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A table of contents for *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* can be found here:

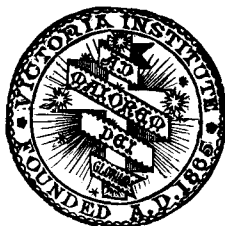
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# **DIVINE HEALING AND THE ATONEMENT: A RESTATEMENT**

BY L. F. W. WOODFORD, DIP.TH.

## **SYNOPSIS**

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Recent years have witnessed a marked interest in the subject of divine, or miraculous, healing and the view is now widely held that the ministry of healing should hold a definite place in the witness and service of the Christian Church.

A doctrinal foundation for this teaching and practice has been sought in the Scriptures and it has been maintained by many that provision for divine healing has been made in the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the Cross: that He died for sickness as well as for sin and that healing is therefore available for all, in that atonement, on the same basis as the forgiveness of sins.

This view, put forward by various evangelical writers, gives rise to serious perplexities and difficulties, doctrinal and practical. A doctrinal restatement is here outlined, on the basis of the New Testament, seeking to define in fresh terms divine healing in relation to the atonement. The vital place occupied in this connection by the resurrection of Jesus Christ is emphasized and its significance assessed. The leading Scriptures used in support of the view above mentioned are then carefully examined and an interpretation of them submitted, in full keeping with the doctrinal restatement now put forward.

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## I

OF the various evangelical writers who have related divine healing to the atoning work of Jesus Christ, Dr. A. B. Simpson has been acknowledged one of the most well-known and respected. His exposition, set forth in *The Gospel of Healing*, has been largely followed by a succession of teachers who have taken as their main foundation—Scriptures: “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows . . . and with his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53: 4 f.); “He cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses” (Matthew 8: 16 f.); “By whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Peter 2: 24). Dr. Simpson’s exposition is typical of this school, declaring concerning Isa. 53: 4 f.:

“The translation of our English version does very imperfect justice to the force of the original. The translation in Matt. 8: 17 is much better: ‘Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.’ The literal translation would be: ‘Surely he hath borne away our sicknesses, and carried away our pains.’ Any person who will refer to such a familiar commentary as that of Albert Barnes on Isaiah, or any other Hebrew authority, will see that the two words here used denote respectively sickness and pain, and that the words for ‘bear’ and ‘carry’ denote not mere sympathy, but actual substitution and the removal utterly of the thing borne. Therefore, as He has borne our sins, Jesus Christ has also borne away and carried off our sicknesses; yes, and even our pains, so that abiding in Him, we may be fully delivered from both sickness and pain. Thus ‘by his stripes we are healed’ . . . That one cruel ‘stripe’ of His—for the word is singular—summed up in it all the aches and pains of a suffering world; and there is no longer need that we should suffer what He has sufficiently borne. Thus our healing becomes a great redemption right, which we simply claim as our purchased inheritance through the blood of His cross.”<sup>1</sup>

Dr. A. J. Gordon followed a similar line of exposition, whilst making certain qualifications along the line of the sovereign will of God in healing,<sup>2</sup> and Dr. Andrew Murray held the same view of Isa. 53: 4 f., although moderately enforcing it.<sup>3</sup> Of more recent writers, the Rev. E. Howard Cobb pursues a similar view: “Christ bore our sicknesses in the same way as He bore our sins . . . He bore them as our substitute. The bearing of our sicknesses is . . . a part of the work of Atonement.” Mr. Cobb, writing very persuasively, admits difficulties in holding this view uncompromisingly and is finally obliged to come to the logical conclusion: “Why not face the facts boldly, and accept the teaching of the Bible that there

<sup>1</sup> *The Gospel of Healing*, pp. 12, 32.

<sup>2</sup> *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 19–23, 256–60.

<sup>3</sup> *Divine Healing*, pp. 111–13.

are only two reasons for unhealed sickness, i.e. want of faith, and disobedience? ”<sup>1</sup> His statement is softened by adding that the lack of faith may not be the sufferer’s fault and the sickness may be the result of the sins of his fathers, rather than any particular sin of his own. But does the teaching of the Bible impel us to such a conclusion? The present writer holds that it does not do so, whilst fully acknowledging that the two reasons advanced may be valid, but along with other reasons.<sup>2</sup>

## II

In the explicit teaching of the New Testament, atonement was the provision of God in Christ Jesus for the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Himself—using the word “atonement” in its current sense of expiation, propitiation (Hebrews 9: 26). When the New Testament sets forth the interpretation of the death of Christ, in the sense of atonement, it is always, without exception, related to the putting away of *sin* and the resulting effects of that work. From whatever aspect the atonement is viewed it is fundamentally related to sin. Thus: It was a work of propitiation—of expiation of *sin*.<sup>3</sup> It was a work of reconciliation, through the *sin*-bearing of Christ.<sup>4</sup> It was a work of justification, through the suffering for *sins* of the Righteous One.<sup>5</sup> It was a work of redemption from *sin* of the Lamb of God, Who bore the *sin* of the world.<sup>6</sup>

The death of the Lord Jesus was essentially substitutionary in character. He died:

- (a) Instead of us—“ a ransom for (ἀντὶ) many ” (Matt. 20: 28).
- (b) On behalf of us—He “ gave Himself for (ὕπερ) me ” (Gal. 2: 20).
- (c) With respect to our sin—“ God sent His own Son . . . for (περὶ) sin ”, i.e. as a sin-offering (Romans 8: 3).
- (d) On account of our sin—“ He was delivered for (διὰ) our offences,” i.e. on account of the fact of our sin and need (Rom. 4: 25). So also—“ Christ died for (ὕπερ) our sins ” (1 Cor. 15: 3)—concerning, in relation to, our sins.

The New Testament gives us rich unfoldings of the divine truth in its interpretation of the significance of the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ—drawing deeply from the wealth of Old Testament types, symbols and prophecies (especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews)—and everywhere the stress is laid repeatedly upon the fact that His death was fundamentally and essentially concerned with *sin*. The great arguments elaborated in the Epistles (especially Romans) make this the heart and soul of the Christian evangel.

<sup>1</sup> *Christ Healing*, pp. 20 f., 98–102.

<sup>2</sup> It has been well observed that theological propositions have to be tested by the facts of life.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. 2: 17; 9: 26–8; 10: 12.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Cor. 5: 18–21; Rom. 5: 10 f., R.V.

<sup>5</sup> Rom. 3: 23–6; 4: 25; 5: 18 f.; 1 Pet. 3: 18.

<sup>6</sup> John 1: 29; 1 Pet. 1: 18 f.; Titus 2: 14.

But the work of atonement was not consummated by His death. Apart from His triumphant resurrection, His death alone would not have possessed atoning value. His resurrection from the dead is an integral and inseparable part of the evangel.<sup>1</sup> The work of propitiation on the Day of Atonement was not completed until the blood of sacrifice was presented in the holiest by the high priest (Lev. 16), the New Testament truth thus typified being set forth in Heb. 9: 7-28. The efficacy of our Lord's atoning death was assured by the triumph of His resurrection on the third day.

The New Testament, further, makes clear that the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus have a wider significance than atonement for sin, a significance touching God's creation at all points, for by His death and resurrection:

(a) The prince of this world—the devil—has been cast out, thrown out, banished (ἐκβάλλω): "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12: 31). The usurper has lost his authority and power.

(b) The devil has been brought to nought (καταργέω: I make of no effect, I annul, abolish, bring to nought, Heb. 2: 14). He no longer has the power (κράτος: might) of death.

(c) The works of the devil have been destroyed (1 John 3: 8, λύω: I break, destroy, set at nought).<sup>2</sup>

(d) Principalities and powers were spoiled (Col. 2: 15, ἀπεκδύομαι: I throw off, I put off as a garment) and were made a spectacle (θριαμβεύω: I make a show, I lead around), holding them up as an example (δειγματίζω). They were completely overmastered.<sup>3</sup>

(e) He abolished death (καταργέω—as in Heb. 2: 14 quoted above) and brought incorruption and life to light through the gospel, 2 Tim. 1: 10. "Death has been swallowed up in victory . . . the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15: 54-7). He drew the sting of death—sin—by His atoning sacrifice, and arose out of death which could not hold him. He gained the complete mastery over death as the Living One, and is Lord of the living and dead.<sup>4</sup>

(f) All authority (ἐξουσία) is in His hands and He exercises that authority over all creation without exception: "All power (authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28: 18).<sup>5</sup>

All this is of supreme importance in connection with the subject under consideration—supernatural divine healing for the body—for the Scriptures thus declare that by His death and resurrection the Lord Jesus has fully met and covered every need of this disordered creation. Sin, at the

<sup>1</sup> E.g., Rom. 10: 8 f.; 1 Cor. 15: 3 f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Acts 13: 43; 27: 41—to disintegrate, break in pieces; 2 Pet. 3: 11—dissolve.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. John 1: 5, Gk., and Eph. 4: 8 ("He led captivity captive").

<sup>4</sup> Acts 2: 24; Rom. 6: 9; Rev. 1: 18, Gk.; Rom. 14: 9.

<sup>5</sup> Col. 2: 10, 15; 1 Pet. 3: 22; 1 Cor. 15: 24, 28; Phil. 3: 21.

very root of the disordered creation, has been for ever put away by His atoning sacrifice; the devil has been deprived of his authority, and cast out, having been brought to nought and his works destroyed; the powers of darkness have been completely overmastered and thrown off by the Lord of life and power; death has been brought to nought, its sting (sin) removed and life and incorruption have been brought to light through the gospel; the Lord Jesus, from His throne, has all authority and power to administer the fruits of His atoning sacrifice and victorious resurrection and ascension, in the salvation of mankind.

We have the definite promise that this disordered creation will be restored, on the basis of our Lord's death and resurrection: delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God (Rom. 8: 21).

### III

We now enquire in what way sickness and disease have been fully met and covered by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Sickness and disease are clearly universal manifestations present in our existing disordered creation, affecting the animal and vegetable kingdoms as well as mankind. They were not present in the original creation, pronounced very good (Gen. 1: 31); they will not be present in the future New Creation, to be pronounced perfect: "I make all things new" (Rev. 21: 5). They are manifestations originating with sin and are part of that bondage of corruption which awaits the deliverance of God. The atonement of the Lord Jesus dealt with the *sin* behind this corruption, thus providing the basis for the deliverance from, and elimination of, its manifestations in His due time and purpose.

The New Testament makes a clear distinction between the atonement wrought by the Lord Jesus in respect of sin, and the cosmic effects that spring forth from that atonement in relation to all else—sickness, disease, death, the devil and his works, and the principalities and powers of darkness. We may discern the distinction very simply.

*Sin*, however viewed in the Scriptures, interposes between the soul and God. It requires and demands expiation, satisfaction, removal—i.e., atonement. *Sickness* and *disease* are manifestations of a sin-dominated creation. They exist on the plane of the natural and physical—whether human, animal or vegetable, and they are, of themselves, non-moral and non-spiritual elements. They may arise in man from moral or spiritual causes, but sickness and disease of themselves do not possess these qualities. *They have no power at all to interpose between the soul and God.* The word of God makes this abundantly clear, and the experiences of the ripest saints of God down the centuries confirm this fact. That God has at times employed them for His purpose (e.g., the plagues of Egypt) manifestly places them in a vastly different category from sin. (Demon-power may be behind much sickness and disease, but this consideration does not disturb the present line of thought.)

Sickness and disease, as non-moral and non-spiritual manifestations on the plane of the physical and natural, did not require atonement as a basis for any forgiveness or reconciliation: they required—of themselves—removal by authoritative intervention. The Scriptures declare, as noted above, that our Lord did not atone for the devil and his works, or for death; *He conquered them all*. Similarly, He did not atone for sickness and disease; He *conquered* them as elements present in a world of corruption.

The New Testament always speaks concerning the divine activity towards sickness and disease in this light: sicknesses were removed, demons (declared to be the source of various sicknesses) were expelled, fevers were rebuked (as, e.g., Luke 4: 39, a strong word: used of our Lord rebuking demons, and the winds and waves, Luke 4: 35; 8: 24), and the work was always one of *deliverance*.

*Sin* has thus been expiated by the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus; *sickness* and *disease* have been conquered by the victorious resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus, who lives in the power of an endless life and who, having all authority within His hands, as the Lord of life releases that life to meet the need of man.<sup>1</sup> "As He passes out of death, He comes into a new life which He may now communicate, and which is to be for paralysed men a new dynamic and a new purity, in the power of which all life may be transformed, and all victories won" (G. Campbell Morgan).

This dual conception of deliverance, by the *blood* of atonement and by the *power* of resurrection, is found repeatedly in the Scriptures. In type it is to be noted in the redemption of Israel from Egypt: the Israelites were delivered from death by the provision of the *blood* of the Passover lamb; they were delivered from the bondage of Egypt by *power*, and the mention of three days' separation from Egypt is surely richly typical of the three days between the death and resurrection in power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Redemption was thus twofold—by blood and, based on that shed and sprinkled blood, by power.<sup>2</sup>

So, for the believer, redemption is twofold: (a) from *sin*, by the atoning blood of the Cross and, resulting from this, (b) from the *bondage of sin* by the power of His risen life.<sup>3</sup> We note Eph. 1: 18-19 and its specific reference to the "exceeding greatness of His power" towards the believer "according to the working of the might of His strength which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead."

Again, the redemption of the body will be (a) for the purchased possession—by *His blood*, and (b) by the emancipating and transforming power of *His risen life*.<sup>4</sup> This principle is implicit in Rom. 8: 11, whether viewed as a present quickening of our mortal bodies by the indwelling Spirit, or as a future quickening by resurrection: "If the Spirit of him that raised up

<sup>1</sup> Heb. 4: 15; 7: 16, 25.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. 1: 7; Rom. 6: 3-14; 1 Pet. 1: 18 f.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 8: 23; Eph. 1: 14; 4: 30; 1 Cor. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Ex. 6: 6 f.; 15: 13.



Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

"The resurrection therefore is the unanswerable argument for the accomplishment by Jesus Christ of God's purpose of destroying the works of the devil. There are infinite possibilities of application. Let it only be said that it is from the empty grave that the true song of hope has sounded. Every worker with God is conscious of the presence of evil in the world. Let that consciousness always be held in connection with the glorious fact that over all, Christ is absolute Master. . . . The glories of the resurrection demonstrate for ever the absolute and final victory of the Man of Nazareth over every form and force of evil."<sup>1</sup>

In full keeping with this, the Rev. John Maillard has stressed one of these infinite possibilities of application, relating to divine healing, when he writes:

"If we have been in doubt as to the source of the healing power of Jesus Christ, the miracle of His resurrection will remove that doubt, for it explains everything: the power which restored life to the withered arm, which staunched the issue of blood, which recovered sight to the blind, and which healed every sickness and every disease among the people came from God. It is unquestionable that the power of God, which was able to rise to the height of a resurrection from physical death, can also overcome and heal the physical diseases, which are the symptoms of death. The miracle of the Resurrection is then the vantage-point from which we contemplate our Christian Faith. . . . A faith, inspired by the truth of the Risen Life, can face all the vicissitudes of life, and meet unflinchingly every adverse condition."<sup>2</sup>

#### IV

In the light of the foregoing considerations we may thus summarize our basis of approach for a restatement of the doctrine of divine healing:

(a) By the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus and His triumphant resurrection, the fundamental relationship between sinful man and a righteous God has been for ever restored and the forgiveness of sins is granted to all mankind as a free gift, on the basis of that accomplished work. "If we confess our sins, He is *faithful and just (righteous)* to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1: 9). The believing sinner avails himself directly of the "finished work" of atonement. He "receives" the reconciliation provided, on the basis of the righteousness of God.<sup>3</sup> He accepts what has been done for him. He

<sup>1</sup> G. Campbell Morgan, *The Crises of the Christ*, pp. 318 f.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. John Maillard, *The Sacrament of Healing*, pp. 23 f. Dr. A. B. Simpson (*The Gospel of Healing*, pp. 32-7) stresses this aspect of healing, whilst also holding to the view of a substitutionary sacrifice for sickness.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 3: 26; 4: 25; 5: 11.

requires *no mediation* on the part of man, to dispense to him the forgiveness of sins.

(b) By the atoning death of the Lord Jesus and His triumphant resurrection all the disorder of creation, caused by sin, has been dealt with—including sickness and disease—and overmastered by the power and authority of His risen life. Their removal from God's creation are all within the supreme administrative authority of the Living Christ, in the all-embracing purpose of God. The first-fruits of this victory, in delivering and healing power over sickness and disease, are being shared by the living Church, and the basis of this ministry from the Throne of God is *His grace and compassion*.

(c) Our Lord has not delegated authority to His people to act in a mediatorial way in the forgiveness of sins: He is our only Mediator in this respect. "There is . . . one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2: 5). But He has delegated authority to His people to mediate deliverance and healing from sickness and disease, in His name and by His power. The first (forgiveness of sins) is based upon an accomplished fact, atonement for sin, which requires no mediation of man to be secured; the second (healing of the body) is a present, direct, supernatural intervention on the part of the Lord of life; and the communication of that life may be granted by the mediation of His servants within the Church. It is based on the ever-present fact of the Ascended Lord who lives in the power of an endless life and who, in grace and compassion, makes His life available to the sick and afflicted, delivering them by the very expulsive power of that life, even as in the days of His flesh.

(d) Deliverance from sickness, disease and demon-power is most frequently granted by God through a mediated ministry possessing delegated authority from His throne. This renders it therefore an entirely different matter from that of the forgiveness of sins, for a mediated ministry is subject to the sovereign will and grace of God for its operation. Such gifts are "grace-gifts" (*charismata*) set in the Church and dispensed in His will as He pleases<sup>1</sup>—thus, the operation of gifts of healings, the laying on of hands, and the prayer of faith (which is subject to the laws of prayer common to every other exercise of prayer).<sup>2</sup>

## V

The subject of this paper can be fruitfully followed up from this point, in many directions. It is submitted that the restatement put forward will provide what seems to be still greatly needed—a means of reconciling supernatural divine healing with healing through the given resources of nature. The New Testament declares that it is the Lord Jesus Christ who "upholds all things by the word of His power" (Heb. 1: 3) and it is

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 12: 4-11; 12: 28; Heb. 2: 4.

<sup>2</sup> Mark 16: 18; James 5: 13-18.

“in Him all things subsist”—hold together and maintain their cohesion (Col. 1: 17). His creative and restoring work is manifest in supernatural divine healing, but as the Creator He has richly endowed both nature and man’s physical constitution with great restorative and recuperative power. Modern science constantly speaks of the *conquest* of sickness and disease, and of their displacement and elimination by the release and application of the healing and restorative powers derived and harnessed from nature—residing there by the upholding power of the Lord the Creator. Indeed, the seasons manifest the direct activity of the Spirit of God in renewing power year by year. The discovery of marvellous latent properties in nature, designed for the use of man, and increasingly employed with skill and understanding in the conquest of disease, is a fact too well-known to require elaboration. The mission fields of the world amply testify to it on every hand. But the conquest of disease by the release and application of life-giving forces provided by God in nature, working co-operatively with the God-given recuperative powers within man, are only manifestations through human channels of the very principles we have been noting in connection with direct supernatural healing: the conquest of sickness and disease through the power of the risen Lord and by the expulsive energy of His life. The principles now accepted in the realm of medical science were laid down and demonstrated in supernatural power in the New Testament, and the revelation given in the Word of God is being vindicated and endorsed by modern discovery along its own lines in this great field. Basically there should surely be no conflict between the promotion of healing by supernatural and natural processes respectively, although the former is specially within the sphere of activity of the Spirit-filled Church of God and the latter is promoted through an acquired and applied natural science. It is believed that the line of approach here indicated provides a means whereby the two can be shown to be complementary the one to the other.

Certain questions arise at this point which invite further investigation but which take us beyond the scope of this paper. Such questions include: (a) the relative place occupied by natural and supernatural processes of healing and the action and interaction of divine providence and divine grace respectively in such healing, (b) the place of the sovereign will of God in miraculous healing, (c) the place of pain and suffering in God’s redemptive purpose, and (d) the continuance of the *charismata* in the Church and their relation to the evangel of the Kingdom of God: the New Testament indicates such a relation.

## VI

It is now necessary to consider carefully the Scriptures referred to at the beginning of this paper, which, it is held, set forth the substitutionary death of the Lord Jesus in respect of sickness, i.e. Isa. 53: 4 f.; Matt.

8: 16 f.; 1 Pet. 2: 24.<sup>1</sup> But it is submitted that, when examined, these Scriptures will be found not to support this view but that, on the other hand, they are in harmony with the main line of thought advanced in this paper.

i. *Isaiah* 53: 4 f. "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." The Gk. LXX renders this: "He bears (φέρει) our sins and is pained for us."

(a) As Dr. A. B. Simpson has pointed out, *Isaiah* clearly speaks of the Servant in language pertaining to sickness, infirmity, pain and affliction, and the terms for "bear" and "carry" in 53: 4 have in the Hebrew a substitutionary significance. But it seems to have been quite overlooked that the precise definition of a word is one thing, but the actual *use* to which the word is put is of course quite another thing. It may be used literally or figuratively, e.g. by way of a simile or a metaphor, and the language of prophecy abounds in these literary forms. This consideration is vital to the interpretation of the passage before us.

(b) The whole of the section (52: 13–53: 12) relates to the nation in apostasy, and *Isaiah* turns to the outstanding symbol for sin—leprosy—and uses this in describing the substitutionary sacrifice for sin of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah. He had employed similar terms previously, as e.g. ch. 1: 4–6, when describing the "sinful nation": "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores . . ."; and ch. 6: 5–7 on the occasion of the death of the leper king, Uzziah: "I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips". Jeremiah used similar terms when describing the apostate state of the people of his time, e.g. ch. 17: 9: "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick."<sup>2</sup>

(c) The *figure of the leper* underlies *Isaiah* ch. 53 in a striking way, from v. 3 onwards. It has been pointed out<sup>3</sup> that the word "stricken" (v. 4) is the same as that rendered "plague" 57 times in Lev. 13 and 14 (detailing leprosy regulations); the word "healed" in the precise form in v. 5, only occurs elsewhere in Lev. 13: 18, 37 and 14: 3, 48 (in connection with the leper); and the "offering" (*'asham*) in v. 10—"when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin"—is the same as that prescribed in Lev. 14: 12, 21. It is also of particular interest to note Spurrell's rendering of ch. 53: 3: "As from one with covered lip we turned our faces from Him", with the footnote—"Here seems to be an allusion to the leper who was commanded to cover the upper lip." Again, v. 4, "stricken, smitten of

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Henry Frost, in *Miraculous Healing*, chs. 5–6, gives a reasoned criticism of the teaching of Dr. A. B. Simpson and Dr. A. J. Gordon in this connection. I cannot, however, fully agree with Dr. Frost in his limited and localized interpretation of Matt. 8: 16 f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Jer. 15: 18; 30: 12–17.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Kay, *Speaker's Commentary*.

God ", aptly fits the leper's state, as, e.g., 2 Kings 15: 5 of Azariah: " The Lord smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death."

(d) The whole section is of one piece throughout. Its essential and repeated burden relates to sin, transgression and iniquity and to their removal by atonement. Verse 4 is no exception, the prophet employing in vivid terms applicable to the state of the leper the sin-bearing of the Servant of Jehovah. The intimate connection between verses 4 and 5 is manifest, as referring to sin—" But he was wounded for our *transgressions*, he was bruised for our *iniquities* "; and furthermore the figurative language of v. 4 is interpreted by the plain language of verses 11 and 12, where the very terms for " borne " and " carried " (*nasa* and *sabal*) are repeated in relation to sin and iniquity: " He shall bear their iniquities, . . . he bare the sin of many."

Thus Isaiah 53: 4, in full keeping with the whole of this section of Scripture, declares the substitutionary work of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah for sin, set forth in terms of the stricken, smitten and afflicted leper. For " He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him " (2 Cor. 5: 21).<sup>1</sup>

ii. *Matthew 8: 16 f.* " Himself took (ἐλαβεν) our infirmities and bare (ἐβάρσασεν) our sicknesses."

The precise significance of this quotation from Isa. 53: 4 may be determined by reference to the method of the writer, the immediate context, and the particular value of the words he used.

(a) Matthew's method of quotation from the Old Testament Scriptures is of importance. On no less than eleven occasions (R.V.) he uses the phrase, " That it might be fulfilled ", and on every occasion he draws upon the Scriptures quoted in order to relate their fulfilment to the actual events there and then recorded, as e.g. the Virgin Birth (1: 22), the time spent in Egypt (2: 15), the mourning of the women of Bethlehem (2: 17), and so on.<sup>2</sup> In this passage (8: 17) Matthew was not referring to our Lord's coming passion when he drew upon his quotation, but he was referring to the actual events he was then describing.

(b) The passage under consideration is in keeping with all the others in this respect; the context makes this quite clear. Matthew, recording the casting out of demons and the healing of the sick (v. 16) stressed the fact that our Lord was thereby fulfilling His Messianic ministry as the Servant of Jehovah, supporting this by the great prophecy of Isa. 53. That prophecy, as we have noted, was directly dealing with the Messiah as the sin-bearing One, but Matthew here pointedly showed that bodily sickness and infirmity as well as spiritual sickness and infirmity came within the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *New Bible Commentary* (I.V.F.) on Isa. 53: 3; " C. R. North translates 'acquainted with sickness', i.e. leprosy; a picture of the Saviour's contact with sin. Cf. 2 Cor. 5: 21."

<sup>2</sup> *Matt.* 2: 23; 4: 14; 12: 17; 13: 35; 21: 4; 26: 56; 27: 9.

range of His mighty ministry and that He had come to deal with bodily needs as well as spiritual needs.

(c) Matthew therefore makes use of the Isaiah passage in its *literal* sense, not in its primary *spiritual* sense. Here we specially note that Matthew makes very significant changes in key words. His quotation entirely avoids any rendering into Greek of the substitutionary value of the Hebrew words used by Isaiah (bear . . . carry). Nor does he use the Greek verb "to bear" (φέρω) used by the LXX in Isa. 53: 4. The latter verb is used in Scripture in a substitutionary sense (e.g. 1 Peter 2: 24 and Heb. 9: 28—He "bare" our sins—with Isa. 53: 12, He "bare the sin of many": ἀναφέρω). But in place of φέρω, Matthew uses the verb βαστάζω for "bear", which verb is *never* used in the New Testament in a substitutionary sense. This change of word is certainly arresting and is in keeping with the assertion that there is no thought of substitutionary sacrifice for sickness in the mind of Matthew in this Scripture. His quotation was related to the life-ministry of the Messiah, not to His sacrificial death, and his rendering of Isaiah was adapted accordingly and to definite purpose.

(d) The most natural and fitting meaning to be attached to this passage is that given by Moffatt: "He *took away* our sicknesses and He *removed* our diseases", and that was exactly what our Lord was doing at the time, in His great healing ministry.<sup>1</sup> The verbs employed certainly hold this meaning:

λαμβάνειν—to take up, to take away: Matt. 5: 40, "take away thy coat"; Matt. 16: 9, 10, "how many baskets ye took up".

βαστάζειν—to take up, to carry away: John 20: 15, "borne hence"; John 10: 31, "took up stones"; John 12: 6, "having the bag, took away what was put therein", R.V. (or, "used to steal", Weymouth).

(e) The verb βαστάζειν ("bare", A.V.) thus holds the meaning of "carrying away", but it also holds a further meaning of compassionate sharing with those in need.<sup>2</sup> Our Lord was moved with compassion and then healed in His compassion, with all authority and power:<sup>3</sup> "Jesus, . . . moved with compassion, . . . healed their sick" (Matt. 14: 14).

(f) Matthew's statement is therefore entirely in line with the full testimony of the Scriptures concerning the work of the Lord Jesus in respect of sickness and disease. Here is no reference to substitutionary sacrifice but a demonstration of the truth that in His grace and compassion, with His word and touch of power and authority as the Resurrection and the Life, He loosed the bonds of Satan, expelled demons, lifted the burden of sickness and disease from the crushed and broken and delivered them.

<sup>1</sup> See H. A. W. Meyer's exposition of this verse (N.T. Commentary, Matthew), in full keeping with the above line of thought. <sup>2</sup> Cf. Rom. 15: 1; Gal. 6: 2.

<sup>3</sup> Stressed by Alford, on Matt. 8: 17 (*Greek N.T.*), and so, also, C. J. Ellicott's *Commentary*.

iii. 1 *Peter* 2: 24. "By whose stripes ye were healed" (R.V.).

Peter was quoting from *Isaiah* 53: 4 and his statement has reference to the death of Christ for sin; there is no reference here to His death for sickness, as the following points make clear:

(a) The plain meaning of the context in 1 *Peter* 2: 22–25 shows that the phrase refers to the healing of the soul through the remission of sins. Peter refers to *Isa.* 53 four times in these verses, each time in relation to Christ's work as the sin-bearer.

(b) The whole context of *Isaiah's* prophecy, vv. 5 f., has relation to atonement for sin. "He was bruised for our iniquities."

(c) The connecting link between v. 24 and v. 25 is emphatic: "For (γάρ) ye were as sheep going astray"; enlarging upon the statement of v. 24, clearly dealing with sin and not with sickness.

(d) It was Peter's manner of writing constantly to refer to the death of Christ as His "sufferings": "Christ suffered for sins once" (3: 18);<sup>1</sup> hence, his quotation alluding to Christ's death as a "bruising" was in full keeping with his style of reference throughout his epistle, and it was particularly appropriate here in view of his writing to slaves who were being buffeted (2: 20).

(e) He was writing to the Dispersion and their healing pointedly refers us back to *Isa.* 6: 9–10 and the judgment on apostate Israel, "Lest . . . they be healed", quoted in *Mark* 4: 12, where the healing is plainly declared to be *the forgiveness of sins*. In the New Testament, to be healed is used of spiritual healing or restoration, a conception fully Scriptural but one that is liable to be overshadowed by our constant thought of purely physical healing. Conversely, to be physically healed is spoken of in the New Testament, frequently, as being saved: e.g. *Matt.* 9: 21–22, "Thy faith hath made thee whole (saved thee)."<sup>2</sup>

(f) The word used by Peter—"bruise"—is not found elsewhere in the New Testament, being taken from *Isa.* 53: 5 (μῶλωψ<sup>3</sup>, a wound, a scar, a bruise, a weal), and the thought is behind *Isa.* 53: 8 (margin): "For the transgression of my people was the stroke upon Him." It is very significant that Peter did not use any of the three words employed in the New Testament for beating, flogging or scourging. Jesus was scourged (μαστιγῶν: *Luke* 18: 33; *John* 19: 1; φραγελλῶν: *Matt.* 27: 26, *Mark* 15: 15). Peter did not use either of these words, nor yet the common word for stripe (πληγῆ, as of Paul and Silas's many stripes, *Acts* 16: 23, 33). If he had desired to refer to the scourgings of the Lord Jesus he would surely have used one of these appropriate words, but in fact he did not do so.

<sup>1</sup> Thus also 1: 11; 2: 21; 4: 1; 5: 1.      <sup>2</sup> Cf. *Matt.* 14: 36; *Acts* 14: 9; *James* 5: 15.

<sup>3</sup> It is significant that the word is in the singular in both the Hebrew and the Greek.

The statement he made did not refer to the scourging of the Lord Jesus but to the stroke of death laid upon Him by God, on our behalf.

(g) Finally, we recall that the whole divine concept of atonement was that of a life surrendered to death by the outpouring of the blood. It was the blood *given upon the altar* that made atonement, for the blood is the life, and the blood given is the life given (Lev. 17: 11, R.V.). Our Lord declared this great truth (Matt. 26: 28): "My blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins."<sup>1</sup> Nowhere is there any ground for the assertion that atonement was made, either for sin or for sickness, by virtue of the scourgings of the Lord Jesus. The substitutionary value lay in the life laid down, and to this all Scripture abundantly testifies. That is not to underestimate the terrible cost to Him of treading the path to the Cross, but Scripture makes clear that it was the crowning act of surrender to the death of the Cross that constituted His atonement and without that final act all that preceded it would have failed in its redemptive significance.

This Scripture has undoubtedly been used with great blessing in the actual healing of the body—the underlying principle is there: the virtue of the atoning blood of Christ has released the power of His risen life for the physical need of man. But that does not give us ground for basing upon the Scripture a doctrine of atonement for sickness which it does not teach and which was not in the mind of Peter, or of the Holy Spirit, when it was written.

In this vital and practical truth of supernatural healing of the body, it is therefore submitted that the focal point is found in the victory of our Lord's resurrection and ascension, just as the focal point for sin is found in His atoning death upon the Cross. The Scriptures indicate this distinction, and whilst the death of the Lord Jesus is inseparably bound up with His resurrection and ascension, *the particular significance of both* requires to be recognized, stated and applied.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mark 10: 45.

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