

# Just What the Patient Ordered

**Dub McClish**

Suppose someone who had some sort of ailment he could not overcome with home remedies goes to a doctor for help. Then suppose said patient describes the symptoms to the doctor, the doctor does an examination, and diagnoses the illness to be life-threatening if not dealt with immediately. However, just suppose further that when he is ready to prescribe the treatment, the patient then tells the doctor that he will reject any treatment that will be painful, he refuses to undergo surgery, and he will not even consider taking any bad-tasting medicine. Such would obviously be the height of folly and immaturity. Few patients would even consider such childish behavior, and what doctor who would accept such a patient? Everyone recognizes that some diseases and injuries require painful treatment, sometimes including radical and dangerous surgical procedures. Few medicines are found that are pleasant tasting.

As foolish and immature as the hypothetical case above appears, it has become commonplace to see the same attitude expressed concerning spiritual ailments. We now have an element in the church (morally and/or doctrinally diseased) that wants to tell the Great Physician what to prescribe for their spiritual ailments. Some are openly and consciously rebellious toward the Lord's treatments for their spiritual illnesses and pains and have been heard to say carelessly, "I don't care what the Bible says."

Others approach the matter in a more oblique way. They tell the elders what they want to hear and what they don't want to hear from Bible class teachers and the pulpit. They tell the preacher on what subjects he should and should not preach. These spiritually ill folk don't really care what is preached and how far from the Truth it is, as long as it leaves them feeling good (especially about themselves), on "cloud nine," or at worst, comfortable. The cardinal sin of a preacher for some folk nowadays is to say a word of any kind that would possibly stir some latent and long-forgotten feeling of guilt in some supersensitive listener.

The next worst sin of any preacher is to preach in such plain terms that everyone can understand what he is saying and to whom it applies, especially if it involves calling the name of a person or an institution whose ungodly doctrine or practice needs to be exposed. I just wish some of these folk who are so "sweet" they must be spiritual diabetics could hear the Lord or Paul preach! Had they lived in their time they would probably be part of the murderous mobs that demanded their deaths, just as they want to silence every preacher that stands for the Truth today. They seek a physician who will prescribe what they order. One of the great tragedies of our times in the church is that such spiritually ill folk will not have to look very far to find one.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, April 24, 1986, of which I was editor.]

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