

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

The Epistle of James has been called “the Christian at work,” and “the book of practical Christianity.” No true Christian should discredit or disobey one word in this God breathed epistle; but the very first verse is a caution from the Holy Spirit to the Gentile believer to study this epistle in the light of other Scriptures.

“Comparing spiritual things with spiritual” and “rightly dividing the word of truth” are two Divine principles which must be diligently observed in the study of any portion of the Bible.

When Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, stood before Agrippa he made reference to his past history, when as Saul or Tarsus he was a Pharisee, as belonging to “the sect of our religion.” Acts 26:5. “Religion”—“threskeia”—that is, observances, rites or ceremonies which were practiced by the Jews in their worship of God. He wrote to the Galatians that he had “profited in Judaism” before he was converted to Jesus.

Galatians 1:14. Then again he speaks of his past religious experience as “in the flesh”; “Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church, etc.” “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.” Philippians 3:4 to 7.

Paul never encouraged a Gentile saint to be religious. He never used the word “Threskeia” in any of his epistles to Gentile believers. The Jews had religion. Christians have eternal life. They have Christ. The Old Testament saints lived in the shadow days, when carnal ordinances were imposed upon them.

James was a very, very religious Jew. He was also an apostle of Christ. But James was never called to the ministry to which Paul was called. James refers to religion, “threskeia,” James 1:27, because he wrote to Jews, religious Jews. “To the twelve tribes.” He wrote in terms that were familiar to them. They, like himself, continued to observe much that belonged to Old Testament Judaism, even after they had been turned to Christ.

His message to these converted Jews sounds very much like the righteous demands in the Sermon on the Mount preached by Jesus of Nazareth in the land of the Jews, where the children of Abraham were more particular about outward religious observances than they were about practical righteousness.

James says: “If there come unto your synagogue . . .” James 2:2. The Greek word for assembly is the same as the word elsewhere translated “synagogue.” The epistle is written to Christian religious Jews. There is much in it for the Gentile Christian of today. If every professing Christian today were measuring up to the standard of James' practical righteousness, many more in the world would behold their good works and glorify God.

There is no book in all of the Bible in the study of which it is less difficult to apply the Divine principles of Bible study. It is a very simple matter to get the mind and ministry of James by studying just three chapters in the New Testament Scriptures; the second chapter of Galatians, the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and the twenty-first chapter of the Acts. Surely the reading of these three chapters will enable any child of God to better understand this epistle of James which is being quoted quite frequently today to support some unsound doctrines and fanatical religious practices carried on in the name of Christianity.

It was James who was the spokesman at the council at Jerusalem in the year 52 A.D., when it was agreed between the eleven apostles, who were located in Jerusalem, and Paul and Barnabas, who made their headquarters at Antioch, that the religious observances of Judaism

which were still being practiced by the Christian Jews and the law of Moses should not be imposed upon the Gentile Christians.

In that Jerusalem council James said:

“Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God.” Acts 15:19.

Trouble not Gentile believers with things Jewish.

Today Gentiles which are turned to God through Christ are certainly being troubled by teachers and preachers who are giving to them things Jewish; some things from the Epistle of James. Remember his sentence.

Again, how simple are these words of James which should be self-explanatory:

“As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing . . .” Acts 21:25.

This he declared in the year 60 A.D. some time after he had written his epistle, When Christians today unwisely preach to Christian Gentiles what God by the pen of James intended for Jews, we may be assured that it is being done in spite of James' clear instructions not to do it. “That they observe no such thing.”

Jewish vows, religious purifications, circumcision, Sabbaths, feast days and laying on of hands do not belong to the Body of Christ.

Notice the first verse of this epistle:

“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.” James 1:1.

The Apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, referred to the writer of this epistle as James, the Lord's brother. Shortly after he was converted Paul visited Peter in Jerusalem, and while there he also saw this other apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ: James. Galatians 1:19.

In the gospel according to Luke, in the sixth chapter and the sixteenth verse, James is mentioned as the son of Alphaeus and the brother of Judas. These two brothers were numbered with the twelve apostles.

Of course James, the writer of this epistle, was not the James who was beheaded by Herod. That James whose death is recorded in the twelfth chapter of Acts was the brother of John. They were the sons of Zebedee.

In the gospel according to Mark, James, the writer of this epistle, is referred to as James the less, the son of Mary. Mark 15:40.

Again, he is mentioned in connection with his brethren and his sisters in Matthew 13:55 and 56.

Jude, in the opening verse of his epistle, is spoken of as the brother of James.

After the resurrected Christ was seen by more than five hundred brethren, he was seen of James. I Corinthians 15:7.

The mothers of both James' were eye-witness of the crucifixion of Jesus. Matthew 27:56.

This James was also one of the apostles in the upper room after the ascension of Christ. He was with the apostles when they were all with one accord in one place on the day of Pentecost. Acts 1:13.

James was mentioned by Paul as one of the pillars of the church at Jerusalem. Galatians 2:9. By common consent and according to the will of God, the ministry of James was Jewish—“To the circumcision.”

The Epistle of James is just as much inspired as any other portion of the Holy Scriptures. But when God has plainly told us that James was a minister to the circumcision, we must surely bear this in mind when we are studying his epistle. Galatians 2:7 to 9.

No where in the New Testament Scriptures do we have any record or even the slightest suggestion that James ever preached one message to even one Gentile. On the contrary, we certainly have scriptural evidence that he was never completely delivered from his Jewish prejudice and from the religious observances of Judaism. James was clinging to these with other Jews who were zealous of the law in the year 60 A.D.

When the disciples were scattered abroad, at the time of the persecution which arose at the death of Stephen, the apostles remained at Jerusalem. Acts 8:1. We find James at Jerusalem in the first chapter of Acts and eighteen years later in the fifteenth chapter of Acts and twenty-six years later in the twenty-first of Acts. The last we hear of James in the Bible, he is still at Jerusalem, one of the rulers of the Jewish disciples, apparently the chief ruler.

James did sanction the declaration of Peter regarding the purpose of God in this age, to first visit the Gentiles and take out from among them a people for His name before Jesus shall return to occupy the throne of David in Jerusalem. Acts 15:14 to 16.

But it would be well for us to read this entire fifteenth chapter of Acts and thereby learn that James believed in one order for “the Jews which believed” and another order for “the Gentiles which believed.”

This is again very definitely and clearly set forth some years later when Paul made his last visit to the city of Jerusalem before he was delivered to the Roman government as a prisoner. This visit is recorded in Acts 21:17 and 18:

“And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.”

This gives us some idea of the prominence of James among the rulers in the church at Jerusalem in the year 60 A.D.

In order that he might please James and “the Jews which believed” in Jerusalem, Paul became a Jew for seven days, as we learn from Acts 21:26 and 27. But we find very clear instructions in Acts 21:25, that the Gentiles which believe were not to observe any of the ceremonies which belonged to the Jews. Did not James sanction two different orders, one for believing Jews; quite a different one, for believing Gentiles?

Surely this experience of Paul with James the Lord's brother in the year 60 A.D. at Jerusalem will throw much light on the epistle of James which we are studying.

The exact date of the epistle of James is not known; but it is quite certain that it was written at a much earlier date than the time of Paul's visit—perhaps from eight to eighteen years before that time. Some authorities believe it to be the first New Testament epistle written.

So, as we study this epistle we shall bear in mind that some years after it was written, James insisted that Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles become a Jew for seven days to please the Jews at Jerusalem.

At that time, even the Christian Jews were still practicing circumcision, which truly has no place in the Body of Christ; and surely no Christian should become a Jew to gain the Jews today. I Corinthians 9:20.

We shall likewise receive much help in the study of this epistle of James by reading carefully all of the second chapter of Galatians, especially Galatians 2:12 which we quote:

“For before that certain (Peter) came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.”

Peter feared them which were of the circumcision, James is mentioned here by name. “Came from James” Then Peter was afraid to eat with Gentile Christians years after Pentecost because of James.

During the time covered by the Book of Acts, James and the other apostles who remained at Jerusalem did not preach outside of the land of the Jews, the land of Palestine. They were ministers to the Jews in the land of the Jews. God said to Paul when he visited Jerusalem, “They will not receive your testimony here so I will send you far hence to the Gentiles.” Acts 22:18 to 21.

Paul, therefore, was not numbered with the twelve apostles. He was the chosen vessel of God to the Gentiles. He labored very little with any of the twelve.

The Jews were turned to Christ from Judaism.

The Gentiles were turned to Christ from paganism. And as the Gentiles did not have the experience of the Jews who were converted from Moses to Christ, some of the believing Jews who were zealous of the law tried to give “the Gentiles which believed” Moses and the law, after they were turned to God from their idols. But this was displeasing to the Holy Spirit. God forbade it.

In his epistle to the Galatians (5:9), the Apostle Paul referred to the legalism which the Jews were mixing with the gospel of grace as, “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”

The “modernism,” “ritualism” and “fanaticism” in the Church of Christ today is very largely due to that leaven. Where is the denomination wholly delivered from legalism? The Christian is dead to the law. Galatians 2:19.

Paul said “I would that they were cut off which trouble you.” 5:12. The Gentile Christians were continually troubled by the Jews who were determined to force Old Testament religious ceremonies upon them; thereby subverting their souls with the perverted gospel which they preached. Circumcision, days and seasons, laying on of hands, washings, anointing with oil, etc., belong to Jews.

Remember what James said:

“My sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God.”

Are you troubling Gentile believers with Jewish observances today?

And as we proceed with the study of the epistle of James please bear in mind this most important statement:

“As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing.”

If James could speak today to the multitude of believing Gentiles who are being beguiled by some of the fraudulent religious healers during the great apostasy which is sweeping over Christendom he would say: “We have concluded that they observe no such thing.” Surely we shall remember these words of James when we read what he says in his epistle concerning anointing with oil.

Certainly we desire the mind of God in this matter.

There are many conscientious saints today who truly want to do the will of God; who do not want to be deprived of any blessing because of the lack of faith, or lack of understanding of

God's Word. God must be sorely grieved with the discord and divisions among His people, with the disagreement and confusion over the subject of healing.

For centuries there has never been so much talk about Divine healing as is heard on every side at this present time. This general discussion of healing has arisen in recent years. The Church of Christ was not troubled with this special emphasis on healing, until this present wave of destructive criticism, known as Modernism, began to sweep throughout the professing Church of Christ playing havoc with Church organizations and so-called evangelical seminaries. Surely Satan is using every device to wreck the sane testimony of Christians. How pitiable is the condition of the Christian Church at the present time.

Many of God's children who could not be deceived by this modern Christianized agnosticism have been captivated and unbalanced by one of these healing delusions.

Really the Lord Jesus Christ is being dishonored today by many men and women who are carrying on their unscriptural healing traffic in His holy name. Not a few of them are wilfully deceiving the ignorant and gullible religious masses to increase the size of their audiences and the cash receipts in their offerings.

“A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign.” Matthew 16:4. This too, accounts for the throngs who often gather around the fake religious healers of today. The reign of the man of sin is not far off. He is coming after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders; with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.” II Thessalonians 2:9.

Satan by his false prophets will try to deceive even the very elect and many of the very elect have joined the ranks of the fanatical healers to help Satan obscure the glorious gospel of grace with their nonsensical, unscriptural and unprofitable theories, which experiences are constantly proving to be false.

It is a well known fact that multitudes of genuine Christians, as well as those who are Christian in name only, never become earnest students of the Bible until they become enthusiasts in some religious sect which corrupts or wrests the Scriptures. Then most of them cease to be like the Bereans who received the Word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily to see whether those things were so.

But for the benefit of the Bereans we send out this message:

“Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

Confess your faults (sins) one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” James 5:13 to 16.

In every assembly of New Testament saints the spiritual oversight of the flock should be in the hands of matured spiritual Christians. Not women. “For an overseer must be blameless as the steward of God.”

The elders should be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.” Titus 1:6.

There is no limit to the need in the church today for the faithful ministry of qualified elders, as well as spiritual Christians of all ages.

Christians who would do the will of God should be visiting the sick with their earnest prayers and messages of comfort and sympathy. Many of them are; and God truly is having mercy on many of His children and in answer to the fervent prayers of righteous men and women

He is raising them up from beds of sickness, even as He did in the case of faithful Epaphroditus, Paul's brother and companion in labor, many years ago. Philippians 2:25.

Notice what Paul says in II Timothy 4:20: "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick."

Now Trophimus, too, was a faithful servant of God and a true friend of Paul's. In one case Epaphroditus was raised up. In the other case Trophimus was left sick. And we may be sure that Paul earnestly prayed for the recovery of Trophimus, but for some reason he left him sick. Why? Why are many faithful deeply spiritual saints on beds of sickness today in spite of many prayers of faith for their recovery?

Thus we see that the sick are not always healed in answer to prayer: not even the most spiritual, consecrated saints. It is very often the case that it is the will of God that some of this class fall asleep in Jesus with the first serious illness they have.

In fact, no true child of God can or will leave this world one second sooner or one second later than the moment God is ready for that one to depart and to be with the Lord.

Do not as many members in the modern healing sects and cults die as sane spiritual Christians? Is the death rate of either any lower than that of the great number of unsaved people who obey God's physical laws?

God's spiritual and obedient saints die at all ages. So do the rest of the human race, regardless of any peculiar theory or method of healing, with or without the use of material remedies. There is no fixed age for the death of any class of people. The whole creation is groaning. We who have received the firstfruits of the Spirit are in bondage.

Every month science is discovering and demonstrating new methods for curing afflictions, injuries and diseases and prolonging human life.

Chiropractors, osteopaths and neuropathists are making wonderful claims of healing. Psychologists and metaphysicians are treating every imaginable and imaginary ailment and reporting marvelous cures.

Some say they were able to throw away crutches as the result of saying, "In every way every day I am getting better and better."

There are thousands who think that sickness is all in the mind; so they are working on the mind to get rid of every kind of disease in the blood or in any part of the body.

Christian Science practitioners are collecting the cash for teaching willing victims to deny the reality of sickness. Many of them who are half or two-thirds dead are lying to themselves or to others about their physical condition and paying expert liars who teach them to lie. Others claim to be cured, and can prove their claims.

Unity and New Thought have a psychic-spiritual healing. The Spiritists have still another treatment and plenty of testimonials from those who have been made whole.

The Mormons cure all kinds of afflictions and diseases with their oil-anointing elders.

The disciples of Mr. Voliva in Zion City have no use for physicians and material remedies. Faith is their medicine.

Certainly there is a variety of remedies. There is also a variety of diseases; "divers" diseases. The divers remedies are successful with some of the divers diseases. But while all kinds and classes of healers are busy, the sanitariums and drug-stores are being well patronized; and the undertakers are getting their share of business. Included in those that they bury are members of all the different healing cults in the land.

It is a blessed thing to be relieved of suffering and pain, to be restored from weakness and sickness to strength and health. Some of the most ungodly people in the community have this happy experience.

Surely every mentally well-balanced Christian man and woman is praising God for the faithful and capable physicians, surgeons and nurses who are doing so much to relieve suffering humanity.

There are many cases that medical science has not been able to cure. But it is a known fact that religious faith and mind healers have not cured any character of disease that has not responded to medical science. No method of healing has brought back a destroyed limb.

Very often a change of climate and occupation have done what scientific or psychic or religious healing did not do for sickness.

The individual is naturally grateful for the healing method and remedy which has brought relief and is generally ready to recommend it to others. But the next individual with the same malady may be just as faithful with the same remedy and find it an absolute failure, so far as effecting a cure is concerned. Christian Science says that medical science has never effected a permanent cure. Neither has Christian Science. They all die. Christ will effect a permanent cure for believers when He comes. Philippians 3:21.

Each of the religious sects who make a specialty of healing has some peculiar theory, and if the individual improves or gets well by applying that theory, then there is a strong probability that the individual will join the religious sect that preaches the theory that brought the relief; and, as a rule, the individual will sing the praises of the healing servant.

There are many healing sects, healing theories and healing servants.

I will leave it to you to explain why some people get rid of their physical ailments by the Christian Science theory. It is a fact that they do.

The Mormons do not believe in any of Mrs. Eddy's theory, but have a theory of their own. But because they do get some results by anointing with oil, does that prove that Christians should anoint with oil?

Oil belongs to the shadow days of the Old Testament. It belongs in the same dispensation with vows and purifications, shaving of the head and circumcision, all of which James approved "for the Jews which believe" twenty-six years after Pentecost.

Now, remember that the Epistle of James is "to Jews which believe." "To the twelve tribes in the dispersion." "He was a minister of the circumcision."

We are not to forget: "As touching the Gentiles which believe; that they observe no such thing."

This Divine principle is to be applied in the matter of anointing with oil. James is the only one who mentions oil and he tells us to observe this principle.

Many of God's true servants have had some blessed experiences using oil on the sick while praying for them, and doubtless most of them will keep on with their oil, no matter what others may say. Different servants use different kinds of oil and have different ways of anointing. Some of the folks they anoint do not recover from their ailments; while some do.

Paul circumcised Timothy even after James wrote his epistle; but that does not mean that we are to practice that Old Testament custom now. There was a time when it was God's commandment. It was a type of the true circumcision of the heart. Paul practiced it, "because of the Jews." But never did he become a Jew to the Jews after he reached Rome.

Oil too, was a symbol or type. Oil was a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

Well, how about praying for the sick without the use of oil? It is wrong not to do so.

Where is the Christian to be found who does not believe in praying for the sick? All Christians believe that with God all things are possible; and that no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.

“Whatsoever ye ask the Father in My Name ye shall receive.” This is the gracious promise the Saviour gave to His disciples.

All Christians know that the Scriptures teach that God does hear and does graciously respond to the prayer of faith. God's principle still maintains: “Be it unto you according to your faith.”

Every true Christian is more faithful and earnest in prayer in the time of serious illness, or adversity, or deep sorrow, or severe testing, than at any other time. Not one such would think of denying the omnipotent power of God or discounting the importance of genuine God-given faith when praying for a loved one or any saint of God who is in any kind of distress, physical or otherwise.

But now, this brings to us this question: “Just what are we to understand by the statement:”

“THE PRAYER OF FAITH SHALL SAVE THE SICK?”

In the Scriptures, James 5, is it the prayer of the anointing elders or the prayer of the sick? Whose faith here saves the sick? Let them pray over him. But we say unless the sick had some faith he would not send for the elders. But, if the sick man has sufficient faith, does he need the praying elders? Is not his individual faith without elders and oil enough to bring about his cure?

Christ said; “That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 18:19.

One elder and the sick man would be enough to claim this promise. But in several other places the Saviour promises definite results to the individual who prays, in faith.

Every honest Christian will confess a certain lack of faith, yet some of the most faithful saints have been praying for years for the salvation of some loved one, and up to the present time their prayers remain unanswered. They have had others of great faith join with them and claim the answer to their prayer, on the authority of a precious promise in God's Word. Sometimes this prayer of faith is answered. Often after waiting many years. Sometimes the loved one remains unsaved.

It is a very common experience to see the immediate family of some “healing” Christian so disgusted with the healing fanaticism of that Christian that the members of that family will not even listen to his testimony.

Surely, the salvation of the soul is of more importance than the healing of the body. And yet the prayer of faith for the eternal salvation of loved ones is not always immediately answered; sometimes not for many years. But if the individual has faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and accepts Him, no prayer is needed to save him.

“He that believeth on the Son hath life.”

It is not the will of God that any one be lost. He will save any one who will believe.

Neither is it the will of God that any Christian should be defeated by sin; that any of His children yield to temptation. God had definitely promised deliverance, the way of escape. There is victory over temptation for every true believer. The prayer of faith will always bring victory.

But the prayer of faith will not always bring healing. And, if Jesus Christ does not come back to receive His own unto Himself within the next hundred years, every faithful saint on this earth, like every unfaithful sinner, will die of some physical ailment. Until the return of Christ, death for saint and sinner alike is inescapable.

And yet, we have some Christians who tell us that the healing of the body is in the atonement.

If the sinner really believes in the atoning work of Jesus Christ and receives Him as Saviour, is he not forever saved?

“Sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” Hebrew 10:10.

“Justified from all things.” Acts 13:39.

“The free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” He has eternal life and spiritually shall never die. This is his because of his faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But incorruptibility is not the Christian's in this dispensation. He is begotten into a lively hope. His incorruptible inheritance is reserved. Otherwise, he would not be in bondage, waiting for the adoption to wit the redemption of his body. Romans 8:23. Every believer must have a body of humiliation until Jesus Christ comes, at which time he will receive a glorified body. In the meantime, physical death is no respecter of persons.

All of these unscriptural teachers who tell their disciples to look to the atonement for the healing of diseases will die, if Jesus Christ does not come back within a reasonable time. Would they die, if healing of the body were in the atonement? A child of God is blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies. He is a child of God because of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus. And therefore, the “all things” that every believer has in Christ are because of His atoning work.

But the theory of healing in the atonement as taught by the modern healers in the Church is absolute heresy.

Surely every true Christian believes in earnest prayer for the sick and should pray that God will bless every means that is being used to bring about the recovery of that sick one. Moreover hundreds of God's people have been raised up from serious illness in answer to the prayers of God's faithful children even after physicians have abandoned all hope.

If this is what is meant by “Divine healing,” surely every sensible Christian believes in Divine healing. But the common “healing” heresy with which the Church of Jesus Christ is today troubled is that the miraculous sign-healing of Jesus of Nazareth and His apostles is still God's order for the Church, because “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.”

By “Divine healing” then, is meant “spiritual healing of physical diseases,” without material remedies; other than anointing with oil.

There are several verses of Scripture which are often emphasized to support the claim of these people; but before we quote these verses we call your attention to the different words translated “sick” in this fifth chapter of James.

Is any sick? The word here used is “Astheneia”-literally, “without strength.” The very same word is used in Roman 5:6.

“When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” When we were yet sick—soul-sick—sin-sick. “The whole head is sick.” Isaiah 1:5.

The prayer of faith shall save the sick—”Kamno” “weary or tired from toil.”

I will leave it to you to explain the why of this change of words.

Now, for the several verses, so often used in healing circles today:

1. “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.” Matthew 8:17.
2. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.” John 14:12.

3. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Mark 16:17 and 18.
4. "By whose stripes ye are healed." I Peter 2:24.

Now the last statement is explained by the other words of the verse in which it is found and has no reference whatever to the body. This verse in Peter's epistle we shall refer to as we proceed to study the statement in Matthew.

"Himself Took Our Infirmities, and Bare Our Sicknesses"—Matthew 8:17

Jesus of Nazareth was a man, approved of God by miracles and wonders and signs in the midst of Israel. Acts 2:22.

"The mystery among the Gentiles." "Christ in you the hope of glory," is quite different. Colossians 1:27.

"The Word was God." Christ was in the form of God. The Word became flesh—another form. The form of a servant—a Man—a Jew. Now He is the resurrected God-Man; glorified. The same Person—but three different forms.

Healing the sick was a part of the Kingdom program of Jesus of Nazareth.

Two Greek words, "bear" or "bare," are used in the New Testament Scriptures—"Anaphero" and "Bastazo."

Bare our sickness—"bastazo."

"Bare our sin in His own body on the tree"—"anaphero." I Peter 2:24. This Greek word "anaphero" is used only one other time in the Scriptures, as bear. "So Christ was once offered to bear (anaphero) the sins of many." Hebrews 9:28.

These two verses speak very definitely of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross of Calvary. For what? For sins. Never is there any suggestion that Christ died for the believer's sicknesses. But time and again do the Scriptures say in different statements that Christ died for our sins.

"Bastazo" is used many times in the Scriptures; Matthew 3:11: "bearing shoes"; Luke 11:27, John 12:6, Luke 14:27, John 16:12: "bear the saying of Christ."; Acts 9:15, Romans 15:1, Galatians 6:2.

We quote the last two of these several verses:

Romans 15:1. "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak."

How does one Christian bear the infirmities of another? Certainly not by making atonement; not by dying. Again, "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." One law of Christ is the law of life for believers because of His death and resurrection. We have not power to lay down our lives and take them up again. This "bear" is the same "bear" used in Matthew 8:17. Does this explain the expression?

Greater Works Than These Shall He Do; Because I Go To My Father. John 14:12.

Jesus of Nazareth fed five thousand hungry people with half a pound of food. What Christian has fed more than that number with the same number of loaves and fishes?

What Christian has calmed the storm? What Christian has walked on the water? What Christian has turned water into wine by miracle? What Christian has died on a cross and abolished death and destroyed him that had the power of death; that is the devil? What Christian has said goodbye to his earthly companions and gone to heaven in a body?

All of the people whom Jesus Christ healed afterward died of the same, or some other, physical ailment.

The death rate of the human race, saint and sinner alike, is still one apiece, regardless of the method of healing employed.

Ten lepers were healed by Jesus at one time. Luke 17:14. To the only one who returned to him to praise God, He said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." Were the others saved men?

Surely not.

Some hours after Jesus gave sight to the blind man in the ninth chapter of John, He said to the man, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The man said: "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" "It is He that talketh with thee." He said, "I believe and worshipped Him." John 9:35 to 38.

To the man sick of the palsy Jesus said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee"; before he healed his infirmity. By the way, where is the Christian who can do a greater work than forgive sin? It is a far greater work to get a man saved from the damnation of hell than to get him healed of fever or rheumatism.

This is the only case where Jesus healed sickness after forgiving the sinner his sins. This case of the palsied man.

Yet, some of the healing preachers today are telling their hearers that they must accept the sacrifice of Christ for soul-salvation before they can have physical healing. Is this according to the way Christ and His apostles healed? What saith the Scriptures?

Those who are doing "the greater works" today should not insist that sick people be saved before they can have Divine healing. If they are to prove that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever by duplicating his miraculous works and thus demonstrating His Deity in the realm of natural science, they should not change the order He followed when here in the midst of the Jews; the Jews who require a sign.

And these miracle-workers should give to the skeptic public the right to chose the character of miracle to be performed; if they are to be convinced of the Deity of Christ by those who are doing the greater works. One will say: "feed five thousand hungry people with these few loaves and fishes, and I will believe that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." Another says: "My brother died four days ago. I prefer to have him raised." By the way, was it because of Lazarus' faith that he was raised?

The miraculous sign healing of Christ and His apostles is quite different from the healing of Epaphroditus. Miraculous sign healing ceased after Paul said; "The Salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles." Acts 28:28.

Otherwise he would not have told faithful Timothy to take wine for his oft sicknesses. I Timothy 5:23.

This was not due to Timothy's lack of faith. Paul praised him for his wonderful faith. II Timothy 1:5.

There is another verse to be explained along with this one:

"To another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit." I Corinthians 12:9.

The only sane and sure method of Scripture interpretation is to study Scripture in the light of other Scriptures. Violation of this principle will produce unbelief or fanaticism.

We submit several facts for light on these Scriptures:

1. No Gentile Christian ever had hands laid upon him for any purpose in the Christian Church, so far as the Bible record is concerned.
2. There is not one scriptural reference to one miracle performed by the hands of one Gentile. God had no Gentile healing servants.

3. We quote Hebrews 4:4: "God also bearing (them) witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit," according to His own will." Read this last phrase, because there are certain false-prophets who are teaching the people they ought not to say, "if it be God's will." The miracles with which God witnessed the apostleship of the Galileans who came down with Jesus to Jerusalem were "divers." Acts 13:31. The Hebrew Christians to whom this epistle was written were not performing healing miracles. Miracles were the signs of an apostle. II Corinthians 12:12. God had no Gentile apostles. And certainly no women apostles or women healers.
4. With the exception of Philip in Samaria where, "the people hearing and seeing the miracles which he did" and the case of Stephen who "did great wonders and miracles" among the Jews; either Peter or Paul was present in every case of sign or miraculous healing in the Church mentioned in the Bible after the resurrection of Christ. Paul was permitted by God to perform a miracle similar to each miracle performed by Peter.
5. Sign healing was general. There was no hit and miss proposition with either Christ or His apostles. Therefore the healing movements of today are not genuine.

"And healed all that were sick." Matthew 8:16.

"Healing every sickness and every disease." Matthew 9:35.

"He laid His hands on every one of them, and healed them." Luke 4:40.

"The shadow of Peter." "And they were healed every one." Acts 5:16.

One of the modern healers whose nefarious traffic is being supported by some splendid Christians, whom he has deceived—or rather whom Satan has—failed with about nineteen out of twenty of the poor unfortunate deluded victims who responded to his invitation at the close of one of his services. And he too supports his healing with, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever"; and contrary to the plain instruction of James, the minister of the circumcision, he uses oil on Gentiles.

Just think of the reaction when those who think these healing preachers know the Bible and are preaching Christianity find that the healing is but a foolish theory, and then many of them will reason that Christ's atonement for the soul is also a false doctrine.

May God help every true saint to stand firmly against these healing heresies in this day of apostasy, and say with Paul, concerning Satan, "We are not ignorant of his devices."

Fully trust the Lord in health and in sickness and know that all things work together for good to the faithful child of God.

And be ready to say with Paul, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." II Corinthians 12:9.

"Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." II Corinthians 4:16.

Are you willing to say: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21.

Mental Science has long since passed the experimental stage—Psychology has worked wonders with many people. Truly there are many imaginary cures of real ills and many real cures of imaginary ills—Psychic healing. Satan put sickness upon Job. He bound a daughter of Abraham for many years. He said, "all that a man hath will he give for his life" Can he perform miracles? Can he heal? Read II Thessalonians 2:7 to 11.