

How Does God Heal Today?

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From a Sabbath Study, February 15, 2020

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THIS morning we will make a comparison between the early church and the situation today. We'll focus especially on the question,

“What kind of healing can we expect today?”

There are many promises, but how exactly are they fulfilled? What is God's purpose in doing this?

Expectations in the Days of Christ

First of all, we'll look back to the time of Christ. There were specific expectations from the people. They had read the Old Testament and expected the Messiah to come in a particular way and God's kingdom to be set up in a certain way. Not only did the Jews think like this, but nearly everybody did. It was universally believed that a deliverer, or problem-solver, must come to the earth.

The disciples especially had these strong expectations that Jesus—whom they believed to be the Messiah—would set up a kingdom that would give them power over the Romans and the ability to do many wonderful things. Jesus did in fact perform miracles. He fed 5,000 men with just five loaves of bread and two fish, He walked on the lake, He cast out demons, He

healed the blind and the paralytic, and He even raised up the dead.

When the disciples were with Jesus, we can imagine that they were certainly quite proud to be together with such a Man who had such power. Their expectations were very high. However, there were also setbacks from time to time. Even though many people were healed, and many followed Him, at other times they left Him. When He was preaching in the synagogue in Capernaum, for instance, they were all disappointed and so they left Him again. The disciples began to wonder what will happen?

In Jerusalem, Jesus had great animosity from the religious leaders— so much that the disciples thought He should not go there because it was not safe to do so. He would definitely be stoned. Therefore, they warned Him,

“Don’t go there!”

But He did go—not privately but publicly, so that everybody could see Him.

Then as it had to happen it did. He was eventually taken captive, investigated, scourged and crucified. We cannot imagine how great the disappointment of the disciples was. They had had such “potential” with them and yet such a thing had happened. That cannot be possible. Such a Man who had raised the dead himself, and healed all manner of diseases—how could He die? They were sorely disappointed!

Although they were disappointed, this does not mean that they were now against Jesus. They still were attracted to His character and still loved Him. But now He was gone. They wondered what they should do now.

They actually did not know when He was resurrected that He was there—as we read in the gospel of *Luke*. There were two disciples on their way to Emmaus. Jesus was walking

with them, but they did not recognize Him. They did not know that it was Jesus. He asked them,

“Why are you so sad?”

Luke 24

¹⁸ Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?

¹⁹ And He said to them, What things? So they said to Him, The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,

²⁰ And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him.

²¹ But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.

What is expressed by the words,

“But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel”?

This expresses disappointment:

“Our hopes are crushed!”

What were they hoping? That He was going to redeem Israel. In other words, they were hoping for a kingdom of the Israelites that would rule the whole world. They were dreaming of Israel as a world power that would be even mightier than the Romans. Maybe they did not imagine they'd have great armies. They did not need strong armies, because they had Jesus. He could walk on water, which is much more powerful than having armies. He could heal the soldiers, which was much mightier than having many soldiers. He could make them invincible, so that basically, it would be easy to be

a world power—even with a small army.¹

“We had hoped—but now He is dead!”

They actually met Him eventually. He met them in the upper chamber and showed them the scars from the nails—and they rejoiced. However, they still cherished their idea of a worldly kingdom—even after they had seen Him resurrected. This idea was now even stronger than before, because now they could say,

“We *are* hoping.”

When Jesus met them for the last time, before He ascended to heaven, we read the following.

Acts 1

⁶ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?

Still this old concept!

“Will this happen now?”

So, didn’t Jesus teach them properly about the nature of His kingdom? Didn’t He correct them while He was with them? Of course, He did! Let’s read His statement before Pilate—and He certainly had taught His disciples the same thing.

John 18

³⁶ Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not from here.

How clear was that?

“My kingdom is not of this world. And this is the reason my disciples do not fight.”

¹ For deeper study see: *The Desire of Ages*, p. 377 and *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 1-5.

Peter tried to fight. He pulled out his sword and cut off the ear of the High Priest's servant. But he was reproved and corrected by Jesus who said,

Matthew 26

⁵² Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

This point is very clear.

“My kingdom is not of this world. The character of my kingdom is different from what you, or the Jews, or even my own disciples imagine. But they do not fight. I did not command them to fight.”

The Proclamation of His Kingdom

When you read the proclamation of His kingdom, which is the Sermon on the Mount, you can see very clearly how Jesus taught about the nature and character of His kingdom. Let's briefly go through some of the verses together.

Matthew 5

¹ And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.

² Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

“The new kingdom is a powerful kingdom that will rule over all the other nations...” Did He tell them something like that? No, but:

³ Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

That is how He started. That is the proclamation of His kingdom. And it continues in a similar manner until He says,

¹¹ Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake.

In other words, “That is the nature of my kingdom.”

¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in

heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

“This is the nature of my kingdom.” No fault lies with Jesus. He made the point very clear about the nature of His kingdom. The problem is that old concepts often stick so deeply in the human mind that it is very difficult to eradicate them—extremely difficult. The same truths need to be taught again, and again, and again.

Eventually, the disciples began to understand the nature of His kingdom. When we think of His disciple Peter, we see that he was glad to lay down his life for his Master. It was a great privilege for him. He had no fear whatsoever—but he did have great joy. Understanding the kingdom better now, Peter could answer Jesus’ question about whether he loved Him more than the other disciples. He simply replied,

John 21

¹⁵ Lord, You know.

When Jesus met him, Peter began to understand the nature of His kingdom and he understood it more and more. Finally, the disciples received the Holy Spirit in power, for the Holy Spirit was the One who would guide them into all truth. Because He would teach them the truth, He was called the Spirit of truth. For that reason, the disciples began to understand the real nature of His kingdom.

In the Time of the Former Rain

We’ll now read about the outpouring of the Spirit.

Acts 2

¹ When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire,

and one sat upon each of them.

⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

In other words, they received the gift of languages so that they could teach the people who were there. The Jews were scattered at that time—which was called the “diaspora.” At this time, there was a feast of the Jews and there were many nations present from different places. They all spoke different languages, but the disciples could speak fluently in these languages to them. Some Jews did not understand them and mocked them. Then Peter said,

Acts 2

¹⁶ No, this is what was foretold by the prophet Joel.

Then he quoted from the Old Testament saying that all this was prophesied and is now fulfilled. Peter was not at all confused, but very straight to the point. He understood the Old Testament much better now. He understood the nature of the kingdom and that they had received the gift of languages for a purpose—to teach others the nature of God’s kingdom.

¹⁷ And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.

¹⁸ And on my menservants and on my maidservants I will pour out my Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.

¹⁹ I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke.

²⁰ The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.

²¹ And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Peter did not go into detail explaining everything in this Old Testament scripture. But two things are very obvious here. At the beginning, when it says,

¹⁷ And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions...

The disciples understood:

“We were taught by you, and so we are your sons and daughters. Now the Holy Spirit is poured out upon us. That is exactly what was prophesied.”

The disciples were young at this time. They were in their 30's or about that age.

Acts 2

¹⁷ ...your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.

That is what is happening here. And at the end, it says,

²¹ ...that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Then the people began to ask,

“What must we do to be saved?”

That was now their big question. Peter answered,

“Well, confess your sins, be baptized and then you will also receive the Holy Spirit.”

That is what you read in the rest of this chapter. It is just amazing how the Holy Spirit had now explained the nature of the kingdom, and how the disciples were living according to the nature of this kingdom.

The First Miracles of Healing by the Apostles

In *Acts* chapter 3, we read about the first miracle of healing. It is amazing how the church grew. In the previous chapter it says,

Acts 2

⁴¹ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

⁴³ Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

⁴⁴ Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

We can also find how they shared everything in *Acts* chapter 4.

Acts 2

⁴⁶ So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house...

This was more than just taking meals, it was a time of refreshing. It was a Lord's Supper which they held together. Then we read the story about the lame man who was begging at the temple gate and Peter said to him,

Acts 3

⁶ Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.

Then the man stood up and walked. Amazing! This showed that the disciples did the same work as Jesus had done. This is what Jesus had foretold.

The Former and Latter Rain

When Peter was quoting from the Old Testament, he was citing from the book of *Joel*. And Joel also said,

Joel 2

²³ Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God; for He has given you the former rain faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for you—the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.

Here the Holy Spirit is compared with the falling of rain. Two kinds of rain are mentioned here, a “former rain” and a “latter rain.” When the seed was thrown out in Palestine, it was usually in the rainy season, or “former rain,” which helped the seed to germinate.

Then there was a dry period in which the seed grew. Having had enough water from the early rain, the seed grew and grew. Then in order to make it ready for the harvest, there came another season of rain called the “latter rain.”

If either of these two rainy seasons failed, then it was very bad for the harvest. Both were really essential, the early rain as well as the latter rain, at the right season of the year. After the latter rain, there was still a final dry season before the harvest.²

The fact that God promised that the early and latter rain would fall, shows that God promised them prosperity. He was saying,

“You will have enough grain to harvest.”

How would a Jew in the time of Jesus understand this scripture? What do you suppose? How would Peter have understood it, before Pentecost, when he quoted from *Joel*? He would have thought,

“Wonderful—when the Messiah comes again there will always be the early and the latter rain before a rich harvest—so, we will be a nation that is more prosperous than all the nations around us. It will be similar to Egypt when Joseph was there. He knew that there would be seven years of rich harvest, so they gathered everything together and when the drought came, they could sell. That is why Egypt became rich and powerful. They had saved at the right moment.”

If you were to buy stocks today at the right time, and then sell them little by little during the time of drought, you would

² For deeper study see *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 506.

become a billionaire. That would be the parallel today. Today we reckon in stocks. Back then they reckoned in harvests. What would an Israelite understand?

“God will so bless us, make us so powerful—it’s a wonderful promise.”

But when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples, Peter gave it another interpretation. He said,

“This is not prosperity and power for Israel, so that they can rule over everyone, but this is the Holy Spirit.”

The Holy Spirit is here promised in two phases—the early rain and latter rain. Obviously, what happened in the time of the disciples at Pentecost was the early rain. That was the beginning of the Christian church. And what God promises here is the latter rain. That is the finishing of that work which the Holy Spirit had begun in the early church. It must be a similar outpouring in both cases.

Do we hold similar misconceptions? Do we understand this aright, or do we hold similar misconceptions as the Jews did in the time of Christ? What do we understand it to be? That is the big question. I ask myself the same question.

“Am I like the disciples? Do I expect the Lord to do this and that, and thereby expect something totally wrong? Could that be?”

Yes, it could! If the disciples who walked with Jesus for three and a half years did not understand it aright, then we might have a wrong concept too.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 55:

But near the close of earth’s harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petitions to

the Lord of the harvest “in the time of the latter rain.” In response, “the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain.” “He will cause to come down...the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain,” *Zechariah 10:1; Joel 2:23*.

That is the context.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 54:

On the other hand, there are some who, instead of wisely improving present opportunities, are idly waiting for some special season of spiritual refreshing by which their ability to enlighten others will be greatly increased. They neglect present duties and privileges, and allow their light to burn dim, while they look forward to a time when, without any effort on their part, they will be made the recipients of special blessing, by which they will be transformed and fitted for service.

This is a warning to us that we may be misunderstanding the whole thing!

“Let’s wait till the Holy Spirit comes and then everything will be okay,”

—while we are missing the present opportunities.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 54:

...without any effort on their part...

This is a very serious warning! But what kind of efforts are needed? Take the sword? Certainly not. Today we would take guns, megaphones, and so forth. No, this can’t be right. It is not the real thing!

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 55:

But unless the members of God’s church today have a living connection with the Source of all spiritual growth, they will not be ready for the time of reaping. Unless they keep their lamps trimmed and burning, they will fail of receiving added grace in times of special need.

This terminology “lamps trimmed and burning” comes from the parable of the 10 virgins.³ The foolish virgins had lamps, but no oil with them. They were not able to lighten the path of the Bridegroom. But the wise virgins did have oil for their lamps, and this is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

Their “lamps trimmed and burning” means that they allowed themselves to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And we do not allow this when we do not live in a close connection with Christ—that means communicating with Him, and submitting to Him. God does not expect us to submit to any human, but He expects us to submit to Him. He is a wise and merciful Leader, and so we can submit to Him. This is what He wants. We are to live in connection with the Source of all spiritual growth. This is the key.

Feeding the 5,000

What do we expect from the latter rain? What exactly do we expect by the latter rain and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in these last days? In order to understand this better, let’s look into one incident in the life of Jesus—when He fed the 5,000.

Matthew 14

¹³ When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities.

¹⁴ And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.

¹⁵ When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.

¹⁶ But Jesus said to them, They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.

³ See *Matthew* 25:1-13.

That was quite a challenge! Can you imagine this? The disciples tell Him that the people need to buy some food and He says to them,

“You give them some!”

Of course, they would say,

“We do not have the money, but even if we did have, where should we get so much food? We would have to go to many shops here and buy them everything they had until they were empty. What do you mean by saying, You give them food to eat!?”

But Jesus was determined. He told them to sit the people down in groups. And finally, the disciples brought the people the loaves and fish which Jesus multiplied, so that everybody could eat. But the point is,

Matthew 14

¹⁶ You give them to eat!

You give them food to eat! You! What would you say if Jesus said this to you? Well, that was the challenge. They brought these 5 loaves to Jesus. That is an important point. They could not multiply it. They could not give all the people food to eat. They had to do it together with Jesus. So, they brought what they had to Jesus, and in the hands of Him, it was multiplied. Jesus himself could not do this either—except by the power of His Father, as He said in the previous chapter,

John 5

³⁰ I can do nothing of myself.

Christ was a human being like everyone else, but through His Father, He was able to do this miracle. So, similarly, everybody can do the same through the power of the Father, by faith. They brought the food to Jesus. He multiplied it. They worked together. They didn't work independently. They didn't rush to the shops and try frantically to do something about

this crisis. They simply brought the food to Jesus, and then He multiplied it.

Everybody was amazed by such a miracle. That was indeed a miracle, wasn't it? You can break the bread, then break and break it, but it never runs out. What a miracle! He fed 5,000 men, plus woman and children, as it says.

The people were very enthusiastic. They had not eaten throughout the whole day. What Jesus had to say was obviously very interesting. When the food finally came, it was even greater than the sermon had been beforehand. It was a very powerful lesson. And now their hopes were raised more and more.

“Well, this must be the Messiah! He gave a wonderful spiritual lesson and had a lot of physical power. He is a provider of food, as well as a minister of the word. What better person can you ask for, as the Messiah?”

Then they imagined how it was with King David and King Solomon, and they thought,

“Well, this is the One!”

And they wanted to make Him king too.

John 6

¹⁴ Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.

They were thinking, “Truly this is the One!”

¹⁵ Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by himself alone.

Even by resorting to the use of force, they wanted to make Him king.

“He is too humble. He won't allow this to happen, so we

must help Him a little.”

And the disciples wanted to force Jesus to become king too. Then Jesus corrected this wrong understanding. When He held a sermon in the synagogue later on,⁴ He talked about the Bread of life. He said,

“You did not understand the significance of this miracle. You didn’t understand what I was doing. You thought in terms of providing food for armies that would conquer the Romans. But I gave you spiritual food in reality, and the physical food was only a symbol.”

Then later, when they were breaking bread from house to house as we read in *Acts*, being of one mind and heart, they understood. This is not just the food we eat. Jesus gives us His body, himself. His selfless life was now in their minds and they were meditating about it. But at the time of the feeding of the 5,000, they were just thinking about food and armies and conquering and kings—in such material terms!

When Jesus corrected the wrong understanding, basically everyone left Him again, because they were disappointed. They saw that with this Man you can’t establish a kingdom. They felt He was too unrealistic. Even if He has power, this might have been just a fleeting power. So, they all left Him except the twelve. When Jesus asked them,

John 6

⁶⁷ Will you also leave me?

They said,

⁶⁸ Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

In other words,

“We have no alternative! We have seen the words of life that You speak.”

⁴ *John* 6:59.

Many people would have said,

“We have no alternative!”

That is good, but it would be better if they had said,

“There is no alternative! It is not because we have none, but there is none! You are life and there is nothing else.”

Miracles

The people in Jesus’ time definitely wanted to see miracles. I imagine that if people today could see miracles, they would also come and join the movement that works miracles. A miracle-working church would certainly be a very popular church. Would you want miracles to happen, in order to be popular? Let’s see what the people in Christ’s time said.

Matthew 16

¹ Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven.

² He answered and said to them, When it is evening you say, It will be fair weather, for the sky is red;

³ And in the morning, It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening. Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.

⁴ A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. And He left them and departed.

Jesus tried to correct their wrong concept. They wanted to see a sign, or a miracle. But even if Jesus had shown them a miracle, they would not have been satisfied, as we see in the feeding of the 5,000. When He explained to them the meaning of the miracle, they all left. Finally, when He was crucified, the people who had left Him were strengthened in their opinion. They thought,

“Yes, we always knew that this Man would come to nothing, and be an utter failure.”

Why then did Christ work miracles? What then is the reason that Christ worked miracles? That is the question we need to ask. What is the reason? Why did He do this, if that was the attitude of the people in His time? There is a very interesting statement that explains this to us.

The Desire of Ages, p. 406:

Every miracle that Christ performed was a sign of His divinity.

How could this sentence be misinterpreted?

“Every miracle that He performed was a sign of His superior power, of His strength that helps you to be stronger than others. If you join Him, you are strong (in a worldly sense).”

Let’s read on.

The Desire of Ages, p. 406:

He was doing the very work that had been foretold of the Messiah; but to the Pharisees these works of mercy were a positive offense. The Jewish leaders looked with heartless indifference on human suffering. In many cases their selfishness and oppression had caused the affliction that Christ relieved. Thus His miracles were to them a reproach.

That which led the Jews to reject the Saviour’s work was the highest evidence of His divine character. The greatest significance of His miracles is seen in the fact that they were for the blessing of humanity.

His miracles were for the blessing of others. They were not for His self-exaltation—not in order for Him to exalt himself, not to give Him a more comfortable or better life, or whatever. He did everything for others. Think about this. Even on the night before He was taken captive, He was still thinking of His disciples and washing their feet. No thought of self.

The Desire of Ages, p. 407:

The highest evidence that He came from God is that His life revealed the character of God. He did the works and

spoke the words of God. Such a life is the greatest of all miracles.

This is a great miracle—a work that is for others and not for self. A selfless character represents the character of God. That is what God is. How many people imagine God just to be a powerful Being who rules over everything. Have people ever thought that He is a selfless being? That He does things for others, and not for himself? The evidence of Christ’s work shows that He worked for others—that every miracle was a blessing for humanity.

When you think of miracle workers today, you think of people who are admired, and are popular. We have miracle workers today in the world and some make a lot of money through it. Whether they use tricks—I don’t know. Maybe they do, maybe not—whatever. But it is not selfless. It is no evidence of divine character. The evidence of divine character is that it is selfless.

The Desire of Ages, p. 407:

Such a life is the greatest of all miracles.

When the message of truth is presented in our day, there are many who, like the Jews, cry, Show us a sign. Work us a miracle.

I literally had a man ask me,

“Do miracles happen in your church?”

I didn’t know what to answer and was baffled, because I didn’t expect such a question. But he meant it seriously.

“If miracles happen in your church, I will join it—if not, I won’t.”

The Desire of Ages, p. 407:

Christ wrought no miracle at the demand of the Pharisees. He wrought no miracle in the wilderness in answer to Satan’s insinuations. He does not impart to us power to vindi-

cate ourselves or to satisfy the demands of unbelief and pride.

But the gospel is not without a sign of its divine origin. Is it not a miracle that we can break from the bondage of Satan? Enmity against Satan is not natural to the human heart; it is implanted by the grace of God. When one who has been controlled by a stubborn, wayward will is set free, and yields himself wholeheartedly to the drawing of God's heavenly agencies, a miracle is wrought; so also when a man who has been under strong delusion comes to understand moral truth. Every time a soul is converted, and learns to love God and keep His commandments, the promise of God is fulfilled,

Ezekiel 36

²⁶ A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.

The change in human hearts, the transformation of human characters, is a miracle that reveals an ever-living Saviour, working to rescue souls. A consistent life in Christ is a great miracle. In the preaching of the word of God, the sign that should be manifest now and always is the presence of the Holy Spirit, to make the word a regenerating power to those that hear. This is God's witness before the world to the divine mission of His Son.

This is the significance of miracles. Therefore, it is a miracle when the Holy Spirit does this work.

The Ministry of Healing

Let's apply this to healing, because the work of healing is a miracle and God has given us the ministry of healing the people.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 112:

The Saviour in His miracles revealed the power that is continually at work in man's behalf, to sustain and to heal him.

That again shows the significance of the miracles of Jesus. They were nothing special as far as anything extraordinary

was concerned, because He is constantly doing this same work. That means when you cut yourself, what immediately happens to the wound? It heals. The body immediately begins to repair itself. This is what we read here.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 112-113:

Through the agencies of nature, God is working, day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment, to keep us alive, to build up and restore us. When any part of the body sustains injury, a healing process is at once begun; nature's agencies are set at work to restore soundness. But the power working through these agencies is the power of God. All life-giving power is from Him. When one recovers from disease, it is God who restores him.

When you talk with experienced surgeons, you will hear them say,

“Well, we cannot do much. We cut a little here and there, and set bones, and so on, but it is nature which really does the work of healing. The more we interfere in this work the less successful we are.”

This is because there is constantly active work going on for healing, on our behalf. When Jesus actually fed the 5,000 He was doing nothing more than He is doing every day. Doesn't He feed more than 5,000 each day? When you think of all the people who are satisfied with bread, it is God who does this, and Jesus simply drew the curtain aside to show what He is constantly doing. And the same is true in the ministry of healing.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 113:

Sickness, suffering, and death are work of an antagonistic power. Satan is the destroyer; God is the restorer.

That statement explains the character of God.

The words spoken to Israel are true today of those who recover health of body or health of soul.

Exodus 15

²⁶ I am the Lord that heals you.

It is important to understand that there are two antagonistic powers here. Very often people ascribe to God the work of sickness.

“This sickness is from God. He made you sick. He is punishing you. He is the supreme Ruler. He makes some people healthy, and the others He makes sick.”

This is what the Jews believed. But that is not God’s work! His work is only the work of healing. What physician would arbitrarily support the health of some and make others sick? He would cease to be a physician! The work of the physician is to heal and only to heal. If doctors do anything else, they are not qualified to be doctors. With God, it is the same. God is only the Healer. Every work of healing is from Him, while every work of sickness is not from Him.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 113:

The desire of God for every human being is expressed in the words,

3 John

² Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers.

That is the desire of God.

He it is who “forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases; who redeems your life from destruction; who crowns you with loving-kindness and tender mercies.” *Psalms* 103:3-4.

It is interesting that it says here “forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases...” The problem with disease is that this is the result of separation from God, not a result that comes from God. It is a result of disobeying the laws of nature.

It is true that not everybody who is sick is a great sinner.

This is another wrong concept that the Jews held. But in general, you could say that sickness is in some way or another in the world because of the transgression of the law. If the laws of nature (and the moral law too) had never been transgressed, we would have no disease.

Just imagine if there were no smoking, drinking, wrong eating, or other unhealthful habit in the world today, how much less would our health system have to care for people. And this is true even after all the abuse that has happened until now. Human nature is terribly abused, and yet God still has His hand over it. This is quite astounding. The fact that some smokers grow so old is just amazing. But it is the work of God's mercy and not any merit that people have in themselves.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 115:

Men need to learn that the blessings of obedience, in their fullness, can be theirs only as they receive the grace of Christ.

This is absolutely another point. To obey the laws that God has given does not come naturally to people. It is hard for them. If I ask a smoker to quit smoking—do you know the usual response?

“I would like to, but I can't switch the button in my head.”

It's very difficult. That is sad. In other words, to obey is not so easy for people, because of the longstanding habit of transgressing the law. So we...

The Ministry of Healing, p. 115:

...need to learn that the blessings of obedience, in their fullness, can be theirs only as they receive the grace of Christ. It is His grace that gives man power to obey the laws of God. It is this that enables him to break the bondage of evil habit. This is the only power that can make him and keep him steadfast in the right path.

When the gospel is received in its purity and power, it is a cure for the maladies that originated in sin. The Sun of Righteousness arises, “with healing in His wings.” *Malachi* 4:2. Not all this world bestows can heal a broken heart, or impart peace of mind, or remove care, or banish disease. Fame, genius, talent—all are powerless to gladden the sorrowful heart or to restore the wasted life. The life of God in the soul is man’s only hope.

The love which Christ diffuses through the whole being is a vitalizing power. Every vital part—the brain, the heart, the nerves—it touches with healing. By it the highest energies of the being are roused to activity. It frees the soul from the guilt and sorrow, the anxiety and care, that crush the life forces. With it come serenity and composure. It implants in the soul, joy that nothing earthly can destroy,—joy in the Holy Spirit,—health-giving, life-giving joy.

This is a very good explanation of the power of healing.

The love which Christ diffuses through the whole being is a vitalizing power.

That is talking about the combination of mind and body. The mind needs to be filled with the love of Christ, and the body is vitalized.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 115:

Our Saviour’s words, “Come unto me,...and I will give you rest” (*Matthew* 11:28), are a prescription for the healing of physical, mental, and spiritual ills. Though men have brought suffering upon themselves by their own wrongdoing, He regards them with pity. In Him they may find help. He will do great things for those who trust in Him.

In Summary

Let us summarize this now:

- The first thing that we need is to believe in the power of Jesus to restore;
- We need to bring Him our barley loaves—this means ev-

everything we can do in co-operation with nature's laws we need to bring to Him;

- We need to follow His instructions implicitly;
- And finally, we need to expect more of Him.

This is what Paul says:

Ephesians 3

²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

²¹ To Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

“...exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think...” He knows even better than we do, so expect more of Him. But expect more in terms of character, of understanding His selflessness, rather than of expecting more power for ourselves. This is the message that God gives us.

Finally, I really want to point out that it is not physical healing that is needed so much today, but healing from the bondage of transgressing God's law. This is a real bondage. Transgressing the law has become a habit. You can call it “sin” if you want, or “separation from God.” It is the same thing. That is the great problem—the bondage of transgressing the law. And what we need, is to be freed from it.

Let's read just one case where Jesus healed from this bondage.

Luke 5

¹⁷ Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

¹⁸ Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before Him.

¹⁹ And when they could not find how they might bring him

in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with his bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus.

²⁰ When He saw their faith, He said to him, Man, your sins are forgiven you.

He was a paralytic and Jesus said,

“Your sins are forgiven you.”

And the man was completely happy about this and did not want anything more. That is what he wanted, what he sought for. This is the significance of the miracles of Jesus. It showed how He forgives sin, because it goes on to say:

Luke 5

²¹ And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?

²² But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, Why are you reasoning in your hearts?

²³ Which is easier, to say, Your sins are forgiven you, or to say, Rise up and walk?

²⁴ But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins—He said to the man who was paralyzed, I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.

That is the significance of the miracles of Jesus.

²⁴ That you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins...I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.

That is the significance today too. If we expect anything else, we will have the same wrong concept as the contemporaries of Jesus had when they expected Him to work miracles.

So, let us really grasp the thought of God when He wants to heal, and does heal, and let's not expect anything that will exalt us. It won't happen. And if it were to happen, it would only be a curse to us. We do not want that.

What we want to do is the work of Jesus—and nothing else.
This is my prayer.