

nected with it in some way. It is not needful to mention the names of such systems, ever reader is more or less familiar with their claims.

Why does not God permit man to exercise the same power in healing the sick and working miracles which was granted to the early church? It seems to me that the reason is most obvious. In that day Christ's teachings were new and needed to be accredited to mankind. They had Jewish prejudice and heathen idolatry to encounter and overcome, and we may say there was no other way to prove they were of God than to attest them by miracles. But now the doctrines of Christ are sufficiently accredited; there is evidence enough to convince any one who will be convinced that the Word and the Gospel are true, hence miracles are not needed.

But there is another weighty reason why God does not give men power to work miracles. Suppose a certain company or sect of believers had this power, they would at this day be very sure to use such a power to accredit the sect instead of the Word of God and the truth of Christ.—Man's failure is such that he would in this and other ways certainly abuse such a power. It was only at the very beginning of the Gospel that this power was given, except in a very limited way, and in this limited way it is still given wherever needed. For instance there are a number of marked instances where God has come in to show, by a display of His great power, to the heathen that the missionary or missionaries were from Him and preaching His truth.

But God does not do this in Christendom ordinarily. He cannot set

His seal upon the discords, divisions, and sectarian strifes of His people; one body of believers cannot stand up and say, we can work miracles, so we are the right church. Suppose a company of His people could do that, were so spiritual and living so much in His presence that every one who came in contact with them saw that they were walking in communion with God. What guarantee could be given that they would continue to walk in this way? The first of the seven churches in the second of Revelation had left her first love, and how soon worldliness crept in. And the second generation in such a movement, how seldom do they keep upon the same high plane of holy living. So in a short time the devoted body of believers have lost their devotedness, have grown worldly.—But suppose the power to work miracles was not withdrawn, what would be the result? Evil in every way, as a little meditation will convince us. Hence very early in the history of the church did the power to work miracles cease, except in the limited way we have spoken of.

But it may be asked, is not James v. 14, 15 for us? A careful study of this passage will not tend to feed man's pride. Eldership has lapsed for nearly the same reason that gifts of healing have been withdrawn.—One prominent truth in the passage is that sickness is often chastening for sin, and the healing is and must be accompanied by the forgiveness of the Father, not that which is given to one on believing in Christ when saved, but what is termed "governmental forgiveness."

The child of God if he fall into sin