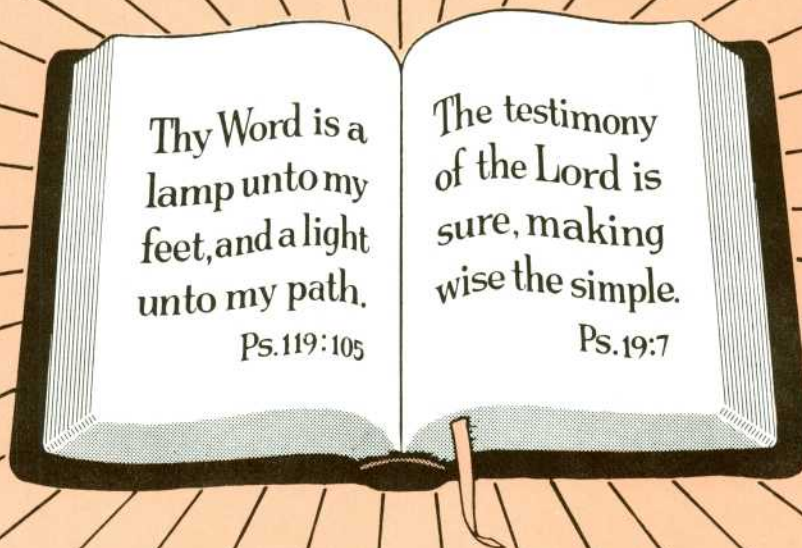


# Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



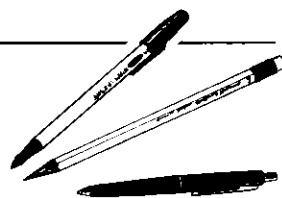
## Thanksgiving or Giving Thanks

God Loves Us . . . or Does He?

What Does the Bible Really Teach about Healing?

Captive Heroes

# Editorial



## Faith Is Power!

**W**E DO NOT have to look far into the Holy Record to sense the power of faith. All those names on God's honor roll were men and women of great faith. "By faith Abel,..." "by faith Enoch,..." "by faith Noah,..." "by faith Abraham,..." "by faith Isaac,..." "by faith Jacob,..." "by faith Joseph,..." "by faith Moses,..." So reads the brief record in Hebrews 11. Why faith? Because "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6).

Faith is staying power. It is faith that keeps us plodding, pushing, pressing; it is faith that will keep us steadily building, thought by thought, deed by deed, word by word, day after day after day. It is faith which opens our ears to listen when God speaks, and opens our eyes to watch and consider our ways, knowing that what God has forecast will most certainly come to pass.

Recall the words of the Psalmist: "I had fainted, unless I had believed" (Ps. 27:13). How often would we faint also, but for our belief, our faith, our confidence in Him who is behind us and above us working out His plan. Our life would fold up, go flat and fall apart were it not for our faith in God. But with faith in God and His purposes, nothing, absolutely nothing that comes into our lives can disturb us or cause us to worry, for we can know of a certainty that God is with us as we are with Him and will bring us through to a glorious finale.

Faith is the turning of ourselves over to the care of God, giving Him absolute command of our lives. This gives us an entirely new relation to the world, to our friends and associates, and even to ourselves and the events in our own lives. The average man may take

adversity with an iron will and stoic resignation. The man of faith can take the same course of events with rejoicing, realizing the potential of such experience. What is adverse about anything that helps him toward his goal? Whatever happens, he can trust God, knowing that out of a thousand trials, not 500 will work for his good, but 999—and one beside. Do not "*all* things work together for good to them that love God"?

Faith, then, is freedom from the little apprehensions which threaten to crush and defeat those who live without hope, or God in the world. This faith was Paul's sustaining support. Can we imagine a more disheartening situation than to be a captive below a throne with Nero on it? An inhuman power, with a diabolic outreach, this was what Paul was up against. But even Nero's brainsick rule could not alarm Paul. Why? Because that stalwart man of God had faith unshakable, and so he labored on—beaten, ridiculed, persecuted, but triumphant.

Difficulties are not calamities if we maintain our faith in God. In fact, with God in complete command of our lives, with every sinew of our body and every brain cell of our minds placed under God's direction, God will be our strength and His saving gospel our power. Against such might no self-seeking, no pride, no selfishness, no hatred, no sin can ever stand.

Of ourselves, we are totally powerless creatures. But when we become men and women of faith, we are tapping the source of infinite power and shall someday have all the voltage of the universe at our disposal. Such faith is power!

MM

## Megiddo means

"a place of troops" (Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon); "a place of God" (Young's Analytical Concordance). Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, strategically located, and the scene of frequent warfare. In the spiritual parallel, it is a place where soldiers engaged in spiritual warfare gather to renew their strength and courage (II Cor. 10:4-5).

### We believe

—in God the Creator of all things, all men, and all life.

### We believe

—in the Bible as containing the genuine revelation of God and His purposes for men, and as being our only source of divine knowledge today.

### We believe

—in Christ the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was born of a Virgin, ministered among men, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven, and who shall shortly return to be king of the whole earth.

### We believe

—in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.

### We believe

—in all mankind as providing the nucleus from which a superior, God-honoring people shall be chosen to receive the blessings of immortal life.

### We believe

—in ourselves as capable of fulfilling the demands and disciplines given us in the law of God, thus perfecting that high quality of character which God has promised to reward with life everlasting in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

### We believe

—in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth will be filled with His glory, His people, and His will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

## Bible quotations in this issue:

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version.

Other versions are identified as follows:

**NEB**—New English Bible

**NIV**—New International Version

**NAS**—New American Standard

**RSV**—Revised Standard Version

**TLB**—The Living Bible

**TEV**—Today's English Version

**JB**—The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition

**Phillips**—The New Testament in Modern English

**Berkeley**—The Modern Language New Testament

**Weymouth**—The New Testament in Modern Speech

**Moffatt**—The Bible, A New Translation

**Williams**—The New Testament, A Translation in the Language of the People

**Rotherham**—The Emphasized Old Testament

The use of selected references from various versions of the Bible does not necessarily imply publisher endorsement of the versions in their entirety.

# Megiddo Message

Vol. 69, No. 10

November 1982

<b>Editorial</b>	
FAITH IS POWER!	2
Faith is the turning of ourselves over to the care of God	
<b>Article</b>	
THANKSGIVING OR GIVING THANKS	4
True thankfulness must be deeper than mere words	
<b>Sermon</b>	
GOD LOVES US . . . OR DOES HE?	6
God's love punishes, restricts, and removes the evil so that the good may be encouraged	
<b>Sermonettes</b>	
. . . AND STILL SHE SPEAKS	11
<b>Articles</b>	
WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT HEALING?	12
THE MOST USEFUL WORD	16
The greatest weapon against temptation	
<b>Drama</b>	
CAPTIVE HEROES	18
Scene Two: Standing for Principle	
<b>So What Do You Know?</b>	
WHO'S THE "I"?	21
<b>Meditating on the Word</b>	
THE SERVICE OF PRAISE	22
A lesson from Psalms 100:2	
<b>Inquiries and Answers</b>	25
Concerning taking of spoils	
Was Christ a Curse for us?	
Did the "devils speak"?	
Symbols of mourning	

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# Thanksgiving or Giving Thanks?

**W**HETHER we put the “thanks” first or last, “giving” is an inseparable part of it. No person can be truly thankful to another person without giving something to that person. In the same manner, it is not possible to be thankful to God without giving something to Him.

True thankfulness must be deeper than mere words. Thanksgiving and love are closely related. We cannot have one without the other. If we are thankful to God for all the blessings He is continually bestowing on us, we will show that thankfulness by giving Him something in return. This was the principle demonstrated in the feasts which the Israelites were commanded to keep three times a year, as we read in Deuteronomy 16:16, “Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee.”

The Feast of Tabernacles was a feast of thanksgiving after the harvest had been completed. In the first two feasts of the year, the first of flock, fruit, and field had been given to the Lord. When the harvest festival arrived, the Israelites could partake of their harvest in abundance. This feast lasted seven days and was observed with rejoicing by the whole nation—including the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. And to everyone whose thanksgiving included giving, the Lord poured out a blessing in all their increase and in all the works of their hands. The festival was a time of great rejoicing.

Should not thanksgiving be to us what the Feast of Tabernacles was in ancient Israel—an occasion on which they celebrated their blessings with great joy?

In order for the children of Israel to be eligible for temporal blessings they were required to give visible evidence of their thankfulness and dependence on the Creator who brought them those blessings. In the spiritual realm we, too, must give proof, genuine proof that we are thankful for the blessings which a merciful and loving God is bestowing upon us every day. We show this thankfulness by the life we live.

A widely recognized author has recommended three ways to be more thankful. The first is, “Regardless of the circumstances, praise God.” Praise, like love, is closely related to thanksgiving. It is difficult to see how one could be deeply thankful to the great Creator and not praise Him for the many blessings which we receive continually.

We who have been enlightened, we who have been called out of the prison house of darkness, have been entrusted with a rare privilege. To us has been pointed out the way to an eternity of joy and happiness. We have been furnished all the necessary helps to make the journey; we have been promised the help of God, Christ, the angels and contemporary teachers to instruct us in the narrow way. We have been given a brief glimpse into the future by the prophets, apostles and Jesus to furnish a goal toward which to work. God has promised that He will not fail us or forsake us and that all His sayings are “faithful and true.” All these blessings are available to us on the one condition that we give Him our thanks. And that thanks cannot be from the mouth only. It must be genuine, visible in a life of sincere dedication. It must be demonstrated, voluntary and joyful.

We cannot expect the Lord to pour out His blessings continually upon us if we do not give anything to Him in return. We would not keep doing something for a friend if that friend did not show any gratitude or thankfulness for what we were doing for him.

The Feast of Tabernacles will be an important feast during the Millennium, as the prophet Zechariah tells us. All who make the yearly pilgrimage to Jerusalem to worship the King the Lord of Hosts will be blest, and those who refuse to go will bring upon themselves a plague. Thankfulness will be law enforced.

Regardless of our temporal prosperity today—or lack of it—“in poverty’s vale or abounding in wealth,” we should give thanks to the Lord in a way that is pleasing to Him. And that way is to live a life in accord with the conditions He has laid down in His Word.

The second way to be more thankful, as given by the above-mentioned author, is to “grow in humility.” At first thought, this might seem to be a reversal of the growth process and have nothing to do with thanksgiving. However, humility and thanksgiving are inseparable. The Christian life requires a growth. It requires sub-

mission to a higher authority. The natural man is too big to fit God's bed, as the prophet Isaiah illustrates it (Isa. 28:20).

Until we look into the mirror of God and see ourselves as we are, we tend to think of ourselves as much more important creatures than we actually are. We see ourselves through the wide-angle lens of the flesh. Just as the wide-angle camera lens enlarges objects close-up, so our vision of ourselves is distorted. When we begin to bring ourselves into correct focus we see how small we are in God's eyes and we can then start to grow in all the Christian graces. Humility is, however, the first step. Without this virtue we will never bow down our ear and hear the words of the "wise." We first must become little in our own sight before we can grow into the full stature of Jesus Christ. It is only after we have started to grow in all the Christian graces, including humility, that we begin to be truly thankful for our spiritual blessings. As we start climbing the mountain of holiness we realize how far down we were in the lowlands of sin and we can begin to thank God for our great deliverance.

The person who does not show respect and thankfulness to the supplier of all his temporal and spiritual needs is, to say the least, ungrateful and undeserving of God's favor. The story is told of a farmer who was entertaining one of his sophisticated relatives from the city. Before their meal the farmer thanked God for the food before them. The visitor said, jeeringly, "That is old fashioned: nobody with an education prays at the table anymore." The farmer admitted that the practice was not common, that even on his farm there were some who did not do it. Much pleased the relative remarked, "So enlightenment is reaching the farm, too. Who are these sensible ones?" The farmer answered, "They are my pigs."

Thanksgiving and Christian intelligence are related. We cannot be intelligent Christians and not be thankful. We cannot be Christians at all and not be thankful. King David associated the paying of vows with thanksgiving. If we agree to serve God, we are not demonstrating thanksgiving unless we live up to our agreement. God is very merciful and longsuffering and will give us time to pay that which we have vowed—one more reason to be thankful. But those vows must be paid.

Several passages of Scripture join thanksgiving with sacrifice. "I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord" (Psalm 116:17). God wants our life, our all. He wants us to be so thankful for what He is offering us that we will give Him our very best. If His cause requires our services and we decline or leave it to someone else, we are not demonstrating a thankful attitude. We may say we are thankful, we may sing songs of thanksgiving, but our lips are saying one thing while our lives tell another story.

Psalm 92:1 states, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord." On the opposite side of this, it is an evil thing *not* to give thanks unto the Lord. And we know that evildoers shall be cut off. Unthankfulness—even to our fellowman—is not only a breach of etiquette; it is a sin.

Jesus in His message to John on the Isle of Patmos tells of the angels falling on their faces before the throne saying, "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might be unto our God forever and ever." Thanksgiving is an angelic quality, and one which we must acquire if we are to be made like the angels.

Finally, Paul couples the grace of God with thanksgiving in II Corinthians 4:15. I will cite it from the New English Bible: "Indeed, it is for your sake that all things are ordered, so that, as the abounding grace of God is shared by more and more, the greater may be the chorus of thanksgiving that ascends to the glory of God."

May we all strive to be a part of that select company of faithful ones who will surround the throne of the great King singing a chorus of thanksgiving. MM

## Thanksgiving

*LORD of the harvest, Thee we hail;  
Thine ancient promise doth not fail;  
The varying seasons haste their round,  
With goodness all our years are crowned;  
Our thanks we pay, this holy day;  
O let our hearts in tune be found!*

*If spring doth wake the song of mirth;  
If summer warms the fruitful earth;  
When winter sweeps the naked plain,  
Or autumn yields its ripened grain,  
Still do we sing to Thee, our King;  
Through all their changes Thou dost reign.*

*But chiefly, when Thy liberal hand  
Scatters new plenty o'er the land,  
When sounds of music fill the air,  
As homeward all their treasures bear;  
We too will raise our hymn of praise,  
For we Thy common bounties share.*

*Lord of the harvest, all is Thine  
The rains that fall, the suns that shine,  
The seed once hidden in the ground,  
The skill that makes our fruits abound:  
New every year Thy gifts appear;  
New praises from our lips shall sound.*  
—Selected.

# God Loves Us . . . Or Does He?

## Part One in a Series of Two

**G**ODIS LOVE, beyond our farthest, fondest fathoming. Our small minds cannot begin to grasp even its least expression. "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever. He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion. . . . The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness" (Ps. 111:2-4, 7-8).

To see God's love toward humankind, we need only open our eyes and look—upward, outward, inward. We can but exclaim with the Psalmist, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" (Ps. 107:21). He was not obligated to give life to a single creature upon earth; and look at the multitude of beings alive today, all accepting the mortal life He has made possible. Truly, God is love.

But this morning we want to think about God's love as His special concern and outgoing favor to those He chooses, to those He is developing into a people for Himself. We want to think about that love of God which endears to us names like Abraham, Daniel, Joseph and Paul.

Who receives this love? Whom has God singled out to recognize and bless? Does God love everyone irrespective of character? Does God love you? Does He love me?

These are questions we should ponder, and ponder deeply, because no one wants to find himself outside God's love. We all need God. We need Him to supply the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food that sustains us. We are dependent on Him for the power to live and move and have a being. And the time is coming soon when we shall find ourselves with absolutely nothing if God does not love us.

Now we are inclined to think of ourselves as naturally

quite good, quite sufficient, quite acceptable. Is it safe to assume that God sees us this way and loves us? Is the love of God something we can just expect—and know we shall not be disappointed in the end?

The Sunday School song, "Jesus Loves Me," would suggest that God loves anyone and everyone capable of uttering the words. "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." The thought is pleasing. It makes us feel good to think that Jesus loves each of us in a special way.

The question is, does He? Does Jesus love anyone and everyone? Is this a fact of divine revelation? Has anyone ever found in the Sacred Volume anything by which he could be absolutely sure that Jesus loves him?

To think of God's love in a personal way is exhilarating and comforting. It produces in us a warm feeling of satisfaction and confidence. But of what value is it, if it is a false premise?—which we are convinced it is.

### Divine "Love"?

The overflowing love of God for all His human creatures is a popular topic among evangelists. It is popular, too, among those who come to listen. Who does not like to feel that God made him so He could have someone to love?—as if the Great God of heaven were depending on us mortals for companionship!

"God made us," says a certain minister, "and He loves us deeply. He must have stood back and looked with great pride at the creation of Adam, the work of His hands. Can He forget? Never! He is our Father. I think there will be an empty spot in God's heart throughout eternity for the wicked who are shut out of the companionship of heaven."

Another religious writer says the love of God is literally without limit. "No one ever sinks so low or gets so grimy that he passes beyond God's love. . . . Sin has stopped the flow of human affection in millions of hearts, but sin cannot quench the love of God. He holds the door open over a welcome mat, and rejoices when the lost is found." Says another, God "looks with greatest love upon the vilest or shabbiest among us."

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Note: *God Loves Us . . . Or Does He?* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

A young man listening to an evangelist was so attracted by the gospel he heard that he decided to enter the ministry. But considering it further, he changed his mind. When questioned as to why he changed, the young man replied, "I'm not bad enough."

Many are the religious teachers who carry this idea of God's greatest love for the worst sinner to such an extreme that a person almost feels condemned for trying to behave himself. The more you sin, the more God will love you. To illustrate this point, the following story has been told.

A prisoner stood in the courtroom to receive his sentence. The jury and the audience in the background waited breathlessly to hear what the judge would say. "Sam," the judge began, "the minimum fine for your crime is \$500. The maximum is \$2500, or a year in prison. I sentence you to pay \$2500."

The audience gasped. They had expected the judge to hand down the minimum sentence at the most, perhaps even a suspended sentence, for the criminal was the judge's own brother.

The prisoner sank into his chair and covered his face with his hands. He could not pay the \$2500, and he couldn't afford to leave his family for a year in prison.

The judge arose from his bench, stepped down from the bar, and walked to where his prisoner-brother was sitting. Taking him by the hand he raised him up and threw his arms around him. "Sam," he cried, "I had to do it. You are guilty, and the law requires it. But I know you can't pay it. Therefore, I'm going to pay that fine for you. You may leave my court a free man."

The minister then commented that God is like that. "His law requires that the sinner die, and He can't change that penalty. But He loves us so much that He arranged for the death penalty to be paid for us. Jesus, God's own Son (and, they say, God Almighty, too!) came down to die that we might go free."

Now where is the love of God in such an arrangement? Our founder once commented on this doctrine, that it was as though God got us stuck in the mud so He could have the pleasure of pulling us out. Is this God's plan? Does He love everyone so much that He forgives their sins, even if unrepented of and unforsaken, just because they call upon Him?

### **God Loves Everyone?**

So many false beliefs are bound up together in this illustration. But just now we want to consider only one, the idea that God loves everyone.

First, let us use our God-given power of reason just a little:

Can we imagine that God, whose will is done through the vast reaches of the heavens, loves us so much that

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## **We think of ourselves as naturally quite good. Is it safe to assume that God sees us this way?**

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He is lonesome if we perish?

Can we believe that "no one ever sinks so low or gets so grimy that he passes beyond God's love"—when the Prophet of the Lord says clearly that "your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear"? (Isa 59:2).

Can we believe that "sin cannot quench the love of God" when we read all through the Bible how God hates, abhors, condemns, and punishes those who sin?

Can we think that God loves him most who is most sinful when we read that even the "thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord" (Prov. 15:26), and the "righteous Lord loveth righteousness" (Ps. 11:7)?

Had our founder years ago gone out preaching that God loves everybody, he could have had multitudes of followers. But it was a luxury he could ill afford. He was too honest. He had pledged himself to preach only what he could read in the Word of God, and he could not find any evidence there that God loves everyone.

The idea of God's universal love has something to recommend it. It has great appeal to large numbers of people. It helps to get many converts, and fill large coffers, and finance extended budgets. The very idea that God loves us as we are, with all our little oddities, fancies, and deficiencies, flatters our little egos and makes us think we are something special.

But what happens when we turn to the Bible and read, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness" (Isa. 5:20); or "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" (Isa. 5:21); or "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin" (Isa. 30:1)? Can we read these verses and still feel ourselves comfortable and safe in the love of God?

### **Great God—Great Love**

God's love is nothing to take lightly. Perhaps we have not considered all it means. When we think of God, we have to think of Him in contrast to what we are, with our



limitations, and mark the differences. We think of His magnificence and might, "the Lord, the great and dreadful," who "keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations" (Dan. 9:4; Deut. 7:9). Think of the greatness of Him who could say, "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God" (Isa. 44:6). Think of His self-existence, His infinity, His eternity, His unchangeableness, all told often in Scripture.

Then think of His power, His almightiness, His omniscience. Think of Him who could say, "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isa. 46:9-10).

Think then of God's moral character, His holiness, His mercy, His truthfulness, His faithfulness, His goodness, His patience, His justice. Our finite minds cannot even begin to comprehend the greatness of Him who "inhabited eternity, whose name is holy" (Isa. 57:15). Think of the power of Him who can create and sustain billions upon billions of worlds in the immensity of space—and then call them all by name (Isa. 40:26). Think of the

greatness of Him who has been blessing and crowning worthy individuals from eternity past (Ps. 103:17). Think of the vast numbers of happy, glorified beings—the angels of God—who live and enjoy His handiwork in all parts of His vast creation.

And then consider: Can we, little creatures of dust that we are, occupying one small spot in a universe among universes, be so presumptuous as to think God is so destitute for companionship that He must save us? Think we that He could ever be lonely without us? Strange, isn't it, how He managed to get along through those countless billions of ages before we were born!

But consider further: Can so great, so magnificent, so holy a God ever look with love upon any who do not honor His principles, accept His standards, and show a deep and overpowering love toward Him? Should we not stand amazed that He even takes notice of us if we make the effort to lift ourselves to His standards?

Oh, how small and weak and finite we are! How gracious is He to even offer us a place in His eternal Plan! Such bountiful, merciful, wonderful love! Do we not feel to exclaim with the Psalmist, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens....When I consider thy heavens,

---

## *Let Us Pray...*

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. O God, help us to realize that we cannot master the external world or help to bring peace and good will among men until we master the world within. Out of the heart are the issues of life, and the evil that we see about us is the child of passions like our own. Forgive us for the hate, the selfishness and sin with which we have darkened life, and grant that henceforth we may be able so to discipline our thoughts and rule our spirits that bitterness and envy may be banished from our own hearts, that one day we may help banish war and discord from the world at large, and establish Thy Kingdom of peace and righteousness.

We rejoice to know that Thou art a God of love, that justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne, and that mercy and truth always go before Thy face. Thou takest no pleasure in the death of the wicked, and Thy impelling motive in their destruction is only to clear the way for better and more worthy individuals, and a better world.

Remind us, Father, that we are the recipients of Thy love and protection. Thou givest to us, we cannot add to Thy pleasure or completeness. Thou dost not need us but we need Thee. We need Thee every moment of our lives. Thou alone givest life and breath and all the physical blessings which we enjoy. But Thy future blessings, the blessings of the world to come, depend entirely upon our worthiness.

Thou hatest both sin and the sinner, and lovest only righteousness, and for that love to flow to us we must become righteous. Thou hast set apart the godly for Thyself. They are Thy special treasure, Thy jewels. Thou dost value all such as the apple of Thine eye, as the most valued commodity in all creation, and Thy love for all such has no limits. Help us, Father, to so conduct ourselves that we may be worthy of that everlasting love, to be counted as Thy dear sons and daughters, such persons as Thou wilt own and bless and save eternally, and to whom Thou wilt be a Father, and with whom Thou wilt share Thy boundless wealth.

We pray that Thy love and protection may be upon all who are seeking Thee with their whole heart. Be with the sick and afflicted and those who are enduring trial and affliction. Bless all who are seeking to learn and live Thy holy way. And give us strength never to grow weary in well doing, that the blessings of the world to come may be ours to enjoy forever. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained: what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Ps. 8:1, 3-4). What are we, even at our human best? How dare we to so exalt ourselves in His presence as to think He must pour out His love on every bit of humanity that breathes!

### **Love, Abundant but Selective**

When our great God does choose to honor a member of the earthly family, think how great is that honor. What high privilege to merit His love! What rare privilege—yet it is available. It has already been guaranteed to 144,000 men and women. And in the age to come, millions and billions of happy mortals shall be the recipients of His eternal love when the earth is filled with the glory of the Lord (Num. 14:21). How grand is the thought that our great God has such love to give.

But can we think for a moment that such love is for everyone?

Let us consider the idea that God loves everyone in relation to His justice and righteousness. We read that He is "the righteous Lord" who "loveth righteousness" (Ps. 11:7); the "righteous God" who "trieth the hearts and reins" (Ps. 7:9). It is His power that will "judge the earth in righteousness"; and "minister judgment to the people in uprightness" (Ps. 9:8). "Justice and judgment are the habitation" of His throne (Ps. 89:14). Can such a righteous and just God demand righteousness and at the same time love everyone good or bad? Is He righteous and just if He does not punish sin, if He treats the sinner with the same love that He reserves for the saint? Can we agree with the minister who says, "If God chooses to love an alcoholic or a drug addict with equal love as a saint, this is God's right—He is God"? Is this the way of the God whose character shows "no unrighteousness"? (Ps. 92:15). We know it is not.

### **Righteous Love**

What righteousness is there in commanding "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (I Pet. 1:16), and then accepting a person who is unholy?

What righteousness is there in requiring one man to "walk before me, and be thou perfect," and then accepting another who does not even profess to walk before God?

What righteousness is there in pronouncing a blessing upon the meek, the pure in heart, the poor in spirit, the peacemakers, and then saving those who have none of these qualities?

No, God is a God of justice, a God of righteousness, of love. And it is His love that punishes, restricts, and removes the evil so that the good may be encouraged. It

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## **Can so great, so holy a God ever love any who do not honor His principles?**

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is only by not loving the sinful that He can show His love for the good. By showing love to the disobedient He would be saying that He did not love the good, for He would be promoting the wrong. But no, there is no such injustice with God. He judges every man "according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12; Jer. 17:10). This is His eternal principle of justice and love.

### **Examples of God's Love**

Can we find in Scripture any example of God loving people who were ungodly and disobedient? We know He sends rain upon the "just and unjust," and in this sense all may be said to partake of His love. But where did God ever single out evildoers for special blessing?

We look in vain. But we find example upon example of those whom God did not love, people whom He abhorred, hated, and condemned because of their sinfulness. Hear His words to apostate Israel, spoken through His prophet Isaiah: "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward" (Isa. 1:4). Did God love them?

We read that the "Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not" (Jude 5). Did God love them?

Did God love those whom the earth opened and swallowed up? Did He love those who were "destroyed for lack of knowledge," of whom He said, "Seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children"? (Hos. 4:6).

No, God's love has never been upon all equally. "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:13). Why? Because one became righteous, the other did not.

In the days of Noah, God brought in the Flood upon the world of the ungodly (II Pet. 2:5), because He saw that "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). He sent fire from heaven to destroy the wicked inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, because not even ten righteous persons could be found there; there were not even ten He could love.

God does not love people who manifest qualities He

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**God is a God of justice.  
It is His love that punishes,  
restricts, and removes evil.**

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abhors. "These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him" (Prov. 6:16-18). And these are traits commonly seen.

**God's Love for Israel**

When the nation of Israel was with God, God loved them and blessed them richly. But when they apostatized and turned away from Him, His attitude toward them changed. He warned, and warned and warned, because many trusted in an idea of "once loved, always loved." He sent prophets to make clear the dire consequences of evil-doing. No one can read the book of Jeremiah, or Amos, or Micah, and think that God has love and kindness for everyone irrespective of character. Jeremiah was commanded not even to pray for them. "Pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them,...for I will not hear thee" (Jer. 7:16). Why? Because of their sins. "Your iniquities have turned away these things from you, and your sins have withholden good things from you" (Jer. 5:22).

We all know the fate of ancient Israel. And dare we think that the same God will deal any differently with us if we prove unfaithful to our high calling? It is written that those who "know the judgments of God" and still "commit such things" are "worthy of death." There is no question about it. "We are sure," says Paul, "that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things" (Rom. 2:2). Then he applies the lesson personally: "And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" (Rom. 2:3). Dare we think that we shall be exempt from punishment and be automatic subjects of His love, if we do not give heed to these things "written aforetime," if we go on from day to day in our own old ways, heedless of His warnings?

However, let us not conclude that God's natural disposition toward men is one of hatred and severity. It is only the sinful, the wicked, the rebellious, the disobedient, the unfaithful whom He condemns. "The Lord is ...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Pet. 3:9). To all He gives opportunity to repent, turn, obey, draw nigh, with the promise of abundant blessing and forgiveness when they do.

God does not love everyone, nor does He have hatred for all. In the days of the boy Samuel, the high priest Eli was given an ultimatum which clearly reveals God's attitude toward men: "Them that honour me, I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (I Sam. 2:30). This is His eternal principle. "I love them that love me," He says, speaking through the voice of Wisdom (Prov. 8:17).

Jesus, communing with His Father on the night of His betrayal, said, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine" (John 17:9). Here was a separation between those God loved, and those God did not love: between those Jesus would pray for, and those He did not pray for. He did not pray for those who had no love or interest for God or His Kingdom. He did, however, pray for those who believed—and even those who "shall believe on me through their word" (John 17:20). Here was divine love reaching into the future, reaching even to us, if we qualify as believers in our day. Jesus could have prayed for us when He prayed that night—did He?

Always God's love is selective. We need to remember how lightly He values all who disregard Him. Nations before Him "are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance....All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity" (Isa. 40:15, 17). But when God chooses from that "dust" an individual who is totally committed to Him, one who is doing everything in his power to lift himself to God's plane of thought and action,

*(Continued on page 23)*

*Eternal Worth*

We see a house, but cannot see a home;  
We see a brain, but cannot see a mind;  
A word is seen, but never an idea;  
A kindly glance, but not the love behind.

We see a deed; the motive is not seen.  
We see a rose, but the growth we cannot see,  
We see a face, a smile, a tear—  
But can't see truth or prayer or sympathy!

Upon the things unseen I set my heart.  
For these have value of Eternal worth;  
While things we see are fleeting, temporal,  
And fade like autumn leaves away from earth.  
—Selected



# — And Still She Speaks —

## Part Ten

The following lines are extracts from sermons, discussions, talks, comments by Rev. Maud Hembree (1853-1935).

We were working in the mission field near Springfield, Ohio, we called on a certain man and his wife. Almost the first thing the man told me was that he did not have any besetting sin, but his wife had a terrible temper. But as the time passed I found that I would rather live with his wife than with him. He was like the rich man in Jesus' parable of The Rich Man and Lazarus. He was self-righteous.

"That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." I do not know a verse in the Bible that contains more wisdom, more length, more height, and depth of knowledge. You might appear outwardly right, might pay your debts, might have naturally an agreeable disposition, an accommodating nature, might be very patient, get along all right, might believe the kingdom is coming on the earth, that man is mortal, and the Lord is coming. But that would not save you. There is more to salvation than that. Isaiah 66:2 tells us to whom God will look: "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

We have to become humble, meek and lowly. We have to get down and search the thoughts and intents of the heart. And that is not highly esteemed among men.

"Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens." To just lift up your hands will never save you. You might lift your hands all day and night long; but have you lifted your mind, brought it into subjection?

Ah, there is such need of searching the natural mind so prone to evil. Some, more on one point; and some, on another. But it covers every act of life. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." That covers it. That is the grand platform of the Almighty.

If we are listening to the wisdom from above, when warning words come to our ears of any transgression or besetting sin, we will be willing to listen. That is the road to the Kingdom.

We must watch to see what moves us, what causes us to act day by day. Where are our thoughts? Have we brought into subjection everything that is not in harmony with the law of God?

Some people might appear accommodating, obliging, and pleasant. You might think they were ready for the kingdom of God; but live with them and see if there is that deep searching of heart. You might think that if a person has known the law of God for thirty or fifty years, they are about sure of the kingdom; but one person might go fifty years in the truth without that heart searching, while another might get right down and do more in a year. It is not the length of time, but really getting down into the work.

How often in past days when on the farm we have worked and worked and worked to get the bit into the horse's mouth. If we wanted to go anywhere we had to go out and catch the horse; and after we caught hold of him, how he would toss his head. We had to work and work to get the bridle on. But when we got the bridle on, we could lead him so easily. How hard it has been to put on the bridle of divine truth! How often we have tossed our head. The Lord furnishes the bridle if we will only put it on, let it rule and govern us.

"Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" My Word is like a hammer, He says. It will come down on our stubborn heads until it will cause us to put away all anger, wrath and evil, until we submit to it.

Let us hold fast to the end. Let us gird the loins of our mind with truth. Let us grow stronger. The glory is all ahead.



## What Does the Bible Really Teach about

# HEALING?

By John MacArthur, Jr.\*

TO MAKE a comparison between supposed "gift healing" being claimed today and what the Bible teaches, we simply have to go back and look at Jesus. Jesus set the pattern for the spiritual gifts, and He did a tremendous amount of healing. In Jesus' day the world was full of disease. Medical science was crude and limited. More incurable diseases existed then than we have now. Plagues would wipe out entire cities.

When Jesus came into the world, He realized that one obvious way to help the world know and believe that He was the Christ would be to heal disease. How did He do it? There are at least six characteristics in Jesus' healing ministry:

1. **Jesus healed with a word or a touch.** Matthew 8 relates that as Jesus was entering Capernaum, a centurion came to Him and asked Him to help his servant, who was lying paralyzed at home and suffering great pain (verses 6, 7). Jesus told the centurion that He would come and heal the servant; but the centurion protested, pointing out

that if Jesus would "just say the word," his servant could be healed (verse 8).

Jesus was amazed at the centurion's faith, particularly because he was a Roman and not of the house of Israel. "And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour" (verse 13).

When Jesus fed the 5,000 (John 6), He had spent most of the day healing those in the crowd who were sick. Scripture does not tell us how many were healed—it could have been thousands. But whatever the number, Jesus could heal them with a word. There were no theatrics, no special environment. Jesus could heal with a word or a touch. For example in Mark 5:25-34 we find the account of the woman with the chronic bleeding problem who was healed by just touching Jesus' robe.

2. **Jesus healed instantaneously.** The centurion's servant was healed "that very hour" (Matthew 8:13, N.A.S.B.). The woman with the bleeding problem was healed "immediately" (Mark 5:29, N.A.S.B.).

Jesus healed the ten lepers instantaneously right there on the road (Luke

17:14). The man with the withered hand was touched by Jesus and "immediately the leprosy departed from him" (Luke 5:13). The crippled man at the pool of Bethesda "immediately... became well, and took up his pallet and began to walk" (John 5:9, N.A.S.B.). Even the man born blind, who had to go wash his eyes, was healed instantly when he did as Jesus said (John 9:1-7).

People often say, "Yes, the Lord healed me, and since He healed me I've been getting better." Jesus never did "progressive" healing. While some of His healings included two phases (such as the blind man washing in the pool of Siloam), the healings were immediate and no less instantaneous. If Jesus had not healed instantly, there would have been no miraculous element to demonstrate His divine power. His critics could easily have said the healing was just a "natural" process.

3. **Jesus healed totally.** In Luke 4 Jesus left the synagogue and came to Simon Peter's home. Peter's mother-in-law was there, suffering from a high fever. Jesus stood over her, "rebuked the fever," and immediately she was well (verse 39, N.A.S.B.). In fact, she felt so good, she got up and began to wait on them.

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There was no "recuperation period." Jesus didn't advise her to sip a little honey in hot water and "take it easy for a few weeks." Her healing was instant and it was total. That was the only kind of healing Jesus ever did.

**4. Jesus healed everybody.** Unlike healers today, Jesus did not leave long lines of disappointed people who had to return home in their wheelchairs. Jesus didn't have healing services or programs that ended at a certain time because of airline or television schedules. Luke 4:40 tells us, "And while the sun was setting, all who had any sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and laying His hands on every one of them, He was healing them" (N.A.S.B.). (For another example see Luke 9:11.)

**5. Jesus healed organic disease.** Jesus did not go up and down Palestine healing functional disease like low back pain, palpitation of the heart, and headaches. He healed organic disease, crippled legs, withered hands, blind eyes, palsy, et cetera, the kind of healing that would show a miracle beyond doubt.

**6. Jesus raised the dead.** In Luke 7:11-16 Jesus was at a city called Nain and came upon a widow in a funeral procession as she went out to bury her only son. Jesus came up, touched the coffin, and said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." And the dead man sat up and began to speak. (See also the raising of the synagogue ruler's daughter in Mark 5:22-24, 35-43.)

It is interesting to note that those claiming the gift of healing today do not spend much time in funeral parlors, with funeral processions, or in cemeteries. The reason is obvious.

Of course, some charismatics have made claims that people have come back from the dead. But to claim to have died while in surgery or with cardiac arrest is something that can never be verified. On the other hand, to come out of the grave four days after being buried (see John 11) or to climb out of one's casket at the funeral (see Luke 7) is a resurrection that cannot

be doubted. There would be an easy way for the charismatic claimants to the gift of healing to dispel all doubt. All they would have to do is to go on television (preferably one of the major secular networks) and restore to life a corpse that was at least three days dead.

Why did Jesus do all this healing? His gift of healing was an authenticating gift. He used it to confirm His claims that He was the Son of God (John 20:30-31).

**How did the apostles heal?** As we have seen, Jesus set a high standard for the use of the gift of healing. Someone could possibly protest that Jesus could do what He did because He was the Son of God. They might argue that those who have the gift of healing today operate at another level of power. Yet how did others use the gift of healing that was bestowed on them by Christ?

The primary group to whom Christ gave the gift of healing was the apostles (Luke 9:1-2). Later, Jesus extended this gift to seventy others, whom He sent out two by two to preach the gospel and to heal those who were sick (Luke 10:1-9).

Did anyone else in the New Testament have the ability to heal? Yes, a few associates of the apostles also possessed the gift, namely Barnabas (Acts 15:12), Philip (Acts 8:7), and Stephen (Acts 6:8). But we never see the gift being used at random in the churches. It is a gift always associated with Christ, the seventy, and the twelve. The gift of healing (and the gift of miracles) was a limited one in terms of the people who possessed it. And like miracles, the gift of healing was used by God to authenticate and confirm the proclamation of the good news of the kingdom.

Acts 3 clearly illustrates how the gift of healing helped the apostles proclaim their message. Peter and John were going into the Temple to pray when a lame man asked them for alms. Peter replied by saying he didn't have any

money, but what he did have he would give. Then he said, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6).

Immediately the man leaped to his feet and began walking and praising God. The word passed quickly, and soon a huge crowd gathered. Everyone knew of the lame man who had been begging at the Temple gate for years. Peter seized the opportunity and addressed the crowd, telling them that they should not marvel at what they had seen. What had been done had not been through the power of Peter or John but through the power of Jesus Christ, the One whom they had crucified.

It is crucial to understand the impact of what Peter said and the impact of the healing miracle that he had just done. Peter was talking to Jews, who had always been looking for their Messiah. Suppose Peter had walked in and simply told them, "Look, fellows, you really ought to believe in Jesus Christ, the One you crucified a few months ago. He was your Messiah."

We cannot begin to imagine how shocking and repulsive this message would be to the Jew of the first century. It was utterly unthinkable to him that his Messiah would be crucified like a common criminal on the town garbage heap. For the typical Jew of that day, the Messiah was to come in power and glory to sweep away the bondage of the hated Romans, who held Palestine in their grip.

Had Peter not performed the miracle of healing the lame man, he would have gotten little or no audience at all. Instead many were shaken and pierced to their hearts. According to Acts 4:4, "Many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand" (N.A.S.B.). Acts 3 is a repeat of what went on in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost.

**The miracle at Pentecost** was not a healing but the speaking in languages that men from many different countries

could understand. Peter had used that opportunity to preach his message of Christ the Messiah, and three thousand believed that day.

With Pentecost the church was born. A new age had come, and God gave miraculous abilities to His apostles to help them proclaim their message. In fact, we can go right down the line and see the same six characteristics operating in the apostles that operated in the miracles of healing done by Jesus Christ.

**1. The apostles healed with a word or a touch.** In Acts 9:32-35 Peter healed a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years with paralysis. All Peter did was say, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed," and immediately Aeneas was healed (verse 34).

In Acts 28 we see Paul on the island of Malta, and he healed with a touch. Publius, one of the leading men on Malta, was hosting Paul and his companions. Publius' father was lying in bed with a bad case of fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him, prayed, laid his hands on him, and healed him (verse 8).

**2. The apostles healed instantaneously.** Peter met a beggar at the gate to the Temple and said, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." The crippled man came immediately to his feet and started leaping, walking, and praising God (Acts 3:2-8). He did not need therapy or extra rehabilitation. The man was immediately cured after a lifetime of lameness.

**3. The apostles healed totally.** You can see this in the account of the lame man in Acts 3, and also in the healing of Aeneas in chapter 9. Acts 9:34 is most insightful when it says, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." Like every healing Jesus did, every healing of the apostles was a whole operation. There was no progression, no talk of how "I've been healed, and I'm getting steadily better since my healing."

**4. The apostles were able to heal**

**everybody.** Acts 5:12-16 reports that the apostles did many signs and wonders among the people, and the people held them in high esteem. Multitudes of believers were constantly added to their number, and they carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets so that when Peter came by, his shadow might fall on any one of them. In addition, people from surrounding cities brought those who were sick to be healed, and "they were healed every one" (verse 16).

In Acts 28:9 we learn that after Paul healed Publius, an important official of Malta, "others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed." No one was left out.

**5. The apostles healed organic disease.** They did not deal in functional, symptomatic, or psychosomatic problems. The man at the Temple gate was probably in his 40s, crippled from birth. Publius' father had dysentery, an infectious organic problem.

**6. Like Jesus, the apostles raised the dead.** Acts 9:36-42 tells how Peter brought Dorcas (Tabitha) back to life. Note especially verse 42: "And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord." Again we see a miracle connected with giving credence and impact to the gospel message, with belief following. In Acts 20:9-12 a young man named Eutychus died in a fall, and Paul brought him back to life.

Like Jesus, the apostles healed with a word or a touch. They healed instantaneously and totally. They healed everybody. They healed organic disease and they raised the dead. Despite all the claims being made on television and in other media, no one has yet done these six things in the way that Jesus and the apostles did them.

Here is another key point: According to Scripture, those who possessed gifts operated them strictly on the basis of volition; that is, *they used their gifts at will*.

Charismatics who are heavily advertised in relationship to healing do not heal at will. They know they cannot. They know that they do not have the

true Biblical gift of healing. And so they say, "It's not my doing; it's the Lord's."

**The gift of healing** was one of four miraculous sign gifts that were given to help the apostolic community to confirm their preaching of the gospel message in the early years of the church. Once the Word of God was complete, the signs ceased. Miraculous signs were no longer needed. In fact, there are many Biblical examples of how an apostle did not use the gift of healing for purposes other than as a powerful sign to convince people of the validity of the gospel message.

In Philippians 2:25-27 Paul spoke about his good friend Epaphroditus, who was sick to the point of death but didn't die, because the Lord had mercy on him. Paul had the gift of healing. Why didn't he simply heal Epaphroditus? Because Paul did not pervert the purpose of the gift for his own personal ends. The purpose of the gift of healing was not to keep Christians healthy. It was to be used primarily as a sign to unbelievers at those times when it was necessary to make the proclamation of the gospel effective.

We find a similar case in II Timothy 4:20, where Paul said that he left Trophimus sick at Miletus. Why should Paul leave one of his good Christian friends sick? Why didn't he heal him? Because that was not the purpose of the gift of healing.

The gift of healing was a miraculous sign gift to be used for special purposes. It was not to be used wholesale as a permanent way to keep the Christian community in tiptop shape. Even in the case of the raising of Eutychus (Acts 20:9-12), the miracle helped authenticate Paul's apostleship. Yet today charismatics continually make such claims as "God wants every Christian to be well."

Dale Bruner quoted a moderate charismatic as saying, "Over every sickness there stands...the will of God to heal." Charismatics would have us believe God has made it perfectly clear it is His will to heal the sick. If this is



true, why does God allow people to get sick in the first place?

In a world where God has not chosen to exclude sin, why should we assume that suffering is excluded? If every Christian were well and healthy, if perfect health were a guaranteed benefit of belief, millions of people would be stampeding to the faith—but for the wrong reason. God wants people to come to Him in repentance for sin, not because they see Him as a panacea for their physical ills.

### **What about charismatic healings?**

Obviously, the charismatics can respond to my entire line of reasoning with the same question they use when anyone asks them to consider the Biblical and theological implications of what they are doing. The usual words are, "But things are happening and how do you explain it?"

I hear the same refrain constantly from charismatic and noncharismatic friends alike: "I know this lady and she had a son who had cancer and..." "My friend's mother was so bent over with arthritis she couldn't move and..."

In reply I ask:

"Since no charismatic healer (or personality who is letting the 'Holy Spirit' do it) can come up with consistently verified cases of healing organic disease instantly, totally, by word or touch..."

"Since no charismatic healer heals everybody (hundreds go away from their services as sick or as crippled as when they came)..."

"Since no charismatic healer raises the dead..."

"Since the Bible is complete and revelation has ceased and no miracle signs are necessary today..."

"Since the Word of God needs no confirmation outside of itself and is sufficient to show the way of salvation to man..."

"Since charismatic 'healings' are based on questionable theology of the atonement and salvation..."

"Since charismatic writers and teachers

appear to disallow God His own purposes in having some people stay sick..."

"Since charismatic healers seem to need their own closed environment..."

"Since the evidence they bring forth to prove these healings is often weak, unsupported, and overexaggerated..."

"Since charismatics are not known for going into hospitals to heal (where there is plenty of faith on the part of many)..."

"Since they cannot heal all who come to them..."

"Since many instances of healings by charismatics can be explained in many ways other than God's unquestioned supernatural intervention..."

"Since all this confusion and contradiction surrounds what 'is happening,' let me ask the return question, 'How do you explain it?' Certainly not as the Biblical gift of healing!"

Healings that happen today can be explained but not according to the charismatic position.

What is the typical explanation by charismatic teachers, healers, and leaders when someone is not healed or when someone dies? "There wasn't enough faith." This kind of reasoning is neither kind nor accurate.

### **Has God promised to heal?**

Although we can be sure that charismatic writers who claim that "God wants everybody well" are in error, we can be equally positive that God can heal. (But in all cases in our day, God does His healing by using natural means and not by openly manifest divine power.—Editor)

God has promised that if what we ask in prayer is according to His will, it will be done (I John 5:14). If it is His will, God will heal.

Paul recognized this principle, and that is why he wrote in regard to his own "thorn" (which was very possibly illness) in II Corinthians 12:8: "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me." Paul's tone is that of a man who is asking for God's will to be done. When the answer came back "No," he accepted it (see Paul's

recognition of God's grace in verses 9 and 10).

### **Should Christians go to doctors?**

While the Bible teaches that God is definitely a healer, there is also ample evidence that Christians should believe in and go to doctors. Isaiah 38 relates the story of how King Hezekiah was deathly ill. The king wept bitterly and beseeched the Lord in prayer for healing. God granted his request, but note how the healing took place: "For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall recover" (Isaiah 38:21). Why was the remedy needed if God had granted the healing? God was laying down a principle here. There are two things to do when you get sick: pray for healing and go to a doctor.

Jesus confirmed this same idea in Matthew 9:12 when He said, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Granted Jesus was speaking of the problem of sin in lives, but He was using an analogy that everybody understood. Sick people need a doctor.

So the principle is clear: When we get sick, we should pray; we should seek help from competent doctors; we should let God do His will.

In illness as in everything else the Christian should keep a Biblical perspective and seek to glorify God and His purpose. And all the time we should remember that God does heal, not through healers who claim or imply they have a miraculous gift, but according to His own sovereign will and pleasure. MM

Just as gentleness is characteristic of the strong, and simplicity of the profound, so is humility characteristic of the truly great.



# NO

## The Most Useful Word

SOMETIME ago the editor of one of the magazines which specializes in word study asked a small number of distinguished writers to answer the following questions:

1. What word in the English language seems to you the most beautiful in sound?

2. What English word seems to you the most useful in the language?

3. What word to you seems the most annoyingly used or misused?

In answer to the first question, the most beautiful word, some of the old favorites were given. Among them the musical word "Mesopotamia." This is the word the great English actor Garrick wished he could pronounce the way the famous preacher George Whitefield pronounced it. Nearly all agreed that the most misused word was "Yes," and nearly all voted that the most useful word in the language is "No."

Plutarch tells of an ancient town whose inhabitants became slaves and vassals to others because of their inability to say "No." The inability, or unwillingness, to say "No" has made men slaves to others, and still worse, slaves to their passions and their fears. For the lack of a "No" spoken to

temptation, Adam transgressed. So did Cain.

That is the picture of human life from age to age, until fortified by the power of God and aroused by the desire for a better life. Almost as soon as we cross the threshold of life we are assailed by enemies, and if we lack the power to say "No" we are doomed. One of General Grant's most useful generals, the one who had the greatest influence on Grant's conduct, was his able and faithful chief-of-staff, General John Rawlins. Of him Grant says that he knew how to say "No" to a request which he felt ought not be granted and say it in such a way that the man who made the request never repeated it.

How shall we prove and demonstrate that it is the hardest word, also one of the greatest? Let us see how it was used in the lives of a few of God's great men.

Joseph was an illustration of the most beautiful word, "forgiveness"; he is also an illustration of the hardest word, "No." When Joseph said "No," no one was left wondering whether he meant it or not.

Sold by his brothers into Egypt, Joseph was bought as a slave by Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard. In

Potiphar's house the splendid qualities of Joseph soon lifted him to a position of honor and trust. Then Potiphar's wife fell in love with Joseph and tempted him to dishonor and sin. The more one reads that story, the more one wonders that Joseph was able to pronounce that magnificent "No." He was then in his early twenties and in the full tide of early manhood. The most natural of temptations, it was also one of the strongest and most dangerous.

This temptation was unusual because of the person who was the tempter. She was not a common woman or a streetwalker but a woman of rank and fashion. From a standpoint of worldly policy, this temptation, if yielded to, might have promised advancement for Joseph. She would have been an influential friend at Court. To refuse her wish was to render himself the victim of hatred and anger and jeopardize his very life. Again, it was a strong temptation because it was a repeated temptation. Some men will say "No" once or twice, then weaken and surrender. This woman tempted Joseph day after day. Constantly he was in the presence of temptation, yet day after day he repulsed it.

Also, it was a strong temptation



because the man who was tempted was a slave and an exile in a foreign land. His father's people and his father's religion, from all external appearances, had done little for him. Slaves were not supposed to have virtue. Here was an opportunity for deliverance and distinction. No doubt the thought flashed through Joseph's mind: "Why bother about the old Hebrew scruples? Perhaps this is God's way of opening new avenues of service and new doors of opportunity. It will certainly be to my advantage."

Yet Joseph met the temptation with a magnificent "No." The consideration which held him true to himself, true to virtue and to honor was the thought of his commitment to God. "How," he cried, "can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" An old drama represents Potiphar's wife, when Joseph said that, as throwing her skirt over the head of an idol which stood in the chamber and saying, "Now God cannot see." But Joseph's loyalty was unquestioned. "My God sees," he replied. "How can I do this great evil against my God?"

The angry, infuriated woman made a false charge against Joseph, and he was cast into prison. It looked as if Joseph had lost everything for his loyalty to principle; but in reality he had won everything, for that "No" was the turning point in Joseph's career. His path took him now through a rough dark dungeon, but it emerged at length in the sunlight of national splendor and honor.

It is always so. When a man yields to temptation, farewell to the tranquil mind; farewell to true greatness. But where the temptation is resisted, where the tempted says to the tempter, "No. I will not," then immediately invisible hands begin to forge a chain of gold which one day will be hung about the victor's neck.

The greatest weapon against temptation is a fearless "No" grounded in the fear of God.

In the book of Daniel we again have the firm "No" of religious principle and

conviction. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the Chaldean names of the three companions of Daniel who were being brought up with him at the court of Nebuchadnezzar, had refused to worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Heralds had gone throughout the land shouting to the people, "To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up. And whoso falleth not down shall at the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

The Hebrew lads were well acquainted with the law of their God, which said plainly, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. Thou shalt now bow down thyself to them nor serve them." Accordingly, they refused to prostrate themselves before this golden image of the king on the plains of Dura. Their enemies among the Chaldeans were glad to accuse the Hebrews to the King. When Nebuchadnezzar heard that they had refused to bow down, in his rage and fury he had his officers bring them into his presence. He said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that ye do not serve my gods nor worship the golden image which I have set up? If ye will not worship, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning, fiery furnace, and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?"

Then the three Hebrew youths rendered their magnificent "No" that still echoes in heaven and on earth: "O Nebuchadnezzar, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O King. But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

Perhaps the grandest thing about their answer was the word, "But if

not." They knew that God was able to deliver them. But whether it pleased Him to deliver them or not their duty was clear, and they chose to burn to ashes in the fiery furnace rather than bow down to a heathen God. On this occasion God did deliver them. The flames were hot—so hot that they consumed the men who threw them into the furnace. But when Nebuchadnezzar went down to contemplate their fate, he could hardly believe what he saw. Perhaps he had wondered if the God of Israel might deliver them. But when he looked in, he saw the Hebrew lads, and by their side the form of a fourth, "and the form of the fourth was like the Son of God." When the three lads emerged from the furnace, there was not so much as the smell of fire upon them. Truly, God had rewarded their fidelity by a great deliverance.

This is the "No" that is always on God's side. There were several memorable occasions when Christ uttered it. The first was when He was tempted in the wilderness. To each proposal Christ answered with a mighty "No." If He had failed there, He would never have been our King.

The second time Jesus uttered that mighty "No" was in the Garden of Gethsemane. Again Christ answered "No" to His natural tendency to shrink from the full fidelity which cost Him His natural life. But when He uttered those immortal words of submission, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done," the battle was won. And when the watching angel heard that "No," he came rushing down to strengthen Him. We read that "there appeared a great angel from heaven, strengthening him."

Christ told us that the great business of His followers is to say "No." Deny thyself, take up thy cross, and say "No" to the temptations of self, of others, of the world. Are you just a drifter? Are you a weak "Yes" man? The cure for that is to say "No." Say "No" to all that is low, sinful and ungodly, that you may be able to say "Yes" to all the grand and wonderful pleasures of Eternity!

MM



# Captive Heroes

## Scene 2

### Standing for Principle

**T**HE HEBREW group refuse to eat the king's meat and drink his wine, a refusal which vindicates the character of the men and sets the pattern for the future.

*Characters:* Hananiah, Mishael and  
Azariah . . . . 3 Hebrew Children  
Daniel . . . . . Hebrew Captive  
Kenak . . . . . Hittite Captive  
Melzar . . . . . Babylonian Officer

*Setting:*

Office of Melzar, prince of the eunuchs in Babylon. Melzar is seated behind a long table. Kenak, a Hittite prince now a hostage and a court student, is summoned and stands before him. The four Hebrew captives sit on a long bench at right, waiting their turn.

*Melzar:*

Now just what is your complaint, young man?

*Kenak:*

Well, Sir, I didn't ask to come to Babylon in the first place. In fact, if I had my way, I'd be right back in Carchemish this minute. But it does seem that a nation as great and as rich as Babylon could show a little consideration. After all, we are all human beings, and have human needs and human wants—

*Melzar:*

Just a minute, Sir. I'm a busy man. I asked you to state your complaint, not to deliver a lecture. Be brief and to the point.

*Kenak:*

Yes, your honor. The point is, I don't like the food I'm getting.

*Melzar:*

It comes right from the king's table. It's the same that he eats. Isn't that good enough for you?

*Kenak:*

That may be, but it isn't what I'm used to. I don't like the way it is cooked, or the way it is seasoned, or pickled, or whatever. And I don't happen to have any liking for spiced brains, or rich wine puddings, or fried hog feet, or salted grubs. And I don't like so much olive oil. And there's one other *big* complaint: Your Babylonian wine is terrible! A Hittite *might* get used to it, I suppose, but why should he have to? Remember, *this* Hittite is a *prince*!

*Melzar:*

Look here, young man. Here you are a prisoner and a slave in Babylon, with all the others. And don't you forget it, or the king himself may help you remember. You are not exactly in a position to tell *him* what to do—or me, either, for that matter. May I suggest that you forget about being a prince, at least for the time being.

Now as for the food, I can sympathize with you. I had occasion to try some Hittite food one time, and I can't say I enjoyed it. I don't like food that I'm not used to, either. But you might try *getting* used to the fare here, because it looks as though you're going to be here a good while.

*Kenak:*

Well, then (haughtily), let me make one suggestion.

*Melzar:*

Let me say it again—and that is all, or out you go!



You were not brought to Babylon to make suggestions, not even *one*. Sit down over there until I'm ready to talk further with you.

*(Kenak turns, eyes Melzar viciously for a moment, then sits down.)*

*Melzar:*

*(to Daniel)* Now, Daniel, I am ready to hear your case. I understand that you and the three young men with you are also objecting to the food, only on religious grounds. Is that right?

*Daniel:*

Yes, your honor. We have no complaint with the quantity or quality or taste of the king's meat. We appreciate his abundant provisions for our needs. But of much of his food we cannot partake, because we are under solemn covenant not to transgress the Law of our fathers given by Moses.

*Melzar:*

*(thoughtfully)* I have heard of him.

*Daniel:*

The law of Moses forbids our eating certain articles of food—which, unfortunately, are very popular in Babylon. We are not allowed to partake of swine's flesh in any form, or any of the other delicate meats which are so frequently served at the king's table. His delicious wines and beverages are also excluded—which, many times, leaves us very little from which to choose. We aren't complaining, but we would appreciate...

*Kenak:*

*(interrupting)* Ah-h-h, nonsense! That's just old Jewish superstition. Let 'em eat what the rest of us eat!

*Melzar:*

Enough from you, Prince Kenak. If you will be difficult, I can order the guards—

*Kenak:*

*(meekly)* Yes, your honor.

*Melzar:*

*(to the Hebrews)* How have you been getting along until now?

*Mishael:*

Very well, your honor. We are glad for whatever we are able to have. There are generally a few vege-

tables and fruits at each meal, and usually bread and milk, so we get along.

*Azariah:*

It doesn't hurt us to go hungry once in a while, if it doesn't continue too long.

*Hananiah:*

Sometimes we don't even know what the various delicacies are. If we don't know, we refrain from partaking, rather than take any chance of violating our sacred covenant with our God.

*Melzar:*

I warn you, young men, that religion can make a lot of trouble. The king is quite tolerant—we have a mixture right now at the court. But he plans eventually to standardize religion in the Empire—that is, compel everyone to worship the gods of Babylon instead of those of their own lands. Which would be well. We all know that there is practically no difference among the gods, anyway. It would solve a good many problems, silence disputes, and be much more convenient for all.

*Hananiah:*

Convenient, perhaps, but our religion goes deeper than convenience. With us it is a rule of life and a way of salvation, not just a matter of form and ceremony.

*Melzar:*

I have the answer to your problem: Go along with the Babylonian religion while you are here. Conform—at least outwardly. If you want to keep your faith in your heart, that is all right. But go along with the Babylonian customs, just for the time being. If and when you return to your homeland, you can go back to your former mode of worship. It certainly won't hurt you, and it will be easier for you and everyone around you.

*Daniel:*

*(firmly)* Sir, if you were selecting a man to be your steward and handle your money, would you choose a man who would compromise his conscience?

*Melzar:*

*(thoughtfully)* No...I don't know that I would. I can see your point, and I respect your principles, but...  
*(a few moments of silence)* Just what would you like me to do for you?



*Daniel:*

We have a proposition, if we may offer it.

*Melzar:*

Let me hear it.

*Daniel:*

Put us on a very simple diet—just vegetables and fruits, and water to drink.

*Melzar:*

No wine?

*Daniel:*

No wine.

*Melzar:*

What's the matter? Don't the Hebrews drink wine?

*Hananiah:*

Oh, yes, many of them. But we are students, and we need clear heads.

*Melzar:*

A little wine won't hurt you.

*Daniel:*

Did you ever hear of drink making a man of any one?

*Melzar:*

No—I don't know that I did.

*Daniel:*

Did you ever hear of it making a fool and a tramp and a wreck of any one?

*Melzar:*

Plenty of them. All right. Your request sounds reasonable, but I don't know what I can do for you. Let me explain.

The king has ordered the very best for you. He is depending upon you to assist with the administration of his government and carry heavy responsibility when your training period is done. I can't believe you would thrive on such a diet. And if you four turn up at examination time looking pale and half-starved, what happens to me? After all, I just work here, and my head isn't on my shoulders any too

firmly. I have orders to feed you to the very limit, with the very best food in the empire. See my problem?

*Azariah:*

We don't look so very bad right now, do we? And some of the time lately it has been very short rations for us.

*Kenak:*

Ah-h, don't let them fool you. They've probably been getting lunches from the kitchen between meals. You can't trust these Hebrews.

*Mishael:*

How about this: Try us out for ten days. Give us all we want of what we have asked for. Then look us over—weigh us—ask us questions. See if we don't look as well as—or better than—the rest of the students.

*Hananiah:*

There is no risk for you, I am certain. It might even give you *more* favor with the king if the test is successful. All the credit would be yours.

*Kenak:*

Yes, and then we'd *all* get bread and water, I suppose!

*Melzar:*

(*silence for a moment*) Very well. Suppose that I do not see fit to grant your request. What then?

*Daniel:*

We shall be sorry, sir, because the law of our God comes first with us, and we will not transgress it, whatever you may do. The king may take our lives, but with the help of God we shall never abandon our principles or compromise our convictions. Here we take our stand. Our God is able to deliver us; whether He will or not—only He knows.

*Kenak:*

(*jeering*) Then why are you in Babylon? Your God didn't do very well saving your city from capture, did He?

*Melzar:*

Must I tell you again to be quiet? (*to the Hebrews*) But what do you say to that?



*Azariah:*

Our nation is in bondage today because of its sins. Our people were warned, but they would not listen. As for us individually, we are convinced that our presence here is for some good purpose, some work for Jehovah, though we do not yet know what it is.

*Mishael:*

But at this moment, we believe we must stand for Him by refusing to eat the king's meat and drink his wine. We believe fully that you are broad-minded enough to see our side of it, and practical enough to give us what we ask.

*Melzar:*

All right, boys, you've won. I'll take the chance—but for ten days only. I'd like to help you all I can, but remember this. If you don't make a good showing, I'll have to protect myself by reporting you to the king. And then—

*Daniel:*

Fair enough, Sir. From the depths of our hearts we thank you.

*Melzar:*

One thing more: If this plan works out in your favor, I want you to promise that you won't go overboard on diet and try to convert all the rest of the class to observing Hebrew law.

*Hebrews:*

*(unanimous)* We promise. *(Four Hebrews exit)*

*Melzar:*

*(to Kenak)* Now, Prince Kenak, do you see how to make friends and influence people? Let that be a lesson to you. And until your attitude improves or you can produce some better reasons, you can eat what is set before you and like it.

*(Continued next issue)*

**Gossips have been catalogued in three different types: The vest-button type—always popping off; the vacuum cleaner type—always picking up the dirt; the liniment type—they rub it in.**

## So What Do You Know?

### WHO'S THE "I"?

1. "I must be about my Father's business."
2. "Fear not: for am I in the place of God?"
3. "O my Lord, I am not eloquent."
4. "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever."
5. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."
6. "Am I my brother's keeper?"
7. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."
8. "As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me."
9. "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee."
10. "And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them."
11. "My countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart."
12. "I know that thou canst do every thing."
13. "What I have written I have written."
14. "Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child."
15. "If I perish, I perish."
16. "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you."
17. "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down."
18. "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower."
19. "I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty."
20. "If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."
21. "I being in the way, the Lord led me."
22. "If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right."

Answers:

1. Jesus, Luke 2:49; 2. Joseph, Gen. 50:19; 3. Moses, Ex. 4:10; 4. David, Ps. 89:1; 5. Paul, Phil. 4:13; 6. Cain, Gen. 4:9; 7. John, III John 4; 8. Caleb, Joshua 14:11; 9. Peter, Acts 3:6; 10. Solomon, Eccl. 2:10; 11. Daniel, Dan. 7:28; 12. Job, Job 42:2; 13. Pilate, John 19:22; 14. Jeremiah, Jer. 1:6; 15. Esther, Esther 4:16; 16. Samuel, I Sam. 12:23; 17. Nehemiah, Nehemiah 6:3; 18. Habakkuk, Hab. 2:1; 19. Naomi, Ruth 1:21; 20. Jacob, Gen. 43:14; 21. Eliezer, Gen. 24:27; 22. Abraham, Gen. 13:9

# Meditating on the Word



## The Service of Praise

**"Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing"**

**—Psalm 100:2**

**S**INGING is naturally associated with gladness. When heart and home are happy, when health is vigorous and energy is buoyant, praise is natural and spontaneous.

But the Psalmist's exhortation is not limited to ideal situations. It applies even to those days when skies are dark and friends are few. And no songs are sweeter in the ears of God than those which sound forth as a paean of victory over our own evil nature, when the power of faith and hope triumphs over evil and despondency. As says the poet:

*Gladness seems a duty! The faith be mine  
That He who guides and governs all, approves,  
When gratitude, though disciplined to look  
Beyond these transient spheres, doth wear a crown  
Of earthly hope, put on with trembling hand.*

The service of song in the worship of the Lord is vital. It can lift the gloom to a higher gladness of inspiration, until we "serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with singing." Music can give cheer to the cheerless and hope to the heavyhearted.

Music and praise is no small privilege or slight responsibility. To be able through musical gifts to reach out a helping hand to some who are struggling upward, to inspire faltering hearts with new courage is the special service of those who lead the songs of the sanctuary, and they fulfill it in proportion as both hearts and voices are attuned to the keynote of celestial praise.

It is interesting to trace the development of the service of song. Like all living things, it has changed frequently in form, though in essence it remains the same.

From the beginning of the national history, the Israelites celebrated their deliverances and victories in song. An inspired prophetess, such as Miriam or Deborah, would suddenly and exultantly lead in song, with accom-

paniment of timbrel and harp. In patriarchal days, the successful digging of a well in an arid land was accompanied by sacred song. Festal days were welcomed with trumpets and cymbals. And during the time of wilderness-wandering, the priests blew their trumpets when the camp was about to move, or when the benediction was to be pronounced.

These ceremonies, however, were not, in earliest times, associated with public worship, nor were the people expected to take any part in them.

But when David rose to power, a great change took place. Musical praise became an integral part of worship. Led by skilled musicians, the people sang their own praises—the function was no longer reserved for the priests. David completely revolutionized public worship, and a large choir and orchestra was gathered by his enthusiasm and princely generosity.

First, David set apart an entire tribe of the people and trained them to celebrate God's praises in popular psalmody. Women joined with men, and children with parents in lifting praise to God. Under David's successor, at the dedication of the temple, good music combined with popular rendering until "the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord.... The trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord."

But music has not always been a spontaneous outburst of joy. The noblest hymns of trust and praise have arisen in the clash of conflict; and this is surely typical, for the most heavenly music and fullest harmonies arise from the struggles and daily trials of earth successfully met and conquered.

Song is not only an expression of trust and reverence; it is the highest form of expression of the noblest spirit of praise. And it is every musician's and singer's duty to



remember that God is worthy of our very best. It should not be regarded as a mere "preliminary" to the sermon; it should lift hearts and minds to the divine, as expressed by the poet:

*"The Song  
Of heaven is ever new; for daily, thus,  
And nightly, new discoveries are made  
Of God's unbounded wisdom, power and love,  
Which give the understanding larger room,  
And swell the hymn with ever-growing praise."*

The service of praise has enormous influence. It would be impossible to overrate the influence of the Psalms, for example, in maintaining the spirituality of worship, in conserving the simplicity of faith, and in intensifying religious emotion and devotion. Often in history, song has been vital in renewing the memory of God's truth and keeping hope and love alive in times of decaying faith.

If, then, you take part in the service of praise, be

mindful of your responsibility. You are called to make the highest possible use of music and song, to bring to other hearts a thought of God they too often forget. Pleasant strains and pulsing rhythms are of value only as they glorify God and enable us to obey the command: "Serve the Lord with gladness, come before his presence with singing."

"See that thou believe in thy heart what thou singest with thy mouth, and approve in thy works what thou believest in thy heart." This counsel given centuries ago to an early choir can still apply, for there is no discord worse than the singing of God's praises with the lips when the heart is out of harmony with His truth and ways.

Whether or not we are capable of singing, we can make melody in our hearts unto the Lord. That inward singing we must all have, in nights of darkness as well as in days of sunshine; only thus can we offer "the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name" (Heb. 13:15). MM

## God Loves Us...Or Does He?

*(Continued from page 10)*

that person becomes not a part of a drop in a bucket but a precious treasure, to be esteemed by God as a price-less commodity, worthy of fame, and praise and glory everlasting! The promise is, "I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off" (Isa. 56:5). Isn't this abundant love?

But this high honor is reserved for the few who attain to it. There is nothing in the Bible suggesting it shall belong to all indiscriminately.

Where, then, do the popular teachers find any basis for their idea that God loves everyone?

### The World God Loves

The principle source is the well-beloved John 3:16. Billy Graham once told how much time he had spent preparing a sermon when he was going to speak in India for the first time, and when he got there and looked out on their faces, he saw that all they needed was the same sermon the people back home needed—John 3:16.

Now John 3:16 is part of the Gospel, and not to be rejected. However, to accept it as saying that God loves all mankind, saint and sinner alike, is to completely disregard other declarations of the apostles, prophets, and Jesus Himself.

John 3:16 is probably the verse best known in all Christendom. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Let us consider it in the light of Scripture teaching.

First, let us ask what it is to "believe in him," as

the whole promise hinges on this.

The term "believe" has broad coverage in Scripture. Believing and acting on one's beliefs are qualities that are inseparable. If we believe, we will act. Our founder once said there is no power on earth that can keep a real believer out of the Kingdom. If we do not act, it is because we lack faith. This is the Bible principle.

How can we believe in Jesus and not believe what Jesus taught? Jesus taught absolute purity of character as the key to salvation (Matt. 5:8, 48). He pointed out the strait gate and the difficult road to life (Matt. 7:14), and called upon His followers to take up a cross and deny themselves (Luke 9:23). Again He said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

To believe in Christ we must honestly conform to the principles He taught and lived. In fact, it is impossible to have beliefs which do not find expression in conduct.

### God Ever Cares

God ever cares for those who are His children!  
His love doth never fail nor show decay.  
The loves of earth, though strong and deep, may perish;  
But His shall never, never pass away.

God ever cares! And thus when life is lonely,  
When blessings one time prized are growing dim,  
The heart may find a sweet and sunny shelter—  
A refuge and a resting place in Him.

God ever cares! Not only in life's summer  
When skies are bright and days are long and glad,  
He cares as much when life is draped in winter,  
God ever cares! howe'er the days are clad.



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## **The world God loves is the world of believers.**

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"When I see a person who calls himself Christian," says one, "but does not live the Christian life, I remember the words of Jesus, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.'" We demonstrate our faith by our works. As James wrote, "Faith without works is dead."

We learn from the very context of Jesus' words in John 3 that believing is more than a mere conviction that a very good man named Jesus once lived. Men are judged by their deeds (John 3:17-18, 20-21).

Now what is the "world" that God loves? We know whom He does not love. He does not love "everyone that doeth evil" who "hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (v. 20). Nor does God love those from whom He commands us to separate ourselves—"Love not the world" (I John 2:15-17), and "Come out from among them" (II Cor. 6:17-18). If all were part of His beloved family, what need to "come out from among them"? Neither could God love "this present evil world," those who are content to live and die without knowledge of Him or His plan (Gal. 1:4).

The term "world" as used in Scripture need not apply to all living humanity. For example, we read that "the world knew him not," referring to Jesus (John 1:10). If this "world" referred to everyone on earth, then no one knew Jesus; and we know some did know Jesus, and knew Him well.

The world which God loves is the world of believers, those who place themselves within His loving concern by their loyalty and obedience. Together they comprise the "world to come" (Heb. 2:5), a world which includes all who will be saved, both from ages past, from the present age, and from the glorious future age.

The "believers," those whom God loves, together form a "world" and live in a "world" by themselves. So absorbed are they in the divine sphere that nothing of here and now appeals to them too strongly. They are "other-worldly minded"; they live in the present by necessity, but in the future by choice. Their whole interest is bound up in seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33). They are the eager souls who are storming their way into the kingdom (Matt. 11:12, Moffatt). Do we wonder that God loves them? Do we wonder that God provides for their development by sending His well-beloved Son to be their perfect Pattern and Example, and ultimately to save them and give them

a place at His side in His eternal Kingdom? What greater love could they receive!

Properly understood, then, John 3:16 becomes a most meaningful thought. We might paraphrase it this way: "For God so loved the world [of believers] that he gave his only begotten Son [as a Teacher, Example, and King] that whosoever believeth on him [to the point of acting on that belief] should not perish, but have everlasting life."

### **The Meaning of God's Love**

What does all this mean to us? It means that if we would be loved of God, we must make ourselves a part of that world of believers. We must be all concerned about Him and His great plan and our part in it. We must dedicate ourselves to the task of proving ourselves the very best material in the whole world.

God is not destitute for friends. He does not need us. But we do need Him. And when our day of salvation is expired, when we are called to give account of our stewardship before Him, how desperately we shall need His love. How keenly aware of this fact we should keep ourselves.

Let us never delude ourselves into thinking God will love us just as we are. If we would be loved, we must prove ourselves worthy of that love. We must love Him with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, all our strength. We must be more interested in what He says and does and offers than in anything else in the whole world. If we do not show Him this love, this concern, He will have no trouble finding someone else who will. Our stubbornness, our doubting, our pulling back will not hurt Him; but it will hurt us—more than we will be able to survive.

So let us ask, What is our status with God? Does He love you? Does He love me? The answer lies with us and what we are doing with our lives and minds right now. We can depend on His love—forever!—if we only make ourselves lovable.

**God wants the best.**

**He in the far-off distant ages**

**Once did claim the firstling of the flock,**

**The finest of the wheat;**

**And still He asks His own**

**With gentlest pleading,**

**To lay their highest hopes and brightest talents**

**At His feet:**

**He'll not forget the feeblest service,**

**Humblest love;**

**He only asks that of our store we give to Him**

**The best we have.**

**MM**

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# Inquiries and Answers

## • Was it right to take spoils?

*"Explain why in II Chronicles 20:25 the spoils, such as jewels, were carried off by Jehoshaphat and his people, and God did not condemn it."*

God's demand has always been for obedience. If He told the people to fight, they were to fight. If He told them to take the spoil, they were to take the spoil. If He told them not to touch the spoil, they were not to touch it. The latter was true in the conquest of Ai, where Achan sinned in taking the Babylonish garment and the pieces of silver when they had been expressly commanded: Ye shall "in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed,...but all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord: they shall come into the treasury of the Lord" (Josh. 6:18-19). Later, while still conquering the land of Canaan, they were commanded to take of the spoil (Josh. 8:2).

In the instance you mention (II Chron. 20:25), the Lord was fighting the battle for the Israelites against the children of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir. This was the time the Lord commanded them to appoint singers unto the Lord "that should praise the beauty of holiness as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever" (v. 21). It was no ordinary battle.

If the fighting was right under God's direction—which we know it was—surely taking of the spoil was "right"—again, because God was directing. We today could not be right in doing either, because God is silent now and Jesus said, "He that takes the sword shall perish with the sword."

## • Christ made a curse for us?

*"Explain Galatians 3:13. How was Christ made a curse for us?"*

Galatians 3:13 reads, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." From the viewpoint of the Jews who held to the old law,

Christ—because He was crucified—was considered "accursed." This is how He was made a "curse for us"—so far as Paul, speaking for his Jewish brethren, was concerned. But, as Paul goes on to explain, Christ was not really accursed at all, as He had done nothing worthy of the curse: "I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed" (I Cor. 12:3). A curse would result from the wrongdoing which led to punishment by crucifixion; not from crucifixion alone. When there had been no wrongdoing, there could be no guilt.

But Christ did indeed redeem men from the "curse of the law," in that the outmoded law of Moses terminated with His crucifixion. As Paul wrote, "Christ is the end of the law...to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 10:4). Also, he wrote, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:14), referring to the removal of the old Jewish law. The law had been given for a specific purpose; for the molding of the Israelite people into a nation of God-fearing civilians. But when Israel was no longer a nation, the law no longer could serve any useful purpose; hence it was removed.

## • Devils Speak?

*"Please explain Mark 1:34, where He 'suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.'"*

The word devil means an "opposer." It can mean anything in opposition to a healthful condition of the body, as well as a person who is in opposition to another person or to a cause.

When Jesus is said to have "cast out devils," it is but another way of saying that He cured the diseased person; He removed that which was preventing a healthful condition. Why did Mark say that "he suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him"? Perhaps He was referring to the scribes and Pharisees as the devils who were opposing Him, calling them devils. Or perhaps He was telling the person who had been healed, as He often did, not to publicize the healing. We cannot be sure. But one fact is certain: Jesus did not believe in a literal devil which could possess a man and compel him to do wrong. Such an idea is nowhere taught in the Bible.

## • Symbols of Mourning

*"Please explain the language of Ezra 9:3, 'And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished.' In Esther 4:1, 4, Mordecai rent his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and Esther sent raiment to clothe Mordecai and to take away his sackcloth from him."*

Ezra was appalled at the sin of the Israelite people—as his vigorous reaction shows. What had they done? These people, who had been strictly commanded to be separate from the heathen nations around them, to have no dealings with them, were "doing according to their abominations," even intermarrying with them: "so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands." And the common people were not the only offenders; "the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass."

Ezra, being God's responsible agent and prophet at the time, knew how dependent the nation was on God, and how abominable to God was such action. He knew also how serious would be the outcome of this offense. So distraught was he that he "rent" his garment and "plucked off the hair of his head...and beard"—both were symbols of mourning. The tearing of one's outer garment was a Hebrew way of expressing great grief or sorrow. It was similar to the custom of putting on sackcloth, a coarsely woven fabric worn around the loins to signify mourning. Sackcloth and ashes were often combined to show great distress, protest, humility or desperation. MM

Lord, what a change within us one short hour  
Spent in Thy presence will avail to make!  
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take!  
What parched grounds refresh as with a shower!  
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;  
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,  
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear;  
We kneel, how weak! We rise, how full of power!

Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,  
Or others—that we are not always strong—  
That we are sometimes overborne with care—  
That we should ever weak or heartless be,  
Anxious or troubled—when with us is prayer;  
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?



# Letters

## Cultivating Thankfulness

"Cicero believed 'a thankful heart is not only the greatest virtue, but the parent of all the other virtues.' Gratitude frees the spirit of pettiness and opens the heart to receive countless blessings. It is a healing force, renewing a right spirit, refreshing the soul and restoring our bodies. The giving of thanks is twice blest: it blesseth him that gives and him that receives. We cannot imagine what joy our expression of appreciation will bring into another's life."

Let us work to cultivate that continual thankful spirit which can only enrich our lives in the narrow way. We, above all people, have no excuse to do otherwise. "In everything give thanks!"

Pelkie, Michigan

D. J.

## Cramming

How short our time may be is not known. At best we know it can't be too long before the arrival of the great King and Judge. Each new day granted is a blessing from on High to be used to the utmost in getting ready to receive a welcome from the Master at His arrival. We must cram our days with good thoughts and good deeds all day long. Human nature is so weak though. Unless we fortify ourselves mightily with the thoughts of God and keep at it relentlessly to do them, we will slip. Man is such an earthy creature. I don't wonder Jesus said only a few will find the way to life and fewer still will do all that is required in the strait and narrow way. And they are the select few out of every nation, kindred and tongue. They are men to be wondered at.

Oh, may we strive to be of that number.

I read a good lesson on habits this morning, about letting the bad habits take hold in our lives. In the beginning they are quite easy to remove. As time passes, uprooting them becomes increasingly difficult until it becomes almost impossible to dislodge them. The longer the habit grows, the deeper it goes. The best solution: Don't let it get a start in the first place. "A bad habit is like a soft chair—easy to get into but hard to get out of."

South Amboy, New Jersey

L. K.



## Heeding the Signs

We should always be living like men who are expecting their Lord's return.

In the hot-hazy days of summer when we see the dark clouds begin to gather in the sky, we most assuredly know a storm is brewing and the copious showers will soon fall to earth quenching the thirst of the growing vegetation and cooling the air, if but for a brief time. Oh, we can read the signs of the weather, but can we read the signs of the time?

Christ's return is surely imminent and we must ever be working to get rid of all our evil inclinations. The common belief today is that we must simply accept Christ's death (on the cross) to atone for our sins...there is no work for us to do. How utterly deceived are these people!

Time is a precious commodity and we must not—indeed cannot—waste it. We cannot halt between two opinions, but must choose this day whom we will serve, for today is the day of salvation. Will we be servants of darkness, enslaved in our own chains of besetting sins? Or, will we choose to be set free by the wonderful words of Truth?

Yes, God does give us a choice: Obey and live; disobey and die. This decision to follow the steps of our Saviour is the greatest ever made in one's lifetime and it is one which cannot be made upon our deathbed, see Jer. 13:15-16. It is a very serious decision, one not to be taken lightly. For when we place ourselves under the laws of God, we are saying we will follow Him in all His ways, or suffer the consequences if we fail.

But when we choose the narrow way, life takes on a much richer and deeper meaning. We are no longer able to do "our own thing." Our ways must be His ways and our thoughts must be His thoughts. There are many sacrifices we must make. No longer are we able to enjoy the so-called pleasures of this world. But is the sacrifice too great? A thousand times, NO! What can this life have to compare with the glory of that which is to come!

The decision made, let us not look back toward Sodom. There is great danger in looking where you've been instead of where you're going. For, if we're not very careful, we'll get turned around and headed in the wrong direction. Jesus said in Luke 9:62: "No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God."

***How long between two opinions will you halt?  
Remember Lot's wife—she was turned to a pillar of salt!***

***Don't look back, for only sorrow awaits.  
Soon, very soon, we'll see those pearly gates.***

***When once inside and the life crown is won,  
How thankful we'll be that the race we did run.***

May we keep our eye on the prize and strive steadfastly to enter in at the strait gate.

Conyers, Georgia

B. P.

## Grateful

Looking forward to Life, real life, makes one walk circumspectly. I give this much thought. It is ever before me, for what is there without it? This mortal existence is so fleeting. We have much more, the Bread of Life, the water of Truth—gems no earthly money can afford. I have no need to look for anything else; I have the real Gem of Truth.

Some have said, God Is Nowhere, but I say, God Is *Now Here*. It is spelled the same, but oh! the difference.

I am most grateful for the comfort and learning from the cassette tapes and literature. Daily association via the cassettes keeps me pressing ahead.

Crewe, England

N. T.

## Snow and Backsliding

Snow is like a backslidden Christian, so nice on the surface to look at but so cold underneath. Don't we make a wreck of things when we try in our own strength instead of trusting all to Christ?

The trouble with snow is that it makes it so hard for everyone to walk and get about. Isn't it true that to be in the company of a cold Christian makes problems for the one who would lead an active Christian life? How often have you heard those who are not interested in following closely the example of Christ saying, "It's not necessary to be so straight-laced." Well, it's not necessary if you just want to play at being a Christian; if you're not concerned for the reward which God will give all those who prove themselves worthy.

Let us who know the true way and the joy there is in serving God determine in our hearts to make harder and fresh efforts to serve and follow more closely than ever, not for our own salvation only but for those who are watching us, that they may be encouraged to dedicate even their own lives more deeply.

Workshop, England

H. L.

## Feeling the "Pull"

Just as the planets in our solar system revolve around the sun and are held steady by its gravitational pull, so the life that adopts Jesus Christ, God's Son, as its "Sun" will be held together, held "in orbit" and will find meaning and fulfillment in Christ. There is no other better way.

Davenport, Iowa

W. P.

## Appreciation

I received your booklet about the coming of Elijah. I think it is really a very good booklet.

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