

# “By His Stripes We Are Healed”?: Exploring a Pentecostal Aspect of the Atonement With Karl Barth

Joshua R. Ziefle, PhD

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## I. Introduction:

Pentecostalism is most popularly noted for a singular activity: *glossolalia*, or speaking in tongues. While it is a practice that retains importance amongst self-identified Spirit-filled believers, it by no means encompasses the breadth of the Pentecostal movement in our time. Donald Dayton’s classic *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* has helped dissuade notions of this sort by focusing not on a single issue, but rather what he calls a “gestalt” of ideas. In contradistinction to those who would attempt to understand Pentecostalism as a “Holy Spirit only” club, each of these four themes remain centrally focused upon the work of Jesus: “Christ as Savior, as Baptizer with the Holy Spirit, as Healer, and as Coming King.”<sup>1</sup>

For the purposes of conversation between Barth and Pentecostalism, this paper will focus on the third of these images, Christ as Healer. Part of the “full gospel” collection of teachings, healing reminds us that Pentecostalism is deeply concerned with the work of Christ in earthly life. As Pentecostal scholar Allan Anderson has written, “salvation means a restoration of wholeness to human life, in which people have communion with God and blessings from God that seem to include provision for human need.”<sup>2</sup> A deeply embodied faith tradition, Pentecostalism the world over takes seriously the idea that physical healing is a part of God’s work for us—a work

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<sup>1</sup> Donald Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury, 1987), 173.

<sup>2</sup> Allan Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 222.

accomplished in the atonement. The way this idea connects to the theology of Karl Barth is therefore the focus of this investigation.

## II. Pentecostals on Healing:

The linkage of healing with the atonement is an idea present in Pentecostal circles from the outset. Arising out of late Holiness teachings and practice, it became one of the four early pillars of the movement. Though atonement-healing doctrine is not limited to Pentecostals, it is one of its notable and classic features.<sup>3</sup> Further, while there are other Pentecostal explanations of how divine healing happens—such as the gifting of the Spirit or divine acts of power—the idea that healing is provided for in the atonement is both historic and central.

The classic Pentecostal presentation is relatively straightforward. God made humanity perfect in God's own image. Humankind was then complete and whole in mind, body, and spirit. With the entry of sin into the world, chaos became a part of life. Sin polluted the soul and destroyed the body. A. B. Simpson, though himself only a proto-Pentecostal, adequately described this state of being: "Man has a twofold nature. He is both a material and a spiritual being. And both natures have been equally affected by the Fall. His body is exposed to disease; his soul is corrupted by sin."<sup>4</sup> Generally speaking, sickness is simply one of the wages of sin in all human lives. In response to this radical perversion of life and the reality of death it augurs, Jesus Christ atones for humanity's sins. Sins are forgiven and by extension disease is healed. The doctrine takes as one of its hallmark biblical verse Isaiah 53:5 (NRSV)—"But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed."

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<sup>3</sup> R. A. N. Kydd notes the teaching was "championed by Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Baptists, among others," but that Pentecostalism is the "20<sup>th</sup>-century tradition which has emphasized it most strongly," "Healing the Christian Church," in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 710.

<sup>4</sup> A. B. Simpson, *The Gospel of Healing (Revised Edition)*, (Harrisburg, PA: The Christian Alliance Publishing Company, 1915), 9.

Jesus therefore took upon himself the sins and diseases of humanity, and in so doing made divine healing available.<sup>5</sup>

This belief is so much a part of the DNA of Pentecostalism that even today a major United States denomination and international participant in the movement —the Assemblies of God— holds up the theological distinctive as one of its four “cardinal doctrines.”<sup>6</sup> The idea of healing in general is also an important theme worldwide, as many Renewalist adherents in the Majority World feel that it offers to meet felt needs. It is an embodied answer to present suffering in a multiplicity of contexts.<sup>7</sup>

Especially with relation to the idea of divine healing and the oft-repeated phrase “by His stripes we are healed,” Pentecostals stand firmly in the realm of substitutionary and expiatory models of the atonement. In his suffering for us, Jesus Christ carries our sin and sickness. There is no doubt that humanity deserved punishment by the justice of God, but through Jesus’ actions, their sorry lot taken away. The words of early Pentecostal F. F. Bosworth speak powerfully to this mindset:

... It is not meant that the Servant of Jehovah merely entered into fellowship of our sufferings which we had to bear and deserved to bear; and therefore He not only bore them away, but also in His own Person endured them in order to discharge us from them. Now, when one takes suffering upon himself which another had to bear, and does this not merely in fellowship with him but in his stead, we call it substitution....the bearing and removal of human disease is an integral part of the doctrine of Christ Crucified; that Jesus is the Saviour of the body as well as of the spirit...<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Pentecostal scholar Keith Warrington notes, “Pentecostals believe in the possibility of divine healing as a legitimate expression of the ministry of the Church.” *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter*, (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 265. *Assemblies of God Website*, “Our 16 Fundamental Truths,”

[http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/Statement\\_of\\_Fundamental\\_Truths/sft\\_full.cfm#12](http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/Statement_of_Fundamental_Truths/sft_full.cfm#12), (accessed 16 June 2016).

<sup>7</sup> As Keith Warrington once again claims, “Although we must acknowledge sociological factors as relevant to the growth and acceptance of Pentecostalism among different peoples, we must see this primarily as Christian revivalist movements that rely on the Holy Spirit to offer holistic and contextual ‘here and now’ answers in the name of Christ to fundamental problems encountered by people in everyday life,” 242.

<sup>8</sup> F. F. Bosworth, *Christ the Healer: Sermons on Divine Healing*, (River Forest, IL: n.p., 1924), 18.

For Pentecostals the great suffering of Jesus on the Cross is what forgives sin and heals humanity. Focus upon our pains and His stripes ultimately leads to this one conclusion. Since sin is understood mostly as lawless action, it is no great jump to imagine punishment for said action would therefore be required in response. That this punishment be active in response to sinful human action makes sense. Sickness, as one of the punishments generally inflicted in this world, constitutes a part of that for which Jesus would have to atone. Divine healing is therefore a great victory, yet all the same one borne through punishment-bearing on the part of God in Christ.<sup>9</sup>

### **III. Karl Barth, the Atonement, and Healing:**

Since Barth was significantly outside the orbit of the Pentecostal movement during his lifetime, the few words he did offer in relation to it are often touchstones in investigations like these.

A 1967 comment to a group of Mennonites serves well as an illustration:

Indeed, the Holy Spirit is one of whom we have need...And if they [Pentecostals] do this [seek the Spirit], and if something of Pentecost becomes visible there now again, who can say something against it? Against this, nothing is to be said and for it everything is to be praised. If it happens the right way, then we should praise and thank God that there is a Pentecostal movement.<sup>10</sup>

For some, this kind of positive appraisal is heartening. Yet if we were to listen to Barth further as he concludes his statement by stating “But one would have to see up close how things turn out with them,”<sup>11</sup> questions emerge. For while Barth’s attention to the work of God in Christ is a significant point upon which he might have sympathy with the Pentecostals, there are many elements in their

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<sup>9</sup> Talk of power in Pentecostal circles makes it clear that a bloody atonement is not all that they have in mind. They understand the great victory that is won in Jesus Christ, a stance that should not be surprising for a group that claims the gifts of spiritual power that so obviously speak to that same victory: “Jesus recovered all through His atonement.” (Bosworth, 4). In the end, saving Pentecostals from a far-too-bloody atonement centered fully upon suffering is their constant attentiveness to the power of the Spirit, a focus that never lets them lose sight of an idea of atonement that presages victory in addition to pain. A distinctive noted among others by Dayton in his *Theological Roots*, 115. There, he comments that “Perhaps even more characteristic of Pentecostalism that the doctrine of the baptism of the Spirit is its celebration of miracles of divine healing as a part of God’s salvation and as evidence of the presence of divine power in the church.” This linking of the two emphases is clear.

<sup>10</sup> Karl Barth, as quoted in Terry Cross, “Christ in Us: The Hope of Glory or the Sentimentality of a ‘Bohemian Private Enterprise,’” in *Karl Barth and the Future of Evangelical Theology*, ed. Christian T. Collins Winn and John L. Drury (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014), 87-88.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

theology of sin, suffering, and sickness with which Barth might either disagree or wish for significantly more depth or nuance.

A reading of Karl Barth's discussion in *CD IV/1* is necessary to understand this complexity. In Barth's mind, the atonement is that mystery by which God is for us. (*Deus pro nobis*). We must, in Barth's words, "recognize [it] to be divinely necessary because it derives from and is posited by God...This fact we have to perceive and reverence and receive and glorify as the mystery of the atonement, the incarnation of the eternal word."<sup>12</sup> Humanity is caught up in sin that is only a negation—"it exists and is only in opposition to the will of God and there in opposition to the being and destiny of His creature. It can only say No where God says Yes."<sup>13</sup> In response to this, God in Christ willingly becomes our representative and substitute.

For Karl Barth, sin has no separate being but exists as negation. This profound nothingness is most importantly—and most tragically—a negation of God. As it develops, it becomes the basis for all things set in opposition to the way of God: "it is the usurpation against the creative will of God...where it has no business at all to be as that which God has not willed."<sup>14</sup> As Barth writes, the profound "nothingness is not exhausted in sin."<sup>15</sup> Rather, it is the source from which all sin, suffering and evil proceeds. This nothingness or negation has a totality to it that radically affects and alters the state of all things at all levels: "The nothingness has the form of evil and death as well as sin [and?] shows us that it is what it is not only morally but physically and totally."<sup>16</sup> There is a radical pervasiveness to this force that eats away and infects the world of life. It is in this sense that it may be said to affect the entirety of the person—spiritually and physically. If so, then it may as well be said to be that which brings death, including that which presages death. In a certain sense,

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<sup>12</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics IV/1* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 213; hereafter cited as IV/1.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 139. Though identified with sin at a certain point, it seems to be a larger concept that goes beyond it.

<sup>15</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics III/3*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 310; hereafter cited as III/3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

sickness may thus be derived from Barth as a result of sin, or more properly, the nothingness that stands opposed to God. Barth himself says at one point that “sickness...is an element in the rebellion of chaos against God’s creation.”<sup>17</sup> Though human existence in “allotted time...proper to him as the creature of God,”<sup>18</sup> is not itself an evil, the end of life—and one would assume the bits of death that sickness contains and portends—has a shadow cast over it. As he writes: “death, as it actually encounters us as men, is the sign of God’s judgment on us.”<sup>19</sup>

The ontological status of sin is for Barth complex. For while on the one hand he says that sin is nothingness, he on the other hand notes that nothingness is much more than sin. Sin is simply one effect of this negation.<sup>20</sup> This nothingness or negation remains hard to define and seems ever an impersonal force within Barth’s thought.<sup>21</sup>

With his understanding of sin, Barth develops a four-fold method to explain the work of atonement. First, we see Jesus Christ taking our place as judge, removing that by which we set ourselves up as gods before others. In so doing, He takes our place as sinners, making our fallen state His own as our representative. Then “it ceases to be our sin,”<sup>22</sup> because “our sin is no longer our own. It is His sin, the sin of Jesus Christ.”<sup>23</sup> Jesus Christ therefore confronts the disruptive force and obstacle affecting all of creation. As he dies for us, this obstacle is overcome and defeated so that we do not have to suffer what we ought to suffer:

In His person He has delivered up us sinners and sin itself to destruction. He has removed us sinners and sin, negated us, cancelled us out: ourselves, our sin, and the accusation, condemnation, and perdition which had overtaken us. That is what we cannot do and are not willing to do.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/4 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 366; hereafter cited as III/4.

<sup>18</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/2, (New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 123; hereafter cited as III/2.

<sup>19</sup> III/2, 157.

<sup>20</sup> Geoffrey Bromiley notes in this respect that “nothingness includes sin but also exceeds it. With sin there is also real evil, real death, a real devil, and a real hell,” *Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), 149.

<sup>21</sup> As per Bromiley, it is in essence a thing that “has no ultimate power or actuality but only that of an echo or shadow,” 151.

<sup>22</sup> IV/1, 236.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

Lastly, Barth writes that Jesus did right in our place, succeeding in living *pro nobis* and for God without sin—“reversed the fall in their place and for their sake.”<sup>25</sup>

In writing on the atonement, Barth downplays the idea of suffering being salvific. In some brief comments relevant to the crucifixion, he notes with regard to Jesus’ sufferings that “many men perhaps suffered more grievously and longer and more bitterly than did this man in the limited events of a single day.”<sup>26</sup> Making the atonement focused entirely upon suffering misses the point in Barth’s understanding. What was important, he states, was that Jesus conquered death and sin. It matters neither the type of suffering nor the means of death: “The decisive thing is not that He has suffered what we ought to have suffered...[but] that in the suffering and death of Jesus Christ He has made an end of us sinners and therefore of sin itself.”<sup>27</sup> The great negation that says No to God is itself negated in the work of Jesus Christ. The negation of negation, in other words, becomes a positive. Christ is Victor over this negation and is a great Yes for us. This is for Barth the meaning of the atonement to which all Christian testimony owes its focus.

#### **IV. Dialogue:**

In attempting a dialogue between the theological claims of Pentecostalism and Barth, two important factors remain fundamental in understanding the basis upon which each understands their position. First, both Barth and the Pentecostals have their own vision of that which separates humanity from God. It is this separation, of course, which needs to be remedied in order to restore the proper and God-ordained order. The process by which this is done is therefore a necessary second point of conversation between the two theological traditions

First, if Barth is speaking of the presence of sickness in our world being related to sin, Pentecostals would have little with which to disagree. The Pentecostal statements that “disease,

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 259.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 245.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 253.

which is incipient death, entered into the world *by sin*<sup>28</sup> and “both [man’s] natures have been equally affected by the Fall. His body is exposed to disease; his soul is corrupted by sin”<sup>29</sup> are, based on what we have seen, ones which could potentially be held by both theological systems.

This said, Barth in large part prefers to speak of nothingness as the primary issue affecting God and humanity. In Pentecostal circles, however, talk of this nature is rarely considered. There, sin always has a specific status and definite existence. Deriving initially from the personal disobedience of Satan, sin is that lawlessness which operates actively in the life of human beings. In the words of Pentecostal scholar Bruce Marino, “whatever else sin is, at its heart it is a breach of God’s law...transgression forces separation from the God of Life and Holiness, which necessarily results in the corruption (including death) of finite, dependent human nature.”<sup>30</sup> In this, Pentecostalism shows the very definite and solid vision of sin it retains. Sin is thus pride, it is stealing, it is lust, it is murder. Sin for the Pentecostal can be the existence of all those things one does in breaking the laws of God. Though Barth and the Pentecostals might find common ground on the idea of God’s purposes in Christ as central in the discussion of sin, the much more concrete understanding of sin within Pentecostalism makes total agreement somewhat difficult.

The negation of God that is nothingness is more impersonal or general than the Pentecostal notion of sin as action and actions against God. Sin in Barth’s mind seems almost a derivative of negation and nothingness. Sickness perhaps, could descend from this common source instead of from sin directly. Pentecostalism, by contrast, often subsumes the philosophical and spiritual basis of sin *ala* Barth’s “nothingness” within the actual acts of lawlessness that are sin. Sickness flows directly out of sin in their approach. Thus while Barth and Pentecostalism see the radical

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<sup>28</sup> Bosworth, 1.

<sup>29</sup> Simpson, 9.

<sup>30</sup> Bruce R. Marino, “The Origin, Nature, and Consequences of Sin,” in *Systematic Theology, Revised Edition*, (Springfield, MO: Logion Press, 1995), ed. Stanley Horton, 273.



disjunction between God and the fallen world that points toward death and by extension sickness, the way they describe this state has certain differences.

Second, Barth's thoughts concerning atonement also remain somewhat different in tone from the Pentecostals'—in large measure having to do with his understanding of the nature of sin. For while the Pentecostal emphasis upon sin as action connects the atonement with punishment, Barth's understanding that both sin and sickness are grounded in the nothingness that negates God points toward a much more bloodless process. Neither suffering nor punishment are central here; rather, "at the very heart of the atonement is the overcoming of sin."<sup>31</sup> What is required in his view is that God negates this negation and destroys it.

For Barth, Jesus Christ is the Victor over the nothingness that threatens Creation and the victor over sin and (perhaps) sickness that flow from that primordial separation. As he notes, "We are concerned with the living person of Jesus Christ. Strictly, it is not grace, but He Himself as its Bearer, Bringer, and Revealer, who is the Victory, the light which is not overwhelmed by darkness, but before which darkness must yield until it is itself overwhelmed."<sup>32</sup> Barth downplays the suffering of Jesus in this, not because he feels that Jesus did not suffer, but because he sees the ultimate importance of his atonement to be elsewhere.<sup>33</sup> By not focusing on the cross of Christ as an instrument of suffering but as a means to overcoming, Barth points to the victory of Christ by which Christ finally negates the opposing nothingness.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> IV/1, 253.

<sup>32</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/3.1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 173; hereafter cited as IV/3.1; Donald Bloesch notes, "there is no doubt that Barth's basic affinity is with the classic or dramatic view of the atonement, in which Jesus Christ is depicted as victor over the powers of darkness," *Jesus is Victor: Karl Barth's Doctrine of Salvation*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 43.

<sup>33</sup> "The decisive thing is not that He has suffered what we ought to have suffered so that we do not have to suffer it, the destruction to which we have fallen victim in our true guilt, and therefore the punishment which we deserve. This is true, of course. But it is true only as it derives from the decisive thing that in the suffering and death of Jesus Christ it has come to pass that in His own person He has made an end to us as sinners and therefore of sin itself..." IV/1, 253.

<sup>34</sup> Forensically and actually, Jesus is the Victor over all. He has both "cancelled [the relevance]...of sin to us" and "done that which is 'satisfactory' or sufficient in the victorious fighting of sin to make this victory radical and total," IV/1, 254.

Even when Barth strays into models of atonement such as sacrifice that would seem to be more focused upon suffering, he rethinks them in such a way that they are not in one-to-one correspondence with the sins or sicknesses of the world, but so that there is a full and pure note of ultimate victory: “The sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the offering of which is taken out of the hands of all priests, is entirely His own affair, and it is no longer a shadow and a figure, but a fulfillment of the reconciliation of man with God.”<sup>35</sup> Even here Barth tends much more towards the side of emphasizing reconciliation rather than the necessity of suffering as the goal.<sup>36</sup> Thus though suffering is involved, it is always done with a view towards only “that which has to take place to set aside sin and remove the conflict.”<sup>37</sup> With regard to the hallmark passage for Pentecostals, Barth admits that “the concept of punishment...from Is. 53...cannot be completely rejected or evaded....but we must not make this a main concept.”<sup>38</sup>

Where Barth discusses the idea of representation and substitution, he may nevertheless lean closer to the Pentecostal idea of Christ bearing our sin and sickness in a literal sense. Concepts such as the *Deus pro nobis* and “Christ in our place” seem fairly conspicuous in this respect. Yet while present, they are not the driving force that the idea of victory and overcoming are in Barth’s thought. Thus while George Hunsinger can state that Jesus Christ “meets [us] with the mystery of suffering love...offers himself up for them all. He presents himself as a living sacrifice...” there is a point to this action, a “dying in the place of his enemies that they might live.”<sup>39</sup> In the end Barth is firm in asserting the victory of reconciliation as primary, even though he does tip a hat towards other models that more readily include ideas of suffering and blood. This tendency might be said to

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<sup>35</sup> IV/1, 279.

<sup>36</sup> In the words of Bloesch, “the cross is to be understood primarily not as the fulfillment of a legal contract calling for the shedding of innocent blood but as the triumph of sovereign love over enmity and alienation, which invariably resulted in the shedding of blood,” 46.

<sup>37</sup> IV/1, 280.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

<sup>39</sup> George Hunsinger, “The Politics of the Non-Violent God: Reflections on Rene Girard and Karl Barth,” in George Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 35-6.

be reversed for Pentecostals, who focus more upon Jesus' bearing of human sufferings, even while that same suffering moves towards victory. Close to the center of these tendencies are the two visions of sin they use to discuss the primary human problem.

## **V. Conclusion:**

As we have seen, the two models of sin and atonement that are utilized by Barth and the Pentecostals—though at times disparate—have intersected in interesting ways. The theological trajectories of our investigation are therefore multiple. First, though the theological systems are distinct, both have a holistic nature. Pentecostalism for its part remains deeply concerned with the physical body. Its focus upon healing and this-worldly gifts of the Spirit shows that they seek to take seriously the idea that God is concerned for their life in this world as well as the next. When specifically related to the atonement, the Pentecostal idea that sin affects the whole person is powerful in creating and sustaining a holistic view.<sup>40</sup> Importantly, it is the work of Christ the Healer that can bring change to the whole person.

Barth's discussions of sin reveal the pervasive nature of the nothingness opposed to God that affects all of Creation: "Sickness is one of the elements in the situation of man as he has fallen victim to nothingness through his transgression."<sup>41</sup> Since this problem affects the whole of the human person—"it will also be understood that in the question of health we must differentiate between soul and body but not on any account separate the two"<sup>42</sup>—so too does its remedy, the atonement. The Incarnation points us in this direction. If God becomes human, God then becomes all that humanity is and redeems it all. In the words of Karl Barth, "only in Him did the

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<sup>40</sup> Pentecostal scholar Vernon Purdy notes "dualism...has been the presupposition of those who would sever the body from the salvific implications of Christ's atonement...God created whole persons and it is His will, as revealed in Scripture, to restore whole persons," Purdy, "Divine Healing," in *Systematic Theology*, 503; An important theme in this paper, holism receives an interesting extrapolation in parts of Allan Anderson, "Pentecostal Approaches to Faith and Healing," *International Review of Mission* 91 (October 2002): 523ff.

<sup>41</sup> III/4, 372.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 358.

Word of God become flesh, flesh of my flesh, to judge sin in the flesh, executing this judgment for me as my Brother,”<sup>43</sup> and by extension redeeming that same flesh in the atonement. For Barth and the Pentecostals both, Christ ought to be the center of a conversation on holistic healing.

Second, we might say that though operating from different theological foundations and having divergent ideas concerning the nature of sin, they both uphold ideas about the atonement that can be linked to physical healing. Pentecostals, of course, are more concerned about healing in the present while Barth sees the whole idea forming more of an imperative towards health. Nevertheless, that they might agree in principle on this fundamental characteristic position is important for building bridges between these two influential theological systems.

Both Barth and the Pentecostals remain unsurprisingly focused upon discussions of sin when speaking of the atonement. For Pentecostals, the meaning of the atonement falls under the larger heading of forgiveness/healing, as detailed earlier. For Karl Barth reconciliation and victory seem the paradigms most appropriate. In a cursory examination of *CD IV/1*, any reader looking for explicit discussion of healing being provided for in the atonement would be largely disappointed. There are relatively few statements in the text that speak of sickness and sin being related and posit a relationship between healing and the atonement. Examples would include the comments in *CD IV/1* that God becomes a servant “to take to Himself and away from us our guilt and sickness”<sup>44</sup> and “He has done that which is sufficient to take away sin...to restore order...to bring in the new man...to redeem man from death.”<sup>45</sup> Even so, the fact remains that these thoughts are infrequently discussed in that volume, containing only implicit hints that, for Pentecostals, are undeveloped at best.

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<sup>43</sup> III/3, 307.

<sup>44</sup> IV/1, 142.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 255.

In order to locate a more fruitful set of materials one must turn to the ethical discussion in the fourth book of his third volume entitled “The Command of God the Creator.” No doubt operating out of a concern for the wholeness of creation bound by sin, he states in *CD III/4* that sickness is that which both presages death and is a result of sin: “sickness is the forerunner of death, and indeed of death as the judgment of God and the merited subjection of man to the power of nothing in virtue of his sin.”<sup>46</sup> Barth also makes reference to Christ’s power, speaking of “Jesus Christ and his sacrifice, by which the destroyer was himself brought to destruction.”<sup>47</sup> In so doing, Barth might almost seem to place himself in the camp of the Pentecostals on this issue, concluding that sin brings sickness and the work of Jesus stands in opposition to such sickness. But at the same time, there are differences that demands attention. First, it is worth keeping in mind that Barth’s view of death is not wholly negative, but has at least in part to do with God-give finitude. In *CD III/2* Barth reminds readers that “death is not in itself the judgment. It is only so *de facto*.”<sup>48</sup> Though some Pentecostals have a healthy awareness that death will naturally come despite the potential for healing, this fact is not as readily evident as it is for Barth.

Second, Barth does not simply say that healing will be accomplished in an automatic fashion, or that that it need to be any more realized than a Christian’s salvation/sanctification. Rather, Barth uses his discussion of Jesus Christ and sickness to speak of a new ethic of resistance to sickness:

...there can be no doubt that the apostolic proclamation of the kingdom and of the name of its Bearer did also include this possibility, and that we see that community, in the possession and exercise of these gifts and in the following of Jesus Christ, engaged in conflict against sickness and not at peace with it. It is not a willful fight, but one which is laid upon it and for which it is empowered by the grace of God...<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> *III/4*, 366.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 368.

<sup>48</sup> *III/2*, 192.

<sup>49</sup> *III/4*, 370.

Any healing that is in the atonement is as much actual as it is potential and a motivation towards future wellness.<sup>50</sup>

In sum, the atonement may rightly be viewed more immediately and viscerally in Pentecostalism while having broader and more cosmic horizons for Barth. What this says about each of the positions is relatively clear and has been parsed earlier in this examination. The difference between the Pentecostals and Barth on this point may best be expressed by noting that the former focuses upon Christ bearing our sufferings while the latter remains intent upon Christ bearing away our suffering. Both in their own way reflect the power and love of God at work and can understand the atonement as connected in some sense to healing, even though their respective theological systems understand these meanings with different levels of emphasis.

A third, final, and obvious yet important implication of our investigation revolves around potential benefit for Pentecostals in deepening their own understanding of the atonement. Our conference's own call for papers reads, in part, as follows: "...how might Barth's...contribution be interpreted in another ecclesiological context, and against another set of concerns regarding the acting of God in relation to the human?"<sup>51</sup> If nothing else, Pentecostals have found an unexpected partner in Barth who both confirms some of their instincts and challenges them towards further depth.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> A sense of the already/not yet theological distinction seems evident in this section (III/4). Barth's inclusion of a discursus on the Blumhardts' and their confrontational healing ministry seems to provide evidence that he did in fact allow for healings in the present time, yet the thrust of his discussion seems markedly pointed towards a future expectation. Perhaps we may then say that Barth's doctrine of healing unfolds in a way similar to sanctification and the hope of the Christian life: announced and proclaimed in Christ yet has not reached that goal fully in the present. This would connect as well with his understanding of allotted time that is, in some sense, a natural part of life. IV/3.1, 165ff will be helpful in understanding a bit of Barth's relationship to the Blumhardts. Notable in this respect as well is that theological ties that exist between the slogan of Blumhardt that "Jesus is Victor" and Barth's model of the atonement.

<sup>51</sup> *Center for Barth Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary*, "2016 Annual Karl Barth Conference Call for Papers," <http://barth.ptsem.edu/event/2016-annual-karl-barth-conference>, (accessed 16 June 2016).

<sup>52</sup> In the tradition of Karl Barth—who was by no means shy when it came to reworking older patterns for his own use—we shall here modify his thumbnail sketch of the doctrine of reconciliation. As it appears in CD IV/1, Barth speaks of the Lord as Servant, the Servant as Lord, and Jesus as True Witness. (IV/1, 135ff.) This, in Barth's mind, is the story of the work of God on our behalf. It is an excellent way of expressing this work *pro nobis*, yet in title and form remains a bit distant to the person hearing its declaration. As such and with relation to the doctrine of healing in the atonement

As noted previously, Barth leans heavily towards the Christus Victor and juridical approaches to understanding the work of the Cross while Pentecostals have focused more on suffering and penal-substitutionary ideals. Yet while they do so, each carry portions of the other's position and allow opportunity for agreement over the core idea that the atonement is a unitary event centered in Jesus Christ providing and/or presaging holistic healing for the entire fallen person. In this way they point towards a doctrine of the atonement that takes healing seriously and reflects Christocentric victory and/or suffering. After all, if reconciliation were just a battle over nothingness, a mostly cerebral theory would be required, leaving the Cross with an unsure value. However, if the atonement were only about of bearing sickness, the Cross in all its pain and suffering might be the only vision the Christian needed. Both emphases, present in the other party to a lesser extent, invites consideration of these themes. Why not, therefore, consider an understanding which reveals a Jesus both bearing our stripes and gaining the victory on the cross in the same instant? While I suspect Karl Barth would have a significant amount to say relative to such a question and will not comment much on whether Pentecostals have helpful lessons to teach him, I do know that Barth deepens the atonement for Pentecostals—a development for which I believe they can be thankful.

While both Barth and Pentecostalism appear to intersect on enough points for a conversation on healing to emerge, they will nevertheless disagree on the ways in which this is accomplished, their underlying assumptions about sin, and the main approach they take toward the atonement. Noting their differences in these areas has been an important exercise in understanding

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discussed herein, we might reimagine the system as such: the Healer as Sick Patient, the Sick Patient as Healer, and Jesus Christ as Complete and True Message of Healing. Though offered a bit tongue-in-cheek, these distinctions may offer an important synthesis yielded by our discussion. Describing the atonement as such allows room for both theological traditions to operate. Both the notions of substitution and suggestions of triumph inherent within have ties to both Barth and the Pentecostals. To assert that our Healer became sick for us is thus linked with the idea that that same God heals us in power and victory. Seen together, they point to the true message and holistic gospel of healing available in Jesus Christ. While these categories should not be taken as the only tripartite divisions that can be made, they provide a unique opportunity for synthesis and can offer a guide and corrective to other one-sided approaches.

how different starting points affect the development of theological doctrines. Yet that they can come together on certain aspects of sin, sickness, healing, and the atonement even as well as they do speaks to possibilities for extended conversation. Pentecostals are helpfully challenged to consider a broader view, and for their part followers of Barth might take note of aspects of his thought being shared by a vastly dissimilar branch of the Christian family. Throughout this discussion of healing, both can come together on the idea that the atonement to which it is connected is a unitary and holistic enterprise centered upon Jesus Christ. This, at the very least, is a core orthodoxy and emphasis upon which the two can confidently and helpfully engage in future dialogue.