

Divine and Faith Healing

[Western Dakota Fall Pastoral Conference, Aberdeen, South Dakota. Oct. 22-23]

by: William H. Russow

We Believe in Divine Healing

We believe in divine healing of the body by the power of God. By this, of course, we mean that God is able to heal our bodies from disease, infirmity, and weakness, just as well as to forgive our sins, or to save us. Nothing is impossible with God because he is omnipotent. God is almighty. Therefore, we believe that God is not only able to heal the body, but we also believe that he does heal whenever it is his divine will to do so. We certainly would not limit God in anything, But this healing must always be according to his revealed Word and will. God cannot and will not do anything that is contrary to his own Word. The test of divine or faith healing, therefore, is always the Scriptures. It does not rest with the claims of men, nor the testimonies of those who profess to have been healed, or even actual cases of healing which were not performed by the power of God but by some other power. We thus repeat, God can and does heal whenever it is his will to do so. Scripture shows us the power of God in creation and we acknowledge the power of God in daily preservation. We recognize God's might, ability, strength, and compassion for his children in passages such as these:

Psalm 115:3. "But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased."

Matthew 6:13. "For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen,"

Matthew 28:18-20. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth...and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Hebrews 1:15-16. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

We Do Not Believe in Faith Healers or Faith Healing

We do not, however, believe in faith healers who make claims of power for themselves that are contrary to the clear teaching of the Word of God. On every hand today we see those who are trying to perform miracles such as those described in the Bible. Some seek to practice healing through noisy, tension-filled, dramatic tent-gatherings. Others, in fashionable churches, have small prayer services in which they claim new spiritual powers. They conduct quiet meetings in which a robed minister, making a sign of the cross and anointing the sick with oil, says: "I anoint thee with oil, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: beseeching the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all thy pain and sickness of the body being put to flight, the blessing of health may be restored to thee."¹ In addition, thousands of people each year visit shrines where special healing power is reported to be available. Roman Catholics speak much of these and advocate the continued direct intervention on the well being of man in this way. Still others, such as the Christian Science people teach that sickness and death are only the delusions of the mortal mind, and that healing comes through proper thinking.

It is very significant to note that in each of the above groups, claims are made for spectacular healings. All of these groups can produce so-called testimonials. Are these testimonials valid? We may answer a qualified "yes" to some of them, for some are well documented and seem to be what they are. But we must not base our opinion on the matter of faith healing merely upon the claims of those who testify to some spectacular healing experience.

We are keenly aware of the large possibility of fraud involved. We also recognize that there can be a psychological explanation for some healings, since many who think they are sick are not really so. The subconscious make-up of a person can be so geared that it can cause real and incurable diseases at physical malfunctions of the body. We will speak more of this when we discuss the implications of psychosomatic medicine. Furthermore, Satan himself has the power to work miracles, and we know that the devil does work through pseudo-christian movements and pseudo-christian representatives to deceive the faithful. It is absolutely imperative, therefore, that we turn to the Word of God for light on this subject and let that be our guide. We must be governed by what the Bible teaches.

The Purpose and the Effect of Miracles in the Bible

Let us begin our study by examining the purpose and the effect of miracles in the Bible. Here we will discover basic principles that will help us evaluate the healing movements of today. We first ask: What is a miracle? We may answer that a miracle is an astonishing act that either greatly heightens, or, and this is what is most commonly found in the Bible, counters and goes against the natural order of things for this world. An example of miracles that greatly heightened the natural order of things for this world can be found in the plagues wrought by the hand of Moses. Here we see that—except for the first and last plagues—the plagues of frogs, flies, lice, murrain, boils, hail and fire, locusts, and darkness were mass exaggerations of common problems for the Egyptians. We underscore the point that Moses as God's representative was given the verbal authority by God himself to send these curses on the Egyptian people. An example of miracles that go against the grain of natural order can be found in the parting of the Red Sea and Jesus walking on water. To clear up any point of criticism we must also clearly state that a miracle, as a remarkable happening that goes beyond or contrary to the laws of nature, is performed by divine power for the good of God's people.

When we speak of the purpose and effect of miracles in the Bible, we see that they occur in or around revelation periods. Thus we note that Moses performed miracles to show the authority of God in the Exodus period. Elijah and Elisha were given God's authority to do miracles in a time when there was a danger of complete apostasy from God around the period of the Baal oriented Ahab and Jezebel. Daniel and his compatriots were given special powers by God to demonstrate the presence of God in the Babylonian Captivity. Our Lord showed his authority as the Son of God through miracles, which St. John calls signs—proofs of his power. The Apostles had special powers during the birth years of the New Testament Church when God's revelation to man was being completed. We see then that a very important feature of miracles is their connection with divine revelation. We are not to expect miracle power to be given to individuals of the Church after God's complete revelation to us is finished, (are we). We quote:

The most important feature of miracles is their connection with revelation. Miracles do not appear on the pages of Scripture vagrantly, here, there, and elsewhere indifferently without an assignable reason. They belong to revelation periods.ⁱⁱ

We do not want to minimize God's love, compassion, and concern for man in our discussion of miracles. But in our observation of miracles a general pattern appears—God wrought these miracles primarily in relation to the divine revelation and they serve as “credential signs”ⁱⁱⁱ In other words, the performance of miracles was usually tied up with God's program for

the establishment of his kingdom, and the miracles served the purpose of identity cards for Gods representatives and for Jesus Christ himself. I would call the miracles of the Bible God's advertising: This advertising ceased when God's revelation was completed. Now God works in a different way.

Miracles and Healing in the Old Testament

Let us now look at the miracles and healing in the Old Testament. Let us make a few basic observations. First of all, many of the greatest men in the Old Testament never performed a single miracle. We point to such individuals as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Second, when God did work with special power it was not simply to relieve human suffering. Third, God's miraculous workings are not seen with equal frequency throughout the Old Testament. In fact, these miracles of God occur in three clusters, with only occasional supernatural acts between. The first cluster of such divine demonstrations appeared by the hand of Moses at the departure of Israel from Egypt. The second cluster of miracles came after many centuries of hardly any supernatural works when Elijah and Elisha appeared on the scene to call the nation back to God. The third cluster occurred when Daniel and his three friends were taken into captivity in Babylon.

Down through the centuries of human history before Moses, God revealed himself to mankind through direct revelation and through the voice of conscience. With Abraham, however, the Lord began a new program. He selected one family, and decreed that from it he would bring forth a nation and from this nation One would come to bring a great blessing that would be for all the nations of the earth. He providentially watched over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the land of Egypt so that they became a great multitude. When the time came for their departure, God raised up Moses to be their leader. It is here that the first great cluster of supernatural works began. The Lord confirmed Moses' authority by miracles, and thus secured the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt by the plagues: God manifested himself to his people as they left Egypt in a pillar of fire and a cloud. He protected them from the Egyptians, led them through the Red Sea, and then provided food for them by raining manna in the wilderness. Through Moses, God produced water out of a barren rock, and in many other ways preserved these people with mighty acts brought about at the hand of Moses.

In many ways God assured Israel of his power on their behalf, even promising complete freedom from illness. On the third day in the wilderness trek, God said:

“...I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians for I am the Lord that healeth thee,” Exodus 15:26.

Later at Mt. Sinai the Lord reiterated this promise,

“I will take sickness from the midst of thee.” Exodus 23:25.

Furthermore, we are told that in the forty years of wandering the Israelites clothes never grew old and their shoes never wore out. (Deut. 29:5) Yet in spite of the fact that God established his covenant with Israel, and in spite of the miracles done at the hand of Moses, the children of Israel became disobedient and rebellious. As a result, from the days of Joshua to the time of Elijah and Elisha there were very few demonstrations of supernatural power, and Israel never realized many of God's promises.

We come to the second cluster of miracles when Elijah and Elisha came on the scene. The mighty acts of these men, even as with Moses, related to the establishment of the kingdom of God. As said before, the people at this time had almost totally gone over to the worship of Baal. Thus in order to demonstrate the power of God and to bring the people back, God bestowed these with special power (credential signs). We find that Elijah during a famine sent upon Israel multiplied the oil and meal of the widow of Zarephath, even raising her son from the dead.

And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray Thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. I Kings 17:22-23.

Elijah set up a contest with the Baal prophets in which God's power is vividly shown to the erring Israelites. In his opening address to the people we see the reason for his whole ministry.

How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal then follow him. I Kings 18:21.

After Elijah was carried to heaven on a chariot of fire, we find Elisha carrying on the ministry of his teacher with the same powerful miracles. Elisha among other things raised the Shunamite mother's child from the dead (II Kings 1:32-37), healed Naaman of his leprosy (II Kings 5:10-14), and even did such things as cause iron ax heads to float on water (II Kings 6:5-6).

The last cluster of great miracles in the Old Testament can be found in the book of Daniel. They include such things as three men who did not burn in a fiery furnace and Daniel himself saved from lions. Again these miracles were signs of God's faithfulness and truthfulness to Israel, even in captivity.

We have deliberately gone into detail concerning the clusters of Old Testament miracles to emphasize certain essential facts. When God manifest his power in miracles, he does not limit himself to healings. He produces water from barren rock, kindles a sacrifice offering on a water soaked altar, keeps men alive in a blazing furnace, even raises the dead. Also keep in mind that these miracles were not performed simply for the personal benefit and comfort of those upon whom they were wrought. Their purpose was to confirm the covenant message. It certainly is apparent to all that the present healing movements have very little in common with the great exhibitions of power in the Old Testament days. We do not see any men today controlling nature, protecting people from the hazards of life, or raising the dead. In fact, Scripture gives us absolutely nothing in the way of encouragement to expect such miracles today. God deals with us today through his Word and his grace. This is the age of the Church. It is not the age of miracles. The question then is not, is God able to do these wonders today? That question in itself is absurd. Of course, God is able. All things are possible with him. The question rather is: Is it his will to do so? We answer, "No." God deals a little differently with people in different ages. Miracles are simple, not God's program today.

Miracles and Healings of Our Lord Jesus

Many of the claims of today's faith healers point to Jesus Christ as their proof for the power to heal. Let us then look at the ministry of the Lord and see in Jesus in any indicates that we can expect to have his miracle power.

The ministry of Jesus was marked by the most extensive display of miraculous activity the earth has ever seen. The Lord demonstrated his authority over disease by healing the sick, over death by raising three people from the dead, and over the power of Satan and the unseen world by casting out demons. He revealed his ability to meet the physical needs of men by multiplying a few fish and a few loaves of bread to feed the multitudes twice. He displayed his authority over nature by calming a troubled sea, walking on water, and by directing fish into the net of waiting fishermen. He manifested his power over wicked men and their wrath by passing unscathed through the midst of enemies who were determined to put him to death.

The miracles that Jesus performed made a tremendous impact on the people of his day. It is significant to note that not only did Jesus' followers glory in his miracles, but also the people uncommitted to him were astounded, even his enemies could not deny the reality of his miracles. As you read the Gospel accounts you are impressed by the fact that all had to admit the supernatural character of Jesus' works. The wondrous deeds of Christ were so open and obvious, so closely connected with the powerful message that he spoke, and so widespread in nature that no one could doubt the miraculous nature of those things performed by the Savior.

St. Mark 3:10. "For he healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him to touch him as many as had plagues."

St. Luke 5:15. "But so much more went there a fame of him abroad: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities."

St. Matthew 9:33. "And the multitudes marveled: saying, It was never so seen in Israel."

St. Mark 8:36-37. "And he aged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it; and were beyond measure astonished, saying, he hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak."

From the above passages, and we could add many, many more like them, there was never any doubt as to Jesus' healing power. His miracles were so many and so varied that the report of Jesus couldn't be kept from spreading. Today, we see absolutely nothing that begins to correspond with this picture in the Gospels. Even the most highly publicized faith healer has never consistently performed such miracles that there is no question to their genuineness, nor of such a scope that large numbers of people have really and truly been affected by them.

We ask the reason for the many miracles that Jesus performed. Certainly, they were done out of love and compassion. But this is not the primary reason. They were credential signs. They were advertisements of his Messiahship. They were proofs that he was in reality the Son of God with whom was all power, and glory, and majesty. They substantiated his message of forgiveness. Recall the healing of the paralytic.

Luke 5:18-26: "And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitudes, they went upon the house top, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before

Jesus. And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, 'Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.' And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, 'Who is this that speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?' But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, 'What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath the power on earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.' And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house glorifying God. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear saying, 'we have seen strange things today.'

Jesus gave to the paralytic the greatest gift that he could give to anyone when he looked on him and said: "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." Immediately there were murmuring among the scribes and Pharisees. Inwardly they accused Jesus of blasphemy, asking within themselves, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Jesus knew what was in their hearts. Thus he proves the greater miracle of forgiveness which no one could see with an outward miracle which all could see. "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath the power on earth to forgive sins," he said. And turning to the paralytic, he commanded him to arise from the bed and go home. As always then, Jesus' miracles identify Jesus' ability to do the greater thing—to forgive our sins. His miracles are proofs. They are signs. God has a purpose in everything he does. While it is true that the miracles of the Lord reveal to us something of God's tender compassion, we cannot say that Jesus' miracles were there only to relieve human suffering. Though Jesus must have healed thousands of people, since on different occasions the gospel writers tell us that he healed all who were brought to him, and John tells us twice that the recorded miracles are but a small fraction of the total number Jesus performed (John 20:30; 21:25). We must point out that he did not fundamentally change the health and mortality picture in Palestine. For everyone that was healed, thousands remained ill, and only three homes received back the presence of a loved one who had died. This earth is still under the curse of sin. Accidents, sickness and death are here to stay until Christ comes again to judge the quick and the dead. Therefore, we must insist that the miracles of Jesus are primarily credential signs.

Finally, faith healers constantly claim that if one's faith is great enough, they will be healed. In studying the miracles of Christ we do find that faith is often a requisite for healing. Jesus said to one individual, "According to your faith be it unto you." (Matthew 9:29) But to make faith a rule for everyone is to ignore the rest of the plain teaching of Scripture. Faith on the part of the afflicted is not always necessary. Sometimes Jesus healed in response to the faith of others. Then there are instances of miraculous healing without any faith on the part of anyone. When Jesus restored Malchus' ear in the Garden of Gethsemane, no one had faith that Jesus would replace the severed member, but he did it anyway. Lack of faith then is not the reason for a faith healer's inability to heal people. This is the thing that they always point to when a person is not healed in one of their meetings.

In closing this portion, let us look at the proper attitude that a Christian should have toward healing. God does not work today as he did when his Son, Jesus, was in the world. We should not expect that someone will come to us and dramatically heal. Rather, we trust in God to give us health when we are sick, We pray to God to help in times of trouble. We believe that God can heal. We believe that God does heal. We believe that God will always answer prayer, but in his own way. Yes, Jesus taught us to pray, "Not my will but thine be done." From experience we

know that it is not God's will that all shall be healed or that all shall live their lives in perfect health. We know that because sin has made this world imperfect, sickness, infirmities, and death shall always be with us. We are to trust him to know what is best for us. It is better to have an obedient and submissive faith in God than to be healed.

Miracles and Healing of the Apostles

Faith healers often support their claims of power to heal on the basis of the miracles performed by the apostles in the early Christian Church. They often quote Matthew 10:5-10 to substantiate their claims. In these verses we read:

These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them saying, "Go not in the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter not; but go, rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons; freely ye have received, freely give. Provide not gold, nor silver, nor copper in your purses, nor a bag for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet a staff; for the workman is worthy of his food."

This was the commission Jesus gave to his disciples for a singular effort. He sent them forth to proclaim the message of the kingdom and with this he gave them authority to perform many mighty works. Be we know that we do not labor under these same orders today. Remember that this effort was a special one with special powers attached. Our missionaries do not go out today without money or provisions. Nor are we to demonstrate authority over disease and death by healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, and raising the dead. Jesus has done this for us already. We are to preach the gospel.

But what about the apostles after Pentecost? Why did they perform miracles of healing? How could they do it and we not? Let us turn to the Book of Acts and answer these questions. So astounding so open, and so obvious are the mighty works of the Apostles, that to deny them would be to deny completely the inspiration of Scripture. At least thirty miracles performed by the apostles are recorded in the Book of Acts alone. Among them we point to a lame man healed by Peter and John (Acts 3:1-8), Aeneas healed by Peter (Acts 9:33-35), Dorcas raised from the dead by Peter (Acts 9:36-42), and Eutychus restored to life by Paul (Acts 20:9-12). It is interesting to note that many other supernatural works outside the realm of healing were either done by the apostles or by the direct intervention of God. Philip was transported from a lonely desert road to the city of Azotus (Acts 8:39), an angel was sent to release Peter from prison (Acts 12:7-8), God sent an earthquake to deliver Paul and Silas (Acts 16:26), the Lord even caused the bite of a poisonous snake to have no effect upon Paul (Acts 28:3-5).

We explain these miracles very briefly. Certainly the miraculous powers given to the apostles were these credential signs spoken of before. The other supernatural acts we say were special "boosts" that God gave to the new fledgling Church, to get the Church off the ground. God saw to it to give the apostles the ability to advertise their words with deeds. God deemed it necessary to lend his power to the Church in a dramatic way so that the apostles could and would accomplish his will. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost shows us how he gave the Church a tremendous shot in the arm. Think of it, the timid disciples went boldly out and preached in languages strange to them and thus in a single day converted three thousand souls. But a careful reading of the book of Acts along with the Epistles will also reveal that during

apostolic times there was a general and gradual withdrawal of the miraculous element. Many place the end of New Testament end of miracles at the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Perhaps this date can even be set earlier. It would seem that when the Gospels and letters of the apostles began to be circulated, God saw fit to take away the miraculous powers that so marked the birth of the New Testament Church. The last divine revelations of God were being made in the Word. The Holy Spirit would work faith through the inspired Word. From henceforth, faith would come by hearing the Word of God. The apostles were at this time being martyred because of their devotion to the Lord. From this time forth people of God were to walk by faith in the Word and not by the sight of miracles.

There are other indications in the Epistles of the cessation of miracles and healings. In the last letters written by Paul we receive many indications of this. Paul himself was denied relief from his "thorn in the flesh." About this he writes II Corinthians 12:9. "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities." In Philipians 2:25-26, Paul refers to Epaphraditus. He expresses gratitude to God that even though he was sick "nigh unto death," God healed his illness. It is quite evident that Paul did not heal Epaphraditus. In II Timothy 5:23, Paul suggests that Timothy use a little wine "for his stomach's sake and infirmities." Now Timothy was well aware of the wondrous healings that Paul had done in the past, but he also apparently recognized that they were no longer in Gods program. Earlier in this letter to Timothy, Paul had written these words: "But Trophimus have I left at Miletus SICK." (II Timothy 1:20) Why didn't Paul look to God to give him the power to heal Trophimus? Why didn't he bless a handkerchief and send it to him? Why didn't he instruct someone to lay hands on him? The answer to these questions can be found in the fact that the time for credential signs was past. In the Book of Acts we have a period of transition. God brought the Church into being on the day of Pentecost with the miraculous sending of the Holy Spirit. But as soon as possible the Church was to progress by the completed revelation of God to man. Miracles and healings were for that age. They were signs for those times. They are not signs that are to be found today.

Oral Roberts and Our Arguments Against Him

The truths we have declared concerning miracles and healing are solidly based on the Word of God. Now is the time to hear what those who practice faith healing have to say for themselves. Since Oral Roberts is perhaps the most well known of the present faith healers and since he is the only one I can quote from, we will hear from him.

I do not have all the answers. There are some things still unrevealed. Thus my continuous search for more of God, more knowledge of Jesus' healing method, more faith, more love. It is my opinion that the salvation offered by Jesus includes good health, and in receiving Christ as your Savior you have every right to go to him for the healing of your body ...I know that Jesus is concerned about all hurt things. The ministry of healing is an integral part of the Work that Jesus came into the world to do. It is a ministry he ranks with teaching and preaching. Jesus healings were not spasmodic works of pity, but the fruit of his compassion for all hurt things and his conviction that sickness is an intruder. Sickness is not part of the plan, not devised by God's will, not nature to the kingdom of God. Jesus came out of heaven because things were wrong in the world. He came forth to challenge the intruders and cast them out. Therefore, Jesus, whenever he met sickness, set himself to destroy it and heal the hurt. He cast out devils. He healed diseases. He forgave sins. He expelled fear. He gave people life and gave it to them more abundantly.^{iv}

There are three exceptions that we take with Brother Roberts in his introductory statements to his book. First of all, he speaks of a special healing method that Jesus employed in his ministry. He feels that this special healing method can be dissected and duplicated. We cannot agree that the signs of authority can be duplicated. Secondly, his assertion that salvation offered by Jesus includes good health cannot be substantiated. Thirdly, his interpretation of St. John 10:10 is wrong. The “life” that Jesus came to give in more abundance is certainly true sonship with God through Christ’s payment for sin on the cross and this includes the promise of the inheritance all Christians have—eternal life beyond the grave. Oral Roberts continually equates Salvation with good health throughout his book. He continually speaks of the abundant life in a purely disease free way.

Jesus gave his ministry of salvation for the soul and healing for the body into the hands of his followers to perpetuate throughout the centuries his works of compassion for the souls and bodies of men. Jesus Christ is the same today as he was then. Servants of God are still hearing the command of Jesus to preach the gospel and heal the sick. The healings have become the most powerful instrument to win souls to Christ. This is scriptural for we believe salvation of the soul is Gods greatest miracle and healing for the body actually begins in the soul. The more like Christ we are; the stronger our faith will be for our healing.^v

We can approach God for healing only through faith that his Son, Jesus of Nazareth, took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses on the cross.^{vi}

Oral Roberts declares that it is never God’s will that a person should suffer and that there is healing for the body in salvation. To support this claim he quotes Matthew 8:16-17. These words of course point back to Isaiah 53:4 which tells us that “He hath born our griefs and carried our sorrows.” We certainly would not deny that there is healing of the body in the atonement, but this awaits the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ when we shall receive glorified bodies. If these present bodies of ours were delivered from all disease and other effects of sin in the world, we would never die.

Oral Roberts writes much about faith and its power. The kind of faith that he talks about though is completely foreign to the concepts of faith we learn about in Scriptures. The kind of faith that he advocates can be likened to hyper-enthusiasm. He says that to be healed, a person must make his believing a *definite act* of faith. We may liken his faith healing process to the action of a double-barreled shotgun when both triggers are pulled. First their must be a point of contact with a faith healer who has the real spirit - like himself. This is the first triggered barrel. Secondly, one’s faith must be so geared up that he goes outside himself to God—this is the second triggered barrel. Now when both of these barrels together explode simultaneously, this double barreled shotgun can shoot down a healing miracle from God.

There is a way, which you must understand, to make your faith a definite act –one definite transaction—and bring it to a climax so that it can be fully released. In this way, healing will be yours. In this way, you may show others how they may be healed also.^{vii}

The final quotes from Oral Roberts's book are taken from the formula he has mapped out amid many descriptive testimonials to show exactly how others have received their healing through faith.

First: know that God wants to heal you...Jesus suffered in our stead only because he did not want us to suffer disease.. He took your specific diseases and infirmities upon his own sinless, perfect body in complete payment for the penalty of sin.^{viii}

Second: You must want God to heal you...Burning desire knows no shame, no barrier, no refusal. The woman's burning desire led her on her knees through the crowd to Jesus' feet. Blind Bartimaeus' burning desire would not be silenced, for he cried all the louder until Jesus stopped and healed him. Intense desire burns the bridges behind; strikes a blow for deliverance, penetrates into the very heart of the Son of God.^{ix}

Third: Approach God for healing through faith...You have been provided with the capacity and the ability to use your faith in any way you choose, for you are a free moral agent. You are able to fix your attention on God, focusing your faith solely and directly upon him.^x

Fourthly: Use your point of contact to make your believing a single act of faith... It is through a point of contact that you let your faith go to God. A point of contact is anything whereby you release your faith, letting it go instantly to God for a specific desire or a specific answer to your prayer. Through your point of contact you also set the time. It is necessary to set the time, for the time you set is the point of expectation. You must expect a miracle, if you want it to occur. The time you set is the very moment for you to let your faith go to God. God is ready. But you must be ready...Through the crusades...In the prayer line, the point of contact is the laying on of hands. That is when you set the time. That is when I set the time. That is the moment of expectation. That is when we both let our faith go to God for your healing.^{xi}

The apostle John gives us the answer to this humbug. I John 4:1-3. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this spirit is that spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world."

Concluding Remarks

Concerning faith healers such as Oral Roberts we must say this: They are distorting and misrepresenting God and his Word and therefore must be condemned. There are many who believe that they themselves have been healed in one of these great tension-filled meetings. There are others who are greatly impressed by what they have seen and hear: and will immediately jump to the defense of the healers. This is rather a normal human reaction. Men instinctively fear disease and death, and welcome with open arms anything or anyone promoting the idea of spectacular cures for diseases. That is why a quack can often become wealthy (a quack such as Oral Roberts) selling a so-called cure before the worthlessness of the drug is

exposed. Sincere folk who actually believe that the drug gave them relief have given sensational testimonials to the healing power of medicines which were later found to have absolutely no value or even harmful effects. Such is the case with faith healing.

There is also a psychological element in illness which we do not fully understand. Many who suffer great distress and weakness are not really physically ill. That is why we must warn our parishioners to be on guard against reports of miraculous healings. We must warn against taking testimonials at face value. Scores of people have reported that they have been healed at shrines, and every type of religious healing service. In fact, pagan and Indian medicine men have apparently worked miraculous cures. Some very evil men have enjoyed great success as healers. The Russian Monk, Rasputin, was one of the most vile men that ever lived, and yet he had a wide reputation as a miracle worker. Even today we cannot explain the miracles done by him, except we say that they were done by the power of the devil. Doctors report that sometimes tumors disappear, even in people who have no Christian faith. Much medical talk today is about psychosomatic medicine. Some scientists believe there is a possibility of a psychological power that as yet is understandable a power that actually heals, and is triggered under certain inner surges of the psyche. The conditions for such a happening are like those found at healing meetings or at shrines etc. I say this in order that we always understand the necessity of searching the Scriptures for the answer to question on divine and faith healing instead of listening to the various and conflicting voices of the over enthusiastic on such matters. In the final analysis, we must say that with healings are for the most part the products of Satan, overenthusiasm, or fraud. Certainly, they are not of God nor are they in line with what God's Word teaches.

Bibliography

- De Haan, Richard; *Divine Healing*; Radio Bible Class; Grand Rapids, Michigan; 1967.
Douglas, J. D.; *The New Bible Dictionary*; Eerdmans; Grand Rapids, Michigan; 1965. Art: Disease and Healing; Miracles.
Edersheim, A., *The Life and Times of Jesus The Messiah*; Eerdmans; Grand Rapids, Michigan; 1965. passim on miracles of Christ and their implications.
Edmonds and Scorer; *Some Thoughts on Faith Healing*; Chicago Press; Chicago, Illinois; 1959.
Roberts, Oral; *Exactly How You May Receive Your Healing...Through Faith*; The Summit Book Co. Bixby Oklahoma

ⁱ Edmonds and Scorer, *Some Thoughts on Faith Healing*, p. 38

ⁱⁱ Douglas, *The New Bible Dictionary*, Art. Disease and Healing, p. 317.

ⁱⁱⁱ De Haan, *Divine Healing*, p. 3.

^{iv} Roberts, *Exactly How You May Receive Your Healing...Through Faith*, p. 1.

^v *Ibid.* p. 7.

^{vi} *Ibid.* p. 28.

^{vii} *Ibid.* p. 17.

^{viii} *Ibid.* p. 25.

^{ix} *Ibid.* p. 27.

^x *Ibid.* p. 29.

^{xi} *Ibid.* p. 30-31.