

DIVINE-HEALING.

"Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." John 9:25.

John devotes a whole chapter to the story of healing this poor blind man. It is as if the great writer had turned a mirror back on the days of our Lord and caught a chapter right out of the life of Jesus Christ. The characters are so vivid one can almost hear them speak and see the smiles of hope and the frowns of fear and hatred on their faces. There are five distinct types of character shown, all so clearly shown one feels like they could be called by name. The bitter stony unbelief of the Pharisees, backed by unyielding prejudice; the open enquiring mind of the disciples, ready to accept the truth backed by evidence; the frightened hedging parents of the blind man, ready to desert him if he was in deep trouble; the divinely inspired faith and courage of the man who was healed, loyal to his new-found friend to death; the Matchless Lord Jesus, the Great Physician; each so plainly drawn with a few simple words. Surely the men who wrote these simple stories were divinely inspired.

The disciples thought that all suffering was caused by sin. If the sufferer had not sinned, then his parents had. "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents." All men who are well and strong and prosperous are prone to believe that all the sick, the lame, the poor and hungry are being punished for their sins. Only those who, like Job, are called to suffer when they know they are innocent, know that this is not the cause of suffering. Why is it

that men who are well and prosperous would like to believe that all the sick, the lame, the poor and hungry are being punished for their sins? Because it is much easier to say and believe that people who suffer are being punished for their sins than it is to share their sufferings or to relieve them. When Jesus said, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents," He put a different feeling in the hearts of the disciples for the blind man. If we know that people who are suffering are innocent, we want to do something for them. Part of the anger of the Pharisees at Jesus for healing the blind man, was because He had exploded their pet excuse for not doing anything for the poor people. These people were great sinners, and any one who tried to help them was encouraging their sin.

The Pharisees at first tried to prove that the healing of the blind man was a fake. They called the parents of the man that was healed. "Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? now then doth he now see?" The frightened hedging parents answered, "We know this is our son, and that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not: or who hath opened his eyes we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself." They knew the son had the courage to speak for himself, even in a din of lions. But how could they leave him to stand alone? Had the son been as timid as his parents they would have made him deny the miracle. But here they met a courage they little expected.

This poor man was born blind. He had never had the blessings of physical sight. But he had an inner sight that was far above that of his parents or neighbors. He could see clearly the difference between good and evil; they could not. The ability to see clearly the difference between right and

wrong is a gift of God. A person whose hand has touched God's has a sight not given to men of this world. Here is the main difference between the children of light and the children of darkness. These foolish ones were ready to condemn all the matchless goodness of Christ because He had healed a man on the sabbath. It never occurred to their dull sense or right that healing a man on the sabbath might be a good deed. What a difference between their reasoning and his. "What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

The bold answer to the foolish charge that Jesus was a sinner is one of the classic declarations of faith. "I was blind, now I see." They could turn him out of the synagogue, they could degrade him, they could scorn and despise him; but they could not turn him against the only friend who had ever done him a kindness. This is the kind of gratitude that proves man is kin to God.

This is the kind of witnessing that has stopped the mouths of skeptics and infidels. This is the testimony of the saints of all ages. This is what the Lord did for me. "Come, all you that pass this way, and I will declare what the Lord hath done for my soul." I was a great sinner; now I am happy and free. I once groaned under the load of sin; now I can sing for joy. I was lame; now I can leap and run. I was in cruel bondage; now my chains are broken. There is no argument or logic for the power of Christ as strong as a soul saved from death.

"Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes." How can a man open the eyes of the blind if he is not sent from God? If a

man has power with God he must be a good man. Why would God, ⁴⁰
who knows the hearts of all men perfectly, put such power
in the hands of men and women of corrupt morals? In the ethics
of modern faith healing why has so little been said about the
moral character of men and women practicing the art? Perhaps
one reason is, that the moral character of many of the "faith
healers" of our day would not bear too close inspection.

Many of the "faith healers" of our day show very little
respect for medical science or knowledge. We know that doctors
do heal thousands of sick people. Doctors today make the blind
see, the deaf hear, the lame walk. They do not do this in a few
isolated cases; they heal men by the millions. Is not this the
gift of God? Is not our knowledge of medicine a gift of God?
It is something the world did not have when Christ was here.
For one to reject this great and merciful blessing is as blind
as the Pharisees who rejected His healing. One who rejects these
divine blessings is as guilty of rejecting the gift of God
as one who rejects faith. Some fanatics in our day have
allowed their children to die when a doctor could have saved them.
They have been encouraged to do this by, so called "faith healers",
and by their pastors. Surely there is no justification for this
in the simple Bible story of healing.

Modern "faith healers" often show very little respect
for doctor's orders. They go in and create excitement and
loud noise where there should be only quiet and rest. Why is
it necessary to disturb a person who is dangerously ill to pray
for him? When people are very ill the least excitement can be
fatal. Good doctors believe in prayer and welcome the prayers
of good men and women. But they do not approve of the noisy
fanatical prayers around people who are dangerously ill.

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Some have claimed far more for divine healing than the Bible teaches. If all illness could be healed by prayer, why should any one ever die? If any one ever had power over life and death the Lord Jesus did. But He allowed himself to die!

Why is it that modern faith healers always lay the blame for their failures on the sick man or his family? When the disciples failed to heal the lunatic boy Jesus did not lay the blame on the child or his father. He said to the disciples it was, "Because of your unbelief." The lack of faith was in the men trying to do the healing.