

BORN BLIND?

So What!...



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"Leaves" From a Disciple's ... ions, Just Show Me the Need!
New

by

w. euGene Scott, Ph.D.



*"Leaves" From a Disciple's
Journal . . .*

BORN BLIND?

So What! . . .

*. . . don't bother me with questions,
just show me the need!*

by
W. Eugene Scott, Ph.D.

DOLORES PRESS, INC.
389 CHURCH STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF. 94114

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San Francisco, California, U.S.A.
2nd Printing, 1977

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The pictures on the cover of this book symbolize its message. From the blackness of "blindness" (outside cover), to the "light" of God's eternal word (inside front cover), it is hoped this book will bring the clear vision of "sight" to those who **act** in faith on its truths (inside back cover).



Faith Center at 1615 South Glendale Ave. in Glendale, California where Dr. Scott pastors.

About the Author . . .

Dr. Gene Scott is a scholar and lecturer who has made a vital impact on Christendom with his Bible teaching to groups encompassing virtually every denomination. Though raised a minister's son, he rebelled against tradition early in life and became agnostic in college. His search for a faith caused him to change majors on every degree.

A hard study of the resurrection of Christ led to a firm faith, and Dr. Scott is best known for his summation of this return to faith under the title: "A Philosopher Looks at Christ." Scott went on to complete a Ph.D. in Philosophies of Education at Stanford University. At Stanford his Doctoral Dissertation dealt with the theology of Reinhold Niebuhr and he did specialized studies in comparative religions and far eastern religious philosophies.

His life has many chapters. He serves as pastor at Faith Center in Glendale, California and as President of Faith Broadcasting Network which owns TV channels 30 in Los Angeles, 38 in San Francisco, 18 in Hartford, Conn. and KHOF-FM radio in Los Angeles. He has served as educational consultant to Foreign Missions Boards on assignments taking him to schools on every continent. As a businessman he acts as President for five different corporations and in this grueling activity has been forced to make his Bible teachings apply to life where it's "at". As a convention speaker and Bible teacher his work has been worldwide. Recorded tapes of his lectures and preaching have been widely circulated by Bible Voice, Inc. of Hollywood, Wescott Christian Center, the Calvary Community Church of San Jose, the Melodyland Christian Center of Anaheim, and the Faith Broadcasting Network.

Dr. Scott is best known presently as the speaker on the "Voice of Faith" and "Living Faith" weekly telecasts and as the host on the daily television program "Festival of Faith."

Dolores Press, Inc.

INTRODUCTION

A "disciple" is a learner; but he is a particular kind of a learner. All men are learners, but not all men are disciples.

A "disciple" is a **disciplined** learner. Man cannot choose to learn or not to learn; man "lives and learns" and in that sense all men are learners. Man **can** choose what to learn, where to learn, how he learns; in that sense men become disciples. A disciple has made a choice and focused his learning. Not all men are **that kind** of learners.

These "leaves" are from the preaching ministry of one who has disciplined himself to know God through His "Word." They were first presented as messages from public platforms, then transcribed and edited for publication. The message of this book was preached at Melodyland Christian Center, Anaheim, California.

The messages take the truths of the Bible and apply them to the practical problems of everyday living. The author has oft noted that he believes the essence of meaning in the incarnation is that God moved into a "tent" of human flesh and revealed Himself in life that is real and ordinary — walking dusty roads, associating with ordinary men, eating ordinary food, encountering man in the stuff of "non mystical" everyday action. God's Word should still provide that kind of encounter.

The writer's life has therefore been committed not only to learning God's Word, but to communicating that Word as a compass point from which men in all kinds of circumstance can take a true bearing.

As these "leaves" fall on your pathway, we pray that you will pause long enough to take a new "fix" on the truths they carry.

PREFACE

At the close of the eighth chapter of John's Gospel, we find Jesus teaching in the temple at Jerusalem. The Jews rose up against him and

*"Then took up stones to cast at him:
but Jesus hid himself, and went out of
the temple, going through the midst of
them, and so passed by."*

"And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth." Here, in the first verse of the ninth chapter of John, is the only occurrence in the New Testament of the phrase "from his birth" with regard to physical affliction. This is a unique occasion: Jesus heals a man with a congenital disease.

"And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" They were more concerned with the cause than they were with the man's need.

"Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."

"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

"When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

"And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing."

"The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?"

"Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

"Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

"He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

"Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

"They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

"And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

"Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

"Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them."

Among the witnesses to this miracle, those of the philosophic frame were more concerned about the cause of the man's blindness than they were with the man's need. The religious legalists were more concerned about keeping the rule of the sabbath than they were with the man's need. Others asked how a sinner could do such miracles. There was no rejoicing among them, just division over the law of the sabbath.

"They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

"But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.

"And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see?

"His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

"But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

"These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

"Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

"Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

"He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

People don't change much. If someone went out of here today testifying to a healing, there would be a lot of different responses preliminary to belief. These Jews didn't believe that this was the man who had been blind until they called the parents.

This episode shows Jesus moving to meet the man's need while everyone else was asking questions or worrying over rules. The disciples' question in verse two, and Jesus' answer, brings into focus this contrast between the Lord and those around him. It also brings into

view one of those passages we have to labor with in the King James version of the Bible.

I often tell the humorous story of the little lady who said, "The King James Bible was good enough for the Apostle Paul and it's good enough for me." In spite of such a view of the King James version, there are some passages that are difficult and others where the work of the translators hurts more than it helps. You can check this out for yourself by studying good commentaries.

G. Campbell Morgan first opened my eyes to an error in the punctuation of this passage at the beginning of the ninth chapter of John. The translators of the King James Bible added words when they deemed it necessary; these additions usually appear in italics to signify that they were not in the original. The punctuation also was not in the original. The translators punctuated many times, as they thought the Bible should read. In this particular case, a punctuation changes the entire meaning of a verse.

Traditionally this passage has been interpreted to read:

"And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

"Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

And this had led to the belief that God made this man sick or blind in order that on this occasion, years later, Jesus could pass by and the works of God could be manifested in the healing. So God on his throne caused a boy to be born blind that God might be glorified in healing him!

Jesus then says, "I must work the works of him that sent me." Now change the punctuation and watch what happens to the passage. "Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents." **Period.** He's not going to waste any time explaining his answer; he just answers them. "The man is blind. Don't bog down in asking why. You asked who sinned, he, or his parents, and I'll answer, but that ends the subject. Neither of them sinned."

With the blind man before him, Jesus was not going to bog down in the philosophic implications of the disciples' question. Jesus put an end to the discussion, saying, "Neither of them sinned." **Period.**

Frequently the church, like the disciples, is busy asking nonsensical questions about nonsensical things while humanity passes by without its needs being met.

Jesus simply said, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents." While some might spend the rest of their lives asking why such a thing would happen, and allow the blind man to stumble on in darkness, Jesus never wasted a word on it. He ended it with a period there; then he went on, "But that the works of God should be made manifest in him," (change the period to a comma), "I must work the works of him that sent me." Remember that I'm doing nothing to change the Bible. I'm just correcting the translators' work; it was they who put in the punctuation.

God's work begins and ends with a healing process. "But that the works of God should be made manifest in him, I must work the works of him that sent me," said Jesus. God had nothing to do with making the

man sick in order that He might show off His healing power. He doesn't need to make a man sick all his life in order to demonstrate His power; God can split a mountain if necessary. He spoke the worlds into being! What a ludicrous view of God — to think that He has to make a man blind from birth in order to demonstrate His power. But encountering the need, regardless of the cause, God meets the need and His work is manifested in the healing process.

Now let us return to these verses of Scripture, and read them once again in the corrected form.

"And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

"And his disciples asked him, saying, 'Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?'

"Jesus answered, 'Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents. But that the works of God should be made manifest in him, I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work.'"

Jesus hushed the questioning of the disciples with a quick answer. Though he was fleeing from a crowd that was ready to stone him, he took time to meet the need of a blind man whom he encountered. He must work the works of God: to heal.

Now, I know God has never said that Christians will float to glory on a flowery bed of ease. The greatest saints in God's Book suffered terrible tribulations in this life: persecution from sinners.

The catalogue of the sufferings for one giant is found in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, the eleventh

chapter. He says, "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one." He had a vivid memory of those beatings. Many people counted: the fellow laying on the lash had to count; an arbitrator counted; a representative of the man being beaten counted, according to Roman law; the man who was being beaten counted too. And if the man wielding the whip gave one stripe more or less than the thirty nine, he was beaten. So they counted, as the lash was laid down time after time. With vivid memory Paul says, "Five times received I the forty stripes save one." And he was so beaten, not for any criminal act, but for his testimony of Jesus. Paul continues his catalogue:

"Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

"In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

"In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

Christianity is not a guarantee of circumstantial well being. Jesus said, "Ye shall have tribulation." But **there are some things that God has promised and they are sure.** My salvation is one of them. I don't hang that on my merits. Christ died for me.

Those whom the Lord loves, He trains. The letter to the Hebrews talks about the training God gives his children. He trained His own Son. God did not take

Jesus while he was still a boy and put him on the cross. It was not a babe in swaddling clothes who faced the angry mob at the end of the eighth chapter of John. But because God loved His Son, He trained Him.

The word for **train** or **chasten** in the New Testament is **Paidia** in the Greek. Literally this meant **child train** or it was used in the sporting world to denote the training of an athlete for a test that lies ahead. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," says Hebrews, chapter twelve. And it goes on to say that if the Lord does not chasten us and treat us as He did His own Son, then we are illegitimate children. We're told we'll be tested; we'll be trained; we'll have problems. **But there is one exception.**

The exception is in our physical needs. Jesus did not work the works of the Father, nor were the works of the Father manifest in him, by the removal of circumstantial problems. But when it came to physical need, he healed their sickness. He did it **that the works of the Father might be manifested.** The man born blind did not even know who Jesus was, but he testified later, "*Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.*" **The works of the Father are to heal!**

Healing, then is a basic luxury of the Christian church. Other luxuries are not so sure. If you serve God you may end up in prison. (That would certainly be true in some lands). You may end up broke when you die. And you may suffer all kinds of other hardships; but you have one luxury. Healing is yours, if the eyes of faith can be opened today.

The Bible says, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The Word of God is a revelation of God. You're not going to get what I'm talking about by wrestling in prayer. It doesn't come by praying. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

All the Bible is a revelation of God's nature as a person. The Bible itself says, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." Whatever a person is will be revealed if he talks long enough. The Bible — this old and new covenant, old and new testament, old and new testimony — is but the showing forth of God's own nature in word. From beginning to end, this Word says a consistent thing about God. It says that which is revealed in the story about Jesus and the man blind from birth: **it is God's nature to heal.** This isn't something incidental to God; wherever God is, His nature is to want to heal the sick.

Let us make a list of key scriptures that reveal the healing nature of God. If you are not sick now, then this is the time you ought to note the message. Some find that when they are sick, they are too weak to appropriate God's promise. Let the seed of faith be planted by the Word when you are well and germinated by frequency of repetition. Then when the time of need comes, you can lift yourself from the circumstance; and like this blind man, who stumbled to the pool of Siloam in obedience to the word of Jesus, you can act on the Word and not on what you see.

I. GOD'S NATURE TO HEAL AS REVEALED IN HIS NAME

The first scripture for our list is Exodus 15:26. This is a self-revelation of God's nature; it is a name of God given to God by Himself. The children of Israel had come out of Egypt and confronted the Red Sea. Moses stretched forth his rod, the sea parted, and they crossed. In Exodus 15, the people in fresh memory of the miracle of God could believe God for anything. Miriam, the sister of Moses, led the ladies in a dance. She took a timbrel and they began to sing and dance because they had just seen God's miracle hand in the parting of the waters. But three days later in the desert they began to murmur when no water was found, and they complained again when water was found because it was bitter. God caused Moses to fell a tree into the water, which sweetened it and they began to drink.

The chapter says God proved them there. What did He prove? He proved their trust and faith in Him. And He appeared to them in a promise, uttering a declaration of His nature. He said, "*If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt 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.*" There is the promise: "I will put none of these diseases upon thee." And there is His Declaration, "I am the Lord that healeth thee." The Hebrew in this case is very pungent in its meaning. "I am" is a declaration of the very spring of God's nature that's being poured out. The essence of His

being is described in this name by which He identifies Himself.

God said, "I am the Lord that healeth thee." I AM. He didn't say, "I will be" or "I'm going to." He said, "I am, and wherever I am, this is the way I am. I am **Jehovah-rophi**," (which, being translated, means **I am the Lord that healeth thee**). More strictly to the point, God is saying, "I am the Lord; I am a healing kind of God. It's my nature to heal, and I'll be this kind of God to you if you'll hearken unto my words."

That's an Old Testament promise to a disobedient people. It's unique because it is God naming Himself, and all through the Old Testament, names have profound meaning. The names of God become a study in themselves, for they are a revelation of the character of God. Some of the names of God are the result of man learning, from experience, things about God. Again and again men have seen that God responds in a certain way, and they perceive that He must be of a certain character because He has consistently done certain things. Many of the names of God in the Old Testament came that way: through experience. Seeing God's consistency of expression, man projects a name for God in a burst of inspiration.

For example, God on one occasion is given the name, **Jehovah-jireh**, meaning **the Lord will provide**. On another occasion God is called **Jehovah-shamai**. **Thou, God, seest me**, was its meaning as men learn that God sees them no matter where they go. But in the present case, God names Himself. This name is not dependent upon a human point of view based on many

experiences. God gives Himself a name: **Jehovah-ropi!**

Two outstanding truths in the Old Testament are of that order. Through the mouth of one prophet, God says, "I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions **for mine own sake.**" Those of a scholarly bent can go through the Old Testament and find a profound use of one little phrase, "for the sake of." You find that many times, the cause of God's action is for the sake of something other than Himself. On occasion you'll find that God acted "for David, my servant's sake," or "for Abraham, my servant's sake," or "for thy faith's sake," or for a promise or a covenant's sake. But God uniquely says to this prophet, "I will blot out **your sins for mine own sake.**"

You'll never understand this until you read through the whole Bible and find that "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, **Christ died for us**" (Rom. 5:8). Again we read, ". . . **God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you**" (Eph. 4:32). The basis of God's forgiveness is not some earthly covenant, not some friend or faithful servant of God on this earth. It is based upon God Himself as revealed in Christ. The basis for God forgiving my sins lies in God's own nature. He forgives us for the sake of His Son. That's a powerful basis for action: forgiveness based not on your performance or mine, not on a temporary covenant, but upon the eternal nature of God.

Now let me place right alongside forgiveness, **healing**. God heals not for any other reason except for **His own sake**. From His very nature flows the desire to heal. If this is true of God at any time, then it is

equally true today. The Bible says (and here God is speaking of Himself again), "I am God and I change not." Write down these Scriptures. After Exodus 15:26, write Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." Wherever Jesus is, He's the same. Go back three verses in the same chapter of Hebrews, to the fifth verse, "for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Write down Matthew 18:19-20, "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Remember that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The church offers no magic; it simply offers the Word of God, its veracity, and the power of God to back up His Word. Look again at Matthew 18:20. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Let's roll that backwards. We're here in His name; He promised to be here also. We have the promise "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." In addition, write down John 1:18: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Christ led forth the nature of God. Wherever He is, He brings God nigh.

Now add 2nd Corinthians 1:20. "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen." Every promise of God, including all of them in the scroll of the Old Testament, is wrapped up and placed in Christ,

and Christ brings them to us. Wherever Christ is, wherever the Spirit of God comes, there is the absolute presence of God. God is a person. You do not pour God into us like a substance into a container. God is a person unseen, who made Himself to be seen in one person, Jesus of Nazareth, and now comes again unseen in the Holy Spirit. In John 14, Jesus said that the world would not receive the Spirit precisely because He cannot be seen; and He promised to pray that the Father would send another Comforter to be alongside us, forever.

The Holy Spirit therefore brings God to us, to abide, and . . . Wherever God is, it's His nature to heal. Now if that's true, then *wherever* you confront God, and in whatever manner of expression, you'll see His healing nature revealed.

II. GOD'S NATURE TO HEAL AS REVEALED IN HIS PROMISES

God is revealed in His promises. We've already said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." The Christian church affirms that God is a vital, living person. Whatever a person is will be revealed in the things *he* says; his words will express the dominating qualities of his personality. In this sense let us look at some of the promises of God.

Many people try to claim the promises of God as though they were like a stick to hold over God. Christian book stores sell promise boxes. Sometimes people, feeling discouraged, will go to the promise box and pull out a promise. Then they approach God as though they have something to hold over His head. "Now look, God, I've found this in Your Word, and You may wish You hadn't said it, but You did say it, so . . ." Wham! They try to club God with His Word.

God says of Himself, "*I will hasten my word to perform it.*" Read Numbers 23:19.

*"God is not a man, that he should lie;
neither the son of man, that he should
repent: hath he said, and shall he not
do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he
not make it good?"*

There's no inconsistency in God, no hypocrisy, no sham. He doesn't say one thing and mean another. You don't have to talk God into keeping His promise. When He says it, He means it. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." In that view of God's faith-

fulness, write down two more promises from Psalm 103.

*Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that
is within me, bless his holy name.*

*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget
not all his benefits:*

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities . . .

There is a first promise: God blots out our transgressions for His own sake. But notice also a second promise:

. . . Who healeth all thy diseases.

III. GOD'S NATURE TO HEAL AS REVEALED IN CHRIST

Where do we meet the fullest revelation of God's nature? In Christ Himself! John 1:18 says, "No man hath seen God at any time;" but Christ hath declared Him. Why did Jesus heal the sick? Some say He did it to prove that He was the Son of God. With such a viewpoint, they interpret the ninth chapter of John to mean that God made a man sick so that He could show off His strength. Don't you believe it!

Read the Gospels in their simplicity and don't bog down in philosophy. It is very easy to determine Jesus' motives. In the first chapter of Mark, a leper comes to Jesus. And the story says that Jesus, "**moved with compassion**, put forth his hand, and touched him." The word **compassion** is made up of two words meaning **with** and **feeling**. Jesus had **with-feeling** for him. He felt a sympathy for his suffering and for that reason, He healed him.

In the sixteenth chapter of Mark, Jesus sends His disciples forth to be His representatives. Included in those acts which flow naturally from those who believed in His name is the promise, "they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

In Matthew's Gospel, chapter fourteen, the story is told about Jesus going to a wilderness place after hearing of John the Baptist's beheading. A great multitude followed: people who would scream for His cruci-

fixion when they had the choice between Jesus and Barabbas, people who didn't share His purposes or understand much of what He came to teach. But the Bible says He had compassion on them. **With feeling** for them, He healed all of their sick. No other reason is given.

In the twentieth chapter of Matthew, Jesus is coming out of Jericho when two blind men cry out. The disciples try to hush them, but the Bible says, "Jesus had compassion on them." **With feeling** for them, He healed their blind eyes.

We saw earlier, in the ninth chapter of John, how Jesus put a stop to the disciples' philosophizing, and in answer to their question as to who had sinned, He said, "Neither hath sinned. But that the works of God may be manifest in him, I do the works of him that sent me." And He healed the blind eyes. Jesus healed for no other reason than a felt sympathy for the sufferer. It was His nature to pour Himself out in healing when He saw the need.

Build faith of your own. I don't want you to just read what Gene Scott has to say. I've built my faith through hard study of the Word. I've never found it easy to believe, and never had visions like some people have had. I just studied the resurrection. I remember how I labored, wishing I could find some hole somewhere that would allow me to be convinced that it didn't happen. Most philosophers who deny it have never looked. They just argue in a circle: it couldn't

happen, therefore it didn't happen, so anybody who says it did happen is a poor reporter, because those things can't happen.

I sat in a graduate class in historiography and listened to my professor say, "The Gospels are not good history." Why? "Because they report miracles." Since miracles cannot happen, anyone who reports miracles is a poor historian.

Quiz the doubts of some people. You'll find that everyone has faith; it is just misplaced. Most people have more faith in their doubts than they do in the Word of God. God's Word clearly says that it's His nature to heal. The same Word shows that Christ healed because He had sympathy for the sufferer.

Once I settled the fact of the resurrection in my mind, I set out on an experiment with my life, trying to take God at His Word. **To date He hasn't failed me. His Word is still borne out.**

Today I asked you to hang your life on His Word, or at least face the choice between His Word and what you see. You have the declaration in Exodus 15 that God is a healing God. You don't have to talk Him into it, for wherever He is, this is the way He is. You also have this nature to heal revealed in His promises and in the actions of Christ, the literal substance of God on the stage of history.

IV. GOD'S NATURE TO HEAL AS REVEALED IN THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

We're now in a charismatic renewal of the church, where God is pouring out His Spirit in all denominations. Many people are going back to I Corinthians 12, 13, and 14, where the revelation of the Spirit of God in His ministries within the church is defined. There Paul, after writing for eleven chapters to those Corinthians about their carnal sins and weaknesses, just flips the page and says, "Now concerning spirituals . . ." The King James translation says "spiritual gifts," but the literal translation says, "spirituals," which means "the expressions of the Spirit."

God came and moved into a tent of human flesh: the revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth. When Jesus was here, you went with Jesus wherever He was in order to get to know God. At the close of His ministry, Jesus said, "You have the Spirit with you" (for He was in Christ), "but He shall be in you." And He went on to say, "*I go, and it is better for you that I go, for if I go not to my Father, the Spirit will not come.*" And He prayed the Father that He'd send another Comforter to abide with them forever. That same Spirit of God, which came and dwelt in human flesh, revealing God in Christ, now comes to dwell in the Christian. And when that Spirit is allowed to express Himself through the channel of a human life, then you have "spirituals." The gifts of the Spirit are nothing more nor less than God finding an outlet through human channels for His own nature.

In I Corinthians 12, three of the nine gifts of the Spirit described reveal God's attention to our physical needs. God is being Himself in the gifts of the Spirit. The gifts of knowledge, discernment, and wisdom flow out of God's knowledge, discernment, and wisdom. The utterance gifts of tongues, interpretation, and prophecy flow out of the communicative unction of the Spirit. But out of the nine gifts that Paul catalogues, three make available **God's nature to minister to human physical need: these are the gifts of faith, healing, and miracles.** One-third of those expressions of God's Spirit defined in the Corinthian letter flow to human physical need.

What is the premise being illustrated? Wherever God is, this is the kind of God He is. He flows to minister to human need. He flows to meet physical affliction. It is in His name. It is in His promises. It is in Christ. And it is in the gifts of the Spirit.

V. GOD'S NATURE TO HEAL AS REVEALED IN THE ORDINANCE OF OIL

The ordinance of oil is an ordinance given to the church. God is not less intelligent than we are. He knows that when you are sick, it is harder to believe than when you are well. I have no trouble believing God can heal the sick when I'm well. It's when I'm sick that I have trouble believing. When we are weak and under the attack, it is harder to believe what you are reading today. God knows that and has taken care of it in the ordinance of oil.

When a person addresses himself to one he loves, the barrier drops and his true nature flows out. Since Christ has returned to the Father, God loves His church more than anything else on this earth. When He addresses Himself to the church, His heart pours out. With that in mind, turn to James 5:14. *"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church."* Notice that the sick person is to call, not someone else. God starts with you where you are and tells you what you can do. He doesn't demand that the sick first get enough faith but rather that they start with a simple act of the will:

"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."

The oil is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. The prayer of faith can be anyone's. A simple formula: the sick one is to call; the elders are to anoint and pray. The prayer of faith shall save the sick: the prayer of one who

can seize upon God's promise in spite of everything he sees. Once the current begins to flow,

***"the prayer of faith shall save the sick,
and the Lord shall raise him up."***

Now some will say, "Maybe he's a sinner," as the disciples did in the ninth chapter of John. But God has allowed for that too, for the verse continues,

***". . . and if he have committed sins, they
shall be forgiven him."***

Please stop thinking that you have to be perfect to get God to heal you. Romans 5 says that we have access by **faith into this grace**, into the sphere of grace where unmerited favor from God is poured out.

God, in addressing the church He loves, recognizes the weakness of faith on the part of the sick, and lets another's faith minister to his healing. That's why I say, when I pray for the sick in the church, that I wish a true intercession could go on. An intercessor is one who takes the place of another: a well one, full of faith, who has that compassion Jesus had. It is one who has **with-feeling** for the sick one until he can so identify with him, that a true prayer of faith is offered.

VI. GOD'S NATURE TO HEAL AS REVEALED IN THE ATONEMENT

We meet God's nature full blown in the atonement. There the heart of God is laid bare in a doctrinal thread that's woven through the whole Bible. If you break the word **atonement** apart, you find **at-one-ment**. Man's sins have created a barrier between God and himself so that God's nature and His desire to be what He wants to be is blocked from flowing to the needy man, the sinner. God wants the barrier broken and the man to be at one with Him again, in order that He might be Himself toward man, whom He loves. All through the Bible two things are constantly dealt with: forgiveness of sins and healing of physical affliction.

The Old Testament, in picture, type, and shadow, tells in advance what is revealed in the New Testament. In Numbers 21 there is a type of the atonement. In this story, serpents sent by God into the camp of the Israelites were biting them. People were dying by the thousands. In answer to prayer, God tells Moses to lift a brazen serpent in the wilderness. The promise is that all who look on that serpent (which was a type of Christ bearing our sins and being raised up on the cross) would be healed. In this Old Testament picture of the atonement, there is **physical healing and spiritual restoration**.

In Numbers 16 God has Aaron the high priest, who was a type of Christ, stand between the living and the dead and make atonement for them. And again there is **physical and spiritual restoration**.

In the Old Testament, an act of worship which was a type of the act related to Christ's work in the New Testament, is the Passover feast of the Jews. At the first Passover, in Egypt, the blood of the lamb upon the doorpost told the avenging angel that the first born of that house was to be spared. And the Passover lamb was eaten that night for strength. According to Old Testament custom, physical strength was gained as well as the establishment of a spiritual relationship. In the New Testament, Paul says that Christ is our Passover. And in I Corinthians 11 he points out that many are sick in the church because they fail to discern the full nature of that sacrifice at Calvary.

Isaiah 53 is an Old Testament account of what Jesus did at Calvary. There you find that He bears not only our transgressions and iniquities, but it says that "with his stripes we are healed." **God laid on Him our infirmities**. In Matthew 8:17, the Gospel writer recalling how Jesus healed the sick, saw in this the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Clearly Matthew applied Isaiah 53 to Jesus' healing of physical sickness. Peter in his first Epistle looks back at Calvary and changes the tense of the verb, saying, "by whose stripes ye **were healed**." while Isaiah, looking forward had said, "with his stripes we are healed."

VII. WHAT NEXT?

There's no doubt about it. Everywhere you meet God you find His healing nature revealed. First in His name: "I am the Lord that healeth thee." Second in His many promises of healing: "they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." Third, in Jesus Himself, who had compassion (with-feeling) on the sick and healed them wherever He met them. Fourth, in the gifts of the Spirit, one-third of which are concerned with human physical needs. Fifth, in the ordinance of oil: "the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up." Sixth, in the atonement, God's work of reunion, where the veil was rent from top to bottom and now we have access to God freely not only for forgiveness of sin but also in the provision for physical need. That's the basis for faith . . . and it can effect our whole approach to life.

Let me return briefly to point out one word in that story in the ninth chapter of John: the healing of the man born blind. Again there has been a mis-translation. In verses three and four the King James version has Jesus saying,

"... but that the works of God should be made manifest in him . . ." (i.e., by healing the blind man) "I must work the works of him that sent me."

That is not what He said. Read the Revised Standard Version. There you'll find that Jesus said, "But that the works of God should be made manifest in him, we must work the works of him that sent me."

This didn't end with Jesus! WE are commissioned to continue the work that Christ began. Jesus is saying here that not only He must work, but that we, too — you and I today — who hang our lives on the Word of God, must continue to make God manifest.

**WE MUST WORK THE WORKS OF GOD
TO MINISTER HEALING BY FAITH IN HIS
WORD WHICH REVEALS HIS NATURE.**

SO . . .

Start where you are . . .

and do it now!

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