



Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

5. Princess With Prism Vision

He who made something 'very good' out of something 'without form and void', will also make something 'very good' out of you.

"Would you please come over to the HyPana House and speak to our family?" asked Chaplain Hamilton. I agreed to go over the following Sunday morning, but down in my heart I dreaded the added assignment.

Not that I did not want to speak to the few, but that our program was heavy, I was weary from the long hours of counseling that often extended into the night. On my way over to the home that morning I experienced difficulty in finding my way. By the time I entered the chapel where Chaplain Hamilton was already opening the worship, I was weary from frustrated haste, yet I was delighted that I had not missed out on the promised appointment altogether.

Chaplain Hamilton's introduction was unique. It went something like this: "Dear people, I have an apology to make. I have felt that ministers are not interested in speaking to the small group. In fact, I ventilated my opinion on this, and some of you heard me. But this morning I want to apologize; Pastor Coon has proved to me that this is not true. He is here, and we are happy to have him speak to us."

As I stood to speak, my eyes glanced over the group of patients. I saw a lady on a specially made hospital bed. She was a helpless invalid. But her smile was infectious. After the worship was over and I shook hands with those close about me, I stepped over to the side of the invalid, Lydia M. Halter.

Lydia was a helpless cripple, fitted with prism glasses so she could read. Following is a letter that she wrote quite legibly with a pen forced into her crippled hand. It indicates that she has also written twenty-three notebooks by the same method.

"TRUST IN HIM"

" 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart: and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and He shall direct thy paths.'"

"These words came to me so very clearly one night that I was awakened out of a sound sleep. It seemed like they were spoken to me almost audibly.

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"I closed my eyes and tried to go back to sleep again, but to no avail; for these words kept ringing in my ears and left me wondering just what significance they had.

"A few days earlier I had been to the doctor and was told that I had arthritis. This was 28 years ago. Little did I know then that before too many years this disease would leave me totally disabled.

"Gradually the pain in my hands grew worse, until I had to give up my typing lessons, and shortly thereafter I was forced to give up teaching my piano students. Little by little all the many plans I had made for the future came to naught. It was a time of discouragement, to say the least.

"My first thoughts were why did this have to happen to me? Could God really love me and yet permit such an illness as this to come upon me? Yes, these thoughts kept going through my mind until my doubt grew stronger and my faith failed. Satan always waits to attack us when we feel at our lowest ebb. He who causes all diseases would have us believe that God does not love us. He knew that if he could get me to doubt God's love, he could block God's every effort to help me.

"It was during this time of awful discouragement that I turned to God in prayer. I prayed for hours, until finally I fell asleep.

"God knew that I needed Him that night, for it was during that very night that I heard His voice speaking so clearly to me telling me to put my trust in Him. He saw too, what lay ahead for me, and this was His way of telling me not to lose confidence in Him.

"Gradually the arthritis left its crippling effects, until it left me completely bedfast and helpless.

"Now it seemed that there was nothing left to do—nothing to live for. I couldn't use my eyes because they would go out of focus when I tried to read. The optometrist fitted me with prism glasses so that I could see my books without the use of a pillow. Then they put up a reading tray to hold my books. I began to study in earnest, but all my pages had to be turned by my nurse. Oh, how I prayed to God for the use of just one hand so that I could turn my pages and underline all the wonderful statements I was reading.

"Nothing happened. Several weeks went by before I finally asked someone to put a pencil in my hand. This they did by forcing it into my hand which was closed in a tight fist. Then day after day I struggled to write, and gradually the Lord enabled me to do so.

"One of the most inspiring statements I found in the book Christ's Object Lessons which says, 'A character formed according to the divine likeness is the only treasure that we can take from this world to the next.' Now, at last I found something that I could do! For if this was all that I could take from this world to the next, this is what I want, and will surely strive to obtain.

"This statement prompted me to continue studying the Spirit of Prophecy along with my German and English Bibles, and taking many statements from these wonderful books until I have completed 23 notebooks.

" 'Jesus has gone to prepare mansions for those who are preparing themselves, through His love and grace, for the abodes of bliss.' Testimonies, vol. 8 , p. 140.

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" 'In the human heart He sees more than sin, more than misery. In His infinite love and wisdom He sees man's possibilities, the height to which he may attain.' Testimonies, vol. 7. p. 269.

"May these few lines be a source of encouragement to others is my prayer. Lydia B. Halter. April 5. 1971."

On the sixth day of Creation week, instead of speaking man into being, God used existing material. 'The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.' Genesis 2:7.

Think of God's using the humble dust to create man in His own image! So today God is using existing material, the human body and spirit compounded in the hand of Himself, and is re-creating wonderful lives.

Lydia Halter is only one example. She became almost completely helpless physically. Yet under the power of a faithful Creator she is not merely a strong vibrant soul, but is able to write legible lines. It was difficult for me to comprehend how an invalid in her condition could so much as write anything—much less in a legible hand.

"God is no respecter of persons." Acts 10:34. What He has done for Lydia Halter He is doing in thousands of lives all over the earth. But to experience God's transforming power man must feel his need of this rebuilding of his life, whether mental, spiritual, or physical.

Isn't it a travesty that while invalids like Lydia are happy in the Lord, countless thousands of others who are physically normal go around whining, pleading for more attention, and complaining at their lot in life? Would it not be well for us all to cry out to the Lord, our Maker, to fulfill His promise, "I will build them." Jeremiah 24:6. God will take us just as we are and make us into beautiful, outgoing personalities regardless of what we are now, if we will but let Him.

In the beginning when God made man, man had no choice as to whether or not he wished to be made from the humble dust. But today we who have the mental capacity to choose can give Him our will. If our will is weak, then in answer to the most humble believing prayer He will fulfill this scriptural promise: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Philippians 2:13.

When I was pastor of a college church many years ago, I audited a class in chemistry. One day the professor gave us a picture of how sodium—just a tiny chunk—can be a violent boiling thing in a liquid. It reminded me of a hot-tempered, obnoxious "Christian."

At another time the professor was telling of the lethal nature of chlorine. He said a tank springing a leak of this deadly substance could empty a town. We learned that ordinary table salt is made up of these two deadly elements. I thought to myself. God has put the two together, sodium and chlorine, and made them into "the salt of the earth."

I wondered to myself that perhaps all the giants of faith mentioned in Hebrews 11 became useful and good because God took the existing inferior material and made it into something very useful, "the salt of the earth." We should gladly allow God to take over our unworthy, obnoxious, fuming, complaining, deadly lives and make us into "the salt of the earth."

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This is the building of Christ. This is He for whom the holy day stands. Should not observers of that day be the most positive, the most constructive, the most success-oriented of any people on the face of the earth?

Are you asking, "How can I, too, be a builder of lives?" The answer is join Christ's building crew! We cannot be true builders unless we unite our lives to that of Christ. He has declared, "Without me ye can do nothing." John 15:5. The psalmist has put it this way, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." Psalm 127:1.

It is not the capabilities you now possess or ever will have that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you.

When the creature unites his weakness to the Creator's strength, his ignorance to Christ's wisdom, his sinfulness to God's purity, and his unworthiness to His matchless grace, then "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Ephesians 2:10.

Then we are "workers together with him." 2 Corinthians 6:1. We have become members of His building crew only through His infinite grace. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works. Lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:8, 9.

When God looked at our lives, "without form and void" He did not cast us off, but declared, "I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up." Jeremiah 24:6

Lydia Halter is just one of the common people, almost unknown, who has been re-created in mind and spirit though physically helpless.

Let me share with you now an account of Pastor Frank Smathers, a minister who was physically normal, but whose spirit and character were negative. Frank had grown up a critical, domineering youth. Determined as a mule and egotistical as a peacock, Frank went through college, married, and somehow got into the ministry.

As the years passed, the officers of the conference observed that Frank was not equipped to be a builder of lives. His sermons were negative, his attitude bad. Even his facial expression was sadly pessimistic.

The president of the conference finally called his committee together. They counseled together regarding Frank's utter lack of fitness for the great work of preaching the gospel--the good news. To most people. Just to see him coming down the street was bad news, to say nothing about the effect when he opened his mouth!

After the committee meeting, a letter was dictated and sent to Frank, informing him that on such and such a date his work for the conference would terminate. There are times when a minister is moved from a church, only to result in strong reactions from church people who have been blessed by his ministry of the Word of God. But so far as we know, there was not so much as a ripple when Frank announced to his congregation that he would soon be leaving them.

Frank and his wife decided to relocate in California. He would return to college, take a medical course, and become a physician. While Frank and his wife Sybil were taking a little rest before beginning his medical training, they heard of our series of meetings. It was to be conducted

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within a few blocks of the apartment where they were staying. Still full of bitterness Frank and Sybil nevertheless began attending our meetings.

One of the topics had to do with the "Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day." We endeavored by the Lord's help to present the creative power of our Lord. He is a builder of lives. He constructs homes. He brings gladness where before there was only sadness, guilt, and bickering.

As Frank and Sybil attended night after night, the Holy Spirit spoke to Frank's heart. Frank saw himself for what he was, at least to a small degree. Had he fully understood himself, surely he would have become discouraged. How good the Lord is to us not to reveal all our faults to us at once, lest we be crushed!

As Frank listened to the voice of the One who in the beginning declared, "Let us make man in our image," that creative Spirit of our Lord began His work in his heart and that of his companion.

Just across the alley from where Frank and Sybil were staying was a young couple just married one month. Already their home was on the skids. They were contemplating divorce!

One day Frank suggested to Sybil, "Why don't we ask the Lord to help us to become channels to build this new home?" This would fit what they had been hearing about the building Christ who not merely created the world but made man in His likeness.

Using some simple excuse to visit their friends, John and Judy, they slipped over to their apartment. Soon they were in a real discussion of the problems of the newlyweds. Before a week had passed Frank and Sybil had been used of the Lord to reconcile John and Judy.

A few weeks later I flew in to a Southwestern college for a camp-meeting series. One day while there I was standing on the campgrounds near one of the tents and felt a little tap on the back of my right shoulder. Turning around I was pleased to see Frank and a stranger. Frank introduced me to John and said, "John has come to the college here to prepare for the ministry." I could scarcely credit either my eyes or ears.

A year or two later we were called to conduct a series of meetings in New Mexico. By now Frank had received a call back into the ministry and was doing well. He made a trip from his nearby district of churches as often as possible to attend our series entitled, "The Positive Living Clinic." I was delighted to observe his optimistic spirit, his sense of mission to build and rebuild lives and to save souls.

Soon Frank began a series of radio messages. With God's help he built hope in the hopeless. He inspired the doubting with faith. He assured the lonely that Jesus loved and cared. The results were amazing. He soon had more interests from his radio ministry, though a small city station, than he could keep up with.

Frank's ministry moved forward by leaps and bounds. He even began using the ten-point program of joy which we have taught for years. The result: People were delivered from the power of Satan and his evil vices.

We kept in touch with Frank and Sybil. As the years passed, success crowned their efforts until Frank is today considered one of the successful evangelists of our church. He is now laboring with great success in Africa, and God is richly blessing his efforts. Souls are being delivered from

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the hypnotic power of Satan. Families are being salvaged. Lives are changing, all through the power of the One who has promised, "I will build them, and not pull them down."

Frank had been somewhat like Mr. Hawk, a leading officer of a certain church where we held meetings. His pastor one day was discussing with Mr. Hawk a beautiful missionary program he had in mind to present to his church. The program by the pastor probably had some weak points in it. But instead of Mr. Hawk's complimenting the pastor for that which was good, Hawk replied. "I'm 'agin' it."

I shuddered; I thought, how much better had Mr. Hawk built his own points upon the pastor's idea. The Bible says, "Overcome evil with good." Romans 12:21. God wants His children to make the good even better.

In the home the same approach is important. Instead of belittling the remarks of another, let us congratulate one another for the degree of constructiveness offered. And then suggest, "What would you think of this plan also?" By this means we can advance step by step to improve the total scheme of things.

When we think of the dramatic change that the Lord Jesus worked within the former negative, pessimistic, destructive-thinking Frank, we cry out. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." But this is the Sabbath-keeping philosophy. "They that shall be of thee shall build" Isaiah 58:12, is His promise.

If you, dear one, find you love to wreck others with criticism, gossip, and evil speaking, we invite you to behold our Lord. This Lord of ours is a builder. After He made a world, He built a home for Adam and Eve. And when man sinned, our Lord built man's hope in the coming Redeemer.

When the world was about to perish by a flood of waters, our Lord had His servant build a most unusual structure, the ark, to preserve any who chose to be saved.

When after the Flood God called Abraham, He built his descendants into a great nation, beginning when Abraham was almost a hundred years old! God loves to take helpless situations and build them into tremendous successes.

Abraham's great-grandson, Joseph, went into Egypt with what the captors thought was a slave's heart. He walked out of the dungeon with the heart of a prime minister. Who brought about this wonder? The Miracle Worker of the universe!

Moses, after proving to be a failure at conquest and spending four decades out in the deserts of Midian, was built into the world's greatest lawgiver, statesman, and leader of armies. By whose power? That of our Creator, our Maker, our Lord.

David, king of Israel, after committing his scarlet sin, cried out to God, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. God came and restored David to His fellowship and did not withdraw His promise that He would build his house and kingdom forever. What a God of mercy and grace!

Throughout the ages of Old Testament history God was building homes and lives, and re-creating hearts filled with sin to be turned over to the Lord. Then Jesus came. "He was in the world and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and

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his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." John 1:10-12.

Everywhere Jesus went He built lives, uplifted the fallen, brought salvation to the sinful, and breathed hope into discouraged hearts. To the one taken in adultery and condemned by the Pharisees He said, "Neither do I condemn thee," assuring her that she could "go, and sin no more." To Zacchaeus, an outcast among his people, Jesus assured, "Today I must abide at thy house." To the rotting leper He spoke with a gentle touch, "Be thou clean."

The last act of Christ's building power was on the cross of Calvary. Hanging next to Him was a ruined life, a wrecked soul, a dying thief. Jesus built into him eternal life right on the spot. Then He dropped His head and died a mighty conqueror over sin and evil, over Satan and all the hosts of hell.

We have the privilege of being workers together with God. From the height of Calvary we seem to hear His cry inviting. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17.

Reflection: Whether in a prayer partnership, a prayer group, or alone in your home, we suggest that you review the seven Bible facts of this chapter. Then "fight the good fight of faith" (I Timothy 6:12) by imagining our Lord as actually doing in your individual life and other lives what He has promised. You will be signally rewarded.

Seven Great Bible Facts:

1. When at the beginning of the world, our Lord said, "Let there be light," He immediately saw light. God knows all and can do anything. Scripture pictures Him as knowing and "declaring the end from the beginning" (Genesis 1:3; Isaiah 46:10).
2. God desires helpless humanity to picture His promise, "I will build them" as being fulfilled, before we experience it or feel it, for "without faith it is impossible to please him" (Jeremiah 24:6; Hebrews 11:6).
3. God encourages all by faith to see the fulfillment of His building love before they experience it, just as the woman with the issue of blood did when she said, "I shall be whole." Jesus declared, "Thy faith hath made thee whole" (Mark 5:28, 34).
4. Our Lord promises that true Sabbath keepers will "build the old waste places." They will "call the Sabbath a delight" and "honour" our Lord (Isaiah 58:12, 13).
5. Our Lord commands us to "speak evil of no man" (Titus 3:2).
6. God commands us to "honour all [men]" (I Peter 2:17).
7. God commands us to "restore" a person "overtaken in a fault" (Galatians 6:1).