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A Christian Teaching Concerning Bodily Healing

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A CHRISTIAN TEACHING CONCERNING BODILY HEALING

by

F. Bruce Chamberlain

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the

Western Evangelical Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Divinity

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem

The problem of this thesis is to formulate a Christian teaching concerning bodily healing.

B. Justification of the Problem

This study is important because many passages of scripture refer to bodily healing. One cannot overlook this area of truth and still have a general knowledge of scripture.

Again, this problem deserves serious attention because it is one of interest to every Christian. Many are directly faced with this problem when sickness or physical break-down overtakes them. Those who are spared this, meet the problem indirectly as sickness comes to some loved one. Thus this problem is more than a mere academic one, but is a very practical one and should be faced squarely.¹

Another reason for this study is to aid the Christian in avoiding unscriptural teachings concerning bodily healing. Within the confines of Christianity there are those who teach that there is no more necessity for the Christian being sick than there is for his being sinful. One who holds to this concept has written, "We should not have sickness in the body any more than sin in the heart."²

¹E. J. Swalm, "A Symposium on Divine Healing," The Evangelical Visitor, LXVIII (September 26, 1955), 4.

²T. L. Osborn, Healing the Sick and Casting out Devils (Tulsa: Voice of Faith Ministry, 1955), p. 27.

Another has written, "After being sufficiently enlightened, our attitude toward sickness should be the same as our attitude toward sin."¹ A third author informed his readers that:

He [Satan] will often put the thought into our minds in the first person. We have certain symptoms, and we think, 'I must have taken cold.' etc. Thoughts of this nature are of Satan, as they are opposed to the Word of God, the plan² of full salvation and all the promises.

Others within the bounds of Christianity reject this teaching and believe that, "Sickness may glorify God,"³ and that, "It is not always God's will to heal. In some cases God's will is that sickness shall remain. To some prayers for healing God's answer, spoken in love, is "no, my child."⁴ It is obvious that at least one of these theories must not harmonize with Christian truth. The Christian needs to know what is truth so he can avoid the error.

Since the subject of bodily healing is now so frequently discussed, it is very important that the Christian have a clear understanding of the Bible teaching on this subject. Much is said and written on the subject. It comes from every angle: movements

¹F. F. Bosworth, Christ the Healer (no place, or pub., 1924), p. 3.

²C. A. Jeffers, "Why Am I Not Healed?", excerpt from a tract (Los Angeles: Free Tract Society Inc., 15th ed.).

³Wm. W. Orr, Does God Heal Today? (Chicago: Scripture Press, n.d.), p. 15.

⁴Ibid., p. 10.

such as Christian Science, New Thought, Unity, Spiritualism, from individuals such as Oral Roberts and Thomas Wyatt, and from shrines such as Lourdes. The established churches, which have in the past been almost completely silent on this subject, are now speaking out in clear tones. The "Presbyterian Life," included an article entitled, "The Case for Spiritual Healing."¹ The National Council of Churches appointed a Committee on Spiritual Healing which is under the direction of Professor Charles S. Braden of Northwestern University. This Committee stated that pastors in the Methodist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist, and other old line churches have reported definite cases of physical healing by spiritual means.²

H. C. Robins of the Church of England writes in his book, A Guide to Spiritual Healing, the following words:

. . . it is most important for the church to recover her faith in His healing power today. Jesus does not change. His arm is not slackened. He is still longing and able to heal if only He can find instruments with sufficient faith to do His work. If only the church would rouse herself to belief. But she is so obsessed with material things that she forgets that one part of the works of the Church today is healing. She is so busy that she gives herself little time to think about her healing ministry. So it is not fulfilled. The healing work is not done, and people go off in unbelief and disappointment, to the sects and cults to seek

¹W. Paul Monteath, "The Case for Spiritual Healing," Presbyterian Life, VIII (December 10, 1953), p. 10.

²Glen Buffum, "Spiritual Healing and Faith Cures" (unpublished term paper, Western Evangelical Seminary, Portland, 1956), p. 4.

what ought to be theirs in their Mother Church. If this little book can do its tiny bit toward rousing my own church, the Church of England, it will not have been written in vain.¹

Since the healing question has attracted such widespread interest, the Christian should inform himself along this line so as to be able to answer questions about healing with a "Thus saith the Lord."

C. Limitation

The writer has confined the source material of this thesis to the areas of Scripture and Christian experience.

D. Definition of Terms

Some of the confusion which has arisen in regard to bodily healing can be credited to terminology. Throughout this paper, the author has attempted to ascribe only the following meaning to each term unless it is stated otherwise:

1. healing - restoration to natural health
2. means of healing - any agent or factor which is responsible in total or in part for a person's physical healing
3. natural means - any tangible agents or factors provided by nature or humanity for health and healing.
4. spiritual means - any agent or factors which are completely apart from natural means.

¹H. C. Robins, A Guide to Spiritual Healing (N. Y.: Morehouse - Gorham Co., 1954), p. 26-27.

5. natural healing - healing which is accomplished by natural means
6. spiritual healing - healing which is accomplished by spiritual means.

* E. Version Used

All the Biblical passages quoted in this paper are taken from the 1901 American Standard Version, unless otherwise indicated.

F. Basic Assumptions

This paper is written with the following basic assumptions in mind:

1. That the Bible came not by the will of man, "But men spake from God being moved by the Holy Spirit."¹ Consequently it is the infallible Word of God and is "Profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."²

2. That because the Bible is the infallible Word of God, one passage of scripture will not contradict any other. When properly understood all scripture on a given subject, including bodily healing, will blend together to form one uniform truth. Consequently, everything the Bible has to say on the subject of bodily healing is truth and harmonizes.

¹II Peter 1:21.

²II Timothy 3:16,17.

3. That the Bible serves as the foundation for all Christian teaching, consequently any Christian teaching concerning bodily healing must be in complete harmony with what the Bible says about this subject. Any teaching which fails to harmonize with the Scriptures can not be called Christian.

4. That the Bible is primarily concerned with man's spiritual well-being and that all other truth, including bodily healing, must be kept subordinate to and in harmony with this great purpose.

5. That the earnest inquirer, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, will be able to formulate a Christian teaching concerning bodily healing. He will be able to do this because the Holy Spirit will enable him to discover the biblical teaching on this subject. This will serve as a firm foundation upon which to build a superstructure. The Holy Spirit, who Christ promised would guide the believer into all truth, will aid the believer as he builds this superstructure from the materials of Christian experience, the findings of true science and common sense. When this process has been completed, the Christian will have a clear, sound and practical guide to follow in regard to bodily healing.

G. Procedure

This paper treats the subject by attempting to answer the following questions: What is the Christian teaching concerning:

1. The causes of sickness and disease?
2. The ground for healing?
3. The purpose for healing?
4. The means of healing?
5. The place of healing in the work of the Christian minister?
6. The place of healing in the believer's life?

The paper then concludes by formulating the findings from these questions into a Christian theory on bodily healing and showing how this relates to spiritual healing.

CHAPTER II

THE CAUSES OF SICKNESS AND DISEASE

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THE CAUSES OF SICKNESS AND DISEASE

It is obvious that if there were no sickness or physical disorder, there would be no need for bodily healing. Hence, the presence of sickness and physical disorder is closely related to the subject of bodily healing and must be considered in order to have a general knowledge of this subject.

One of the first questions which arise in regard to the presence of sickness is, "Why?" The Bible lists the following as some of the causes of disease:

1. Direct Result of Personal Sin (breaking God's moral law)

The scriptures clearly teach that sickness and disease is often sent by God as a punishment for breaking His moral law. God warned the men of Israel to give a ransom each time a census was taken, "That there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them."¹ It is evident that Miriam's leprosy was sent by God to punish her for her sin against God's servant, Moses.² The same could be said of the ten spies, for the Record states, "Those men that did bring up an evil report of the land, died by the plague before Jehovah. But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, remained alive of those men that went to spy out the land."³ Moses in his last address told

¹Exodus 30:12.

²Numbers 12:1-10.

³Numbers 14:37-38.

the children of Israel that if they failed to "Harken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all his commandments,"¹ that "Jehovah will smite thee with the boil of Egypt, and with emerods, and with the scurvy, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed."² When the man of God was preaching against the sinfulness of the Northern Kingdom, King Jeroboam put forth his hand saying, "Lay hold of him." Then the Record reads that, "The hand he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not draw it back again to him."³

The same is taught in the New Testament. There is the incident of Christ healing the helpless man by the sheep gate. Later, when Jesus found him in the temple, He warned him, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee."⁴ In Acts it states that, "Immediately an angel of the Lord smote him [Herod], because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."⁵ Paul told Elymas, who tried to withstand him, that the hand of the Lord would be upon him, and that he would be blind, "Not seeing the sun for a season." This is followed by the statement that, "Immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand."⁶

¹Deuteronomy 28:15.

²Deuteronomy 28:27.

³I Kings 13:4.

⁴John 5:14.

⁵Acts 12:23.

⁶Acts 13:7-12.

Other instances from both the Old Testament and the New Testament could be added to this list, but this is sufficient to prove that the Bible teaches that sickness is at least sometimes punishment meted out to the disobedient by God.

But while the Bible makes it plain that some sickness is the direct result of sin, yet it makes it equally clear that this is not the case in every instance.

James makes it clear that not all sickness is consequence upon and in punishment of particular sin. He says that the 'prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up'¹ which is an unconditional statement. He then adds 'If he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him,'² which is a conditional statement. That is, a man may be sick and in need of healing apart from particular sin, or he may be sick and need healing in consequence of particular sin.³

This scriptural teaching harmonizes beautifully with both experience and common sense. For as McDonald has written, "If sickness is the direct effect of sin, and both are from Satan, then every unsaved man should be sick, and every fully saved man should be perfectly well."⁴

2. Demon Possession

Many times in the New Testament, sickness and demon possession are mentioned together. After Jesus had healed Peter's wife's mother,

¹James 5:15 A.V.

²Ibid.

³Henry W. Frost, Miraculous Healing (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1939), p. 86,87.

⁴W. McDonald, Modern Faith Healing (Boston: McDonald, Gill and Co., 1892), p. 70.

many heard of the incident. In the evening, after the sun had gone down, "They brought unto him many possessed with demons: and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all that were sick."¹ When Jesus sent out his twelve apostles two by two he gave them "authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness."² This was also true when he sent out the seventy.³

Sometimes these demons were responsible for the insane behaviour of the person possessed. One of the first New Testament examples of this was the man of the tombs who could not be bound any longer with chains and who "always, night and day, in the tombs and in the mountains . . . was crying out, and cutting himself with stones."⁴ A similar case was that of the demoniac son who often "falleth into the fire, and oft-times into the water."⁵

Sometimes these demons were responsible for physical infirmities. One of the clearest cases of this nature is found in Mark 9:25. Here "He [Jesus] rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, 'Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.'" That demons can cause physical infirmities, is also strongly implied in Matthew, chapter nine, verses thirty-two and thirty-three,

¹Matthew 8:16 (see also Mark 1:32-34).

²Matthew 10:1 (see also Mark 6:7-13, Luke 9:1-6).

³Luke 10:1-21.

⁴Mark 5:1-16 (see also Matthew 8:28-34 and Luke 8:26-33).

⁵Matthew 17:14-18 (see also Mark 9:17).

where it is stated that, "There was brought to Him a dumb man possessed with a demon; and when the demon was come out the dumb spake." Luke wrote of a case where a woman "was bowed together for eighteen years and could in no wise lift up herself." As Doctor Luke commented on the case, he accredited it to "a spirit of infirmity." This also harmonized with what Christ stated concerning this case for He said, "Satan hath bound her."¹ Had doctors been asked to diagnose this case they would have called it,

arthritis of the spine, or vertebrae out of place, or some other medical term, and they would be right, as far as medical terms are concerned. But if you get to the real source of the trouble, you will discover that a Spirit of an infirmity from Satan has bound her. Cast out the spirit, rebuke Satan's oppression, and she is healed.²

Since the Bible clearly states that demons are responsible for at least a portion of man's mental and physical disorders, it would be well to look further into this matter. One of the first things to be borne in mind is that the Bible makes a distinction between the Devil, who is often referred to as Satan, and demons.³ Satan is the leader; the demons are his assistants under his authority.

Satan and his demons are personalities. The demons, however, have no bodies of their own. Just as any individual yearns to express

¹Luke 13:11-16.

²Osborn, Healing the Sick and Casting out Devils, Op. Cit., p. 128.

³Unfortunately the translators of the A.V. often failed to make this clear.

himself,

even so demon-spirits yearn to express themselves. But since they have no bodies of their own, they must wander through the land seeking some body in which they can enter and find expression to carry out their mission of evil.¹

Once these demons have possessed a person they can work in many ways. The Bible relates some instances where they spoke,² and as already indicated, at other times demons were responsible for insane behaviour and physical infirmities.

The Bible plainly teaches that demon possession can be responsible for mental and physical disorders. It gives no reason to think that this should be otherwise today.

3. Indirect Result of Sin

The Bible records a number of instances where people were afflicted by sickness or disease, not because of their sin, but because of the sin of someone else. One of the first examples of this was in the case of the plagues which befell Egypt. Pharaoh was primarily responsible for not permitting the Children of Israel to leave, but all the Egyptians suffered because "of the hardness of his heart." When David sinned by numbering the people, "Jehovah sent a pestilence upon Israel", but David escaped it for he prayed, "Lo,

¹Osborn, Op. Cit., p. 116.

²Mark 3:10-11, Luke 4:40-41.

I have sinned and I have done perversely; but these sheep, what have they done? let thy hand I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house."¹ When David fathered a child out of wedlock, God did not punish him with disease, but the innocent child died.²

Apparently the people in Jesus' time realized that infirmity was often the result of another's sin, because Christ's disciples asked him concerning a man born blind, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents?" It is well to note Jesus' answer, "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents."³ Thus the Bible clearly teaches that while there are some infirmities as the direct result of sin and while some are the indirect result of sin, there are also some which are the result of neither.

4. Result of Mental or Spiritual Disorder

There are several instances in the Bible which show that physical sickness is sometimes the result of mental or spiritual disorder. In one place it is stated that "Ammon was so vexed that he fell sick."⁴ It is also recorded that, when Ahab was unable to secure Naboth's vineyard that he lay "down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread."⁵ Thus the Bible, in harmony with

¹ II Samuel 24:15-17.

² Ibid., 12:18.

³ John 9:1-4.

⁴ II Samuel 13:2.

⁵ I Kings 21:1-4.

psychology, teaches that some sickness is the result of mental, instead of physical disorder.

Doctor Adolph States:

It is conservatively estimated that over fifty per cent of the patients who come to the general practitioner's office in our large cities have no demonstrable organic disease. They are nevertheless, suffering real disease symptoms on an emotional tension basis.¹

5. Result of Breaking God's Natural Law

A number of the Old Testament statutes were given for health purposes. Carter has written:

Now be it remembered that those 'statutes' contained a most admirable system of sanitary and dietary laws which have never been excelled for effectiveness. Food, clothing and methods of sanitation were specifically described and set in limits of scientific safety.²

God also instituted the Sabbath, which Christ said "was made for man."³ It is to be noted that in every instance where God promised to preserve the health of his people, it was conditioned on keeping both the moral and natural laws.⁴

When the sinner transgressed the natural law, he suffered, as indicated by the inspired pen of Solomon:

Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at wine."⁵

¹Paul Ernest Adolph, Health Shall Spring Forth (Chicago: Moody Press, 1956), p. 14.

²R. Kelso Carter, "Faith Healing" Reviewed after Twenty Years (Boston: The Christian Witness Co., 1897), p. 46.

³Mark 2:27.

⁴Exodus 15:26, Deuteronomy 7.

⁵Proverbs 23:29-30.

The law of nature, however, is no respecter of persons, for if the Christian breaks it, he too will suffer, unless God makes a special concession. In the New Testament there is the record of Epaphroditus who over-taxed himself "for the work of Christ" and consequently "he came nigh unto death."¹

Thus the Bible distinguishes "between sickness and suffering which is due to a breach of the moral law (sin) and sickness and suffering due to a breach of the laws of physical health and safety."²

6. Inherent Weakness of the Human Body

The Bible often refers to the human body as being very frail.

As the Psalmist wrote:

He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.³

Paul, in writing to the Romans, stated that all of creation "groaneth and travaileth in pain," and that even the Spirit-filled Christians groan within themselves as they await the redemption of their bodies.⁴ In his first letter to the Corinthians he stated that the human body is subject to corruption,⁵ and weaknesses.⁶ In his second letter to

¹Philippians 2:29-30.

²Wade H. Boggs Jr., Faith Healing and the Christian Faith (Richmond Va.: John Knox Press, 1956), p. 85.

³Psalm 103: 14-16.

⁴Romans 8:20-23.

⁵I Corinthians 15:42.

⁶Ibid., v. 43.

this same church, he wrote that "our outward man is decaying"¹
and "we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened."²

The first passage refers to the universal frailty of the body while the others refer to the frailty of the Christian's body in particular. Thus it becomes obvious that salvation does not now exempt man from the universal frailties of the human race.

In old age these frailties become more noticable. It is recorded "that when Isaac was old - his eyes were dim, so he could not see."³ Almost the same thing is said about Jacob, "Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see."⁴ The great soldier, David, suffered in old age, for of him it is written:

Now king David was old and stricken in years;
and they covered him with clothes, but he gat
no heat.⁵

David recognized this was often the case and consequently wrote, "Cast me not off in the time of old age: forsake me not when my strength faileth."⁶ In the Ninetieth Psalm he wrote:

The days of our years are threescore
years and ten, Or even by reason of
strength fourscore years; Yet is their
pride but labor and sorrow; For it is
soon gone, and we fly away.⁷

¹II Corinthians 4:16.

²II Corinthians 5:4.

³Genesis 27:1.

⁴Genesis 48:10.

⁵I Kings 1:1.

⁶Psalms 71:9.

⁷Psalms 90:10.

These scriptures are sufficient to indicate that some physical disabilities and especially those in old age are the result of the frailty of the human body.

7. Result of an "Accident"

The Bible records several instances where sickness or physical disability came as the result of what might be termed an accident. The Bible tells of these "accidents" befalling both the wicked and the righteous. The explanation given for Mephibosheth's lameness is one example of this. When he was only five years old, his nurse in an attempt to save his life, "took him up and fled: and, it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell and became lame."¹ In another place it is stated that the wicked king, "Ahaziah fell down through the lattice in his upper chamber . . . and was sick."² Then there is the case of Eutychus, apparently a well-respected Christian, who "fell down from the third story and [was] taken up dead,"³ but who was later revived.

8. The Permissive Will of God

The Bible also records some instances where God permitted sickness or physical disability in order to work out his plan. This is clearly taught in the case of Job. Christ stated the purpose of Lazarus' sickness as follows: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the

¹II Samuel 4:4.

²II Kings 1:2.

³Acts 10:9.

glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby."¹ It is to be noted, however, that in both of these cases healing eventually came. Whether God wills that Christians should be permanently sick is a matter of sharp debate.

It is clear that many passages teach that the Christian, as long as he is in this world, will be subject to suffering, but does this refer to sickness? Andrew Murray answered by saying:

There is; therefore a great difference between suffering and sickness. The Lord Jesus spoke of suffering as being necessary, as being willed and blest of God; while he says of sickness that it ought to be cured. Suffering . . . is from without . . . while sickness is an evil which is in the body itself, in this body served by Christ that it may become the temple of the Holy Spirit and which consequently, ought to be healed as soon as the sick believer receives² by faith the working of the Holy Spirit.

Mr. Osborn added:

The word 'affliction' as used in this case³ has nothing to do with sickness or physical disabilities. It means trials, hardships, persecutions, and etc. Because of the misinterpretation of this scripture many saints are 'subjecting themselves to the perfect WILL OF SATAN,' rather than to the will of God.⁴

William Orr took his stand on the other side of the controversy, and in his book, Does God Heal Today?, stated that, "Sickness may glorify God."⁵

¹John 11:4.

²Andrew Murray, Divine Healing (N.Y.: Christian Alliance Pub. Co., n.d.), p. 110.

³Psalm 34:19.

⁴Osborn, Op. Cit., p. 55.

⁵Orr, Does God Heal Today, Op. Cit., p. 19.

The question, however, that the Christian always asks is, "What saith it (the Word)?" The Bible includes some, but very few, instances where the believer lived for years with physical handicaps or sicknesses. There is the case of Isaac's blindness. It is written in Genesis, chapter twenty-seven, that he was so blind he was unable to differentiate between his two sons, and so feeble that he thought it necessary to bestow the birthright upon Esau before he died. However, he lived for at least twenty-one more years,¹ apparently without any improvement in his health. Then, there is the case of Timothy who had constant stomach trouble and was beset with "often infirmities."² Perhaps it would be safe to say that as a rule, God does not will permanent sickness on the Christian, but that this rule, like almost every rule, has its exceptions.

Summary

The Bible does not oversimplify the causes of sicknesses and physical disorders. It plainly teaches that they may be the result of any one or a combination of any of the following causes:

1. Direct result of personal sin
2. Demon Possession
3. Indirect result of sin
4. Result of mental or spiritual disorder

¹Genesis 35:29.

²I Timothy 5:23

To this could be added Paul's thorn in the flesh if it could be proven that this was a physical infirmity. Since this is such a controversial subject, it is not included in this paper.

5. Result of breaking God's natural law
6. Inherent weakness of the human body
7. Result of an "accident"
8. Permissive will of God

It is obvious that some of these causes have moral implications but this cannot be said of all of them. It is also apparent that some sickness could be avoided by careful Christian living, but again it must be added, that it is just as apparent that this is not always the case.

CHAPTER III

THE GROUND FOR BODILY HEALING

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THE GROUND FOR BODILY HEALING

Practically every one who believes the Bible, also believes that God can and does heal today. However, they differ sharply as to the ground upon which God performs this healing. Practically every writer on the subject can be placed under one of two banners: Those who teach that healing is provided unconditionally by the atonement, and those who teach that it is conditionally provided by the atonement.

A. Healing Grounded Unconditionally in the Atonement

1. The History of the Theory

Both A.J. Gordon and Biederwolf trace the origin of this theory back to Pastor Otto Stockmayer, who lived during the nineteenth century.

He attached:

great weight to the words of the scripture which declare that Christ 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!' He reasons that if our Redeemer bore our sicknesses it is not His will that his children should remain under the power of disease, any more than having borne our sins it is his will that we should remain under condemnation and disobedience.¹

Pastor Rein was another of the early believers of this teaching. He began his ministry as a decided formalist, but after diligent Bible

¹A. J. Gordon, The Ministry of Healing (New York: Fleming H. Revell, Co., 1882), p. 163.

study began praying and anointing the sick. Many miraculous cases of healing were reported under his ministry.¹

It was Dr. A. B. Simpson, founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, however, who popularized this teaching. For years Dr. Simpson was in very poor health, but while attending a camp meeting conducted by Dr. Cullis, took Christ as his healer. His health immediately improved and he was enabled to "do the work of two ordinary men."² Dr. Simpson preached and wrote much on this subject, and his work, in many ways, served as a foundation for contemporary healers to build on.

Others who subscribed to this position include Andrew Murray and Oswald Smith. Most if not all the present pentecostal healers, such as Oral Roberts, O.L. Jagers, Osborn, A.A. Allan and Thomas Wyatt hold to this same basic teaching but have carried it further than these earlier men.

2. The Biblical Basis of the Theory

Those who subscribe to this belief state a number of Biblical passages for support.³ The following five, however, are the most popular and most pertinent:

¹Ibid., p. 165-168.

²Wm. Edward Biederwolf, Whipping Post Theology, or Did Jesus Atone for Disease? (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1934), p. 184.

³For a detailed discussion of these pages, see the last two chapters of Biederwolf.

a. Exodus 15:26, 23:25,26

As the Children of Israel were leaving Egypt, God promised them:

I will put none of the diseases upon thee,
which I put upon the Egyptians, for I am
Jehovah that healeth thee.

Later He promised, "I will take sickness away from the midst of thee.

There shall none cast her young, nor be barren in the land."²

b. Deuteronomy 28 and Galations 3:13

Every form of sickness and disease known to man is included, and many of them even mentioned particularly, in the 'curse of the law' (Deuteronomy 28:15-62). Now, in Galations 3:13, we have the positive statement that 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, made a curse for us' . . . What plainer declaration could we have than that Christ, Who was born under the law to redeem us, bore its curse, and therefore did redeem us from all sickness and disease?³

c. Numbers 21:8, and John 3:14,15

In this passage it is stated that God healed those who were bitten by fiery serpents through a look at the brazen serpent, which was a type of Calvary.⁴ Osborn reasons from this that:

If 'Everyone' who looked at the brazen serpent was healed then, it is logical that 'EVERYONE' who looks at Jesus can be healed.⁵

¹Exodus 15:26.

²Exodus 23:25,26.

³Bosworth, Christ the Healer, Op. Cit., p. 22.

⁴John 3:14-15.

⁵Osborn, Op. Cit., p. 191.

d. I Corinthians 11:29-30

In these verses the Apostle Paul stated that many of the Corinthian Christians were "weak and sickly" because they discerned not the Lord's body. This is said to mean that those Christians were sick, because they did

not discern or distinguish between the elements of the Lord's Supper. As they partook of the sacrament they only thought of Christ's blood which was shed for their sins and thoughtlessly (thus unworthily) partook of the bread representing the physical pain and suffering for their sickness.¹

Thus Lindsay wrote:

It is important at the Communion hour that each believer discerns not only the cup as a token of the Blood of Christ shed for the remission of sins, but also the Bread as a token of the Body of Christ, broken for his body.

As a logical sequence Bosworth stated:

You can be healed when you put the bread in your mouth . . . by discerning the Lord's body broken for your healing.³

e. Isaiah 53:4 and Matthew 8:16,17

These are the verses which led Pastor Stokmayer to believe that healing is provided unconditionally by the atonement.

The passage in Isaiah reads, "Surely he hath borne our griefs [margin: sicknesses] and carried our sorrows." According to Ringenberg,⁴ the Hebrew verbs for "borne" and "carried" used in verse four to refer to griefs and sorrows are also used in verses eleven

¹McCrosson quoted by Biederwolf, Op. Cit., p. 276.

²Gordon Lindsay, World Evangelization Now by Healing and Miracles (Glendale: The Church Press, 1951), p. 110.

³Biederwolf, Op. Cit., p. 10.

⁴J. A. Ringenberg, Jesus the Healer (Fort Wayne, Indiana: Missionary Church Assn., 1947) p. 43.

and twelve in regard to iniquities and sin. Thus Bosworth wrote:

Now whatever be the sense of these two Hebrew words, the same must be applied in both cases, namely, of sin bearing and sickness bearing. To pervert the sense of one case would give liberty to pervert it in the other.¹

Along the same vein Osborn wrote:

To prove that our sicknesses were carried away by Christ, just like our sins were carried away, the same Hebrew verb for "borne" and "carried" is used.²

It is also important to note the meaning of the Hebrew words translated griefs and sorrows in this verse. Mr. Ringenberg states that the Hebrew word, which is here translated "griefs" is used sixty times in the Old Testament, and is translated as follows: "grief or griefs" four times, "disease" or "diseased" ten times, and "sick, sickness or sicknesses" forty-six times.³ The Hebrew word which is here translated "sorrows" is found ten times in the Old Testament. It is variously translated as "sorrows" five times, griefs twice, and the other three times as pain.⁴

Consequently this verse could be translated, "Surely he hath borne our sicknesses and carried our pains." This perhaps, is the meaning that the Holy Spirit wanted conveyed, for note how it is used and translated by Matthew:

¹Bosworth, Op. Cit., p. 16.

²Osborn, Op. Cit., p. 199.

³Ringenberg, Op. Cit., p. 44,45.

⁴Ibid.

When the even was come, they brought unto him many possessed with demons: and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases.

Osborn summarizes this position by stating:

In Isa. 53, the removal of our diseases is included in Christ's atonement, along with the removal of our sins. The word "bare" implies substitution - suffering FOR, not sympathy - suffering WITH. If Christ has borne OUR sicknesses, why should we bear them?

In Matt. 8:16,17, Christ fulfilled Isaiah's words, "healing ALL THAT WERE SICK."²

3. The Logical Conclusions of the Theory

Those who hold to this theory reason that since both sickness and sin are mentioned in the redemption chapter of Isaiah fifty-three, that both salvation and healing must be provided in the atonement on an equal basis. Accepting this to be true, they also hold to the following logical conclusions:

1. God never wills anyone to be sick any more than he wills anyone to be sinful. Just as it is God's will to save everyone, so it is his will to heal everyone. This is one of the basic assumptions of all who hold this theory. Frequent reference is made to a report prepared by the Episcopalian Church which reads:

¹Matthew 8:16,17.

²Osborn, Op. Cit., p. 193.

The healing of Jesus was done as a revelation of God's will for man . .

. . No longer can the church pray for the sick with that faith-destroying phrase, 'if it by Thy will.'¹

Mr. Simpson wrote, "No one thinks of asking for forgiveness 'if the Lord will,' nor should we throw any stronger doubt on his promise of physical redemption."² To those who say, "I know God can heal me if it is His will," he wrote:

Now, if a friend is going to doubt me at all, I should much rather he would come to me and say, "I am sure you would help me if you could" than "I know you have it in your power to aid me, but I have little confidence in your disposition to do it." When will man see that this easy, good-natured talk about God's will involves the most subtle and offensive distrust?³

Oswald Smith wrote:

Some selection is surely necessary if there are individuals whom God would have remain sick for his glory . . . But we search in vain for such information . . There is no suggestion of a select number.⁴ "Is any sick?" is the question asked.

2. We are not fully saved until we are completely healed.

Osborn stated, "If we are saved, then we should be healed. If we are healed then we should be saved. Our Lord would not be satisfied with a half salvation."⁵ He commented on the healing incident of

¹Ibid., p. 11.

²A.B. Simpson, The Four-Fold Gospel (Harrisburg: Christian Publications Inc., 1952), p. 80.

³Ibid., p. 111.

⁴Oswald J. Smith, The Great Physician (New York: Christian Alliance, 1927), p. 45.

⁵Osborn, Op. Cit., p. 35.

Mark 2:1-10 by saying:

If Jesus had told this man that his sins were gone, his sickness would also have to leave, because the remedy for both was provided in the same atonement . . . If Jesus had told the man to rise up and walk, then his sins also would have to leave.¹

Morrison qualified this by saying:

The penalty for refusing, neglecting, or otherwise not availing oneself of the privilege of divine healing is that one shall remain ill, or recover health, maybe by some other and slower process.²

3. The Christian need never be sick. This is implied by

Andrew Murray's words:

As soon as the believer comes to realize that Christ died for both sin and sicknesses he can say, 'I need no longer bear my sickness; Jesus in bearing sin bore also sickness which is its consequence; for both He hath made propitiation, and He delivers me from both.'³

4. Any sickness or physical disorder in a Christian's life is evidence of defective spirituality, for if God has promised perfect health to every Christian, and one does not have it, the fault must of necessity be with the Christian and not with God.

5. Any minister who does not preach that healing is for all, is not preaching all the gospel. Some, like Osborn, "Always preach a full twofold provision, telling the 'unsaved' to accept Jesus Christ as their 'healer' and 'Saviour' at the same time."⁴

¹Ibid., p. 19.

²J. G. Morrison, Achieving Faith (Kansas: Nazarene, 1926), p. 140.

³Murray, Divine Healing, Op. Cit., p. 110.

⁴Osborn, Op. Cit., p. 18.

6. Natural means are unnecessary to healing. When a person is forgiven his sins, it is upon the basis alone of his faith in Christ's being his substitute. The same should be, then, true of healing. Thus Simpson reminded his readers that Matthew wrote, "'Himself', not Himself and physicians, not Himself and us, but He takes the whole burden Himself."¹

7. The Christian's death will be apart from sickness or disease. One of the questions constantly being addressed to those who hold this position is, "Why should people ever die, if Christ will always heal?" A.B. Simpson, like most of this school, answered by saying, "Faith can only go as far as God's promises and God has nowhere promised that we shall never die" physically.² The scriptural prescription for the death of God's children is said to be, "Thou takest away their breath, they die."³ "Thou shalt come to thy grave in full age, as a shock of corn cometh in his season."⁴

4. The Theory Evaluated by the Opponents

Those who reject this theory state that its proof texts and implications do not harmonize with the total Bible teaching on the subject of bodily healing.

a. An evaluation of its proof texts by the opponents of this theory.

¹A. B. Simpson, The Gospel of Healing (Harrisburg: Christian Publications, Inc., 1915), p. 111.

²Ibid., p. 47.

³Psalm 104:29.

⁴Job 5:26.

Osborn, Op. Cit., p. 25.

1. Exodus 15:26, 23:25,26

Those who hold to the conditional theory say that a careful study of these verses indicates that they were not intended to teach that unconditional healing is provided by the atonement. For one thing, they say, the healing mentioned in these verses does not come by faith in Christ's atonement, but is based upon obedience to God's moral and natural law. Secondly, the passage in Exodus 23 also promises that none should be barren, none should have a miscarriage, and that God would send hornets before them to "drive out their enemies." Thus they say that it is obvious that these three benefits were for the nation of Israel and cannot be applied to the present day Christian, and that there is nothing in the context which indicates that this fourth benefit, that of bodily healing, is to be applied any differently than the other three. Those who reject the unconditional theory go on to say it is evident from reading these verses that they were not intended for individual use, but rather that they were national promises. This, they state is verified by the fact that some of the most godly Israelites were sick after God had made this covenant with his people. For instance, the Word says that the saintly prophet "Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were set by reason of his age; that Elisha, who had a double portion of the Spirit, "was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died"²; Hezekiah, the king who brought revival to a backslidden nation was sick unto death and the great prophet Daniel testified that, "I, Daniel, fainted, and was sick certain days."³ Thus they reason that it is very evident that while God did promise to make Israel a healthy nation, if they kept his laws, yet there were

¹I Kings 14:4.

²II Kings 13:14.

³Daniel 8:27.

individual exceptions, so consequently these verses just referred to do not teach that there is unconditional healing provided in the atonement.

2. Deuteronomy 28 and Galations 3:13

The Deuteronomy scripture deals with the curses that are to come upon those who break the law and Galations 3:13 reads, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law." Those who subscribe to the conditional theory comment on this verse by saying that in the entire book of Galations, there is not one mention of sickness or disease, so it would seem that Paul is speaking of a spiritual curse. Though some may concede that this verse did refer to physical sickness, yet they insist that even this does not prove that healing is unconditionally provided in the atonement. Even a superficial reading of Deuteronomy twenty-eight makes it clear that this refers to sicknesses brought on by disobedience to God's moral law and has nothing to do with any other form of sickness. They state that it is apparent that the Deuteronomy portion was directed to the Israelitish nation and not to individuals of this dispensation, for God also promised that disobedience would be punished by severe diseases. The rest of the Old Testament verifies that God did punish Israel in this way for their disobedience. They say that if this were still God's method of punishing sin, then every sinner should fall victim of these deadly diseases, but experience indicates that this is not the case. One has written, some of:

The finest physical specimens among men of the present time are prize fighters; and it is commonly acknowledged, whatever might be said in their favor, that they are not noted for their spirituality.¹

They then reason that it is obvious that the one half of this Old Testament chapter does not apply to the present dispensation, therefore it is safe to

¹Frost, Miraculous Healing, Op. Cit., p. 102.

conclude that the other half does not either, making it clear that "what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law."¹

3. Numbers 21:8

Those who reject the theory of universal healing comment on this by saying it is true that the Brazen Serpent was a type of Calvary and that all who looked upon it were healed, but this does not mean that Calvary provided unconditional healing for every Christian. Jesus Christ, Himself, gave the meaning of this scripture in John 1:1-19, but there is not even a hint at physical healing.² According to His interpretation, the Brazen Serpent typifies the spiritual healing provided by Calvary.

4. I Corinthians 11:17-34

Those who hold to the conditional theory state that in the opening verses of this passage, the Apostle makes plain what he meant by partaking unworthily of the Lord's Supper. The Corinthians, in contrast to Christ and His disciples, were commemorating this occasion in the midst of division, drunkenness and rivalry. Thus it is not surprising that many were weak and sickly. They reason that if Christ wanted His followers to know that the Bread of the communion bespeaks of physical healing, He certainly would have said so when He instituted this ordinance. This, they say, would be the most logical place to find it, but there is no hint of it.

¹Romans 3:19.

²John Elward Brown, Faith Healing (Los Angeles, n.d.), p. 37.

5. Isaiah 53:4 and Matthew 8:16,17

It is quite obvious in the light of Matthew 8:16,17, that Isaiah 53:4 refers to sicknesses and disease, but some who hold to the conditional theory say that this does not mean that Christ bears sickness for everyone, but rather that He shares the load with the Christian who is sick.

G. Cambell Morgan held to this position and taught that,

The word "bare" is from the Greek word "bastago" the same word Paul uses when he says "bear the infirmities of the weak" (Rom. 15:1). It is evident from Paul's use of the word that we do not take the other man's burden all away, or that our bearing with the weak ones makes them strong. We get under the burden with them sympathetically but do not relieve them of the burden entirely.¹

When Jesus bears our sicknesses, He gets under the load with us sympathetically. An entirely different word is used when the Greek speaks of bearing our sins. It is "anaphero" which means to pick up and carry clear away so that we bear it no more.²

In this same vein Boggs wrote:

The Greek word used here by Matthew . . . in connection with Christ's bearing of sickness is never used in the New Testament in connection with Christ's bearing our sins.

Similarly Gaebelin wrote:

What then does it mean 'Himself' took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses? It can mean but one thing . . . He suffered with those who suffered. He shared sympathetically

¹"bastago" evidently is a misprint and should be written "bastadzo".

²Swalm, "A Symposium on Divine Healing," Op. Cit., p. 5.

³Boggs, Op. Cit., p. 84.

with the afflicted ones.¹

Others who hold to the conditional theory think that something else is meant by these verses. The Bible, they say, does teach that our High Priest is touched by the feeling of our infirmities, but it is obvious that something more is meant in this case for this passage does not picture the Christ merely sympathizing with the sick, but plainly states that He "healed all that were sick, [that were brought to him at that time] that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases."² Thus, they say, this passage of scripture teaches that bearing diseases in this instance meant bringing complete deliverance.

But they say that this scripture can not be understood until one knows the meaning of the phrase, "That it might be fulfilled," which appears twelve times in the Gospel of Matthew. They say that in order to see what significance Matthew attached to his own words, it would be well to note how he uses them throughout his gospel. The first time he uses it is in connection with the virgin birth and reads as follows:

And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. Now all this is come to pass that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son . . .³

¹Arno Clemens Gaebelin, The Healing Question (New York: Publication Office "Our Hope," 1925), p. 37.

²Matthew 8:17.

³Matthew 1:20-23.

It is obvious, they claim, that this scripture was fulfilled once and for all at the time mentioned in the context.

This phrase appears next in connection with the flight of the holy family into Egypt. It reads:

And he arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son.¹

Again, they say, it is obvious that this scripture was fulfilled once and for all at the time mentioned in the context.

Just a few verses later Matthew records how Herod had the Children of Bethlehem slain in an attempt to take the life of the new-born king. Commenting on this he writes:

Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying,
A voice was heard in Ramah,
Weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children;
And she would not be comforted,
because they were not.²

Again, they say, it is plain that this prophecy was completely fulfilled at the time mentioned in the passage. They continue their line of reasoning by saying that a study of all the other passages where this phrase appears, reveals the same thing. There is no case where the fulfillment is either postponed or considered to be continuous. With this background in mind, we are told that it becomes a relatively easy matter to answer the question "when was Isaiah 53:4 fulfilled?" Judging from the way Matthew consistently uses this

¹Matthew 2:14,15.

²Matthew 2:17,18.

phrase, it was fulfilled, "Not while He was on the Cross, but while He was alive, in the City of Capernaum, on the shore of Galilee."¹ This, we are told, is especially clear since in Matthew 8:16,17, there is no reference at all to Calvary and nothing in the context to suggest that it was fulfilled at any other time or that this was to have a continuous fulfillment. It is also obvious that the phrase "He healed all that were sick" refers only to those who were brought to him at that time and was not a universal or unconditional healing.²

b. An evaluation of its logical conclusions by its opponents.

Those who reject the universal theory have extended their criticism to include the logical conclusions of the unconditional theory.

1. God wills that all be healed. The critics say that it is difficult if not impossible to reconcile this to the fact that Isaac was blind for at least twenty years,³ and that Timothy had stomach trouble.⁴ It is also stated that Timothy was plagued with often "infirmities." Those who hold to the conditional theory ask why Timothy did not realize and take advantage of this provision of the atonement if it were really there?

2. Those who are in need of healing are not fully saved.

¹May Wyburn Fitch, The Healing Delusion (New York: Loizeaux Brothers Inc., n.d.), p. 19.

²Ibid., p. 20.

³Genesis 35.

⁴I Timothy 5:23.

If this is true then, according to these critics, it follows that the men mentioned in the preceeding paragraph were only partly saved. This list would also have to be enlarged to include Elisha, Daniel, Epaphrôditus and others. This, it is accreted, fails to harmonize with all the rest that the Bible says about these saints.

3. Only those who preach that healing is unconditionally in the atonement, are preaching the full gospel. Here the critics say that if this is true then the Bible knows nothing of "full gospel preachers," for there is no record that Christ ever preached on healing. The same could be said of the apostles, Phillip, Stephen, and Paul. As the apostles went out it is stated that they "preached that men should repent."¹ They healed but, it is argued, this served only as credentials of their commission, not as a basic part of their message.

4. One should not rely on natural means. Those of the conditional school say that this conflicts with several scriptures. Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit told Timothy to use wine for his stomach trouble,² and Christ apparently never objected to doctors or to natural means, for He said, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick."³ In the story about the man who fell among thieves, Jesus told that the

¹Mark 6:12.

²I Timothy 5:23.

³Mark 2:17.

Samaritan poured oil and wine into his wounds. These were among the best medical remedies known at that time. The Samaritan also left him at the inn to recover.¹

Those who reject the universal theory continue their argument by asking if this theory is true why Paul left Trophimus sick at Miletus when he needed him so much,² and why there are gifts of healing placed in the church³ for there is no gift of salvation.

B. Healing Grounded Conditionally In the Atonement

The conditional healing theory could be explained as follows. If God dealt with man according to strict justice, man would die spiritually and physically as soon as he sinned.⁴ Any better treatment that man receives from God, then, is not based upon justice, but upon mercy. It is the atonement alone which makes this mercy possible, and hence all the benefits known to mankind, including physical healing, are grounded in the atonement. In order to understand the relationship between the atonement and healing, it is asserted, one must have a general knowledge of what the Bible teaches concerning the atonement.

¹Luke 10:30-37.

²II Timothy 4:20.

³I Corinthians 12.

⁴Genesis 2:17.

After God had created the world and its inhabitants, it is stated, "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good."¹ There was perfect harmony between man and God for in the cool of the evening God came to walk with man; there was equality and harmony between Adam and Eve. There was no enmity between man and the animals for God gave man "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing."² But man sinned and all this changed. Man now tried to hide from God, the world's first son killed his brother, and some of the animals, instead of being under the dominion of man, became man's constant enemy. God stated that because of sin, the animal world was to be under a curse, that the woman would bring forth children with multiplied pain, that the ground would be cursed, bearing thorns and thistles, and that man would die and return to the dust. Both the scripture and experience prove all these things to be true. Both Biblical and secular history picture man at enmity with God and other men, nature, and the animal world. What a dark picture this would be if it were not for one ray of light - calvary. Christ died to redeem man from all these curses and according to the Bible the benefits of calvary shall some day go "as far as the curse is found." This means that the atonement must provide forgiveness for sin and with this the Word agrees for it is stated:

Come now, and let us reason together,
saith Jehovah: though your sins be as

¹Genesis 1:31.

²Genesis 1:28.

scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.¹

This means that the atonement will bring a termination to the enmity between mankind and the animal world, and with this the Word agrees for it is written:

And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.²

There will also be no more enmity between animals for it is stated:

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.³

In fact all the results of the curse, including the thorns and thistles will be removed, for the Apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote, "The creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into . . . liberty."⁴ There is also complete deliverance for the body, for Paul speaking about the body

¹Isaiah 1:18.

²Isaiah 11:8,9.

³Ibid. 11:6,7.

⁴Romans 8:21.

wrote, "For this corruptible [body] must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."¹ There is coming a time when;

He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more: the first things are passed away.²

Thus, those who hold to the conditional theory say that the Bible teaches that sin, sickness, death, thorns, thistles, pain, the attacks of wild animals, are all a result of sin. It teaches that Calvary has provided complete deliverance from all of these evils. But they ask if this means that the Christian can unconditionally claim all these benefits now. The answer is obvious. The Christian can only unconditionally claim those benefits where he is authorized to do so by the Word.

Those who reject the universal theory state that by studying the relationship between these other physical benefits and the atonement, light will be thrown on the relationship existing between bodily healing and the atonement.

The Bible, they say, states that there is coming a time when man's last enemy - death, "shall be abolished." It also tells of two men - Enoch and Elijah, who did not taste death. However, they continue, no enlightened Christian can dare to presume he will never die because of these scriptural statements, for the Bible gives no

¹I Corinthians 15:53.

²Revelation 21:4.

such promise, but plainly states that during this age, "It is appointed unto man once to die." Hence, we are told, this benefit of the atonement cannot now be appropriated by any amount of faith, for it is not in keeping with God's present will.

The Bible, they continue, makes it evident that the enmity between man and the animal world, has provisionally been abolished.¹ Besides this there are several instances in the Bible where God gave man marvelous deliverance from wild animals. There is the case of Daniel in the lion's den, and of Christ being with the wild beasts during His temptation. The faith chapter lists one of the feats of faith as stopping the mouths of lions.² In fact there is not one Biblical record of any obedient child of God ever being hurt by an animal. To this could be added the promise of Christ himself that the believer "shall take up serpents" and not be hurt. Now, they say, if these scriptures only are considered, it would present a strong case that the Christian could unconditionally receive protection from every wild animal. But no enlightened Christian will make this assumption, for if he seeks for a promise from God's word to this effect, he seeks in vain. Hence, they conclude that while God now, as in Bible times, often provides special protection to the Christian from wild animals, it would be presumption, and not faith, which would claim this as a present, unconditional benefit of the atonement.

They also say that the Bible states clearly that thorns are a

¹Isaiah 11.

²Hebrews 11:33.

result of the fall. These will some day be removed, but they ask, can faith provide the Christian's land with immunity from weeds now? Obviously not, for there is no scriptural support for such faith.

Now what about sickness and disease? The atonement has made provision for the believer to have a perfect body. The Bible lists many cases where believers were miraculously delivered from sicknesses and physical disorders. But can the Christian claim healing in every case as an unconditional present benefit of the atonement? Again they answer only if he can find a clear promise to this effect.

The question then arises whether there is any place where God has unconditionally promised the believer protection from all sickness or healing in the case of disease. Those who hold to the unconditional theory answer "yes." The scripture they most refer to is, "I am Jehovah that healeth thee."¹ As has already been indicated, those who reject the universal theory say that this is a national, not an individual promise and that there were individual exceptions to it. They also add that this promise was conditioned by obedience to God's natural and moral law, and not upon faith in the atonement as in the case of sin. There are two other scriptures which are sometimes quoted by those who hold to the unconditional theory. "They [the believers] shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."² And James 5:14,15 states,

Is any among you sick? let him call
for the elders of the church; and

¹Exodus 15:26.

²Mark 16:18.

let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him.¹

Those who hold to the conditional theory, however, state that both of these verses are given as a promise to the one who ministers to the sick and not to the sick person. They also say that there is no scripture which promises universal healing for all now. Instead, it states that the believer lives in a body of humiliation.² In the eighth chapter of Romans, the apostle says, "Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."³ In the fiftieth chapter of Corinthians, he describes the Christian's body as being subject to corruption, and bodies of weakness. In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote that the "outward man [body] is decaying."⁴

Thus, they say, the scriptural conclusion is that, while God often heals the sick believer in answer to prayer, yet physical healing like many other benefits of the atonement are not now unconditionally available to the believer. This enables the Christian to understand that both now and in Bible times, God, for reasons often known only to Him, healed believers and yet sometimes, equally godly men such as Isaac, Timothy and Trophimus, David Brainard and Fanny Crosby were not healed. R.A. Torrey, speaking for the conditional theory

¹James 5:14,15.

²Phillipians 3:21.

³Romans 8:23.

⁴II Corinthians 4:16.

says,

While we do not get the full benefits for the body secured for us by the atoning death of Christ in the life that now is, but when Jesus comes again, nevertheless, just as one gets the first fruits of his spiritual salvation in the life that now is, so we get the first fruits of our physical salvation in the life that now is. We do get in many, many, cases physical healing through the atoning death of Jesus Christ even in this life that now is.¹

Carter comments:

Yes, physical healing is in the atonement, but, "We do not get everything at once!" "Every man in his own order." Heaven, the life eternal, the resurrection, the coming ages of blessing and peace, the New Jerusalem, the many mansions, - all these and more will be ours through the atonement. We must not anticipate the plan of God. The court of Heaven will pay us everything in our Father's will to the last item; but it will be in the order and time set by that court. If we attempt to discount God's notes before the time set in conditions, we need not be surprised to find those notes apparently going to protest.²

Those subscribing to this theory continue by saying, that if salvation and healing sustain the same relationship to God's present program for man, as some teach, then it would be logical to assume that the Bible would deal with both of these subjects alike.

¹R. A. Torrey, Divine Healing (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1924), p. 46,47.

²Carter, "Faith Healing" Reviewed, Op. Cit., p. 59,60.

This, they say, is not the case, for the Bible gives no clear promise of unconditional healing; it tells of some godly men who never received it, and it further states that the outward man is decaying. This is not, however, the way that it speaks in regard to salvation. It contains many universal promises such as:

Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him.¹

and:

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.²

There is not one case where God refused salvation to the penitent seeker. Jesus said,

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.³

and, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."⁴ Thus those holding to the conditional theory state that it is obvious that while both bodily healing and salvation are in the atonement, they do not now sustain an equal relationship to it.

¹Acts 2:38,39.

²I John 1:9

³Revelation 3:20.

⁴John 6:37.

Summary

Within Christian circles there are two conflicting theories as to the biblical ground for bodily healing. According to one theory, healing is provided unconditionally in the atonement, as is salvation. According to the other theory, healing is provided in the atonement, but is conditioned by the sovereign will of God.

Those who hold to the unconditional theory list the following as their main proof texts:

1. Exodus 15:26; 23:25,26. Here is recorded the promise, "I am the Lord that healeth thee."

2. Deuteronomy 28 and Galatians 3:13. In this Old Testament passage, God warns Israel that the law breaker will be cursed by sickness. In the Galatians passage Paul writes, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law."

3. Numbers 21:8. Christ stated that the Brazen Serpent mentioned in this passage of scripture symbolized Calvary. Since a look at this serpent brought bodily healing, it is reasoned that a look at Calvary should do the same.

4. I Corinthians 11:17-34. In this passage it is stated that many of the Corinthian Christians were "weak and sickly" because they discerned not the Lord's body. Failing to discern the Lord's body is said to mean that these Christians did not realize that Christ's body was broken to atone for their sicknesses and diseases.

5. Isaiah 53:4 and Matthew 8:16,17. In the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah where the ministry and sacrifice of Christ is depicted, it prophesies that Christ should bear sickness. Matthew 8:16,17

states that Christ healed all that were sick, that this scripture might be fulfilled.

Those who hold to this theory also hold to the following conclusions which are the logical outgrowth of their teaching:

1. God wills that all be healed.
2. Those who are in need of healing are not fully saved.
3. Only those who preach that healing is unconditionally in the atonement are preaching the full gospel.
4. One should not rely on natural means.
5. The Christian need never be sick.
6. Any sickness or physical disorder in the Christian's life is evidence of defective spirituality.
7. The Christian's death will be apart from sickness or disease.

Those who hold to the conditional theory reject the foregoing theory by saying:

1. Its proof texts are weak and have not been considered in the light of their context.
2. Its logical conclusions fail to harmonize with the total Bible teaching on bodily healing.

In support of their theory they state that there is no passage of scripture which promises, unconditionally, bodily healing, but that there are frequent references¹ which indicate that the contrary is true.

¹Such as I Corinthians 15, II Corinthians 4,5, Romans 8.

CHAPTER IV

THE PURPOSE OF BODILY HEALING

CHAPTER IV

THE PURPOSE OF PHYSICAL HEALING

It would be presumptuous to think that man could know the divine purpose of healing in every case. Yet, the Bible does indicate at times why God healed. It is not always for the same purpose.

A. To Serve as Credentials for Special Messengers.

God often worked special signs through his servants to accredit his messengers or their message. This was true of Moses for he had power to turn his rod into a serpent, and when he "put forth his hand and laid hold of it, "it became a rod in his hand" again. When he put his hand into his bosom, it became white as snow, but when he brought his hand out the second time, "it was turned again as his other flesh."¹ God told Moses that these were to serve as signs to Pharaoh that he was sent by Jehovah. It was added that if Pharaoh did not believe that sign, others would be added.

The man of God in preaching to Jeroboam said,

This is the sign which Jehovah hath spoken: Behold the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out.²

Then it is stated,

The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of Jehovah.³

¹Exodus 4:1-7.

²I Kings 13:3.

³Ibid., v. 5.

It is evident that on some occasions, God worked special healings through Christ for this purpose. In the Gospel of John, the author selects eight incidents from the life of Christ which were to prove that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."¹ These signs include several physical healings - the man at the pool of Bethesda,² the man born blind,³ and the resurrection of Lazarus, which Christ said was, "that the Son of God might be glorified."⁴ That these signs did indicate to the open hearted that Jesus was from God is brought out by Nicodemus' statement, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no one can do these signs that thou doest except God be with him."⁵ When John the Baptist wanted proof of Jesus' Messiahship, Christ answered,

Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them.⁶

God also supported the ministers of the early church with signs. The first of these, which the Bible records after Christ's ascension, is found in the third chapter of Acts. When this man who was born crippled was healed, it drew a large crowd. Peter refused

¹John 20:31.

²Ibid., ch.5.

³John 9.

⁴John 11.

⁵John 3:2.

⁶Matthew 11:4,5.

to take any of the credit for this miracle, but stated that God by this miracle, "Hath glorified his Servant Jesus."¹ He then preached a message of repentance, and "many of them that heard the word believed."² Soon this incident gave Peter an opportunity to speak to the religious rulers and elders. He said:

If we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man, by what means this man is made whole: be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in him doth this man stand here before you whole.³

This healing was so definite that even the prejudiced elders, "could say nothing against it."⁴ This healing power was not limited to only the apostles for Philip possessed it as he ministered to the Samaritans. These signs, however, were not an end in themselves, nor were they to draw attention from the gospel, for it is written:

And the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip, when they heard and saw the signs which he did. For from many of those that had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice: and many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed.⁵

Other instances could be added, but this is sufficient to show that God sometimes sends healing to accredit a message or messenger.

¹Acts 3:13.

²Acts 4:4.

³Acts 4:9-10.

⁴Acts 4:14.

⁵Acts 8:6,7.

When God healed for this purpose, the Bible indicates that these were always of a supernatural nature. This is logical, for healing that came as a result of natural processes would not serve this purpose very well. However, when the blind, lame, crippled and diseased, instantaneously and supernaturally were healed, it became evident that these men and their message came from God.

It is also noted that in such instances, faith in Christ as a healer was not always required on the part of the individual who was healed. This obviously was the case of those who were raised from the dead. It is also clear in the case of the man by the pool of Bethesda. Although the man was miraculously healed, it was not the result of faith in Christ as the Son of God, for it is stated that he "That was healed knew not who it was", who healed him, "For Jesus had conveyed himself away."¹

There is no indication that either Christ or his apostles ever allowed these signs to become an end in themselves, or to subtract from their gospel ministry. These healings served as a means to an end. After Christ had healed many at Simon's house, he was urged to remain but replied, "Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end come I forth."² When Christ gave his apostles their last orders it was, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation." Then Christ stated that one of the signs which would follow was the healing

¹John 5:13.

²Mark 1:38.

of the sick. Thus Christ made it clear that healing was to be considered as a sign, and not to be placed on the same basis as the gospel. The Apostles followed this pattern. The healing of Aeneas is rather typical.

And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had kept his bed eight years, for he was palsied. And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed. And straightway he arose. And all that dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.¹

It should also be added, that power to perform miracles does not necessarily indicate that an individual is sent by God. Pharaoh's magicians were also able to perform some of the wonders that God worked through Moses and Aaron.² Jesus said:

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.³

He also warned his disciples:

For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets and shall show signs and wonders, that they may lead astray, if possible, the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have told you all things beforehand.⁴

Thus one must not unconditionally consider signs as an indication that

¹Acts 9:33-35.

²Exodus 7.

³Matthew 7:22,23.

⁴Mark 13:22,23.

a person is divinely commissioned. Jesus gave the following method of distinguishing between the true and false prophets:

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them.¹

The Bible also indicates that great signs are not enough to convince those who are wilfully ignorant. Several times the Pharisees realized that Christ had healed, but they did not want to accept His claims, so in one instance they discredited the miracle because it was performed on the Sabbath.² Another time they attributed it to the power of the Devil. Thus the reason why the Pharisees refused to believe was not because of lack of evidence, but because of a moral condition in the heart. This is made clear by the question Jesus once asked them:

How can ye believe, who receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?³

One question which arises in this connection is, "Does God always accredit his servant's ministry by working miracles through him?" There is nothing in the Scriptures which indicate that this question should be answered in the affirmative. It is true that many of the Old Testament prophets such as Moses, Elijah, and Elisha, and many New Testament preachers such as Peter, John, Paul and Stephen performed miracles. It is equally true, however, that there

¹Matthew 7:15,16.

²John 9.

³John 5:44.

is no record of Timothy, Titus, Luke, and many other New Testament ministers ever performing miraculous healings. Without controversy, it is a "great thing" to have God bless a person's ministry with signs, but it is "greater" to have it said of any minister what was said of John the Baptist:

John indeed did no sign: but all things whatsoever John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there.¹

While God does not always work "signs and wonders" through His ministers, yet it is plain that God during Bible times often aided his ministers to instantaneously heal the sick to indicate that they were sent of God. There is no verse to indicate that this may not still be His purpose for healing some who are sick.

B. To Provide Strength for Christian Service

Sometimes, according to the Bible, God healed his children that they might have added strength to serve Him. This was apparently part of the reason Peter's mother-in-law was healed, for after her healing it is stated, "She ministered unto them." After God had revealed unto Ananias that Saul was to be a "chosen vessel unto me [God] to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the Children of Israel,"² Ananias laid his hands on Saul's blinded eyes. "And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight."³ Epaphroditus, who was nigh unto death was restored to health in order that he might serve the Apostle.⁴

¹John 10:41,42.

²Acts 9:15.

³Acts 9:18.

⁴Philippians 2:28.

There is no record where God ever healed a sinful, sick person in order that he might continue his same course. Once Christ told a man whom he had healed, "Sin no more lest a worse thing befall thee."¹

When a person is not fully devoted to the Lord, it is difficult if not impossible to pray in faith for his bodily healing apart from any spiritual healing. Oswald Smith said he could only pray as follows for the sick sinner who was concerned only about his bodily healing:

Lord, heal this man; he is blind. Give him his sight in order that he may see the movies. Lord he is deaf. Cause him to hear that he may listen to the vile jokes of the vaudeville show. He is dumb, Lord, give him back his speech that he may curse and swear, lie and gossip as much as he likes. Lord, he is lame, Heal him that he may enjoy the dance, and Lord, his fingers are stiff with rheumatism. Heal him in order that he may play cards. Dear Lord, this man is very sick. Please restore him wholly that he may serve the devil with all his heart. Amen!²

Thus:

God does not heal us that we may be freed from limitations and infirmities and live less restricted lives. He does not deliver us from bodily suffering so we may the more pursue our selfish interests. He is not interested in raising us up from our afflictions so that we may destroy these bodies in riotous living. His gifts are to bring glory to himself.³

¹John 5:14.

²Smith, The Great Physician, Op. Cit., p. 72-73.

³Ringenberg, Jesus The Healer, Op. Cit., p. 118.

As has already been stated, when God's purpose in healing was to accredit some messenger, the healing was always of a supernatural nature for only this type of healing would serve this purpose.

However, when God's purpose in healing is to merely bestow health for service upon one of his children, any type of healing, be it miraculous or natural, instantaneous or gradual, would serve this end. Consequently some of the biblical instances of healing for this purpose appear to be natural and gradual. When Paul writes about Epaphroditus' recovery, he states merely, "God had mercy on him."¹ There is no indication that this was a miraculous healing. On one occasion, Paul's spiritual son, Timothy, was hindered in his ministry by stomach trouble and infirmities. The Holy Spirit chose to bring help to Timothy through the human instrumentality of the Apostle Paul, but this time it was not by performing some miracle as had often been the case before, when he was working among people who were hearing the gospel for the first time. Instead, the same Holy Spirit, who had empowered him to perform these miracles of healing in the past, inspired him to write Timothy to find healing through the use of natural means.

Summary

There are at least two different reasons why God sometimes

¹Philippians 2:27.

grants bodily healing: to serve as credentials for his messengers and to provide strength for Christian service.

It is important to bear the following things in mind when God grants healing to serve as credentials:

1. In Bible times these healings were always of a supernatural nature.
2. In Bible times this type of healing never was an end in itself, but was the means of making the message more effective.
3. In Bible times, some who were not sent by God could perform miracles too. Consequently the ability to perform miracles in itself does not guarantee that a person has been sent by God.
4. Even the miracles of Christ did not lead those to faith who were wilfully ignorant.
5. God did not accompany all of his servants with physical miracles.

Sometimes God grants healing to bestow physical strength to the believer for Christian service. This, like the healing in the preceding paragraph, is obviously a means to an end and not an end in itself. Unlike that type of healing, however, which was always of a supernatural nature, this type of healing may come gradually and through natural means.

CHAPTER V

MEANS OF HEALING

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MEANS OF HEALING

The opening Chapter of this paper lists the six main causes of disease as found in the Bible. Since there are a number of causes for disease, it would not be surprising if God would also have a number of means by which to bring healing. The Bible indicates that this is the case. These various means of healing can be placed under two main headings - spiritual means, and natural means. These correspond to the two main causes of sickness - spiritual and natural causes.

A. Spiritual Means

1. Personal Faith

Faith played an important part in many of the biblical healings. Jesus said to the woman healed of the issue of blood, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole."¹ When the two blind men of Jericho came to Jesus seeking healing, Christ asked them, "Believe Ye that I am able to do this? They say unto him, Yea Lord, Then touched he their eyes saying, According to your faith be it done unto you, And their eyes were opened."² To the Canaanitish woman who sought healing for her daughter, Jesus said, "Great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was healed from that

¹Mark 5:34.

²Matthew 9:28.

From this they reason that if you are not certain that it is God's will to heal you, then you will have doubt, and since healing comes as a result of faith instead of doubt, you will probably never be healed.

When one comes to believe that it is God's will to heal all and consequently to heal him, then he must claim his healing, dis-regarding his symptoms and healing will come. As Bosworth wrote:

Faith always blows the ram's horn before, not after the walls are down .
 . . Faith rests on far more solid ground than the evidence of the senses and that is the Word of God which 'abideth forever.' Our senses may deceive us, but God's Word never!¹

Hence those seeking healing are admonished:

Never confess your 'feelings.'
 They are always weakening to faith.
 There will always be a conflict between your feeling and the Word of faith.²

When those who hold to this position, are not perfectly healed, there of course can be but one logical explanation - not enough faith. The extent of healing, therefore, becomes a barometer to one's faith.

Torrey, commenting on this type of faith healing wrote:

Of course, there is a healing power of a certain kind in this asserting that you are well, or that 'day by day in every way, you are getting better and better,' but it is certainly not Divine healing, it is self healing .
 . . This is not much different from the method of Christian Science.³

¹Bosworth, Christ the Healer, Op. Cit., p. 99,100.

²Osborn, Op. Cit., p. 110.

³R. A. Torrey, Divine Healing, Op. Cit., p. 30.

McDonald adds:

The New Testament furnishes no examples of cure where the sick continued battling with the disease for weeks and months, refusing all remedies, and when nature at last rallied, and partial health was restored, it was taken as a veritable case of Divine Healing. . . . But there are many who claim to have been cured many times of the same disease It would seem that the work of Christ if it be His work is very unreliable, scarcely equalling that of the ordinary physician.¹

Along this same line Dr. Schofield writes, "I know many people who have been cured (?) for three or four years, but still wait its manifestation!"²

Again it becomes apparent that Christians differ. The question however, that needs to be settled in the light of the Scripture is this, "Can the Christian have faith to believe God for his personal healing even though he does not believe it is God's will to heal everybody?" In Genesis, it is recorded that God made known his special will to Abraham, promising him a son when both he and Sarah "were past age." On the basis of this special, personal promise Abraham "waxed strong through faith,"³ and "Sarah herself received power to conceive seed . . . since she counted him faithful who had promised."⁴ Hannah pleaded no universal promise, but God gave her the assurance she should have a child. God made clear, by

¹McDonald, Modern Faith Healing, Op. Cit., p. 16.

²Alfred T. Schofield, A Study of Faith Healing (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., n.d.), p. 32.

³Romans 4:20.

⁴Hebrews 11:11.

a special revelation to Hezekiah, that he would be healed. The Leper of Mark I prayed, "Lord, if thou wilt," and he was healed. "If Christ honored this form of prayer when the leper appealed to Him, will He deny us when we pray the same way?"¹ In the light of the Scriptures it becomes apparent that God is also able to reveal to the believer when a request is not His will. Paul wrote concerning his "thorn in the flesh," "Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me,"² but God revealed to him that this was not His will. If God were able to make His special will plain to the people of Bible times, it is reasonable to suppose that He can do so now.

James writes, "Ye have not, because ye ask not."³ Perhaps it would be safe to say that many are not healed because they have never consulted God in this matter. In several instances, Christ, "Seeing their faith,"⁴ granted His healing touch. Is it not logical to believe that if man had greater faith God would still make Himself manifest in this way?

As important as personal faith is in bringing bodily healing, it is not the only means listed in the Bible. Dr. William Orr, who has carefully studied this subject wrote, "fully a third of the recorded healings of the Bible have no reference at all to required

¹Fitch, The Healing Delusion, Op. Cit., p. 49.

²II Corinthians 12:8.

³James 4:2.

⁴Mark 2:5; 7:29.

faith."¹

2. Obedience

Sometimes the afflicted individual was asked to obey some simple command. When he had obeyed, the healing came. For Naaman, it meant to dip seven times in the Jordan; the blind man was bidden to wash at the Pool of Saloam. Naaman almost went home without being cured. He seemed to have great faith, for he traveled a long way to see Elisha, and brought money to offer him as a gift for his healing. However, he was not healed until he obeyed.

3. Confession

James wrote, "confess therefore your sins one to another that ye may be healed." Since man confesses to God his sins against God, it would seem that this confession to one another would apply to man's sins or offenses against a brother. If these are responsible for illness, then when they are confessed, healing will come.

4. Faith of Others

There are several cases where God granted healing to a suffering individual, on the basis of someone else's faith. This was the case in the healing of the centurion's son;² the demoniac;³ the Nobleman's son;⁴ and the Syrophenician woman.⁵ These seem to

¹Orr, Does God Heal, Op. Cit., p. 7.

²Matthew 8:5-13.

³Matthew 17.

⁴John 4:46-53.

⁵Mark 7.

be cases where the sick individual was in such a serious condition that he was unable to seek help for himself.

5. The Prayer of Faith

James wrote that the sick person should call for the elders of the church who would,

Pray over him, anointing him with oil
in the name of the Lord: and the prayer
of faith shall save him that is sick and
the Lord shall raise him up.¹

This verse states who is qualified to seek healing in this way. This is implied in the question, "Is any among you sick?", thus it refers to any Christian, (for it says among you), who is sick. The implication is that the person is so sick that he cannot get out, but must send for the elders to come to him.

R. A. Torrey commenting on this verse says that the person in this condition is to "send for the elders of the church."

He is not to send for some self-appointed busy-body who goes about with a little bottle of oil to be used in his loudly-advertised "ministry of healing" to which he has been called, or fancies he has been called . . . He is not to "attend meetings for three days" (or three hours or three minutes) to get under the spell of psychological influences, that are akin to Coueistic auto-suggestively therapeutic influences. He is not to be brought into the mesmeric atmosphere of a meeting where there is skilfully-planned, highly-emotional music and swaying of the body and

¹James 5:15.

passings of the hand and shouts of hallelujahs, that excite the imagination and thrill the body. No, he is to "call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him" in the calm and quiet of the home.¹

This verse states that the healing in this instance hinges on "the prayer of faith." It is obvious that no man can believe God to do something which is outside the orbit of God's will. Hence, the prayer of faith is one which is in keeping with that will. Two verses down, James gives an example of the prayer of faith. It is:

One which originates in heaven, for Elijah's prayer, before it was offered was given to Him by the Holy Spirit, which fact revealed to him the will of God and thus made him bold to ask for the thing desired.²

This verse states what happens when the elders pray the prayer of faith over a sick man. "The Lord will raise him up." This may be instantaneous or gradual, but if the prayer of faith has been prayed, there will be real healing.

7. Anointing with Oil

This is mentioned in two places. In Mark it reads, "and they [the apostles] cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them."³ The other passage is the one just referred to in James. From reading Leviticus 8:10 through

¹Torrey, Op. Cit., p. 12,13.

²Frost, Miraculous Healing, Op. Cit., p. 86.

³Mark 6:13.

verse twelve, it becomes apparent that anointing was an act of dedication or consecration, when used in reference to the tabernacle. Thus, when the sick person was anointed with oil, it was an act of dedication or consecration, implying a full surrender of the person's hands, feet, lips and entire body into the hands of God to be a temple of the Holy Spirit.

8. Laying on of Hands

Christ often healed the sick by laying His hands upon them.¹ Saul received his sight after Ananias laid his hands upon him.² When Paul discovered that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever, he "entered in, and prayed, and laying his hands on him healed him."³ Christ said concerning those who should believe in him, "they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."⁴

9. Gifts of Healing

In I Corinthians, chapter twelve, Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit lists nine spiritual gifts which are set in the church. One of these is the gift of healing. The other eight are in the interest of the soul. The fact that the gift of healing is listed as one of the gifts "set" in the church offers strong evidence that it is God's will to heal throughout the church age, for as Oswald Smith wrote,

¹Luke 4:40; Mark 5:35; 8:22; Luke 13:11-13; and many other cases.

²Acts 9:17.

³Acts 28:8.

⁴Mark 16:18.

If it was not God's will to continue His healing ministry, then why should such a gift be given, Does He bestow unnecessary gifts? Did he not intend it to be used?¹

10. Prayer Cloth

There is but one reference to this means of healing, which is recorded in connection with Paul's ministry at Ephesus. The Record states:

And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them and the evil spirits went out.²

11. Satanic Power

Not all spiritual means of healing are of God, for the Bible relates several miracles performed by the power of Satan. One example of this was the power of the Egyptian magicians to turn their rods into serpents. If Satan working through men could do these things, it is not difficult to also believe that he could perform bodily healings. Mr. Simpson wrote:

If he [the Devil] has power to inflict ill health upon the body, I see no reason why he should not, if he please, open the back door and get out and leave the body well. If Satan had power to bind a woman in Christ's time for

¹Smith, The Great Physician, Op. Cit., p. 39,40.

²Acts 19:11,12.

eighteen years, he had power to unbind her just as quickly.¹

Pastor Blumhardt, the Lutheran healer in Germany during the nineteenth century wrote:

Satan's supreme stroke in Jesus' day was to have the people believe that He wrought miracles and healed the sufferer and cast out demons by the power of demons or the Prince of Demons. Now the tables are completely turned. He is saying, "all miracles are of God." Multitudes believe this, but all are not of God. The true fact is Satan works miracles today, yet he does it to deceive, to ruin, to rob of faith and love.²

A. J. Gordon wrote, "Our Lord has expressly warned us of them [false miracle workers], and told us to test them, not by their power, but by their fruits; holiness, humility, and homage to the name of Jesus."³

B. Natural Means

Since the Bible teaches that a great deal of sickness is the result of spiritual and mental causes, it is not surprising that it lists so many spiritual means of healing. The question, however, which often arises, is, "Should a Christian ever use any other than spiritual means to secure his healing?" The answer to this question is generally determined by the individual's theories as to the causes of sickness, and as to the relationship of healing to the atonement. Thus Simpson, representing those who teach that healing is unconditionally provided by the atonement, wrote, "The

¹Simpson, The Four-Fold Gospel, Op. Cit., p. 52.

²C.H. Blumhardt, Pastor Blumhardt (Washington D.C.:Voice of Deeper Truth, n.d.), p. 67.

³Gordon, The Ministry of Healing, Op. Cit., p. 37.

causes of disease and suffering are distinctly traced to the fall and sinful state of man;" therefore, since it is a "part of the curse of sin, it must have its true remedy in the great Redemption."¹

Consequently:

Everything that comes through Christ must come as grace. There can be no works mingled with justifying faith. Even so, our healing must be wholly of God, or not of grace at all. If Christ heals, He must do it alone. This principle ought to settle the question of using "means" in connection with faith for healing. The natural and the spiritual, the earthly and the heavenly, the words of man and the grace of God cannot be mixed . . .²

Straton, the New York City Baptist preacher, held to these same principles taught by Simpson, but made the following concession,

They [natural means] seem to be primarily for the natural man and those who do not know the full truth. Divine Healing, on the other hand, is for those who fully trust the Lord and have the faith to walk with Him without any human crutch or dependence whatsoever.³

Equally sincere and godly men disagree with the position held by these men. J. Hudson Taylor, of the China Inland Mission, who himself was often miraculously healed, wrote:

The use of means ought not to lessen our faith in God, and our faith in God

¹Simpson, Op. Cit., p. 30.

²Ibid., p. 41.

³John Roach Straton, Divine Healing in Scripture and Life (New York: The Christian Alliance Pub. Co., 1927), p. 80.

ought not to hinder our using whatever means He has given us for use,

to restore health;

to me it would appear as presumptuous and wrong to neglect the use of those means which He Himself has put within our reach as to neglect to take daily food, and suppose that life and health might be maintained by prayer alone.¹

John Paton, the famous missionary to the New Hebrides, wrote,

I have ever most firmly believed, and do believe, that only when we use every lawful and possible means of preservation of our life . . . can we expect God to protect us, or have we the right to plead his precious promises.²

Kelso Carter tells of visiting Dr. Cullis, under whose ministry of faith many, including A. B. Simpson were miraculously healed. Dr. Cullis took a small bottle from his pocket and said,

Now I know this will stop my headache in a few minutes. Knowing that, I think it would be wrong to trouble the Lord about it, or expect Him to effect the cure in any unusual way.³

Kelso Carter, giving his personal testimony, states that for years he held to the "unconditional healing" theory. Consequently he was opposed to the use of natural means in treating his constant heart ailment. He earnestly sought God in faith for his healing, but without success. Later he had such noted healers as A. J. Gordon,

¹Adolph, Health Shall Spring Forth, Op. Cit., p. 114.

²Carter, "Faith Healing" Reviewed, Op. Cit., p. 125-126.

³Ibid., p. 110.

Dr. Cullis, A. B. Simpson and J. A. Dowie pray with him for his healing, but with only the same disappointing results. Then, as a result of diligent Bible study and prayerful consideration, he laid aside the "unconditional theory" and began to use medicine. In a short time he was completely cured, and was able to "accomplish more in six months than he had been able to do in three years."¹

It is interesting and of some value to note what godly men have thought in this connection, but before forming an opinion on this subject, the Christian will want to know what the Bible has to say in regard to natural means.

1. Diet

On one occasion people took handkerchiefs and aprons from the body of Paul and placed them on the sick and healing resulted.² However, when Paul's own "son in the gospel" was sick he did not follow this practise, but under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit urged a slight change in diet.

2. Rest

God set aside one day in every seven for rest. This was not just an occasion of switching from manual work to the religious work of Sunday School classes and gospel services, but real rest.

3. Sanitation

In Leviticus God stated that if any of the Israelites' houses were plagued with leprosy:

he shall cause the house to be

¹Ibid., p. 128.

²Acts 19:10-12.

scraped within round about, and they shall pour out the mortar, that they scrape off, without the city into an unclean place: And they shall take other stones, and put them in the place of those stones; and he shall take other mortar, and shall plaster the house.¹

All that came into contact with such a house were told to "wash their clothes." These verses no doubt had a spiritual application, but the sanitary precautions also seem obvious.

4. Isolation

Anyone who contracted leprosy was placed outside the camp and commanded to "dwell alone."²

5. Climate

It is of interest to note that God did not promise the Israelites health until after they had left the land of Egypt and were on their way to Canaan. The strongest promise of health is found in Deuteronomy seven which is conditioned upon their dwelling in the land. These facts indicate that perhaps one of the ways God was going to make Israel a healthy nation was by bringing them to a healthier land. Carter uses graphic language to describe what the living conditions were like for the Israelites in Egypt.

Think of the nation of Israel dwelling in filthy hovels built of Nile mud and straw, standing in the reeking soil by the river, in long, unshaded rows, with no possible drainage, no decent provision for the removal of offal and refuse, no time for bathing, no money to purchase

¹Leviticus 14:41,42.

²Ibid., 13:46.

change of raiment, no hours of rest
beyond the few of the night's cessation
from awful toil . . . no proper food
from childhood up.¹

What a contrast this was to the land to which God brought them -
a land that flowed with milk and honey, provided good drainage, and
offered a perfect climate.

6. Exercise

As indicated above, God's promise to make Israel a healthy
nation hinged upon two conditions - obeying God's laws and abiding
in Canaan. The Old Testament makes it clear that living habits of
this land provided much exercise. For one thing most of them were
farmers, so consequently spent much of their time out of doors. Even
the Levites, whose activities were of a lighter nature were given land
where they could raise crops and livestock. In addition to this,
three times a year all the men were required to travel to Jerusalem.
For most of them, this meant walking. Once a year the entire nation
was required to live in booths for a week. Thus it is obvious that
life in the Old Testament Canaan provided plenty of wholesome exercise.

7. Doctors

Some who are opposed to the Christian ever going to the doctor
for aid quote II Chronicles 16:17,18, which reads:

Asa was diseased in his feet, his disease
was exceeding great, yet in his disease he
sought not to Jehovah but to the physicians
And Asa slept with his fathers.

¹Carter, Op. Cit., p. 48.

Boggs takes the position that, according to Deuteronomy 24:8, the priests were God's guardian of the people's health. These physicians mentioned in this passage were not only godless, but were also "ignorant quacks."

The sin of Asa, therefore, was not that he sent for a doctor: it was rather that he shut God and God's appointed agents of healing out of his sick chamber.¹

Perhaps Boggs is reading too much into this verse, but the most that can be said about this verse is that the trouble here was not that he sought the physicians, but that he sought not the Lord.

Christ in his ministry said, "they that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick."² Although He healed many that were sick, he never spoke a word against either doctors or medicine. Luke was a physician and apparently never dropped this title, as some say, for years after Pentecost, Paul referred to him as the "beloved physician." The fact that he used the adjective "beloved" indicated that Paul held him in honor, instead of disrepute, for his profession. The Holy Spirit used this physician to write two of the books of the New Testament. Thus while the Bible mentions doctors on several occasions, it never does so in a derogatory way.

8. Medicine

The Old Testament prophets, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit often spoke of the use of medicines in a spiritual sense. This

¹Boggs, Faith Healing and the Christian Faith, Op. Cit., p. 42.

²Mark 2:17.

was true of Isaiah,¹ of Jeremiah,² and of Ezekiel.³ If God were opposed to medications, it would seem logical that He would have inspired his prophets to use other illustrations.

Jesus in telling of the man who fell among robbers, stated that the Samaritan treated him with oil and wine. The wine possessed a disinfecting agent which is used in many medicines now, and the oil contained healing properties which are to be found in salves at the drug store. Christ speaking through John in the Revelation, counselled the Laodicean church to spiritually buy "eyesalve" and to "anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see."⁴ Thus the Bible often refers to the use of medicines, but never in a derogatory way.

Another strong indication that Christians should use natural means, is that the Bible records no case where God granted healing which could be obtained by natural means. Christ healed those who were blind, crippled, deaf, dumb, of whom it could be said that they could not "be healed of any." There is no record where Christ or anyone healed an individual with a broken arm, an abscessed tooth, or any disability which could be corrected by natural means. Thus, in Bible times there is no record of God doing for man what man could do for himself. However, there are many instances where God did for man what he could not do for himself.

¹Isaiah 1:5,6.

²Jeremiah 8:22.

³Ezekiel 47:12.

⁴Revelation 3:19.

Summary

The Bible lists both spiritual and natural means for bodily healing. The spiritual means include:

1. Personal faith
2. Obedience
3. Confession
4. Faith of others
5. The Prayer of faith
6. Anointing with oil
7. Laying on of hands
8. Gifts of healing
9. Prayer cloths
10. Satanic Power

The natural means of healing include:

1. Diet
2. Rest
3. Sanitation
4. Isolation
5. Climate
6. Exercise
7. Doctors
8. Medicine

As far as the scriptures are concerned, it is legitimate for the Christian to use any one or a combination of these means, with the obvious exception of Satanic Power, in seeking for bodily healing.

CHAPTER VI

THE PLACE OF HEALING IN THE WORK OF GOD'S MINISTER

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It goes without question that healing played an important part in the ministry of Christ and the Early Church. The time that Christ sent out his apostles two by two, He gave them power "over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of diseases and all manner of sickness."¹ Later He sent out seventy others and told them to "heal the sick."² As Christ gave His last and Great Commission, He stated, "And these signs shall accompany them that believe . . . they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."³ The question, however, arises, "Does the Bible teach that healing should continue throughout the church age?" The scripture indicates that it should.

According to Mark's account of the Great Commission, Christ stated that throughout the church age two things should follow as a result of faith: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," and "these signs shall accompany them that believe . . . they shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover."⁴ Several things about this passage need to be noticed. They were

¹Matthew 10:1.

²Luke 10:9.

³Mark 16,17,18.

⁴Mark 16:16,18.

to preach the gospel. This apparently meant that they were to preach salvation, not healing, for it states, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Healing was not placed on a par with salvation, but was listed as one of the signs which should accompany them that believe. It is also important to note that while the verb "believe" is used in both cases, there is a change in number from the singular to the plural form. "He [personal] that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.

These signs shall accompany them [collective] that believe." Thus while not all possess the gifts of healing, some do possess them, so they remain in the church.

Another Scripture which indicates that healing should remain in the church is I Corinthians, chapter twelve. Here healing is listed as one of the gifts that the Holy Spirit has placed in the church. There is no statement that any of these were to be withdrawn.

James 5:14,15 reads, "Let them [the elders] pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick and the Lord shall raise him up.¹ Those who were to be instrumental in bringing the healing were not the apostles, nor those with the gifts of healing, but were the elders, those "men most likely to be within reach of every sufferer,

¹James 5:14,15.

the men who are to continue till the end of the age."¹

A careful examination of these passages indicates that there are several factors which, at least to a certain extent, determine the effectiveness of the church's ministry. The first of these is a missionary zeal. In each instance where Christ gave His followers power over disease, it was in connection with taking the gospel message into new areas. It is interesting to note that many of those who have been used of God in this way have been missionary minded men - Murray, Simpson, Oswald Smith, Hudson Taylor, John Paton, Bishop Taylor and others. Faith is another factor which is conducive to the church's healing ministry. In both Mark and James healing is dependent upon the faith of the one ministering to the sick. The passage in I Corinthians, chapter twelve, makes clear that the work of the Holy Spirit is a third factor which determines the effectiveness of the church's healing ministry. Thus the Bible indicates that it is God's purpose that bodily healing should ever be a part of the church's total program and that the effectiveness of this ministry will be determined, at least in some degree, by the church's missionary zeal, faith and obedience to the Holy Spirit.

Since healing is a part of the church's ministry, the Christian worker should make certain that this phase of his work coincides with the Word of God. To do this the minister must avoid two dangers. First, he must not neglect it. If he fails

¹Simpson, Gospel of Healing, Op. Cit., p. 23.

to lead his congregation in this area, they will miss one of the physical blessings which God intended for the church. Often, however, it does not stop here, for some go elsewhere seeking this heritage which should be theirs. In their search for that which is secondary - healing - they sometimes lose that which is primary - their faith. The other danger is to the other extreme - making healing either equal or superior to the gospel. Christ stated that the church's primary job was to "preach the gospel to the whole creation" and that healing was a by-product, not the subsistence of the gospel.

There are three places where the Christian minister can prepare himself for and fulfill this phase of his ministry: in the study, in the pulpit, and in the sick room.

1. In the Study

The Christian minister cannot do justice to this part of his work, if he is ignorant of what the Bible teaches along this line. As in every area of doctrine, he needs to know more than just a few proof texts to prove whatever theory he may hold. He must have a clear understanding of the total teaching of scripture on this subject.

However, it is going to take more than an academic knowledge of this subject to do this job. The minister must also be a man of faith. James said it was the prayer of faith that would save the sick. The context explains that this prayer of faith is to

be prayed by the elders. The Gospels tell how some of Christ's apostles, once tried to cast out a demon but failed. When they asked Jesus for the reason he replied, "Because of your little faith,"¹ or as Mark stated it, "This kind can come out by nothing save by prayer."² The minister, therefore, must avoid that which would hinder his faith and carefully pursue that which would increase it.

To fulfill this phase of one's calling, the minister must also obey the Holy Spirit. There is no record of Jesus' performing any miracle until after the Spirit descended upon Him. Christ, speaking to His apostles said, "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you."³ Christ also made it plain that, "Apart from me ye can do nothing" . . . but . . . "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit."⁴ A. J. Gordon has written,

These did not belong to the twelve, to that special and separated body of disciples with whom it has been said that the gifts were intended to remain. It was not to Stephen an apostle, but "Stephen a man full of faith and power" that "did great wonders and miracles among the people." We in these days cannot be apostles, but we are commanded to be "filled with the Spirit"; therefore we are at least required and enjoined to have Stephen's qualifications.⁵

If, while in the study, the minister fails to prepare

¹Matthew 17:20.

²Mark 9:29.

³Acts 1:8.

⁴John 15:5.

⁵Gordon, The Ministry of Healing, Op. Cit., p. 28,29.

himself intellectually and spiritually for this ministry, it will be difficult, if not impossible for God to use him in this respect outside the study.

2. In The Pulpit

If the minister has diligently applied himself in the study, he will be able to handle "aright the Word of truth" in the pulpit. As he states the clear Bible teaching on this subject it will prevent the members of his congregation from being,

carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error.¹

If he has properly done this before some fanatical preacher has come to town, it will not be necessary to do much of it after he comes to town. Too often that which is done at such a time is "too little, too late."

At times, however, it might become necessary for the minister to speak out in regard to a certain "healer." At such times, he should be careful to observe the following principles laid down in the Bible:

1. One should not criticize another before he has carefully examined himself. Jesus said, "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye."² Perhaps if the Church had been more faithful in

¹Ephesians 4:14.

²Matthew 7:3.

performing this part of its ministry, there would not be so many extremists. If this be true, then part of the blame must rest upon the Church itself.

2. One should not allow jealousy to influence his judgement of another man's ministry. John once complained to Christ, "Teacher, we saw one casting out demons in thy name and we forbade him, because he followed not us." It is well to note the reply of the Master, "Forbid him not . . . for he that is not against us is for us."¹

3. One should not base his judgement of a person upon public opinion only. Nicodemus gave sound advice when he asked the Sanhedran, "Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth?"²

4. One should keep in mind that vengeance belongs to the Lord and that God is well able to protect His Word. Gamaliel's prediction still proves true today, if "this work be of men, it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them."³

5. One should be logical in his evaluation. There are no doubt many instances where individuals apparently receive no help when prayed for by the faith healer. One must be careful and not conclude from the fact only that none are healed, or that there is nothing to spiritual healing. There are many who publicly seek

¹Mark 9:38-40.

²John 7:51.

³Acts 5:38,39.

salvation, and even give evidence for a while of a transformed life, but later go even deeper into sin. Yet the Christian would not on the basis of these cases reason that God's grace is not sufficient to keep the Christian from sin.

One should keep in mind that godly men often differ on some points. Peter and Paul had differences of opinions but were able to work together, for their hearts were united in the same cause. God stated that in His judgment He looks primarily at the heart. He has blessed many sincere and godly men who have considered healing to be unconditionally grounded in the atonement. This list includes men such as A. B. Simpson, Andrew Murray, and Oswald Smith. He has also blessed the healing ministry of men who did not hold this theory. This list includes such men as Blumhardt, Dorthea Trudel, Dr. Cullis, R. A. Torrey, and others. Thus in passing judgment, the attitude of the heart receives precedence over the theory of the head.

However, the Christian is warned not to apply these same principles of charity when vital doctrines are at stake. John, in his epistles, warned the Christian to have no fellowship at all with those who deny the doctrine of the Incarnation. Christ warned his followers that false Christ's would arise, but that they should not follow them. He added; "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Perhaps it would be best to conclude by saying that before passing judgment upon any individual "healer" one should be careful that his remarks are based upon known facts and that they are in

a spirit which is in harmony with the above Bible principles.

The preacher should be careful that his ministry along this line is not all negative for this does not meet the need nor does it agree with Scripture. His preaching on this subject should cause the congregation to realize the following Biblical truths:

1. Sickness often has moral implications. This is frequently God's way of trying to point out things in the Christian's life which need to be corrected.

2. God can still heal today. He who changeth not is as able to heal now as He was in Bible times.

3. God has made provisions for bodily healing in the Church. This is indicated by Christ's promise that the sick should recover when the believer lays his hands on him, that God has given some the gifts of healing and has promised to raise up the sick in answer to the elders' prayer of faith.

4. The afflicted individual must take the initiative in seeking healing. This is true in practically every case recorded in the Bible. Hannah was in "bitterness of soul" as she prayed for her limitation to be removed.¹ God told Isaiah to tell the dying King Hezekiah, "I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years."²

¹I Samuel 1:10.

²Isaiah 38:5.

The blind beggar of Jericho cried out until Christ stopped and healed him.¹ The woman with the issue of blood pushed her way through a throng in order to touch the hem of the Master's garment and find healing.² Those who are too sick to go out were commanded by James to take the initiative by sending for the elders.

5. Those who are well have the privilege and responsibility of helping the sick person find healing. The elders of the church (apparently both the clergy and lay elders) are to pray for the sick when called upon to do so. This responsibility to the sick, however, is not limited to the officers of the church, for Christ said that the believer "shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."³ James says "pray one for another that ye may be healed."⁴

As the minister preaches these Bible truths from the Pulpit, faith will rise, for "belief cometh of hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ."⁵ When these promises are believed and acted upon, all healing within the orbit of God's will will come, for God has promised to send it. As the congregation sees genuine cases of healing in its own church, there will be little temptation to seek it in some fanatical group. This is no doubt the best way

¹Luke 18:35-45.

²Mark 5.

³Mark 16:18.

⁴James 5:16.

⁵Romans 10:17.

to solve the problem of Christian people seeking healing from questionable groups.

3. In the Sick Room

As an outgrowth of preaching what the Bible says in regard to this subject, the minister will perhaps often be called upon to pray for the sick as prescribed in James. The use of the plural in this case indicates that this is the privilege and responsibility of both the clergy and lay elders.¹ As the elders go to the sick room it is well to keep in mind the thought suggested by Dr. Cullis when he said,

The promise is plain, 'Let any sick among you' - that is among Christians - 'call for the elders.' Now I am sure that I am an elder. If called, I must obey the direction, 'Let them pray anointing with oil in the name of the Lord.' That is my business. Then the matter is in the Lord's hands and He is responsible.²

Sometimes, as already indicated, it is not possible to pray the prayer of faith and consequently healing does not come. However, if the elders know that they have been obeying the Holy Spirit, they should not let this defeat them. As Dr. Cullis has said, the elders' responsibility ends when they have completely obeyed God. Paul no doubt prayed for Trophimus, but there is no record of his being healed. Three times Paul prayed that his own

¹James 5:14,15.

²Carter, "Faith Healing" Reviewed, Op. Cit., p. 110.

thorn in the flesh be removed, but God replied that it was not His will. In such cases the elders can but leave the matter in God's hand. One remembers the words of Oswald Smith when he wrote:

I want to frankly confess that in many, many instances the healing of the body is still an unsolved mystery. There is much, oh, so much that I cannot comprehend. I anoint some who seem hopeless and for whom I have but little faith, yet they are healed, and I pray for others who are not nearly so serious and for whom I have much more faith, yet sometimes they die. Hence, I am perplexed. There is much that I do not understand . . .¹

At other times, the prayer of faith will be prayed and the Lord shall raise him up. At such a time the elders should be careful that both the words of their mouths and the meditation of their hearts comply to what Peter said after healing the crippled man at the gate called Beautiful.

Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man? or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or Godliness we had made him to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his servant Jesus.²

Summary

The healing promises of Mark chapter sixteen and James five, and the fact that healing is listed as one of the permanent gifts, indicate that God intended for bodily healing to be a part of the

¹Smith, The Great Physician, Op. Cit., p. 75.

²Acts 3:12,13.

church's ministry throughout its history. These passages also indicate that the effectiveness of this ministry is determined in part by the church's missionary zeal, faith and obedience to the Holy Spirit.

Since healing is a part of the church's ministry, it should be a matter of serious consideration for every Christian minister. In order to fulfill this phase of his work the preacher will need to apply himself in three areas: In the Study, In the Pulpit, and In the Sick Room.

In the study, the minister needs to prepare himself intellectually by carefully studying what the Bible says on this subject. He will also need to prepare himself spiritually by prayer and obedience.

In the pulpit, the preacher's primary task is to pass on to his people that which God has given him through prayer and Bible study. This instruction will do two things - prevent his flock from being misled by some extremist, and lead his flock to discover by experience that God can and does heal today as his instructions are believed and acted upon.

In the sick room, the pastor's primary responsibility will be to follow the instructions given by James to anoint and pray over the sick person in the name of the Lord. When the pastor has done this, he can with confidence leave the matter in the hands of God.

CHAPTER VII

THE PLACE OF HEALING IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER

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From reading the Bible it would seem that God is not primarily concerned with man's mortal body, but with man's immortal soul. The people in Jesus' day, however, apparently were more interested in their physical well being than in the spiritual well being. The Master told them, "Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things [physical needs] shall be added unto you."¹ Later He told his followers, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul."² However, it is not to be assumed from these and similar scriptures that God is not concerned only with man's spirit.

The Apostle Paul, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, wrote that the Christian should present his body to God as a "living sacrifice."³ By way of remembrance, he informed the Corinthians that their bodies were "members of Christ" and a "temple of the Holy Spirit."⁴

Thus the body of the consecrated believer ceases to be merely a secular tabernacle for the human spirit, but also becomes a sacred temple for the Holy Spirit. The Jews of Jesus' time apparently did not realize this truth for they considered the body

¹Matthew 6:33.

²Matthew 10:28.

³Romans 12:1.

⁴I Corinthians 6:15,19.

as a secular temple, and consequently should not be healed on the Sabbath. Jesus, in order to teach them this truth, performed many of his healings on the Sabbath day, thus showing them that both the body and soul of the believer are sacred to God.

Since the consecrated believer's body belongs to the Lord, it is certain that God will use it in the way best in keeping with His purposes. God will not permit anything to overtake this body which now belongs to Him, but that which would be for the best. The body is for the Lord and the "Lord is for the body." Consequently, the Christian has the assurance that "all things [including those things which concern the body] will "work together for good."

It is obvious, however, that in Bible times, God did not treat all His children alike in regard to health. To some of them, He apparently granted continuous health. This seems to have been true of Moses and Caleb, who even in old age were "able to go out and come in." Others for some reason had sicknesses, but God raised them up. Those of this group include Daniel, Hezekiah, Epaphroditus and others. Then there is a third group of equally devout saints, who suffered and as far as the Record shows, never found relief. In this group is Isaac, the child of promise who was blind and feeble for over twenty years. There is also the case of Elisha, who brought two men back from death, but who himself fell "sick of his sickness whereof he died."¹ To this could

¹II Kings 13:14.

be added Paul's helper, Trophimus who was "left at Miletus sick,"¹ and the case of Timothy. This seems to correspond to the faith chapter, which tells of some being miraculously delivered while others equally devout were "sawn asunder, slain, and afflicted." Yet it states that, "These all died in the faith," and that each had a part in God's total program."

Turning to Christian experience, the same thing seems to be true. Some ministers like Peter Cartwright seem to have endless energy and health. Others were stricken by deadly disease but were miraculously brought back to health and Christian service. One outstanding case of this was when Philip Melanchthon was almost dead but quickly recovered in answer to Martin Luther's prayer.² In his journals, John Wesley records several times when he was miraculously healed.³ In recent times documentary cases have appeared of Daniel Poling, E. Stanley Jones, R. G. Le Tourneau, and many others being miraculously healed.⁴ However, it is also a well known fact that some of the most godly and consecrated saints were stricken early in life with disease. Instead of being healed, for reasons known only to God, they died. This list includes such

¹II Timothy 4:20.

²Basil Miller, Modern Miracles of Healing (Kansas: Beacon Hill Press, 1956), p. 57.

³Ibid., p. 40,41.

⁴Ibid., p. 80-106.

consecrated Christians as Henry Martyn, David Brainard and Sammy Morris. There is also the case of Fanny Crosby. She like Isaac and Ahijah was blind physically but her songs have proven a blessing to many. Both A. B. Simpson and A. J. Gordon were miraculously healed on several occasions, but there were also times when disease did not leave their bodies until it had run its natural course.¹ Both Mrs. Baxter and J. A. Dowie brought healing to many, but they were unable to secure healing for their own eyes and consequently had to resort to glasses. Thus it seems evident from both Bible and Christian experience that God does not treat all His children alike in regard to health.

The Bible passages, however, concerning the believer's health could be placed under any one of the following three headings:

- A. Things which tend toward health, B. How to seek healing,
- C. What to do when healing does not come.

A. Things Which Tend to Health

There are several factors, according to the Bible, in the life of the consecrated Christian which tend toward health. For one thing, some of the causes of sickness are not present in the believer's life.

As is indicated in chapter two, God often punished wilful disobedience by permitting sickness or affliction. Sometimes, when the sin was repented of, the Lord granted healing, as in the case of

¹Carter, "Faith Healing" Reviewed, Op. Cit., p. 111-115.

Miriam and Jeroboam.

Both the Bible and experience teach that some sickness is the result of breaking the natural law by giving way excessively to appetites and lust. The consecrated, Spirit filled Christian, has ceased to follow this way of life. This change of life is not retroactive, but this new way of living does tend to preserve and improve the health the person has.

Both the Bible and modern psychology agree that some tensions are the result of guilt complexes. It is stated that the wicked flee when no man pursues, and that Judas was so distressed by his guilt that he hung himself. The Bible presents the only cure for the guilt complex -

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.¹

There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus . . . who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.²

As condemnation goes, its by-products go with it.

It is commonly acknowledged that a carnal self-seeking attitude is a contributing factor in some cases of sickness. Two things indicate that such an attitude may have been at least in part responsible for some of the sickness mentioned in the fifth chapter of James. For one thing, the preceding chapters make it

¹I John 1:9.

²Romans 8:1.

plain that some of those to whom James wrote had such a concept of life for he rebuked them for their unbridled tongue, respect of persons, lack of sympathy for the needy, carnal desire to be masters, strife and lusts. Another indication that some of the sickness may have resulted from carnal ambition is suggested by the instructions he gave to those who were seeking healing:

Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.¹

In contrast to a self-seeking attitude which often brings mental and physical disorders,

Jesus in teaching a renunciation of ambitious goals and self-centered aspirations effectively sets the stage for development of²

a healthy body and personality. The lowly Christian whose spirit is ever ready to forgive and forget and who in sincerity denies himself to follow the Master, will find that one of the basic causes for sickness and disorder has been removed from his life.

Another basic cause of mental disorder and sickness is anxiety. The consecrated Christian is spared much of this because he knows that all he possesses is in safe keeping because he has given it to the Lord. He remembers Christ's command, "Be not anxious for the morrow," and he also remembers the promise, "If God doth so clothe the grass of the field . . . shall he not much

¹James 5:16.

²Wilfred G. Slayton, "The Healing Ministry of Christ", (unpublished term paper, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, 1955), p. 8.

more clothe you." and "lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." He also remembers the promise spoken through Isaiah where God promised to keep those in perfect peace who trust in Him.

Thus it is apparent that many of the causes of disorders and sicknesses no longer exist in the Christian's life, but the list of things which tend to health does not stop here. God has provided special care for his children who do become sick. God has given each of his children the right to "ask anything" in the name of his Son. He has set in His Church those with the gifts of healing to minister to those in physical need. It is also stated that the afflicted Christian can have another believer pray for him or call on the elders of the church and that when they pray the prayer of faith that God will grant healing. In the light of these Biblical facts, it is safe to say that if Christians carefully practiced these scriptural principles, that many cases of disorders and sicknesses would vanish.

B. How to Seek Healing

According to the Bible, there is nothing wrong in a person desiring and seeking for healing. Hannah prayed earnestly that her physical limitation might be removed. Hezekiah, "wept sore" as he petitioned God for his healing.¹ A number who were in physical distress were rewarded healing when they sought eagerly for it.

¹II Kings 20:3.

This was true in the case of Bartimaeus, the Syrophenician woman, the lady with the issue of blood and others. In James the Christian sufferer is told to send for the elders to pray for his healing. In fact the Bible tells of only a few cases where people were healed who did not seek it. In most of these instances the person's affliction was of such a nature that it was not possible for him to seek his own healing.

Here again, Christian experience corresponds with the Bible. Few, if any, have been healed who did not earnestly seek for it, if they were able to do so. Many who have sought have found. As has already been mentioned, A. B. Simpson found great strength when he trusted God for his healing at Dr. Cullis' campmeeting.¹ Oswald Smith, who had to wear thick glasses, tells how he trusted God to heal him. For over a month his eyes showed little or no improvement. Finally healing did come and his vision became normal.² Andrew Murray was about to lose his voice so left Africa and returned to a "spiritual healing home" in Europe. After several weeks he was completely healed. He testifies that this physical healing also brought many spiritual benefits into his ministry.

As the Christian seeks healing he should keep the following Bible truths in mind:

1. The Christian should make sure that all the moral barriers, such as wilful disobedience to God and carnal feelings

¹Biederwolf, Whipping Post Theology, Op. Cit., p. 184.

²Smith, The Great Physician, Op. Cit., p. 103.

toward his fellow men, are removed, so God can heal. If the cause of sickness is some sin toward God or a fellow man, it is doubtful if healing will come before this has been made right. However, as in the case of Miriam, when the sin was confessed and made right, healing will probably be granted. As James writes, "Confess therefore your sins one to another . . . that ye may be healed."

2. The Christian should make sure that he is doing his best to keep the God-given laws of nature, which tend toward health. It is presumption and not faith that demands God to do for a person what he can do or have done for himself.

In the first temptation, the Devil suggested that Christ do that which was unlawful to supply his physical needs. The implication was that He could not trust His Father in this need, so consequently must take the matter into his own hands. The second temptation was to the other extreme. Satan challenged him to disregard the laws of nature by throwing himself down from the pinnacles of the temple, and trusting God to protect Him. This ceases to be faith and becomes presumption. The Christian must avoid both of these extremes in this as well as in every area of life.

3. It is important to have the right motive. James wrote, "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures."¹ Thus in praying for healing the Christian should be certain that all he possesses now is consecrated to God and that if God should grant added strength, this too would be

¹James 4:3.

consecrated to Him.

4. The Christian should avoid the mistake of Asa, who in his sickness thought that all healing came from the physician, and hence, did not seek God. It seems clear that many of those who were healed during Christ's ministry, would not have been cured had they not asked. There is no reason to think this is otherwise today. James has written, "Ye have not, because ye ask not."¹

5. The Christian should pray for himself. Both Hannah and Hezekiah found healing as a result of their personal prayers. As has already been noted, this was also the case in the healings of A. B. Simpson, and Oswald Smith. It is questionable if God will heal a person who deliberately depends entirely on the faith of another, when it is within his power to exercise his own faith.

6. The Christian may feel led to have others pray for him, in accordance with James' instructions. This is not a substitute for personal faith, but a means of strengthening it. Andrew Murray was aided in finding healing in this way.

When the Spirit-filled Christian is confident that he has obeyed all these scriptural requirements, it will be easy for him to believe God for his healing, and if it is God's will, healing will come. It may be gradual or instantaneous, but in either case it will be the way which best fits God's program.

C. What to do When Healing Does Not Come

If the Christian has carefully met all the above scriptural

¹James 4:2.

conditions and healing does not come, there is obviously only one reason - it is not God's will. Under such conditions the Christian finds rest, realizing that, "God's way is the best way," and prays, "Not my will but Thine be done." He is confident that this is not something that, "just happened," but that this is a divine appointment. He finds the meaning of the passage which states that our High Priest is touched by "the feelings of our infirmities." He discovers that when God gives an extra heavy load to be carried, He also gives an extra supply of grace. So as Job testified on his sick bed of ashes, he says, though God "slay me, yet will I trust him."¹ With the Apostle, who was told that he must continue to bear the thorn, he sings,

Most gladly therefore will I rather
glory in my weaknesses, that the
power of Christ may rest upon me.
Wherefore I will take pleasure in
weaknesses, in injuries . . . for
Christ's sake: for when I am weak,
then am I strong.²

Thus the Christian finds that God has fully provided for all his physical needs. The Christian life tends toward health. When sickness comes, God will grant healing if this is best. If not, He will provide extra grace so the Christian will not have to bear the burden alone. Consequently the Christian can always rejoice, regardless of what lot he has been assigned. Paul summarizes this by saying:

¹Job 13:15.

²I Corinthians 12:9-10.

Though our outward man is decaying,
yet our inward man is renewed day by
day. For our light affliction, which
is for the moment, worketh for us more
and more exceedingly an eternal weight
of glory.¹

Summary

The Bible indicates that the following factors in the
Christian's life tend toward health:

1. The believer's body belongs to God and He will not allow anything to befall it but that which would be for the best.
2. Some of the causes of sickness are not found in the life of the consecrated believer. This includes wilful disobedience to God, riotous living, guilt complex because of sin, carnal ambition, and anxiety.
3. God has provided special care for his children who become sick. The Christian has the privilege of praying for himself and also of having others pray for him.

The Bible suggests the following things for the Christian to keep in mind as he seeks for bodily healing.

1. He should make certain that the moral barriers are removed.
2. He should make certain that he is doing his best to preserve the health he has.
3. He should make certain that he seeks with a right motive - being willing to use his health for God's glory.
4. He should not think that natural means can in themselves

heal, but that these are merely instruments in God's hand to bring healing.

The Bible also indicates that there may be some cases when it is not God's will to heal. It assures the Christian, however, that this is never the case unless God knows that sickness is better than health. It also assures the Christian that in such cases, God will provide grace in proportion to the need.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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A. Summary

This study may be summarized as follows:

1. There are many causes of sickness. Some have moral implications, but this is not always the case.

2. Any bodily healing granted by God is on the basis of Christ's atonement. Some Christians believe that this is provided unconditionally; some that it is conditional.

3. God's purpose in granting healing is not always the same. Sometimes He grants healing in order to accredit a special messenger. At such times, the healing is always of a supernatural nature. At other times, God's purpose in granting healing is to provide strength for Christian service. In such instances, the healing is not always of a supernatural nature.

4. God grants healing through both spiritual and natural means.

5. God intends for bodily healing to be a part of the church's total ministry. Some of the responsibility for the fulfilling of this ministry rests upon the clergy.

6. Part of the responsibility for the fulfilling of this phase of the church's ministry rests upon the afflicted Christian and the other believers of the church. When each one has been faithful in fulfilling his part, God will always grant healing within the orbit of His will.

7. Bodily healing, at the best, is but the first fruits of the physical benefits which Calvary provides for the Christian.

B. Conclusions

Upon the basis of the research which has been presented the following are some general conclusions:

1. Bodily healing is part of the churches' ministry.
2. To neglect the teaching and practise of healing can be very detrimental to many Christians and may limit them in their Christian service.
3. When proper attention is given to this phase of the church's ministry it will keep many from being led astray by false teachings.
4. Genuine healing experience results in wholesome spiritual benefits such as strengthening believers' faith and awakening sinners to this need.

With reference to the problem presented for research, namely, what constitutes a Christian teaching concerning bodily healing, the study has indicated the following as being valid both from a Scriptural standpoint and that of Christian experience:

1. The entire Christian, including his body belongs to Christ.
2. The atonement provides for all of man's spiritual and physical needs. However, bodily healing during this life is not unconditionally provided in the atonement as is salvation.
3. It is not always God's will to heal.
4. Sickness sometimes is for the glory of God.
5. God sometimes heals through the use of natural means.

6. God still performs miracles in healing the sick.

It may therefore be concluded that this is the sound
Christian teaching concerning bodily healing.

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