

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees. And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

DIVINE SICKNESS

Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. John 11:3-4

We live in a time when it is quite common to hear men (and oddly enough, women) preach about sickness and disease as though it is a condition quite contrary to the will and purpose of GOD. In some circles what I am about to say would be considered heresy. Both sickness and good health are conditions which are dictated and ordained in men for GOD's own purpose. There is no such thing as a man who is sick, contrary to the will of GOD, nor does a man ever enjoy health or the deliverance from disease or affliction except according to that same will and sovereign purpose. "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand." (Deut 32:39)

Lester Roloff was once asked if he believed in Divine healing. He replied, "I didn't know there was any other kind". If a man is ever healed from any malady which befalls him in this life, that man should thank the GOD of heaven and earth for that deliverance. Now we are quite certain that if man had not fallen into sin there would have been no disease of any kind. But our sin has produced affliction and sickness. Just as certainly as the fall of man did not take GOD by surprise neither does the attendant affliction which comes as a result of it. The LORD even uses it for our benefit, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" (2 Cor 4:17) "For whom the LORD loveth HE chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom HE receiveth." (Heb 12:6) So, far from being against the will of GOD, the LORD often ordains that HIS people be ill for HIS own purpose and for their good.

The LORD's disciples assumed that tragedies befell some and not all because they were greater sinners than others (see John 9:2; Luke 13:2), or that physical affliction was the sign of a specific sin being brought to justice. The LORD taught them that all men alike were sinners worthy of destruction and that physical ailments are not necessarily meted out as judgment. We may not always be able to discover the specific reason we are afflicted but we can be certain that GOD is bringing us along a pathway HE has marked out that we might be ultimately blessed. (see Rom.8:28) It would seem prudent for us then each time disease or affliction invades our body to seek the LORD not just for healing but to ask HIM to show us why HE has brought us into this condition. Since we know that sin is the primary moving cause of sickness we need to examine why the LORD ordains illness and affliction in HIS children's lives.

All sickness is directed for HIS glory. Just as HE told Mary and Martha that Lazarus' sickness was not unto death (i.e.; destruction) but rather that GOD would be glorified. So it is when our bodies are afflicted that this too is for HIS fame and grandeur.

All sickness in the children of GOD is for their ultimate benefit. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love GOD, to them who are called according to HIS purpose. (Romans 8:28) Therefore "though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is

renewed day by day. " (2 Cor 4:16). The LORD allowed Satan to afflict Job for a season. Satan's desire and design was Job's destruction but the LORD designed Satan's activity to get Job's attention and teach him a valuable lesson. Even the devil can be a tool in GOD's hand.

Sometimes GOD gets glory in the healing of our physical bodies. When the LORD JESUS walked upon the earth HE went about healing many of their afflictions and maladies. HE did it for the glory of HIS FATHER in manifesting obedience to that which HE was sent to do. All true healing is a gift from the LORD. HE may choose to manifest this healing in a miraculous way (i.e.; unexplainable and without means) or HE may use instruments of medicine (doctors and pills), or HE may direct the use of natural means such as vitamins and herbs for such relief. But rest assured that no man can be healed of any disease, affliction, or disturbed state of mind apart from the direction and purpose of Almighty GOD.

Sometimes GOD gets glory in not healing our physical bodies. He does this in allowing our afflictions to run their course or even to remain with us until death. Paul sought the LORD three times to have his "thorn in the flesh" removed. Yet the LORD refused to remove it. Rather HE taught Paul a more valuable lesson in requiring him to rest in HIS grace. We are not in error to ask for the removal of our afflictions, (see James 4:2; 5:14) yet it is not always GOD's will to answer such prayers exactly as we would like. May we learn to wait upon HIM and trust HIM to meet our needs even when HE chooses not to grant our wishes.

Afflictions are a testament to the LORD's great love for HIS own. *"He whom thou lovest is sick."* Lazarus was a man greatly favored by the LORD. *"Faithful are the wounds of a friend;" (Prov 27:6) "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. " (Heb 12:6)* None of us delight in discomfort, yet we are greatly comforted in knowing that our SAVIOR is with us in all of our diseases, yea HE was tempted in all points like as we are. When we enjoy good health let us praise HIM, for we would be suffering daily if we were to receive what we deserve. Then when we are down in the valley of affliction, remember that it is the LORD who has gone before us and marked out our pathway through that wilderness with HIS own blood. We can never be lost nor destroyed on that journey for HE who loves us has passed this way and will be with us to the end.

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