

# Before They Call

by THOMAS A. DAVIS

A RETURNED missionary tells of his acquaintance with an Indian rajah. The rajah, one of the fabulously rich Eastern potentates of whom we occasionally hear, became fond of him. On the least pretext he would present him with some expensive gift. So often did the prince heap favors upon the missionary that it became a source of embarrassment to him.

He could not refuse the gifts, because that would have been a serious breach of etiquette. There was nothing for him to do but accept.

One day the missionary and the rajah were talking near the royal stables, when a groom walked past leading a magnificent horse.

"What do you think of the horse?" the rajah asked.

The missionary admitted that it was a superb animal.

"Give it to him," the rajah ordered the groom.

The Oriental prince used the least excuse, the slightest sign of willingness to receive, the faintest indication of a desire to have, as a motive for giving. So God is ever watching to see if there is the smallest desire in our hearts to receive His blessings. As soon as He detects that desire, He bestows as much of His favor upon us as He, in His wisdom, knows is for our good.

Nor does He wait for us to ask. "And it shall come to pass," He promises, "that before they call, I will answer." Isaiah 5:24.

This was illustrated in the life of Jesus. On one occasion He was preaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath day, when He was interrupted by a madman, who cried out, "Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth?" Mark 1:24.

The poor man's words did not express his real desire. Ellen G. White says, "In the Saviour's presence he was roused to long for freedom; but the demon resisted the power of Christ. When the man tried to appeal to Jesus for help, the evil spirit put words into his mouth, and he cried out in an agony of fear. The demoniac partially comprehended that he was in the presence of One who could set him free; but when he tried to come within reach of that mighty hand, another's will held him; another's words found utterance through him."

But Jesus freed him. His word healed him.

The strong chains of habit may bind us; circumstances may appear to hold us without hope of escape; but Jesus knows the hidden longing of every heart. If, from the soul's secret chamber, we send a silent prayer to Him, He eagerly waits to help and to bestow His gifts of peace and forgiveness.

American  
Signs of the Times  
March 11, 1953.

