

THE CONNECTION OF SATAN WITH DISEASE

By Anna W. Prosser

The source of the vast multitudes of painful diseases which afflict the human race seems so little understood by Christian people that it may be well for us, dear reader, to sit down together for a while with the Scriptures and see what the Lord our God says regarding it. I presume that you clearly understand that Satan brought sin into the world, and that he is the mighty adversary of our souls and will be until the King comes and casts him into the lake of fire. But perhaps you do not yet see that he is also the author of disease, and that he flings his "fiery darts" quite as frequently and with as much malignity at our bodies as our spirits.

But consider a moment. When man fell, through listening to the tempter's plausible reasonings, he was not only cut off from God spiritually, but mentally and physically. The whole man went down. From the moment he fell into Satan's hands through disobedience to God, he began to die. Gen. 2:17, (margin) "dying, thou shalt die." The seeds of disease and death then took root in his body which had been created "in the likeness of God," fair, and sound, and beautiful.. Separated from God, who alone is the source of spiritual and physical health, he became corrupt at the very center of his being,

and from that day brought forth sin, disease and death.

Have we not many times charged our loving Heavenly Father with much of the misery, which Satan is the author of! He has been from the first a mischievous, destructive spirit, ever bent on stirring up strife and confusion in the bodies and spirits of men as well as in the natural world. God, on the other hand, "is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (1 Corinthians 13:33); and it is a comforting and most inspiring thought that He is back of and above and beyond all that Satan can do, and for His own dear children causes' even his most diabolical schemes to work out eventually for good. (Romans 8:28) Look at the case of Job. Was not all his suffering, both physical and mental, purely Satanic, Job 1:6-19 and 2:3-7. But through his affliction he was led to see the "RANSOM" for sin and sickness, and humbling himself into the dust before God, was not only healed in body, "his flesh becoming fresher than a child's", but sanctified, and finally more favored of God than ever before.

Then when the blessed Redeemer, whom Job saw by faith, came into the world and entered upon His ministry of salvation and healing, we read that "He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil." Acts 10:38. If their diseases

were the work of God and for His glory, how would He have dared to rebuke them (the diseases) as He invariably did? He "came to do the Father's will" not to thwart it. He "came to set the captive free" (of Satan) in spirit, soul and body, and to bring the whole man back into union with God and completeness in Him, which he had lost through Adam's fall. He visited Peter's mother-in-law and finding her in a burning fever He "rebuked" it, and she was at once delivered. But what was it that He rebuked, the fever or the one who had maliciously put it upon her? Did He rebuke a thing or intelligence, manifestly the latter. She was "oppressed of the devil," and rebuking him he fled in confusion before his almighty Conqueror as, praise God, he always does and must; and the sufferers being set free from his deadly clutch was once more in health. Jesus also encouraged the good and rebuked the evil, did He not? Hence we see that He considered that fever an evil put upon her by Satan, not "a blessing sent by God," as many, even some ministers of the Gospel, would like us to believe when sickness comes upon us! Surely Jesus could not and never did interfere with the work of God.

In Luke 13:11-16 we see Him graciously and tenderly "calling unto Him" a poor woman who had "a spirit of infirmity eighteen years." What "spirit" was this? Surely not the blessed Spirit of God! He is a life-giving Spirit, and we read "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." But this poor woman was bound as if by iron bands and "could in nowise lift herself up." The moment our compassionate Savior beheld her He spoke the word of power and set her free. He said "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." What

thrilling words! Then He laid His hands of healing upon her, and she was instantly straight. This also was a case of "oppression," not possession. When remonstrated with, He plainly declared she had been "bound by Satan," and that she ought to be loosed!

When my attention was first called to the significance of that little word "ought" in this connection my heart leaped for joy. As "a daughter of Abraham" she had no right to be "bound," but as an heir to the promise through Christ she had not only the privilege, but the indisputable right to assert her claim to complete salvation, entire deliverance from Satan's power over body, soul or spirit. Oh that all dear sufferers who read these lines might clearly see that they "ought" not to remain bound by Satan's malignant hand another hour, not another moment! What else can we gather from this declaration of our Lord than that it is our DUTY to be free? When we say that we ought to do this or that, do we not mean that we consider it a binding duty to do that thing? Oh, praise God for such a Redeemer! No wonder that dear captive "glorified God," when she thus suddenly escaped like a bird from the "snare of the fowler." We can just fancy her hastening out of that synagogue, erect and who had thus afflicted her for eighteen long years. She had undoubtedly supposed all along that it was her Father's hand and that she must bow in submission to His will, bitter though it was to creep through life thus crippled and suffering.

In Matthew 12:22 we see a poor man, both blind and dumb, brought to Jesus. Either one of these afflictions one would think hard enough to bear, but to be unable either to see or speak must be an affliction

indeed. Now what was the cause of this, The Holy Spirit tells us that he was "possessed of a devil," a demoniac (margin). As soon as this vile, tormenting spirit, which had closed his eyes and bound his tongue, was cast out, immediately "he both spake and saw." Again we see in Matthew 9:32-33, a dumb man "possessed with a devil," which when cast out left his tongue loosened. In Matthew 17:14-21 we see one tormented indeed. His disease is termed epilepsy in the Revised Version, and such it must have been, judging from the symptoms which Mark gives more in detail (chapter 9:17), where we read that he had "a dumb spirit" which often seized him, tearing him and dashing him to the floor, into the fire and into the water, causing him to foam at the mouth and gnash his teeth, and through this severe handling, both mind and body were sinking, so that he was pining away. Matthew says: that he was a "lunatic," a frequent result of this terrible disease. Could a God whose name is Love thus torment one of His helpless creatures? The disciples on this occasion were powerless through unbelief and disobedience, but Jesus said: "Bring him unto Me." The moment the demon within him saw Jesus, his Conqueror, the almighty Savior, he threw his wretched victim on the ground foaming and writhing in agony. Upon the poor distracted father declaring his faith, our glorious Redeemer (who was soon to conquer Satan and all his hosts, upon the Cross), rebuked the foul demon thus: "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him and enter no more into him." Mark 9:25. Praise God, the afflicted one was, after one more struggle, delivered of the demon, and though so exhausted with the conflict that he appeared to be dead, when Jesus

took him by the hand, he arose, and Matthew says, "he was cured from that hour." Consider what a terrible work one demon had wrought in that body; he had closed the ears; bound the tongue, and deprived him of his reason! No wonder Satan is called the "Prince of darkness"; his work is dark enough.

As Jesus "came to destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8), and to deliver his captive's (Luke 4:18), and to perfectly do the Father's will (Hebrews 10:7), therefore when we read in Matthew 8:16, that "He healed all that were sick," we see that He was manifesting the love and compassion of our Father, whose will is that all His children should be "complete in Him."

Disease in spirit, soul or body is Satan's work, but "in ME," said Jesus, "ye shall have peace." Oh that the dear suffering children of God everywhere might be enlightened by the Holy Spirit to see that they are tormented of the devil and no longer be "ignorant of his devices." Let me assure you, dear friends, that he is a very real personage, and if you will only face him squarely and in the name of Jesus rebuke him, pointing him to the blood which has redeemed you, not only from all sin, but also all sickness (Matthew 8:17) he will flee from you and his foul diseases with him.

Will you not believe what God says about it? "RESIST the devil and he WILL flee from you!" Dear, dear sufferer, he certainly will. Perhaps not always without a conflict, and it may be at times fierce and long, but consider two more promises given for our comfort. After commanding us to put on the "whole armor of God," we read: "Above all, taking the shield of

faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench ALL the fiery darts of the evil one." (Revised Version) It seems to me that that shield is the name of Jesus, which, if held up resolutely and perseveringly between you and Satan and any of his demons will surely force him to retreat in dismay. How can he withstand that name, He may for awhile "roar like a lion," and try to make it appear that he has the field and will never leave it, and your efforts may seem to you so feeble and utterly useless against such a foe that you may be tempted to give up. But no! A thousand times no! All depends upon your exercising a firm faith in the power of Jesus' name and letting the enemy know that you do not fear him, that you understand him perfectly and his cunning tricks and do not propose to yield one inch until you come off triumphant.

A friend once said to me when I was passing through a sharp conflict, both in spirit and body: "This conflict is not between you and Satan, it is between Jesus and Satan!" New courage filled my soul. "Ah," I thought, "if it is between Jesus and Satan, I know very well how it is coming out!" In conclusion, reads Romans 8:37-39, and let us exalt the Name which is above every name, now and evermore.

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