

Healing (Beggars)



"Such as I have give I thee."—*Acts iii. 6.*

Let me share with you an Oriental custom in regard to healing. This is concerning the many beggars which you see in certain places when you go to Palestine, Egypt or India. Americans think that all these beggars are poor people and that is the reason they are begging. But this is not so. In the Eastern philosophy, either Hindu, Mohammedan or Jewish, if a man is incurable and the doctors have given up on him, then he becomes a beggar, seeking not money, but healing.

When you act as a beggar, then you have no more self respect. You lose all your social standing; you become very humble, when you act as a beggar. Then God, through His mercy, may give you healing somehow, sometime, through some holy man. That is the teaching we have in the East.

The three places where the beggars go are the highway side, the temple gate, or the banks of holy rivers. Thousands of people go past these three places daily, and they pray that in one of these places there might be a holy man passing whose shadow might fall on them, or that he might say a word or touch them and heal them of their incurable disease.

An example of a beggar by the highway side is the story of blind Bartimaeus, found in Mark 10:46-52.

Mark 10:46

And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging

The fact that blind Bartimaeus was sitting on the highway side begging, shows me that he was not begging for money. The real beggars of the East that beg for food, come to the door. They tap on the floor by the door, and the woman of the house comes out and gives them something to eat. But the beggars who line the highway side, and who sit at the temple gates, are generally seeking healing. What are the temple gates? The temple gates are both sides of the passage to the temple. You might see a hundred beggars lining each side of this passage. Then all who go to the temple must pass them, both going into and coming out of the temple.

Take the case of Peter and John going to the temple, as told in the third chapter of Acts. There they saw a lame man and he asked them for alms.

Acts 3:6

Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

Peter and John understood why this man was here; they could have given him a coin, but they did not. They used an old Eastern way of speaking when they said to him, "Silver and gold have I none". They meant, "for all the silver and gold in the world you cannot buy a new pair of legs. So we don't have that kind of help for you; we have the help of Jesus Christ of Nazareth in whose name you shall walk!"

If you read in the Acts of the Apostles a little farther, in Chapter 5, Verse 15, you will see that a while after the healing of this beggar in the gate of the temple, the people brought their sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them, and they might get healing.

Acts 5:15

Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

From this illustration from the Scriptures, you see how the Eastern mind works. It was the same at the time of Abraham, the time of Jesus, and in our time today. I have seen these things not only in my native land of India, but also during my travels through the Bible lands, and I can tell you they are true.

Another place where the beggars go, who are seeking healing, is to the holy waters, generally holy rivers. Here, along the banks of the Ganges, the Euphrates, and the Tigris, hundreds of beggars line the banks waiting for the troubling of the waters. For thousands of years, the people of the East have believed that one of the ways of being healed is to wait on the banks of holy waters, and to get into the spot of water that is troubled. Very seldom does anyone ever get cured by this means, but it is all the hope that they have.

Praise be to God, we have more hope than that. We who are born again of God's Spirit have Christ in us, the hope of glory. We are sons of God! So when we pray for healing, let us pray boldly, for we know He has promised to supply our needs out of His riches in glory. Then let us believe that we receive, and we shall do so. God bless you.

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