

Victory in Jesus and The Lord's Healing Touch

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Faith!

What a mighty word is faith.

What is it that rolls back the dark shadows of death to send the glorious light of the resurrection in all its brilliant beauty to the sorrowing heart? What is it that lifts the burdens that are too heavy to bear? What is it that brings cleansing to the sin-sick soul? What is it that cools the fevered brow, eases the torturing pain, and heals the afflicted and diseased?

The answer is FAITH.

But this is not faith for faith's sake, not a mere believing in something or someone. It is Holy Spirit inspired faith. It is faith based on the teachings of the Word of God. It is faith, pure and simple, in the atoning merits of Jesus Christ who died on the cross for all men everywhere, and for you and me.

Faith is Christ-centered if it is Bible faith.

Someone has said: "Jesus will do everything for you that you really expect Him to do." Jesus meant something like that when He said, "According to your faith be it unto you." (Matthew 9:29)

There is a tragic dearth of faith today. Creeds, traditions, opinions: all these

have somehow taken the place in the hearts of men (many professing to be Christians) of that kind of faith

that moves mountains. Yet God is still in the heaven and stands ready to give a believing and living faith through Christ to anyone who will dare to receive.

In all probability, you feel the need of such a faith. That may well be the reason why you are reading this little book and why you are willing to meditate and pray about this most vital matter.

Your Faith

Even in the ranks of believers, there is as much confusion about what faith is, and what faith does, as about any other of the great themes of Christian thought.

Faith is the deed of trust.

Faith is belief in action.

Faith is the heart moving toward Jesus, receiving from Him.

Faith is the latchstring to God's great Supply House.

Faith is to be sought. It is not a matter of 'working up' faith. Faith does not come 'up'—it comes down! Faith is divine heart enrichment, the active moving of the Holy Spirit in believing exercise. Faith is from God, in Jesus' Name, anointed by the Third Person of the Trinity. One prays for faith. It is a gift from God.

In Mark, Chapter 5, Verses 25 through 34, we read about a woman by the name of Lydia. She was in great need of the Lord as her physician, as many people are today—perhaps even you.

This young widow, once beautiful and vivacious, was wasted away, her attractiveness gone. She had a serious sick-

ness peculiar to women. She had been treated by many physicians, but to no avail. They could do nothing for her and her illness persisted, worsening with each day. Great was her distress and she despaired of ever having a well and strong body again.

Then Jesus came! What mighty and miraculous changes are wrought when Jesus comes into homes, into lives and into hearts!

One day Lydia saw a multitude moving slowly past her home. Perhaps someone knocked on her door and told her that Jesus was in the midst of the crowd—that He could heal her. The very thought of being well must have made her heart fill with hope and joy. Oh, to be well and strong again, to be able to worship in the temple, to visit with friends!

But there were misgivings in Lydia's heart, too. From the vantage point of her home, she may have seen the nobleman, Jairus, earnestly in conversation with Jesus, for it was on that same day that this nobleman had come to Capernaum to ask Jesus to come to the bedside of his sick young daughter. Would Jesus have time for her, too?

Besides, there were so many people around Jesus. They had come from far and wide from other communities to see and hear the Miracle Worker and Teacher, and Lydia knew it would be difficult to press her way to Jesus through the throng.

Lydia, however, was desperate. She put all her fears aside. She made her decision and acted upon it, and hurried to the street as fast as her weakened condition permitted and, timidly at first, began to elbow her way through the crowds. A few stragglers permitted her to go by them but soon she was thrust against a mass of humanity such as she had never experienced before, and she could go no farther.

What shall I do? Where will I go? were questions she must have asked herself. She dropped to her knees. She was so weak, and it seemed hopeless that she could reach Jesus. Suddenly she saw an opening before her, and still on her knees, she began to crawl carefully but determinedly. Many a dirty sandal must have pressed down on her thin hands, but finally, nearing exhaustion, she reached the inner circle of the crowd.

She lifted her dustcovered face, and there He was—Jesus.

If only she could attract His attention, if only she could cry out, but He was speaking. Within her reach, however, was the hem of His garment, the wide band that encircled His robe. She was a Jewess and was well acquainted with the meaning of that border, that God had commanded His people to wear that band as evidence they were keeping His law. To Lydia, the border represented even more: Jesus' deity, the profession of who and what He was. She believed that Jesus was all He claimed to be. This was her faith.

Lydia balanced herself in her crouched position and exerting all the strength she had, she reached out, her fingers reverently touching the hem of Jesus' garment while saying in her heart, ****If I can but touch His garment, I shall be whole.**"

Immediately she was healed and at the same moment, Jesus knew that someone had touched Him—in faith. There was a vast difference between that touch of faith and the press of the curious who gathered around Jesus. He knew Lydia's faith had touched Him—she knew she was whole again.

A Reasonable Doctrine

The New Testament records many miracles of healing such as took place in Capernaum that day. But you may be asking the question, Can and will Jesus perform miracles of healing today? Did such miracles cease with the closing of Christ's earthly ministry?

These are reasonable questions worthy of reasonable answers. Surely there is more involved than the mere statement of an historical fact in the assertion that "he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick." (Matthew 8:16)

There is no ****day of miracles!** Miracles are the manifestation of the power of God. This marvelous power was manifested throughout the dispensation of God the Father, throughout the dispensation of Jesus Christ the Son, and continues to be manifested during this dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Whenever God works, it is in a supernatural way; therefore, miracles will continue as long as God is still on His throne. Let me repeat: there is no "day of miracles" with God!

While it is certainly true that faith is more a matter of the heart than it is of the head, this in no way excludes the utter reasonableness of the doctrine which is often referred to as "divine healing." This term, if used in the sense of Christ's healing power, means that one is healed in answer to the prayer of faith in the name of Jesus as God's Son, the sacrifice on Calvary. For this healing power. He and He alone should receive glory and praise.

This doctrine (truth) is a most rational one, and may well be received as such by everyone who believes on Jesus as Savior. It is not difficult to understand, and less difficult to believe.

It is fact that many Christians have far more potential faith than they realize. To illustrate: do you believe that God the Father is the only true and living God? Do you accept the truth that Jesus Christ is God's Son, born of a virgin, crucified, dead, buried, raised from the dead? If you can honestly answer "yes" to these questions, you have good foundation for miracle-provoking faith, and if this potential faith is given free course, allowed to act and become deed, you will experience answered prayer.

What all this means is simply that you have already laid the groundwork within your heart for the performance of the miracle of healing. Take encouragement from this fact. Press through your pride, through your unbelief, your pre-con-ceived opinions. Press through on your knees and exercise your belief in the Great Physician who will make you every whit whole. Look up and praise God— worship Him— adore Jesus—let your heart rise above the discord of the world around you and praise God for all He has done for you, and what He is going to do!

Go a little further and let your heart and mind fasten on the knowledge that you can KNOW that you are going to be healed. It is reasonable to expect it because at the heart of your faith stands a person, Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son. The only thing in existence that can limit His power is your unbelief.

Sickness is Christ's enemy. If sin had not come into the world, there would be no sickness; and when we are with Christ in glory, there will be no pain and no affliction. These came into the world as a direct result of sin. But remember

that many are sick or afflicted through no act of sin on their part, and we must never stand in judgment, pointing our finger at one who is sick, and declare that their sickness is because of sin in their life.

You may not be familiar with the expression, "slain by the Spirit," a terminology used when one receives a tremendous outpouring of the blessing of God; but this is simply a "foretaste of glory divine," an earnest of glorious resurrection power that we shall all experience when this mortal body puts on immortality. Through the price that Christ paid on Calvary, we may all have "an earnest of our inheritance," the "life also of Jesus—made manifest in our mortal flesh," until our work here on earth is finished. Because our eternal destiny concerns both spirit and body, our redemption also must be spiritual and physical. We cannot receive our full inheritance until the coming Day of Redemption, but we can enjoy the "earnest of our redemption" now. In the very same way that we experience the first fruits of our spiritual salvation, we can also receive the first fruits of our physical salvation: healing for the body.

Remember, our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is a quickening, life-giving power. Paul wrote to the church at Rome in these words: *'But if the Spirit of him (the Holy Spirit) that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal (flesh and blood) bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.' (Romans 8 :11)

The question may now justifiably arise as to whom this can be applied. Who has the right, according to the scriptures, to expect the Holy Spirit—this quickening power of God—to be exerted in his behalf in the healing of his body? Do you have such a right? Isn't that what you would like to know?

Turn to Romans, Chapter 8, Verse 9: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God (the Holy Spirit) dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ (the Holy Spirit), he is

none of his."

What Paul is saying is that every true born-again believer has the Holy Spirit dwelling within him. He may not have the Holy Spirit in His fullness, but he does have the witnessing presence of the

Holy Spirit, else there is no assurance that he is saved. So, in this plain light, it can be seen that every Christian has the right to look to Jesus Christ for the healing of his body.

To pray for healing with the faith-destroying words, "**if it be Thy Will," is like trying to grow corn without planting seed. Imagine a man standing before his garden and praying, "Lord, give me corn in my garden, if it be Thy Will." He returns six weeks later and there is no corn. He accepts as fact it was not God's Will that he should grow corn, when the real fact is that his field produced no corn because he planted no seed!

God calls His words, which are spirit and life, "seed." Corn planted in the ground produces corn, and the Word of God (His "seed") planted in hearts produces the result which the Word of God promises. It is impossible to believe God for healing until you are convinced beyond a shadow of doubt that it is His will to heal your body.

The same Lord who "wills" your salvation ("The Lord is not willing that any should perish" II Peter 3:9), also "wills" your healing ("Himself took our

infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" Matthew 8:17). Physical healing is as much a part of the atonement as is salvation for the soul.

The Psalmist in an ecstasy of praise exclaimed: *'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Who for-giveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." (Psalm 103:2, 3)

There go all our sins and our sicknesses !

Looking down through the telescope of time, the prophet Isaiah saw Christ hanging on the cross and declared: "He (Jesus) was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities . . . and with his stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5) Isaiah's prophecy is confirmed in the New Testament: "When Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them . . . and he 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," (Matthew 8:14-17) This is the "double cure" for soul and body!

The scriptures constantly confront us with the wholesomeness of Jesus. In His earthly ministry, He was often challenged by pain, sickness and disease in every conceivable form: blindness, lameness, leprosy. In no case did Jesus register a negative heart. In every case He was "moved with compassion." It was His very nature, His characteristic, to be moved with non-resistant compassion whenever and wherever He came face to face with a human need. In every situation He did something about it. In every instance He gloriously and victoriously met that need. Jesus still moves with compassion today. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." (Hebrews 13:8)

God's mighty power has never changed! Does Jesus still possess the power to work miracles, forgive sins, lift burdens, heal bodies? Surely He would have left some pronouncement before He went away to

Glory—or He would have immediately sent an inspired messenger to tell us, if He no longer could do these mighty things for us.

He gave us His Word: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," and He spoke this in connection with the

great commission: "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." (Matthew 28:18-20)

Far from suggesting a lessening of His power, Jesus magnified His continued and enlarged capacity to exercise it. Here He spoke plainly and concisely of the time AFTER His ascension when He would take His place at the Father's right hand: "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils . . . THEY SHALL LAY HANDS ON THE SICK, AND THEY SHALL RECOVER" (Mark 16:17-20). After saying this, He was taken up in the clouds. Therefore, it is evident to all that the last word from Christ was to expect the further demonstration of His power in all phases of the gospel ministry: salvation for the soul and healing for the body.

Physical healing was not unknown to Old Testament saints and while there are many instances, let us recount just a few here:

"And God said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God . . . 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) Of a certainty, God was speaking of PHYSICAL, not spiritual healing.

Read in your Bible Isaiah 53:4, 5: "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." In these glowing verses is the gospel as revealed throughout the entire Word of God: salvation for the soul and healing for the body.

Miracles of Healing

It is strangely apparent that many of God's own people shy away from any discussion of the miracle-working power of Christ; that is, from any discussion of that power in present day exercise. For the most part, they are willing to permit the record of the supernatural performances of the long ago days to stand; but they seem extremely hesitant to voice testimony that they have faith in Him for these mighty works in this modern day.

It would seem that every child of God would meet the issue with joy in view of the needs in every life; or, that they would cherish an opportunity to bring glory to the One who died for their redemption. How great a change would be effected in the church; what a challenge would be laid at the door of the unbeliever, if God's people dared to make trust a deed, and to exercise belief in faith!

Those who know me are aware of my great respect for doctors and their vast medical and scientific knowledge; and without any desire or thought to belittle their sincere efforts, let it be said that

God can and will do what no man can do in healing ALL who will come to Him by faith in the name of

His Son. He is no respecter of persons.

The power of God will become real to your heart in a beautiful way when He touches your body and the healing virtue of Jesus Christ flows through you. It will enhance the spiritual blessings which you may have enjoyed for a long time. It will enrich your testimony. It will enable you to encourage others who stand in great need. It will challenge the unsaved, and may well be the means of leading others to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, by far the greatest miracle of all.

Since God, His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit are supernatural, it is natural that we should expect God to do supernatural things for us. We can live in the state of expectancy that He will perform miracles and among them are miracles of healing for our physical bodies, healing all who will reach out and touch the hem of His garment, all who will say, "Jesus, You are all You claim to be."

The place that the Word of God needs to occupy has been yielded to tradition. Doubt has robbed many of us of the re-

wards that result when we believe God's promises. Opinions have usurped the seat of God's positive declarations. God's people have become eloquent in excuses allowing an almost total lack of evidence of a living Christ in their lives. Jesus is as willing to heal today as He was when a leper cried out to Him: "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." (Matthew 8:2, 3)

The Healing Virtue

The healing virtue, or power, that Jesus uses is the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead. To understand something of His personality and His work will make it easier for you to bring belief to the stature of faith.

Let this simple statement sink into the very deepest recesses of your heart. The Holy Spirit can and will do anything and everything for you that Jesus Himself would do were He standing there before you with His hands extended and the radiant light of glory shining from His face. In fact, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit when He went to be with the Father: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever."

That glorious promise in John 14:16 says several startling things. It shows the three members of the Godhead in divine harmony of action. It reveals that the Holy Spirit will be "another" like unto Himself, a Comforter, a Strength-ener. It shows that the Holy Spirit will continue and abide "forever."

Instead of the Great Physician having limitations of the flesh, accessible to a relatively small number, He becomes accessible to ALL of us through the Holy Spirit. The Great Physician is everywhere today. He is all-sufficient for Jesus not only has power in heaven, but all power in earth as well.

This fact alone should be enough to change our entire outlook. It is not merely a matter of getting something from God, as important as that may be to you. It is a matter of "practicing the presence of God," of recognizing, enjoying and utilizing the continual abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

Remember that the Holy Spirit is with you whether you think so or not, whether you feel His presence or are wholly unaware of it. If you are a true child of God, then you have the witness of the Holy Spirit

which is your assurance of salvation. This Holy Spirit is the same One who worked with Jesus during His earthly ministry in the performance of His healing miracles.

To understand that enables you to see what great power there is available to you now. It is the same as when Jesus walked the shores of Galilee. The only

difference is that you have MORE on which to base your faith, for His testimony has been established and corroborated thousands of times and more since then.

When Lydia touched the hem of the Lord's garment, the Word declares: "And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned about in the press, and said. Who touched my clothes?"

The virtue that "had gone out of him" was the power of the Holy Spirit flowing through His very being. It did not mean that He had any the less of that power because He had been touched by Lydia, but that another through Him had received of it.

One ordinarily thinks of virtue as being a "specific kind of goodness" or characteristic. That is true. The kind of goodness in this instance is the divine nature, the perfection, the holiness and righteousness of Almighty God. This is one point on which many fail in their understanding of how God works in the healing of the body, or in answering prayer for any benefit or blessing. They fail to see that they are asking God to touch them with the high zenith of abso-

lute purity, the power of perfect holiness. That is His virtue.

We should realize, therefore, that this requires prayerful consideration; that sincere, earnest, honest heart cleansing should precede any request of the Lord to exercise this virtue for our benefit. Far better that we come to Him pleading His mercy, "Lord, cleanse my heart with the precious blood of the Lamb. Make me pure and clean from all my sin. Make my heart right in the sight of God," than to come with the attitude that He must heal us in spite of the sinful condition of our lives, or without any desire on our part to serve Him, or to render Him glory in testimony after He does heal us. Remember, you ask for a part of God when you ask Him to give of His virtue and His power.

In other words, remember to come unto the Lord with all the heart warmth and utter reverence that you would feel if you were to suddenly find yourself confronted by the Person of the Son of God, for the Holy Spirit is God in exactly the same way as Jesus is God, and as the Father is God.

Jesus Christ now sits at the right hand of God the Father in glory. He still has

the body of Calvary and bears the scars of the crucifixion. He is our Savior, and He is in position of great High Priest.

The Holy Spirit is here. He is with us now. We can feel His presence, practice His presence, utilize His presence, praise God in His presence and live under the blood of Jesus in His presence.

Let it be said that this healing virtue is obtained through Christ and in no other way. All that is done by the Holy Spirit is done in the name of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit will definitely lead you to give Jesus all the glory for your healing after He has touched you. The Holy Spirit is carrying out the injunction of Jesus when He is with you, when He blesses you, when He keeps you, when He heals you. Remember that Jesus

sent the Holy Spirit when He returned to the Father in Heaven.

Lest someone feel that the work of healing sick bodies is given precedence over the greater ministry of the Holy Spirit in bringing conviction and conversion to the unsaved, it must be pointed out in this connection that the same power that heals sick bodies also convicts and saves. There is but one Holy Spirit and whenever and wherever He is pres-

ent for healing the sick, He is also present in revival power. In fact, many great revivals have resulted from the performance of healing miracles. That was true in the Lord's ministry to such an extent that He even told that He was healing so that they might believe also for salvation.

Church members today need to stop limiting the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and begin praying and believing God for the enriching and enlarging work of the Third Person of the Trinity in His blessed fullness. Jesus meant the Holy Spirit to be as Himself among us until the very end of this age, which will close when He returns at the Catching Up. The 'touch of the Lord' is the moving of the Holy Spirit in us, through us, and for us. He will supply any and every need in your life when you will simply believe God.

How[^] To Touch the Lord

In Mark's account of the healing of Lydia, she is referred to as a "certain woman," and so also are you a certain man or a certain woman in the sight of the Lord today. It is as though you are the only person in all the world in need of His touch, and though you may be in a vast multitude, God will single you out if you touch Him by faith.

Matthew records that Lydia "said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." Her discussion and persuasion were within her own heart. She knew in herself that Jesus would heal her, and so she was healed. This is how to "touch" the Lord: be absolutely persuaded in your own heart that He will meet your need.

Lydia had an urgent need of the Lord's help. That need was so great that all lesser things were relegated to lesser places of importance in her consideration. Her consuming thought was for the healing of her body. She was desperate about the matter. She did not approach the Lord with the idea that IF He healed her, it would be wonderful; and

that IF He did not heal her, she would not be too much surprised or disappointed. Her need was far too great for that. She already knew that medically speaking, there was no help. She went to Jesus with her whole heart and mind as well as with her sick body. That is how to touch the Lord: with a whole heart and a mind single to His performing the need of the hour.

Lydia had no other hope. It was Jesus and Jesus only who held the answer to her dilemma, and those of us who reach that place in the concentration of our need and our faith, will surely know the Lord's healing touch.

Sometimes it is not easy to reach the Lord, for there are obstacles such as Lydia knew. There was her weakness to be considered. Her strength and her life's blood were far spent. Besides, hundreds of people were milling about Jesus, each seeking for himself a better view, a clearer hearing, or a gratification of his own curiosity or heart hunger. People often stand in the way when one is trying to get closer to Jesus, close enough to reach out and touch Him. Most often they are well meaning people, but we fear what they

will think or what they

will say. Instead, we need to be encouraged to trust the Lord, and this assurance is many times found on our knees in prayer.

Press through, beloved, press through! No matter who may stand in the way, press through. You need not explain or make your determination audible, just simply and persistently press through to Jesus. Lydia made a desperate effort to reach her Lord, and He was there to honor her faith and to meet her need. She merely touched the hem of the Master's robe. She did not handle Him, she did not tug at Him, she touched His garment, but that was enough. This started the mighty power of the Holy Spirit coursing through her body and made her well and whole again. No, Lydia was not worthy to touch Jesus (and neither are we) ; yet, she knew that He forgave sins when He healed, and that He healed all manner of sickness and disease. She knew He had never turned anyone away who came to Him, and she knew to reverence Him as the Holy One, the Son of the Living God.

The Prayer of Faith

The true prayer of faith may be just that and nothing more. It would seem from the record that Jairus' word to Jesus was that kind of prayer: "My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live." Of course Jesus went and even though the little child had died before He reached her bedside, she was raised up by the power of God. No matter what the need, Jairus saw Jesus ready, willing and able to heal.

The prayer of faith is in reality the heart act of receiving that which we ask the Lord to do. "Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for . . ." (Hebrews 11:1) "Believe that ye receive it." (Mark 11:24) It is not the mere act of petitioning the Lord and certainly not the condition of begging. It is the heart act of receiving from the Lord with the positive knowledge that the material evidences are to be made known at His pleasure, for your good, and for His glory.

Perhaps you are saying at this point, "I would give anything in the world for a faith like that;" but do not start trying to measure your faith to see how great or how small it is. By the time you are finished, you may likely seem to have no faith at all. Don't try to "take your faith out" and look at it. Your faith is the result, at any given time, of your heart relation to Jesus. Surely you have experienced moments when you have exercised great faith, and other times when you feel your faith is small. Begin your season of petitioning with consecration, with praise, with worship, ****be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with THANKSGIVING let your requests be made known unto God.**" (Philippians 4:6)

The prayer of faith is not the result of having used a measuring rod to find a level on your state of belief at a given moment. Neither is the fact that at one time you received a mighty answer to prayer, definite proof that you have faith now; nor the fact that you never had an acknowledged answer to prayer, any reason to believe that you cannot pray the prayer of faith today.

Your faith is the result of your heart relation to Jesus. Surely there are times when you will exercise great faith and

other times when you feel that you have little faith. This is why the prescribed formula begins with praise, worship, consecration, thankfulness for past favors and blessings. This is why faith is great when a

spiritual revival is in progress ; why God's child, awed by the beauty of Jesus, the surety of the Word, the goodness of the Father and the sweet presence of the Spirit, can easily believe for anything and everything.

The prayer of faith, then, should be the experience of every believer, enriching his testimony, making joyous his heart, and a source of praise to Him who hears and answers prayer.

Foundation of Faith

That great prince among preachers, Charles Spurgeon, is often quoted as saying, concerning praying the prayer of faith: "Tlead a promise." His advice has been proven sound and good—it works!

The Bible is God's Word and is the foundation for faith. God said what He meant, and meant what He said; and it is true that there is a promise in the Bible to meet every need. There are many blessed promises on which to stand for the healing of the body.

Concerning the record of miracles performed by Jesus in His earthly ministry, Matthew gives as Christ's reason for doing these works: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." (Matthew 8:17) Rejoice and praise His Holy Name because He bore your infirmities and sicknesses as surely as He bore the diseases of those whom He healed near Peter's home that afternoon, and all the others who came to know the healing touch of Jesus.

Consider the statement, clear and bold, in I Peter 2:24: "Who (Jesus) 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 we are healed." By whose stripes YOU are healed. Is that not sufficient foundation for your faith?

In the Epistle of James we find many thoroughly practical and workable statements that are especially pointed toward the church at large, and in a very definite way for the entire church age. One such passage is found in James 5:7-16:

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

"Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the comxing of the Lord draw-eth nigh.

"Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

"Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of

Job, and have seen the end of the Lord: that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

"But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other

oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

"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."

Wrapped up together in such a short passage of scripture are enough Holy Spirit inspired statements that an entire revival campaign might well be based on them alone. If God's people will fulfill the injunctions of these verses, the lost will come with broken hearts, crying to be shown the way to a salvation like this.

Consider briefly what we have read in this Epistle of James: An admonition to abide patiently until the return of Jesus for the church with the promise that His coming "draweth nigh;" an urgent appeal for the manifestation of the spirit of brotherly love among believers; a challenge to exemplarship under persecution ; an exhortation against swearing; and a "prescription" for the sick in the ranks of believers during the church age. This last we will examine carefully in the light of the knowledge that it is meant for us now—today. That is a foundation for our faith.

"Is any among you afflicted? ... is any merry? ... is any sick among you?" There is fulfillment of every need in the Lord's great program, all the way from giving vent to the heart-bursting and overflowing joy of the supernal blessings of salvation, to the lifting of affliction and the healing of sicknesses. Whatever is the need, Jesus meets that need.

The Bible Prescription

Giving rightful credence to the intent of the Word in the passage quoted earlier in James, let us examine the "prescription" given for the sick and afflicted among the ranks of believers :

"Let him pray." This presents the thought that the needy one is going to ascertain his present relationship with his Lord. If there is something in his heart that might prevent the Lord from healing him, the Holy Spirit has the opportunity to convict him of that fact and lead him to repentance, thus permitting him to make the next step with the assurance that there is nothing between his soul and the Savior.

In prayer, the believer has the further opportunity to deepen his consecration, and to progress in his experience in the Holy Spirit. His heart will come under the anointing of the Holy Spirit for the praise and adoration that will cause him to lean heavily on the Lord for his healing.

The believer will renew his covenants with the Lord. He will make a new covenant, vowing to be more energetic in his

service to God after receiving his healing. He will be more faithful in discharging his obligations to the Lord and His work at large.

Thus, in his season of prayer, the believer will find his heart prepared for the other phases of the healing "prescription" recorded by James.

"Let him call for the elders of the church." Those ministers of the gospel who may be known to the believer, or in whose ministry he has found especial blessing, will be called to him, if he is unable to go to the place of worship. They will join together, and with him, pray and believe God in the name of Jesus to heal him. In connection with this season of prayer, the elders are to anoint the believer with oil in the name of the Lord.

Anointing With Oil

There is blessed significance in the use of oil (olive oil) in the scriptures. The holy things of the tabernacle were anointed with oil to signify a separation for God's use and service, as in Exodus 30 :25. It was used to signify a place of special blessing as when Jacob anointed the stones after the divine revelation in his dream, recorded in Genesis 28. That which was anointed was to become the object of divine protection, as in Psalm 105:15: "Touch not mine anointed." Oil was used as a type of great spiritual blessing: "Thou anointest my head with oil." (Psalm 23:5)

It is not strange, therefore, that oil is used by James as a type of the Holy Spirit in the "prescription." The Holy Spirit was evidenced in the initial creation ; the Spirit of the Lord rested upon the prophets of old; Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost; He was the virtue of Christ's miracles in His earthly ministry; it is the unpardonable sin to blaspheme Him; and it is the Holy Spirit who will lift the believers in the rapture when Jesus comes again.

Do we not see, then, something of the meaning of the anointing oil as used by James? It is the calling and the recognition of the Holy Spirit in action. It is the testimony in connection with the healing of the sick and the afflicted that God alone is given the glory for the miracle wrought in answer to the prayer of faith.

It is not an over-statement to say that this is one of the sacred ordinances of the Church of Jesus Christ. The pitiable and tragic fact that it is neglected, or disbelieved, does not in the least alter its provisions, and its Bible-founded factual-ity. It is a privilege, through Calvary, because it is by "His stripes we are healed." There are many, a great many, today who have believed these words and have been blessedly healed.

The Healing Testimony

In a large measure, God's plan for the dissemination of the gospel message since the founding of the church has been the ministry of the testimony. It seems that God has ordained that word of mouth, the printed page, and any other means at hand, should be used to tell men what the Lord has done. Most of us have been saved because of the prayers and testimonies of others. What is true in the matter of soul winning, is also true with regard to the healing testimony; others are led to a sharing of the blessing.

There is a real "art" in giving a testimony. Perhaps the easiest way of all is to stand in a group of sympathetic and interested believers and tell how the Lord answered prayer for the healing of the body.

While it is imperative that we tell it far and wide that Jesus still saves through the blood, and that He still heals sick bodies and performs miracles in answer to the prayer of faith, we must be constantly in prayer for two things:

pray that God will send the "seasons" of testimony, and then that He will give us the special anointing" that we need to take full and rich advantage of all the opportunities the Holy Spirit opens to us. In that way, the matter of testifying becomes a true partnership between the believer and the Holy Spirit. That is the unbeatable combination for soul winning and faith ministry.

Let it be stressed emphatically that we are not to hide the light of our testimony under the "bushel." The story must be told, and there have been many who did not keep their healing because they did not keep their covenant with the Lord in their testimony.

Perhaps, too, it will be well to state in this connection that a dogmatic attitude defeats the purpose of the testimony. Any effort to make a poor sick man feel that he is committing a terrible sin because he has a doctor or takes medication is nothing short of fanaticism. A sick man needs help, not condemnation. His heart needs to be made tender, and not rebellious. He needs to know that there is healing for him in Jesus' name, not to be made to feel like a sinner because he didn't know how to believe God.

There are many fine doctors, and they have done, and are doing, great humanitarian work in the world. They are doing much to alleviate suffering and it would be a falsehood to say that they are not instruments in God's hands and vitally needed. Many are alive today because of the kindly, sincere and intelligent care given by a good doctor or nurse. The Christian believer should be the first to recognize and appreciate this fact. What a tragedy it would be if there were no doctors, no hospitals, no medical skills to aid the suffering of mankind.

But there is another way, a way for one who will put his whole trust in Jesus : the miraculous way. There is a way when men have done all they can and the afflicted one turns to Jesus in desperation as Lydia did. He heals all who come to Him by faith.

Just remember, when the Lord has healed you, be a faithful steward of your testimony. Take advantage of your special knowledge from experience of the Master's touch. Tell it, tell it to the great and small, tell it wherever you go. One day you may come to realize that the best part of your healing—as your salvation—is the privilege of using your blessings

to reach the hearts of others with His Word. •

Conclusion

In closing, let me say that this is not an effort to make an issue of divine healing. The issue is faith in God, whether or not we take Him at His Word.

From today on, keep so close to Jesus in Bible reading, in prayer, in testimony and in the fellowship of believers that faith becomes the order of your every day. What may now seem beyond the realm of plausibility, or even possibility, can become the general state of heart expectancy. You will no longer be surprised to see God do great and wonderful things in answer to prayer; but rather, you will be bitterly disappointed if the time comes when you do not expect Him to do mighty things.

Having known the Lord's healing touch, you can never be quite the same again. While His Spirit was effecting a change in your physical condition, you will find that He was also doing something to your heart. You have become the steward of another great blessing. You have been given another link of kinship with the blessed saints of long ago, who learned to trust God with every

care. You have been given another assurance that Jesus lives, that He does have *all power."

In following Jesus and in growing in His grace, within your heart will re-echo words something like those Lydia heard: "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague."

(Editor's Note: Years after Kathryn Kuhlman wrote the preceding chapters, God gave her an understanding of yet greater spiritual depths and a realization of the vast mercy and love of God transcending all human comprehension. His compassion knows no bounds or limits — His desire to reach hearts of men and women goes BEYOND the scope of His promises, beyond the prescribed methods of healing. For this reason, we are taking the liberty to quote from a later book by Kathryn Kuhlman, "God Can Do It Again," written in 1969.)

It is because of God's great love, compassion and mercy, that He gives anything to us. Often we lose sight of the fact that not one of us can claim any righteousness of our own, not one is worthy of the smallest blessing, but we are the receivers of His blessing because

of His mercy and compassion. Healing is the sovereign act of God.

When I was very young, I could have given you all the answers. My theology was straight and I was sure that if you followed certain rules, worked hard enough, obeyed all the commandments, and had yourself in a certain spiritual state, God would heal you.

Lo and behold, my theology came tumbling down and was crushed into a thousand pieces when one day a man who had just entered the auditorium during a miracle service stood silently against the back wall, and after not more than five minutes, walked boldly to the stage and freely admitted, "My ear has just opened and I do not believe!"

Although I questioned him repeatedly, he never recanted. Seeing the crowd, out of curiosity, he came in not knowing whether it was an auction or some kind of giveaway program. He was standing there as a spectator and after much questioning, I found out that he had not been to church for more than twenty-five years and had put himself in the category of an atheist.

It is possible for me to relate many cases where people have been healed who

were amazed, who freely admitted that they did not expect to be healed, who sobbingly cried, "I cannot believe it—I cannot believe it." Until we have a way of defining it, all that I can tell you is that these are mercy healings. They have been healed through the mercy of the Lord.

We forget the mercy of God—we forget His great compassion—we forget that we do not earn our blessings; neither do we merit His goodness. Were it not for the mercy and the compassion and the grace and the love of God, not one of us would be a Christian and the same holds true when it comes to physical healing. How often I have thought that God cares very little about man's theology, and we are so prone to get dogmatic about things that we know so little about!

There are some things in life which will always be unanswerable because we see through a glass darkly. God knows the beginning to the end, while all we can do is catch a glimpse of the present, and a distorted glimpse at that.

In 1865, when President Lincoln was assassinated—the great, patient, mighty Lincoln—an excited throng of thousands gathered in the streets of Washington,

They were utterly bewildered, going to and fro as sheep without any shepherd. They were overcome by questions and emotions incident to that tragic hour. But in the midst of the tragic turmoil a man appeared on the steps of the Capitol and said, *'God reigns and the government at Washington still lives.'" The crowds dispersed quietly.

The right words had been said: *'GOD REIGNS!'"

A Message to the readers of this book:

Many of the radio messages by Kathryn Kuhlman are still available on cassette tape. If you desire any of her talks, you may request a listing of subjects by writing to:

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