are very much part of a healing team and work better in the patients interest if they work well together as team. In the light of the new contracts which practices face in 1990 (an issue which is causing a lot of pressures) this teamwork is probably more important because the loading of paperwork tends to push the care of the patients a little way into the distance.

Our practice nurses, for example, are helping a depressed patient who has tried to commit suicide on some occasions. They will come up to the practice to collect his daily amount of medication for the next 24 hours. However, it is not the collection of the medication that is helping him, it is the time the nurses give to talk to him and listen to him and care for his welfare that is really beginning to make this person feel a whole person again. This side of medicine is so important and the people who come with what seem to be trivial

ailments time and time again are really crying for help. It needs time and the awareness to listen and to hear what they are really trying to say. This is difficult in general practice, it is very easy to rush through with your six minute consultations. It is very difficult when you are seeing a patient who is suicidal first thing on a Monday morning or a patient has a big family problem when you know there are 20 or more people queueing up in the waiting room. It is very difficult to get the balance, and this is where having a team can certainly help and be very beneficial for the patients.

The next thing I want to discuss is the role of the community in healing. No person is an individual in isolation. We have all been members of a family. We have all lived with neighbours. We perhaps go to a local church or we belong to local societies or clubs. Even if we choose to be on our own our presence still affects people around us. Some people who prefer to live on their own and not have visitors are of concern, especially the elderly because people are concerned about their welfare. Neighbours who have arguments are causing disharmony in the community. Neighbours who get on well are causing creative healing because of their care. A caring community is a healing community and this is very difficult to produce in some places, perhaps in London. We used to live in 'bed-sit' land and it was quite possible not to know the people in the room next door. Perhaps this is where a village can be healing, where at least you have time to talk to the people in the shop when you go and buy your stores. A caring community must be an aware community as well. Finding the milk bottles on the doorstep or just knocking on the door of elderly or infirm people who live nearby; having time to talk to people in the shops; being aware of people's needs around. This is all very much part of the healing and the dignity of making people realize that they are needed, wanted, acknowledged and cared for.

Community activities in the voluntary sector are also absolutely invaluable. The times I pick up the phone and talk to Age Concern and a volunteer will come and either walk the dog or sit with somebody or perhaps do a little bit of gardening. That may seem trivial and it may not be directly related to healing but for an elderly person who has loved their garden and is now too infirm to actually look after it, to know that some young person is going to come along and cut the grass and remove the weeds is tremendous. They can look out on this creation that is being preserved for them. One dear old gentleman has just acquired a dog, and that dog has helped more with this patient's healing than a lot of us have over many years. There are so many aspects that are important in making people feel that they belong and that they are cared for.

Alcoholics Anonymous and agencies like it, self-help groups, are very important because people then can have empathy with the ones that they are helping. They have been to that position before and they know what it feels like. They know the experiences. They have coped with it and they are coping with it and they can strengthen each other. Therefore the community in itself is important and each member is important. As each member is important, people will need to be considered as complete individuals. We can have 10 patients coming in with identical diagnoses but each one will react to it in a

different way depending on their circumstances, their personality, their problems, their immune system. This is one of the fascinations that no two people are the same.

Moving on from the community towards politics, I have been very concerned recently because we have had a tremendous number of teachers through the surgery. The strains and pressures that the National Curriculum and local management of schools has put on a very dedicated profession is affecting their health. We have older teachers who have really a gift of teaching, are well respected and have a tremendous pattern behind them of good teaching who are taking early retirement because they cannot cope with the extra work being given to them in administration and marking and assessment. We have got young teachers who are feeling that they have no initiative left and feel that they have got to leave teaching altogether. The changes in the National Health Service are also having a real impact on the people who work in that service. In our area the number of young doctors applying for vocational training for general practice has dropped from 50 to 15 this year.

When I came up to the last Churches Council for Health & Healing meeting, as I went through 'Charing Cross a youngster was begging and had a little notice saying 'No home, no money'. You could be cynical and say they just wanted some money for drugs but I don't think this is the full picture. Certainly when the Salvation Army did their survey recently, which mirrored a survey done many years ago, they found that the amount of helplessness and homelessness in this city is increasing. This is what I mean about wholeness in healing. Healing is not just medication, about just going to the doctor, it is so much more.

We all have a personal responsibility. If there are things that are making problems, stress related to the political situation, then we should at least think about it and decide whether this is right or not. We all have a responsibility here because politics can certainly affect health.

Leaving that rather broad issue, which we really do not have much control over, we move on to the place of the church in the community. What is so special about the local church and how can this help in the healing and the wholeness of the people who live in the area? Firstly, think just of the church as it is, of the building, the resources and the position. Recently our local church has started a Link Scheme on a Monday and a Wednesday lunchtime and the dedicated people in the congregation cook busily during the week and provide a wide range of lunches for people in the parish. This has really been tremendous. It has opened a whole new door into people's needs and people that perhaps didn't come near the church before, are coming and they are having companionship. People are caring for them, they are talking to them, they are giving them the confidence to share. They are having good meals, they are having good nutrition and they are having somewhere to go in their long lonely days. This link on a very practical basis is helping make people whole and to heal them. The enthusiasm and the friendliness of the people who are running this Link Scheme has really opened new doors. We have one lady who comes in her electric wheel chair up the hill even in the foulest weather because she finds that this service is such a help to her. In our churches it is not just a case of 'pew filling', it is a case of caring for the people who live around us and

this is how wholeness can reach the needs of the people who actually live near us. We are lucky because we have got lots of resources, thoughtful caring people, buildings, time and money, the church's history of a social conscience and a history of setting up hospitals and schools. This is still certainly needed today in a caring way and perhaps in a different way.

The members of the congregation can show Christ's love in action. Certainly I find time and time again that I don't need to refer patients to hospital for further investigation or to give them medication. What they need is a listening ear.

Mental illness is something that has recently become a high priority in our area. The local mental hospital is going to close in 1992. Many patients are already being moved into the community and mental illness is something that is very difficult for some people to understand and accept. Many of these patients have been in hospital for a long time and they are going to need gentleness and tender loving care to be able to settle into the confidence of a new life. The community here has been very destructive, not I think knowingly but through fear and perhaps through ignorance. Every time the local authority tries to buy a house and set up a hostel for 4 or 5 patients, the local community is in uproar and the meetings are full of anger and full of fear. It is so sad because all of this is being directed at a concept and not at the gentle people who have been treated and are returning to the community. Patients who are discharged from hospital often don't have the back-up that they need to help to give them confidence and rehabilitate them back into the community. We need retreats for people who don't really need to be in hospital. People whose circumstances, defense mechanisms or their own problems have brought them to a point of crisis - they often just need a safe place to go to, a caring place, a warm place, somewhere they can leave their immediate problems behind and heal in the peace and the retreat and the warmth of tender loving care. Medication is needed as well but there are so many needs in this field. We have started a group recently for people who have been discharged from hospital, some have had to go back and some come out again and don't need to go back. The wonder and excitement that I have found there is in looking across a room and seeing somebody who has been through very deep periods of depression listening and helping somebody else who academically and intellectually is way above her. Listening and giving time, helping this other person to heal, to help his agitation and anxieties to be, not dispelled, but at least controlled. It is lovely to see the co-counselling and help that these people can give and also the wonderful gifts they have got. It really is such a shame that people can be labelled, this is where a community can be cruel or caring, perhaps this is the thing that is most on my heart at the moment having been to some of the meetings and yet seen the patients blossoming with some care and growing as people. Our local disablement resettlement officer says that 90% of the people that come to him now are people with mental health problems, so I think this is a field that needs perhaps more awareness.

We have talked about the church in terms of its buildings, resources and caring people, but obviously the centre of our church is the Christ we worship. He can bring that extra dimension to healing. We have talked about mental problems,

social problems, political problems and physical problems, but there is this extra dimension which I know you must be aware of. This is where, if we look at Christ, we can see how healing can take place, sometimes dramatically.

Those of you who have been to some of the healing meetings will know how dramatically healing can take place. Perhaps we can't explain it all in scientific terms, but we can explain that the body has a tremendous healing system of its own. When the body becomes ill, the cells and the chemicals immediately rush into action. When the bones are broken the plaster cast might give support, but it's the body that is healing itself and perhaps in some way the healing that takes place quickly can be accelerating the body's natural healing processes. I am sure there are many of you here who know much more about this than I do.

Sometimes healing takes place more slowly, e.g. the healing of memories. Sometimes things are just too deep and too painful to be exposed in a short space of time. Sometimes healing isn't the same as curing, the physical problems may remain but what tremendous healing can take place. I have certainly seen people who are physical wrecks being more whole than the fittest athlete. I have seen people in wheel-chairs who have been an absolute hub of a wheel, they have stayed in their room and people have come to them and talked to them and poured out their hearts to them and gone away feeling much greater people because of the love and the care that this physically restricted person has been able to give them.

Going back to the healing though through Christ - yes dramatic healings, yes miraculous healings, yes the power is there. Some may take longer, but one of the greatest healings is the love of Christ because each person is an individual and each person is loved by Christ. For some people who feel that they have no self-worth, to know that Christ loves them and died for them is a tremendous healing in itself, because suddenly they become worthy again and can grow from that point. People often have angers, fears, and guilt - guilt particularly - hidden away and restricting growth. Anger is terribly destructive and yet when Christ forgives, forgiveness is wiping the slate clean. It is having the virgin earth in which things can grow. It is allowing problems in the past that have stopped and hindered growth and healing to be dealt with and prevented from stopping this any more. The freedom and the release of forgiveness is such a tremendous healing. There are so many ways in which Christ can heal and his love can permeate in all ways. Sometimes if things are difficult to cope with, we know that the strength is there. We know that this can be shared and we know that other people who are aware of the love of Christ can pray and prayers will help to heal.

So as we consider this final great dimension of healing, the healing work of the church is bubbling up all over the place. It is perhaps a part of Christ's ministry that has been forgotten in the past, but certainly links with the Churches Council of Health and Healing and with the Acorn Trust and with the representatives of the different denominations, indicate that all over the country the healing of Christ is alive and well.

GRESHAM LECTURE

Healing and the Spirit: Ancient and Modern

The Healing Team

by

The Reverend C.K. Hamel Cooke

Sion College, Victoria Embankment, London EC4

Monday 26th March 1990

Cardinal Heenan, it is said, was once giving evidence in a court of law and the barrister who was questioning him said "Your Eminence, I suppose you must be one of the most intelligent men in England". There was a moments pause, and the Cardinal said, "Well yes, I suppose you could say that". Somebody who knew him well enough took him to task afterwards and said, "You know, that was perhaps going it a bit" to which he replied, "Yes, I realize that, but I did have to remember that I was under oath".

It is a great joy to be back with Richard Chartres who was a colleague for years in Bedford. If you were thinking of making notes, which some of you are, I can save you the trouble of doing so by telling you that it is all in a little book and it is marked £2.95 but they are £3.00 because they are all autographed. I hope that you will think I am much more humble than I am, but that is not going to be very conducive to that point of view.

I want, if I may, to divide this talk into three parts and first to tell you a little bit about the St Marylebone project because when all is said and done there is a great deal more 'said' than 'done' and we were fortunate at St Marylebone to be able to do something. I have been bleating about the healing ministry for a long time now and it was an enormous privilege and joy to be able to do something about it and bring into being this air of co-operation at St Marylebone. So I propose to deal with that subject by telling you what we have done there and then to spell out something of a concept of health and wholeness and to talk about the ingredients that go into this ministry from the church's point of view - that which we have put in that is complimentary to medicine.

The project then is of course close at hand. Some of you have been to see it. Any of you may do so at any point. You can go and walk around or you can go more particularly when there is a healing service, which is on the first Thursday (10.30 am) and the first Sunday (6.30 pm) of each month when there is always the possibility of seeing the Centre and hearing about it from the staff. I have left St Marylebone now. I retired at Christmas to pursue an academic involvement in this ministry at Birmingham University. I am trying to do something to produce a rationale, an undergirding of this ministry which has produced many little books, but no really thoroughgoing

theological work. So I shall lapse into the present tense although in fact I have been left St Marylebone now for nearly three months.

The project is located in the crypt of the church. St Marylebone is a very ancient parish. The first church which was built in 1200, stood at Marble Arch and was trampled under foot by the sightseers of the gallows at Tyburn. It was rebuilt at the top of Marylebone High Street. This church was then replaced with another one on the same site and finally the present magnificent church opposite the York Gate of Regent's Park. It was built in 1817, in the Regency Period and the crypt was built as a burial chamber. When I went there in 1979 there were 850 coffins in the crypt and the first thing we had to do was to remove them. We took them to Brookwood Cemetery and gave them a decent burial. There is a plaque at Brookwood as well as one in the church to commemorate that fact. It took a great deal of doing and cost a great deal of money. The total project cost £1.4m and for a parish church to raise that in 10 years is, I think, no small achievement. I boast of it because I had very little to do with it, merely caused it to happen.

When we had removed the coffins we were left with this great open shell in which the original concept was simply to extend my own ministry of pastoral care, healing and counselling.

Twenty-five years ago I had a two years quasi-sabbatical and studied at Birmingham University for the Diploma in Pastoral Studies, a cross-bred diploma in psychology, sociology, social casework and that sort of thing, which brought me into this arena as it were. I wanted to extend my own ministry on the model of what Chad Varah had done with the Samaritan organisation at St Stephen's Walbrook. Indeed, we cribbed many of his ideas. We call the people who work in the pastoral centre 'Befrienders' just as he calls his helpers in Samaritans, though of course it has nothing to do with the telephone or with suicide, but it has everything to do with helping people in that kind of way - not with qualifications but with qualities of heart and mind. People carefully chosen to walk with people for a little way on their journey when they are in some sort of trouble, problem, crisis, or whatever.

The healing and counselling centre consists of a pastoral centre run by the church, that is one of the component units in it. The second thing was to bring medicine in alongside us, and the origin of that goes back to my Bedford days when we took one funeral a week on an average in that parish. The undertaker would ring up and say "Can you take a funeral on such and such a day?" and you would be given a name and address of a man you had not heard of. You didn't know he lived, until you heard he had died. Why? Because with a parish of 16,000, how could you? Then you would visit the widow and you would find that the man had been ill at home for six weeks dying of cancer and you had never been near because you didn't know. Then you would meet the doctor and you would say 'Why didn't you tell me about Mr So-and-so?' and he would say, 'Because I didn't know it was your parish' or one of the other reasons doctors give for not referring people.

So I hit on a brilliant idea (the only trouble is nobody else thought it a brilliant idea) to suggest to general practices that they should appoint their own chaplains. Always work with

the same priest or minister so that there would be somebody in their team who would be their priest. It meant cutting across denominations and parochial boundaries, but nevertheless it seemed to me the only way to achieve the purpose which we all had, which was to minister to sick people. After all it happens in hospitals. Hospitals have chaplains so why not general practices? I still wonder whether it is not a good idea. Anyway it didn't work, nobody ever took it up, but when I set up the pastoral centre at St Marylebone I thought "I can stand that idea on its head. If the doctors won't appoint a chaplain then this chaplain is going to appoint a doctor", and that is exactly what we did.

We advertised through the General Practitioners Council and had to do all sorts of formal things to get the necessary sanctions and permissions, but eventually a doctor offered to come and work with me. He withdrew and another came and in the event it was a man whose name may be known to many of you, Dr Patrick Pietroni. He has made quite a name for himself as the Chairman of the British Holistic Medical Association. Not only an eminent G.P. and lecturer in general practice at St Mary's Hospital Paddington, but also at the crypt involving himself in a research programme into complementary and alternative therapies. So that in the crypt there is not only the general practice, open to the locality just like any other general practice, but the doctor is also doing a research programme into acupuncture, osteopathy, chiropractics, homeopathy, and so forth. This of course fits in extremely well with the concept of the church's ministry, being itself a compliment to medicine and vice versa.

Patrick has extended his ministry so greatly that it has now gone over in to Regent's College in the Park. Part of his educational programme is staged there rather than in the crypt, but they are very closely allied and I want to emphasize that the co-operation between the church and medicine is not only at the clinical level, but also at the educational level. I regard that as being an enormously important part of what we are doing. We are not only trying to help people who are sick, we are trying to help people to live healthily. You will perhaps know that over 50% of all the beds in hospital at any given moment are occupied by people who are there with self-inflicted wounds, caused by smoking, drugs, motor accidents etc, and it could have been prevented. What we are trying to do at the crypt is to help people to live healthily. so the doctor runs stress classes and diet classes. We on our side run prayer groups and meditations and so forth, showing people how to live healthily both physically and spiritually in order that they may live well and not become ill.

In addition to the combination of the pastoral centre with the medical practice we have developed a complimentary music therapy unit. We chose music therapy from all the possible options because of the fact that the church also has a very strong musical tradition. If it were not for the crypt, the focus of the life at St. Marylebone would undoubtedly be the new organ which we put in two years ago, sharing it with the Royal Academy of Music which is immediately over the road. It cost £400,000 and was built in Austria and is deemed to be one of the finest organs in the country. It has enhanced and enormously improved the curriculum of the organ school at the R.A. and given us this most wonderful instrument to accompany our worship. Because of that tradition we thought that music

therapy would be an obvious bridge and we hope that eventually not only will the liturgical music which is already happening be taught at the Academy but also perhaps music therapy would be taught as a subsidiary subject.

In addition to both of those things we also invited the organisations of the churches healing ministry to come and find their home with us, and the Churches Council for Health and Healing founded by William Temple, the Institute of Religion and Medicine founded by Michael Ramsey and The Guild of St Raphael - the Anglican healing guild, all have the headquarters in the crypt. Therefore we have this combination of agencies as well as the clinical work and the educational work, linked of course to the healing services in the church and to the general ministry of the church. There is no way in which what goes on in the crypt is separate, different and other from what goes on in the church. It is all part and parcel of what St Marylebone's ministry is.

Let me, if I may, try to go back behind the immediate practicalities to what the healing ministry, as I see it is all about. In order to understand the healing ministry of the church you have to have a concept of health and wholeness and I find that that is often very defective in the minds of people. What do we actually mean by being healthy? In the Anglican rite we have this expression of being healthy in body, mind and spirit. Many people think that if you were healthy in your mind and your body and in your spirit you would be a healthy and a whole person. It sounds obvious and is in fact quite inadequate because it suggests quite erroneously that you can be healthy all on your own. As an individual person you cannot be healthy because you are not an individual person in isolation from your fellows, you live in relationships. If those relationships are not healthy then you are not healthy. So I suggest to you a concept of health and a concept of wholeness (I think those two words mean the same thing) and I think that holiness which is derived from the same stem is also included in the concept, so that health, wholeness and holiness are three aspects of the same thing. I want to suggest ultimately that healing and salvation and sanctification are the same thing. You cannot be a whole person unless you are also a holy person.

May we just explore these relationships very rapidly and briefly before we look more fully at the Christian church contribution to healing. I see our relationships as being four fold. (i) We have a relationship with the things with which we have to do. (ii) We have a relationship of course within ourselves where the body, mind, spirit syndrome does work. (iii) We have to have a relationship with the people with whom we have to do, and (iv) we have a relationship with God. We have all these four relationships not only as individuals, but also in the corporate entities to which we belong.

- (i) We have a relationship to the things around us, to the tools of our trade. If you are an engineer or a surgeon, it is of vital importance that you should be healthily related to the instrument in your hand and if you are not, then it can of course produce fatalities. On the corporate scale we are terribly aware, and thank God ever increasingly aware, of man's failure to relate healthily to his environment. The whole of the 'green' movement is about that. Man's desecration of the animal creation,

the bird creation, the forests, the seas, the rivers. We have wrecked them all or are in the process of doing so. At last we are being alerted to the damage we are doing and perhaps it isn't too late. Any healing that leaves out the recognition that all of this is part of it is very inadequate. I find it quite wrong, distressing and upsetting that people so often think of healing as merely a clinical, individual thing leaving out all those areas. The healing ministry of the church is just as much a prophetic ministry as it is a pastoral ministry and of course from our point of view also a priestly ministry.

(ii) We have a relationship to ourselves. We are body, we are mind, we are spirit. I often wonder why it is that when we take a funeral we say we buried so-and-so but when somebody is murdered and the body is found we say not that the person was found but that that person's body was found. I find that quite a wrong way of looking. I don't have a body, I am a body. I don't have a mind, I am a mind. I don't have a spirit, I am a spirit. I am all those three dimensions of myself. They are not healthily related within me. St Paul said, "The good that I would, that I do not and the evil that I would not, that I do", and that sums up this warning, as it were, within our own souls of the different aspects of our own being. I need not enlarge upon it, it is obvious and evident to us all that we go on our life's journey trying to reconcile these disparate parts of ourselves. Not parts, parts is a bad word to use but it is difficult to find language to express precisely what we mean. If there were total perfect harmony within ourselves it would be a marvellous achievement and none of us has achieved it as well we know. That is true of you as an individual, it is true of the organisations to which you belong, whatever those organisations are. To your parish, to the church as a whole, to the clubs and societies to which you belong societies to which you belong, you all know that within those organisations there is not perfect harmony.

(iii) Our relationship with each other of course relates to that, to each other, the relationship that we are now enjoying (I hope you are enjoying), the relationship between ourselves. Is it a healthy relationship? As an individual, are you healthily related to the people with whom you have to deal. In the 1662 rite we used to say "Those who are in love and charity with their neighbours may come to the altar". How did we ever dare approach the altar? Which of you is in love and charity with all your neighbours, with every one of them at this moment? Have a word with me afterwards and tell me how you manage it.

We all know that there is a disease in our relationships. we all know that we need healing in that dimension of our lives. We all know that that is true for you and for me, and how much more is it true for the nations to which we belong and the societies to which we belong. The tension between management and union, the wars between East and West, Iraq and Iran, and whatever. We have this abundant evidence of man's incapacity to live at peace and in harmony with his fellow men. That

needs healing and the Christian healing ministry is about that just as much as it is about anything which is purely clinical and personal. I don't denigrate the importance of that, heaven knows how could I, when I have been so deeply involved in this personal ministry, but I am tremendously aware of the fact that it is not in itself the story. Leaving out those other dimensions is to be a mockery of what healing is meant to be about.

- (iv) Finally our relationship with God, that relationship which we at its best describe as holiness. The goal to which I am sure everyone here aspires, but who would dare to suggest that they have attained that goal. We all know that it is only a goal and that is true for you, for me, and for the congregations to which we belong. Seeking holiness, seeking the perfection of relationship with God to which we are called and knowing that we are all on a journey towards it and none of us has arrived.

So I ask you to think over and accept if you will that concept of what it is to be healthy, what holiness is, and then to see healing as simply a means to that end.

You have heard what the doctors contribution is, and one is always grateful that the doctors see things in the way they do and if I am going to suggest in the next few minutes that there is an inadequacy about what they do, it is only to suggest that there is an inadequacy in what we do on the church's side which needs their compliment. If I break my leg, it is to the doctor that I go. If I develop this or that ailment, I shall go to him and hope that he will cure me. That is what he sets himself to do, and if he doesn't succeed in doing that there is a very real sense in which he is failing in his ministry. That is true, that is how it should be, that is how I want it to be. The Christian ministry of healing is a compliment to that because the doctors must, and I hope always will, concentrate on the body and perhaps on the mind and their recognition of the vital, important spiritual dimension is something which has to be shared. Let us not suppose that the holistic approach to medicine means that one person can do it all. We need to see how each of us has a contribution to make.

So I now propose to enlarge for a few minutes on what I might call the ingredients of the Christian healing ministry, the attitudes which are ours, the ministry to which we believe, as Christian people and as a church we are called to perform, and perhaps sometimes to compare it and to contrast it with the ministry of the doctor. If we begin with the concept of death you will immediately see how the Christian ministry and the medical ministry approach from different points of view. If I go to the doctor, and in consequence of his ministry I don't recover but die, there is a very real sense in which he has failed me. I don't want to press that point because of course you can argue against it. If you are a geriatrics doctor or nurse you would not say that. That is obviously true, we recognize that fact and I am only proud to make the general point that the doctors business is to keep people alive. The Christian healing ministry is also involved in one sense in keeping people alive and recognizes the tragedy of so many deaths and the tragic circumstances in which so many deaths take place.

Do you know what the current death rate is in this country? Yes you do, it's 100%. It always has been and it always will be. You are all suffering from an incurable disease called mortality. The Christian business as I understand it is to prepare people for that eventuality as a positive goal to which their lives tend. On Easter Sunday we shall sing 'Jesus lives, henceforth is death, but the gate of life immortal' and I hope we shall mean it. Death is the terminus of this life's journey. So often we contrast death with life which is not the right comparison to make because death is an event. Life goes through death and the thing that one should compare with death surely is birth, the event that brings us into existence. Birth and death but life goes through death. So the Christian attitude to death is evidently and properly different from the attitude of the medical profession. In principle it is different. That is not to suggest of course that because death is the goal to which we aspire, the tragic deaths, premature deaths, sorrowful deaths are not what they are. Of course they are very sad and very sorrowful. When children die of starvation, when people are killed unnecessarily in accidents, this is sad, this is tragic, and nothing I am saying is intended to suggest otherwise.

Let us move from that to another word which is so often misunderstood in the ministry, indeed so often closely associated with it, and that is the word 'faith'. The telephone rings, (you have no idea how often this has happened to me in my time at St Marylebone) "Are you the Faith Healer?". What do you answer to that question? I would say 'yes' rather than 'no' because I think the answer 'no' would be so misleading, but we never use the word 'healer' of any of the people working for us. It is interesting isn't it how the doctors don't use the word 'healer'. Mind you, the doctors have a way of translating things into Greek. It is alright to be a therapist. 'Therapy' is an 'in' word with the medical profession, 'healer' is not. In the Christian ministry we, I hope, don't use the word 'healer' of practitioners because we see ourselves as the agents of healing, the channels of God's healing. We see God as the only healer. That isn't to suggest that we don't have a part to play. Even the word 'channel' is misleading, it suggests that we don't contribute anything. We do, we are part of the process, but God is the healer. So to say that one is a Faith Healer is a somewhat dangerous and I think also ambiguous claim. Yet faith does play a part, and many of those who have said to me (and no doubt to all the clergy present here and others too) I wish I had your faith. A strange thing to wish for if they only knew. What they are really saying is, I am besieged by doubts and my faith is impaired by the fact that I have so many doubts to which I am hesitant to own up because I don't want to be that kind of person. This to me is quite mistaken because faith and doubt should never be contrasted. The opposite of 'faith' in Christian terms is 'sight'. Faith is the evidence of things not seen. When we see something, we no longer have to have faith. You don't have to have faith that I am standing here - you can see me. To believe that God is here requires faith because you can't see Him. So faith is not to be contrasted with doubt but with sight, and doubt is the evidence of faith. It is good to have doubts because if you didn't have doubts you wouldn't have faith either. The person who has no faith certainly has no doubts. To heal peoples' faith is a very important part of Christian healing and very often that is what we were doing, not curing physical ailments by faith but

healing their faith, bringing them to a greater faith, to a more sound and robust faith, to a faith which was more meaningful.

Faith is difficult to quantify. We are told that faith the size of a grain of mustard seed will move a mountain into the sea. When I was a very little boy and had lots of faith I thought I would try it out and see. I prayed earnestly that this mountain would move but unfortunately it didn't because of course God had put it where He wanted it and didn't want it moved. Faith is the agent of moving mountains of pain and sorrow and doubt but it won't do that practical thing and we know it. So that when we talk about faith as so often we do in the healing ministry we need to be very careful how we use it. I say that because so very often people have blamed themselves and other people for the fact that they have not been cured. They attributed it to a lack of faith. I want to repudiate that position completely.

So we heal faith and we also heal the other two great Christian virtues of 'Hope' and 'Charity'. Many of those who come to the centre come hopeless and in despair, and to give them hope, to encourage them to have hope is an enormously healing thing. I believe that we should all have hope because how ever often we are disappointed on life's journey, and all of us have suffered disappointments at various points, I believe that the ultimate hope is the vision of God. I believe we shall all ultimately attain to it. I am an avowed universalist, if hell exists then like the moon, it is not inhabited. We shall all I believe finally come to heaven. It won't be because of what we have done and we should not forfeit it because of what we have done either. Power in the love of God cannot, in my judgement, be ultimately defeated, but you have to have a very strong sense of purgatory in order to accept that point of view. We need and shall need to be cleansed before we can see the vision of God. To give people that hope means that they travel through life hopefully, and even if all the other things that they look forward to are dashed, they will still have the ultimate hope and they will live hopefully, which is to live healthily. To be without hope is itself to be in sickness. It is certainly true of the last and greatest of the Christian virtues, those who are unloved and unloving are sick indeed.

One of the great things about the Christian healing ministry, is that we have a worshipping, loving congregation of people to introduce people to. If your community is not such, not a healing congregation, then look to it because it needs to be healed of its inadequacies in order to become that. The great thing that we have over against the medical profession is that we have this loving community into which we can invite people to come. When people are loved and find someone to love they are undoubtedly healthier and happier people than if they have not.

Let me move on to another very difficult word and that is the word 'miracle'. So often again the press would ring me up and say, "Do you do miracles?". You could ring me up and say, "Do you do rheumatism?" as if there were certain specialities as it were in the Christian healing ministry. What is a miracle, what do you mean by a miracle? You all use the word, what does it actually mean to you? Do you think it is a divine intervention? Do you see it as something which must be sudden, immediate? Do you see it as something which must inevitably be

inexplicable? Do you see it as always accompanied by extraordinary circumstances? I want to suggest that the word 'miracle', derived as it is from the Latin word *admiro* (I wonder at) is a subjective word. It is how I or you react to something that God is doing. If something that we see causes us to wonder, then it is by definition a miracle. If it causes you to lift up your heart to God in wonder, love and praise, that is a miracle. If the next day you understand how it happened, even though it were not accompanied by extraordinary circumstances, even though it took a long time to materialise it would still be a miracle.

Rid your mind of the concept of divine intervention, simply because it is not necessary to have it. The concept is born of a mistaken view of creation. If you believe that the creation took place 4004 years ago as Archbishop Usher did, or if you add a few noughts to that figure and think you are being thereby a little bit more accurate - think again. The creation did not take place in the past at all, it is taking place now. We are held here this evening by God's creative love and without it we would not be here. The creation is an ongoing reality. So obsessed have we sometimes become with salvation concepts that we have forgotten that the creation goes on. The new creation has not obliterated the original creation. It is a revival and renewal of that original creation and that original creation is a present reality. When I see God acting, and lift up my heart to him in wonder, I am simply seeing what God is doing next. He is not intervening, He is not coming in to put something right that had gone wrong, He is simply creating this next moment and many of the things that he does cause me to wonder - and you too and all people. More and more we need to hold on to, or perhaps recapture that sense of wonder, to be able to marvel at what God is doing. In the natural plane as well as in the supernatural plane, if indeed there was any difference between them, and I am not sure that there is. The birth of a baby, the sight of the first primrose, the hearing of the first bird in the spring - these things on the natural plane cause us to wonder and lift up our hearts to God. They are miracles, that is its definition.

So think rather, not of intervention, but of interaction with God's creative activity because we are His agents in creation and we can help His creative activity or we can hinder it. We can frustrate it or we can be the agents by which it is promoted. We are His agents in creation and all the arguments that we have had, for instance lately over David Jenkins' outburst about miraculous events associated with Easter and so forth, are all unnecessary if you get your doctrine of creation right and rid your mind of that concept of intervention.

So what in the healing ministry are we to expect? When people come for ministry, either personally or in the context of a healing service, what are they to expect? So often people say to me, "If I come, what will you do for me?". Because I don't have a gift of sight, I don't know what will happen. I never admit that I can do anything for them. It is very easy to be glib and say, "I am sure we could help", but all we can offer is our availability. If through that availability good things happen, then we have served them well. What can we expect? Always that God will act, because God never fails to answer a prayer and always that He will act characteristically. That is to say He will act as the loving Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He acts characteristically, that is the thing to

remember. To me there is ultimately only one doctrine of the church that matters and that is that God is my loving Father. I have often said, if you could prove to me tomorrow that the virgin birth was not true, that it would be demonstrated beyond doubt that it wasn't so, what difference would it make to my faith? It would make none at all, I should still be in my place on Sunday. But if you could prove to me that God was not my loving Father you would destroy me completely. Everything that I have ever done, or said, or thought, or believed, the whole of my ministry would be completely undermined because that is at the heart of Christian living. God, because He is our loving Father, always acts as such. If, in the course of our ministry, things that happen seem to belie that, that is where faith comes in. To believe, if we may so put it, against the evidence. Hold on to the fact what has happened is God's will and your faith will see you through those times of doubt and difficulty.

So God will always act, and he will always act characteristically, but He will not always cure. I want to make a very big distinction between curing and healing. Sometimes people are cured and not healed, sometimes people are healed and not cured. Sometimes people are healed through their sufferings and not from their sufferings. The area of course where we see the curing, where we see the physical changes, is in the psychosomatic area. Hugh Child, who was one of the leading lights in the Institute of Medicine, used to say that all sickness is psychosomatic. By that he meant that whether your illness begins in your body or in your mind or in your spirit it will inevitably affect all three aspects of your being.

A simple story to illustrate that: A mother was waiting for her children after school and a car comes and knocks her over and she breaks her leg. That is a simple, straight forward physical thing that has happened. She goes to hospital and has it set and there is nothing more to it than that - or is there? Anxiety creeps in because, who is now meeting the children. Perhaps she begins to wonder how God can allow this to happen to her, so she wonders about her faith. A terribly simplistic example but just to illustrate the fact that if you are sick in one part of your being, you are likely to be sick in them all.

So there is a very real sense in which all illness is psychosomatic, body and spirit. That I think is why the sacraments are so enormously important in the healing ministry, because they administer to our bodies but penetrate into the heart and mind. We are all psychosomatic, we are all sacramental beings, and we know that many of the sicknesses that we have in our bodies come from the fact that we are diseased in our minds or spirits. A cardiologist just round the corner from me in Harley Street, a man called Peter Nixon, whom some of you may know, once said at a meeting that I convened, that all his patients suffered from stress. Stress is not a physical thing, it is a mental thing, and it can cause heart trouble and all sorts of other things. We all know how true this is, that the things we see are not necessarily physical in origin though they may be evident in our bodies. The classic example of that, which many of you no doubt will see every year on the television, if not in real life, is the Boat Race. It always amazes me how little difference there is between the two crews - a matter of seconds. They both row the same distance, almost exactly the same length of time. One

crew finishes the race looking as if they have just come out of the boat house and the Cambridge crew is completely shattered. Why? Because what you are seeing is not tiredness but defeat, and that is evidence in the physical state of the people concerned. A silly example you may think but it is evidence of the simple fact that we do show in our bodies what is going on within our hearts and minds.

Curing of the bodily things sometimes happens simply because we put right the things that are wrong in the heart or the mind. One has often seen physical cures because people have become happier, become relaxed, become loved. All sorts of contributions which make for their curing. But they are not always cured. We must not suppose that because they are not cured that they are not healed. God's healing mercies are always vouchsafed to those who seek them, but His curing is not inevitable and not universal.

Let me finish my talk by just telling you two stories which illustrate these two truths.

The first is a miracle of curing where healing did not really take place. A girl was flown in with her Mother from Kuala Lumpur to a London clinic. She had cancer and she needed surgery. Her Mother came to see me in the morning after they arrived and she said, "They are doing the tests now. My daughter doesn't have much faith but I do. I would like you to pray for me". She came back in the evening to say that her daughter had had the tests and there was no sign of the cancer and she was going home again. That was a cure. You may say a miracle cure. You may question if it would have happened had I not prayed with her. I am glad to say I have no idea. But I do know this, that her mother said that she was greatly distressed. Of course she was thrilled and delighted that the cancer had gone but she was bewildered by what had happened. She had worked herself up into a state for coming to England accepting all this and I have likened what happened to her to somebody who wins the football pools, becomes instantly wealthy and their lives are ruined in the process. Instant wealth and instant health can both be bad for you. She was cured but there was no way in which she could be administered to and healed.

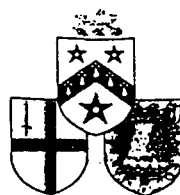
The other story is of a woman who came and just walked past the church and saw the sign outside. She had been to the Bristol cancer clinic and was told there that she should receive healing and she should find a healer in London. She had no idea how to set about it or what it was all about but saw our notice and she came down into the crypt and she met my lady deacon. She was a Jewish woman who had no faith or religion of any kind and never had had. She was brought up in a totally secular home and God had meant nothing to her all her life. She wasn't practising anything. She wasn't an atheist, she simply didn't know anything about religion. She was 50 years old and my lady deacon ministered to her over a period of six months. She talked to her about Christian hope and this little lady was a convert, simply that. She had a conversion experience and she kept saying, "Why have I not heard about these things until now, why have I to wait until I am dying before I know about these wonderful things?". She went into the Princess Grace Hospital and she died there. She was not cured but she was most certainly healed.

GRESHAM COLLEGE

Policy & Objectives

An independently funded educational institution, Gresham College exists

- to continue the free public lectures which have been given for 400 years, and to reinterpret the 'new learning' of Sir Thomas Gresham's day in contemporary terms;
- to engage in study, teaching and research, particularly in those disciplines represented by the Gresham Professors;
- to foster academic consideration of contemporary problems;
- to challenge those who live or work in the City of London to engage in intellectual debate on those subjects in which the City has a proper concern; and to provide a window on the City for learned societies, both national and international.



Founded 1597

Gresham College, Barnard's Inn Hall, Holborn, London EC1N 2HH

Tel: 020 7831 0575 Fax: 020 7831 5208

e-mail: enquiries@gresham.ac.uk

Web site : www.gresham.ac.uk