

EASTER MESSAGE

By Alden Truesdell

The literature we call our Holy Scripture is a collection of selected Books which are expositions of fundamental and universal facts presented for the convenience and enlightenment of mankind. If, today, we had no Scripture, a similar collection of sacred writings would be produced through man's formulative and reproductive nature. In the new manuscripts there would be characters equivalent to Abraham, the faithful father, Moses, the Law-giver, David, the Psalmist and ruler of a kingdom, Isaiah and the other prophets giving instructions, warnings, and singing praises unto God.

During the persecutions of the Church, the original manuscripts of our present Scripture disappeared; but many confirmations of the originals were presented in the forms of copies, or duplicates; for the Scripture is a permanent structure, more durable than the history of men and of nations.

"The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35); "The Scriptures must be fulfilled" (Mark 14:49); "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (II Timothy 3:16,17); and James 2:8 explains, "If ye fulfill the royal law, according to the Scripture, ... ye do well." Peter wrote, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (II Peter 1:20,21).

Our greatest art is based in the chronicles of Scripture; our greatest sciences confirm its declarations; lawyers study its clear concept of justice; musicians express their greatest triumphs in song and sound; and the common man's heart is moved to unprecedented heights in prayer and meditation when he reads its sacred Word.

Can its literary value and beauty be surpassed? Can we improve upon this Classic in any manner? Consider the presentation of the idea of perfect spiritual man. Could we present it in a form more acceptable than that given in the New Testament?

Any fragment of the drama of the life of Jesus Christ is enough to furnish material for the best literary efforts of our day. Books have been written about isolated incidents in the life of the Man. One such book is titled, The Robe; another, The Nazarene.

For literary and dramatic purposes there is ample material in the events contained in the Easter story to provide best sellers and smash hits on stage and screen in abundance. When we speak of best sellers, we imply vast sums of money; and here we point out that Christianity (or spirituality) is not without sales appeal, for it commands respect in the fields of commerce. The Bible is an example for it is the best selling book ever to be published. One of the greatest money-making pictures in motion picture annals is deMill's King of Kings, depicting the struggles of early Christians.

In the story of the crucifixion and the resurrection, we find Mary of Magdala (a splendid example of the cleansing action of the Christ influence), coming to the sepulchre where Jesus had been laid. She found the stone rolled away and the body gone. This woman, who had been so completely redeemed, was signally honored by receiving the first communication and assignment from the resurrected Saviour of man.

"Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." (John 20:17.)

According to the account of John, while it was yet dark, Mary came to the sepulchre and found it empty. She ran to Peter and John and told them. The men raced to the scene, John outstripping the older man. He looked into the empty tomb, but waited for Peter to take the initiative before entering for a more complete examination. Brusk, vacillating Peter, and the lovable, ingratiating John - the two men dearest to the heart of the Master, confused and shamed by the dreadful catastrophe that had enveloped all of them - sprang into action. But there was nothing to be done; so, after satisfying themselves that the body was gone, they returned to the others who were assembled in a closed room for fear of the Jews.

When the men left the tomb, Mary remained behind. In the upsurge of her soul, she became detached from other interests. She had no place to turn. There was nothing to do but wait for her Lord, living or dead.

Where was He now? He had said something about laying down His life and taking it up again. But such words could not be grasped either by her or by the disciples who had gone home. She wept, and stooping down, looked into the sepulchre. What she saw was a most astonishing spectacle: two angels in white, who said unto her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" and when she told them, she turned back, and saw a man standing.

The quiet appearance of Jesus Christ at this point is the most vital climax to the greatest story of all time. The individual whom Mary saw through her tears was no apparition. This Man looked so much like an ordinary man that Mary thought He was the gardener.

One of the paradoxes of the living Principle is that the Most High is also the most practical. When Mary's attention was distracted from her grief, she saw her Lord and Saviour, and her high hopes and aspirations were instantly fulfilled.

She was told to return to the disciples who, according to the other gospel writers, are reported as doubting her sanity. To prove His reality to them, Jesus appeared that evening while they were at supper. He stood in the midst of them and said, "Peace be unto you."

These men were to be introduced to a new order of living. They were to learn how practical a seemingly fantastic promise can be. Their understanding was to be opened so that they could comprehend the Scriptures of the past, and eventually know the import of this present experience.

The spiritual aspirant of this present day who believes he has done all to follow Christ Jesus will recognize in the experience of each of these friends of Jesus similar developments in his own consciousness as he unfolds in understanding of his divinity.

The grief of Mary while her attention was glued to the sepulchre; her joy at being permitted to recognize her Lord.

The eagerness of John and Peter; but their willingness to be disappointed and their tendency to accept defeat.

The disciples requiring much convincing (even as you and I - the doubt of Thomas, who represents the disbelief in all of us, just as Mary represents our despairing grief), before they were prepared sufficiently to utilize the Holy Ghost which the Lord had breathed on them.

John states that Jesus truly did many signs in the presence of His disciples which are not recorded; but the ones which are reported are for the benefit of those who might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, they might have life through His Name.

Truly, truth is stranger than fiction; for fictional literature in all its fields, with all its liberties of unfettered imagination, has constructed no stories or tales comparable to the dramatic works recorded in the epical accounts of Scripture. Beside the spiritually inspired reporters of the works and Word of God, our leading authors and playwrights are rank amateurs.

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LOVE

"Divine Love is my armor, my ready defense that protects me from evil by dissolving and dissipating all belief in it. None of the plagues that mortal mind has conceived - sickness, poverty, or death - can come nigh my dwelling, for I abide in Love.

"Love not only works for me, but through me. Love shares itself with me. As I radiate Love by thought, word, and deed, I become a channel for its expression in the world."

By Elisabeth Swan

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SPIRITICITY April 1949

PRAISE IS VALUABLE

By Robert Applegate

At the Jamesburg Reform School, there used to be a Superintendent who had a sincere interest in boys. He knew every boy in the School by name, and whenever a visitor came to the grounds, he would call whichever one of them happened to be nearest and introduce him with some praise-worthy remark, such as, "I want you to meet my boy Johnny (or Frank, or whatever his name might be). He is one of the best boys we have here. You should see the work he does on a lathe, etc." Always the Superintendent found something good to say about his boys, and he took pride in showing off his charges. Those boys behaved

themselves while they were in the institution, and when they were released, they did not relapse into their former habits and so be sent to another reformatory, or prison. Instead, they became useful citizens and constructive members of their communities. The sincere praise of someone who had their welfare at heart restored their self-respect and started them off on the right track. Often the boys returned ten or fifteen years later to express their gratitude.

Praise and love and joy are coordinated. Love always evokes praise, and the effect of praise is joy. Joy is a movement in consciousness that enlivens the whole man, and new strength flows forth to vitalize and stimulate the faculties and resources of mind and body. It is as if the sense of being arouses to respond to the infusion of praise which inspires a new grasp of values and self-esteem.

Criticism is praise in reverse. To our dismay, we discover our critical attitudes displaying themselves in us; for we beget the errors we criticize in another and reproduce them on the soft, pliable flesh of body and affairs. As the attention of our mind presses upward, we understand in a new manner how we blend with, or combine with whatever we give our attention to. A union is consummated, and we become the unhappy victims of our blending with negative impressions, which we voice without restraint.

The Truth student soon comes to realize that his thoughts and his words do not affect others so much as they tend to influence and dominate his own consciousness. If his expressions toward others are constructive, they take the form of praise which stimulates the praised into constructive action. On the other hand, destructive assertions tend to discourage and dishearten. But the important point to understand is that those who fall under the grace of praise, or under the dispiriting blanket of criticism are not the true victims. It is he who originates and presses out his own responses who reaps the real crop, though he may for a time be completely unaware of it. The person who bestows sincere praise receives the greater blessing. The person who gives criticism, reaps confusion.

Not only does the action of praise or criticism toward others stimulate advantages or disadvantages into expression for them, and for ourselves, but our thoughts and words directed toward God are potent factors in our general well-being. They indicate without fail what the attention of the mind is fixed upon. If it is glued to negation, our prayers will be petitions of need and want - a continuous crying for things we do not have; if it is centered on what is good, beautiful, and true, our prayers will be peans of praise, glorifying God for His goodness and tender mercies. And what we report to God is fulfilled in ourselves, for we ultimately embody our descriptives to the Most High. It is as if our words fall back upon ourselves, as rains fall back upon the seas.

All praise, whether directed toward man or God, is for the Highest. When we praise anyone, we praise the goodness of him, or the Presence of the Supreme in him. When we praise God, we praise the Good that fills heaven and earth; for God is Omnipresent, and there is nothing to praise but God. As we practice praise, our awareness of God and His Good increases until, from our hearts, we voice only what is commendable in others, ourselves, or in God (though we ought to realize always he is the fulness of Good).

Censure and blame are removed, and to our delight, we ourselves are freed. The affairs of life are loosened, as if from bondage. Our affections increase, and we love in a Godly manner all forms of His creation. We praise God anew for the gifts He so lavishly presses upon us. We praise Him for His mighty acts in

behalf of mankind. We praise Him heartily, for we are come alive in a new way and sense a new relationship with our Heavenly Father. We praise Him for the sheer joy of acknowledging His goodness. As St. Augustine declared, "My soul delights to praise Thee; for Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."

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BECOME AS A CHILD

By Nell Truesdell

The first movements in the development of behavior in the human being are said to occur at the beginning of the fetal period, eight or nine weeks after conception. The development of behavior and the growth of the nervous system bear a close relationship. The brain grows in advance of the remainder of the nervous system, and in the head region of the fetus, the sensory and motor functions appear first. Gradually, these functions pass progressively over the growing nervous structure to the regions farther removed from the head until the whole being becomes animated.

After a child is born, his behavior patterns continue to involve the whole body; e.g., when he cries, "He cries all over"; when he smiles, "he smiles all over." Soon, though, these general activities greatly decrease; as he matures, certain actions are localized. As he begins to learn, he will cry when he wants attention, or smile when someone smiles at him. His behavior responses begin to follow the different types of stimulation around him. Practice, of course, enables him to associate a certain response with a specific stimulating factor.

Years pass, and the developing child learns to react to his environment in pleasant or unpleasant ways. For not all learned reactions result in desirable adjustments. Bad habits and good habits are formed under much the same conditions. It is said that changes in the neuro-musculature determine the permanence of learning. In every situation and in every relation, a person reacts in some manner, and this reaction causes a change in his nervous system - slight, to be sure; but add reaction to reaction and soon a habit is formed.

Learning, for the infant and for the small child, follows a hit-or-miss course. He practices and practices, and eventually develops a certain proficiency in whatever it is he is learning: to speak, walk, jump, ride, write, solve problems in arithmetic, play the piano, and so forth, as the need to learn increases. This is the selective approach to learning; another, is the associative approach where stimulus and response are linked together: as when you or I learn somebody's telephone number, or learn the name of newly introduced person.

The psychological conditions governing learning can be studied by anyone interested in the subject. Numerous books are published, and universities offer special courses of study. How can the student of Truth come to some satisfactory conclusion without specialized study in psychology? Usually a student of Truth is a very mature person who feels he has little time to devote to intellectual pursuits. He wants to devote his time to developing his consciousness of God. Where shall he start? What shall he study?

There is no source like Jesus Christ. Go to Him for knowledge: none can teach like Him. Nicodemus was concerned about learning. He wanted to learn the things of the Spirit; and to him Jesus appeared to have obtained the knowledge he longed for. "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him."

Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say unto you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

How confused Nicodemus was at this reply! Can a man enter into his mother's womb to be born again? No! He has had that experience and it is behind him; now, he must return to the bosom of the Father, to rest and gather strength and growth for a new life-experience. Instead of reaching outward with all his faculties to learn about the world and the people in it so that he might adapt himself congenially to both, he must become still, he must integrate the forces of his being in such a way that he will be complete as a whole, with all processes and parts unified. The Church has pounced on this simple re-turn and made it a matter of religious import - profession of faith, and joining the Church. However, being born anew is an expedient within the reach of all and taxes no one. It is a way so simple that few find it. And yet, it is the only source of freedom and peace in this life.

Choose to enter in to the new birth. You do it by becoming as a little child. This implies that you will be as receptive to the things of the Spirit as you were to the things physical and mental that comprised the body which was born into the world.

You will select and you will exercise spiritual prerogatives; you will associate with the Name and Nature of God, and you will learn that He is One - the only One.

You will voluntarily give your attention to the Most High God above your thinking, your feeling, and your possessions. You will wait on Him, as the fetus in the darkness of the human mold waits on the forces that aid and abet its growth. And while you wait, you will not be asleep, as the fetus is, but you will be awake to catch the faintest whisper of the Heavenly Cadence, that through its rhythmic flow, it will formulate in you the Song of Love that will be your response to Him who molded you, from the beginning, in His own image and likeness.

Though you and I have followed the devious ways of the flesh and have come to the end of that pursuit, we have yet the opportunity to turn and enter at once into right relation with God, our true Father-Mother, Begetter of Being.

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Alphabet of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day of the Month

APRIL 1949

1. He taught them AS one that had AUTHORITY.
2. Shine as the BRIGHTNESS of the firmament.
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4. Know the CERTAINTY of the words of truth.
5. Let us not be weary in well DOING.
6. Be ENCOURAGED in the law of the Lord.
7. Truly our FELLOWSHIP is with the FATHER.
8. Blessed be His GLORIOUS Name forever.
9. Faith cometh by HEARING.
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11. I have walked IN mine INTEGRITY.
12. He is near that JUSTIFIETH ME.
13. Be KINDLY affectioned one to another.
14. I have LEARNED ... that the LORD hath blessed me.
15. MAKE MENTION that His name is exalted.
16. Call upon the Lord while He is NEAR.
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18. OFFER up spiritual sacrifices.
19. The Lord is my PORTION, saith my soul.
20. QUIT ye like men.
21. Be more READY to hear.
22. SEEK the Lord and His STRENGTH.
23. All THINGS come of THEE.
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25. UNITE my heart to fear thy name.
26. God hath VISITED His people.
27. Peace be WITHIN thee.
28. Why reason YE among YOURSELVES?
29. He was ZEALOUS for his God.
30. The Lord is good to all them that trust in Him.

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"When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

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SPIRITICITY is the working Power of the Spiritual Principle,
As electricity is the working power of the electrical principle.