

The

Wounding

&

the Healing

From the preface ..

‘Geoffrey Bingham, a man of many talents, has become known above all as a scholar of the Word of God, and a communicator of its content with a rare balance and insight, enriched by wide experience in the arena of life. Hence when we come to this many-faceted and complex subject, we need the application of an open-minded, deeply considered, knowledge of the Word of God Here I think we see such an application. In these pages he takes the reader to look at many things which would not normally be mentioned in a book on healing, let alone in the average church sermon, yet which forma part of the full spectrum of God’s dealings with His people in the area of their hurts and their healings. It is to be digested with care and contemplation, and not to be bolted as a ‘fast food’. It is a searching look, faintly or frankly disturbing, which can only reward the honest and enquiring mind with a more complete understanding of Him with whom we have to do.’

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Geoffrey Bingham is an Anglican Minister. His experience as soldier, prisoner of war, farmer, writer, missionary, and family man, as well as theologian, has, given him grounds for writing material which is Australian in tone, and relevant to the society in which we live. Some have found his books lifechanging.

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Geoffrey C. Bingham

The Wounding

&

The Healing

Geoffrey Bingham

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FOREWORD TO THE 1990 EDITION

This is the third Edition of *The Wounding & the Healing*. First published in 1980, a revised Edition was printed in 1982 when a couple of new chapters were added, A further chapter has been added in this book, namely 'The Personal Matter of Healing', I wrote this chapter as a more personal approach to sickness and healing, seeing the previous material had been mainly a study of the Scriptures on the subject of God's sovereign action in sickness and healing.

There has been a great deal of 'feed-back' from readers of both Editions, Some have said it has been a relief to face biblical teaching on the subject and to be free of systems of healing which not only do not ring true, but have placed hearers under great bondage, Simplistic views always create practices of healing which bring confusion and sometimes great suffering. As I suggested in the Foreword to the first Edition there is a history of the growth of these various views, and we will not be free of them until we subject them to the test of the Scriptures.

What has been gratifying has been the fact that readers of all views have found help from the book, both in their personal approach to the subject and in their pastoral counselling of others, I am sure, also, that

the drive for perfect health, the judgement of all sickness as being evil, and the implication that folk who become ill are somehow deficient in faith and holiness, have brought a great deal of suffering to those who have lived under this kind of teaching. To know that God and not Satan is sovereign in all areas of life and experience, and to know that a human being can live freely before God—sickness notwithstanding—must make for a rich life, and one that is free from the fear of death.

I trust, therefore, that this third Edition will bring enlightenment and relief to many, and provide a useful resource for those who exercise personal and pastoral ministry.

*Geoffrey Bingham,
Coromandel, 1990.*

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FOREWORD

It goes without saying that the subject of the healing of body and mind is a live subject today, A steady volume of publications continues to emerge for our current reading' Yet the matter is not only within books. Over the past few decades many have emerged, within the Christian church, to take up the ministry of healing'. We are in an age of healing ministries,

Doubtless much of this healing ministry has been greatly discredited by some who are in the Elmer Gantry tradition, It may well be that few are like him, yet flamboyancy of method, poverty of biblical teaching, and commercial gains of some have prejudiced moderns against such healing methods, Confrontation by the seemingly miraculous healings has been disconcerting to some who like their faith kept to theological categories, and who care little for such 'action'.

Is there, then, real healing from God? If so, is this confined simply to the medical care, modern medicines, and the hospitalisation of the sick and surgically needy? Why do people seek healing at hospitals? Why do churches pray for sick people? Why does mankind set about healing with such determination as we see?

There are other questions, also, which are being asked:
Why does not the church heal as Christ and his

apostles healed? Is not such healing for today? Could God possibly visit persons with disease and sickness, and would He cause such to suffer for their sins and failures? Is not sin simply a visitation of Satan, although permitted, so to speak, by God? If the Kingdom ministry healed in the Gospels, why does not the same Kingdom heal now?

There are other questions asked, and books have been written to answer these. Some healers have evolved modes and methods of healing' They seek to rationalise these on biblical bases' Hence the current discussion of these interesting and confronting issues. What is called the 'Princeton View' claims that healings and miracles were given, so to speak, to launch the church, were temporary, and have ceased. Missionaries oppose such a view, reporting miracles and healings on new mission fields. Some, then, amend the Princeton View to include such action wherever the inception of churches is taking place.

Others such as Pentecostals and charismatics insist that God is the same yesterday, today and forever, and that He not only can but does heal today—as ever. The healing movement has these two wings just nominated, ie. the Princeton View exponents and Pentecostal exponents, but between these two wings is a marvellous range of others who are more moderate in their views. They, too, have definite ideas on the matter, ranging from the use of medicos, psychiatrists, psychologists and therapists to those who use prayer, the ministry of communities, and therapies for inner healing, and healing of hurtful memories.

To attempt a reconciliation of all these elements would be a vast, if not hopeless task. This book is no

attempt to do that. Whilst the writer believes God not only can but does heal, he is not convinced that wholesale healing is advocated in Scripture. To say God does not heal today is to go against the facts, not only of medicine, but also of what we might call spiritual healing. We are not creatures fatally enclosed in a squirrel cage. Our universe is not a closed system. This is the heresy of deists' God is the same yesterday, today and forever, but then He did not always heal, anyway not in a wholesale fashion, yesterday. He has healed in remarkable ways in various epochs of our history, and doubtless, in quiet, unseen ways through it all. Doubtless the matter of healing is His, and calls for humility, submission, and obedience on our part as to His times and purposes in and for healing, today. -It is for these reasons that the writer has found the compiling of this book both frustrating and enriching. No human mind dare claim to handle the complexity of the matters discussed. No human heart dare to be other than simple, and let God be God. The secret things always belong to Him, and the things revealed belong to us, to do them.

We trust that some of the insights shared in this book may help to bless, and even to heal. Where a reader takes issue with some of the material expounded, let him not only feel free to do so, but let him rejoice in the fact that God, and not man, is the true Healer, and that He heals, not by men's methodologies or prescriptions, but by His love, and that in His wisdom, sometimes revealed to us, and sometimes left inscrutable.

Geoffrey Bingham
Coromandel, 1980

PREFACE

Many books other than medical ones have been written in the last decade or so about the subject of disease and its healing. These include many with a Christian view point as there has arisen a new interest in the ministry of healing within the Christian church across the world. For many within the church, this latter discovery has become a point of crystallisation of their faith, a point of contact between their finite and somewhat sad world, and the Infinite. God has thus broken in on their rather academic beliefs, and their experience of Him has become real and exciting' This is as valid and encouraging as any other area of our lives in which we are blind or dull of senses, and in which we can come across the Living God and find Him immanent and active'

With the spawning of more books about healing there has often been a somewhat constricted view, that, after the line of popular appeal, ignores natural events (most healing is 'spontaneous'), or the medical contribution to recovery, looking more for the dramatic or short cut answer, and often requiring some selectivity of Scripture references or case histories to confirm the view, This is not to deny that such views do not still have value in encouraging a simplicity of faith in a world where intellect is worshipped, and simple child

like trust a rare commodity which our Master greatly praised. But in the ultimate, the way to maturity is through a willingness to face all the questions and look at all the evidence, even if it is disturbing to our favourite theories.

Here is another book about healing. But what is this! The judgements and wrath of God get almost an equal footing in the examination as His restoring and healing! It is reminiscent of the statement by the same author that one third of the New Testament talks about the subject of suffering, and we should face that fact more openly. This is hardly the approach of popular appeal!

But Geoffrey Bingham, a man of many talents, has become known above all as a scholar of the Word of God, and a communicator of its content with a rare balance and insight, enriched by wide experience in the arena of life. Hence when we come to this many-faceted and complex subject, we need the application of an open-minded, deeply considered knowledge of the Word of God. Here I think we see such an application. In these pages he takes the reader to look at many things which would not normally be mentioned in a book on healing, let alone in the average church sermon, yet which form a part of the full spectrum of God's dealings with His people in the area of their hurts and their healings. It is to be digested with care and contemplation, and not to be bolted as a 'fast food'. It is a searching look, faintly or frankly disturbing, which can only reward the honest and inquiring mind with a more complete understanding of Him with whom we have to do.

Here is to be found the portrayal of God, not as the 'heavenly "Aspro"', nor the mechanical Answerer of

the push-button promise, but the One who knows all about the problem of pain, who is acquainted with suffering, and desires the highest good rather than the greatest comfort for His people.

And there is still plenty of room for the miracle, that usually sudden restoration to normal, against all likelihood, which restoration is the long-term 'aim' of all the laws of His world which we otherwise know as Natural laws or the laws of Medical Science, but which are so often thwarted by processes representing an intrusion upon or an upset in the balance of those laws.

And even the most ardent fan of the healing ministry must in the end admit that the full restoration from this world's disorder, of which sickness and disease represent a part, will not be complete until the end of the age, when pain and tears, sorrow and crying, have been put away, when death itself is no more, and light and life are untrammelled and free.

Here we see a picture, painted by one who has suffered, of the God who is bringing all that about.

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—INTRODUCTION—

The Matter of Healing

Because the matter of healing is so close to the daily experience of people, it is one of the most relevant of all subjects. It is one of the largest industries in any nation, and promises to remain as such. Healing is certainly a subject which is not confined to Christians. It has been the interest and work of sorcerers, witch-doctors, secular healers, as well as healers within the realm of the occult and the sects. Hence it is an important subject.

Our purpose in this book is not to settle the matter of spiritual healing, faith-healing, or divine healing— whatever people may understand by those terms—but simply to show, as far as possible, what the Bible discloses on the matter. It is difficult for anyone to approach the Bible without preconceived notions, or to do so without certain presuppositions in which one's thinking has been conditioned.

It would be difficult for Christian persons to controvert what the Bible says on the matter, even if it seemed to unseat their personal convictions about healing. For this reason the second part of this study seeks, in some way, to relate what the Bible says to certain principles

which have been adduced from the Bible or the practice of healing by Christian people. This will be the most difficult matter to deal with. Let us all be warned that what we find in the Bible may not be easily acceptable, and this is said to those who believe that God heals not only in what we call 'Nature's way', but also in ways which we may call 'supernormal', or, as some have it, 'supernatural'.

Let us keep in mind, then, that we are seeking to discover what the Bible says, and therefore we seek to remain within that perimeter, ie. the perimeter of the Bible.

—1—

SICKNESS AND HEALING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT—I

Introduction: God is Unchangeable

In Malachi 3:6, God makes the statement that He does not change. In all the suffering Jeremiah knows, he can still say, 'The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness' (Lam. 3:22-23). Our point is that God never changes. Nevertheless He seems to change. There are so many different eras in the Old Testament that God seems to act differently. We see that He deals out sickness and punishments (even death) for the sins of persons and nations. We see also that He heals and forgives, even raising some from the dead. It is somewhat bewildering. In one situation He seems grim, judgemental, and in another as tender, compassionate, and forgiving. Is He not then unchanging? When it is said that He repents of certain actions He has done, is He not arbitrary? Why in fact, when He calls Himself the Healer (Exod. 15:26) is there, comparatively speaking, so little healing?

As we will see, the Hebrew way of thinking about man, life and death differed from the way we often regard these matters. For God to act in various ways did not seem to him to be arbitrary or inconsistent. He could believe that God did not change, but that within the scope of His actions, God had great variety. In any case, the genius of prophecy lay within Israel, and Israel anticipated so many things that were yet to happen. To them all of history was, in fact, prophecy, and God was dynamic in His intentions for creation and man. They seemed to understand beyond any other nation, that suffering was linked with God's purpose, and that He would bring His great Day upon the world when He would transform sinful society into a new true Kingdom. Unless we grasp this principle, our examination of sickness and healing will be out of true context. We have then to understand the way those of Israel thought about God, man, creation, and so sickness, disease, death, and the healing of these.

The Hebrew View of God and Man

A detailed understanding of this view is beyond the scope of this book. It is a vast study on its own. What follows is a helpful summary, gleaned from the Hebrew writings.

God was understood by the Hebrews to be Creator and King. Sometimes—in the context of Covenant— they understood Him to be Father. In the Old Testament, man is most creaturely, dependent upon God for his life. All flesh is as grass, and the beauty of the grass quickly fades and withers. Man is essentially dust. The classic statement is, 'Man is not an incarnated soul, but

an animated body'. Sickness in the Old Testament is contrasted with health. Yet health is creational normality, so to speak' Man is a basic entity, not seen as either bipartite, or tripartite, for the Hebrews were not interested in that sort of psychological assessment of man, He is seen as a living person, Sickness is not merely a bodily thing, It is a condition of the whole person. In Genesis chapter 2, man is depicted as being made of the dust of the earth and insufflated by the breath of God. He becomes "a living soul", ie. 'a living being'. He is almost substantial soul, or soul substance. This breath is called *nephesh*, and the animals likewise have it. Man is also subject to the life of *ruach*, ie. spirit. He is strong with ruach and weak when it is withdrawn. He is a soul (*nephesh*) and has spirit (*ruach*), yet these terms are interchangeable. Even a beast can have ruach (Eccl. 3:21), so that man goes on being an entity, sometimes referred to as flesh, sometimes as soul, and sometimes as spirit. Yet he is not trichotomous (ie. body, soul and spirit). He is man. Also he is man only in the context of his tribe, clan, people—indeed in the context of entire humanity. We mean that man is a social creature, so that whilst being personally unique fares best without undue individuation.

Man, if he pondered it, saw himself in the light of the Creator-King of the universe. It was God's creation, and He could do with it as He wished. It was not for man to question Him. His actions would be consistent with Himself, even if man could not directly understand. Something of this is conveyed in the Psalmist's thinking. He was puzzled when he saw about him what seemed to be injustice. When he went into the sanctuary he understood' The principle of I Peter 4:19 ('God is

a faithful [trustworthy] Creator') was basic to the understanding of the Hebrews' He echoed Abraham's words, 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' Only when man truly knows God does he understand that what seems to be injustice is not really so' So, likewise, when man cannot understand all that is happening, he is in danger of concluding, with his limited wisdom, that somehow God must be wrong. For this sort of thinking God rebuked both Job and his counsellors, 'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?'

To return, then, to the Hebrew view of sickness, disease and healing, there are many elements to be observed when we read the Old Testament. One of these is that sickness is a direct punishment of God for evil a man has done. In some cases it is a chastisement. In other cases, such as the terminal illness of Elisha the prophet, no explanation is given. For the most part sickness is seen as a condition of the whole person. Thus when the nation falls into sin and failure, God *heals* it. When a person covers his sin and refuses to confess it, he has bodily illnesses. When God heals him He heals him of his sin as well as the sickness deriving from the sin.

In order to understand this matter more deeply we need to look at God's action in His world as regards sickness and healing.

—2—

SICKNESS AND HEALING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT—II

God, Man and Creation

According to Genesis chapters I and 2, God sees His creation as very good, ie. functionally good, so that its operations define true morality' This is substantiated by Ecclesiastes 3:11,1 Corinthians 10:26, and I Timothy 4:4, 6:17' If all creation lives in its created functional harmony then there will be no problems, and no sickness' Genesis chapter 3 tells us of the rebellion of man against God, so that sin enters and death is its outcome' This temptation to do evil is laid at the feet of the serpent, later known as Satan or the Devil' The effects of the sin of man are described in Romans 5:12f., but most particularly in Genesis chapter 3. Man is alienated from God, the man from his wife, and she from him. Pain is now part of the universe, and creation has a curse upon it.

It is, however, the moral and spiritual dislocation of man which is primary. Other parts of the Old Testament show man as miserable and sick because of his sin, his

internal dislocation of person, A study of the prophetic passages which promise an ultimate time of cessation of sickness, pain, and even death, also presupposes a cessation of man as a sinner, New Testament passages carry on the same thought. When man is glorified the whole creation will be liberated from its pain and suffering, sickness and death.

We assume then, that for the Hebrews, sickness and death were not part of the true creation. Man's rebellion, as also the rebellious system of evil, is responsible for the judgement of God, for the dislocation of things harmonious, and so for the deterioration of man as a person. We mean that he gets sick, has diseases, is distraught because of his own sin, and suffers misery because he will not be wholly obedient to God.

In the Old Testament there is no suggestion of dualism. Nevertheless, at the very outset, evil is seen to be involved in creating the human problem. Very little is said of the power of evil forces. Satan is certainly mentioned, and demonic powers are certainly linked with idolatry, but it is God whom the Hebrews see. The significance of Satan and his evil powers is minimised.

God the Giver of Sickness, Suffering and Death

In Genesis 2:17, God has said that eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would bring death to man. Paul develops this thought in Romans 5:12f. He says that death as man knows it is a result of the Fall. Likewise God tells the woman that her pain (in childbirth) will be increased because of the Fall, the man that he will have to work hard to counter the curse and

live.

Cain, the first murderer, is told he must be punished for his evil. The blood of his brother cries from the ground. Cain's punishment is primarily that of his person, his mind, his inner feelings, his unresolved guilt. Genesis chapter 6 shows the violence and corruption of man which spreads across the earth, so that God now visits this evil with the Flood. He visits Sodom and Gomorrah with a salutary punishment. How then does all this fit in with the ideas that God is kind, tender and forgiving? Does God have two sides to His nature? Is He arbitrary in His dealings with man and the creation?

Deuteronomy 32:39 says, 'I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand'. Hannah echoes this thought (I Sam. 2:6), 'The Lord kills and brings to life' (cf. I Kings 5:7). In Exodus 4:11, God says to Moses, 'Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind?' Amos 3:6 has it, 'Does evil befall a city, unless the Lord has done it?' In Isaiah 45:7, God says, 'I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe, I am the Lord, who do all these things'. Isaiah 31:2 says, 'he is wise and brings disaster'.

Some of God's actions are not easily understood. God seeks to kill Moses (Exod. 4:24-26). It seems that Moses is evading the circumcision of his son, which is God's seal for the Abrahamic covenant, and only the quick action of Zipporah, Moses' wife, saves him from death. Jacob, in wrestling with the angel, has his thigh permanently damaged. The incident where Uzzah steadies the Ark and is struck down (II Sam. 6:7-10; I Chron. 13:10-13) angers David, so inexplicable it seems.

In Genesis chapter 12, Pharaoh's house is inflicted with plagues because the king takes Sarai, Abram's wife. In Genesis chapter 20, the king Abimelech is threatened with death, whilst his wives become barren, all because of his taking Sarah, Abraham's wife. In both cases the matter is solved satisfactorily, but it is seen that God punishes with sickness and death. In Genesis chapter 38, Onan is destroyed because he spilled his semen on the ground. In Exodus, plagues are visited upon the Egyptians even to the killing of the first born because they oppose the liberation of God's people. The Egyptians are also drowned in the Red Sea. In Numbers 12:10, Miriam is made leprous as a judgement, as also Gehazi for his greed in II Kings 5:26-27, and King Uzziah for sacrificing at the altar (II Chron. 26:) 1). In Numbers chapter 11, the complaining Israelites are given the meat they desire but many suffer death because of that. Likewise in their sin at Peor many suffer death (Num.31:16f.). In I Kings 13:4ff., the prophet of God is destroyed because he will not obey the Lord implicitly. In II Chronicles 21:11f., Jehoram is told, because of his evil, 'the Lord will bring a great plague on your people, your children, your wives and all your possessions, and you yourself will have a severe sickness with a disease of your bowels, until your bowels come out because of the disease, day by day'. In II Chronicles 16:12, Asa is said to be diseased and even so does not seek the Lord, but a physician, ie. as against the Lord. In II Kings 1:16, Ahaziah dies according to the word of the Lord because he consults Baalzebub, and not the Lord.

Other incidents are:

The deaths of the seventy men of Bethshemesh who

did not welcome the return of the Ark (I Sam.6:19). In I Samuel 5:6, we see the Philistines visited with tumours because they handled the Ark. In II Samuel 24:10-15, we see the terrible slaughter of David's people because of his sin of numbering them. The army of Sennacherib was struck down in the night by the angel of the Lord (II Kings 19:35; II Chron.32:21; Isa.37:36). Saul's death is ascribed to the Lord (I Sam.28:19), David's child dies because of his sin (II Sam. 12:14), the death of Eglon of Moab is ascribed to God (Judg.3:19f.), and that of Sisera by Jael (Judg.4:14ff.). Jeroboam's son dies because of the sin of Jeroboam. Time and again idolaters are destroyed because of their sin. Nebuchadnezzar is visited with insanity (Dan. 4:19ff.). God says He will smite the shepherd of His people with blindness (Zech. 11:17). The 850 prophets of Baal and the Asherah are destroyed following the prophetic ministry of Elijah. Forty-two boys who jeer at Elisha are destroyed by two she-bears when cursed in the name of the Lord.

Over and above all these things are the commands of God to destroy the people of Canaan because of their idolatry and attendant evils. Abraham is told this will not happen until the iniquity of the Amorites is ripe. Likewise various nations are told that God will destroy them for their interference with Israel. Time and again God urges His people to destroy pockets of the enemy.

When it comes to the favoured people of God, they do not seem to be guaranteed against sickness. Elisha the prophet dies of terminal illness (II Kings 13:14ff.). David dies of senility. Daniel is sick after having a vision (Dan. 8:27). Isaiah 57:1 says, 'The righteous man perishes, and no one lays it to heart'. Zechariah 1:5 shows that the prophets have no favour in longevity, whilst

other Scriptures tell us they all perish, ie. through persecution.

As for Israel, God certainly speaks strongly to them' We have noted Deuteronomy 32:39 where God says He kills and makes alive, and Exodus 4:11 where He makes dumb or to speak. In Deuteronomy 4:15ff., Moses warns Israel against idolatry, lest God destroy the people. In 7: 15, he says God will not lay upon them the diseases they had known in Egypt if they obey Him. In 28:15ff., Israel is warned against disobedience and idolatry. If disobedient they will receive 'curses, confusion, and frustration'. 'The Lord will smite you with consumption, and with fever, and with inflammation, and with fiery heat, and with drought, and with blasting and with mildew. "The Lord will smite you with the boils of Egypt, and with the ulcers and the scurvy and the itch, of which you cannot be healed . . . madness and blindness and confusion of mind.' 'He will bring upon you again all the diseases of Egypt, which you were afraid of; and they shall cleave to you. Every sickness also, and every affliction.'

We might note in passing (lest we make comparisons between the God [so-called] of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament), that in the New Testament Herod, Ananias and Sapphira all perish at the hand of the Lord. Elymas is blinded. The servants of the Lord, such as Stephen, James the apostle, the martyrs (Rev. ch. 6), and others, perish although they are faithful.

There is much more that we could add, but what we have seen is sufficient to show us that God is the Initiator of judgement, punishment, chastisement and the Giver of sickness, disease and death to the dis

obedient, whilst some who are obedient do not seem to escape the suffering of life that others experience. Put together all these events present a formidable picture of God's severity. Some would call it intolerant cruelty.

There is no need to defend the Lord, for He is represented as acting in His own character, and doubtless examination and willingness to understand the events would dispel any idea of injustice. Much of the rationale lies in Deuteronomy 4:24 (and equivalent statements), 'For the Lord your God is a devouring fire, a jealous God'. Such 'fear of the Lord' may well lead to wisdom concerning His acts, cruel though they may appear to us.

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GOD THE HEALER AND REDEEMER

To begin with we see God's creation was functional, harmonious and purposeful. There is nothing of evil inherent in creation. God, being Creator, may be permitted to do what He will with it. Instead of abandoning it, He chooses to act in grace towards it. Romans 1:18 enunciates the principle of God's anger and punishment, but even this is with a view to redemption, rightly understood. Isaiah 63:16 portrays Him as 'Redeemer from eternity'. The prophets are not merely condemnatory but (ultimately) salvific in their utterances. God is positive towards Israel. If they are obedient 'none of these diseases' will come upon them. Even where God warns against evil, naming His judgements, He indicates that where there is repentance, judgement will be either ameliorated or remitted.

Positive statements concerning God, such as in Exodus, both warn against doing evil, and enjoin obedience. God says, 'I am the Lord, your Healer'. In Exodus 23:25-26, He promises, 'I will take sickness away from the midst of you. None shall cast her young or be barren

in your land; I will fulfil the number of your days'. When Hezekiah calls on Him He says, 'I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will heal you...I will add fifteen years to your life (II Kings 30:3ff.). In the Book of Job, Eliphaz avers, 'he wounds, but he binds up; he smites, but his hands heal'.

In Psalm 41:3, the Psalmist says that the Lord sustains the man who considers the poor upon his sickbed. In his illness he heals all his infirmities. The Psalmist then says, 'O Lord, be gracious to me; heal me, for I have sinned against thee!' In Psalm 103:1-3, the writer exhorts himself not to forget the benefits of God, 'who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases'. Psalm 147:3 has it, 'He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds'. In Isaiah 57:18-19, God says, 'I will heal him', speaking of Israel. The prophet (Jer. 8:22) asks, 'Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of the daughter of my people not been restored?' Jeremiah is insisting that God is the God of healing. Healing here is moral, of course. It has to do with the results of the sins of Israel.

In Jeremiah 33:6-9, we see the healing of the nation linked with cleansing and relief from guilt. God will let Chaldeans smite the city but then He will 'bring it to health and healing' and 'cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me'. Hosea 6:1-3 repeats this thought: 'Come, let us return to the Lord; for he has torn, that he may heal us; he has stricken and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up'. Ezekiel chapter 37 can be said to have the same idea, for God raises the nation to life, even from its dead, dry bones. In Ezekiel chapter 47, there

is water which heals: at least the trees which grow in it (cf. Rev. 22:1-3) 'will be for food, and their leaves for healing'.

The thought of Israel being healed is found in Jeremiah 30:15-17, where God discusses the pain, hurt and wounding of Israel because of its own guilt. He says, 'I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal'. This is in contrast to Jeremiah 14:17f. where Israel is said to be 'smitten with a great wound'. Here no healing is promised. The city has 'the diseases of famine'. The prophet asks, 'Why hast thou smitten us so that there is no healing for us? We looked . . . for a time of healing, but behold, terror'. All this implies that God is the One who heals. He alone can heal, yet why does He not heal? Doubtless their time for this has not yet come. The point, however, is established, ie. God strikes with sickness and wounding. He, then, alone can be the true Healer of such wounding. Isaiah 58:6-9 parallels Psalm 41. If Israel cares for the poor and oppressed, 'Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily'. Healing cannot obtain where there is lawlessness and social injustice. All these passages show God's conditions for healing. They also show the conditions which bring about the affliction of God upon the land and the people.

Causes for Sickness: Something of their Healing

We have seen that the basic cause for sickness in the Old Testament is the rebellion of Israel, with their refusal to obey the covenant. Linked with this is idolatry. In Deuteronomy 29:16ff. God speaks of the bitterness

and poison which will come if they turn aside to idolatry. God will bring the curses of the book of the covenant upon them, and foreigners will see, 'the afflictions of that land and the sicknesses with which the Lord has made it sick'. Sickness is caused by rebellion and idolatry. On the positive side Proverbs 3:7-8 says, 'Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones'. To fear the Lord and turn from evil is therapeutic. In 4:20-22 the writer says that his words are 'life to him who finds them, and healing to all his flesh'. Proverbs 16:24 supports this: 'Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body'. We note in passing the Hebrew parallelism of soul and body.

Again in Proverbs 15:4, it is said that 'a gentle tongue is a tree of life', which fits with, 'There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing' (12:18); 13:17 has it, 'A bad messenger plunges men into trouble, but a faithful envoy brings healing'. All of this thinking is summed up in 14:30 which says, 'A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh, but passion makes the bones rot'. The word passion encompasses the idea of zeal, jealousy, intensity, uptightness, compulsive action, and straining towards goals. One is reminded of Martha (of the New Testament) who was anxious and troubled about many things, or Peter when rushed madly at his goals. In other words, true health is a basic state of mind which knows quiet joy and habitual serenity.

This is seen in those Psalms which bring together much that we have observed. When a man is obedient, that is life and health. When he rebels, sins, and then

refuses to accept his actions as sin, and in refusing covers them up, that man must feel the torments of guilt, the dislocation of full relationship with God and others, and the loss of true joy and serenity. He lives in guilt, he feels his infirmities, he suffers pain. Pride, however, does not allow him to come clean, be humbled, confess and be at peace. We saw in Proverbs 3:7-8, 'Do not think of yourself as wise, fear the Lord and turn your *back* on evil: health-giving, this, to your body, relief to your bones'. In Psalm 3 1: 10, we find the antithesis of this: 'For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away'.

We must grasp the principle of this statement. The Israelite saw his body as carrying the burden of guilt, and affecting it in illness. This may well be the key to much we have seen above. The disoriented nature of much in the world because of sin and rebellion causes the passion (mentioned above) to literally 'rot the bones'. This shows us the close link between sin, sorrows and infirmities. The translation of Isaiah 53:4, 'Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows', is also translated, 'Surely he has borne our sicknesses and carried our pains', and Matthew 8:17, which is a quotation, has it, 'He took our infirmities and bore our diseases'. We shall see the difficulty in deciding what Luke 4:18 means in the light of Isaiah 61:1-2, especially because the passage in Isaiah does not mention recovery of sight to the blind. At this point it does not matter, but we see that sins and sicknesses are closely linked, as the Hebrew thought in practical terms of his body, as he did of the heart, the seat of mind, will and emotions. That emotions play a large part is seen in the statement

of Job 5:2, 'Surely vexation kills the fool, and jealousy slays the simple'. This again is the passion of Proverbs 14:30.

Isaiah gives the background to restlessness. 'The wicked are like the tossing sea; for it cannot rest, and its waters toss up mire and dirt. There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked.' This is seen in Psalm 38:1-8. Here the weight of the man's guilt is felt as direct and personal wrath of God. As a result, 'My wounds grow foul and fester . . . I am utterly bowed down and prostrate; all the day I go about mourning. For my loins are filled with burning, and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am utterly spent and crushed; I groan because of the tumult of my heart'. There is no relief where man encapsulates his sin, and is encapsulated by it. In verse 18 the sufferer cries, 'I confess my iniquity, I am sorry for my sin'.

Psalm 32 is a perfect paradigm of the sinner who refuses to confess, suffers greatly, and is forced to confess. Having confessed he has an inrush of joy, humility and power. It is fascinating to read verses 3 and 4 which speak of his physical suffering, sickness, and distress which his guilt causes within him: 'When I declared not my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me, my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer'. In verse 5 he confesses and loses the guilt of his sin. Psalm 41:1-10 speaks in much the same vein, but here confidence obtains that the Lord will heal.

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THE PRINCIPLE OF HUMAN SUFFERING

In all of this, then, we have come to a basic principle, namely that there is a connection between man's suffering and his sin and guilt. God objectively visits sinners with punishment, *and especially where He has made covenantal agreement with them*. He will punish those who oppose and persecute His chosen people. Much of sickness is caused by the innate guilt of man, and the refusal to repent and seek the forgiving and healing grace of God.

Even such a statement as this, however, must be tempered by Psalm 103:10—'He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor requite us according to our iniquities'. We see that man's suffering in this world is not commensurate with his sin. The punishment does not fit the crime! This is the grace of God. As Psalm 130:1-3 shows, if God should mark iniquity then who, in all the world, would be able to stand, ie. guiltless, before His tribunal, and not be terrified by righteous judgement? The thrust of Psalms 103 and 130 is that the Lord is merciful. Psalm 147 has it, 'The Lord builds up

Jerusalem; he gathers the outcasts of Israel. He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds'. Psalm 30:2 says, 'O Lord, my God, I cried to thee for help, and thou hast healed me'. II Chronicles 30:20; 7:14; Psalm 107:19-10; Isaiah 30:26; Ezekiel 37:1-14, amongst many other passages, speak of God as the Healer of His people, the proof of Exodus 15:26, 'I am the Lord your healer'.

When we seek to understand the reasons God has for His judgements, they are seen to be within the nature of Himself. In accordance with Habakkuk 1:13 and similar passages we conclude that His judgements are based upon righteousness, and holiness. It is therefore surprising that God does not judge more heavily than He does. The law-code of Israel made gracious provisions for the strangers and sojourners. When, as in the case of Nineveh, a prophet is sent to declaim against the evil of that city, the very prophet sent is conscious that his message will cause the people to repent, and the people will be saved. That is why he does not wish to preach. His problem is that he cannot depend on God to destroy the city, the people, with their cattle and goods! The Book of Jonah is a powerful sermon on the loving-kindness of God. In Matthew chapter 11, Jesus avers that many cities which had been destroyed in judgement, had they heard his own message, would have repented.

The Book of Job is a book we need to study, for the whole matter of suffering is raised here. Even so it is not a simple matter to find its message. Satan is depicted as questioning the integrity of Job, whose life seems to have been peerless. Satan is allowed to destroy the family and possessions of Job, and then to bring him to a terrible sickness. Job certainly finds this difficult to

accept. The tormenting accusations of his friends are that Job has sinned. For this reason, then, Job is sick. If he will acknowledge that and repent (cf. Ps. 32; 51), then he will surely find God's forgiveness. Job, however, maintains stoutly what seems very much like the New Testament doctrine of justification. In the final section of the Book, God pours scorn on Job's first three tormentors. However, His business is with Job. He refuses to enter into the arguments against Job, or Job's defence of himself. He simply widens Job's vision of Himself as Creator. It is not only the magnitude of God's works which grips Job, but the whole complex of their functions and actions. No careful answer is given the problem of suffering, but the very view of God is sufficient for Job. He confesses that he had thought to have known God, but what he now sees and knows blows his mind! He is gratified. He is stunned. He repents.

The Book closes off with Job restored to prosperity and godliness. This is a rebuke to the puerile arguments of the tormenting friends. It thus puts that kind of argument out of place. Nevertheless the Book is saying, 'Answers to human puzzlement lie in truly knowing the nature, works and acts of God, not in seeking to rationalise all suffering as the sign that one has sinned'. It may well be true that much if not most of suffering is related to sin, but the Book of Job forbids us to be glib as to this matter. When then, we come to the matter of the nations, we should be careful not to apply our presuppositions in glib ways. God, in His covenant with Abraham, has promised blessing to all the nations. There are many prophetic indications that God's blessing will be upon the nations, and that many will be

healed.

As we ponder the matter of the wholeness (health) of persons and nations, we see the place of sin and rebellion as the basis for most sickness. The more we penetrate the text of the Old Testament, the more we see man's misery comes from his sin, which sets up the ideal conditions for bodily sickness and disease. We see the holiness and righteousness of God demanding obedience to the living principles of the creational law, and the use of them for covenantal obedience. The references to sharp judgements when related to the whole process of history, are in fact quite few. It is the loving kindness of God, His tenderness to His people, and His restraint in bringing judgement which surprise us out of the presupposition that God is severe and judgemental. He is severe. He does bring judgement, but as the New Testament reports, there are many things He has appeared to pass over, or winked at (Acts 17:30; Rom. 3:25).

What, however, is clear in the prophetic stream, especially of the latter prophets, is that there is a time coming when 'the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings', and this will be a time of universal peace and gladness. The various passages which refer to renewal, not only of persons, but creation itself, are related to Messiah, to the Son who is given, to the Son of Man who will rule an eternal Kingdom. The Kingdom is linked with Messiah and Messiah is one who will liberate his people, as we see in Isaiah chapter 61, quoted by Christ in Luke 4:18. 'Thy God reigns!' is the message of the King. Isaiah chapter 35 speaks of the time when all shall see the glory of the Lord. 'Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the

deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy.’ This is a passage quoted by Jesus to John the Baptist to reassure him that he, Jesus, was the true Messiah. Isaiah 3 2:1 4- 30 shows a renewal of the nation, and also of the very land itself. In Isaiah chapter 11, Messiah comes and peace reigns, a peace that is Edenic. Likewise in chapters 65 and 66, a new age is promised in which even the current heavens and earth will be wholly renewed. That, in fact, is the note on which the Old Testament closes.

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SICKNESS AND HEALING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Introduction: Anticipation of the New Age

Any reductionist study* of sickness, healing and miracles of the New Testament is bound to be unproductive. Sickness and its healing must not be seen as something in itself’ Already we have seen that true healing is a holistic dealing with the full person, and indeed with the group in which he lives’ It is doubtful whether man has altered significantly in his personal being, although his response to life and creation may be greatly conditioned by his age, culture, and other influences,

Insofar as the people of God is concerned, that people had been through the training and discipline of God over many centuries, Our superficial study of Israel the covenant people in the Old Testament has scarcely even mentioned their medical background, The coven-

* A 'reductionist study' is one which oversimplifies a matter to make it fit a preconceived pattern.

-ant with Moses was undergirded by special laws of sanitation and hygiene.* These laws had not only to do with diet and hygiene, but they had to do with the well-being of persons in that they were to worship God with their whole being and relate to others of the community in practical love and concern. In modern terms we would say that provision was made for physical, mental and spiritual well-being. At the same time the history of Israel and its prophets tells us that the nation fared badly as a covenant people because of its rebellion, its innate idolatry, its dependence upon its own decisions when it ought always to have acted as a theocracy.

The chastisement of the nation in being subjugated to many enemies, both before, during and after the Exile, meant that Israel needed the message of the prophets, both of restoration following the Exile, and of a new day when the Kingdom of Israel would be restored. The picture of the eschaton was that of a triumphant nation under a King whose law and reign would be universal, and would be of righteousness. Hence there was Messianic expectancy in Israel even before John the Baptist appeared on the scene, There were even communities which awaited Messiah and his utopian Kingdom. Although disappointed by pretenders to that office and Kingdom, the people awaited the coming of the anointed leader. They anticipated that this new age would be attended by such things as total forgiveness, the gift of the Spirit to all, and the triumph of the Kingdom. They also related it to such matters as the full triumph over evil, eg. Satanic and demonic

powers, as also over sicknesses, infirmities and diseases, If we attempt to understand the action of Christ in his ministry apart from the revelation of his being as Messiah (Christ), ie. the anointed one, the Son of Man, the Suffering Servant, the greater Son of great David, the Son of God as portrayed in Psalm 2, and the Lord of the Kingdom, then we will certainly examine healing reductively and not holistically. Hence when John says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand', and demands a baptism which is with a view to the remission of sins, and which will ultimately bring the outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh, then an age is portended which is beyond the current age of anticipation.

That is why in the New Testament 'the age to come' or 'the new age' or 'the end of the ages' are not only intriguing statements but demanding facts. Exorcisms, healings, miracles, and liberation from unwholesome guilt must all be considered in the light of this special age, or, as we often say, 'the Kingdom coming',

The Kingdom of Evil

In the New Testament we find the system of evil is revealed as a quite powerful movement, When we read the Old Testament we could be forgiven for thinking that it comes very little into view, We might think, on reading the New Testament, that those contemporary with Jesus had discovered a hidden kingdom, This is why many suggest that Israel in exile had learned about the system of evil from the Babylonians and Persians, Whilst it is true that these nations had a systematised view of darkness and light, it is not true that the Hebrews

* See Appendix One, Health Provisions in the Old Testament

lacked such. Again it is the New Testament which verifies what is implicit in the Old Testament. For example, John the apostle in his first letter says, 'the whole world is in the power of the evil one'. In Genesis chapter 3, we see the act by which the serpent sought to capture man. Hence Revelation 12:9 calls the dragon, 'that ancient serpent. . . the Devil'. It then proceeds to call him, 'the deceiver of the whole world', Likewise Jesus says that this Devil was a liar from the beginning, because he refused to remain in the truth. Like man whom he incited, he exchanged the truth of God for a lie, He lives in deceit and seeks to enmesh all of creation in the same deceit,

We do not propose to give a whole view of Satan and his powers in the Old Testament. What we do need to see is that the Hebrews did not credit him *directly* with the infliction of sickness and disease. All sickness and disease is in the hands of God, The Book of Job shows Satan as being allowed to bring misery to Job, and even to inflict sickness upon him. However, this was under the hand of God Himself. Whilst the Hebrews knew sickness and suffering generally issue from sin, yet they knew, too, that the wicked man was unjust, whereas the righteous man was obedient. They had problems when righteous men seemed to suffer whilst some wicked men seemed to avoid suffering and punishment.

What we are inclined to miss is the vast emphasis the Old Testament gives to the matter and subject of idolatry, which is a manifestation of the kingdom of evil. It is quite astonishing to know how much of the text is given over either directly or indirectly to this subject. It should not be surprising since anything to which man

gives worth—the worth that he should give to God alone—is idolatry, * Romans 1:20ff. (cf. Acts 17:24-30) shows that man in rebelling against God immediately created, and resorted to, idols. The key for understanding idols is found in I Corinthians 10:18-22, the principle of which is that anyone sacrificing to idols is having fellowship with demons. In other words, idols act as mediums for demonic powers. This New Testament insight, then, floods light on the dangers of idolatry in the Old Testament.

Nor is this explicit connection missing from the Old Testament. Here, too, the principle of demons is that they relate to idolatry.

Hence in Psalm 106:36-37, the writer says of Israel, 'They served their [the Canaanites] idols, which became a snare to them. They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons'. This parallels with the Levitical warning (17:7), 'So they shall no more slay their sacrifices for satyrs [demons], after whom they play the harlot'. This is reinforced by Exodus 22:20 and Deuteronomy 32:17 where it is said, 'They sacrificed to demons which were no gods[†], to gods they had never known, new gods that had come in of late, whom your fathers had never dreaded'. Whilst the gods, as such, were not demons, they were the modes through which demons were worshipped, and through which the demons operated.

The words for 'satyrs' and 'demons' (Heb. seirim and shedhim) are different. References to satyr are 11 Chronicles 11:15 and Isaiah 13:21, and to demons those mentioned in the above

* The present writer has covered this subject in a comprehensive way in his publication, *Dear, Darling Idols* (NCPI, Blackwood, 1980).

† Cf. I Corinthians 8:1-6 where Paul speaks of 'gods' which are not essentially gods. 'Possessed' can be a misleading term, hence some translate the verb as it is, literally, 'demonised'.

paragraph. The small number of references to them does not mean they were not significant, but rather that the Hebrews were not obsessively concerned with them. Rather they were concerned with the Lord, God of Israel. Quite a number of prohibitions exist, in the Old Testament, against forms of idolatry and demonic magic, and these would relate to the demonic even if not described as such. We repeat, the Old Testament Scriptures are not obsessed with the demonic.**

From the above we can see that whilst demonic powers are little spoken of in the Old Testament they are indeed active under their master and leader, Satan. If it is asked, 'What destroyed Israel? What brought it into bondage?', then the answer must be, 'Idolatry'. Stephen's sermon in Acts chapter 7 claims that the Israelites were incorrigibly idolaters. When we trace the sin of Solomon (let alone those prior to him) in introducing other gods and shrines through his 'strange wives', and when we see the kingdom divided under Jeroboam and Rehoboam, then we see the effects of idolatry. The accounts in the Books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles tell us the sad tale of idolatry, and so, implicitly of demon powers. We conclude, then, that although Satan is rarely shown actively opposing Israel (and so God's plan), yet in fact this is what he was able to do through idolatry.

It is interesting, then when we come to the New Testament to discover that there is no mention of an idol in Palestine! Yet, in fact, there is more mention of demonic powers in Palestine, contemporary with Christ, than at any time in Israel's history. There must, then,

have been idolatry in the heart! The money-lust of many of the leaders, both Pharisees and Sadducees, is disclosed in the Gospels, These men were also power-hungry, and were unable to recognise that Jesus was the Son of the Father, and the true Messiah. We assume, then, that demonic forces exercised great power'

Later we will see that demons, in many cases, were directly related to illness in people' The saying in Acts 10:38 that Jesus 'healed all that were oppressed by the devil', is a most significant statement' It means that in some way at least some sickness was linked with the activity of Satan and his powers. There is plenty of explicit statement and description to substantiate this fact. It is for this reason that many have concluded that all sickness comes from Satan' This conclusion is too simplistic to be accepted' It may well be true that much sickness comes to man through the work of Satan, However, our study of the Old Testament makes it clear that much sickness comes from God, It may even be true that God allows that sickness to come to men through evil powers, but it should be seen that Satan does not have equal authority with God, nor is he the Creator, and therefore the chief power in the universe, Satan can do nothing unless human persons wilfully expose themselves to him, and unless, in the ultimate, he, Satan, is permitted such power,

We could conclude, then, that when we come to the New Testament it appears that sickness is rather a result of the actions of Satan and his powers, and not as a result of the actions of God, Indeed, as we will see, the meaning of the Kingdom of God is that it is the power of God come to defeat every Satanic imposition of sickness and demonic possession, Why, then, does God

* Quoted from *The Dominion of Darkness and the Victory of God*, by Geoffrey Bingham (NCPI, Blackwood, 1977). This quotation from pp. 12-13.

often inflict sickness, plagues, and even death in the Old Testament and seem not to do so in the New Testament? The facts are that in the New Testament this same principle obtains although the other principle of the Kingdom is also present. The deaths of Ananias and Sapphira are punishment; nothing can change that fact. The blinding of Elymas, indeed even of Saul of Tarsus 'for a season' is present. Herod dies by an infliction of God. Some Christians at Corinth have fallen sick, and some are dying because they 'discern not the Body'. Finally the Book of the Revelation shows us two elements:

- (i) that God Himself is responsible for pouring out plagues and punishments, for destroying Babylon and the forces of evil. In these punishments many of the human race suffer, and many are destroyed.
- (ii) Satan and his powers inflict heavy suffering, and even death upon those who have faith in God. At the same time, these powers can only do what God allows them to do, and even for that they are reprehensible.

What then are we to conclude? The answer must be (i) that God does directly visit persons with sickness for sin, and even brings death, and (ii) that Satan is allowed certain operations of visiting mankind with sickness, demons and death. Do these two principles conflict? The answer is, 'Not necessarily', They do, however, bring us to this thought that we must be wary on the one hand of saying that God never inflicts sickness or death, and on the other, that Satan does not visit the human race with sickness, evil spirits and death. Positively we must say that all sickness does not come only from Satan.

Having said these two things, we must remember

that had man not sinned God would not have punished, and that sinning man leaves himself open to punishment from God, and evil elements of Satan's forces' We must remember that man's guilt, shame, and bad conscience make him a prey of evil powers, and that these elements set up the climate which is favourable to sickness, disease and demonic possession'

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MESSIAH: THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HEALING—I

The Kingdom of God

We have seen that John the Baptist came as precursor of the Kingdom of God' Jesus came as the anointed Messiah' He proclaimed the Kingdom, and then began to exercise the powers of the Kingdom' His famous statement in Matthew 12:28, 'If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you', must mean that all he did was in the power of the Spirit and *was the action of the Kingdom of God*' This is borne out by the statement of Luke 10:9, 'heal the sick ' . . and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you"'. In verse 11, when the messengers are rejected, they are to affirm, 'The kingdom of God has come near', ie. they are the messengers of the Kingdom. The Kingdom is present in their Master. Under his delegated authority the Kingdom is present in them.

It is true that Christ and his followers set out to heal all who needed such healing. Acts 10:38 says, '(God

anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power . . . he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him'. We gather, then, that to heal 'all those who were oppressed by the devil' meant those who were sick, diseased, oppressed by guilt, even death, and others who were possessed or oppressed by demons. Without doubt the use of Isaiah 61:1 in Luke 4:18 is also paralleled by Christ's answer to John the Baptist in Luke 7:21-23, 'And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offence at me"'. We see that the 'liberation of the captive, the recovering of sight to the blind' of Luke 4:18 is the very activity of Jesus recounted in Luke 7:2 I, which, as we have seen, was a conflation* of prophetic passages, namely, Isaiah 29:18-19, 35:5-6 and 61:1.

Doubtless this is not all the teaching of the Kingdom of God, but it shows that part of it which is Messiah's aggression against Satan's powers, and his action to liberate men and women from Satan, involving healing from sickness, cleansing from disease, liberation from demons and peace of conscience from guilt.

There are many aspects of the Kingdom, but one of them is shown in the contrast between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of evil. This is seen in Luke I 1:14-16. In this passage Jesus speaks of himself as the one who is stronger than the strong man, that strong

* A 'conflation' is a fusing of several passages into one statement.

man being Satan. Consider also the statements of I John 3:8 and Hebrews 2:14-15, namely, 'He who commits sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning' The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" 'Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage.' Taken together, all these ideas lead us to the conclusion that Messiah has come to defeat the kingdom of darkness, by:

- (a) directly overcoming sickness, disease and death in certain human situations, and
- (b) defeating Satan and his powers through the Cross (cf. Col. 2:14-15, with Heb. 2:14-15)' All of this action is the action which is the very Kingdom of God itself.

Our most important conclusion, then, is that *where sickness, disease, death and oppression of guilt are found in man because of Satan's action and oppression, the work of Messiah and his Kingdom is to liberate the oppressed of the evil.*

Messiah's Reasons for Healing

We saw, in Luke 4:18, that Jesus believed he was anointed for the specific task which was that of Messiah. The Isaianic prophecies which he quoted to John the Baptist confirm this. He therefore healed and liberated because this was Messiah's appointed task. We have seen that it was the work of the Kingdom, and its purpose was to defeat Satan and release captive mankind.

One of the clearest statements is found in Matthew 8:14-17. Jesus healed in order that the prophecy of Isaiah 53:4, 'He took our infirmities and bore our diseases', might be fulfilled. The Greek verbs here are taken from the Septuagint version of the Old Testament (ie. Greek version), and indicate a present action. The significance is that, at that point in time, he actually carried away or removed the illnesses. This is a different kind of action from that of I Peter 2:24, which describes his dealing with our sins by suffering for them vicariously, and taking them up into himself, into the Tree. There is no suggestion, then, that the Cross plays any part in this place in the ministry of Jesus. The reason for his healing action is to take away the sins and sicknesses *of* persons.

In Mark 1:23-24, an unclean spirit verbally attacks Jesus, and Jesus shows his authority by rebuking him. In Luke 4:39 he rebukes the fever in Peter's mother-in-law, and later rebukes demons who seek to declare his sonship of God. On the lake, the wind and the waves seem demonically inspired, and Jesus rebukes them. He does these things to show his authority and to exercise that authority *for* others. Demons are notorious for tormenting man, and Jesus wishes to put an end to the tormenting. This is seen in the story of the demoniac of Gadara, and the boy who was constantly brought into fits, and where persons became suicidal.

One of the reasons Jesus heals and liberates is compassion. In Mark 1 :40-4 1, it is said Jesus was moved with compassion for a leper and healed him. Matthew 9:35-36 and 14:14 indicate this compassion which resulted in healing. This same compassion was shown towards the widow of Nain, as he healed her son (Luke

7:11 16). Bartimaeus cries for mercy and is healed.

Jesus' purpose of healing to liberate those in bondage is not merely out of calculated obedience to the Father, but relates to his own being as Creator-Mediator. He has created man (Col. 1:16f.; John 1:1-3) and is angry when man is debased by evil. This is evidenced at Lazarus' tomb, where we are told in John 11:33 and 38 that Jesus 'trembled with indignation'. Some have translated it, 'snorted with anger'. He was angry to see men and women grovelling, so to speak, before death. After all, he himself, standing amongst them, *was the resurrection and the life*, and they did not see it, or draw comfort from the fact! Likewise in the healing of the woman jack-knifed with spondylitis (Luke 13:10-17), Jesus releases her from the demonic indignity she had suffered for eighteen years. Surely this was the reason for most of his healings, that is, to take away the indignity man suffers from sin. 'Oppressed by the devil' is what Peter calls it (Acts 10:38), and Luke 4:18 describes every aspect vividly.

One of the great purposes of his healing ministry was to glorify God. This is seen in principle in the raising of Lazarus. 'This illness . . . is for the glory of God' (cf. John 11:4,40). It is fascinating to read how often people were amazed and glorified God. A special example is the healing of the paralytic. Luke's version of the story tells us that his audience was sceptical, being composed of Pharisees and teachers of the law. We are told, 'And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen strange things today."' This glorifying of God is seen in the fulfilment of the *will* of the *Father* (John 4:34; 17:1-2). In healing the blind man John 9:1-5), Jesus says, 'We

must work the works of him who sent me'. In John's Gospel these works count for much since they are the works of the Father in him John 14:10; cf. Matt.5:16). In other words, the works he does are the will of the Father. By this we know that the true nature of God is manifested in all healings, miracles, deliverances and the like.

Whilst we doubt not that Jesus went about doing good and healing, it was not out of mere sympathy or desire to advertise himself, or even prove his Sonship. He did what was needed. However, often, it seemed, the faith *of* others drew him into action. It is not that he would not have acted had their faith not been present. His familiar, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace', is also associated with, 'He, seeing their faith'. In other words, the friends have faith for their paralytic friend, the centurion for his servant, Jairus for his daughter, the Syrophoenician woman for her daughter, the nobleman for his son, the lepers for themselves. That is, Jesus responded to faith. A graphic example of this is seen in Matthew 15:29-31. Here a great multitude comes bringing lame, maimed, blind, dumb and others. He healed them all, 'so that the throng wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel'.

We sum up this section by saying that Jesus in his acts of miracles, healings, and liberation sees himself as Messiah, the virtual King of the Kingdom, which is itself the Reign and Rule of God. He sees those whom he approaches as needing liberation from Satanic oppression. In doing what he does, he believes he is fulfilling the will of the Father; indeed he does nothing

without the Father. It is not simply Jesus, then, who is the Healer, but primarily his Father.

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MESSIAH: THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HEALING—II

Modes of Healing

We have seen something of the purposes of healing, and undoubtedly these also relate to the modes Jesus used. We recognise that Christ's miracles include healing, but are not confined to healing. John 2: 11 shows that a miracle revealed the glory of Christ. In fact in John's Gospel there are not so much miracles as there are signs, ie. the miracles are signs, and signs intended to lead true readers of them to the Kingdom. They are Kingdom actions. This must mean that the modes of healing are part of the true action of the Kingdom.

Questions we can consider are:

How Did He Heal?

- (i) **Some healings were instant** (cf. Matt.15:28). In fact most were.
- (ii) **Some healings had a gradual** approach to them. There is the example of the man whose eyes Jesus

anointed with clay made of spittle, and who had to wash his eyes in the pool of Siloam (John 9: 1ff)' There is the deaf man into whose ears Jesus put his fingers, and having spat touched the man's tongue (Mark 7:32f). In Mark 8:22f., Jesus took a blind man by the hand, led him out of the village, spat on the man's eyes, laid hands upon him and asked him whether he could see. Gradually the man's sight came to him.

(iii) **Some healings were done at a distance.** This is the case in Matthew chapter 8 where the centurion told Jesus he need not come to his house. In John chapter 4, the nobleman was told to believe that at the distance Jesus was from his son he could nevertheless heal the son.

(iv) **Some healings were done by a touch.** The word *touch* in the New Testament can also be translated held, embraced. It is a manual action which may differ in different situations. Jesus touched the leper (Matt.8:3); he touched Peter's wife's mother (Matt. 8:15); he touched the eyes of the two blind men (Matt.9:29), and he touched the disciples at the Transfiguration when they were prostrate with fear (Matt. 17:7). In Matthew 20:34, Jesus touched the eyes of yet more blind men, moved as he was with compassion. He touched the deaf man's tongue (Mark 7:33). He touched the bier of the dead man and he became alive (Luke 7:14-15). He touched the infants who were brought to him, although we do not know whether some of them were sick (Luke 18:15). He touched the severed ear of the high priest's servant, and healed him (Luke 22:51).

(v) **He allowed others to touch him.** In Luke 6:19 the whole multitude sought to touch him. In Luke 8:44 the woman with the issue of blood sought to touch him,

succeeded and was healed. Power went from Christ to her. Matthew 14:34-36 speaks again of the crowds touching him and being healed.

(vi) **He healed by the word of command.** In Matthew 8:3, he says to the leper, 'I will; be clean'. We saw he rebuked the fever and ordered it to depart, the wind and the waves to subside, the demon to go out. He commanded the man with the withered arm to stretch forth his hand. He commanded Jairus' daughter to arise, the dead son of the widow of Nain to arise, and Lazarus to come forth from the grave. He commanded the paralytic to rise from his bed (Matt.9:6). Doubtless, as we shall consider, his word commanded faith to be alive and act.

(vii) **He spoke with power,** and acted with power. This point is so apparent as to be taken for granted. Yet his mode was that of using power. The woman who touched him was healed, but Jesus felt power flow from him. In Luke 5:17 we are told, '. . .and the power of the Lord was with him to heal'. In Luke 6:19 we read, '. . . power came forth from him and healed them all'. The power of course was that of the Holy Spirit. Acts 10:38 says Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power, and in Matthew 12:28 Jesus states this fact.

(viii) **He often asked questions.** In Matthew 20:32 (cf. Luke 18:41), he asked the blind men what they wanted him to do. He also asked this of the Syrophenician woman in regard to her daughter, and of the sick man at the pool of Bethesda he demanded, 'Do you want to be healed?' Doubtless this was to make clear in their minds what they really desired. He asked the two blind men of Matthew 9:27f., 'Do you believe that I am able to do this?' Sometimes he never asked questions, nor even

commanded action, but simply healed. On at least one occasion he was told, 'Lord, if you will, you can make me clean'. His answer was, 'I will; be clean' (Matt. 8:1-4).

(ix) **He often demanded faith** or spoke to it. In Matthew 9:28, he asked the blind men whether they had faith. He marvelled at the centurion for his faith: ' . . . not even in Israel have I found such faith'. He healed the servant. In the case of the paralytic, Jesus saw the faith of his friends, and this possibly included the faith of the sick man. He acknowledged that it was the faith of the woman who touched him that had saved her. It was the faith of the Syrophenician woman which had saved her daughter. In Luke 17:19, it is the leper's faith that has saved (healed) him. In Luke 18:42 it is the faith of Bartimaeus which has saved him. On the other hand Jesus was angry with his disciples because they lacked faith to heal the demon-possessed boy, Faith, of course, is not in healing itself, nor simply in Jesus as having the power to heal, but faith is in God who does all things well, including healing' The one with faith believes that God wills to heal him/her at that particular point' In this sense faith is specific and not only generic'

(x) **He healed by teaching** In Matthew 4:23, we are told that Jesus was teaching in the synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and infirmity among the people' To teach is to impart living truth' To preach is to proclaim, ie. demanding a response, confront with the immediate truth for action. Healing, although it seems to differ, is linked with teaching and preaching' Hence in many places we see that by preaching, the Kingdom is proclaimed' Nevertheless the actions of Christ are teaching and his

teaching is in action. Likewise with proclamation. Healing, then, in this sense is both teaching and healing! It seems that to heal without putting that into context would be pointless, whilst Kingdom proclamation that does not show the action of the Kingdom (eg. healing, exorcisms, liberation) is lifeless proclamation.

When we view the whole matter of Jesus' modes of healing we are confronted with a variety of actions, adaptation to the personal needs of those who were healed, and a whole variety of approaches. None of these can be understood without the person and presence of *Jesus*. His presence inspires or encourages faith. His presence brings the cry for relief and release. His power demands response, and commands evil forces. His love and compassion engender trust and confidence, ie. faith to be healed. In Acts chapter 3, although Jesus is not visibly present, his followers account the healing of the lame man to the power and holiness of Christ. It is important that we do not omit the fact of holiness, for his holiness kept evil at bay and gave him the integrity needed to command sickness and evil, and vanquish it.

Where Did He Heal?

As Acts 10:39 shows, Jesus ministered in all Judea, beginning from Galilee. The areas of Samaria and Perea were also included. The ministry was to Israel only, so that the plea of the Syrophenician woman was at first ignored. Jesus spoke of others coming from different directions and sitting down in the Kingdom, or of the Vineyard (Kingdom) being given to other than Israel, but in fact he healed only in Palestine, but

then all Palestine including some doubtful ethnic areas such as Gadara. Luke 9:6 says, ‘ . . . preaching the gospel and healing everywhere’. Luke 8:1 says, ‘...through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God’.

Whom Did He Heal?

Mark says, ‘he healed many’ (1:34; 6:13). Matthew says, ‘he healed them all’ 8:16 has it, ‘That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick’, and this is repeated in 12:15. In 14:14 it is said, ‘As he went ashore he saw a great throng; and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick’, and the sense is that the whole throng was healed. However, in Mark 6:5 we read, ‘And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands upon a few sick people and healed them’. Jesus was now in his own country and people. We are told, ‘he marvelled because of their unbelief’. In Luke 4:23-30, he explains their unbelief. Without doubt he desired to heal all, but unbelief stood in his way. In Luke 10:13-15, he reproaches the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum. He had done great works, but they had not repented. It is safe to assume that through unbelief some, also, were not healed.

What Did He Heal!

Matthew 4:23 says, ‘And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every

infirmity among the people’. ‘Every disease’, and ‘every infirmity’ makes his healing comprehensive. 9:35 repeats, ‘every disease and every infirmity’. 10:1 says that he delegated authority to the twelve disciples to cast out demons and to heal every disease and every infirmity. It is clear that there was nothing of the demonic, of sickness, disease, mental and physical aberrations that Jesus did not deal with when it was presented to him. Whereas some healing was the restoration of the body to its normal state, other healings were miraculous, such as giving sight to the blind. From one point of view this too was restoration, but the man healed of blindness in John chapter 9 asked whether it had ever been heard that from the foundation of the world a man had been given sight.

When Did He Heal?

The answer must be, ‘Seven days a week’. In John 5:17, Jesus explains this matter, thereby showing the true meaning of the Sabbath. He said, ‘My Father has always gone on working, and I, too, go on working’. He inferred that God did not cease from *action* after creating the world, but simply *from the work of that creation*. Matthew 12:10, Mark 3:2, Luke 13:14 and John 5:16— amongst other references—show us that he healed on any day that he saw need.

How Comprehensive Was His Healing?

We conclude, then, that Jesus’ ministry was comprehensive. With the exception of the ethnic, he covered all Palestine, and met the needs of all who would come.

Doubtless many never came because of unbelief, and some who cynically asked for signs were not given them, There were signs enough if folk were prepared to see them, but Jesus would not be drawn to vindicate himself in any way, Sometimes he healed where there was no mention of faith, but we assume, nevertheless, that *there was no innate opposition*. In some cases there was weak faith, and Jesus healed nevertheless. Sometimes he strengthened the little faith there was, and doubtless his word brought many to faith, ie. on the principle of, 'Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ' (Rom. 10:17). Had his ministry not been comprehensive it would have meant that the Kingdom was not comprehensive.

Conclusion on Messianic Kingdom Ministry

We note in Luke chapters 9 and 10 that Jesus delegated authority to both the seventy and the twelve (disciples) to preach the Kingdom, heal and exorcise. That is, *the same power* that worked in him, worked in them. Thus Palestine had, so to speak, a network of proclamation, part of which was the very action of healing, delivering from guilt, and liberating from demons.

In looking at the matter of healing we should avoid reductionism. We must recognise that miracles (signs), teaching, and proclamation were also present when healing was carried out. Peter's summary of Jesus' ministry in Acts 10:38, then, covers the whole matter of the proclamation of the Kingdom by the Messiah-Son:

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

Whilst it is true that we are looking at Jesus' healing ministry in the Gospels, it is also necessary to see that this healing did not finish with his death. Acts 1:1 speaks of 'all that Jesus began to do and teach', the inference being that he went on doing and teaching. Primarily he did this through the agency of his servants, but the principle remains that he did it. This is seen in John 14:12-14. He tells them (the apostles) that they will do greater works than he has done, Yet, he adds, he will be the one who will do the works. Anything they ask in his name, he will do.

We see then, that the ministry of the Kingdom did not cease with Christ's death, but rather that it continued, and no less dynamically, This we will see as we study healing in the Acts and Epistles. What, however, we have to note is the significance of the Cross, Resurrection and Ascension, and this we will do in our next chapter.

—8—

THE ACTION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST'S SAVING WORK

The Kingdom in Palestine

We have seen that John announced the Kingdom, and pointed to Jesus as Messiah. We have seen that Jesus also proclaimed the Kingdom, not merely as coming, but as being present in his own person, and being worked out in his actions, Matthew 12:28 (with Acts 10:38) is a principle which reveals the nature of the Kingdom, By the Holy Spirit Jesus defeats demons, and so the Kingdom of God has 'come upon' both demons and people, Demons are defeated: people are liberated, To heal is to have the Kingdom come upon, or come near one (Luke 10:9), To cast out demons is to have Satan fall rapidly from heaven (Luke 10:18f),

What, however, must happen when Jesus is removed from Palestine? Does the work go on or does it cease? Were Jesus not to have been killed would he have worked until the Kingdom had thoroughly captured Palestine, and then perhaps other lands and peoples?

The answer is that Jesus has to do something which secures the Kingdom for ever. Since the reign and rule of God (ie. the Kingdom) is safe without anyone securing it, why do we speak of securing it? The answer is that Jesus had to do that in history which would definitely defeat evil for ever, thus revealing the Kingdom as more powerful than evil, and showing that evil was doomed to destruction. What Christ did on the Cross was precisely that.

How, then, do we explain the ministry of Christ in Palestine? What was its purpose and significance? The answer is that Jesus had to proclaim the Kingdom to all in Israel that they might make their decision about the Kingdom. He had to polarise the people of God into decisive acceptance or rejection of the reign and rule of God. They either exposed themselves to this truth and action, or they opposed it. The Gospels show that Jesus was anxious for the good news of the Kingdom to reach all. This fact is confirmed by a close study of the Gospels. In John 9:4-5, Jesus says, 'We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world'. We also notice in John's Gospel that he is conscious he is working to the Father's programme. He never works before time, nor lags after it. He sees himself as the true messenger of the covenant. That is why he goes everywhere, tirelessly, or delegates ministry to the twelve and the seventy. It is at the Transfiguration that he is prepared for the Cross. Now his face is set towards Jerusalem, and as he hastens through Samaria the Samaritans are angry because he will not stay with them and minister to them. All of this dispels the curious idea of some theologians that Jesus

expected the Kingdom to come in its final consummation in the time of his ministry. Far from this, he had repeatedly prophesied of his crucifixion death and his resurrection. Doubtless he knew the relationship of his final saving work to the Kingdom.

We conclude, then, that Jesus' work in Palestine was:

(a) A proclamation that in accordance with the prophets, Messiah was come to do his saving work. The first part of this was to *tell* the good news, and the second part to *be* the good news,

(b) To do that work which was the Cross and the Resurrection, followed by the Ascension, so that the powers of darkness would be defeated forever,

(c) Such work was to wrest the weapon of the fear of death which Satan wielded over those under his power,

The Kingdom Is Secured

What do we mean by *secured*? We mean that for millenniums Satan has had the world in his power (I John 5:19), We do not mean the created world, for God is King over that' We mean that part of creation which has opposed God's will and seeks to defeat His plan and purpose' This system is called 'the world' by Christ, and he finds it opposed to him, The prince of this world is Satan (John 12:31), He has powers under him which are fallen angelic creatures, demons and evil spirits, as also men and women who are captive to him through sin,

God in His great personal power (power which created the world and sustains it) could, it would seem, just annihilate evil forces, Such an exercise of metaphysical power would give Him immediate victory. The

matter is not as simple as this appears, The question is a moral question, one of good and evil, and mere metaphysical power does not touch it,

Man lives in guilt, and it is because of guilt that Satan can manipulate man, especially through his conscience, and such is linked with law. Man is in bondage to sin, Satan, evil powers, the world system, death, the flesh, law and conscience, not excluding the wrath of God, by reason of his guilt. Christ has to destroy the guilt of man on the Cross so that he may be freed. The Kingdom of God, in essence, is the rule of God, and the willing submission of man, who, having submitted, aligns himself with the plan God is working out in history.

Through the suffering of the Cross, Christ secures the Kingdom. He defeats all evil, removes fear of death (ie. fear of punishment), and liberates man into the Kingdom (Col. 1:13). Man is born anew in order to enter the Kingdom. Yet such regeneration cannot obtain apart from the work of the Cross and Resurrection, especially as these are made dynamic to man through the work of the Holy Spirit. In other words, guilt of sin's penalty, and pollution of sin's defilement are completely erased. Because of this the hold evil has had over man is destroyed,

Given all of this, man, who has been regenerated, has to live by faith. Nothing of this is by sight: he must have faith that it is so. Thus, for this period of time in which men live prior to the Parousia of Christ, the *Kingdom is* always a matter of faith.

Kingdom Salvation is for Now and Then

In Palestine, the Gospel of the Kingdom is given this title because the Cross has yet to secure the Kingdom

definitively, before the weapons of deliverance are placed in the hands of the apostles and the church. It is this Gospel which is preached in the Acts. Of this there is no doubt. See Acts 8:12, 19:8, 20:25, 28:23, 31. It is now the Gospel of redemption, ie. redemption from evil powers and guilt. It is thus simultaneously the Gospel of the Kingdom, and the Gospel of redemption.

I Corinthians 1:18 reminds us that although we have been saved (Eph. 2:8-10), yet we are also being saved (cf' Phil' 2:12-13)' Romans 8:23 shows us that we will be saved' We are in the Kingdom (Col. 1:13), but we have yet to inherit the Kingdom (I Cor.6:10; Eph.5:5). Through much tribulation we will ultimately enter the Kingdom. In other words, the Kingdom is yet to be consummated, but even now we are in it, and working in the cause, We will enter into it in finality (Matt. 25:34)' Meanwhile for us it is 'righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit', and is 'not in mere talking but in [acts of] power' (Rom' 14:17; I Cor' 4:20)'

Having seen that the Kingdom, in the Gospels, is visible by its acts, dynamic in its operations, and powerful over Satan and evil through exorcisms, miracles, teaching and healings, we now need to see whether this was a demonstration only for Jesus' brief time of ministry, or whether such dynamic Kingdom actions continued in the time of the early church.

We recognise of course that ultimately the Kingdom will defeat earthly kingdoms and rules. I Corinthians 15:24-28 (cf. Phil, 2:9-11) shows us that the kingdoms of this world will come under Christ, His reign will be complete. He will then give the Kingdom to the Father, from whom it originated.

—9—

MESSIAH, THE KINGDOM, AND HEALING IN THE ACTS

Commission and Transference

Jesus told his disciples, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go ye therefore'. Luke's Gospel tells us that Jesus said repentance and remission of sins would be preached in his name amongst all nations, fanning out from Jerusalem. This could not happen until the Spirit was received. The Spirit, the gift of repentance and remission of sins could not happen until Jesus ascended. Then it must happen. It did happen. Mark 16:17 says that those who believed would exorcise demons, speak in new tongues, be protected from deadly evil, and would lay hands on the sick, and the sick would be healed, Given that Mark 16:9-20 may not have been part of the original Gospel of Mark, it is certainly the mind of the early church.

Acts 1:2 says Jesus gave this command (or commands) by the *Holy* Spirit before he ascended. The apostles were to do nothing until the Spirit came. When the Spirit

came he anointed them for service, as had been the case with Jesus at his baptism, In accordance with Acts 1:8 they would receive power by the Spirit coming upon them, as indeed Jesus had received power when anointed.

We have seen that John 14:10-14 is a most important passage. It suggests that there will be no discontinuity of works as they had been done by Jesus. Indeed greater works would ensue, and these through the disciples, but then still being done by the Son for the glory of the Father, Put in another way, we can say the work of the Kingdom would continue. We would expect, then, in Acts, to see works similar to those which Jesus had done in Galilee, but that such works would not be confined to Israel. The New Covenant—new because Jesus had won the victory over evil at the Cross and Resurrection— would not be confined to Israel, but would now penetrate the people/s of the world. Jews, Samaritans and Gentiles would be welcomed to the Kingdom, The Kingdom promises of God would be for all. The disciples, then, were the new messengers of the Kingdom, living in the Messianic thrust, and equipped by the Spirit to be dynamic witnesses to Christ. *Christ, the Son, would now work through his people and carry God's plan to fulfilment, the fulfilment that was secured by the acts of the Cross and Resurrection,*

The Actions of Acts

Pentecost was the anointing of the new people of God, Miraculous signs attended this event. The immediate consequence was that the apostles did signs (miracles) and wonders (Acts 2:43). These were not a few but many. Amongst these was the healing of the lame

man at the Gate Beautiful. Such action was disturbing to the Sanhedrin who saw the enormous influx of Jews to Messiah's cause. The source and mode of this action is understood by the new people of God, In Acts 4:39-30, they request that the Father give boldness for proclamation whilst He stretches out His hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed, through Jesus, The Father is to work these things through the Son, but really through the apostles. We conclude that the Son is working through the disciples for the Father's glory, Already the disciples have acknowledged that the power (and holiness) is that of Jesus. He has healed, As folk in the time of Jesus' ministry had had faith and were healed, now the disciples have faith in the Name, and people are healed (Acts 3:16).

The pattern is emerging, It is like that of the Gospels except that Jesus is not visibly present. What is more, the disciples become instruments of God's judgement upon Ananias and Sapphira. Here we see the Old Testament pattern of punishment being effected. The result of this is a holy fear, and the disciples do many signs and wonders. They are done 'by the hands of the apostles', though they are God's acts (Acts 5:1-6). It is recorded, 'They even carried the sick out into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets . . . , and [brought] those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed' (Acts 5:15-16).

These acts and signs were not only done by apostles, Stephen 'did great wonders and signs among the people' (6:8), Philip preached Christ and the Kingdom in Samaria (8:5, 12), and " . . . unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed, crying with a loud voice; and many who were paralysed or lame were healed' (8:5-8)

Saul of Tarsus was both blinded and healed by God, the healing being through a man named Ananias (9:1-18), Peter healed a paralytic, Aeneas, and a dead woman, Dorcas, was raised by him from the dead (9:32a2).

Another judgement took place in the smiting of Herod with sickness and death' Elymas the sorcerer was temporarily blinded (12:23; 13:9-12)

Paul and Barnabas in their ministry in Asia did signs and wonders at Iconium (14:3)' At Lystra, Paul healed a crippled man (14:8-10), Paul himself, from being left dead was raised up through prayer (14: 19-21), On his second journey Paul exorcised a possessed girl at Philippi (16:16-18). After preaching the Kingdom at Ephesus, 'God did extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were carried away from his body to the sick, and diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them' (19:11-12), Eutychus was raised to life after falling from a height (20:9-10). On the island of Malta Paul was immune to a viper's bite, Also he did some significant healing (28:1-9), Later Paul spoke of this ministry of signs and wonders, describing it as follows:

For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has wrought through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so that . . . I have fully preached the gospel of Christ (Rom. 15:18-19).

An Evaluation of These Acts

We have said already that the actions of the servants of God in Acts, resemble the very ministry Christ had

effected in Palestine, An examination of Jesus' ministry and the commissioning of the seventy and the twelve (Luke chapters 9 and 10) for local proclamation, shows that there was both similarity and difference, The similarity is that the signs happen in the Gospel and Acts' The difference is that in Acts they are not proclaiming that the Kingdom is coming, or has come upon persons, but rather that redemption has now come through Messiah, ie. the redemption of the Kingdom' The use of the terms Messiah and Lord ('Jesus is Lord', 'He is Lord of all', 'God hath raised him up to be both Lord and Christ') tells us that the Kingdom is secured, set, and operative, not in an initiatory way, but in the way of permanence' The Epistles show that the Kingdom is coming to consummation'

It cannot be said, then, that Jesus failed when he was crucified' Rather, he was triumphant, especially in rising from the dead' He has broken the back of evil (Heb' 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8; John 12:31; Col' 2:14-15) and has liberated man through his work, Man, by receiving the gifts of repentance, faith, forgiveness, justification, regeneration and the Spirit, is now free, He is in the Kingdom, He suffers for the Kingdom's sake (II Thess. 1:5 -6)'

What, then, is the action of Acts, especially in regard to exorcisms, signs and wonders? Our evaluation is deeply interesting' In this regard comparison of Jesus' ministry with that of the proclaimers in Acts shows us that it aligns with what Jesus had spoken of in John 14:10f. It is the Son doing it through his people. Many of the elements in his earthly healing come through in the work of his servants. There is laying on of hands (5: 12 - 14)' There is command to be healed (9:34,40)' In

at least one case it was stated, ‘. . .and they were *all* healed’. Touch is not mentioned, but it seems the very shadow of Peter was effective, and the handkerchiefs and aprons which had touched Paul’s body were effective to heal many. Faith to believe for healing is mentioned in 14:9, and so a command is given. Faith for healing is presupposed in many cases such as Acts 5:15-16, 8:5-8 and 19:11-12. The extent of healing is total but the geographical area is now the world. It passes ethnic boundaries.

In Acts 2:22, Peter says of Jesus, ‘Jesus of Nazareth, a man *attested to you* by God with mighty works and wonders and signs’. This means that whilst Jesus’ works were the actions of the Kingdom, they *also* attested him to be Messiah. Mark 16:20 says, of the disciples, ‘they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and *confirmed the message by the signs that attended it*’ A close examination of Acts 5:12-14, 8:6, 14:3 and related statements in Romans 15:18-19, and Hebrews 2:4 shows that *God bears witness to the works of the apostle, and thus attests to the truth of the word proclaimed*, This attestation is linked with their special works of signs and wonders.

Another point noticeable is that the apostles are not continually spoken of as doing signs and wonders, It may well be that much of this action is just not recorded, In most cases it is stated, ‘And the Lord gave them to . . .’, ‘. . . signs and wonders were done *through* the hands of the apostles’. The ministry comes from God, from the Son. It is in the *name* of Jesus that action happens. Acts 3:6 is the command given in the name of Jesus. 3:16 is the statement that the healing is in his name. They repeat this truth to the Sanhedrin (4:10).

The Sanhedrin demands they do not use the name of Jesus (4:17-18; 5:28, 40)’ The name is again used effectively in 4:30, 8:12 and 16:18’ For this reason we conclude that the whole work was done by Messiah, and that he has been raised up above every principality and authority and every name that is named, and been given to be head over all things for the church (Eph’ 1:19-21)’ One day every knee will bow to that name’ Meanwhile it works with power’ Messiah rules from the place of authority’

Our conclusion on Acts is that the Kingdom proclaimed by Jesus in Palestine is now proclaimed in Palestine, Samaria and amongst the Gentiles. The effect of this proclamation is to liberate men and women from the bondage of sin. The ministry of God’s servants liberates people from demons, sickness, diseases, malformations and—in some cases—physical death. The word of God is shown to be powerful, and Jesus is proclaimed as Lord. Also his Lordship is shown to operate now.

—10—

HEALING IN THE EPISTLES**Signs, Wonders, Healings**

In his First Letter, Peter speaks of ‘ . . . those who preached the good news to you through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look’ (1:12). The writer of Hebrews speaks of ‘ . . . such a great salvation . . . *It was declared at first by the Lord*, and it was attested to us by those who heard him, while *God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his own will*’ (Heb. 2:3-4). We see, then, that these two statements, when conflated, show us that proclamation was this kind of action, and had this kind of attestation. The writer of Hebrews adds (6:4-6), ‘...-we have tasted . . . the word of God . . . and *the powers of the age to come*’. The ‘powers’ or *dunamis* (Gr.), ie. ‘deeds of power’, obviously refer to signs and wonders and healings.

In Galatians 3:5, Paul indicates that some of these elements are still happening in the church, and that such happenings are not only initiatory (in building churches) but part of its life, He says, ‘ . . . he who goes

on supplying the Spirit to you and goes on working miracles among you’. Obviously the Spirit and the miracles are linked. This was the church initiated by Paul, and it is surprising that he does not refer to his authority as an apostle simply on the grounds of signs and wonders, but uses other methods (chapters 1 and 2). Perhaps it is because they, themselves, are having these signs and miracles within their church. However, in II Corinthians 12:12, Paul does claim to have worked signs and wonders, ‘The signs of a true apostle were performed among you in all patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works’. Nevertheless such acts were also performed by those who were not apostles, eg. Stephen in Jerusalem (Acts 6:8), and Philip in Samaria (Acts 8:7).

These elements of the Epistles are only used to show that the Gospel was initially preached with signs and wonders, and that signs and wonders did not necessarily cease once a church was formed. Indeed we have Paul’s question in I Corinthians 12:29-30, ‘Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing?’ Obviously not, but the point is that some work miracles, and some effect healings.

To refer to Paul’s ministry again we need to see he has a rationale of such signs, wonders and miracles. We have already seen the action of these in his ministry in the Acts. Romans 15:18-19 shows this rationale: ‘For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has wrought through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so that from Jerusalem and as far round as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ’. That is, that signs,

wonders, healings and miracles were all part of the dynamic proclamation. For this reason many have seen the term 'power of the Holy Spirit' (I Cor. 2:4-5), and 'much assurance and power of the Spirit' (I Thess. 1:5) to parallel the statement of Hebrews 2:4.

Our conclusion, then, is that the Epistles indicate that the initiatory work of proclaiming the Gospel involved the elements of signs, wonders, miracles, healing and exorcisms. Even so, such elements do not necessarily cease in any local area with the formation of a church.

Other Elements of Sickness and Healing

In Acts chapter 5, we saw the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira. These were a punitive action of the Holy Spirit. The couple had lied to him. We are not told whether or not these deaths meant that the two were lost to salvation. What is remarkable is that those who have been baptised die.

In I Corinthians 11:27-32, we meet the case of members of the church at Corinth becoming sick, and of some actually dying, all through a failure to 'discern the body', for this is 'profaning the body and blood of the Lord' (vv. 29, 27). Persons are to examine themselves before they presume to eat of that bread and drink of that cup. We have a fair idea of what Paul is speaking about. One profanes the work of Christ when one does not understand what his body was given for, and when one does not live in accordance with this. It may also mean that one must discern the Body of Christ, the church, so one must not be greedy or selfseeking as is indicated in verses 33 and 34 of this chapter.

These surely refer back to verses 13-22.

Whatever the actual cause here for sickness and death, one thing is apparent, that Christians can know sickness and death which is a punishment from God. This may well be the case of the incestuous person of I Corinthians 5:1-5. Paul speaks of delivering this man to Satan for the destruction of his flesh. Such a reference may be to sickness and death. It is a punishment instigated by the church, but evidently as part of God's action. In 11 Corinthians 2:5-11, Paul seems to rescind this action, the man having come to his senses and repentance for his evil. Doubtless he means the judgement on the man's flesh is rescinded. We assume the man is restored not only to fellowship but health.

Finally, we come to the matters of Paul's thorn in the flesh, and the illnesses of Epaphroditus, Timothy and Trophimus. It seems to the present writer that most commentators on these matters come with a presupposition. It is either that sickness is part of life, and that God's intention is not always to heal His people, or that somehow there is something wrong with these men being ill. That is, they must have some form of sin, or have laid themselves open to sickness through overwork. It would likewise be presupposition that Paul's thorn in the flesh was an illness, or, on the other hand, not an illness. One should approach the subject without presuppositions' One should be open to both these possibilities, or some other unforeseen possibility'

In regard to Paul's thorn in the flesh (11 Cor. 12:1-10), doubtless it can be pressed that 'the messenger of Satan' is the actual thorn, ie. an outsider being a burden to Paul. It has been pointed out that this is the general use of the term 'thorn' in the Old Testament.

Even so, we have seen that the man delivered over to Satan suffered in the flesh, and Job also, Satan being allowed to harass him. We cannot discount the possibility that it was a physical element. On the other hand, we cannot dogmatically insist on it. What we do know is that Paul saw it as some indignity. After all he was an apostle, and it seemed incongruous to his authority and situation. The affliction was given to him to prevent pride because of the revelations he had seen. It appears he needed this harassment to keep him out of such pride.

In regard to the illnesses of Epaphroditus, Timothy and Trophimus, we must again be modest. We must examine their cases without presuppositions. In the case of Epaphroditus (Phil.2:25-30), this servant of God was ill. Some translate verse 27 as him having risked his life, and others as to his being on the edge of death. All we know is that he was ill, and that he recovered. Do we have to say he had sinned because he was ill? Do we have to say he had not? In fact we just do not know. What we do know is that he was healed.

In the case of Timothy (I Tim. 5:23), we again can only accept what is written, 'No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments' We can say that water was unboiled, unfiltered and therefore dangerous' We can say that wine was hygienic' In addition, 'for other ailments', does not quite substantiate the former statement' What we do gather is that if natural means are helpful for a person who has visitations of sickness, then they are useful and legitimate' It is idle to speculate as to Timothy's spirituality, and how he could be proof against sickness.

So far as Trophimus (I Tim. 4:20) is concerned, Paul simply says, 'Trophimus I left ill at Miletus'. Again it is foolish to speculate. Why was he ill? Why did Paul not heal him? We know none of these answers. Again we are left with the fact that a Christian was sick. We could draw the conclusion that Christians will be sick, or that if they are then it is their fault, in some way or another, or that it may not always be opportune to heal them. However, such simplistic reasoning here may cause us to lose some valuable insight God gives through the sicknesses of these men of God.

James and the Matter of Healing

James 5:13-18 is the section which deals with the healing of a Christian person who is sick. If we ask the question, 'Why is he sick?', we have no answer. It could be that he has sinned, but then it is not necessarily so, for verse 15b says, 'and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven'. We find, then, that this is a normal provision: anyone sick may call for the elders to come, and to pray over him. The prayer of faith seems first to be that of the sick person, and then of the elders. Doubtless the elders also have faith since the sick person believes he should have called for them. It also seems that the confession of sins is 'so that you may be healed', It could mean, 'If you clear up things which are between you then you will make a concerted stand', This could mean something like 'discerning the body', in which case the conditions are ideal for true prayer, James says, 'The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects'. Contrary to the AV, fervency is not called for. We see, then, that faith is called for, prayer is needed,

there is anointing, and the name of the Lord is used. Mark 6:13 speaks of the twelve anointing with oil and healing many. There is, then, nothing new in James. It fits with the healing both of the Gospels and the Acts.

What, of course, is important is that it is accepted as part of the life of the church. There is no mention of a special charisma of healing. In fact in I Corinthians 12:30, Paul does not ask, in conformity with his other questions, 'Do all heal?' but 'Do all possess *gifts* of healing?' In other words healing is not simply a gift but is the use—presumably from point to point of time—of gifts as the need is indicated and supplied by the Spirit, through his agents.

It is to be noted that James says, 'the prayer of faith will save the sick man'. He uses the Greek verb *sozo* which is certainly used of salvation. James adds, 'and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven'. Prayer is that one may be healed (v.16). It would seem, then, that to be saved, in this case, is to be healed. We need to keep this in mind when we deal with the wider subject of salvation.

Conclusion on Healing in the New Testament

Collating, evaluating and understanding healing in the New Testament is a large task, and involves consideration of what the Old Testament has to say on the subject. An examination of the Revelation of John is also needed, because this Book reveals much of the significance of history. It is theodicy par excellence. Whilst we do not have time to do a particular study of this Book, we can certainly see elements which relate to

our subject.

In 2:20-23, Christ says he will cause a certain woman to be thrown on a sickbed and will include those who commit adultery (idolatry) with her. In fact he will strike her children dead! This is in contrast to suffering which is not punishment in 2:10. Through the Revelation the people of God suffer, although God also protects them in many cases. Some of them are killed (6:9-11), and others will be killed.

God certainly releases plagues, destruction, famines and the like through Christ the Lamb and the Lion. This is the major portion of the Book, for descriptions of terrible happenings abound. Even where Satan, the dragon, the false prophet and others work calamity, they do it only under the authority of God. The two godly witnesses of chapter 11 have great powers, and on being slain are raised again, and their translation to heaven brings further suffering to the world. In chapter 16, three foul spirits (like frogs) emerge from the mouth of the false prophet, 'performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty', ie. Armageddon. This reminds us of Matthew 24:24, 'For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect'. It also reminds us of Matthew 7:21-23, 'Not every one who says to me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?" And then will I declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from me, you evil-

doers"'. All of this raises the fact that evil powers can imitate the healings, signs, wonders and miracles which the people of God effect. The Book of the Revelation shows us the cosmic conflict that is taking place and will take place. At the same time, it shows us what is the consummation of time'

'The consummation of time is the defeat of all evil' It parallels the passage of I Corinthians 15:24-28' In that passage, as in Revelation (cf' 11:15), Christ triumphs over all evil' Hence every enemy is subjugated, even the enemy of death' Thus those powers that deal sickness, bondage and death, are now destroyed' Revelation 7:15-17 and 21:1 -4 show the ultimate defeat of pain and death, and even suffering' Revelation 22:1-3 shows that the river of life and the tree of life are for the healing of the nations' It is also said, 'There shall no more be anything accursed'' In other words, all that has issued from the curse is finished. This is a great note for the subject of sickness, disease, evil bondage and healing to end upon' Healing, in the ultimate, is total. Yet, as we note, this is not until the end-time.

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THE WHOLE MATTER OF HEALING: CREATIONAL ORDER

The Background to Understanding Healing

If we regard the Bible as a single, integrated entity, then we see that God deals with man under the following eras and principles, namely that of creation, then redemption, and finally the renewal of all things. Looked at from another vantage point we see man at creation, man fallen, man up to the time of the Flood, man in the post-Flood era, man under God's Covenant with Abraham, then man under the New Covenant, The Covenant with Abraham has *ultimate* significance for all nations, but primary significance for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and so for the progeny of Jacob (Israel). In the New Testament the New Covenant (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Matt. 26:28; Heb. chs 8 and 10) has significance first for Israel and then for the nations. The Gospel which relates to this covenant, as also to the Kingdom of God, is for all the world, The Abrahamic

Covenant is still extant, but now in the form of the New Covenant.

Another way of looking at God in history is through the theme of the Kingdom of God. Creation shows that God is King over all. The rebellion of angelic and human powers shows that His Kingdom has been contested down through history. Israel is peculiarly God's Kingdom (Exod. 19:5-6), but fails to be His Kingdom as it ought to be. From this matrix emerges, so the prophets say, the Messiah, the King who is Son of God. He will set up the Kingdom. Since the Covenant-Mediator is one with the Messiah, then covenant and Kingdom are linked. Both covenant and Kingdom concern the whole world. Ultimately the Kingdom will come in its fullness, and the universe will be regenerated. The Covenant-Father will dwell with His people. Sickness, pain, death and suffering will be finished.

The God of Creation

The Father-Creator-King certainly has concern for His own creation. We take it that man, even though in the image of God, was not of himself, as created, immortal. If so, there would have been no possibility of his death. The placing of the tree of life in the Garden was also a sign that he needed this for life. At the same time had he died, that death would have none of the humiliation it has associated with it following the fall of man. Death resulted from sin. Also the earth has upon it the curse which is because of man. Doubtless the kind of death man has is related to the curse of sin. What is not stated at all is whether sickness is part of this curse.

However, all in creation who suppress the truth in unrighteousness have the curse or wrath of God upon them (Rom, 1:18), This is because they deliberately seek to suppress the creational order as God made it,

This fact is supported by our references to Abimelech and Pharaoh who have sickness visitations from God because of sin, although in both cases it was in ignorance, The destruction of mankind through the Flood, the visitations upon Sodom and Gomorrah, as also of the Egyptians and the Canaanites are sufficient to show that God destroys those elements within His creation which oppose His creational principles, The case of Nineveh shows that where there is repentance God is gracious.

What, then, of the healing of those whom God has created? One of the answers is that man sees sickness as an enemy, that he often believes it is a visitation of God in judgement, and that in any case he seeks healing from it. Medical science has taught us a number of things in regard to healing, namely that the body is equipped for the most part to be resistant to sickness and disease. Not only are there inbuilt prophylactic elements, but also powers for remedial healing, Within the creation itself are many elements which are aids to healing, Whilst druggists and naturopaths may argue about the special merits or demerits of organic and chemical elements used for healing, the principle remains, God has implanted into His *creation* those aids which help man in the healing *of* his body, Such aids may be neglected, used or abused but the principle remains, nothing is present in creation without *some* purpose, and many elements are conducive to healing, In addition, man has been given great intelligence to discover and

use these, and has been given intellect to use them at those points in history when such aids, medication and surgery are needed and possible' The enormous healing that takes place across the world today is proof of our point.

Does God, then, heal persons within creation by miraculous means? The Bible accounts show us that He does' The sicknesses in the families of Abimelech and Pharaoh were healed this way. Naaman the leper was thus healed. Medicos speak of mysterious remission of sicknesses which were on the verge of being terminal. Such healings are not confined to those within Israel or the Christian people. Whilst repentance and faith—of a kind—are evident in some extra-covenantal healings, yet on the whole the Scriptures point to healing being primarily related to Covenant. At the same time history records many special healings and miracles outside the Covenant as such. In accordance with the principle shown in Matthew 5:43-48 where God loves all men and provides for them all, whether they be good or evil, just or unjust, we must agree that many healings must be directly from God as Creator, even to a fallen mankind.

God, Covenant and Healing

What is clearly indicated in Scripture is that healing especially relates to the covenant with Moses, and the covenant and Kingdom in the New Testament. It is this point we wish to pursue.

Our study of healing in the Old Testament made one thing very clear: God is the Initiator of sickness and disease. We repeat a few references:

' . . . I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand' (Deut.31:39).

' . . . The Lord kills and brings to life . . . ' (I Sam.1:6; cf. II Kings 5:7).

'Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind?' (Exod.4:11).

' ..Does evil befall a city, unless the Lord has done it?. . .' (Amos 3:6).

'I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe, I am the Lord, who do all these things' (Isa.45:7).

' . . .he is wise and brings disaster' (Isa.31:2).

Doubtless we could add many other references to support the fact that God takes the initiative in visiting with sickness, as also with healing, but what is notable is that most of the references we have studied relate to God's covenant people, Obviously something needs to be understood in this regard, When we turn to Exodus 15:22-26 we see two things: first, that God makes sweet the bitter water of Marah, and, second, that He promises He will be their Healer (Yahweh Rapha). Note the words, "There the Lord made for them a statute and an ordinance and there he proved them, saying, "If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon you which I put upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord, your healer"“ Without doubt a 'statute and an ordinance' means a lasting law for Israel. God has contracted to be their Healer, This means (a) He will not put diseases upon them, and (b) He will heal them should disease come to them, Notice, however, that the text itself does not explicitly state the latter, It does not say, 'I will heal

you” At the same time Exodus 23:15 does make an explicit promise, namely, ‘You shall serve the Lord your God, and I will bless your bread and your water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of you’

If we follow through the principle that the Lord is Israel’s Healer, we find a wealth of material which is supportive. We will review this material under the following headings:

(i) **Non-visitation** of sickness is connected with obedience. Exodus 23:25 promises God will take away sickness if Israel does not accede to idolatry’ Leviticus 26:3-13 does not explicitly promise healing, but 26:14f. promises sickness if Israel does not obey’ Deuteronomy 7:15 promises explicitly that God will take away disease where they are obedient: ‘And the Lord will take away from you all sickness; and none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which you knew, will he inflict upon you, but he will lay them upon all who hate you’. Deuteronomy 28:13-14 promises clearly that Israel will have well-being if it obeys.

(ii) **Visitation** of sickness is connected with disobedience’ The diseases which are promised if Israel disobeys through idolatry, departing from the agreement of covenant, as agreed to in Exodus chapter 24, are the diseases of the plagues the Egyptians had known through God’s visitations. The following Scriptures promise these diseases on disobedience—Leviticus 26:14ff., Deuteronomy 7:15ff., 28:15ff.—whilst many other passages promise drought and infertility of the land, and even of human procreation if disobedience occurs. Jeremiah 8:14-21, 33:6-8, Isaiah 1:2-6 and Micah 1:9 are other Scriptures, and much later in the history of Israel, which

tell of the same principle,

(iii) **Repentance**, a return to God, and consequent obedience brings healing, II Chronicles 7:14 is the classic passage for such healing, ‘I will.....heal their land’, That means both inhabitants and the very land itself, Jeremiah 33:6-8 is a clear picture of forgiveness, and so of healing, ‘Behold, I will bring to it health and healing, and I will heal them and reveal to them abundance of prosperity and security, I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and rebuild them as they were at first, I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me’, Likewise Jeremiah 14:19-20 speaks of the same principle, Psalm 103:3 says of the Lord, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases” Psalm 51 is the Psalm of repentance, and God will restore the bones which He has broken’ Psalm 32:3-4 speaks of the suffering of unconfessed sin, ie. sickness which comes upon the guilty. Verse 5 speaks of the rich relief which comes when a man confesses to God. Like Isaiah 58:6-8 where the man who remembers the poor and needy has the promise, ‘your healing shall spring up speedily’, so Psalm 41:1ff. speaks of the man who considers the poor, ‘The Lord sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness thou healest all his infirmities’. The Psalmist adds, ‘As for me, I said, "O Lord, be gracious to me; heal me, *for I* have sinned against thee!"’ In Jeremiah 8:22, the prophet cries for healing, for the balm of Gilead.

Psalm 34:17-19 speaks of the Lord delivering those who call upon Him, ‘The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit’. Isaiah 30:26 speaks of the day when ‘the Lord binds up the hurt of

his people, and heals the wounds inflicted by his blow'. The same promise is to Israel in Ezekiel 34:16, 'I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the crippled, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will watch over; I will feed them in justice' In Hosea 6:1, the prophet exhorts, 'Come, let us return to the Lord; for he has torn, that he may heal us; he has stricken and he will bind us up' This acknowledges the righteous judgement of God and accepts the fact that, 'he wounds, but he binds up; he smites, but his hands heal' Job 5:18). Notice in Jeremiah 33:8 and Psalm 32:5 that the forgiveness is for the guilt of sins' Over that forgiveness God sets about healing.

—12—

THE WHOLE MATTER OF HEALING: RESTORATION TO THE CREATED NORM

In and Out of Israel

What then do we make of the matter of healing in the Old Testament? Creationally men bring upon themselves misery and sickness by their sin. Yet, as Psalm 103:10 says, 'He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor reward us according to our iniquities' Ezra 9:13 says, 'And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt, seeing that thou, our God, hast punished us less than our iniquities deserved. . .' Is this, then, only Israel under covenant? Romans 3:t5 and Acts 17:30 suggest that God has not judged complete judgement, and in fact has done this only in the Cross. Hence God is shown to be merciful rather than merely judgemental' He does judge, but holds judgement in mercy, until His grace can be available' Daniel 9:9,18, Nehemiah 9:17, Joel t: 13 and Exodus 34:6-7 all show that God is merciful, whilst Ezekiel

18:32 says, 'For I have no pleasure in the death of any one, says the Lord God; so turn, and live' (cf. Ezek. 18:23; 33:11).

We have seen that God healed not only in Israel, but outside of it, although such mentions are few. Even so, God's promise to be the Healer is made only to the covenant people Israel. Yet it seems God's judgements are even more severe on Israel than to the nations outside, and this is doubtless because Israel is to be the true priest nation. We see the healing of Naaman, and the healing of the people of Nineveh, ie. from death and judgement. Egypt is told there is no healing for that nation Jer. 46:11; cf. Isa. 47:1f.). Assyria is also under judgement (Nahum 3:18-19) without healing. In general, many of the prophets have burdens against the other nations.

Israel, then, is the nation whose God is its Healer, whose Healer is its God. Sicknes which is from disobedience will come upon it. Prophylaxis against sickness is obedience. Furthermore Israel is taught in the ways of health and hygiene. Her laws are for good sanitation' Her manner of life is healthy. Not only do the sacrifices keep the people in (what we now call) mental health, keeping guilt at bay, but personal repentance, as also national repentance and faith, keep the nation in true health.

If this were all, then the matter would be simple. However, it is not all.

The Problems Concerning Sickness

The story of Job makes it forever clear that all sickness is not from God as punishment. Even if Job is the

rare exception, that exception is still there. Job was not punished for his sins. He was a test case. It cannot be said that Sarah's barrenness could be disfavour shown by God. Hannah, also, had not sinned. In order to be fruitful she did not have to repent. God gave her the gift through prayer. Manoah's wife, being barren, is especially given the gift of a child (Judg. 13:3), and likewise the Shunammite woman of II Kings chapter 4. Elisha's terminal illness does not seem to carry condemnation. This seems to be confirmed because his bones revive the dead body of an Israelite (II Kings 13:21). The healings of children by both Elijah and Elisha have no hint that the children were sinful. Nor for that matter does Hezekiah seem to have been stricken ill because of sin (II Kings 20:1-7).

As we have seen, the man who considers the poor is sustained upon his sick-bed and then healed. Here there is no sense in which the man has sinned, although of course he confesses to sin. Doubtless this sense of one's sinfulness should be present in all humans, but at the same time, in cases like this, the sense that one has primarily done the will of God. There is no contradiction in these two attitudes. This is where Job's comforters (so-called) fail in their theology. They have a view of God as Judge, and also of Healer where repentance takes place, but they make no provision for sickness coming by ways other than sinning.

Finally we have the prophets pointing to a wonderful time when all sicknesses will be healed. Doubtless something of what they are saying is the forgiveness of God, and the restoration of the nation. Yet it is more than this. Passages such as Isaiah 61:1f.; 32:14ff; 33:24; 35:3ff. and chapter 53 all show that God is the Inter-

vener for His people. He is fighting not merely His own punishment, but elements which have come upon His people. Doubtless their state has been connected with their covenantal disobedience, but this is not all the story. The Messianic age under the great Davidic King will be a time of serenity, righteousness and health. Ezekiel chapters 37 and 34 should be read together. Here God accuses the false shepherds of bringing Israel into evil days, and He promises He will heal. It is true that every man is responsible for his own sins, and cannot blame such on to the leaders, but it is also true that the coming of the True King will heal them.

The Heart of Sickness

Now we come to that which we have evaded throughout our study. It is all in this simple question, 'What is sickness?' Doubtless to the modern mind sickness is a departure from what we sense to be the creational, functional norm. Without going into the linguistics of the words 'sickness', 'infirmity', 'weakness' and 'disease', we can see that created man is free from these elements. However, what was the norm for unfallen, created man is not the experience in toto of fallen man. The very term disease means dis-ease, ie. a negative of the ease of unfallen, created man' Man is not simply depraved, so much as he is deprived, ie., he has lost something, He is less than true man,

When we look at infirmity, sickness, disease, demon-possession and the like we see man has lost true relationship with God, He is in an alien world, even though he calls it his familiar world, He lives in alienation, Marxists and others have rationalised this alienation to

derive from a society which is self-seeking, and which alienates man because it deprives him of self fulfilment' This may well be true, but man's primary alienation comes from his own choice, ie. his refusal to relate to God, and so to man.

Taken one step further, man is sick because he subjects himself to dislocation, disjunction, malfunctional operations, dysfunctional actions, and disorientation to the essential, functional nature of God and His creation. Thus he alienates himself. In this state he subjects himself to unnatural, malfunctional actions with himself, *ie.* his body. Whilst doubtless demons and spirits are personal elements, having their own being and character, yet man in another sense demonises himself' He sets himself at odds with his created, functional self' He is thus very awry in his living, out of kilter with the true nature of things. His whole person, body, mind and spirit is at odds with itself because it is distorting its natural functions. Hence the body (*ie.* person) is subjected to humiliating pressures, and must ultimately end up in ruinous states.

Looked at from this point of view, we see sin and sickness and disease, as well as nervous tension and psychosomatic ailments, as a reaction of the person to its own ill-treatment. Thus we are inclined to think it is simply going against creational laws and so suffering. This is, of course, true, but then Romans 1:18 and other passages remind us that God is personally angry at such actions, and God is really behind what seems largely to be self-infliction of sickness, tension and disease. This, of course, opens up the whole matter of twisted relationships with God, man and the universe.

Man is so much a unified entity as a created person

that he cannot afford to become disparate in himself. Yet man becomes angry with his body and opposes it in his bitterness. He gives it its own alien personality. He flagellates it in anger, or makes impossible demands upon it. He vents the judgements of his own conscience upon it. He despises it, rejecting it as inhibiting to his desires. He suffers from low self-esteem and uses his body as a sacrament of that guilt-induced inferiority.

If we can see that this is the true nature of sickness, then we can understand the many references in Psalms such as 31,32 and 38 where the sickness of the writers is linked with unconfessed sin, the personal wrath of God, the inner but intolerable burden of guilt, and the like. Psalm 31:10 says, 'For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away'. This is echoed in Psalm 32:3-4, 'When I declared not my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer', whilst Psalm 40:12 shows the intolerable burden of dynamic guilts and sins: 'For evils have encompassed me without number; my iniquities have overtaken me, till I cannot see; they are more than the hairs of my head; my heart fails me'. Isaiah 57:17-21 contrasts the repentant man and the persistently evil man. One is healed, the other is at odds with himself, eternally restless. Thus the writer says:

Because of the iniquity of his covetousness I was angry, I smote him, I hid my face and was angry; but he went on backsliding in the way of his own heart.

I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and requite him with comfort, creating for his mourners the fruit of the lips.

Peace, peace, to the far and to the near, says the Lord; and I will heal him.

But the wicked are like the tossing sea; for it cannot rest, and its waters toss up mire and dirt.

There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked.

When we carefully read Psalm 38:1-8, it tells in painful detail the whole story of sickness, guilt, burden of sin and disjointedness:

O Lord, rebuke me not in thy anger,
nor chasten me in thy wrath!

For thy arrows have sunk into me,
and thy hand has come down on me.

There is no soundness in my flesh
because of thy indignation;
there is no health in my bones
because of my sin.

For my iniquities have gone over my head;
they weigh like a burden too heavy for me.

My wounds grow foul and fester
because of my foolishness,

I am utterly bowed down and prostrate;
all the day I go about mourning.

For my loins are filled with burning,
and there is no soundness in my flesh.

I am utterly spent and crushed;

I groan because of the tumult of my heart.

Verses 17 and 18 show the desperate attempt to find healing through repentance and confession: 'For I am ready to fall, and my pain is ever with me' I confess my iniquity, I am sorry for my sin''

What goes for persons is the same principle that goes for nations, God heals the whole land, the entire

nation, the people which is His, Healing, as has often been said, is wholeness, is restoration to the created norm' The eagerness to relieve man of some painful ailment, some self-induced bondage, some symptomatic evidence of a deeper, more painful condition is a superficial estimate of the matter, and a shallow, even emotional wish on the part of the sympathetic spectator' It is a refusal to see the nature of sin. We need carefully to take into account all that we have said of creational rebellion and covenantal disobedience before we hasten to deal simply with mere symptoms (ie. sickness and diseases). Such haste and superficiality could well keep us from getting to the heart of the matter—internal guilt and rebellion—and from seeking the true healing of forgiveness and cleansing of moral pollution. Without the objective truth of the Atonement, healing becomes a temporary relief from symptoms, but does not touch the deeper matter of broken relationships with God, the self of the person, and the other selves of humanity. Thus Jeremiah 33:6-8, 'Behold, I will bring . . . health and healing, and I will heal them . . . I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me'.

When the person is forgiven, freed from guilt and moral pollution, that one can resume being a true human. This is true healing, no matter *if* some *of* the symptoms temporarily remain. What matters is wholesome healing of disorientation in the newly established relationship with God. Effected reconciliation with God is effected reconciliation with oneself and one's universe. It is given congruence with things as they essentially are. It is acceptance of the creation as it is essentially.

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THE WHOLE MATTER OF HEALING: CHANGELESS GOD THROUGH CHANGING AGES

Healing in the New Testament

If we gather together the prophecies concerning Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God, Suffering Servant and Davidic King that are contained in the Old Testament then we have a powerful prophetic content' Liberation, deliverance, healing and miracles are certainly connected with this complex of offices, ministries and so on, That we have seen,

When we also realise that Israel was still God's covenant people then it is not to be wondered at that Jesus, anointed for these offices, and attested by the Father, should do miracles, healings, exorcisms, and acts of guilt-removal and cleansing from moral pollution. If it is asked, 'Why did he do that?', then we have already given most of the answers (see chapter 6). We know he was moved by compassion and pity. He just did not want people to suffer under sickness, disease, demonic

powers and guilt. So he healed.

We have seen that his work was Messianic, We have seen that it was the very expression of the Kingdom itself, and in John 14:11, he asked his disciples to believe that he was in the Father and the Father in him, If they could not accept that, then they were to believe for the ‘very *works*’ sake. Nevertheless he did not do miracles in order to attest to himself, and certainly not in order to gain attention. That evil principle he had rejected in the Temptation in the wilderness. He would not give signs for signs’ sake.

We should not marvel at his healing and other ministry. In accordance with the Exodus chapter 15 passage, where God was the Healer on the basis of the covenant, it was no wonder, the Father being present in him, that he should heal directly, Also he was preparing Israel for the Kingdom, Whilst in the Old Testament, as we have seen, Israel could live in good health and prosperity when it obeyed God, and could expect good health when it kept to the laws of physical hygiene, and even renewal when it repented of rebellion, yet we have *few accounts of miraculous* healing, In Jesus’ few years of ministry such healings were plentiful,

Jesus and the Disciples

One thing becomes clear, Jesus heals with great power. His disciples, however, are not as dynamic. On occasions they were given authority, but then they healed only ‘many’ as against Christ’s ‘multitudes’, and ‘all’. Matthew 17:16 shows they were not always successful in healing. Why the difference between the disciples and Jesus? The answer must be that Jesus is

one with the Father, and with great difficulty were they one with Jesus! So many times they misunderstood him. They awaited the Holy Spirit as Remembrancer, Teacher, Filler with love and faith, who was to come at Pentecost and so bring Christ to them, and them to Christ.

In the Acts, the apostles are at one with Christ, and so are men like Barnabas, Philip, Stephen and others. None, however, ministers exactly as does Christ the Son and Lord. The message of the Acts is clear, ‘When the apostles and others heal, exorcise demons, and do miracles it is *the Lord* doing these things through them’. Doubtless the Holy Spirit is the Agent of Christ and his power. Nevertheless, no matter how fine are the apostles, they have their weaknesses. Peter gives way to the Judaisers on one occasion (Gal. ch. 2), and Paul cannot be trusted with visions (II Cor. ch. 12). In Acts chapter 4, the church prays for boldness for the apostles, and as a result there is a fresh affusion of the Spirit. This brings boldness and a powerful witness to the Resurrection. In the Epistles, Paul exhorts his readers to be continually filled by the Spirit (Eph. 5:18; Rom. 12:11; Gal. 3:5; Phil. 1:11), and walk in the Spirit (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:16, 18, 25).

We see, then, that the promises of John 14:10-14, that the apostles would do greater works than Christ, must be thoroughly understood. Firstly, they together as the corporate Body of Christ will do greater works than have been done. Secondly, the ‘greater works’, whilst including healings, miracles and exorcisms, *are not only those elements*. The greatest works (if we have to make comparisons) are the preaching of the Lordship of Christ, the gifts of repentance and remission of sins,

justification and the like. Thirdly, we see that the followers of Christ are not Christ himself. Ideally they should be wholly one with him, and thus should know his mind, and do his commands in deeds of mercy, proclamation and the like' Whilst we do not limit the sovereignty of Christ, we know that man's disobedience, indolence and lethargy certainly diminish the measure of his effectiveness'

Healing in the New Covenant

It is said, logically enough, that if God were Healer in the covenant given to Israel under Moses, then how much more would He be Healer in the New Covenant under Jesus. The writer of Hebrews spends time and patience showing how superior is the New Covenant, and how outmoded and superseded the Old Covenant' The question must be, 'What healing is given under the New Covenant?' Related to it must also be asked, 'What of the Kingdom and healing?'

When we examine the matter of covenant, we find it is primarily related to the forgiveness of sins, and the true people of God' For example, Exodus 19:5-6 now becomes I Peter 2:9 - 10' In other words, the true people of God is the church, in which are Jews and Gentiles who have bowed to Jesus the Messiah' The Kingdom is the reign and rule of God over the universe, and which because of Messiah and the Atonement, now exercises power to defeat all rebellious elements within the creation, In the Gospels and Acts, that power is often shown in the enacting of signs, wonders, miracles, exorcisms and healings, However, the Kingdom of God is not only this. It is 'righteousness and peace and joy in the

Holy Spirit'. It is the Kingdom of love (Col.1:13). It, like the covenant, is linked with repentance, forgiveness and new birth. Doubtless all who are in the Kingdom, and who will eventually inherit it, are also in the church, but the Kingdom is more than the church, since the church proclaims the Kingdom, and itself comes under God's reign and rule.

Has the age of the New Covenant come? Yes. Is the covenant as yet fulfilled? No. Has the Kingdom fully come? No. Has the New Age fully broken into the Old Age and dispersed it? No. Can we then expect the fullness of the covenant and the Kingdom to be operating? The answer is, 'Any such operation will depend on (a) the actions of Messiah, and (b) the faith, trust and obedience of those who are covenant people, and members of the Kingdom'.

This raises the further point, namely, 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever'. What does that mean? It means that God is unchanging. We can depend on His nature being immutable. What He has revealed Himself to be, that He will continue to be. *What it does not mean is*, 'What He did yesterday He will do today and forever'. We should be honest and say that God did not do in the *yesterday* of Christ's ministry (ie. before Christ's ministry in Galilee) that which He did in the *today* of Christ's ministry. Nor does He necessarily perpetuate *forever* what He did in the *today* of Christ's ministry. We have missed the point of the quote from Hebrews 13:8. It is very close to the statement, 'I AM', or 'I am Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end'. This means, 'What I have set out to do, I will go on doing, until I complete it. Everything is contained in Me'. Hence,

'Yesterday and today and for ever', must mean that God is at His purposes all the time. A microcosm of this is Philippians 1:6, 'he who began a good work. . .will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ'. Thus Jesus is the Author of life, the Author of salvation and the Author and Finisher (Completer) of faith.

What we mean is that God though unchanging, is not homogeneous but heterogeneous. He does not change but He does different things at different times. We cannot, then, dogmatically say He will heal all the time, every time, and even at times when we seem to exercise faith. His character as Healer does not change, but His purposes in what He does, and what He refuses to do, are not always known to us. We have nothing to operate upon but His promises, but we must note the times for which these promises are made.

Healing and the New Age: Also the Old Age

Further, we must recognise that we are not wholly and only in the New Age, not wholly and only in the Kingdom, and not wholly glorified. We are all that we are in hope, and receive all we can have through faith. We make an enormous mistake when we demand for now what we will only have wholly in the New Age. We have the hope of this but not its totality. We walk by *faith*, and not by *sight*'

In the New Age there will be no sickness, disease, pain, suffering, sorrow or death' Now all these things obtain' The Son came to destroy the works of the devil' Principally he did this upon the Cross' That victory has yet to be worked to its appointed end as we see in I Corinthians

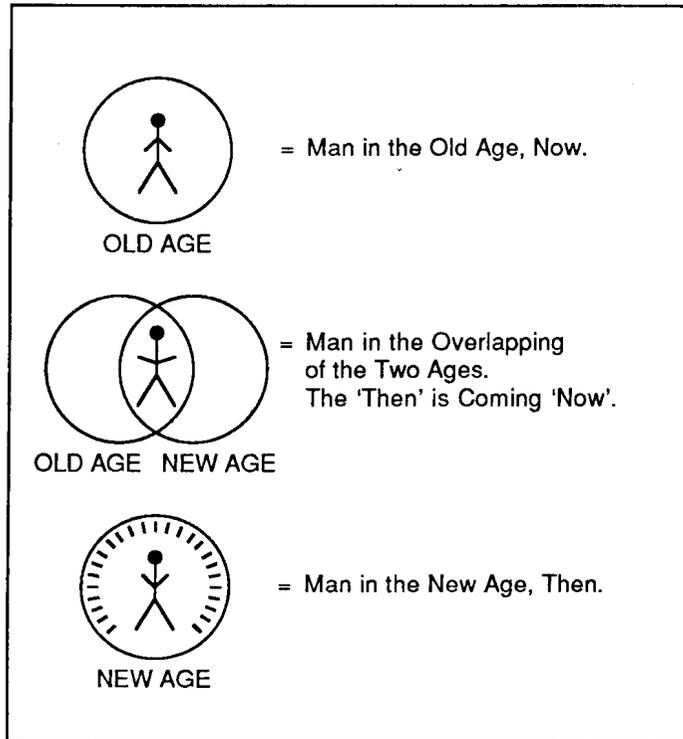
15:24-98, and Revelation 11:15. This brings us to an important understanding which may well account for many anomalies where healing does not take place. There is no healing in the 'old age' which Paul calls 'this present evil age' (Gal. 1:4). The Greek word for age is *aeon* and can mean a period, an age, and even a system. Sometimes this word is a synonym for kosmos, ie. the created world. Ephesians 1:21 speaks of 'this age' and 'the age to come'. Hebrews 6:5 speaks of 'the powers [dunamis, works] of the age to come'.

In one way of speaking we are still in the Old Age; in another we are in the New Age. It is like the contrast of the Old Man and the New Man. The Old Man, strictly speaking, is Adam, but then all of humanity in Adam, whilst the New Man is Christ, that is all who are in him. So, 'in Adam all die . . . in Christ shall all be made alive'. Whilst we are legally dead to the Old Man (and Old Age) and legally alive to the New Man (New Age), and have put off the Old for the New, yet the Old is still dynamic within this present evil age. Likewise the New Man is dynamic in this age. Hence the conflict we have set before us in Galatians 5:16-18. We belong to the New, but the Old ever fights with us. In Romans chapter 7, we read of indwelling sin, which *of itself is* more powerful than we are of ourselves.

This means we have conflict every day. Healing cannot be as total as if we were only in the New Age, and likewise sickness cannot be as total as if it were only in the Old Age.

Daily, then, we fight the battle of faith. Faith does not fight to make the circumstances; it fights to see them as they really are, and to maintain that view. In this conflict we will lose sometimes, and win at other times.

There is no guaranteed *set* to our lives, or to healing operations. We can visualise where we are from Paul's statement in I Corinthians 10:11, where it is said we are those 'upon whom the end of the ages has come', This is illustrated as follows:



We see, then, that where man (Christian man) lives in the overlap of the two he is aided by the New, and retarded by the Old. He can live as a man of the New Age, but *only by faith*. He wavers in faith and is wrought upon by the Old. The key to faith is the objective truth

of Christ, and the indwelling power (for faith) of the Holy Spirit, This, then, brings us to the whole matter of faith, and especially faith in regard to healing'

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THE WHOLE MATTER OF HEALING: HEALING AND FAITH

No Christian doubts that God can heal, It is often that he does not know when or *if* God will heal in any given situation' He knows that 'creationally' human beings heal, sometimes aided by doctors, and sometimes not. Sometimes medicine is used, and sometimes not, In many cases surgery seems to be needed, and in some cases the setting of fractures. Behind all this must be the healing of God. Such healing is often called 'natural'.

Other healing has been given the terms, 'miraculous', 'supernatural', 'divine' and 'faith'. The terms have all been debated, but as terms they do not matter. It is what they seem to indicate that helps to form certain ideas in the minds of people. What we do know is that there is healing which stands out from natural healing as we have called it. Doubtless doctors have witnessed remissions of sicknesses for which they have no explanation. It may well be that such have happened without conscious prayer, or faith. They have just happened,

and might well be called miraculous or supernatural. Statistics show that such remissions do happen.

The miracles of the Old Testament as performed by Elisha and Elijah were out of the ordinary. Doubtless they witnessed to the prophets, but primarily they witnessed to God, especially at times when there was so much apostasy in Israel. Yahweh was witnessed to by these miracles.

Jesus' miracles were also beyond what is known as the 'natural'. In his case he was Messiah. He had come to defeat the Old Age and its evil powers. In practice he showed he had authority to command them. On the cross he brought about their basic defeat. Hence Jesus was the True Man of the New Age. Where he went the New Age went. Where he went the Kingdom went. God's people had their Messiah and Kingdom in their midst. However, his primary aim was not to demonstrate the Kingdom, or temporarily relieve the sicknesses which had attached for millennia to the human race. His primary aim was the Cross, and so the defeat of the Old Age and the ushering in of the New. Our old humanity was crucified with him (Rom. 6:6), and powers of evil were defeated (Col. 2:14-15; Heb. 2:14-15; I John 3:8).

Whilst Jesus was present, and especially as he was in action, faith was not overly difficult. In some cases he encouraged faith by the acts of touching, spitting, applying clay and so on' In others he taught until faith came. He did not do miracles at Nazareth where they had no faith, yet often he pressed beyond the faith (it seems), of certain persons, and healed them. In some crowds there must have been people without faith.

His own teaching on faith is of deep interest. In Mark 11:20-25, we read:

As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. And Peter remembered and said to him, 'Master, look! The fig tree which you cursed has withered'. And Jesus answered them, 'Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, "Be taken up and cast into the sea" and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses'.

Notice the occasion, the cursing of the fig tree. This symbolised Israel with its promise of fruit, yet possessing only barrenness. The disciples were surprised, Jesus' statement was, 'Have faith in God', ie. 'Don't be surprised at what He can do, and does'. Jesus then went on to show that faith could accomplish otherwise unbelievable things. One only has to ask in faith, believe that it will happen, and it will happen,

The question is, 'What can one ask in faith?' The answer must be, 'Only that which is in conformity with God's will', This is precisely what Jesus is saying in Matthew 7:7-11, Here the principle is that if human fathers know how to give good gifts, how much more does the Father give good gifts, The Giver, then, is not in question, It is the asker who must recognise the goodness of the Father, and so ask in faith,

In John 14:10- 14, we see again that whatever is asked in Christ's name will be effected, What, then, is it to ask 'in Christ's name'? It is to be one with the Son, as the Son is one with the Father, hence it is to be one with the Father through the Son. John 15:1 -11 describes the abiding (dwelling) in the Son which causes that kind of fruit pleasing to the Father. Again it is prayer according to His

will' John 16:23-24 expounds the same principle' We have to conclude, then, that *one can only ask in faith that which one knows to be the will of God*. There is no question of God not answering when we pray in His will. The statement, 'If it be thy will', indicates the person praying is not sure whether it is His will' To pray, 'Do that which is according to thy will', is more honest, and humble'

Matthew 18:15-20 further shows that prayer, generally speaking, must be corporate. The agreeing upon anything by two or three will result in action, but then *only when it is known to be the will of God*. The plain injunction in James 5:14 for a sick person to call the elders of the church is simple obedience by the sick person, based upon a promise of God, and on this calling will the elders pray for the sick person' Faith required here is that of righteous men'

The question that faces us is, 'What, then, is faith?' Faith is trust in the God who promises, and preparedness to act in obedience upon that promise' Man is believing only when he accepts and obeys the God who commands' To believe is to know the will of God, and not to 'psych' oneself up to a certain pitch, assuring oneself that such-and-such will happen because one has believed it. This action of belief is in the living God, ie. the God who acts, but then acts in conformity with His will made known. Nowhere is a person encouraged to think up things he would wish to be done, and then present them to God with the demand (however humbly made) that God accomplish them.

Faith and the Context of History

What is God doing at any given point of history?

What are His promises within that point of time? What are the extant promises of God? What are our motives in seeking the healing of persons? In the light of these things what do we understand as the will of God? How is God working in the life of a particular person we have in mind (and prayer) for healing?

These questions are reasonable. One must know, at any point in time, what is the will of God. Some see only healing in every situation as the will of God for a person. Given He works that will through His church, how can we be sure this is His intention, ie. to heal? Given that we know it is His intention, how then do we pray and so bring healing from the Healer?

We repeat: when Jesus was present in the world, he set about to heal those who were sick. This is what we gather. He could not heal under at least one circumstance, that of scepticism, and yet his action was that of the Kingdom. On one occasion his disciples could not heal a boy of a demon, and Jesus said, 'This sort goes out [only] by prayer'. Some MSS. add, 'and fasting'. What did Jesus mean? Did he mean that when healing is requested the disciples should fast and pray? That would take time; the case was urgent. No. Surely he meant, 'Certain cases are dealt with simply, when one lives, so to speak, at an ordinary level of spirituality. Yet one ought to take all of life and ministry so seriously that one habitually prays and fasts, so that when the difficult occasion comes, the one, so to speak, beyond the ordinary, then one would be equipped to meet it, ie. to cast the demon/s out of the boy'.

Surely this goes for the whole matter of healing. Jesus kept himself in spiritual shape, 'as it were'. He never presumed to minister without the anointing of God,

without the discipline of prayer and fasting, without maintaining high levels of obedience and action. Where faith was bred from his presence, or godliness had preceded his coming, then doubtless healing was easier. He had 'power to heal', and 'power went out of him'. Thus the person seeking to exercise such a ministry should live in such a discipline. By this discipline we are not thinking of asceticism. We are thinking of faithfulness, and union with Christ, whilst being filled with the Spirit' This is abiding, and this is obedience'

Our title, 'Faith and the Context of History' is designed to make us assess where we are at any given point, and at this given point in history' Did Jesus intend not only his immediate followers of his generation, but those of future generations to exercise a ministry such as was effected by the apostles and others of the Acts? How many eras in man's history have been the occasions for multi-healings? Is such healing to continue from Pentecost to the Day of the Lord? Is it to accompany the proclamation of salvation, or be limited to those within the church? Is healing part of the proclamation, or simply a charisma given to certain within the Body of Christ? Until we have found the answers to these questions, we cannot be dogmatic about the matter of healing.

We have first to resolve the question of an epochal ministry of healing. If we believe such healing is for all generations following Pentecost, then is the true climate for such healing indeed present? May one in fact heal at any time, irrespective of how warm, cold or hot the church is throughout the world? Could the demand to God for healing in certain cases of sicknesses be quite wrong, and even sign-seeking? What of the folk at

Corinth who were dying because of their failure to discern the body? Should they have been called or recalled to life? Ought Ananias and Sapphira have been saved from death by prayer? Are the cases of Epaphroditus, Trophimus and Timothy indications from the New Testament to us that illnesses are part, even, of Christian living? Must we put these failures to heal at that point in time to Paul's account and to the accounts of others of the apostolic church?

What we really mean is, 'Is this the age of Messiah and his Spirit in which, given faith and persevering prayer, any child of God (and perhaps others) will be healed?' If so, then are failures to heal due to either a lack of faith in the one seeking to heal, or the one seeking healing, or both?

The Battle of the Two Ages

It is now right for us to return to our theme of overlapping ages, the Age Old and the Age New, Has every provision been made in the Cross and Resurrection for the full redemption of man? Assuming it has, and that a repentant person is fully forgiven, totally purified, and wholly justified, does one then sin, nevertheless? The answer is, 'Yes, he does sin, If not habitually, then at least occasionally' He ought not to sin habitually' He need not even sin occasionally, but he does. The famous theological dictum, 'It cannot be said that it is impossible for redeemed man to sin, but it can be said that for him it is possible not to sin', must be pondered. No redeemed person has a clear record of not sinning. Nevertheless the provisions of the Cross are there for him to be finished with sin.

On this understanding we may now approach the controversy relating to Matthew 8:17 and Isaiah 53:4-6. Isaiah 53:4 can be translated as either, 'he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows', or 'he has borne our sicknesses and carried our pains'. We have partly discussed this matter, saying that Matthew 8:17 does not necessarily relate to the Atonement. The exegesis that does relate to Matthew 8:17 ought to be made very carefully' Doubtless I Peter 2:24 does relate Isaiah 53:4 to the Atonement' Here, nevertheless, there is no talk of bearing our sicknesses and carrying our infirmities' In our literal Western way we connect the Matthew, Isaiah and I Peter Scriptures and make them one together. Why, however, cannot Isaiah 53:4 be used with one meaning in Matthew 8:17 and another in I Peter 2:24? This has to be considered.

For a moment let us grant that the three are related, and so the established principle is, 'There is healing in the Atonement'. This would parallel the other claim, 'There is forgiveness (ie. redemption) in the Atonement? Thus we would conclude that whilst we cannot say it is impossible to be sick, we can say it is possible not to be sick. Christian men sin' Christian men also, presumably, may become sick' The Atonement, per se, does nothing for forgiveness and sickness' The gifts of the Atonement are received by faith, and must be used in and by faith'

We see, then, that no matter what our views are, the kind of life we live in the overlap of the two ages will require constant alertness, vigilance, faith, and the discipline of prayer, fasting and obedience'

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**THE WHOLE MATTER
OF HEALING:
MAN, SIN, SICKNESS
AND HEALING**

In the account of the healing of the paralysed man (Matthew chapter 9 and parallel passages) Jesus shows clearly that his healing of the man is the substantial proof of his being forgiven, ‘ . . . that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins’— he then said to the paralytic man—‘Rise, take up your bed and go home’. The strong hint is given in John 5: 14 that a repetition of sin after being healed will bring something even worse upon the healed person. We saw that in the Old Testament, covenant people were healed of sin-caused sickness by repentance and the grace of God. At least, if not always, then, the principle obtained in Israel.

Having said this we need to read again Psalms 31,32, 38 and 40 (amongst other Psalms) to see that man’s guilt brings sickness upon him time and again. God may directly afflict a person with sickness as punishment, or

for some other purpose. However, through the operation of guilt, man may come into sicknesses or set up the ideal conditions for sickness to make its entry, or to gain power. In all of this the conscience is involve. It acts not only as mentor and guide, but as accuser, judge and punisher. This compounds man’s guilt, fear, hatred and acts of sin. He increasingly deteriorates from created serenity to fallen misery.

Whilst clear-cut visitations of God in punishment are recognised, the Hebrew for the most part saw his infirmity and sickness not merely as an alien bodily parasite, but as the disturbance of his whole self. His body was never personalised and made his enemy’ He did not seek to work out his angers upon his body, or blame God for the body he had. He did not have a body. He was his body. Hence sin was a body thing and brought about body *suffering*. He did not have an illness, so much as he was ill. Hence the passages in the Old Testament such as Jeremiah 33:6-8; Ezekiel 37:23; Jeremiah 14:17-20; Ezekiel 24:16; Isaiah 30:26 and Hosea 6:1 all show us that sickness and infirmities of Israel are really their sins, ie. caused by their sins, and inseparable from their sins. This is powerfully supported by the sin and sickness nominated in our second paragraph above. The Psalmist’s bones waste away because of his iniquity (31:10). He is fevered and desperate because of his unconfessed sin/s (32:3-4). Psalm 38:1-8 is a powerful revelation that sin and the suffering of sickness (in this particular case) are one and the same. Guilt and sickness are God’s wrath. This strongly relates to Romans 1:18.

When, then, we come to Isaiah 53:3-6 we read:

He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows’ and

acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised' and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Examining it we see in verse 3 that this Sufferer was 'a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief', or 'a man of pains, and acquainted with sickness'. What, then, is the difference? None, in the mind of the Hebrew, Verses 4 and 5 then follow naturally, In bearing our griefs and sorrows (ie, our sicknesses and pains) he is also bearing our sins and iniquities, His wounds heal our wounds (cf. I Peter 2:24). Peter is not interested at this point in mere physical healing for he knows none. He is interested in the dispersal of guilt, and so the full healing of the person.

The meaning of the Atonement, then, must be that all guilt is erased, all sins forgiven, and all the ills which come from such guilt (or, God's wrath) have been healed. Thus there is no true, no final and definitive healing apart from the Atonement, ie. forgiveness of sins, cleansing from (moral) defilement, and the gift of justification. Given these, man is wholly healed, ie. healed wholesomely. In all this possibility it is envisaged that he may be converted and yet not healed from any given sickness, for in certain cases this sickness may not in any way relate to his guilt.

Is All Sickness from Sin?

The answer, we have seen, is 'No!' John 9:3 makes it

clear that the blind man has not sinned' Nor had his parents. In fact this sickness was for the glory of God' We recognise that the *glory* was shown primarily in the healing and not in the sickness. This also was the case with Lazarus John 11:4), 'This illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it'. No indication is given that the illnesses of Epaphroditus, Trophimus and Timothy have to do with sin. The death which came to the murdered Galileans, and others upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell was not because they were worse sinners than others (Luke 13:1-5). Notice, however, in this latter point, that the tragedies were not prevented by the moral state of the victims. All men are sinners. All may not manifest outward sickness, but in God's reckoning may be very ill within. Isaiah 57:20-21 tells its story, 'But the wicked are like the tossing sea; for it cannot rest, and its waters toss up mire and dirt. There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked'.

A study of the Gospels shows that sicknesses are often attributed to demonic powers or evil forces,-in addition to others being caused by sin' Some are not explained, and we must consider them as the visitations men have, neither from sin, nor demons, but perhaps from the curse, *or purposes of God beyond any human explanation*' Women who suffer pain in childbirth do not suffer because of their sin, nor is the pain necessarily lessened because they are holy persons' We mean that salvation does not necessarily lessen the pain of childbirth' It may well be true that childbirth is not sickness, but then it is pain which the human race experiences as a result of the curse. In this respect the whole creation knows convulsive pain. The coming of

Christ's power in Palestine, or following the Cross (Acts 1:8) does not lessen this pain. It certainly increases hope within the pain, but 'not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies'.

We must conclude, then, very firmly, that some sicknesses are from sin, some sicknesses are the very sin itself, and some sicknesses are the result of the complexities of the world, this including the effects of the sins of others. In addition we must conclude that some sicknesses are not from our own sin, the sin of others, or even, directly, the immediate results of the curse. Hence having all these options we must be very careful how we handle the matter of seeking healing for this variety of sicknesses.

The Problems of Triumphalism

What is 'triumphalism'? Triumphalism is the belief that in every circumstance the believer will be wholly triumphant, and that in fact not to be triumphant is to fall from the norm, and such even constitutes sin. Paul continually fights such triumphalism in his converts, especially those at Corinth. They exult so much in the use of gifts, even including the gifts of healing, that nothing (they claim) can fail. If one fails it is because of lack of faith. Triumphalism is often rooted in hubris, which is a type of pride, and which has contempt for lesser ones. Paul may well be warning against the hubris of the strong Christian brother who virtually has contempt for his weaker brother.

James and Peter warn against such hubris in their

letters. In 4:6-7 James says, ' . . . God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble' Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you'. Genuine triumph depends upon our dependence upon God. The same advice is given in I Peter 5:6-9' There one can only resist in the faith, when one has humbled himself under the almighty hand of God'

In I Corinthians 4:6-13, Paul speaks further against triumphalism' Some, exercising the gifts of God, have become proud' He asks, 'For who sees anything different in you? What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?' He then uses strong irony about their triumph (so-called) and his denigration and suffering. Doubtless for such triumphalists the whole matter of suffering would be foolish' The passage of II Corinthians 1:3-7 would be unintelligible' Such successful persons would see suffering as a failure, even as being out of the will of God. For them the true position could only be abounding health and persistent prosperity. Since two-thirds of the New Testament is given over to the subject of suffering this triumphalist conclusion can scarcely be correct.

The use of gifts, as we have observed from I Corinthians 13:1 -3, is on the basis of, and for the purposes of, love. However, for some the matter of healing is primarily based on faith. It is assumed that everyone may, and even should, be healed. Faith is the only element required. Where there is not healing then there is not the true exercise of faith. Such a presupposition assumes that God will heal in every case, faith being present. Elisha, the great prophet, lacked faith in this area; but for lack of faith, Job would have risen from his

heap of dung and ashes and had no need for the brilliant and personal revelation God finally gave him; Timothy would have to be judged timid and Epaphroditus and Trophimus without the necessary faith.

Some insist that the faith is necessary on the part of the healer, and some believe it must be exercised by the sick person. How simplistic we are not to allow for many eventualities. Jesus' healing ministry becomes the set paradigm for all healing ministries. It is, so to speak, all or nothing. We doubt not that Jesus' direct ministry would effect healing, especially if scepticism were absent. Yet we have seen, in the Book of Acts, that it was the Lord who gave the apostles power to heal at specific points in time, and, it would seem, not at other points in time. A careful reading of Acts should show this.

Doubtless Christ is wholly with his church today, and doubtless where it is his purpose, and where his servants truly abide in him, and are filled with his power, he may well do many of the same things that he has done not only in Palestine but in the times which have succeeded his days on earth. This writer sees no reason why such action should be confined to the apostolic period of the church. Nor does he see the need for healing to proceed at the same intensity as it was manifested in Christ's personal ministry on earth. Without doubt an enormous medical healing of people operates today, and so in some sense the compassion of God is upon the world. Yet when healings are the practical will of God at any point in history, then we must accept that healing is not confined to one era, any more than we should insist it is to operate fully in every era.

We do need to become a revived and renewed church, We need to break through our intellectualism, our theological rationalism, our traditional attitudes and practices, and our spiritual lethargy. Doubtless, then, faith would increase, love would enlarge and healing would appear in new ways. Even so, triumphalism must be banished as wrong and dangerous. The simplicity of faith must be accompanied by true humility, and a desire to know and act upon the will of God.

Observations on Faith Healing

Our study in this volume is not to make comparisons with the past and the present, nor to agree or disagree with current opinions regarding our subject. Nevertheless it must be observed that there is cruelty in placing the responsibility for healing on the sick person. That is what happens when faith is demanded of a sick person and healing made dependent on that faith. Such an approach is not, in any sense, an exercise of a gift or power of healing. Tragic problems have resulted from such teaching and practice. One contemporary practising healer has said, 'No one has failed to heal as many sick people as I have failed to heal' One might well say of a famous evangelist such as Billy Graham, 'No one has failed to convert as many as I have failed to convert' Both these men have had vast audiences, and so more opportunities than others to exercise their gifts' Yet what does this tell us? It tells us that not all will be healed, and not all will be converted'

We must conclude, then, that some healings will be the effects of, as well as the demonstration of, the Kingdom' Some will come as a direct intervention of

God in the affairs of men, and this through His servants. There will be healings where personal faith is exercised. Often where a person or persons believe personal faith has been exercised, there will be no healing, and, seemingly, no explanation of the matter. In addition, there is the whole matter of God's wrath upon the nations as shown in the Book of the Revelation (see chapter 10 under 'Conclusion on Healing in the New Testament'), and in which even believers will be affected. The matter of evil powers opposing the people of God, and inflicting suffering will likewise need to be taken into consideration.

In other words, we should believe God heals in all ages, and that He is the true Healer of His people, wherever it is His will. Such healing relates to both covenant and Kingdom, but it must be borne in mind that a triumphalist view of these two will bring wrong conclusions regarding healing. Healing, in the ultimate, is the act of God. Faith, of itself, cannot effect anything. Faith in God can draw us to know the will of God and ask accordingly. Even so, no knowledge of God's will is necessarily perfect, and the exercise of faith will always be contested by the powers of evil.

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THE HEALING POWER OF THE GOSPEL

Those Who Heal

How, then, do we apply the biblical material on healing which we have examined? It is certain that we cannot adduce certain principles, and having formulated them proceed to effect healing. The best we can do is to see that God heals, and seek to understand His purposes in healing, and—if it be so—His purpose, at times, in not healing. It is always wise not to come with certain presuppositions and argue for them by specious reasoning and special pleading.

Having said this we know the practice of healing is widespread on our earth, It is not confined to people with biblical knowledge but expands to those who are pagans, who are sorcerers, who are linked with the occult, and even others who reject the occult, magic and sorcery' We cannot here deal with these'

What demands our attention are the attempts at healing by many who claim their approach is biblical' Again we cannot occupy our attention with the various schools of thought. We simply desire for them successful

ministries, and helpful healings. Wherever true healing takes place there can only be rejoicing, The rejoicing IS increased where the Scriptures are upheld and followed, not only in the matter of physical healing, but in the whole matter of man's redemption, Best of all, then, is that ministry which is used in the healing as the whole person.

The Power and Nature of the Gospel to Heal

In our study we have seen that sickness is closely linked, in many cases, with sin. The matter of sin is most complex. First we have the fact of the human race sinning in Adam. This leads us to believe that man has a bias in his personality which has come from sin. We have seen that impressions are formed, and even attitudes are set, at a very early age. These may occur even in the womb. Thus we have the problem of sin rather than sins. That is, sin is an attitude, a principle, a formative power in fallen humanity.

Then there are sins which result from the basic matter of sin' These acts bring individual guilts' Guilt for being out of kilter with God and His creation determine these acts of sin, and then the sins compound themselves, and always in the context of this 'out of kilter' frame of mind and being' For this reason the whole person is subjected—even self-subjected—to strains and tensions which are conducive of bodily ailments and diseases' In one sense the body is not allowed to function harmoniously because the mind, attitude and thrust of the person is subjecting it to disharmony. Hence the whole person is denied creational wholeness and true functionality. Since man

does not merely *hate* a body but is his body, then illness may well be self-induced, even if this induction is not conscious or deliberate.

The writer spent three and a half years incarcerated in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp' It was there he saw that much of illness was self-induced, even though unconsciously so' It is well known in therapeutic research that human beings use their bodies to gain help and attention of others. Much harm results through emotional imbalances, guilts and the like. Dr Paul Tournier, a Swiss psychiatrist, has dealt powerfully with these matters in his books, especially in *Guilt and Grace* (Harper & Row, New York, 1962). Dr Tournier, along with other Christian therapists, has used the Scriptures to enhance his personal insights. Even apart from the direct Christian approach to the matter of maladjusted emotional life and the dynamics of guilt, an amount of research has been pursued in regard to the connection of emotional states and the induction of illnesses.

If the reader turns back to Chapter Three ('God the Healer and Redeemer'), he will see that in the Books of Proverbs and Psalms, emotional states of mind bring, on the one hand sicknesses and death, and on the other (where the emotional states are of love, peace, joy, submission to God, etc') health and life. We need to ponder these elements time and again. We here quote again a number of observations by writers of both Books:

* Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.

* My son, be attentive to my words . . . they are life to him who finds them, and healing to all his flesh.

* Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.

* A gentle tongue is a tree of life.

* There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

* A bad messenger plunges men into trouble, but a faithful envoy brings healing.

* A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh, but passion makes the bones rot.

* For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away.

* When I declared not my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

We may conclude, then, that man suffers much sickness because of his attitudes, his angers, resentments, fears, jealousy, envy and guilts. Especially revealing in this regard is Proverbs 14:30, 'A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh, but passion makes the bones rot'. We have observed that the word passion has within it the ideas of compulsive zeal, envy, ambition, striving, intensity and the like. The saying of Job 5:2, 'Surely vexation kills the fool, and jealousy slays the simple', is a basic principle. This kind of passion (envy, anger, frustration, compulsive drives) certainly rots the bones. Such passion is constituted of all emotional elements that are not in harmony with man's created functional being. This awryness causes much damage to the human person.

We have also seen that a man's attitude to others, and the working of good for others is a cause of healing, or is prophylactic against sickness and disease. In the Book of Proverbs, considering the poor is life. Psalm 41:1-3 speaks of the Lord healing the man who considers the poor, whilst Isaiah 58:6-8 speaks of the healing

which will come, speedily, to a man who helps the poor, the hungry and the oppressed:

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

A number of other elements need to be considered, One is that of practical hygiene, Immediately above we have spoken of unhygienic states of mind. There are also unhygienic states of the body. In the Old Covenant, hygiene was prescribed, not merely advised. How could one hope for healing over disobedience to the Mosaic laws of physical hygiene? Doubtless some rules for physical well-being included injunctions against idolatrous practice, such as seething a kid in its mother's milk, Probably this was more a cultic prohibition than a health prescription. Yet for the most part, the foods recommended for diet, practices recommended for sanitation, and the like, were all prescribed for the life of that day. S. I. McMillen in his book, *None of These Diseases* (Oliphants, London, 1963) has written superbly on this matter. We repeat that as God would not heal where emotional attitudes and states were persisted in, neither would He heal when those of the covenant rebelled against its laws.

We have spoken, then, of self-induced sickness, disease and punishment of both body and mind, or, as the Hebrews would say, 'of the heart'. We need then to see

that God directly punished where rebellion was shown. Even this was not according to the measure of guilt, so that we assume punishment was to bring that fear of the Lord which was the beginning both of wisdom and health. Hubris is always attacked by God, although overt punishment is not always evidenced. We can say, then, that it is God's wrath and love for man which causes Him, personally, to visit persons with judgement. The emotional and bodily states described above are perfectly consistent with this chastisement of God. In other words, what is self-induced from man's side may well be what God is doing in punishment from His side.

We may, then, sum up much of sickness and disease by saying it results from living out of kilter with God, His creation and mankind. It is often self-induced by wrong states of mind, and wrong actions of bodies. Where the prophylaxis of hygiene and sanitation is ignored, then sickness will naturally come. Where persons sin against the covenant of creation, of law, and of grace, then bodily ailments may well follow. Where rebellion is deliberate God will work His wrath. This is primarily in the conscience but will come to affect the whole person, ultimately. Other sicknesses may well be God's way of remedial treatment. Sometimes, though it may seem contradictory, *God heals persons through the means of sickness*, whether these illnesses be self-induced, from sin and wrath, or as a result of the sovereign acts of God. Having said these things, we are now in a position to see the power of the Gospel in healing.

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THE HEALING GOSPEL AND THE LOVE OF GOD

It does not take much brilliance to see that where God forgives sins, deals with basic sin (through the Cross) and cleanses the moral defilement of a person, then that person is proof from self-induced states of illness, Mental and bodily health—for the most part—result from forgiveness and love. We cannot claim that conversion necessarily heals a person, either in body or mind, ie, holistically. If this were so then the best and safest medical care would be Gospel preaching! Nevertheless true healing does stem from the Gospel,

Having stated the matter we would be accused of being simplistic if we did not realise man, even converted man, has many problems even though he has accepted the Gospel. It is these we must see.

The Nature of the Gospel

If we study the Gospels, Acts and Epistles we can adduce the nature of the Gospel. Simply stated it is the good news that God loves the world, and has sent His

Son into the world to redeem it from its sinfulness, guilts, His own wrath upon sin, and the grip of evil powers—all of this with a view to renewing man in the fullness of His image, and ultimately glorifying him to live in a new creation, ie. new heaven and new earth. The actual proclamation of the Good News is related to the Kingdom of God. It speaks of the prophets foretelling certain things, and Jesus fulfilling these, so much so that through his Cross and Resurrection forgiveness and eternal life are now offered to mankind. Man must now repent, believe and receive the gifts of God. This is commanded. Thus one comes to obey God through His Son Jesus Christ, and by the power of His Holy Spirit.

This sketch of the Gospel covers the salient elements of grace. However, the bringing of them to persons is a special work of God. It is made difficult because man does not understand God. It is this misunderstanding we need to examine. However, often evangelism is faulty in its presentation of the Gospel. Often it is theologically deficient.

Often evangelists confront people with the fact and nature of sin. They then offer the grace of redemption to persons. Unthoughtful evangelists are occupied with a decision. They may present repentance as a work of man, or even as unnecessary to conversion. If they seek simply to get decisions, then they may have evaded the most vital element of all, namely the conviction of the person through his conscience, and the giving of the full revelation of God's love. Hence problems will arise for the (so-called) convert. These are often very complex.

The preaching of the Gospel should always begin with God. When the nature of God is well indicated the nature of man (as created) can be reasonably under

stood. Even so, the doctrine of creation needs to be taught, so that man can see the nature of his sins. When God, man and creation have been presented, then something of God's plan through history should be sketched, thus putting the incarnation and salvific works of Christ into their true perspective and context. Finally, the love of God should be shown through the work of the Cross, and men exhorted to receive the gifts of love, namely redemption and resultant life.

Problems in Understanding the Gospel

In John 16:7 -15, Jesus states that he has to go to the Father, for it will require the Holy Spirit to convict men and women of sin, righteousness and judgement, as also to show his true nature and glory. Likewise it required the Spirit to show the Father. This latter fact is under lined in the fifteenth chapter where Jesus says the Jews have hated both him and his Father, and the Spirit must come to witness to Jesus as the true Son and Messenger of God.

If the personal presence of Jesus could not convince the Jews to whom he spoke, then how would those outside of Israel understand the Messiah of Israel? What, then, prevents persons understanding Christ? The answer lies in the rebellion of Adam as shown in Genesis chapter 3, and the chronic rebellion of all mankind as shown in Romans 1:1 8-3 2. In other words, man has rejected the knowledge of God, and does not wish to renew it. Colossians 1:21, Romans 1:30 and 5:10 all tell us that man hates God—despite any protests he may make to the contrary. We conclude, then, that man has a bias against God. He wishes to blot Him out

of memory. He does not desire to be confronted by God and His high moral demands.

The Problem of the Image of God

From the Scriptures we learn that God goes on communicating Himself to man, even though man may refuse to respond. He reveals Himself in creation by His creational laws. He speaks to and through the conscience. He sends His prophets to speak of, and from, Him. Sometimes He sends angelic messengers. Mostly He speaks in His acts, these being the acts of creation, providence, redemption, and the promised renewal of the entire creation. At times He speaks through judgements, and at times through acts which we call supernatural acts. He may well speak to the minds of persons, and indicate Himself through circumstances. For the most part man chooses to ignore these revelations.

God created man to be in His own image and likeness (Gen. 1:26f.; 5:1f.; 9:6; I Cor. 11:7; cf. Ps. 8:3ff.). The account is, 'In his image made he him; male and female made he them . . . and he called *them* Man'. Briefly we must say that God must have masculine and feminine elements, although not with sexual connotation, seeing He is Creator, and not a procreator. When, then, the woman was taken and moulded from the man's side, it must mean that she was part of the image of God. When the man and the woman come together they are, dually speaking, Man. That is, they constitute the image of God. Thus in marriage (in particular) the parents form the image of God for the child. Because of the Fall, children are born in sin, although conception, gestation and birth are not, in themselves, sinful.

Children do not wholly see their parents, because of this innate bias against God, against authority, and in that measure, against parenthood. It is not that children wholly reject parenthood, but primarily, as in Romans 1:18-32, they reject the image of God. Of course parents present an imperfect image, and children see even the imperfect imperfectly. What is significant is that the child lives with this image all its life. Whilst it is true that some children have a higher image than others, no child has the exact or true image, by nature of the case. Hence all children interpret life, creation, all events, and indeed all things in the light of this image. We can easily see the variations and options which could arise. When leadership is missing, or is deficient in the male parent, when the mother is overly dominant, or overly servile, there will be deficiency of image.

It is undoubted that all persons in the world desire emotional fulfilment. It is also evident that some may reject affection. Equally true it is that where affection is withheld or seems to be withheld, there is generally anger, resentment and frustration. This incurs elements of guilt, and extends anger and misery, and so disaffection is compounded. Some therapists believe that neuroses, for the main part, spring from negative reactions to the parent/s. Since the office of parents often becomes rejected and even despised, so the image given is likewise rejected. That is, God is rejected.

It is a principle of Scripture that wherever (whenever) a person rejects God he turns to gods, hoping to find his emotional fulfilment in this area. Guilt must accrue from this virtual abnegation of parenthood. The idols have to fill the place of parents (ie. of God), generally speaking. Idols ultimately bring misery because

of their failure to provide true emotional fulfilment. It is often because of this fact that persons turn to God.

Man originally, especially man and woman together as 'one flesh', expressed the true image. In Hebrews 1:1-3, it is said of the Son that he was 'the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person'. That is, man brilliantly portrayed God. When the Son came into the world he was, in human form, 'the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person'. It is this clear image that a person coming to conversion *ought* to see. Often he does not. Often the Gospel of redemption is not preached dynamically enough, and an inadequate vision (image) of God is shown. Were it truly shown, then the recipient of redemption would receive also a view of God which would transcend (a) the image his parents have given of God, and (b) the promising image the idol has given. Hence a person with a weak conversion (so to speak) will have three images, and his life really depends upon the image which comes most strongly to him.

When it comes to an image of the parents being deficient, all kinds and states of emotional attitude and experience may result. The idol image will promise much and give nothing, thus increasing the misery of the person. If God's image is weak from the teaching received, then the conflict of the three images will be most disturbing to a person. Idolatry, as we have seen, promises only illnesses, sicknesses and even death, let alone demonic oppression!

This, then, represents various states a human being may experience. It tells us why human beings contract illnesses, lay themselves open to visitations of disease and demonic powers, and how their bodies suffer by

reason of their guilts,

The Power of the Gospel

We have seen in Psalm 32:3-4 that to contain sin within is to lay oneself open to misery, suffering and bodily disturbance to the point of illness. The same Psalm (verses 1-2) says, 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit', This shows that forgiveness and justification, which follow confession, bring joy and tranquillity to the penitent. It is assumed that the symptom illnesses vanish. They dry up, and wither away. The objective happening of the Cross and Resurrection provides the basis for complete liberation.

It is the nature of this liberation which we will discuss in our next chapter.

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THE DEPTH ACTION OF SALVATION

Basic Healing Elements

Salvation, as we know, has to be the root of healing. It is saving the whole person, not only from ultimate judgement, but to fullness of life, ie. to total healing of the total person. Doubtless this totality is eschatological, rather than wholly accomplished in this present age, but it is totally assured to the recipient.

We need, then, to see that out of the Gospel the believer receives total forgiveness of sins. By this we mean that God establishes His personal relationship of love and forgiveness with the sinner. The New Testament is filled with the wonder and astonishment of those who received full forgiveness. God is said to forgive all our iniquities. In one sense this means sins past, present and future, seeing all of them were dealt with on the Cross. Of course there is another sense in which forgiveness is experienced, moment by moment. It ought to be seen, however, that confession as such does not move God to forgive. It is God's known attitude of forgiving which moves us to confess. Confession, then,

is us catching up with God's forgiveness! Not to acknowledge that we have sin, or have sinned, or do sin, is to lock the unacknowledged sins into ourselves, and to deny ourselves the total forgiveness of the Cross. Hence we cultivate the states of mind and body which leave us open to incursions of certain illnesses.

What also ought to be understood is that God does not remember our sins any more (Jer. 31:34; cf. Matt. 26:28). Many passages in the Old Testament, some of which we have quoted, make it clear that God does not remember our sins. Unless we see that Christ actually bore those sins and suffered them to their exhaustion, extinction and obliteration, then we will think those sins still remain. God does not remember our sins *because* there is nothing to remember. That is, because of the Cross, we have no sins which are extant.

This brings us to the fact that not only has the legal penalty of our sin been borne away, but its guilt has been erased. Justification by faith assures us that, 'There is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus!' (Rom. 8:1f; cf. Gal. 5:1). Romans 6:7 says, 'he who has died [ie. in co-crucifixion with Christ] is justified from sin'.

Not only has guilt been erased, but purification of sins has taken place. Our memory data bank contains myriads of thoughts, experiences, impressions and the like. The memory, it is said, can store one billion such elements, but it cannot *but* store them. In Isaiah 57:20-21, we saw that the wicked retain all of these elements. I Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:5; Acts 3:19; 22:16; Hebrews 1:3; 9: 14—amongst other passages—tell us that all impurity has been purged. The sins that were scarlet are now white as snow! He has washed us from our sins. Old

things have passed away. Behold! They have become new.

These elements constitute the power of the Gospel. It is this word which heals us in our whole person. Yet even this is not the end.

Further Healing Elements

The greatest healer is love, ie. God's love. In fact, it is that love which is our deepest need. It is the fact that they do not receive love which makes many angry against their parents, God and the world. They retreat into neuroses. Depression has been described as frozen rage. It may well be, or better still, frozen rage thawing out. It may well have its origins in the body and mind. What we do know is that love is therapeutic. Romans 5:5 says God brings His love to our hearts. The New Testament tells us that we love because He first loved us. It makes much of this 'He first loved us'.

God's love forgives and purifies. God's love regenerates us. It liberates us from evil powers. It renews us in life, and goes on renewing us in God's image (Col. 3:9-10). What is wonderful is the reconciliation that is effected between man and God, by *God*.

When we minimise the free nature of God's love ('I will love you freely'), and when we teach that forgiveness is only received through the exercise of penance, then we miss out on much. We must understand the language of Isaiah 53:4-6. We have already examined this text, but let us look at it closely. It tells us that Christ has borne all our iniquities. It tells us that he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. If we reduce these words to sickness and infirmities (which they all are), then we

fail to see that our hurts, sorrows, griefs and mental-spiritual pains have all been suffered by him, and we are forever released from them! In other words, a truly converted person stands up and walks away from the evil and suffering of his past. He has, in certain parlance, 'no monkey on his back'.

Further, the passage says, 'upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed'. That is to say the Cross has fully saved us, and the wounds we once had are now totally healed!

This truth needs to be underlined because many Christians do not realise Christ has suffered everything. They do not realise that there are no memories which now have power to hold them, hurt them, or give them pain. All memories have been healed! We mean by this that all sins have been cleansed, and all hurts have received the divine balm of Gilead. The new man in Christ is now free to live.

Problems with the Wholeness of Salvation

It is clear from many modern therapies which are called Christian, that people do have healing of memories, or, as others put it, 'inner healing'. For all such we must be grateful. Caution, however, is necessary on two counts:

(a) We must never recycle what Christ has already destroyed, cleansed or healed. We must never repeat the work of the Cross; and

(b) We must never minimise the work of the Cross by adding to it some therapy of our own.

The Cross is wholly healing since it says, 'upon him was the chastisement that made us whole'.

If we read the New Testament closely, we will see that the early church trusted the finished work of Christ, and the application of it by the Spirit. It says clearly, 'you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified'. It says, 'Old things have passed away. Look! They have become new!'

Against these categorical statements it is often said, 'Yes, but . . .', and such 'yes-butness' must not be admitted. Paul is angry in his Letter to the Galatians against legalists who are seeking to add to the Cross. Such actions minimise the totality of grace, the fullness of salvific healing.

What is really reprehensible is that this kind of reasoning and practice diminishes the Cross, and so diminishes the full flood of God's love. Moreover it makes the work of grace (monergistic) into a God-man work (synergistic). Let it be known that whenever man enters into healing-teaching he (unwittingly perhaps) lessens the assurance a counsellee may have in the totality of grace and love.

We need to see that only when the image of God is shown by the totality of His love in forgiveness, cleansing, liberating and healing will the recipient truly receive the whole of God's love. Only then will he see the whole image of God. When he does see that image, then the image received from his parents, or the rival images received from idols, will dwindle. He will be captured by the total *love of God*. This having been the case, the Scriptures will now be intelligible, informative, stimulating and beloved by him. Likewise the exercises of prayer, worship, stewardship and service will all flow naturally, and normally. If, however, this full view of the Father is diminished by those who seek to open up

his past, recycle his sins, and—like some psycho-analysts—make him relive elements of his former life, then a long and demanding process will be set in action which will become therapeutically necessary to him, since his past experiences run into tens of thousands. Failure to have faith in the finished work of Christ will set him on actions which pertain to sight rather than faith. We insist that the less persons—including well-intention counsellors—have to do with another person's personality, the better. The norm of the early church was for all members to share with all other members, and the health of a member was in the context of prayer, worship, fellowship, obedience, service and the proclamation of the Gospel. In this context true health prevails.

The Healing Father

The story of the prodigal son and his father is the paradigm for fatherly love. There is no mention of the mother. We have seen that the word Father includes God's elements of male and female. God, then, is Father-Mother if we will to see it that way. Thus the father in the parable represents God. His son does not see the prodigality of his father until he is in desperate straits. Then he remembers the generosity of the father who—against contemporary custom—had given him all things. His emotional need is for his father. He returns and receives this in unexpected ways.

Man is a sinful creature, an angry, resentful, hurt and sick creature. He has refused his true creational origins. Out of fellowship with the Father-Creator, he is out of fellowship with his world, himself, and all others. His

sense of emotional deprivation and the laying of blame at the door of God and others, has resulted in a twisted way of life. One of his problems is that he will not take responsibility for his own wrong reactions, his own failure to love, and his wrong laying of blame upon God, his parents, his heredity, circumstances, environment and others. Hence his misery is compounded, and as we have said, he lays himself open for all kinds of body-mind problems, which today we call psychogenic or psychosomatic. Whatever these may be, man is in a terrible state.

When man has the Father revealed to him, and when he is reconciled to the Father, then his emotional deprivation vanishes. He is more than fulfilled by the love the Father gives to him. Salvation is the healing gift. What he was created to be, and what he was created for, is now being fulfilled. His life-satisfaction is now a very sweet thing.

Nor is this all. All his relationships are virtually healed. Whilst others may hate him he can, and must, love them. Properly speaking, he relates to every other person through the Father. He loves by means of the love of God. Christ is his Lord, his high protector, his mediator against evil powers. The Spirit lives in him, teaches him truth and makes the Gospel ever real to him.

This, then, is the truly healed man, and the one who lives in the prophylaxis of love.

The Faith that Believes and Obeys

Paul's statement that, 'we walk by faith, not by sight', was directed towards the things which are to come.

Nevertheless that is true of all the Christian life. It is a walk of faith. The things of which we have spoken are known only by faith, and lived in only by the same faith. Hence the truth of God, the power of the Cross, the consequent forgiveness, cleansing, healing and renewal of the person, are matters of faith. What we must make clear is that God, His works, and His accomplishments are all objectively true. Our faith does not make them true. Faith is not 'the power of positive thinking'. It is the assurance that things are as the Scriptures tell us. It is trust in their objective reality that causes us to live by them. Hence faith not only believes such things *are*, but faith goes ahead to *act* upon these facts. The battle of faith is not to make things to be real, but to believe that they are already real, and are the things of God.

The work of Satan is to lessen our trust and belief in the things the Scriptures tell us. It is easy, then, to think that our moods, our experiences are somehow deeply rooted in the past, and we must continually be bound by that past, at least to some degree. Yet faith not only trusts God for the work of the Cross, and believes in His present continuing love, but it rejects accusation from Satan, and insists that it is right with God. This is the great dynamic of justification, just as purification is the great dynamic for peace, and healing of the person the present dynamic for full living.

Just as Israel lived in the knowledge of Yahweh Rapha, 'The Lord Healer', and accepted that as covenant promise, so does the member of the New Covenant see Him in the same light. Hence he believes in His healing. The mystery of *what* God is about, and *why* He acts in certain ways, some of which are mysterious, is no

check to his faith. Thus he asks what he believes is right, and knows he is heard. His prayer is, 'as is your will, oh Father, so let it be done'. This is what the Son prayed in Gethsemane, and we can never go beyond the wisdom of His Son.

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THE LOVE THAT HEALS

His Love Heals Us

We need now to amplify the whole matter of healing love. We have already seen that faith is a prerequisite for true healing. We mean faith in God, and it is best where the nature of God is known, and faith reposes its trust in that nature. We have also seen that faith is not a screwing up of oneself to the point of credulity. It is a calm resting upon the nature of God. We have also seen that our knowledge of God is limited. There may well be reasons why, at any point and time, God may not heal. If healing does not come, as is often the case, then it is not because God fails to love. It is because there are many factors in life which are hidden from us. Nevertheless faith must be present whether there be healing or no healing, Our faith is in God that He is Healer, but that He heals in accordance with His own will,

In Galatians 5:6, Paul says, 'faith works through love', He means, doubtless, that the love of God brings us to faith, and love. That is, faith is active in love. In I Corinthians 13:2, Paul indicates that faith-action without love is barren. This is also mentioned in Revelation 2:1ff.,

We mean that when faith comes by (obedient) hearing of the word of Christ (Rom, 10:17), that man comes to know the love of God, It is this love of God which provides us with forgiveness, cleansing, healing of hurts and which inspires us to obedience, service and love to others. 1 John 4: 19 has it, 'We love because he first loved us', Note that it is not, 'We love him because he first loved us', although that is true, but it is, 'We *love* because he first loved us', ie. we love Him, others and even (rightly understood) ourselves.

In our last chapter we saw that God's love is not in degrees, It is total. That is, God loves us wholly, and not by degrees. He loves us even as He loves His Son (John 17:23). We saw that to minimise or diminish the work of redemption in the Cross and Resurrection is to take away from that love, Such a diminishing also takes away from the basis of faith, Faith is primarily dependent upon God as love, God will only do that which is love, Even though sometimes it seems that God does that which is not love, yet, were God's actions truly known, they would be seen as love. Often the suffering He brings or permits, though not seeming to be love, is nevertheless His love in action.

Covenant Love

We saw in the Old Testament that the covenant given to Abraham was one of love, not only for Abraham, but in the ultimate for the nations of the world. We saw that the covenant given to Moses was one of love and healing. In the New Testament the New Covenant can be no less in its healing significance than that covenant given to Moses. Of course God healed where there was

covenant-faithfulness, or repentance where persons had sinned,

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we see the New Covenant is of a higher order than the Old Covenant, We can, therefore, expect no less love and healing than in the Old. At the same time, it is this Epistle (ch.12, vv. 3-17) which speaks of the chastening of God as Father, Covenant privilege demands covenant responsibility.

The whole New Testament speaks of love in the following manner:

- (i) God loves us.
- (ii) We respond in love to Him.
- (iii) That love to God is shown in love to the brethren who are in the church.
- (iv) It is shown to all men, including one's enemies,

Anything less than this kind of love is not true love.

The Love that Heals Us

Whilst we appear to be repeating ourselves, let us see that we are only reiterating the enormous importance of love. God's love heals us in providing for our salvation. It operates in communicating and applying that salvation. That is, it makes us whole. Then it goes on making us whole. We mean that in one sense we will not be wholly whole until the Parousia of Christ. Yet day by day God's love continues to protect, provide for us, and heal us where we need healing. That is God's covenant love.

At the same time we do not live as individuals. We are part of the whole people of God. We are brethren. We are members of His Body. We are useful living

stones in His Temple. Everything is living and dynamic. In other words, we are kept whole by our fellowship with others. We are given comfort and aid by our brethren. 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14, Romans chapter 12, 1 Peter 3:8ff. and 4:7ff. all show us the healthful nature of the church. To be a member of it is to live in constant and helpful love-therapy. We may say that Body-love is a prophylactic against illness as well as being therapeutic every day. I Corinthians 11:27-32 warns of the dangers and damage that come from failing to recognise, and live according to, this truth.

Thirdly, the love of God which heals us, is the love which heals others through us. Perhaps this is the most practical healing of all.

In Zephaniah 3:17 (RSV), we are told, 'he will renew you in his love'. We have seen *from* Isaiah 53 (and other passages) that this is what He does. His love renews us. He then expects us to renew others by love. In Jude 20-23, we are exhorted to *keep ourselves in this love of God*. One of the ways of doing this is to seek out others who need the redeeming love of God. This brings us to an important truth, namely that to be healed is to heal.

There are many who long to be loved. In fact we all like to be loved, and benefit from such love, especially if it is pure. However it is generally unhealthy to be waiting for love. Indeed it is clearly unhealthy when we demand love. Whilst God who is love can legitimately demand we love Him, humans cannot legitimately demand love. They can only point to the obligation God has laid on us all to love one another. Yet to demand love and to wait for another to love is disaster. Love then becomes a legal obligation and works against the voluntary nature of love.

This demand does more. It indicates self-pity, and self-concern, both of which are highly corrosive to the spirit of man. It is in loving others we are healed. We mean that to love others because God has loved us is healthy, logical, and in a sense, self-healing.

What we are really saying is that God created us, and then recreated us (in redemption) to love others. Not to do this is to go against the true functional order of the creation, and so to bring distress and misery, and that person-illness of which we have spoken so much.

In other words we are saying that hurting and living in our wounds is sin! Why? Because Christ has healed those. To continue to speak of such hurts is to deny the power of the Cross by which we should live each day (I Cor. 1:18). Of course if someone hurts us, that is not our sin. However to retain that hurt, and to foster and cultivate it is indeed sin. We must turn the other cheek, immediately, ie. not feel the hurt. We must not give way to wrath, and certainly never go to sleep with it in our persons. We must never revile, though we have been reviled. In fact the hurts which come to us may be a source of joy. The occasion of hurt and persecution is the highest available point, so to speak, where we can show love. At such a high point Moses refused to love his people as they grumbled at Meribah. Moses profaned God by his anger and irritability. He missed out on that great opportunity to show love.

What we really mean is that the Cross has broken the nexus between us and our past hurts. It has cleansed away our angers, bitternesses, resentments and hatred which have been our reactions through having been hurt. No longer do we have any basis or excuse for such. We have been loved to liberty. Now we must do the

same with others.

The Love-Healers

We conclude, then, that whilst there may be many powers in the world by which people can be healed, the only true power is love. We do not understand the mysteries of what we call psychic and occult powers. We know there are shifts, from time to time, of the use of special powers. Some exercises are those of the charlatan. Some are so dark in their operations as to be deeply evil. Some appear to be fleshly, yet they seek to bring healing. Others are clearly quite evil for we have been warned against satanic efforts to appear as light, and to delude even the elect. The less we have to do with all these shifts the better. What we do know from I Corinthians 13:1 -3 is that anything done without love is empty, invalid and delusive. That which is done in love is alone authentic and true.

The love, then, that submits to God is the love that truly serves. It is the love that heals, or may we say, it is the love through which the Healer heals. What we must understand in saying, 'God is love', is that He created the world in love, and love constitutes its essential unity and harmony, as unity and harmony constitute love. That is why people suffer when they go contrary to love, and become healed when they submit to it, and carry it out in life.

Man's primary disobedience is his failure to love God. He ought to love God because he, man, was created in, and for, love. Hence his 'disease' is not living functionally in and by love. He is responsible to love because this was what he was created to do. Being in the

image of God it is mandatory for him to love. Since love, 'bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things', then man was given the powers to live in this manner. That he did not was his primary evil. Through the Cross and its work he is now enabled to live afresh in love. That is, he has been healed by love, and now helps to liberate others by the same love. Of course such 'bearing, believing, hoping and enduring' has no place for cultivating hurts, self-pity and angers. It only has place for forgiving, for giving, for effecting reconciliation and personal union, in love, with others. It seeks not its own, but the 'own' of others.

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HEALING AND THE WILL OF GOD

Does God Will Both Sickness and Healing?

Sometimes our inquisitive mind asks, 'Is it the will of God that people should become ill?' Having asked that question we naturally follow on: 'Does God *cause* people to become ill? If so, why does He not will them to be well when that is best for them?' We would then be led to the further question: 'Why does not God will good health for all and so not allow sickness in His world? He is, after all, all-powerful as He is all-knowing'.

Questions are tricky things. One needs to analyse them before attempting to answer. We should take a leaf out of Jesus' book. He rarely answered a question put to him, or if he did, then generally indirectly, though never evasively. The fact is that many questions cannot be answered because they are asked wrongly. Sometimes they are an attempt to trick the person to whom they are made. Sometimes they are so couched that a true answer is impossible. Often they are asked to divert attention from the questioner by getting the

questioned person busy in answering. This sort of question is known as a red herring.

It is also very important to remember that when a questioner uses the word 'why' he may simply be seeking clarification of what he does not know, or on the other hand, he may be trying deliberately to discredit by using 'why'.

What is the Answer to the Question?

We have already seen in the early part of our book that God definitely brings sicknesses and disease to certain persons. In Chapter Two we saw the occasions when He caused sicknesses. On other occasions He may heal those who are in need. Let us spread some biblical statements before us which make this clear:

* Deuteronomy 32:39—'See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand'.

* 11 Kings 6:18—'And when the Syrians came down against him, Elisha prayed to the Lord, and said, "Strike this people, I pray thee, with blindness." So he struck them with blindness in accordance with the prayer of Elisha'.

* I Samuel 2:6—'The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up'.

* Job 5:18—'For he wounds, but he binds up; he smites, but his hands heal'.

* Psalm 68:20—'Our God is a God of salvation; and to God, the Lord, belongs escape from death'.

* Isaiah 43:13—'I am God, and also henceforth I am He; there is none who can deliver from my hand; I work and who can hinder it?'

* Hosea 6:1—'Come, let us return to the Lord; for he has torn, that he may heal us; he has stricken, and he will bind us up'.

When we look at these verses we are bound to come to the conclusion that God is the One who moves in the matter of sickness and death. Equally He moves in the matter of healing and giving life.

For certain people this can mean only one thing: God is the author of all illnesses. Their mind drives them to this conclusion. Therefore they conclude that God is cruel. They say indignantly that He ought never to will such sicknesses.

Part of the Answer

In Acts 2:23, Peter says, ‘this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men’. He means, of course, that God had definitely planned the Cross, but that man, moved by hatred of God and Jesus, had set out to do this anyway. Some would say, ‘No! They were forced—even against their wills—to do this’. Others would say, ‘No! They were not forced against their wills. They wanted to do this. However, God, being all-powerful and all-knowing, could have stopped them’. In saying these things both objectors are wrong. The plain facts are that men wished to kill Jesus so they did. To say God *could* (or should) have stopped them by His sheer power is to misunderstand the nature of God.

God is All-Powerful and Not All-Powerful

This statement is apparently contradictory and so, foolish. It is not contradictory. When men say, ‘God is all-powerful’, they mean, ‘God has naked power; sheer

power, He can do anything He wishes’. What they fail to understand is that God only does that which is consistent with His nature. He cannot do moral evil, ie. He will not. Thus He does what He does in the light of His true knowledge of all things. We can put it this way, even if a little foolishly, ‘God being who He is; man being what he is; things of creation being what they are; evil being what it is, and man’s sin being what it is, nothing would ever be any different than what it has been!’

This is not just cleverness through the use of hindsight, It means that God acts consistently with His nature. Evil acts (even if irrationally) consistently with its evil nature. The creation acts in character with itself. Man cannot be other than what he is. Nor does God act irrationally, ie, out of character with Himself, To say, ‘God can do anything He wishes’, is to be both wrong and right at the same time’ If we mean God acts as He wills and in so doing is consistent with His own nature, then that is true’ If, however, we mean—as pagans believe about their gods—that God is omnipotent, which means He has enormous power at His disposal, so that with Him nothing is impossible, then we are stating a truth in an absurd way’ Within His own person, God does those things which are consistent with His nature of holiness, righteousness, goodness, truth and love’ He can do nothing against these’ Therefore when we say, ‘He can do what He wishes’, we must realise that He does not wish anything outside His nature, ie. it is silly to say, ‘He can wish anything’, The facts are that He only wishes what is consistent with Himself, We may see this as a limitation on Him, but we would then be wrong. Within the so-called limitations of Himself, God is truly free.

What Would We Do if We had 'All Power'?

Some of us think that God is slow, lethargic, dilatory, or simply uncomprehending of human needs. If we were to have the power which we imagine God has, then we would straight away go about tidying up the world. We would immediately repress all crime. We would prevent children being deformed by making sure they would be born as healthy persons. We would wipe out all sickness and disease in one stroke. We would cause wars to stop instantly. We would instil love in all human creatures. We would win back evil powers to loving sanity. We would preserve all living creatures, and would ban the use of harmful things such as uranium. We would ensure that joy and peace would be the experience of all human creatures.

Why Does Not God Do These Things Through His Power?

If God has not done these things, then He is either foolish or He is wise. He is obviously aware of the problems in His creation. So, then, He is either incompetent and cannot do the things we think are good and necessary, or He is powerless to do them. If He is powerless then He is less than God, for evil personal powers appear to be stronger than He is. In both cases, we cannot be other than dismayed, and even angry.

On the other hand, we may have to come to the conclusion that God is different from the image which we have of Him. It is almost certain that if we were able to tidy up creation in the way we think it is possible for God to do, then we would do enormous damage. One

thing is apparent, namely that we would have to cut strongly across the wills of innumerable human creatures. Since they want to kill, to hurt, to be in competition with others, and to do evil, then we would be forcing them not to do the things they do. In this way, we would destroy the sovereignty of the human person. In so doing we would force humans to be without freedom of will. Life would then be wholly intolerable. We ought to recognise that God does not imprison the wills of human beings, even though they use them sinfully. This does not mean, however, that all things are not under His control.

It is no good saying that somehow we could change the attitudes of people so that they would act aright. If, for example, we were to be as the Marxists and say that we could change society by changing its conditions, thus eliminating competition and fear, then we would be flying in the face of the evidence. Man does not really get security by having sufficient on which to live, This is a simplistic view of man, We have to realise that the will of a human being is subject to nothing that man can devise, The only thing which will ultimately win it is love, but some humans even refuse to be gripped by love,

We must conclude, then, that God is working as rapidly and efficiently as He sees fit for the total perfection of His creation, that is, taking all things as they are into consideration,

God's Way of Working

The Scriptures tell us, time and again, that God's time and our time differ. We wish God would perfect

all things instantly. With God a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as a day. One day my grand-daughter asked her mummy to come out and play with her, and her mummy said, 'I'll come soon'. The grand-daughter waited for a few moments and cried impatiently, 'You are taking a long time!' Her mummy replied, 'Mummy-time and daughter-time are different'. She was right. Man-time and God-time are different. What seems to be tardiness to man is speediness with God!

Back to Healing

The simplistic belief that God never hurts, wounds or destroys does not deal honestly with the facts of Scripture. He does do many of these things. But then He does these things for His own reasons. He does not always disclose the reason, but we must trust that He is just in what He does. All His good powers are at the disposal of the human race. He has angels watch over us. He provides for humanity in wonderful ways. It is man who rebelliously decides to go his own way.

In order to make out God is good even though there is evil in society, we seek to justify Him. This, too, is a wrong exercise. We should simply say, 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' and leave it at that. No! We think, we must justify Him! God does not need this. Either we believe He is the true God or we accuse Him of being less wise or loving than we are! The Scriptures call Him 'the only true God', ie. as against the false gods who know nothing and can do nothing. It is life eternal to know the true God (John 17:3), but it is death to know the idols. Man's impasse comes from the

fact that '[he] exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator'. No wonder man does not understand the ways of God.

Sickness by the Permissive Will of God?

In order to get God off the hook some speak of God's 'permissive will' and His 'active (or direct) will'. By these terms they mean God cannot but allow certain things, so that He permits them. There is certainly some truth in this statement, but it is badly phrased. It is better to say that in all things God is working for good for those who love Him, and the ultimate good of all things. He 'turns the wrath of man to his praise', which means He uses the evil that man does for ultimate good. In the Book of the Revelation we are told that God allows evil to do many things, However, all these things are under His control, It is best not to use the terms 'active' or 'permissive'. It is better to say that in the ultimate it will be seen that all things have been in the will of God, but for the reasons which *God* has and not for the reasons which man may think He has! It would be healthy for us to read and keep in mind the following passages: Isaiah 64:8-12; 48:3-8; Malachi 1:2-3; Proverbs 16:4; Romans 9:15-21. These and other Scriptures are summed up in the statement that God 'accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will'.

It may be good at this point to consider the statement made in the Westminster Confession, concerning the outworking of the will of God: 'God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to

pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin; nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established’.

When, then, we see things happen we must not give up in fatalistic despair, anymore than we should see God as uncaring. He has given us a part in the action *of* His universe! He has given us the gifts of faith, love and prayer and expects us to use them so that the course of human and world events may be influenced and even changed by our participation.

Faith and Prayer in Healing and Non Healing

In our section on the use of faith (Chapter 14), we saw that God calls for us to pray in faith. That is what Jesus did as he healed. Sometimes when people had anti-faith he could not heal. When they did not have anti-faith but even no faith, he could, and did, heal. When they had faith the matter was simple. Also we saw that faith must be in the discerned will of God. We saw that there are some cases in which God does not heal because of the need for repentance and turning to Him. We also saw that healing—as in the case of nine out of the ten lepers—is of no great point to the healed since they have no gratitude for the gift. The grace and kindness on God’s side remains but unrecognised.

In Revelation 5:8, we see that the prayers of the saints are in bowls in the hands of the celestial elders. In 8:1 -5, these prayers are offered to God and become powerfully effective. They actually help to effect part of God’s plan. God then has made a place for them, and in fact

requires such prayers of us. In 6:9-11, prayers are offered to God but God—so to speak—whilst hearing them, puts them on ‘Hold’. They cannot be answered by action before the time. This is because of certain factors which are hidden from us. We must then see that some prayers, whilst heard by God, are put on ‘Hold’ until the time of their answers. In this case cited—ie. the prayers of the saints—we see in 15:5-7, 18:20 and 19:1 -2 that the prayers of the saints have been answered. How long it must have seemed that the prayers were held on ‘Hold’!

Even so this does not mean we must think that none of our prayers will be answered quickly. If we move in the will of God we will know that in some cases they will have an immediate answer, and at other times an answer which will come after a certain period of time. Doubtless that will be God’s time.

Why Then are Some Healed and Some Not Healed?

We have discussed much of this material in another part of this volume. In the light of the statements given above we may conclude that certain healings take place because God has given us a sense of His will, a knowledge of the power of faith and prayer, and so healing takes place in accordance with these principles. For reasons known alone to God, some prayers offered up in sincerity and the eagerness of faith remain—as yet— unanswerd. People with terminal illnesses die. Others who are sick are not healed. Some suffer in deep pain.

We must not say God has not heard our prayers, or that we lack faith. What we lack is knowledge and

wisdom. We cannot always assume that sickness is from Satan or that all healing should necessarily be effected. It is not failure on either God's part or ours when healing does not always take place. We may have our understanding of healing off-key, or our understanding of God and His ways may be deficient. On the other hand, there are times when we do lack faith. The climate of warm believing power is absent. Doubtless this has happened on numerous occasions in the history of the church.

What we must not do is develop a stereotype for healing, We must not blame God, or even ourselves, when, on some occasions, healing does not take place, What we must do is trust God and not be angry or dispirited if He does not act according to our stereotype, If we look back at the history of mankind, we can see enormous healing has taken place by the forces of what we call 'nature', ie. God working quietly within His own creation. At some times of history there have been periods of miraculous healing through the power of God. Also there have been long periods when little of this has been evident. The reasons for intermittent periods of healing are not always known.

Conclusion: God is Good, God is True

We must conclude, then, that when the church is low in faith and obedience, healings will be less than they need be. We must never say dogmatically that God wills that none should have sickness and that all should be healed. Nor should we have a view of God that He is careless and even callous, choosing to ignore man's plight. We should be honest and say that man is sinful,

and that many Christians are indolent and lacking in faith. We should also say that God is good, and He is true, ie. dependable, We should believe that He is doing the very best possible under the conditions, without violating the wills of human beings, and without being slack in the fulfilment of His own will, We must not be angry when things do not turn out as we wish them. We, too, can be faulty and deficient in understanding of God and His creation, as also in our actions of life.

I was once told a story that has since made me hesitate to conclude that it is God's will that all should be healed, and healed immediately. A friend of mine knew a man who was opposed to the Christian truth. At the time of middle age this large and robust person became a Christian. His experience was so rich that he joyfully shared it with his friends, and for eighteen months continued witnessing in a powerful way. Suddenly his health declined and it was found that he had terminal cancer. Hospitalised, he quickly lost weight. When my friend visited him he had become a thin creature, a shrunken image of his former self. The flesh had all but disappeared, and he was little more than a skeleton.

Far from being depressed, he was a person of joy and strong faith. My friend, who went to minister to him, came away feeling he had been in the presence of a miracle, a non angry and loving person. After prayer he parted from his friend, but at the door he looked back at this triumphant believer. With the little strength that he had left, this patient had grasped the monkey-grip above his head and hauled himself up into a sitting position. With a strong grin on his face, and all the strength that he could muster, he shouted, 'Ron! Jesus is

Lord! Jesus is Lord!' Sickness and death had no terrors for him, Within a few days he had died, but then he had not died, Others saw his death, but he did not, He had been ushered joyfully into the presence of his Lord, and, as Bunyan has put it, 'All the trumpets sounded for him on the other side!'

How much does the thought of death give us an inordinate fear of sickness? This body will inevitably come to corruption, It is the new sin-free, sickness-free and death-free body for which we hope. Yet how some of us fight against the newer and better thing God has prepared for us.

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CONCLUSION ON HEALING

Medicines and Medicos

It is evident from the material that we have discovered that the matter of healing is a complex subject. The normal contact that most persons have with healing is either in tolerating certain sicknesses until they have played themselves out, or the use of medicines and medical advice and treatment to defeat, if possible, such illnesses and diseases. Both these methods tell us that for a great part, powers lie within what we call 'nature' to heal human beings. By nature we really mean creation. Nature is not a person. It is God's creational arrangement. We come to know that battles against sickness and disease are fought by our own body. We also know that certain sicknesses overcome our bodies, ie. ourselves, and we become subject to such illnesses. Sometimes they prove to be mortal.

The question of medicine is, in itself, an interesting one. It is quite astonishing to find that such medicines exist in the creation. We are driven to believe they must have been placed there by God. They must be an evidence, in part, of His love. In no way can we say man

makes such medicines. In the primary sense God has placed them there. In the secondary sense man discovers and makes them, using his proportions of available substances. Some use the substances of herbs and other organic products, whilst others use chemicals and other inorganic elements or all useful elements.

It is true that medicine as such is scarcely mentioned in the Old Testament. Doctors are also mentioned little, and King Asa seems to have been disapproved of for seeking doctors. However, it may be that his use of them over and against God was the complaint of the chronicler. In Isaiah 1:6, there is the use of oil and balm for sores, even though in this case, which is figurative, healing does not come. In Jeremiah 8:20-22, the mention of a physician and of a balm is not derogatory to these two. Likewise in Jeremiah 46:11, there is a mention of medicines but since the language is figurative, we cannot say the prophet disapproved of them. In 11 Kings 20:1-7, the prescription of an application of boiled figs is the only actual medication recorded. We must remember, of course, that Israel saw the Lord as its Healer. What we call the illnesses which come from guilt could be healed by the therapeutic use of the sacrifices. Moreover Israel (ideally speaking) lived according to excellent dietary and sanitation laws.

In the New Testament, we read of the good Samaritan who used oil and wine as medicine, although this is seen by some as an antiseptic procedure. We also remember the medicinal use of wine in Timothy's case, although some argue it was the use of wine as against the polluted water often met in travelling. Luke is called 'the beloved physician', whereas, were physicians not wholly commendable, Paul could have said, 'the beloved

brother'. On the whole, the thought seems to be that medicines and doctors given in, God is the Healer. No true healing comes to man apart from Him.

A Summary of Sickness and Healing

We have seen that sickness was often the result of a person's sinfulness. This could be healed where there was faith in God, and repentance for one's sins, especially where such sin was done in ignorance. Examples of this are the unconscious sins of Pharaoh and Abimelech. The sins of the later Pharaoh were met with the ten plagues. Even so, these were not perpetual.

In the Old Testament, as indeed in the New, it is God who visits sinful people with sickness. Those within the Mosaic Covenant who sin against God within the covenant will be severely dealt with. If, however, there is repentance God will heal. The deepest cause of sickness is related to idolatry. Yet not all sickness is punishment, as is shown by the cases of Elisha and Job which have differing aetiologies. Satan is shown to have power to visit Job with sickness, but in his case only with the permission of God.

Miraculous healings may have been many in the Old Testament, but comparatively few are recorded. Certainly they were not the norm.

In the New Testament, the same concept of punishment is found in certain cases such as those of Herod, Ananias and Sapphira, and the particular case of those at Corinth who became sick and died. If the plagues and outpourings of wrath in the Revelation are actual and not merely figurative, then such are under the control of God, and are visited by Him upon the earth.

At the same time the New Testament, especially the written Gospels, indicate that much sickness comes from being in bondage to evil. The aetiology** is that demonic powers bring sicknesses to people. Indeed some sicknesses are virtually personified. Christ as God's Messiah and Liberator comes against these diseases. He defeats them for the most part with or without the faith of those who are sick. Only in one case where scepticism reigned was he unable to heal. This example, however, is a most important one, for it shows that healings could possibly take place in other situations were there not hard scepticism.

Again the words of Jesus at the beginning of Luke chapter 13 make it clear that not all disaster and death is the result of man's sin. The blindness of the man in John chapter 9 also shows that not all sickness is the result of a person's sin, or his parents' sin. Of course in this case, it is not the blindness that glorifies God, but the healing of it. This is the case also of the illness of Lazarus in John chapter 11. Lazarus had not brought the illness upon himself but it had come, and Jesus insisted it was part of the will of God, especially as it would glorify Himself.

The principle behind healing in the Old Testament under the Mosaic Covenant seems to be on the basis that God is covenantal Healer. In the Gospels, Christ is the Messiah, whom, it had been promised, would also be Healer. Messiah gave to his disciples similar authority and power to heal, and whilst no direct command

* 'Aetiology' is a systematised explanation, taking into consideration a broad spectrum of cases.

is given to heal in what we call the Great Commission, yet in Mark chapter 16 there is the statement that those who believe will heal. The facts are that the apostolic church knows healing through the apostles and others. Gifts of healing, also, are distributed to certain persons, or are effected through members of the Church, Christ's Body'

The healing which ensues comes from the continuing (and now heavenly) Lordship of Jesus' It is, as in the Gospels, the power of the Kingdom coming on people. It must also be connected with the New Covenant, although this is not explicitly stated. The Book of Acts does not indicate anything like wholesale healing, and since it is the Lord who is healing, the occasions of healing and their volume relate to his Messianic will and purpose.

James chapter 5 indicates there was a ministry of healing within the church, based on the faith of the sick person, and the elders who sought healing for him. Even so, we find certain servants of God such as Timothy, Epaphras and Trophimus who have acute illness. In one or two cases Paul does not appear to have used the power to heal to effect their healing. It has been argued that the time was not ripe. This may or may not be true.

In the wider discussion of healing we need to see that the thinking of the Hebrew was that sickness was not merely a bodily thing, but part of a state of the whole person. Indeed sicknesses and infirmities were often linked with sin and guilt. Hence the sacrifices would be seen, ipso facto, as being and bringing healing, especially where repentance and faith were present. The constant references to healing in the Old Testament are rather to

the state of the community, the people of God, than individualistically to persons. Even so the Psalms, Proverbs and Job point to the fact that God's salvation is a healing of the whole person, and in many cases, the whole nation.

Our whole point is that sin constitutes an awryness, a state of being out of kilter with creation, and this state is within the present creation, that is, it is incongruous with the functional order of things. What we must note, however, is that whilst much of sickness is the result of a person's sin (his own being out of kilter with the functional order of things), yet all sickness is not because of his own failure and wrongdoing. Sometimes a person is sick because of the state of the world. Or it may be he suffers because of another's evil. It may even be that sickness relates to the curse, to a general wrongness rather than the specific wrongness of the person. In other words, there is a variety of reasons for this sickness.

When it comes to the suffering of a person, it may well be that links with satanic evil such as idolatry may give entrance to virulent forms of evil such as sickness, demeaning maladies, creational disorientation, and personality dislocation. It may just be the failure to bring one's guilt to grace, to repent and be liberated. It may take the form of hating one's own body, either as rebellion against the Creator who made it, or because the person wishes to make some strange kind of expiation. All of these factors show us the elements we may have to take into consideration when any malaise appears. Some Christian medicos believe that hatred, anger and resentment cause functional diseases, and believe that emotional states may give opportunity for certain dis-

eases, cancerous growths of benign or malignant nature to come into being. Certainly all we have said within these latter paragraphs is depicted powerfully within the various biblical expressions of emotional subjectivity.

Given in all of this we repeat that all sickness is not from personal sin, and in some cases it may well be that 'persons are healed by sickness'. That is, God may need to bring sickness to bring sensibility of evil, of pride, and utilise painful methods to induce humility, awareness of the greatness of God, and to inculcate love. We dare not exclude such a meaning and use of sickness. We must not assume that *per se* sickness is wholly wrong. We must not idolise or deify health and prosperity.

We must take into consideration that although the Kingdom of God, which in one sense can be said to be 'the age to come', has the needed powers to destroy all illness and to rehabilitate the human person, yet it has not yet come in its final expression. The power lies within it for healing, for miraculous happenings, for liberation from the powers of darkness, and for the positive elements of 'righteousness, peace and joy', yet it has not fully consummated itself in the history of man and creation. Messiah's own presence meant a full exercise of its powers. The delegated powers given to the apostles also meant a dynamic operation in regard to these things we have here nominated. Doubtless were the climate of faith, love and obedience wholly present, then we would see similar expressions of power, but the facts are that much of Christendom is not in this climate, and lacks much in faith and obedience. It may well be that such Kingdom power and deliverance may

present deep difficulties in the lives of Christian people. The constant temptation to hubris and triumphalism such as Paul had to rebuke in the church at Corinth may bring great dangers. Where love and humility are absent the uses of healing and miraculous actions may well be sadly incongruous.

This, however, is not to say that prayer should not be made for the sick. It is not to say alien elements should not be rebuked in the name of Christ, or that his name ought not to be invoked where sickness and suffering are present. It is just that we must know the will of the Lord, and not bow to a wholesale concept of healing. Great damage can be done when results are promised on this basis and fail to find fulfilment.

Most deeply of all we must recognise the victory of Christ's redemptive work. Evil powers have been defeated, and they must not be admitted to places of power within the human person. The area in which evil works powerfully is the area of human guilt. Such guilt sets up the climate for illness and a malaise of spirit. It is this guilt which has been healed at the Cross. Not only the penalty and pollution of sin have been taken away in this work, but also the past hurts and wounds. The new man is free to live without such. He is also free to confess that for the most part such hurts, griefs and sorrows are of his own making, and spring from his own attitudes. He can even confess that most wounds are self-inflicted. In realising all of these things he is freed from them through the *carte blanche* nature of forgiveness, cleansing and justification.

This brings us, then, to the most vital point of all, namely that man comes to justification by faith. Whatever the elements of repentance and receptivity which

may be required, man is justified by faith. This means that guilt no longer has a place in him. He may well have shame for his sin, and may well acknowledge it within his experience of new life, but it is justification which brings true salvific healing, come wind, come weather, come sickness, come health. A fear of illness, a whining against suffering, - a deification of health and human prosperity are foreign to the person whose sins are forgiven, whose transgressions are covered, and who is in a state of justification. Such a person will not feel his sickness is necessarily a punitive measure of God, nor that bodily wholeness (in this age of conflict with evil) is the assurance to him of justification! If sickness is chastisement, then *he is free to accept the fact* and to respond with acknowledgment, faith in God's forgiveness, and renewed obedience.

Conclusion

For the rest we must say that the elements in regard to sickness and healing which we have nominated are so many, so diverse, and of such variety that we cannot easily simplify them without, in fact, being simplistic' We dare not say on the one hand that all sickness is of Satan, and all who are sick are so from their sin or because they are beleaguered by Satan' Nor can we say this may not, for the great part, be the truth. We dare not say God cannot heal, nor be dogmatic that He will not. All acknowledge He *can* heal. That He does not always heal may not be because of lack of faith, or lack of prayer, but because in the mystery of His will, His purposes may be worked out in ways which do not fit our theological models.

We must continue to be people of faith, of hope, and of love. We must have compassion upon the sick and disturbed, and we must use the gifts, powers and graces given to us for the healing of man where he may be healed. For the rest—that which we do not fully know—we must be men and women of humility. Who knows, then, what may even come out of that humility, for in all things we must see Him, the Father, with His Son and His Spirit, as Yahweh Rapha, the Lord God who is the Healer.

We must see that He is not merely a Healer of bodies, of minds, but that He is the Healer of needy, sinful and beleaguered persons.

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THE PERSONAL MATTER OF HEALING

The Matter of Personal Healing

A book such as this present one is concerned to discover—as far as possible—teaching on healing which can be called ‘biblical’. To this end we have looked at certain principles regarding the sicknesses which come to the human race, the link of sickness with sin, alienation from God, and various workings of evil. With this we have looked at the fact that God is primarily One who chastises, punishes, smites, wounds, kills, forgives, cleanses, makes alive, and heals—if indeed the situation is to be a healing one. We have discussed the nature of the Kingdom of God, of the Gospel of the Kingdom, the powers of the Kingdom, the presence of Christ as Lord of this age—especially as he works through the Holy Spirit, his fruit and his gifts.

We may have come far in our understanding of sicknesses and other afflictions such as a tyrannous conscience and oppression by demonic powers. When, however, we fall ill, much of our detached or mental

attitude to sickness and healing undergoes a change. Some persons become terrified by the thought of sickness, can develop anger and depression, and can look upon the visitation from varying points of view, Some look upon sickness as a punishment from God, whilst others consider it may be his chastisement, There are those who consider illness to be due to natural causes, those who see it coming only from Satan, and those who see it as something to be endured, whilst yet others see it as God's way of teaching them what they need to know,

For most people it is bewildering, probably because health is considered to be the right order of human living, Some find it difficult to cope with ill health simply by nature of the case, Sickness is a prominent point of talking, In any conversation it soon intrudes, Probably it is more discussed than anything else—even than the weather itself,

The Fear that Relates to Illness

All of this tells us something, and probably this is linked with our fear of death. We are afraid not to be well. Being ill, we are closer to death than when we were well. Perhaps few people view it consciously in this way, yet it seems to be present generally. The human race is generally sympathetic with those who are ill. The vast medical industry is shaped to relieve people of illness. Whilst the industry is fairly commercial it does not lack a fascinating mystique. Doctors are treated as somewhat godlike, patients as ignorant of the mysteries of medicine. Many there are who worship at the shrine of curative medicine and indeed many are the acolytes

who attend upon the mystery of sickness. Whilst there is fear of sickness which may well be the fear of death, then exploitation can take place' Were there no fear then the large army of medicos would be generally diminished' Whilst there is fear, satellite medical industries grow up around the cult of illness'

One of the mushrooming industries is the 'keep fit' promotion' People are afraid of becoming or being obese, of the danger of high cholesterol levels' Others have a phobia of cancer or some particular disease, and signs of aches or pains send them scuttling for medical help. There are those who are too afraid to visit a doctor lest some disease be discovered and diagnosed, and the worst of fears be realised'

Inside the Christian church the fears relating to sickness do not seem to be less than what is average in society' Some people cling pathetically to divine healing or faith healing, and adulate known healers' Often the story is that there is a special healer in another country and at great expense Christians who are not well visit them, hoping to be healed. Many are the therapies, some of which are New Age prescriptions, and either border on the occult or are linked with it,

A Wholesome Attitude to 111 Health

Unwholesome Attitudes to be Faced

It is often the case that persons who are well worry about becoming sick, a state of mind which can be conducive to illness, There are those who worry over aches and pains, flying for medical help, imagining the worst, and disbelieving when told there is nothing radically wrong. We can have attitudes or states of mind

which keep us constantly worrying about illness. Often the strain of life, its responsibilities, strained relationships, pressing circumstances, the necessity for making decisions as well as constantly recurring crises make it difficult to cope with living. There is a human mechanism of escape from such confrontation, and that mechanism is to switch to illness' This relieves the person of onerous responsibility for all these elements, so that he or she is delivered into the care of doctors, nurses and similar medicos'

There is also another human mechanism of escape, and that is the principle of victimisation. A person sees his present illnesses as resulting from the past. It is common in psycho-analytic therapies to trace one's present states of unease and disquietude to events in the past. The principle—which Ezekiel 18 emphatically denies—that the past is responsible for the present, sends patient and therapist off on the long trek of discovery of the past. In a sense the client lives in relief if the past cause is never discovered because the treatment is interminable. If the responsibility for our personal choices is denied, then morality ceases to have an authentic basis. The facts are that even when past damaging situations are unearthed, the person is not greatly relieved. Indeed the past now becomes 'framed' and the person roams the vast rooms of his or her picture gallery, feasting the eyes—and doubtless self-pity and anger—as the now set experiences of the past are viewed and wondered. Whilst we may call this disquiet of the mind and heart 'mental illness', yet it soon produces physical ailments which are described as 'psychosomatic'. Illness has come to have a place in the life of the person.

The Scriptures and Wholesome Attitudes to Illness

We have seen that the Hebrew saw illness as a visitation from God for sinfulness, or that it was allowed because of the sinfulness of other men, or that it was a chastisement from God, If the particular cause could not be seen, the Hebrew was content to know his illness was, anyway, in the hands of the sovereign God, Thus it is simply stated that Elisha was in that illness of which he was to die, Hezekiah was healed of his illness when he applied to God, and in a way his prayer was indignant, He didn't think he deserved, yet, to die, and he knew enough of covenant grace to keep God to His covenant promise, 'I will put none of the diseases upon you which I put upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord, your healer', Let us note again that to be their healer, God simply does not put diseases upon them—not, primarily that He heals diseases that have come upon them!

In the New Testament there is little—if any—of the morbid preoccupation with sickness which many Christians have today, especially in some healing meetings where headaches, depression and sore toes occupy the minds of the congregation rather than the great eternities! People look to special preachers and healers because what is primary to them is escaping from illness, This desire for 'Christian Medicare' seems to blot out the deeper issues, but such a spirit is absent from the New Testament, Healings mainly were the dynamic evidence of the presence of the Kingdom of God, Healings were not a prelude to preaching the Gospel, but rather a part of it, accompanying the word of the Gospel and testifying to it, For the rest there is an exercise of the various gifts (charismata) some of which

were direction to restoration and healing. All gifts were to be used unostentatiously, without pride, and in love.

The reason for such a healthy attitude was that all believers were forgiven the entirety of their sin, were released from the past so that psycho-analytic therapy was not needed.** The purification of their consciences brought them into liberty of living. The fear of death was replaced by the love that casts out all fear. They lived in the community of grace and love, and this sustained their health, since relationships were of a sane and loving nature. Believers were also kept in a healthy state of mind because they were a called people.

* An interesting title of a book on healing is *Your Healing is Within You* by the Rev'd Canon James Glennon (Hodder & Stoughton, 1978). Canon Glennon has not written on 'self-healing' but on healing by God, but he bases some of his thought on the statement by Christ, 'The kingdom of heaven is within you' (Luke 17:21). He means the power of God for true kingdom life is within you, and you must use this. Scholars are divided on whether the Greek preposition *esōthen* could here mean 'within' or 'in the midst', i.e. 'among'. Most exegetes fix on the latter interpretation, for nowhere in the New Testament is it suggested that the kingdom is within any one. Romans 14:17 tells us that the kingdom of God 'is righteousness and peace and joy', but adds, 'in the Holy Spirit'. These translations do not really matter, but what we have to guard against is the idea that we have great powers within by which we can fight evil and heal. It is true that the power of the Spirit is within us, but then such power must be used under the direction of Christ and his Spirit. We have no power which we can operate from ourselves. Canon Glennon's point, I believe, is valid, i.e. that the power of God is present to overcome sin, to defeat Satan, and—if that is what God requires—to heal. To think that we are powerless to do anything apart from an intervention of God means we will allow much to overcome us—including sickness.

They had a clear sense of vocation and purpose, hence they lived in healthy hope. If chastisement came from God, even in the forms of illness, then they knew God was dealing with them and not Satan. All of these elements made—and make—for healthy living. Should sickness come then the person is not necessarily thrown into a state of doubt, fear and panic. Timothy takes a little wine for his stomach's sake. If Paul's 'stake in the flesh' were a physical visitation, then he eventually accepts it for its value—that it keeps him weak so that his ministry can be powerful! Epaphroditus certainly was close to death, but he recovered, and his concern was not for himself but for those who were concerned for him. Paul and his companions, too, were 'unbearably crushed' so that they 'despaired of life itself', they were 'delivered from so deadly a peril'. Nor was that deliverance of special significance, in itself. It was that—once delivered—they could preach the Gospel.

Living in the Way of True Personal Health

The section immediately above is spelled out ideally. That is to say that rightly understood the person who was an Israelite or a Christian could have minimal ill health if he followed the truth of the word of God. In Israel love to God and to one's neighbour, with consistency to the law kept men and women in good health. The Christian who lived by grace and love in obedience to the word of God could generally expect good health. Both Israelite and Christian loved and obeyed God because that was part of the covenant relationship, and not a way of maintaining good health. The problem we face is that we do not live ideally. We often fail in our

battles, stumble because of difficulties, become afraid of the odds, revert to angers and self pity, again become angry with others, and again seek to justify and prove ourselves by what we do and say.

Doubtless many an Israelite failed covenantally, and doubtless many a Christian also. What this chapter is mainly concerned with is that we should see that life always has to be lived in faith, hope and love. If a Christian does not have vital faith in God's love, in His total forgiveness and His total purification of the past, then that person will be subject to fear of punishment. The past will come again to confront his spirit, and memory will bring misery. There is no need for such states, but faith is required to stand firmly against them.

Sadly enough, as a Christian, I have found myself in states of anger, depression and fear of illness. Twinges of pain have sometimes fired the imagination so that I have thought I might be in the midst of serious illness' Symptoms were magnified and even affectionately retained! Later I have realised that this has been an escape mechanism I have used in order to escape immediate responsibility, to get attention from others, and to evade being honest about myself, my wrong relationships and my sins' None of this had to happen but I wanted it to happen. I really welcomed the escape into illness. Such attitudes as these are what keep doctors in luxury, and help to maintain that vast industry devoted to human health.

There is something very satisfying in being about the work of God. This deliberate doing of His will, preaching and teaching His word, caring for others, seeking to live in wholesome relationships helps us to say, 'No!' to many an invading illness. Some call it 'faith-healing' but

it is primarily faith living, and faith loving' It is living in the hope of resurrection, glorification and eternal life. We do not have to cling to present life as though it were a thing in itself.

Whilst a believer is not afraid of sickness—not even if it were to come to him—then sickness does not find an easy lodging place. Let us be wholly honest and recognise that no one understands the mystery of illness. None knows the extent of the curse, the interaction of Satan and the powers of evil with humanity, the judgements of God upon evil, and the uses God has for illness as well as for health. That is why a healthy trust in God—come wind, come weather—will bring minimal sickness and maximal health. It has nothing what ever to do with 'the power of positive thinking', or the dynamics of 'possibility thinking'.^{*} It just has to do with sensible living in God, with the life of holiness which flows from love and grace. It has to do with healthy

^{*} This is not a snide criticism of these two ways of going about life. Undoubtedly many have had immediate results from such teaching. Getting immediate results is what seems to confirm the doctrine or practice of those who achieve the results. Immediate results do not greatly impress me, although once they did. It is what obtains in the long run which matters. Dynamic conversions can be followed by falling away from the Gospel—though this is neither necessary nor inevitable. Hearty meetings may be commendable, but it is the steady progress of believers which matters most. I doubt whether many of us can really define what is actually 'positive' and what is 'negative'. I think the matter has been dealt with superficially, and I am sure the terms are used too loosely. I am sure we can effect 'results' by certain kinds of teaching and preaching but if—ultimately—they are not truth, then they cannot—ultimately—produce authentic results.

fellowship in the body of Christ, abiding in God's life and Christ's body, and it has to do with prayer—faith in the intercession of Christ for us at God's right hand, and the Spirit's intercession within us.

When we can stop being fascinated by the matter of sickness, and become fascinated by the glory of God, sickness will become as a thing indifferent. At least so far as personal health is concerned, our attitude will be biblical and commonsense.

—APPENDIX ONE—

Health Provisions in the Old Testament

The incident of the sweetening of the bitter water of Marah (Exod. 15:22-25) incorporates God's announcement of Himself as the Healer of Israel, but such healing was contingent upon the obedience (to the covenant) by the people. *Obedience*, then, was the best prophylaxis against sickness. Although not all laws were related directly to physical health, in another sense all laws related to the health of the whole person, Sickness, we have seen, was the result of disobedience to the moral law; refusal to obey the laws of health and sanitation also invited illnesses.

A Basic Law of Prophylaxis was the Sabbath

Although not explicitly described thus, the Sabbath was given for health. Man was to concentrate on work for six days only. Hence the seventh was a time of rest. In modern times, nations have sought to eliminate the

Sabbath. As a result, industrial and primary production have diminished. Mental and physical health have often been jeopardised. Rested minds and bodies spell health. Animals, too, benefited. The Sabbath of the land enriched the soil. The Jubilee year when all things were rested, and in particular human beings were freed from slavery, imprisonment and debt, ensured a healthy race.

It must be noted that the Sabbath law was rooted in creation, ie. it is a functional principle of creation. That is why its infringement brought God's judgement, both upon persons and the nation. Exodus 31:12-17 states that the covenant is (a) a sign that God sanctifies His people, and (b) a sign of creation, ie. that God made the creation in six days, rested and was refreshed. Exodus 23:1t says that all are refreshed by this Sabbath, ie. persons, animals and even strangers. In Exodus 31:12- 17, death is prescribed for Sabbath non observance. Numbers 15:3t-36 is an example of this penalty executed. Jeremiah 17:19-t7 speaks of the judgement which will come on Judah and Jerusalem if they do not keep the Sabbath. Ezekiel 20:11ff. describes what God did because the Sabbath was not kept, principally because the Sabbath was one of those ordinances 'by whose observance man shall live' (v. 21). The Sabbath, then, was life-giving.

A Co-ordinating Principle of Prophylaxis was the Law

We saw in Ezekiel 20:21 that all God's laws were life-giving. Leviticus 18:5 repeats this, 'He who does them shall live by them'. To honour one's parents is 'to

live long', ie. to live longer, being in good health. In other words good familial relationships bring good life' At the same time the ten commandments are concerned with all life's relationships which are simultaneously vertical and horizontal, to God and man. Love to God and man ensures good health' The Psalms are rich in their demonstration of the healing power of true emotions and the destructive powers of negative use of emotions. Covenant love is the assurance of true personal and national health.

Dietary Laws are a Powerful Prophylaxis

These laws need to be examined in particular' The book, *None of These Diseases* (op' cit'), handles the subject well, especially as considered from a modern medical analysis' Foods were 'clean' or 'unclean', a classification which existed prior to the Flood (Gen. 7:2). Primarily cloven-hoofed ruminants were clean animals because they were not carnivores (Lev. 11:3-8; Deut. 14:4-8). Even so they had to be drained of blood, and animals which had died of disease or accident were forbidden. Fish with scales were permitted but no other water creatures. Certain fowl were also considered unclean (Lev. 11:13-19). Locusts alone of all insects were allowed for food' Pig meat was prohibited'

When these unclean creatures are examined they are found to be hosts to parasites which are dangerous to man. Pig meat, in particular, is a danger as its system is similar to that of man, and the life-cycle of a number of parasites begins with swine.

It is also interesting to note that, in the sacrifices, the fat was consumed on the altar, and when the sacrifice

permitted part human consumption, man was protected against excessive eating of fat.

Circumcision has Elements of Prophylaxis

It is assumed that for Israel, circumcision had moral and spiritual connotation. Deuteronomy 30:6, amongst other references, signifies this. Modern examination of the custom shows that certain types of cancer are more prevalent in uncircumcised than circumcised persons, and the transference of cancer to women is larger in the case of uncircumcised persons. Other skin diseases also are linked with uncircumcision.

Sexual Laws and Hygiene help Prophylaxis

The Jews had laws of consanguinity, which prevented inbreeding and line-breeding. These were heavily weighted against forms of incest' Other sexual laws legislated against homosexuality and bestiality (Lev. 18:22-23)' There were limitations on the times of sexual intercourse, these taking into account menstrual periods and post-natal cleansing (Lev. 15:19-24; 20:18). Certain injunctions related to normal hygiene and times of sexual intercourse. We may conclude that such hygiene related both to moral and physical elements.

Washings were not confined to sexual elements, but also to bodily and priestly functions (Exod. 30:18-21; Lev. 14:2-32).

Sanitation Was Also a Means of Prophylaxis

A study of such passages as Deuteronomy 23:12-13 and Numbers 31:7-24, shows us that sanitary arrangements prevented the initiation and spread of diseases by flies, human touch, and so on. Not only when travelling, but also in battle, all excreta was to be covered. In Numbers 31:13ff, there was to be isolation of both the victors and the vanquished so that there would be neither moral nor bodily pollution' All persons and things not of Israel were to be sanitised before use'

Conclusion

Other points made in the text of our study show that Israel's basic prophylaxis against sickness and unease was love of God, loyalty to Him, and the life of obedience. So often states of emotion, and of the will, relate to health and sickness'

What is clear is that those who neglected or abused the basic laws of health could scarcely expect healing' The application of this principle today may explain, in part, why some applicants for healing remain unhealed. Certainly cleanliness and godliness, for the Israelite, were one together.

—APPENDIX TWO—

Healing in Faith, Hope and Love

Hope

The ultimate for healing is in the realm of hope. We have seen from such passages as I Corinthians 15:4-28, Philippians 3:21 and Revelation 21:1-5, 22:1-5, that healing will be complete when the last enemy— death—is vanquished. It is this hope which keeps us enduring in the midst of suffering, eg. Romans 8:18-28, II Corinthians 4:16-18 and I Peter 5:10. In one sense, then, healing is always in hope and in this age never wholly complete. We face the dangers and experiences of disturbance, suffering and sicknesses every day. The verses we have just quoted give sense to suffering and sickness.

Faith

We have seen that healing is also in the realm of faith, ie. we must have faith in God's promises; we must seek His immediate personal will and so pray in faith

(Mark 11:20-25; James 5:13-18). We note in the cases of these two references here given, that each act of faith was timely, ie. at God's point of 'the fullness of time', ie' Jesus did not curse the fig tree out of time, but on time. This accords well with all that Christ did when evoking faith in the ill or using his faith for them.

Love

What is clear in all the healings of Christ is that they were done in love, for love. Hence the announcement of Luke 4:18 (cf. Isa. 61:1) was a love-announcement. Whilst his healings and miracles attested to his Messiahship, yet they were acts of love and deliverance which God did through him for those who needed them (Acts 2:22; cf. Mark 16:20; Acts 14:3; 19:11-12). Acts 14:3 speaks of 'the word of his grace' as being attested by signs and wonders, ie. the healings were of the nature of that very grace. Acts 10:38 speaks of Jesus going about 'doing good', ie. releasing folk from sickness, suffering and bondage. All of this must be summed up as love. All healing is from love, by love, for love. If it is not, then any healing effected is out of its true context. As we know, ultimate healing will be in the ultimate climax of love. It will be the ultimate climax of love.

Power, Healing and Love

In the New Testament, there are three areas in which the power of God is indicated. They are the Spirit, the Cross and the Kingdom of God. Romans 15:19 is one of the few places where the term 'power of the Holy Spirit' is mentioned (cf. Luke 4:1, 14; Acts 10:38). Other passages

speak of *power* which comes through the Holy Spirit (eg. I Cor. 2:4-5; I Thess. 1:5; Acts 10:38). In Romans 1:16-17 and I Corinthians 1:18, the Cross is called the power of God. Romans 14:11 speaks of the Kingdom being righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, whilst I Corinthians 4:20 says the Kingdom of God is not talk but power.

In the Gospels, the Kingdom is power to heal, exorcise and liberate. At the same time, such power is through the Spirit. Again the message of the Cross is through the Spirit (John 16:7-11; I Cor. 2:4-5; I Peter 1:12; I Thess. 1:5; Heb. 2:4). This message is also the message of the Kingdom (Acts 20:20-25). We conclude, then, that the Cross and the Kingdom are the expressions of God's power. They are incorporate in Christ (I Cor. 1:24), but they are expressed through the Holy Spirit. In this respect, Acts 1:7 -8 is important. The Spirit is to bring witness to Christ (or the witness of Christ) and to effect the Kingdom (to the ends of the earth) by the Holy Spirit.

Power for What?

We recognise that creational-providential power is for the good of creation. The healing-redemptional power is restorative of creation, liberating from states that are sub-creational or mal-creational. Hence the Cross and the Kingdom are all love, for love. Thus we see that Messiah and the Spirit work for love. This is the plan of the Father in whose authority are the times and the seasons (Acts 1:8). Hence we establish the principle that healing is for love. Faith and hope are always involved in love, (eg. Gal. 5:5-6; I Thess. 1:3; II Thess.

1:3-4; I Cor. 13:13; Col. 1:4-5; Eph. 1:15, 18) because this triad is inseparable. At the same time, the *greatest* of these is love.

This brings us to the astonishing fact that a certain kind of faith can accomplish healings and miracles without love: 'Though I have faith so that I can remove mountains and have not love, it is nothing'. Doubtless Matthew 7:21-23 illustrates this powerfully. The effecting of miracles and healings was without love, and was seen as unacceptable and even evil. This reminds us of the Egyptian magicians who could match some of Moses' wonders (Exod. 7:8-13). Simon Magus was in this 'gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity' (Acts 8:18-24) because he wanted to use power without God.

Power is for Love

The Cross is for love, indeed is love (eg. John 3:16; I John 3:16; 4:19; Gal.2:20; Eph.5:1 -2). The Kingdom is love (Col. 1:13; Rom. 14:13-17; etc.). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of love as of power (Rom. 5:5; 15:30; Col. 1:8; etc.).

It appears that there is power which can be used without love. True hope is based in love' Romans 5:5 says, '...and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us'. Galatians 5:5-6 shows us that 'faith works by love'. I Corinthians 13:1-2 shows that any action of power without love is valueless. The act is nothing, the doer is nothing. Hence the commands, 'Make love your aim' (I Cor. 14:1), and 'Let all that you do be done in love' (I Cor. 16:14).

The practical outcome of the power of the Spirit

coming at Pentecost was the new and wonderful love of the new believers' They were of 'one heart, one soul and one mind', and they regarded nothing as their own' They daily distributed to fit the needs of the brethren. They cared for the poor, the orphans and the widows, The Gospel of love captured them to love, Ephesians 1:15 speaks of 'your love toward all the saints'. The same Epistle speaks in terms of power (1:19; 3:14-20), but this power is equated with love (3:14-20).

We have seen the healing powers of the Cross in regard to removing guilt, hurts, wounds, and the accumulation of moral evil and pollution, this inducing great love and gratitude. We see, then, that all elements of liberation are the actions of God's love. Love is always spoken of as building something (I Cor. 8:1; Rom. 14:15-19; Eph. 4:16; cf. I Cor. 3:10ff. where the only eternal element is true work, ie. work done in love).

Conclusion: All is for Love

We have not fully examined the use of power apart from love. We assume from references to the occult in Exodus 7:8-13 that a principle of use of power to effect miracles is present in the created world. Matthew 7:2 I ff. (cf. Matt.24:24; Rev.13:12 - 14) shows that not all healings, signs and wonders are done in love or for love. They are deceptive imitators or counterparts of the real thing, ie. the love of God. It may well be that the acts described in I Corinthians 13:1-3 are not evil nor of the occult, but they are nevertheless empty and pointless. The true use of gifts is for love. The gift is the deed which meets the need. Great powers exist in positive thinking or possibility thinking and in the exercise of

active faith, but the test of their authenticity is whether they spring from love, are actions of love, and are the goals of love. Doubtless in creation there are great psychic powers available for human beings to use, some of which may not be essentially evil, though some may be evil.

Love heals. True healing is true loving. Healing without love is not true healing. It can be valueless, neutral, and even dangerous. The test of the true healer is that his life is rooted in the Cross, in the Spirit, in love. He will show the fruit of the Spirit. Where he exercises the gifts of the Christ and the Spirit, he will exercise them in love.

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