

Isn't "No" an Answer?

*Just a tiny little child
Three years old,
And a mother with a heart
All of gold.
Often did that mother say,
Jesus hears us when we pray,
For He's never far away
And He always answers.*

*Now, that tiny little child
Had brown eyes,
And she wanted blue instead
Like blue skies.
For her mother's eyes were blue
Like forget-me-nots. She knew
All her mother said was true,
Jesus always answered.*

*So she prayed for two blue eyes,
Said "Good night,"
Went to sleep in deep content
And delight.
Woke up early, climbed a chair
By a mirror. Where, O where
Could the blue eyes be? Not there;
Jesus hadn't answered.*

*Hadn't answered her at all;
Never more
Could she pray; her eyes were brown
As before.
Did a little soft wind blow?
Came a whisper soft and low,
"Jesus answered. He said, No;
Isn't No an answer?"*

The above poem, written by Amy Carmichael, was based on an incident that actually did occur in her life when she was three. It turned out to be in the providence of God for her to have brown eyes. She became a missionary to India in the late 1890s. At first her ministry was primarily evangelistic. But along the way she became aware that some parents in India sold their daughters to the temple, where they were used for immoral purposes. God led one such child to her, and through a series of events and a sense of the Lord's leading, Amy took the child in. Then more stories of other girls (and later, boys) surfaced and more opportunities to rescue and provide homes for these children arose. Amy had to struggle with this, because the Lord had seemed to be blessing her evangelistic work. Was it right to turn from that ministry to give herself to housing and raising children? She concluded that that was indeed God's will for her life. The ministry grew exponentially and eventually became a whole compound, with housing for children of all ages, the workers who took care of them, and even their own hospital.

As Amy went "undercover" to find details of these children, she would stain her arms with coffee and wear Indian dress so that she could pass as an Indian woman and move freely in Indian society where she never could have as an Irish missionary. This she could not have done with blue eyes — her eyes would have given her away immediately. Neither she nor her mother could have ever known, all those years ago, the Lord's purpose for her brown eyes, but the lesson of faith stayed with her all her life.

(Recommended biographies of Amy Carmichael: *Amy Carmichael of Dohnavur* by Frank L. Houghton; *A Chance to Die* by Elisabeth Elliot; and *With Daring Faith* (a children's book) by Rebecca H. Davis.)