

Trophimus I Left Sick - Part 3

~Other Speakers G-L: Donald Gee:

Closer attention to these suggestive facts might throw light on some of our problems of Divine healing when we see those greatly used in healing others unable to get healing for themselves. There need be nothing inconsistent in that when we see deeply enough. Indeed perhaps there is something profoundly true and necessary. Our Lord wrought no miracles for Himself. And the servant is not above his Master. Trials and afflictions and weaknesses and infirmities in the flesh of His faithful missionaries and evangelists today are not instances of "failure" in Divine healing; rather they may be marks of sharing that very travail and heavy price that the work of pioneering in the Gospel usually entails. The sheer physical strain can be immense, and there is plenty of evidence in the New Testament that Paul and his companions found it so.

Epaphroditus was not the last messenger of the Gospel who "for the work of Christ was nigh unto death." Broken health is the price many have paid. It is to be avoided as much as possible by using wisdom, by taking precautions, and above all by keeping in the will of God and not attempting things beyond our personal calling. God had mercy on Epaphroditus, who apparently overworked to make up for the "lack of service" of others (how often this occurs!), and God still has mercy in like circumstances. But the price has to be paid. And sometimes to the "last full measure of devotion." If there has been failure, it has not been failure in Divine healing. Perhaps we shall understand in That Day that there is no failure at all, but only a deeper principle at work than receiving the physical deliverance that our weak hearts always crave and judge to be the will of God.

Was there some failure in Trophimus that necessitated Paul leaving him at Miletum sick? Had Trophimus been guilty of some disobedience to the Divine will? Or did Trophimus simply lack faith?

Those who want, somehow or other, to fit in this verse about the illness of Trophimus with their own doctrines of Divine healing are tempted to assert that he **MUST** have failed somewhere. But that is the worst possible way of interpreting the Scriptures. There is nothing whatever in the statement, or in its context, to suggest anything spiritually or morally wrong about Trophimus. Assumption here is completely gratuitous.

Part of the unfortunate manner in which faith in Divine healing sometimes has been sincerely promulgated by strong-minded personalities is this continual suggestion that failure to get healed is rooted in some deep spiritual failure in the one who is sick. This attitude has added mental suffering to physical suffering, and in extreme cases turned belief in Divine healing into a scourge rather than a privilege, and a burden rather than a relief. That it possesses an element of truth need not be denied. Even in natural healing the patient has responsibilities. But to hold a doctrine of Divine healing that acts like a lash upon the heightened susceptibilities of the weak and sickly, surely comes near being a travesty of compassion with which our Lord viewed the multitudes of sick folk that crowded around Him on earth.

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