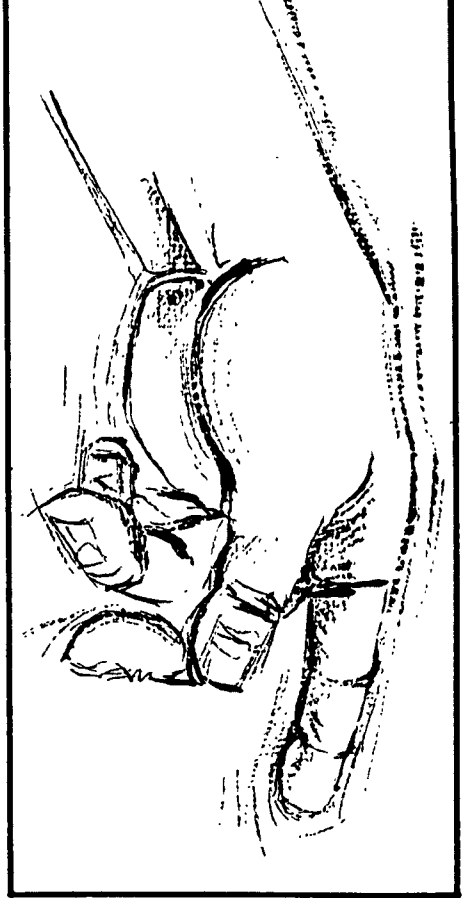
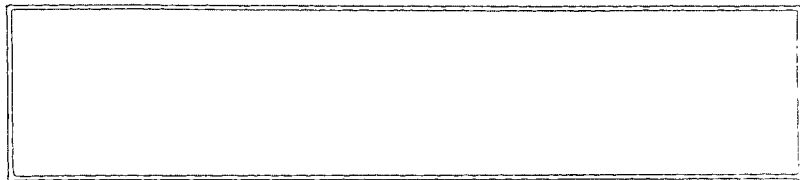




"...I am the Lord
that healeth thee."

EXODUS 15:26



We
Believe
In

**DIVINE
HEALING**

WE BELIEVE IN DIVINE HEALING

Reproduced from the *Foursquare
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"Divine Healing"

We believe that Divine Healing is the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to heal the sick and afflicted in answer to believing prayer; that He who is the same yesterday, today and forever has never changed, but is still an all-sufficient help in the time of trouble, able to meet the needs of, and quicken into newness of life the body, as well as the soul and spirit in answer to the faith of them who ever pray with submission to His divine and sovereign will. The Declaration of Faith.—*Aimee Semple McPherson.*

Scripture References

"And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Exodus 15:26).

"Bless the Lord, O My soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases" (Psalms 103:2-3).

"Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. 8:17).

"For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?" (Matt. 9:5).

"And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they

shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:17, 18).

"And now, Lord, behold their threatening: and grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy Word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy child Jesus" (Acts 4:29, 30).

"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed..." (James 5:14-16).

Introduction

Divine Healing is one of the cardinal doctrines of the Four-

square Gospel. Not unimportant among the relationships of Christ to the believer is that of the great Physician. High among the pro-

visions of Christ for the need of the believer is that of bodily healing. In our opinion no gospel is a full-gospel which overlooks, belittles, or denies the doctrine of divine healing. One of the big factors in the growth and rapid spread of the Foursquare Church and the other Pentecostal movements is that of the preaching and practice of Divine Healing. We believe that it is the duty of the Christian church to be very active if not to take the initiative in the cure of the sick. Unfortunately, the church, little by little, has relinquished many of its original functions. The churches have turned education over to the state, charities and benevolence over to the lodges and charitable societies, judgment of grievances over to the courts, and the healing of the sick over to the hospitals and secular physicians. We are not opposed to these secular institutions entering fields once occupied largely by the church. There is much to be done and every organized effort to alleviate human suffering and to solve social problems is more than welcome, but we do lament the fact that the church has retired almost completely from so many areas where it once took the leadership. The hospitals and doctors are more than welcome in our society; they are, in fact, positively essential to the people's well being, a fact no thoughtful person will deny. However, it was not, and is not the will of God that secular, and sometimes unbelieving physicians should be the sole administrators of physical healing. The children of God should have the privilege of calling upon the elders of the church who will pray the prayer of faith in a spiritual atmosphere, who will attend to the patient's spiritual ills as well as his physical ills. The church has no right to reproach our country for being unchristian when it has neglected a large part of its duties and become little

more than the perpetrator of religious ceremonies.

Furthermore, when the orthodox church ceased to preach Divine Healing, a number of healing cults sprang up to fill the vacuum, which were Christian in name only. The negligent, orthodox church is indirectly responsible for the existence of the healing cults which deny the existence of sickness, sin, and evil, while rejecting Christ's finished vicarious work of redemption. The orthodox ecclesiastical bodies can gain their lost prestige and leadership in human affairs only by accepting again the responsibilities fulfilled by the apostolic church. We are happy to say that Divine Healing is being more widely practiced throughout the many branches of the church than ever before in modern times. The truth will prevail. Reality cannot be forever overlooked.

Exposition

EXODUS 15:26

Written plainly above the platform of every Foursquare church is the passage of Holy Scripture, "Jesus Christ the same, yesterday and today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8). Some things in God's plan never change, and never cease to exist because they are the manifestation of the very nature of God. The Lord never ceases to do some things, because they are the acts resultant from His very character. God does what He does, because He is what He is. "I am God, I change not." James says of the Lord, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variability, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). A literal translation of the same verse reads, "Every good provision and every perfect free gift is from above coming down from the Father of lights in

whose position there is no shifting nor slightest trace of turning." God has indeed dealt with His people on the basis of many different covenants, but what God is by nature, He will always be to His people.

Now, what God is to His people is revealed in His seven compound names by which He is known. One of the compound names of Jehovah is found in our text which we are now examining. The phrase from Exodus 15:26, "I am the Lord that healeth thee," is more literally translated from the Hebrew Bible, "I am Jehovah-Rapha" or "I am Jehovah, the healer." The other six names of Jehovah are as follows:

1. Jehovah-Nissi—The Lord our banner; 2. Jehovah-Shalom, the Lord our peace; 3. Jehovah-Ra'ah, the Lord my Shepherd; 4. Jehovah-Tsidkenu, the Lord our Righteousness; 5. Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord who provides; and 6. Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord is present. Through all the different dispensations God has never ceased to be what these names reveal Him to be. Furthermore, Jesus, the Son of God, whose nature is identical to that of Jehovah of the Old Testament, has continued to be all that the seven compound names imply. Jesus is our banner or our ensign. Are we not called Christians? (Exodus 17:8-15; Acts 11:26.) Jesus is our peace. (Judges 6:24; Ephesians 2:13-14.) The Lord Jesus is, indeed, our Shepherd. (Psalms 23:1, John 10:2, 11, 14.) Furthermore the Lord Jesus is our righteousness. (Jer. 23:6; Romans 3:21-22.) Jesus is also our provider, for all things are supplied in His name. (Gen. 22:14, Phil. 4:19.) Finally Christ Jesus is our ever present Lord. (Ezek. 48:35—Heb. 13:5, 6.) Now if Jesus was, and continues to be all these things revealed in the names of Jehovah, how can anyone argue that Jesus was, but has now ceased to be

the "Lord that healeth thee" Yes, Jesus was and remains unto this present time Jehovah-Rapha; He was and is the Great Physician.

The promise to keep the Israelites from the diseases by which the Egyptians were afflicted was not a temporary provision conditioned upon the circumstances. Jehovah was their healer during their wanderings, because He by nature was a healer of diseases. What God bestows as a manifestation of His very nature is never temporary. Sometimes the conditions for receiving the divine provision may vary, but the blessing always remains available to those who meet the conditions. The Israelites were required to keep God's commandments and obey his statutes in order to enjoy divine health, because an obedient heart is more desirable and blessed than physical health. Jesus is still the Great Physician, but we must meet the conditions of faith and obedience in order to enjoy healing from Heaven.

PSALMS 103:2-3

The Psalmist calls upon his soul to remember the benefits of the Lord, among which, the principal were the forgiveness of sins and the healing of diseases. The Psalmist's manner of speaking clearly infers that the benefits of forgiveness and healing are provisions which the Lord is accustomed to make for His faithful people. He speaks here not of a single occasion, but of the continual working of the Lord. Some are willing, because of the overwhelming evidence, to admit that the Lord has in some unusual cases healed the sick, but they deny that the Lord may be relied upon to heal diseases. We believe the Bible teaches that Divine Healing is a promise based upon a permanent provision purchased in the finished work of the cross. We rely upon Jesus to

heal sickness, because we believe that He is, by very nature, a compassionate physician who is not unconcerned about the most minute needs, sorrows, and sufferings of His people. To say that God will not be to us what He was to the Israelites under Moses and to the Psalmist is equivalent to saying that God's character has changed. Full-gospel people who have believed and tested the healing promise have experienced adequate demonstrations of the Lord's willingness and power to heal sickness. To us it is not theory, but daily experience. Let us with the Psalmist bless the Lord for His unchanging benefits for soul and body.

MATTHEW 8:17

What God was by His very nature to His chosen people Israel, He has now made available to all who will believe of every race and nation. Forgiveness of sins and the healing of bodily sickness have become universal provisions by virtue of the redemptive work of Christ upon the cross. The ransom price paid in the sacrifice of God's Son purchases a full provision of redemption and blessing for all who trust in Jesus Christ for all things. What God formerly bestowed on the basis of a covenant with His chosen people, He now bestows upon all believers on the basis of a larger covenant made effectual by the perfect work of the cross. Our enjoyment of full blessing for spirit, soul and body is now limited only by the measure of our faith. We need not bear sickness that Christ has already borne for us when He became our substitute.

MATTHEW 9:5

Jesus, here, clearly means that the forgiveness of sins includes bodily healing. The two blessings go together and may be bestowed at the same time. He whose sins are forgiven may rise and walk, if he be-

lieves. Due to our fragmentary preaching and the resultant partial faith of the repentant, healing does not always follow the pardon of sins, yet there have been scores of persons whose faith was fortified by a confident evangelist or pastor who appropriated both blessings in the same moment. In our great Divine Healing meetings, the double work of forgiveness and healing is often the rule rather than the exception. The Lord in His providence may for reasons unknown to us delay healing in order to work our higher good, nevertheless, while we submit to Providence and trust God's sovereign will, we do not cease to trust that God in His time will bestow upon us both blessings. We ought always to expect immediate blessing, if we have fulfilled sincerely, as far as we know, our part of the covenant of faith and obedience. We are willing for God to do according to His will, but where we have a revealed promise of benefits, we ask always assuming that it is God's will to heal immediately. Uncertainty about God's will is not conducive to faith. Ask, standing upon the promises, and expect the blessing.

MARK 16:17, 18

Here is a clear prophecy that the Christian believers would lay hands upon the sick and that they would recover in answer to believing prayer. Certainly a person who had had no knowledge of Christianity, would, upon reading the New Testament, be surprised if he found no practice of Divine Healing among Christians. The teaching that Divine Healing has ceased is not based upon the Bible, but upon the experience of the church during a century when intellectual attainment took the precedence over spiritual power, faith, and prayer. If the Baptism in the Holy Spirit were more highly esteemed in all quarters than a doctorate

in philosophy, the promises and miracles of the Bible would not seem so out dated. Believers still lay hands on the sick with the result that they are healed.

ACTS 4:29, 30

Not only is Divine Healing a manifestation of the merciful and compassionate nature of the Lord, but it is also bestowed in order to put God's seal of authority upon the efforts of His servants. Evangelists, missionaries, and other workers who carry the gospel message to the unevangelized find that Divine Healing is a very powerful and effective wedge for the Gospel. God's healing power is often manifested also during times of revival and refreshing in order to encourage a disheartened church. This does not mean, however, that the Great Physician is inactive during normal times, nor that He does not heal in areas already thoroughly evangelized. To attest the divine authority of the gospel is not the only, nor even the principal, reason why God heals the sick. Perhaps the greatest reason is that He is a merciful and compassionate Lord who responds to the prayer of faith of His obedient children.

JAMES 5:14-16

This passage is often called the New Testament divine healing covenant. Here provision is made within the inner function of the established church for the healing of the sick. The infirm believer is to call for the elders of the church who will pray with him the prayer of faith, and he has the promise that the prayer of faith will save the sick and that the Lord will raise him up. It should be noted that, here as elsewhere, the forgiveness of sin accompanies healing, showing that both blessings are included in the same divine provision.

Some have attempted to explain away this promise by affirming

that James wrote not to church saints, but to Jews of the dispersion. No matter what the race of the recipients of the epistle, they are real church saints as anyone may discover by even a superficial reading of the book. James wrote to believers who had faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (James 2:1) and who were waiting for the coming of the Lord (James 5:7,8). Others have said that the oil was used in the anointing for its medicinal value, but we are clearly told that the prayer of faith, not oil, saves the sick, and that the Lord, not the medicine, raises him up. All attempts to set aside this blessed promise are and will be in vain. The elders of the church cannot escape their responsibility to anoint the sick in the name of the Lord.

There is the further provision for the healing of the sick, which is that believers pray one for another. Here again the healing comes after the mutual confession of faults and sins. Lest we lowly esteem our own spiritual capacities we are assured that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, and that we in Christ can be as potent through faith as was Elijah whose prayer closed and opened the Heavens. There is nothing wrong with the modern church that the confession of faults and the greater exercise of faith in God's promises will not cure. Faith is the victory, yet without faith it is impossible to please God. If we lament the absence of faith, let us remember that faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Divine Healing is for today, because God is the same today. Jesus is the Lord that heals in the modern church as surely as He was the Great Physician in the apostolic church. The age of miracles has not passed, because the whole age in which the Holy Spirit abides is an age of miracles. According to our faith be it unto us. The

admonition we need is *'Have faith in God.'*

The Meaning of Divine Healing Outline

1. The Meaning of Divine Healing—Simple answer to prayer.
2. The Assurance of Divine Healing—Jesus ever the same.
3. The Conditions for Receiving Divine Healing—Prayer and Faith.
4. The Result of Divine Healing—Quickened bodies.

I. Introduction

It is important for all of us and especially for our church school teachers to know exactly what we believe about Divine Healing. To say that we believe in Divine Healing is not to be exact. There are many kinds of so-called divine or faith healing. Not all who say that they believe and practice Divine Healing believe what we, of the Foursquare churches, believe. We are eager to be known for our belief in Christ as the Great Physician, but we are equally eager that we should not be identified with all who preach or teach healing. We do not have a theory, philosophy, technique, nor system of healing, we simply take the healing offered by the Great Physician according to Bible teaching. We do not begrudge anyone the benefits of physical, surgical or psychosomatic therapy. If anyone has found a system of faith or mental healing that works, let it be judged as a natural means of cure on its own merits and results. We do caution that Satan may lift or remove his oppressions in connection with certain kinds of healing systems in order to deceive. There may be any number of natural healing techniques capable of bringing varying degrees of success, but let us call Divine Healing only that direct supernatural healing which comes in answer to

prayer in the name of Jesus.

Perhaps the best approach to a definition of our doctrinal position would be a phrase by phrase analysis of the statement of our position on Divine Healing found in the Declaration of Faith.

II. We Believe That Divine Healing is the Power of the Lord Jesus Christ

Biblical Divine Healing is centered in the Lord Jesus. The apostles healed only and always in the name of Jesus. Anointing with oil is to be done in the name of the Lord. It is the good pleasure of the Father to bestow all benefits by the virtue of faith in His blessed Son.

Just as Christ was active in the creation of the world and of man, and is now active in the preservation of all things (Col. 1:16-17), so also is Christ Jesus active in the healing of our sicknesses. Now the power that heals is bestowed in answer to prayer. The only requisites demanded of the seeker for Divine Healing are asking and believing. All things are possible to him who believes. So be it unto us according to our faith. *"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord"* (James 1:6, 7). *"Ye have not, because ye ask not"* (James 4:2). Also Luke 11:9. Only two things can hinder God's bestowal of bodily healing—failure to ask, or failure to believe what we ask. Asking selfishly can hinder God's answering prayer, but it is to be doubted that one can ask selfishly and at the same time pray the prayer of faith. There are three clearly marked ways to pray for and receive Divine Healing: (1) call for the elders of the church, who augment and inspire the faith

of the seeker, and whose prayer also avails much; (2) Pray for one another, for the Lord has promised to be where two or three are gathered together in the name of the Lord agreeing as touching what they shall ask; (3) Call upon the Lord directly, for the Lord has promised that if we shall ask anything in His name, He will do it. However, when we approach the matter of healing, two things are essential; that we ask, and that we believe.

III. That He who is the same yesterday, today, and forever has never changed

We believe in the same kind of Divine Healing administered by the Lord Himself when He healed the lame, the palsied, and the blind; in the same healing He promised would follow them who believed; in the same healing performed by Peter, John, and Paul; in the same healing implied in the gifts of healing; in the same Divine Healing that continued in the early church; and in the same Divine Healing practiced by Luther, Zinzendorf, and Wesley et al. Divine Healing has not changed nor diminished because the Lord is eternally the same; and, until the Saviour comes again, the needs of humanity will be the same. We look with suspicion upon any kind of so-called divine healing system or philosophy purported to have been discovered in recent times, or to have come from mystical extra-biblical sources. The healing blessing of Him who changes not is still the same blessing, bestowed in the same simple manner as that of the Bible. Our ministers who pray for the sick do not do so because they have mastered a philosophical system, but because they have been filled with the Spirit of God; the same Holy Spirit bestowed upon the apostles on the

day of Pentecost.

Because the Lord is ever the same, He has not ceased to bestow healing in the same direct and simple manner. Some who believe that God still heals, nevertheless believe that the manner of reception has become more indirect and philosophical. The Divine Healing in which we believe is by the same power of the same Lord, bestowed in the same fulness in answer to the same prayer of faith.

IV. Is still an all sufficient help in the time of trouble

Sickness occasionally may be a permitted discipline, or a punishment for sin, but generally speaking sickness is a trouble out of which the Lord is willing and eager to help us. Even sickness as a discipline should not endure always, for a discipline is useless that cannot be removed as soon as the maturity is reached. Sickness is not the normal condition of the body. It is nearly always a greater hindrance to spirituality or service than it can be a stimulus. Out of such abnormal states, called trouble, the Lord will and does help us. If we call upon the Lord in the day of trouble, He will deliver us, according to His Holy Word. Now it cannot be denied that God sometimes permits and uses trouble, as in the case of Job and Paul, but the day of troubles' value soon passes and deliverance comes as it came to Job and to Paul. Of course there are some mysteries connected with human suffering and Divine Providence that we cannot understand nor explain. We do not call God's ways into question, but normally, every believer trusts in the ultimate, glorious deliverance of the Lord. The eternal Lord is "Jehovah-Rapha," the Great Physician.

V. Able to meet the needs of, and quicken into newness of life the body, as well as the soul and spirit

God is not Lord of the soul and spirit only; He is also Lord of the body. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost. Christ's redemption, by which we are "bought with a price," includes our physical bodies. The Lord bases His demand upon our bodies, for holy living, upon His purchase of them. We are exhorted to glorify God in our bodies as well as in our spirit. (I Cor. 6:20.) Now if redemption includes our bodies, then God has an interest in the health of our bodies. If we are required to live and treat our physical beings in a manner so as to preserve them and to keep them sound, cannot we expect help from the Lord if our bodies are attacked by disease or suffer organic failure? The apostle Paul, indeed, plainly declares that there is constant quickening from Heaven for the mortal body, as well as for the soul and spirit. "*If the Spirit of God, of Him who raised Jesus from the dead, has His home in you, then He who raised the Messiah, Jesus from the dead will thrill with a new life your very bodies—those mortal bodies of yours—by the agency of His own Spirit, which now has His home in you*" (Romans 8:11 Arthur S. Way's translation). When God bestowed His Spirit upon the believer He made thereby provision for the quickening of the believer's body. We not only may enjoy Divine Healing, but also Divine health, if we honor our bodies, preserve them in holiness, and devote them to God's service.

VI. In answer to the faith of them who ever pray with submission to His divine and sovereign will

There has been some discussion of whether one need include in a prayer for healing, the provision, "*If it be Thy will.*" Now of course every sincere believer is willing for God to have His will. If it can be shown that sickness is better for us than healing, we will be resigned to sickness; but if healing is purchased for us, as the Word declares, and promised to the church as a divine provision of the unchanging God, then we will boldly ask the Lord to heal us, assuming, on the basis of Scripture, that it is His will. Must we doubt the will of God to do something He has promised? Do we pray, "Lord save me if it be Thy will?" "If's" defeat faith. We cannot take a benefit by faith if we doubt its availability. We ought, however, to discover whether a matter is according to God's will before we begin to pray. If sickness is a discipline or a punishment, then one ought to pray first for guidance into victory or into maturity, after which he may pray for healing. If we are in doubt about the nature of a sickness, we can pray for insight into the trial. If one feels that sickness is a temporary testing, he ought to pray for grace to bear his trial. But, normally, one need not pray "if," but he may assume that God desires to fulfill His promises.

Divine Healing In The Old Testament

Scripture References

(II Kings 4:18-37; II Kings 5:1-14;
Isaiah 38:1-21.)

"And when the child was grown, it fell on a day that he went out to his father to the reapers . . . And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother.

"And when he and taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died. . . .

"And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again. . . .

"And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed.

"He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord.

"Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. . . .

"And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son. Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out" (II Kings 4:18,19b,20,22,32,33,35,36,37).

"Now Naaman, captain of the host of the King of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper. . . .

"And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy. . . .

"So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

"And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shall be clean. . . .

"Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean" (II Kings 5:1,3,9,10,14).

"In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.

"Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord. . . .

"Then came the Word of the Lord to Isaiah, saying,

"Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years. . . .

"For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall recover" (Isaiah 38:1,2,4,5,21).

Introduction

Divine Healing in the Old Testament may seem to some to be an unimportant consideration. Nevertheless it is far from unimportant.

All New Testament truth has its roots in the Old Testament. The unchanging God has manifested all His attributes by which He is known to man somewhere, and to some degree, in His dealings with His people Israel. We are, therefore, not surprised that a number of cases of bodily healing are recounted in the history of Israel. He who revealed Himself in Exodus 15:26 as Jehovah-Rapha—"The Lord that healeth thee"—saw fit to heal the sick whenever it pleased Him to thus magnify His name or honor the faith of His earnest saints. Physical healing is rather rare in the Old Testament, because, throughout a great part of Israel's history, deep personal faith and devotion were rare. However, such true and devout saints as Moses, Caleb, David, Hezekiah, Isaiah, Elijah, Elisha, and the Shunammite woman knew the Lord as the Great Physician or the Health Giver.

It is both important and interesting to trace the progressive unfolding of God's revelation of Himself and His benefits. In every dispensation God makes Himself better known to His people. In the final age we will see Him face to face. Further, the benefits of God become more fully and more generally bestowed in each successive age, until at last, they will be bestowed without measure. Inasmuch as Divine Healing is bestowed in the Old Testament in some measure, we expect it to be bestowed in fuller measure in the present age. If God is Jehovah-Rapha (The Lord that healeth) in the book of Exodus, He cannot be less than the Great Physician in this dispensation of His fuller revelation.

It would not be wise to attempt to establish doctrinal points nor to prove doctrinal arguments solely on the basis of Old Testament passages, however, the Old Testament gives valuable confirmation to doctrinal positions established upon New Testament promise. Every phase of Christ's life, work, mission, and office is prefigured or prophesied in the Old Testament. The fact that a New Testament provision or blessing is typified and foreshadowed in the Old Testament is a fact much in favor of the validity of the provision. Every great gospel truth should be typified in the Old Testament and realized in the New. Jesus, the Messiah, fulfills all that Jehovah was to Israel, as revealed in His seven compound names (see the preceding lesson) of the Old Testament and are a foretaste of the supernatural ministry of Jesus.

If we are not warranted in making direct application to ourselves of the Old Testament healing miracles, we can, at least, make many valuable comparisons and observations.

Exposition

II KINGS 4:17

The greater part of chapter four is an account of Elisha's dealing with the Shunammite woman. Although she was a Gentile, she manifested faith and devotion to God's cause unmatched by the average Israelite. In fact, the Holy Scripture calls her great, a description reserved for only a very few men and women in the whole sacred history. Perhaps she did not qualify for greatness in the opinion of the majority, but God judges greatness by a different yardstick from that used by men. This woman was great because she had great insight, great generosity, great love, great faith, great courage, great determination, and great gratitude. Certainly these

qualities combining themselves in one person add up to greatness with a capital "G".

God's bestowal of blessing and favor upon this woman rather shows that God, in His great love, was no respecter of persons, even in the Old Testament. Blessing a childless woman with the advent of a son was one of the greatest favors bestowed by the Lord in ancient times. Such a favor seems to have been conceded only to women of great faith and devotion to the Lord's cause. This woman of Shunem was as worthy as any who ever received the honor.

VERSE 18

Just why calamities befall the truest saints we can only guess. It should not appear unreasonable to us, however, that trials and tests are occasions of opportunity as well as occasions of sorrow. God is our ever-present help, but His blessed provision for our care and rescue may never be appreciated unless we have occasion to call upon Him. Not only do our victories in time of stress and sorrow prove a blessing to us, but they often witness to the world of God's gracious care for His people. If God desires to use us as examples of His faithfulness in order to draw the unbeliever unto Himself, should we complain?

VERSE 20

Perhaps one does not appreciate his God-given possessions and benefits to the full until they are apparently taken from him. It is at least true that one esteems most highly that which he has held through great sacrifice or recovered at a great cost. Abraham and Sarah were given a son under similar circumstances and they were likewise apparently required to sacrifice him. In both cases great faith prevailed over apparent loss. Through faith in the healing powers of the Great Physician, many

an apparent sorrow has been turned into joy, and many an apparent loss into gain. Death is the greatest enemy of man—so most think—but Christ has taken the sting out of death. Whether death is cheated by newness of life, or ushers us into God's presence, it is now but a blessed transition at its apparent worst. One of the great Christian victories, is victory over the fear of death.

VERSES 21, 22

When the tragedy befell her, the woman turned immediately to the man of God. She could not believe that God intended to give her a son by promise only to deprive her of him in the flower of his youth. Of course, we have no right to question the ways of God, nor do we have the right to expect Him always to raise the dead. This woman, however, had unusual faith in God and in the man of God. The Lord can deal with us directly in the bestowal of His favors, but in nearly every case He chooses to work through a human vessel. In every great God-sent revival, there has been a man of God with exceptional faith and devotion. Every believer should be grateful for the men and women of God who pray the prayer of faith and who faithfully uphold divine truth.

We need more real men of God in our day, but any of us may be God's vessel, if we will but yield and believe. Elijah and Elisha were great men indeed, but they were men of like passions as we are. James in the fifth chapter of his epistle seems to infer that there can be a great number of righteous men capable of praying the effectual fervent prayer.

VERSE 32

The great woman of Shunem was indeed great for her faith—the kind of faith that lays hold upon God's best. When she is

greeted by the servant of Elisha with the question, "*Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?*", she answered, "*It is well.*" A person who walked by sight would never have said, "It is well." On the other hand, to those who love the Lord and trust the Lord, all things work together for good; and even in the face of apparent grief and loss such can say, "It is well." Not only was her faith great, her persistence was also great. She, like the man who went to his friend at midnight seeking three loaves, and like Jacob who said, "*I will not let thee go except thou bless me,*" refused to leave Elisha until he was willing to go with her. God has some blessings for all who pray, even with the weakest faith, but there are, it seems, some special blessings reserved for those who will not be denied. The Lord is not reluctant to bless; we must not suppose that we have to overcome His unwillingness. He, however, may delay His response in order to test our perseverance. Perhaps there are benefits that are not of value to us unless we esteem them of such value as to persevere in their quest. When Elisha arrived, he found death awaiting him, but he who had prayed the boy into the world, had confidence that he could pray him back again.

VERSES 33, 35

We might have expected Elisha to merely wave his hand over the boy exorcising him and calling him back to life, but this is not a case for mere exorcism. Elisha's first step was to go to God alone in prayer. When Jesus said of one boy's case of demon-possession in which case the disciples had failed to help him, "*This kind goeth not out except by prayer and fasting,*" He placed the emphasis on the word "prayer," not on the word "fasting" which does not occur in the Greek manuscripts. The dis-

ciples were exorcising the demon to come out of the boy, but with no success. Some forms of sickness do not respond to formulas or commands; only persevering prayer will avail. When Elisha had prayed through to victory, he went to the boy's room, and prayed over him with the result the boy was restored to his grateful mother. Prayer changes things.

II KINGS 5:1, 3

Strangely the two most notable healing miracles in the ministry of Elisha were performed upon Gentiles. God has, apparently, always responded to faith and obedience irrespective of race or nation. God uses Divine Healing frequently as a means of advancing His cause among the heathen. We observe, nevertheless, that the testimony of the Israelitish servant girl, and the prophetic agency of Elisha were the principal factors in the human aspect of the miracle.

VERSES 9, 10

The instructions given to Naaman by Elisha were to test Naaman's faith and obedience. We are not to suppose that the waters of the river Jordan had any therapeutic value. This reminds us of our Lord's instructions to the lepers to show themselves to the priest, who were healed as they went. If one has sought healing in vain, perhaps some act of obedience yet remains before victory can be obtained.

Naaman expected to be exorcised and healed by the pronouncement of a simple magic formula, but to his surprise he is told by the servant of the prophet to bathe in the muddy river Jordan. There are many today who run from one healing revival to another expecting some extraordinary evangelist to pray the prayer of faith, when God is waiting upon their obedience and earnest personal prayer. Not everything can be had by the wave of a hand; there is a price

to pay for the great blessings, otherwise they would not be appreciated.

VERSE 14

Naaman very nearly missed being healed because of his pride, but on the insistence of his more humble servants, he obeyed, whereupon he was gloriously healed. Pride is one of the commonest barriers to success in the spiritual realm. It is not that God desires to humiliate us; but that pride is a form of self-deception, an attitude that gives one a distorted picture of himself and of God. The humble see themselves and see God in the right perspective. Pride is a barrier to health, because pride is in itself a form of sickness.

ISAIAH 38:1, 2

Hezekiah was one of the best kings to reign in Judah after David. The success of his reign was largely due to the statesmanship of Isaiah the prophet, who was both seer and advisor to the king. In those days Hezekiah became sick unto death. Now sickness is no respecter of men, visiting the good as well as the evil, afflicting kings as well as peasants. The fact that one is taken with a fatal sickness is no indication of evil doing, nor of divine punishment. Some sickness is a punishment, some a discipline, some a blessing in disguise, but generally it is merely the result of natural causes. "*Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all*" (Psa 34:19).

Isaiah delivered to Hezekiah a pronouncement of death, but Hezekiah refused to accept death as inevitable. He began at once to besiege the throne of grace, and to plead for his life in tearful entreaty. His prayer was a model of earnestness and contrition. So importunate was his entreaty that God heard his prayer and stayed his sickness. Now we are not to

assume that Hezekiah changed God's mind nor that he reversed God's will; he merely reversed God's pronouncement as the repentance of Nineveh reversed Jonah's indictment. Hezekiah would have died had he continued in his normal attitude, but his contrite seeking after God changed matters. We do not change God; but in changing ourselves we often enable God to change His dealings with us. If sickness is God's will for us in our indifference and selfishness, perhaps divine health may become His will for us when we are repentant, prayerful, unselfish and faithful. Prayer changes things, but it more often changes people.

VERSES 4,5

God added fifteen years to the life of the king and gave him victory over his enemies. God assured him of life and victory in his days by the miracle of turning back the shadow on the sundial ten degrees. The Christian's walk is a walk of faith, but on the other hand, God gives the Christian more assurance than any unbeliever enjoys. "We do not know what the future holds, but we know the One who holds the future." When God heals He gives assurance so that one need not have fear of recurring sickness.

VERSE 21

Much has been made of the poultice of figs laid upon Hezekiah's boil at the command of Isaiah. Many who trust more in remedies than in prayer have insisted that the figs served as a medicine to cure him. They go further and say that one ought to take medicine and pray that the medicine will take effect. First of all, we know that Hezekiah's prayer was the reason for his healing. The figs served the same purpose as Naaman's dip in the Jordan, or as Jesus' anointing with clay; perhaps the same purpose as the anointing oil serves with which the

elders of the church anoint. Secondly, if medicine needs prayer in order to work, it is useless as a remedy; if prayer will not work without the medicine, it seems futile. If figs are so potent to avert death, why are they not used today as a common remedy? We do not condemn those who because of their weak faith, resort to remedies or physical and surgical therapy, but we insist that Divine Healing is the best way, available to all believers. Many who say that they must not seek healing because sickness is the will of God for them, do not cease taking medicine in the hope that it will cure them. Divine Healing is a glorious reality clearly taught in both Testaments. Any attempt to explain it away only leads one into inconsistency. Let us receive it, rejoice that it is real, preach it to others and practice it in our own lives.

Important Truths Concerning Healing in the Old Testament

Outline

- I. *Healing in the Old Testament*
 - A. Differs from that in the New Testament.
 1. Different conditions of fulfillment.
 2. Based on different covenants.
 - B. Is Similar to that in the New Testament.
 1. Manifestation of God's Mercy.
 2. Sign of God's Power.
 3. Conveyed through Gifted persons.
 4. Answer to Prayer.
 - C. Not Merely a Material Blessing.
 1. Revealed God's mercy

to the Syrophenician woman.

2. Revealed God's power to Naaman.
3. Revealed God's love to Hezekiah.

II. *Sickness in the Old Testament.*

- A. Not always a visitation of judgment.
- B. Often a testing.
- C. Sometimes a Means of revealing God's glory.
- D. God not the author of sickness.
 1. There are Satanic causes.
 2. There are natural causes.
 3. May be by God's permission.

I. Let it be noted, first, how Divine Healing in the Old Testament differs from that of the New.

Divine benefits differ from age to age simply in the covenant conditions upon the fulfillment of which they are bestowed. Under the Mosaic covenant healing as well as other blessings were dispensed to those who kept the commandments. Divine benefits are now concentrated in the person of Christ and imparted in response to faith in His name. The lame man at the Beautiful gate was healed by the same power that healed Hezekiah, but the lame man was healed through faith in the name of Jesus. According to the Old Testament healing covenant, the Israelite was promised healing on the condition that he would "*diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord, . . . do that which was right in His sight, . . . and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes.*" According to the New Testament healing covenant, it is the "*prayer of faith*" that shall save the sick, faith in

the work and person of the Lord Jesus Christ. All healing is now made available through Christ. The promise of Jesus is, "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (John 14:14).

It might be said that the healing differs in the two Testaments in the same way that salvation differs. The Israelite qualified for salvation and healing by the performance of works; the New Testament believer qualifies for either benefit by the exercise of faith in the virtue and efficacy of a finished work performed once and for all by Christ.

2. How is Divine Healing in the Old Testament similar to that of the New Testament?

It is perhaps, more important for our purposes to note how Divine Healing is similar in all the dispensations. The God who is ever the same, who changes not, bestows similar blessings upon His covenant people in all ages. In all periods of sacred history, God has healed in response to sincere and earnest pleas for pity, mercy, and deliverance. Great is the compassion of the Lord from age to age. Hezekiah heard the death sentence pronounced upon him, yet he refused to accept death as inevitable. His plea for God's mercy did not go unheeded. The Lord Jesus, perhaps, in most cases healed because He was moved with compassion. In no age has the river of God's love been completely obstructed. Even the heathen, without covenant rights, have often by faith and earnest entreaty obtained God's special benefits through an appeal to His mercy. In no dispensation is God's ear heavy that He cannot hear, nor His arm shortened that He cannot save, provided that men's sins have not separated between them and their God. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.

Not only has God always healed out of His great mercy; He has always healed, furthermore, in order to glorify His great name and to put the stamp of Divine authority upon the work of His own special servants and prophets. The healing of Naaman demonstrated the greatness of Jehovah to a heathen general. From the time of the apostles until this present day the Lord has wrought miracles of healing by the hands of apostles, evangelists and missionaries, in order to exalt the Christian gospel before the heathen and the unevangelized. From this it should be obvious that the Lord's reasons for healing the sick and afflicted have not greatly differed from age to age.

If it seems to some that healing was unique in the Old Testament, in that it was principally manifested in the ministries of special prophets, such as Elisha and Isaiah, let it be noted that healing in our age is most notably manifested in the ministries of those evangelists, and missionaries who have the gifts of healing. God is still sovereign in the choice of those upon whom He will bestow the gifts of healing; He distributes to all severally as He will. We must not think that healing in old times was exclusively manifested in connection with the ministries of special prophets. The writings of the Psalmist indicate that there was a constant bestowal of physical healing in the lives of the devout; though perhaps in a less spectacular manner. In this dispensation, the most spectacular miracles of healing follow the ministries of workers endowed with gifts of healing, but, on the other hand, healing is promised as a benefit to follow the ministries of any elders of the church. Beyond this, any believers may pray for each other, or even claim healing directly from Heaven as an act of faith, but this is not greatly more

than what was available to the devout Israelite.

That which makes God's bestowal of benefits and blessings similar in all ages is that God blesses and delivers His people in answer to prayer. The Bible, from beginning to end, is a book of answered prayer. Nothing in the religious realm is more certain than the fact that God answers prayer. Now just as long as God answers prayer, there will be physical healing. Man's first impulse in time of sickness is to call upon the Lord for deliverance, an impulse which has been common to all races of men in all ages of time. This leads to another question.

3. Was Divine Healing in the Old Testament purely a material blessing?

It has been remarked often that God's blessings to Israel were purely material benefits. It is true that material prosperity was promised to Israel as a recompense for Godliness and obedience; however, that does not mean that material prosperity was divorced from spiritual values. Hezekiah's healing was just as much a spiritual blessing as a material one, as is evidenced by his hymn of praise composed after his deliverance. Observe the spiritual depth of his words, "For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day" (Isa. 38:18-19). Obviously, Hezekiah's healing was a great spiritual blessing. His soul and spirit were as greatly benefitted as was his body. Several of the Psalmist's praises of Jehovah were prompted by physical healing. Certainly that which lifts the heart Godward, humbles the spirit, and purifies one's thoughts is a spiritual blessing of the first rank.

There is yet another question related to sickness and healing, the solution of which is of import-

ance.

4. In the Old Testament, is sickness always a visitation of judgment?

At the outset, it must be conceded that sickness was and is sometimes a visitation of judgment. The sickness and death of David's child after his great sin and the leprosy of Miriam and of Gehazi were sicknesses visited in consequence of sin. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." It does not necessarily follow, however, that all sickness in Israel was a visitation of judgment. In the cases of Hezekiah and Job, sickness appears to be a test rather than a visitation of God's wrath. It is a natural reaction of men to assume that sickness, trouble and affliction are the judgments of God. However, the Lord in His superior wisdom finds a use for sickness other than that of punishment. The Great Refiner produces the purest of gold in human character by means of the fires of affliction. The book of Job answers once and for all the question, "Why do the Godly suffer?" It also shows that sickness besides being a judgment, may be a discipline, or merely a means by which God is glorified. Now if it was a fact that sickness in the Old Testament was not always a judgment, it is even more certain that sickness in our age is often a discipline rather than a punishment.

Sickness is indirectly the result of sin, but not always necessarily the direct result of sin in the individual person's life. Had there been no sin there would be no sickness nor pain. But with the fall came the curse and the fact of universal suffering. We now often suffer pain, sickness, or war without having committed a grievous sin. Inasmuch as the curse covers all nature, all are subject to its consequences, whether saints or sinners. Much sickness comes from natural causes such as disease

germs, weather, food, and accident. Therefore, we do injustice to many of God's servants when we assume that all sickness and calamity are the direct result of individual sin or disobedience, although sometimes such is the case. This brings us to ask finally.

5. Is God the author of sickness?

We have already pointed out that sickness came as a result of sin, as a natural consequence of disobedience. This does not mean, however, that God is the author of sickness. Satan is directly the author of sickness. God permits sickness, as in the case of Job, but He does not send it. Satan cannot go farther in the infliction of sickness than God permits. God may temporarily permit the affliction of His people, but when the trial has served its purpose, God sends deliverance in the form of bodily healing. God's deliverance is sometimes delayed, but as in the case of the apostle Paul, ultimate deliverance seems to be the will of God for those who believe.

Divine Healing In the Gospels

SCRIPTURE TEXT

*Matt. 8:2,3; 8:5-10; 9:20-22,35;
Mark 9:17-27*

"And, behold, there came a leper and worshiped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

"And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed" (Matt. 8:2, 3).

"And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

"And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

"The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

"For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

"When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Matt. 8:5-10).

"And, behold, a woman, which

was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment:

"For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

"But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour" (Matt. 9:20-22).

"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people" (Matt. 9:35).

"And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit . . .

"And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him; but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us.

"Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

"And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:17, 22, 23, 24).

Introduction

Even a casual reader of the gospels will notice how much space is given to the healing miracles of Jesus. Healing the sick was, unquestionably, a very important phase of the mission of our Lord. The first acts of Jesus' ministry were His baptism, His temptation, His selection of the disciples, and the Sermon on the Mount. Immediately after these great initial acts, the Lord began to heal the sick. Chapters eight and nine of Matthew, which follow the record of the Sermon on the Mount, are entirely devoted to miracles of healing. Note how chapter eight begins: *"When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed."* The Saviour who is Saviour of the whole man, lost no time in demonstrating His power to heal as well as declaring His willingness to heal. It is hard to believe that Jesus would have spent so much time healing the sick unless He intended that Divine Healing should be a permanent part of the mission of the Christian church.

One need only turn the pages of the four gospels, giving each a passing glance, in order to appreciate what a great part of the life and ministry of Jesus was devoted to the healing of the sick. A careful reading of the four evangelists leaves an unbiased student with the inescapable impression that Divine Healing ought to occupy a larger place in the program of evangelism than is given it in the modern church. It is indeed gratifying, however, to observe that Divine

Healing now is being more widely taught and practiced than it was two decades ago. God forbid that Full Gospel churches should come to neglect this great truth just at the time when it is finding wider acceptance in the other churches.

If it were necessary to exercise some caution in applying the principles of Old Testament healing to our present situation, such is not the case with Christ's healings in the gospels. The principles that govern Divine Healing today are the same as those that governed the reception of healing in our Lord's time.

There is no diminution in Christ's healing power, neither are there any changes in the conditions upon which healing is bestowed. Christ at the right hand of God is even more mighty, if possible, than He was during His earthly ministry. In fact, Christ is just as much with us today as He was when He walked with the twelve. Mark's gospel expresses this fact beautifully: *"So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following"* (Mark 16: 19-20). The Lord Himself gave us every reason to expect the same works that He performed without any change in conditions or results: *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my father"* (John 14:12). Jesus Christ is, indeed, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

Text Exposition

MATTHEW 8:2-3

These verses speak eloquently of the willingness of Jesus to heal the

sick. Nearly everyone who believes in the existence of one God, believes that He is able to do what He wishes to do. No one needs faith to believe that God can heal the sick. Perhaps no one objects to the doctrine of healing on the ground of Christ's impotence. The objectors to Divine Healing contend that Christ is unwilling to heal the sick. Now, why He should have been willing to heal the sick in ancient times, but unwilling in recent times would be difficult to explain. To some Jesus is not the same forever. In any case, Jesus was willing to heal in His day, which willingness He clearly revealed to the leper; and since Jesus nowhere later reversed His policy, we safely assume that He will heal any today who qualify by meeting the conditions. The leper had no doubt of the Lord's ability; he apparently recognized His divine nature. He, therefore, let his hope of healing rest upon the willingness of Jesus to heal the sick. Now, if Jesus were not generally willing to heal, why does the Holy Word preserve for us this unequivocal statement of Christ's willingness to heal bodily sickness? Note that Jesus does not let the matter rest upon whether or not He was willing; He said plainly, "I will," or literally, "I am willing." Must we pray always for healing with the proviso, "if it be Thy will," when we have a clear statement of the will of Christ regarding healing?

MATTHEW 8:5-7

As in the case of the Shunamite woman, and of Naaman the leper, as well as in that of the Syrophenician woman, healing was bestowed upon believing Gentiles. Faith prevails even where there is no covenant. This Roman centurion is indeed an exceptional man. His concern for the physical well-being of his servant reveals him to be a man of compassion. We would per-

haps be blessed with a great manifestation of healing in our churches if we were motivated more by a deep compassion for the suffering than by a desire to see supernatural works. Those who reject the doctrine of healing assume that Jesus healed only to prove His divine origin, or to manifest His supernatural power, further assuming that the establishment of Christianity makes the manifestation of miracle working power unnecessary. Such is a false assumption. Much of Jesus' healing ministry was motivated by His deep compassion for suffering humanity. Even if Jesus healed no longer in order to reveal His power, He would, indeed, heal out of mercy for the suffering.

When Jesus saw the compassion of the Centurion for his servant, He immediately expressed His willingness to go to heal the servant. It pleases the Lord to see us concerned for the needs of others. We would see more of God's power if there were more unselfish love among us.

MATTHEW 8:8-10

The centurion was not only a man of compassion, he was also a man of intelligent faith. He perceives that Jesus is Lord of all, unlimited by time and space. He recognizes that the Lord needed only to speak in order to effect the exercise of His power in any place. This Roman, in fact, had a better understanding of the limitless power and authority of Jesus than Martha had who was a close friend. Now, if Jesus could heal from a distance the centurion's servant, He surely can heal us from His position in Heaven by merely speaking a word. It helps our faith to have someone visit us in time of sickness and pray with us, but if no one is available, let us trust the Lord who heals, being present or absent. Actually, Jesus cannot be absent for He is omnipresent in His pow-

er. Jesus very rarely used the word "great" in reference to men, but He calls the faith of this centurion *great*. Great faith brings great results. The Lord always honors real faith, because it pleases Him to find faith in the hearts of men. Who can say that Christ will not honor faith today by healing the sick? All things are possible to him who believes as the centurion believed.

MATTHEW 9:20-22

The centurion was blessed of Jesus for his response of faith; the woman here is blessed for her touch of faith. She was too timid to cry out, or speak her desire, but her faith was such as to prompt her to touch the garment of Jesus. Her faith perhaps revealed to her the omniscience of Jesus, that is, His knowledge of all things. The centurion's great faith was revealed in his belief that Jesus could heal without being present; the woman's faith is manifested in her belief that Jesus could hear the unexpressed desire of her heart. We are not heard for our much speaking nor for our loud entreaty. One touch of faith brings more results than any amount of loud petitioning where faith is lacking. Often the vociferousness of our pleading is in direct relationship to the weakness of our faith. We do not say this to discourage earnest prayer, but to emphasize the importance of faith. We must after all accept a work as done before we see the evidence. Real faith does not believe merely that God will act, but that He has already acted. Jesus knew that someone had touched Him because He felt virtue go from Him. He always recognized the touch of faith, even when hundreds were brushing against Him in the crowd.

MATTHEW 9:35

The miracles of healing which Jesus performed were not rare exceptions. In all the villages and

towns Jesus healed all manner of disease. He withheld His healing only when He confronted stubborn unbelief. In verse 36, there is an unmistakable reason given for the majority of Jesus' healing miracles. Matthew says, "*He was moved with compassion on them.*" We can never think clearly about Divine Healing until we rid our minds of the idea that Jesus healed only to manifest His divine power. Why did He frequently forbid those whom He healed to tell others about it? Our Lord is not only a Supreme Being of omnipotence; He is also a merciful benefactor who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

MARK 9:17, 22

The disciples of Jesus were given power to heal in Jesus' name, but we have a case here for which their faith was inadequate. The faith of the father of the epileptic boy was, no doubt, somewhat weakened by the failure of the disciples. He perhaps knew that Jesus was a prophet of exceptional powers, but he was ignorant of His exact mission and authority. The leper knew that Jesus could heal if He would; this man is not certain of Christ's ability to heal all manner of disease. He is not fully confident that this prophet can heal such dreadful disease as that with which his son is pitifully afflicted. He says, "*If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us.*" He is on solid ground when he appeals to Christ's compassion. His fault is that he places all the responsibility for success or failure upon the Lord. Now, the Lord is indeed compassionate, but there are certain conditions which the recipient and the petitioner must fulfill. If we have not received the answer to our prayers, we must not conclude that Jesus was unable, nor that He was unwilling to help. We must conclude that faith or obedience is lacking. In fact, no prayer should begin with an "if."

"If" defeats faith and makes prayer an empty form.

VERSE 23

The Lord turned the "if" back upon the petitioner. He placed the responsibility for success upon the father. "*If thou canst believe, all things are possible.*" If we know who and what God is, we also know what He can and will do; the rest depends upon us. God is, "*Able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,*" but what He does is, "*according to the power 'of faith' that worketh in us.*" How meaninglessly we speak when we say in supposed confidence, "I believe God is able." Who does not believe that God is able? Faith does not waste time with vain assertions of God's ability. Faith reaches out and appropriates the blessing saying, "God has done it."

VERSE 24

Notice the apparent contradiction of the man's answer. "*Lord I believe,*" then, "*Help thou mine unbelief.*" There is a sense in which all of us believe, and there is a sense in which each of us needs to pray, "Lord, help thou mine unbelief." We could discuss at length the unbelief of the believing. No one has so much faith that there is no unbelief in his heart. If we exercise all the faith we have sincerely, the Lord will, indeed, help our unbelief. If we lack faith, we may seek it at the throne of grace. Faith is further increased by using, day by day, what faith we have. We will never have great faith until we acquire the daily habit of exercising the proportion of faith God has already given us for small things. Faith grows with exercise. According to our text, one profits more in confessing his unbelief, praying for faith, than in stubbornly affirming that he does believe. God knows the measure of our faith and will reward us accordingly. If we are aware of unbelief, let us ask God to help us.

SOME VITAL TRUTHS TO CONSIDER

Outline

- I. The Church's Pattern of Christian Service.
- II. Jesus' Motives For Healing.
 - a. Demonstration.
 - b. Restoration.
 - c. Compassion.
- III. The Conditions For Healing.
 - a. Request
 - b. Faith.
- IV. The Results of Healing.

I. The Church's Pattern of Christian Service

In all things pertaining to life and service Jesus is our pattern. He came to show us how to live and to serve. That does not mean that one merits salvation by following the example of Jesus or by imitating the life of Jesus. The central mission of our Lord was that of dying to make atonement for our sins, which atonement is made effective by faith in the atoning work of Christ. However, once we are redeemed, we begin to live the life of Christ, because He lives in us. When Paul says, "*Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ*" and "*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,*" we take it that Christ Jesus is our pattern in life and service.

Who can be a close follower of Jesus without feeling the urge and necessity of living as He lived and serving as He served? Who can note the prayerfulness of Jesus without being moved to pray, or without being convicted for prayerlessness? Who can observe Christ's implicit obedience to the will of the Father without feeling that full obedience is positively imperative? Who can contemplate the holiness of Christ without loathing every spot and stain of sin? Who can

learn that the Lord lived not for Himself, but to serve others, without being convicted for selfishness and conceit? Who can see the great unfathomable depth of His unflinching love without desiring above all else to overcome hatred, envy and malice with divine love? Likewise, who can follow Jesus as He goes from place to place healing all the sick without feeling an inescapable conviction that healing the sick in answer to prayer was meant to be an important phase of Christian service? When Jesus said to His disciples, "Greater things than these shall ye do, because I go unto the Father," He positively affirmed that His followers were to continue the work of healing. "These signs shall follow them that believe." When we truly follow Jesus, His signs follow us.

II. Jesus' Motives for Healing

We become even more certain that Divine Healing is a permanent provision when we know why our Lord healed the sick. In fact, there are at least four reasons why Jesus healed the sick.

1. That He might attest His Divinity. The Son of God must work the works of the Father. He who is from Heaven must present Heavenly credentials. He who is Lord must show that He is Lord over sin and sickness. Christ's healing of the sick, authority to command the elements, and power to raise the dead attested the validity of His sacrifice as the infinite Lamb of God. He who is very God can die for all men. Now the need of attesting the reality of Christianity is as great today as it has ever been. Every generation has its doubt and unbelief. Every new advance of the faith requires new signs of Christ's power. Men are never greatly convinced by wonders of the past. The Lord whose power knows no limit

and who is the same forever can have no reluctance to do whatever He once has done for the advancement of His cause. His signs were not unusual, temporary evidences for a single occasion; they were meant to follow them who believe in every age as the credentials of Christianity.

2. The Lord, further, healed the sick because He came to destroy the works of the devil. Sickness is, indirectly, and sometimes directly, the work of the devil. Sickness and disease came into existence as a result of the fall. Sin and sickness are twin curses which disobedience to God and yielding to Satan brought upon the human race.

A. J. Gordon said of Jesus' destruction of Satan's work, "He is the second Adam come to repair the ruin of the first. And in order to accomplish this He will follow the lines of man's transgression back to their origin, and forward to their remotest issue. He will pursue the serpent trail of sin, dispensing his forgiveness and compassion as he goes, till at last He finds the wages of sin, and dies its death on the cross; and He will follow the wretched track of disease with His healing and recovery, till in His resurrection He shall exhibit to the world the first fruits of these redeemed bodies, in which, 'this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality.'"—The Ministry of Healing, page 21

A very strong proof that Jesus was the Messiah was His successful attack upon the works of Satan. When John the Baptist inquired of the exact person of Jesus, He answered with a recital of His works, for His works were the last testimony of His person and authority. "Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear

and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt. 11:4-5).

3. Moreover, the Lord redeemed not only our souls, but also our bodies. He who redeemed our bodies will quicken them by His power that dwells in us in response to faith in Him. Because of our lack of faith we may not see perfect health as a universal realization, but we may and do see Divine Healing wherever there is faith and obedience to the Great Commission. The Lord is able and willing to destroy in us every work of the enemy.

4. The foregoing reasons do not, however, fully explain why Jesus healed, nor do they account fully for the continuance of Divine Healing as a provision of grace. Jesus, indeed, healed to manifest His power and authority in many cases, but He also healed and does heal merely because of His great compassion. If it were true that Christ needed miracles to attest His authority only at the beginning, (which is not a very logical assumption) we still could appeal to God for Divine Healing on the ground of His mercy and compassion.

He who said, "If ye shall ask anything in my name . . ." used the word "anything" very carelessly unless it also included the merciful healing of diseased bodies. The compassion of Jesus was His motive for healing a leper as recorded in the first chapter of Mark. "And there came a leper to him, beseeching Him, and kneeling down to Him, and saying to Him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean" (Mark 1:40, 41). The leper was instructed furthermore not to tell anyone of his healing,

proving that the miracle was not intended as a sign to the public. Very often compassion, not demonstration, was the reason for Christ's healing the sick. Shall we reckon Him less compassionate today?

III. The Conditions Upon Which Jesus Healed the Sick

There are apparently two conditions the fulfillment of which is necessary for the reception of healing, namely: petition and faith. It is doubtful whether Jesus ever healed anyone without being requested to do so. If we have not, it is because we ask not. If we ask, we receive; if we seek, we find. But if we ask we must ask in faith, believing. According to one's faith, so be it unto him. Jesus worked no mighty miracles where there was no faith. Doubt and unbelief dishonor God and shut up the Heavens. It has often been asked why healings do not occur in many of the large churches, if it is intended to be a permanent provision of grace.

The answer is that God does not bestow upon churches great or small what is not requested, expected, nor sought in faith. On the other hand, God does bestow upon churches great or small what they request in faith. Where Divine Healing is taught and preached, the Lord heals the sick, because the people seek it and believe they receive it. Where this precious doctrine is rejected, belittled, and omitted, little healing can be expected to occur, because no one seeks it and no one believes in it. God is no respecter of persons, but He is a respecter of conditions. What a revival the world could enjoy if only faith could be stimulated on a universal plane!

IV. The Results and Spiritual Effect of Divine Healing

Many minimize the importance of Divine Healing, contending that healing is only a physical blessing. Such teachers pretend to see a danger in preaching the doctrine of healing, in that the bodily needs are likely to be put above one's spiritual needs. Such fail to see that bodily healing is just as much a spiritual blessing as it is a physical one. If the doctrine of healing is taught in accordance with the truth of Scripture, those who are healed are drawn closer to God. It is impossible to separate in man his physical and spiritual self. What blesses the soul has an effect upon the body and what blesses the physical man has its effect upon the soul and spirit. Man has faculties of body and spirit but he is one man. If one member suffers the whole man suffers. Those who have observed the result of Divine Healing through the years will witness that Divine Healing has moved thousands into a closer walk with God.

Divine Healing

In the Book of Acts

SCRIPTURE TEXT

ACTS 4:8, 9, 10, 13, 14

"Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

"If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

"Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole . . .

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

"And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it."

ACTS 9:32-35

"And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which

dwelt at Lydda.

"And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

"And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: Arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

"And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord."

ACTS 14:8-11

"And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

"The same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

"Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

"And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, the gods are come down to us in the likeness of men."

Introduction

Healings occur as frequently in the book of Acts as they occur in the Gospels. This fact should not surprise us when we remember that Jesus said, *"These signs shall follow them that believe; . . . they shall lay hands on the sick and they*

shall recover" (Mark 16:17-18). In fact, it would have been surprising to us, in view of Christ's predictions, had we found no miracles of healing recorded among the acts of Christ's apostles. The Redeemer who is the same yesterday, and today, and forever continues to be-

stow the same mercies, as the ascended Christ, that He bestowed upon men while He was the present visible Christ. The followers of the Lord do the Lord's works, for they are commissioned as His representatives. When Jesus was present in the flesh, He dispensed His blessings directly; but now that He is ascended, His work of redemption, healing, and restoration differs only in that He works through the anointed ministries of His believers. The assumption that healing must diminish and finally cease after the departure of Jesus is a verdict of unbelief. It was never intended that Christianity should cease to become a movement of practical works of mercy and develop into a mere system of teaching about past reality. Christ is an ever living Redeemer who never ceases to save and heal. The true gospel of Christ must ever proclaim Him as the ever living, ever present, ever quickening Lord.

The study of the Acts of the Apostles is of great importance for modern believers. We have no other scriptural pattern for our Christian service. If the church today cannot follow the practice of the early church, then we cannot know certainly how we ought to serve and work. There certainly is nothing in the Sacred Record to indicate that the mission and the effectiveness of the church should ever in any age differ from that of the early church. Perhaps the influence of the church would be greater today, if we gave more attention to the study of the book of Acts.

The book which we call the "Acts of the Apostles" should actually be called "The Acts of the Holy Spirit." That which took place in the book of Acts in connection with the ministries of the apostles was the manifestation of the work of the Holy Spirit. The healings and powerful works were granted by God, not because the

disciples were special or superhuman ministers, not merely because they were apostles, but because such is the normal operation of the Holy Spirit whenever He is present in power. The Holy Spirit is no respecter of persons nor times; whenever and wherever men exercise full faith in the name of Jesus, the Spirit will make effective the work of Christ as Savior, Healer, Baptizer, and Provider.

Andrew Murray wrote, "Whenever the Spirit acts with power, there He works divine healings. Would it not seem that if ever miracles were superfluous, it was at Pentecost, for then the word of the Apostles worked mightily, and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit was abundant? Well it is precisely because the Spirit acted powerfully that His working must needs be visible in the body. If Divine Healing is seen so rarely in our day, we can attribute it to no other cause than that the Spirit does not act with power. The unbelief of worldlings and want of zeal among believers stop His workings. The healings which God is giving here and there are the precursory signs of all the spiritual graces which are promised to us, and it is only the Holy Spirit who reveals the Almightyness of the name of Jesus to operate such healings. Let us pray earnestly for the Holy Spirit, let us place ourselves unreservedly under His direction and let us seek to be firm in our faith in the name of Jesus, whether for preaching salvation or for the work of healing."—Divine Healing, page 26

Our study of healing in the ministries of the early Christians is made with the object of making clear the fact that Divine Healing was not only a way of revealing the divine authority of Jesus as the Son of God, but that it was also a permanent provision of God's grace toward the needy believer. Divine Healing did not diminish on the

death and ascension of Jesus, nor did healing cease with the death of the last apostle. The assumption that Divine Healing was a special manifestation of the Spirit for the apostolic age is false on several counts. Healing is a permanent blessing of the Great Physician. Furthermore, the idea of an apostolic age is unbiblical, for the time between the Day of Pentecost and the Second Coming of Christ is one single dispensation. The Holy Spirit, bestowed upon the Day of Pentecost, is to abide with us forever. Where is there biblical support for the notion that the Holy Spirit would become gradually more dormant? We propose to show that Divine Healing has accompanied all full manifestations of the Holy Spirit's power in all ages, even to the present.

Text Exposition

ACTS 4:8-14

Verses 8-9

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter's preaching brought three thousand souls to Christ. Shortly afterward, as the result of the healing of the lame man (chapter three), Peter's preaching brought five thousand souls to Christ. (Acts 4:4.) The first great harvest of souls was the result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; the second was the result of a miracle of Divine Healing. There can be no doubt about the fact that the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the healing of the sick are tremendous forces for the salvation of souls. A Spirit-filled and Spirit-empowered church will be a soul-winning church. Let us be cautious about new movements, pretending to be the exclusive vehicle of the Holy Spirit, that minimize the importance of soul-winning. We may be sure that the Spirit's work of empowerment and healing during this present dispensation is with the object of turning men to Christ.

When the sick are healed and souls are saved, the enemy is always furious against the church. The healing of the lame man followed by the salvation of five thousand resulted in the apostles being called before the council of Jews. The Jews could not deny the reality of the miracle; they desired to know how the healing had been accomplished. Perhaps they thought they could persuade the apostles, by threatening dire punishment, to attribute the miracle to the God of Israel without mentioning the use of the name of Jesus, the crucified. The apostles apparently welcomed the opportunity to witness for Jesus even at the risk of their lives.

When we are persecuted for the cause of the gospel, the Lord always bestows upon us special boldness; not boldness to argue, to defend ourselves, nor to vilify, but to exalt the Lord.

Verse 10

The Sadducees did not get the answer from the disciples that they expected. God causes the wrath of men to praise Him. The apostles' arrest afforded them an unusual opportunity to witness the power of the risen Jesus, a name hated by the rulers of Israel. Some are reluctant to preach Divine Healing and pray for the sick for the fear of persecution. We ought rather to welcome persecution for a righteous cause, especially for having done the good work of Christ's kingdom, because persecution always redounds to the greater glory of Christ.

The apostles were very emphatic in attributing the healing to the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the crucified and risen Lord. There was certainly no doubt in the minds of the disciples about the deity and divine authority of Jesus. They believed that God worked only through His Son whom He

sent to the world on the mission of redemption. Of Jesus they said, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). That cannot truly be called Christianity which does not recognize Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the crucified and risen Lord, as the mediator of God's blessings of salvation and healing. The Living Stone rejected by many is and ever will be the Chief Corner Stone. "If Christ is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all."

Verse 13

The speech of the apostles revealed them to be uncultured men, but their lives and works revealed them to have been with Jesus. God certainly places no premium on ignorance, nor is He glorified in the ignorance of men, but He often accomplishes more through unlearned men who have been with Jesus than He can accomplish through educated and cultured men who value culture and natural brilliance above devotion to Christ and spiritual empowerment. No matter how much we may have been with the educators and the theologians, we must also spend time at the feet of Jesus in the school of prayer.

Verse 14

The best proof of the reality of Divine Healing is the witness of those who have been healed. In fact, the multitude of believers who have been healed in answer to prayer has become so great that much opposition to the doctrine has subsided. Prayer is now offered for the sick in some churches of almost all denominations. When the opponents of healing see the healed standing in our midst whole they can say nothing. God does not perhaps condemn those who resort to medicine, but He is pleased more with those who exercise faith in

the Great Physician, for every believer who is healed by the power of God in the name of Jesus is an undeniable proof of the power and mercy of Christ. The world today has become so materialistic that we need every demonstration of Divine reality possible in order to withstand the flood of naturalism. One of the most blessed results of belief in Divine Healing is that it keeps one mindful of the nearness of Christ, making Christ Jesus Lord of the body as well as Lord of the soul and spirit. The church, in neglecting Divine Healing, neglected a precious opportunity to attract the multitudes to Christ, and, at the same time, opened the door to false healing cults that have turned thousands out of the true path. Without placing too much emphasis on physical benefits to the neglect of spiritual, for a sick soul in a well body is not a desirable objective, let us improve every opportunity to trust God for healing, to witness of healing, and to present Christ as the Healer of spirit, soul and body.

ACTS 9:32-35

Verses 32, 33

Lydda was an important city on the coastal plain near Joppa which very early had a Christian community. In Peter's visits to Palestinian churches, he visited also Lydda where a notable revival resulted. Great revivals often result from meeting a great challenge. The challenge in Lydda was a paralyzed man who had been bedfast for eight years. His case was a challenge to Peter's faith, but one which Peter met in the name of Jesus. The afflicted are a challenge to the church today, but they also provide an opportunity for a believing church to glorify God.

Verses 34-35

The faith and authority of Peter stimulated faith in the heart of

Aeneas who arose and walked in the name of Jesus. If we walk with God and do His will, we have a right to expect that He will honor our word and empower our ministries. When we are led of the Spirit we should not be afraid to speak for Christ and command in His name. Let us, however, not be presumptuous in speaking in Christ's name, unless we are filled with God and emptied of self. It is not the mere pronunciation of Jesus' name that brings results, but the use of the name by those in whose lives Jesus lives and acts.

The healing of Aeneas resulted in the whole town's turning to Christ. Again we point out the obvious fact that the exercise of Divine Healing is a powerful God ordained means of turning men to Christ.

ACTS 14:8-15

Verses 8-10

On his first missionary journey Paul encountered fierce persecution from the Jewish communities and sometimes from the pagans. In spite of great opposition, however, churches were planted in nearly every place, because the gospel he preached was backed by Divine reality. In Lystra a miracle of healing demonstrated the power of Christ, and made possible the founding of a church, in spite of his finally being stoned. Paul's preaching of Christ as the Saviour and Great Physician aroused faith in the heart of a cripple who was drinking in every word of hope. Christ-centered preaching is always the most effective preaching. Seeing that the man had faith in Jesus to be healed, Paul needed only to command him to rise and walk. We note here that faith is necessary to the reception of healing. We will have little results in praying for the sick and little results in seeking healing unless faith is first aroused. God honors the faith of

a person who prays, but usually the sick person is healed only when the faith of the person who prays stimulates faith in the heart of the afflicted one. Before praying for the sick, one should lay a solid foundation of teaching of the mercies of Christ. Healing instruction, testimonies, prayer or some effective means of building faith should always precede prayer for the sick.

Verse 15

Paul is very careful to attribute the healing to the Lord and to make clear that he, himself, was merely a herald of truth. Divine Healing ceases to be a blessing to the church only when we cease to make clear that the healing is directly from God and not due to our superior power and holiness. Healing that exalts man is of questionable value. It has been noted that many who are healed in meetings where man is unduly exalted are often not permanently healed. To receive permanent healing one must look to Christ as the sole source of power. When our faith is fixed in Jesus, we may be as easily healed in the local church through the prayer of a consecrated pastor as we would be through the prayer of an evangelist of great reputation.

Healing Through The Ages

From the Day of Pentecost on, Divine Healing has been a normal manifestation of the working presence of God's Spirit. Whenever there have been few or no healings, the reason for their scarcity has been, not the reluctance of God to heal, nor the difference in the time, but rather the lack of faith accompanied by worldliness and self-sufficiency in the professing church. The stream of salvation and healing has been flowing constantly

from Calvary to the present hour, though sometimes the church has lived far away from its healing waters. Let us trace the healing stream through the ages.

Outline

- I. Apostolic Healing.
 - a. By Peter.
 - b. By Paul.
 - c. By Stephen and Philip.
- II. Post-Apostolic Healings.
 - a. Justin.
 - b. Irenaeus.
 - c. Tertullian.
 - d. Dr. Marshall.
- III. Modern Healing.
 - a. Waldenses.
 - b. Moravian.
 - c. Wesley, Luther, etc.

I. Healing Miracles in the Early Church

(Apostolic Healing)

a. By Peter

1. **The lame man at the Gate Beautiful healed through Peter. Acts 3.**

A man who asked for money received what silver and gold could not buy. The first healing miracle after Christ's ascension, performed in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

2. **Multitudes of sick people healed even as the shadow of Peter passed over them. Acts 5:15.**

A tremendous manifestation of the Holy Spirit. A miracle equally as great as any Jesus performed when He was present in the flesh. Perhaps a fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus that the disciples should do even greater works (John 14:12). However, Jesus was the real healer in all the miracles of the apostles. Christ at the right hand of God can do even greater miracles than He did while present on earth and in the flesh.

3. **The healing of Aeneas through Peter, Acts 9:34.**

A man sick for many years is a recipient of Christ's mercy and his healing led to the salvation of the entire town. We see here Christ's two-fold motive in healing.

4. **The healing of Dorcas through Peter. Acts 9:40.**

A woman who lived and worked for the blessing of others is raised from the dead and given an extension of life to serve others. Her healing led to a revival in Joppa. There is no greater miracle than that of raising the dead. There is obviously no diminution in the power of the Spirit to heal. Another fulfillment of John 14:12.

b. By Paul.

1. **A cripple at Lystra is healed through Paul. Acts 14:10.**

A man whose faith was quickened by Paul's preaching was instantly healed through obedience of Paul's command to stand. God honors the word of His servants who speak by faith. Faith was required by the afflicted man as well as of Paul. It is important to arouse faith in those who come for healing by means of teaching, preaching or prayer.

2. **Young woman with a spirit of sorcery is healed through Paul at Philippi. Acts 16:18.**

Demon possession is a sickness as truly as any bodily affliction is. This woman's healing led to her conversion. Healing is a powerful means of drawing men to Christ. If the modern church has no authority to heal, how can we set free the victims of Satan's oppression who are demon-possessed?

3. **Special Miracles of healing are wrought through Paul at Ephesus. Acts 19:11,12.**

Here again mighty manifestations of the Spirit are instrumental in a mighty revival. These special miracles were perhaps the evidence that Paul had the gifts of healing and working of miracles. The gifts of the Spirit are for the church in all

ages, and they are bestowed upon us to make us powerful in soul-winning. This is the only biblical example of the use of handkerchiefs in the healing of the sick. Another fulfillment of John 14:12.

4. **Eutychus is restored to life through Paul at Troas. Acts 20:10.**

A young man who fell asleep from Paul's long preaching is restored by Paul. Some people may fall asleep even during the best anointed preaching. Here is an example of an all night meeting. The enemy tries in many ways to defeat God's people and hinder their services. God will always defeat Satan if we go to Him in prayer. If we have strong faith in God, we will always turn hindrances into victories.

5. **Paul is healed of the viper's bite on the famous island of Melita (Malta). Acts 28:5.**

Here is a fulfillment of Christ's prophecy in Mark 16:17,18. Note that Paul did not presumptuously take up the serpent in order to display his faith, but when he was unavoidably bitten God delivered him. We are wrong in tempting God presumptuously.

6. **The father of Publius healed at Melita through Paul. Acts 28:8.**

The father of the ruler of the island is cured of a serious sickness, whose healing led to a revival. Note that this man had a sickness which might have responded to medical treatment, yet in spite of the presence of Luke, who was a physician by training, Paul effected his healing by means of prayer. It is absurd to argue in the light of this fact that one ought to resort to prayer for healing only when a physician is unavailable or where he fails. Let us seek God in order that our cure may glorify God.

7. **Many persons are healed on the same island of Melita. Acts 28:9.**

One healing nearly always inspires the faith of others.

c. By Stephen and Philip.

1. **Miracles are wrought through Stephen, a man full of the Holy Ghost. Acts 6:8.**

One of the first deacons is anointed of God in a miraculous ministry. If we are full of the Holy Ghost, there is no reason why we cannot enjoy the anointing of God in praying for the sick. Many who were once filled with the Spirit fail to live in the fullness of the Spirit. There is one baptism in the Spirit, but there are many fillings.

2. **Miracles of healing are wrought through Philip at Samaria. Acts 8:6,7.**

This is not Philip the apostle, but Philip the evangelist. He was like Stephen, one of the deacons chosen to administer the material affairs of the church. Philip's revival in Samaria was partly due to the miracles of healing wrought. Healings were not restricted to apostles, but were the result of the Spirit's operation in any faithful believer. The special distinction of Stephen and Philip was merely in that they were Spirit-filled.

II. Healing in the Church After Bible Times

(Post-Apostolic Healing)

We have ample proof that healing continued in the church after the death of the apostles. The following are some testimonies of those who witness to the continuance of healing miracles.

a. **Justin Martyr**—Second Century.
"For numberless demoniacs throughout the whole world and in your city, many of our Christian men, exorcising them in the name of Jesus Christ who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, have healed, and do heal, rendering helpless and driving the possessing devils out of the men. Though they could not be cured by all the other exorcists and those who used incantations and drugs."

"Healing In the Atonement"

SCRIPTURE TEXT

b. Irenaeus—Second Century.

"Wherefore also those who are in truth, the disciples receiving grace from Him do in His name perform miracles so as to promote the welfare of others, according to the gift which each has received from Him . . . Others still heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole."

c. Tertullian—Third Century.

"For the clerk of one of them who was liable to be thrown upon the ground by an evil spirit was set free from his affliction, as was also the relative of another, and the little boy of a third. And how many men of rank, to say nothing of the common people have been delivered from devils and healed of diseases."

d. Dr. Marshall, translator of St. Cyprian says of the fourth century:

"There are successive evidences of them (healings) down to the age of Constantine. (After Constantine the church became completely worldly and the dark ages began.)"

III. Modern Healing

a. In the twelfth century the Waldenses, a movement founded by Peter Waldo, restored the truth of Divine Healing. The following is from their articles of faith:

"Therefore, concerning this anointing of the sick, we hold it as an article of faith, and profess sincerely from the heart that sick persons, when they ask it, may lawfully be anointed with the anointing oil by one who joins with them in praying that it may be efficacious to the healing of the body."

b. In the eighteenth Century the Moravians or United Brethren kept the torch of healing aloft. Zizendorf, their leader says:

"To believe against hope is the root of the gift of miracles; and I owe this testimony to our beloved church, that apostolic powers are there manifested. We have had undeniable proofs thereof . . . in the healing of maladies in themselves incurable, such as cancers, consumptions, when the patient was in the agonies of death, all by means of prayer, or of a single word."

c. We could quote Wesley, Luther and a host of others in whose ministries the sick were healed, but these testimonies suffice to show that healings will always accompany the exercise of faith when the Holy Spirit is honored, whether in one age or another.

The above quotations are from the book, "Ministry of Healing" by A. J. Gordon.

ISAIAH 53:3-6-9

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not.

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

MATTHEW 8:16,17

"When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were

possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:

"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

I PETER 2:23-25

"Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

"For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

Introduction

If there were no specific promises of bodily healing to be found in Scripture, we could hold reasonable hope of healing through appeal to the mercy of God as it is revealed in the life and ministry of Jesus. However there are specific promises in the Word in which the Lord offers to give anything the believer may ask in His name. Now we may add, further, that such a promise to do whatever we may ask in the name of Jesus would be sufficient ground for seeking bodily healing even if physical healing were not actually mentioned. Surely "any-

thing" includes physical benefits as well as spiritual blessings. Nevertheless, in the fifth chapter of James, the inspired writer declares that the "prayer of faith shall save the sick." Beyond these assurances we have a conditional covenant promise that if the believer abides in Christ and His Word abides in him, he may ask *whatsoever he will*, which certainly includes healing of the body. Now if we are abiding in Christ and His Word is abiding in our hearts, we may ask for whatever benefit, whether physical or spiritual, with the assurance that a covenant keeping Lord will fulfill His promise as surely as He is God.

To summarize, let us note that one may rest his hope of healing in the mercy of God, in His promise to do anything, in a specific offer of bodily healing, or in the terms of a covenant, all of which constitute a solid foundation for a doctrine of Christ as the Great Physician; but perhaps the strongest promise for our doctrine of healing is that bodily healing is provided for in the vicarious atonement of Christ. There is healing in the finished work of the cross.

DELIVERANCE FROM THE EVIL ONE

Jesus taught us to pray in the following manner regarding testing and temptation: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" (Matthew 6:13—Literal translation). Obviously God's highest good for us is to be delivered from the evil one. The Lord does indeed permit trials and testings to teach us what we do not learn through the Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but His best for us is a life of victory in which we are not led through woes and temptation. If, however, we must suffer trials, pain, and sickness (which things are the work of the evil one), God wills that we be delivered from them as soon as they have served their purpose. In either case God's will for us is deliverance.

Now we are entitled to deliverance because it is purchased for us by the atoning work of our Redeemer. He came to destroy the works of the devil, the principal of which are sin and sickness. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). That work of Christ which wrought the destruction of Satan's work was His suffering and death upon the Cross. The aton-

ing work of Christ delivers the body from disease just as it delivers the soul from sin. Paul clearly teaches the redemption of the body when he writes, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" 1 Cor. 6:19,20 Yes, he teaches that our spirits and our bodies belong to God by the right of purchase. We cannot think that God's highest good for any believer is disease any more than we can believe that His highest good for our souls is sin. One surely ought to pray, "Deliver us from the evil one." The apostle in his letter to the Romans (Rom. 8:11) further declares that the quickening work of the Holy Spirit not only effects a regeneration of the spiritual soul but also a quickening of the mortal body. "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." We are indeed mistaken if we suppose that the work of Christ is solely for the soul, leaving the body to the ravages of Satan.

Dr. A. J. Gordon argues well against the prevailing misguided attitude toward sickness. "It is easy to see now that when death gets established in the high esteem of Christians, sickness, his prime minister, should come to be held in great regard also. And so it is, that while very few enjoy being sick, very many are afraid seriously to claim healing, lest it should seem like rebellion against a sacred ordinance, or a revolt from a hallowed medicine which God is mercifully putting to their lips for their spiritual recovery. Those who have such a feeling should

search the Scriptures to learn how constantly sickness is referred to as the work of the devil. From the day when 'Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils' to the hour when the Deliverer came and loosed 'a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound these eighteen years—he that 'hath power of death, that is the devil' has been compelling our wretched race to reap the first fruits of mortality, disease, and pain, and bodily decay. Alas, if the Lord's people shall be so deceived by him that they shall willingly accept sickness—the first fruits of death—as their portion, instead of seeking for health—the first fruits of redemption! If any shall insist indeed, that God often allows His servants to be sick for their good; or that He sometimes lets them fall into sin for their chastening; on that account we shall not admit that sickness is God's agent any more than that sin is. An old divine probably spoke as truly as he did quaintly when he said that 'the Lord sometimes allows His saints to be sharpened on the devil's grindstone,' but we believe that in the comprehensive petition, 'Deliver us from the evil one,' is contained without question a prayer for rescue from all the ways and works of Satan—from sickness as well as from sin; from pain, the penalty of transgression, as well as from transgression itself."

Now Christ taught that those who are bound by Satan, by any spirit of infirmity, ought to be loosed from their bonds. Surely anything that ought to be done for men Christ will do if they will but meet the conditions of faith and surrender. The urgency of divine deliverance was clearly affirmed by the Lord when He healed a certain woman who was afflicted by Satan. "And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up her-

self. And when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity . . . And he laid his hand on her and immediately she was made straight and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on Sabbath Day . . . The Lord answered him . . . And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath Day?" (Luke 13:11-16).

It is clear from the above that the infirmity was caused by a spirit of Satan or a demon spirit. Many scoff at the idea of evil spirits, but Jesus certainly believed in them, and He was the omniscient Son of God who knows more about the invisible influences at work in this world system than any philosopher, psychologist, scientist, or physician knows. How can sin, crime, degeneracy, greed, bloody warfare, poverty in the midst of plenty, oppression, and disease persist undiminished through countless decades, while crime prevention and law enforcement agencies, legislators, sociologists, physicians, peace councils, educators and scientists war feverishly against man's enemies, unless there are powerful invisible forces at work actively perpetuating evil. Only Christ's work of redemption prevails against the work of Satan; therefore, it is urgent that true believers invoke the name of Jesus against sin and disease thus making manifest the victory of Christ. Jesus delivered the woman on the Sabbath Day because she ought not to suffer under Satan one day longer. If we suffer from the curse of Satan, we ought ultimately to be delivered that God may be glorified in our victory over both sin and sickness. "He was bruised for our iniquities . . . and by His stripes we are healed."

We proceed to examine the scriptures that set forth the fact of healing in the atoning work of Christ.

Text Exposition

ISAIAH 53:3-6

Verse 3

Here the prophet sees a picture of Christ upon the cross, a picture of Him so afflicted with the afflictions of mankind that men turn their faces away in horror. The Christ of the cross was lowly esteemed by selfish men, even despised, but the redeemed now look back upon that scene and view one who, to them, is the fairest among ten thousand, the fairest because His sufferings mean the healing of the nations.

It is impossible for us to imagine the full extent of our Lord's suffering. We know that at the whipping post He was beaten with the Roman scourge until His back was one solid bruise; we know that He was compelled to carry His cross upon that bruised back; we know that He was nailed to the cross and crowned with a crown of thorns. We know that He was left until He died suspended by His nail pierced hands and feet. All this we know, but how much He suffered mentally and inwardly as a result of sin, injustice and rejection we can never know. We can be sure from the words of Isaiah that He became acquainted in His ordeal at Golgotha with every kind and degree of sickness and suffering possible to the human body.

It is not our purpose merely to describe the shameful suffering inflicted upon Jesus, but rather to point out that He, to whom we go in prayer, is completely familiar with all our pains, sickness, anguish, oppression and crushing. When Christ is moved with compassion toward us frail beings, it is with a compassion derived from having experienced, Himself, all

that we experience. Is it not a great privilege to go to one in prayer who has purposely visited our sphere and made Himself familiar by experience with every manner of suffering? Every believer should be able to go boldly to the throne of grace in every time of sorrow or sickness. Of this we may be certain, that Jesus has a special love and compassion for those who suffer, and that He, in answer to believing prayer, either will heal the sick one completely, or draw so near in His comforting sweetness that the pain and suffering will be mostly borne by Him.

The King James version reads, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." But the sorrows and grief include physical sickness, a fact which is made more clear in the translation of Dr. Young, the author of Young's Analytical Concordance, which reads, "He is despised and left of men, a man of pains and acquainted with sickness." Rotherham in his Emphasized Bible renders the clause as follows: "Man of pains and familiar with sickness." Whatever may be our plight, we cannot lift a petition to Heaven with which our Lord is not familiar. He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," because He suffers with us in all our anguish.

Verse 4

Not only are we told that Jesus suffered every form of suffering, but furthermore, that He actually, in bearing the physical suffering occasioned by the ordeal of the cross, was bearing vicariously all our sufferings. Those were not His pains He bore but ours. When we say that Jesus suffered vicariously, we mean that He was taking sufferings that belonged to us, and bearing them in such a way as to make our bearing them unnecessary. Just as Jesus bore our sins so as to lift them from us, so in like manner did He bear our sickness so as to

lift sickness from us. Just as He died that we might not die, so also He was made sick that we might not be sick.

Some may ask why godly people do get sick if Jesus bore our sickness. We do not pretend to know fully the secret of suffering, but we do know that healing and divine health are conditional blessings just as forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life are conditional blessings. In order to be saved one must meet the conditions of salvation which are faith in and surrender to the Lord. Many apparent professing believers are such only in appearance, having not complied fully with the conditions. Likewise, in order to receive healing one must meet the conditions of faith and consecration of the body to the service and glory of God. There are also some cases of sickness, such as that of Job's, in which the Lord permits a temporary trial of sickness in order to make one more patient with others who suffer, to bring out a maturity of character not otherwise possible, or to use one's healing for His glory. We must not question the wisdom of Divine Providence in our trials, but we may continue to seek healing on the grounds that Christ purchased healing for us on the cross.

Verse 5

There is no mistaking the fact that this verse teaches the vicarious atonement for sin; that is, that Christ suffered for our sins upon the cross making it possible for God to forgive us our sins and to impute to us Christ's perfect righteousness. When punishment was inflicted upon Jesus on the cross, it was our punishment. Christ was our substitute taking our place and receiving what we justly deserved to receive. Vicarious suffering is the suffering one person bears for another. We are saved because our Savior took our condemnation.

Now this verse, just as unmistakably as it teaches vicarious atonement for sins, teaches vicarious suffering for our sicknesses.

"By His stripes we are healed." Young's version reads, "By His bruise there is healing for us." The Lord's death purchased life for us, His bruise inflicted at the whipping-post purchased healing for us. The whipping-post and the cross are distinct experiences; likewise forgiveness of sins and bodily healing are distinct blessings. The stream that flows from the cross is a cleansing stream and a healing stream. The lifeline that is thrown to dying humanity is woven of the two strands of salvation and physical healing. There is no reason why we should not present this twofold truth in such a way that sinners might grasp both promises at once and receive both benefits at once. Many are both saved and healed at the same altar, but cases where such occurs should be more frequent. We do not preach the Foursquare message unless we present Christ both as Saviour and Healer, as well as Baptizer and King.

Verses 6, 10

When we like sheep went astray we brought upon ourselves eternal condemnation and physical woes. Disobedience brought both death and disease. All sickness is the direct or indirect result of sin. In order to lift the curse of sin, God laid upon His Beloved Son the sins of man. The curse would not be wholly lifted, however, without a provision for the healing of sickness. When Jesus came to destroy the works of the Devil, He destroyed sin, sickness and death. Verse 10 says, "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief." Rotherham translates as follows: "Yet Jehovah purposed to bruise Him, He laid on Him sickness." Yes, God put our sickness as well as our sins upon Jesus; let us take by faith health as well as forgiveness.

MATTHEW 8:16,17

In these verses the healing of the sick by Jesus is declared by the evangelist to be the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 53:4. There can be no doubt whatever that the prophecy in Isaiah refers to the two-fold vicarious work of Christ. These verses leave no doubt that healing the sick was definitely a part of the mission of Christ. Jesus healed not only to show His divine power, but chiefly because He came to set men free from the work of the devil.

There has been much opposition to the teaching of vicarious healing. Many who quote Isaiah 53 to substantiate the doctrine of a vicarious atonement for sin reject the idea that it includes bodily healing. They say that the word "healed" refers to the healing of the soul, a cure from sin, not from bodily sickness. It might be pointed out in the first place that the word translated "healed" comes from the same Hebrew root as the word "physician," and is used frequently of physical sickness. Let us, however, note here how Delitzsch, a famous German Hebrew scholar comments on Isaiah 53.

Now as Delitzsch points out, Christ's healing of the sick is declared by an inspired apostle to be a fulfillment of Isaiah 53:4. The only question which might arise is: "In what sense was the prophecy fulfilled?" Did Matthew mean that the healing of the multitude in that one case completely fulfilled the prophecy, or that the healing described was an evidence that the prophecy had begun to be fulfilled and would continue to be fulfilled every time a believer claimed for himself the virtue made available by the finished atoning work of Jesus? The latter explanation is unquestionably the correct one.

Now the use of the words "took" and "bare" indicate that the sicknesses were healed because they

were put upon Christ and were borne away in the same sense that sins and iniquities were *taken and borne*; therefore, the fulfillment would of necessity be continual, just as it would be in respect to the forgiveness of sins. In addition, healing did not stop with the eighth chapter of Matthew, but Jesus and His disciples continued to appropriate the healing stream all through the New Testament. The great part of the ministry of Jesus and that of the apostles which was devoted to bodily healing, demonstrated clearly the fact that bodily healing was a permanent provision of the Christian gospel made eternally available by the work of the Cross.

"Freely but faithfully does the gospel of Matthew translate this text, 'Himself took our infirmities and carried our sicknesses.' The help which Jesus rendered in all kinds of bodily sickness is taken in Matthew to be a fulfillment of what in Isaiah is prophesied of the Servant of Jehovah. The Hebrew verbs of the text, when used of sin, signify, to assume as a heavy burden and bear away the guilt of sin, as one's own; that is, to bear sin mediatorially in order to atone for it. But here, where not our sins, but our sicknesses and our pains are the object, the mediatorial sense remains the same. It is not meant that the Servant of Jehovah merely entered into the fellowship of our sufferings that we had to bear, and deserved to bear; and therefore He not only bore them away, but also in His own person endured them in order to discharge us from them. Now when one takes sufferings upon himself which another had to bear, and does this, not merely in fellowship with him, but in his stead, we call it SUBSTITUTION." (Bodily Healing and the Atonement) T. J. McCrossan

Observe the comment of Dr. A. J. Gordon on the continuance of healing:

"Two streams of blessing started from the personal ministry of our Lord, a stream of healing and a stream of regeneration; the one for the recovery of the body, and the other for the recovery of the soul, and these two flowed on side by side through the apostolic age. Is it reasonable to suppose that the purpose of God was that one should run on through the whole dispensation of the Spirit, and that the other should fade away and utterly disappear within a single generation? We think not." (Ministry of Healing)

We have yet another witness to healing in the atonement. Peter in his first epistle quotes Isaiah 53, putting the word "healed," however, in past tense. "By whose stripes *ye were healed*." The work is past in time because when Peter wrote Calvary's victory was already an accomplished provision. Our sins have already been borne away so that we have no condemnation. Likewise our sicknesses have been carried so that we need not now in present time suffer them. Both Weymouth and Rotherham translate Peter's clause, "by whose stripes ye have been healed." In reality we have already been redeemed of sin and sickness by the Lord's substitutionary atonement.

That Peter refers to physical healing is reasonably clear from the fact that he uses the Greek word IAOMAI for "healed" from which the word "physician" (IATROS) comes. Both Isaiah and Peter use words for "healed" that unmistakably refer to physical healing.

Outline

- I. Isaiah's Prophecy.
 - a. Of One familiar with sick-

ness.

- b. Of One scourged for the diseased.

- c. Of One bearing our diseases.

II. Christ's Fulfillment.

- a. Healing the sick.

- b. Defeating Satan's work.

- c. Dying for the weak and sinful.

III. Peter's Message.

- a. Of a finished provision. (2:24)

- b. Of a restoration. (2:25)

"The New Testament Healing Covenant"

SCRIPTURE TEXT:

JAMES 5:13-18

"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

"And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

"Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

"And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."

Introduction

This passage of Scripture is, perhaps, the most important of all passages with regard to the continued practice of Divine Healing in the church. Here is a specific command that the sick should appeal to the elders (pastors) of the church when they are sick, requesting prayer for their healing. Now, as has already been pointed out in a previous lesson, we would not necessarily need specific promise of bodily healing in order to be justified in seeking it. The promise to do "anything" the believer asks in Jesus' name surely includes bodily healing. However, it is indeed doubly assuring to have a specific command and promise of healing upon which to stand in time of need.

Now we contend, furthermore,

that James 5:14 constitutes the institution of an ordinance of Divine Healing to be practiced by the church with the same faithfulness that baptism and the Lord's supper are practiced. Regarding the Lord's supper, Jesus said, *"This do in remembrance of me."* Throughout the book of Acts the apostles were faithful in carrying out this command and the church has continued to carry out the command, although there is only one specific Scripture passage which gives a description of the rite. (I Cor. 11:23-24.)

In Matthew 28:19 Jesus commanded the disciples to baptize in water, a command which was carried out by the apostolic church, and which continues to be practiced by nearly every branch of the church in some form, although there are only a few passages in

the epistles where the rite is mentioned. The point is that any command or prophecy of Christ concerning the practice of the church may become an ordinance of the church even where there is but a single description of the ordinance in the epistles. Keeping this thought in mind, we recall that Jesus said, in Mark 16, in the Great Commission, *"they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."* Now this prophecy of Jesus should be sufficient for us to expect a practice in the church of laying hands on the sick for their recovery, but in order that we may be certain that the ordinance is to be a continual one in the church, the Lord inspires James to interpret the Great Commission to us by way of making prayer for the sick a perpetual ordinance. In James 5, we have the establishment of a perpetual ordinance just as surely as we have in I Cor. 11 the establishment of an ordinance of the Lord's supper, or as surely as we have in Acts 2:38, the institution of an ordinance of baptism.

Of this passage, Andrew Murray says, "This text above all others, is that which most clearly declares to the sick what they have to do in order to be healed. Sickness and its consequences abound in the world. What joy, then, for the believer to learn from the Word of God the way of healing for the sick! The Bible teaches us that it is the will of God to see His children in good health. The Apostle James has no hesitation in saying that *'the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.'* May the Lord teach us to hearken and to receive with simplicity what His word tells us!" (Divine Healing, p. 108).

Text Exposition

A. Verse 13

Here a distinction is made be-

tween affliction and sickness. Dr. Young translates verse 13 as follows, "Does anyone suffer evil among you? Let him pray." Affliction in this case does not mean sickness but the many kinds of suffering, mishap, and misfortune to which all mankind is subject. There cannot be perfect felicity in a world full of suffering, poverty, pain, and unhappiness. God has not promised the believer perfect freedom from suffering, nor is it always God's will that we escape all suffering and trial. Peter says, *"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings . . . (I Pet. 4:12,13).* James himself says, *"My brethren count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience"* (James 1:2,3). Did not most of the early Christians suffer trials and persecutions above those of the unbelievers? There is, indeed, for the Christian a certain fellowship of Christ's sufferings. Paul writes, *"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake,"* (Phil. 1:29). A reading of II Corinthians 11:23-33 will give one an idea of the afflictions of Paul, but we do not gather that he is complaining; rather we learn that he glories in his afflictions. *"If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities."* (II Cor. 11:30).

Now regarding our afflictions, we are commanded to pray, but we are not specifically told that God will remove them. Prayer often brings a kind of help better than deliverance. No one enjoys suffering and persecution, but which one of us has not looked back upon a severe trial, seeing in it the hand of God. Some of our best lessons

promise of healing. Yet some prominent writers, guided by prevailing prejudice, have attempted to establish that the Book of James was written to Jewish Christians and that it has no application to the church as a whole. Anyone can see the danger of such a practice in Bible exegesis. After a while there would be no book of the New Testament valid for modern Christians.

We would not trouble our teachers with these skeptical interpretations were it not for the fact that many Christian groups still oppose the doctrine of Divine Healing, and inasmuch as our people will hear them voiced by opponents of the Full Gospel sooner or later, we may as well examine our text closely enough to be able to meet the objections hurled against our teaching of Divine Healing.

Answers to the Objections Against the Validity of James 5:14,15

OBJECTION ONE

That the Book of James was written to the twelve tribes scattered abroad and that it cannot apply to Christians in general.

ANSWER TO OBJECTION ONE

There are several reasons why this objection is unfounded. First, while it is true that James greets the twelve tribes scattered abroad, yet he is writing to Christian Jews who were real members of the Christian church. He addressed his epistle to the Jewish Christians because he had a special calling to minister to the Jewish Christians. Paul wrote to Gentile Christians because he was called as an apostle to the Gentiles, but it would be exceedingly foolish to argue that a modern Jew could not claim a promise of salvation found in Romans on the grounds that the book of Romans was written to Gentiles.

Furthermore, James addresses his

readers using the word "brethren," a common greeting among early Christians. In verse one of the second chapter he says, "*My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, with respect of persons.*" That they were Christian brethren is obvious from the fact that their faith was placed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now among Christian brethren whose mutual faith is in Christ Jesus, there is indeed no respect of persons in regard to His precious promises. If He has healing in answer to the prayer of faith, for Jewish Christians, He has the same for Gentile Christians, for in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free. To make a distinction between Jews and Gentiles in the New Testament is in violation of the very spirit of New Testament Christianity. (See Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9; Acts 10:34.)

Moreover, James was writing to church members. They are to call for the elders of the church. James wrote not in Hebrew, but in Greek, and he uses the word, "ekklesia" to designate the church, the same word used by Paul and the other New Testament writers to designate the body of Christian believers. The word "ekklesia" comes from two words "ek" meaning "out of" and "kaleo" which means "to call." The church is composed of all of the redeemed who are called out of the world and washed in the blood of Jesus. Beyond a doubt the recipients of James' letter were church saints no matter what their nationality was.

We have even further proof that James wrote to Christian believers who were in the body of Christ, in that he admonishes them to look for the coming of Christ. "*Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord . . . Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh*" (James 5:7-8).

It should be pointed out, in conclusion, that Divine Healing was a common practice in the church as is made clear by Paul's reference to gifts of healing in the first book of Corinthians. Our evidence for the ordinance of healing is not found only in the book of James, although the promise in James 5:14, 15 would be sufficient to establish our hope of a healing ordinance. Must we doubt the validity of the promises of God's Holy and inspired Word unless they occur a number of times?

OBJECTION TWO

The oil used for anointing in Bible times was applied because it had medicinal value. Therefore, James recommends the use of medicine to cure the sick.

ANSWER TO OBJECTION TWO

This is an absurd objection, though it is put forth by a prominent writer and is often re-echoed. Surely they do not mean to tell us that an inspired apostle, writing under the guidance of an all-wise God, would prescribe a massage in olive oil as a universal cure-all. What good would an outward application of oil do for a person afflicted with tuberculosis or diabetes? No, the oil had only symbolical value. The text clearly says that the prayer of faith saves the sick, not a dose of medicine; the Lord, not the physician, raises up the sick.

Now we do not disparage the truly scientific work of sincere men of medical science. Christians must favor every agency for the alleviation of human suffering. Conscientious doctors are a tremendous blessing to the world, indispensable to modern society. One, no matter what his faith in Divine Healing may be, should never condemn doctors as a whole nor should one harshly condemn believers, of weak faith, who seek the help of medical

science. However, we ought not to confuse natural healing with direct Divine Healing through prayer offered by pastors who have gifts of healing. No matter how efficient medical science becomes, there will always be the responsibility laid upon the church to heal the sick.

OBJECTION THREE

That no mention is made of physical healing in this passage, but only of salvation of the soul.

ANSWER TO OBJECTION THREE

It is true that it says "save the sick" and that the word "save" is the same used of bodily healing very frequently. When Jesus said to the woman in Mark 5:25-34, "*Thy faith hath made thee whole,*" He used the same word for "made thee whole" as James uses for "save the sick." Of course the whole matter does not rest upon the word "save" for James further says, "the Lord shall raise him up." In this latter clause there is no doubt that he refers to physical healing. In verse 16, he suggests another means of healing, which is that of praying one for another. There is no possible way of explaining out of this text its reference to bodily healing through the direct power of the Lord.

We quote here again from Dr. A. J. Gordon, a godly man outside the Full Gospel ranks who has written on Divine Healing. "Here is the calling for the elders of the church—a voluntary appeal to the ministry and intercession of the servants of God. Oil is applied as a symbol of the communication of the Spirit, by whose power healing is effected. It does not seem reasonable to suppose that it is used for its medicinal properties. Because observe, it is the elders of the church, not the doctors (of medicine), who are called to apply

it; and it is accompanied by prayer, not by manipulations and medications. As in baptism the disciple confesses his faith in the cleansing power of Christ's atonement, *by the use of water*; or, as in communion he declares his dependence on Christ for spiritual sustenance, *by the use of bread*; so here he avows his faith in the saving health of the Spirit *by the use of oil*. In other words, this whole ceremony is a kind of sacramental profession of faith in Jesus Christ as the Divine Physician acting through the Holy Ghost." (Ministry of Healing—Page 31).

Sincere commentators cannot but see in James 5:14,15, the establishment of an ordinance of Divine Healing. I trust we are not too unkind when we suggest that many find it easier to invent complicated explanations to get rid of the healing message than to exercise healing faith to pray for the sick. Not everyone, of course, has the gift of faith, nor gifts of healing, but we cannot deny the fact that many today do possess these gifts. If one cannot pray the prayer of faith, he should at least direct the sick to elders who are capacitated to pray effectually.

We quote again Dr. A. J. Gordon. "We believe that there are those in our times who have humbly sought, and manifestly obtained this gift of prevailing faith. If the larger majority of Christians, either through wrong teaching or indifference have willingly consented to surrender this primitive birthright of the church, and have learned to say without emotion to the sick that lie at their doors, thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous, there is none to plead thy cause that thou mayest be bound up; there are some who are more jealous for the Lord's honor in this matter. Because they believe that the mi-

raculous gifts are for all ages, they have thought it not covetous to seek them for themselves—and yet not for themselves, but that through them the Lord might still show forth His glory."

As long as God answers prayers; as long as His promises are true; as long as we may ask anything in Jesus' name, just so long will the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avail much. Perhaps not all may have gifts of healing, but all by close communion with God in prayerful study of the Word may have the energized faith that lays hold of God's good provision in behalf of the needy. Any righteous man energized by the Holy Spirit can pray effectually so that his prayer avails. Dr. Young translates James 5:16 as follows: "Very strong is a working supplication of a righteous man."

A strictly literal rendering would be, "Mightily prevails an energized petition of a righteous man." Perhaps some have hesitated to pray for the sick feeling that their righteousness was not equal to that of the elders of old time. One is righteous who is wholly trusting in the righteousness of Christ and walking in full obedience to His known will. This is the prayer of a righteous man, not a perfect man. Even Elijah was not a perfect man when he shut up the Heavens by prayer, but a man of like passions as we are. Nothing hinders our obeying the Word of God in praying the prayer of faith for the sick.