

A STUDY IN THE LIFE AND WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

By, Nell Truesdell

PART II

The First Disciples (The Historical View)

The Gospel of John does not report the story of Jesus' successful overcoming of the temptations in the wilderness as do the Books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. However, John does relate that the instant the Baptist saw Jesus, he identified Him as the Lamb of God. In the picturesque language of a man who lived close to God in the wide open spaces of a rough country, John the Baptist declared, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." When Jesus presented Himself for baptism at the place on the bank of the Jordan where the Prophet was exhorting men to repent, God opened John's understanding, so that at a later date, he reported, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. . . . And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."

When Jesus returned to the Jordan River, approximately six weeks after His baptism, John the Baptist caught sight of Him; and "he stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!" This incident occurred during the afternoon of the day of Jesus' emergence from the wilderness. He had probably left the wilderness early that morning and had traversed the distance of about fifteen miles to the Jordan at a rapid pace.

When John the Baptist's two disciples heard him speak of Jesus as the Lamb of God, they at once turned from him to follow Jesus. One of the two that heard John speak was Andrew; the other was John, the writer of the Gospel. About the tenth hour, or four o'clock, when Jesus headed for the place where He intended to spend the night, these two followed Him. When He, perceiving them, turned to ask "What seek ye?" they blurted out that they wanted to see where He lived; and receiving the invitation, "Come and see," they went along to spend the night with their new Master.

At the first opportunity the next morning, Andrew sought out his brother Simon and excitedly told him, "We have found the Messiah." He brought Simon to Jesus, who, when He saw him, said, "Thou art Simon the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas." Without question or debate, Peter instantly became Jesus' disciple. We may assume that John likewise sought out his brother James, although, in his Gospel, John never mentions himself; nor does he ever refer to his brother or to his mother.

Since John the Baptist's influence was strong in Judaea and he did not need an assistant in his work, Jesus, with His four new disciples who also lived in Galilee, decided to move homeward. As they walked, Jesus caught sight of Philip. The instant their eyes met, Jesus, knowing this was His man, said to him, "Follow me." Without faltering, Philip accepted his new Leader; and his first act was immediately to seek out his best friend, Nathanael to tell him, "We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth." Nathanael was doubtful, but he went with Philip to take a look at Jesus. As he approached, instantly Jesus saw through him and said, "behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Without a moment's hesitation, Nathanael, recognizing his Master, replied, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." Jesus must have smiled at this highly colored

statement; for He answered, "Hereafter, ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

The group, augmented by Philip and Nathanael, continued northward, skirted Mount Tabor, and turned northeast toward the Sea of Galilee. Philip, Andrew, John, James, and possibly Nathanael lived in the town of Bethsaida. Simon Peter lived with his wife and her mother at Capernaum, five miles away. Here he left Jesus who made His way toward Nazareth, twenty miles distant, where, after an absence of between seven and eight weeks, He could be at home with His mother, sisters, and brothers. His men, too, could have time to break the news to their several families that they intended to follow Jesus of Nazareth in whatever work their Master was to do. Jesus probably took this opportunity to talk over His plans with His mother, who, however, had plans for Him: He was to accompany her to Cana where one of His brothers was going to be married. To forestall any objection, she wisely extended an invitation to His six new disciples. Accordingly, three days later, Jesus, instead of being about His Father's business, found Himself at a wedding in Cana, five miles from Nazareth. The incident recalls the time when Jesus was twelve years old: He wanted then to be about His Father's business but had that aspiration nipped by His mother's anxiety.

A wedding feast in those days lasted from three to seven days. Some of the merrymakers ate, drank, and slept at the house where the marriage took place. Everybody was jovial, and even beggars and strangers shared in the generosity of the bridegroom, who was always responsible for the refreshments at his wedding feast. We shall not attempt to determine whether or not Jesus turned water into wine at this wedding. We know that, in the wilderness, He refused to turn stones into bread to satisfy His own hunger. Instead of arguing this point, we shall understand that Jesus was not above joining in festivities that were of immediate concern to the people He loved most, especially His mother. It is quite possible that He met the situation with kind consideration for the success and happiness of His kinfolks and friends. This we know, a shortage of beverages was solved and thirst was quenched.

From Cana, Jesus, with his mother, brothers, and disciples went to Capernaum, where they stayed a week or two. During this interval Jesus attached His disciples more closely to Himself while He waited the signal from God for His next step. He had several decisions to make, one of which was to add to the number of His disciples.

An Interpretation

We found in our study of Jesus' temptations in the wilderness (See SPIRITICITY, February, 1951.) that the experience of baptism by water opened the way for His baptism by Spirit, which took the form of an unmitigated testing that cleansed Him of every human desire for power in any of its external patterns. When He returned to the place where John the Baptist was still working, He realized that He must go to work on His own instead of attaching Himself to the Prophet. Two of John the Baptist's adherents went over to Jesus, and four additional men were added to His company in short order.

Every movement and each of the men who followed Jesus symbolize activities and attributes that unfold in the consciousness of all persons who take steps to turn from the things of the world to the things of God. A phenomenon that cannot be denied is that all persons who choose to make God the most important factor in their lives unfold in spiritual consciousness in exactly the same way. Outer details appear to make the experience different for each one, but the

fundamental procedure can be observed and traced without fail. This unfoldment never takes place in the bulk of people who call themselves religious. They have not yet awakened to the touch of God upon them; and, blissfully ignorant of Him and of His Way with them, they go through the motions of religious worship, unaware of anything but themselves and their interrelations with others just like themselves.

The movements that occur in the newly awakened consciousness are the severest tests of sincerity. They embrace the relinquishing of all impediments to spiritual development, beginning with the intimate family relationship, and continuing on in consciousness through the natural inclination and craving to exercise personal power on all planes, from the satisfaction of sensual desires to the exertion of rulership over others. This severe testing takes place in the wilderness; that is, in that place in consciousness where no observable relief is offered to lessen stark choice. When the choice settles on God before all else that can be imagined or craved, the called-out one emerges immediately and returns to his old haunts. However, without his doing anything about it, attributes never before realized are aroused and are attracted to the Ideal. The processes involved in this development are symbolized by the incidents of Jesus' baptism and His testing in the wilderness. The attributes involved are symbolized by the disciples who attached themselves to Him.

On His way homeward from the wilderness experience, Jesus attracted Andrew, who represents Strength; John, who represents Love; Peter, who Represents Faith; James, who represents Wisdom; Philip, who represents Power; and Nathanael, who represents Imagination. These men symbolize Spiritual Ideas (or attributes), that are to be allowed to come into full bloom. Progress in the human consciousness is slow and often tedious. However, as the Master ministers unto and instructs them, they expand, suffuse, and fortify His spiritual structure, and yield their blessings to Him and to each other.

Jesus Christ represents the Image of God in man, and the disciples represent the Likeness of God in man. In the beginning, God created man in His Image and Likeness. The Image of God in man is God's immaculate Ideal of Himself (not man's ideal of either himself or God). The natural man has lost sight of this inherent immortal Individual, the very I-m-age of God, which is his indestructible, true Self. This Ideal is the eternal Is-ness that endows man with Being and enables him to exist in the world.

Jesus Christ, the dawning realization of this Ideal in all men, is heralded by John the Baptist, who represents that vital phase of spiritual activity in the natural man that is described as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord"; and who admonishes, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Thus the Prophet prepares the consciousness for the full impact of the realization of Sonship. Most people never get beyond hearing the call "Repent!" Because they do not, or cannot, obey this counsel, they never prepare themselves to press consciously into the experience of the water baptism and the Spirit baptism, which cleanse and absolve from human limitations and uncover divine prerogatives at hand which comprise the Likeness of God.,

The Likeness of God is the Substance of God; the Substance of God can be said to embrace twelve major Ideas of great scope and range. These are referred to as attributes and are symbolized by the twelve disciples of Jesus. The Substance of God (aggregate of Divine Ideas) is what all creation is composed of. This Substance is the imperishable stuff that makes God's creation substantial. Its highest form of embodiment is man. Man has drifted so far

from his Source that he finds it difficult to turn and retrace his steps toward God. Jesus Christ came into the world to show man that he is the Son of the Most High God, and not the son of the flesh or the will of man. Two thousand years after Jesus' day, man still lags in his attempt to follow the Master who leads direct to the Father's house.

The first six disciples of Jesus symbolize the Spiritual Ideas that are first to quicken in the consciousness of a man who begins to look toward his innate Sonship in the midst of himself - he comes to himself, arises, and begins the trip back to his Father's house.
(To be continued)

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SPIRITICITY, April 1951

PUT ON THE NEW MAN

By, Robert Applegate

Spring is a time of newness. As new buds, blossoms, and leaves appear on every tree and shrub, an air of freshness, youthfulness, and vitality pervades the atmosphere. All persons and creatures respond to this newness, feeling a new vigor, a new hope, strength, and optimism. Spring, therefore, is always welcomed with joy.

A note of newness runs throughout Scripture and is especially prominent in the New Testament, which proclaims that a spiritual springtime for the whole universe was ushered in by the advent of Jesus Christ. The very name New Testament conveys the thought of newness. It indicates, in fact, that the "new covenant" promised by Jeremiah was established by Jesus, who, as Paul declared, "Hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth light." In the Greek that Paul wrote, the same word means covenant and testament; and Paul wished to indicate that a new covenant, or a new relationship between God and man, had been established, which superseded the old relationship that could ultimate only in death. The old relationship was one of external obedience to certain fixed ordinances; the new is that wherein "the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth."

Jesus Christ ushered in an entirely new age, a new dispensation. Of all the followers of the Master, John and Paul recognized most clearly that Jesus had brought about something completely original, something never before experienced on earth. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." And John, on the Island of Patmos, perceived the new state of consciousness that possesses all those who seek the kingdom within: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea (mental agitation) . . . And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men; and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." Thus John and Paul described their realization that the practice of Christianity brings about a new

state of consciousness, which produces new men, new circumstances, and a new relationship with God that ultimates, not in death, but in eternal life, a life that is here, now.

In the realm of nature, mankind welcomes the newness of Spring, but the spiritual new birth is shied away from because of fear of the unknown. However, those men only who have relinquished the old and welcomed the new in any line of endeavor have benefitted their fellow men and, in so doing, have experienced the joy of discovery and the satisfaction of service. Those men who have made new inventions, pioneered new lands, opened new business have provided mankind with innumerable blessings and have found a measure of inner peace and happiness, unexperienced by those who have clung timidly to accustomed ways. Galileo perhaps more than any other man in the last thousand years, opened men's eyes and minds; for, when he turned his telescope on the night skies, he inaugurated a new way of thought, which is now called the scientific method: that of testing one's beliefs by actual experiment, rather than accepting them on authority or following the dubious path of logic. We can only imagine the joy of revelation that Galileo experienced - or Columbus, or Pasteur, or Edison. These men made new discoveries in the physical and mental realms because they dared to abandon traditional ways of thought and action. Today we honor these pioneers, and we respect their courage and originality.

If the world has benefitted from those who have made new revelations in spheres of physical and mental action, how much more does it owe to those who have practiced the new way of life that Jesus Christ introduced? And how much greater satisfaction have those spiritual pioneers experienced, who have been willing to relinquish all traditional beliefs and customs in order to follow the Master? Christianity proclaims a new way of life, which is a way of continual discovery and continual renewal. There is no stopping place this side of perfection, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of Christ." Christianity offers to the consciousness that will accept it a spiritual springtime, to which there is no end. We should welcome this new way, just as we welcome the coming of Spring; we should no more fear the relinquishing of old ways than we fear the departure of winter.

Spring, with its resurgence of life and vitality is a time for rededication to high ideals, for renewing of faith in God and love for Him. As the new energies are redirected back to their Source, we are strengthened in the inner man until we become new creatures. We gladly obey the commandment: "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind. . . . Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

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NEW TRENDS

By, Alden Truesdell

In public print and popular pulp it is not unusual now-a-days to find well paying and well paid articles regarding the efficiency of prayer and the reality of God. These presentations are much in the nature of new discoveries, as though the efficacy of God had only been awaiting competent chroniclers. Much is made in these accounts of certain healings and definite prosperings. New

states of welfare and well-being are postulated, and the entire subject is being treated much as the realm of materia medica would consider a new discovery such as penicillin. It seems to be becoming the habit and the fashion in certain social areas also to declare and turn to the Presence of a hitherto lightly regarded Potential. This tendency is to be commended; its practice should be encouraged.

It is to be hoped that those who are turning may be directed in the straightest route to That which they seek and that, in their seeking, they may make contact with the God who is willing and able to make their seeking yield the greatest benefit. Man seeks something higher than himself. Man senses a higher, a better way of life. The good way of life for which he yearns is within him. "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."

God in the midst of you is mighty to heal, to bless, to prosper. If you go within yourself, you will find God. If you find God, you will acquaint yourself with Him. Acquainting yourself with Him, you will find Him so generous and agreeable, so willing to help in every way that He seems almost eager. And, as to His ability, you soon learn that things that had seemed impossible before seem to be the normal thing when God is considered and invoked. With God all things are possible. You find, therefore, that you have indeed a capable and willing ally in God.

Those of you who have been reading of these seemingly miraculous results from prayer, please know that this is no new God, no new school of thought, that is responsible for this splendid exhibit; but that it is something the wise of all ages have subscribed to; and the results of such subscription have been ever amazing in the sight of men.

There have always been seekers of Truth like yourself and finders of Truth, as you will be. These have been known down through the ages as the illumined minority. You will be one of these, if you continue on in the way. There have always been those who devoted their lives to the relaying of this instruction and the practice of this Principle. When you are ready, you will find such a one to assist you along the way; and, when you are ready, the Teacher will come from within you, "in such an hour as ye think not."

Alphabet Of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day Of The Month.

APRIL 1951

2. He which hath ANOINTED us is God.
3. In the BEGINNING was the Word.
4. He CARETH for you.
5. The DAYSPRING from on High hath visited us.
6. Thou wilt ESTABLISH the heart of the humble.
7. Our FELLOWSHIP is with the FATHER.
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9. GLADNESS shall be found.
10. Let the peace of God rule in your HEART.
11. I will INSTRUCT thee.
12. What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do JUSTLY?
13. His KINGDOM is an everlasting KINGDOM.
14. Ye shall come into a LARGE LAND.
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16. To the only wise God be glory and MAJESTY.
17. One thing is NEEDFUL.
18. PEACE be unto you.
19. We enjoy great QUIETNESS.
20. He that REAPETH RECEIVETH wages.
21. Let your SPEECH be SEASONED with SALT.
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23. TAKE no THOUGHT.
24. UNDERNEATH are the everlasting arms.
25. Through God we shall do VALIANTLY.
26. Thou WILT WALK in My WAY.
27. My YOKE is easy.
28. It is good to be ZEALOUSLY affected.
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30. The Father loveth the Son.
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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.