

Jesus in the Chamber of Sickness

by Octavius Winslow

Sickness can be a blessing for believers, bringing spiritual quickening and preparation for greater service in God's Church and in the world.

Scripture: Psalm 34:18, Isaiah 41:10, John 11:4, Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 1:21, 2 Timothy 4:7-8, James 5:14-15, 1 Peter 5:10, Revelation 21:4

Topics: "Suffering", "Hope in Sickness"

Description

Octavius Winslow emphasizes that sickness, while painful, is a profound blessing for believers, as it brings them closer to Jesus and deepens their faith. He reassures the sick that their suffering is not in vain, but rather a preparation for greater service and spiritual awakening. Winslow illustrates this with the story of Wycliffe, who, despite being near death, declared his commitment to his faith and went on to serve even more powerfully. He encourages believers to see their sickness as a sacred space where God is present, offering hope and eternal life. Ultimately, he reminds them that even in death, they are promised life eternal with the Lord.

Transcript

"Jesus said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."--John 11:4

Sickness stands high up in the catalogue of the believer's covenant blessings. When it is recognized as coming immediately from the hand of God, and when it lays us lower at the feet of Jesus, and when it draws us closer within the bosom of Jesus, oh, a lovelier flower or sweeter fruit of holiness blooms and grows not upon the rod of correction than this! Deem not that a cold, unsympathizing heart that dictates this sentiment. He whose hand traces it is too conversant with the scenes of the sick room--its suffering and weariness, its despondency and depression, its hopes and fears--to speak flippantly and unfeelingly of this painful discipline of God. He looks upon the believer's chamber of sickness as one of most sacred and hallowed spots this side of eternity. He never approaches it, never gently opens the door, and with silent footfall glides within that solemn and shaded room, but with an unearthly awe resting upon his spirit. God is there--Jesus is there--the Holy Spirit is there--attendant angels are there; and, it may be, the spirits of the just made perfect are permitted to hover there, fanning, as with noiseless and invisible wings, the fevered brow of the being they love, to whom they are permitted to minister, and whose ransomed soul they wait to escort up to the gate of glory.

"This sickness is not unto death." Oh no, there is life in it, you sick one, you child of Jesus! This shall prove a time of spiritual quickening to your soul. You shall know more of God, see more of Jesus, read your title to the mansion in heaven in a clearer light, and with stronger faith than ever. No, it is not unto death! The Lord may, by this sickness, be preparing you for greater service and usefulness in His Church and in the world than ever. Wycliffe was at one time supposed to be upon his dying bed. An embassy of friars and doctors from Oxford was deputed to call upon him to urge and receive a recantation of his published opinions. They entered the apartment of the rector of Lutterworth, and, surrounding his bed, expressed the hope that, as death was about to remove him, he would not conceal his penitence, but distinctly revoke whatever doctrines he had advanced to their injury. The noble reformer, fixing upon them his languid but now flashing eyes, and summoning all his remaining strength, exclaimed, "I shall not die, but live, and shall again declare the evil deeds of the friars." He recovered, and lived to preach the doctrines of the Reformation even with greater power and success than he had ever done! Be still, then, you sick one, dear to Jesus. Who can tell for what great work in your Lord's vineyard this sickness and suffering and depression are preparing you! But, should it terminate fatally--should it be the chariot sent from heaven to bear you home, still it will not be unto death, but unto life, life eternal--"forever with the Lord!"

"When languor and disease invade

This trembling house of clay,

'Tis sweet to look beyond our cage,

And long to fly away.

"Sweet to look inward, and attend

The whispers of His love;

Sweet to look upward to the place

Where Jesus pleads above.

"Sweet to reflect how grace divine

My sins on Jesus laid;

Sweet to remember that His blood

My debt of suffering paid.

"Sweet in the confidence of faith,

To trust His firm decrees;

Sweet to lie passive in his hands,

And know no will but His."

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