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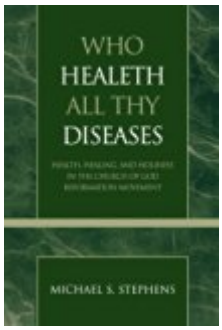

Michael S. Stephens. *Who Healeth All Thy Diseases: Health, Healing, and Holiness in the Church of God Reformation Movement.* Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2008. xxii + 224 pp. $50.00, paper, ISBN 978-0-8108-5840-4.

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Published on H-Pentecostalism (July, 2009)

Commissioned by Gene Mills (Florida State University)

Michael S. Stephens's work is a major contribution to the current scholarly discussion of divine healing in the Holiness and Pentecostal movements. His book joins such efforts as James Opp's dissertation "Religion, Medicine, and the Body: Protestant Faith Healing in Canada, 1880-1930" (2000), published as *The Lord for the Body: Religion, Medicine, and Protestant Faith Healing in Canada, 1880-1930* (2007); Jonathan R. Baer's Yale dissertation "Perfectly Empowered Bodies: Divine Healing in Modernizing America" (2002); Amanda Porterfield's *Church History* article "Healing in the Christian Tradition" (2002) and her *Healing in the History of Christianity* (2005); and my own book *Faith Cure: Divine Healing in the Holiness and Pentecostal Movements* (2003).

Stephens's subtitle is quite significant: *Health, Healing, and Holiness in the Church of God Reformation Movement.* This group is more commonly referred to as the Church of God (Anderson, IN). It was one of the earliest Holiness groups to organize, although their founder Daniel S. Warner was resolutely anti-sect and critical of all denominations. As Stephens carefully sketches, Warner's followers coalesced in the 1880s around his publication, *The Gospel Trumpet*, published in several locations before settling in Anderson. This Church of God retained a focus on sanctification, remained Holiness, and was highly critical of those who came to believe that speaking in tongues was the defining gift of the Holy Spirit. (Both the Church of God [Cleveland, TN] and Church of God Prophecy, also headquartered in Cleveland, became Pentecostal.)

Health is a distinctive emphasis for Stephens. He persuasively argues that Warner actually grounded his beliefs about divine healing in various health reform movements of the day: Sylvester Graham's dietary advice, William A. Alcott's behavioral proscriptions, hydropathy (the "water cure"), and especially phrenology. In 1889, Warner had his head and those of some *Gospel Trumpet* staff members examined by a traveling phrenologist, and he often quoted from the writings of Orson. S. Fowler. In chapter 1, "Healing in the Late Nineteenth Century," Stephens lays these

movements alongside "medicine" as sanctioned by the American Medical Association, formed in 1847. (He ignores such equally popular forms of "medicine" as the Thomsonians, eclectics, and homeopaths.) He argues that for nineteenth-century people, divine healing was simply another healing option, equally reliable in its results and much less harmful than some of the alternatives.

Stephens makes two major contributions to the discussion in chapters 2 ("Healing the Body of Christ") and 4 ("Divine Healing Doctrine, 1890-1905"). In the first instance, he details not only the development of the Church of God Reformation but also Warner's notions of regeneration, sanctification, and Holiness. Regeneration takes care of "actual sin," "willful acts of wrong that we commit by the consent of our own will," whereas sanctification removes "inherent," "inherited," "inbred," "original sin" (p. 38).

In chapter 4, Stephens painstakingly tracks the subtle changes Warner and his colleague Enoch Edwin Byrum make in their support for divine healing. Almost all supporters of the notion begin with James 5:14-16: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church" to pray, anoint with oil, and hear confessions (p. 93). A second argument was based on the healing ministry of Jesus and taught that healing power continues to come from a personal relationship with Christ. Most Holiness advocates of divine healing stressed that a person needed to experience salvation and sanctification before they could truly pray the "prayer of faith" mentioned in James 5:15. The fourth argument is the well-known idea that healing is part of the atonement, that Christ died not only for our sins but our sicknesses as well (p. 98).

The third argument, however, was somewhat unique to the Church of God. Relying on Mark 16:15-18 (although leaders were aware of the dubious originality of the long ending of Mark), they suggested that the final phrase, "they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover," is linked to a version of the Great Commission, and thus every true minister of the Gospel should have the gift of healing (p. 96). Stephens finds this assertion in writings dating from the late 1880s and early 1890s. My research led me to conclude that the Holiness movement generally stressed the privilege of all believers to pray the "prayer of faith" for themselves and others and that the notion of certain individuals having a "gift of healing" empowering them to impart healing to others emerged as part of the Pentecostal revival. In both movements, many laypeople pray and lay hands on others for healing. I have not seen before material suggesting that ministers in particular are to have this gift.

In chapter 6, Stephens very helpfully details how "persistent pain, unanswered prayers, legal prosecutions, compulsory vaccination of school children, and medical advances) led the church to de-emphasize and redefine healing after the turn of the century (p. xviii).

Readers interested in divine healing, health reform, the Holiness movement, the Church of God Reformation, Pentecostalism, and related issues will find Stephens's book a fascinating, well-researched volume and a good read.

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Citation: Nancy A. Hardesty. Review of Stephens, Michael S. *Who Healeth All Thy Diseases: Health, Healing, and Holiness in the Church of God Reformation Movement.* H-Pentecostalism, H-Net Reviews. July, 2009.

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