

# The Lord Our Healer – Part 1

By Paris Reidhead\*

Will you turn, please, to the back of your Bible to the little Epistle, 3rd Epistle of John. I shall soon join this Scripture with Exodus, the 15th Chapter. But we would begin here. We have announced this evening that we shall speak on the theme of Jehovah Rapha, The Lord our Healer. But I want you to begin in this Epistle. I believe that it will be appropriate that we establish this as a foundation principle, and this at the very close of John's ministry, and incidentally probably the last, or the next to the last Epistle included in the New Testament. And I would have you hear it: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." (1 John 1:2)

Years ago, I used this in connection with the subject of The Lord Our Healer, and a critic said to me, Oh, but don't you understand? This is the elder unto the well beloved Gaius. And it is a personal letter, and it must so be viewed. I said, All right, I am prepared to do that if on only one condition. What is that condition? If you will also agree that John 3:16 was a personal word, and John 3:3, and 3:5, and 3:7 were personally given to Nicodemus. If you are willing to give that word of the Lord to Nicodemus, and not have it applicable to you, then I am willing to give John, 3rd John 2 to Gaius, and not have it applicable to you. Or, if you are prepared to say that this applies to Pharisees, and none other. Or, if you are prepared to say that this applies to Pharisees that come at midnight and no other time. And if you make it for Nicodemus personally, then I am prepared to give this to Gaius, or only to those to whom Paul would have written a letter. But if you have any reason to believe that the statement of Christ made to Nicodemus, You must be born again, Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God, Except ye be born of water and the Spirit ye cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven, those spoken to Nicodemus is applicable to all men everywhere... If, I say, you want to extend that to others, then we will extend the word given by John to Gaius to others, that it is a revelation of the Holy Ghost through His servant of a principle, deep in the heart of our high priest, and the elder one writing is writing for the elder of the elders, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the well-beloved could have been you, as well as Gaius. For he speaks of those who are the object of his love.

And so we would find that there is a tendency always to escape from the clear implications of the Word addressed to us, even as there is a tendency to apply things which are not addressed to us to our case. But I personally feel that every Biblical principle of interpretation and understanding of the Scripture means that this 2nd verse in the 3rd Epistle of John is the revelation of the desire of the Head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ for the members of His body, the church, and that this principle is to be understood with that total revelation from the very earliest chapters of the book. Let me read it again: (and lay hold upon it, for it certainly means you.) "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health,... Notice it is a comma at that point and not a period. For there is a qualification: Even as thy soul prospereth.

Now will you turn with me to Exodus, Chapter 15. Going back in the Word to that place where His people, a company of people, drawn by His stretched out arm from Egypt, (speaking of the world,) by means of the Passover, (the Blood of Christ,) through the Red Sea (death and resurrection of our risen Lord who carried His people with Him through that experience). But there is something more. Listen as I begin with verse 22:

"So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. And when they came to Marah, (which means bitter), they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord shewed him a tree, (now see that), ... the Lord showed him a tree." (Exo. 15:22-25) Just as the water of bitterness was removed by the tree, as we are to see, so the bitterness was removed by the tree set into the stream of humanity, that stream Calvary. And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them. And 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... Do you notice He is still the God of Covenant, and He still has qualifications. Be in health as thy soul prospereth. Here, if thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of

the Lord thy God, first; will do that which is right in His sight, secondly; and will give ear to His commandments, in the 3rd place, and keep all His statutes.

So we have qualifications. The only promise in the Bible that has no qualification for reception is the one we mentioned this morning, They that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But even that has a qualification. You have to live godly to be entitled to that. But if you do, you do not have to do anything else. You do not have to believe for that. That is one promise you do not have to lay hold of. You just do it, and the results come. That is the only unqualified promise, but even that is not unconditional. But every other promise in the Word is conditioned, and is qualified.

So here, if thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, 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 (and here is the revelation of His name) Jehovah Rapha, or Jehovah Rophi. I am the Lord that healeth thee. And they came to Elim, and there were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters. And someone says, there are the 12 disciples, and there are the 12 apostles, and the 70 disciples that went out with the good news that Jesus Christ had come to be Jehovah Rophi, Jehovah Rapha.

And so we have here the revelation of the name of God, the revelation of the name of Jehovah. Remember the first name used of God is Elohim, the self-existent one, and then we find that we have Jehovah Elohim, the self-existent one who reveals Himself, the mighty God who exists by no one's help, who reveals Himself. And as He begins to deal with man, he takes the name, Jehovah, the name of the revelation of His nature. But His name, Jehovah, is qualified by the other words that He associates with it. He completes the revelation of Himself in man's need. This is the point that you have to see.

For instance, He gave to us the name Jehovah Jireh, in Abraham's need. Abraham had obeyed the Lord, had taken his son Isaac to the top of the mountain as a sacrifice, had promised that he would bring his son with him again, fully expecting that he would have to slay Isaac, burn his body on the altar, and then that God would miraculously and supernaturally restore Isaac to life, so that he could return. He said, I and the son will come again to You. Abram had resurrection faith. And so in his need, as the knife started to descend, God stayed his hand, and spoke to him, and there was a ram caught in the thicket and he gave the name, Jehovah Jireh. This was spoken in faith by Abraham, for Isaac said, Where shall we secure a lamb? Where will we find the offering? And he said, Son, Jehovah Jireh, God will provide. But he fully expected that the provision would be his son, Isaac. And so when the ram was caught in the horns by the thicket, the name Jehovah Jireh took on a new meaning to Abraham. Each of the Jehovah compound names was given in somewhat a similar situation. A time of need, a time when men cried to the Lord, and He manifest Himself by completing the revelation of Himself.

Another instance of the seven that we could follow would be from Psalm 23. There the shepherd king remembers his years with his father's flock, and he seeks to communicate through this lovely Psalm the truth that had been made so real to his heart, and thus he wrote, not as the shepherd he was, but as the shepherd he knew the Lord to be. And we have that 23rd Psalm opening with the name of God, "the Lord is my shepherd" is the way we repeat it. But it is just the two words in the Hebrew, Jehovah Roeh, the Lord my shepherd is. Thus it is that Jehovah is revealed as shepherd. Our Brother Holte has just sung so beautifully this message that He never puts forth His own sheep but what He goes before. This is the revelation that is given, and when our Lord Jesus said I am the Good Shepherd, He has identified Himself with Jehovah Roeh. But you also know that in Matthew the 8th Chapter, he identifies Himself with Jehovah Raphi, for He took their sicknesses upon Himself, that it might be fulfilled, By His stripes we are healed.

And so here we have the revelation of God's character. And this is the point I want you to see. God was concerned about His people Israel in Egypt's bondage. He was concerned about their deliverance from the angel of death. He was burdened about their escape through the Red sea. And now do you suppose He is going to turn them loose and forget about them, having brought them thus far? Do you feel that He His interest wanes, and just baying made a hobby of this for a little while He is content to abandon them to their own resources? Not so. Not so at all. He knew the place to which they would come. He knew that there would be bitter water. Just as He knew that after you were forgiven and after you were pardoned from your past sins, there would be great temptation overtake you, and so He continues as your High Priest, able to save unto the uttermost

all them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession of them. And thus, as a Christian, when you are tempted to sin, He knows this, and He has said “that God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able to bear, and with the temptation will be able to make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it.” (I Cor. 10:13)

Well He has anticipated that in the journey you would be tempted. He has even anticipated the possibility and likelihood of your falling into sin. And so He has made a means of cleansing that, if we judge ourselves, if we forsake our sin, “if we confess our sin; He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (I John 1:9) He is a tender Shepherd. He is a glorious provider. He understands His people.

Well now, if He has made provision for us in this battle for our spirits, made provision of victory through His cross, made provision for His sheep in succoring them, and helping them, and caring for them, made provision for cleansing, it is not surprising at all that He would make provision for His people in their bodies. For these bodies are of great importance to Him. Have you ever stopped to realize that the only thing that you have that He really needs or asks for is your body? Did you know that? He did not ask for your talent; He did not ask for your brilliant mind in a sense; He didn't ask for your experience; He did not ask for your personality. In fact, many of these things that the world recognizes as of being of great advantage and the means of great achievement, the Lord says have to be gotten out of the way. Certainly that was true of the Apostle Paul. He was not ready to begin his work until all the things that he would have counted gain to him were lost to Christ. He had to be stripped. He was a brilliant debater. His logistic ability, his logic, his forensic ability, all of the prowess he had acquired in Pharisaical debate with the rabbis he thought he could immediately turn to good account in defending the faith. But not so, not so. This was not the means by which God was to be glorified. He said, I came to you knowing nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified, because I did not want your faith to stand in the wisdom of men and depend upon logic and argument. I wanted you to have a revelation of the power of God, and not just be convinced by eloquence, or by argument. And so the very things that would have been of great gain to commercial firms, hiring this brilliant man, were relatively useless to the Lord when He dealt with Paul. These were things that he had to lay aside. The things I counted gain I counted loss. All of these things, said he, were just wood, hay and stubble. They had to go before the Lord could fulfill His purpose.

And thus it was that really what Paul had that the Lord asked for was His body. Now this is what the Scriptures said. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice.” (Rom. 12:1) Now you would think, Present your personalities, and present your training, and present and experience and all of these assets. But you see Romans 12 comes after Romans 6, and in Romans 6 we are told “that our old man is crucified with Christ,” and the old man represents all the assets we possess before we came to Christ. (Rom. 6:6) And these things went to the Cross. And thus that which remains is the body, the personality, and the faculties, because God wants to do with you the same way He did with His Son, and the same way He did with Paul. He wants you to present your body to Him, so that living in you, and filling you, He could use your brain to think His thoughts, and get them back in the world again. He wants to use your eyes so that living in you He will have your eyes to see sinners as sheep scattered without a shepherd. He wants you to present your ears so that living in you He can use your ears to hear their complaint and their wails there caught in the snare of sin. He wants you to present your feet to Him, so that living in you He can use your feet to walk where He would walk. He wants to go. You have given Him feet again. He wants you to present your hands so that, living in you; He can have your hands to do His work. He wants you to present your heart so that living in you He can have your heart with all the emotional possibilities of it that have been so squandered and misused. Now given to Him, He can be moved with compassion again. He wants you to present your lips, so that living in you He can use your lips to speak His word of redeeming love. Thus Paul says, I (that is Paul of Tarsus, his education, his personality, his talent, all of these things that were of such great value – “I) am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live.” Then said he, “Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” (Gal. 2:20) Christ liveth in me. And if we understand this and realize this, this is the plan and the pattern for your life. Then you can realize why the body is important. We are to glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits which are God's.

So, the matter of healing then is tied in very closely with this whole thing of the Christian life. We cannot separate the body from the rest of us and say, Well now this is not important to the Lord. He has said too much about it. He has asked for it. He has asked us to present that, and not to present some of these other things. He has asked us to present our ego with all of its confidence, and all of its talent if you please to the Cross. But He has asked us then to present our bodies to Him. And so we

recognize that we are not thinking of the body as something apart from, something mundane, something of lesser importance. It is of tremendous importance to us and to the Lord. And thus He has said that we are to prosper and be in health as our soul prospers.

Now, let us take this and extend it the other way for a moment. Here is someone that says, I want to be healed, because I do not want to be sick. I don't like pain, and I don't like sickness, and I want to be healed, a Christian person, of some experience with the Lord. But what is the reason for their wanting to be healed? They do not want to be sick, that is all. They do not want to die. They do not want to be incapacitated. They do not want to be weak. I believe that the Word of God has some reason for our thinking that the Lord will answer prayer for the unsaved, and regarding the unsaved in this point. I am sure our Lord healed many people that did not repent and come to Him, just to demonstrate that He is gracious, just to reveal the nature and character of the Father. And, therefore, I feel that in this connection of simply taking healing, that many times the unsaved, or babes in the earliest years of their Christian experience will get further than just getting well, than will Christians of more mature years. I am sure of that. I am confident in my own experience that there were times early in my pilgrimage with the Lord that God answered prayer so directly, so simply, and I look back on it now and I would say primarily just to encourage my faith, just to strengthen me. And I am sure this could be the testimony of many of you.

But you see, Pabulum may be good for the baby, but the grown man doing a hard days' work finds it mighty meagre fare. And there is a point where God will give us milk, but when He feels we ought to have strong meat of the Word, there are times when He will allow something to come into our lives that will drive us to the Word. And many a person that has had healing early in his Christian life on some level finds as he has gone on a little that what (shall I use it pragmatically) what worked back there doesn't seem to work now. Sometimes their hearts have been filled with despair. Sometimes there has been questioning and disappointment grow out of this. There should not be. The Lord has not changed, has not changed His intention for us to be well. But I do think what He is doing is driving us into the Word, and driving us into new areas of dealing with our hearts, and dealing with our spirits, dealing with the soul — that part of us that is to prosper even as our soul prospers, and consequently we would expect that there would be different levels of God's dealing. I am sure. I have no question in my mind at all about this. I have too much experience of my own in the past, and with others, to question for a moment, but what God often answers prayer by the unsaved. You say, They have no grounds for praying. That is true. They have none. But still there are so many testimonies of people that have known saving relationship with Christ that cried to the God of their mother and the God of their father, the God of... to Jesus Christ, to answer prayer, and He has answered prayer. Not because He has any obligation to, but simply because He is a gracious God, and He wanted to reveal His graciousness and encourage them, and lead them on to seek Him. And there are many babes in Christ, early in their Christian life, that simply cried to the Lord, and God answered. We rejoice in this and thank the Lord for it. But we also recognize that when we go on with the Lord a little further, He is going to tie the soul, the spirit, in with the body. And there are many, many times in our experience when it is absolutely imperative, when a need has come in our bodies, and we have gone and used all the means we have known of using, to then come back and say, Lord, there is something you want to teach me. There is some principle you want to teach me. There is some lesson I am to learn. There is something that I have not seen, and You are concerned about. Now, Lord, if this is a little school master to draw me on into some truth I have not learned, then take pity on my mental spiritual laziness, and forgive me for my indolence, and speedily lead me on into what You want this to do for me, because I will be very grateful when it is taken away. Do you see the principle? Do you follow then? that when anything touches a Christian, he can act first on the basic principle. This that we saw in I John: "Beloved, my heart's desire and prayer to God for you is that you prosper and be in health as your soul prospereth."

Now this is principle, this is the underlying desire for our High Priest for us. Is this principle of such that it is inviolate, or is it conditional? And obviously it is conditional. Are there Christians in the will of God that get sick, and the unchallenged answer is, Yes, of course there are. Does this mean that they have necessarily personally sinned? And the answer that I must give is no. Are those for whom we have prayed, and for whom prayer has been offered who die of sickness unhealed? And the answer is, Yes, unquestionably yes. And so we are in no sense trying to establish an absolute here. We are establishing a principle and recognizing that God is the God of that principle. And so we would assume then that until there is a further revelation that it is God's desire for us to prosper and be in health as our soul prospers, immediately that sickness comes we would ask the Lord to

teach us what is involved as a side effect, as a second lesson, deal with this, ask the Lord to remove it, and recognize that He is still retains His sovereignty.

Now what are the means. I would like to give you several. I do not think I will have time for all seven that I have found operative in my life and others, but let us take several means whereby one can obtain healing. Let us take several. And the first, of course, we recognize is a principle in the body. God has put into the human body a principle of healing, and when we get sick our bodies are so made by Him that all of the resources of that body are thrust at the point of invasion. This can be helped by diet, by proper nutrition, and there are many diseases we now come to recognize as being nutritional in origin, the scurvy and the beriberi and the rickets and others of these things which have plagued humanity in the past, and are associated with diet. Even leprosy, Hanson's disease is also associated with diet in some respect. And so we will see a principle of healing in the very foods that God has intended us to eat, in the very vitamins that He has placed in these foods, the principle that is in the body. And so this is the first natural care, and I include also in this natural care such derived things that we now have as quinine. I am sure that everyone recognizes that the leaves of this tree has brought healing to many, and those that have suffered and been in malarial infested areas have found that the use of quinine has been a tremendous help. Remember that when Dr. Simpson<sup>1</sup> began to preach, back 80 years ago in this church, or as pastor of what is now this church, that the germ theory was still being debated. Many a surgeon in the decade just before had utterly refused all the theories of Lister and others with him that state that disease was carried by something they could not see. And many a surgeon took great pride that his Prince Albert operating coat, encrusted with blood and stiff with remnants of previous operations, should have the scalpel wiped on the sleeve and tucked in the vest pocket to be used at the next operation. There was not a great deal of sanitation. And there were some that were dying broken hearted — the man who wrote the article on childbed fever was laughed out of the profession, mocked and scoffed, and driven to an insane asylum, because of hundreds of mothers that were being destroyed by physicians going from bed to bed and infecting the whole hospital, not using proper sanitation. So remember, back less than 100 years ago, there was mighty little practice that prevails today, and there was not a great deal to encourage one about going to the hospital. And oh, the knowledge that has come in these hundred years; in the last 80 years, there has been more knowledge acquired that in the previous seven thousand years of history, or whatever they are, and there has been more knowledge acquired in the last 15 years than in the previous 80. It has been just marvelous, the increase in knowledge. And I believe that we should be grateful for it, for all truth is God's truth. Do you understand? All truth is God's truth. It does not make any difference what the man believes who discovers it and reveals it and brings it back to us. If it is truth, it is His truth. He put it there. He made the principle, and He established it. And it is all ours. And so we will give due credit to these that labor as doctors and nurses. Thank God for them, for everything that has been done, and everything that will be done and we are not going to minimize it. But one of the things that hurts you is this, that so many times the first one that ever.... the first one that ever got me interested in Divine Healing was a doctor. In Little Falls, Minnesota, 1940, I went to the hospital, and he said, Is she one of your women? I said, Yes. He said, She is dying. Medical science, as far as I know, has done all it can do. We can call in specialists, but there is absolutely nothing that I know that they can do. She has four children. And, he said, Preacher, if you know anybody in your church that can pray, you had better get them to pray. Now I don't know why he didn't say me. He probably could tell from the look at my eye that I have been thoroughly sewed up in teaching that made this all for the Jews and the tribulation and elsewhere, and scattered it all around; and so he said, If you know anybody at your church that can pray, you'd better call on them, because if God does not do something... Now I am not a church man, but I know this, that I have had people prayed for and they got well when there was not a thing in the world we could do. He said, If you know anybody that can pray you had better get them to pray, because we have gone as far as we can go.

One of the deacons in this same church in Little Falls came to me and said, Mrs. so-and-so wants you to come and anoint her. And I spent 45 minutes trying to prove to him how that this was a ritual that was for the Jews in the dispersion. If she could prove she was a dispersed Jew, I was willing to go, but otherwise I didn't think I could. He said, I guess you don't believe it. I said, Oh, I believe it, but I don't believe it is for us today. And so he said, Well I'd better find out if there isn't somebody in town

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<sup>1</sup> Albert Benjamin Simpson (1843-1919) founder of The Christian and Missionary Alliance

that will go, because she wants him to go. She wants him to come. And this was your pastor back in no later than 1940. Taught by a doctor, and then rebuked by a deacon.

And I submit to you, dear ones, tonight that the ones that are the first to drive us to the Lord are the ones that are closest to this field and are most aware of the limitations of their skill. The first means of obtaining healing from this wonderful, willing Lord, *is simple childlike prayer. Just asking in the Name of Jesus.* Have you done that? Do you do that for yourself? Do you do that for your neighbors? You know, He answers prayer. That is the amazing thing about Him. He answers prayer. And if you could just understand that the Lord Jesus answers prayer, and pray.

Old Perry Brandon down in Chattanooga, Tennessee, a dear, dear friend of mine. I will love him as long as either of us are capable of appreciating. He said to me one day, "Brother, I'd have to pray for people if there was not another verse in the Bible that said anything about it except Philippians 4:19, 'My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory.'" He said, "When you get sick you need healing awful bad." He said, "If people would just ask Jesus. He loves to answer prayer. Thou art coming to a King. Great petitions with thee bring. For His grace and power are such, none can ever ask too much." So the first way is just to ask Jesus, just to ask Him, simple childlike prayer; just say, Lord.

The second way is *to get others to ask Him for you, get others to pray with you.* And so if you find the first is not enough, then do the second. Ask others to join you in prayer. Get them to pray. Tell them to pray. Share with them. Invite them in. I like what Brother Freileigh says, Harold Freileigh who used to be at Nyack, such a benediction and blessing there, and now out on the West Coast. He says, "You know, Brother Reidhead, I am just a beggar for prayer. I ask everybody I meet that knows God to pray for me. I just figure one thing I cannot have too much of is people praying for me." Well you know, I feel the same way. And I believe that there is no better thing than to get folks to pray for you, to get them to pray, to ask them to pray. And we haven't done enough of that. And this is the second, groups to pray. And I am so glad we are learning some things from the Episcopalians. You know, Alfred Price who was the founder of the Order of St. Luke of the Episcopal Church down in St. Stephen's in Philadelphia, Alfred Price has a prayer chain that goes 24 hours a day. There are 150, and most of them are doctors, lawyers, nurses, teachers, and professional people. 24 hours a day they are praying for the same people. And God answers prayer. And so this is group prayer. Laying hold of the Lord. It says, "Pray one for another." (Jas. 5:16) "Bear ye one another's burdens." (Gal. 6:2)

Now the 3rd one to have healing *is just the word of authority.* And there will come a time when in your experience with someone else or yourself, this may be the way God uses. We fail to understand the power of words, you know. We do not recognize how important it is, but our Lord Jesus gave us a key to it. Remember that day as He was going into Jerusalem, "when He was coming out actually, and He saw the fig tree, and He went over to it to get fruit, and there was not any. And He just spoke. And the next day when He came by, Peter said, Say, Lord, that tree you spoke to yesterday, Look at it. It has died from the bottom up." (Matt. 21:19-21) Now if you know anything about trees, you know they do not die from the bottom up. They die from the top down. This thing is funny. It has died from the bottom up. This is not dying the natural way. The life has been cut off, not just withdrawn. He said, This is strange. And our Lord said, Don't think it is strange. Didn't I say, if you should say to this mountain, Be removed and be cast into the sea, and doubt not in your heart, it shall be as you say. It shall be as you say. He did not say, Pray for the mountain to be cast, He said, Say. And I know of some missionaries especially that have found that there are times in their ministries when they have not needed to pray for the sick, but God has given them that word of authority that Mr. McMillan<sup>2</sup> writes about in his little book, "The Authority of the Believer." And they have spoken in the Name of Christ, and people have received from the Lord. And so it could be that this could be one of the ways that you would receive from Him, simply saying to the thing, In the Name of Christ (for yourself, for another) to go away; and doubting not in your heart, even as He has said. When He gives you His faith it is not mechanical. It is a relationship to Him. But it is the Word of Authority.

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<sup>2</sup> Rev. John A. MacMillan (1873-1956) Author of "The Authority of the Believer"; "The Authority of the Intercessor" (1942)

Then, of course, the 4th way to receive healing from the Lord *is through the laying on of hands*. I think that if you would get the little booklet by Dr. Simpson<sup>3</sup>, “How to Receive and Retain Divine Healing” (I do not know are available. I think they are out of print. We have had them most of the time. It is a wonderful little booklet.) But he tells about this dear man up in Maine that had such a marvelous ministry. Just a humble man. He was the caretaker at the County Poor Farm, and God greatly blessed him. And as he was there in the course of years and age he acquired a skin cancer. And he tried one way and another and it didn’t go away, and he was prayed for, was anointed actually in the little church nearby, and it healed partially; but it still was there. And he was not satisfied. And so, God had told him back there as he began his ministry at the Poor Farm, if people asked him, and only when they asked him to pray, that he should lay his hands on them and pray for them, and that in so doing, simply identifying himself with the person in their need, that there would be this, shall we say, this release of the Lord to work. I do not know the significance of it entirely. I do not know why the Lord said it, but I know He did, and it is good enough for me. And so he had prayed for so many, and when he did he just put his hands on their head or shoulder, take their hands in his and pray for them, and so here he had this skin cancer. And you know he began to see a principle in it. Every time he looked in the mirror, he did something about that cancer. He said, Oh it isn’t there, it isn’t gone, or else he had to release his own heart to believe God, and so what he did was just to put his hands on it. He did not do it to embarrass anybody, or in the presence of anyone; but when he was alone, and he just did it. It says, They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover. He didn’t say, Whose hands, Lord, and it isn’t the hands anyway. It is You. And you know the testimony is that this dear man, written both by Dr. Simpson and by W. T. McArthur, that this dear man gave to all of the men, even in the very early days of this movement a testimony of the simplicity of faith and obedience, that every time he thought of it he had to do something about it. Either it was despair, nothing has happened, and possibly woe, or it was acting out the Word of God to release the work in His behalf.

Then of course, the next way (and I forget which number it is. You are keeping track, well and good. If you are not, what difference does it make.) And so the next way that I know *is someone that has the gift of healing*. Well you say, Are there those today? Well you might think of some names of men. I won’t comment on them, because I personally believe that all these gifts and graces belong in the church and none are to be exploited or associated with individuals. And I have told you about this little person. And occasionally I have had someone say, Well, I know who you mean. Well, bless your heart; if you do don’t you tell either. But I was down in the South Land. This little woman. Oh, she just bubbles with joy, just bubbles, bubbles, it is an effervescent of spirit that is from the Lord. I am sure her personality would have been somewhat effusive. But this is something more. This is just the joy of the Lord. And she has the strangest thing. God just talks to her and she will waken in the morning and say, Well now Lord, here is a pair of feet and some hands, and where do you want them today? Any place you would like to go. And she’ll wait before the Lord, and God will just burden her with someone. And the bus drivers, for she knows the buses, and they say, Well you here again? Where are you going today? Well I am going so and so. And she will talk to the bus drivers and give out tracts, and she is just so bubbly that no one can get angry with her, and go to the door you know, and ring the bell, and say, Anybody home? And someone from the bedroom sob out, Oh, I just was crying out to the Lord; I knew if He would send you I’d get well. And she has a gift, a gift of inspiring, a gift of encouraging, and even her pastor does not know it. She said, Don’t tell him. And I have kept my word. I haven’t. And it is just thrilling to me that here is someone that just lives with the Lord, and a gift from the Lord that she claims nothing for herself. Why she doesn’t think she has healed anybody any more than a person that is an evangelist and has the gift of an evangelist would think they had saved sinners. Do you see? The gift of an evangelist is not to save people. It is to encourage them, and to release them, and help them to lay hold of Christ. And the gift of healing is not to heal people, but it is to lay hold of people’s hearts and encourage them and point them to the Lord and bring out the problem and help them to lay hold of Him. And this is a wonderful gift; oh, I wish that it were in the church. Wish that it were in the church. Hidden, buried, yes. But under the complete control of the Lord.

Then of course the next way, and you see it is a long time. Here I have not even mentioned the way we customarily think of. Have I? So now I am going to *speak about anointing*. It is a strange thing about this word in James the 5th Chapter. You might like to turn to it, because it would be helpful for you to see it as I comment briefly on it in closing. Here we come to this portion in James, and there is a strange word used here. Verse 13 says, “Is any afflicted? let him pray.” And then “is any merry? let him sing songs. Is any sick among you?” (Jas. 5:13,14) Now this word sick is not the customary word. It is asthenia from neuras-

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<sup>3</sup> Albert Benjamin Simpson (1843-1919) founder of The Christian and Missionary Alliance

thenia. It is the word, exhausted. It is the word, exhausted. Here is someone that has tried every other way. They are just exhausted. And so they say, "Call for the elders." Now I believe that the connotation here is this, All of the elders were to be men filled with the Holy Ghost. And everyone filled with the Holy Ghost has a gift of the Spirit, and the gifts of the Spirit as you know are the gift of faith, the gift of wisdom, the gift of the word of knowledge, and so on. And I believe that the reason for calling for the elders was to get all the gifts of the Spirit around the person. The eyes, and the ears, and the insight, and the knowledge, so that the Spirit of God would be free to work, not just as a form, but here were to call for the elders because these are men filled with the Holy Ghost and each has a gift of the Spirit. And as they are called, these gifts were to be in operation around the one that was sick.

Now it says, They are exhausted; they have tried every means they know, and they have not received the answer, and wouldn't it have seemed from this then that the purpose of calling the elders would be this. Well now, Lord, why haven't you done something up until now? What is standing in the way? Because, notice as we go on. "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." (Jas. 5:14,15) Now, remember what it says, Prosper and be in health as our soul prospers. And it could be that the reason for this was that there should be found out something in the life that is standing in the way of reaching the Lord. And as the gifts of the Spirit were to be in operation, then it could be disclosed through some means He would sovereignly choose what the problem was. And it says, "If he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven."

I think of a man I knew, a Baptist preacher, had a great gift and anointing from the Lord. Somebody came and asked him to pray for him. And he was in the presence of a company of people, and he said, Excuse me, to the people. He said, Excuse me a minute, and he stepped aside from where they were, and he said, Now listen. On such and such a night, in such and such a car, at such and such a place, with such and such a person, you did such and such a thing. And the man said, Oh, my Lord. And he fell right down on his knees, because nobody in this living world would have known. Now this man could not be healed till that was done. He fell on his knees, spread out on the floor, he sobbed like a baby, his sin came out, was confessed and forgiven, had peace spoken to his heart, stood up and was prayed for and was wonderfully healed. Now if he had just been healed, if this gift of the word of knowledge whereby the man knew something he couldn't otherwise have known had not been in operation, the man would have been prayed for, a ritual, sent on his way, and nothing would have happened. But the gifts of the spirit were in operation. And so the eyes of the Lord were there.

Think what would have happened in the church if the gift of the Spirit had not been in operation with Ananias and Sapphira. Ananias would have been given great recognition. Sapphira would have been given great honor. They would have stayed in the church with their gift. And all the time they would have grieved the Holy Ghost so that God could not have worked in their midst. But as it was, the gifts of the Spirit were in operation. Ananias, you did not get so and so. You have lied to the Lord. This is what God thinks about lying. You are through. And Sapphira, how much did you say? No. This is what the Lord has told me. That is what He did. Here are the men who carried your husband out, and they are going to carry you away. And the church was pure. Yes, it was radical, wasn't it? But it still showed that His name is holy. And I believe the reason we do not see the presence of the supernatural manifested in the church is that sin is not always dealt with, not forsaken, not confessed. If you can get a pure church, if you can get a clean church, He can get people that love Him with their whole hearts, and sin is buried and under the Blood, and everything is open, and everything is free with Him, then the Lord can work. I see no problem in that. I do not see any problem seeing the Lord released. I know of many places today where the presence of God is being gloriously released, but it is always on one condition, utter brokenness before the Lord, complete openness before Him. No problem getting the Lord to work. The problem is getting us to the place where we are blessable, so we can be the instruments that He wants. And so it is then that we come back to this, that He says, Prosper and be in health as your soul prospers. Well thank God He does not penalize an individual for the sake of any group. And if you are here and you have a need, I cannot say to you that it is the sovereign will of God for you to be healed, because of the Word. Now it was true that the Scripture speaks of many that were sick but they were sick in the sovereign will of God. The principle is that we prosper and be in health. But He is sovereign. He is sitting on the throne. He can do differently with me and you. And I will frankly say, If He can be glorified more in my body and my life by my being dead than alive, I choose to die. If He can be glorified more in the light of eternity by being a failure than a success, I choose to fail. If He can be glorified more by being unknown than known, I choose obscurity. And I

will even go so far as to say, If He can get greater eternal glory by my being sick than well, I choose to be sick. For there is one overruling passion, and that is the glory of Jesus Christ. And He is a sovereign, and He sits on the throne. But, dear heart, the basic principle is, that we prosper and be in health as our soul prospers. And we ought to go to Him. Paul had a problem in the thorn in the flesh. Well if you think it was sickness, well and good. I am not sure. Every other place thorn is used, it is used of people. My personal feeling is that it was the Judaizers that followed him everywhere he went and made life utterly miserable for him. Maybe I am mistaken. If it was eye ophthalmia or sickness of the eye or so, in any case, Paul was so convinced that God ought to answer prayer and take it away that he had to— he went to the Lord three times; and when it did not come in three times, he said, Now Lord, what is doing here. And God so honored his confidence that this should be answered that He gave him the reason. And the reason I believe was that Saul had used testimony that he should not have used. He had gone into the 3rd heavens. He had seen things unlawful to utter, and God said, Don't utter them. And so he told them to prove his apostleship when the pressure was on. And my own personal feeling was that because of the fact he described things which God had told him not to describe, and he could not trust his apostleship to the Lord, he took his own defense in his own hands, that God allowed whatever this was to come. But be that as it may, I see that three times he went, and then he said, Now Lord, what is it, and God gave him the answer. The basic principle is this. In his sovereign purpose, he may have something else, but this is the principle. And I worship God. I do not order Him. Do you see? We worship God. We do not command Him. We serve God, and we would thus recognize that He has the sovereign right to do as He will. But this is the principle. This He has established as the basis that we prosper and be in health as our soul prospers. You say, You have not encouraged me greatly. Well, I did not want to give a panacea. I know the Lord heals. I know He touches bodies. I know He repairs membrane.

Bob Finley<sup>4</sup>, who stood behind this pulpit, testified to being in Korea in that prayer meeting when he saw eyes come into sockets where there had not been eyes, little stubs of arms, deformed, utterly deformed, grow out to full formed arms equal with the other in his presence. Legs that were deformed. He said he saw a huge goiter, an enormous goiter that went clear down into the chest disappear as they prayed for the party. He saw cancers that had eaten into the flesh just disappear as they were being prayed for. He came back in 1950 in Korea, or '51, went to Winona Like to the Youth for Christ International Gathering, and he absolutely electrified it as he said to the people that were there, We've got to rethink some of our attitudes and some of our opinions. I have been in a prayer meeting, and I have seen God work. And I cannot longer depend upon the attitudes that I acquired in school. I have got to come back to the fact that when God is honored, He is released to be God in the midst of His people. And this has done more than anything else that I know to change the climate in America and to get men everywhere, thinking, rethinking, studying, and praying.

And so, I challenge you by saying this, There is only one reason why you should want to be well, only one in this living world. Not to be well, not to be comfortable, not to be free from pain. There is only one reason, and that is that Jesus Christ can have a body that is strong for the work He wants to do. That is all. That is all. That He can have a body that is strong and well, and healthy and vigorous, for its ages and years, for the work He wants to do. And we are to glorify Him in our bodies and in our spirits which are His. And oh to be well, not just for the sake of our comfort, not just for the sake of our ease and freedom from pain, but to be well so that He can have our bodies as the vehicles by which He can do His work.

So it now comes back to this, that it is tied in with the whole will and purpose of God for our lives. And our text is appropriate: "Beloved, my prayer to God for you is that you prosper and be in health even as your soul prospereth." You say, Well I have been prayed for and nothing has happened yet. All right. All this means is that God has another lesson He wants us to learn, and we are going to stay in school and seek Him further, because He is teaching us.

Shall we bow our heads in prayer? Our Father, how glad we are that we serve a living Christ, in the midst of His people mighty. We have not changed. Thou hast not changed. Thou art looking for a people that love Thee, and trust Thee, and believe Thee, and are prepared to meet Thee on Thy terms, and serve Thee as Thou dost long to be served. And oh, Father, we thank Thee for everyone here tonight that loves Thee with their whole heart, and their only desire is to glorify Thee, to have victory in their spirits, and to have health in their bodies, their whole person, body, soul and spirit, sanctified wholly, might be fit and

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<sup>4</sup> "Dr. Robert 'Bob' Finley" Founder of Christian Aid Mission

meet for the Master's use. And so we pray, Lord, that Thou wilt be to us Healer, Thou wilt be Strength, Thou wilt be Wisdom, and Power. Oh, we see the Lord Jesus everything. We do not ask for healing. We ask for the Lord Jesus to be to us what He is in His very nature. He is our health. He is our strength. And we pray for every one of us that are ill, and every one of us, Lord, have some need that presses us to Thee. And we thank Thee for this, because it keeps us before Thee now, learning and waiting, being taught of Thee. We pray for those that have special need. Oh, might their faith arise to lay hold of Thee, might they just use all of these ways that have been set before them. And then, if any exhausted, call for the elders and seek the Lord, Thy mind and will, to see Thee raise them up, give them health and strength again. So, Father, seal the Word to our hearts. Grant that we shall become people that live in the very presence of Thyself, the Living God, and give to our path tomorrow an excitement, a delight, a joy, an anticipation, an adventure, as we walk with the Lord Jesus Christ.

With our heads bowed and our eyes closed, I do want you to know that the Lord Jesus is saying this to you: Beloved, my heart's desire and prayer to God for you is that you prosper and be in health as your soul prospereth. Let us begin by saying, Lord, make our souls to prosper and our bodies then will share that life of Christ. Will you do it?... (invitation.)

Now let us stand for the benediction. Now may the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father and the communion and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be and abide with each of us, now and until we meet around the feet of our triumphant Lord. Amen.

\* Reference such as: Delivered at The Gospel Tabernacle Church, New York City on Sunday Evening, June 24, 1962 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.

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