

The *Contender*

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Divine Healing: What It Is and What It Is Not, Part 3



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We are still on the subject of divine healing, endeavoring to present enough scriptural evidence to convince true Bible believers that there is no doctrine of divine healing taught in the Bible. There are many examples of divine healing to be found in the

scriptures, and we know that God is a healer, but what we need to get settled in our mind, is that He cannot be forced to honor any man's doctrine on the subject. Any conviction that you may have about going to the doctor, or not going to the doctor should be treated only as a personal conviction, and not taught as a universal church doctrine, for you simply cannot make any such doctrine line up with all the scriptures. We read something in the papers ever so often, where some poor soul gets into trouble trying to live up to someone else's convictions on the subject. May I say, You will always get into trouble trying to follow someone else, if you do not have a personal conviction about what you do, and say, and allow. Let me say also, that just being able to say that you have never been to a doctor in your life does not prove a thing, as far as establishing any kind of doctrine, for when I was a small boy, still living in the Borden,

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Indiana, area, the attendant at the old Monon Railway depot, a fellow by the name of Joe Davis who smoked an old pipe, and claimed that he ate an orange every day, and slept with his windows open every night, also claimed that he had never been to a doctor in his whole

lifetime, and he was above 90 years of age. You never heard him talk about God either. As far as I know, he did not even mention God in any way concerning the matter. There was also a school teacher at Sellersburg, Indiana, that bragged about never being sick a day in his life, and never being checked by a doctor, so my point is, There are many such testimonies both among the ranks of Christianity, and also without, but none of them should ever be used to establish a doctrine for the universal church to live by. This is exactly what caused Paul to write in his Romans epistle, (14:22) “Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. (For) Happy is he that condemneth not HIMSELF in that thing which he alloweth.” In other words, Let your personal conviction guide your own life, but do not try to force those same personal convictions on your brothers and sisters of this great family of God. All of the basic doctrines of the New Testament church are for every true child of God to recognize and follow, but God has His own way of dealing with every individual soul in the area of personal convictions. Furthermore, Paul wrote to the Hebrew Christians, (10:36) “For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.” God is never obligated to react to your faith with an immediate manifestation of the promised benefit, but one thing is sure, If you have exercised genuine faith in a scriptural promise, God will not let

that faith go unrewarded, though you may be required to wait for a while before receiving the benefit.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

People who take certain promises from the Bible, and try to apply them as a blank coverage to everyone, are sure to miss the will of God, and they are sure to cause others to miss it also, for when something does not work the way they want it to, they immediately begin to blame someone for their lack of faith. Brother, Sister: It is hard to exercise genuine faith for something, when many times it is presented to you with the formula all mixed up. That is why I say, The preacher's first responsibility before God, is to preach the gospel in a way that will cause those who believe to submit themselves completely unto the Lord. Then when they have a need, God will be on hand to meet that need. That is how it was in the beginning of the New Testament church. The disciples of Jesus did not need to preach sermons on divine healing, all they needed to do was get people to believe the gospel, and surrender their lives unto God. It was those who heard the gospel preached, that were impressed to say and do certain things that led to their healing most of the time. Some felt led just to touch the garment Jesus wore, and others were led to lay the sick folks

along the side of the street or roadway, where the shadow of the apostle Peter might just fall across them as he passed by, and others took handkerchiefs and aprons from the apostle Paul, and layed them upon their sick folks, and in every one of these settings, people were healed, but tell me, Where is our spiritual authority to present any of these things to the body of Christ as a doctrine, or try to obligate God to do the exact same things again? I grant you this, He has repeated these things many times in the last 1900 years, but He is only obligated where He has led individuals to approach Him in these certain ways.

MOVING IN THE WILL OF THE FATHER

Jesus ministered on earth 3 ½ years, doing only what the Father led Him to do, and saying only what the Father told Him to say. He never obligated the Father to do anything any certain way, for it was the Father in Him, that was doing the directing. That is why He could say, before ascending to glory, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." He knew that early church would be so solid in the will of God, and so led by the mind of God, it would not be the individuals

doing the miracles; it would be the Father working His will through them, doing the very same works that He had been doing through His only begotten Son Jesus. But the beauty of it is that many times God just simply deals with an individual, without even using a preacher. Then there are cases where certain other people have lived with their sicknesses and diseases for many years, and they have been prayed for over and over again, and again without being healed, because somewhere there was an individual with a gift of God in his life, that the Father had purposed to use for this healing. When that is the case, there will be on healing until the setting is right, no matter who else may pray for them. I have personally witnessed such a case in the early years of my exposure to this type of ministry. It was right down here at Evansville, Indiana, in a church where Bro. Branham was preaching, and also at Owensboro, Kentucky. They had a group of deaf mutes in those meetings, and they did everything they possibly could, to seat them right in front of Bro. Branham, in the hopes that at least some of them might get a touch from God. I sat there myself, desiring to see God do something for them. But when that anointing would come upon Bro. Branham, not one time did he ever turn to any of them. He would look right out over them, and point out someone maybe way in the back of the building, or even right near them, but not one of them was ever pointed out. That just let me know one thing: God knew where

they were, but that was not His plan. Then a few months later, another man came to that area, and set up a tent in a ball park. As soon as he started preaching, the Church of Christ people in that area got on the radio, warning people to stay away from those meetings. They proclaimed that God no longer heals as He did in that first age, and they called this practicing medicine without a license. I will never forget what took place on Saturday night of that first week. That preacher came to the platform and said, People: I came to Evansville to mind my own business, but a bunch of those Antichrist, so-called Christians from the Church of Christ have blasphemed the word of God. Therefore I want you all to know, that I speak in defense of the power and promises of almighty God tonight. Then for about twenty minutes he preached on divine healing, and the delivering power of God, and that is the time when I said, You could actually feel that anointing settle down over the whole congregation of people. It could best be described as little electrical currents surging through everyone. When he gave the altar call, he did not have to spend fifteen minutes begging people to come. He merely said, If you are here tonight, and you do not know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you find your way to this altar, and someone will help you. Brothers and Sisters, I'm telling you, all of a sudden it sounded like a herd of cattle stampeding as people came from every direction.

Many of them had been standing outside that tent, leaning against parked cars, but suddenly the whole tent was filled, and you could just feel the power of God surging through that great crowd of people. That preacher prayed one little short prayer, and then said, Take them, and pray with them personally, and may God touch their needs. Five of those same deaf mutes were prayed for that night, and the first three of the five that were prayed for received both their hearing and their speech just as simple as that.

DO MIRACLES ALWAYS MAKE BELIEVERS?

What I witnessed there that night settled one thing in my mind once and for all, and that is this, When God has a plan to use a certain ministry for something, there is no way under the sun that someone else, no matter how good their intentions may be, could change that plan. Men can go to great extremes positioning this One, and that One, in a position where they think God is sure to bestow His anointing upon them, but unless God leads you to do something like that, your efforts are vain. They do not move God at all. Just think about all the times that Jesus Christ Himself probably walked right past the crippled man that lay at the gate Beautiful of the temple, begging

alms. Yet here comes Peter and John going up to the temple to pray, and when he asked them for alms, what happened? Peter looked into the man's eyes and said, Look on us, and when he looked, expecting to receive something from them, Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." The Bible says Peter then took him by the hand and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength, and he entered into the temple court with them, walking, and leaping, and praising God. This is the very instance that caused me to make the statement earlier, that God did one miracle here, and five thousand believed, and at other times many miracles only led to one believer. Jesus fed five thousand plus, with one little boy's lunch; and a little later they all left Him, being unbelievers. What is the difference? Simply that God is working out a plan, and no man knows exactly what He is going to do next, unless He has seen fit to reveal it to certain chosen ones. Now tell me this, Do you think Jesus was without feelings for that lame man that He had seen at various places around the city begging? Not at all, but the Father just simply did not lead Him to do anything about it, and I believe you can see the reason why. That is why we should never develop any certain form or routine for dealing with the needs of people. We need to leave room for this sovereign God to do exactly what He

has already determined to do. The church has gone through a period of time teaching that a person can get saved or healed just any time they chose to, but Saints: I hope you can see by now that it is not that way at all. In the Methodist Church, we would go down the aisles and beg certain individuals to give their heart to God and get saved, when the preacher would give an altar call, for we were taught that this was the way it should be done. But when we take that to the scriptures, we find that no man can come to the Lord, unless the Spirit (the Father) is drawing him; therefore trying to persuade them to get saved before the Spirit of conviction is upon them, is nothing less than a pure aggravation to that lost soul. You are actually turning them against the very thing you want them to receive. To you, they appear to be like a stubborn Jersey calf, but to God you appear as a little child yet without understanding of the things of God. There is nothing at all wrong with testifying to those you are concerned about, but trying to wrestle them to an altar to pray before the Spirit of God deals with them is just pure human effort. Furthermore let me ask you this, Do you find any place in the Bible where those early disciples went through the streets of the cities yelling to people, Hey? Don't you know you are going to hell, if you don't change your ways? No, you do not. That was never God's way for the gospel to be presented to lost souls. Overzealous people who desire to do

something for God, have designed all these attention getting phrases you hear from time to time. Far too many people are out trying to do a service for God, when God is not in what they are doing at all. What they are doing seems so right to them, they do not even take the time to ask the Lord if that is what He wants done. God is not necessarily pleased with our service just merely because we are sincere, and ever so dedicated to our cause. In your sincerity and enthusiasm you can very well be going against the will of God.

OUR WAY IS NOT NECESSARILY GOD'S WAY

In the area of divine healing, many people have the idea that every sick person should be healed no matter what. They just simply will not accept the idea that it may be time for the Lord to take certain one's that are sick. No, I am not saying that we should not pray for them, or that we should not give them every medical advantage, but we ought to endeavor to exercise some faith and confidence in the Lord to work His own will and purpose in these things. There are times when people reach a certain place in sickness, that no matter how much you preach to them, and admonish them, you can never raise enough faith to get them up. It is their hour to go. My own

father was one example of this. Back in the year of 1965, he entered in to a series of sicknesses that just lingered on and on. There was one time I remember, Bro. Branham prayed for him while he was in Clark County Hospital, and he just revived, and came right out of that sickness, and in a very short time he was back home. But a few weeks later, he began to enter into another period of sickness, and I could see his health just going down, down, down. He was steadily getting weaker and weaker. Yes, I was praying, asking God to strengthen him, and help him, but it finally reached an hour when his condition became very acute. The doctor examined him, and began to diagnose his condition, and that night I saw myself in a dream. I will never forget it. I saw myself going toward the old home place. In the dream, it seemed that I was supposed to meet my sister right in front of the old house. I came from the way of Borden, and my sister came from the other direction, for she and her husband lived on the Henryville side from the old home place. Now in the dream, we met precisely in front of the house, and as we stood there, I was looking at all the old buildings. It seemed that the roofs were all caving in, and the sides were all leaning, and in every way, what I was seeing, was an old run down farm. As I stood there looking at all the old buildings caving in, I said to my sister, (in the dream) Elda Jean: Daddy is going. He did go, and today, there is only two of those old buildings still

standing on the old home place, the barn, and the corn crib. All the others are gone. Now Saints, I am only saying that this is how God let me know when my Father was nearing his departure, and I point this out, only to say this, We have to learn to walk by faith, and let God lead us, rather than us trying to lead Him, for there is another side to this thing. There are times when a person will be lying in a hospital, seemingly at the point of death, and just a simple little prayer of faith will cause them to snap right out of that condition, and be on the road to recovery. There are other times when you will go to the hospital, and pray for someone, and you think that person could not be very sick, but the next thing you hear, is that they have passed on to the other side. In such a case, do we blame the person who prayed? Or do we blame the sick person for not having faith to be healed? That is carnal to think like that. You have to realize that God has the final say so about these things.

GOD HAS THE LAST WORD

In our early years of going into Canada, (New Brunswick area) we were getting ready to leave the St. John area, and go on to Moncton, when Bro. Conley said, Bro. Jackson: I would like to take you by the Veterans Hospital,

to pray for a man that is supposed to be dying with cancer. As we left, they just went that far with us, and we went in to see this man. Lying there, staring out the window toward a little cemetery, was a little man (not much more than skin and bones) that felt like he would soon be lying out there in the cemetery instead of there in the hospital bed. That is how he answered, when we asked, How are you today? Tears came in his eyes, and he said, I will soon be out there with those others. Now we knew we could not change the will of God, but when the man stopped crying, we asked him if we might have prayer with him, and he said, By all means, please do. We just simply prayed that God would be gracious to the man's physical condition, and comfort and strengthen his body, and then we left the hospital, and went on to Moncton. Then, two or three years later, when we were back in St. John for meetings, I noticed a man and woman as they came in and took a seat one night, and thought to myself, That man looks familiar to me, but I never could remember where I knew him from. When the service was over that night, we were shaking hands as we walked back the aisle, and when we reached the place where they were, the woman grabbed my hand and said, Bro. Jackson: It is so good to see you! Then she said, Do you remember this man here? I said, I suppose I should, but I cannot place him. This is the man you prayed for, when you came to the Veterans Hospital, she replied. The

doctor had already told us he was dying, or at the point of death, but today, he is in perfect health. There is no more cancer, and he has gained his weight back. Now Brothers and Sisters, we just have to give God glory for that. He did not show us ahead of time, that He was going to raise the man up from his death bed, and make him well again, but that is exactly what happened. Every time I see the man now, he just shakes my hand and says, I am so thankful to God for what He has done for me. He had reached the point where it would not have done one bit of good for anyone to have stood over him, saying, Do you have faith to believe that God will heal you? He had already reconciled his thinking to what the doctor had told them. There are times when it is alright to ask that question, but this was not one of those times. In other words, you just simply cannot adopt a universal practice that is applicable to every sick person you desire to pray for. Furthermore God is not asleep, and He is not deaf. You do not have to scream loud enough to wake Him up, for He is already on the scene, if He is ever going to be, and He already knows what He is going to do. We just have to be willing to walk within His will. If you pray for someone today and they die tomorrow, there is no one to blame. You just simply have to accept it as the will of God. I have already mentioned the Brother here in the church, that was facing open heart surgery back in the early 1970's, and we were asked to go

to the hospital and pray for him. At that time he did not understand many of the things we believe and teach in this assembly, and it was not a situation where you would ask, Do you believe God will heal you, if we pray for you? It was a situation where, we will say, He was willing to let us pray for him, but he was already reconciled to the plans for open heart surgery. Nevertheless God sometimes uses these things to get our attention, and that is how it was with him. Instead of having surgery, he went to Israel with us later that same year, and he has been attending services here ever since. Did we change God's plan when we prayed for him? No. We just merely entered into God's plan. It was His plan for this Brother to have the testimony he has had because of that experience. It was the same way with the Brother that had 28 broken bones in his body from a terrible accident. God wanted him to have that testimony of how those little slivers of bone just merely began to slide into place, after he had cried out to God for help. You hear people say, Why did a thing like that have to happen to a man like this? What did he ever do to deserve that? Listen to me Saints; I believe God uses these things that we find ourselves faced with in life, to draw us closer to Him, and in so doing, many of us come out with a testimony that really glorifies His great name. We would not volunteer for such a thing in order to have the testimony, but in order for there to be such a testimony, someone has to have

the experience that establishes it, and it has to be known by others. He could have been like some people we hear of, people who have no use for doctors and hospitals and medication, but without the doctors, and the x-rays, how would anyone ever have known that the man had 28 little broken slivers of bones, that were so small they could not even be worked with? Do you see what I am getting at? God was in it all the way. The accident was no surprise to Him, no more than the death of Lazarus was. God was not interested in trying to convince people that they should not go to the doctor, nor to the hospital. He was interested in showing what He could do, after the doctors had done all they could do.

GOD'S TWOFOLD PURPOSE

As I look at all the various circumstances God has worked in, and as I observe what natural man has done with many of the miraculous testimonies of His grace and mercy to needy mankind, I am persuaded that God has a dual purpose in doing what He is doing in this Laodicean age. Within the true body of revealed believers that make up the living bride of Christ, He is using these things to mold us into the very stature of Jesus Christ as we look at them scripturally.

Then within the ranks of foolish virgins and tares, (make believers) He is using the very same means to send strong delusion upon all those that have no love for revealed truth, but choose rather to follow the signs. It is among this group, that you find people going off into fanaticism, and actually bringing reproach upon God, and upon all those who follow a true revelation. They are the one's that forbid their people to call a doctor. They are the ones that accuse each other of not having faith, when they pray and fail to get the desired results. They are the ones that are always begging for money to support their programs. They do not necessarily all do the same things, but my point is, No true work of God has anything to hide, and no true work of God has to be supported by begging, and no true testimony is voided because someone went to the doctor, or to the hospital. As I said before, Many times, that is what really establishes the testimony. We have to realize also, that there are times, and circumstances where it is impossible to get medical help, and the person in need has no choice but to depend completely upon the Lord to intervene in the situation. Certainly we know that there is nothing too hard for God. Did He not bring the children of Israel through the wilderness by a miraculous means? There was no confectionaries along the way; yet they had plenty to eat, and more where that came from. There was no shoe stores, and no clothing stores, yet they

traveled forty years in the wilderness and came out on the other side with shoes on their feet, and clothes on their backs, and there was not a feeble one among them. How could we not have faith to believe a God like that would work circumstances for the benefit of His true children? In his Philippians letter Paul wrote, "Be careful for nothing; (not overanxious) but in every thing, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ." Brothers and Sisters: We have got to put our faith and trust in God, and when we talk of our throne rights, may we ever realize that it is simply the right to go personally before the presence of God in prayer without having to have an earthly mediator, as in the days of old, under the law of Moses. Jesus Christ Himself is the only mediator we have need of, and He stands at the very right hand of our heavenly Father, with all power and authority delegated to Him, as pertaining to redemption and restoration. So we have the right, or privilege to enter in personally, to let our request be made known unto God, but contrary to much of what you may hear on television religious programs, we have no right to demand anything from God. There are many, especially in the area of divine healing, that are always speaking of the believers right to demand certain things, but let me

say this, If God has allowed a sickness to overtake you, or some financial misfortune to befall you, for the purpose of drawing you closer to Himself through the test, you can demand until you are blue in the face, and it will not change the plan of God the least bit. What will change the situation, is for you to humble yourself before God, and submit your will to Him, to do what ever it is that He desires to do. That is what He is after in every child of His, and there is nothing we can do short of submitting to Him completely, that will change our circumstances when they are for that purpose. There is no sickness nor disease that is too far advanced for God to intervene and bring about complete healing when it serves His plan and purpose to do so. Neither is there any financial situation so bad that He cannot reverse it, and cause you to have an abundance rather than a lack, even though His only promise is to meet our needs. He is not moved by our selfish desires and demands that are motivated by a human urge to please the flesh; His first concern is for our spiritual welfare, and our statural growth in the likeness of our blessed Savior, who died for us at Calvary, and rose again the third day that we all might have the victory over death. Yes the price is paid for our complete redemption, and as children of God we have all the resources of heaven available to us, but let us have faith in God to distribute them to us as He sees fit to do so, rather than us demanding

from Him as we have all seen spoiled children do from their earthly parents.

DOES PRAYER CHANGE THE WILL OF GOD?

I will never forget; one time when the little niece of some folks here at Faith Assembly took spinal meningitis. The little baby was down here in the hospital at New Albany, and her kidneys had ceased to act, and she was burning up with a fever. I received a telephone call from them late in the night, telling me of her condition, and they asked if I would come to the hospital and pray for her. I dressed and drove into town, and met the folks in the waiting room at the hospital. She was in the intensive care unit, and in a coma, so we were not able to go to her bedside to pray. Her parents and grandparents were all gathered there waiting, and they told me that the doctor did not give her much of a chance of pulling out of that condition. Her mother, and maybe some others of them were crying, so as we stood there in the waiting room, unable to see the little baby, I said, "The only thing we can do is put our trust in God. He is the one that can change this situation right now. All the crying that any of you can do will not change God, nor change

this situation. Furthermore, if it is within His will and purpose to take her even this very night, you could not prevent it; but let us just pray now, and ask God to be merciful to the little child.” It was just a little baby, and could not exercise faith in God itself, so we knew that whatever God would do, would not be because of its faith. We just prayed a simple little prayer asking God to be gracious to the little child, and confessing our belief that He was able to change the circumstances and spare the little one. No more than a minute or two after we stopped praying, the mother of the baby said, Let’s go up to the room and see if the nurse can give us any word as to its condition now. We walked down that long hallway and up the steps to where the children were, and as we approached the room, the door suddenly flew open, and the nurse stepped out, and when she saw us she said, Oh, we were on our way to tell you: your baby is out of the coma, the fever is dropping, and her kidneys are acting again; you can come in now. We walked in, to the bedside, and the little baby had its eyes wide open, and was moving its little hands. Saints I could never describe the look on that little mother’s face, as she reached under the plastic hood to touch her little baby. After that, it wasn’t but a few days until the little baby was back home, and well. God intervened and turned the whole situation around, but again I say, We did not change the plan of God when we prayed: we just entered into

His plan. Furthermore I want to say this; I am not a specialist of any kind, and I am not a Dr. of Divinity that can give you an explanation a mile long of how God works, therefore I just give you these little testimonies that show what I have seen Him do on behalf of needy souls when someone prayed. That brings me to say also, Do not ever stop praying no matter how hopeless the situation may look, until you know beyond any shadow of doubt that there is no longer any need to pray. Sometimes God will test us to the very last minute.

JUST WHERE IS YOUR FAITH?

Now, to the preachers that preach against doctors, and medicine, and hospitals, let me say this, Are you ready to let your little baby lay in a coma with spinal meningitis, a high fever and kidney failure, without seeking whatever medical help is available while you trust God? As I said before, God does not need anyone to cover up anything; He has nothing to hide. He is not afraid a testimony will be destroyed if medical help is sought. Furthermore any reasonable person knows God is the only one that can heal; and all the doctors and medicine are able to do is assist the law of healing that God has placed in every

last one of His creatures. In other words, Most all babies are born into this world through a natural law of reproduction that God placed in effect when He created the first male and female. Therefore when a little offspring is born into the world, we do not look upon it as a divine act of God. There are however certain women that are never able to have a baby, no matter how healthy they may be otherwise. So if through prayer, they are able to conceive and bear children, that can be called a divine act of the Creator. He has overridden the existing circumstances. That is why it is written in the 11th chapter of Hebrews, verse 11, "Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised." It took a divine act of God for Sarah to conceive, because the natural law of reproduction was not working in her. If you can understand that, then you ought to be able to understand why at times it takes a divine act of God to bring about a healing when the medical profession has done all they can do trying to get the natural law of healing to work, but the condition gets worse and worse instead of changing for the better. There are times when no amount of medical technology is able to strengthen an old run down physical body to the point where the natural law of healing will take over, but that does not necessarily mean that the person is going to die, for God may have

purposed to be glorified through the healing of such a person. If such a testimony is what He is after, that is exactly how it has to be. Praise His great name! I am so glad that there is a supernatural power that remains the same yesterday, today, and forever. Hallelujah! That does not mean that He will do the same thing in every case though, so we cannot make a universal doctrine out of any experience, and teach it to the body of Christ, lest there be confusion created. That is why Jesus said, "There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heavens were shut up for three and a half years, and there was great famine throughout the land, but to none of them was Elias sent, except to one that lived in a city of Sidon. Many people, with their dogmatic approach to what they call, faith in the word of God, actually war against the plan of God much of the time, because they try to make a universal application to everything God has ever done for anyone. You just simply cannot do that. In other words, If God has allowed some condition to overtake you for the purpose of cultivating some patience on your part, and you spend all your time running first to this One, and then that One for prayer, and never really take the time to earnestly talk to God personally, about your condition, is it any wonder you do not get the results you are after? Patience is a thing that a lot of people run from, yet it is ranked among the great virtues of the Christian's life. In the first chapter

of James, we find these words. Verse 2, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers (different) temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of you faith worketh PATIENCE. But let PATIENCE have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Many of you, when you get in the valley, instead of exercising some patience and waiting upon God, you allow your mind to run wild, and you allow Satan to feed your mind every vain imagination that he is capable of coming up with. Then you get so depressed and discouraged, you conduct yourselves as though you have no confidence in God at all. It ought to be just the opposite of that, for God has not changed. He is on the scene just as much today as He was two thousand years ago, for all those that place their trust in Him. That is why I like to keep reminding people of what Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans, (8:28-29). "And we know that all things work together for good (not for everyone, but for certain ones,) to them that love God, to them who are the called according to HIS PURPOSE. (Now notice) For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." If you are a child of God, you are in those two verses, whether you realize it yet or not. We are called, according to the purpose of God; therefore He has to be able to work in our lives as He sees fit, or He

could not fulfill verses 29-30. Let us read verse 30 now. "Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified." Paul was looking at the whole beautiful picture, and I believe it might do you good to read the rest of that chapter when you get the chance. Above all else we just have to realize that God has a plan, and a purpose, and He is going to run it the way He wants to. Many people interfere, even while they think they are doing God a service, but they can never prevent the Lord from working out His plan of redemption and perfection in the lives of His foreknown children. Just knowing that ought to make us truly thankful, for on the surface it sometimes looks like the devil is winning. We are living in a day when it is very popular to be religious, but holy living, and upholding a revelation of truth is just as unpopular today as it has always been. In other words, the devil loves to see people go to church, just as long as he can keep them from receiving a true revelation of the word of God. One thing is sure though, Every person that has taken it upon himself, or herself, to handle the scriptures and teach others what they think they mean, is going to have to give an account before God for it one of these days, and I would hate to be found standing in the shoes of a lot of them, for they have brought shame and reproach upon true Christianity. It is for this very reason, that I have felt like

we ought to put something in print on the subject of divine healing. There have been so many instances of fanaticism and misuse of the scriptures brought to the attention of the news media lately, I feel that it is time for us to let the world know exactly where we stand on this subject. What I teach and stand for, I am not ashamed to take my Bible and defend it in a court room, if it ever comes to that. Furthermore I will not have to worry about being accused of telling people not to go to the doctor when they feel they need to, for I say, Go on, and let the doctor do whatever he can to relieve you of your ailments; that will not hinder God from doing for you what the doctors cannot do, if you have your faith and trust in Him. I could never begin to tell of all the times I know of, that God has stepped in and healed folks after the doctors had either done all they knew to do, or many times, after the doctors have determined that surgery was the only resource. Therefore I would like to ask some of these preachers who think they know it all, Who should receive the glory and praise in such cases? Certainly not the doctors. To God alone belongs all glory and honor, and He is ever to be praised.

STUDY GOD'S WORD

Now, Brothers and Sisters: I believe many of you know why so many others err when it comes to applying scriptural truths. It is because they take them out of context, and try to apply them to every situation that comes up. God never meant for any of us to handle His written word like that. That is why the apostle Paul wrote what he did to Timothy, 2nd Timothy 2:15-16. Listen to this. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: (irreverent, quarrelsome arguments and debates pertaining to something of the faith) for they will increase unto more ungodliness." Paul goes right ahead and gives an example of what he is talking about. It seems that there were two fellows by the names of Hymenaeus and Philetus; who were going around arguing that the resurrection had already taken place, and Paul said this sort of thing will eat like a canker, (or gangrene) and will overthrow the faith of some. Why? Because they themselves have erred from the truth, and by their persuasions, they cause others to do likewise. He says, Shun them. Have nothing to do with people like that. As I have already said, Jesus did not suffer and die on that old cross, just simply to give the world another religion. He did all that in order to give us a way of life that the world was destitute and void of. A way of life that God would be pleased with. He gave back to man,

something that Satan had robbed him of, a genuine faith in the true and living God. Every other religion tries to pull God down to the level of man and reason Him out, but true Christianity lifts man up to a place where He can sit in heavenly places, and partake of heavenly things. A lot of people just have a few pet verses of scripture they study, and they call that, studying the word of God, but that is not studying the word of God when you do it that way, for you do not get those Bible truths in their proper context. In chapter 3, verse 16, Paul wrote to Timothy, "All scripture (A-L-L) is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (To what purpose?) That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Naturally we all have certain verses of scripture that we like to meditate upon, and quote to others from time to time, but those verses were not meant to stand alone, apart from the other scriptures. Certain verses carry the major impact, but all the rest have to feed into the picture somewhere, and there is always a right and a wrong application that can be made. Take James 5:14-15, for example. Many people hang their faith on those two verses, and just simply close their eyes to everything else in the Bible that is related to sickness, but I am complete convinced, that if we could have known what was in the mind of James when he wrote those

words, we would know that they do not apply to every situation where there is sickness. I will show you what I mean in a minute, but first let us read verse 13. "Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. (Now that pertains to ridicule and persecution.) 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." I am convinced that this was meant to apply only to those who had become immobile because of their sickness, or for some reason the person cannot come to church. Then, let him call for the elders of the church to come and pray for him, but not just for every little sickness that might strike a person from time to time. You can get pretty sick sometimes, with an upset stomach, but Paul did not tell Timothy to call for the elders of the church to pray for him, he told him to drink a little wine, and that was to settle his stomach. The sad thing is, Gentiles have done with the word of God, exactly what the Jews had done in the days of Jesus' ministry on earth. They have, without revelation, applied the word of God to every situation according to their own carnal interpretations.

UNDERSTANDING **SCRIPTURAL PROVISIONS**

There is more to what James said there, than what most people grab hold of when they read, “Is any sick among you?” What about the part that says, “If he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven?” Is God going to forgive your sins just merely because the elders of the church have prayed for you? You know there has to be more to this than that. Would we not have to look at the possibility that the Lord may have allowed the devil to put some sickness upon such persons because of some secret sin in their lives? I can certainly see how such persons, maybe lying at the point of death, would call upon God for forgiveness and healing, out of a truly repentant heart. You say, Could not God heal such a person without him having to call for the elders of the church to pray for him? Of course He could, but you have to realize that it was the Spirit of God that inspired James to write those words, so it must be, that there are times when God wants to establish a certain testimony, and also leave a lasting impression upon the memory of the person that receives His mercy and grace. In the 19th chapter of Acts, the elders were not called in to pray for the sick that were unable to attend the meetings; those that cared for them just simply took anointed handkerchiefs and

aprons from the apostle Paul and layed them upon their sick folks, and the diseases departed from them, and also the evil spirits that had tormented them went out of them. Brothers and Sisters: The important thing is that we believe God, and have confidence in Him, and at the same time, do not try to tell God how to go about meeting your needs. You believe Him to the saving of your sin sick soul, and His healing power will automatically be present to heal you, if that is what the plan of God holds for you. One thing is sure, God never turns out a counterfeit product. Everything He produces is a genuine original, and the salvation of a lost soul still remains to be His primary objective. Divine healing is just one of the fringe benefits, and should never be presented as the primary objective. Even lost sinners from time to time have miraculous healings. Would you not agree? But let us never forget that God has set a law of healing to work in all of His creatures, therefore we should be grateful to Him every time we cut or scratch ourselves, and the injured place heals up. Saints I hope this is making sense to you, for it is an honest effort to help you better understand a subject that has been presented from every angle imaginable through the years, and in these last days Satan is using it to bring reproach upon God, and upon the true people of God. I would never want to say anything that would hinder anyone from exercising faith in a scriptural provision, but when I read, and hear in

the news, of all the fanatical teachings that various one's have, on the subject of divine healing, it makes me want to help poor innocent souls that have been carried away with such nonsense. You will be a lot more stable as a Christian, if you can just simply come to understand that God is not obligated to heal ever sick person by a divine act of His sovereignty, when He has a natural law of healing that will work when given the chance. I just cannot help but look back to how God dealt with King Hezekiah when he was sick unto death with a boil. Not just a plain old boil, that was what they called a carbuncle, when I was growing up. But the point is, The Bible says he was sick unto death with it, and when God had Isaiah tell him that he would live another 15 years, man's first thought is, that God would heal him by a divine act. But not so: Isaiah had them put a poultice of figs on the boil, and when that drew out the poison, the natural law of healing in his body did the rest. You will also find that in 2nd Kings, chapter 20, and also in Isaiah, chapter 38, if you want to read it. Now I grant you, God could have healed him by a divine act, but I feel that these instances are recorded in the scriptures because God wanted wise people to understand that He is not in the business of constantly overriding His natural laws that have been in effect ever since creation. When He does that, there is a reason for it, but our faith and trust in God ought not be just for the supernatural. We need to trust

Him totally of course, but that is no excuse for us to fail to do what we know to do when some situation arises. Therefore as we go back to what James wrote, Yes, the prayer of faith shall save the sick, unless it is his time to go home, but that still does not mean that the sick person is going to be healed by a supernatural means. The person may have to take some antibiotics to clear up an infection. We do not hear much of anyone using home remedies any more, such as a poultice of figs, or a piece of fat meat, but regardless of what was used, that is not what did the healing; it just cleared the way for God's natural law of healing to work. In other words, God wants us to get a true understanding of His word, so we can walk down this road of life without all these extremes. I just hate to hear people use the Bible trying to make it look like an aspirin, or a shot of penicillin is of the devil. It was not the devil that allowed man to discover these medical helps, but it is the devil that causes man to misuse them.

THINGS THAT CAUSE CONFUSION AND TROUBLE

People who fail to get an understanding of the word of God will always miss the mark somewhere. Just like when I used to be in the Methodist

Church, and began to see in the scriptures various things that pertained to the Millennium. The main body of Methodism did not see the Millennium in the scriptures. All they could see was the catching away of the saints in the rapture, and the rest of eternity in heaven. They read 1st Thessalonians 4:16-17, and as far as they can see, that is our ultimate goal, just to be taken up into heaven to be with the Lord for ever. Most of you know these verses, but for the benefit of some who may not, let us read them. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Now if we never pay any attention to other scriptures like Isaiah 11, and Isaiah 65, that actually speak of a time beyond the rapture, and the only other scriptures we ever read are those like 2nd Peter 3:10-12, and if you ignore verse 13 there, you might have reason to believe as some do, that the rapture ends it all, and the earth will then be destroyed. Peter wrote, But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. (The Methodist people say, You see there, the earth is going to be burned up; that

is why the Lord is taking us to glory. But notice now, as we read some more) Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? (If you stop reading right there, and build your revelation off those three verses, you see no place for the Millennium, but notice verse 13.) "Nevertheless WE, according to HIS PROMISE look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Verse 14, Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found in Him in peace, without spot, and blameless." This great redemption program of the Lord, is not just to get some people saved that He can take up to live in the heavens with Him. If that was all He wanted He never would have put man down here on earth in the first place. His ultimate goal in redemption and restoration is to reinstate man back to the place Adam fell from when he disobeyed His commandment to him. The big difference, is that the end product will have already been tested by the devil, and will have overcome him, never to be tested again. But it will take one thousand years of Jesus ruling on earth with a rod of iron while Satan is chained up, and unable to interfere, to restore all things back to what they

were before the fall of man, and at that time Satan will be allowed to go out and test all those that were born during the one thousand years, and he will deceive a great host of them. But God Himself will immediately intervene, and destroy Satan and all that he has been able to deceive, and that will mark the end of his influence upon Earth. That is why Isaiah could write, in chapter 65, verses 24 & 25, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." A thing like that could never be, until Satan is chained up, and the world is set free of his evil influence. There are an awful lot of professing Christians that you could never teach anything about the Millennium to, for they just simply cannot see past those other scriptures we read. Over in chapter 11, of Isaiah, we find him also speaking there of conditions in the Millennium. We will just pick up verse 5, and read a little there. "And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reigns. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together: and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion

shall eat straw like the ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the cockatrices' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." I will stop reading there, but I ask you, Where and when do a lot of these people think that prophecy will ever fit in. Certainly not before the rapture of the true church; so when? Only in the Millennium. Bro. Jackson: Why are you talking about the Millennium, in a message on divine healing? Simply to point out how essential it is for Christians to rightly divine the WORD OF TRUTH, for if you just lift out a verse here and there, you can miss the whole picture. One of these Methodist men actually said to me one time, Bro. Junie: It has been said, that the book of Revelation never should have been written, and I partly believe that. Brother I thank God for the book of Revelation, for that, along with Daniel, lets us know where we are today. But these are just some little points that I am including to help you see where all the confusion and trouble springs from, among the ranks of religion. Because of something some of them have read from the Bible, one of their family members could be lying at the point of death, and they would not consent to a blood transfusion to save the person's life. It is all a result of the way they have twisted the scriptures. But as I said already, If for some reason God has give you the

conviction, that you will never have to take another pill, I promise you this. You will never have to take one as long as you live, but if God did not give you that conviction, and you are just following the teaching of some man, you are in for trouble before you get out of here. That kind of life requires a revelation of faith, and I will never try to point out who has it, and who does not, but time itself will tell. If God placed in you a revelation of that kind of faith even for you whole family, and you are hauled into court because of it, I guarantee you one thing, God will be right there to defend you, but if He has not dealt with you in that way, and you are trying to live like that, you are just experimenting with faith, and what you have will not stand the test. Just taking certain verses from the Bible, and building a doctrine out of them, that you use to instruct others on how to build their lives, is like building a bridge over a great crevice and never fastening the ends to the embankments on either side. Anything that is worthwhile has to be anchored to something. Therefore any doctrine that will not connect up with the scriptures all the way through the Bible is going to leave someone hanging somewhere without anything to hold on to. It was not like that in the early church. Those disciples were Christians in name, in word, and in deeds. Those who opposed them had to make up lies about them, in order to get them in trouble with the law. They were not trouble makers. They did not go

around just agitating people by trying to cram what they believed down them. They were not breakers of the law of the land, except where there was a definite difference on some moral issue, and they were not afraid to die for what they believed, for their convictions became a living part of them by the power of the Holy Ghost that guards every true conviction. Furthermore when their true convictions were put to the test, God was always on hand, either to deliver them out of their dilemma, or to give them grace to die for their faith with a smile on their face.

CONVICTIONS THAT GLORIFY GOD

I have actually read from the writings of the antinicean fathers, how that the Spirit of conviction would come upon the critics of Christians being put to death, and they would jump right out of the crowd, and say, Let me go with them. That was the result of the power of God standing by to uphold something that was a true spiritual conviction implanted in the believers by a revelation of faith. That will glorify God. On the other hand, when you are taken to court because you have refused medical treatment for your dying child, and all you have for your defense is what your

denomination teaches you, and the power of God is not present to vindicate you, The only conclusion one can come to is that you are a source of reproach upon every true Christian in your society. What you do in the name of Christianity reflects upon everyone who is a true Christian. But let me keep stressing this, I am not trying to take from any of you, anything that is a personal conviction. The only thing I would try to impress upon you, is that your convictions ought to glorify God. Therefore we need to handle them with wisdom. You need to realize also, that you cannot prove spiritual things to the agnostics and blasphemers of the world. From time to time, some poor soul accepts the challenge put out by this unbelieving Church of Christ for someone to come on their program and prove that God still heals people today, as He did in days of old. Naturally they always make such a person look foolish, because God will not cooperate with such a display. It is not the same as it was with Elijah, when there was a great host of people that had to choose which God they would serve. The thing that really thrills me though, is when some poor soul is almost to the point of death with cancer, and the doctors have done all they know to do, and have given him up to die, and then someone comes in and says, Would it be alright if I just anoint you with oil and pray for you? Naturally those doctors, or at least most of them think that is all a lot of

foolishness. But when that person is restored to health, their mouths are stopped, or now and then, one of them will say something like, A higher power has intervened, but that seldom, if ever, makes a believer out of the doctor. Praise God! It sure does a lot for believers though, and many times God has to let circumstances come to that, in order to get us into the place where we belong with Him.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY OF MIRACULOUS HEALING

When I was lying there in the old St. Edwards Hospital with my head split open and seemingly no chance of saving my right eye, even if I lived, I did not know anything about divine healing. As a matter of fact, I did not know anything at all for three days after the accident, but when I finally did come to myself, not knowing whether I had an eye or not, and even wondered if my brains were running out, there was something deep within me, that kept saying, This all happened to make you get right with God. That was certainly one thing that no doctor could do. That was between me and God. As for my healing, even after they had me patched back together, and thought I might have a 50-50 chance of living, they had no way of knowing whether I would ever have

my right mind or not. As for my eye, they said I might be able to see out of it, but I would never have any control over the movement of it. I am just telling you what the best opinions of the doctors were, for that is what the condition looked like to them. But praise God, He had another plan for my life that none of us knew anything about at that time. Not only do I have my right mind, (Some of these preachers might question that at times), but I also have my sight in that eye, and I can move it where ever I want to, just like you do yours. No it was not any instantaneous healing, but if you could have seen me then, you would have to agree that I have experienced a miraculous healing. Brothers and Sisters: this world is full of living testimonies tonight, of how the hand of God intervened in their lives at a time when just about all hope was gone from the standpoint of the natural. Some of them were picked up along the highways, where they were found lying, bleeding to death with their bodies mangled. I read the testimony of one fellow many years ago, that lay in the hospital in just such a condition, asking himself, and asking God, Why? His bones were broken just about like the Brother here in the church that we mentioned earlier. The doctors had him x-rayed, and they checked him, and it looked like it would be impossible for him to ever walk again, But not only did he walk, he preached and prayed for the sick, after the Lord healed him. It is this kind

of healings that really let us see two sides of the healing power of God in operation at once. The natural law of healing completes the work, but there are times when God moves in a supernatural way, to get everything in its proper order for the natural law to work, so what we need to realize above all else, is that even though God may intervene in a situation of your life, and heal you by a supernatural means, (A divine, sovereign act) He will never do away with the natural law of healing that He has placed in your body. You may not think so, but you need it. Another thing I want to say more about, is how God will sometimes use a physical sickness in our life, to get us to the place where we will pray and seek to know His will and purpose for our life. Many times a man will run from his call to preach, until God has to let some sickness overtake him, and get him flat on his back, and then he will begin to cry out to God, and actually surrender to the will of God, if God will only allow him to get well. I do not know what is ahead for any of you, but I do know that somewhere down the road something is going to knock on your door, and I just pray that when it does, your heart will be in tune with the word of God, for if it isn't you will be at the mercy of the enemy. God is still a healer; that is one thing we know for sure, but let us not experiment with Him. Pray rather, that He will help you recognize every true conviction of your heart that He has placed there, and that He will teach

you to walk in obedience to that. For He has put those true convictions there for our spiritual benefit. They will lead us to be more like Jesus.

RECEIVERS OF GOD'S PROMISES

Now we come to another question people often ask; Who are those promises and provisions in the Bible meant for? As most of you well know, there are hundreds of different denominations among the ranks of what is called Christianity, and every last one of them feel that what they have is right. They are deceived into believing that what they have is what God is looking for, in the world today. Even homosexuals and perverts are deceived into believing God will accept them. They refuse to believe that it was their kind that caused God to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah even after the great flood of Noah's day. Some of those blasphemers even have the nerve to suggest the Jesus Christ Himself was one of their kind, but we do not have to defend Him against them, for God knows what to do with their kind once their cup of abominations is full. In the meanwhile God is perfecting a body of true believers made up of all nations, kindreds, tongues, and tribes to be just like Jesus, (That is what we read in

Romans 8:29) and the main body of promises and provisions New Testament are for them. Oh yes, others are partaking of the benefits also. Jesus reminded His disciples that God maketh the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. God cannot send rain to a thirsty field of wheat without watering also those old tares that are growing right alongside the wheat. It is the same way in religion even yet today, for God has not yet separated all the tares from among the true body of believers. But I do want to go into the 4th chapter of Ephesians for a little look at what the apostle Paul wrote to that model church about this great mystical body of Christ. In verse 4 we read, "There is ONE BODY, and ONE SPIRIT, even as ye are called in ONE HOPE of your calling; ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM, ONE GOD and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Brothers and Sisters: There is a lot to be said in response to those three verses. In the first place, if there was only ONE BODY to start with, it will end with only ONE BODY of true Bible believers, and there will not be one trinitarian in the bunch. Another thing we can say is, At the time of this writing, that ONE BODY was made up partly of people that had been taken from Judaism, and various beliefs of Judaism, yet Judaism still lingered on. Even though God called out of Judaism many souls to make up this ONE BODY, it did not destroy

Judaism. Then when God began calling people out of paganism; it still remained just as strong as ever. Their temples were everywhere. But there was something unique about that ONE BODY of believers in that apostolic age; they all walked in the unity of the faith. They were not a divided people over their own Christian doctrines. The doctrines that governed their moral, and their spiritual makeup, was the same for everyone; both Jew and Gentile alike; and there was no such thing as denominational divisions among that ONE BODY. God has predetermined that we should be conformed to the image of His Son, and He only had one Son. He did not have a Baptist son, a Methodist son, a Presbyterian son, a Catholic son, and so on. The one Son was Jesus the Christ, and all who are to be made into His image will have to shed those denominational garments, and get dressed up in the pure unadulterated word of God. Therefore it is utterly impossible to even visualize being made into the image of Jesus Christ, as long as your vision of Christianity is tied to those systems of religion. As we have said many times before, those religious systems are the result of what God did in the lives of various men who were instruments in His hands in the years of the Reformation, when through many different one's the Spirit of God restored back to the church the apostolic doctrines that Satan had robbed her of. But God never intended to have denominational fences built

around those precious truths that belonged to His ONE great body of believers. That was the work of man in his carnal efforts to protect a precious jewel of revelation that had been restored by the Spirit of God. Now we know God worked through these various systems in the hour of their beginning, but when they failed to move on with Him, He left them, and now they are existing in name only. There is no life among them, except for an individual here and there that has not yet heard their call to come out and follow truth.

TRUTHS SET IN ORDER

I suppose some of you may be wondering why we are dealing with these scriptures here in Ephesians 4, in connection with a message on divine healing, but I hope that by doing so, we can help you see why there is so much confusion about the subject of divine healing. Many of you have heard me say that a proper revelation of the Godhead is what really unlocks the revelation of the other major doctrines of the Bible. Well that also applies to the promises and provisions of the scriptures, just as much as it does to the doctrines. The more you know about the author, the better you can understand what he has to say. If you can understand exactly, who Jesus

Christ is, and what His relationship to the Father is, concerning His works, then you will know more about how to exercise faith in the provisions He has made for us. It is one thing to read the gospels and see what Jesus did for various ones during the three and a half years He ministered on earth, but it is quite another thing, to know just how to apply those things to our own lives. Some people seem to have the idea that anything Jesus ever did, they can do the same thing and get the same results, and it is these experiments that are causing a lot of the confusion we see and hear of so often any more. I will just say this, If the Father tells you to do a certain thing that Jesus did, like He told Him to do it, then you will get the desired results. Otherwise you are just putting on a show, and actually playing with peoples lives. Jesus spat on the ground one day, and made a clay substance He applied to a blind man's eyes, and he received his sight, but tell me, How many people have ever had their blind eyes healed through that same process since then? The secret to your success or failure is in how you respond to the reality of what Paul said in Ephesians 4:6. "ONE GOD and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and IN YOU ALL." Who was he talking to? Born again believers of course. But there is where it all lays. If you will allow the Spirit of God in you to lead your life, you will not have to experiment with the scriptures. Neither will you have to walk in fear, always wondering if you have missed

the will of God. When it comes to following the ministry or teaching of a man, be sure you are following him because he is following Christ, and not his own selfish ambitions. There are ten thousand voices out there, bidding for your attention, but you need not be deceived by any of them, if you will take your Bible, and get down on your knees, and ask God to show you which ones are teaching His truth, and who you should sit under. Some use a verse of scripture found in 1st John 2:27, to excuse themselves for being too proud to sit under the teaching of any man, but I want you to know, those apostles of Christ did not contradict each other, and the apostle Paul wrote in his Ephesian letter that God has set in the church, a five fold ministry for the perfecting of the saints. Let us read it, beginning with 4:11. "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ? (All of the body) Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Now some may ask, When was this ministry set in the church? Right at the very beginning. She started out with a ministry like this, and she will end the same way. God's longsuffering grace waited while Satan had his Millennium, (the Dark Ages) but the Reformation has restored those

precious truths that were so perverted during that period, and God's five fold ministry is again at work in the church doing exactly what Paul said they would do. By this precious word of truth (the Bible) they are setting everything in its proper order. Where do they get their authority? From the Holy Ghost, which is the Spirit of God as was in Jesus Christ.

THE WORK OF THE COMFORTER

Let us turn back to St. John 16:12-15, and see what Jesus had to say about the Holy Ghost that was to come. He refers to it as the Spirit of truth here, but in verse 7, as the Comforter, and in 14:26, both the Comforter and the Holy Ghost. So let it be understood that each of these references apply to one and the selfsame Spirit. Notice now, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. (They had to witness His death, burial and resurrection before they would really be able to comprehend all that He wanted them to.) Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, (The Holy Ghost, or Comforter) is come, He will guide you into ALL TRUTH; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: (Jesus speaking) for He

shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." In reality, here is what Jesus said this Comforter, this Spirit of truth would do. He would take the things of His, and would show them unto the true children of God. Not just for their amusement, but for their complete understanding to this great redemption plan of the Father. That is what the things of Christ Jesus were; the attributes and works of the Father, as was manifested in His miraculous ministry upon earth. When He walked upon the earth among men, Jesus did not go up and down the street blowing His own whistle, so to speak, like a lot of people do. Instead, He became a humble servant, and sought no reputation of His own. Most of the time when He was seen walking along, He looked much like any other man. Nevertheless within that vessel of clay was the unlimited power of the great Creator of heaven and earth, and at various times those attributes projected forth to minister to the people of that day. His works among the people were the works of the Father that was in Him, and that caused Him to say, in chapter 14, verse 12, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and great works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." In other words, Jesus in reality distributed those attributes of the Father that was in Himself among the church, and He

gave the leadership and oversight of the church into the hands of what we refer to as the five fold ministry, and it became the responsibility of the apostles to set all doctrine in order in the church; and to have the final word in settling disputes that arose from time to time. Besides the ministry that was set in the church, (which is the body of Christ) there were nine major spiritual gifts, or gifts of the Spirit distributed among the body, and the operation of those spiritual gifts is by the anointing of the Holy Ghost. Among those nine gifts mentioned by the apostle Paul in 1st Corinthians 12:7-10, is the gifts of healing, and we have certainly been privileged to witness those gifts of healing in operation in this generation, and especially so in the ministry of Bro. Branham. But the point we were making, was that the gifts of the Spirit were no confined just to the ministry. They were placed in the body, in order that the spiritual body might function much as the physical body does. In the physical body each member of the body has its particular function, and it takes the complete body of members working in harmony with each other, in order for that body to function as it was originally created to do. When one or more members of the body fail to do their part the body suffers because of it, and that is exactly what happens in the mystical body when the various members fail to cooperate with each other. Paul really goes into much detail clarifying this in the latter part of

chapter 12. He talks about how even the least members have their part in the completeness of the whole body, and that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another, because when one member suffers, all the members suffer with it, and likewise when one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. If you hit your thumb with a hammer, and it swells up twice its size, your whole body suffers because of it. Likewise if you are walking on sharp gravel barefooted, your whole body is suffering, but let someone come along and give you a good pair of shoes, and your whole body will rejoice. Therefore just apply that spiritually, and you will understand what Paul is really trying to get across to that Corinthian church. That is what James was getting at in chapter 5, verse 16, when he said, Confess your faults one to another, and pray for another, that ye may be healed. He went on to say, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Let me say this now, When you start using this scripture to confess your faults to each other, be sure you follow up with the rest of it, and pray for each other, lest you be found just gossiping and complaining, and you wind up in a worse shape.

APOSTLES OF THE FIVE **FOLD MINISTRY**

Let me get back to this five fold ministry that Jesus set in the church in that first age, for we want to take a look at what happened to it, and see why the church went without it for so many hundreds of years. In the first place let me point out the fact that every Christian of that first age had been converted to Christianity out of a religion that was ruled by priests through a lot of rituals and ceremonies. The Jews had their priests and rabbis, and everything they did was formalistic, one ritual after another. The Gentiles had been converted from paganism, and they also were ruled by a priesthood and rituals. But in the church, in the book of Acts, there were no priests and rabbis. There were apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, and they did not rule the church; they led it. It was not really them doing the works we read of, no more than it was Jesus doing the works in His ministry. In reality it was the Holy Ghost doing the works using their bodies as instruments. He was taking the things of Jesus, which were the things of the Father, and dividing them up among the five fold ministry, of which the apostle held first place in spiritual authority. Every man referred to as an apostle in the New Testament, was definitely a man that carried a revelation of the word of God with the

authority to establish exactly what the gospel was, and what it was not. Only apostles wrote epistles in the New Testament. Not one epistle was written by an evangelist. That is why you have heard me say, it was the apostles that held the line on the revelation of the word of God. Of course we realize that we are living in a day and hour when any number of men are being referred to as apostles simply because they have exercised some spiritual gift, or gifts, but that is a poor yardstick to measure an apostle by, for Phillip went down into Samaria preaching the gospel, and had an outstanding ministry with all sorts of miracles, and he was only an evangelist. Just listen to what it says here in Acts 8:6-7, about his ministry down there. "And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Phillip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed." If that had been in our day: many people would be saying, A man that has such a miraculous ministry as that, would have to be an apostle. But Phillip was not an apostle; he was an evangelist. He took the gospel to those people, and he preached it with the full authority and power of the Holy Ghost, and I am sure his revelation was correct, but I am just as sure, that he did not claim to be an apostle. He exercised no authority in establishing the doctrine that the whole grace age

church was to be judged by. Paul, Peter, James and John did that. In Romans 2, Paul wrote, “For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; in the day WHEN GOD SHALL JUDGE THE SECRETS OF MEN BY JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL.” There was nothing wishy washy about Paul. He was so sure that what he preached was the very mind of God, he even wrote to the Galatian assembly, that if any man, or even an angel from heaven, ever preached any other gospel than the gospel he preached to them, let him be accursed. He even included himself in that. A lot of preachers have to go back later, and straighten up something they have preached wrong previously, but not those apostles. What Paul really said was, (I will just paraphrase it,) Even if I myself come back later and preach something contrary to what I have already preached to you, may I be accursed also. Why was he so positive about it? He tells why in Galatians 1:11-12. “But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Brother when you receive it like that, you do not have to go back and change it later.

GIVE IMPOSTERS THE WORD TEST

In his first letter to the Corinthian church, Paul wrote, “I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.” In other words, the church was founded upon a pure revelation of the word of God, and as long as those first apostles remained alive, it was kept on a true course, and ministered to by a five fold ministry. But when those old guardians of the true faith finally all died off, Satan began injecting little ideas here and there, until the first thing they knew the church was being flooded with ritualistic, pagan practices that those first Christians had fled from. By 500 A.D. the church was under a priesthood, just like Judaism and paganism. The five fold ministry was out of the picture, and it would be out for a long time. During the Dark Ages people did not become Christians for the most part, because of Holy Ghost conviction, and because the gospel was preached to them. They were all too often given a choice, You become a Christian, or you will have your head cut off. You can just imagine what kind of Christians that produced. A people that functioned exactly as the priests and bishops ordered them to. That is what Christianity had come to, and that is why the Reformation was necessary. Through it, little by little,

through first one man, and then another, God gave back to the church what Satan had stolen from her, but it would be quite some time before that five fold ministry would be restored to her.

This 20th century has produced some tremendous testimonies as different men have exercised dynamic faith and stood against the forces of evil. When they would preach, and pray for the sick; demons would come out screaming, and people would be healed. But when you go back, and study the doctrines they preached, they were nowhere in line with what those first apostles preached. Yet people would say, Oh, with a ministry like that, Bro. So and So just has to be an apostle. Saints: that is not so. Even in that first century there were men who claimed to be apostles, and no doubt ever one of them had a tremendous ministry (They had to have some reason to be looked upon as apostles) but I find some very interesting words in Rev. 2:2, where the Lord had John write to the church at Ephesus. He rebuked them a little farther down for departing from their first love, but in verse 2, he wrote, "I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast TRIED THEM WHICH SAY THEY ARE APOSTLES, and are not, and hast found them liars." They may have

fallen into a routine of works to the point where they were not even motivated by the pure love that they began with, but one thing is sure, they did not forget how to put those self acclaimed apostles to the word test. They certainly knew that it took more than a miraculous ministry to make an apostle out of a man. There were times when they had to listen real close in order to catch the part that would reveal the imposter as a false apostle, for some of those fellows no doubt had done their school work, and had learned the part very well. Nevertheless there will always be a little something said, that will allow a true saint to get a glimpse behind the mask of every imposter. That is the reason the apostle John wrote, (1st John 4:1) "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." In verse 4, he says, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, (The Holy Ghost) than he that is in the world." It is His enablement within us, that allows us to recognize the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of effort. John also wrote (2nd John 10) "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." Now this was before the tares actually got into the church, but that old apostle said, Don't let them even come into our home if their

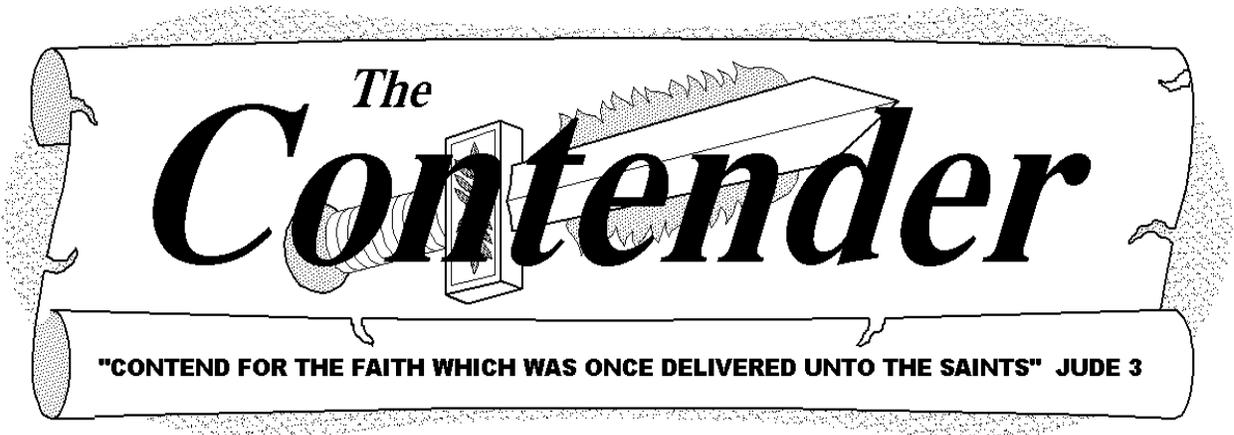
doctrine is wrong, and besides that, Be sure you do not say to them, God bless you, or May God prosper you, lest you be counted as a partaker of their evil deeds. That was pretty strong; would you not say so? John outlived all the original apostles, but in 96 A.D., when he wrote the book of Revelation, it was just about over for him also. There were other men who stood gallantly for the truth going into that second age, but John was the last of the original apostles of Christ, that held the line on the true revelation of God's word in that first age, and all this confusion in the ranks of Protestant religion is a result of what Satan did in stripping the church of her pure revelation. But has not the truth been restored? You may say. Yes it has been restored to the true church, but for every true saint that is following a true revelation, there are thousands that are interpreting the scriptures to fit their own human reasoning. Sure the five fold ministry is being restored to the church, but you will not find any of them in a denominational church, nor in any of these cults that are springing up in so many places anymore. Therefore that leaves a lot of room in the overall scope of religion for manmade doctrines and dogmas, and divine healing is one of their main topics, for we are living in a generation of sick people. Everyone who is sick would certainly enjoy being healed by a divine act of God, especially if they did not have to do anything to receive it, except support some religious program

of some man somewhere. You know what I mean; some of them even have it advertised at discount prices. While one man may you to send him a hundred dollars along with your prayer requests, another one will only ask for ten. But the dangerous one's are those who teach their doctrines on divine healing, and make their followers feel afraid to go to a doctor for any reason at all. Ruling people's lives through fear is worse than just swindling them out of their money. I believe you would have to agree with that. When a person allows himself to fall under some man's spell, many times that person finds out too late, that the man they are following is actually tampering with their soul.

Let me ask you a question now. Have you been able to see by all these many examples and remarks, what divine healing is, and what it is not? Divine healing supercedes, or bypasses the natural law of healing that God has placed in every last one of us. But it is still the will of God for us to do whatever we need to, in order to keep that law of healing working in our body. But above all, Do not allow your life to be ruled by fear, for that is not the Spirit of God using fear tactics on you. That is how Satan operates. Just remember this, All healing is of God, when it is a true healing. But God does not always receive glory for it, for a lot of people just want to get healed so

they can get back to their same old way of life, and never even think of God until they get sick again.

May God be praised forever! Amen.



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