

## Let Heaven Fill Your Thoughts

In Col. 3:2-4, Living Bible, we read, "Let heaven fill your thoughts. Don't spend your time worrying about things down here. You should have as little desire for this world as a dead person does. Your real life is in heaven with Christ and God. When Christ, who is our real life, comes back again you will shine with Him and share in all of His glory." Look at verses 13 and 14, "Be gentle and ready to forgive. Never hold grudges. Remember, the Lord forgave you so you must forgive others. Most of all, let love guide your life for then the whole church will stay together in perfect harmony."

It is amazing what will happen if you let thoughts of heaven fill your mind and if you will let love guide your life because love can accomplish the impossible.

### *Pinocchio*

When my daughter, Teresa, was 3 years old, Pinocchio came to town. All of the children wanted to go see Pinocchio and I promised them that they could but when Saturday came Teresa had a fever and I said, "Sorry, you can't go." She started to cry

like girls will do and I said, "Sorry, you can't go." She begged like little girls will do and I said, "Sorry, you have a fever." Pretty soon Teresa climbed upon my lap but I didn't pay any attention to what was going on because I was reading the paper. I felt a little arm slip around my neck but I paid no attention because I was reading the paper. Then another arm went around my neck but I still didn't pay any attention. Then I was smothered by kisses and the paper was knocked to one side as the kisses continued and then Teresa made a triumphant announcement, "My sweet Daddy is going to let me go see Pinocchio." Isn't it just amazing and marvelous what love will accomplish?

### *The Missing Link*

The Bible says, "Most of all let love guide your life for then the whole church will stay together in perfect harmony." We Christians are all members of the same fraternity. We Christians are all united through Jesus Christ, the head of the body, the church. We Christians are all related in the same interests. We Christians all have communion with each other every Lord's Day. We Christians are all going to the same heavenly home where we are all going to spend eternity and, therefore, we Christians ought to love one another with a very, very special affection.

Love is the missing link in the world of 1983. I also believe that love is the cure-all medicine for this sin sick world of 1983. Love for country is the foundation of the nation and any nation minus the love of her citizens is headed for self destruction. Love for each member of the family is the basis for the home and any home minus the love of the family members equals emptiness. Love is the very reason for salvation. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Love is the very test of salvation. I John 3:14 says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

**I. Jesus set the example in His own life.** In John 13:23 we read, "Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples whom Jesus loved." It was a well known fact that Christ had a very special loving relationship with this one disciple even above His loving relationship with the others. In John 21:20, "Then Peter turning about seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following which also leaned on His breast at supper and said, 'Lord which is he that betrayeth Thee?' " Who was this disciple that Jesus loved? We know that it was the apostle John. We have another example of Jesus, our loving Savior, in Luke 7:44-47. "And He turned to the woman and said unto Simon, 'Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house and thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time that I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My feet with oil thou did not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.' " When Jesus came into the house of this Pharisee who was so self righteous, he showed no love, he did not even afford the common courtesies of the day. Then a prostitute from the street came in and got down on her hands and knees and washed Jesus' feet with her tears. She wiped His feet with the hairs of her head, she kissed His feet, and Jesus received the love that the prostitute gave to Him and forgave her sins. Oh, what a loving Savior was Jesus. What a marvelous example He has left for us as to how we should demonstrate our love for one another. In John 11:5 the Bible says, "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." This is with reference to that little family in Bethany where Jesus went to visit so often. Everybody knew that He loved Mary and Martha and Lazarus and

everybody knew that Mary and Martha and Lazarus loved Jesus. So affectionate and loving was Jesus that when Judas came to betray Him, he betrayed Him with a kiss!!

**II. Another marvelous example is the apostle Paul.** Oh how affectionate was Paul. He learned to love from Jesus. Time after time Paul wrote to the Christians and told them how much he loved them. He wrote to Timothy, "My dear beloved son." He wrote to Appia, to Luke and to Tychicus and to all of those he said, "I love you." He called them "dearly beloved." He wrote to the Christians at Rome, at Corinth, at Philippi and expressed that he loved them. In Acts 20:1 the Bible says, "After the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples and embraced them." In Acts 20:10 when Eutychus fell asleep under Paul's preaching and dropped down out of the third story window and fell dead on the ground the Bible says that Paul went down and "embraced him." In Acts 20:37 when Paul told the elders of the church at Miletus goodbye the Bible says, "They all wept sore and they fell on Paul's neck and kissed him." Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you love one another." There was such love in the New Testament church that over and over again Paul admonished the members of the church to kiss one another with a holy kiss. In Romans 16:16, I Cor. 16:20, II Cor. 13:12, I Thess. 5:26 and I Peter 5:14. In other words Paul said "*demonstrate your love.*" Let everybody see it. Isn't that what Jesus was saying when He said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another."

**III. Ways we can demonstrate love.** Read to a person who has bad eyesight. Visit a shut-in and take a copy of The Lookout or the Christian Standard with you. Take a person who needs transportation to the shopping center or to the doctor. Call on someone who has been bereaved and express your sympathy. Take church literature to someone who is not able to attend church so that they can read it. Visit someone who is in the hospital. Invite somebody to dinner. Go mow the grass for

an older person. Take a dish of food to a house where there is illness. Provide transportation to the church for someone who can't come otherwise. Send a birthday card to a church member. Mail a gift to some church member who is serving in the armed forces. Send a sympathy card to someone who has lost a loved one. Write a Bible college student and send them \$5.00. Tell your Sunday School teacher that you love her or that you love him and appreciate their teaching. Help clean house for somebody that is sick and doesn't feel like cleaning their house. Give used clothing to a family that is in need. Look for a way that you can use your hobby or your special talent in church work. Telephone an absentee and don't say, "Where were you", but say, "I love you and I missed you Sunday and I just wanted to call because I love you." Offer to take care of the children for a young mother so that she can have the afternoon off to go to something. Clip an item from the newspaper that is good and share it with a friend. When missionaries come to the church, invite those missionaries to your home to stay over night. Find a boy who has no dad and take him to a ball game. Share flowers from your yard with shut-ins. Invite some foreign student that lives in the city to come to your home over a holiday.

### *Shocking Advice!*

A certain woman came to her preacher for counseling and she said, "Preacher, my husband and I have fallen out of love and we are getting ready to get a divorce and I need your counsel. Preacher, I absolutely hate my husband and I want to hurt him in the worst way possible. Now, what is your advice?" Well, the preacher thought for a moment and without the woman realizing it, he used reverse psychology on her and he said, "You really hate him?" She said, "Yes, I really hate him." She said, "In fact, I would murder him if I could get

away with it.” She said, “What do you think that I could do to hurt him most of all and not have to go to jail over it?” The preacher said, “Well, I tell you what,” he said, “I know how you can do it. Start demonstrating love for your husband.” She said, “No, I hate him.” He said, “Now wait a minute and let me tell you my suggestion. Hear me out.” She said, “Okay.” He said, “You start telling your husband every day when he comes home from work, ‘I love you darling’ and you meet him at the door, you throw your arms around him, you give him a big kiss, you prepare his favorite meal for him. All evening long you offer to put his slippers on while he sits in his easy chair, you serve him popcorn, you do everything that you can think of that is kind and loving and after about 6 months of this, you know what is going to happen? He is going to love you so much and then you spring the news, ‘I am going to divorce you’ and you will just kill him.” He said, “That is the way that you can do the most harm to your husband that I can think off.” Well, she got to thinking about that, so she did it. Well, about 6 months later she came back to see the preacher and she said, “Preacher, you really gave me good advice and I came to thank you for it.” He said, “Okay, are you ready to divorce him now?” She said, “Divorce him? Why preacher I have fallen in love with him. He is the dearest most wonderful man in the whole world and I just wanted to thank you for preventing the divorce.”

I want to encourage each member of the church to put that same advice into practice with reference to the church. You have said, “I am just sick and tired and I just want to quit.” For the next 6 months I want you to attend every Sunday morning for Sunday School, I want you to participate in the Sunday School lesson, I want you to tell the teacher how much you love him or her. I want you to come to church every Sunday morning and study your Bible and listen to everything that is preached in the sermon. I want you to come back on Sunday night and be there every Wednesday evening and participate in our Bible

study and prayer meeting. I want you to come on Thursday night and go visiting the unsaved and try to win them to Christ. I want you to get really active and participate in every phase of the life of this congregation and then every time you meet any member of the church I want you to throw your arms around that member and say, "I love you." I want you to do that for 6 months. Now at the end of the 6 months I want you to up and quit because that will really hurt us. But you know what will happen? You will never quit if you do that. If you start demonstrating your love to everybody by the end of the 6 months you are going to be so much in love with everybody and with this church and with the whole program of the church that nothing can ever keep you away. Oh dear friends, do you want the church to be that kind of a church? Then, I encourage you to be that kind of a member.

### *WHY DON'T WE?*

It is the tale of a man who might have been I, for I dreamed one time of journeying to that metropolis — the City of Everywhere. I arrived early one morning. It was cold, and there were flurries of snow on the ground. As I stepped from the train to the platform, I noticed that the baggageman and the redcap were warmly attired in heavy coats and gloves, but oddly, they wore no shoes.

My initial impulse was to ask the reason for this odd practice, but repressing it, I passed into the station and inquired the way to the hotel. My curiosity was enhanced by the discovery that no one in the station wore shoes. Boarding the streetcar, I saw that my fellow passengers were likewise barefoot. And upon arriving at the hotel, I found the bellhop, the clerk, and the habitués of the place were all devoid of shoes.

Unable to restrain myself longer, I asked the ingratiating manager what the practice meant.

“What practice?” said he.

“Why,” said I, pointing to his bare feet, “Why don’t you wear shoes in this town?”

“Ah,” said he, “that’s just it. Why don’t we?”

“But what is the matter? Don’t you people believe in shoes?” said I.

“Believe in shoes, my friend? I should say we do. That is the first article of our creed — Shoes. They are indispensable to the well-being of humanity. Such chilblains, cuts, sores, suffering, as shoes prevent! It is wonderful!”

“Well, then,” said I, bewildered, “why don’t you wear them?”

“Ah,” said he, “that’s just it. Why don’t we?”

Though considerably nonplused, I checked in, secured my room, and went directly to the coffeeshop and sat down by an amiable-looking gentleman, who likewise conformed to the conventions of his fellow citizens — he wore no shoes. Friendly enough, he suggested, after we had eaten, that we look about the city. The first thing we noticed upon emerging from the hotel was a huge structure of impressive lines. To this he pointed with pride.

“You see that?” said he. “That is one of our outstanding shoe manufacturing establishments.”

“A what?” asked I in amazement. “You mean you make shoes there?”

“Well, not exactly,” said he, a bit abashed, “we talk about shoes there, and believe me, we have one of the most brilliant young fellows you have ever heard. He talks most thrillingly and convincingly every week on this great subject of shoes. He has a most persuasive and appealing way. Just yesterday he moved the people profoundly with his exposition of the necessity of shoe-wearing. Many broke down and wept. It was really wonderful!”

“But why don’t they wear them?” said I, insistently.

“Ah,” said he, putting his hand upon my arm and looking

wistfully, "that's just it. Why don't they?"

Just then, as we turned down a side street, I saw through a cellar window a cobbler actually making a pair of shoes. Excusing myself from my friend, I burst into the little shop and asked the shoemaker how it happened that his shop was not overrun with customers. Said he, "Nobody here wants my shoes. They just talk about them."

"Give me what pairs you have ready," said I eagerly, and paid him thrice the amount he modestly asked. Hurriedly I returned to my friend, and proffered them to him, saying, "Here, my friend, some one of these pairs of shoes will surely fit you. Take them, put them on." But he only looked embarrassed; in fact he was well-nigh overcome with chagrin.

"Ah, thank you," said he politely, "But you don't understand. It just isn't being done!"

"But why don't you wear shoes?" said I.

"Ah," said he, smiling with his accustomed ingratiating touch of wisdom, "that's just it. Why don't we?"

And coming out of the City of Everywhere back into the Here, over and over that query rang in my ears: "Why don't we? Why don't we? Why don't we?"

