

LOVE OF LIFE

By

Curtis Dickinson

The life you save may be your own! Saving lives! Medics on the battlefield, scientists in the lab, daring chopper rescue teams over Southeast Asia — all endeavoring to save lives.

At the same time over two and a half million people in the United States are delving into the occult, studying clairvoyancy, telepathy, reincarnation, attending séances and indulging in trances, dreams and vibrations. Their efforts are directed to receiving a message from some outside source — from the dead! So strong is their **love of life** that they must find some evidence somewhere that it will not end.

But they are looking in the wrong place. Whatever the mysterious responses, they are wholly unreliable. Listen to what God has to say on this:

“And when they shall say unto you , ‘Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards, that chirp and that mutter’: should not a people seek unto their God? On behalf of the living should they seek unto the dead? To the law and to the testimony! If they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them” (Isa. 8:19–20).

God is simply saying that the dead cannot give us any message, they are, after all, dead!

Then how do we account for the mysterious actions, apparitions and seeming communications? Here again, the Bible give a clear answer.

“For they are spirits of demons, working signs” (Rev. 16:14). Satan and the other fallen angels are the spiritual hosts of wickedness against whom the Christian is engaged in warfare. Satan actually has uncanny power, and can fool anyone who is foolish enough to go about consulting him through spiritualists and those who claim special powers. “for such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for even Satan fashions himself into an angel of light” (II Cor. 11:13–14). There is no help from Satan and spiritism for those who have a **love of life**. Satan is the destroyer, the one who deceives man in order to bring about his death.

It is God who instills into man the **love of life**. In fact it is He who has the greatest love of life, for He created it, and all life is in His hand; “seeing he himself gives to all life, and breath, and all things” and “in him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:25, 28).

Since He is the author of life, it is logical that he should expect us to have a great love for it. Jesus said to “love thy neighbor as thyself,” which certainly means that he expects us to love our own lives. “Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loves his own wife loves himself: for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ also the church” (Eph. 5:28–29). A man is expected to love and care for his won body.

Christ considered life the most precious element in the world. “For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life. For what should a man give in exchange for his life?” (Mark 8:36–37). So much value did Jesus place on life that he said he would give his “flesh for the life of the world” (John 6:51).

Why, then, do some have so little regard for life? Why are the revels so careless with their own lives and the lives of others? Why do some thing so little of their lives as to ruin their health in dissipation and drugs?

One reason is faith in evolution. To the evolutionist life is no more than a tiny step in a long process of happenstance. There is no purpose for it and no plan, since there is no planner. One simply exists under prevailing conditions, and has no obligation to the past or hope for the future. His life is an accident, an interval, and with no intrinsic meaning. After millions of years perhaps a better breed and better conditions might happen, but then that is of no value to our present generation.

No wonder that so many young people, under this depressing conviction, space out on drugs, cop out and foul up their lives in sin. They do not love life! They may love pleasure, but have no love for living, and the things they may do in this frame of mind tend to destroy chances for a good life.

Someone suggests that Christ Himself placed no value on life, for He voluntarily gave up life on the cross. But just look at His attitude as He faced the cross. On the way to Jerusalem the disciples noted that His attitude was one of sadness, as he told of the necessity of His death. Never did he indicate that parting with life was an easy matter. On the night before the crucifixion, Jesus flung himself to the ground in an agonizing prayer, and cried to the Father, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Three times he prayed that the cup of death "pass," and so intense was his agony in surrender to the death of the cross that He sweat "as if were great drops of blood" (Luke 22:44).

If life was so dear to Christ, then why did he die?

That's just the reason! It was because of His **love of life** that Christ was willing to die to preserve it. You see, he designed it (John 1:1, Heb. 1:3). Not quite as we see it, full of problems and heartaches, but perfect, in the garden of Eden. Before sin was committed by our first parents, life was absolutely beautiful. God himself, after creating all the world and placing man and woman in the midst of it, declared it to be good.

So good was the life that God created, and so precious was it in His eyes, that he decreed that all who corrupt it should pay a penalty — the penalty of forfeiting life.

That's fair enough. If man doesn't want the life God gives, then life is withdrawn. But man did corrupt it, and goes on doing so, for none measure up to the absolute goodness of God, in whose image man was created. Therefore, in the Judgment, one must pay the penalty of death, the second death, which we usually call hell, where life must be forfeited.

So Christ came into the world to pay this penalty, to forfeit His own life that we might live. His **love of life** is so real and so great that He was willing to give up His own, to make ours possible.

Hear Him when He says, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). "I am the living bread...and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world" (John 8:51).

Life for life! Jesus gave up life, taking the penalty of sin, yours and mine, that we might not die, but live. Listen to Paul: "For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). Certainly Christ loves life — so much that He died that we might live. And all who stubbornly go on ignoring the **love of life** must eventually give up their lives in judgment.

All the ESP, clairvoyance, telepathy, trances and witchcraft will avail nothing in the day of judgment. They will not effect the lake of fire which consumes the sinner, where life must be forfeited.

But those who have a **love of life** need never see that fire. Before it begins to burn the saved will be taken from the world by Christ. “For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (I Thess. 4:16–18).

Note that Paul is writing about Christians who are now dead, but when Christ comes they are to be raised from death, just as He was resurrected, to live again — and this time as immortal mankind.

You see, the hope of life which God offers is not to die and “go to heaven” to live as a disembodied something. Paul writes that we are to “comfort one another with these words,” the words concerning Christ’s *return* and the *resurrection* from the grave.

As Paul faced death, he wrote of his faith and said, “Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing” (II Tim. 4:8). At what day? At the day of “his appearing,” at the same time that all the rest of the saints receive the crown of righteousness. God promises life through a resurrection of the dead. It is blasphemy to suggest that at death man may be mystical united with the Maker, or absorbed into the Power of the universe; Man cannot become a part of God. God creates and gives life to that outside Himself, and that life is demonstrated by Christ.

When Jesus arose from the dead he appeared to Mary, who was not expecting this kind of thing. She first thought Him to be the gardener, but when Jesus spoke her name, “Mary,” she immediately replied, “Master.” His voice and manners were familiar to her. He was the same REAL Jesus. You will be real in the resurrection. So will your friends. It will be LIFE.

Christ offers only one kind of life, a life like His own, in harmony with God’s purpose. You can have that life now, and in the resurrection be given immortality for eternity.

What if one loves an evil life? What if the things he loves are sinful and contrary to God? Then he had better enjoy them now — eat, drink and be merry — for he must forfeit life at judgment. Eternal life — immortality — is not offered those who reject Christ.

The life God offers is beautiful, ultimately to be glorified, powerful and perfect. It will be set in a new world of righteousness, where everything is in harmony with God. If you love this kind of life, you can have it through Christ.

“He that has the Son has life; he that has not the Son of God has not life” (I John 5:12).

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