

Is *Healing*
in the
Atonement?

eBook Series:

Issues Facing the Churches

David Cloud

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Table of Contents

Pentecostal Promises	4
The Truth about Divine Healing.....	14
Isaiah 53:5.....	15
A Hope for the Future	15
Christ’s Healing Ministry	17
The Apostles’ Healing Ministry	20
God Did Not Always Heal	22
Faith Healers Can’t Heal Themselves.....	23
Faith Healers Cannot Heal Others	25
Sign Gifts Passed Away	54
Saints of Bygone Days often Sick.....	58
Two Kinds of Faith.....	60
Last Days Miracles	61
Great Confusion	63
I Believe in Miracles.....	65
About Way of Life’s eBooks	73
Powerful Publications for These Times.....	74

Pentecostal Promises

“And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus’ feet; and he healed them: Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see; and they glorified the God of Israel.” Matthew 15:30-31

“And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch. ... Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.” Acts 5:12,15-16

One teaching which seems to attract many to the Charismatic movement is the idea that physical healing is promised in Christ’s atonement. It is commonly taught by Pentecostal-Charismatic preachers that if a person is saved and right with God he never has to be sick. Healing is guaranteed, so to speak, for those who exercise faith. This doctrine has been closely connected with the Pentecostal movement throughout the twentieth century. *The Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* notes:

“The formative years of development for the classical Pentecostal churches were from 1907 to 1932. As the movement aggressively grew and spread, so the doctrine and practice of divine healing was extended since it was one of the movement’s cardinal doctrines” (p. 370).

Most Pentecostal historians trace their movement to the “tongues speaking” experience of students at CHARLES PARHAM’S Bethel Healing Home in Topeka, Kansas, in January 1901. Parham believed that healing is in the

atonement. One of Parham's disciples, WILLIAM SEYMOUR, founded the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California, in 1906. From Seymour's Azusa Street and Parham's Apostolic Faith movements, Pentecostalism spread and gained momentum. The Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements notes that all of the Pentecostal denominations today--including the Assemblies of God (1914), the Church of God (1907), and the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel (1923)--find their roots in the aforementioned movements.

John Alexander Dowie

From its inception, then, the Pentecostal movement was affiliated with the doctrine that physical healing is in the atonement. The man called the father of healing revivalism in America was John Alexander Dowie(1847-1907), who established a community in 1900 called Zion City north of Chicago. Dowie's magazine, Leaves of Healing, had a worldwide distribution and a vast influence. He taught that healing is promised in the atonement and insisted that those who sought faith healing must give up all medical care. He viewed druggists and physicians as instruments of the devil. When his own daughter was severely burned, he banished one of his followers for trying to alleviate her pain with Vaseline. He refused to allow her any medical treatment and she died in that condition. Many others who came to his faith cure homes died of their illnesses without any medical attention. The Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements notes that many of the most famous Pentecostal evangelists--including F.F. Bosworth, John Lake, Gordon Lindsay, and Raymond Richey--went out from Zion (p. 368) and dozens of Parham's followers at Zion joined the Assemblies of God at its formation in 1914. In fact, three of

the original eight members of the AOG general council were from Zion City (p. 370).

Assemblies of God

The largest Pentecostal denomination, the Assemblies of God, founded in 1914, promote the doctrine that healing is in the atonement. Consider their Statement of Fundamental Truths, section 12: “Divine healing is an integral part of the gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement, and is the privilege of all believers (Isaiah 53:4,5; Matthew 8:16,17; James 5:14-16).”

Aimee Semple McPherson

Aimee Semple McPherson (1890-1944), founder of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, exemplified the widespread Pentecostal view that the Gospel includes physical healing. Her autobiography of 1921 was entitled *Divine Healing Sermons*. McPherson taught that healing is guaranteed in the atonement. She falsely promised to the eager crowds: “Your chains will be shattered, your fetters crushed, your troubles healed, if you only believe--for where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (Epstein, *Sister Aimee*, p. 221). It is blessedly true, of course, that the Lord is a very present help in time of trouble and that He goes with His children through all their trials, but to promise that in this present life all problems will be removed and all sicknesses healed if one only has enough faith is a false promise. McPherson warned against saying, “If it is His will to heal me, I am willing.” She said such an attitude brings no results (Epstein, p. 224). In fact, McPherson claimed that physical healing is part of the gospel. The “foursquare” gospel she promoted was Jesus Christ as Savior, Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, Healer, and Coming King. She claimed that

she had obtained this gospel through a vision in 1922, in which God showed her that the Gospel was for body and soul and spirit. It was the same “foursquare gospel” being preached by the Elim Foursquare Gospel Association in Ireland (McPherson had worked with Elim’s founder, George Jeffrys), the Assemblies of God in the States, and other Pentecostal groups.

Smith Wigglesworth

Smith Wigglesworth (1859-1947) was a famous Pentecostal evangelist and faith healer. Many books about his life are still widely distributed in Pentecostal-Charismatic circles. Wigglesworth believed that physical healing is guaranteed in the atonement of Christ. He taught against the use of all medicine. He believed that signs and wonders should always follow the preaching of the Gospel. He taught that a Christian can be justified and sanctified but still not have everything necessary from God. “People are never safe until they are baptized with the Holy Ghost” (Wigglesworth, “The Place of Power,” June 1916, reprinted in *The Anointing of His Spirit*, p. 151). He taught that handkerchiefs which are prayed over will bring life if carried in faith to the sick (*The Anointing of His Spirit*, p. 231). He taught: “Jesus came to set us free from sin, to free us from sickness, so that we should go forth in the power of the Spirit and minister to the needy, sick, and afflicted” (Wigglesworth, “Divine Life Brings Divine Health,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, Jan. 17, 1942). He claimed that the Christian has the power to speak things into existence: “God declares, ‘You have an anointing.’ Believe God and you will see this happen. What you say will come to pass. Speak the word and the bound shall be free, the sick shall be healed” (Wigglesworth, “Power from on High,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, May 27, 1944).

Franklin Hall

The doctrine of healing in the atonement did not die out in the early part of the century. There was a revival of healing fervor in the middle of the century, led by men such as William Branham, Oral Roberts, Jack Coe, and A.A. Allen. A publication which had widespread influence in reviving the doctrine that healing guaranteed in the atonement was *Atomic Power with God through Fasting and Prayer* by Franklin Hall. He had a “revival center” in San Diego, California, and taught that fasting and prayer were the means to the restoration of apostolic miracles for the end times. He taught that the “fire of the Holy Spirit” would eliminate the potential for sickness, tiredness, and even body odor (*Dictionary of Pentecostal*, p. 346). Pentecostal historian David Harrell, Jr., notes that though Hall was somewhat isolated because of his doctrine, his book on fasting had a major impact on the Pentecostal movement and most of the healing evangelists used it (Harrell, *All Things Are Possible*, p. 81).

Gordon Lindsay

One of the most influential Pentecostal publications of the century, the *Voice of Healing*, edited by Assemblies of God preacher Gordon Lindsay, was established in 1948 to promote the healing ministries of these men, all of whom believed that physical healing in this life is promised in the atonement of Jesus Christ. Lindsay warned that “it is a very serious offense to deny that divine healing is in the Atonement” (David Harrell, Jr., *All Things Are Possible*, p. 85).

William Freeman

William Freeman was one of the many Pentecostal evangelists who led the healing revival of the 1950s. In 1949 he began publishing *The Healing Messenger*. He listed “four steps to healing” -- (1) Stand on the atonement, trusting that with Jesus’ stripes we are healed. (2) Know that it is God’s perfect will to heal you. (3) Understand that sickness is the devil’s oppression. (4) Set the time of your deliverance.

Oral Roberts

Oral Roberts, another of the pioneers of the “faith healing” movement, has promoted the healing in the atonement doctrine widely. His ministry was originally called Healing Waters. His first book, published in 1947, was titled *If You Need Healing--Do These Things!* He listed six steps to deliverance, the first being, “Know that God’s will is to heal you.”

Roberts gave a classic statement of this doctrine in the September 1976, issue of *Abundant Life* magazine:

“For the knowledge of the truth look toward Jesus of Nazareth who himself took our infirmities and bear our sicknesses. If Jesus took our sicknesses we need not bear them any longer. Sickness is part of the curse and Jesus came to destroy the curse. He suffered in our stead because he did not want us to suffer disease. He took our specific diseases and infirmities upon his own sinless, perfect body in complete payment for the penalty of sin.”

“I know it is God’s highest wish for you to be in health.”

“Sickness is not part of God’s plan and not devised by God’s will.”

“One of the things I have always appreciated about physicians is that they are all against disease and they work to bring healing. You see, doctors are not hung up on theology. Yet some ministers and many Christians are not

quite sure where sickness comes from. I mean they are still asking the question, Is it God's will to heal? Some ministers are still praying, Father, if it be thy will, heal. I wonder if they could be sued for theological malpractice? Well, it's a thought" (Oral Roberts, "Why I know that God wants to heal you," *Abundant Life*, Sept. 1976).

A.A. Allen

Pentecostal evangelist A.A. Allen published a book in 1953 entitled *How to Renew Your Youth Without Medicines, Drugs or Surgery*. He stated: "It is my firm belief that God wants everyone of us to prosper and be in health until we fulfill the number of our days." He claimed that God has promised to "restore our youth," meaning that God would "take away the sickness, the disease, the infirmity, even the deformity, that cause one to feel, act, think, and live like an old person."

Jack Coe

Jack Coe, another very influential Pentecostal leader in the mid point of the century, published *Tried ... But Freed* in 1956. He stated that "Deliverance from physical sickness is provided for in the atonement and is the privilege of all believers" (pp. 35-40). Coe taught that "the day would come when those who consulted physicians would have to take the 'mark of the beast' and that men were clearly looking to the wrong source for healing when they consulted doctors" (Coe, "Doctors, Demons and Pills," *Herald of Healing*, Dec. 1953, pp. 2-4,6, cited by David Harrell, Jr., *All Things Are Possible*, p. 101).

Kathryn Kuhlman

Another famous healer was Kathryn Kuhlman (1907-1976). She popularized the "miracle services" concept, during

which she would call out supposed disorders that were being cured in a certain area of the auditorium, and it would be received by the appropriate individual. Kuhlman taught that people could be healed and then lose their healing if they failed to come up to the stage and testify.

In the late 1940s Kuhlman began to teach that physical healing was provided in the atonement of Jesus Christ. In 1947 she preached that the miracles of Pentecost should be experienced today, claiming that Christians today are able to perform the same miracles as Jesus performed, and even greater miracles. “Every church should be experiencing the miracles of Pentecost. Every church should be seeing the healings of the Book of Acts” (Kathryn Kuhlman, cited from Jamie Buckingham, *Daughter of Destiny*, p. 104). She published a booklet entitled “The Lord’s Healing Touch.”

Kenneth Copeland

Many of today’s Pentecostal-Charismatic leaders continue to promote the doctrine that healing is in the atonement. Kenneth Copeland, popular Charismatic evangelist, states this idea in his paper:

“Sickness is of the devil ... God has never used sickness to discipline His children ... I don’t care how old we are, it’s His will to take us home healed, well, whole, and delivered” (Kenneth Copeland, quoted in *Calvary Contender*, Sept. 15, 1989).

Kenneth Hagin, Sr.

Popular Pentecostal preacher Kenneth Hagin, Sr. (1917-2003) also taught a health-prosperity gospel. He said:

“Like salvation, healing is a gift, already paid for at Calvary. All we need to do is accept it. All we need to do is possess the promise that is ours. As children of God, we

need to realize that healing belongs to us” (Hagin, *Healing Belongs to Us*, p. 32).

He further said: “God is glorified through healing and deliverance, not sickness and suffering” (Hagin, *The Key to Scriptural Healing*, p. 17).

Hagin’s influence has been phenomenal. Thousands of students have graduated from his Rhema Bible Training Center and have gone throughout the world planting churches patterned after his ministry. The stated purpose of Rhema is “to produce graduates who will carry forth the great charismatic renewal that God has sent into our time.” His daily radio program was broadcast on more than 180 stations in the States and by short-wave to about 80 other countries. By the late 1980s, more than three million of his 85 books and a half million of his sermons on audio cassette were being distributed each year. His monthly Word of Faith magazine went to 190,000 homes.

Charles and Francis Hunter

This philosophy of healing is also held by Charles and Francis Hunter, who conduct healing seminars. In an article in *Charisma* magazine, “It’s the Hour of the Believer,” Francis Hunter is quoted as follows:

“The Bible does not leave any doubt. It does not say some of you, or just a few of you who believe; it simply says that all those who believe are going to be able to lay hands on the sick, and the sick are going to recover” (E.S. Caldwell, “It’s the Hour of the Believer,” *Charisma*, Oct. 1987, pp. 19-24).

Not all Pentecostal and Charismatic preachers believe exactly as Roberts or Copeland or the Hunters, and there are many variations on the healing theme. Some believe medicine should not be used; others recognize the value of

medicine. It is a fact, though, that a large number of Pentecostal leaders both past and present claim that healing is in the atonement and is therefore promised by God.

The Truth about Divine Healing

Let me say up front that I do believe in divine healing. I believe in James 5:14-15:

“Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.”

This passage gives clear instruction for the sick in this church age. We believe in this, and we practice this, and we have seen God heal in answer to prayer. I have experienced healing in this way.

But note that these Bible instructions do not lend any support for a faith healing movement. The sick Christian is not instructed to attend a special healing meeting or to seek the services of a faith healer, but is to call for the leaders of his own church. Note, too, it is the sick person who is to take the initiative to seek the prayer of his church leaders. The emphasis is not on the gift of a faith healer, but on the prayers of humble church leaders.

I repeat, I believe in divine healing, but I do not believe in the Charismatic faith healing movement. It is not based on Scripture. There is no healing movement in Scripture. The Bible does not promise healing and perfect wholeness in this present time. The Bible does not instruct us to hold healing crusades.

Further, the Bible does not allow women to preach and usurp authority over men, but that is exactly what has been happening in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement for more than a century. Women such as Phoebe Palmer, Carrie Judd Montgomery, Maria Woodworth-Etter, Aimee Semple

McPherson, Maria Wing Robinson, and Kathryn Kuhlman and have played a major role in the movement. The Scriptures forbid this.

I believe in divine healing, but I don't believe God always heals, and I don't believe that physical healing is guaranteed the atonement in this present time. I also believe that the Pentecostal-Charismatic healing movement has caused untold harm.

Following are the reasons I say this:

Isaiah 53:5

The healing of Calvary, is primarily spiritual healing.

Isaiah 53:5 is often quoted as a proof text for the doctrine that physical healing is in Christ's atonement. "... with his stripes we are healed." The primary meaning of this passage, though, is that we are healed from sin through Christ's death.

This is what 1 Peter 2:24 says: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

The Apostle Peter applies Isaiah 53:5 to salvation from sin. The healing spoken of in Isaiah 53:5 is spiritual healing of the soul from sin.

A Hope for the Future

Perfect physical healing pertains to the resurrection; it is a future hope.

There is a physical part to salvation. There is a physical wholeness; there is a glorious kingdom; there is a wonderful,

trouble-free life promised to the child of God--but it is something we look forward to by faith, not something we presently possess in this world. This is clearly what Rom. 8:22-25 teaches:

“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”

The Apostle Paul was a spiritual giant, yet he said his condition was that of groaning within himself, WAITING for the redemption of the body. He said the redemption of the body is a hope, not a present possession. In verse 10 of Romans 8, Paul says the body is dead because of sin. The Christian has eternal life; his sins are forgiven; his name is written in Heaven; he is a child of God. But the Christian lives in a body that is under the curse of death, and the Christian lives in a world which is still under the curse of God for sin, a world which “groans and travails together until now.”

Thus, while the Christian can live a life of victory and fruitfulness through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, he is still under the influence of the troubles and pains of this wicked world. This includes sickness, depression, sorrow, trials, difficulties, sweat, tears, hurt, old age, weakness, death. These things are the lot of the Christian just as they are for the non-Christian. The release from the troubles of the flesh will come at the “redemption of the body”--the resurrection and second coming of Christ.

It is at death or at the rapture that the Christian will gain liberty from this body of death and will have that perfect physical healing and wholeness that is so intensely desired.

Christ's Healing Ministry

The healing ministry of Christ was unique: to prove that He was the Messiah.

It is popularly taught in Charismatic circles that Jesus healed as an example for Christians to follow. Jesus' healing ministry is held forth as an example of what healers today are doing. John Wimber, Charles and Francis Hunter, and a host of others are saying every Christian can heal, that Jesus' healing ministry is an example for all Christians.

This idea ignores the fact that Jesus healed as a sign that He was the Messiah, the promised Savior, the Son of God. Jesus' healing ministry was not an example for us to follow, but was part of His unique credentials as the Christ. This is plainly what the Bible teaches. Consider the following Scriptures:

“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” Jn. 20:30-31

“But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.” Jn. 5:36

“If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.” Jn. 10:37-38

“Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me.” Jn. 10:25

“Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works’ sake.” Jn. 14:11

“If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.” Jn. 15:24

These verses leave no doubt as to the purpose of Christ’s miracles. They were not done as examples of what every Christian can and should do, but were done to demonstrate that He was the promised Holy Son of God. This explains the fact that no one before or since Christ has ever been able to perform the healings He performed. He healed every type of disease, cast out every type of devil, raised the dead, and He did these miracles repeatedly, at will. He healed perfectly. He never failed to heal those who were brought to Him. Not once did he fail. Who can say that today?

It is true that the apostles did some wonderful miracles, as recorded in the book of Acts, but their miracles were also performed for a special, unique purpose as we shall see in the next heading.

Some point to Christ’s statement in the following verse as “proof” that Christians are to do the same miracles as Christ did.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.” John 14:12

What does this verse mean? Some today are saying it means the greater works will be fulfilled prior to Christ’s return--through the signs and wonders movement.

The fact is that since the time of the apostles, Christians have not been able to do great sign miracles. It is a fact of history that the sign gifts ceased with the passing of the apostles. That is fact! The only “sign miracles” witnessed in church history since those days are those of spurious individuals and groups involved in strange and unscriptural doctrines. Among the faithful people of God through the centuries since the apostles, sign gifts ceased. Instead, God’s people have enjoyed the power of God to live holy lives in the face of a godless generation, to withstand persecution, and to preach the Gospel. That is fact. God’s people have continued to experience miracles, but not sign gifts.

Along comes the Pentecostal-Charismatic, claiming that God is giving sign gifts today, but it isn’t true. There are no true sign gifts among the Charismatics. Those who claim to be healers cannot heal--at least they cannot heal any more consistently than can any faithful pastor who prays at the bedsides of his people. Those who claim to be prophets cannot prophecy inerrantly. They make all sorts of embarrassing mistakes and thereby identify themselves as false prophets. Those who claim to be apostles cannot perform the signs of an apostle of which Paul witnessed in 2 Cor. 12:12--”Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.” In other words, they have no proof of their claim.

What then? What about John 14:12? I believe the promise of Jesus Christ in John 14:12 was fulfilled in the ministry of the apostles as is recorded in the book of Acts. Since those miracle-filled days there have been no more periods in church history of true, honest-to-God sign miracles of the same nature as those of Christ and the apostles. That, dear friends, is fact. Those who deny it are flying in the face of Scripture, of history, and of present reality.

The Happy Hunters can't heal like Christ and the apostles could. John Wimber can't heal like Christ and the apostles. Reinhold Bonnke can't heal like Christ and the apostles. Oral Roberts cannot heal like Christ and the apostles. No one today can heal like Christ and the apostles did! Those who claim they can are self-deceived or worse.

In understanding divine healing, it is crucial that we know that Christ's miracles were for the purpose of verifying his Messianic claims. This is no longer necessary and that type of miracle has ceased.

The Apostles' Healing Ministry

The healing ministry of the apostles was unique: to authenticate their work.

We've already referred to this, but to be sure that we cover all bases, let's see what Scripture says about the miracles of the apostles.

"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." 2 Cor. 12:12

"And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils." Mk. 3:14-15

"And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles." Acts 2:43

"And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all." Acts 4:33

"And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people ... Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on

beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.” Acts 5:12,15

“And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.” Acts 19:12

Note that the miracles of the apostles were special and were for the purpose of marking them as the apostles of Christ. They had miracle-working power to authenticate their unique ministries. That is what Scripture says. All Christians could not do the sign miracles of the apostles. The only exceptions were a few men upon whom the apostles had laid hands. There was no general miracle-working experience among the first churches. If there had been, Paul could not have pointed to his miracle-working ability as a special sign. His would have been just another miracle-working Christian ministry if all could have performed such things. But all could not. If all could have performed miracles as a matter of course, the Christians would not have called for Peter to come and raise Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:36-42). Peter’s miracle that day was the “sign of an apostle.”

It has never been God’s will for all Christians to be running around performing sign miracles and healing everyone. That has never been the case, and will never be the case in this age. Don’t be deceived. Don’t seek that which God has NOT promised and thereby leave yourself open to the deception of the devil.

Jesus warned that an evil generation seeks a sign. Let’s not be identified with evil. Let us seek those humble things which God HAS promised and which He wants to do in and for and through us to the glory of Christ. Seek to live holy, gentle lives. Seek to preach the Gospel and see souls saved and lives changed for the glory of God. Seek to be looking

and longing for Christ's return. Seek to be obedient, fruitful Christians.

God Did Not Always Heal

God did not always heal, even in the first century churches.

If physical healing is to be expected as the heritage of the saints in this life, we would see this in the New Testament account of the early churches. The problem, though, is that the New Testament shows cases in which God did not heal Christians of their sicknesses.

The case of Timothy

“Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.” 1 Tim. 5:23

1 Timothy 5:23 tells us that Timothy was sick frequently, and the Apostle Paul told him to use a little wine for his stomach's sake and his often infirmities. God did not heal Timothy supernaturally or permanently from his sickness.

The case of Trophimus

“Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.” 2 Tim. 4:20

In 2 Timothy 4:20 we learn that another of Paul's coworkers, Trophimus, was left behind in Miletum sick. He was not supernaturally healed even though an apostle, Paul, was with him when he had to be left behind because of illness.

The case of Paul

“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I

besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." 2 Cor. 12:7-10

In 2 Corinthians 12:8-10 we read of a situation in which the Apostle Paul was afflicted with some sort of infirmity. Three times he asked God to take away this problem, but the Bible says God refused to do so. He was told that this infirmity was something God wanted him to have for his spiritual well-being. Upon learning this, Paul bowed to God's will and wisely said:

"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:10).

This is a perfect example for Christians today. We should pray for healing and release from trials, but when God does not heal, we must bow to His will and accept that sickness or trial as something from the hand of God. This is not lack of faith; it is obedience to the sovereignty of God.

Faith Healers Can't Heal Themselves

The hypocrisy of the faith healing movement is amazing. Its leaders teach that healing is promised in the atonement and that it is always God's will for the Christian to enjoy wholeness. Yet these very leaders do not enjoy such wholeness!

We will use Charles and Frances Hunter as an example. They teach that healing and wholeness are a guaranteed part of the Christian life. Yet consider that they both wear glasses. That

is not perfect health. Both of them are balding. (She wears a wig.) That is not wholeness. While conducting a healing crusade in the Philippines, Frances Hunter ended up in the doctor's office after contracting conjunctivitis, or "pink eye." She testified, "I could not get rid of it in spite of all the healing teams over there." So she went to a medical clinic for help. "I nearly fainted when I walked in because the first thing I saw was a copy of the book *How to Heal the Sick*, and I thought, 'What am I doing in a doctor's office when Charles and I wrote that book.' With embarrassment, Frances told the nurse about her sickness" (*Charisma*, May 1988).

On another international healing crusade trip, Mrs. Hunter had to be brought back to the States in a wheelchair!

Let me remind you of what Frances Hunter says about healing: "The Bible does not leave any doubt. It does not say some of you, or just a few of you who believe; it simply says that all those who believe are going to be able to lay hands on the sick, and the sick are going to recover"(E.S. Caldwell, "It's the Hour of the Believer," *Charisma*, Oct. 1987, pp. 19-24).

What amazing hypocrisy! The faith healer is conducting a healing crusade and seminar, and is teaching that every Christian can lay hands on the sick and expect them to be healed. Yet the faith healer gets sick and no one can heal her. She goes to a doctor!

Mrs. Hunter excuses this problem by claiming that she performed two healings while in the doctor's office--a neck pain and tonsillitis. We don't know whether any healings were performed, but we do know that Frances Hunter does not enjoy the health she claims is a part of the atonement, and she and her husband and followers cannot heal the sick as they claim.

We have witnessed the Hunter's healing meetings and have seen the wheelchair-bound patients leave disappointed and just as sick and crippled as they were when they arrived.

Faith Healers Cannot Heal Others

The fact is that modern faith healers cannot heal anyone, not themselves, and not others. They cannot heal as did Christ and the apostles. They simply cannot do what they claim to be able to do.

The following statement is made by J.H. Montgomery, former editor of Oral Roberts' Abundant Life devotional. In his book, *The Enemies of the Cross*, Montgomery says this:

"I make the following statement after serious thought and consideration. I first attended a healing campaign in 1949, and in the intervening years between then and now I have attended a great many of these great meetings. ... But I have yet to meet one man or woman who had the power of God to perform miracles as Jesus performed them."

Paul Locke comments on this as follows: "Now this man was there. They are not miracle workers; they are master salesmen. The power of these master salesmen has not been the power to heal the sick and cast out devils. It has been the knack of getting great crowds together. Any little evangelist who has prayed for the sick has had as much success, percentage wise, as the greatest evangelist in this movement. And if a pastor prayed for 5,000 people in his church and only 100 of them or less were healed, he would become so discouraged that he would be ready to throw up his hands and quit. And this is the great problem."

The faith healers simply cannot heal any more effectively than any godly non-Pentecostal pastor can heal. This is not

only true of Oral Roberts, but of all the others, as well. Consider a survey of some of the healing heavy weights:

William Branham

William Branham conducted great healing crusades throughout the world and was one of the father's of the modern healing movement. The Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements says this about Branham: "The person universally acknowledged as the revival's 'father' and 'pacesetter' was William Branham. The sudden appearance of his miraculous healing campaigns in 1946 set off a spiritual explosion in the Pentecostal movement which was to move to Main Street."

Though there were some notable healings ascribed to Branham's meetings, overall he did not have great success in healing. Alfred Pohl was a worker in one of Branham's crusades in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Pohl was right by Branham's side during the meetings and attended Branham when he prayed over the bedridden cases following the evening healing services.

Alfred Pohl made the following statements about this crusade in an interview with the editor of O Timothy magazine, February 21, 1990:

O Timothy: Now, did many claim to be healed, or did it seem that many were healed in the meeting?

Pohl: In the meetings? Ah, yes, there were those that claimed to be healed, and there were those people that thought they saw healings, or thought they saw miracles. But, when you were on the inside, you saw that some of those things that were supposed to be miracles, were not miracles at all. From the outside, you would think that something had really happened; but having been right close to Branham, and working right with him, I discovered

that a lot of those supposed healings or miracles were really not miracles after all.

O Timothy: Okay. As you took him through the dorm, he prayed for different individuals. What did he say during those encounters with the individuals?

Pohl: Well, one of the things he did was to take the hand of the person, and quite often I heard him say that the angel that gave him this gift told him that to identify certain diseases--and he would speak of cancer very much--there are vibrations that he felt on his hand that indicate that this person has cancer. So he would take the patient's hand and hold it. He would say, "Yes, the vibrations tell me that you have cancer."

Then he'd say something like this, "We're going to pray for you, that the Lord will heal you." And he proceeded to do this. Then he went on, and when he was through praying, he would take that hand again or else he would hold the hand throughout the prayer, and he would say, "The vibrations are gone. The cancer is dead. You are healed."

And the person would rejoice, of course; so would I. I thoroughly believed in Branham, I thought he was God's man and so forth, and we wanted to see people healed. So [supposedly] the cancer was dead, and we were happy about this.

But then he had a little added statement there, and that was something like this, "Now, just keep on trusting the Lord. You're healed. Don't loose your faith in the Lord. Just keep your faith and trust the Lord, and you're healed." He said, "You're going to be sick for a while. You're going to be quite sick for a few days." Quite often he referred to three days. "You're going to be very sick for three days."

The people often asked, "Well, what do you mean, Brother Branham? If I'm healed, why should I be sick?"

He said, "The cancer, the cancerous growth which is now dead inside your body has to be carried out by the blood stream. And it's waste material; it has to be carried out; it's poison material, and so you'll be sick for quite awhile until that is carried away."

But what happened then was this: that in the meantime the people wouldn't worry about it.

They'd say, "Well, that's what Branham said would happen. I'm healed."

But this went on, till some of these people got sicker and sicker and died.

So he had an out. By this time he was gone [from that place].

O Timothy: Right. So there were many that he proclaimed healed?

Pohl: Yes, yes. Practically every one as I recall, standing beside these various bedsides--practically everyone was pronounced healed. But the tragedy is that so many of those died after Branham was gone. So there was something wrong.

He also said, "Don't let your faith fail." In other words he emphasized that point. "Don't let your faith fail." And his out was this, I'm sure, that when they died, well, "Their faith failed."

It wasn't his faith, it was their faith. In other words, it was the patient's faith, which I don't see that in Scripture. When the Lord healed people, they were healed. And there wasn't such a thing as "You'll be sick for five days, or three days," and so, "don't lose your faith." I don't see that in Scripture.

O Timothy: There was a newspaper that tried to investigate the healings. Can you tell me something about that? What were they able to confirm as far as healings?

Pohl: Yes, in Winnipeg. Branham came to Canada at that time and he preached at a number of Apostolic churches in Canada. The first church was the church of our moderator in Winnipeg, who brought him into Canada. And Mr. Branham had his campaign there. Then he came later on to Saskatoon.

When the campaign was in progress in Winnipeg, the newspaper (one of the large city newspapers) was giving considerable coverage to the meetings, and they indicated that there were a lot of people healed. They were

favorable to this church, and advertised it and gave news reports that quite a few people were healed. But later on that same editor sent out some reporters to check on some of these people that they had written up in the paper weeks before. [The reporters were] to check up and see whether these people who were supposedly healed at that time, were still healed, were still alive, or whatever.

And when these reporters went back, they discovered that these people had died, or were in the same state or in a worse state than they were before. So, the editor then put it in the paper that these cases had turned out to be phonies, and that these people weren't healed after all. And there was something wrong with these so-called miracles and healings.

But when the pastor of the church saw these reports in the paper, he went to the editor rather disturbed and not very happy about the situation, and he confronted the editor: "Why do you do this to our church? You're hurting the reputation of our church, and you shouldn't do that to us."

And the editor said words something to this effect, "Well, pastor, if the healings are genuine, you don't have to worry, do you?"

And I thought to myself later on when I heard this, well, that editor certainly had a lot of common sense, because if they're genuine, why worry? If they're not, well then they should be exposed--which is what the paper did.

And the editor said, "Pastor, we gave you good coverage when Mr. Branham was here." The pastor had to admit they did. "Now," he said, "we owe it to our people to give them the rest of the story." And he said, "That's what we found." He said to the pastor, "I'll tell you what I'll do, if you can bring me one genuine case of a genuine healing, I'll give you the front page."

And I was told right in that pastor's home that they couldn't find one.

O Timothy: Not one?

Pohl: Not one.

O Timothy: I understand there was a radio pastor whose wife supposedly was healed, and also a man with four

students in the college. Could you tell me about those two?

Pohl: Oh, yes. Yes. The first one I would relate to is a man from a little place near Regina, Saskatchewan. He and his wife were staunch Christians in our denomination. Very fine family. They had four children, and they were all attending our Bible school at that time, in which I was on staff. We knew these children very well--such very fine children, and young people, and a very fine family.

One day during the healing campaign, the phone rang in our dorm and I answered it in our office there, and here was this man phoning from the airport. He'd flown his wife in from near Regina, and he said, "We're here. We want Branham to pray for my wife. She's dying of cancer. What shall we do?"

Well, I said, "Bring her down to the Bible school dorm." And he knew very well where that was. I said, "I'll meet you at the south door, and we'll put her in a room, and I'll see that Branham prays for her."

Which he did, and after the meeting that night we proceeded to take Branham from room to room, and of course we had her in mind very much. And we brought him into her room, and the husband was there, too. Branham prayed for her and pronounced her healed.

Well, there was great rejoicing on the part of all of us. We really were rejoicing that the Lord had healed this woman. [We were rejoicing] for the sake of the whole family. He had given them this story, of course, that "she's still going to be sick, though she's healed; she's going to feel pretty bad." So, they flew back as soon as they could. They wouldn't stay around. We didn't have the facilities to take care of sick people there. There was just a dormitory, and so they went back as soon as they could.

About 10 to 14 days later, in that time frame, I was sitting in the office in the Bible school. Branham was gone; the meetings were over. The door opened to the main building, and I could hear footsteps, then a knock on the office door. In came this gentleman. Of course I recognized him immediately, but I saw that his face was very downcast; he was really under pressure and a heavy burden. So I invited him to sit down, and I said, "Brother," I

said, “what’s on your heart?” And he said, “Brother Pohl, you were standing beside my wife when she was sick in one of the rooms in the dorm. Mr. Branham prayed for her, and he pronounced her healed.”

I said, “Yes, I was right there.” He said, “Tell me, how is it that my wife who was healed ten days ago (somewhere in that time frame), is now in the grave?” He said, “Tell me, how that can be?”

Well, it really hit him hard, and it hit me hard too, because that’s the first I heard that she had died. We hadn’t heard that she had died. So here he was all broken up and he wanted an explanation. What could I tell him? I think that’s one of the hardest questions I’ve ever had to answer in my life. Why is she dead, if she was healed? And I was witness. He couldn’t figure this out, a very fine Christian, and I felt for him.

To this day I don’t know what I said, but I know we wept together and we prayed together. I could have said this: “Brother, your faith failed, or your wife’s faith failed.”

What help would I have been to him? I mean, that’s a terrible thing to do. I wouldn’t dare say that to him, to anyone. He was broken. He had enough to burden him down at this stage without saying, “Your faith failed you.” That was the wrong thing to say, so I didn’t say it.

I could have said that, because that’s the feeling behind a lot of these cases. The healer will say, well “Your faith failed, and it’s not my fault.”

But, I don’t see that that is the case in Scripture either--where people’s faith failed, and they lost their healing after God healed, or the Lord healed them, or the Apostles healed them. So, it’s ridiculous.

Anyway, he left then, and of course we prayed for him, and so on. But it really was a difficult blow to this man and his family.

Then the other party was--I recall so well--was a pastor from Port Arthur, Ontario, which is now called Thunderbay, Ontario. (They combined two cities, Port Arthur and Port William.)

This man was a Pentecostal pastor, had a radio broadcast and, I understand, quite a sizable church. He flew his wife in and the nurse to Saskatoon which was quite a trip--quite costly. And again I had the phone call from the airport and placed them in a room there eventually in the dorm. And when the meeting was over, and the prayer line was over in the church, I brought Branham into the dorm and he prayed for this lady as well. He prayed also for the nurse. The nurse was deaf. He prayed for her healing, and claimed that she was healed. He also claimed that the pastor's wife was healed of cancer.

Well, there was great rejoicing. Let me tell you, we rejoiced together, because I thoroughly believed in Branham all this time, I thought he was just ... just it. He was God's man. We rejoiced together, and then Branham left. And the husband (the pastor) said to me, "Now, Brother Pohl," he said, "I've spent thousands of dollars to try to get help for my wife, on doctors, and this and that and the other, medicines." He said, "I really can't afford it, but here"-- and he wrote out a sizable check. He said, "I can't afford it, but Branham is worth it." He said, "My wife is healed."

He took Branham at his word. See, it wasn't anything else; he just believed Branham. And here was this sizable check. He said, "Give it to Branham." Which I did, the next day.

Later on, about three, four weeks later, I left for Ontario. I was missionary secretary of our denomination, and I visited some of our churches in Ontario. And in the process of visiting our churches, I came to Port Arthur, Port William. We had a church in Port William, and one of the first things I did when I got to Port William was to ask the pastors, "What about pastor so and so in Port Arthur?" I named him. I said, "How's his wife doing?" I said, "She was healed in the meetings in Saskatoon."

And I saw a strange look that came over their faces as I asked that question. And I thought in my heart, "Oh, no, not another one." Just like the family I was telling you about in Saskatoon, from Regina. And I said in my heart, "No, not another one."

And they said, "Haven't you heard, haven't you heard? She's dead. She passed away."

Well that was another blow to me, because I began to realize that something was wrong with this kind of healing. This was counterfeit; something was drastically wrong. Of all people, here was a pastor who loved the Lord and served the Lord, and, you know, why did this happen? Did his faith fail? Did his wife's faith fail? He had a whole church behind him. But no, she passed away.

I was told that the worst thing was that this man (the pastor) had a very good radio broadcast in the area. He went on the air as soon as he got home, and he announced that they had been to Saskatoon to the Branham meetings and had wonderful meetings there, and there were many healings, and amongst them his wife was gloriously healed in those meetings.

I'm sure that many people rejoiced, were happy to hear that. But, it wasn't very long after that, a few days later, he had to get on the same radio station and mention the fact that his wife had passed away. And I was told this gave his radio program a severe blow and setback, because the world at large--I mean they think too, they're not stupid--here one day she was gloriously healed, and a few days later she's dead. You know, this doesn't add up.

We had more of those cases--these are just two exceptional ones--but there were others that passed away. I stood beside bed after bed, person after person who was pronounced healed and yet, where were they? They passed away. So there was something very wrong with this type of healing.

Aimee Semple McPherson

Earlier in these studies we saw that Pentecostal preacher Aimee Semple McPherson, founder of the Foursquare Pentecostal Churches, taught that physical healing is guaranteed Christ's atonement, is part of the Gospel, and is available to those who have faith. In spite of this, most who came to her meetings in search of healing left disappointed. McPherson and her supporters emphasized the various healings which took place during her meetings, but the fact is that most who came for healing were not helped. To go

through McPherson's healing line required that one obtain a card, and these were normally limited to 75 people.

The following sad case of a little girl who attended a McPherson revival crusade illustrates the plight of those who are duped by this false teaching:

"A little girl wore a pair of glasses one-half of which was entirely black. I gathered that she was totally blind in one eye and almost blind in the other. I sat upon the stage very close to the whole procedure. While prayer was being made for her, the little girl, who appeared to be about 11 years of age, wept and sobbed and writhed in her eagerness to secure the help that she had been led to expect. She left the platform and public claim was made by one of the workers that she had been healed, and the little girl verified the claim by a nod of the head given in reply to the question of the workers. An hour later, when the meeting was out, I noticed a small cluster of women near the platform. I thought I saw the blind little girl in their midst, so I asked my wife to go over and investigate and talk to her if necessary. She found the erstwhile 'cured' girl flat on her face on the floor, sobbing, with shattered hopes and a breaking heart. Her disappointment was complete, and so was her disillusionment. The improved sight that she seemed to have had in the midst of the excitement on the platform had disappeared, and with it the hope of the little girl" (Arno Clemens Gaebelein, *The Healing Question*, New York: Our Hope Publications, 1925, p. 93).

Though there were some notable healings documented under McPherson's ministry, one of McPherson's biographers, Daniel Epstein (though extremely sympathetic to her), admitted those healed were "mostly diseases of the immune system, or attributed to hysteria." He said: "Sister Aimee is not credited with raising anyone from the dead, correcting a harelip or cleft palate, or restoring a missing limb, digit, or internal organ" (Epstein, *Sister Aimee*, New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1993, p. 112).

Smith Wigglesworth

Aforementioned Pentecostal evangelist Smith Wigglesworth taught that God promises perfect physical wholeness, that the Christian has the power to command things into being, and that the Christian can operate in the same sign gifts that Christ exhibited. Even so, very few of those who sought Wigglesworth's healing ministrations were ever healed. His own wife died six years after he became a Pentecostal, and his son died two years after that. His daughter, who assisted in his meetings, was never healed of her deafness. For three years he suffered with gallstones. We who understand that physical healing is not PROMISED for this present time know that such things are part of God's sovereign plan and we are not confused by these events. God often heals in answer to prayer, but He does not always heal. According to the doctrine that physical healing is guaranteed in the atonement and is a part of the Gospel, though, such things should not occur. Those who hold this doctrine tell us that sickness is never a blessing of God, that it is of the devil, that it has been defeated on the cross. According to his own doctrine, Wigglesworth's daughter should have been healed of her deafness and he should have been healed of his own sicknesses. His wife should have been healed of the sickness that took her life when she was but a young woman, and his son should have been healed of the sickness that took him away in childhood.

Mary Boddy, the woman who laid hands on Wigglesworth in 1907 when he was allegedly "baptized in the Holy Spirit," had come into a Pentecostal experience only a month prior to that. Mrs. Boddy believed in the doctrine of healing in the atonement, but she spent the last sixteen years of her life as an invalid.

Kathryn Kuhlman

In spite of Kathryn Kuhlman's claims that healing is promised in the atonement and that the miracles of Pentecost should be experienced today, she was never able to perform those miracles. It was alleged that there were documented organic healings which took place in some Kuhlman meetings, but they were very few, compared to the claims, certainly no more than the healings which are experienced by Christians who believe the sign gifts have ceased and who pray for healing, trusting God to do His perfect will.

In his book *Healing: A Doctor in Search of a Miracle*, Dr. William Nolen dedicates an entire chapter to his experiences investigating Kuhlman healing crusades. Though sympathetic to Miss Kuhlman as a person, Nolen was unable to document medically even one case of physical healing, though large numbers of them were claimed. At the time of his investigation, Dr. Nolen was chief of surgery at Meeker County Hospital in Litchfield, Minnesota. A reporter who covered a Kuhlman healing crusade in Pittsburgh's Carnegie Music Hall in 1948 testified:

“For every one who has proclaimed a cure, a score more have faded off into the darkness, as miserable and heartsick as when they came” (Wayne Warner, *The Woman Behind the Miracles: Kathryn Kuhlman*, p. 145).

Kurt Koch was a renowned evangelical researcher into the occult. In his book *Occult ABC* he describes his research into Kathryn Kuhlman's healing ministry. He carefully followed up on a list of 28 cases of alleged healings in the Minneapolis, Minnesota, area. The following is the summary of his findings:

“Ten had not been healed, seven had experienced an improvement in their condition, eleven had diseases in which the mind can play an important part. In the whole of

this extensive report, there is not one clear case of healing from an organic disease” (Kurt Koch, *Occult ABC*, Grand Rapids: Kregel Publishers, 1981).

Dr. Nolen writes in his book:

Occasionally Miss Kuhlman would turn and say, ‘Someone with a brace... a brace on your leg ... you don’t need that brace any more. Take it off, come to the stage, and claim your cure.’

The first time she called for a brace there was a delay in the proceedings. No one came forth. The audience began to grow restive; you could sense that they all felt this was most embarrassing for Miss Kuhlman. Finally, after what was probably a minute but seemed an hour, a very pretty young girl limped up the stage. She waved her leg brace in the air and stood, with her pelvis tilted badly, on one good leg and one short, withered leg. Kathryn Kuhlman questioned her.

‘How old are you?’

‘Twenty.’

‘How long have you worn the brace?’

‘Thirteen years. Since I had polio at seven.’

‘And now you’ve taken it off.’

‘And,’ she said, ‘I believe so much in the Lord, I’ve prayed and He’s curing me.’

Everyone applauded. The girl cried.

This scene was, to my mind, utterly revolting. This young girl had a withered leg, the result of polio. It was just as withered now as it had been ten minutes earlier, before Kathryn Kuhlman called for someone to remove her brace. Now she stood in front of ten thousand people giving praise to the Lord--and indirectly to Kathryn Kuhlman--for a cure that hadn’t occurred and wasn’t going to occur. I could imagine how she’d feel the next morning, or even an hour later, when the hysteria of the moment had left her and she’d have to again put on the brace that had been her constant companion for thirteen years and would be

with her the rest of her life. She was emotionally high right now; soon she'd be emotionally low, possibly despondent.

This case shook severely what little hope I had left that Kathryn Kuhlman was, truly, a 'miracle worker.'

I had accepted as a misunderstanding the deception that went with 'Not yours, surely?'--referring to the wheelchair--even though I knew the man hadn't been in a wheelchair until that afternoon; I had chalked it up to innocent error when the ability to take a deep breath was passed off as evidence of a lung-cancer cure (even though I knew most patients with lung cancer can breathe deeply); I had assumed that it was simple overenthusiasm that enabled Kathryn Kuhlman to call a multiple-sclerosis patient 'cured,' even though she obviously still walked with the multiple-sclerosis gait; but this episode involving the girl with the brace was pure, unadulterated, flagrant nonsense. For Kathryn Kuhlman to really believe that the Holy Spirit had worked a miracle with this girl, it seemed to me that Kathryn Kuhlman would have had to be either blind or incredibly stupid, and she was obviously neither. Was she, then, a hypocrite or a hysteric? I didn't know, but I had begun to seriously question her credibility and that of her organization.

Not once, in the hour and a half that Kathryn Kuhlman spent healing, did I see a patient with an obvious organic disease healed (i.e., a disease in which there is a structural alteration). At one point the young man with liver cancer staggered down the aisle in a vain attempt to claim a 'cure.' He was turned away, gently, by Maggie. When he collapsed into a chair I could see his bulging abdomen--as tumor-laden as it had been earlier.

One desperate mother managed to work her child's wheelchair down to the front of the auditorium. The little girl in the chair, about five years old, glassy-eyed, hydrocephalic, could barely sit upright. The mother, weeping, lifted her daughter out of the chair and attempted to get her to walk to the stage. The child, with the mother holding her, made two pitiful attempts to walk, both times nearly collapsing on the floor before the mother could catch her. Finally, weeping, the mother put her imbecilic child back in the wheelchair and pushed her away down the aisle. ...

Before going back to talk to Miss Kuhlman I spent a few minutes watching the wheelchair patients leave. All the desperately ill patients who had been in wheelchairs were still in wheelchairs. In fact, the man with the kidney cancer in his spine and hip, the man whom I had helped to the auditorium and who had his borrowed wheelchair brought to the stage and shown to the audience when he had claimed a cure, was now back in the wheelchair. His 'cure,' even if only a hysterical one, had been extremely short-lived.

As I stood in the corridor watching the hopeless cases leave, seeing the tears of the parents as they pushed their crippled children to the elevators, I wished Miss Kuhlman had been with me. She had complained a couple of times during the service of 'the responsibility, the enormous responsibility,' and of how her 'heart aches for those that weren't cured,' but I wondered how often she had really looked at them. I wondered whether she sincerely felt that the joy of those 'cured' of bursitis and arthritis compensated for the anguish for those left with their withered legs, their imbecilic children, their cancers of the liver.

I wondered if she really knew what damage she was doing. I couldn't believe she did (Nolan, *Healing: In Search of a Miracle*).

A.A. Allen

The aforementioned A.A. Allen (1911-1970), Pentecostal healing evangelist who had a large and influential ministry in the early to mid part of the century, was a drunkard and a charlatan. His *Miracle Magazine* was filled with incredible claims, such as the cure of a woman who allegedly shed 200 pounds instantly during one of his healing services. In 1956 he began claiming that miracle oil flowed from the hands and heads of those attending his meetings. This allegedly began when God poured supernatural oil of the hands of Lewin Burchan, a seven-year-old boy who was being used as a Pentecostal evangelist. In the 1960s, Allen launched a "raise the dead" campaign, urging his followers to believe

God for resurrections. He had to stop this when some refused to bury their dead loved ones (David Edwin Harrell, Jr., *Oral Roberts: An American Life*, p. 199). Allen also claimed to have the authority to lay hands on those who gave to his ministry, granting them “the power to get wealth.”

Jack Coe

Another famous Pentecostal latter days healing evangelist was Jack Coe (1918-1956). His ministry, too, was characterized by false teaching and outrageous and untrue claims. Though the Assemblies of God expelled him in 1953 for extremism, Coe’s false teaching that healing is guaranteed in the atonement is shared by the Assemblies of God. He claimed that consulting physicians was connected with the mark of the beast (Simson, *The Faith Healer*, p. 164).

In February 1956, at a healing crusade in Miami, Florida, Coe laid hands on a little boy who was stricken with polio. The boy’s mother, Ann Clark, was told by Coe: “If you believe Jesus heals the child, take the braces off, and leave them off.” She immediately removed the braces from the boy’s feeble legs, but as he attempted to take a step, he collapsed to the floor. Believing the false teaching that Coe and the other faith healers preached that God had promised her boy’s healing through faith, Mrs. Clark determined not to put the braces back on. Soon the boy’s legs began to swell and she took him to a doctor, who ordered the braces to be put back on. Her letter to Jack Coe, seeking his counsel, was ignored, so she contacted the police and Coe was charged with practicing medicine without a license. After a highly publicized trial, the judge dismissed the case. Mrs. Clark’s sad experience reminds us that the path of the Pentecostal

movement is strewn with this type of heartache because it promises things which God has not promised.

Though he taught that healing was guaranteed in the atonement and warned his followers against using medicine and consulting physicians, Coe went to the hospital when he fell ill WITH POLIO only a few months after the aforementioned trial. He succumbed to this disease a few weeks later, and it would be difficult not to see the hand of God in such a remarkable coincidence. After Coe's death, his widow published a series of articles exposing the fraud of key healing evangelists.

Charles Price

Charles Price (1880-1947) was another of the famous healing evangelists of the first half of the 20th century. He turned his back on modernistic theology after attending Aimee Semple McPherson's meeting in early 1920 and was "baptized in the Spirit" soon thereafter. Beginning in 1922 he conducted healing crusades in many parts of the world. Following a Price crusade in Vancouver, British Columbia, in 1923, a group of physicians, professors, lawyers, and ministers followed up on the healings. Of the 350 people who had claimed to be healed, they could not find any physical change in the conditions of 301, 39 had died within six months of the meeting, five had become insane, and five appeared to be cured of "nervous disorders" (D. Richard Wolfe, "Faith Healing and Healing Faith," *Journal of the Indiana Medical Association*, 53, April 1959, cited from Eve Simson, *The Faith Healer*, St. Louis: Concordia, 1977, p. 166).

Oral Roberts

Oral Roberts is one of the pioneers of the “faith healing” movement, but his ministry has been examined by faithful men of God and has been proven bogus. We offer the testimony of Pastor Carroll Stegall, Jr., pastor of the Pryor Street Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, Georgia. This is told by David Edwin Harrell, Jr., in his biography of Roberts:

Probably the most damaging religious attack on Oral ever published appeared in the Presbyterian Outlook in 1955. The article, written by Carroll R. Stegall, Jr., pastor of the Pryor Street Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, Georgia, was later republished in a widely circulated tract. It was Stegall's tract which preceded Oral to Australia and fanned opposition to him.

Stegall's curiosity was piqued by the March 1952 issue of Healing Waters, which featured a cover picture of “three great medical doctors congratulating Oral Roberts.” Stegall and Donald Grey Barnhouse, noted conservative Presbyterian pastor in Philadelphia, addressed an inquiry to the American Medical Association that “brought the answer from their bureau of investigation that not one of the men mentioned ... could be identified as doctors of medicine ... One of the three men was found operating in Phoenix as a ‘naturopathic physician’ [meaning he was not a licensed medical doctor]. No organization headed by ‘Dr. J.H. Miller, outstanding medical doctor and president of a medial society of over 20,000 physicians,’ was discovered.”

Stegall later attended a number of campaigns, interviewed Oral, and did some follow-up interviews with those who had passed through the healing line. He concluded that Oral was not “as bad as some others in the miracle business,” but found no basis to support his claims. “I have never seen a vestige of change. I challenge any honest investigator to follow my technique and see whether his findings do not agree with mine.” Stegall concluded: “So far from glorifying God with this they (the healing evangelists) cause His name to be blasphemed by the world by their excesses. So far from curing, they often kill. Far from blessing, their arrival in a city is rather a curse, a misery, a racket, a destruction of faith in simple

people” (David Edwin Harrell, Jr., *Oral Roberts: An American Life*, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1985, pp. 163,164).

Stegall’s assessment was followed by other reports which demonstrated the duplicity of Roberts’ ministry:

Writer John Kobler interviewed two individuals recommended to him by Roberts as “the most striking instances of cures” and reported that while both believed themselves healed, one had never visited a physician, and the other had subsequently undergone surgery to remove a cancer. W.E. Mann reported that a Toronto, Canada physician had examined thirty persons who passed through Oral’s healing line and found no case of healing “that could not be explained, in terms of psychological shock or straight hysteria.” At least one had died. Oral’s critics repeatedly charged that he “covered up his failures,” particularly because the television tapes were edited to show only the most favorable cases (Harrell, *Oral Roberts: An American Life*, p. 164).

Further evidence of the lack of curative power in Roberts’ ministry lies in the disasters which have occurred during his “healing” campaigns:

But, save for the debacle in Australia, no single evening in Oral Roberts’s crusading career left deeper memories than the evening of Sunday, September 10, 1950, in Amarillo, Texas. ... On Sunday evening, September 10, the tent was once again filled to its capacity of about 7,000. Four hundred people had just answered the altar call when a rumbling, hail-filled thunderstorm suddenly engulfed the tent. ... As the crowd sang “When the Saints Go Marching In,” the light suddenly faded out, and the tent lifted toward the sky like a kite, pulling the huge aluminum poles aloft. The tent then began to rip and settled slowly down on the audience ... By midnight, news reports confirmed that about fifty people had been hospitalized (Harrell, *Ibid.*, p. 108).

This event would not be strange except for the claims Roberts makes about healing in the power of Jesus Christ. Though Roberts was present and prayed for some of the

injured, all of those hurt in this disaster were carried to hospitals and healed by doctors, not by faith healer Roberts. Many other disasters followed in the train of the Amarillo storm:

“In 1951, an Alabama businessman died while attending a Roberts campaign in Atlanta. ... In 1955, the death of an elderly Indian, Jonas Rider, during Oral's campaign in Calgary, Canada occurred, according to the local press, “in the evangelist's tent surrounded by converts and followers of the cult.” ... The following January, Mary Ida Buddington Vonderscher, who had appeared the year before on Oral's television program in the healing line, returned to testify of her healing of cancer, but she died in her California only twelve hours after her testimony was aired. The year 1959 was particularly beset by tragedy. In January, a sixty-four-year-old California man died of a heart attack during a campaign in Oakland Auditorium. Then, in May, death struck twice in a campaign in Fayetteville, North Carolina. First, a three-year-old girl died under the tent in her parents' arms while waiting for the service to begin. ... The next evening an elderly Indian woman died on her way to the campaign, causing a local physician to issue a warning against “moving critically ill patients to a faith healer.” Finally, in July 1959, in a case which seemed to pose the most serious ethical questions about religious healing, a woman “threw away her insulin” in the belief that she had been healed in a Roberts campaign, and she died in a Detroit hospital” (Harrell, *Oral Roberts: An American Life*, pp. 164,165).

Again, we do not think it strange that people die in Christian meetings. It is appointed unto men to die. The problem is that Roberts teaches that it is always God's will to heal. Consider again what he says about this:

“For the knowledge of the truth look toward Jesus of Nazareth who himself took our infirmities and bear our sicknesses. If Jesus took our sicknesses we need not bear them any longer. Sickness is part of the curse and Jesus came to destroy the curse. He suffered in our stead because he did not want us to suffer disease. He took our specific diseases and infirmities upon his own sinless, perfect body in complete payment for the penalty of sin. ...

I know it is God's highest wish for you to be in health. ... Sickness is not part of God's plan and not devised by God's will" (Oral Roberts, "Why I know that God wants to heal you," *Abundant Life*, Sept. 1976).

Not only has Roberts been unable to heal strangers, he has been unable to heal his own family.

"The last two decades have been marked by tragedy in the Roberts family. His daughter Rebecca and her husband Marshall Nash were killed in an airplane crash in 1977. His son Richard and daughter-in-law Patti, who were being groomed to take over the ministry, were divorced in 1979. [Richard remarried an Oral Roberts University law student 10 months later and continues to work with Oral in the ministry.] Three years later, his rebellious older son Ronnie committed suicide. And [in 1984], his 10th grandchild--the son of Richard and his second wife Lindsay and the only heir to be named after him--died two days after birth" (Harrell, *Oral Roberts: An American Life*, pp. 343-347).

We want our readers to understand that we are not gloating over the tragedies which have befallen Oral Roberts. These are sad things, and there is no joy in relating them. The reason we do so is that he has made claims that must be taken seriously. If healing is in the atonement, if special healing powers belong to Christians today, if God wills that the Christian be healthy and prosperous, if sickness is never God's will, such will be evident in the reality of the Christian life. These facts from Roberts' own life, though, show that such things are not true. His life witnesses the same problems, the same sicknesses, the same afflictions which befall Christians which do not believe Pentecostal-healing doctrine, who believe in a cessation of the sign gifts.

God has not promised health and prosperity, and it is wickedness and confusion, therefore, for man to make such promises.

Not only is Roberts' healing ministry not what he claims, but his prophecies have also been proven false. Consider just one of his visions, that concerning the City of Faith medical center. In 1977 Roberts claimed that God had appeared to him and given him the directions to build the City of Faith:

He said to me: "Son, you cannot put the vision I have given you into a place where My full healing power is not freely accepted. It must not be in a place defeated by lack of faith in My miraculous power. You must build a new and different medical center for Me. The healing streams of prayer and medicine must merge through what I will have you build. ...

There rising before me were the details of the buildings. Immediately I was led to read the two chapters in the Bible, Revelation 21,22. There I saw the City of God, the New Jerusalem, with its River of Life and its broad avenues. ...

I saw the City of God as a reflection of God himself bringing healing and health to those who entered there. Suddenly God gave me a new name for the Health Care and Research Center I am to build in His name.

"You shall call it the City of Faith."

I thought my heart would burst with joy. The City of Faith. What a name! I knew only God could give a name like that to the Health Care and Research Center He wanted me to build" (*Oral Roberts: An American Life*, p. 333).

Oral even claimed that Jesus had appeared to him and promised that a cure for cancer would be discovered at the City of Faith Research Center (*Time*, July 4, 1983).

From the beginning the City of Faith caused severe financial strain on the Roberts empire. In 1980 Roberts claimed he had a vision of a 900-foot-tall Jesus who encouraged him about the financial problems of the medical center. This is how Roberts described the vision in his September letter to supporters:

“I felt an overwhelming holy presence all around me. When I opened my eyes, there He stood ... some 900 feet tall, looking at me ... He stood a full 300 feet taller than the 600 foot tall City of Faith. There I was face to face with Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. I have only seen Jesus once before, but here I was face to face with the King of Kings. He stared at me without saying a word; Oh! I will never forget those eyes! And then, He reached down, put his Hands under the City of Faith, lifted it, and said to me, ‘See how easy it is for Me to lift it!’” (*Oral Roberts: An American Life*, p. 415).

Oral claimed that Jesus assured him that He would speak to the ministry’s partners and that the City of Faith would be finished.

In January 1987, Oral told his television audience that God had appeared to him and had told him that he must raise \$8 million within the next 12 months or he would die. The money was supposed to provide scholarships for medical students who attend Oral Roberts University. In April Roberts announced that he had received \$9.1 million, the largest portion of it coming from the owner of a dog racing track.

The visions Oral claimed regarding the City of Faith have proven to be bogus. By late 1984 Oral’s City of Faith hospital had only opened about 130 of its 294 beds and the projected figure of 777 operational beds was a remote goal. ... in mid-1984 the deficit was running about a million dollars a month (*Ibid.*, p. 391). Even the special appeals could not save the Center. The \$9.1 million which was raised in 1987 was swallowed up. In January 1988, Roberts canceled the university’s free medical tuition program despite his claim that God had told him to make the medical school a world outreach program. In March 1988, the medical scholarship fund went bankrupt. Students were required to repay scholarship funds at 18 percent annual interest if they transferred to another school rather than stay at ORU medical school and start paying the high tuition (*Media Spotlight* report).

In September 1989, Roberts decided to close the medical school and the City of Faith hospital to pay off debts!

In our opinion, few men of our generation have done more to turn people away from Christianity and the Bible than Oral Roberts. This is because his claims and teaching do not match reality. We know there are multitudes who believe in the man and who will vehemently resist what we are saying, but we are convinced that the facts speak for themselves. Oral Roberts appears to be a very personable and likable man, but he is neither a prophet nor a healer.

Kenneth Hagin, Sr.

Kenneth Hagin's claims that sickness is never God's will and that healing and deliverance are guaranteed by Christ's atonement do not match his own reality. A few years ago he claimed that he hadn't been sick in 60 years, but actually he has had several cardiovascular crises, one lasting six weeks. Heart disease is a sickness, dear friends! I have been confronted with Hagin's disciples in my travels in such diverse places as South Asia and eastern Europe. On a trip to Slovakia a few years ago I visited the home of a man who was devouring Hagin's books. In spite of the fact that the man was crippled and had not been healed, he believed earnestly that physical healing was promised to him. For many years this deceived man had been trying to exercise enough faith to gain his healing, to none effect. Instead of accepting God's will and glorifying God in his weakness (2 Cor. 12:8-10), the man was consumed with the false doctrine that his illness was of the devil.

Morris Cerullo

Another popular Pentecostal "faith healer" of our day is Morris Cerullo, who took over the Heritage USA properties after Jim Bakker was convicted and sentenced to prison. Cerullo teaches that healing is in the atonement, and he

practices the supposed “word of knowledge” ministry of identifying healings which are taking place in his meetings. In a 1976 mailing, Cerullo referred to something new in his ministry called a “Revelation-Healing Institute” through which he predicts “unusual miracles--miracles that require deep penetration of the Spirit” (*F.E.A. News & Views*, Nov.-Dec. 1976). At his healing crusades Cerullo proclaims that “it is God’s will to heal every person” (*Calgary Herald*, Calgary, Alberta, June 6, 1987), yet those with obvious sicknesses--such as those in the wheelchair sections--return to their homes disappointed.

The September 1992 issue of the British-based *Evangelical Times* contained the following information about Cerullo healing crusades:

“Miss Audrey Reynolds attended a Morris Cerullo healing crusade in London and believed she was healed of a brain abnormality. She stopped taking her medicine and, as a result, suffered a fatal brain seizure. Sir Montague Levine, the Southwark Coroner, told the inquest, ‘It was a tragedy that she went to this meeting and thought she was cured of everything. Sadly, it led to her death.’

“Andrew Fergusson, a general practitioner for ten years and currently the General Secretary of the Christian Medical Fellowship, was present at the Earl’s Court meetings. He recently wrote, ‘The healing miracles of the New Testament were instant, total reversals of obvious, organic disease which nobody could argue with, and indeed that was the gold standard Cerullo set by his advertising. We saw nothing verifiable that approached this’” (*Evangelical Times*, September 1992, reprinted in *Australian Beacon*, Oct. 1992).

Foundation magazine, published by the Fundamental Evangelistic Association of Los Osos, California, wisely warns:

“Multitudes have been discouraged and led astray by so-called faith healers such as Cerullo. Their paths are

strewn with heartbreak and confusion. I realize that many feel it is wrong to speak publicly against supposed Christian preachers such as this, but this type of thing is a great wickedness. It is a serious matter to claim that God wants to heal every sickness" (*Foundation*, May-June 1980).

Foreign Healings

Many of the stories of Charismatic healings come to us from foreign lands, particularly from Africa. Popular healers report of amazing healings and miracles during their overseas crusades. We have learned that these reports are not dependable. Consider the following testimony of a British medical doctor:

More recently my friend Duncan Leighton, an evangelist, obtained a Kodak traveling scholarship to go to Africa and America. He wrote an article entitled, 'Signs? One Wonders,' in which he tells of his own investigations of miraculous healings:

"In Africa in 1984, I followed the Derek Prince team through Zambia where they claimed thousands of miracle healings. We found none. Dr. Eric Rea examined one miracle leg-lengthening and pronounced it a hoax. My letter asking Mr. Prince for detailed information was passed down the line until it reached Brian Bentley who knew someone whose sinus was cured."

Duncan Leighton then went to California where he looked at some of the healing groups there. Roger Ziegler, a Californian chiropractor who is a Christian man, said after one healing meeting, 'Almost half the bad backs I deal with have already been healed in this place.'...

So many of the success stories which we hear amount to reporting from a distance, but the physicians on the spot see a different picture. Those who have read Canon Michael Green's book, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, will know that he quotes instances of healing in Africa, in places where there had been great healing meetings. You may be interested to know the views of a missionary doctor who had been working in that area for many years. He wrote:

“During my career in this country from 1944, there have been many reported healings, particularly in the area on both sides of Lake Nyasa, now called Lake Malawi. The 1973 outbreak in the Dar es Salaam area was the only one which I have heard of outside the Lake Nyasa area. All the outbreaks I have come across have followed the same pattern, that is, tremendous popularity initially with thousands of people being attracted to the meetings, followed by gradual thinning out of the attendances. When the popularity has waned the outbreak ends and the organisers move to another area. My own impression is that there is nothing to these healings, and that the initial popularity of the meetings decreases as the actual results become known. I have not come across a single case of undoubted cure proved by medical examination of the clinical condition before and after the alleged healing” (Verna Wright, MD FRCP, “A Medical View of Miraculous Healing,” quoted by Dr. Peter Masters, *The Healing Epidemic*, pp. 215-224; Professor Wright is chief of rheumatology at Leeds University, England).

John Wimber

John Wimber (1934-1997), former head of the Vineyard Association of Churches, was a popular promoter of faith healing in our day who held “signs and wonders” seminars throughout the world. He taught that healing is in the atonement and that God wants His people to be well and whole. He taught that every Christian should learn to lay hands on the sick and expect to see them healed. In a message at the North American Congress on the Holy Spirit & World Evangelization, held August 16, 1990, in Indianapolis, Wimber said this:

“And after he has given you his Son, why would he withhold healing from you? He’s given you the most precious thing he had, the Father. ... he’s torn his very Son out of his heart and sent him to earth, that he might die for you. Why would he withhold healing from you? A simple thing like physical healing?”

“Up in heaven the angels rejoice when they see the servants of God on earth doing the deeds of the Son and

ministering in the power of the kingdom. ... I believe right now that the Lord is releasing healing angels among us and that they are here to minister on his behalf, and that these ministering angels are here for the purposes of God to unfold and be completed, and that the task of God might be accomplished..."

I attended this conference with press credentials and recorded Wimber's message. When Wimber's healing movement is examined, though, it quickly becomes clear that his success rate is pathetically small. He even admits this.

Five medical doctors attended a Wimber healing crusade in Leeds, England, and made the following assessment:

All the five doctors, one of whom is a leading psychiatrist in England came to one diagnosis:

"[It was] a very expert performance containing all the textbook characteristics of the induction of hypnosis. are very likely in the short term to respond to this treatment. Relief of pain as in dental extraction or childbirth is relatively commonplace with hypnosis. In the Wimber team's meeting we saw no change that suggested any healing of organic, physical disease. ... To encourage techniques which produce hypnosis and hysteria, and to teach that one is learning how to exercise Kingdom rule over demons, disease and nature is false; it is a misrepresentation."

This conclusion was concurred with by Dr. Verna Wright, chief of rheumatology at Leeds University, England.

"Recently John Wimber was in Leeds where he conducted in St. George's church one of his evening meetings. Five of my colleagues who go to that church were present. They were so incensed by what they saw that they afterwards wrote an account of their reactions [quoted above].

"I cannot emphasize my agreement with this conclusion too strongly. All the detailed analyses which have been made of healing claims over the years have failed to produce evidence of cure being achieved, except for the

kind of disorders which in medicine we call functional states” (Dr. S.H. Tow, *Read-Pray-Grow Daily Bible Reading Guide*, Holy Spirit III, Banner Publications: Singapore, May 1988).

During a question and answer session in Australia in March 1990, Wimber was asked about the success rate of his healing ministry. His answer was interesting. He admitted that not all diseases are equally responsive to his healing ministry. He claimed a high success rate for headaches and back aches, but admitted that he cannot heal mongolism. Of the 200 Down syndrome children Wimber had prayed over, none have been healed. Though he claimed one of these has reached the lower end of the normal range in educational achievement, doctors say this is not remarkable (Phillip D. Jensen, “John Wimber Changes His Mind!” *The Protestant Review*, July 1990).

In other words, Wimber can “heal” sicknesses which are unobservable--and therefore untestable--but he cannot heal observable disease. Friends, this is bogus. The Lord Jesus Christ healed every form of disease; no one was turned away; all were healed. He raised the dead, restored detached ears, opened blinded eyes. Christ never failed to heal. Today’s “faith healers” simply cannot heal like this. They do not have special gifts. None of them do.

Benny Hinn

Benny Hinn also claims that healing is promised in the atonement and he conducts healing crusades. The Dateline program on NBC asked Hinn’s ministry to provide confirmation of the 56 cases of healing that were claimed at one of his crusades. Hinn’s people could only come up with five cases of what they called “irrefutable and medically proven miracles.” When Dateline researched these five

cases, it found that only one of the people involved could provide medical records, and her doctor suspected that the woman never had the Lou Gehrig's disease she claimed to have been healed of (Charisma Online, Feb. 20, 2003).

If healing is in the atonement, as the healers say, and if God is giving the sign gifts of healing today, why can't the great faith healers heal after a truly Messianic or Apostolic fashion?! The fact that they can't negates their claims.

Sign Gifts Passed Away

Both the Bible and history tell us that the sign gifts passed away.

The following is from an excellent sermon on healing by Paul Locke:

"It's a very interesting thing to note some of the Greek words that are used in the Bible and their frequency. There is a law in the Bible, the law of occurrence. Whenever you see a word occurring over and over again, you know that it is teaching you something. When it does not occur, you know what that also is teaching. Because Jesus said, 'If it were not so, I would have told you.'

"Let me give you some of the words, and the frequency of the occurrence of them. The word 'sign' is the Greek word 'semeion.' It is used 61 times in the Gospel and Acts. Now remember, the four Gospels are written primarily for the age of law and for the presentation of the King, the Messiah. The book of Acts is the transition period, but most of that transition period was spent preaching the Gospel to the Jewish nation. And signs were still evident, but they declined during that time. But the word 'sign' is used 61 times in the Gospels and Acts, and only 16 times in the rest of the New Testament.

"The word 'heal'--'therapeuo'--is used 45 times in Gospels and Acts, and only three times in the rest of the New Testament, and two of the three times relate to the Antichrist in the book of Revelation. So the word is really

only used once. But why is healing used 45 times in the Gospels and Acts, and then only once--as far as it applies to believers--only once in the rest of the Bible?

“The word ‘heal’--‘iaomai’--is used 25 times in the Gospels and Acts, and only three times in the rest of the New Testament.

“The word ‘wonder’--‘teras’--is used 16 times, all used for the special signs of Christ and His apostles, and only once in the rest of the New Testament, and there it is used for the signs of the false prophet.

“Now let’s go to the other side. These are all words that apply to the sign ministry of Jesus Christ and the apostles. Let’s take the word ‘faith.’ It’s used 40 times in the Gospels and Acts, and 204 times in the rest of the Bible. Now someone might say, Well, the rest of the New Testament covers a lot more chapters than the Gospels and Acts. The Gospels and Acts covers 117 chapters; the rest of the New Testament covers 143. So it’s almost balanced out even. Yet we can see from these words what God is trying to teach us.

“It’s a real interesting thing about the word miracle as it’s used, or overused, by these people today. They talk constantly about miracles. Miracle living, miracle this, miracle that. Do you know that the Greek word for miracle is not ever used in the Bible. Not once. The Greek word for miracle is ‘thoma.’ It’s never used in the Bible. But the Greek word ‘dunamis,’ which is the word for powers or work and which is translated ‘miracle’ in the Bible, is translated 16 different ways in the Bible, none of which relate to each other.

“Now what does the word ‘miracle’ in the Bible mean? It simply means, when it talks about the signs of the apostles or the miracles of the apostles, it means special powers. ‘Miracle’ is not used because the word ‘miracle’ does not fit some of the Scriptures here which are given. And the word ‘miracle’ means actually something that is done that goes beyond the known physical laws.

“The gift of healing stopped, we know. We have scriptural evidence. Like the gift of tongues, the gift of healing, the gift of knowledge, the gift of wisdom--all of these nine special gifts which were given for the transition period

while the apostles were still preaching to the Jewish nation and holding out signs and trying to get them to believe--suddenly those special miracles came to an end. How do we know?

“Well, Epaphraditus was sick, and Paul wrote to the Philippians and said Epaphraditus was sick nigh unto death but God had mercy on him and he got well. Paul does not say, “I healed him; I had the special miracles.”

“And Paul’s special miracles were not just a light thing. If you will turn to Acts 19 you will see how great the miracles, or healing powers, of Paul was. Acts 19:11--’And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs for aprons and the diseases departed from them and evil spirits went out of them.’ It does not say they had faith. It does not say that Paul was even there. But handkerchiefs off of his body were used as they touched other people and healed people. Now that is a special miracle, special power.

“Why didn’t Paul heal Epaphraditus?

“Trophimus was another of Paul’s closest friends, and a man of God. And Paul wrote in 2 Tim. 4:20 and said, ‘Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.’ Why would a man that had the ability that Paul had not at least send him a handkerchief off of his body to heal him? Paul didn’t have the power. He lost the power.

“How about Timothy? Listen to what he says about Timothy. ‘Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.’ And the Greek word for infirmities is the word sickness--’esthenia.’ Why didn’t Paul heal him of his stomach trouble? These were all men that were important in the ministry of Paul in his later years. But you see, Paul never gave one promise to anyone about healing, because Paul was a sick man all of his life. He had the thorn in the flesh; he had a physical disability which he called a sickness and a weakness, a physical weakness.

“And it’s very interesting to note, that in the Oral Roberts Bible, in the Abundant Life version of the Bible, translated by George Lambsda, that was printed quite a number of years ago, that he came to the passage in 2 Cor. 12 and

he couldn't get around the fact that it meant sicknesses. So he talks there about Paul having physical weakness. Well what is physical weakness other than sickness? They can't translate it any other way.

"And then in the history of the church since that time--we have all the writings of the church to testify--that there were no gifts of healing during those early years in Christianity. Now God always has healed, but on a different basis than the miraculous kind of healing that we find in the life of Christ and His apostles.

"In the history of the church there has never been anything like the miracles of Christ that He performed. His own disciples weren't able to do them. And it says of Jesus even when He came to a place where the unbelief was there He still healed everybody that He touched. He healed everybody. It says, "He healed them all." Of those who came to him, there was not just a small proportion healed. All were healed.

"Now why did healing stop? There is only one thing that we can use as an explanation. That is that it is God's will for us to believe by faith. Jesus' words to Thomas prove this. 'Truly,' he said, 'you believe because you have seen, but I say unto you more blessed are they that see not yet believe.'

"The Lord warned us about false teachers that would come making merchandise, and it says that they were enemies of the cross of Christ. And the basic thing about them would be that they would mind earthly things, that they would combine with the world. What about the claims of these men? Someone says, Well do you deny that these men have healed anybody?

"You see, I'm in a position where I cannot take man's word as final because God has told me not to. I can simply back away and say, I don't know. Because God didn't tell me to spend my life checking out the claims of all these different men. He told me not to trust in man. In fact, 'cursed be the man that putteth his trust in man.' He told me to believe the Word of God, teach the Word of God, correct false teaching with it, and proclaim the Word. And He did not say that I had to take the word of any man.

“Someone says, Don’t you believe that among them some people were healed? Certainly I do. But the satanists, and the spiritualists, and the Moslems--all those people have claimed things that are just as great for healing. I worked in the Army in psychosomatic work, and I saw the power of psychosomatic healing. Sometimes just even a word by somebody else, an encouragement, will heal somebody. But that doesn’t replace a severed arm, or a severed leg. It does not raise the dead. Raising the dead certainly goes along with all the other powers that Jesus gave to his disciples. The Bible says that if people will not take the Word, they put themselves into a position where God will permit them to believe a lie. 2 Thess. 2 says, If they believe not the truth, then God will send them strong delusion that they would believe a lie.

“So I have to say that I don’t believe in man. I believe in God. And I believe in His Word” (Paul Locke, “What the Bible Teaches about Healing”).

Saints of Bygone Days often Sick

Again we quote from Paul Locke’s sermon on healing:

“Our Bible came to us from the hands of sick men, of men who suffered deprivation. And I want to read you something that I’ve never read before, but I think this is very significant. This has just come to light recently in the life of William Tyndale. And William Tyndale probably had more to do with our English translation of the Scriptures [than any other man]. He wrote a letter to someone in authority and said,

‘I believe, right worshipful, that you are not aware of what may have been determined concerning me. Wherefore I beg of your lordship, and that by the Lord Jesus, that if I am to remain here through the winter you will request the commissary to have the kindness to send me from the goods of mine which he has a warmer cap, for I suffer greatly from the cold in the head and am afflicted by a perpetual catarrh, which is much increased in this cell. A warmer coat also, for this which I have is very thin. A piece of cloth, too, to patch my leggings. My overcoat is worn out. My shirts are also worn out. He has a woolen shirt, if he will be good enough to send it. I have with him also leggings of thicker cloth to put on above. He also has

warmer night caps. And I ask to be allowed to have a lamp in the evening. It is indeed a wearisome to sit alone in the dark. But most of all I beg and beseech your clemency to be with the commissary that he will kindly permit me to have the Hebrew Bible, Hebrew grammar, and Hebrew dictionary, that I may pass the time in that study. In return may you obtain that which you most desire so only that it be for the salvation of your soul. But if any other decision has been taken concerning me to be carried out before winter, I will be patient. Abiding the will of God to the glory of the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ, whose Spirit I pray may ever direct your heart. Signed William Tyndale.'

"Now here is a man that God has permitted to suffer in prison. But here is a man that is translating the Bible. What is more important than that? What more important ministry of all the ages has been to translate the Bible into English and other languages? Why would God not heal this man? Is this man great in God's plan? Certainly he is. Are these men today that talk about healing, that healing is the most important thing in the Christian's life, healing and prosperity, are these men greater than William Tyndale? I don't think so.

"Almost every hymn that we have in our hymnbook came to us from the hands of sick people. Charlotte Elliot was sick all her life. Fanny Crosby was blind from birth, blind 95 years. She wrote, "Saved by Grace" and "Safe in the Arms of Jesus." William Bradbury, who wrote "He Leadeth Me"; August Toplady, who wrote "Rock of Ages"; Philipp Doddridge, who wrote "Oh Happy Day"; Sarah Flower Adams, who wrote "Nearer My God to Thee"--all of them had TB all their lives and finally died of it. Isaac Watts, who wrote "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," and "Marching to Zion," and "Joy to the World," suffered all his life of acute suffering. He had a frail body.

"John Knox was sick all of his life.

"John Bunyan was sick because of diseases that he got when he was in prison.

"Joseph Scribbsen, who wrote "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," had tragedy and sickness all his life.

"The Reverend Frank Graff, who wrote "Does Jesus Care," again, was sick most of his life.

“Eleanor Whitney has said, “Christians are like tea bags. You never know what kind they are until they are in hot water.” And I believe this. I believe God tests us to see what we’re made of. And believe me, I do not believe that the life of a Christian is chosen by the Lord to be a life of ease, and a life of health and prosperity, necessarily.

“Robert Murray McCheyne and David Brainard were two men who were known as the holiest men of their time. They both died with lung trouble at the age of 30.

“Are these men today more spiritual than these men that we’ve been talking about? If healing was in the atonement and if it was God’s will for us to be in health, to be prosperous, why weren’t these men healthy and prosperous?” (Paul Locke, “What the Bible Teaches about Healing”).

Two Kinds of Faith

The Bible speaks of two kinds of faith: Overcoming and Enduring.

“And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: AND OTHERS were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: AND OTHERS had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented” (Heb. 11:32-37).

Charismatic healers speak much of faith. “If you have faith, God will heal you; you must only believe.” But this teaching ignores the fact that faith does not always overcome.

There are two kinds of faith mentioned in this passage in Hebrews--overcoming and enduring. Some heroes of the Bible overcame sickness and troubles by faith, but others, whose faith was just as real, were not delivered from their troubles. Yet all find their place equally in the record of God's heroes of faith.

We all want overcoming faith, but it simply is not always God's will to give deliverance. Many times the faith we are given is that which allows us to endure the sickness or problem for God's glory.

God's Word, then, does not guarantee physical healing for Christians. Sometimes He heals; sometimes He does not. This is the clear example of the New Testament and is the honest experience of godly Christians of every century. God sometimes has a purpose in our sicknesses, and as long as we are in this body we will be subject to infirmities, weaknesses, disease, old age, death.

The teaching which says God always heals if we pray in true faith has resulted in much confusion, for it is a cruel error. Many have believed this false idea and have become discouraged and confused when God did not heal. It is crucial to understand exactly what God promises and does not promise about faith and healing. We must rightly divide the Word of God.

Last Days Miracles

The Bible warns of false miracles in the last days.

According to many Pentecostal-Charismatic teachers, the modern sign gift movement is a fulfillment of prophecy. They teach that a revival of sign gifts is prophesied before the coming of Christ.

Not only is this not true; it is exactly contrary to what the Bible actually teaches about the last hours of this age. Scripture doesn't foretell a revival of miracle sign gifts in the churches. Just the opposite. The Scripture prophesies of a leavening apostasy which will grow within the lump of Christendom until the whole is leavened (Matt. 13:33). The mystery of iniquity will increase over the course of the church age until the final revelation of the great Harlot of the seventeenth chapter of Revelation. 2 Timothy 3:13 warns that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." This is a prophecy of increasing apostasy, not of revival.

The signs and wonders spoken of for the last hours are deceiving signs. Consider some Scriptures:

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Matt. 24:24

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." 2 Thess. 2:7-9

"And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast..." Rev. 13:13-14

In light of these warnings it is crucial that the Christian be wary of any signs or wonders movement in these last hours. The signs and wonders movement prophesied in Scripture for the hours prior to Christ's return is one of demonic deception.

Great Confusion

The healing movement has caused great confusion and harm.

Not only is the healing movement contrary to the Bible's teaching, it is hurtful. Consider this discerning statement by a British medical doctor:

"Apart from the damage which the miraculous healing movement is doing to the faith, it is a cruel teaching because by claiming all may be healed if they have sufficient faith, it increases the agony of many who are sick. At Horsforth, on the edge of Leeds, Don Double conducted a healing crusade. Mr. Double heals different ailments on different nights and it so happened one night he was healing the deaf, and a friend of mine who is deaf in one ear thought he would have a go at being healed. Hands were laid upon him and he was told that he was healed, but he said, 'I am not.' The healer said, 'Yes you are.' My friend insisted, 'No, I am not,' only to be told, 'Well it must be that you have not got sufficient faith.' After a brief altercation the healer went on down the line of deaf people. When the healing activities had finished my friend turned to the lady next to him and said, 'What did it do for you, love?' and she replied with her hand cupped to her ear, 'What did you say?' ...

"It is necessary to say that this miraculous healing teaching is not only damaging, it is often disastrous. I think of a general practitioner who was a great friend of mine, a fine Christian lady who had led many people to Christ, but she suffered from severe depression. Fortunately her depression was controlled by medication. Her counseling ministry was one that I valued so much that I would often send my depressed patients to her for help. Unfortunately she fell in with a group who majored on this miraculous healing teaching, and she was informed that she had been healed. She therefore abandoned her medication, but three weeks later she hanged herself.

"I think of another person, a girl from Leeds, who had severe epilepsy, but fortunately she was controlled on medication. She too fell in with a similar Charismatic group, and likewise she abandoned her medication. One day she traveled over to Harrogate, stepped off a bus, had

a major epileptic fit and fell under the wheels of an oncoming car to be killed outright. I put the deaths of those two useful Christians firmly and squarely at the door of those who promoted such disastrous teaching, and I assert as strongly as possible that it is distressing, it is damaging, and it is dangerous in the extreme" (Verna Wright, MD FRCP, "A Medical View of Miraculous Healing," quoted by Dr. Peter Masters, *The Healing Epidemic*, pp. 215-224; Professor Wright is chief of rheumatology at Leeds University, England).

We could also mention the immense discouragement which the healing movement has caused to God's people. There is discouragement on the part of those who try to work up enough faith to be healed, but there is no healing. There is discouragement on the part of those multitudes who have attended healing crusades and who thought they were healed, but realized later that there was no healing. Dr. William Nolan, who investigated the Kuhlman crusades, describes the discouragement of the sick who attended only to leave without healing:

"I was not sure that whatever good Miss Kuhlman was doing was not far outweighed by the pain she was causing. I could not get those crippled and idiot children and their weeping, broken-hearted parents out of my mind, and all the others cruelly disappointed" (William Nolan, *Healing: A Doctor in Search of a Miracle*).

It is impossible to calculate the damage the healing movement has done to people through its false, unscriptural claims. The highway of the healing movement is strewn with the wreckage of discouragement.

I Believe in Miracles

When we warn that God does not promise always to heal and when we teach that certain sign gifts ceased with the apostles, we are immediately charged with not believing in God's miracle working power. I can't speak for others, but I know that for myself that accusation is not true. I believe in a miracle-working God.

My God can do anything. He created the world in six days. He destroyed the ancient world by a great flood. He parted the Red Sea so the millions of the children of Israel marched through on dry ground. He brought Jesus into this world through the womb of a virgin. He died on the cross for my sins, and He rose from the dead the third day! He poured out the Holy Spirit on Pentecost with mighty signs and wonders.

My God can do ANYTHING, but my God also does what He wants when He wants! And He isn't flooding the world today, nor is He parting the Red Sea, nor is He dying on a cross or rising from the dead. And He is not giving a new Pentecost today. That part of His glorious plan has been accomplished, and He is marching on toward the End.

My friends, I want to march in step with God. We must be satisfied with that which He IS doing, not carnally seeking after that which He has done in the past and that which we WISH He would do!

I can still hear the protests, though, saying, "Yea, you just believe in miracles for the past, not for today." That's simply not true. I have experienced all sorts of miracles since I was converted in 1973. I couldn't count the miraculous answers to prayer I've witnessed from the hand of God.

Our missionary years in South Asia have been absolutely filled with miracles. Our evangelistic work was illegal and for at least three years, the government had a warrant out for my arrest, yet God protected us and kept us there to see a strong national church established. The churches we have planted are a complete miracle. In the first church we began having meetings in our house each week, but many weeks went by and no one was saved. Many showed an interest in the gospel, but they were Hindus and they knew that if they were to reject their idols and follow Christ alone, they would be severely persecuted. Weeks went by and not one person repented and turned to Christ. Finally, we had a time of fasting and prayer, and almost immediately one man was saved. Then another man, then that man's sister. Then another and another. The second man who was saved is a pastor today. His sister is a pastor's wife! God does miracles.

I could also tell of the miracles I saw in bringing Bibles and Christian literature into that land at a time when it was illegal.

Our missionary and literature ministry for the past 39 years has been one long miracle of God's protection, provision, and power.

When I wanted to print our first book, which was a warning about the dangers of rock and roll music, I didn't have any money for printing or any means to have it printed. I went to a commercial printer in North Carolina to see how much it would cost, and when I learned how expensive it was, I went out to my car, drove down the street a couple of blocks, parked under a tree, and poured out my heart to the Lord. I said, weeping, "Lord, I want to print this book. I want to exhort your people about this danger, but I don't have any money. You see all of that printing equipment back there (at

the commercial print shop). You see that they have the capability to print anything, but instead of using it for your glory, they are printing all sorts of worldly junk. Please open a door for me to have this book printed.” The next week I was in Brooksville, Florida, for a missionary deputation meeting, and after I preached, I was introduced to a church member who owned a commercial print shop. His name was Bobby Meadows. I told Bobby about my situation and my desire to print the book, and he said, “You are welcome to use my print shop. If you want to come in after we close at 5:30 each afternoon, you can use any of the equipment, and I will supply all of the materials.” That was it! I had experience working as a commercial printer, so I gathered some volunteers from the church, and for about two weeks we worked from 5:30 each day through most of the night, printing the first books under the name Way of Life Literature. That was the miracle door the Lord opened. It has been like that ever since.

One time I went all the way around the world without any money. We were missionaries in Nepal, and I felt the Lord leading me to expand our publishing ministry in America. I wanted to travel to the States with the goal of visiting several places across the country, conferring with some pastor friends, in search of the Lord’s will. The problem was that I did not have the money even to reach my first destination, which was Florida, and if I were somehow to reach there, I didn’t have a car to drive on my desired trip across the States, and even if I were somehow able to obtain all of that, I didn’t have any money to return to Nepal. Believing the Lord was leading me to go anyway, I purchased a ticket as far as I could, which was New York City. As I was flying from London to New York, I learned that the man sitting next to me was a Christian man, a printer who was returning from a printing convention in Germany. I didn’t tell him anything

about my situation, but before we landed in New York, he gave me \$300 in traveler's checks. When I landed in New York on Tuesday, I called a preacher in upper state New York. We had never met, but we had briefly corresponded a year or so before that. He had no idea I was coming through New York at that time, but he invited me to come up and preach for him that Wednesday night, so I took the money the printer had given me and purchased a ticket on a commuter flight. After I preached, they gave me a nice love offering, which enabled me to fly on to Florida. Within three days of arriving there, a Christian man gave me the keys to a beautiful car with the insurance and everything already paid, and I headed out on my trip across the full length of America from Florida to Washington State! I didn't have any meetings scheduled and no one knew I was coming, but the Lord provided step by step all the way across the country and then back to Nepal. This is only one of many such experiences I could describe.

I have personally experienced physical healing in answer to prayer. On a trip to the States in the 1980s, I experienced a wonderful healing. I had contracted a severe amebic dysentery in Calcutta just before embarking to the States. My first meeting was in Cody, Wyoming, and those first two days were miserable and as the dysentery was showing no sign of abating and I was very sick. I was planning to go to a doctor as soon as I could reach the next city. I stopped that night at the home of a pastor friend, Bill Redmond, in Thermopolis, Wyoming, and we talked into the wee hours of the morning. Before we retired, he prayed for me to be healed of my sickness. When I woke up after a few hours of sleep to continue my trip, I discovered to my great joy that the Lord had completely healed me.

Another example of miraculous healing was experienced by our friend Paul Timmerman. A few years ago, he told me of a healing he experienced when he was co-piloting seaplanes in the Coast Guard, and I asked him to write it down so I could share it with others:

“Hello, I’m Paul Timmerman. I give the following as testimony of the great power that our God has to heal a person. I personally have had several instances of divine healing in my life that were just plain miracles, that could be explained no other way. These were attested to by federal medical personnel and flight surgeons, and the healings that I have had are a matter of my own military record.

“The one that I would like to share for this moment happened in 1971, when I was serving with the United States Coast Guard. I was stationed at Port Angeles, Washington, [at the] Coast Guard Air Station there, flying sea planes and single engine helicopters at that time. While stationed there, I developed a very sore wrist condition, whereby the use of my hands was badly impaired, and I had growths on the insides of my wrists that started growing up and came about a half an inch high or so on each wrist. It would keep my wrist from moving, became very painful, and the doctors checked it out, and, after X-raying and all, said that it was a tissue growth called a ganglia. They tried several different medical ways to remove them, and to stop the growth of them, and to give me back the use of my wrists, and these methods failed. So they sent me to a specialist at the Army hospital, Madigan General Hospital, Fort Lewis, Washington. There the medical staff again X-rayed and examined my wrists and set up the date for surgery because there was no other alternative that they had at that point to remove the growths that were quite visible, and very sore, and hindering the use of my hands. They set up the surgery date, and the day before my surgery I had to report in to the hospital for prepping, for pre-surgery examination. And the surgeons examined again the X-rays and my wrists, and saw the extent of the damage, and prepared me for surgery for the following day.

“However, that evening, after the doctors left, I was in my hospital bed there waiting, studying my Bible, and just relying on the promises of the Lord, and I turned sincerely to the Lord and asked Him--knowing full well He had the power to heal through surgeons or through divine healing--and I just asked Him to work a miracle, and take these away, that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ would be magnified and glorified throughout that hospital, due to the miracle that had been worked.

“In the morning, much to the surprise of the doctors when they came in, the growths were completely gone from my wrists. I had full use of my hands, my wrists. And to this day, almost 20 years later, I have never had a reoccurrence of this phenomena on my wrists. The doctors then were totally baffled by what happened, thinking perhaps they had the wrong patient or whatever. I simply witnessed for the Lord Jesus Christ and told them that I had asked the Lord to work a miracle a night before if it be His will, knowing full well that He could, and that He had decided that it was for the glory and honor of Jesus Christ that He did. And He healed me that night, and like I say, it has never reoccurred. I went about the hospital just praising the Lord Jesus Christ and glorifying His name, telling others about Him, witnessing to the great miracle that took place there. And the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ went throughout that hospital to many military men, and the doctors, of course, had nothing to say but that they certainly had done nothing to change that, but that condition was totally healed.”

Isn't that a blessing! Let me give you another miracle healing testimony from an independent Baptist preacher who believes in the miracles of God today but not the sign-miracles of apostolic times. The following is the testimony of evangelist Al Lacy, which he gave on May 8, 1996, at the Bible Baptist Church in Oak Harbor, Washington. At the time this miracle healing occurred, Brother Lacy was a pastor:

“My wife had a rare disease which destroyed her kidney and it had to be removed. Eight years later the same symptoms were discovered in her remaining kidney. The doctors said that two-thirds of the kidney was dead. They

said she had one year to live. One and a half maximum. She was too weak for a transplant. (That was in the early days of kidney transplants.) I called the 27 deacons of the church, and they anointed her with oil and prayed over her. The Lord stopped the disease right there and she has lived 21 years as of this telling.”

I should mention that Bible-believing Baptists of old have believed in and prayed for divine healing, though they knew that God does not always heal and His people must be willing to bow to His sovereign purposes even in sickness.

An example of divine healing among ancient Baptists is found in the ministry of Owen Thomas, who pastored the first Baptist church in Delaware. Thomas was born in Wales in 1676 and came to America in 1707. He took the pastoral care of the Welsh Tract church in 1740 and continued in that office until 1748, when he resigned it, to go to Yellow Springs, where he died, November 12, 1760. Pastor Thomas left behind the following note: “I have been called upon three times to anoint the sick with oil for recovery; the effect was surprising in every case, but in none more so, than in the case of our brother Rynallt Howel: he was so sore with the bruises which he received by a cask falling on him from a wagon, that he could not bear to be turned in bed: the next day he went to meeting” (David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptists in America*, 1813, Vol. 2, Chapter 1).

You don't have to follow Charismatic error to believe in the power and blessing of God. I believe in miracles for today, but friends, I also believe in the Bible, and I refuse to force the Bible to say what I want it to say. The Bible tells me that the miracles of Christ and the apostles were unique and were not something that will be duplicated by Christians in general. If the sign miracles were something that were done by Christians at large in the first century, how could they have been the “signs of an apostle” (2 Cor. 12:12)?

Furthermore, the Bible tells me that God often heals but he does not always heal. The Bible tells me that sickness and trouble can be a blessing from Him. The Bible says that faith is more important than miracles. The Bible says that kingdom power and glory is yet future, and will flow through the world when Christ returns--not before. The Bible warns that the end times will be characterized by deceiving signs and wonders (Matt. 24:24; 2 Thess. 2: , and Jesus said, “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign” (Matt. 12:39).

We close with the words of Fanny Crosby on the issue of health. This godly woman was blind all her life, yet she did not demand that God heal her; she did not believe that the devil had afflicted her with the blindness; she did not rebuke the devil for her affliction; she did not doubt God because He chose not to heal her. She had a different testimony:

O what a happy soul am I!
Although I cannot see
I am resolved that in this world
Contented I will be.

How many blessings I enjoy,
That other people don't.
To weep and sigh because I'm blind,
I cannot, and I won't.

-- *Fanny Crosby*

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Is Healing in the Atonement?

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weakens the fundamentalist stance of churches. We give examples of how changes are occurring in formerly fundamentalist churches through the instrumentality of contemporary music. The rest of the book deals with questions that are commonly asked on this subject, such as the following: What is the difference between using contemporary worship music and using old hymns that were interdenominational? Didn't Luther and the Wesleys use tavern music? Isn't the issue of music just a matter of taste? Doesn't the Bible encourage us to use cymbals and stringed and loud sounding instruments? What is wrong with soft rock? Didn't God create all music? Love is more important than doctrine and standards of living, isn't it? Since God looks on the heart, why are you concerned about appearance? Isn't Christianity all about grace? What about all of the young people who are being saved through CCM?

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gleaned from interviews with pastors, missionaries, and church people who have raised godly children. The book is packed with practical suggestions and deals with many issues: Conversion, the husband-wife relationship, the necessity of permeating the home with Christian love, mothers as keepers at home, the father's role as the spiritual head of the home, child discipline, separation from the pop culture, discipleship of youth, the grandparents' role in "keeping the kids," effectual prayer, and fasting.

MUSIC FOR GOOD OR EVIL (4 DVDs). This video series for July 2011 is a new replacement for previous presentations we have produced on this subject. The series, which is packed with graphics, video and audio clips, has seven segments. I. Biblical Principles of Good Christian Music: II. Why We Reject Contemporary Christian Music. III. The Sound of Contemporary Christian Music. IV. Transformational Power of CCM. V. Southern Gospel. VI. Marks of Good Song Leading. VII. Questions Answered on Contemporary Christian Music.

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