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F.F. Bosworth Vindicated?

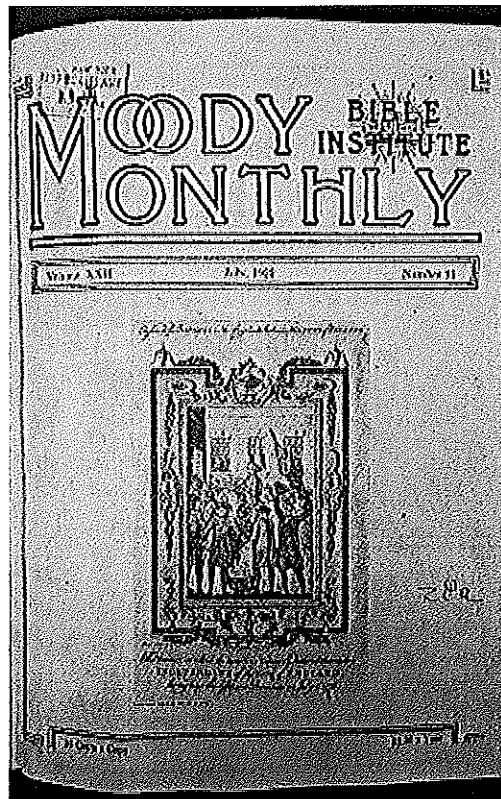
Moody Magazine Published 'Evidence'
for Divine Healing Case

By Roscoe Barnes III

Author, *F.F. Bosworth: The Man Behind Christ the Healer*

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#FFBosworth



NOTE: I recently published an article (blog post) titled, "[F.F. Bosworth's Tangle with Moody Magazine](#)" (Roscoe Reporting, Thursday, Feb. 22, 2018), in which I described a

meeting between Bosworth and the editors of the magazine. The meeting ended with plans for a special investigation into some of the claims of divine healing.

In my conclusion, I wrote: "It would be interesting to see how the proposed investigation actually turned out and if they followed through with their plans." Well, based on the editorial in the July 1922 issue of the magazine, it appears that they followed through with the investigation and the results, from my perspective, seem to vindicate Bosworth, who had promised he could produce convincing testimonies and statements by physicians. Read on to see how the editors presented this information. — **Roscoe Barnes III**

In the July 1922 issue of the Moody Bible Institute Monthly magazine (later called Moody Monthly), the editors laid out in crystal clear terms the magazine's position on divine healing. It was a move that may have been prompted, in part, by a controversy involving F.F. Bosworth, a famous healing evangelist and author of *Christ the Healer*.

At various times in 1922, the magazine published articles about divine healing. Those presented by dispensationalists, such as Arno C. Gaebelein, probably led some readers to think the magazine did not believe in miraculous healing beyond the time of the apostles. Some readers, apparently, had mixed views about the magazine's position.

In March of that year, the magazine published a transcript of a talk by Gaebelein entitled, "Christianity vs. Modern Cults," that mentioned miraculous cures and harshly criticized a number of healing evangelists. In addition to Bosworth and his brother, B.B. Bosworth, the target of the criticism included Aimee Semple McPherson and John Alexander Dowie. The article prompted a visit by Bosworth to protest the magazine's handling of the matter. The meeting ended with Bosworth and the editors agreeing to do further investigation into some of the claims promoted by Bosworth.

The meeting with Bosworth, though cordial, was not enough to quell the concern of readers or to resolve the on-going debate on the topic. Although the meeting seemed promising, it did not help to clarify the magazine's position. So the editors used a short editorial to put the matter to rest. It was titled, "Is This a Case of Divine Healing?" It is featured here:

Is This a Case of Divine Healing?

A recent article or two in our pages has caused some friends to think that we do not believe in divine healing, but that is a mistake. Anything we may have said editorially on the subject was simply to point out the distinction between divine healing and some forms of faith healing. Divine healing may be faith healing, but all faith healing is not divine healing.

To show our true feeling in the premises, we are publishing the following correspondence which speaks for itself. There will be those who will say that the evidence it presents is not convincing, and we admit that it is open to inquiry; and but our position in regard to it

is that of the late A.J. Gordon on the subject of holiness. He said he would rather aim high and miss, than aim low and hit the target. In other words, we had rather believe that God is sometimes pleased to heal now as He did in the days of the apostles and sometimes be mistaken in our judgment, than to deny He does so and sometimes be right. – Editors.

Use of Testimonials

The editors sought to support the magazine's position with testimonials, which they admitted would not convince everyone. Still, their effort was probably seen as a credible step that was worth taking. Their argument included correspondence identified as "exhibits." Exhibit I features a letter by a woman named, Lillian E. Wilkes. She gives a testimony about the Lord's healing that reportedly occurred when Bosworth prayed for her in Toronto. She also gives the names of the physicians involved with her case. Below is an excerpt from her letter.

Exhibit I

"Editors of The Moody Bible Institute

"I feel confident you desire to be fair in your attitude toward those believers who know they have been healed physically in answer to prayer.

"Please pardon me for intruding upon your time, but I feel constrained as a believer in the great Physician to tell you that He healed me of inward goiter last spring in dear Brother Bosworth's meeting in Toronto.

"I had suffered several years and found out the cause at Clifton Springs Sanitarium, where there is a record of my case. Dr. Hintze and Dr. Tinker both said I had goiter, and my heart, as a result, was beating altogether too fast. In the sanitarium library I found A.J. Gordon's Ministry of Healing, and the Lord graciously blessed and comforted me as I read it. Then I had the privilege of attending the Bosworth meetings for one week-end in Toronto, and I was anointed according to James 5:14 (seeking to meet all scriptural conditions), and the Lord healed me perfectly."

After reading Wilkes' letter, Moody editors replied and commended her for her testimony. They also said they wanted to contact the physicians at Clifton Springs and Buffalo, New York "for corroboration" of the testimony before they would feel free to publish it. Wilkes provided them with the information they needed. See below.

Exhibit II

"Editors of THE MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE MONTHLY:

"May I ask you to return the enclosed note from Dr. Hintze at Clifton Springs, and the statement from Dr. Gould, of Buffalo, corroborating my testimony?

"By sending these I thought I might spare you the trouble of writing, but have my glad permission to write Clifton Springs Sanitarium, or Dr. Gould if you deem it necessary.

"I was never treated for goiter by any physician - my case was diagnosed at Clifton Springs. Later the Lord healed me, then I was examined by a physician and pronounced well. Last fall the doctor told me I had no goiter and he believed the Lord fixed my heart. Then last Saturday I went to Dr. Gould, was examined, and received his written statement.

"It would give me joy to have you mention what the dear Lord did for me. I pray some one may be encouraged to trust more fully. The Lord bless you.

"Yours in Christ,
"Lillian E. Wilkes."

"P.S. Rev. Samuel Russell is my pastor, and his address is 24 Barker St., Buffalo, N.Y."

Exhibit III

"Dear Miss Wilkes:

"Miss Shayer has handed your letter to me asking if we have a record of your case. My diagnosis according to two of your histories is goiter.

"Yours truly,
"Anna A. Hintze, M.D."

"The Sanitarium,
Clifton Springs,
New York

"This is to say that I have today examined Miss Lillian Wilkes, of 142 Oxford Place, and find her apparently in perfect health.

"There is no evidence of goiter, or of so-called Exophthalmic goiter, unless a slight cardiac murmur can be so considered.

"The heart sounds are well balanced; and except for a slight murmur, is perfectly normal so far as I can discover.

"Edwin R. Gould, M.D.

Bosworth must have been quite pleased with this effort by Moody magazine. He probably felt vindicated as the letters clearly illustrated what he had been sharing all along. For him, it was probably more about his reputation than it was about doctrine. After all, his name had been attacked by a prominent preacher. Now to be clear, the magazine focused on one particular case that seemed to support Bosworth's claims. The editors did not comment on the other cases, at least, not in this particular issue of the magazine.

A.J. Gordon and *The Ministry of Healing*

One thing that stands out in the magazine's presentation is the mention of A.J. Gordon in both the editorial and in the correspondence. That is interesting because the same preacher (Arno C. Gaebelin) who criticized Bosworth and others in the pages of the magazine, also criticized Gordon for a misleading claim of healing. Gordon was the author of *The Ministry of Healing*. His questionable case of healing is described in Chapter Seven of Gaebelin's book, *The Healing Question* (See: <http://www.biblebelievers.net/Charismatic/kjcheal7.htm>). Here's an excerpt:

The late Dr. A. J. Gordon in his book "The Ministry of Healing" cites a similar case of a boy who was miraculously healed of a very bad double fracture of the arm. A healer who flourished over fifty years ago, W. E. Boardman declared that the child's arm was miraculously healed the next day and was perfectly whole. This case was thoroughly investigated by Dr. James Henry Lloyd, of the University of Pennsylvania, and in the "Medical Record" for March 27, 1886, Dr. Lloyd published a letter from the very child, who had become a physician: [page 91]

Dear Sir: The case you cite, when robbed of all its sensational surroundings is as follows: The child was a spoiled youngster who would have his own way; and when he had a green stick fracture of the forearm, and after having had it bandaged, for several days, concluded he would much prefer going without a splint, to please the spoiled child the splint was removed, and the arm carefully adjusted in a

sling. As a matter of course, the bone soon united, as is customary in children, and being only partially broken, of course all the sooner. This is the miracle! Some nurse or crank or religious enthusiast, ignorant of matters physiological and histological, evidently started the story, and unfortunately my name—for I am the party—is being circulated in circles of faith-curites, and is given the sort of notoriety I do not crave.

Very respectfully yours,
Carl H. Reed.

We feel sorry that this untrue account is still being circulated in Dr. A. J. Gordon's book. Edition after edition has been printed in which this fake miracle is made prominent (see page 184 of the 13th Edition). And there are other incorrect statements in the same volume.

In supporting their argument for divine healing -- and the claims of healing in Bosworth's meetings -- Moody editors relied on the experience of a person and the written statements of her physicians and church leaders. For many people, that approach is convincing. Others would disagree. The approach is sometimes used by Pentecostals and charismatics who emphasize the role of experience as a valid method of relating to God and understanding His Word.

The argument presented by the editors shows that they may have had more in common with Pentecostals than some people realized. That may also explain the cordial meeting they had earlier with Bosworth, who was also fond of Gordon and his book, *The Ministry of Healing*. It appears that Bosworth and the Moody editors shared common ground in more ways than one.

For more information: Visit ffbosworth.strikingly.com. Questions about the research and commentary on F.F. Bosworth may be directed to Roscoe Barnes III via email at doctorbarnes3@gmail.com or roscoebarnes3@yahoo.com. For updates on F.F. Bosworth history, simply follow this blog or @Roscoebarnes3 on Twitter. **#ChristTheHealer**