

Is It God's Will to Heal? By Eloise May Richey

To the man or woman sick, afflicted, tortured by pain and suffering and weakened not only by bodily but by mental anguish as well there come many doubts and fears and questions. These questions are many and varied, but perhaps the one question, which comes sooner or later to almost everyone in need of physical healing is the old, old question, "Is it God's will to heal the sick?"

Strange as it may seem this question never seems to enter the mind of the person seeking medical aid. The best physicians may be secured, specialists consulted, the X-Ray machine resorted to; trips be made from one side of the nation to the other, and even across the ocean; every aid known to science may be sought, with never a thought of whether it be "God's Will," but when all these have failed, and weary, heartsick and discouraged, at last one turns to the "Great Physician;" then like a "bearer-of-evil-tidings" comes some well meaning friend to say, "Perhaps He wants you to suffer for Jesus' sake."

Let us turn to the Word of God, our one source of information and instruction on this and all other subjects pertaining to our dealings with God. In order to know the will of God, let us look at the life of the One who perfectly exemplified that will. We read in John 4:34, "My meat is to do

the will of Him that sent me and to finish His work." John 5:30, "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; *because* I seek not mine own will *but the will of the Father which hath sent me.*" John 6:38, "For I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, *but the will of Him that sent me.*"

These three quotations, taken from three consecutive chapters of the Gospel according to St. John are words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Since He says of Himself that He came to the earth for the one express purpose of doing the will of the Father and since the Father says of Him, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him" (Matthew 17: 5), is it not reason-able to suppose that what the Lord Jesus did during the days of His earthly ministry is a perfect indication to us of God's will?

In this connection, let us turn to Acts 10: 38 and read the words of Peter, spoken in the house of Cornelius on that occasion when the "Crumbs from the Master's Table," aye and the "Children's Bread" as well, was to be shared with the gentiles, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and *healing all that were op-pressed of the devil;* for God was with Him."

Please note three things in this familiar verse. First, that in speaking to the gentiles this very first time, Peter told them Jesus healed. Second, that He healed all. Third, that he spoke of the diseases, sickness, afflictions etc., as being from the devil. Surely Peter thought it was the will of God to *heal the sick*, or he would not have mentioned it thus early in this first message to Cornelius and those gathered there with him. Peter evidently thought it was the will of God to heal *all* the sick, for he said that "Jesus went about doing good and healing *"all"* that were oppressed of the devil." Peter thought that sickness came from Satan, not from God, for he said "Jesus went about doing good and healing all that were *oppressed of the devil.*"

Jesus came to the earth to do the will of the Father. He did the will of the Father during all the years of His earthly ministry and if this be true, may we not conclude that since He healed "all that came or were brought" (Matthew 8: 16-17), and "as many as touched Him were made perfectly whole" (Matthew 14: 36), and "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people" (Matthew 9: 35). In view of all this, I say, may we not conclude that it is the will of God to heal the sick and afflicted and that John the beloved was exactly right when he wrote unto the well beloved Gaius, "Beloved, I wish (margin "pray") above all things that thou mayest prosper and *be in health*, even as thy soul prospereth?"

From the first thought of "Is it God's will to heal the sick?" we turn now to the thought that grows out of that; that is "Perhaps it is God's will that I suffer for Jesus' sake."

Few of us are consistent along this line. It is not until medical and surgical science has been exhausted that we begin to think of this, and then only when we are urged to turn to the great God who created these bodies of ours and knows everything about them. And strangest of all, after we have very definitely decided that we are to suffer for Christ's sake and for the sake of leading others to Him by our patient (???) bearing of this cross, after all this, we continue to take medicine and to "try" every means of relief that may be suggested. Cannot we see that if we, as born-again children of the King, yielded to His will, as we think we know it, really thought in our hearts that God wanted us to suffer, we would be committing sin by trying to escape suffering He wanted us to endure?

Then too, it is not inconsistent for us to think that God wants us to be sick or afflicted to bring praise to His Name? We know that we were created for His praise and for His glory and we cannot, any of us, truly think that we can bring more praise or more glory to the name of our Lord by being incapacitated for service, than when we are strong and well and like Jesus Himself—"about the Father's business."

May I give you one single illustration? Some eighteen years ago, my husband lay in California dying with tuberculosis. Physicians,

the best, had said there was no hope for him. For years he had been serving the Lord; pointing men and women to the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." God had touched and healed his eyes in days gone by; other members of the family had been marvelously healed and as he lay there on that bed, there came a letter from his mother saying, "On Sunday morning in the church at home, as we partake of the Holy Sacrament, we are going to believe that His broken body, by the stripes that He bore, avails for your body and you will be healed." Faith was inspired in his heart, and turning the pages of his Bible to Psalm 103:3 he read those words that have brought encouragement and hope to untold thousands: "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases" and God wonderfully, miraculously healed him. Unable to stand, unable to speak above a whisper, immediately strength was given him to run up and down stairs, to sing and shout and praise God and in just a few short days he was back in evangelistic campaigns which he loved so well.

During the years since that glorious Sunday morning, hundreds of thousands of people have through His ministry, found the Christ he loves and serves to be a personal, living Savior, while others, and there are thousands of them too, have been healed in answer to the prayer of faith.

Which think you was the will of God: That his young life should have been snuffed out, after lingering perhaps for months suffering agony,

and perhaps a few lives, those who were able to come in contact with Him, drawn closer to God by His suffering? Or the thing that actually did happen—touched and healed by the tender hand of the loving Christ and sent out to win multitudes to Him, who is the same "yesterday and today and forever?" May I ask again—What think ye?

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