

## MAN'S SEARCH FOR GOD

By Nell Truesdell

## PART III

Man, in his search for God, has an infallible guide in the form of our Holy Scripture. By it, he may avoid the numberless pitfalls of human existence and arrive safely at a spiritual goal, more readily available and more rewarding than any he can imagine in the world. The way to that goal is plain; the chief guide to that goal is Jesus Christ; and the full reward of obtaining that goal is conscious Sonship.

The Old and New Testaments of our Scripture set forth the history of Israel; and the entire narrative is the story of man. It emphasizes accurately and with exhaustive details the fact that, when man is conscious of the Presence of God, and gives his attention to God in every aspect of his life, God's care shields him from human mistakes and the perversity of enemies who would use him to their purposes. When man's attention strays to the things of the world, and he begins to strive for what appears to have value among men, he loses touch with God and with spiritual verities. As soon as this happens, he lays himself open to the attack of outlying enemies, and, because he is unprotected (by his own lack of awareness of God), he is easily overtaken and conquered.

Man is so constituted that he can never stray from God and hope to defend, sustain, or govern himself successfully. Man is absolutely dependent upon God in every phase of his existence. However, in his utter helplessness lies his great strength. For God gave man dominion over all the lesser creations in the earth, so that the fear of man lies, to this day, over the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms. But God did not give man dominion over man. Men are brothers, equals in the sight of the Creator. Man's absolute dependence on God is no cause for alarm; for man never was, is not now, nor will he ever be an automaton. He has free will, and he can choose to be and to do whatever he likes. The pitfall is that man overreaches his sphere of dominion; he undertakes, not to rule himself, but to rule his brothers. In this assumption of power, he destroys himself and pulls all who permit themselves to be subject to him into destruction.

In every age, a few persons realize that there is more to life and living than following blindly after material things in the world, and attempting to satisfy the demands of the senses. These few are ready to turn about and give their wholehearted attention to God. They search for the things of Spirit in the realm of Spirit, not in the realm of the world. To gain entry into the realm of Spirit, they study God's Word as it is revealed to their waiting hearts, and they are fearless in announcing that Word; for it is powerful and it is right. Jeremiah, inspired Prophet of Israel, was one of these men. He wrote to the captives in Babylon and told them to seek the peace of that city: "for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace." He admonished them not to hearken unto the false prophets among them, and not to trust in dreams. Quickened by an inner perception of the Presence of the Lord, Jeremiah further wrote, "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil. . . . And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord; and I will turn away your captivity."

Jerusalem, the sacred city to all Israel, symbolizes the spiritual center in the consciousness of man. This is the seat of peace, the peace that lies beyond the comprehension of the physical-mental-man (the natural man). While the Israelites (who symbolize all the thoughts that go to make up the spiritual consciousness) are held captive in Babylon, Jeremiah urges his people to be at

peace. Babylon symbolizes a confused, chaotic condition so strong that it subjugates the entire consciousness to the foreign dominion of materiality and sensuality. The god of Babylon is gold; and its seat of rule is in the realm of sense. As the Israelites fell captive to the Babylonians, so does the spiritual nature of man fall captive to sensuality and materiality when, by his attention, he places his values in the realm of things and of sense. In this state, man should attain peace as quickly as possible, and wait on God for deliverance from the enslaving power of the senses and the deceit of gold.

When we take a long view of the history of Israel and study the events that culminated in the Babylonian captivity, we see the true reason underlying the situation. Solomon, in the first years of his reign, was dedicated to the Lord. However, lust for gold and for power caused him to forget God. He turned dictator and subjugated his people to enforced slave labor in his effort to make his kingdom appear to be the wealthiest in the world. Consequently, all the vices associated with slavery came to the fore throughout the nation until the whole was so corrupt that its weakness was no secret to covetous enemies. From the time of Solomon's death until the captivity, Israel suffered the humiliation and defeat that hounds the steps of any nation (or man) who turns the attention away from God to worship the world and its ways. God is jealous of His highest creation, man, and will not tolerate a division of attention between Him and something else; for God is All-in-all, and man outpictures God, in the realm of form.

We must turn to the accounts of Creation to understand man's true relation to God. Of the two accounts of Creation in Genesis, the priestly narrative is the more scientific. In it we find: "God said, Let us make man in our Image, after our Likeness;

. . . So God created man in His own Image, in the Image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, . . . and God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good."

To understand the meaning of the Image and Likeness of God, in which man is created, is to expand the awareness to such a point that human belief in separation, not only from God, but from mankind also, is overcome; and the limitations of man's concept of God and of his fellows is bridged over in the understanding of the inseparable oneness of both.

The Image of God in man is His Identity. The Name of that Identity is I AM. That is the Name of God, and it is the Name of Man, the Son of God. The Name, I AM, is impersonal, it is immortal, and it is immaculate. It belongs to everybody on earth regardless of his place of birth or his position in race or family. This Identity of God in man is the I-am-age that remains One in all men, though they show forth varying aspects of that Image. I AM identifies God and Man as One, forever together, inseparable, and indivisible. No man exists without that Identity. Jesus Christ understood the mystic relation between God and Man and declared, "I and my Father are one." On one occasion, He said to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. . . . Believe me that I AM in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."

The Likeness of God in man is the sum total of God's attributes. Man names a few of the characteristics of God as Love, Life, Intelligence, Power, Substance, and so forth. These qualities of God, which in their purity are spiritual, are the stuff out of which God creates Man. They compose the Nature of God that inheres in the natural, manifest man who is formulated by and projected into the world through processes involved in generation. The natural man of the world is he who has forgotten his Sonship; but forgetfulness does not eradicate the True Man who is the essence of man's Being. Jesus Christ interpreted the Nature of God in man as good: "There is none good but One, that is God."

Man, created in the Image and Likeness of his Maker, bears His Name and is endowed with His Nature. The Man of God is a spiritual Being. Man is not a physical-mental being; he is the offspring of the heavenly Father, and, in truth, is the Son of God. "Call no man your father upon the earth: for One is your Father, which is in heaven." This is the witness of Jesus Christ.

The Original Man is the birthright of all men. It is the factor in all mankind that is pure spiritual Being. This is the Man God knows as His Son. It is in the Son that the Image and Likeness of God is secreted and kept intact. This Man, the Holy One of God, knows his Maker and remains forever one with his Maker. This is the Man that is eternal. This is the Man through whom all mankind are to return unto God. On earth, Jesus Christ is the demonstration of this Man (Son); and He declared, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." It is to this Man within the consciousness of each person that each one must make the deliberate choice to return to, and, after making that choice, resolve to follow the necessary course involved in its fulfillment; for, the activity involved comprises the new birth which Jesus Christ told Nicodemus must be consummated before a man can see the Kingdom of God. "I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. . . . Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." Every man has limitless opportunity to be born anew. The determination to make and to adhere to the choice rests with the individual.

All men are created equal, but not all men are born equal. Some are born slaves, others are born free. Each person born into the world demonstrates that he is following the pattern of generation through the flesh, and each person is born into the world at the level that is best suited to his needs. Beginning with conception, each experience in the life of every man is a step in development. A person may move steadily forward and upward in his unfoldment (through the wilderness of human consciousness), toward entry into his spiritual birthright as the offspring of God. If this is true, why, then, is man apparently forced to live out his life in a world set to thwart this attainment? The answer lies, in part, with his response to the influence of parents, relatives, systems of religious and educational training, and the eventual occupation of making a living in a world whose ruler is gold. From the day of birth, the attention of the helpless infant is forced outward by the pressure of outer influences, until, in time, he is so steeped in the things of the world and its way with him, that he is sidetracked for a long time - at least, until he is able to arouse sufficiently to come to himself and choose to set his feet in the direct path toward the Father's house.

To the outer judgment, subjugation to what appears to be a merciless fate for all men alike seems to comprise the cruelest of penalties for birth in the world, and far from what might be expected from a God who is held to be essentially good. Nevertheless, the fact remains that each person coming into the world bears the Name and Nature of Deity and is foreordained to Sonship. God is not to be held accountable for the devious paths anyone is taught to follow in the world. This is one of the beautiful lessons Jesus Christ proved as He lived out, among ordinary human beings, His life that began with birth into a lowly order of human experience. He was taught the way of life familiar to all boys and girls around Him, was steeped in Jewish Law, and schooled in the Prophets so that He obeyed without sidestepping in any degree, the demands of His religion. Too, He met as well all the moral obligations of family and state that fell to His lot. (We know this from the stories He told to illustrate points in the Principle of Being.) He proved for all mankind that the level of entrance into life in the world offers no real barrier to the influx of Spirit, once a person grasps the fact that he is essentially spiritual and not mortal.

Jesus Christ offers mankind the safest guidance into full spiritual Sonship. No other teacher can give the assistance that this Master offers to anyone freely who is willing to turn, become as a little child, and receive the

Kingdom of God. "Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein," He stated. We must remember always that the Master demonstrated Sonship in full sight of mortal man: He did not just tell about it; He revealed it. His was no ethereal existence, but a flesh and blood experience, the demands of which were transcended by His recognition and acceptance of His oneness with God.

The family does not teach this truth to its children; religion does not teach it; the state does not teach it. What does teach it? The Spirit in man teaches it. Nothing is hid from the man who wants to know. The Scripture is an open Book to all who crave enlightenment. As no man can blame the prevailing systems of education for his evident lack of knowledge, neither can he blame systems of religion for his inertia concerning the things of the Spirit. Each man is in the spot prepared for him by his progenitors, and accepted by him, by his own consent. If he is dissatisfied, he is free to make a change. The snare lies in his attempt to make the change for the better on the same level that has already proved unsatisfactory. He must look higher, and he must trust in Something more than his own resolve to make the change.

Study of the teachings of Jesus Christ reveals a definite pattern of instruction that can be easily learned and followed from beginning to end and that will lead any man quickly into the Kingdom of God. However, the student must set himself seriously to the task of turning his attention from the world and its way with him, and aim his vision steadfastly toward God and His Way. When he does, he will receive immediate assistance from Jesus Christ who already knows the Way, and who is the only One prepared and able to give reliable and necessary help. No man can make his way back to God alone, and the sooner he accepts the help at hand, the quicker will he make his attainment. For it is certain that the only achievement any man can hope to make in this life is Sonship.

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GENTLENESS

By Alden Truesdell

In a business organization there was a man holding an executive position which was the envy of every ambitious employee. His desk was in the center of a large office, so that his activities were an open book to all who cared to observe. This man was purely an executive. He never had any work accumulated on top of his desk. Usually someone sat at his elbow, apparently visiting pleasantly; though frequently he had occasion to speak a word of advice, or give a gentle rebuke. Men from other departments came to him, men from other places of business; but always the visits had a pleasant tone and quality. Sometimes this man and his visitors would tell jokes and stories. Always there was pleasantness and freedom from hectic labor.

Here, in the sight of many other office workers was the ideal job, a job worth striving to obtain. And, in the course of time, the executive moved on to a better position, so that his place was left open. The man who received this coveted position tried to look as nonchalant and to have as good a time as his predecessor, but to his chagrin he found friction and responsibility. He found work piling up on his desk, and he found that he had little time for visiting. He worked until he was a nervous wreck and had to be replaced by another man - and another and another. No one held that position for long, and yet each man

who tried to fill it had been trained as an executive and had many executive qualities. Each one, however was deficient in one essential quality, that of gentleness, a rare spiritual gift.

The ability to deal with others on terms of equality and still to command respect and loyalty is something like the ability to be in the world but not of it. Such a gift is so rare that those who have it are outstanding and are noted, not so much by their presence as by their absence. Will Rogers had this gift, the gift of pleasing gentleness. He said that he never met a man that he didn't like, and consequently he was welcomed wherever he went. Gentleness makes for greatness. All great men have been marked with this distinguishing quality, for truly great men are always essentially spiritual.

Man in his true spiritual estate is a gentle creature, a gentleman. There is a cultural veneer which makes one appear to be of the gentry. The race highly values good breeding, good manners, and the gentle qualities of good behavior, which are the mark of the gentleman and the gentlewoman. Some of this, however, is camouflage, applied from without through copying those who have been outstanding. But the true mark of the gentleman must be invoked from the same source as all spiritual gifts. True culture must be injected from above. If a man is to ring true under all circumstances, there must be an infusion of that culture that is of Christ. When a person is raised to the status of lordship in the court of the King of kings, the title of Lord or Lady is conferred for life, which is eternity.

Gentleness is something to be obtained, something for which to aspire. Gentleness is not a sissy or sentimental quality. It is an efficacious working and living element. It is a warrior so formidable that armed might falls back in consternation before it. The Roman soldiers sought to take Jesus by force; but, when He confronted them, they fell on their faces before Him. He had to deliver Himself into their hands, for they were unable to take Him. Even the hardened Pilate was impressed by this Gentleman and exclaimed, "Behold the man!"

Jesus was so supremely nonresistant that even death could not overcome Him, and He arose out of the tomb, the gentle Saviour of all who turn unto Him. Thus always gentleness confers nobility, deliverance, and salvation.

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A COMMENT

By Robert Applegate

The resurrection of the dead is an eternal fact; it is not something that happened two thousand years ago, or will happen at a cataclysmic end of the world. Jesus Christ overcame death, not only for Himself, but for all mankind. This was clearly perceived by Paul, who warned his young friend Timothy to shun those who "concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already." In fact, for Paul the resurrection was the main fact of life, the only thing worth striving to attain and the only basis for hope. To the Corinthians he wrote: "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam (the sense-man) all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." The resurrection is an endless and timeless

reality, which was fully demonstrated by Jesus Christ, so that now every man may attain unto it if he desires to strongly enough.

The way to attain the resurrection is to desire it more strongly than anything else, to desire it even to the exclusion of all else. Paul declared, "I count all things but loss, . . . and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ; . . . that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, . . . if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." The resurrection is a free gift to anyone who seeks it with his whole heart.

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Alphabet of  
DAILY MEDITATIONS  
For Every Week Day Of The Month

FEBRUARY 1952

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.  
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4. Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.
5. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
6. Honour thy father and thy mother.
7. Thou shalt not kill.
8. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
9. Thou shalt not steal.  
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11. Thou shalt not bear false witness.
12. Thou shalt not covet.
13. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.
14. Love thy neighbor as thyself.
15. When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any.
16. I and my Father are one.  
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18. He that loveth Me shall be loved of my Father.
19. Have faith in God.
20. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
21. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
22. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
23. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness:  
for they shall be filled.  
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25. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
26. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
27. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called  
the children of God.
28. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake.
29. Blessed are ye, for great is your reward in heaven.  
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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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As electricity is the working power of the electrical principle,  
SPIRITICITY is the working power of the Spiritual Principle.

NOTE: Daily lessons on these meditations were developed by Nell Truesdell, and published in the February issue of ASPIRE.