

# THE DIVINE SCIENCE WEEKLY

PUBLISHED BY THE COLORADO COLLEGE OF DIVINE SCIENCE  
1819 EAST FOURTEENTH AVENUE, DENVER

Entered as Second-class Matter January 23, 1919, at the Postoffice at Denver, Colorado, under the Act of March 3, 1879

Vol. V

SEPTEMBER 15, 1923

Number 30

## “He Sent His Word and Healed Them”

By NONA L. BROOKS

**T**HERE is something within man that insists upon wholeness, that is not satisfied with anything less than the best. So it has been down through the ages; the race has been struggling for the next better attainment—from the good to a still greater deepening of understanding through turning to the highest and the best. This Something—the Spirit of God—is ever stirring us to our highest endeavor. It is through turning to the work of our own hands, that we have gone astray. The external experiences have been stimuli to good ends, but not to the best. We must turn within to find the real way. This finding of the highest and the best we call healing.

Healing has been practiced in every age, and all kinds of disease have been healed. People have sought healing of the body as the direct end of all prayer and treating. There is a difference between healing and curing. Throughout the ages, we see cures wrought by faith in relics, in talismans, in incantations, in persons, in medicine, but this is outer curing. It is not the true healing. There are then, two kinds of healing, the mental or external, the spiritual or internal. The mental does not touch That Inner Something which lifts, and blesses, and cleanses. As glorious as health is, there is still that which is more glorified—that which health is based upon—the Consciousness of God's Presence and Power. Inner cleansing brings outer wholeness. It must be sought for earnestly—truly worked for.

How shall we seek the highest? What are the steps to attainment? Let us seek the first thing first—the realization of God's Presence and Power. Desire earnestly; endeavor steadfastly; realize the Presence. This is the method by which we attain. We shall not get very far unless we reach out beyond the belief in externals to God's Presence and Power. Curing is external healing, and includes the mental. Anything we believe in—medicine, talismans, personality will seem to help; in fact it has a place in the outer. True healing is the eternal, inner process of illumination. It is the healing that lasts.

Ways and means to the attainment of this great process are at hand. There are centers, books, various methods, new schools of metaphysics, lectures and classes in all phases of New Thought. These are all indicative that we are feeling the stir of the Spirit. The use of these ways is left to us. Our right of choice is respected.

It is the act of belief that heals. Letters asking for help have been sent and have gone astray; nevertheless the senders have received help owing to the

act of faith that prompted the sending of the letter. A healing takes place before the letter is received by the practitioner, because the writer thinks that it is in the healer's hands. “Thy faith hath made thee whole,” said the Master of Life. He who was conscious of the Presence and Power of God, saw the true meaning of faith. It is the motivating power behind every accomplishment, whatever the goal may be. How then shall we use the means at hand? In faith, that they have their place, but that the true way is through realization of wholeness within and without; this is true healing.

“He sent His Word and healed them.” Healing means that we are hearing that Word! Jesus says, “Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.” He might have said, “Be ye whole as your Father in heaven is whole.” This is the interpretation of the word perfect, is it not? How shall we hear the Word? First, desire earnestly! Turn your thought in the right direction. Think up to standard. Second, endeavor steadfastly. Be true to what you know is right thinking. Be vigilant in holding to a standard. Third, realize. Practice the Presence of God in all times and at all places. All conditions must be met in the Spirit of Wholeness. He who aspires to spiritual healing, and seeks persistently will realize the Presence and Power of God. This is healing.

Healing is an inner cleansing, followed by an outer result. We have every means of attainment at hand, and still we do not attain. This is sufficient proof that we cannot depend upon the outer for our sustenance. There is no growth in outer dependence; hence the accomplishment is absent. Do not wonder why. Go to work with earnest desire, steadfast endeavor, and constant practice. If we get into the deep, inner consciousness, we find That Something, beautiful and wonderful. The kingdom of God within! Get back to the direct inner message; God is always sending His Word and healing. “All thine is mine!” Wholeness is ours! Seek wholeness of body through wholeness of vision—the vision that seeks unity.

God is conscious of Himself as Universal Presence. Man is becoming conscious of God as Universal Presence.

We see in this light that Jesus did not set too high a standard for us, when he said, “Be ye Perfect.” Be ye whole in your thinking. Be ye true in your doing, conscious of yourself as a child of God. If we attain the Kingdom of God, it is through simple practice in little things, such as overcoming mental habits that are not conducive to right living.

At the root of all wrong is fear. Fear is lack of faith in God and the Law of Life—the Life Principle. It separates us from our good. He who fears the future, is cut off from all participation in good. How shall we work with fear? Form an attitude of faith. Simple and constant practice of faith will bring results. If the thought or feeling of fear arises in you, take a stand immediately, with the words, "I do not fear, for I trust in God." Let no hint of fear linger in your mental realm. Never accept the negative side. Do not listen to the voice of weakness. Analyze your mental attitude. Are you thinking of self, and of getting for self, and forgetting to share with others? Self-centered thought keeps us out of the Kingdom of Heaven. Thinking out into life, and working for the good of all, brings us to the very gates of the Kingdom.

Greed is a mental habit that shuts us away from that which is truly ours. The constant strife for the things that we think we want, absorbs us, and keeps the windows of heaven closed—those windows through which the blessings of life are poured. Anger is another one of the self-made barriers. There is no just cause for it. One can not be angry when he touches the love of God—the Consciousness of Wholeness. God is love. He does not take cognizance of your and my mistakes. Why should we remark upon those of our neighbor? In this sense we are not our brothers' keepers. As in mathematics we learn principles, and apply these to our problems, so in life, let us learn the Law of Love—the Consciousness of Wholeness, and practice the principle until it becomes a part of our thinking and living. Integrity of thinking and doing in the every day affairs of individual living is a requisite of attainment. We can not get anywhere until we cast out

the undesirable, in other words, clear our mental pathways of weeds and stones. This was Israel's mistake. She left in her midst the people who did not belong there. This nation did not possess the land fully. Let us possess the land fully; let us not leave the tares of fear, greed, and anger, growing in our mental fields, and then expect to attain the best in life. We are doing our work only partly. We never fully possess the land, until it is clear. Any weed left challenges our possession. Any notions of fear, greed, lack, or anger, that play around in our mental realm, hold us out of the full possession—the Consciousness of Wholeness.

The only thing that can keep us out of the Kingdom, or that can hurt us, is an inner attitude of fear, jealousy, greed, anger. Remember we are not injured from without. We are wounded by our attitude, if it is negative. See life as a Whole. Bless with love the one that has criticized you, because you believe in this mode of thinking, knowing that the opposite is not up to standard. "Pray for them that despitefully use you," said the One who best understood the power of thought. Love should be a habit of the soul; hence spontaneous. "Put off the old man"—old habits, and put on new habits—right thoughts.

"Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven." Get the large idea of health as wholeness in all the phases of your living—health of thought, circumstance, body, relationships: "These are the signs that follow." Seek the supreme thing first, seek the Consciousness of the Presence, and you will hear the Word that heals.

He is ever sending His Word and healing us of wrong thinking, and guiding us into the Eternal Presence of Wholeness.

## True Service

By MARY C. R. HALL

Service is application of the Truth in its broadest sense. Service is the natural result of unfoldment in realization of conscious unity. True service is outward manifestation of Love.

There is the old saying that Charity (love) begins at home. Shall we love ourselves, serve ourselves? Yes, by letting go false opinion of self by "letting go" the belief that we are worms of the dust and must therefore grovel and rebuke ourselves. We serve ourselves by "letting be" the power of God's love and letting come the manifestation which the realization of conscious unity brings. We straighten our shoulders, lift our heads, and feel and know that we are the Sons of God. We cannot be slovenly in appearance, manner, or habit when we realize and keep our thoughts fixed on our kinship with God. Service to self is loving our real selves into evidence, bringing them forth into the consciousness of peace, harmony, order.

True Service to others is exactly the same thing; lovingly helping them to realize their true selves. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This verse, read in the light of truth implies first, seeing and serving God in ourselves and then recognizing the same God nature and possibilities in others, and declaring this Truth for them.

Jesus said—"Bear ye one another's burdens and

so fulfil the law of Christ"—(love). This verse does not mean that we should do another's work for him. I think it must mean that we must bear (away) that is, dissolve the burden by lovingly realizing for him that there are no burdens in Truth. "Come unto me (into the knowledge of Unity with God) all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." What greater and more loving service to suffering humanity could there be than showing them the significance of this saying of Jesus, *our* elder brother.

Let us declare the Truth for every one whom we may see apparently sick, discouraged, or in trouble. We may do this everywhere,—at home, on the street, at school, in our places of business, at the theater, anywhere we see the need. Let us not see the cripples, let us see only their perfect bodies. Let us see every man our brother, no matter how unattractive and sordid he may appear. He is truly a child of God and only needs some one to show him the way of realization.

Let us each day silently bless the whole world, realizing that every country is God's country, every living soul is God's child, our brother. Every loving thought thus sent out will be an action of Universal Service, and will bring closer the day of World Peace, closer the day of Universal Consciousness of the Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man.

# A Series of Lessons in Divine Science

By EDITH L. LAVER.

## LESSON II

### “IN THY PRESENCE”

The Divine Scientist speaks of God as the One-All, but a term even more familiar to him is Omnipresence, which means All-Presence; One and Only Presence. It includes Omnipotence (All-Power); Omniscience (All-Knowledge); and Omniaction (All-Activity). This Presence is known by various names. The natural scientist thinks of it as Ether, whereas others prefer Principle, Substance, Perfect Mind, Spirit, Limitless or Infinite Being, Creator, or Father, the name that meant so much to Jesus. I believe I like The Presence better than any other because it carries with it an especial dignity and majesty, at the same time not precluding the intimacy and nearness implied by the other attributes connoted by the term Father. After all, though, what the word *is* doesn't matter nearly so much as what it *means* to us.

In *Basic Truths* Miss Brooks says, “If we take the Omnipresence literally it means that God is everywhere all the time; and it must also mean that all that God is is present everywhere all the time.” We may project our thought as far out into infinite space as our imagination will permit; God is THERE, and all that God is is THERE. Or we may bring it back to the center of our being and know that God is HERE, and all that God is is HERE, as close to us as our heart beats. But this is just another way of expressing what is given in our Statement of Fundamentals: God is All, both invisible and visible.

One Presence, Knowledge and Power is all.

This One that is All is Perfect Life, Intelligence and Substance.

It is easy to say *God is All*. It is also helpful to say it, for the importance of the spoken word is not to be underestimated. But however great may be the power of the word, the conviction of the soul is much greater, and to feel this Truth with the very antennae of one's being is the ultimate attainment. To quote again from *Basic Truths*. “The simplest truth in the world is to know that God in fulness is everywhere.” **TO KNOW THAT GOD IN FULLNESS IS EVERYWHERE.** To know this intellectually? Yes, surely. But to know it with all one's heart, and with all one's soul, and with all one's strength, and with all one's mind, is to *experience* it. This is the end sought—the final achievement, and it requires, not strenuous effort, but intense application.

We read in Ps. 16:11, “In thy presence is fulness of joy,” but because we know that God and God in action is all there is, we may go further and say, In thy presence is fulness of All Good. Likewise, since God is the essence of His every Inherency, we may say, In thy presence is fulness of Wisdom, Love, Knowledge, Understanding, Power, Life, Joy, Peace, Purity, Health, Supply. God is the only reality, and whatever God is not, is not reality. There is no other Presence, no other Power, no other Knowledge, no other Activity, apart from God. God is Spirit; Substance-Mind Universal. There is only One—not two, consequently the Attri-

butes of Spirit can have no opposites. For instance, there is only good—not good *and* evil; there is only life—not life *and* death; there is only health—not health *and* disease; there is only harmony—not harmony *and* discord. In Truth, there is only God and His Expression; only the Creator and His Creation. And it is all good. Gen. 1:31.

All this I know seems to contradict the story of human experience, but this is only because we have not been awake to the reality. We have been drowsy in the lethargy occasioned by our own ignorance, and when we do come to ourselves and claim our own we shall be not unlike a certain man who lived a long time ago. This man's name was Jacob, and he had a dream. When he awakened out of his sleep he said, “Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not.” Gen. 28:16. *Surely the Lord is in this place.* This is the realization that must come to each and every one of us sooner or later, and the prayer of the one who is earnestly seeking to know God is that it may come soon. We are to remind ourselves that there is no time like the present, and that to learn to appreciate the importance of *this moment* is one of the most significant things we can do. Postponement has no place in the thought of the person who is sincere in his desire to practice the Presence. This does not mean that we can force an issue. There is virtue also in learning to wait. What it does mean is this: “The Allness of God and the nothingness of nothing are to be known and declared.” To affirm *instantly* in the face of any and every negative condition that presents itself, that *God is here and everything that God is is here* will bring about the annihilation of the false intruder just as surely as darkness is proved to be nothing in the presence of light. This is a matter of sincerity and of integrity, and as we have said before in this lesson, it requires intense application.

#### STATEMENT OF OMNIPRESENCE

(To be memorized, meditated upon, and practiced)

I accept the Omnipresence without any reserve. Since God is all, there is no place for anything adverse to God. There is no place for sin, sickness, or death in God's presence, and that presence fills all.

References: Jer. 23:24  
Deut. 4:39  
Eph. 1:23  
Eph. 4:6  
I Cor. 8:6  
Rev. 1:8

Ps. 139:7-12 (It might prove interesting reading in this connection to read *The Hound of Heaven*, by Francis Thompson.)

Rom. 11:36.

# Healing Department

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## *THE INSPIRATION OF THE ALMIGHTY IS MY UNDERSTANDING*

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“Through love of wisdom, and the application thereof, we are come into fuller knowledge and understanding. By the power of understanding we are able to demonstrate the life that is perfect. In the Christ we are complete, nothing lacking.”

“If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not. And it shall be given unto him.”

“In the way of understanding there is life; in the pathway thereof is no death.”

“Give me understanding, and I shall live.”

“My people perish for lack of understanding.”

On account of our lack of understanding, we believe in duality; we see God afar off. We believe that we are bound by the race beliefs, and are subject to all of the ills of the flesh. We believe that we are creatures of circumstances, and we expect sickness and suffering, and all kinds of misfortune.

A dear friend once told me that she tried to be patient in her suffering for it was written: “Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth.” She felt that God had sent this suffering in order to prepare her for a great reward in Heaven. I asked her what chasten meant. And her answer was that the word meant—to punish. I told her that this was an interpretation man had given to the word, and that truly it meant—to purify. She was delighted with this interpretation.

How little understanding we have had of God. We have believed that all of our suffering and all of our misfortune came from God, while all of the time God’s love has been waiting for our recognition. As we turn to God’s love we are free. Now we can see why, “My people perish for lack of understanding.”

Since I and my Father are One, I must share all that my Father is. Therefore I can lack no good thing.

In the light of understanding, I see that I am in the very Presence of God.

Since This Presence is all that God Is, then here and now is fulness for my need, not in the future but now; not in the external but through the understanding of the Spirit within.

Therefore:—If I need wisdom, I will turn to the Spirit within, and not to the outer.

If I need healing, I will not go down into Egypt (darkness), but I will seek the healing currents of God’s love. I will trust the Spirit within. I will think, talk, and live, health.

If it is strength that I need, I will connect with Omnipotence, and let Its Power be my strength.

If it is supply that I need, I will set out the supply vessel. I will open the channel by removing the barriers of fear, worry, and of doubt, and I will replace them with faith and trust in God’s unfailing abundance. Then I shall see not a limited amount of supply, but fulness at hand for every need. This cannot come to me until I do my part by opening to it.

Truly it is time for us to awake from our dreams of distress and of limitation, and through Divine Understanding put on the Glory of God, and be perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect.

For to those who look for Him, shall He appear in Glory.

The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. “Lo, I am with you always.”

Infinite Wisdom—guide you today.

Infinite Love—protect you today.

Infinite Life—live in fulness in you today.

Infinite Power—strengthen you today.

Infinite Understanding—instruct you today.

“This day you shall dwell with me in paradise.”—Only believe.

# The Divine Science Weekly

Published and copyrighted by The Colorado College of Divine Science, 1819 East Fourteenth Avenue, Denver, Colorado, Nona L. Brooks, President.

Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized March 14, 1919.

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MIRIAM MITCHELL }

Yearly subscriptions two dollars. Single copy ten cents.  
Foreign subscriptions two dollars and fifty cents.

## IN GOD WE TRUST

### A New Earth

"The flower in the crannied wall will give us more light in ten minutes on the problem of life than we could derive in a Methusalah's existence, from studying it in itself apart from and above its particular forms and mutations."

Students of the problem of life are turning to the Book of Nature in their study. Its pages are teeming with illustrations of the beauty, purpose, truth, and goodness, with which the Law works. There is a "fulness that filleth all." There is a unity of purpose that pervades all, and an Infinite Power of expression.

Science is finding everywhere in this universe that it has called material, the evidence of an invisible life. The Presence of God is being recognized by all men on whichever path their journey leads. Think of the tremendous import of this unity in the trend of individual experience. He who is looking for wholeness, and truth, is finding God. "The universe is a spiritual universe"—is the new fact that this search for ultimate truth is revealing. Order, harmony, rhythm, energy, purpose, are always revelations of a universe with a spiritual foundation. "The world is an amazing store-house and conservatory of beauty." The earth is made new by this revelation.

Our thoughts as they are uplifted in the on-going of man, reveal the fact that they are expressions of an underlying Unity whose purpose is infinite progression. We find out the nature and purpose of God by practicing the Truth that we are constantly discovering. Discoverers are we on a long road of reality. Finding God is the reward of all research in the chapters of the New Bible—the record of all God's wonders. The stars in their courses are blazing forth the glory of the Living Creator, no more than are the wayside flowers, for we are finding that all are alive with the Eternal Power of Being. There is One Life, call it what you will. Words are only symbols of the mighty ideas in Infinite Mind.

What is the import of the New Revelation? It has revealed a new earth—a sentient universe whose great heart is beating in the rhythm of tides and planets moving in their orbits, as well as in the true thoughts and loving deeds of men. The comradeship of Almighty God is revealed to us in every cranny of the New Earth. The streams chatter, the ocean roars, the birds sing, the butterfly lights with exquisite grace upon a dainty flower which in its

turn nods in the breeze,—all express the Living Presence of an Infinite Heart Beat.

"God of the granite and the rose,  
Soul of the sparrow and the bee—  
The mighty tide of being flows  
Through every creature, Lord, from Thee.  
It leaps to life in birds and flowers,  
Through every grade of being runs,  
Till from creation's radiant towers  
Its glories flame in stars and suns.  
Know that like bird and grass and flower,  
The life within thee is divine;  
Nor time, nor space, nor human power,  
The God within thee can confine.  
God of the granite and the rose,  
Soul of the sparrow and the bee—  
The mighty tide of being flows  
From every creature back to Thee;  
Thus round and round the circle runs—  
A mighty sea without a shore—  
While men and angels, stars and suns,  
Unite to praise Thee evermore."

—M. M.

### Divine Science College of Illinois

The Divine Science College of Illinois, 1010 Hartford Building, 8 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, will have two weekly classes in FUNDAMENTALS beginning Wednesday, September 12, at 2 p. m., and Thursday, September 13, at 7:30 p. m. No one may enter the classes after October 10 and 11. If necessary work may be made up until that date.

### Memorial Services for Warren G. Harding

On Friday, August 10, the regular 12:30 meeting at the First Divine Science Church of Chicago was turned into a Memorial Service in honor of Warren G. Harding. This meeting was under the auspices of the Business Men's Divine Science Club of Chicago.

It was a very sacred time in which our need of reliance on God was emphasized by the reading, by Mr. A. Ver Berkmoes, of President Collidge's Proclamation; and the thought of service and the continuity of Life were brought out in a strong tribute to Mr. Harding by Mr. A. H. Rice. Mrs. Ritchie lead the Meditation.

Spin cheerfully,  
Not tearfully,  
Though wearily you plod.  
Spin carefully,  
Spin prayerfully,  
But leave the thread with God.  
—Author Unknown.

(The closing thought used at the I. N. T. A. meetings this year in Washington.)

I am the open channel through which the healing currents of God's Love are now flowing.

God is my Life. God is my Health. God is my Supply.

In God is my trust.

—Elizabeth Towne.

## A Background for the Study of the Bible

KEY-NOTE: ASCENDING REVELATION.

JUDGES—Continued.

Read Judges, Chapters 7-17.

### LESSON XIX

Although the Hebrews have conquered central Canaan, there is no organized government and they are still a prey to marauding desert tribes, chief of whom are the Midianites. They attack the various villages, forcing them to pay tribute until a certain band kills the brothers of Gideon, the son of Joash, who becomes the champion of the Hebrews in this new crisis.

There are two accounts of the founding of Gideon's kingdom. In one, he is represented as a religious reformer; in the other, he is a great warrior. Regardless of his motive, he is also inspired by patriotic and religious zeal, and as in the stories of Abraham, a divine messenger appears to him, bidding him go forth and save Israel.

Gideon demands proof of the Lord's favor, for he is aware of his lack of position and influence. He sets forth a sacrifice which is burned by Jehovah's messenger as a sign of His favor, but not until a second test is met does Gideon go forth in confidence to assemble his army. (Judges 6:11-40.)

Gideon's messengers are sent to all of the neighboring tribes and some thirty thousand men are assembled. This is considered too large an army by Jehovah, who does not wish the Hebrews to take unto themselves the credit for the promised deliverance.

The timid ones are first allowed to go, and then Gideon is commanded to bring his army to the water and those who lap the water are to be separated from those who bow down and drink. The number who lap are only three hundred, but the Lord commands Gideon to take them and go forth against the Midianites.

The small band is divided into companies, and each man is given an empty jar with a torch within each jar. They advance upon the enemy, reaching their camp about midnight. At a signal from Gideon they break the jars and charge upon the Midianites with torch in one hand and sword in the other, crying, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." The Midianites flee in terror, not knowing in the darkness that only a small army has attacked them. This defeat was so thorough that "the day of the Midian" became a current illustration of Jehovah's intervention to save Israel.—Sanders.

Gideon represents a crisis hardly less acute than that at which Deborah appeared. Israel was passing from nomadic to settled life, but if the fruits of agriculture were snatched from them by the Midianites, the temptation to return to a wandering life would be very great.—Hastings.

The deliverance wrought by Gideon shows the Hebrews the necessity of a centralized organization with a permanent head who can both judge Israel and fight their battles.

Gideon is asked not only to rule over them, but to transmit his authority to his descendants. He refuses, true to the great principle that Jehovah is Israel's ruler, but he establishes a government and

is a king in authority, if not in name. A golden ephod made from the spoils captured from the Midianites is set up at Ophiah as a sign of authority, thus establishing a royal shrine to strengthen the power of the new dynasty.

After the death of Gideon the succession of hero stories is interrupted by a story of a different kind which is an important step in the history of the transition period.

Gideon made many marriages to strengthen his power, and at his death his son Abimelech makes himself king of Shechem, but after a brief and stormy reign of three years, he meets death at the hands of a woman (Judges 9). In this chapter we have the well-known fable of the trees which Jotham, the youngest son of Gideon, hurls at the self-appointed king. Its connection with the moral which Jotham wishes to point is not entirely clear, but it expresses very fully his hatred and contempt for Abimelech.

Thus the first attempt of the Hebrews to establish a kingdom proves a failure and doubtless tends to increase their dislike of any established authority. When at last conditions were ripe and a worthy leader was found, a permanent Hebrew kingdom was destined to rise.—Kent.

The Hebrew struggle for possession of the country continues, but the scene changes to the rolling uplands of Gilead, east of the Jordan, where the tribes of Gad, Reuben and the half tribe of Manasseh have settled down to work out their own individual problems, independent of the other tribes. They are protected on the west by natural barriers and the other tribes, but on the east they are constantly in fear of invasion from the Ammonites, who covet the rich territory of Gilead.

When a general attack is threatened, the elders of the tribes look about for a leader, and no one seems so well fitted for the task as Jephthah. Driven from home when a boy, Jephthah has become the leader of a band of outlaws, and before he accepts the offer of the elders, he obtains their promise to recognize him henceforth as their chief.

Although only a rough warrior, Jephthah is a devout worshiper of Jehovah, and upon the eve of battle makes a solemn vow that if he should be successful, he will offer as a sacrifice the first one who comes to meet him on his return. Such a vow seems very cruel to us, but it was characteristic of the early Semitic religion, when the life of a human being was considered the greatest gift that could be made to the Deity.

"And Jephthah came to Mizpah unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances; and she was his only child; and beside her he had neither son nor daughter.

"And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, 'Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them

that trouble me; for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back?"

His daughter accepts her fate and after a period of lamentation, Jephthah fulfills the vow that leaves him childless and deprives him of all hope of descendants.

Jephthah's judgeship lasts six years, and the record of that period recounts many conflicts between the Gileadites and the powerful tribe of Ephraim, who resented Jephthah's victories and his failure to ask their help. The fords of Jordan were the scene of many conflicts, and the inability of thousands to pronounce "shibboleth" caused them to lose their lives at the hands of the Gileadites.

"Jephthah well illustrates the real nature of the local deliveries, whose brave deeds are the chief events of this period of settlement and conquest. Their standards are those of the rude age in which they lived. \* \* \* Although their deeds were often cruel and their interests selfish and local, each of these deliverers was loyal to the God of his race and clearly regarded himself as the agent of the Deity in carrying on the wars of deliverance."—Kent.

The repeated attacks and invasions of the enemies of Israel were gradually uniting the various tribes, although national unity might not seem to be any further advanced.

Israel's most serious foe at this time is the Philistines. This sturdy people are believed to have come from southern Asia Minor and a large body of them had settled on the fertile maritime plain in southwestern Palestine. They raised much grain and their geographical position gave them the necessary opportunity for trade with Phoenicia and Egypt. While the Hebrews were struggling to build homes in central Canaan, the Philistines had already established a powerful kingdom.

"And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord and the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines forty years." A deliverer is found in Samson, who, like Jephthah and Gideon, is both warrior and judge. (Judges, Chapters 13-16.)

Samson is a Nazarite, a man consecrated from his birth, which had been heralded by a divine messenger. The outward signs of his consecration to Jehovah are the abstaining from wine, keeping the hair uncut and ceremonial purity. Even in his youth he is noted for his great strength, which is given him by Jehovah and symbolized by his long hair, according to ancient superstition.

Although the Philistines are beginning to invade Canaan, the relations between them and the Hebrews are friendly enough to allow a marriage between Samson and a Philistine woman. This was a peculiar type of marriage common to that day, in which the woman remained with her own people.

We are told little of Samson's work as a judge, but he has numerous encounters with the Philistines in which he delights to mock and make sport of them. His great strength for the most part seems to have been exerted to carry on his private feuds rather than for the deliverance of his people, and in his schemes for revenge he shows little regard for the rights of other people.

All of the attempts of the Philistines to capture

Samson are in vain until they enlist the help of Delilah, with whom Samson has fallen in love. She finally persuades him to confide to her the secret of his great strength, his hair, which has never been cut, and when this symbol of his strength has been taken from him, he falls into the hands of his enemies.

Sightless, grinding away in the prison house, Samson doubtless learns some of the lessons that he refused to learn otherwise. His strength slowly returns and in one last heroic effort he brings down the temple of the Philistines upon himself and the worshipers who had assembled to exult over him.

The stories of Samson were evidently preserved, not so much for their religious value as for the insight into the life and viewpoint of the Hebrew people at this period. The early Hebrews had a great admiration for physical strength and wit, and these stories which describe Samson's strength overflow with rough humor, which doubtless delighted these children in development just as they please the child of today.

In many instances the story of Samson seems to parallel that of the Greek Hercules. Of both specifically the same stories are told and both are betrayed by treacherous women. The custom of tying a lighted torch between two foxes in the circus is said to have been kept up in Greece for a long time in memory of the damage once done to the harvest fields by Hercules.

Samson must be measured by the standards of the age, but even so, we cannot call him a noble character. He possessed great gifts, but used them to carry out his own selfish purposes.

The lesson of the life is plain: muscular strength mated to moral weakness never makes a hero; the man who lacks self-control can never be the deliverer or the true leader of a people.—Abbott.

In contrast leaders like Deborah and Barak reveal by their deeds the dawning of that nobler ideal which was destined to find full expression in the messages of the later prophets. The stories of the *Book of Judges* vividly portray the early character of that race which under divine training, in time became a prophet nation with a universal spiritual message.—Kent.

## Happy Thoughts

Collected by Everett Thornton Brown

I am only one,  
But still I am one;  
I cannot do everything,  
But still I can do something,  
And because I cannot do everything  
I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.  
—Edward Everett Hale.

The ornaments of a home are the friends that frequent it.—Ralph Waldo Emerson.

They might not need me, yet they might,  
I'll let my heart be just in sight.  
A smile so small as mine might be  
Precisely their necessity.  
—Emily Dickinson.

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