

Father. Only on the call of the Father can He employ the miraculous power. "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do" (v. 19). The 'hour' in this connexion is, of course, not used in the immediate sense of the hour of death. That idea is on the horizon, but the actual meaning the word would have for the mother of Jesus is that of a "divinely appointed moment." It is a moment pregnant with much fuller significance than she can fathom. It is the moment when Jesus openly declares Himself in all His power to the world. That moment can only be determined by God, and by the communication of His will to Jesus.

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*(To be continued.)*

### *NEW TESTAMENT MIRACLES AND MODERN HEALINGS.*

WHEN we picture to ourselves the scenes recorded in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, we cannot but feel the vivid contrast that exists between life then and now.

*Then* the unusual was frequent and the miraculous of daily occurrence. *Now* steady sequence in natural law rules and the normal persists.

We know that to many minds the miraculous element in the New Testament is a real difficulty, and leads some to refuse their assent to the trustworthiness of the records. We, who are able to accept generally the Gospel record as we find it, usually explain the presence of the miraculous at that time by holding that such an event as the Incarnation (an event which if it took place must be the central point of the world's history) would most fittingly be heralded, accompanied and followed by supernatural signs; and we explain the absence of the miraculous in our own time

by holding that, as the fact of the Incarnation has been sufficiently evidenced, and as the Church has been authoritatively established continuously to bear witness to the fact, no further need for miracles exists.

However, an opinion is gaining ground which, if established, will considerably modify this position. The extraordinary cures reported as wrought by Mental-Healing, Christian Science and other similar movements have led not a few to think that in these cures we have occurrences similar in nature to many of the cures wrought by our Lord and His early followers; and that, therefore, the cures recorded in the New Testament need no longer be regarded as strictly miraculous, but rather be viewed as applications by our Lord and His disciples of certain natural laws controlling mind and body which we are only now beginning to understand, and so to master: and it is further suggested that when our knowledge of these psychic laws is more fully developed we shall find our powers over human nature so increased as to enable us to perform most of the wonderful works described in the New Testament.

Now if this position be the true one, it follows that any difficulty that may have been felt regarding the contrast between the miraculous first ages of Christianity and these later ages is non-existent, for the so-called miraculous is resolved into the production of astounding effects through the greater grasp of knowledge of natural laws; and our Lord stands before us, in so far as His miraculous powers are concerned, not as One who has been proved by miracle to be the possessor of supernatural endowments, but either as One who possessed knowledge of the laws of the mental processes of human nature 2,000 years before any one else, or as One who, without any such premature knowledge, merely found Himself possessed of a power of curing disease,

the nature of which He Himself was ignorant of. To state such a situation is at once to demonstrate its paramount importance.

But, further, this question touches thus fundamentally not only dogma, it also touches practical ministerial life. For if our Lord's miracles were wrought by application of natural forces which we are learning to control, then the Church, as the representative of Her master, has to consider whether she should not be engaged in healing operations even as He was, and she is driven to ask whether her present inability to work such beneficent wonders may not be due to her deadness in faith and to her failing to claim from her Lord powers which He is only too ready to bestow. It is, we may suppose, to some such feeling as this that the desire in many quarters is due, to restore the rite of unction of the sick or laying-on-of-hands.

To form any clear opinion on the important matters thus brought before us, we must determine whether the cases of mental healing which are found to exist to-day have any true connexion with the curative miracles of our Lord and the apostolic Church. But before doing so, let me say that I think we ought to be on our guard against exaggerating the number of cures wrought to-day by Christian Science, spiritual healing or other such movements.

That some cures, and taken in the aggregate *many* cures, are wrought, none of us, I think, will doubt. But in judging the amount of relief and health such operations are bringing to human life, we are also to bear in mind the very much greater number of cases where nothing beneficent is wrought, or where pain has been increased and death produced by the application of these methods. By the constitution of our nature we are in all such matters liable to "count

the hits and neglect the misses.” Bacon in the 5th Book of the *Novum Organum* (v. 4) says : “ The nature of the understanding is more affected with affirmatives and actives than with negatives and privatives, though in justice it should be equally affected by both ; but if things fall out right and keep their course, the mind receives a stronger impression of this than of a greater number of failures, or contrary events, which is the root of all superstition and credulity. Hence, Diagoras, being shown in Neptune’s Temple many votive pictures of such as had escaped shipwreck, and thereupon asked by his guide if he did not acknowledge the Divine Power, answered wisely, ‘ But first show me where those are painted that were shipwrecked, after having thus paid their vows.’ ”

In other words, as I have said, we by nature are prone to count the hits and neglect the misses, and I have not the slightest doubt that the novelty and attraction of genuine cases of psychic-cures have led the world at large to credit this movement with a vastly greater amount of success than it at all deserves.

Let us now return to the question whether the Mental healings of to-day have any essential connexion with the miracles of our Lord and His Apostles.

First, I think we may hold our Lord’s miracles were one and all wrought *along the line of Law*, that they were never contradictions of Law, but the result of His miraculous use of Law. Science demonstrates the universality of Law throughout the Universe ; and we believe that the Word of God “ by whom all things were made ” and “ in Whom all things consist ” is Himself the Author and Force of that Law. If then a Mental-Healer by his skilful use of newly-discovered laws of mind, is enabled to cure a sick man, we acknowledge that Christ may also have healed a sick man by the very same laws. I say, “ *may* have cured,”

not "*must* have cured"; for there may be many other laws which could have produced the same effect, and our Lord may have used those other laws.

But when this is acknowledged I believe all further connexion ceases. The modern healer's application of his science is *tentative*. He fails at times as well as cures at times. He is no more an absolute master of the forces he is using than the medical therapist is of the drugs he is using. But an essential note of a miracle is the absence of all *tentativeness*. If an act, however wonderful, is tentative, it there and then ceases to be a miracle. A miracle is essentially evidential of authority possessed by the worker of it; but the Tentative is the antithesis of the Authoritative.

In the miracles of Christ there is nothing tentative. He is disclosed in the Gospels as having absolute control over the forces of Nature. To Him it is no more easy to cure a paralytic than it is to raise the dead; He can walk on the water, still the raging of the sea and wind, feed five thousand with five loaves as certainly as He can make the dumb to speak. He is presented to us as having the entire world of Nature absolutely at His command.

Now the source of this unlimited power is declared by Him to be found in His unique relationship with His Father. He told those that witnessed His miracles that He and His Father were so essentially one, that the full power of the Godhead was His. "The Father abiding in me, doeth his works" (John xiv. 10). "What things soever the Father doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner" (John v. 19). That was His explanation of His miracles. Is it not clear that here we are removed a long way from tentative use of psychic forces by a Mental-Healer? Our Lord is not one working from the realm of Nature with the forces of Nature, but rather is one who from the spiritual realm is able to command the forces of Nature to obedience. His miracles

are not psychic or natural, but spiritual or supernatural. This distinction between the spiritual and the psychic is of great moment in connexion with the subject under discussion. No more important sentence occurs in the Report on Ministries of Healing appended to the Lambeth Encyclical of last year than the words "many need to be reminded that psychic forces are not the same as spiritual." No doubt it is difficult to differentiate them. From the unity of our being they act upon each other, and the resultant effects are often difficult to classify; but nevertheless the distinction is real, for the spiritual is a higher degree of reality than the psychical. "God is Spirit," and the spiritual part of our composite nature links us with the Being of God. By it we reach God, receive God. On the other hand, our soul, our psychical part, links us with finite conscious life; it includes those endowments of thought, emotion and will which in conjunction with our powers of body and spirit complete our personality. If, then, we bear in mind that the power of mind over mind has no necessary connexion with the religious side of human nature, we shall see that if any man is gifted with the power of mental healing, he has it, not as a spiritual grace, but as a natural endowment; just as he might have been granted a special endowment in connexion with the arts of music or painting. He may, and indeed ought, to cultivate that gift (as all his gifts) by the aid of prayer, and to consecrate it to the highest uses; but in itself the gift is psychical and not spiritual.

But if the healing works of our Lord are thus spiritual or supernatural, and so miraculous, how are we to classify the miracles wrought by His Apostles as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles? Now, when we study the words of the Apostles in reference to the miracles they perform, it is seen that they were convinced that they wrought them, not by

any inherent personal power, but in the name and by the power of their ascended Lord. When St. Peter fastened his eyes on the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, he said, "In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk" (Acts. iii. 6); and when the crowd ran together, wondering at the cure wrought, he declared, "Why look ye on as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk? By faith in His Name hath His Name made this man strong."

It is clear that they believed that miraculous powers were granted to them by their Lord in fulfilment of His promises. The purpose for which they were thus endowed was to enable them to spread the Faith and securely establish the Church that was to guard it. And so when they were gathered together, we find that they prayed the following words: "Lord . . . grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness while thou stretchest forth thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of thy Holy Servant Jesus" (iv. 29).

Clearly, then, we must regard the miracles recorded in Acts as wrought by the power of God delegated to them through their ascended Lord, and so as a continuance of the miracles of Christ. Here, then, we are still in the spiritual, not in the psychical region. When, however, we come to the period that immediately followed the apostolic days, we find a markedly changed situation, the miraculous having practically ceased. The Gospels describing the Life of Christ are saturated with the miraculous. The Acts contain much that is miraculous, but to a less extent than the Gospels. The writings of the primitive Church are almost entirely without the miraculous; in them life has recurred to the normal.

In this connexion it is worth remarking that at the close of the Acts we have a hint that the author, Luke the Physi-

cian, was curing sickness with medical treatment, while Paul was exercising his miraculous powers. In the 28th chapter we are told that the Apostle, praying and laying hands on Publius, cured him, and that when this was done many others came to be healed. It appears that these latter were cured not only by St. Paul but by his companions as well, for we read they honoured "us" (not "him") with many honours. This change from the singular to the plural, together with the exact medical diagnosis of the disease of Publius, is taken by Harnack as pointing to the fact that Luke brought his medical skill to bear upon the sufferers. Professor Ramsay much strengthens this suggestion by pointing out the change in verbs used to describe the cures wrought. In the case of St. Paul's cure of Publius, we have *ιάσατο*, that is, he was *cured*; whereas in the cases where Luke was associated with the Apostle we have *ἔθεραπεύοντο*, a word which in the strict sense (and Luke certainly used medical terms in a strict sense) means "*received medical treatment*". This interpretation is strongly corroborated in the EXPOSITOR (May, 1909), by Professor Moulton and Dr. Milligan; and if it be accepted, we have an interesting evidence of a return during the apostolic age to the treatment of sickness by recognised methods of medicine—a method not less truly from God than the miraculous.

We shall not, then, be surprised to find in *post-apostolic* writings an absence of the miraculous. In support of this position let me quote from Dean Bernard's article on Miracles in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*. He says: "It would not be surprising if we found in the literature of the early second century many references to miracles like those in Acts. Yet such references are few and scanty. . . . With a few notable exceptions there is no trace up to the end of the second century of any miraculous gifts still existing in the

primitive Church save those of *prophecy* and *healing*, including *exorcisms*, both of which are frequently mentioned." Doubtless what will, in the present connexion, most strike us in this quotation is the statement that though the miraculous generally is said to be wanting from the post-apostolic Church, yet that "healing" existed; and we ask, were not these "healings" themselves miraculous?

Such, however, is, I think, not the case. Of these "healings" the most frequent examples are cases of exorcisms; but exorcisms are not necessarily miraculous, and they were by no means confined to the Christian Church. We find instances of them in the writings of Josephus and the Apocrypha. They thus occurred before the Incarnation. No doubt the power of exorcism, resident in the Church, was vastly more potent than any similar power existing outside of it; yet the fact that it was not exclusively Christian separates it from the miracles of the New Testament.

The same must be remembered about healings other than exorcisms. No doubt these were present, both as to power and frequency, in the Church in a way not found elsewhere; but nevertheless cases of healing sufficiently marvellous to excite amazement were found among those outside the true faith. Origen evidently thought that signs and wonders were wrought among the heathen, for he writes in controversy with Celsus: "Were I going to admit that a demon named Aesculapius had the power of healing bodily diseases I might remark . . . that such curative power is of itself neither good nor bad, but within the reach of the godless as well as honest folk . . . Many instances may be adduced of people being healed who did not deserve to live. The power of healing diseases is no evidence of anything specially divine" (*c. Celsus*, iii. 25: cited by Harnack, *Expans. Christianity*, vol. i. 108). Bearing then in mind the fact that healings, *apparently* miraculous, have been wrought

to a certain extent without as well as within the Church, we are led to conclude that these healings of the primitive Church were psychic and not supernatural, and so come into line with cures wrought to-day by faith-healers rather than with the miracles of our Lord. We must remember that in describing them as psychic we are not denying that they were wrought by the Church in the very strength of God. The spirit of God in His mercy endowed certain members of the Body with psychic powers that enabled them to heal.

And if such powers were granted to those outside the Body, yet undoubtedly the Church was the true home for such gifts. Religious convictions strongly influence the psychical part of our nature, and therefore the Christian Religion, as being the strongest spiritual force, would most powerfully exert in the psychic region every beneficent psychic force. But the point we would strongly urge is, that if such healings, beneficent as they are, are psychic in nature, they are essentially distinct from the miraculous works of Christ and His Apostles ; they are natural, not supernatural.

It is important to mark that St. Paul himself distinguished between the power of working miracles and the possession of gifts of healing. In 1 Corinthians xii. he gives a list of the various gifts with which the Church was endowed by the one Spirit. We read (ver. 8), "To one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom, and to another the word of knowledge . . . to another gifts of healings in the one Spirit, and to another workings of miracles." Here healings are differentiated from miracles. Nor can we say that the Apostle is merely rhetorically enumerating the various results of the Holy Spirit's activity which he saw around him without attempting carefully to classify them ; for at the close of this chapter he twice repeats his list, and on both occasions again differentiates working of miracles

from gifts of healing. In verse 28 we have " God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, *then miracles, then gifts of healings* " : and in verse 29, " Are all apostles, are all prophets, are all teachers, *are all workers of miracles, have all gifts of healings ?* " This emphatic separation of working of miracles from gifts of healings is most remarkable, and can only be based on some essential distinction between them ; and that distinction is, I believe, to be found in the fact that miracles are spiritual and healings psychical.

This, too, is probably the cause why healings are described as *gifts* (i.e. special personal endowments), while miracles are not so described. St. Paul's experience taught him that while he and other leaders of the Church were enabled, by the impartation of a measure of Christ's own supernatural powers, to work miracles, others were gifted with inherent psycho-therapeutic powers which enabled them to exercise healing functions upon the sick. (See Heb. ii. 4.)

We may conclude, therefore, that the phenomena of healings which meet us to-day are identical in nature with the psychic gifts of healings found in the days of the apostolic and primitive Church. Nor need we think that the centuries that divide us from those days were devoid of similar experiences. There is a superabundant wealth of statement regarding the miraculous during this period ; and while the evidence for the majority of the so-called miraculous cures of the Middle Ages must be judged as insufficient, yet doubtless many genuine cases occurred wrought by the exercise of psychic powers granted to specially gifted members of the Church.

In one aspect, however, the modern position regarding such cures is markedly distinct from the primitive or mediæval, for now the laws underlying the phenomena are, in a measure, understood and systematised, and thus are placed more or less under our control.

Of these discovered laws, one in particular must have a strong influence on the Church's attitude, namely, the ascertained fact that religious sentiment, belief and practice have a most important place in the application of psychic forces for the restoration of health. We have learned that the state of mind has a great influence on the recuperative powers that exist in human nature. Fretfulness, rebellion of will, hopelessness of recovery, all tend to render the physician's treatment less likely of success; while cheerfulness, hopefulness of outlook, patience, truthfulness aid him in his battle against disease. But these latter are Christian virtues; and therefore it follows that the convinced and consistent Christian has, other things being equal, an increased likelihood of recovering health: and it further follows that if a man be gifted by God with the power of psychic healing, he is much more likely to succeed in his attempts in a Christian atmosphere than in an atmosphere where the peace of the Gospel is unknown.

To those who exercise pastoral functions, this must be a consideration of great moment. The pastor may not, during his ministry, happen to come across a healer; but he is daily in touch with the physician, and it should be part of his aim to strive by pastoral counsel to lead the sick into such a state of peaceful contentment with Divine Providence as to render the work of the physician more likely of success.

Further, since the gift of healing is an endowment which the Spirit giveth "where it listeth," and has been found in the past to be possessed by those who rejected the Christian Faith as well as by those who accepted it, it is evident that it cannot be in any way considered as specifically belonging to the Ministry of the Church as such. Yet, some cleric may happen to find himself endowed with the psychic powers that heal; but if so, he must regard it not as an endowment necessarily connected with his minis-

terial office, but as a gift to be used like any other natural gift, prayerfully, and for the glory of God, and also, considering the weighty matters at stake, only to be used in consultation with skilled medical practitioners.

But while the power of healing is a special gift that belongs to but a few, another means of beneficent dealing with the sick lies at the hand of all. Prayer to Almighty God for the restoration of health should enter largely into the intercessions of the Church.

In the exercise of this function of the Church, we are raised above the psychical and natural into the spiritual and supernatural. We are in the same realm as the miracles of Christ. Not that answers granted to prayer are miracles; they lack the authoritative certainty and the evidential value of the true miracle; but both have this in common, that they are the result of the direct interposition of the volition of God. The man who has been granted a propitious answer to his prayer for the health of another has not exercised any peculiar psychic power with which he is endowed, but he has been enabled by faith to enter into the spiritual realm, to reach God, and to move God to exert His healing force. It may be that the Church has been in the past too slow to realise the lofty powers that are thus placed within the scope of her ministry, and that her ministrations have been too exclusively confined to the edification of the soul of the patient. If so, it would be well for her to practise more constantly and with more spiritual concentration the Prayer of Faith for the Healing of the Sick. Necessarily, it must be remembered at such times and impressed upon those ministered to, that God, who sees far beyond the limits of our finite vision, may see that to grant the request for health may be contrary to what is really best. Sickness is often a blessing, and its removal may be a very real

calamity. But still the fact remains that God *does* answer prayer for health, and that in such intercession the Church has a true ministry for healing; may we not say her *chief* ministry of healing? And as such answers to prayer may reach us not only by God's direct action on the sufferer, but also by His indirect action through sound medical treatment—or deliberate psychical influence—it follows that prayer in no sense supersedes the physician's care, or the healer's gifts, but rather that the clergyman, physician and healer are co-workers in a holy alliance.

One other point needs consideration. Inasmuch as prayer is a potent power to restore health, the question arises whether it would not be wise that some symbolic act should accompany the prayer.

We know that St. James bids the elders of the Church to be sent for in order that they may pray over the sick and anoint them with oil. As we are told that it is the prayer of faith and not the oil that "saves the sick," we may assume that the anointing was added because, by its well-known curative effects, it would help, as by symbolism, the patient to believe in the reality of the application of the power of prayer to his own case. Why should not we, then, add unction to our prayers for the sick?

It is remarkable that in addition to this passage in James and the statement that the Twelve anointed and healed many that were sick (Mark vi. 13), no other allusion is made in the New Testament to Unction. There is no record of its use by our Lord or by His Apostles after Pentecost. On the contrary, our Lord usually employed in healing the symbolism of laying on of hands (Mark v. 23, vi. 5, vii. 32, etc.); and His followers, as recorded in Acts, acted similarly. Ananias restored the sight of Saul of Tarsus, and Paul healed Publius with the laying on of hands (Acts ix. 12 and 17, xxviii. 8). Further, as regards the early Church,

there is little or no evidence of unction being in general use. Tertullian indeed records that the Emperor Severus had been cured by a Christian by "means of oil," and in gratitude had kept the healer in his palace until the day of his death (*Ad Scap.* 4); but on the other hand, Irenæus only mentions unction as a practice among heretics in his day (*Ad Haer.* i. 21, 5). It seems probable that, as regards the first ages of the Church, anointing with oil was confined to the Judaistic section over which St. James presided. In the words of the Lambeth Encyclical of last year, "There is no clear proof of the use of unction for the sick in the Church until the fourth century." In view of these facts, then, it seems that if the Church to-day seeks for a symbolic act to accompany "the prayer of faith" she would be more closely following the apostolic and primitive use in adopting not unction, but the laying on of hands. While, then, we must emphasise the truth that the healing power sought comes directly from our Heavenly Father, yet in not a few cases I believe the hand may be laid with deliberate intent on the sick, as a means of helping both him who prays and him for whom he prays to realise the definiteness of the spiritual act in which they are engaged when pleading with God for the gift of health.

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*"SHOULD THE MAGNIFICAT BE ASCRIBED TO  
ELISABETH?"*

It has always been known to textual critics that there is a remarkable variant in St. Luke i. 46, according to which the Magnificat is ascribed to Elisabeth instead of to the Virgin Mary. It is discussed in Westcott and Hort's *Notes on Select Readings*, and has been the subject of various articles in Germany and France, but it has not until