

Planet in Rebellion

God heals-sometimes instantly, sometimes gradually. Then sometimes God, who sees the future, as we do not, does not heal at all. He simply answers, No. But always remember, God is too wise to make a mistake and too good to be unkind.

You see, you might demand healing from God. And God might give it. One mother beat the air with her fists. She challenged God to heal her dying child. The child lived. But that mother lived to see the day when that son was executed as a criminal.

All faith must be fitted around the final will of God. If Jesus needed to say, "Thy will be done," how much more do we need to say it! His will, we can always know, is for our best good. And in the end, as enlightened eyes look back upon difficult experiences, there will come from lips once bitter and critical the surprising words, I see now. I would have had it any other way."

Yes, God still heals. He has made some striking promises about divine healing-promises that He honors again and again, wherever there is faith and a willingness to cooperate with the conditions that He has laid down. Yet keep in mind that there is a counterfeit for every genuine doctrine, for every gift of God.

God has said that miracles would be brought to their lowest abuse in the last days of world history. His Word tells us that before Christ's second coming counterfeit miracles will be performed in the name of religion-even in the name of Christ.

Remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 7, where He looked ahead to the judgment day and described the astonishment of certain miracle-working Christians when He would say, I never knew you"? Listen: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity." Matthew 7:22, 23.

"What did He mean?" you ask. And you say, "Surely the devil would not bring into the lives of people such a wholesome blessing as healing, would he?"

Yes, evidently many will be healed by a power other than Christ's. And Christ-in whose name they are healed-will have nothing to do with it. Therein lies the subtle deception. "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Matthew 24:24.

Now I would not sit in judgment concerning any man or any group of men who claim the gift of healing. God will reveal to every sincere heart sufficient information to discern the true from the counterfeit. But I do know that no people in all the history of this world have been called to face such deception as we.

All miracles, you see, are not divine. Two forces are operating in this world. And only the man or the woman who takes time and sincere effort to understand the Word of God, who has an "It is written" as the basis for his action-only such individuals are safe from deception.

Never has the world been more in need of healing. And never have the healing lines been longer. There are the faith healers. There are the mass hypnotic healers. There are the trance healers, and the spirit healers.

Evidently there is need for a sharp distinction between true divine healing and the counterfeit. The two stand side by side. Both are Supernatural. God honors true faith wherever He finds it. But Paul tells us that "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." (2 Corinthians 11:14.) And Revelation 16:14 makes it clear that the spirits of demons in the last days will work miracles-not merely tricks. "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles."

The man who accepts all that is miraculous as coming from God soon finds himself in a strange dilemma. For there are undoubted miracles in and out of the church. There are miracles all through the cults. There are miracles in spiritualism. There are miracles even in the voodoo of Haiti. But here is the point. Shall he accept the teaching because of the miracle? What sort of faith would be his if he did so?

Remember that to turn aside from Scripture is to walk on ice that is treacherously thin. For miracles can never take the place of knowing and following the will of God. It is a dangerous thing, to make a miracle the price of your soul!

We are in the last desperate stages of the great controversy between good and evil. It is a battle for the minds and wills of men. And miracles are cheap enough, if by them the enemy can trap the soul. Any man who steps off the solid ground of Scripture is in constant danger of being drawn into the whirlpool of deception.

An American investigator describes a voodoo ritual witnessed on one of his trips to Haiti. "As I

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heard the drum and the organ, I realized how closely this demonstration in a lowly Haitian home paralleled a phenomenon I had frequently witnessed in America." "Each drum had its distinctive rhythm. They blended with the organ into a hypnotic symphony against which I consciously braced myself and into which I was unconsciously drawn." His wife, he says, "was already partially hypnotized by the embrangling sounds and the swaying motion of the worshipers." And then, describing the conclusion of another service, he comments, "Our wills and our volitions were buried with the sacrifice."

Need I say more? Is any man safe without the discerning power of the Word of God?

"How then, can one distinguish between true and false healing?" you ask.

I sincerely believe that there are certain earmarks, questions, and sincere contrasts that, if kept in mind, will keep you from serious deception on this vital point.

Does the healer demand healing from God? Or does he teach his people to say, "Thy will be done"?

Does he exalt Christ as the Great Physician? Or does he make God only a sort of publicity agent to further his own personal fame?

Does he stay close to Scripture? If not, the words of Isaiah apply: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20.

Does the healer tell those who come to be healed that their illness may be the result of their own disobedience to nature's laws? Does he teach them how to cooperate with those laws in the future?

Does the healer tell his people about the healing power of sunlight as it is allowed to shower its radiant energy over body and soul? Does he tell them of the healing potential of ordinary water-skillfully, scientifically, generously used, inside and out? Does he tell them about the relaxing effects of simply watching water in motion -a waterfall, or even a fountain in the backyard? There is something about water in action that unwinds nerves, takes the kinks out of muscles, and removes strain from the heart.

Does he tell men and women how to take a tip from their heart and rest between the beats? Does he tell them about pure, fresh air, God's air-conditioning system for body and mind? Air means oxygen. And oxygen means life. Reduce a man's supply of oxygen, and the higher centers of his brain are affected first. A man's judgment and memory are so impaired that even ordinary questions are answered stupidly. Reason enough for getting plenty of fresh air?

Does the healer explain what happens to a man when he neglects exercise? Does he explain that we must keep our nerves in balance that unless we balance mental activity with physical exercise, sooner or later the mainspring is going to snap? A good brisk walk every day is cheaper and safer and far more interesting than a nervous breakdown.

And does the healer say a word about diet? Fruits-in all their luscious, appealing beauty-simply packed to overflowing with readily assimilated vitamins, minerals, and natural sugars. Grains-waving fields of grain. Kernels-the heart, the life-prepared for your health and enjoyment and the building of body proteins. Nuts-a concentrated, health-building delicacy provided by a thoughtful Creator. Vegetables-in abundance and variety and color to suit every taste and desire. Firsthand, Creator-appointed foods for the human race.

Does the healer tell men and women that this brief summary pictures the original diet God gave to man, and that, when it is followed with wisdom and simplicity, the best health is enjoyed? Does he tell them that the body is the temple of God? Said Paul, "Have you forgotten that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?" 1 Corinthians 6:19, Phillips.

Would you bring anything unclean into a temple? No? Yet many unclean things are brought into our bodies. And I almost hesitate to read what Paul says about this practice-it is so straight! If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." 1 Corinthians 3:17. No wonder Paul says "Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31.

Could it be that what we eat or drink has more to do with the health of the soul than we have realized? Evidently.

This brings us to the fundamental difference between true and false healing. One deals only with the momentary need of the body. The other, along with healing, teaches men how to live in harmony with the laws of the Creator. One promises life in obedience-the other in disobedience. In counterfeit healing there is no recognition of the part sin may have played in producing illness, and no turning away from it. But the Savior says to every man, "Go, and sin no more."

The healing of the body. The healing of the soul. And who can say which is the greater miracle?

"How thankful I am that God not only said to Roy Slaybaugh, 'Take up thy bed, and walk,' but