

## **SICKNESS: ENDURED, CURED, OR IGNORED?**

(What should the Christian's attitude be?)



**TEXT:** **2 Corinthians 4:17-18** *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

**INTRO:** Who among humans have not experienced physical pain, illness, or injury? What Christian is there who has not had even one day's sickness, ache, or pain? What should his attitude be? Endure it, seek a cure for it or simply ignore it?

Should the fact that we have guardian angels and a concerned God watching over us exempt believers from tragedies, disease, accidents? Do the words: **"Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sickness," (Matthew 8:17)** mean that Christ died for our sins and our sickness?

Are we out of the will of God if we have illness, deformity, pain, and other maladies plaguing *us*? *Should we perhaps claim the Old Testament promise to the Israelites that if we keep His commandments and statutes that he will "put none of these diseases upon thee..."? (Exodus 15:26)* Man, in general, and Christians specifically, are often plagued with everything from cancer to the common cold, from deformed limbs to deficient minds, from loss of sight to loss of legs, from measles to myopia, etc., etc.

Is healing guaranteed by God, His Son, His Word? Is the age of miracles past? Is there no ray of light for the hopeless, hapless, and helpless? My dear wife suffered with excruciation pain for the last decade+ of her life. Was she out of God's will? NO!

Are there men with Divine gifts who with the "laying on of hands," blessing of handkerchiefs, anointing with holy oil or water (or vinegar or peanut butter – why not?), whose shadows falling upon the afflicted will raise them from their helpless state? Are there men with so great faith and power who merely strolling through a hospital corridor would empty the sick beds? Are there specially anointed or gifted men (and women!) of God who have superhero "*powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men*" – who can heal bodies, restore limbs, raise the dead, give sight to the blind, cure cancer, colds, coronary and cranial problems? Can they lay their power- full hands on the abdomen of a pregnant woman and guarantee a perfectly formed baby at birth? Or, as one "Evangelist-Healer" claims, may we expect God to fill the cavities of diseased teeth!? What are the answers? We have only one source of infallible authority—the Holy Scriptures!!

**Remember this maxim:** We must measure our experiences (and that of others) by the Word of God, not the Word of God by our experiences!

### **I. HEALING:**

A. Why the Need?

1. Because of the ravages of sin:

- a. All decay, destruction, disease, and death stem from sin.
- b. All harm, hurt and horrible disaster originated with man's fall.

**ILLUS:** *John 9:1-7 And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.*

Note some interesting things in this passage. (1) A recognition on the part of the people present that sin and sickness were related (2) A statement by Jesus that an affliction is not necessarily caused by immediate personal sin (3) That sin and sickness (the effect of sin) may bring glory to God! (4) That blindness and the Light of the world were mutually exclusive (or that sin and sickness are

incompatible with the Son) (5) That means ("**clay**") may properly be used in healing physical infirmity – even by the Great Physician (6) That obedience to Christ can remove sin and its effects.

**QUOTE:** Christ "always assumes that disease is a part of the kingdom of evil, and never once does he give the slightest sign to the contrary. His underlying idea can only be that God is always on the side of health rather than disease, and that where the latter triumphs, something is as it ought not to be." Faith Healing: Fact or fiction, John Pitts

## 2. Because of the weakness of the flesh: (Degeneracy)

**ILLUS:** "The wages of sin is death" and the death process begins at birth. Our bodies decay and deteriorate, organs fail to function, microbes infect us, we, in effect, wear-out! Thus, the weakness of the flesh constitutes the need for healing.

### B. What Are the Sources?

#### 1. Divine:

##### a. This study is not a denial of Divine healing:

**ILLUS:** By the term "Divine healing" here is meant, healing without the use of natural means and a direct intervention of God in relation to a physical affliction.

##### b. This study is not a denial of Scriptural accounts of gifts:

- 1) Miracles abound today as Jesus predicted: (John 14:12)
- 2) Every believer is a miracle.
- 3) Every answered prayer is a miracle.
- 4) Believers experience miracles in their lives in many areas.
- 5) Healing of the body seems to pale by comparison with other miracles.
- 6) Healing miracles, however, do occur today.
- 7) Healing by God must be considered a "gift" today: (James 1:17)
- 8) There are various "gifts" given for the church today: (Ephesians 4:11, Romans 12:4-8)

**ILLUS:** The Scriptures declare that certain gifts are permanent while others are temporary. For example, who among us would claim to be a "prophet" or "priest" in the Old Testament sense? Who today has the ability to pen new Scripture? Which of us would care to duplicate the feat of Peter walking on the water? To say then that all the gifts mentioned in the New Testament are available for us today is demonstrated preposterous. However, to deny that all the gifts mentioned as Divinely imparted have disappeared, is equally preposterous.

##### c. This study asserts that God has, does and will continue to heal:

##### 1) Old Testament examples of healing are few and two-fold:

- a) God healing directly without human agency (II Kings 20:5,6)
- b) God healing indirectly through human agents (I Kings 17:8-24)

##### 2) New Testament examples of healing are frequent and manifold:

- a) Christ's healing ministry was to demonstrate His divine origin and authority (Acts 2:22), not simply to relieve suffering or to demonstrate His love for humanity.
- b) Apostolic healing was to confirm the message of the Messiah in the absence of a completed revelation (Hebrews 2:3,4; Mark 16:18-20; 1 Cor. 13:8-10)
- c) Early church healing diminished rapidly as the New Testament was completed and was primarily for the benefit of unbelieving Jews (Matthew 10:5-8; I Cor. 14:21,22)
- d) Present-day healing is a result of prayer to God, Who delights in giving us our requests when they are:

- according to His will (John 15:7)
- to bring glory to Him.
- to give evidence of His power in our lives (Matt. 7:7).
- in response to unusual fervency in prayer (James 5:16).

**ILLUS:** Note the passage most frequently cited as the pattern for healing today in **James 5:13-20**. 1) v. 13 The afflicted one is to pray; 2) v. 14 The sick one is to call for the "elders" (Pastors) of the church. 3) v.14 They are to pray & anoint (literally "rub" or "lubricate") the sick. 4) v.15 The sick is guaranteed healing and cleansing from sin. 5) v.16 Again sickness and sin are related. 6) v.17,18 The power of prayer illustrated 7) v.20 Sin mentioned again in connection with the illness. When all the conditions herein set forth are met, healing will occur!

2. Human:

- a. The powers of the mind over the body are only partially understood today.

**QUOTE:** "The case of...St. Francis of Assisi is well known. By a process of *self-hypnotism*, he reproduced in his body...the five bleeding wounds of Christ...the fact that the mental process of hypnotic suggestion is able to do these things, and that is capable of being used as an anesthetic, shows that the mind can influence physical condition." IBID., John Pitts

- b. The extent of psychosomatic illness is little realized by most of us.

**QUOTE:** Martin Luther remarked: "*Heavy thoughts bring on physical maladies; when the soul is oppressed, so is the body.*" "Competent medical authority has stated that no physical tissue is wholly removed from the impact of powers that are non-physical." "Blindness & deafness, abdominal tumors & limb paralysis even pregnancy, can be simulated by the body as the result of purely mental illness." IBID., John Pitts

- c. The claims of cures must be examined in the light of this factor:

- 1) The power of eloquence can convince audiences.
- 2) The power of emotion can stir audiences.

**QUOTE:** "The strains of the last hymn had just died away, and the theater was so quiet you could have heard a pin drop." In Carey's words: "Miss (Kathryn) Kuhlman (Pentecostal 'Faith Healer') raised her hand for a benediction, but she didn't speak a word, and my heart sank. At that moment, all my hope was gone. Then, very slowly, her hand came down, she looked directly at me, and pointing a finger straight at me she said, 'Are you from Florida?' My hopes soared as I replied, 'Yes.'" Then, Carey went on, she asked me to stand up and I said, "I can't"- and she said, firmly, 'IN THE NAME OF JESUS, STAND UP AND LOOK UP, AND WALK!'

Carey started to get up on his crutches. The aisles were narrow, and he had on a big heavy overcoat. It was ten degrees below zero that day in Butler, and coming from Florida, he wasn't used to cold like that. Attempting to get down that narrow aisle, bundled in an overcoat, paralyzed and manipulating crutches on a slanted floor – trying not to step on people's feet. It was no mean task to look up, but somehow he managed to achieve it.

"All of a sudden," relates Carey, "Miss Kuhlman said: 'Take that right crutch away.' I tried it and it worked: my leg bore my weight – and I remember being amazed how she knew this would be the case."

At that moment the pain in his body instantly vanished. "It was like a light going out," Carey described, "or like ink spreading on a blotter."

Realizing that his one leg was successfully bearing his weight, Carey dropped the second crutch and stood alone and unaided.

"Miss Kuhlman then told me to come up on the platform," he relates. "The steps were very narrow and very steep – about twelve of them in all. Two big, strong gentlemen stepped up to my side to help me, but I didn't need help. I walked on the platform like a bird flying up. I seemed hardly to touch the floor, and I didn't walk toward Miss Kuhlman, I ran." Was he surprised at his healing? "No, I was not," he replies in a firm tone. "This is what I came for." Was he amazed when he found himself walking without crutches? "No, I was not," he responds. "I expected to walk without them."

And this is the answer. I BELIEVE IN MIRACLES, Kathryn Kuhlman

- 3) The power of suggestion can stimulate audiences.

**ILLUS:** The "suggestion" that spirituality in a given fellowship may be measured by speaking in tongues or in having an experience in healing, the person responds by conforming to what is expected. Many so-called "healings" are simply the result of psychosomatic illnesses being relieved by removing the cause through psychological means and methods.

3. Satanic:

- a. Satan attempts to duplicate God's power – but he is a counterfeiter:  
(Ex.7:10-12; 20-22; 8:6-8; II Cor. 11:13,14; II Thes. 2:9; Ex. 7:11,12; Rev. 13:15)
- b. Satanic influence often identified with the things of the Lord:  
(Matt. 16:21-23; Matt. 7:22,23; Rev. 13:11-14; Rev. 13:3-8)

**ILLUS:** In both TestamentS illustrations of worship or religious practices are directed toward "a god" but not always toward the God of Heaven. The 'god of this world' desires worship and receives it by doing miracles to make men believe in false and unscriptural doctrine. The way to guard against being deceived is to know the Scriptures and what they teach! ("**Search the Scriptures,**" "**compare Scripture with Scripture,**" "**Study to shew thyself approved,**" "**rightly dividing the Word of Truth,**" "be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of the apostles of the Lord and Savior.")

**SUMMARY ON HEALING:** There are three kinds of healing: (1) Divine (2) Human and (3) Satanic. When God heals, it is always in accord with His Word, complete and instantaneous. (However, the normal means of healing thru doctor, medication, and normal bodily processes are also to be considered "Divine Healing" although not "miraculous.")

Remember that the mind may cause disease, etc. and the mind may also cure disease, when the conditions are right.

Satanic healing occurs with one objective in mind, i.e., to gain a following away from God and toward a person (Healer), thing (Shrine, image, medal, etc.) or Satan himself! ***Satan usually works through religion.*** He is a deceiver and a counterfeiter! Service to Satan is the price tag on Satanic healing.

## **II. HEALERS:**

**NOTE:** Miraculous healing always has a special purpose. The miraculous is the exception rather than the rule. Usually God deals through established rules of His creation. When He directly intervenes in the affairs of men and imposes a higher law we call it a "miracle."

### A. In Old Testament times:

1. Mesopotamian: crude acquaintance with the anatomy or internal organs; vegetarians in diet; sickness and death thought sent by the gods; medical treatment in the hands of priests; divination used for diagnosis (Ezek. 2:21-23); treatment partly magical and religious with incantation (Dan. 2:7-12), etc.

**QUOTE:** It is interesting that the oldest cuneiform texts and tablets from excavations where the earliest information regarding medical practice is derived comes from the Tigris and Euphrates area in the period before Abraham till the Babylonian Captivity of Israel. In other words "It is contemporaneous with nearly the whole of the Old Testament." THE BIBLE AND MODERN MEDICINE, A. Rendle Short

2. Egyptian: a clean people with a meat and vegetable diet (pork excepted); gallstones, arthritis, mastoids, paralysis, fractures, etc. have been noted by archaeologists; a mixture of magic and quackery prevailed in treatment with the source of disease being ascribed to evil spirits which had to be driven out.

**QUOTES:** "To prevent the hair from turning gray, anoint it with the blood of a black calf which has been boiled in oil, or with the fat of a rattlesnake." This prescription comes from the famous Papyrus Ebere a medical book of Egypt written about 1552 B.C. Also in this book, a prescription for those going bald: "...apply a mixture of six fats namely those of the horse, the hippopotamus, the crocodile, the cat, the snake, and ibex." A ladies hairdressing "consisted of equal parts of a heel of an Abyssinian greyhound, date blossoms, and asses' hoofs, boiled in oil." NONE OF THESE DISEASES, S. I. McMillen, M.D.

One prescription for treatment of trembling limbs was application of the "fruit of the Dom Palm, garlic, honey, copper, verdigris, then put a dog's hide on him. Do not press the hand on him." IBID., A. Rendle Short

3. Grecian: Here we have a different story in comparison to other pagan societies; Hippocrates, the father of medicine, separated medicine from magic; his basic prescriptions were simple and sensible – rest, diet, fresh air, massage, bloodletting, etc.; wine and boiled water were used in treating wounds.

### 4. Jewish:

- a. Non-Biblical Data: Certain diseases were recognized, fevers were diagnosed and when three successive cases were diagnosed, the horn (Shophar) was blown, for diphtheria the warning was given for only one case; regular treatment for wounds was wine, oil and bandaging; there was mention of amputations and what we now know as caesarean section in other than normal births.
- b. Biblical Data: Midwifery was in the hands of women and the head midwives in Egypt at the time of Pharaoh's slaughter of male infants are noted for their courage. (Ex. 1:15-21) Diagnosis was in the hands of the priests primarily. He could diagnose, prescribe "ablutions" and "washings," quarantine, etc. (This is logical since sin is the source of sickness!)

**ILLUS.:** Prevention and treatment of disease was often a part of revelation for God's people. How unlike the heathen. The Jews were a washing people (Jer. 2:22); they had specific instructions regarding water purity (Lev. 11:29-26); sewage disposal handled properly avoided typhoid fever and dysentery (Deut. 14:21; Lev. 7:22-26; Lev. 11:9-23); strict laws of chastity and sexual morality were most valuable health aids.

**QUOTE** "Studies indicate that Jewish women in Israel have a very low incidence of cancer of the cervix, possibly because of the virtually universal circumcision of males in that country. Similarly, there is a low incidence of cancer (in the male organs) in the U.S. in men circumcised at birth." THE DOCTORS, Martin L. Gross

Miraculous healing was rare in Old Testament times. God healed Abimelech and his family (Gen. 20:17), Miriam of leprosy (Num. 12:13-15) and Hezekiah (II Kings 20:5) all without human instrumentality. Three resurrections are recorded (I Kings 17:8-24, II Kings 4:8-37, 13:20,21)

B. In New Testament Times:

1. Non-Biblical Data: The heathen countries of the New Testament continued many of the religious-quackery of Old Testament times, the mumbo-jumbo and magic, the ritualism and ridiculous treatments continued.
2. Biblical Data:
  - a. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, was strictly a preacher – not a miracle worker.
  - b. Jesus Christ, performed no miracles until the beginning of His public ministry at age 30. At that time He was specially anointed by God the Holy Spirit, and began a three and half year period marked by both miracles of nature and miracles of healing.

**THE PURPOSE FOR THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST WAS TO AUTHENTICATE HIM AS THE MESSIAH TO THE JEWS!**

**QUOTE:** "We are more inclined to accept the miracles because we believe in Christ than we are to believe in Christ because we accept the miracles. But it was different for His contemporaries. For the men and women who were healed by the Great Physician, and for those who witnessed the healings, what happened next must have borne testimony to the fact that He was God's Promised One. Were not all His miracles... the mighty acts of a Unique Personality? Did they not play some part in leading impetuous Peter to exclaim, "***Thou art the Christ, the son of the Living God,***" and Doubting Thomas to make the greatest confession of Christian faith ever made: "***My Lord and my God?***" FAITH HEALING: FACT OR FICTION? John Pitts

**THE MINISTRY OF THE SAVIOR WAS CONFIRMED BY "SIGNS & WONDERS."**

**ILLUS:** The healing ministry of Christ was simply to confirm His Messianic claim! He knew, better than anyone else that miracles attract fans, but do not produce faith. For 3 ½ years, Jesus produced miracle after miracle yet even His disciples fled at His crucifixion. **LOOK UP JOHN 2:23-25.** Faith must stand alone or it is not faith. *Faith is itself the evidence of the unseen. Physical phenomena cannot be a part of it. (Heb. 11:1,6)*

- c. The Apostles were given the power of miracles, including healing. **(Luke 9:1,3,6)**

**THE PURPOSE FOR APOSTOLIC MIRACLES WAS TO AUTHENTICATE THEM AS MESSENGERS SENT FROM GOD AND TO PRESENT CHRIST AS MESSIAH. THEIR HEALING MINISTRY WAS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR MESSAGE.**

**THE MESSAGE OF THE APOSTLES WAS CONFIRMED BY "SIGNS & WONDERS." (Acts 14:3; 15:12)**

**ILLUS:** Note that the Apostles took no offerings, sold no "healing cloths," "bottles of anointing oil," etc. and never performed for money. **(Acts 8:20-23)**

Note, too, that their miracles *always succeeded*. They never had to excuse themselves because the person to be healed "didn't have enough faith." **(Heb. 2:4)**

Note finally that *as the New Testament neared completion there are fewer and fewer cases of miracle working*. Paul, who had the Spirit-given gift of healing, had a physical ailment, left fellow-workers sick, prescribed a home remedy for a Pastor-friend, etc. Why did he not heal himself and others? The reason is obvious. **The gifts diminished as the revelation of God to man was completed.** The need was gone, so the gifts died out! (We will deal with the "prayer of faith" (Jas.5) and its relation to healing later on.)

C. In Church History:

1. As indicated above the supernatural "sign-gifts," including healing (and the ultimate healing, that is, "raising from the dead") *died out with the foundation of the church complete and the canon of Scripture closed:* (Eph. 2:20; I Cor. 13:8-13)
2. However, healing within the body of believers has continued throughout church history
  - a. When Scriptural conditions are met and when it is God's will, folks have been and are being healed in this church age.
    - 1) Intercessory prayer: (Heb. 11:11-13)
    - 2) Confession of sin: (James 5:16)
    - 3) Use of means: (medicine, physicians, etc.) (James 5:14; I Tim. 5:23; Is. 38:21; Col.4:14)

**ILLUS:** Many "miracles" and "healing" have occurred down thru the centuries of church history, which would fill many volumes, wherein God either directly through supernatural means cured illnesses or indirectly thru natural means did the same. In any event, God can and often does heal. But it is not a question of what He CAN do but whether He is in every case willing to do. Though Christ is "***the same yesterday, today and forever***" He is not bound to always heal, raise folks from the dead, etc.

- b. Sometimes God heals even when through our ignorance, indifference, or even indolence; we do not meet Scriptural conditions.
3. Church history is also filled with this or that group, sect or denomination, which majored on "healing" and placed an undue and unscriptural significance on this one aspect of the Christian life:
- a. Every "Christian" group: Catholics, Protestants, the sects, cults, and isms have all had their share of "miraculous healing" and "faith healers"
    - 1) Catholicism lays claim to miraculous healings through such curious media as the bones or relics of 'saints'; the ministry of 'saints'; miraculous medals and amulets; pieces of the cross; various healing shrines (such as St. Anne de Beaupre, in Quebec, Canada and Lourdes in South France, Fatima, etc.), prayers to the 'saints', Mary, Joseph, Christ, the Father, etc.

**NOTE:** On Nov. 11, 1970 on CBS News (Man and His Religion) WTOP Radio, Washington, D.C. came the report of a 12-year-old Roman Catholic girl called "Holy Monica." Born with a birth defect (un-named) – the next day, no sign of defect. At an early age strange occurrences began taking place when she was present; articles in a room would float, or materialize out of nothing; friends testified that she would appear in 2 or more places at the same instant in time. Today, the faithful flock to her home in Mexico City with pleas to her, "Holy Monica – Heal us!" Many "cures" have been reported as she made the sign of the cross from her window to the multitudes!

- 2) Protestants especially Pentecostal or Holiness groups believe strongly in "faith healing" and "faith healers."

**ILLUS:** All the "Healers" claim a special "gift" or "anointing" of God's Spirit for this specialized ministry which, they believe, has come to them from the New Testament times in a sort of Apostolic succession of supernatural sign gifts! Oral Roberts (and now his son Richard) are perhaps the best known of all the Protestant healers and perhaps the most "respectable" (Oral Roberts moved from Pentecostalism to the United Methodist Church and has a 53 million dollar university in Tulsa, Oklahoma.) Next to Roberts in popularity, until his recent death from alcoholism (!) was the flashy, super-salesman and showman, "God's Man of Faith and Power – A.A. Allen"! This list goes on and on with such names as Miss Kathryn Kuhlman, Leroy Jenkins, Rev. "Ike", Radio-Pastor David Epley, Brother Al, Peter Popov, Benny Hinn, etc., etc. (More about some of these under our next heading: Hypocrisy.)

- 3) Among the sects we have the Christian Scientists who insist that sickness is non-reality and death is unreal (though their founder Mrs. Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy [married four times!] has long since passed away to somewhere!?) and the Rosicrucians who claim healing through mind over matter exercises and mystical experiences related to the "Secrets" of the Pyramids and ancient Egypt, etc., etc.
- 4) Other isms and denominations more or less associated with "Christianity" have their own brand of healings.

**ILLUS:** In recent years the cold, dead, non-orthodox, old-line denominational churches have experienced an upsurge in "sign-gift" manifestation, E.S.P., tongues, and healing. The Episcopalians have special healing services at stated times in many churches (*12:10 pm every Tuesday* [!], Annapolis, Md.) "Cho Yonggi, a converted Buddhist and co-Pastor of the Assemblies of God Evangelistic Center in Seoul (Korea), gave this account of his healing from tuberculosis: 'I saw the Lord...and I said to Him, 'Yes, Jesus, I will preach your Gospel.' I tried to touch His feet. As soon as I touched His clothes, what seemed like a thousand volts of electricity flowed through me and I began to speak in other tongues. When I awakened from this vision, I was a changed man. Right away I went to the hospital and had x-ray pictures taken. There was no sign of my TB at all.'" THE MODERN TONGUES MOVEMENT, Robert G. Gromacki, P. 40

**TRANS:** Compare some of the above with the New Testament narratives of miraculous healing! How out of line one seems alongside the other. Thus we move from HEALINGS to the third heading:

### **III. HYPOCRISY:**

- A. Failures A Problem Among "Healers";

**ILLUS:** John Pitts (IBID.) states: "*It is true that in medicine and surgery the successes outweigh the failures many times over and that with respect to faith healing and spiritual healing there are many more failures than there are successes.*" His statement is undoubtedly true if we are speaking of "faith-healing" as usually thought of. But, biblically speaking God is in back of all healing and He never fails! He never makes mistakes or does a halfway job! And this can be a measure of the "faith healer" of past, present, or future. If he is really "anointed" to "raise the sick" – why do his failures exceed his success?

- 1. Jesus never failed to heal anyone when that was His purpose!
- 2. The only failure recorded of the Apostles had to do with demon possession.
- 3. Considering the numbers in present day healing lines failures exceed successes.
  - a. But what of the successes?

**QUOTE :** "Oral Roberts, in addition to being a very fluent speaker, has a magnetic personality. The type of service in which he is the central figure is supercharged with emotionalism, and expectation on the part of the vast congregation is immense. In such an atmosphere, and in such a context, the most amazing things can happen, as any psychologist will testify. Is it to be wondered that Oral Roberts seems to cure functional disorders – hysterical deafness, hysterical stuttering, hysterical paralysis, and the like? Are any of these cures permanent? And are there any medically proven cases of the healing of organic diseases? And if any genuine healing takes place, is it the result of the workings of the Divine Spirit or is it the outcome of mass hypnotic suggestion?" IBID., John Pitts

Perhaps a more potent and living leader among the charismatics and "healers" today is the flamboyant Benny Hinn. In his emotionally charged services, Hinn blows on people from across the platform, or simply touches them or taps them on the forehead and they are instantly "slain in the Spirit" (a totally unscriptural concept!). He also claims many healings, but again without documentation of the origin of the illnesses or the permanency of healing.

b. How can they be categorized?

- 1) Psychological or psychosomatic
- 2) Mass-hypnosis or auto-suggestion

**QUOTE:** "People frequently speak of 'faith cures' when they are referring to what should be called 'suggestion cures', and so give a religious turn to something that could have no religious significance whatsoever." IBID., John Pitts

- 3) Mind over matter or self-cures (Christian Science)
- 4) Satanic or demonic activity:

- a) Exodus 7:10-12
- b) Exodus 7:20-22
- c) II Thes. 2:9-10
- d) Rev. 12:12-13
- e) Rev. 13:15
- f) I John 4:1

c. Which "cures" are of God and which are not?

- 1) Biblical Principle #1 – Does the cure glorify God or exalt man? (John 9:3)
- 2) Biblical Principle #2 – Is financial gain involved? (Acts 8:20 –23)
- 3) Biblical Principle #3 – Is the "cure" complete? (Acts 5:16)

**QUOTE:** The tapes of radio and TV broadcasts of so-called "faith-healers" are edited so only the apparent successes are aired. Hear the testimony of one who was formerly identified with the famous MacAuley Mater St. Mission, Miss May Wyburn Fitch. She writes: "I have attended 14 Healing Campaigns ranging from 2 to 9 weeks in length...I have attended between 300 and 350 meetings, in most of them being on the platform where I could observe all that was taking place. I have dealt with hundreds of sufferers before and after they were anointed and prayed for and I have assisted the evangelists as they anointed and prayed for the sick...I do not say that no one has ever been healed in the hundreds of services I have attended. *I can and do say most emphatically that I have never seen any evidence of healing...*Of the hundreds, yes, I believe I could safely say thousands of deaf, dumb, blind and crippled I have seen anointed, *I have never seen one healed or even definitely improved.* There have been a few, a very few, who have said they could hear 'a little better' or see 'a little better' but at the end of the campaign they were not improved. Is this the way God heals?" A.J. POLLOCK, HEALINGS & TONGUES: ARE THEY OF GOD?

- 4) Biblical Principle #4 – Are there any failures? (Matthew 8:16,17)

**ILLUS:** Oral Roberts indicts himself and other "healers" on this score when he says: "If God has ever healed one person, he will heal two; if he heals two; he will heal four; if four, then eight; and if eight, He will heal all who will believe." IF YOU NEED HEALING DO THESE THINGS, Oral Roberts (Yet, he admits to many failures!)

- 5) Biblical Principle #5 – Can even "hopeless" cases be included? (Matthew 9:35)
- 6) Biblical Principle #6 – Can the ultimate sickness (death) be cured? (John 11:43,44)
- 7) Biblical Principle #7 – Can severed limbs be restored? (Luke 22:49–51)

**QUOTE:** Edgar Cayce, the "Psychic" or "medium" is said to have "cured over 14,000 people while he was 'asleep'" (in a trance!) VENTURE INWARD, Hugh Lynn Cayce

B. Faith As a Prerequisite For Healing:

**QUOTES:** Faith healers excuse their failures to impart healing by stating that the person didn't have enough "faith". Oral Roberts says "We must have personal active faith in God for our own healing."

\_"In his book If You Need Healing Do These Things, Oral Roberts said, 'Have faith in God and you WILL be healed' (Page 63). He does not take into consideration the will of God, or the age of the person. If he were right, as long as a person had faith in God, he

would keep on being raised up, and never die. (!) With this kind of teaching, Oral Roberts and his kind had thousands of followers...A great following does not prove a man's teachings to be right (II Peter 2:2)." THE 9 GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT ARE NOT IN THE CHURCH TODAY, B.F. Cate

1. "Faith healers" need an out for their failures, so they blame them on the person seeking help and health.
2. Jesus often healed whether or not the person seeking had "healing faith" C.F. (John 5:1-13, Luke 22:47-53)

**ILLUS:** If "faith" is needed for sickness to be healed, then there is no use praying for babies, unconscious people, or the insane, because they cannot exercise faith.

3. The Apostles healed when no evidence of "healing faith" existed: (Acts 28:2,7-10)

**QUOTES:** "In the majority of the healing miracles of the Bible faith is not even mentioned. To make it a universal requirement, as faith healers do today, does not find support in the examples of Scripture." DIVINE HEALING: THE RACKET OF RELIGION William G. Bellshaw One author shows that in her opinion many who come for healing do have an extreme amount of faith and yet are not healed: *"in the thousands who crowd the platform to be anointed no one can dare doubt there are many who are truly 'born again'. I have dealt with hundreds of them personally, and as far as it is possible for any human being to judge, many were truly children of God...Many have been sufferers for a long period...They believe what the evangelist says, and they show in their faces the new hope that has come into their hearts. They comply with all that is required...(yet) after having met all these conditions, and done all they could do, they are anointed and prayed for, and they return from the platform in just the same condition as when they mounted it."* May Wyburn Fitch, THE HEALING DELUSION

- C. Fakery Is Prominent Among Healers: (Jer. 23:21,22,28)

**NOTE:** Not all who believe in "faith healing" are deliberate fakers – many are sincere. However, there is a mass of evidence, which demonstrates that some use deliberate deception.

**QUOTE:** An eyewitness to an Oral Roberts "Healing" Campaign among the Navajo Indians at the tribal fair grounds, Window Rock, Arizona, Aug. 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>, 1959 reported as follows: "There are no hypochondriacs among the Indians. When an Indian hurts, he really hurts, thus every case presented was genuine. It was quite obvious that this caused considerable uneasiness on the part of the Roberts party. Prayer cards, a prerequisite to admission to the healing line, were issued at the morning sessions to great numbers. The closing day of the crusade, when all bearers of prayer cards would be prayed with who had not been cared for previously. On Wednesday afternoon the stands were a riot of color such as can be seen only in the Navajo land. A stage had been erected on the racetrack in front of the grandstand. This was not large enough to accommodate the crowds bearing the prayer cards, but was large enough to screen from the view of the spectators the 50 or more 'blanket' and wheelchair cases who were ushered into this area. After the preliminaries, the holders of prayer cards were ordered to leave the stands and assemble on the track in front of the stage. They were then ordered to form a single line and march around the one-mile racetrack. These sick ones could be seen hobbling around the track in the hot afternoon sun until a solid line had formed occupying the entire circuit except for about 250 feet immediately in front of the stands. Many were clustered at the end of the line waiting for the line to advance. Many who were unable to make it dropped out and returned to the starting point hoping that they would eventually be able to get attention, although not in the healing line. It is a safe estimate that 1,800 to 2,000 were in the line. Official movie and still photographers appeared and got ready for action. First in line around the track was a youth with his foot in a cast. To make a more spectacular "shot", two old, crippled Navajo women, hobbling on homemade crutches, were recruited and posed in front of the young fellow with the cast. Mr. Roberts then posed in characteristic healing posture and the cameras rolled. The two old squaws were then allowed to return to their place, still on their crutches, and Mr. Roberts proceeded along the line, laying hands on all, while the camera crew paced him. The distance from the stands to where Mr. Roberts was operating was too great for the details to be observed so Mr. Tsosie and the writer went over to the healing line and followed along a few feet distance from the "healer" who was laying hands on the sick at the rate of about 70 each minute. Occasionally, he would pause and spend a few moments with certain individuals who were quite obviously members of the sponsoring groups since they would always respond in typical fashion. These would respond with the waving of hands & shouting. One went into a spasm of head jerking. Some would start talking in "tongues" which were neither Navajo nor English. All of the others remained as motionless as only a Navajo can."

1. They misquote and misapply the Scriptures:

"In asserting his authority as a healer, Mr. Roberts read the incident in Luke's gospel, chapter 4, verses 16-19, in which the Lord Jesus asserted His Messiahship in these words: *'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind.'* Mr. Roberts then said, 'I, too, have this anointing.'"

2. They created false hopes in their followers:

**ILLUS:** "We paced Mr. Roberts for about a quarter of the way around the track and observed him at close range. He offered no prayers and no results were seen. No results were even simulated. Those who had hobbled around the track on sticks went away on their sticks; the blind were led away blind. There was a look of dismay on most faces. They would wait a few minutes in the line after Mr. Roberts had touched them and then just drift away or else return to the front of the stage hoping that the "healer" would return to them after he was through with the line. It was quite apparent that all of them came expecting results and were in possession of whatever attitude of faith would be expected of them. Hence the disillusionment that was present on most faces when nothing happened."



3. They fail to measure up to Scriptural precedent set by Peter: Acts 3:6

**QUOTE:** "Roberts a few years ago built a three million dollar skyscraper of the latest and most modern design in the city of Tulsa, Oklahoma; this money was doubtless the fruit of his healing campaigns, and extracted from his deceived and infatuated followers. Peter could truthfully say, **"silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I to thee: In the Name of Jesus of Nazareth rise up and walk."** (Acts 3:6) But Roberts, like the Pope of Rome, has plenty of "silver and gold" but is terribly short on what Peter had in place of the "silver and gold."

The new Oral Roberts University also in Tulsa, Oklahoma was reported to have cost 53 million (!) dollars, obviously extracted from those who can least afford it: the sick and afflicted! Since collecting all this money from his Pentecostal followers from around the world, Roberts has left them and their denomination high and dry. He needed a more "respectable" image and is now with the United Methodists, notoriously liberal and bereft of spirituality, and has been accepted by the leading "ecumenical evangelist" Billy Graham.

"Oral Roberts recently attended Billy Graham's Great Congress of Evangelical Neutralism at Berlin, Germany, thereby proclaiming himself part and parcel with Graham's Ecumenical Apostasy. As a fake healer he fits in perfectly with Graham's ministry of disobedience; in lowering God's precious separating Gospel to the level of apostate modernism. Both of these self-appointed prophets have not the slightest resemblance to such men of God as the apostle Paul and thousands of other real men of God down to our day. 'Men that have hazarded their lives for the Lord Jesus Christ.' (Acts 15:12) While these two "profits" roll in wealth and live like kings." (Mrs. Graham squandered hundreds of thousands of dollars on a "chapel" in the middle of the woods, which is rarely used, for nostalgia.)

4. They pretend to be able to do something for others they are unable to do for themselves:

**ILLUS:** When a "healer" gets sick or has an affliction it is hushed up. (Physician, heal thyself!) For example, the famous healer A.A. Allen, one of the Top Ten Healers in America in 1968-69 was being secretly treated for chronic alcoholism before his death for the same problem! Yet, A.A. Allen claimed to be able to cast out the "demon of alcoholism" from others! (?)

Another inconsistency among "healers", obvious to the thinking person, is their constant appeal for funds to sustain their ministries when they teach that by just having "faith" God will fill your wallet. (Why doesn't God fill theirs?!) A.A. Allen sold (!) empty "miracle wallets" to his followers promising them God would "fill them to overflowing."

5. They destroy genuine faith in God and work against true evangelism:

**QUOTE:** "What will happen to these thousands of Navajos (at the Roberts healing show)? Most of them will go back to their hogans and return to their old heathen practices, convinced that their own medicine man can put on a much better show and get better results than the white medicine man. Many, who came sincerely trusting in Roberts' ability, will be embittered against all Christian missionaries. Many who adhere to the healing and tongues sects will drift into peyotism (drugs) to get the exhilarating experience that they failed to get through the cultist missionaries. Probably no event has happened in Navajo land that will retard the work of the gospel as this crusade has done." IBID.

6. They focus attention upon themselves rather than upon the Lord: Ps. 118:8

**QUOTE:** Again referring to Oral Roberts healing campaign among the Navajos, Rev. Fraser writes: "What did Roberts get out of it? Cash offerings probably amounted to several thousand dollars, and several thousand of Roberts' books were sold, at a handsome profit, to Navajo Indians – 98% of whom cannot read English. The Roberts party also went away with a wealth of publicity photos such as could not be gotten anywhere else than among the Navajos. These will probably be shown on the screen and in publications throughout the country as a great triumph of the gospel in Navajo land." IBID.

7. They convince people they are healed when they are not:

**QUOTE:** "Teaching people to commit their sickness to the Lord and to believe they are healed while they are still sick, works havoc in the lives of some who are not suffering from emotionally induced illness. They try to commit their sickness to the Lord and to believe they are healed. Then they testify, while they are yet sick, that they are healed, thus making liars of themselves". THE 9 GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT ARE NOT IN THE CURCH TODAY, B.F. Cate

8. They lead God's people astray: (Matthew 24:24)

- a. They detract from the local church ministry taught in the New Testament
- b. They deceive many into believing they have supernatural powers
- c. They divert great sums of money from the local church and missionary outreach
- d. They deter believers from a soul-winning ministry
- e. They discourage believers away from Scripture study and replace this hard work with an emotional experience (II Tim. 2:15)
- f. They destroy confidence in God-called men and ministries

**ILLUS:** The term "followers" can be accurately used to describe those oriented toward this type of unscriptural program. At great expense and inconvenience these "followers" trudge across the country on the heels of their favorite "evangelist-healer". Thus, instead of following the Lord and His program, they become followers of the "healer" and his program! Anyone who speaks out against these false prophets and religious quacks becomes accursed and their ministry abandoned.

9. They do more harm than good to those they profess to help:

- a. They extract money from those who can least afford it.
- b. They lead sick folks away from genuine medical help.

**NOTE:** How many have actually died because they refused sound medical advice because of faith in the quackery of some "faith-healer" may never be known this side of eternity, but surely their numbers are legion.

10. They hide behind clerical titles and the religious freedom we enjoy in America:

- a. They skirt the law by stating that God does the healing, while they build empires on self:

**ILLUS:** For example: The Oral Roberts Evangelistic Assn.; Oral Roberts Univ.; The A.A. Allen Revival Hour; LeRoy Jenkins Evangelistic Assn., The Benny Hinn Ministries organization, Inc.; etc., etc. ad nauseam!

- b. They enjoy tax-exempt status while wallowing in the luxuries of the world.

**ILLUS:** They drive the best cars, eat in the best restaurants, own the most expensive equipment, stay in the most expensive hotels and motels while their followers are often not able to afford even the necessities of life. Cf. Matthew 10:8-10

In a recent CBS-TV special "60 Minutes" one faith healer admitted to receiving up to \$500.00 in one small meeting for one night. No one but he counted the money, and he was accountable to no one! How much is reported to the Internal Revenue Service? How much is pocketed? While *"the servant is worthy of his hire"*, God doesn't expect His servants to wallow in luxury while their congregations die of starvation. Our Savior, the One these healers claim to emulate *"had nowhere to lay His head"*.

**TRANS:** We have considered Healing, Healers, and Hypocrisy. In this next section we shall deal with the Heresy of those who practice "faith healing" by exposing the distortion of the Word of God prevalent among these individuals and groups, as they attempt to justify, rationalize and build a case for their misleading ministry.

To judge men and movements we must always seek to compare them not with our "experiences" or the experiences of others, nor with the sincerity of their beliefs or convictions but with the God-given standard of His Holy Word. What saith the Scriptures?

#### **IV. HERESY:**

**Definition:** A definition of the term from the dictionary tells us that "Heresy" means "a religious belief opposed to the orthodox doctrine of a church ... and regarded as likely to cause schism." For our purposes in this study we will use Peter's definition in II Pet. 3:16 where he says ***"...they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction"***.

**NOTE:** We will be looking at the Scriptures used by these groups and individuals to support their claims of faith healing for this day and age...

A. Misused Text #1: **Hebrews 13:8**

1. Consideration: ***"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever"***

- a. Note the absence of any specific allusion to the physical.
- b. Note the major teaching of the verse standing alone: the immutable character of the Savior.

2. Context:

- a. The Book of Hebrews: Written as a warning against those who "professed" belief in Jesus as Messiah against their return to Judaism and the Levitical system. Also written to show that Christ is the Messiah and presents a "better" and more secure future to those who trust Him.
- b. The preceding verse (s); v.7 speaks of the past and the readers are admonished to remember their former teachers and follow their faith! It is faith not faith-healing that is in view here. It is saving faith not healing faith (?) spoken of here!
- c. The following verse(s): v.9 speaks of the future of those who profess to be trusting in a never changing Savior as opposed to a system of dead works.

**QUOTE:** "Those in the healing movement quote v.8 and insist that Christ will heal today as He did during His last few years on earth. But remember, there is nothing in this Scripture about healing. It has to do with salvation. Jesus Christ is the same with reference to salvation, but not with reference to administration. We have seen before that Christ did not carry on a healing program during his first thirty years on earth. He let the sick suffer and die. But He made a drastic CHANGE and started performing miracles about three years before He went to the cross in order to prove that He was the Christ, the Son of God. Compare Matt. 10:5 with 28:19 and see another change Christ made. When you quote Heb. 13:8 and say that Christ works the same "today" as He did "yesterday" what do you mean by yesterday? Do you mean the thirty years of His life on earth during which He did no healing? IBID., B.F. Cate, p. 42

3. Conclusion:

- a. Verse 8 means that faith in Christ saved "yesterday", faith in Christ will save "today", and faith in Christ will save "forever".
- b. Verse 8 is a repudiation of salvation by works, specifically the system of Judaism practiced by the readers of the epistle.
- c. Verse 8 teaches the unchanging nature and character of the Savior in relation to salvation. Praise the Lord!

B. Misused Text #2: **Is. 53:4-6** (with Matt. 8:16,17; I Pet. 2:24,25)

1. Consideration: **"...with His stripes we are healed."**

- a. Note that the portion in Isaiah is a prophecy regarding the coming Messiah.
- b. Note that the passage in Matthew is the fulfillment of this prophecy.
- c. Note that the penman in I Peter relates the healing to "sins" and "going astray".

2. Context:

- a. Since this passage in Isaiah 53 is a prediction of our Lord's atoning work on the cross, healers conclude that "healing is in the atonement":
- b. However, this prediction is stated to include the pre-atonement ministry of Christ as well as His death as sin bearer:
  - 1) That is why Matthew states that this prophecy (Is. 53:4) was fulfilled while Christ was healing physical sicknesses *before the atonement*. (Matt. 8:16,17)
  - 2) It is thus obvious that physical healing was in view in Is. 53:4, the passage quoted by Matthew. But Peter quotes from Is. 53:5,6, which has to do with *spiritual healing*. Both these passages speak of Christ's atonement.

3. Conclusion:

- a. The passage in Is. 53 has a twofold fulfillment:
  - 1) v.4 speaks of physical healing and was fulfilled by Christ before Calvary.
  - 2) v. 5,6 speak of spiritual healing and was fulfilled by Christ on Calvary.
- b. The fact that Peter and Isaiah both used the word "healed" doesn't mean that they were referring to physical healing.

**ILLUS:** Two examples where healing has a definite reference to the spiritual:

- 1) Hosea 14:4 **"I will heal their backsliding"** and Mark 2:17 where Jesus said: **"They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick (sinners): I came not to call the righteous but sinners (the sick) to repentance"**. To say then that Isaiah meant physical healing when he wrote **"with His stripes we are healed"** is another example of not **"rightly dividing the Word of truth..."**

C. Misused Text #3: **James 5:14,15:**

1. Consideration: **"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".**

- a. This is an epistle, thus it is truth for this age.
- b. These are permanent instructions on the subject of healing.
- c. Those in the healing movements make much of this Scripture, yet go contrary to nearly everything contained therein!

2. Context:

- a. The setting is within the local church (**"elders of the church"**), not in healing meetings, etc.
- b. The scene is a quiet, orderly one, not a circus-type atmosphere.
- c. The sick call for the elders, not vice-versa.

d. The significant thing mentioned is the "**prayer of faith**", not the "gift of healing".

1) The "**prayer of faith**" is the guarantee of healing.

**ILLUS:** The Lord is bound to "**raise Him up**" when the "**prayer of faith**" is prayed. But the ability to pray the "**prayer of faith**" is given at special times and when a sovereign God wills it and makes it known to the church or individual involved.

2) The "**prayer of faith**" is not always possible:

a) It must be in accord with God's will (**I John 5:14**).

b) It is limited by higher laws imposed by God (**Roman, 6:23a; Hebrews 9:27**).

c) It is given by the Holy Spirit because we cannot ask according to God's will without the aid of the Spirit (**Romans 8:27**).

e. The simple use of oil for the affliction in connection with the prayer of faith seems to be the means connected with spiritual effort:

**ILLUS:** We, along with many others, believe this to be an approval of the use of physical means (or medicine) along with spiritual means to accomplish the desired end, that is, healing! Paul authorized Timothy to use wine for his sickness; James authorizes the use of oil; the Good Samaritan used a combination of both.

**QUOTES:** B.F. CATE: "We believe that the use of oil in this case has reference to using oil as a medicine. Oil was (and still is) used in the Orient as a medicine for many types of sickness."

DR. KENNETH BROWN: "...the use of oil as a medicine as universal, not only in practice, but for nearly every malady... The healing of wounds to soothe their pain and hasten the process of restoration (**Is. 1:6; Luke 10:34**); it was used in the therapeutic service of the normal constituent of the daily toilet, to freshen and stimulate for the day's work (Matt. 6:17) and for guests arriving from a hard journey (Luke 7:46). The Bible would hardly be expected to speak of antibiotics, barbiturates or tranquilizers. The medicine which was used in nearly all illnesses was oil!"

DR. SPIROS ZODHIATES: "The anointing referred to by James is no sacrament, but something done to relieve the physical affliction of the suffering one. It refers to rubbing with olive oil, or to oiling with oil. We never speak of "anointing" a machine with oil. Nor could we really use the verb "anoint" in this instance, for *the Greek word used has no sacred meaning*. It refers rather to the application of physical means for the relief of physical pain. In that day it was oil; today it may be an antibiotic, or an operation, or any other material means for the relief of physical weakness. Our bodies need physical care all the time, and especially when they are weak and exhausted. If one doesn't believe that this rubbing with oil can do any good, let him try having a rubdown and see how good it will feel. We can readily see, then, that James does not mean that the Christian minister or the elder, of the local church should go around with a little bottle filled with oil in order to anoint the sick, for this is not what James meant in this verse at all. How easy it is for the misunderstanding of a verse of Scripture to make us sanctimonious, by causing us to make the mundane sacred. The question, which immediately arises, is this. If oil referred to by James is material medicine and there is no symbolic use of it, as there is on many occasions in the Old Testament, then why should religious leaders, the elders, apply it, and not a physician? They surely had physicians in those days, and indeed one of the writers of the New Testament was one. His name was Luke. But these physicians were so scarce and the means of transportation so difficult that they were only called in extreme need. All the home remedies were first applied and then if they failed, the doctor was called in.

A very significant thing to note in the study of this verse is the tense of the participle. "Someone is sick among you. Let him invite the elders of the church and let them pay over him, having rubbed him with oil in the name of the Lord." (*not KJV - P.F.*) The first thing, which the aides are supposed to do, is to rub the patient with oil. This is equivalent to providing material relief for the body. It is the equivalent of medical attention. If a member of the Church of Jesus Christ is unable to procure such medical attention for himself, it should be the duty of the officers of the local church to make such provision as is necessary. This is most Scriptural, and would to God that Christians did more of it. We have no business praying unless we first do something to relieve the ailing bodies of our brethren. As there is dead faith, of which James spoke, so there seems to be dead prayer. We can pray all we want for a sick person, but unless we do something in a material, tangible way to relieve his physical pain, our prayer is Pharisaic, is vain, is dead. Many of us are like the priest in the story of the Good Samaritan, who came to the place where the victim of robbery was lying groaning between life and death, but passed by on the other side. He may indeed have stopped to pray for him, but what good was his prayer if he did not do something to help him, even as the Samaritan did, pouring oil and wine into the wounds? The Christian Church, too, has a duty toward the ailing bodies of its members and others, and that duty is not merely prayer; it is more than that, it is "rubbing with oil".

f. The sense of the word "anoint" is "to rub" and *does not have a ritualistic or ceremonial content*:

1) The Greek word *murizo* is used only once in the New Testament and spoke of preparation of Christ' body for burial ("**anoint**").

2) The Greek word *chrio* is the word employed in the New Testament when the action of anointing is emblematic of the Holy Spirit (cf. I John 2:20,27; II Cor 1:21; Heb.1:9; Rev.3:18). This is the ceremonial or ritual use of the word "**anoint**".

- 3) The Greek word **aleipho** is never used symbolically of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. This word is used classically as lubricating the body after bathing, in preparation of sports events for athletes; in the oiling of equipment, etc. An **"aleiptas"** was the anointer or trainer in Greek gymnastic schools. **This is the word the Spirit selected for use in James 5!**

**ILLUS:** Someone has wisely stated that we should "work as if everything depended on us and pray as if everything depended on God." Perhaps this is the connection here regarding the anointing with oil and the prayer of faith.

DR. KENNEFH BROWN: "This practice of anointing the sick shows that the use of medicine is entirely in harmony with God's Word and in no way contradicts nor confuses the ministry of prayer".

DR. SPIROS ZODHIATES: The word used by James is *never used in the New Testament with the sacred and symbolical meaning of the verb **chrīoo***. It is used in describing the anointing of the dead body of Christ by the women in Mark 16:1. It is also used describe the anointing of the feet of Jesus by the woman in a Pharisee's house, in Luke 7:38,46. Other Scripture references where this secular word is used are John 11:2, 12:3. In reality in English the word "anoint" has come to have the sacred meaning which the verb *chrīoo* has in Greek, and only this Greek word should be translated by the English "anoint", and not the one used by James. The verb *aleiphoo* used by James should rather be translated "to oil" '(NOT – P.F.) It is equivalent to the expression "rubbing or oiling" that we so commonly use today. We would never use *chrīoo* to mean "anoint" a piece of machinery or the human body. Perhaps a bit of the etymology and history of the verb *aleiphoo* -to oil, would be helpful in more fully understanding what James meant by it in this difficult verse. It comes from the root *lipos*, which means 'grease.' It is therefore the verb , which means to apply oil to something. In ancient times, for instance, people rubbed their bodies with oil after a bath. Also the athletes of Greece used to have their bodies rubbed with oil to prepare them for the gymnastic events they were to enter. Therefore, metaphorically the verb meant "to stimulate, to encourage" through the application of oil".

g. The strong connection between sickness and sin cannot be overlooked in this passage:

- 1) The Lord will not only **"raise him up"** but his sins **"shall be forgiven him"** 5: 15
- 2) We are admonished in this context to **"confess faults (sins)...that ye may be healed..." 5:16**
- 3) Our deviation from truth (sin) is mentioned **(5:19)**.
- 4) Recovering **"a sinner"** will **"save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins" 5:20**

4. Conclusions:

- a. There seems to be recognition of the sick here that sin is the cause of the sickness involved.
- b. Confession of sin, anointing (rubbing) with oil and the prayer of faith bring about recovery.

C. The anointing with oil seems to be the physical effort and the confession and prayer the spiritual effort.

**QUOTE:** "The action of primary force is found in the main verb, pray; and the anointing is subordinate in thought. The aorist participle need not carry the time sequence in relation to the main herb. The anointing may be considered prior to the prayer, but the significance is that of an event without reference to continuous or future action. The elders are exhorted to pray, not to anoint. The anointing must be considered secondary to praying". DR. KENNETH BROWN

- c. The prayer of faith is given by the spirit to individuals or an individual, and God is bound to answer positively.
- e. The exhortation occurring, as it does, in an epistle extends to us the privilege of prayer for the sick with the assurance of positive response from God in accord with His will.
- f. This is Divine Healing for today!

D. Misused Text #4: **Acts 3:6**

1. Consideration: **"Then Peter said...in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk".**

- a. This verse is often used by "healers" as some magical formula to impart healing.
- b. This verse was not meant to be used in this manner nor by followers of Christ in this age.

2. Context: Here let us again quote B.F. Cate in his book THE NINE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT ARE NOT IN THE CHURCH TODAY:

**QUOTE:** "The Lord Jesus Christ is referred to in the Acts as being of Nazareth in order to show that the Jesus preached was the one from Nazareth, thus proving His resurrection. As the miracles they performed were to confirm the message, so the word "Nazareth" was to identify the person in back of the miracles. But the word "Nazareth" is never used in connection with His name in any of the church epistles. Why? A comparison of Acts 2:36 with II Corinthians 5:16 will show why this is so. The name "Jesus Christ of Nazareth" refers to Him in His humiliation. The Lord Jesus Christ refers to Him in His exaltation. Peter referring to His exaltation in Acts 2:32-36 said in vs. 36, **"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made this same JESUS, whom ye have crucified, both LORD and CHRIST"**. Here we have his name in exaltation. Now notice what Paul said in II Corinthians 5:16, **"Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more"**. To use the word "Nazareth" in

connection with His name is knowing Him after the flesh. The...ESTABLISHED churches were not to use His name in humiliation, but His name in exaltation.

The leaders in the healing movement still use His name in humiliation. Evidently they have not progressed in their Bible study from the Gospels and Acts to the Church epistles. This is another good example of not **"rightly dividing the Word"**. (*II Timothy 2:15*)

3. Conclusion:

- a. Again, this verse is one healer's quote out of context both historically and biblically.
- b. Often this verse is misused by self-styled healers who are attempting to resurrect ***a gift that died with the Apostles and that is no longer needed in the church's maturity***. It was a **foundational gift** for an infant church to establish, document and undergird the apostles' message as authentic until that message was inscripturated, or written down in God's completed revelation!

E. Misused Text #5: **Psalm 103:1-8**

**Psalms 103:1-8 A Psalm of David. Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.**

1. Consideration: Read this passage carefully.
2. Context:

- a. Written to the children of Israel, not a promise to the church
- b. Remember that every Scripture has one and only one interpretation; but often many applications:
  - 1) Thus these verses have been written to Israel, but we can receive blessings by making applications of the principles involved today.
  - 2) Note especially v.7
  - 3) If the **"all"** in v.3 means God is bound to heal all our diseases, we may ask also for renewed youth as in v.5. If the healing of all diseases refers to the present age, so does the promise of renewed youth-hood for the aged.

**QUOTE:** "If immediate physical healing has been provided for in the death of Christ, then that healing must of necessity be just as eternal as the spiritual healing... In other words in the same sense in which the believer receives pardon from sin he should receive deliverance from physical sickness forever. Why should there be a different time, progressive or otherwise, when physical deliverance is achieved?" ROBERT P. LIGHTNER

2. Conclusion:

- a. When we **'rightly divide the Word'** we give the promises for Israel to Israel and the promises for the church to the church.
- b. Sloppy handling of the Word can and has produced confusion, schisms, misunderstandings, hard feelings, etc., while careful exegesis or interpretation produces blessings and knowledge approved of God. II Tim.2:15

F. Misused Text #6: **John 14:12**

1. Consideration: **"...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 to my Father"**. ("Faith Healers" interpret the "greater works" to mean physical cures.)
2. Context:
  - a. There is no support in this text for assuming that physical healing is in view in the promise.
  - b. In fact, if the works Christ used as a reference were physical in nature then the **"greater works"** would have to refer to something better, that is, spiritual works!
  - c. Note that which follows, namely a promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit - He would be the source of these **"greater works"**. Cf. **John 16:7-11** for the **"works"** of the spirit. Are they not indeed greater than physical miracles?
  - d. Keep in mind that Christ's **"works"** were about to cease and that His physical presence would be replaced with the Holy Spirit.
  - e. The Book of Acts is more the record of the Acts of the Holy Spirit than of the Acts of the Apostles, but He did perform **"greater works"** than them. The great theme of Acts is **"power"** to **"witness"** after **"the Holy Ghost is come"**. **Acts 1:8**

3. Conclusion:

- a. Qualitatively the "**greater works**" can be measured by the conversions prevalent after the Savior's ascent and the Spirit's descent.

**ILLUS:** For example, compare the conversions during Christ's earthly ministry of three years with those in the first three years of apostolic ministry thru the Holy Spirit's power working in men!

- b. Quantitatively the "**greater works**" can be measured in the number of conversions after the Savior's promise.

**QUOTE:** "Christ had just finished telling these disciples that His own words and works were the words and works of the Father. (John 14:9,10) ROBERT P. LIGHTNER

**CONCL:** In this consideration of **Healing, Healers, Hypocrisy, and Heresy** we have attempted to show that the kind of healing spoken of in the early church thru the imparting of special, supernatural gifts upon certain men has ceased!

We emphatically do believe in Divine Healing today! We do NOT believe in Divine Healers! Do not be discouraged if God does not heal you when and how you think He should, instead say with the Apostle Paul: "***I take pleasure in infirmities...for when I am weak (physically), then am I strong (spiritually).***"

We would like to offer a few words of encouragement to the children of God who are sick, and who have been led to believe it is God's will to heal all Christians. You have tried to comply, as you have been taught, and yet you are sick. If this teaching were true, how is it that those who believe and teach it die from sickness themselves? If what they teach is true, they should die without sickness – or not die at all! You will also notice that in churches which teach that all Christians should be healed, there is sickness, just as in any other church. Remember, a good example that it is not God's will to heal as it is His will to save, is the fact that Paul and his co-workers suffered from sickness just like the average Christian does today. Read again **2 Cor. 12:7-9; 1 Tim. 5:23, and 2 Tim. 4:20**. Paul used the gift of healing to heal many people, BUT HE NEVER USED IT TO HEAL HIS OWN CO-WORKERS WHO WERE FIRM BELIEVERS IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. This shows that the gift of healing WAS NOT FOR THE PURPOSE OF HEALING THE SAVED but was for the purpose of aiding people to believe in Christ before the New Testament was completed (**Mark: 16:17-20**).

When we get sick we should examine ourselves and pray. If there is anything wrong in our lives, we should condemn it and correct it. On the other hand, if we are not healed it may be God's will for us to use means or medicine (2 Kings 20:5-7; 1 Tim. 5:23). Then if we are not healed we should see if we are under emotional stress. If so, we should try to get out from under it, relax, and forget about our sickness. Then if we are not healed let us say with Job, "***though he slay me, yet will I TRUST HIM***" (**Job 13:15**). In that case we may say, as Paul said: "***Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of God may rest upon me.***" (**2 Cor. 12:9**) "***Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?***" We may not be able to understand why we are called upon to suffer, therefore, let us always be in all things submissive to God's will as Job, Paul and others were.

*Pastor (c) Paul C. Fedena*