

THE LORD'S HEALING TOUCH

by

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Faith!

What a mighty word is faith.

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

The answer is, Faith.

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

Faith is Christ-centered, if it is Bible faith.

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

There is a tragic dearth of faith today. Creeds, traditions, opinions: all these have somehow taken the place in the hearts of men, many professing to be Christians, of that kind of faith that "moves mountains." And God in Heaven looks down on a world that, more than ever, needs to come to faith, believing faith, living faith in Jesus Christ.

And, in all probability, you feel the need of such a faith. That may well be the reason why you have taken this little

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book in hand. That may be why you are willing to read, meditate, and pray about this most vital matter for the next hour, and, perhaps, for many more hours in the days to come. God grant that it may be so.

SEEKING FAITH

There is as much confusion, even in the ranks of believers, about what faith is, and what faith does, as about any other of the great themes of Christian thought. Your prayerful consideration is invited as this marvelous subject is discussed.

Faith is the deed of trust.

Faith is belief in action.

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

Faith is the latch-string to God's great Supply House.

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

There was a woman in the long ago by the name of Lydia. She was in great need of the Lord as her Great Physician, even as many are today. Perhaps, even as you are now.

This young widow, once beautiful and vivacious, was wasted away, her attractiveness gone. She had a most serious sickness, peculiar to women. She had been treated by many physicians, but to no avail, because they could do nothing for her. The sickness persisted. Great indeed was her distress. She had despaired of ever again knowing a well day.

Then Jesus came.

What changes have been made in homes, lives, hearts. What mighty, miraculous changes have been wrought because Jesus came!

One day as Lydia looked out from her home, she saw a multitude moving slowly by. Someone may have slipped to her door and explained that Jesus was in the midst of that crowd that day.

"Come on, Lydia. Come on. This is your opportunity to be made well, Lydia. Hurry, it's Jesus. He will heal you."

The very thought of being well must have fairly made her heart burst with joy. To be well and strong again, to be able to go to the synagogue, to visit with friends: what a boon that would be!

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

Then, there were so many people, a great many of them strangers. They had come from other communities to see and hear the Miracle Worker and Teacher. And Lydia was ashamed. She had been ashamed for so long that it was hard to forget her shame, even for a moment.

You know what she did? She suddenly made her decision, and as suddenly acted upon it. She made her way to the street as fast as her feeble condition permitted, and timidly, she began to elbow her way among the people.

Perhaps a few stragglers permitted her to slip shyly by them, but soon she was against a packed mass of human bodies, and she could make no progress whatever.

"What shall I do? What SHALL I do?" she must have cried over and over to herself.

She dropped to her knees. She was so weak!

It seemed hopeless, until suddenly, she began to slowly place her hands before her, and those who took a second look down were astonished to see a young woman crawling carefully, but determinedly, between them. Many a grimy sandal must have pressed down upon her thin hands.

Finally, well nigh exhausted, she reached the inner circle of the crowd. She raised her dust-covered face and looked at Jesus. There He was! If she could only attract His attention.

She would have cried out, but He was speaking.

She would have implored His help, but others had engaged His attention.

Suddenly, she saw the hem of the Master's garment, the wide band that encircled the bottom of His robe. She knew full well the meaning of that border. She recalled how God gave commandment in the days of the Exodus for His people to wear that band as a testimonial that they were keeping the law.

To Lydia, that hem represented Jesus' profession of Who and What He was. And she believed Him with all her heart. She believed He was all He said He was. That was, and is, faith. That is, it is faith when it is put into action.

She balanced herself as best she could on one hand, and then, exerting all the strength she had left, she reached out and her finger tips reverently touched the hem of His garment, while she kept saying in her heart, "If I can but touch His garment I shall be whole."

**SHE TOUCHED THE HEM OF HIS GARMENT.
WHAT AN EXPRESSION OF FAITH!**

Immediately she was healed, and as immediately Jesus knew that someone had touched Him. There was a vast difference between that touch of faith and the press of the many bodies of the curious ones all about Him.

Lydia was joyously whole again.

A REASONABLE DOCTRINE

The New Testament records many such incidents as the healing of the young widow of Capernaum. Many great books could be written, discussing these marvelous expressions of the grace of God through the miracle-working power of His Son, Jesus.

But the question you may be asking, because it is a question that arises whenever such matters are discussed, is this: Can and will Jesus perform miracles of healing today? Or, did such miracles cease with the closing of His earthly ministry?

That is a reasonable question and worthy of a reasonable answer. Surely, there is more involved than the mere statement of an historical fact in the assertion, "and He cast out the spirits with His Word and healed all that were sick."

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

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

This doctrine (truth) is a most rational one, and may well be received as such by every believer on Jesus as a personal Saviour. It is not difficult to understand, and less difficult to believe.

The fact about the matter is, many have far more potential faith than they realize. To illustrate: Do you believe that God the Father is the only true and living God? That Jesus Christ is God's Son, virgin born, crucified, dead, buried, raised from the dead? If you can honestly answer "Yes" to these questions, you have a wonderful FOUNDATION for your faith. If that "potential faith" were only given free course; if that belief were allowed to act; if that trust were to become a deed; that would be miracle-provoking faith.

What all this means is that you have the groundwork laid for the performance of the miracle of healing in your heart this moment. Take encouragement from this fact, and keep moving closer, and closer to Him. Press through your pride, your unbelief, your preconceived opinions. Press through on your knees. Exercise your belief.

Does it not thrill your heart to know that even though you may have borne the burden of sickness, affliction, or disease for a long, long time, you are now slipping closer and closer

to Him, who will make you every whit whole? Does not your heart fairly burst with joy and thanksgiving as you contemplate the performance of the miracle that will set you free?

Then, look up just now and praise Him. Worship Him. Adore Him. Let your heart rise above the din of the traffic, the discordant notes of the world around you. Lift your inner voice in song. Praise Him for all He has done for you. Praise Him for what He is going to do!

If you will go along a bit further, let your heart and mind fasten on the knowledge that you can expect, you can know that you are going to be healed. It is reasonable for you to expect it.

Reasonable, because at the heart of our faith stands a person, Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son. The only thing in existence that can limit the power of the Lord Jesus Christ is our unbelief.

Bear in mind that sickness is Christ's enemy. If sin had not come into the world, there would be no sickness. And when we are with Him in Glory there will be no pain, no affliction. These came into the world as the direct result of sin.

It is true, of course, that many are sick or afflicted, and through no act of sin on their part. There is such a thing as an affliction being passed on to the third or fourth generation. And at least one instance is recorded during the ministry of Jesus where one was afflicted from birth in order that his healing might be for God's glory.

When one receives a tremendous outpouring of the blessing of God upon his heart, it may well be said that he is receiving "a foretaste of glory divine." It may also be said that when one is healed in answer to the prayer of faith that he is receiving a foretaste of the glorious Resurrection. For, at the time of the Resurrection, or the Rapture, our bodies become perfectly whole, and with no marks or blemishes of sickness, disease, or death.

Through Christ's redemption we may all have, as a part of the "earnest of our inheritance" the "life also of Jesus—made manifest in our mortal flesh" until our work is finished. Because our eternal destiny is both spiritual and bodily, our

redemption also must be. We do not receive our full inheritance until the coming "Day of Redemption," but we can now enjoy the "earnest" of it. In the very same way that we may receive the "first fruits" of our spiritual salvation we can also receive the "first fruits" of our physical salvation.

Then, also, bear in mind that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is a quickening, life-giving power. Paul wrote about Him to the Church at Rome in these words: "But if the Spirit of Him (the Holy Spirit) that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal (flesh and blood) bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

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

Another verse, taken as the one just quoted, from the eighth chapter of Romans, may be of help to your clearer understanding: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God (the Holy Spirit) dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ (the Holy Spirit) he is none of His."

Certainly, what Paul is saying is that every true born-again believer has the Holy Spirit dwelling within him. He may not have the Holy Spirit in His fulness, but he does have the witnessing presence of the Holy Spirit, else there is no assurance that he is saved. So, in this plain light, it can be seen that every Christian has the right to look to Jesus Christ for the healing of his body. Think well on this truth.

Praying for healing with the faith-destroying words, "if it be Thy Will," is like trying to grow corn without planting seed. Imagine a man standing before his garden and praying, "Lord, give me corn in my garden, if it be Thy Will."

He returns six weeks later—and no corn. He accepts as a

fact it was not God's Will that he should grow corn. When the real fact about the matter is, he had no corn because he had planted no seed!

God calls his words, which are spirit and life, "Seed." Just as corn planted in the ground produces corn, so the Word of God, as the "seed" planted in your heart, produces the result which the Word of God promises.

It is impossible to believe God for your healing until you are convinced beyond a shadow of doubt, that it is His Will to heal your body.

Listen: the same Lord who "wills" your salvation, also "wills" your healing, "Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses." Your bodily healing is as much in the Atonement as is salvation for your soul.

The Psalmist in an ecstasy of praise exclaims: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases." Psalm 103:2-3.

There goes our sins and our sickness!

The prophet Isaiah looks down the vista of time, through the prophetic telescope and sees Christ hanging on the cross and declares, "He (Jesus) was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him: and with His stripes we are healed." Isaiah 54:5. This prophecy of Isaiah is explained in the New Testament: "When Jesus was come into Peter's house. He saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose and ministered unto them—and He healed all that were sick. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the Prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses." Matthew 8:15-16-17. It is the "Double Cure" for soul and body!

Again, one is constantly confronted in the Scriptures with the wholesomeness of Jesus. He was often, in His ministry, challenged by pain, sickness, and disease in every conceivable form: blindness, lameness, leprosy, and many others. In

no case did Jesus register a negative heart. In every case He was "moved with compassion." It was His very nature. His characteristic, to be moved with non-resistant compassion whenever and wherever He came face to face with a need. And in every case He did something about it. In every instance He gloriously, victoriously, met that need. And that brings us to the clear-cut declaration: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." He still moves with compassion.

Think well, also, of His mighty power. All those who follow in His footsteps through the Gospels are thrilled to contemplate the constant and continuous exercise of His power: miraculous; super-natural. No believer hesitates to accept at full and face value the entire recital of facts in any of the matters revealed or incidents related. They are true. They are accepted as true.

Now, has that power changed? Does Jesus still possess His power to work miracles, forgive sins, lift burdens, heal bodies? Surely He would have left some pronouncement before He went away to Glory, or surely He would have immediately sent an inspired messenger to give us the word that no longer could He do these mighty things for us.

He did give us His Word. This is what He said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." And He said this in connection with great commission: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Far from intimating a lessening of His power, He magnified His continued and enlarged capacity to exercise it. And as this statement just referred to from the twenty-eighth chapter of Matthew is plain and easy to understand, so also is the kindred passage in the sixteenth chapter of Mark: "And these signs shall follow them that believe (now, that is after He has gone back to the Father); 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." After so saying He went into the clouds.

It is evident to all, then, that the last word from Christ was to expect the further demonstration of His power in all the phases of the Gospel ministry: salvation for the soul, healing for the body; but in neither case should one expect to be allowed by the Holy Spirit to behave presumptuously. That in itself is a sin to block the blessing of God. There is a place where faith stops and presumption begins. Some have gone well beyond that place, with tragic disaster as the result, and fanaticism the evidence.

Now, anyone believing the whole Word of God would be at least openly receptive to the doctrine of the gospel for the healing of the body because of the Old Testament Scriptures. While there are ever so many of them in type, figure, and word, only a few can be recorded here. However, they are so clear and understandable that they might well lead one to accept the truth involved with no doubt remaining to spoil their significance.

Here is one from Exodus, fifteenth chapter, twenty-sixth verse: "And (God) said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and will do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee." And, of a certainty, He was speaking of bodily, not spiritual, healing in this instance.

Then, from the Book of Isaiah, chapter fifty-three, verses four and five: "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet did we esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgression, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with his stripes we are healed." Wrapped in these glowing verses is the gospel, as revealed throughout the entire Word of God: salvation for the soul, healing for the body.

MIRACLES OF HEALING

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

Yes, it would seem that every child of God would meet the issue with joy, even as an opportunity to bring glory to Him who died for their redemption. How great a change would be effected in the church; what a challenge would be laid at the door of the unbeliever, if God's people dared to make trust a deed, to exercise belief in faith.

This matter may be brought very close home to many of us. We, ourselves, may need the healing touch of the nail-scarred Hand, or we may have someone near and dear to us who stands in such need.

Without any thought, or desire, of belittling the sincere efforts of men of science and of medicine, let it be said that God can and will do what no man can do in healing all who will come to Him by faith in the name of His Son. He is no respecter of persons.

When God touches your body, and the healing virtue of Jesus flows through you, it will make the power of God real to your own heart in a beautiful way. It will enhance the spiritual blessings which you may have been enjoying for a long while. It will enrich your testimony. It will enable you to encourage others who stand in great need. It will challenge the unsaved, and may well be the means of you leading others to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, far and beyond the greatest miracle of all.

Since God, His Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are supernatural, why should we not expect God to do the supernatural things for us? It is natural for God to do the supernatural.

We should live in the state of wondering expectancy that He will perform miracles, and certainly among them miracles of the healing of the bodies of all who will reach out and touch the hem of His garment, all who will say, "Jesus, you are all you claim to be."

Doubt has intimidated the Book, and robbed us of the reward of believing the promises. Tradition has been yielded the place that the Word needs to occupy. Opinions have usurped the seat of God's positive declarations. God's people have become eloquent in excuses for an almost total lack of an evidence of a living Christ among them.

Jesus is as willing to heal today as He was when a leper cried out to Him: "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed."

THE HEALING VIRTUE

Now, the healing virtue, or power, that Jesus uses is the wonderful Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Tri-unity of the God-head. To understand something of His Person and His work will make it much easier for one to bring belief to the statute of faith.

Let this simple statement sink into the very deepest recesses of your heart. The Holy Spirit can do and will do anything and everything for you that Jesus Himself could do or would do were He standing right there in front of you with His hands extended to you, and the radiant light of Glory shining down upon you. In fact, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to undertake for us while He is away with the Father. Here is exactly what he said not long before He went away: "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever."

That verse of gigantic promise, found in the fourteenth chapter of John, verse sixteen, says several startling things. It shows the three members of the God-head in divine har-

mony of action. It reveals that the Holy Spirit will be "another" like unto Himself, a Comforter, a Strengtheners. It wonderfully shows that the Holy Spirit will continue and abide "forever."

Instead of the Great Physician being present in an isolated community, accessible to a relatively small number, through the Holy Spirit He immediately becomes accessible to all of us. The Great Physician is today everywhere, and all-sufficient. Remember that Jesus not only has power in heaven, but "all power" in earth as well.

This fact alone is enough to change the entire outlook of most of us. It is not merely a matter of getting something from God, as important as that is. It is also a matter learning, as the old timers chose to put it, of "practicing the presence of God." How joyful indeed would your life become if you were to recognize, enjoy, and utilize the continuously abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

Bear in mind that the Holy Spirit is with you whether you think so or not. If you are truly a child of God, then you have the witness of the Holy Spirit, which is your assurance of your being a saved man or woman. And this Holy Spirit is the same One you read about all through the Word of God. He is the same One who worked with Jesus in the performance of the recorded miracles, as well as scores of which no record was made.

Understanding that will enable you to see what great power there is available to you now. It is the same as when Jesus was on earth during his pre-Calvary ministry. The only difference is that you have more on which to base your faith. It should be far easier for you to believe now than it was for them at that time. His testimony has been established and corroborated thousands of times since then.

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

The virtue that "had gone out of Him" was the power of

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

One ordinarily thinks of virtue as being a "specific kind of goodness" or characteristic. That is true. The specific kind of goodness in this instance is the divine nature, the perfection, the holiness and righteousness of Almighty God. Think of it!

This is the one point on which many, doubtless, fail in their understanding of "how God works" in the healing of the body, or, as for that matter, in answering prayer for any boon, benefit, or blessing. They fail to see that they are asking God to touch them with the high zenith of absolute purity, the power of perfect holiness. That is His virtue.

Cannot one plainly see that this requires some prayerful consideration? Cannot one see that sincere, earnest, honest heart cleansing should precede any request of the Lord to exercise this virtue for our benefit?

Far better that we come to the Lord saying, "Lord cleanse my heart with the precious Blood of the Lamb. Make me pure and clean from all my sin. Make my heart right in the sight of God," than it is to come with, seemingly, the attitude that He must heal us in spite of the sinful condition of our lives, or without any desire on our part to serve Him, or to render Him glory in testimony after He does heal our bodies.

Remember, you ask for a part of God when you ask Him to give of His virtue.

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

Jesus Christ now sits at the right hand of God the Father on His seat in the Glory. He still has the body of Calvary, and still bears the scars of the Cross. He is our Saviour, but He is in Heaven.

The Holy Spirit is here. He is with us, God with us now. Feel His presence. Practice His presence. Utilize His presence. Praise God in His presence. Live under the Blood in His presence.

Again, let it be said: You obtain this healing virtue through Christ, and in no other way. All that is done for you by the Holy Spirit is done in the name of Jesus. And the Holy Spirit would definitely lead you to give Jesus all the glory for your healing after he has touched you. Let that be clearly understood. The Holy Spirit is carrying out the injunction of Jesus when He is with you, when He blesses you, when He keeps you, when He heals you. Remember that Jesus sent Him from the Father.

Lest someone might feel that the work of healing bodies is given precedence over the greater ministry of the Holy Spirit in the conviction and conversion of the unsaved, it must need be pointed out in this connection that the same virtue that heals bodies is the One who also convicts and saves. There is but one Holy Spirit, and whenever and wherever He is present for healing the sick, He is also present in revival power. In fact many great revivals have resulted from the performance of healing miracles. That was true in the Lord's ministry to such an extent that He even told that He was healing so that they might also believe for salvation.

The present-day church needs to get to the place where we will quit limiting the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and begin to pray and believe God for the enriching, and enlarged ministry of the Third Person in His blessed fullness. All this is tied together, intertwined throughout the World and in the experiences of His Own. You do not find the Lord saying, "I will do this but I will not do that for you." It is still a matter of what, where, and when you will believe Him in your need.

Jesus meant the Holy Spirit to be as Himself among us until the very ending of the age. And the touch of the Lord is the moving of the Holy Spirit in us, through us, and for us.

HOW TO TOUCH THE LORD

In Mark's account of the healing of Lydia, she is referred to as a "certain woman." That is good for a second notice, because as she was a "certain woman" that day, so also are you a certain man, or a certain woman, in the presence of the Lord today. So far as your need is concerned; and so far as His willingness, desire, and power to help you are concerned, it is as if you were the only person in all the world. Even though you are in a vast multitude, the Lord will single you out if you touch Him by faith.

Matthew records that Lydia "said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole." Her discussion was with her own heart. Her persuasion was in her own heart. She did not have to argue with a priest, or a relative, or a friend about the matter, she had but to know within herself that He would heal her, and to the extent that she knew that she would be healed. She knew that she would be made whole and so she was. That is the way to touch the Lord: absolutely persuaded in your own heart that He will meet your need, and He will.

Lydia had an overwhelming need of the Lord's help. And, that need being so great, all lesser things were relegated to lesser places in her consideration. Her consuming thought was for the healing of her body. In other words, she was desperate about the matter. She did not approach the Lord with the idea that IF He healed her that it would be wonderful, and that IF He did not she would not be too much surprised or disappointed. Her need was far too great to be trifled with. She already knew that men could not help her. She went to the Lord with her whole heart and mind, as well as with her poor, disease-wracked body. That is the way to touch the Lord: with a whole heart and a mind single to His performing the miracle of our need.

No, Lydia had no other hope. All else was gone. It was Jesus and Jesus only. While not many of us seem to reach that place in the concentration of our need and our faith, those who do so will surely reach the Lord and feel His touch.

It was not easy for her to reach the Lord. There was her weakness to be considered. Her strength was spent. It was an extreme effort for her to move at any appreciable length. Her very life's blood was well nigh gone. She had to make a most earnest effort to reach the Lord in that condition, but she reached Him. And so will you reach Him if you want to as much as Lydia did.

And, there were the people, hundreds of them milling around, each seeking for himself a better view, a clearer hearing, a gratification of his own curiosity or heart hunger. People so often stand in the way when one tries to get close enough to the Lord to reach out and touch Him. People, sometimes the well meaning, are so often between the needy ones and the Lord. All too often it's "What will people think? What will they say?" instead of "Perhaps someone else will be encouraged to trust Him, too. Maybe another will know the sweet peace of the Master's touch." The one sure way to get by the people who stand between you and Jesus is to get on your knees. They won't see you so easily then, and seeing you will recognize your earnest heart's desire to reach Jesus.

Press through, Beloved, press through. No matter who may stand in the way, press through. You need not be offensive, you need not boast of your determination, you need not try to explain; just simply, persistently, faithfully press through. That is the way to touch the Lord.

Lydia merely touched the hem of the garment of the Master's robe. She did not handle Him, she did not tug at Him, she just touched His garment, that was all. That is, that was all except that the mighty power of the Holy Spirit flowed through her body and made her as well and as whole as if she had never been scourged by her sickness.

What it all means is that Lydia was reaching out to the Son of God. She was not worthy to touch Him. Yet, she knew enough about Him to know that He forgave sins when he healed, and that He healed all manner of sickness and disease. She knew that He had never turned anyone away

who had come to Him. And furthermore, she knew somehow in her heart to reverence Him, to treat Him as the Holy One. That is the way to touch the Lord.

THE PRAYER OF FAITH

The true prayer of faith may be just that and nothing more. It would seem from the record that Jairus' word to Jesus was that kind of a prayer: "My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live." And, of course Jesus went, and even though the little girl had died before He reached her bedside, He raised her up.

But for the most part, we are not ready to pray a prayer like that. Usually we have to pray through to the place where we can see Jesus, by faith, as Jairus saw Him that day: ready, willing, able to heal.

For many, there is the insistent necessity of getting right with God by the confession of sin. We have no right to ask for healing until we have made sure to ask for the Blood to be applied to our iniquitous hearts. It is well nigh a sacrilege to reach out to touch the hem of His garment with hands that are unclean. Your confession of sin, and your reaching out in faith will surely bring results in prayer.

The glorious assurance of a clean heart is enough to start the "joy bells ringing." The prayer of praise will very often become the handmaiden of the prayer of faith. It is so much easier to ask in faith, believing, when your heart is fairly bursting with praise and adoration for the One you love with all your heart. In fact, it would be far better to spend at least three-fourths of your prayer time in praise. The one-fourth will be enough to voice your need after that. Anyway, the Lord knows what you have need of before you ask Him. He is but waiting for you to be ready to receive it, to be in an attitude of heart and life to give Him the glory—all the glory—for what He does for you.

It cannot be too greatly stressed that the prayer of faith is in reality the heart-act of receiving what you are asking the

Lord for. "Now, faith is the substance . . ." "Believe that ye receive it." It is not the mere act of petitioning the Lord, and it certainly is not the condition of begging. It is, let it be repeated, the heart-act of receiving from the Lord, with the positive knowledge that the material evidences are to be made known at His pleasure, for your good, and for His glory.

Perhaps you are saying, "I would give anything in the world for a faith like that." But do not start trying to measure your faith to see how great or small it is, because by the time you get through with your measurements, you will likely seem to have no faith at all. Some people are constantly trying to "take their faith out and look at it," as one woman said she did.

The prayer of faith is not the result of using a tape measure on your state of belief at a given moment. Neither is the fact that at one time you got a mighty answer to prayer any definite proof that you have faith now, or the fact that you never had an acknowledged answer to prayer any reason to believe that you cannot pray the prayer of faith.

Your faith is the result, at a given time, of your heart relation to Jesus. There are surely times when you will exercise great faith, and other times when you feel that you have little faith. That is why it is always better to begin your season of petitioning with consecration, praise, worship. That is why faith rises (or rather, falls; since it comes from Above) when a spiritual revival is in progress. Why, when a person is enthralled with the beauty of Jesus, the surety of the Word, the goodness of the Father, and the sweet presence of the Holy Spirit; he can believe God for anything and everything.

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

FOUNDATION OF FAITH

That great prince among preachers, Charles Spurgeon, is often quoted as saying, concerning praying the prayer of faith: "Plead a promise." And that is a good sound piece of advice. It works!

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

In connection with his record of miracles being performed by Jesus, Matthew gives as His reason for doing these wonderful works: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Rejoice and praise His Holy Name, because He bore your infirmities and sicknesses as surely as He bore those whom He healed in front of Peter's home that afternoon, and all the others who came to know the healing touch of Jesus.

And consider the statement, clear and bold, in First Peter (2:24): "Who (Jesus) His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree; that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes we are healed." "By whose stripes" YOU are healed. Is that not a foundation for your faith?

In the general epistle of James is found many thoroughly practical and workable statements that are especially pointed toward the church at large, and in a very definite way for the entire church age. One such passage is found in the fifth chapter, verses seven to sixteen:

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

"Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

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

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

"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

"But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church: and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

"And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Bundled together in such a short passage of Scripture are enough Holy Spirit-inspired statements that an entire revival campaign might well be based on them alone. For if God's people fulfilled the injunctions of these verses, the lost would come with broken hearts, crying to be shown the way to a salvation like that.

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

"Is any among you afflicted? Is any merry? Is any sick among you?"

There is the fulfillment of every need in the Lord's great program, all the way from giving vent to the heart-bursting joy of the supernal blessings of salvation to the lifting of affliction and the healing of sicknesses. Whatever is the need, Jesus meets that need.

THE BIBLE PRESCRIPTION

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

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

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

The believer will renew his covenants with the Lord. He will make a new covenant that upon the Lord's healing him, he will be more energetic in the service of his Lord. He will be more faithful in discharging his obligations to the Lord and His work at large.

And thus in his season of prayer the believer will find his heart prepared for the other parts of the healing "prescription" recorded by James.

"Let him call for the elders of the church."

Those ministers of the gospel who may be known to the believer, or in whose ministry he has found especial blessing, will be called to him, if he is unable to go to the place of worship, and they will join together, and with him, pray and believe God in the name of Jesus to heal him.

In connection with this season of prayer, the elders are to anoint the believer with oil in the name of the Lord.

ANointing WITH OIL

There is blessed significance in the use of oil (olive oil) in the Scriptures. The holy things of the tabernacle were anointed with oil to signify a separation for God's use and service, as in Exodus, chapter thirty, verse twenty-five. It was used to signify a place of special blessing as when Jacob anointed the stones after the divine revelation in his dream, recorded in Genesis, twenty-eighth chapter.

That which was anointed was to become the object of divine protection, as in the Psalms (105:15): "Touch not mine anointed." Oil was used as a type of great spiritual blessing. Psalms (23:5): "Thou anointest my head with oil."

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

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

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

THE HEALING TESTIMONY

God's plan for the dissemination of the gospel message since the founding of the church has been, in a large measure, the ministry of testimony. It seems that God has

ordained that word of mouth, the printed page, and any other means at hand should be used to tell men what the Lord has done. Most of us have been saved because of the prayers and testimonies of others.

What is true in the matter of soul-winning is also true with regards to the healing testimony; others are led to a sharing of the blessing.

There is a real "art" in giving a testimony. Perhaps, the easiest way of all is to stand in a group of sympathetic and interested believers and tell how the Lord answered prayer for the healing of the body. If one attempts to give such a testimony in the nominal church of the day, he will doubtless cause something of a sensation. But if he gives his testimony in the spirit of humility, and with the sole thought of helping someone and bringing glory to the name of Jesus, in most cases his testimony will be given a courteous, if not interested, hearing.

While it is imperative that we tell it far and wide that Jesus still saves through the Blood and that He still heals bodies, performs miracles, in answer to the prayer of faith, we must need be constantly in prayer for two things: We must pray that God will send the "seasons" of testimony, and then that He will give us the special anointing that we need to take full and rich advantage of all the opportunities the Holy Spirit opens up for us. In that way the matter of testifying becomes in a very blessed way a true partnership between the believer and the Holy Spirit. And that is the unbeatable combination for soul winning, and faith ministry.

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

Perhaps, too, it will be well to state in this connection that a dogmatic attitude defeats the purpose of the testimony. Any effort to make a poor sick man feel that he is committing a terrible crime because he has a doctor or takes medicine is nothing short of fanaticism. This sick man needs

help, not condemnation. His heart needs to be made tender, and not rebellious. He needs to want to know that there is healing for him in Jesus' Name, not to be made to feel like a criminal because he didn't know how to believe God.

The whole idea is this: There are many fine doctors, and they have done, and are doing, great good work in the world. It would be a falsehood to say that they are a group of fakers. Many a man is alive today because of the kindly, sincere, and intelligent care given him by some good doctor and nurse. And the believer should be the first one to recognize and appreciate this fact. What a tragedy it would be if there were no doctors, no hospitals, no medical skill to attempt to alleviate the suffering of those who have not learned to reach out and touch the Master's garment.

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

When the Lord has healed you, be a faithful steward then, of your testimony. Take advantage of your special knowledge, from experience, of the Master's touch. Tell it far and wide; tell it to the great and the small; tell it to the rich and poor. Tell it!

One day you may come to realize that the best part about your healing, as your salvation, is the privilege of using your blessings to reach the hearts of others with His Word.

CONCLUSION

In closing this short treatise, let it be clearly stated that this is not an effort to make an issue of Divine Healing. You either believe the Word, or you do not. There is not anything of value to be gained by arguing. As the old adage has it: "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still." No, beloved, Divine Healing is not the issue. You can go right on in your sickness if you feel you must. Let there be no debate about it.

The issue is FAITH.

The issue is whether or not we shall take God at His Word.

Surely, you have long been saying to yourself, "I believe."

The case is rested on your love for the Lord and your simple faith in Him!

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

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

You can never be the same again after you have known that He has reached down to touch you! You will want to bear more of the likeness of the Son of God. Your HEALING will come to be a part of what God did for you when He healed you. And, as wonderful as it was, it will not be the most important part of your blessing, although you may feel now that it is.

The fact that you came to know Him better, and to love Him more, and to trust Him as you never had before: these are the things that will mean more and more to you as you go on from the place where He so wonderfully heals you.

And, in keeping on with Jesus, you will find re-echoing in your heart, words, something like those Lydia heard: "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague."