

HE HEALETH THEIR DISEASES

– MARCH 10. – MARK 1:29-45. –

"Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

– Matthew 8:17.

TODAY'S STUDY follows closely the one of a week ago. When Jesus left the Capernaum synagogue, He went to St. Peter's home. There St. Peter's mother-in-law lay sick of a fever. It was the work of but a moment for the Savior to take her by the hand and raise her up to health. The fame of Jesus had spread and by evening there were crowds importuning His healing words and touch. "And He healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many demons, and suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew Him."

But He did not remain to increase and deepen the favorable impression that He had made. The next morning, long before daylight, He left Capernaum and went into a desert place for prayer and communion with God. St. Peter and the others who had accepted the call to discipleship followed, and found Jesus later, and apparently urged His return, saying, "All men are seeking Thee." But Jesus replied, "Let us go elsewhere, into other towns, to preach there also." And He went into the synagogues throughout all that section, all of Galilee, preaching and casting out demons.

Nothing is more attractive to the human mind than the miraculous power of healing disease. No one enjoys disease, pain and suffering. People would be glad to be healed of disease, even if they were assured that the cures were performed by the power of Satan himself. It should not surprise us today that many false doctrines, wholly out of harmony with God's Word, commend themselves to the poor, groaning creation by promises of relief from physical ailments, without medicine, and theoretically by the power and favor of God, and supposedly in proof of the doctrines advocated by the healers.

But since these healers hold various and antagonistic doctrines, it is manifest that all are not of God, if any of them are. To our understanding, the Bible teaches that no miraculous healing at the present time is authorized by God's Word. St. Paul declared by inspiration that the gifts granted to the early Church and exercised by Jesus and the Apostles and those to whom they personally communicated them would pass away. We believe that they did pass away – that they gave place to the next and higher manifestation of Divine favor, namely, the fruits of the Holy Spirit – meekness, gentleness, long-suffering, and love – as evidence of God's favor and of membership in the Church of the First-born. The miracles which Jesus and the Apostles wrought were merely with a view to the establishment of the early Church. Nowhere is it intimated that it was the Divine will that all people should be healed of disease during this Age.

The general healing of disease will doubtless be a prominent feature of the work of Messiah's glorious Kingdom after its establishment. Not only will the ailments of the flesh be lifted, but restitution processes will go on step by step, lifting humanity out of sin, disease and imperfection, up to full and absolute perfection, except in the case of those who wilfully and deliberately oppose the Divine arrangement, and who, in due time, will be cut off from life in the Second Death. All the remainder will ultimately reach the glorious condition of perfection mentioned in the Scriptures, where there will be no more sighing, no more crying, no more dying, because all the former things of sin and death will have passed away; because He that sitteth upon the Throne will make all things new. – Rev. 21:4,5.

SATAN AN ANGEL OF LIGHT

St. Paul intimates that Satan and his messengers, the fallen angels, would seek to transform themselves so as to appear "as angels of light," that they might exercise the greater influence over humanity and that thereby they might inculcate the more successfully false doctrines,

subversive of true faith in God and His Word. We believe that the Apostle's words are particularly applicable in our day, and that many conscientious and good people are being deceived, and that miraculous healings are part of the Adversary's bait. It would not be appropriate for us to enumerate here the different doctrines which we believe are thus baited. We content ourselves by giving the Scriptural reason for expecting no miraculous healings from God at the present time.

"WHO HEALETH THEIR DISEASES"

It is quite true that under the Law Covenant which God made with Israel, He agreed that sickness should be a penalty for violation of the Law, and health a reward for the obedient. The statement of the Prophet, "Who healeth all thy diseases," was applicable physically to the Israelites under the Law Covenant. It has also a spiritual application to the Church, the New Creation.

But the healing of the New Creature and the healing of his flesh are different things. The New Creature's soul sickness and heart troubles are all cured by the Good Physician – even though his flesh may suffer pain and go down into death. We are to remember that the condition upon which we were begotten of the Holy Spirit to **[R4980 : page 69]** be new creatures was a full surrender of the flesh and its interests as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable, which is our reasonable service. – Rom. 12:1.

Nor is this any change from the Lord's dealings with the Church from the very beginning. So far as the records show all, or nearly all, who were healed by Jesus and the Apostles were "sinners." Surely there is no record of a single instance in which any of the Apostles were healed of any disease. Although St. Paul healed many sick, yet when Epaphroditus was sick and "nigh unto death" we have no mention of any attempt to miraculously recover him.

Similarly, in the case of Timothy, we find that St. Paul neither sent him napkins and handkerchiefs for his healing, nor advised him to pray

for his own healing, nor told him that he would pray for him, nor advised him to have others pray for him. On the contrary, he advised certain medicines, "for thy stomach's sake." Indeed, we believe that for God's consecrated people to ask for physical healing would be to attempt to take back again what they have specifically consecrated to the Lord – "even unto death." That the Lord specially overrules in the cases of many of His people to give them remarkable health and strength for their labors in His service, without their asking it, is another matter entirely. This, however, is in no wise in conflict with the fact that God used miracles amongst outsiders, amongst unconsecrated people, as a foreshadowing of the general blessings which will come to mankind under Messiah's Kingdom shortly to be established.

Furthermore, let us remember that the miracles performed by Jesus and the Apostles were not attempts to heal all sickness, to banish pain and sorrow. They were merely intended to attract attention to the Gospel Message. The time when God shall wipe away all tears from off all faces, and when there shall be no more sighing and crying [R4980 : page 70] and dying, will be during and as a result of Messiah's reign of a thousand years. – Rev. 21:4.

Today's study furnishes one proof along this line. Jesus did many mighty works in Capernaum, but merely to attract attention. He went to other cities and towns, leaving behind Him in Capernaum many sick and disappointed. Similarly, we read that when Jesus passed the pool of Siloam there was a great multitude of impotent folk there needing healing and waiting the opportunity to go down into the water therefor. Jesus merely observed one of that multitude and said unto him, "Take up thy bed and walk." – John 5:1-9.

A CLEANSED LEPER THANKFUL

Today's study mentions another case of healing. Leprosy was regarded by the Jews as an incurable disease, and as a type of sin. The leper of this lesson had faith in the power of Jesus, and came and

kneeled before Him and entreated healing, cleansing. His prayer was answered, not because he was one of Jesus' disciples, nor because he promised to become one of them, but because of his exercise of faith, and in order to make of his case a testimony to the priests that Jesus exercised a power Divine. The cleansed leper was told to go, according to the Law, and present the customary offering, expressing his thanks to God and giving his testimony to the priest respecting his healing, and to have him examine him as the Law required.

Jesus admonished the leper not to make known so great a miracle; but in his thankfulness he could not restrain himself; he told it everywhere. The result was that Jesus could not thereafter visit the large cities because he would be overwhelmed with the number of sick brought to him for healing. He therefore frequented the rural districts, but even then the people sought Him for healing, from every quarter.

But alas! they were more appreciative of the restitution blessings than the great privilege which our Lord specially offered them of becoming His footstep followers and joint-heirs in His Kingdom, which, by and by, will dispense restitution blessings and healing far and near to every member of Adam's race condemned through the fall of Adam, and redeemed by the precious blood of Calvary.

