

long as he sees a more far-reaching way to utilize his efforts toward checking social cowardice, he will not face certain and instantaneous death for a lesser issue. He will ever look ahead, watching, as far as he can, the heart of the thing, working hard and with serious purpose, yet biding his time. He will direct his efforts toward the end that the will to check social cowardice become sufficiently organized therefore sufficiently effective

## HEALING MIRACLES OF JESUS

BY JULIUS J. PRICE

FROM even a scant survey of the New Testament, it is quite evident, that miracles occupied an important place in the ministry of Jesus. Whilst the majority of critics discountenance the supernatural miracles attributed to this God-Man, yet there are some who cling most tenaciously to their belief in the truth of his healing miracles.

The author of the article entitled "Jesus" in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* is inclined to the latter theory, for he says, "The healing ministry judged by critical tests stands on as firm historical ground as the best accredited parts of the teachings." Should we, however, be inclined to accept this theory of miracle healing, we are immediately confronted with the difficulty—that this miraculous healing power cannot be attributed to Jesus alone. For it is an acknowledged fact that amongst the Jews, Hindus, and Mohammedans a sort of supernatural Therapeutics has always been known, for well does Harnack remark: "Nor was it God's messenger alone, but magicians and charlatans as well who were thought to be possessed of some of these miraculous powers."

This power can lay claims to no divine inspiration or religious sanctity and so cannot serve as a criterion of a religious truth or a moral excellence. Therefore the so-called miracles cannot be taken as conclusive proof of Jesus divine mission.

Even Gospel accounts proves that Jesus was not unique in this one power but that others yielded the same power over similar diseases. The Pharisees for instance, did not dispute the ability of Jesus to heal certain diseases but they attributed it to his connection with Beelzebub. Since Jesus in several gospel accounts was regarded as anything but a righteous person, it proved to the Pharisees that these healing miracles could be performed by righteous as well as sinner alike. And to prove this contention we have only to turn to the account in the gospels where we find this contention discussed (compare Matt. ix. 34; xii. 24; Mark iii. 23; Luke xi. 15).

It can be further proven from the gospels (Matt. xii. 27; Luke xi. 19) that the disciples of the Pharisees also performed such miracles as are attributed to Jesus and that this fact is admitted by Jesus himself. "And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils by whom do your children cast them out." Again the gospels call our attention concerning those who cast out devils but yet were not numbered amongst the followers of Jesus (compare Mark ix. 36-40; Luke ix. 49). And, further still, the oft repeated assertion that the disciples could only heal in the name of Jesus is disproved in the gospel of John where the blind beggar regains his sight by washing in the pool of Siloam (compare John ix. 7).

Another point that we must consider is that Jesus demanded faith in himself and his teaching before he would proceed to use this healing power. And strange to say he attributed any failure of his to heal the person in question on the part of the disciples' "lack of faith." Thus the author of the article "Gospels" in the *Encyclopedia Biblica* takes shelter in the Neurotic theory of the healing miracles. He writes, "Of course we must endeavor to ascertain how many, and still more, what sorts of cures were effected by Jesus. It is quite permissible for us to regard as historical only those of the class which even at the present day physicians are able to effect by physical methods as more especially cures of mental maladies. It is highly significant that in a discourse of Peter (Acts x. 38), the whole activity of Jesus is summed up in this that he went about doing good and healing all those that were oppressed by the devil. By this expression only demoniacs are intended (compare also Luke xiii. 32). It is not at all difficult to understand how the contemporaries of Jesus after seeing some wonderful deeds wrought by him which they regarded as miracles should have credited him with every other kind of miraculous power without distinguishing as the modern mind does between those maladies which are amen-

able to physical influence and those which are not. It is also necessary to bear in mind that the cure may often have been only temporary. If there was a relapse people did not infer any deficiency in the miraculous efficacy of the healer; they accounted for it simply by the return of the demur who had been cast out. On this point Matthew xii. 43-45 is very characteristic. Perhaps also Luke viii. 2 may be cited in this connection if the seven devils cast out of Mary Magdalene not simultaneously but on separate occasions."

In one of the issues of the *Hibbert Journal* the theory of miracles healing is questioned by a writer of an article entitled "The Miracles of Healing." It is his contention that even should the Neurotic theory be accepted there is still matter for great contention and unbelief. But this contention of incredulity need not be a matter of great dispute when we consider that the account of miracle healing in the gospels have been greatly exaggerated. For well does Harnack remark, "*The gospels are not, it is true historical works any more than the fourth; they were not written with the simple object of giving the facts as they were; they are books composed for the work of Evangelization.*" The gospel accounts are in themselves the best witnesses of this fact.

We invariably find an account that appears simple in Matthew, is found highly colored and exaggerated in Luke or Mark. In the gospel of John the state of utter absurdity is reached in the assertion that if all things done by Jesus were written in Books the world would not be large enough to contain them. This assertion is not only ludicrous but as exaggeration of a Haggadic possibility.

A number of gross exaggerations might be quoted from the gospels and it can easily be understood how trivial occurrences were magnified into the greatest of wonders by men who sat down to write events not with a real historical accuracy but with one thought and that to make out a good case for the wonder working power of their hero.

We must have a stronger case of strict accuracy in the gospel narrative with regard to the miracles of healing wrought by Jesus before we can even approximate the neurotic theory otherwise we must reject them outright.

The claim to divine intervention in the healing miracles of Jesus meets with another obstacle in the fact that Paul as well as many early Christian dignitaries make like pretensions of miraculous healing. And even throughout the ages of time, history records innumerable individuals and some strong sects laying claims

to like power. We have only to refer to the Monk Julian, who cured by his words a possessed person. Sabinus, Bishop of Placentia, wrote a letter to the River Poi, which had overflowed its banks and flooded some church lands. When the letter was thrown into the stream the waters at once subsided. Irenaeus, Apollonius, Vespasian, the King's touch, in English history: Dowie and his sect, Mrs. Eddie and her Christian Scientists, and others too numerous to mention, support the above contention.

It is therefore evident that if the above healing miracles accredited to Jesus bear an iota of truth, his was no exceptional power.

One of the fundamental doctrines of Christian Science is summed up in the following words by Mrs. Eddie: "Christian Science lays claim to the healing of most of the diseases which affect the human body while it has another still more important claim to the healing of the Spirit."

It is a well-known fact that Mrs. Eddie suffered ever since her youth from recurring fits of hysteria and it was only in 1862 that she found relief in a cure of a week through the affectual treatments of the mind healer, Dr. Quinby. In later years when she reached the zenith of her power, she claimed a higher degree of perfection than either Jesus or His Mother.

When baffled in his pray healing, the celebrated Doctor Dowie defended himself by declaring that his power was no greater than that of Jesus, "Who on several occasions failed in his administrations."

In the light of these facts it cannot be gainsaid that if Christianity finds no other means of explaining the miracles of Jesus than by the neurotic theory, it is sufficient proof that Jesus can claim no greater power than that of the many other of a Thaumaturgists who lived before and after him.