

NO ESCAPE

By A. J. Truesdell

I can get away from foe and friend,
And hide in introspect;
I can leave the game before its end
And retire in self respect.

I can come and go much as I please;
I can race, or, I can plod;
But where'er I go to seek release
I cannot hide from God.

The poet moans of Heaven's Hounds
Which track with instinct rare
The man who runs in open grounds
Or hibernates in lair.

The psalmist takes the wings of dawn,
Or makes his bed in Hell;
But, Omnipresent eyes look on
His whereabouts to tell.

LONGSUFFERING

By Nell Truesdell

When the word longsuffering comes to our attention, the element of time enters our thoughts. A state of continued and successive endurance is brought to mind; the ability to withstand provocation and injuries for a long period without redress; the patience to bear pain or sorrow without giving way. These are some of the ingredients of longsuffering.

On the other hand, there is a constructive angle wherein we know how to be good tempered in trial because our vision is so high that what seems to be negative disturbs us not at all. We are so conscious of the Presence of God that what appears to be evil does not upset our composure. We can look with tolerance upon all that attempts to agitate us, with no trace of suspicion or doubt.

Two men in our Scripture are outstanding examples of longsuffering or patience. The first is Job; the second, Jesus Christ.

Job's first trials touched his outward possessions. In the allegory, Satan was given the opportunity to test Job when he and the Lord had a conversation about him. Satan reminded the Lord that Job worshipped him because he was thoroughly protected from evil, and every work of his hands was prospered; but, Satan suggested, if the Lord would put forth his hand to touch all that Job had, Job would curse God to his face.

The Lord took this "dare", and turned Job over to Satan with the reserve that he was not to touch Job's body to hurt him in any way. So Satan went to work on Job and did a thorough job of snatching from him every one of his possessions. His oxen and asses were stolen by the Sabbeans, and his servants

slain. A fire from heaven burned up his sheep and killed his shepherds. Three band of Caldeans fell upon his camels, carried them away, and slew the tenders with the edge of the sword. Even Job's sons and daughters, eating and drinking their eldest brother's house, were killed by a great wind from the wilderness.

When messages of these calamities came to Job, he arose, rent his mantle, shaved his head, and fell upon the ground and worshipped God saying, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." And, the account declares, "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."

On another day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, God reminded Satan how perfect and upright Job had been -- that he still feared God, eschewed evil, and held fast his integrity although Satan had moved God against him to destroy him without cause.

Satan was not to be rebuffed: he argued that any man would give all he had for his life, but that if his bone and flesh were touched, he would curse God to his face. Again, the Lord put Job in Satan's power, but instructed that his life be spared.

So, Satan went forth and smote Job with sore boils from head to foot. Much to his disappointment, however, Job calmly sat down in some ashes and scraped himself with a broken bit of crockery.

Now, Job's wife refused to take all this trouble in silence. She voiced her despondency in these words to her husband: "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die."

Job, however, called her a foolish woman and reminded her thus: "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

Three of Job's best friends heard of the evil that befell Job, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, and by mutual agreement, they rushed over to visit Job to mourn with him.

After seven days of silence, Job opened his mouth to speak, and his reaction to his troubles was voice in curses. He cursed the Day, that a cloud should dwell upon it and turn it black; he cursed the Night that it not be joined to the Day for a year (that it be solitary and that no joyful voice make a sound in it); that the Stars be without light.

He longed for death in which he should have slept and been at rest. He declared the blessings of death: that in it the wicked cease from troubling; the weary are at rest; there the prisoners rest together and hear not the voice of the oppressor; the small and the great are there; and the servant is free from his master.

He asked why light was given to him who was in misery; how was it that the bitter in soul had life; why did the man whose way was hid have light when he knew God had hedged him in? And then Job inadvertently gives us the key to his tribulation. He said: The thing which I was afraid of has come unto me.

Job's friends answered him with implied accusations. Eliphaz discreetly asked if Job is really innocent. Bildad asked if Job were always true and upright. Zophar reproved Job with, "Should a man full of talk be justified?"

To each of them Job gave long replies. He insisted that his friends were partial. He professed his confidence in God and entreated God to reveal his purpose in afflicting him. His friends then accused Job of impiety, impatience, and reminded him that the joy of the hypocrite was but for a moment.

Back and forth the conversations flew. Job's friends insisted that his secret sins were the cause of his downfall. Job reproved them for being unmerciful, cruel, and uncharitable of spirit, while he kept declaring that God's ways are past finding out, though he wondered why God afflicted him so.

Now a younger man was sitting in on these arguments and when the three older visitors ceased to talk to Job (because Job was so righteous in his own eyes), Elihu the Buzite, in anger against Job because he justified himself, rather than God, and against his three friends because they had found no answer, yet had condemned Job, said: "There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."

Elihu, when he started to speak, could not be stopped. Among some of the wise statements he uttered were: "Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him." "With God is terrible majesty. Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict. Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise of heart."

After Elihu left off speaking, God answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, "Gird up thy loins like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. ... Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency: and array thyself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: ... Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee."

When God finished, Job submitted himself and made his friends submit themselves unto God, and said: "Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee." Then God reproached Job's friends and made them furnish seven bullocks and seven rams to Job for a sacrifice and told them that Job would pray for them and that his prayers would be acceptable. Then, Job's lot changed and God gave him twice as much as he had before. People came from everywhere and gave him money and jewelry. His flocks and herds increased and he had seven sons and three daughters; and Job gave his daughters an inheritance among their brothers. And Job lived to see his grandchildren to the fourth generation. Such were the blessings of Job who was able to stand before the Lord in his own integrity.

Jesus Christ also stood with God in his own integrity. He was able to say, "I and my Father are one." He said again and again that whoever saw him saw the Father. He promised that he and the Father would be with whoever opened his heart in love toward God and his fellowman.

When tribulation struck Jesus, we have a different picture from that of Job. Jesus was able to stand before his accusers, uttering not a word. When they beat him, spat upon him, put a crown of thorns upon his head, clothed him in a scarlet robe, put a reed in his right hand, bowed the knee before him and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! he answered them not.

They led him to Golgotha, made him taste the vinegar mingled with gall, and crucified him; but no word escaped his lips. They wrote a sign and set it up over his head, This is Jesus the King of the Jews. Passersby reviled him

with, "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the son of God, come down from the cross."

Even the chief priests, scribes, and elders came out to mock him saying, "He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God."

After Jesus was buried, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate and demanded that the sepulchre be made sure lest Jesus' body be stolen and the people be made to believe he had risen from the dead. Pilate gave consent, and the tomb was sealed, and a watch set so that no one could tamper with it.

After three days, when the sabbath was passed, a great earthquake shook the ground; an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was so radiant that the keepers shook and became as dead men. Two women who had come to see the sepulchre (Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary), were told by the angel, "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said."

If we, as followers of Jesus, could remember to be like him when tribulation strikes our work, or our character; if we could be quiet and not talk when pain strikes our bodies; if we could be very still when we are wrongly accused and have just cause for anger, we should not suffer so much at our own hands.

Suffering is not for the children of God. Jesus proved that. With every opportunity to feel sorry for himself and accuse God for heaping trial upon him, he instead kept very still. He touched every experience with the Gospel that by knowing the truth he would be set free.

The Law taught retaliation; but the Gospel of Jesus Christ teaches confidence in the God of right to such an extent that it annuls every negative attack and makes it nothing. When we feel the sting of the law of cause and effect, when our bodies ache, and our minds tortured by fixing the attention on the mists of sense, if we could but remember to keep still and determine to see and feel nothing but Christ, all the "evil" would become as nothing. To learn to relapse into the finer life of Christ causes the hard ways to cease to have hurting power.

There is a finer life at our command than the one we believe in. Though we are urged hurriedly through a noisy world, we must learn to keep our inner attention fixed on the victorious life coursing through us. If we are sick, we keep very still; and lo, we are well. If we are in trial of any kind, we keep still, and freedom delivers us in miraculous ways.

Christ was never crucified; Christ was never entombed; Christ never had to rise: to this Christ we pay homage and join ourselves by giving all our attention to him no matter what the outer seeming.

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RETURN TO WHAT?

By R. A. Applegate, Jr.

The reason that most of us do not seek the kingdom of God with our whole hearts is the result of one of two beliefs: we regard as phantastic the teaching that such a state exists and is the only state worth attaining; or, we are afraid that even if we strove toward such a state we might never attain it. Such indecision can bluntly be summed thus -- actually we do not believe in God. For this reason, Jesus said that the work of God was to believe on him whom he had sent into the world.

Jesus compared the discovery of the kingdom of God to a son's returning home after a long and bitter sojourn abroad. In this time, anyone who had served overseas with the armed forces knows the intense joy of returning home. Though in this instance disillusionment destroyed the joy of the first few days at home, so such report has ever come from those who have sincerely sought to return "to my Father's house." Instead, the reports are consistent in their descriptions of ever increasing and indescribable joy and peace which would not be treaded for everything the world has to offer.

The kingdom or consciousness of God is our true home. Until we learn continually to abide or live in it we shall be restless, home-sick, and unhappy. Such is the testimony of Jesus Christ and of all men or women who have earnestly followed him.

We are aware of disquiet and discontent in our present state of consciousness, for there is no rest this side of perfection. But we take heart in the knowledge that we may, with many who have already turned, set our feet firmly in the way that was proclaimed and demonstrated two thousand years ago. We know the way is narrow and that we shall be tempted to wander from it frequently; but, we also know we shall always turn back upon it because actually there is no other way to freedom. The end is not only assured from the beginning, but it is contained in the beginning. It is God who is seeking us, and what he wishes for us is already accomplished.

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HEART-KNOWING IS IMPORTANT
By Mary A. Livonius

Most truth students are seeking to realize health as wholeness of mind and body (including the affairs). The first step in demonstrating this wholeness is to know consciously that we are one with God. This must be a heart knowledge, not a mere intellectual conclusion. We catch the feeling of wholeness by flashes of intuition, as it were, which reveal that everything God is, is ours. Since he is life and health, joy, peace, love, intelligence, and abundance of every good, these likenesses can be objectified in and through us at once in all their glorious fulness if we but become acquainted with him.

In truth there is nothing but God and God in action. Man, created in the image and likeness of God, and having his name upon him, is to accept consciously all that God has given of himself so freely.

However, man, because he considers himself separate from God, has to learn to claim and affirm again and again, in order to awake to a consciousness of what he already possesses. He has to hold himself steadfastly aware of his true Being, or Self, by constant thought upon the Fact.

While thought does little for man, it is surely better to make the effort to think right than to let the thoughts wander; for, eventually, the very effort will lead him to discover that he really thinks most about what his heart is centered upon. Bodily discomfort or disturbed affairs are but the farthest rim of the agitation that has arisen because he has mistakenly fixed his heart on what is transient and untrue. Frequently he is not aware that he has lost balance until the turbulence about him brings him up short.

To make the effort to think right thoughts in the midst of the hubbub and howlings without, takes courage and a daring that far surpasses that of most human beings. But to look God-ward requires no effort at all and is the easiest practice within the grasp of man. He need neither think nor feel right; he need only look up toward God who is above thinking and feeling and, lo, peace descends and perturbations cease.

Consciousness of God is the key. However, man is more conscious of struggle and trials and his tremendous efforts to overcome. So long as this is accepted as true practice, man will be forced to continue in it.

In order to maintain unity with God and to keep his forces organized in singleness of purpose, man must keep his attention fixed in the direction of that to which he aspires. When he chooses to look away from the negative ideas which beset him and determines to keep the High Watch, he is prepared to discern the Good which hurries to meet and fulfill the various demands of the moment. Through such practice the scattered forces of his being are brought together and he becomes capable of realizing and manifesting his inherent wholeness.

Victory is inevitable when unity with God is maintained consciously. There is nothing, actually, to oppose God, for God is all. Since God has given man himself, and all that he is, knowing this in the heart is fulfillment.

Alphabet of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day of the Month

January 1948

1. Turn AGAIN unto the Lord.
2. BEAR the image of the heavenly.
3. I COME to Thee.
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5. He DOETH great wonders.
6. Life from God ENTERED into him.
7. The words of God shall be FULFILLED.
8. GATHER yourselves together.
9. The day-star arise in your HEARTS.
10. INWARD affection is more abundant.
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12. JUDGMENT must begin at the house of God.
13. I have KEPT the ways.
14. Doth not His LIGHT arise?
15. Go forth unto the MOUNT.
16. Draw NEAR with a true heart.
17. Set thy words in ORDER.
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19. He draweth the mighty with POWER.
20. He QUIETETH the earth.
21. RETAIN thine integrity.
22. Who is SUFFICIENT?
23. I come to THEE.
24. Hear with UNDERSTANDING.
*
26. VOW to the mighty God.
27. He WALKETH in the circuit of heaven.
28. Make to YOURSELVES friends.
29. He was clad with ZEAL.
30. The Lord is my strength and song.
31. Go forward.

DAILY MEDITATION puts a song in the heart and imparts a spiritual strength to will and to do. Please join us daily.