

WILL YOUR LOVE WAX COLD?

Why did Jesus Christ forewarn that during our time, many — even in His Church — will become calloused, hard, unsympathetic? Will you be one who will let your love grow cold? How can you make certain this doesn't happen to you?

by Raymond F. McNair

IN THE Olivet Prophecy, Jesus foretold the world-shaking events leading up to His Second Coming. He showed that worldwide hate would lead to *wars* (climaxing in World Wars), *famines*, *pestilences*, and widespread *earthquakes*!

Then Christ sounded a fearful warning!

"All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall *kill you* [referring to the terrible end-time persecutions, culminating in the Great Tribulation!]; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall *many* be offended and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. . . . And *because iniquity shall abound, THE LOVE OF MANY SHALL WAX COLD*" (Mat. 24:8-12)!

Have YOU taken this warning from your very Saviour *personally*? Have you made an inventory of your life lately to be *sure* you are not guilty of this charge?

Christ also solemnly promised the overcomers: "He that shall *ENDURE unto the end*, the same shall be saved" (verse 13).

Speaking of His Second Coming, Jesus gave another solemn warning in this Olivet Prophecy: "But and if *that evil servant* shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to *smite his fellowservants* and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and

shall cut him asunder . . ." (Mat. 24:48-51)!

Is it possible for a "servant" of God to get careless and begin smiting his own fellowservants? Whether or not this means that such an "evil servant" would *literally* smite his fellowservants, or whether it refers to *him smiting his fellowservants with his tongue* — one of the cruelest kinds of injury — this warning is, nonetheless, very explicit in pointing out the lack of true, deep love which some will exhibit toward their brethren!

Don't Lose Your First Love!

The Church at Ephesus (typifying the Apostolic Church era) made the sad mistake of letting its first spiritual glow grow faint. And this happened to the very people who heard the inspired messages from the lips of Christ's chosen Apostles!

Christ rebuked the Church of Ephesus for only one sin — "*because thou hast left thy first love!*" It grieved our Saviour very much to see those early New Testament Christians let their spiritual love — for God, for the brethren and for God's Work — diminish! He wanted to see them keep up their first love — and increase it!

The same applies to us today!

What did Christ point out as the *solution* to this serious problem? "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and *repent*, and do the first works; or else, I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, *except thou repent*" (Rev. 2:5).

This divine counsel points out the real answer to the problem of all those who have *left their first love!*

Do you *remember* the love, zeal and warmth toward God, His people and His Work, which you had at the time of your conversion? Repent! Get back to the beginning. *Confess* your wretched condition to God! *Ask* Him to mercifully *forgive* you for letting yourself get into this hardened condition; then *pray for divine strength* and guidance so that you may become an *overcomer* — and eventually inherit a place of rulership in the soon-coming, glorious Kingdom of God!

Universal Lack of Natural Affection

What are some of the *reasons* why people become hardened in a cold, unmerciful attitude — totally lacking in compassion?

Today's widespread lack of "natural affection" is a worldwide, cancerous-like spiritual affliction! And the seeds of this lack of love and compassion often take root early in our lives!

Truly, we are living in the perilous times — the latter days — foretold by the apostle Paul: "This know also, that in the last days *perilous* times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves . . . *without NATURAL AFFECTION . . . fierce*" (II Tim. 3:1-3).

This prophecy clearly reveals that in our time men would be *self-lovers*. But they would be woefully lacking in the *natural affection* which a normal person should possess toward his fellowman. They would have extreme hostility

(fierceness—verse 3) toward their neighbours, instead of loving their neighbours as themselves.

Paul also showed that this world's leaders, both *religious* and *secular*, do not like to retain God in their knowledge (Rom. 1:28)! This is certainly true of most of today's churches, colleges and other man-made institutions of learning! Man's *religious organizations* and his *secular institutions of higher learning* are primarily responsible for producing this blighted, bumper crop of hardened minds!

Since this world's leaders don't wish to retain God in their knowledge, God has given them over to "a reprobate mind" (verse 28). Such minds are destitute of the real truth—"Being filled with all *unrighteousness . . . maliciousness . . . murder . . . malignity . . . spiteful . . . without NATURAL AFFECTION, implacable, unmerciful . . .*" (Rom. 1:29, 31). Such hate-filled minds often display open hostility not only toward their fellowmen, but also toward their very Creator (Rom. 8:7)!

There are other important reasons for this universal lack of "natural affection." Stop!—look carefully around you for the real answer.

The seeds of ruthlessness are planted early in life! In today's topsy-turvy world, little tots are brought up playing with "killer toys." They figuratively "mow down" their own brothers, sisters, playmates.

In the typical home, these same children are often subjected to constant *family bickerings* between various members of the family—between husband and wife, parents and children—between members of the family and the outside community.

Then, in addition, today's children are often not shown the right type, or the right amount, of real love and affection by their parents and other members of the family. Such children, reared in this dog-eat-dog society of ours, soon conclude that, if they are to survive, they will have to look out for number one—and let the devil take the hindmost!

But this isn't all! Modern children from infancy on up, are subjected to a continual, insidious barrage of *horror and violence via TV, the cinema and*

other forms of mass entertainment.

Such little children (potential sons of God!) are also the victims of their nation's *propaganda*—which conditions their little pliable minds to *hate* the supposed enemies of their country—the Germans, Japanese, Russians, Chinese, Jews, Arabs.

Worldwide Hate and Violence

Remember, Jesus Christ foretold that these days immediately preceding His return to this earth in supernatural splendour would parallel the days of Noah. And in Noah's time, "*the earth was filled with VIOLENCE*" (Gen. 6:11).

But never before in mankind's 6,000-year history has he been subjected to such unprecedented *hate and violence*: hot and cold wars, race riots, family brawls, rapes, muggings and other types of bodily assaults—not to mention the *vicarious* "enjoyment" of ready-made violence through our entertainment media.

In this heartless world, human beings often have more concern for their *pets* than they have for their fellow human beings. When the Russians first shot a *dog* into space, countless Britons loudly voiced their protests! But when a *man* was later sent up into space, there was hardly a murmur!

A London paper recently reported: "Laddie was Mrs. Lewis' whole life. The dog was kept in the matrimonial bedroom and slept on the bed. . . . The judge [who granted a decree *nisi* to Mr. Lewis] said Mr. Lewis moved a chair to make way for a visitor in front of the television set. The dog was bumped or stepped on and yelped.

"Mrs. Lewis complained that he did not even say he was sorry to the dog and she then attacked and punched her husband in front of the guest."

When will human beings come to their senses?

The 40 million human beings (including over 6,000,000 Jews) killed during the terrible carnage of World War II offer mute testimony of this world's cold, cruel, heartlessness!

You and I, members of God's Church, grew up in this harsh, competitive world. Whether we realize it

or not, we have imbibed all too freely of this world's ideas and attitudes. Without realizing it, we have become tainted with this *worldwide lack of natural compassion!*

But, are we doomed to remain shackled with this world's dog-eat-dog attitude of mind? Certainly not!

God has solemnly promised: "For *sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the [death penalty of the] law, but under grace [pardon]"* (Rom. 6:14).

Our Creator has bound Himself to provide a means of deliverance from every temptation we will ever face: "*God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it*" (I Cor. 10:13).

How to Overcome this Hardness

There are three vital steps we must take if we want to overcome a hard-hearted attitude.

First, we need to *recognize the fact that many in God's Church ARE sadly lacking in natural affection!* This is the first step in overcoming this spiritual disease.

Next, we must *admit our lack*, confess it to God, and ask our loving Creator to help us overcome this universal lack of compassion for others.

Then, we must *do our part* to overcome this character weakness—by drinking in of the mind and character of God through *prayer and diligent Bible study*.

We can learn how to overcome this lack of natural affection by carefully studying God's Word to see how the great men of the Bible (Christ, David, Joseph) thought and acted—how they exhibited great love and compassion toward others. And we can see how these men of God showed real *godly* affection. By diligently *studying*, and carefully *following*, their examples, we *can and will* overcome this *universal spiritual affliction*—this gaping lack of natural compassion!

Christ's Infinite Compassion

Christ's earthly life was a perfect, shining example—revealing His deep

love, mercy and compassion for all men.

He continually taught men to have a forgiving, *merciful* attitude toward their fellowmen. "Blessed are the merciful: for *they* shall obtain mercy" (Mat. 5:7).

God hates cruelty (Prov. 11:17; 12:10)! God disinherited two of Jacob's sons (Gen. 49:5-7) because of their *cruelty* in slaying *all* the men of a certain town — when only *one* man was guilty (Gen. 34:25).

Jesus further admonished us: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, *neither will your Father forgive your trespasses*" (Mat. 6:14, 15).

The person who is unmerciful toward others will be judged harshly by God! "For he [the unmerciful person] shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy" (James 2:13).

Christ not only *taught* mercy and compassion; He also *practised* it! And His ultimate, supreme sacrifice upon the cross was the final capstone — proving His boundless love and compassion for all humanity!

Notice carefully the following examples of the deep compassion which Jesus Christ felt for ordinary, erring people.

On one occasion, Jesus noticed the milling throng, and was deeply touched at the thought of their spiritual wretchedness. "But when He saw the multitudes, *He was moved with compassion* on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd" (Mat. 9:36). Christ then told His disciples that they should pray that God would send more labourers into the harvest (verses 37, 38).

On another occasion, "Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was *moved with compassion* toward them, and *He healed their sick*" (Mat. 14:14).

Christ performed His miracle of multiplying the loaves and fishes — because of His deep feeling for the people: "I have *compassion* on the multitude," said Jesus (Mat. 15:32).

Two blind men, sitting by the roadside near Jericho, cried out to Jesus:

"Have *mercy* on us, O Lord, thou son of David" (Mat. 20:30). Jesus never turned a deaf ear to any cry for mercy or help. This was no exception. "So Jesus had *compassion* on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him" (verse 34).

On still another occasion Christ was deeply moved by the sorrow of a widow who had lost her only son: "And when the Lord saw her, He had *compassion* on her, and said unto her, Weep not . . ." (Luke 7:13). Jesus then raised her dead son to life — out of sheer *pity* for this desolate widow!

One of the most moving examples of Christ's deeply felt emotion was shown through His profound concern over the awful calamity about to befall the inhabitants of Jerusalem — the very ones who would later cry out for His blood!

Jesus stood upon the Mount of Olives, surveying the rather peaceful-looking city of Jerusalem, lying below: "And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and *wept* over it, saying, If thou hadst known even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace. . . . For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies [the Romans] shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children with thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another . . ." (Luke 19:41-44).

And His prophecy was fulfilled with dreadful accuracy, as recorded by Josephus. The Romans razed Jerusalem, butchered and slaughtered many thousands of Jews inhabiting the city. The victors carried the rest of the Jews to the far-flung corners of the Roman Empire — as bond slaves!

And then, after Christ had spent three and one-half years "going about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil," He obediently, willingly gave Himself in the supreme sacrifice on the stake at Golgotha. Jesus, even in His agonizing death throes, was so filled with love, mercy and compassion that He was able to summon up enough pity to exclaim: "*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*" (Luke 23:34)!

Those were the words of the most noble, self-sacrificing and compassionate man ever born of woman! What an example for us to follow! Christ certainly never let *His* love for people "wax cold"!

Joseph's Natural Affection

Another shining example of one who possessed great "natural affection" — was Jacob's son, *Joseph*. His brethren, because of envy, sold him into slavery. Later, after he had become the Prime Minister over all of Egypt, Joseph revealed his love and compassion for his guilt-ridden brethren.

For some time Joseph purposely concealed his true identity from his brethren; nevertheless, he supplied them and their families with plenty of food to nourish them.

Finally, however, Joseph could contain himself no longer. In one mighty burst of love and compassion, he revealed to his startled brethren that he was in fact their long-lost brother, Joseph, whom they had sold into slavery many years previously!

"Then *Joseph could not refrain himself* before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me . . . and *he wept aloud*: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph" (Gen. 45:1-3).

Joseph, revealing great mercy, asked them not to be grieved because of their past sin against him in this matter: "And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and *wept*; and Benjamin *wept* upon his neck. Moreover *he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them*" (verses 14, 15).

Any lack of "natural affection" here? Any false modesty against a man shedding tears here? Certainly not! The Bible does not teach that a real "he-man" should never show his emotions!

Merciful David

David, of all men mentioned in the Bible, was spoken of as being a man after God's own heart (I Sam. 13:14). Does God have human-like emotions? Yes, the Scriptures reveal *God has emotions* — love, hate, sorrow — very simi-

lar to those possessed by a balanced, emotionally well-adjusted person.

David was a robust, whole-hearted, likeable person. He made a number of serious *mistakes*; but when these *sins* were pointed out to him, he bitterly repented. (See II Sam. 12:13 and Psalm 51.) He learned the real meaning of mercy!

David cried out to God: "*Have mercy upon me, O God . . . blot out my transgressions. Wash me* throughly . . . *cleanse me* from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions . . . Against thee, thee only, have I *sinned*, and done this evil . . . *Purge me* with hyssop . . . *wash me*, and I shall be whiter than snow . . . Hide thy face from my sins, and *blot out* all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps. 51:1-10). Yes, David really repented of his adultery, and subsequent murder!

Just what kind of a man was David? He was a man of considerable *emotion*, and he possessed a lot of natural affection.

On many occasions during his life, David showed his loyalty to God and to King Saul, by repeatedly refusing to take Saul's life! But Saul's envy and cruelty drove him to seek David's destruction!

David's depth of natural affection — his great compassion — was perhaps best revealed in his behaviour at the death of his rebellious son, Absalom.

Absalom committed insurrection against his father. By flattery and deceit he "stole the hearts of the men of Israel" away from loyalty to his father, David (II Sam. 15:1-6). Absalom's high treason finally culminated in his proclaiming himself king instead of his father, David.

David and his loyal servants had to flee to keep from being slain. In spite of Absalom's treachery, David loved this son so much that he sternly charged his soldiers not to harm him. This command, however, was not obeyed. Joab "took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak" (II Sam. 18:14).

When David was informed that Absalom had been slain — what was his reaction? "And the king was much

moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and *wept*: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! *would God I had died for thee*, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (II Sam. 18:33.)

David's grief was so bitter that he "covered his face, and *the king cried with a loud voice*, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (II Sam. 19:4.)

Yes, David was a man who had a tremendous capacity for compassion. Many of the Psalms David wrote are filled with deep emotion. They reveal the mind of a merciful, compassionate person!

David could never praise God enough for the limitless mercy and compassion which God had personally granted him.

"The Lord is *merciful* and *gracious*, *slow to anger*, and *plenteous in mercy*. . . *Like as a father pitieth his children*, so the Lord *pitieth them that fear him*. . . But the *mercy* of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him . . . to those that *remember His commandments to do them*" (Ps. 103:8-18).

Learn to Be Compassionate!

Can you, brethren, now see the importance of learning to express more compassion — especially in this age when there is so little natural affection in the world? If we don't naturally have sympathy and compassion for people, then God will give it to us — if we ask Him for it in faith! "*And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, BELIEVING, ye shall receive*," said Jesus Christ (Mat. 21:22).

We must learn to be SOFT-HEARTED. But *this does not mean we should be SOFT-HEADED!*

Two of Christ's disciples, James and John, seem to have been rather uncompassionate, hard-boiled men by nature. Christ "surnamed them BOANERGES, which is, *The sons of thunder*" (Mark 3:17).

Their hell-fire-and-damnation approach to life is revealed in an incident as recorded in Luke 9:51-56. On this occasion, the Gentile Samaritans would not receive Christ and His disciples. This angered James and John, the Sons of Thunder!

"And when . . . James and John saw this, they said, Lord, *wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and CONSUME them*, even as Elias did?" (Luke 9:54.) They were ready to teach these Samaritans a lesson or two!

"But He turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is *not* come to *destroy* men's lives, but to save them" (verses 55, 56).

A careful study of the epistles of the apostle John will lead you to the conclusion that he later became filled with much more *love* and compassion — *after* he was filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. His epistles reveal a great deal of *love*. So, we see that it *is* possible for God's Spirit to give His children added love and compassion.

"Bowels of Mercies"

In this competitive, cut-throat, dog-eat-dog world in which we live, there is very little compassion, mercy or even natural affection. But, even though we may not have been born with a lot of natural affection, *we can receive God's supernatural love, mercy and compassion* — after we repent, are baptized and receive His precious Holy Spirit. This is the vital "*power from on high*" (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8) which changed a cowardly, cringing Peter into a man of boldness (Mat. 26:69-75; Acts 2:14-40).

Some members of the very Body of Christ let themselves get upset because of something which one of their brethren says or does (or *supposedly* says or does)! Instead of ignoring, overlooking and forgiving the insult (or the *supposed* wrong) such people develop a hard, unmerciful attitude.

They let some disappointment, some grievance (or *imagined* grievance) disturb them so much that they finally let a "root of bitterness" spring up in their heart — thereby becoming defiled; and they sometimes contaminate others with their hard-hearted, bitter attitude!

We are commanded: "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any ROOT OF BITTERNESS springing up trouble you, and *thereby many be defiled*" (Heb. 12:15).

Yes, brethren, we need to be very
(Continued on page 15)

Will Your Love Wax Cold?

(Continued from page 10)

careful not to let *bate* fill our hearts. Don't ever let your love and compassion grow cold! We must learn to follow Christ's example: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

For this reason we are commanded: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, BOWELS OF MERCIES, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on CHARITY, which is the BOND OF PERFECTNESS" (Col. 3:12-14).

We are further admonished by James, the brother of Jesus Christ, to be very careful to show pity and compassion: "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" (James 2:15, 16.) James shows that *faith without works is dead!*

And the apostle John was inspired to add: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his BOWELS OF COMPASSION from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (I John 3:17, 18.)

We All Need God's Mercy!

How do you react to the suffering of others? Have you become so calloused or hardened toward suffering that you no longer feel any real sympathy (or empathy) toward those who suffer deprivation or physical pain?

We must all beware lest we become so hardened in sin that we let our love grow cold — lose our first glow of love, warmth and spiritual zeal!

I am sometimes appalled to see the hard, critical attitude of some members of God's Church — toward their own brethren, or even toward people in the world. We should never say or think: "It served him right!" "He had it coming!"

We are commanded not to even so

much as rejoice when our enemy stumbles or falls (Prov. 24:17).

One of the best ways to learn compassion is to develop the habit of putting yourself in the place of the other person who may be suffering deprivation, embarrassment, shame, physical pain. Don't judge too quickly, and *don't ever condemn!* You can't always know the *motives* behind a person's actions.

We are commanded: "*Speak not evil of one another, brethren*" (James 4:11).

How can we make sure that our love doesn't grow cold? How can we learn to have more compassion and natural affection for people? Here's how:

(1) *Realize that we are lacking in affection.*

(2) *Confess our lack to God*, and ask Him for His love, mercy and compassion (imparted by His precious Holy Spirit) to help us *overcome* our lack.

(3) *Diligently search the Scriptures* so we can note and follow the examples of the holy men of God — men who did have a lot of natural affection — men who did show a lot of compassion toward their fellowmen.

We can Overcome!

Through God's help we can overcome any lack of natural affection!

With His help, we can learn to have more compassion for people! We can really *overcome* our character weaknesses! And if we keep close to God in study, prayer and fasting, we *will* overcome!

Brethren you have seen Christ's warning — that "the love of many shall wax cold!" You now know what God requires of you. It is up to you, with the help of God, to overcome any lack of natural affection — any lack of compassion — which you have developed through the years!

Your love will not grow cold — if you willingly let God's Spirit mould within you God's *very character* — His *love and compassion!*

NOTICE!!

NATURAL FARMING PROGRAM REPORT

FARMERS, it appears advisable for you to continue your USUAL METHODS of soil preparation, planting and cultivating during this season.

We are NOT yet able to supply all the information, soil tests, and other services necessary for successful natural farming. Therefore, we advise against gambling with this season's production by introducing farming practices with which you are not *thoroughly* familiar. To begin new procedures in a haphazard manner may jeopardize your crop and cause financial ruin.

We plan to publish all pertinent information as quickly as we can, but it will *not* be available for this growing season. Such a changeover should be started at harvest time anyway — NOT in the spring.

In the meantime, we can supply a list of recommended books farmers can read for themselves to become familiar with many of the natural farming principles, in addition to our recently revised article "The Truth About Chemical Farming."