



Weekly Bible Study Resources

Excerpts from *The Great Physician*
For study related to the Bible Lesson April 15 - 21, 2013

Introductory Note – *The Great Physician*, Vols 1 & 2 were written by Vinton Dearing, a Christian Scientist, who was Professor of English at UCLA where he taught the English Bible as Literature for forty years. The book is a composite translation of the four Gospels, organized by event rather than book, and includes a commentary. Because of the composite nature of the translation and commentary, the excerpts below may cover more topics than the citation in the Lesson. These excerpts have been compiled by Doug McCormick. A paperback book with both volumes in one binding is available for purchase at vintondearing.com.

SECTION I – B5 (John 10:23...30)

JESUS' WORDS PROVOKE ANOTHER ATTEMPT ON HIS LIFE

[John 10:22-42](#)

According to John, Jesus had gone to Jerusalem at Hanukkah time before he crossed the Jordan. Hanukkah is an eight-day festival instituted by the Hasmoneans to commemorate their capture and rededication of the temple in Jerusalem after it had been desecrated. It comes in December.¹⁰⁰

[“Then the Dedication happened in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple precincts in Solomon’s colonnade \[on the east side of the temple area. The retaining wall on that side of the area was thought to have been built by Solomon.\]”¹⁰¹](#)

[“So the Jews \[Judeans\] encircled him and were saying to him, ‘How long do you hold our soul \[in suspense\]? If you’re the Messiah, say \[so\] to us publicly.’”](#)

[“Jesus answered them, ‘I said \[so\] to you and you don’t trust \[me\]. The works that I do in my Father’s name \[because I am His\], these testify about me. But you don’t trust \[me\] because you’re not from my sheep. My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. And I give them eternal life, and they’ll never die, and no one will seize them from my hand. My Father, who’s given \[them\] to me, is greater than all \[others\], and no one can seize \[them\] from my Father’s hand. I and my Father are \[at\] one.’”¹⁰²](#) He was prayerfully affirming that Christianity was ineradicable and that God would guard his followers from temptation.

[“The Jews again took up stones to stone him.](#)

[“Jesus responded to them, ‘I showed you many good works \[that came\] from my Father. For which work of these do you stone me? \[Are you defaming God’s work?\]](#)

[“The Jews answered him, ‘We don’t stone you about a good work but about a \[different\] defamation,’ that is, ‘because you, being a man, make yourself a god.’”](#)

[“Jesus answered them, ‘Hasn’t it been written in your Law \[and Prophets and Psalms\], “I said, ‘You are gods’”? If it said those \[men were\] gods to whom the word of God came, and the scripture can’t be broken, do you say to him whom the Father made holy and sent into the world, “You defame \[God\],” because I said, “I’m the Son of God”? If I don’t do my Father’s works, don’t trust me. But if I do \[them\] and if you \[still\] don’t trust me, trust the works, so that you’ll know and recognize that the Father \[is\] in me \[I](#)

reflect Him] and I [am] in the Father [He embraces me].¹⁰³

“So they were seeking again to arrest him, and he went out of their hands.

“And he went off again across the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and remained there. [Since we do not know where John did his baptizing, we cannot tell exactly where Jesus was.] And many came to him and were saying, ‘Even though John made no sign [as a proof of his teaching], still everything whatsoever John said about this [man] was true.’ And many trusted in him there.”

Thus Jesus proved to himself a third time in this year that God protected him.

SECTION II – B7 (Mark 12:32-33)

MORE DISCUSSIONS WITH PHARISEES

Mark 12:28-34 Matthew 22:34-40 Luke 10:25-37

Luke puts the next dialogue among the events on Jesus’ preceding journey, but the agreement of Matthew and Mark indicates that they have it in the right place. Continuing with Mark (with whom Matthew is in general agreement): “And one of the scribes [Matthew and Luke call him a lawyer] who came and heard them arguing [about immortality], seeing that he answered them well, questioned him, ‘Which is the first commandment of all?’

“Jesus answered, ‘The first is, “Hear, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul” and from your whole mind “and from your whole strength.” The second [is] this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” No other commandment is greater than these.’ [Matthew says instead, “On these two commandments hangs the whole of The Law and the Prophets.”]²²⁹

Mark adds, “And the scribe said to him, ‘Teacher, you spoke well and truly, for “[God] is One” and “there is no other except Him,” and to “love Him from the whole heart” and from the whole mind “and from the whole strength,” and to “love [your] neighbor as yourself” is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.’²³⁰

“And Jesus, seeing that he answered thoughtfully, said to him, ‘You’re not far from the kingdom of God.’”

Luke’s version of the conversation says that the lawyer tested Jesus, “saying, ‘Teacher, what shall I do to inherit [or possess] eternal life?’” Luke says also that Jesus replied, “What’s been written in the Law? How do you read [it]?” and that the lawyer answered by quoting the laws which Matthew and Mark say Jesus quoted. Then, says Luke, Jesus said, “You answered correctly. Do this, and you’ll live.”

Those familiar with spiritual healing interpret the “first” commandment in the light of Jesus’ words to the Samaritan woman, “God [is] Spirit,” and “the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth [mentally and sincerely].”²³¹ To them, therefore, the commandment says we must constantly affirm that spiritual existence is the only true existence, and surrender not only material forms of worship but all human sensations and emotions, no matter how attractive they may seem, which do not conform to the divine. They then interpret the “second” commandment in the light of the first, saying that we must carry out our deeds of love in full recognition that everyone is activated and supported in life by the one Spirit or Mind, everyone is a child of God and manifests His truth and love.

Continuing with Luke, “And he [the lawyer], intending to make himself righteous [that is, to think and act justly about the matter], said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’ [For the law in Leviticus 19:18 says in full, “You shall not take vengeance on nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall

love your neighbor as yourself,” and so might be interpreted as limiting “neighbors” to fellow Jews.]

“Taking [him] up, Jesus said, ‘A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among bandits, and after they stripped off his clothes and laid blows [on him] they went off, leaving [him] half dead. And by chance a certain priest was going down by that road and seeing him he passed by on the other side. And a Levite, too, likewise coming to the place and seeing [him] passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan traveling [on the road] came to him, and seeing [him] had pity and went to [him] and bound up his wounds, pouring olive oil and wine on [them]. And putting him on his own animal he led him to an inn and took care of him. And in the morning throwing out [of his moneybag the coins to pay his bill] he gave [an extra] two denarii to the innkeeper and said, “Take care of him, and whatever you spend besides I’ll repay to you on my return.”

“Which of these three seems to you to have become a neighbor to the one who fell among the bandits?’

“And he said, ‘He who did the merciful act to him.’

“And Jesus said to him, ‘You go and do likewise.’”

Considering that a denarius could be a day’s wage, that Jericho is only about ten miles from Jerusalem, and that the Samaritan had an animal to ride, we may guess that he intended to return in two or three days.

While it is certainly true that the wounded man had to accept the Samaritan’s help if he was to benefit from it, I nevertheless disagree with those who say Jesus told the parable to teach grateful and unquestioning acceptance of God-sent aid, important as that teaching is, and I do so in spite of the evidence of the Talmud that male Jews felt it demeaning to accept public charity, even from their fellow Jews.²³²

My reasoning rests on the assumption that Jesus would use language in the normal way wherever possible. The lawyer to whom Jesus was speaking might indeed have put himself in the position of the wounded man and have been mentally rejecting the idea of accepting help from a person whom he despised. But if Jesus had intended the parable to teach the lawyer to accept help from whoever gave it he would have structured it differently, explicitly making him see the action through the wounded man’s eyes.

While, in the present state of literary criticism, it is widely regarded as legitimate to see in a text whatever one can see, I still believe authors have intentions that they signal through careful choice of words. As Luke records Jesus’ words, we see the action as bystanders. We are not asked to view it through any eyes but our own, nor would the lawyer as long as all the characters were Jews. Jesus gives him no signal that when the Samaritan arrives he is to shift his point of view. He does not say, “But the man saw a Samaritan coming to him.” Finally, Jesus tells the lawyer to do, not accept, merciful acts, using the same verb the lawyer had used to identify the neighbor, “He who did the merciful act to him.”

But it is more important to do good to all and to accept good from all than to quarrel about principles of interpretation.

SECTION II – B8 (Matt 4:23)

Mark 1:39 Matthew 4:23-25 Luke 4:44

Matthew now rejoins the others. Mark says: “And he went into all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and throwing out demons.” (Luke says that Jesus “was preaching in the synagogues of Judea,” but as “Judea” is a slip of the pen most manuscripts have “Galilee” instead.) Matthew says: “And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom [of God, that is, that it had drawn near and was knocking at the door, waiting to be recognized], and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. And his fame went out into all Syria [the next Roman province to the north, roughly modern Syria]. And they brought to him all those ill with different sicknesses

and those in great pain, and demoniacs and epileptics and paralytics, and he healed them. And many crowds followed him [that came] from Galilee and the Decapolis [east of Galilee] and Jerusalem and Judea and across [east of] the Jordan [that is, from Perea].”⁸⁰

SECTION II – B9 (Matt 5:1..24)

[II. FULFILLING THE LAW]

“You’re the salt of the earth [that is, the fertilizer of the soil], but if salt loses its qualities in what [way] will it be salted? It has no use any longer except to be thrown out and walked on by people.”⁸²

“You’re the light of the world. A city lying on top of a hill cannot be hidden [because its lights shine out at night]. Nor do [people] light a lamp and put it under the eight-quart measure, but on the lamp stand and it shines for all those in the house. Likewise shine your light before people, so that they’ll see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven [who inspired and empowered you to do them].

“Don’t think that I came to destroy The Law and the Prophets [the Bible]. I didn’t come to destroy but to fulfill [them; give their full meaning, including their spiritual or metaphysical meaning, and apply them in the destruction of all evil]. For truly, I say to you, until the heaven and the earth will have passed away — until all [things] will have happened — not one yod [the smallest Hebrew letter] nor one ‘horn’ [a projection from the main line of a letter distinguishing it from a similar letter] will have passed away from the Law. So whoever will destroy one of the littlest of these commandments and will teach people thus will be called littlest in [understanding and proving the nature of] the kingdom of heaven. But whoever will do and teach [them], this [person] will be called great in [understanding and proving the nature of] the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you that if your righteousness won’t overflow [bless others] more than [the righteousness] of the scribes and Pharisees [by worshipping God in spirit and truth instead of at Jerusalem, by welcoming healings of every kind on the Sabbath, and by recognizing that you are defiled by what you think, not by what you eat] you won’t go into the kingdom of heaven.”⁸³

“You heard that it was said to the ancient people, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever will murder will be deserving of judgment’ [a commandment God gave to Noah in the form, “Whoever kills a man must be executed”]. But I say to you that everyone who’s angry at his brother will be deserving of judgment; and whoever will say to his brother ‘Raca’ [‘You’re a nothing’] will be deserving of [trial by] the [full] Sanhedrin [summoned only to hear accusations against a priest or a prophet, or a whole town or tribe]; and whoever will say ‘Fool!’ will be deserving [of being sent] into hell fire.”⁸⁴

“So, if you’ll bring your gift [that is, sacrifice] to the altar [in front of the temple in Jerusalem] and there you’ll remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar and go away; first settle matters with your brother, and then come and bring your gift.”⁸⁵

“Make friends quickly with your opponent [in a law suit], while you are on the way [to court] with him, so that the opponent won’t bring you before the judge and the judge [won’t hand you over] to the under-officer and you won’t be thrown into jail. [Otherwise,] truly, I say to you, you won’t come out of there until you’ll give up [your] last quadrans [the smallest Roman coin]. [Don’t depend on human law, depend on God’s law.]”⁸⁶

“You heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’ [a commandment God gave to Moses]. But I say to you that everyone looking at a woman in a way that made him desire her thereupon committed adultery with her in his heart. And if your right eye shocks you, tear it out and throw [it] from you, for it’s better for you that you’ll lose one of your bodily parts and that your whole body won’t be thrown into hell. And if your right hand shocks you, cut it off and throw [it] from you, for it’s better for you that you’ll lose

one of your bodily parts and that your whole body won't be thrown into hell."

[Jesus combines the commandment against adultery with the one against coveting your neighbor's wife. He did not teach self-mutilation; the right eye and hand represent what one thinks most necessary to well-being and happiness.]⁸⁷

"And it was said [by God to Moses], 'Whoever will divorce his wife, let him give her a [certificate of] divorce.' But I say to you that everyone divorcing his wife, except on grounds of unchastity, makes her commit adultery [should she remarry], and whoever will marry a divorcée commits adultery [because she is really still married to her former husband].⁸⁸

"Again, you heard that it was said to the ancients, 'You shall not break oaths, but perform your oaths [sworn] to the Lord.' [God gave Moses the general commandment, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain," as well as other laws more specifically governing oaths]. But I say to you not to swear at all, neither by heaven, because it's God's throne, nor by the earth, because it's the footstool for His feet [God says in Isaiah 66:1, "the heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool"], nor by Jerusalem, because it's 'the city of the great King' [i.e., God; Jesus is quoting Psalm 48:2], nor shall you swear by your head, because you can't make one hair white or black. But let your word be 'yes,' 'yes,' 'no,' 'no.' Anything more than these is from the evil [one]. [Don't depend on oaths to ensure honesty in others or yourself, depend on God.]⁸⁹

"You heard that it was said [by God to Moses], 'Eye for eye' and 'tooth for tooth.' But I say to you not to withstand an evil [person], but whoever strikes you on your right cheek turn to him the other also [a command to be merciful as well as not to be afraid of a second assault but to trust that God will protect you]. And to the one who intends to get a judgment against you and to receive your tunic give up your cloak to him also. And whoever [on government business] will force you to go one mile [with him carrying his baggage], go two with him. [The second mile being a gift makes the first mile a gift also, changing the whole atmosphere from grievance to grace.] Give to anyone who asks you, and don't turn away from one who intends to borrow from you. [You need not avail yourself of Hillel's prosbul or fear any kind of demand made on you; trust that God will give you the wealth, time, and strength you need in order to respond generously.]⁹⁰

[The so-called Mosaic code of "eye for eye" replaced an earlier rule that in order to insure your safety in lawless circumstances you should threaten unlimited retaliation and if necessary carry out the threat. In going beyond Moses' newer rule, Jesus was alluding to a precept in the book of Proverbs,

Do not say, "I will requite evil [with evil]";
Trust in the Lord and He will save you.

As for generous giving, the books of "wisdom" urge and the Law of Moses demands it.]⁹¹

[The reader should observe carefully how the following paragraph unfolds its theme and comes to a climax, paying attention, however, to what is said, not to how it is said.]

"You heard that it was said [by the Essenes], 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy' [a teaching in the first surviving paragraph of their Manual of Discipline]. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray over those persecuting you. [The Essene law not being biblical, Jesus simply rejects it.] Thus you'll be sons of your Father in heaven, because He makes His sun rise on evil [people] and good and rains on righteous and unrighteous. For if you'll love those who love you, do you have any reward [for merit]? Even the publicans do the same, don't they? And if you'll greet only your brothers, what do you do extra? Even the Gentiles do the same, don't they? So be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. [As Jesus' listeners knew, this eternal command was, humanly speaking, as old as their ancestor Abraham, to

whom God had said 2000 years before, “Walk in My ways and be perfect” (Genesis 17:1), and had been reaffirmed in a law He gave to Moses, “You shall be perfect with the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 18:13). Those with experience of Christian healing regard Jesus’ words as referring not to a human struggle with one’s limitations but to a God-empowered recognition that life and intelligence are purely spiritual.]

SECTION III – B13 (Mark 2:15-17)

LEVI (MATTHEW) CALLED TO BE A STUDENT

Mark 2:13-17 Matthew 9:9-13 Luke 5:27-32

Continuing with Mark (with whom Matthew and Luke agree particularly well in the dialogue; possibly they all had a written source for the words of Jesus): “And he went out again by the sea (and the whole crowd was coming to him and he was teaching them), and passing by he saw Levi, Alphaeus’ [son], sitting at the publican’s office, and says to him, ‘Follow me.’

“And he got up and followed him.”

Matthew calls this man Matthew, and although Luke agrees with Mark that his name was Levi, indicating that they have the name right, it is usually assumed that he had both names. In Chapter VII, I discuss the question of whether he was the author of the Gospel. Authorities are divided over how to translate the Greek word commonly represented by the Latin *publicanus* and English publican. Does it mean a customs officer or a tax collector? Capernaum was the first town in Galilee west of Trachonitis on the lakeshore, and so it may well be that Levi was collecting duties on goods going to market instead of taxes.

Continuing as before. “And it happened [that] he [Jesus] was reclining [while eating] in his [Levi’s] house (and many publicans and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his students, for they were many, and they were following him). And the scribes of the Pharisees, seeing that he is eating with sinners and publicans, were saying to his students, ‘Does he eat with publicans and sinners? [He shouldn’t.]’¹²¹

“And when Jesus heard he says to them, ‘The strong don’t have need of a physician, but those who are sick [do]. I didn’t come to call the righteous but sinners [to repentance].’”¹²²

We should note that Matthew puts the following between the two last sentences: “But go and learn what ‘I [God] intend [you to show] mercy and not [to offer] sacrifice’ is.” The quotation is Hosea 6:6. According to Matthew, as we shall see, it is a teaching that Jesus quoted more than once.

SECTION III – B14 (John 8:1-11)

AN ADULTERESS REFORMED

John 7:53-8:11

The next paragraph begins a section of John that is found in many manuscripts, but not the oldest. Several of the older ones have it marked as spurious or even erased. In a few manuscripts it is found elsewhere in John in different places or just before or after it. Therefore, even though it appears in some of the older manuscripts of John, most scholars feel that it was not originally a part of any Gospel but was put in or added to John to preserve it. Why preserve it specially? It has been conjectured that it was important to early Christians because it shows Jesus writing. The unquestioned parts of the Gospels give no evidence that Jesus could write but instead record the objection we have just read that he did not know “letters.”

“And each went to his house, and Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

“And early in the morning he came into the temple precincts again, and all the people were coming to

him, and he sat down and was teaching them. And the scribes and the Pharisees bring a woman who had been taken in adultery and they stood her in the midst [in front of Jesus].

“And they say to him, ‘Teacher, this woman has been taken in the act, committing adultery. And Moses in the Law commanded us to stone such [women]. So what do you say?’⁴²

“They were saying this, testing him, to have [something] to accuse him [of as well as her]. But Jesus bent down and was writing [something] down on the ground with [his] finger [the King James translators added “as though he heard them not”].

“But as they were remaining there asking him, he straightened up and said to them, ‘Let him who’s without sin among you be the first to throw a stone on her.’”

By this date the Romans had forbidden Jewish courts to order executions on their own. Either the narrative is not genuine, then, or the accusers were trying to get Jesus to say the Roman law should be broken, so that they could charge him with sedition, or Jesus thought the court might disobey the Romans as one did later when trying Stephen, the first Christian martyr, or Jesus was using language that had only recently become obsolete, with the full understanding of all concerned. Witnesses could not refuse to testify, and in former times the witnesses in a capital case would have begun the process of execution. They were examined in order of decreasing age, the judges looking closely for signs that their testimony was inaccurate, and no more were examined after a second acceptable witness was found to agree with the first. The Naples edition of the Babylonian Talmud says the first witness would have dropped the first stone on her (other editions say one of the witnesses would have pushed her off a nine foot drop, after which, if she survived the fall, the other witness would have dropped the first stone).⁴³

Continuing with John. “And he bent down again and was writing on the ground. And when they heard [what he said], they went out one by one, beginning with the oldest ones, and he was left alone [with those he had been teaching], and the woman being in the midst [in front of him].⁴⁴

“And Jesus straightened up and said to her, ‘Woman [not a disrespectful term in Greek, it will be remembered], where are they? Didn’t anyone condemn you?’

“And she said, ‘No one, Sir.’

“And Jesus said, ‘I don’t condemn you either. Go, and from now on don’t sin any more.’”

Here the questionable section of John ends. I accept the foregoing as a true narrative, for it corresponds to what we know of Jesus from the unquestioned parts of the Gospels. I regard Jesus’ last words not as a dismissal or even as a pardon but as a permanent cancellation of sin. We are to understand, I believe, that the woman went home freed of any temptation to engage in adulterous relationships. We must also recognize that Jesus did not merely appeal to the better nature of her accusers. Who could tell how men filled with deceit and lawlessness might react? Jesus purified their thinking too, another example of his holding crime in check. Finally, I believe we may conclude that the spiritual insight which changed the woman’s and her accusers’ thoughts caused her husband or her fiancé, if she had either, to forgive her wholeheartedly. God does nothing by halves, and, as Jesus said, he did only what his Father did.

SECTION IV – B17 (Matt 9:2...38)

A HEALING OF PARALYSIS

Mark 2:1-12 Matthew 9:1-8 Luke 5:17-26

Continuing as before with Mark as our base. “And when he entered into Capernaum again after [some] days it was heard that he is in the house. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room even in front of the door, and he was speaking the word to them. And they come bringing a paralytic

to him carried by four [stretcher-bearers]. And not being able to bring [the man] to him because of the crowd, they [carried him up the stairs on the outside of the house,] lifted off [the upper surface of] the roof where he was and after setting aside [the under-boardings] let down the stretcher on which the paralytic was lying.¹¹⁶

“And Jesus, seeing their trust, says to the paralytic, ‘Child, your sins are taken away.’

“But [the man remained inert, for] there were some of the scribes sitting there and arguing [against Jesus] in their hearts, ‘Why does this [man] speak this way? He’s defaming [God]. Who can take away sins except God alone?’”

Luke says more specifically that the men were Pharisees who taught law and that they came from all the villages of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem. Most manuscripts of Luke add the words, “and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.” Scholars today prefer the manuscripts which add instead, “and the Lord’s power was [there] for him to heal.”

It is important to recognize that Jesus’ words had not immediately healed the paralytic, to understand why, and to observe Jesus’ response. The mental opposition to him among the onlookers had to be faced up to and faced down.¹¹⁷

Continuing with Mark. “And Jesus, knowing immediately in his spirit that they are arguing in themselves thus, says to them, ‘Why do you argue these [things] in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, “Your sins are taken away,” or to say, “Rouse up and take your stretcher and walk”? But so that you’ll know that the Son of man has authority to take away sins on the earth,’ he says to the paralytic, ‘I say to you, rouse up, take your stretcher, and go to your house’ [thus raising him from his inertia and, by removing him from the hostile atmosphere, preventing a relapse].

“And he roused up and taking his stretcher at once he went out in front of all, so that they are all amazed and glorify God, saying, ‘We never saw anything like this before.’”

Luke adds that the paralytic glorified God. Matthew’s and Mark’s omission of the paralytic’s gratitude does not necessarily mean Luke is wrong, but we shall see Jesus himself pointing out that only one in a group of ten lepers gave God thanks as soon as they were healed.¹¹⁸

Notable in the healing of the paralytic is Jesus’ statement that the paralysis and sin were taken away in the same manner. He did not thereby mean that every disaster was caused by sin, for Luke tells of the following conversation at a later time. “There were some . . . who brought him news about the Galileans whose blood Pilate mixed with their sacrifices. [We do not know anything more about this massacre.] And he said to them in reply, ‘Do you think that these Galileans were sinners beyond all the Galileans because they suffered these [things]? No indeed, I say to you, but unless you repent you’ll all die in a similar way. Or those eighteen on whom the tower fell in Siloam [a part of Jerusalem inside the southeast corner of the city wall] and killed them [another event of which we have no other record], do you think that they were sinners beyond all the people living in Jerusalem? No indeed, I say to you, but if you don’t repent you’ll all die similarly.’” And, as we shall see, when his students thought sin might have caused a certain man to have been born blind, he said that sin was not the cause in that particular case.¹¹⁹

Sin neglected or nurtured is not merely a cause of disaster, it prevents spiritual healing. As the man who had been born blind put it, “God doesn’t hear sinners. If this [Jesus] weren’t a man of God he couldn’t do anything.” One who would heal by the Spirit does not have to be so free of sin as Jesus was, but he cannot deliberately break or even intend to break one part of God’s law at the same time that he seeks to bring another part into operation. The same is true of the patient. If sin has caused his trouble, he must give it up by himself or with the aid of the healer before healing can come; to erase the effect the cause must be erased.¹²⁰

In the case of this paralytic, Jesus had healed the man of sin, the cause of his paralysis, but was

interrupted before he removed the effect. This was not the last time that Jesus had to come to the defense of his healing method in order to heal, and spiritual healers today sometimes find it necessary also. When one has taken up a case with the same love and trust in God that Jesus had, then delay in the healing is a symptom of the disease and must be taken up along with the others, this particular symptom indicating that the patient's mind, of itself or under the influence of other minds, is resisting the healing. There is no formula for the healer's response in such cases, as we can see from the other times when Jesus had to respond. A spiritual healer known to me was praying for a patient whose family telephoned several times to say, "He's no better." When the healer responded, "He's no worse, is he?" the healing came. Spiritual healings are proofs, not tests, of God's care for His beloved creation, proofs that He never tires of or in healing the sick. Who would not come vigorously to the defense of this great fact, dispelling any illusion that would appear to blot it out?

We shall also see many other examples of Jesus' removing his patients from atmospheres of thought inimical to him by sending them away or by taking them aside or both. He did not always do so, but he clearly preferred to. In the same way, a spiritual healer today will prefer that his patient be under the care of like-minded persons, but will not refuse to help someone who has been hospitalized or imprisoned. In Jesus' case, also, as we have said, he was sheltering his patients from attempts to undermine their healings.

SECTION V – B18 (John 17:1...26)

These verses are part of a much larger passage, on which Dearing makes extensive commentary in his book. Please see the book or contact me (dougmcoco@gmail.com) for the excerpt if you are interested.

Please contact me (dougmcoco@gmail.com) if you have any questions or comments.