

HEALING PURCHASED BY THE BLOOD

By Anna W. Prosser

"Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." (Matthew 8: 17)

UP TO this time I had been of ten called to visit the sick and always went cheerfully and told my experience, and strove to lead the sufferer to look to Christ for healing, but I was never quite certain as to whether it was the will of God to heal them or not, believing it to be His will to heal only certain cases, those designed for a special work, perhaps. So it was often a trial to me to go when sent for, lest I should raise the hopes of some in vain. While attending a Convention at Old Orchard Beach, I heard all who spoke on the subject of Divine Healing, teaching that it was a part of Christ's redemptive work upon the cross. They were prominent ministers of the Gospel, and evangelists from all parts of the country. "Can all these men and women, so deeply taught of God, be wrong in this respect?" I queried. I had heretofore seasoned against this teaching of healing in the atonement, and honestly thought that I was doing God service.

In one of the cottages there was a brother holding conversational meetings, and, being present one afternoon, I listened for some time to the questions and answers, and finally concluded that I would ask him if he believed that Jesus bore our sicknesses in the same sense that He bore our sins? I inwardly hoped that he would say that he did not. But he replied, "Most assuredly." I then undertook, by quite a lengthy process of reasoning, to convince

him that he was wrong. He listened very quietly and humbly until I had finished, and with one brief sentence gave the deathblow to all my fine reasoning and human opinions. He said, "The Bible says so, doesn't it, sister?" "Y-e-s," I said hesitatingly, as the passage "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" came quickly to my mind. "The Bible says so! Is not that enough?" whispered the blessed Spirit "Do you not take that very same position when dealing with souls on any other subject? Do you not urge them to believe simply because God says thus and so in His Word?" Thus was I put to confusion by the one simple question evidently given that dear man of God by the Holy Spirit.

Overcome with emotion I hurriedly left the meeting, and going up to my room I prostrated myself before God, determined that I would not leave the room until this subject, so long contended against in the past, was clearly settled in my mind. Now I had often been told by Greek scholars that the word "bare" in the passage quoted above (Matthew 8: 17) is the same in the Greek as the word "bare" in 1 Peter 2:4, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree," referring, of course, to the blessed work of substitution wrought on Calvary's cross in our behalf. And yet I had, like many others, refused to believe it because I could not understand it.

I argued that if Jesus bore our sicknesses in the same sense that He bore our sins, we should never die, as the atonement would avail to the end for the body as well as the soul. This arose from the supposition that the believer must necessarily enter into the next world through the gateway of sickness, and as I had never even conceived it a possibility that the Christian should pass out of the body in triumph over disease, living to a ripe old age and falling asleep in Jesus, I was really an honest doubter on the subject of healing in the atonement. If anyone had asked what the passage did mean I could not have answered, but I had a vague idea that it might mean that He sympathized with our sicknesses. Also that He might in some way have "taken" the sicknesses of those whom He healed when on earth, by the laying out of hands.

I must confess that I was in a fog with regard to the whole thing; I simply did not want to believe that my sicknesses were nailed to the tree, because I could not explain how or why it was so. Believing that many of my readers are in the same state of mind, and that others may be prejudiced against this important doctrine for the simple reason that it has never been clearly explained to them in the scriptures, I write this experience of my own struggles in this direction with the hope that many may, as the result of it, "search the Scriptures" like the Bereans of old to see whether these things are so.

I had also been taught that Isaiah 53:4 should be translated thus: "Surely He bath borne our sicknesses and carried our pains," and had

seen in the Revised Version the word "griefs" throughout the entire chapter rendered in the margin": sicknesses." (Hebrews) As I bowed before God the words flashed through my mind recorded in I John 5:10 "He that believeth not God bath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son," and I was obliged most humbly to confess and to ask forgiveness, that I had refused to believe the record which God has given us of His Son as the Bearer of our sicknesses as well as of our sins, and had thus made God a liar, for surely this is a part of the record, is it not?

No sooner had I made this confession than I was brought face to face with a very sharp, pointed question from which I could not turn aside. He said. "Will you believe what I say, or will you not?" With my finger upon Matthew 8:17 I said: "Lord, this is what Thou hast said to me; that Jesus Christ bore my sicknesses and infirmities, and now I do believe it, simply because Thou hast declared it. I do now rest upon Thy word rather than my own reasoning about it, and although. I do not yet understand it, I do with all my heart receive it, and from this time forth I will teach it to others, as Thou shalt bid me, for the remainder of my days. And now, Lord, let the light in." As I uttered these words while bowing low at His feet, such a view was given me of Jesus bearing not only my sins, but also my sicknesses, upon Calvary's cross, that I was melted to tears and could only pour forth my praises for such a wonderful redemption.

On my way home from the seashore, I stopped to visit friends in two different cities, and was requested in each place to speak on the subject of Divine Healing. Satan whispered: "You won't dare to declare healing in the atonement." I said I would declare precisely what God gave me, and found as soon as I had opened my mouth in the first meeting that I was led to lay the foundation stone of this blessed truth deep and strong in the blood shedding of the Lord Jesus Christ. When about starting for the meeting the Spirit said: "Take the anointing oil." I had hitherto felt that an "elder" (James 5:14.) must necessarily be a man, but being quite sure that God had spoken, I rather tremblingly obeyed, and was so blest in thus ministering in His name that many suffering ones came to me for prayer, and laying on of the hands (Mark 16:18) and about fifty were anointed with oil for the healing of their diseases.

As I went on giving forth this truth it became more and more clear to my understanding, and from time to time, as the years have come and gone, it has been a joy to witness sick ones coming to the Cross for healing (for there the "record" will surely lead one) often of incurable diseases, and going on their way rejoicing and glorifying God.

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