

# Is There No Balm In Gilead?

Meade MacGuire

*This was the General Conference Morning Bible Study on Monday, May 31 at 8:45 A. M. on May 31, 1926. Published in the Review and Herald, June 7, 1926.*

1 I WILL read a verse from the eighth chapter of Jeremiah, the last  
2 verse:

3 “Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is  
4 not the health of the daughter of My people recovered?” Jeremiah  
5 8:22

## 6 Why Are The People Of God Sick?

7 It seems to me this verse should come home to us as a very practical  
8 appeal this morning. Is there no balm, in Gilead; is there no physician  
9 there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people  
10 recovered?” This implies that the people of God are sick, and they are  
11 not recovering; and the pathetic question is asked, “Is there no balm in  
12 Gilead; is there no physician there?”

13 I believe that it is a practical question, because many of the professed  
14 people of God are sick. I am going to read from two documents, just a  
15 few sentences to confirm this statement. First, from the spirit of  
16 prophecy, in an article from the Review and Herald, February 28,  
17 1899:

18 **“The power of the Holy Spirit is needed to chase away our unbelief**  
19 **and unchristlike attributes. We must see our need of a physician.**  
20 **We are sick, and do not know it. May the Lord convert the hearts**  
21 **of His workmen. When there is a converted ministry, then look for**  
22 **results.”**

23 “We are sick, and do not know it.” There is not one of us who does not  
24 deplore his lack of spiritual power, and his lack of success in winning a  
25 large number of souls to Christ. Probably there is not one of us who  
26 does not often long for power in dealing with individuals. We are  
27 baffled; we do not know what to do, because they seem to be in a  
28 condition which we are unable to remedy.

29 Again, in another article, dated Aug. 14, 1902, I read:

30 **“Godliness is becoming more and more rare. Unless the divine**

31 **leaven of renovation works in the church, little will be done to**  
32 **convert souls who will be not only consumers but producers. The**  
33 **church is now a vast hospital, filled with the spiritually sick.”**

34 That is certainly a very startling statement. I was thinking that if one of  
35 these dietitians gave a lecture to this congregation, he would not know  
36 whether or not any one here was sick. He could not tell, very likely,  
37 whether any one in this congregation was suffering and sick. I think it  
38 is possible for a minister to preach and preach and preach, and not  
39 understand or sense the spiritual condition of his hearers. They may be  
40 desperately sick, and he may not know it. There must be a contact  
41 outside of the pulpit, to find out whether the people are sick or well.

42 This statement says that our churches are “a vast hospital, filled with  
43 the spiritually sick.” To use the physician again as an illustration:  
44 Many people might tell to a doctor their symptoms and needs without  
45 being able to describe them so accurately that the physician would not  
46 have to bring all his knowledge and skill to bear upon the case; yet I  
47 fancy that occasionally, at least, a person is able to analyze his  
48 condition so clearly and so accurately that it is all the diagnosis that is  
49 necessary.

50 I find it so among people in spiritual things, and I am sure you do, that  
51 occasionally there is a person who diagnoses his own case very clearly  
52 and simply and accurately. **I am going to read a letter which I think**  
53 **is one of the keenest diagnoses I ever heard:**

#### 54 A Spiritual Diagnoses

55 “I have long wanted to talk to some one about my religious  
56 experience, some one whom I could tell exactly how I felt, and with  
57 the assurance that he would not look upon me with contempt ever  
58 after. You had a personal conference with me at one time, but I think  
59 you thought I was all right, perhaps a little careless. I did not tell you  
60 what was really on my mind, so if you will have patience with me, I  
61 will write you what I could not tell you.

62 “To begin with, you asked me if I was **reared by Seventh-day**  
63 **Adventist parents.** I was, and they were sincere Christians. I **took**  
64 **most of my academic work in an academy, and have spent some**  
65 **time here at the college.** I have no fault to find with either the  
66 academy or the college; both are very good and have many earnest  
67 young people; but sad to say, there are many who feel, at least in a  
68 measure, as I do.

69 **"I attend vespers, Sabbath school, church, and prayer bands, and**  
70 **take an active part in each.** I do not mean to be a hypocrite, but **I feel**  
71 **as if I am in a trap. When I first went away to school, I decided**  
72 **that it was time for me to be a Christian, and though I did not feel**  
73 **religious, I felt it my duty to align myself with the religious**

74 **activities of the school, thinking that if I did this, the real**  
75 **experience would come later.** Do not think that I wished to make a  
76 big profession, for I did not, but I felt that was where I wished to  
77 stand.

78 **“The experience did not come. I do not really enjoy the things that**  
79 **a Christian should enjoy. I go for weeks without personal prayer. I**  
80 **tried to have a time set apart for this and performed private**  
81 **devotions for a period, thinking I would learn to enjoy it, but I do**  
82 **not. It seems as if I am talking to myself.** I read my Bible, and there  
83 are parts that I really enjoy. but when I stop to analyze, I find I enjoy it  
84 only from a literary standpoint.

85 “I have often had girls come to me to talk about their religious  
86 experience, and out of my blank personal experience have tried to  
87 answer them and introduce them to a Friend that I do not know  
88 personally, but just by hearsay. **My testimonies in vespers express a**  
89 **desire rather than a victory. I think at times that I will never take**  
90 **part again, for it gives people a wrong impression of me. I think I**  
91 **might as well give it all up, and quit pretending,** but I do believe the  
92 underlying principles of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

93 **“The things I am writing you are not the result of a day's thought,**  
94 **but that of months. I wish you could help me in some way.** Miss  
95 told me to read Steps to Christ. I have read it, and that more than once,  
96 but it is like the other things. Elder told us in worship not long ago that  
97 when he felt himself slipping, there were three things he did: He  
98 prayed, he read his Bible, and he tried to help some one else. That is  
99 very good, but **I have tried it, and it is all formal.** Perhaps the Spirit  
100 of God has left me. I am past the adolescent age, so do not think that  
101 would account for my feeling as I do. If you have time to write and can  
102 help me, I should really appreciate it. Next week is our Week of  
103 Prayer, and I wish it might be different from other such occasions.”

#### 104 Recovering A Real Experience

105 Dear fellow workers, this is a remarkable analysis of the condition of  
106 hundreds and hundreds of our young people, and of many of our older  
107 people. **There is so much today that is artificial, so much that is**  
108 **superficial, so much that is theoretical, that there is coming into**  
109 **the hearts of those who are sincere, a great cry after reality, a**  
110 **great, longing for a real experience. Theory does not satisfy, and**  
111 **the knowledge of the truth, however precious that truth may be,**  
112 **does not give them personal victory.** I am convinced, so far as I am  
113 concerned, that the value of my ministry may be judged very largely  
114 by my ability, through the blessing of God, to make Christianity real to  
115 people, to lift them out of the merely theoretical and abstract into the  
116 actual experience that makes the Bible the most fascinating book,  
117 because they find Jesus in it; that makes prayer the most fascinating

118 exercise, because it means fellowship and communion with Him; and  
119 that makes service the only thing worth living for, because in it they  
120 have fellowship with Jesus.

121 I have long been impressed with the fact that the remedy is very  
122 simple, and I am sure that in my early ministry I missed a great deal  
123 because I did not know how simple the remedy is. I did not understand  
124 as I do now what Jesus meant when He said, “As Moses lifted up the  
125 serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up;  
126 that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have  
127 everlasting life.” It didn't seem possible that it could be as simple as  
128 that.

## 129 Giving All; Taking All

130 Perhaps it can be summed up in those two brief expressions from Steps  
131 to Christ, “Giving all,” and “taking all.”

132 **We may surrender by just laying down our arms, just stopping**  
133 **resistance, stopping rebellion; but that is not going far enough to**  
134 **bring reality into the Christian life, Thousands of people have**  
135 **surrendered that way. When I have talked to congregations about**  
136 **giving all, and then we have a social meeting, and people get up**  
137 **and say, “I surrender all to the Lord today,” I have had to say,**  
138 **“Brother, you are not talking about what I have been talking about**  
139 **at all. You are talking about surrender; I am talking about**  
140 **something away beyond surrender.”**

141 **Let me read three or four scriptures that have made much more**  
142 **real to me this matter of a relation to Christ, which goes away**  
143 **beyond mere surrender to Him.**

144 The first is **Philippians 1: 20: “According to my earnest expectation**  
145 **and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all**  
146 **boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my**  
147 **body.”**

148 It is my earnest expectation and my hope that Christ shall be magnified  
149 in my body. I like to call attention to that word “magnify,” so that you  
150 will think of a magnifying glass, through which many things are made  
151 visible which we do not see at all with the naked eye. Paul says, “It is  
152 my earnest expectation that people shall look at me and see Jesus”—  
153 people who never saw Him before, or would not see Him otherwise,  
154 save by looking at me. Christ is magnified, enlarged, made visible, in  
155 my body.

156 The next scripture is **1 Corinthians 6: 20: “Ye are bought with a**  
157 **price: therefore glorify God in your body.”**

158 Make God glorious in your body. When studying this in the schools,  
159 very often some young person has arisen and said, “This brings a new  
160 idea to me. I have long tried to serve God with my heart, but I thought

161 I could do about as I pleased with my body.”

162 Paul says, “It is my earnest expectation and hope to magnify Jesus in  
163 my body.” He says, “Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God  
164 in your body.”

165 The next text is **2 Corinthians 4: 10: “Always bearing about in the  
166 body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might  
167 be made manifest in our body.”**

168 It seems too bad to pass that verse, for there is enough for an hour's  
169 study in each of those expressions. Brethren and sisters, is that first  
170 expression real to us, “always bearing about in the body the dying of  
171 the Lord Jesus”? What do you know about that as a real, personal  
172 experience? for the last part of the verse cannot precede that. **We must  
173 bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus before the life  
174 of Jesus can be made manifest in our body.** I am sure that the  
175 greatest ambition or aspiration any of us has is that the life of Jesus  
176 may be manifest in our body; but it cannot be unless we are always  
177 bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus. Let us pray that  
178 God may make us understand what that means, and may we enter into  
179 the experience.

## 180 Making A Living Sacrifice

181 Now in order that I may truly magnify Christ in my body and glorify  
182 God in my body and manifest the life of Christ in my body, it is  
183 necessary for me to do one thing, which is presented in **Romans 12:  
184 1: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that  
185 ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto  
186 God, which is your reasonable service.”**

187 **That verse goes beyond the word “surrender” as we ordinarily use  
188 it. “Present your bodies.” “Surrender” may be merely passive; this  
189 presentation is very active. “Present your bodies a living sacrifice.”  
190 If you have never tried this, I believe what I am suggesting will  
191 bring to you a distinct experience, something different, as it does to  
192 me day by day.** When I present my body to the Lord with the desire  
193 and the great hope and expectation that Christ shall be magnified in it  
194 and God shall be glorified in it and the life of Jesus shall be manifest  
195 in it, **I understand that consecration to include every organ of my  
196 body — my hands, my feet, my lips, my every sense; and I say it  
197 brings a distinct experience to me in the morning; or at any time  
198 during the day, to look down at my hands and say, “Lord Jesus,  
199 these are your hands. I have no claim upon them at all. I have  
200 given them to you. These feet are your feet, and I want you to treat  
201 them and use them today as fully as if no one else had any claim  
202 upon them whatever but yourself.”**

203 **That brought a distinct, wonderful experience to me. Then I said,**

204 **“Jesus, my voice is Thine. Communicate to me Thy will moment**  
205 **by moment, and by Thy grace I will co-operate in using this voice**  
206 **of Thine whenever Thou dost say, and keeping it still when Thou**  
207 **dost want me to.”** It is all summed up in one expression in that self-  
208 dedication of Jonathan Edwards, where he says, “I have given myself  
209 clear away, and have not retained anything as my own.”

210 **The more I try to cultivate day by day the reality of that**  
211 **consecration, the more I say to my Saviour, “Jesus, I now again**  
212 **this moment give myself clear away, and I want you to treat me**  
213 **this next hour as if I belonged entirely to you, and no one else had**  
214 **any claim to any part of me,” it helps me, and the experience**  
215 **becomes more and more real.**

## 216 Act As If He Is Real

217 I often say to young people who come to me begging that in some way  
218 Christ may be made real, “My child, Jesus will never be real to you  
219 until you treat Him as if He were real. **When you begin to act as if He**  
220 **were real, He will be with you, and you can talk to Him as a real**  
221 **person. But when you ask Him in the morning to be with you all**  
222 **day, and then never think to pray again until you go to bed at**  
223 **night, you are not treating Jesus as a real person.** You would not  
224 treat your mother that way, or any friend; because your mother is real  
225 to you, and your friend is real to you. Jesus will be real to you when  
226 you begin to treat Him as a real person.

227 **I have been talking about giving all. Now a word about taking**  
228 **all.** The verse that always comes to our minds first is **John 1:12: “As**  
229 **many as received Him, to them gave He power.”** I like to step there.  
230 We need more power. The young people say, “I cannot be victorious; I  
231 do not seem to have power.” But the Scripture says, “As many as  
232 received Him, to them gave He power.” **We must teach the young**  
233 **people that when they receive Jesus, power comes; power comes**  
234 **with Him, in Him. It is not a theory; the power is in the Person.**  
235 **“As many as received Him, to them gave He power.**

## 236 Receive Him

237 Now, coming back to that question of surrender: **How do you receive**  
238 **Him? — Not by surrendering. Surrendering is not receiving;**  
239 **asking is not receiving.** It does not say that as many as asked for Him,  
240 or as many as surrendered to Him; but “as many as received Him, to  
241 them gave He power.” **I think that is where the confusion comes**  
242 **with many. They surrender, and then they ask, but they do not**  
243 **receive; so they are conscious all the time of weakness and**  
244 **helplessness, failure and defeat. Receiving Him is a definite act of**  
245 **faith. It is by definite, determined co-operation with God,**  
246 **accepting, claiming, appropriating the things that He promises,**

247 **that makes it a reality to us.**

248 When Jesus ascended, we are told, He asked His Father for the greatest  
249 gift it was in the power of God to give for the exaltation of His  
250 people,— that is the gift of the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit, the  
251 third Person of the Deity, came down as Christ's personal  
252 representative and successor; and He is here now. **I understand that**  
253 **when a young man down here comes and gives all to Christ, and**  
254 **accepts all, or appropriates all, Jesus says to the Spirit, who is**  
255 **here, “This young man has given himself to Me; will you go to Him**  
256 **and take possession of My property? “ To me that is a most blessed**  
257 thought. Jesus says to the Spirit, who is here as His representative,  
258 “You go now and take entire possession of My property; that young  
259 man belongs to Me henceforth. **Take possession of his hands, his**  
260 **feet, his eyes, his ears, his voice, his whole being, and just possess**  
261 **the man and use him for Me.”**

262 Don't you see, brethren and sisters, that if the young man can be given  
263 that vision, that understanding of how completely God appropriates the  
264 gift and takes possession, there will not be this terrible failure and  
265 defeat, this feeling all the time, “I cannot do it; it is too great. The  
266 standard is too high; I cannot reach it. The temptations are too great.”  
267 All that is immediately forgotten in the realization that now I am  
268 possessed by a divine Being who is almighty; I just yield myself to  
269 Him. The young man can have the consciousness of that constant  
270 passiveness in the hands of the Holy Spirit, who is to make Christ a  
271 reality.

272 Receive the Blessings of Entire Possession!

273 Now **just a few brief statements as to what further the Holy Spirit**  
274 **does when He is given entire possession. He gives a new**  
275 **comprehension of spiritual things.** Many of the young people today,  
276 it must be admitted, have a very materialistic mold of mind. They are  
277 not naturally inclined to spiritual things, and they must be made to  
278 understand simply and clearly that when they make this presentation to  
279 God and He takes possession of the faculties of the mind and heart, the  
280 Holy Spirit, by a definite act of divine power, recreates those spiritual  
281 faculties and powers so as to awaken a new comprehension and  
282 apprehension of spiritual things. **The person is now capable of**  
283 **enjoying what before was dry and tasteless to him.**

284 **And the Holy Spirit gives victory over sin — personal victory.** You  
285 know how strikingly that is brought out in the seventh and eight  
286 chapters of Romans. In the seventh chapter there is picture that heroic  
287 struggle of an earnest, conscientious man who is crying out after  
288 victory, and struggling and praying and working; the apostle uses the  
289 personal pronouns “I “ and “me “ and “mine “ forty-five times. But he  
290 says nothing about the Spirit, and so the keyword to the chapter is, “O

291 wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this  
292 death?”

293 But in the eighth chapter the keyword is, **“Nay, in all these things we  
294 are more than conquerors through Him that loved us,” and the  
295 reason is that the Holy Spirit is mentioned nineteen times and “I”  
296 only twice. It is the Holy Spirit that gives victory.**

297 I think, brethren and sisters, that we must in some way reach an  
298 acquaintance with the Holy Spirit that we have not had. It is through  
299 His power, His visitation upon us, that we are to finish the work. I do  
300 not mean that we need to study merely the theory about the Spirit, but  
301 to know more of the fellowship of the Spirit and the indwelling of the  
302 Spirit, for **the Holy Spirit makes real the presence of Jesus. He  
303 makes real the deliverance from the power and dominion of sin.  
304 He makes real in us the love of God to the brethren and to the lost,  
305 and He brings to us the joy of service for Christ.**

306 “Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is  
307 not the health of the daughter of My people recovered?” **Why is it,  
308 brethren and sisters, when God has made such abundant and full  
309 provision for a victorious people clothed with the righteousness of  
310 Jesus, why is it that we are so slow? May God help us to seek after  
311 Him in such a way that He will become real to us. The fault is ours.  
312 It is not God's.** It seems to me that God will be greatly disappointed if  
313 we go away from this General Conference without having entered into  
314 a fellowship and relationship with Jesus and the Holy Spirit far more  
315 deep and full and complete than we have known in the past.—Meade  
316 MacGuire.

317 This wonderful Bible Study was given at the General Conference of 1926. At  
318 this same convocation, Carlyle B. Haynes also provided his personal  
319 testimony of how he experienced true conversion as he discovered, and  
320 personally applied, the message of righteousness by faith in his own life.

321 This line-numbered discussion resource was developed by Path2Prayer  
322 Ministries. You can also find Pastor Hayne’s sermon as a line-numbered  
323 discussion document at [discipleheart.com](http://discipleheart.com) in the section on righteousness by  
324 faith. [Discipleheart.com](http://discipleheart.com) has more than 700 pages of wonderful resources on  
325 practical spirituality, including righteousness by faith.

326 Contact us: 269 471 5415. Email us: [discipleheart@protonmail.com](mailto:discipleheart@protonmail.com).

327 Write Us Path2prayer Ministries, PO Box 244, Berrien Springs, MI 49103

328 Righteousness by Faith

Meade MacGuire

[Discipleheart.com](http://Discipleheart.com)

