

ALL WILL BE WELL, WON'T IT?

Today, I met my Sister and asked, "How's it going? Is everything well?" Sadly, her expression – already full of pondering – said, as she moved away, "Well, it" I called after her quietly, "All will be well." Another said, "That's so easy to say." Yes, it is so easy to say, "All will be well." It is so easy to hope, when once we have known hope, when once we have known love, when once we have known joy, when once we have known delight, when once we have known peace. It is so very easy to say "All will be well" when we are immersed in hope, love, joy, delight, and peace.

What do we do when we are not sensing our blessedness, when we can only remember seeing dreary dusty despair, tasting bitter loneliness, hearing sorrowful sadness, smelling of death and decay, and feeling troubling torment – when we can no longer remember the color of hope, the taste of love, the sound of joy, the smell of delight, or the feel of peace? What do we do then? It's so easy to say, "All will be well" when everything within and around me or us screams back "How do you know? All is not well! All will never be well again! Will any thing ever be well? Was anything ever well? How dare you say 'All will be well'?"

Upon a time, the radiant color of all things – of people and living creatures, of the sky, the earth, and the water – their color illumined me with hope.... O where has it gone? Then too, your love filled me with the taste of bread and wine, and of the sweetest fruits. At the very sound of your footsteps or your voice, joy leapt up within my heart. The fragrance of your garments, of your hair, and of the meals we shared filled my soul with delight. The very breeze in the air surrounded me with the warmth of your presence and cradled me in your peace. O where have they all gone? Where have You gone, O my Beloved? No, all is not well – not well at all.... Oh, in so many ways, all is not well.

All is not well – my ailment is back. Lord, I thought You had heard my prayer and had answered it. Why has my ailment returned? What's going to happen now? Do you intend to heal me? How much longer must I pray? What's the point of praying to be well again if You have no intention of healing me? Why does your will always have to come to me through others – why can't You just reveal your will to me yourself? What do You want of me? How can I know it? How can all be well when I am not? Is it true – will all ever be well again?

Upon a time, though I did not seek attention or approval, the eyes of my brothers and sisters were full of warmth and understanding for me – but now I see judgment, and their disappointment – now they are embarrassed or concerned for me. I ache so much once again to be self-oblivious: to have eyes only for the well-being of others, to hunger only for your love in the hearts of all, to have ears only for your Word – that your every desire might be my command, to want only the scent of my labor and ours – all done for love of You and for the least of these sisters and brothers of Yours, ours, and mine, and to take comfort only in the sensations accompanying the satisfaction of being spent for love and filling me with gratitude for your wondrous gift of life renewed each day as an echo of your promise of eternity. O, in what depth of darkness have I fallen, for assuredly, all is not now well.

All is not well – the one You’ve entrusted to me for formation has such glaring faults – what do You want of me? Am I supposed to continually correct this person? It doesn’t look like this is someone who’s going to change in a hurry, so what am I supposed to do? Is there a bottom line, a minimum that is acceptable, and whose responsibility is it to make sure that this minimum is met? What do You want of me? When will this all be well?

Indeed, all is not well – I keep falling back into my faults – my sisters, my brothers, keep correcting me, again and again I become embarrassed and feel humiliated, but I keep falling back into my faults, and it just keeps going on and on.... How long will this last? When will my heart become pure and undivided? Will You not do this for me? O, how long, Beloved, till You rescue me from these depths? What do You want of me? How would You have me bear this cross? When will I rest? Will You not make all things well?

Upon a time, my mind was at rest – understanding enough of your ways that my labors, my rests, my pains, my delights, my sorrows, my joys – all made sense to me in the comfort of your presence and your love. Now, I feel like a traitor, like a guest who has overspent his welcome, like a child who has become a burden, like one who is an embarrassment, like one who should have gotten things right by now, like one who seems without discipline, like a stone on everyone’s ankle. Then, my heart was content, my body was secure, and my spirit was in surety, but now I am in distress. How long, O Lord, will You leave me among the dead? Do You not see that all is not well?

Are You not all-powerful and sovereign over all? Can You not make all things well? And yet You do not act, You leave me to languish in my misery. Can You be testing me? If it is so, then what do You want of me? If I am as a child in pain, and You are comforting me – though I am aware only of my hurt – would You have me dry my tears? Would you have me echo your words, “All will be well?” Would You have me hope in my pain suffered for You? If I am as one crushed by too many rejections, and You are encouraging me – though I see You not in my defeat – would You have me take heart in my humiliation? Would you have me echo your words, “All will be well?” Would You have me love though I am crushed?

If I am as one wounded in battle, and You are attending me – though I am aware only of my wounds – would You have me silence my groans? Would you have me echo your words, “All will be well?” Would You have me take joy in my wounds suffered for You? If I am as one staggering in the desert, lost in the wilderness, parched and weakened by hunger, and have lost all sense of life in me, and You are finding me – would You have me let You sweep me off my feet? Would you have me echo your words, “All will be well?” Would You have me take delight – even in all I have endured for You? What do You want of me?

If I am as one haunted by the relentless troubles of the world, cut to the heart by the untold suffering of countless throngs of your children – embarrassed to still be in the grip of my own pain, insignificant though it seem in comparison, and You are calling to me in my depths of shame – would You have me come out of my tomb? Would you have me echo your words, “All will be well?” Would You have me find peace in You? What do You want of me?