

Many Bibles have a marginal reference in connection with this phrase to Matt. 8:17 and I Peter 2:24. Some, however, contain only the reference to Matthew. When we look at these two New Testament statements we find that if they both refer to this verse in Isaiah fifty-three they contradict one another. Matthew is referring to the healing ministry of Christ and the miracles which He worked on earth, while Peter is referring to the atonement. I Peter 2:24 reads as follows: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." It is impossible to escape noticing that this verse (and the one following it) refers to Isaiah fifty-three. Yet to say that it refers to the first half of Isaiah 53:4 is utterly unwarranted, for the only word which it has in common with that verse is "bare." The words for "sickness" or "infirmity," even if translated "grief" and "sorrow," certainly are not the equivalent of "sin." Only confusion is introduced by using this particular New Testament verse as an explanatory comment to Isaiah 53:4. However, it is quite different when we look at Matthew 8:17. After Matthew described how Jesus healed those who were sick, he added the words: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Clearly Matthew interprets the passage in Isaiah as describing how Jesus took away the sicknesses of people, and delivered them from their infirmities. The thought of the verse is: we saw Him do these wonderful miracles of healing, we realize that He was not only a great teacher but also One who could do mighty miracles, and yet, when He was crucified, we thought that He was "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." It reminds us of the men on the road to Emmaus who are described in Luke 24. They told of the wonderful deeds of Jesus "which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people." Then they said: "The chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have crucified Him. But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel." They saw the wondrous acts which He had performed and yet they thought that the fact that He had been taken by cruel hands and killed proved Him not to be the Savior. Isaiah 53:4 exactly describes the situation of these men. They had seen Him