

# Greatest Gift

#0752

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—December 23, 1982

[The audio of this message includes an entire church service, complete with song service, announcements, etc. We have only transcribed Elder Frazee's sermon from it.]

I have two texts for you this evening to begin with, James the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter and the 17<sup>th</sup> verse, and Isaiah the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter and the 6<sup>th</sup> verse.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" James 1:17.

We're thinking tonight about the greatest gift from the greatest Giver, the gift from above, thank God.

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace"  
Isaiah 9:6.

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh..."  
1 Timothy 3:16.

The theme of the incarnation is the most baffling to human understanding or comprehension. It has enough in it to study all through eternity without exhausting it. It's well that we ponder tonight the greatest gift and the greatest Giver, Jesus, the Son of God, the Son of man.

Is He the Son of man? Oh, yes. There in the manger, we see Him a babe on Mary's breast. Is He the Son of God? Oh, yes. The angels sang it, and we are joining tonight in welcoming our Lord as our guest here this evening as we think about His birth, the greatest gift from the greatest Giver. The Son gave Himself. The Father gave Him to the world.

Is He still ours? Yes. There at the mercy seat at the throne of God, the Son of man lives to make intercession for us. With His divine arm, He lays hold on the throne of God; with His human arm, He extends help to every human being. I think it's wonderful, don't you? His name is rightly called Wonderful, Wonderful.

I'm thinking tonight of another Christmas Day. The great gift from the same Giver was given to the world in Rochester, New York, December 25, 1865. I'm reading a few lines now from the book *Life Sketches of Ellen White*, page 171:

"Christmas evening, as we were humbling ourselves before God and earnestly pleading for deliverance, the light of heaven seemed to shine upon us, and I was wrapped in a vision of God's glory. It seemed that I was borne quickly from earth to heaven, where all was health, beauty, and glory. Strains of music fell upon my ear, melodious, perfect, and entrancing. I was permitted to enjoy this scene a while before my attention was called to this dark world" *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, pages 171–172.

I must give you the setting of this and also the sequel, for this is one of the greatest Christmases in the last 2,000 years, Rochester, New York, 1865. You see, some 20 years or so before that, the Great Disappointment had come as God's people were expecting the Savior on October 22, 1844. Through a failure to understand the meaning of the expression "the sanctuary shall be cleansed," they suffered that great disappointment.

But as the Savior Who gave Himself to men in Bethlehem and on the cross took His disappointed disciples in Jerusalem through the disappointment to understanding, and gave them a world mission, so in 1844 that same dear Savior set about at once making clear to His disciples in this world the meaning of *their* disappointment and giving to them their world mission.

This mission comprehended the complete restoration of humanity to the image of God, which had been lost in the fall. It comprehended a work of healing for body and mind and soul. It took a while for this all to be developed. In fact, it was June 6, 1863, that the great vision on health reform was given Ellen White in the farmhouse of Aaron Hilliard near Otsego, Michigan.

I've been in that humble little farmhouse and pondered that, "Here's where heaven touched earth. Here is where the angel came with the light on healthful living, which has spread around this world and has blessed literally millions of people."

It's just a humble farmhouse, but that manger was in a humble stable in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago, friends. God's beginnings don't always make the headlines in the metropolitan newspapers. But eventually, the influence of anything God does reaches far beyond anything that human beings could plan or execute. And so it was with these visions on health reform.

How was it that that vision came in '63 and '65? You know, human beings usually pray about things that are hurting them. Do you do that? Ah, yes. If your heart is burdened over sin, you pray about that. If your heart is burdened over sickness, you pray about that. If it's financial problems, you pray about them. Don't

you? And that's what God wants us to do. He invites us to come to Him with all our needs, all our problems, all our sorrows.

And He says:

"Come unto me... and I will give you rest" Matthew 11:28.

And in 1863, James White, along with others of the pioneers, was already suffering the result of overwork, poor hygienic practices due to ignorance, lack of the proper diet, and in not understanding what the proper diet was.

And so June 6, 1863, on a Friday evening there in Otsego, Michigan in this farmhouse, they were praying for James White's health and healing. This Friday evening in the vesper service, Sister White moved over as she was praying and laid her hands on her husband's shoulders, continued praying for him.

And dear ones, in answer to that prayer, God gave, not a sudden healing of James White as they had experienced from time to time previously. Instead, He opened up the great subject of health and healing that has blessed millions of people, James White included.

If you want to read that vision, you'll find it in the little book, *Spiritual Gifts*, in the chapter on health. You'll also find it in the book, *How to Live*, the sections of which were written by Ellen White are now in *Selected Messages*, Book 2, the final section on "Disease and its Causes." It's interesting to read those writings written nearly 120 years ago and see how marvelously God opened up the great subject of health in a time when much of this was contrary to accepted health understanding.

But although James and Ellen White took hold of the health reform, they could not undo in a few months the harm that had come through years of the transgression of nature's laws. And so, we find in 1865 in the late summer James White suffering a stroke of paralysis. In answer to prayer, he was partially restored, but still, many of his weaknesses lingered.

And so, they decided to take him to Danville, New York to a health institution called Our Home on the Hillside. This was headed by Dr. Jackson. He had a team of physicians, both men and women working with him. And it was at that time the outstanding natural healing place in this country.

And while they received great blessings there in some lines, yet their minds were disturbed by the lack of emphasis on religion. In fact, there was a rather antagonistic attitude toward religion in the case of people like James White. Dr. Jackson actually thought, and I believe he was perfectly sincere, that James White had worked so hard in religion that it was bad for him, and he needed to forget it for a while.

There are people today that have those ideas, aren't there? But thank the Lord, James and Ellen White had had light from heaven through a vision, in the 1863 vision.

There were other things. There were extremes in diet, and there was a lot of dancing, and card-playing, and other amusements going on to divert the attention of the patients. And so, for these and other reasons James and Ellen White couldn't get the help there that they needed and that God wanted them to have.

And so, in December of 1865, we find them journeying to Rochester, not far from Danville, calling together friends, and brethren and sisters to pray for James White. They kept that up day after day, my dear friends, for ten days, three times a day petitioning the Lord to heal James White.

And that's the setting of what I read from this statement here in *Life Sketches*. I want to read it again:

"Christmas evening, as we were humbling ourselves before God and earnestly pleading for deliverance, the light of heaven seemed to shine upon us, and I was wrapped in a vision of God's glory. It seemed that I was borne quickly from earth to heaven, where all was health, beauty, and glory. Strains of music fell upon my ear, melodious, perfect, and entrancing. I was permitted to enjoy this scene a while before my attention was called to this dark world. Then my attention was called to things taking place upon this earth. I had an encouraging view of the case of my husband" *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, pages 171–172.

Do you know what she was shown that Christmas evening? Let me read it to you in *Volume 1*, page 553. Listen, see if there's anything about it that strikes a cord in your mind:

"In the vision given me December 25, 1865, I saw that the health reform was a great enterprise, closely connected with the present truth, and that Seventh-day Adventists should have a home for the sick where they could be treated for their diseases and also learn how to take care of themselves so as to prevent sickness" *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 1*, page 553.

What do we call a place like that? Sanitarium. When a few years after this Dr. Kellogg began to lead out in the work of this health institution, he started calling it the Battle Creek Sanitarium.

Somebody said to him, "But Dr. Kellogg, that word "sanitarium" is not in the dictionary."

He said, "It *will* be."

Thank God it is, friends.

This is such a wonderful sentence I want to read it again:

“In the vision given me December 25, 1865, I saw that the health reform was a great enterprise, closely connected with the present truth, and that Seventh-day Adventists should have a home for the sick where they could be treated for their diseases and also learn how to take care of themselves so as to prevent sickness” *Ibid*.

You notice the three features of a blueprint sanitarium. It's a home, a home, a home-like place. It's a place where people come to get well and also learn how to keep well. It's a place of treatment and also health education. That, my dear friends, is a Seventh-day Adventist sanitarium.

I'm so glad that God put one of that number of sanitariums in a little place called Wildwood, aren't you?

And incidentally, that was Christmas Day, too. Forty-one years ago tomorrow (it didn't happen to be Sabbath, but it was December 25), four of us met in a little room up here in the building called Evangelid, which has since burned, and put our hearts and our hands together to establish the Wildwood Sanitarium. So, its birthday is Christmas Day, too.

Now, why do Seventh-day Adventists have sanitariums? They have them, my dear friends, because God sent His angel to Otsego, Michigan, June 6, 1863, and gave us a program of health and healing. And He sent that same angel, Gabriel, to Rochester, New York, December 25, 1865, and told us to establish a home-like institution where those principles could be carried out, both in treatment and in health education.

Isn't it wonderful to be working under marching orders from the command center of the universe, dear friends? I thank God for it.

And through the years that followed those visions of Otsego and Rochester, God continued to give through His chosen messenger thousands, literally thousands of details about how to do this work. And they're in these books, *Medical Ministry*, *Counsels on Health*, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, as well as the nine volumes of the testimonies. They're in that priceless volume, *Ministry of Healing*.

And I thank God for every page of these inspired counsels. What a blessing they have been and are being to many. Oh, I thank God for that vision at Rochester, that Christmas gift from the great Giver.

You know, I thought some of you might be interested in some statements that were written by the editor of a great religious periodical published by another denomination. He fell sick, and his physician, who was not a Seventh-day Adventist, refereed him to one of our sanitariums in another state. And this is what this doctor who is not a Seventh-day Adventist said:

“Yes, it is an Adventist sanitarium, but believe me, some of the most accurate reports of diagnoses and treatment

that I have ever received from any source came from that hospital. They are largely vegetarian in habit and diet, and take no chances with meats of any kind. And the longer I live the more I am convinced that they are not far wrong in that particular" [Unknown source.]

So, this non-Adventist, on the recommendation of his non-Adventist doctor, came to this sanitarium, and there he spent a period of time receiving treatment. And he's writing this editorial as a tribute to the sanitarium, telling about how much he appreciated the music, the singing of the nurses of the Gospel hymns. How he appreciated the Christian care of the physicians and the whole program.

And later on, he wrote another editorial, and this is what he said:

"A friend back home who has honored me by reading these observations writes to know if I'm about to turn Seventh-day Adventist. My reply was, 'Not yet. I'm not good enough'" *Ibid.*

Oh friends, God gave us this medical missionary work not only to reach the physical needs of thousands of people but to present the saving truths of the great message which is to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Very humbly but happily, I want to tell you a providence that many of you know about but many of you don't. Some months back, the Columbia Broadcasting System approached the Seventh-day Adventist leaders in Washington, D. C., and said they wanted to do a documentary TV program presenting the work of Seventh-day Adventists, and they wanted the names of two of our health institutions to contact.

The general conference leaders contacted the leaders of our health dependent in the general conference, and as God would have it, they came up with two answers. One institution they recommended that the Columbia Broadcasting System should interview and take the pictures for the TV documentary was the Loma Linda Sanitarium and Hospital, where our great medical college is located. And the other was Wildwood Sanitarium.

Some of you have seen that documentary. And what an interesting thing it is to see one of the largest of our health institutions, and one of the smallest side by side on that picture, first a picture of one, then the other, the program in each, and they're both destined to present the health message to make man whole.

I thank God for the privilege we have of being a little part of a great work. What do you say?

Now, dear friends, before I turn the meeting over to you and I know that many of you would like to say something tonight in praise to God this Christmas Eve for the greatest gift of Jesus and also His continued gift in health and healing to those who look to the mercy seat for light and life.

But before I turn the meeting over to you, I want to say this. I thank God for what health reform has done for millions of people who have never been able to visit a sanitarium through our health journals, such as Dr. Marjorie was telling us about, and in other ways.

I thank God for the *Ministry of Healing* and the other books. And I pray that every one of us may have as a reward of study and practice not merely the six extra years that the statistics show the average Seventh-day Adventist has better over the average worldling, not only in years but in an abundant life, the joy of knowing Jesus as the great Physician and your personal Savior.

I thank God that God led me when I was a young man to Loma Linda to be trained as a medical missionary, a medical evangelist. I've had the joy of devoting my whole life to it. If I had it to do over again, I'd do it all over again, dear friends. It's a most rewarding life. God has given us the joy of seeing hundreds of people find health, literally thousands of them in victory over tobacco, alcohol and the other health-destroying habits, and hundreds of people accepting this glorious message.

And my heart is happy tonight, and I want to lay my tribute down at the feet of Jesus tonight. In my imagination, I join those shepherds at Bethlehem to worship that newborn One Who's from eternity, from the days of everlasting, and yet took His beginning here in this world in that humble place. And in my imagination, I join with that group in Rochester, New York, over a hundred years ago, who sought the Lord and who received that glorious revelation. And I join once again with those that established this place.

May we bow our heads in prayer?

Precious Lord, we thank Thee for Thy love. Thy delights are with the sons of men. Thou dost want Thy children healthy and happy, as well as holy. And we acknowledge Thy divine gift in the gift of Jesus, and the wonderful revelations of His love expressed in practical health and healing. And tonight, we lay our tribute at the feet of our Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Now, I'm sure there are many of you who'd like to say a word of praise to Jesus this Christmas Eve. Just step right forward and come up here, speak where many can hear you better because of the microphone. We can have an army just marching by the microphone.

[Testimony meeting followed.]

“O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, The silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary; And gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep Their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth!  
And praises sing to God the King, And peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human the Spirit The blessings of His heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming; But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive Him still, The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin and enter in—Be born in us today.  
We hear the joyful angels The going to glad tidings tell—  
Oh, come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!  
*Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #135.*

Copyright 2021. All rights reserved.

W. D. Frazee Sermons  
435 Lifestyle Lane, Wildwood, GA 30757  
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755  
[www.WDFsermons.org](http://www.WDFsermons.org)  
[support@WDFsermons.org](mailto:support@WDFsermons.org)