The Miracles of Jesus

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Butler University Early Theses Collection

Summary

Volume of Collection
8 boxes, 154 folders

Collection Dates
1887 – 1911

Scope and Content Note

The collection contains early theses manuscripts from Butler University dating from 1887 until 1911 on subjects including Literature, Religion, Science, Greek and Latin. Until 1897 Butler required all students, including undergraduates, to write a theses statement in order to receive a degree. One year after Butler University joined the University of Indianapolis and became Butler College the theses requirement for undergraduate students was dropped. Postgraduate theses are available in this collection ending in 1911. While the majority of these manuscripts are handwritten, as early as 1908 graduate students were required to type theses statements.
The Miracles of Jesus.

It is not possible to arrange the miracles of Jesus in distinct classes, as some of them belong to two or more classes. E.g. "raising the dead" could be classed under "healing" and both of them under "influence over matter", but for the sake of convenience I have made the following classification:

I. Healing:
   1. The Blind.

      e. The deaf and dumb.

   3. The demoniacs.

4. The lepers.


c. The blind.


5. The parables.


6. Resurrection.

13. Besides the many grams about there are many cases of healings which are just mentioned.
    Mark, 1:32, 39.

II. Raising the dead.

III. Influence over matter.
2. The five thousand fed. Matt., 14:15–21;
3. The four thousand fed. Matt., 15:32–38; Mk.,
6. The draught of fishes.
8. The fig tree cursed. Matt., 21: 18, 19; Mk., 11: 12-20.
In the discussion of these miracles I have followed the classifications just given and have paid no attention to chronological arrangement. The discussion is not complete and is only designed to show the purpose and place of miracles in the work of Jesus in the world.


This is the first account that we have in the Gospels of the many healings of the blind. This work is in the line of the prophetic words of Isaiah; "Thine eyes shall the eyes of the blind be opened" (35:5). Frequent as these miracles are, yet none will be found without its own distinguishing feature.

Regarded from a spiritual standpoint, and in contemplation in Scripture and moral blindness (Deut., 28:29; Job, 12:26; Isaiah, 39:10; Zeph., 1:17), and the deliverance from sin and the removal of this blindness (Isaiah, 16:18; 43:18; Matt., 18:14; Zeph., 1:8), and hence it is not fitting that He who was the "Light of the world" should accomplish works...
which symbolized so well that higher work which He came into the world to accomplish.

"Two blind men followed Him, crying and saying, "Show son of David, have mercy on us." They did not obtain their desire at once, indeed not till He had gone into the town. But they were not discouraged. They followed Him, and after His question, "Believe you that I am able to do this," and their response, "Yes Lord," He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done unto you," and their eyes were opened.

We have no account of the opening of the eyes of the blind simply by His word, though this was possible for Him, and no doubt He would have done so had their faith been stronger.

The difficulty in this case is to explain the expression in verse 30, as there seems to be no cause for it here, as in the case where He healed the leper (Mark 1:40-45).

Jesus charged them not to tell what had been done, but they did
not obey Him. We see that it is difficult for Jesus to get men to do just as He wishes them to do. God could make the wind speak, but He could not make Balaam be a good man.

   This man was brought to Jesus with the specific instruction that He should "touch him." They thought this was necessary to the healing, and Jesus did as they requested, only that He took the man aside from the village.
   The healing in this case differs from all the other in that it took place by degrees. We doubt owing to a lack of faith in the man.

3. The opening of the eyes of the man who was born blind. John, 9: 1-41.
   The disciples felt that sin was the cause of this misfortune, and therefore they asked, "Who has sinned?" Jesus replied that it was not on account of any specific sin, but that the will of
God might be made manifest in him. He was not born blind simply for Jesus to open his eyes in the presence of men upon whom it did not have any effect, and as we are told to inquire, what are the "works of God?"

Here was a man who was not able to do anything but to sit and beg, and yet he had developed a character which had spoken words of cheer to the sufferers of all ages, telling them how they ought to live under affliction. He bore his trial with resignation and trust, though, as doubt, he did not understand why he had to live as he did. He did not despair, but confidently awaited the time when light should come, and when it did come it was not only to his physical eyes, but to his spiritual as well, for he was ready to accept Jesus when He came to him.

This man was chosen to suffer in God's household, but the choice was not an arbitrary one. This
The case was willing to do what God would have him to do, and hence was the one chosen to do this work.

They cast him out of the synagogues, but recognizing this he dared to do what he thought was right.

In this case also Jesus used external means, and gave the man something to do as a test of his faith—"Go wash!"


This case is similar to the others. However, it has its difficulties in the fact that Matthew states there were two, while Mark and Luke mention only one; and Matthew and Mark place it on the departure from Jericho, while Luke says it was on his entrance to the city. It is possible that there were two cases of healing. The only strange thing in that case is that the same language should be used both times, but there is not much room for
Variation, as at blind man wanted his eyes opened. This healing was done by virtue of their faith.

5. The healing of the man who was deaf and dumb. Mark, 7:31-37.

In this case also those who brought the man requested Jesus to put his hand upon him, and he did so. They requested, after that he had taken him aside from the multitude. This Calvin suggests was, ut praecedentem liberaret eum.

Christ's sight were caused by a lack of faith on the part of the man healed and his friends. It was so difficult to get mud to understand him. Some only believe as far as they can see. It needs more faith than that. cf. The Centurion who believed that Jesus could heal without being in the presence of the sick. Mark, 6:5-13; Luke, 7:1-10.

They did not obey Jesus when he told them not to tell this. No doubt more good would have resulted if
they had obeyed Him.


Down to the time of the Saviour there was nothing known of spirits, especially evil spirits, in mind, but about this time the fact became very common. Witchcraft was prevalent. This was the result of attempts to get control of the power of darkness—its fathoms the unseen. They had departed from the truth.

While many of the miracles of Jesus consisted in casting out evil spirits, yet it is a subject that is difficult to understand.

This is the most important and the most perplexing of all the demonic cures of the Saviour. The first difficulty we observe is that Matthew mentions "two", while Mark and Luke mention only "one". There may have been two different cases of healing, but rather I prefer to think that Mark and Luke only mentioned the stronger of the two.
The man in this case did not distinguish between the evil that was in him and himself.

When Jesus came into the presence of the evil spirits they recognized him and began to treat him, "not to send them out of the country," and to adjure him not to torment them. The man felt that to have his condition changed would make him worse. He did not know that sin and misery are inseparably connected, and likewise holiness and happiness. This is a case of the blindness of sin.

Jesus granted the evil spirits permission to enter into the swine. They asked this privilege thinking to work and injury to Jesus, and they seemed to accomplish it, for when the tide saw the destruction of their property they brought home to leave the country, and He did so. But He sent the man who had been healed to preach to them. Here is a case where Jesus told the one healed to tell what had been
It seemed that Jesus went to this place simply to heal the sick man and in doing so he produced such a change in the community that they were ready to listen to the words of this man. They had been in a state of despondency and by the demonstration of their poverty they were led to see the "exceeding sinfulness of sin." The case of God "ploughing up as measures." Some have accused Jesus of immorality, but only a man who thinks much of a hog knows a man would do this.

We have to admit that Jesus had power over the evil spirits. They could go only where He gave them permission. He could not make them keep quiet. The Devil had a sphere of freedom upon which God does not transgress, and likewise man, but alas God says, "Thus far shall it go and no further."
the healing of the dumb demoniac. Matt., 9:32, 33, shows His power over these evil spirits. And His failure to make those who saw it good men.

8. The healing of the boy from whom the disciples had failed to cast the evil spirit. Matt., 17:14-21; Mark, 9:17-29; Luke, 9:37-43.

The disciples evidently had been neglecting to pray, and hence failed to cast out the evil spirit, but Jesus having just come down from the Mt. of Transfiguration where He had been praying was able to do so. He rebuked His disciples for their lack of faith.

Another remarkable thing to be noted here is that the healing was dependent upon the faith of the father, and the lesson was not so much the healing of the child as the strengthening of the faith of the father.

Her case have a grand exhibition of faith, and we are rather surprised to find it in one entirely outside of the 'last days of the times of Israel.' Though at first rejected, and called a 'dog,' yet in all humility and earnestness she clung to Jesus till her request was granted. This is another case of suffering for the good of others. Jesus knew that her faith would not only stand this test, but that it would come out from under it deeper and purer, and so she stands as a monument to all who seek blessings from Jesus, that 'men ought always to pray and not to faint.'

The woman received more than she had asked. She wanted her daughter healed, and she received that, together with the healing of her soul, and as shall we if we have faith to endure the trial.

We have three ascending degrees of faith manifested in the miracles of Jesus. The paralyzed (Mark, 2:4); the blind man at Jericho (Mark, 10:48), and this woman. The paralyzed broke through outward hindrances—the obstacles of things merely external; blind Bartimaeus
through the hindrances opposed by his fellow men; but this woman, more heroically than all, though apparent hindrances even from Christ himself.


The leper seems to have entered the town where Jesus was, which was unclean, and for which he severely reproved him, after that he had healed him. He had here an exhibition of the man's faith in Jesus' power to heal him. 'If thou wilt, thou canst.' Jesus said, 'I will, be thou clean.'

This man also divested the Sarum in regard to publishing this.


They all stood afar off and brought him for mercy. Jesus told them to go and show themselves to the priests, and as they went they were healed. Nine of them went and did as Jesus told them, but one— a Samaritan—
returned and fell down at Jesus' feet and gave him thanks. This man yielded to the impulse of his better nature, which is one of God's laws, and showed his gratitude to his healer.

The lesson is one of obedience. The man did not show any gratitude. No doubt he obeyed Jesus' instruction, but not as the one who returned, who afterward went and showed himself to the priest. Obedience to the impulse of our better nature is more important than cold, mechanical obedience to forms.


At this miracle Jesus for the first time said, "Risen and forgiven thou." This man was evidently not thinking about his disease, but about his sin, else Jesus' words would have had no meaning to him. He was evidently satisfied with what Jesus said to him, for he did not ask to be healed. One man the cause of the disease and the sin being removed, he would never. This central lesson, took
exception is what He said and then to show that He had power to put any sin to heal the man at once.

This man did not have as much faith as he might have had. If he had had more faith, he would have had less labor— for Jesus could have healed him at his home.

Jesus also took the faith of those who brought him into consideration. "Then he saw their faith," as He tested our faith into consideration when we bring people to Him to be healed.

Here we have an example of the strongest faith of any of the miracles of Jesus—a faith of which He could say, "I have not found as great faith, no, not in Israel!" A man who—though not a Jew—believed that all that was necessary was for Jesus to speak at all, and his servant would be healed. This result was according to his faith, which as we have seen,
was always Jesus' rule for healing. This man through self-examination was led to this condition.

This man asked Jesus to go and heal his son. Jesus said, "By this sign ye shall know," and trusting in Him he went and found it as Jesus had said. His faith and all the house believed in Jesus through this, i.e. became His ardent disciples.

There is nothing special in this case only their faith in Jesus, and His power over their disease.

Here is a case of healing where no request was made for it, and yet there must have been one in that woman's heart. This healing was performed on the Sabbath day to teach the Jews their hypocrisy.
tacy. There is a possibility of obeying and yet of not obeying. To obey is better than to sacrifice, but the ordinary must be from the heart.

Jesus' work was the overthrowing of the work of Satan. And it was right to do it on the Sabbath as well as on any other day.

17. The healing of the woman with an issue of blood for twelve years:

This woman had faith that if she could but touch the hem of his garment she would be healed of her disease. She did as she was healed. But Jesus did not let her go. Why? If she had not come back in all probability she would never have known the real cause of her healing. She, no doubt, would have attributed it to some magic power-supposition. Her inner condition was the cause, but she did not know it. Jesus called her back to teach her that...
that she could seek to further develop this condition. This is not a case of reforma-
tion of life. She no doubt did reform after this but we have no account of it.


This is an important case. Jesus went among many diseased ones and selected
that man and healed him. Why? It was not any arbitrary choice, but because
the man was in the condition to be heal-
ed. He evidently was attributing his
disease to some specific sin, that
Jesus' admonition of, "Go and sin no more,
lest a worse thing come upon you" would
have had no force to him. This self-
examination brought him to this point
and Jesus then came to him.

19. The healing of the man with the withered
hand in the synagogue on the Sabbath
day. Matt., 12:15-13; Mark, 3:1-6; Luke,
6:6-10.

It seems that the Jews had a hand
in having the man there to entrap Jesus. If so they were "doing evil," and therefore He rebuked them and healed the man.

20. The healing of the man with dropsy. Luke 14:1-4. This case is similar to the last one.


Of all the miracles of Jesus John only relates seven. We can understand this when we study his writing. He dealt more largely with the inner condition and character of Christ as manifested in His daily life. Jesus seemed to have made His home with this family when in this region. They had, no doubt, had much trouble. Two sisters
and a brother would imply that the father and mother were dead, and though
this terrible Jesus was very near to them.

This miracle was for the glory of God
that the Son of God might be glorified
thereby. 

When Jesus received the message
from the sisters He abode still two
days in the place where He was.
After the death of Lazarus He started to
go, and His disciples tried to hinder
Him, saying, 'The Jew of late sought to
stone thee, and goest Thou thither
again? But this did not hinder Him
from doing His duty.

The peculiarity in this miracle
is the weeping of Jesus, which was
called by it lack of faith on the
part of the sisters in His real work.
They had not learned the lesson! He
had been trying to teach them;
that the individual who lives and
believes in Jesus cannot die.

It is difficult to lift up the
heart to a proper conception of
life and death. It was no wonder
that he sought what those most intimate with him seemed to have no higher conceptions of his life and character than the generality of the Jew. He finds trouble today to get the people generally to comprehend his real mission in this world.

He manifested, "God's glory" in showing his power over death, but it did not make much of an impression upon those who saw it.

23. The raising of the widow's son.

Here the Saviour manifested his compassion for one in trouble and restored her son to life.

This is a case of healing in which nothing is said about faith, but no doubt, there was faith in the mother's heart, though it was not expressed. She had certainly heard of His work and had faith in Him.

The faith of the father entered into this miracle. No doubt the child was only asleep, but to the others she was dead. It is difficult to explain how the faith of the father was necessary to the healing of the child. The effort on Jesus' part was to stimulate the faith of the father.


As Jesus showed his power over disease and death, so likewise did he manifest it over matter in different ways. This influence was not exerted contrary to any known principle, only in the time in which it was accomplished.

This was the beginning of Christ's miraculous and lordly "manifested forth his glory", and this gave us the key to the solution of the miracles. Christ's glory is the salvation of men - at least as far as this world is concerned.

There are three important lessons in
this miracle:—

1. He made the family sacred with His presence at a wedding feast, and this was not accidental in His life—nothing was. He chose to be there to do this work.

2. He used Jewish waterpots, and they were filled with Spirit. As all empty formal and ceremonial were filled by Him with Spirit, so that no longer is it the literal that kills, but the spirit which makes alive.

3. It was an act of self: His family was in a painful place no one could help them, and at such a time He came to help not sparingly, but abundantly. It cost them something to have done this, but what He gave more than repaid them. In order that we may have Him to supply our needs we must invite Him to be with us.

To see this principle of turning water into wine at work every day in every man is required at longer term to accomplish it.
The feeding of the five thousand. Matt., 14:15-21; Mark, 6:34-44; Luke, 9:12-17; John, 6:5-16.

This is the only miracle of Jesus recorded in common by all of the Evangelists. The principle manifested here is the same as in the former miracles. He who made the earth to produce, but has so arranged it as to make man to cooperate with Him in furnishing bread, how good if all of men, and why should we wonder at it?

It teaches us some very practical lessons, however:

1. The disciples brought Jesus to send the multitude away. ‘And disciples, as called, have been sending the multitude to the ‘stal’ seven sines. Jesus said: “Give ye them to eat.” They complained of their inability, but He taught them that by giving what they had to Him for His blessing, they were enabled to do this work and have plenty left.

2. The gathering up of the fragments taught us to save the little things, and thereby we can accomplish great things.
   This is similar to the preceding one.

   This miracle seems to have been performed because of a failure to understand the lesson in the feeding
   of the five thousand. The disciples were anxious to care for Him. They
   wanted to make Him king. He wanted
   them to learn the lesson that He
   was not dependent upon them,
   but that they were dependent upon
   Him. It was very difficult to teach
   them this, and it is today.
   There are some things that we
   don't understand, but the lesson is
   clear and that is all we need.

   This case showed His power over
   the elements, and is a lesson of the
   lack of faith in the disciples, who
thought that He could not protect them if He was asleep. It is also a lesson of help in distress.

30. The draught of fishes.
   The Lord still as different manifestations of Jesus' power.
   The effect upon Peter produced a condition of humility as manifested in his 'depart from me for I am a sinful man'.
   As Jesus was able to make three fishermen successful there, so He was able to make them successful 'fishers of men'.
   Jesus had been crucified. The disciples were disheartened. They had failed even thus far to learn the lessons of the Master, and as Peter said: 'I go fishing' back again to his old occupation. It was failure there, and as the Master came again and called them to this service, manifesting himself to them in this miracle.

This is a peculiar circumstance. From Peter's statement it would seem that Jesus had been in the habit of paying this tribute. Here Peter thinks of him as a man. of whom he made the confession. "How art thou that the Son of the living God?" This is difficult to explain.


All the other miracles of Jesus are of help and healing. This one stands almost as destructive. He went to this tree expecting to find fruit; but did not, and this tree was cursed for being deceptive. It had all appearance of a tree that had figs.

Matthew states that it withered away immediately.

The lesson here is against deception. Jesus will come to many men expecting to find "fruit." But will find nothing but leaves, and His curse will be pronounced upon them.
Having discussed the different miracles of Jesus, it will be in order to consider the name or names which they bear, and determine the purpose they served in His work in the world.

What we commonly call miracles are in the Sacred Scriptures treated under various names: - Ἰτίας, Οὐκανάσιος, Ραφαήλος, Ὀμρῦος, Ὀναμίσ, Ἕφεσος, and Ἔφεσος. - each of which will be treated in turn. Each of these words embody a portion of its essential quality, present it upon some single side; and in the contemplation, not of any one of them exclusively, but of all together, will any adequate conception of that which we desire to understand be obtained.

1. Ἰτίας = a prodigy - portent - miracle [AV. Wonder] performed by any one.

It is found in the New Testament only in the plural and always in connection with θαύμα, Luke, 24:44; Mark, 13:22; John, 4:48. (It only gives the ref. in the Gospels).

3. Ἰαπάδος: unexpected, incredible, wonderful, and as it implied the astonishment which is caused, it is found only in Luke, 3:26. (v. Num., 16:30).

4. ΟΝΕΙΟΡ. = sign. mark. token. prodig. etc. is the word most frequently used in reference to Christ's work as manifest in His miracles. They are signs and pledges of something more than, and beyond themselves; valued not so much for what they are, as for what they indicate of the grace and power of the One, or of the connection in which He stands with a higher world. See. Matt., 12:38 sq.; 16:1-4; Mark, 8:11 sq.; 16:17, 20; Luke, 11:16, 29; 23:8; John, 2:11, 18, 23; 3:2; 4:34; 6:2, 14, 16, 30; 7:31; 8:16; 10:41; 11:47; 12:18, 37.
6. **EV 50ēsos.** = a wonderful deed–glorious–notable, as found only in Luke, 13:17. This is a work in which the 50ēsa of God was manifested (see Jgsa:11:11;40), and which in turn caused men to glorify Him (Mark, 2:12).

7. **Ev 50ēs.** work–business.
This word is used frequently by John in reference to Christ's work. In the singular it signifies His whole work—His acts and teaching; His words and His works, as they came under the eye of men, not indeed excluding the miracles, but including very much besides (De 17:4). The plural 
E£~a in several passages refers to His miracles, no doubt. See 6:36; 10:26, 32, 38; 14:11; 16:24; cf. Matt., 11:2-6.

An interesting question still remains. What was the purpose of the miracles in Christ's work while on earth? It has been almost universally set forth that they were to prove His Divinity, and to inspire faith in the hearts of men. If this is true we can safely conclude that it was a failure, for even His most intimate disciples who saw nearly all of them did not learn the lesson till after His
Resurrection, and the sending of the Holy Spirit which was to lead them into all truth, to teach them all things, and to bring all things to their remembrance whatever He had said to them.

John tells us on one occasion which we have already noted that it "manifested forth His glory." And this glory was the salvation of man from sin. Matt., 1:21.

The Master himself on one occasion said that it was in order that "the works of God might be manifested in Him." Jn., 9:3, and on another that it was "for the glory of God, and that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." Jn., 11:4, 40.

The "glory of God" is the destruction of the work of the devil - evil.

We have noted also the "Deus ex Machina" which was produced by the miracle, and we know that such a condition is not productive of spirituality, and this is the nature of His work. 1 Cor., 2:14. Rom., 8:7, Cap. 4:9, 9c.

It was not to produce faith, for "this universal rule to heal was according to thy faith," and in Matt., 13:56, we...
are told that He could not do any "mighty works" in Nazareth because of a lack of faith. How is this not rather have been a reason for doing so if they were for that purpose? While the miracles confirmed and stimulated the faith of those upon whom they were performed, or that of those intimately associated with them, yet they did not produce faith in those who had none. Jesus' whole purpose was to draw men to goodness for its own sake, and we can see all this even in His miracles—for as already noted they were all miracles of help and healing except one, and He frequently called attention to this fact. Prov. 10:32-33; 14:11-12. It was said of Him, "He must not do good." The conclusion, then, to which we must come from all that we have seen, is that miracles in and of themselves were not necessary evil, a condemnation on God's part.
on account of the condition of the world when Christ came. Men had to be armed
before He could teach them the principles
of His Kingdom, and after this condition
had been changed by the influence of
the Gospel, miracles ceased.

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