

## *“The Theology of Healing”*

Prepared by Patrick J. Griffiths © - [pastorpat@waukeshabile.org](mailto:pastorpat@waukeshabile.org)

February 3, 2008

There are certain vocations that expose the practitioner to those who suffer and are in pain. All those within the medical profession encounter people in ill-health and chronic pain. Those in the ministry of the church are likewise regularly faced with those who suffer either emotionally and/or physically. Everyone inside those professions must wrestle with the nature of suffering and pain.

John Stott has said that "the fact of suffering undoubtedly constitutes the single greatest challenge to the Christian faith." It is unquestionably true that there is no greater obstacle to faith than that of the reality of evil and suffering in the world. Indeed, even for the believing Christian, there is no greater test of faith than this -- that the God who loves him permits him to suffer, at times in excruciating ways. And the disillusionment is intensified in our day when unrealistic expectations of health and prosperity are fed by the teachings of a multitude of Christian teachers. Why does a good God allow his creatures, and even his children to suffer? ("The Problem of Evil: How Can a Good God Allow Evil?" Rick Rood)  
<http://www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/evil.html>

Why would a good God permit the entrance of sin into a perfect universe? This question has puzzled thoughtful people for centuries. There is no truly adequate answer. Man does not have the capability of answering the question because of his finiteness and sin. Furthermore, the Bible is silent.

"One of the most influential and powerful 'proofs' that there is no God proceeds from 'The Problem of Evil.' This argument claims that the following three statements cannot *all* be true: (a) evil exists; (b) God is omnipotent; and (c) God is all-loving. The argument is as follows.

If God can prevent evil, but *doesn't*, then He isn't all-loving. If God intends to prevent evil, but *cannot*, then He isn't omnipotent. If God *both* intends to prevent evil and is capable of doing so, then how can evil exist?" (The New York Public Library Desk Reference, 1993, p. 266).

There are several assumptions in their argumentation. The first assumption is that an all-loving God would never permit evil to take place. Yet, love is not the absence of evil (i.e., discipline). God's love for His Son was enormous though it did not prevent Him from sending Him to die for humanity's sins. The second assumption is that omnipotence would stop evil. Though omnipotence could stop evil should it so choose, it does not demand that evil be stopped. Since omnipotence can control evil, it can use evil for its own end. The third assumption is that evil serves no purpose. Evil, pain, sorrow, tragedy all have their place. Fatalism denies their purpose, yet Christianity acknowledges the value of such tools when placed in the Master's hand. God is all-

*Continued on the other side...*

wise. **God uses the best means to accomplish the highest good for His ultimate glory and man's benefit.** As a sovereign ruler, He may do as He wills (Rom. 9:18-23).

It is obvious (a) that God has permitted sin, and (b) hence, it was right for Him to do so. But why it was right must ever remain a mystery demanding submission and defying solution. In light of this idea, I would like to propose nine concluding thoughts.

1. All disease is ultimately under God's control (Ps. 135:6).
2. All disease, suffering, and death is a consequence of sin (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12).
3. God is always just, good, gracious, and compassionate.
4. All healing is either from God through immediate and direct action (i.e. the suspending of natural laws) or through secondary and indirect action (i.e. herbs, foods, rest, or the medical profession [1 Tim. 5:23]).
5. God gave the "gifts of healing" by the Spirit to some within the church (1 Cor. 12:9, 28, 30).
6. God can heal all He wills to be healed, but does not will for all to be healed. This is a mystery.
7. All sickness and all health has a reason in existing.
8. We are to pray for healing and to trust Him in sickness and in health.
9. All disease, suffering, and death has an end and will one day be completely removed from the people of God (Rev. 21:3-5).

The Bible teaches that all disease, suffering, and death has a termination point. There is coming a day when these expressions will be removed from the experience of the believing. Even though it has been noted that disease, suffering, and death will be forever removed from the experience of the believing, it is not being said that these things cease to exist. These experiences will continue to exist in a place called hell. The pain of hell and the state of perpetual suffering is the consequence of God's absence. It is in this life and in the life to come that we are to find God enough. In my suffering and pain, He is enough. We are to flee to the eternal God as our refuge and strong tower. We find His everlasting arms under us (Deut. 33:27). May the reality of God as the author and finisher of our experience cause us to find comfort knowing that our experience is at the hands of a just, good, gracious, and compassionate God.