

Faith Healing  
Speaking In Tongues  
Signs and Miracles  
In The Light of Scripture

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By  
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**Faith Healing**  
**Speaking In Tongues**  
**Signs and Miracles**  
**In The Light of Scripture**  
**“Be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18)**

INTRODUCTION

Today, much is being said about being filled with the Holy Spirit and many things are being linked with this subject. To judge whether what is being said is right we have an infallible touchstone: the Word of God. Scripture calls the Jews of Berea more noble than those of Thessalonica because they not only received Paul’s teachings with all readiness of mind, but also searched the Scriptures daily if these things were so. And in Galatians 1:8 Paul wrote, “But if even we or an angel out of heaven announce as glad tidings to you anything besides what we have announced as glad tidings to you, let him be accursed.”

We live in a time when many false prophets are gone out into the world (1 Jn.4:1). These prophets will turn away the ear of those who listen to them, from the truth, and they will be turned aside to fables (2 Tim.4:3-4). So we need to carefully test everything presented to us by the Word of God. “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And it is not wonderful, for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also transform themselves as

ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor.11:13-15).

I want to begin by drawing our attention to a few points. The Bible is the Word of God. Holy men of God wrote it under the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus in reality the Holy Spirit is the Author of the entire Bible. This means that the Word is perfect and gives us all we need to know. And if we read carefully and compare Scripture with Scripture we shall also find that everything therein is sufficiently plain. [Because this comparison requires an accurate translation, we will use the J.N. Darby translation since it is the most accurate English translation we know.]

Every word of Scripture has its significance. Different Greek or Hebrew words never have exactly the same significance. *We* may sometimes use an incorrect word when speaking or writing: the Word of God in the original autographs never does! If a different word is used it has a different significance. Yet many do not consider this fact and thus often arrive at a completely slanted idea of the thoughts of God.

## FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

The expression “filled with the Spirit” occurs three times in the Gospels, six times in Acts, and once in the Epistles. Also in Exodus 31:3 and 35:31 we find that Bezaleel was filled with the Spirit of God “in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, and to devise artistic things” and to execute them. In Exodus 28:3 all those whom God had filled with the spirit of wisdom were to make

the holy priestly garments for Aaron. And Joshua, according to Deuteronomy 34:9, was filled with the spirit of wisdom.

Luke 1:15-16 says that John the Baptist would be “filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. And many of the sons of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.” In verses 41 and 67 Elizabeth and Zacharias were filled with the Holy Spirit to render testimony.

In Acts 2:4 the Holy Spirit was poured out; all the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. They rendered so mighty a testimony that 3000 people were added that day to the Christian company.

In Acts 4:8 Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, rendered a powerful testimony before the Sanhedrin. And in Acts 4:31 it says, “And when they had prayed, the place in which they were assembled shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and spoke the word of God with boldness.”

In Acts 9:17 the Lord told Ananias to go to Saul who was destined to be a great instrument for God. Ananias went and told him, “The Lord has sent me, Jesus who appeared to thee in the way in which thou camest, that thou mightest see, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Acts 13:9 reports how Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, broke the opposition of Elymas the magician. And in verse 52, after the Jews had caused enmity and persecution against the messengers of the gospel, we read, “And the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.”

Ephesians 5:3-21 tells how the children of light are to walk in the midst of the sons of disobedience. Verse 18 says, “And be not drunk with wine, in which is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit.”

These are all the verses that speak of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Note the following points:

- Being *filled* with the Holy Spirit is not the same thing as the *indwelling* of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit only dwells *in* believers since Pentecost (Acts 2). This is stated in John 14:16-18, 26. According to Ephesians 1:13-14 and 2 Corinthians 1:22 the Holy Spirit only takes up residence in someone *upon his believing* the gospel, although John the Baptist, a unique case, was already filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb according to Luke 1:15. And in Acts 4:31 all *were* (became) *filled* with the Holy Spirit, even though they *already* had received the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 and also were filled with the Holy Spirit at that previous time. Likewise, in Acts 4:8 Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. After the Ephesians had received the Holy Spirit (Eph.1:13; compare with 2 Cor.1:22), it says in chapter 5:18 that they *should be* filled with the Spirit. This was presented to them as their responsibility: that they *must* be filled.
- It follows that being filled with the Holy Spirit is not a permanent condition, but a temporary one. John the Baptist was an exception because of the special one-time position he was born into.
- It further follows from the passages cited that being filled with the Holy Spirit is given for the work of the Lord and for witnessing for Him.
- Scripture does not connect being filled with the Holy Spirit with doing signs and wonders or with speaking in foreign languages. In none of the passages in the Old or New Testament where mention is made of being filled

with the Holy Spirit are signs or miracles mentioned, except for Acts 2:4 where “other tongues” are spoken of, and Acts 13:9 where Elymas became blind. From the three chapters in Acts in which we find speaking in tongues (Acts 2:4, 8, 11; 10:46; 19:6) it is evident that speaking in tongues is linked with the *outpouring* of the Holy Spirit (Jews in Jerusalem, Gentiles, and disciples of John the Baptist outside of Palestine), and not with being *filled* with the Holy Spirit. See also 1 Corinthians 12 and 14.

From the passages in the Gospel and the seventeen passages in Acts where *signs* are mentioned, Scripture clearly does not associate those signs with being filled with the Holy Spirit, though in one case it is said that the one *doing* a sign was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Note that the believers in Acts 4:23-31 prayed, “Give to Thy bondmen with all boldness to speak Thy word, in that Thou stretchest out Thy hand to heal, and that signs and wonders take place....” God granted them the boldness they prayed for, but not through signs, etc. He filled them with the Holy Spirit, and *then* they spoke the word with boldness.

- Nowhere is it said that anyone was filled with the Holy Spirit after the laying on of hands except in Acts 9:17. There Ananias laid hands on Paul and said the Lord had sent him so Paul might be filled with the Holy Spirit. But Scripture does not say Paul was filled at that moment, nor that it was done *through* the laying on of hands. In all the other passages it could *not* have been done through the laying on of hands.

## FULL OF, ANOINTED WITH, SEALED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

Besides “being filled” we find the expression “full of the Holy Spirit” four times in Scripture. This expression is used only of the Lord Jesus (Lk.4:1), of Stephen (Acts 6:5 and 7:55), and of Barnabas (Acts 11:24). These passages show that being “full” is not so much a matter of power for service, but rather of the practical condition. The believer is abiding in a condition in which the Holy Spirit governs his whole life and in which He can do so unhindered. With Stephen and with Barnabas, being “full” goes together with being “full of faith,” but nowhere is the expression connected with speaking in tongues or with doing signs and miracles.

Scripture also speaks of being *anointed with* and of being *sealed with* the Holy Spirit. *Anointing* is found only in 1 Corinthians 1:21 and 1 John 2:20, 27. From these latter two verses it is plain that what is meant is being brought near to God and thereby being able to discern what is not of God. Compare Revelation 3:18.

*Sealing* is spoken of only in 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30. In all three passages it is connected with the certainty of soon obtaining our future inheritance. God has already set His seal upon us and thus has given us the assurance that we belong to Him. Compare Revelation 7:3. Both anointing and sealing refer to all believers and are viewed in 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 as being one with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

## PRAYING FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

From Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13 and other passages, it is apparent that in our present dispensation the Holy Spirit dwells in every believer. I want to go into this somewhat more thoroughly because Luke 11:13 is often referred to as proof that we today should pray for the Holy Spirit.

I leave open the question as to whether the Lord in this verse was really calling upon those who were listening to Him to pray for the Holy Spirit, because this question is predominantly one of translation. In any case this is not expressly stated in the Greek. But let us assume anyway that this was really the Lord’s intention. Then the question arises whether this is still applicable for us today, for in Luke 11 the Lord had not yet accomplished His wonderful work upon the cross, nor had He yet ascended into heaven. The death of the Lord, His resurrection, and His ascension have certainly changed everything, even the position of believers.

John 7:39 says, “But this he said concerning the Spirit, which they that believed on him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.” It is thus expressly stated here that at that time, the believers had not yet received the Holy Spirit. This was not to take place until after the Lord’s glorification, after His ascension. This is confirmed emphatically in John 14:16-18, 25-26 and 16:5-7. In this latter passage the Lord said, “It is profitable for you that I go away; for if I do not go away,

the Comforter will not come to you; but if I go I will send Him to you.”

In Acts we find the fulfillment of this promise. In Acts 1:5 the risen Lord said to the disciples, “Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit after now not many days,” just as John the Baptist had announced before. Ten days after the Lord’s ascension the *outpouring* of the Holy Spirit took place (Acts 2). Peter told the Jews who were pricked in heart, to “Repent, and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for remission of sins, and ye will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” This agrees fully with what the apostle Paul wrote the Ephesians, that they had been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise after they had received, or *having believed*, the gospel in faith. He also wrote to the believers at Rome, at Corinth, and at Thessalonica that they had received the Holy Spirit and that He was now dwelling in them (Rom.8:11; 1 Cor.6:19; 2 Cor.1:22; 1 Thes.4:8). In fact, Romans 8:9 even says that one in whom the Spirit of God does not dwell is no Christian.

Thus, after that the Lord Jesus ascended and was glorified, and the Holy Spirit came down upon this earth to form the Assembly (Church) through the baptism with the Holy Spirit (1 Cor.12:13), and to dwell in her (1 Cor.3:16; Eph.2:22), *everyone* who accepts the gospel in faith receives the Holy Spirit, who then dwells and remains in him. This dwelling of the Holy Spirit in a believer thus is not to be traced back to *praying* for the Holy Spirit, but rather to *believing* the gospel (Eph.1:13)! Praying for the Holy Spirit may have been proper *before* the glorification of the Lord and *before* the coming down of the Holy Spirit to this earth, but *today* it can only be a

sign of unbelief as to that which God assures us in His Word is *already* our possession.

The situation regarding the *baptism with the Holy Spirit* is similar. The only passages in the Word of God that speak of it are Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5; 11:16; and 1 Corinth-ians 12:13. In the first three passages John the Baptist announced that the Lord would baptize with (or “in”) the Holy Spirit. In Acts 1:5 the Lord said this would take place “after now not many days.” Peter, when being criticized because he had admitted Cornelius and other believing non-Jews to the Assembly, reminded those criticizing him of this. In 1 Corinthians 12:13 the meaning of this baptism is finally given us, “For also in the power of *one* Spirit we have all been baptized into *one* body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or free.”

The objective of the Lord’s death was not only to save sinners, but “that He should also gather together into *one* the children of God who were scattered abroad” (Jn.11:52). When He had completed the work of redemption and thereby laid the foundation for the union of all believers, the Holy Spirit came down on this earth to bring this about. The Holy Spirit is the bond by which every believer is united with the glorified Lord in heaven and with every believer upon earth. This is portrayed for us in the baptism with the Holy Spirit which took place on Pentecost (Acts 2).

This baptism thus was a *one-time* occurrence. It can never be repeated, for the body of Christ came into being at that time and shall endure throughout eternity; it can never be destroyed. Every sinner who now is converted and believes the gospel

receives the Holy Spirit, who indwells him; simultaneously he is added as a member to the body of Christ which was formed on Pentecost through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, this baptism in Scripture is never connected with an individual believer, but rather with the believers as a whole.

If someone thinks or teaches that a believer must be baptized with the Holy Spirit today, he is either ignorant as to the real significance of this baptism, or else is wantonly rejecting the Word of God. This subject is treated in greater detail in my book *The Holy Spirit Is a Divine Person*, obtainable through the publishers of this book.

## SPEAKING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (SPEAKING IN TONGUES)

Speaking in other languages (tongues) without having learned those languages does not occur in the Old Testament. Only one prophecy in reference to it (Isa.28:11-13) is found, and if this were not cited in 1 Corinthians 14:21 with express reference to speaking in tongues, we would in all likelihood not even have connected it therewith. The sense of Isaiah 28 becomes clear from its context. Because the priests and prophets in Israel no longer were open to true knowledge and the divine report (vv.7-10), God would speak to them through people with unintelligible speech and strange tongues. These were their foreign enemies who would bring judgment upon them. The Holy Spirit used this passage to make clear in 1 Corinthians 14 that “tongues” are a sign to *unbelievers* and not to believers (vv.21-22).

We do not find speaking in tongues in the Gospels either, other than in the prophecy of the Lord Jesus in Mark 16:17. But since this verse is so frequently cited as proof I must dwell upon it a bit. In verse 14 the Lord came to the *eleven* and reproached their unbelief and hardness of heart. Then in verse 15 He gave them the commission to preach the gospel to all the creation, and in verse 16 He said what its consequences would be to the hearers. In verse 17 He then said to them (that is, to the eleven in connection with His reproach of their unbelief in verse 14) that signs would follow those who would believe. In verse 20 they went forth and the Lord fulfilled His promise and confirmed the *Word* by the signs following upon it. From this we see:

- That the signs were only given as *confirmation* of the Word. Compare John 2:23-25.
- It does not say that the signs would follow all believers.
- The promise was only given directly to the eleven, and verse 20 says that when this Gospel was written the promise was fulfilled. This is in accord with Hebrews 2:3-4, “So great salvation, which having had its commencement in being spoken of by the Lord, has been confirmed to us by those who have heard; God bearing, besides, witness with them to it, both by signs and wonders, and various acts of power, and distributions of the Holy Spirit, according to his will.”

It follows too from 2 Corinthians 12:12 that the signs were an evidence of apostleship. And an apostle had to have seen the Lord (Acts 1:21-26; 1 Cor.9:1; 15:8-9).

In Acts 2 we find speaking in “tongues” taking place for the

first time. The Holy Spirit came upon earth and baptized those believers (who in a certain sense had each been standing separately for the Lord) into one body, the Assembly (1 Cor.12:13). Up to that day the Holy Spirit had certainly worked upon earth, but had never dwelt there, other than in the Lord Jesus (Jn.3:34; Col.1:19). Now He came upon earth to dwell here – in the Assembly which He formed through His baptism, and also in each individual believer.

Should this mighty fact of God the Holy Spirit coming to dwell upon earth pass by unnoticed? Just as the advent of the Son of God upon earth was accompanied by signs: a multitude of angels in the Bethlehem countryside and a star in the East, so too the advent of the Holy Spirit. Here too the signs were not visible before the whole world, but only before a small group of people. But the *consequences* of this great fact become evident to everyone who wants to be convinced (Jn.7:17).

In Acts 2 the Holy Spirit did not come in the form of a dove. This was possible only with the Lord Jesus, the only One pure and spotless, who went His way in meekness and uprightness. Here the emphasis is placed upon *testimony*: parted tongues as of fire.

Note that the Greek word *glossa* used here for *tongues* means *language* as well as *tongue*. When, for example, the human tongue is mentioned in James, this word is used. But it is also used for *language* in 1 Corinthians 13, “If I speak with the *tongues* of men and of angels,” and in Revelation 5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15, “Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,” etc.

This word is used in Acts 2:3 (“parted *tongues*, as of fire”), in verse 4 (“began to speak with other *tongues*”), and in verse 11 where the multitude of foreign Jews said, “We hear them speaking in our own *tongues* the great things of God.” This word *glossa* is used everywhere where speaking in tongues is mentioned (Acts 10:46; 19:6; and 1 Cor.12, 13, 14). The Greek word *dialektos* (dialect) appears in Acts 1:19; 2:8; 21:40; 22:2; and 26:14.

From this follows that the Holy Spirit, in accord with the announcement by the Lord Jesus (Jn.15:26; 16:7-14), manifested Himself in the character of a testimony: “parted tongues, as of fire.” It is not one tongue, but rather parted tongues. The testimony thus will no longer be limited to one language as before Pentecost (see, for example, Mt.10:5), but rather will go out to many peoples. And as a consequence of this, they spoke in other languages, and all the foreign Jews heard them speaking in their own languages *the great things of God*. This gives us the purpose of speaking in tongues, that the glad tidings of God’s grace was breaking through the boundaries of Israel and going out to all peoples and nations and languages. Speaking in tongues was thereby being used of the Holy Spirit as the means to take away the hindrance to preaching the gospel to all peoples (Acts 2:7-8) which existed since the confusion of tongues at Babel (Gen.11:1-9). The disciples, who were unschooled and uninstructed men (Acts 4:13), spoke of God to men of foreign languages although they had never learned these languages. Through this, the supernatural divine character of their message was demonstrated. And convinced thereby, the foreigners listened

devoutly as Peter spoke to them, and 3000 people were converted.

As we have seen above, other *than in Acts 2*, we find *speaking in tongues* in Acts only in 10:46 and 19:6. In chapter 10 it is mentioned of some from among the Gentiles, while in chapter 19 it is mentioned of believing Jews who until that time had been disciples of John the Baptist but not yet Christians, who were being added *to the Assembly*.

All three cases in Acts thus manifestly bear the character of the beginning of the Assembly, and in all three cases it has to do with *whole groups of people* who all speak in tongues and receive this gift *without* having prayed for it.

## SPEAKING IN TONGUES IN THE EPISTLES

In the epistles we find speaking in tongues only in 1 Corinthians 12-14 where we find the following assertions:

- Every manifestation of the Spirit is given for profit. Therefore, speaking in tongues is given for profit (12:7).
- Not all spoke in tongues, but the Spirit gave this to *some* (12:8-11, 28-30).
- Speaking in tongues is at the very bottom of the ranking in God's Word (12:8-10, 28-30). That this is truly an order of rank becomes evident in the *reading of* these sections. Both in verses 28 and 29 the *apostles* are mentioned first.
- One should in no wise conclude from this that speaking in tongues is a lasting gift, for the apostles, who are mentioned first, also were only for the beginning. Ac-

ording to 1 Corinthians 9:1 (see also Acts 1:21-22) it was necessary for an apostle to have seen the Lord. Thus no new apostles could arise. But besides this, 1 Corinthians 3 and Ephesians 2-3 tell us that the apostles laid the *foundation* of the Assembly. It is evident that *this* happens only once, and that at the beginning.

- The gift of tongues was not given to be exercised in the assembly, but rather as a sign to *unbelievers* (1 Cor. 14:19-25). And not for unbelievers who couldn't understand what was being said in the foreign language or tongue (14:23), but rather for such who could understand it, where it would truly be a sign of the power of God. This is thus in full accord with that which we have seen in Acts 2.

We have thus found:

- Speaking in tongues is announced only in Mark 16, being given as a confirmation of the spoken word of the gospel, and is only applied to the preaching of the apostles.
- We find it only in Acts 2, 10 and 19, where it is connected with the *beginning* of the Assembly.
- Besides this, it is only mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, and mentioned by way of correction.
- From both Acts and 1 Corinthians it follows that existing languages were spoken when using the gift of tongues, and spoken where they were understood, and that the gift of speaking in tongues was not given to be exercised in the assembly, though this was *permitted* in a limited measure, but only when an interpreter was present (1 Cor.14).

– Speaking in tongues is not connected with being filled with the Holy Spirit.

If everything in Scripture indicates that the gift of tongues was associated with the *beginning* of the Assembly, it is certainly necessary to be very careful and to take great pains to test every assertion of its use today by the Word of God. So much the more since Scripture expressly tells us that the devil and his angels assume the appearance of angels of light, and also that signs and wonders and deceiving spirits may come from the devil (2 Thes.2:9; 2 Chron.18:21; Acts 16:16).

History, too, expressly confirms this. Speaking in unknown tongues was found in the heathen world. The pagan writer Plato who lived about 400 B.C. wrote that certain persons did not speak their own language but that of demons who dwelt in them (Vlechtwerken 1, page 140 of Clemens Alexandrinus, Sythoff edition, 1914). Virgil likewise speaks of this.

Edward Irving, who declared that the Lord Jesus had a sinful nature, spoke in tongues. The Mormons profess to speak in tongues. And so it goes.

Bear in mind that Satan not only assumes the form of an angel of light, but he also often mixes his work together with good things and lets it be carried on through real believers (Mt.16:21-23). But the good that so often is found in a religious movement does not make the whole movement good. Yes, if true believers are found in it, then not everything is wrong, *but the question is whether everything is according to Scripture*. Sometimes the wrong thing is not openly taught by those who speak in tongues, but is *characteristic of their movement*. For example, almost *everywhere* where speaking

in tongues is prominent, women are prominent so 1 Timothy 2:11-15 is completely disregarded. And this is a well-known phenomenon in all kinds of wicked and non-Christian groups. Just think of Christian Science (Mrs. Eddy), of Theosophy (Mrs. Blavatsky and later Annie Besant), of the Seventh Day Adventists (Mrs. White), etc. Among the Spiritists there are at least a dozen female mediums for every male medium.

## WOMAN'S ROLE ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE

God has given woman an honorable place. Eve was the mother of all living (Gen.3:20; 1 Cor.11:12). A woman had the infinite privilege of being overshadowed by the power of the Highest and so becoming the mother of the Son of God. A woman anointed the feet and the head of the Lord, and a woman was the first one permitted to see the risen Lord. And on that occasion He gave her the revelation about the highest and most glorious consequence of His work on the cross: "I ascend to My Father and your Father" – a truth about which we can only adoringly marvel. Yet God's purpose for woman is not to take a public place in the foreground. She is to picture the Assembly, the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:32); therefore the role of subjection under the man is becoming to her, for the man is the type [picture] of Christ, the Bridegroom of the Church.

In all God's ways with mankind we see this role in the background, this secluded place as the role for woman. None of the writers chosen by God to write the 66 books of the Bible

was a woman. The genealogical registers give us the pedigrees of men. God called *men* to begin a new testimony: Noah, Abraham, Moses, etc. The twelve apostles and the seventy whom the Lord later sent out were all men. The seven in Acts 6 who had a good testimony and were full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom were men. Among the witnesses to the resurrection of the Lord, who are mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15, there was not a single woman, and that despite the fact that Mary was the first one to see the Lord after His resurrection and that she announced it to the apostles. Where mention is made of elders, overseers and ministers, only men are indicated. The two witnesses in Revelation 11 are men. I could go on like this.

We see this, too, in the directions that are given for the meetings of the local assembly and for the entire public conduct of women. 1 Corinthians 11 expressly says that a woman, if she is engaging in a service that might give the appearance that she is taking a place *beside* the man, must cover her head as a sign that she recognizes that she is to take a place of submission *under* the man. And so there might be no uncertainty about the fact that she can only pray or prophesy when no man is present capable of so doing, Scripture expressly tells us three chapters further on that women must be entirely silent in the meetings of the local assembly, which surely were the least public of all occasions (1 Cor. 14:34-38). In 1 Timothy 2:11-15 it is especially emphasized that under no circumstances is a woman to rise up as a teacher. Scripture gives as reason for this, that the first time woman [Eve] did so, she dragged along her husband and us all with her into ruin.

It is often asserted that the word “speak” in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 only means “chatter.” But that is a naked untruth. This exact Greek word is found 25 times in this chapter, and among other places it is used in verse 21 for the Lord speaking. It cannot be translated “chatter” in even one passage.

It is well known that in the so-called Pentecostal and Charismatic groups practicing speaking in tongues, women often play the leading role; at any rate they pray publicly and speak in their meetings. Are these not plain symptoms by which to recognize the spirits that are at work there? Is this not a open despising and rejection of the Word of God?

## SIGNS AND MIRACLES

Signs and miracles are not the same thing. A *sign* is always a miracle, but not every *miracle* is a sign. Is not the birth of a human a miracle? Is not the human body with all its organs a miracle? Is not all nature with all that takes place therein a miracle? And is not the *new birth* an even greater miracle?

All these miracles take place so often that we are used to them and no longer think of them as miracles. We usually only view things as miracles that seldom happen and substantially depart from God’s usual manner of operation.

Ever since man was created there have been miracles for him to see and he will see them on into eternity. God is sovereign, and if He wishes to do so He may deviate from that which He has instituted as customary or as a law of nature.

*Signs*, however, assume the presence of sin and that man does not believe God, or does not even believe that He exists.

A *sign* is a miracle that God does to let man know He is and that He is above all. Therefore in eternity there will be no more signs because there will be no more unbelief.

In this section of this book, we will limit ourselves to signs and miracles which God *has done through men*.

In the first 2500 years after the creation of man we do not find a single sign done through men, although there were many believers and servants of God in those days. Think of a man like Enoch who walked with God and was taken up by God. Think of Noah who walked with God and whom God's Word calls a preacher of righteousness. Think of Abraham, the father of all believers. Was there a greater and more faithful man in the Old Testament than Abraham? But they did not work a single sign.

We find the first signs with Moses at the beginning of Exodus. When God sent Moses to deliver Israel He knew that Pharaoh would not listen to Moses. Therefore God would "smite Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in the midst thereof; and after that he will let you go" (Ex.3:20). And when Moses was fearful that even the elders of Israel would not believe him, God gave signs for this, too, so they might thereby be convinced that Moses was truly sent by Jehovah (Ex.4:1-9).

From this we see that signs were given:

- As a judgment upon unbelief.
- As an evidence that the one doing the sign had a special commission from God.

The thing that differentiated Moses from Abraham, Noah, etc., is that he wrought signs and they did not. Did he have more faith than these two? Exodus 4 shows us otherwise. The

faith of Abraham and Noah was much greater than that of Moses. And Noah, as well as Moses, proclaimed judgment and pointed out the way to escape it. Abraham, as well as Moses, began a new period in the ways of God upon earth.

Then what special thing differentiated Moses from the others? It is not only that he received light about new things and became the beginning, chosen by God, of this new dispensation. Noah and Abraham were this as well. *But he received a special commission from God to proclaim this new thing to those who did not know that this testimony was of God.*

We see too that these signs were done in a very short time *at the beginning*. Where do we find signs that Moses wrought after the first weeks of the Exodus, other than perhaps that he smote the rock? Miracles happened! Was it not a miracle that Moses was on the mountain forty days without eating or drinking (Ex.34)? And we could mention more miracles. But they were not signs that he wrought.

When Joshua led the people into the land we find the signs of Joshua 10:12-14. But after that, there were no more signs for 700 years until Elijah and Elisha. These two again did signs and miracles, but not in *Judah* where the temple was and where the Law was found, but only in Israel which had separated from Judah, had officially done away with the worship of Jehovah, and had openly turned to idolatry. God gave His apostate people a special testimony through two servants called especially to this, just as He will also do in the last days (Rev.11:3-6).

After Israel rejected this testimony, we do not find any more signs in the character in which Moses and Elijah wrought

them. Again we must skip over 700 years until the Lord Jesus was walking *through the land*, and we then again see signs.

Note that John the Baptist did no signs (Jn.10:41), despite the Lord Jesus saying of him that Moses and Elijah were not greater than he, and despite him being filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb (Lk.1:15). Likewise, the Lord Jesus did no signs before He publicly made His appearance to carry out His ministry (Mt.4:23-24). *Then there were signs*. Matthew 11:3-5 tells us the purpose of these signs: to demonstrate that He was sent from God. See also John 2:23; 4:48; 5:36; 6:2, 30; Acts 2:22; etc.

The Lord chose the twelve apostles and sent them out with the express commission to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom and to do signs (Mt.10). Later, the seventy were sent with a similar but somewhat more limited commission. The commission of both groups was limited to Israel: they were not to go beyond the borders of Israel. The time of grace for the Gentiles had not yet come.

When the Lord was rejected by Israel and the work of redemption was completed, He, as the risen Lord on the point of ascending to heaven, sent out the apostles anew (Mk. 16: 14-20). But it was no longer to preach the gospel of the kingdom. It was the new dispensation of grace. Therefore the gospel must be proclaimed to the whole world – to the Gentiles, too, who in the dispensation of Law had been far off (Eph.2). The Lord again connected signs with this testimony, and just as with Moses, signs that bear the character of that which God was offering in the tidings being proclaimed. Mark 16:20 tells us that the apostles carried out their commission,

and that God fulfilled His promise with respect to the signs and thus confirmed the Word. Hebrews 2:3-4 confirms this.

Acts describes for us how the apostles carried out the commission of the Lord. They preached the gospel and worked signs to confirm their words. Note that it is said seven times of the eleven apostles (especially Peter) that they wrought signs (Acts 2:43; 3:7; 5:5-10, 12, 15-16; 9:33, 42). After that we find it said seven times of Paul (13:11; 14:10; 16:18; 19:12; 20:10; 28:3-6, 8-10) and three times of Stephen and Philip (6:8; 8:6, 13).

If we read Acts with close attention we shall make some noteworthy discoveries in connection with this subject:

- Other than the apostles, only Stephen and Philip, these special servants called by God, worked signs; and only once and twice respectively. Emphasis is repeatedly put upon this; see, for example, 2:43; 5:12, 15; 13:7-9, etc. None of the other servants mentioned in the Acts such as Barnabas, James and Silas, wrought signs.
- The first seven signs in the Acts were all wrought in Jerusalem. Thereafter, Philip worked signs in Samaria. Thereafter Peter worked two signs in Jewish country beyond Jerusalem. And after that, Paul seven times among the Gentiles.
- The signs outside Jerusalem all took place in *different* places. Nowhere are signs reported to have taken place twice at the same place. And the signs almost always took place when the one doing them was preaching the gospel at that place for the first time. The only exceptions to this are:

- Ephesus. According to chapter 18:19-20 Paul had already been there, but only very briefly
- Troas. According to chapter 16:8-11 and 2 Corinthians 2:12 he had been there twice, but probably without or almost without proclaiming the gospel.
- In the beginning of Acts we find a volume of signs. The more the testimony spread and became known, the longer were the intervals between signs.
- Those who were healed through the signs were unbelievers. Only believing Dorcas was raised from the dead. Many times with those who were sick there was faith in the power to heal. In other situations, as for example in Acts 3, such was evidently not the case. The man did not know who stood before him, and he expected nothing but alms. In still other situations the sign was a judgment from God.

Only in 1 Corinthians 12 is mention made of *miraculous powers* and *gifts of healings* in the epistles. God had given these gifts to *some*. It is not said, however, who these “*some*” are; nothing also is said about the use of the gift (12:28-31). 1 Corinthians was written at the time of Acts 19 (1 Cor.15:32; 16:5-9). In none of the epistles written after Acts 28:29 are signs or healings or speaking in tongues to be found.

Note well that speaking in tongues and the gift of healing are only discussed at Corinth where the assembly’s condition was so bad. They were *carnal*, had lawsuits one against another, attacked the authority of the apostle. There was dreadful unjudged fornication in their midst which apparently was making no impression on them. Some were getting drunk

at the Lord’s Supper, and there was false doctrine among them. Those gifts are not mentioned in the other epistles, written to assemblies where the *condition* was so much better, and especially not in the epistles written after the close of the book of Acts.

Mention is made in 2 Thessalonians 2:9 of “all power and signs and wonders,” but those are signs of the *Antichrist* which he will do by the power of the devil. See also Revelation 13.

We further find in Matthew 7:22 men who *through the name of the Lord Jesus* have prophesied, have cast out demons, and have done many works of power, and to whom the Lord Jesus yet shall say, “I never knew you. Depart from Me, workers of lawlessness”! Did not Judas Iscariot work signs also? He was one of the twelve who were sent out!

Satanic influences may be operative among believers, even if connected with things that are produced by the Holy Spirit. Look at Peter in Matthew 16 and at those who preached the gospel for envy and strife (Phil.1:15-17).

## SUMMARY:

In the Old Testament signs were wrought only through individual servants of God who received a special commission from God to proclaim a new testimony to unbelievers. Among these, there lived at the same time thousands of others who did no signs. In the Gospels we found that apart from the Lord, *only* the twelve and the seventy wrought signs; and in the rest of the New Testament *only* the apostles and once Stephen and twice Philip.

Furthermore we found in the Old and New Testaments that these signs were given as confirmation of the preaching of these specially commissioned servants. Therefore, the signs decreased and ceased entirely when the testimony was established.

We have also seen that *unbelievers* can work signs through the name of the Lord Jesus and apparently not always be unmasked upon earth; even as *believers* also can do things under satanic influence that appear very nice outwardly because they are joined together with good things.

## MIRACLES IN HISTORY

Mention is often made in history of the healing of the sick, of speaking in tongues, etc. Among the pagans, belief in miraculous healings was widespread. Egyptians, Greeks, Romans and Germans all had their priests and holy men who healed sicknesses in supernatural ways. Plato reported of speaking in tongues. I cannot go through all of history. I shall therefore limit myself to a few individual instances.

Montanus, who lived in the latter half of the second century, said he was a prophet – Joel’s prophecy was now fulfilled. He spoke in tongues and laid hands upon the sick. Two well-known women left their husbands and followed him. In speaking in tongues he often asserted he was God. The movement became widespread and lasted for several centuries.

In the 17th century there was a fanatical sect in France known as the Camisards. They made their way into England where they were called the French Prophets. They claimed to

be divinely inspired. They asserted they possessed the gifts of prophecy, of speaking in tongues, and especially of healing the sick. The whole movement was charged with the grossest immoralities. Fornication, adultery and incest were widespread among them (Dr. A.C. Gaebelein). Both this movement and that of Montanus, to which Tertullian belonged, were cited in the January 1955 issue of *Streams of Power* as forerunners of this false group.

In the same century the belief was widespread that a ruling prince could heal *scrofula* (Tuberculosis of the lymph nodes) – then called *King’s Evil* – by simply touching the sick. On Easter Sunday 1686 Louis XIV touched 1600 persons, saying, “The King touches you; God heals you.” Charles II of Spain, who died in 1700, touched approximately 100 000 persons in this way. The historian Macauley reported that when William III of Orange refused to do this, a flood of tears and cries of despair arose from parents and children who were afflicted with this disease. Mark 16:17-18 most generally was read at such occasions.

The Mormons, this antichristian sect with its polygamy, speak in tongues, heal the sick, and say they have the gift of prophecy. The Spiritists speak in tongues and heal the sick.

Christian Science, which is neither Christian nor science (it denies the deity of the Lord Jesus, His atoning work, the Holy Spirit, etc.) says it does the same works as the Lord Jesus did. And some sick people are healed.

Dr. Coue, a French physician, healed the sick in a miraculous way. He was not religious, nor did he claim to be so. He had his patients repeat over and over: “I am already much

better,” and then “I am healed.” And hundreds were healed in this manner.

The “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” in November 1968 reported “healings through faith in the great Party Chairman Mao Tse-Tung” in Red China.

## HEALINGS OF THE SICK

The Spirit of God has been sent into this world to guide the believers “into all the truth” (Jn.16:13) and to occupy them with Him who after completion of the work of redemption, ascended to God’s right hand, and who shall come again from there to take His own to Himself forever.

The *enemy*, who knows he can’t take away salvation from those possessing it in Christ, is intent on at least diverting them from contemplating Christ and thus robbing them of their sole source of happiness, progress and a blessed testimony. To accomplish this purpose he avails himself of one means above all: *he seeks to occupy believers with themselves and with their earthly circumstances*. He sets all kinds of things before their eyes, many of which may be good in themselves, but which are adapted to occupy their thoughts and activities to the detriment of the glorifying of the Lord. Some of these things are supposed to allow a Christian to better serve the Lord and make him even happier than does simple obedience to the Word. In reality the opposite is the case.

The *sufferings* which God allows His own to pass through are playing a great role in this area in recent times. Since sufferings are repugnant to our human nature which was

created for the purpose of living on this earth and enjoying it, it is understandable that people should be glad to lend their ears to all that claims to set them free from these sufferings. On the basis of this, too, special importance is ascribed to those passages in Scripture relating to *prayer* in which God promises to answer those who draw near to Him in faith.

Scripture says in regard to sufferings that every trial is in the hand of God and is a means to a blessing, the consequences of which are of eternal duration. Sickness too, although it is a result of sin, belongs to the trials which the *Lord* sends us to arrive at His purpose. In Romans 8, where we are told of the sufferings connected with this fallen creation, a creation that groans and in the midst of which we also groan awaiting the redemption of the body, it is not said that God will spare His children sufferings. But it does say that “All things work *together* for good to those who love God” (v.28). And in 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 we read, “For our momentary and light affliction works for us in surpassing measure an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen are for a time, but those that are not seen are eternal.” This “momentary and light affliction” that bears such glorious consequences often lasts throughout one’s whole lifetime, for God’s activity in respect to us does not have this earth, but rather *heaven* as its goal. James even says, “Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into various temptations (in the sense of *trials*), knowing that the proving of your faith works endurance. But let endurance have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (Jas.1:2-4).

The purpose for which God sends trials of faith with their glorious consequences cannot be attained when one seeks to remove the trial. On the contrary, we are to ask in faith for that wisdom that can *so lead us through the trials* in conformity to the thoughts of God, that the perfect results of those trials may be attained (compare vv. 5-8). The trial thus is not anything extraordinary (compare 1 Pet.4:12) from which one should seek to be free as quickly as possible. Be it persecution, sickness, or whatever other trial, it is just as necessary for God's children today, as at any other time. In fact, it is more necessary today since God is bringing judgment over His house before He executes it upon the world (1 Pet.4:17). He cleanses and sanctifies His own to make them capable of walking faithfully and enjoying His fellowship.

Trials thus are evidences of the activity of the grace of God, of His love, and of His wisdom toward those beloved of Him, and that in view of the glory where all the consequences of His doings with us shall appear. Hence it takes great ignorance of the ways of God to want to make Him give up His activities with His own by which He is bringing them up.

If one takes this into account it is not difficult to see how far from the thoughts of God modern faith healers are when they tell us, "You don't have to be sick. You can get well immediately if you only have faith to do so." Is not this as much as saying, "God is treating you wrong and we want to give you back your health?" This whole *healing movement* denies or at least ignores the governmental ways of the Father toward His children. What do these people do with the teaching in Hebrews 12:4-17? Where in this chapter can one's will decide

if one is to be healed when God tells us, "My son, despise not the *chastening of the Lord*, nor faint when reproved by Him, for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. Ye endure for chastening, God conducts himself towards you as towards sons; for who is the son that the father chastens not?" What? Is one really wanting to deprive Christians of the results of that chastening which alone is able to fit us for "the partaking of His holiness" and to yield "the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those exercised by it" (vv.10-11)?

We repeat: A determined will to heal someone is contempt for chastening or an outright ignoring of chastening. Those who counsel in this way dishearten the afflicted by accusing them of having no faith or by causing them to think their sufferings are useless. Such counsel directly contradicts God and robs them of the blessings that proceed from God's perfect ways. Moreover, one who prescribes to God and tries to force Him to do (or not to do) something, shows no fear of God.

Today's healers would have demanded that the apostle Paul shake off his "thorn in the flesh." Before he knew the Lord's thoughts about this matter the apostle besought the Lord three times that it might depart from him, as he thought it would hinder him in the work entrusted to him. But for him, just as for us today, the perfect answer of the Lord was, "My grace suffices thee; for My power is perfected in weakness." Paul knew that his desire which had caused him to pray for removal of the thorn would be fulfilled much more surely if the thorn remained. Or was the thorn not removed because he did not have sufficient faith, as is said to such who

are not responsive to this type of suggestion or influence? Absolutely not!

Has it never occurred to these healers that among the hundreds of wonderful healings of the sick reported to us in the New Testament, there is not one single case in which a *believer* was healed? And this not because no believers were sick. God has seen to it that we should know that His children have their share of sicknesses as long as they are on this cursed earth.

Epaphroditus was sick, close to death (Phil.2:25-30), and not because of a sin, as in 1 Corinthians 11, but rather for the sake of the work of the Lord. And Paul did not heal him by a miracle.

Timothy had stomach trouble and was frequently ill (1 Tim.5:23). Was sin the reason for this? Not according to all indications. Nevertheless Paul did not heal him, but rather gave him the advice no longer to drink only water but also a *little* wine, for this would be better for his stomach. Why did Paul leave Trophimus behind in Miletus sick and not heal him? Do we not gather from 3 John 2 that Gaius was often sick? Why did the apostle John so expressly wish him bodily health “even as thy soul prospers”?

The apostles did nothing to interfere with the ways of God with His children! Can it be that they had so much less light into God’s thoughts than these healers? Oh, no! They knew their Father had higher things in view than bodily health when He allowed them to pass through sicknesses.

## HEALING OF UNBELIEVERS

But if it is not according to God’s thoughts to heal *believers* in such a way, is not the healing of *unbelievers* still left as a sign? It certainly cannot be disputed that both the Lord Jesus and the apostles healed many unbelievers. Today’s healers appeal to the fact that God is unchangeably the Same, and that just as formerly there were healings, so there are today.

It is certainly true that God is unchangeable. “For I Jehovah change not” (Mal.3:6). “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and to the ages to come” (Heb.13:8). But this is not to say that God always manifests Himself in the same way! Hebrews 13:8 does *not* say, “Jesus Christ *does the same* yesterday...” (Actually, in the Greek it only says, “Jesus Christ, yesterday and today the same and into eternity.” It is here a matter of the immutability of His Person, not of His manner of acting.)

God has manifested Himself in a different manner in each of the various periods (or, *dispensations*) of the history of mankind. To Adam, He revealed Himself as the Creator. To Noah, as the One who made a covenant with the earth. To Abraham, as the Almighty. To Israel as Jehovah, the eternally existing One. To believers today as Father. And in the coming kingdom of peace He will manifest Himself as “The Most High God, Possessor of Heavens and Earth.” His revelation is always associated with the character of things at the moment.

Although God is the Unchangeable One, He does not always *act* in the same manner. He reveals Himself and acts in

conformity with the circumstances. We plainly see this in His judgments. What a difference between the great Flood, the confusion of tongues at Babel, the ten plagues, the destruction of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, the judgment upon Korah, Dathan and Abiram, that upon Nadab and Abihu, and that upon Miriam.

After God in Genesis 7 destroyed everything upon the face of the earth by the Flood (except those with Noah in the Ark), He said, "I will no more smite every living thing, as I have done" (8:21).

In principle the sin of Ananias and Sapphira (wanting to appear more than one really is) occurs often today, and yet God does not punish it today as then (Acts 5). The apostle James was imprisoned and put to death by Herod, while Peter was freed from prison in a miraculous manner.

In the healing of unbelievers we find confirmed that which we have already seen in the section "Signs and Miracles." These are signs, for we are not speaking of answered prayers. God grants the prayers of His children and sometimes He grants the prayers of unsaved people also. "But they flattered Him with their mouth, and lied unto Him with their tongue; for their heart was not firm toward Him, neither were they steadfast in His covenant. But He was merciful: He forgave the iniquity, and destroyed them not" (Ps.78:36-38). "Then He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul" (Ps.106:15). I know of one case where God so granted the prayer of an unbelieving mother that the doctor said a miracle had happened. And this became the occasion that led to the conversion of her and her husband. God grants the prayers of

His children. Who does not know this from experience? And that also includes cases of sickness! But we are not concerned here with wonderful answers to prayer, but rather with things that are public, with signs.

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not reckoning to them their offences" (2 Cor.5:19). As proof the Lord Jesus came to earth in wonderful grace like one of mankind. He manifested His goodness by healing their sick, cleansing lepers, feeding the hungry. He even let it be known that He wanted to take away all the consequences of sin by raising their dead.

The world rejected God's grace: it crucified the Lord of glory. But God raised Him from among the dead and set Him at His own right hand, saying, "Sit at My right hand until I put Thine enemies as footstool of Thy feet" (Heb.1:13). The time will soon come when God will head up all things in the Lord Jesus, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth (Eph.1:10). God can do that on the basis of the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross, where He laid the foundation upon which all things shall be reconciled to God (Col.1:20). *We* are already reconciled. But soon all *things* (not all men) shall be reconciled.

When the Lord Jesus comes to earth to take possession of all things (Mt.24:30-31; Rev.1:7), the curse will be removed from the earth. Creation will be set free then (Rom.8:21). "The wilderness and the dry land shall be gladdened" (Isa.35:1). "And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people who dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity" (Isa.33:24). Sickness and death will no longer be (Isa.25:8; 65:20-22),

except in the case of open opposition to the Lord Jesus (Isa.66:24; Ps.101:6-8)

But this is yet future. The Lord Jesus is still rejected and hidden upon the Father's throne. But *through the apostles* He has been presented to the Jews (and later to the Gentiles) as the One through whom times of refreshing will come if they will receive Him (Acts 3:19-21). And in confirmation of their word, God worked with them through signs and miracles, the works of power of the age to come (Heb.6:5). Thus God recognized this new thing as coming from Himself and showed by the signs and miracles that full blessing was ready to come if the people would receive the Lord Jesus.

Israel rejected the testimony of the Holy Spirit and was set aside (Acts 7:51-60; 28:28). God gave His written Word, the New Testament, so no more signs were necessary to confirm that this testimony was of Himself. God could no longer publicly identify Himself with those who departed from Him and went their own way in disobedience.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JAMES FIVE

It is necessary to write at this point about James 5:14-16 since these verses are often misused. They have nothing to do with the "gifts of healings" in 1 Corinthians 12. From the context it is clear that James 5:14-15 speaks of practical righteousness in connection with the governmental ways of God, and this is in accord with the whole character of James. As Job 36:7 said, God does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous. The following verses in Job 36, however, show

clearly that this has chastening as its result when there is departure, so that self-examination and a turning away from sins might be produced. James is speaking of sicknesses that are the result of sins – where God was sending sicknesses as *chastening* because the person in question had sinned and had not humbled himself about it.

If he examines himself and turns to God in humiliation, then God is ready to exercise grace (Job 36:11-14) – except in a case where there was a sin unto death (1 Jn.5). God has also given this power to forgive sins (in God's governmental ways, thus in that which concerns this earth) to the local assembly (Mt.18:18; 2 Cor.2:7-10), and in certain cases even to all disciples (Jn.20:23).

The sick one who came to self-judgment could turn to the elders as those persons designated by God to impart this forgiveness. As *elders* they have the spiritual experience and sobriety to know the thoughts of God in such circumstances. Among the Jews and also in the congregations of the Jews, we find no officially appointed elders. It was simply the oldest brethren there, elders also in respect to spiritual things. *We* can have no appointed elders in the assembly because there is no one to appoint them. Moreover we are not the assembly locally, but merely a small part of it.

That is not critical to this question, for verse 16 also contains God's provision for our time. "Confess therefore your offences to one another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed." In connection with verse 14 we thus see that a believer can request the brethren who bear the character and the spiritual qualities of elders to come to his sick-bed; he

confesses to them his sins, which in God's governmental ways have occasioned his sickness, and requests them to pray with him and for him for healing. And then if *his prayer and the prayer of these brethren* is a *prayer of faith*, God will recover him.

It is important not to make healing in these verses dependent upon the position of the elders nor upon the anointing oil, but rather upon the prayer of faith. Thus they don't *hope* that God will grant healing, but they definitely know so. Could the sick person have this certainty if he had not truly humbled himself, if he had not accepted his sickness as chastening from the hand of God and now knew that God would forgive? Could the elders pray in this faith if they did not have the firm conviction that God had attained His purpose with the sickness and that it was not a sickness unto death (1 Jn.5:16-17)? This is only possible if they have received this faith in communion with the Lord and are thereby certain that God wants to grant healing to the sick one.

It is evident that this is quite different from that which happens in many so-called faith healings. Moreover James is a transitional epistle, the only epistle in the New Testament addressed to the twelve tribes of Israel, though it does differentiate the believers from the mass of the people.

## MIRACULOUS POWERS OR OBEDIENCE?

We live in days of ruin. One characteristic of the time of the end, this difficult time in which we live, is that much is said about *power*; but little about obedience to the Word of God.

The knowledge that one gains by simply believing the Scriptures is rejected. One is instead inclined to believe in some power that has nothing to do with the Holy Spirit, but that is admired by men and will be fully manifested later on when concentrated in the "Man of Sin." To such who eagerly look for supernatural power of one kind or another, Satan will gladly give his power instead of that of the Holy Spirit. One does not need extraordinary perception to recognize in our days the forerunners of the "working of error" of which the apostle speaks in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. As soon as the Assembly is removed from earth, this evil power, which is already advertising itself today and is ensnaring men in its toils, will be fully revealed.

Great longing and dissatisfaction reigns in the spiritual realm among many Christians. They feel their lives are fruitless and empty, and they long for a higher plane of experiences. Often they don't know their Bible and their glorious blessings in Christ, so there arises in them an unhealthy longing for new experiences and emotional "highs." From a lack of spiritual discernment one ascribes to God and to His Spirit something that is the result of one's imagination or of satanic origin.

Many may be upright, but uprightness is not truth; uprightness alone is no protection against the many kinds of seduction. Love for the truth and obedience to the truth alone will guard us against the religious confusion of our time. If a believer's life is empty of fruit, the diagnosis is usually simple: it is lacking in knowledge and in devotion.

Those who are faithful, who see the true condition of the assembly, are concerned about *spiritual* health, that the saints

might walk in the truth, in proper separation from the world and all that is not according to the will of the Lord. They desire that full place be accorded to the Holy Spirit and to His ministry of glorifying Christ; that the relation of Christ and the Church be known and enjoyed; that the members of the body of Christ might recognize their being united one with another, and might make it reality in their God-given place; that the “joints and bands” might be in such living union with the Head that His fullness might continually flow out unhindered to the entire body so that it might increase with the increase of God, thus ministered to and united together (Eph.4:16; Col.2:19); so that the saints holding the truth in love might grow up to Him in all things who is the Head, the Christ.

Whoever will thus walk in simple obedience will receive from God the answer to that sublime demand which the Son addressed to Him in that night in which He was delivered up, “Sanctify them by the truth: Thy word is truth” (Jn.17:17).

### IS THE HEALING OF THE BODY INCLUDED IN THE ATONEMENT?

To confirm their assertion that a believer has no need to be sick, the faith healers maintain that the Lord Jesus has borne our *diseases*, and therefore the healing of the body is included in the work of atonement. Although they all agree on this and all cite Isaiah 53:4-5 and Matthew 8:17 as proof from Scripture, they do not all agree in their way of demonstrating proof.

Matthew 8:17 clearly says that Isaiah 53:4 was fulfilled *in the life* of the Lord Jesus and not at his death. And Matthew gives us the explanation for this, too. The Lord cast out the spirits and healed all who were ill “so that *that* should be fulfilled which was spoken through Esaias [Isaiah] the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bore our diseases” (Mt.8:17).

“I have no doubt that Christ never healed a sick man without bearing in His spirit and heart the burden of it, as the fruit and power of evil.” This is what Isaiah 53:4 refers to (J.N. Darby, Collected Writings. Vol. 7, pg.182.)

Many say that by the fall Satan brought in the double curse of sin and sickness, but the Lord Jesus in His atoning work has given the double restoration of salvation and healing. They arbitrarily divide Isaiah 53:5, and thereby in like manner the atoning work of the Lord Jesus, into two parts. “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him”: this refers to our sins and was fulfilled on the cross. But the following, “And with His stripes we are healed,” in their opinion refers to our sicknesses, and this is supposed to have been fulfilled *before* the cross when the Lord Jesus was beaten and mistreated before the high priest and before Pilate.

They may have just gone by the sound of the words *stripes* and *healed* to arrive at this conclusion. But they have thereby forgotten that Isaiah is *prophecy* and uses metaphorical language just as every other prophecy. And they have forgotten the important axiom that God’s Word itself gives the interpretation of prophecy. 2 Peter 1:20- 21 says, “Knowing

this first, that the scope of no prophecy of Scripture is had from its own particular interpretation, for prophecy was not ever uttered by the will of man, but holy men of God spake under the power of the Holy Spirit.” Only when we compare Scripture with Scripture do we learn to know the real significance of a passage of Scripture.

Who gives us the right to divide Isaiah 53:5, which deals with the work of atonement for our sins, and thereby also divide the work of the Lord into one part that took place *upon* the cross and one part that took place *before* the cross? There is no Scripture for this. Does not Scripture speak of the healing of the soul in connection with sin (Ps.41:4; Mt.13:15; Mk.4:12; Jer.3:22; 6:14; 14:19)? And does not Peter apply precisely the words of Isaiah 53:5 to the work of the Lord for our sins (1 Pet.2:24)? Here we have the explanation of Scripture itself.

The late Dr. A.B. Simpson expresses still another view in his book, *The Gospel of Healing*. When he spoke of Isaiah 53:4 he said that the English translation does not do justice to the Hebrew text. According to him it should read, “Surely He has borne away our sicknesses and carried away our pains.” And the expressions “borne away” and “carried away,” according to him, do not merely denote sympathy, but actual substitution and the removal utterly of that which is borne. Dr. Simpson was a doctor of theology, so many are inclined to believe him without questioning it, because after all, they are not able to judge. J.N. Darby said, “If someone wants to prove his teachings by references to the Greek and Hebrew before an audience that does not know these languages, there is

almost always a hitch to it.” This is proven by an examination of Dr. Simpson’s assertion.

The Hebrew word in Isaiah 53:4 which Dr. Simpson wants to translate by “borne away” occurs in the following places in Isaiah. “He will lift up a banner” (5:26); “He ... shall lift up his staff” (10:24); “He shall lift up a banner” (11:12); “Thou shalt take up this proverb” (14:4); “Elam beareth the quiver” (22:6); “Lift up a prayer” (37:4); “They lift up the voice” (52:8). It is evident that it is impossible for all these passages to mean *substitution*. Why then should it have this meaning just in Isaiah 53:4?

We might ask, Does not the Lord’s bearing our sins in 1 Peter 2:24 denote substitution? If so, why doesn’t the bearing of our diseases in Matthew 8:17 then also denote substitution? Well, Peter *is* speaking of substitution, and for this he uses the Greek word *anaphero*. Besides three times in the Gospels, this word only occurs in Hebrews 7:27; 9:28; 13:15; James 2:21; 1 Peter 2:5, 24. *Sacrificing* is the subject in all these passages. But in Matthew 8:17 a different Greek word, *bastazo*, is used. Besides this passage this word occurs thirteen times in the Gospels and thirteen times in the rest of the New Testament, and it *always* has the sense of *bearing a burden*. Examples are Matthew 3:11; 20:12 and Galatians 6:2, “Bear one another’s burdens,” which certainly cannot mean substitution. It *never* is used like *anaphero* in connection with sacrificing! Thus we see that none of the arguments are supported by Scripture.

The assertions of the “healers” lead to the worst consequences. If the Lord Jesus vicariously bore our sicknesses and griefs, then according to Matthew 8:17 it was during His life

before the cross. But then His work is divided into two parts – one part upon the cross and one *before the cross*. So Dr. Simpson writes, too: “Three years as the Great Healer, and then for six hours of shame and agony as the dying Lamb” (page 13). During those three years the Lord is supposed to have brought about an atonement *without blood* for our sicknesses, and thereafter upon the cross an atonement *with blood* for our sins. That is a *heresy* that will find no intelligent Christian to defend it.

One also hears the view, “These three: sin, sickness, and death, are the works of the devil; Jesus came to destroy them (1 Jn.3:8). And they are destroyed through the sufferings, the dying and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus has borne our sickness upon Golgotha.” And from this they conclude that God does not want us to be sick any more than He wants us to sin.

If the preceding were true we would surely expect to find it explained in Romans, for this epistle clearly sets before us the doctrine of salvation: forgiveness of sins and deliverance from sin. But this epistle doesn't say a word about it. On the contrary Romans 8:23-24 says we live in a groaning creation and that we ourselves groan also, awaiting the *redemption of our body*; for we have been saved in hope. And Romans 8:1 says that our mortal bodies shall be quickened *in the future*. Had healing of the body from disease and death been included in the work of atonement (just as our sins were paid for by that work), we would have to assume that this work would have had the same consequences for disease and death as for our sins.

No one who knows Scripture will deny that everyone who

has received the Lord Jesus shares perfectly in His work. The question of his sins is settled: they are forever put away (Rom. 4:7; 5:1, 9, 19; Eph.1:7; Col.1:12-14, 21; 2:13; Heb.10:14-18; 1 Pet.2:24; etc.). This does not depend upon his works before or after his conversion, nor upon his insight into the scope of the work of the Lord. This *is solely by grace*.

If the healers' assertions are true, then it follows that from our conversion on, we would not know sickness nor death anymore. For believers there could then be no more infirmities of old age and no dying. And this could no more depend on our works than the question of our sins, for else it would no longer be grace.

If God had made our sharing in this aspect of the work of the Lord Jesus *depend upon our receiving it*, then this would mean that neither Paul nor Peter nor John nor any other believer in these more than 1900 years since the cross, had received it. For all have died, as have also the greatest leaders of this “healing” movement.

Then what Philippians 1:21 says could not be true, that to die is gain. Could a condition [of death] contrary to the will of God and stemming from unbelief toward God's thoughts, as it is claimed, be better than that which the Lord Jesus has accomplished for us on the cross and which God wants to give us?

How terrible then would be Paul's word in 2 Timothy 4:6, “The time of my release is come,” and that which Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1:14, “Knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle is speedily to take place, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has manifested to me.” And all the martyrs from Stephen on down

who thought they were dying for the Lord would then only have died on account of their unbelief.

How terribly Paul would then have erred when in 1 Corinthians 15 he presented the coming of the Lord as the only event that would result in believers no longer having to die. And this in the inspired Word of God!

Enough! It will be evident to every unprejudiced person that this “healing teaching” is in direct contradiction to God’s Word, and that its results must work out to sheer havoc.

The Word of God teaches us that sickness, suffering and death are consequences of sin. The Lord Jesus through His work on the cross has laid the basis for the putting away of sin by His sacrifice (Heb.9:26-28), and for heaven and earth, the whole creation, one day to be cleansed and brought back to God (Col.1:20-22) – except fallen angels and those persons who die in their sins. We believers are *already* reconciled and *have* the forgiveness of our sins. Insofar as it concerns our relationship as creatures to the Creator, the question of sins is fully settled. We have been perfected in perpetuity (Heb. 10:14). This is the salvation of our soul, which we already possess (1 Pet.1:9).

As far as our bodies are concerned we still belong to this creation. And although the Lord Jesus has also purchased our bodies (1 Cor.6:20), the body does not yet have part in this salvation in a practical way. “We await the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory” (Phil.3:20-21). At present our bodies still have part in mortality and corruptibility (1 Cor.15:48-54).

We groan with the whole creation, awaiting the redemption of our bodies (Rom.8:23). We have part in tribulations and sufferings here on earth (Rom.5:3-6). But because the Holy Spirit indwells us we know that our Father uses these sufferings in bringing us up (Rom.5:5; Heb.12). And Scripture gives us the glorious assurance that the Lord Jesus as Man upon earth took part in all the sufferings that are our portion on earth, so now as High Priest in heaven He might be able to sympathize with our infirmities and come to our help as our Mediator and Advocate in full consciousness of our situation, of our difficulties, of our feelings, and of the dangers to which we are exposed (Heb.2:10-11, 18; 4:15-16; 5:7-8; 7:25-26; etc.).

This is the explanation Scripture gives us of Isaiah 53:4 and Matthew 8:17, that is, as far as we can apply these passages to us.

Don’t forget that Isaiah 53 is prophecy. It gives us the feelings and expression of the believing remnant of the two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) when they see the Lord Jesus coming from heaven and recognize that they have rejected and crucified their Messiah (Zech.12:10-14; 13:6-9). When we read Isaiah 52, 53 and the beginning of 54, this is evident. The prophetic time of Isaiah 53 is the beginning of the millennial reign of peace, a time when the curse will truly be removed from the earth and when people will die only through God’s public judgment when they have sinned overtly (Isa.65:19-25).

The same thing applies to Psalm 103, which was so often referred to by Hermann Zaiss, a noted European healer, as justifying so-called faith healing. There too we find the believing remnant of Israel looking out for the glorious day of

Christ's dominion. When He shall *every morning* destroy all the wicked of the land (Ps.101:8), when His kingdom shall rule over all (Ps.103:19), *then* He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob and heal his diseases (Rom.11:26). Then Jacob's life will be redeemed from the pit (Ps.103:3-5) as we have seen in Isaiah 65.

If the teachers of so-called faith healing had rightly divided the Word of Truth they would not have to be ashamed and could stand before God approved (2 Tim.2:15). But then they would not have come with this deplorable teaching which directly contradicts the Holy Scriptures, teaching by which so many uninstructed people are misled and so much harm is done to the life of faith.

### SOME FURTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF ERROR

We have seen the principles of the healing movement to be contrary to Holy Scripture, but sadly we must find out in another way that they do not bear the characteristics of the Holy Spirit. When we look at the writings of this movement as a whole, we see that passages from God's Word are so torn out of context, then so jumbled together, and then have such impossible conclusions drawn from them, that it is not possible to go into all of this without writing long books. Reference to some individual citations will make it evident what spirit it is that speaks from these writings.

John 14:12 often is referred to, "He that believes on Me, the works which I do shall he do also, and he shall do greater than

these, because I go to the Father." This is then applied to the working of miracles. And every Christian accordingly can and must do greater works (and they then read *signs*) than the Lord Jesus did. But the Lord is not speaking of signs, but of *works*. On Pentecost and thereafter we see greater works. Never were three thousand people converted in one day through the preaching of the Lord. The greatest number of believers we read of before Pentecost is five hundred (1 Cor.15:6). Only 120 were together in Jerusalem after the ascension.

It is a characteristic of this movement that earthly things are of greater importance to its adherents than heavenly things, spiritual things. Along with all the signs that God had His servants do was the giving of *life*. We see this with Moses in Exodus 8:16-19. The magicians imitated all the signs. But when Moses made gnats of the dust, they could not do so. Satan can copy much, but cannot give life. He can do signs and miracles through his servants, as we see in Matthew 24:24, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall give great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect." The coming of the Lawless One will be "according to the working of Satan in all power and signs and wonders of falsehood" (2 Thes.2:9). He will even imitate the resurrection as though he too were able to impart life (Rev.13:3). But God's Word lets us know that the beast was "as slain to death," but not really dead. The Antichrist will do great signs and will even cause fire to come down from heaven – the well-known sign of the presence of God. But he can only give *breath* to the image of the beast, not real life (Rev.13:15).

God is the source of all life. Scripture therefore calls Him “the living God.” Along with the signs He had them do, God also gave His servants the power to give life. Satan could not imitate this, so this was the sure sign that God was working.

We saw this with Moses. We see this too with Elijah and Elisha (1 Ki.17:22; 2 Ki.4:32-36). We see it with the Lord Jesus who raised up one who had just died, one just being borne to the grave, and one who had lain in the grave four days, so no one could say that he wasn’t really dead. The Lord also gave the commission to raise the dead when He sent out the twelve (Mt.10:8). And in the Acts we see the apostles also raised the dead (Acts 9:36-41; 20:9-12).

I have not heard of anyone of this movement raising a dead person. Once I received a letter which said, “Now Satan has again brought this sick one to the edge of the grave through pneumonia and other illnesses (after he had been “healed” two weeks before), yet the Almighty will not permit his soul to leave his body.” The man died a day later and efforts to raise him failed.

The February 1955 issue of *Streams of Power* said, “The background of all this is the imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has promised this and every believer looks for it with strong desire. But He is not coming until the gospel has been preached as a witness to *all nations*. And it has not yet come to this. At present more than two billion people live on earth. Half a billion of these have heard the gospel of Jesus Christ in one way or another. Millions of others live in areas in which the door to the proclamation of the gospel is closed at present...”

First, they take Matthew 24:14 out of context to use it as they please. The passage speaks of the *gospel of the kingdom* which will, *not now, but after the rapture of the Assembly (Church), be preached*. This is plain to everyone who reads this verse in its context. But the use they make of it is sad. Is this the voice of the Holy Spirit who together with the Bride cries, “Come”? Who inspired the Word in which the Lord Jesus repeatedly said, “I come quickly”? Who let the words be recorded, “Watch therefore, for ye do not know when the master of the house comes” (Mk.13:35)? “Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour” (Mt.25:13)? Is the above not much more the voice of the evil servant who says in his heart, “My lord delays to come”?

It is dreadful to read what the above magazine says in the May 1954 issue: “He bears the wrath of God against the sins of the whole human race during His whole lifetime, but especially at the end of His life. So the wrath of God is appeased. Jesus brought the sacrifice for the world.” “What does ascension mean? ... That He as High Priest comes before the Throne of Grace and finally brings about reconciliation with God through His own blood.”

The wonderful work which the Lord Jesus accomplished on the cross is directly attacked by this. He did not bear our sins during His life upon earth, but rather “on the tree” (1 Pet.2:24). The Lord Jesus did not bear the wrath of God against the sins of the whole human race. Nowhere does Scripture say this. And most certainly He did not do this during His life. He was made sin for us upon the cross. Had the Lord been under God’s wrath *before* the cross, He would not have been able to

accomplish the work of redemption. And how could the Father then have been able to say of Him, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I have found My delight” (Mt.3:17)?

And if the Lord says, “It is finished” upon the cross, and if the Word of God everywhere connects reconciliation with the cross and says that He has been raised for our justification (Rom.4:25), how can one write that the work was not accomplished on the cross and that reconciliation was not yet complete there but only after the ascension?

### THE RECOGNITION OF THE LORD JESUS AS LORD

Romans 10:9 says, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth *Jesus as Lord*, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised Him from among the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

In 1 Corinthians 1:2 all disciples are included in the words, “With all that in every place call on the name of our *Lord Jesus Christ*, both theirs and ours.” And in 1 Corinthians 12:3 it says, “No one can say, *Lord Jesus*, unless in the power of the Holy Spirit.”

These passages show that the Word of God calls the confession of the Lord Jesus as *Lord* and the speaking of Him as the *Lord Jesus*, the distinguishing mark of discipleship: it links it up with salvation. And only through the Holy Spirit’s activity can a man say, *Lord Jesus*, for an evil spirit will never do that. The demons never recognize the Lord Jesus as Lord. Satan can transform himself into an angel of light (2 Cor.11:14). His angels can call the Lord Jesus, “Son of

God” (Mt.8:29) or “The Holy One of God” (Mk.1:24). They can openly proclaim the honor of servants of the Lord (Acts 16:17). But never do we find an evil spirit calling the Lord Jesus *Lord*.

The title *Lord* is not the highest glory of the Lord Jesus. It does not declare His personal and eternal glory, but rather a position that has been given Him after the completion of His atoning work and after His resurrection (Acts 2:36). To know Him as *Lord* is the simplest knowledge one professing Him can enjoy, for this merely signifies the recognition that the Lord Jesus has authority over him. But the evil spirits do not recognize this authority! The day is coming when “at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of heavenly and earthly and infernal beings, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is *Lord*” (Phil.2:9-11). At present this is not yet so. But the Father demands this and makes it a condition for being saved. This is in no way to say that someone who says “Lord Jesus” is thereby born again; 1 Corinthians 12 merely says that never does an evil spirit cause a man to say “*Lord Jesus*.”

This characteristic of discipleship is not found in the “healing” movement. In their writings one often finds mention of “Jesus” or “Christ” or “Jesus Christ,” but practically never “Lord Jesus.” When in a personal conversation with a member of this movement I asked him to say “Lord Jesus” (because it hurt me to hear the Lord Jesus being spoken of in such an irreverent way), he called my request “narrow-minded carping.”

## THE DEITY OF THE LORD JESUS

In the brochure *Abundant Life* it said, “Perhaps someone thinks that Jesus could do miracles because He was really God. This, however, is not so. He was God before creation, but He laid aside all His deity and became man like us apart from sins.” Even the first words of that last sentence, which sound nice when read superficially, go no further than the God-dishonoring creed of the Arians: “I affirm that the Son had His beginning from the Father before the ages, God from God, Light from Light. But I affirm that He is not like unto the Father” (Bishop Germinius in the theological debate that took place January 3, 366 A.D. at Sirmium in present-day Yugoslavia.)

The Lord Jesus is not “God since before creation,” but the “I AM,” the *Eternal*, just as the Father, and just as the Holy Spirit. And He was this upon earth *also*. He was the eternal God when He lay in the manger as Bethlehem. He was that when wearied from His journey He sat, hungry and thirsty, at Jacob’s well (Jn.4). And He was that when He accomplished the wonderful work of redemption upon the cross.

He became true Man, born of a woman. But He was “God manifested in flesh” (1 Tim.3:16), “the only-begotten Son, who *is* in the bosom of the Father” (Jn.1:18). “In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col.2:9). God spoke in the person of the Son (literally, “God spoke *in Son*” – Heb.1:1-2). Could God cease to be God? Could the triune God cease to be the triune God?

He was the true God and He was true Man, yet *one* Person. Woe to that man who would intrude into this wonderful

mystery. Woe to the man that would bring Him down to one level with us, with even the most distinguished of us (Lk.9:33-36). The Father guards the honor of His Son who in wonderful glory of His own free will took the place of submissiveness to the will of the Father (Jn.8:50).

Even the last phrase of the above-cited sentence is false and impugns the glory of the Son of God. It should not say, “apart from *sins*” but rather “apart from *sin*.” Not only had He not *sinned*, but there was no trace of a *sinful nature* in Him either. “Him who knew not sin” (2 Cor.5:21). “In Him sin is not” (1 Jn.3:5). “The holy thing also which shall be born shall be called Son of God” (Lk.1:35). I think of Mary’s saying here, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him” (Jn.20:13).

Worst of all, the men who write and teach such things assert that they have received the fullness of the Spirit, and assert that what they say and write is inspired of the Holy Spirit.

God’s Word teaches us the sources from which signs, miracles, prophecies, healings, etc. can come, as follows:

- The divine source (Joel 2:28-32)
- A human source (Jer.23:16, 25-27; Ezek.13:2)
- The satanic source (Rev.16:13-14; Acts 16:16; 1 Kings 22:21-22)
- A mixture of influences (Mt.16:21-23; Phil.1:14-17).

When the principles as well as the practical expressions of a movement are so contrary to the Word of God, and in which so many things take place by which the Lord Jesus is dishonored, can such a movement be of God? If not, from which of the above sources then does it come?

Yes, there are believers in this movement. I know some personally who are very dear to me, and I pray for them that God might deliver them from these bonds.

Because there are believers in it, perhaps even many of them, not everything can be wrong. Where the divine nature is, it must disclose itself in some way or another. But the question is not whether *everything is* wrong, but rather the only question is whether the principles are according to God's thoughts and whether obedience to the *Lord Jesus* brings us here. And for me there is only one answer to this: *No!* The voice that sounds out from this movement is not the voice of the Good Shepherd, the voice of Him who laid down His life for me.

So my daily prayer is,

“Ever, O Lord, may this one thing be left me,  
That constantly, faithfully, I walk with Thee”!

H.L. Heijkoop

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