

Old Books: God Does Not Use Sickness for Character Development

Henry Wilson in his 1917 book, *"Does Christ Still Heal,"* taught against the false idea that sickness and disease was God's doing. Wilson wrote:

"He is a God of love; a God who cannot do evil; who would not do evil even that good might result. To attribute to Him the sending of disease is but to dishonor Him. Jesus recognized that disease and sickness followed, in many instances, as a result of man's disobedience; but He taught that the author of the evil and the disease was not God, but a spirit of evil prompting man to a neglect of God's laws or a defiance of them." (pp. 16, 17)

Some protest that there are cases where sickness and pain has brought strength and value to a person (Joni Erickson Tada for example). Wilson acknowledged the power that a godly character has in not allowing pain to destroy one's life, but at the same time refuted the false teaching prevalent within Christianity that God Himself sends this pain in order to strengthen us:

"It is a demonstration that where the heart of man is truly turned toward God, any physical evil that may come may be not only robbed of its power to embitter or destroy character and faith, but may be used as a stepping stone to a sweeter, stronger character of faith. THIS IS THE VINDICATION OF THE POWER OF GOD OVER THE POWER OF EVIL.

God has not sent evil to bring about strengthening. The evil has fallen through some cause or from some source that is contrary to His will for man....

Even the most enthusiastic defender of the theory that God sends trouble, will admit that those persons who take misfortune cheerfully and turn it to good advantage, constitute a very small percentage of the afflicted ones. The average cripple and chronic sufferer is a sour, unpleasant character with little or no kindly feeling toward God or man; nor can he be brought to the point where he will adjust himself to his changed conditions and take advantage of new opportunities. That misfortune which a Christian theorist bids him accept as an opportunity, he rejects as a hindrance.

If, therefore, the principle were true, that God had sent the trouble for purpose of education and development and for giving larger vision, it would be seen in the vast majority of cases that His plan had failed."

Wilson, Henry B. **Does Christ Still Heal?** (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1917), pp. 36, 37

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