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THE PIONEER BAPTIST

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DIVINE HEALING

By: C. D. Cole

There is a suffering and groaning creation and the people of God share in this suffering. Romans 8:22-23, *“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”* There is salvation for the whole man, soul and body, but the body must wait for its redemption in the resurrection.

There is widespread interest in physical healing and there is a great army of doctors and nurses dedicated to the care of human bodies. Their work is of a scientific nature and they work within the realm of natural law, and through their work the body may be kept in a measure of repair, but its death is inevitable. Hebrews 9:27, *“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:”*

There is also widespread interest in miraculous healing without the use of doctors and drugs. This is called faith-healing. Faith-healing movements are many and are to be found both inside and outside Christianity. Christian Science claims some 10,000 healers. The Episcopal Church has over 200 churches where healing services are held regularly. The Roman Catholics have their healing shrines in many parts of the world; the most famous is the Lady of Lourdes in France where multitudes make their way in search of healing. It is claimed that the Blessed Virgin appeared in 1859 to a 14-year old girl. Sensational claims are made about the heal-

ing of many pilgrims. Many of the smaller sects in Christendom claim power to heal. Then there are independent evangelists like Oral Roberts, and the Bosworth Brothers who claim to be divine healers. And I must not fail to say that Baptists are concerned about bodily health. Every normal person wants to get well when he is sick. It is right and proper to pray for healing. And it is Scriptural to believe and teach that God is able to heal today as of old. There is no disease too much for Him.

THE HEALING MINISTRY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

1. It is fulfillment of prophecy.

Isaiah 53:4, *“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.”* Matthew 8:17, *“That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.”*

2. In every case it was miraculous and instantaneous. There were no gradual healings or improved condition. The healing was perfect without any period of convalescence. John 4:46-54, *“So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come*

down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house. This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee.”

Matthew 9:27-31, *“And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.”*

Matthew 9:20-22, *“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*

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thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.”

3. Christ’s miracles were his credentials to Israel as the Messiah. John 20:30-31, “*And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*”

4. Christ never healed anyone after His death and resurrection. He was here forty days and did many things but there is no record that He ever healed.

THE HEALING MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLES

1. Matthew 10:5-8, “*These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.*”

2. There was no command to heal in the Great Commission. Matthew 28:19-20, “*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*” Luke 24:46-49, “*And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: ...*”

HEALING MINISTRY IN THE EARLY CHURCH

1. There were miraculous gifts in the early church, sovereignly bestowed by the Holy Spirit. I Corinthians 12:28, “*And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then*

gifts of healings, ... diversities of tongues.” These things were temporary and soon ceased to be given. I Corinthians 13:8, “*Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail: whether there be tongues, they shall cease; ...*”

2. Paul exercised these gifts for awhile. Acts 20:7-10, “*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.*” He prescribed a little wine for Timothy. I Timothy 5:23, “*Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.*” II Timothy 4:20, “*Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.*” These miracles seemed to have ceased about the time Paul turned away from the Jews to preach to the Gentiles. Acts 28:28-31, “*Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves. And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.*”

James 5:14-15, “*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; ...*”

ERRORS AND DANGERS

Here are some errors and dangers of modern so-called faith-healing.

1. Their claim that it is always God’s will to heal every case of sickness, and the only thing that keeps any child of God from being healed is lack of faith on his part or some sin in his life. This is refuted by facts in and out of Scripture. Let’s take a look at the Apostle Paul. II Corinthians 12:7-10, “*And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*” It was not God’s will to remove it, but He gave him sufficiency of grace to stand it, and Paul became happy to keep the thorn and glory in his infirmities that the power of Christ might rest upon him.

One thinks of Fanny Crosby, the blind poet and hymn writer (1820-1915). She was a woman of faith and godly life, and yet she lived 95 years in total blindness. One also thinks of Helen Keller (1880) who was born at Tusculumbia, Alabama, and at the age of two was stricken with scarlet fever which left her with the loss of three senses: sight, hearing, and smell. Helen wrote a number of books. In 1903 she wrote a story of her life and 27 years later (1930) she wrote the book, “Midsteam – My Later Life.” And in 1940, at age 65 she wrote a book entitled “Let Us Have Faith.” To say that God is always willing to heal and that nothing prevents healing is a lack of faith or some sin in the life is to charge Fanny Crosby and Helen Keller with unbelief and ungodliness. And then one thinks of all the fine Christian men and women he has found in hospitals and rest homes, who live to the glory of God in their infirmities.

2. Modern faith-healers put the blame on their patients and take none upon themselves when they fail to heal.

And this reverses what the Bible says. In the Bible Christ blamed His disciples when they failed to cure the lunatic child. Matthew 17:14-21, *“And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.”*

3. Perhaps the worst thing about faith-healers today is their claim that physical healing is in the atonement and a redemptive right for every believer. We are told that Christ died for our sicknesses as for our sins. This is a terrible error and should not go unchallenged and uncondemned, for it is another gospel. There is no gospel of physical healing in the New Testament. It is nowhere written in the Bible that Christ died for our sicknesses. We are referred to 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.”* This prophesy was fulfilled at Capernaum when our Lord healed the multitude, while He was alive, not while He was dying on the cross for our sins. I Peter 2:24, *“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, ...”* I have often said that if physical healing were in the atonement, the believer could no

more have the headache than he could go to hell. Christ did not die to keep us from having the headache or to make us immune to any physical disease; He died that we might not perish in our sins by suffering the torments of hell.

Conclusion: The danger of going to these self-styled faith-healers.

In pointing out the danger, I will give two illustrations; two cases well authenticated. One is from the book by Mrs. May Fitch, who was for a number of years associated with faith-healing evangelists. She tells of a woman well known to her as a faithful and consecrated Christian, a woman who had won her drunken husband to faith in Christ. She had been a sufferer of diabetes for many years, and had strictly followed the prescribed diet; a restricted diet. She attended the Bosworth meetings, listened to the teaching of F.F.B., and was anointed and prayed for and claimed to be healed. In dealing with the reason why some are not healed, the Bible said that people look at their symptoms instead of to Christ; that one must believe that he is healed and act on his faith whether he feels any better or not. This woman was taken in by the attractive way in which the preacher presented the matter and determined to act on her faith. And so believing she was healed, she began to eat all the good things she loved so much. She gave her testimony gladly to the fact that she was healed. It was about September 1922 that the special healing took place. In the following January she cut her toe. It seemed trivial and she attended to it herself. It would not heal and a doctor was called. He treated the wound for over a week and still it did not heal. She was then sent to the Presbyterian Hospital in New York where it was examined and discovered that she had gangrene. The leg was amputated above the knee, but this did no good and she soon died. And so after being healed of diabetes in September, 1922 she died of diabetes in January 1925. Her death was the direct cause of this false teaching. And who can know what was done to her faith? She must have felt that God had let her down and could not be trusted.

Let's look at another case closer to home. A healing evangelist by the name of Jack Coe was holding a healing meeting in the Miami area. Little George Clark, a victim of polio, was brought to the meeting by his mother. At Coe's invitation she took the child to the platform. Coe put some oil on his thumb, pressed it to the child's head, raised his eyes to the sky and shouted, "Jesus, heal this boy!" He ordered the mother to take off the braces and let him walk in proof that he was healed. When the braces were taken off, the child fell to the platform, and for three days the little fellow stumbled along while his mother's faith in the healer dwindled and died. When she finally took the child to the doctor, he found irreparable bone damage had been done. Let us hope that the mother did not lose her faith in God's ability to heal her boy. The sequel to this story is that Coe was arrested and jailed, charged with practicing medicine without a license; his so-called healing act backfired. He was not as smart as Oral Roberts. Oral would not put his teaching to the test like Coe did. He would probably have claimed that the child was better and would gradually be able to walk. Oral Roberts is too smart to stick his neck out like Coe did.

And to those of you who are lost we preach unto you the gospel. I Corinthians 15:1-4, *“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”*

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