

ON STRENGTH AND VISION

By Nell Truesdell

Someone once said, "What we are is God's gift to us; what we become is our gift to God."

Essentially, we are God's Image and Likeness; we bear His Name and Nature. Through us He reveals Himself, for He has endowed us with all that He IS. Outwardly, we belie the Divine Source from which we spring and by which we are sustained. We appear to exist independent of our Origin much as a child exists independent of its parents. The parents cannot live and breathe for their offspring no matter how much they love him; neither can they provide the necessities of life, such as flawless intelligence, good judgment, unfailing power, the perfect love that casts out all fear, and everflowing, limitless provision; nor can they give the capacity for original thinking, or for acting in an independent manner in ways that are revealed only from within.

Among the endless gifts of God to man are two that will be discussed in this paper. One is strength, the other is vision. If man will coordinate these attributes in harmonious relation and action, what are called the good things of life will manifest in such abundance that there will seem to be no end to them. Health, happiness, prosperity, and success will be more than ample and will be attained easily and freely.

Strength is an inherent sustaining capacity that manifests as an energy to endure. Strength can reveal itself as muscular power, mental vigor, moral firmness, and spiritual integrity. It can show forth as a power of resources, or of authority, or of influence, or of an abiding stamina. It is an equipment that enables an ordinary mortal to resist strain and the wear and tear of everyday living. It helps him to be unfaltering under trial, sturdy, vital, tireless, and thoroughgoing.

The purpose of strength is not limited to the power to endure under great stress, as when a crisis is met and overcome; but strength is that which can be drawn upon every moment in just the ordinary business of living. The child draws on strength to get through school; the young man or woman utilizes strength in many guises to "make the grade" among his contemporaries. The middle-aged uses strength in promoting the affairs of business, making and maintaining a home, and in keeping up with others in social, political, and religious affiliations. (In this period of his life man dissipates, through wrong judgments, what ought to be a limitless asset.) The aged has learned, one way or another, to rely on a strength beyond and deeper than the outward energies, else he would not have reached a ripe age. He has learned, in part, to let the energies arise from within to sustain him, while he calmly goes about the affairs of day-to-day or year-to-year living. He has learned to be integrated, though he may not be aware of this. He "lets" life have its way with him, and he finds that life lifts responsibilities that are usually assumed by a younger and less experienced person.

With such a valuable gift at his disposal, we wonder why man tolerates negation in any degree. Why does he suffer limitation in every phase of living when he has this wonderful inborn equipment upon which he can draw at will? The answer can be set forth in one word - hoarding. Man tries to accumulate for future use such commodities as money, food, ideas, energies, talents, and so forth. He tries to preserve the essentials of life by laying up or storing up elements that can be made lasting only through use. He makes the mistake of saving himself for a "better day." And the forces he would retain deteriorate so rapidly they cannot be recouped. Thus he loses what he struggles for before

he attains it, though all the while it lies quiescent within him, awaiting recognition and the right moment to spring forth.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth (the outer), where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven (the inner), where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," said Jesus Christ.

The heart suggests the vision; for what the heart is set upon, there will be found, in all its force, the concentrated attention of the mind (consciousness), which is commonly called the vision.

Generally, man associates vision with the sense of sight. He claims he is using his vision when he can "see" something (whether it be an idea or a thing with outward form). This is a limited use of an inherent skill, which is limitless. A man sees in ratio to his understanding, and he limits whatever he considers the moment he begins to think about it (or is aware of it). Just as soon as the "thinking apparatus" begins to handle unseen or seen things, their original purity and perfection becomes blurred.

Each reader can prove this for himself. Just ask, "How much do I know about life? How much do I know about my country? How much do I know about anything at all?" At once you discover that your knowledge about anything is confined to how much you can "see" and what you can "see" is colored by what you think.

Now vision deals less with what we see (and think) and more with what we look toward. Seeing, in the ordinary sense, is interpreted through thinking; while, what we look toward is caught and revealed through the understanding.

"Take no thought," said the Master. This is the mystery of vision, which he who is constantly occupied with thinking can never fathom. No matter how "spiritual" his thoughts, concerted activity of his mentals cuts a man off from the truth that comes from taking no thought. While thinking seems to produce results, they are seldom totally satisfactory, for they are limited. Man produces something worth while when, through his vision, he receives inspiration from God which he, in turn, interprets as aspiration. To aspire is to soar above the limits of mortal attainment. It is an achieving power, which stems from God.

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint."

Are you one who says, "I will save my strength until a better opportunity arises." Remember that talents and skills dull by lying dormant. They are kept bright and shining by use. Preparation is the law of vision. Strength now utilized to perfect talents and skills is suddenly turned to gain. The vision to participate wholeheartedly in the program of the hour, though it be far from the desired goal of success, is always rewarded. Opportunity faces him who is prepared.

To repeat: strength and vision can be so coordinated that the welfare of the individual is enhanced beyond present hopes. New fields of enterprise open, new attainments surprise onlookers, new glories shower upon the life and reveal it as outstanding.

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PROSPERITY MEDITATION

By Alden Truesdell

I know that the Miracle-Worker, of the ages is Presence of Life, Intelligence, and, Substance, in which I live and move and have my being. As I learn to agree with the Divine Determinations of this Presence, I witness miracles of magnificent splendor transpire in natural sequence to bless me with prosperity.

Therefore, I shall pray, "Teach me Thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path." Bless me with prosperity for the New Year.

Prosperity is present, and prosperity is at my service. It is my prerogative to command prosperity to manifest for my use; for prosperity is of God, and it is God's pleasure to give me all Good. In my heart I hear the promise, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." Therefore, I am assured that, since all Good belongs to God, it is mine to use and to enjoy to full advantage.

Now do I acknowledge my origin. Now do I accept my inheritance. Now am I God's dearly beloved. Now I have enduring riches of the Spirit. Now am I in dominion over all my Good. Now am I a partaker of all that the Father has. Now does all manifestation and all activity work together for my highest good and most profit. Now am I lifted up. Now will I praise my God. Now will I commit my spirit unto Him, for He has redeemed me. "In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust."

There is no lack, no absence, no loss, no deprivation. There is no possibility of my being separated from God. I know that I live in the midst of plenty and that all that the Father has is mine.

Now am I assured that works of magnitude can be accomplished through the simple process of relinquishing my will to coordinate with God's will. Now do I understand that the all-providing and accomplishing Principle called God is Itself the permanent maker of miracles in this present time and throughout all the ages. It stands by and is ready to operate with unfailing efficiency to accomplish all the miracles of being for me, or for anyone who worships in spirit and in truth. Miracles simply remind me that I possess a capacity to agree with the Higher Intelligence that rules the universe.

In this realization I give thanks unto the Lord, who is my strength and my shield. As my heart trusts in Him, I am helped.

I will listen to the powerful Voice of the Lord that speaks in the midst of me. He is full of majesty. He is great. When He says, "seek ye my face," my heart replies, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." Amen.

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RELIGIOUS IDEAS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT
By Robert Applegate
(Continued from December, 1949)

We reach the conclusion that a divinity credited by his worshippers with a spirit of uncompromising exclusiveness proves to be the only medium through which the profound and elusive truth of the unity of God has been firmly grasped by human souls.

This conception of a personal and a "jealous" God was Moses' contribution to Judaism, whence it was adopted by Christianity and Islam; and its importance can be measured only in the light of history. Another contribution of Moses, which was also taken over by Christianity in its concept of the Kaine Diatheke, was the idea of the covenant. Yahweh had chosen the Hebrews, and had revealed His will to them. All He demanded was obedience, and, in return, He promised to bless His followers with "salvation." A covenant, or contract is a two-way agreement; and, when either party violates it, the contract is void. This was the ever-reiterated message of the prophets: Yahweh's people had violated the covenant, and it, therefore, was no longer operative. The Hebrews, however, came to regard the covenant as unbreakable, in spite of any failures to live up to it on their part. They thus conceived of themselves as a people chosen by Yahweh in perpetuity. This was their most fatal error, of which Toynbee remarks:

They persuaded themselves that Israel's discovery of the One True God had revealed Israel itself to be God's Chosen People; and this half-truth inveigled them into the fatal error of looking upon a momentary spiritual eminence ... as a privilege conferred upon them by God in an everlasting covenant. Brooding on a talent which they had perversely sterilized by hiding it in the earth, they rejected the still greater treasure which God offered then in the coming of Jesus of Nazareth.

Moses' legacy to Judaism, although modified in succeeding generations, remained a permanent inheritance, especially with respect to the three points mentioned above. His concept of Yahweh as a god of war was adopted by his successor, Joshua, and later by Deborah, Gideon, Saul, and David; but it was gradually dropped by the prophets, although Isaiah still maintained Yahweh's power to save Jerusalem from military aggression. Amos, however, preached specifically against military preparedness. Israel had apostasized from Yahweh, and any effort to save itself was simply resistance to God's decree of destruction.

The prophets emphasized different aspects of Yahweh's nature, as succeeding generations grew in spiritual understanding. Elijah stressed the strength and power of God, although his greatest contribution was the discovery that God was not in the, wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but in the "still, small voice." Elisha perceived and exemplified the compassion of Yahweh toward the common man and his needs. Like Jesus he went about "doing good." Amos stressed the justice of God and His demand for justice on the part of man. Hosea advanced the idea of the divine mercy, love, and forgiveness of God. "I will betroth you to myself in righteousness and justice, and in kindness and in mercy," his God declared to an unfaithful Israel. Hosea's teaching of the love of God had "two collaries," as Fleming James writes. "One was, that suffering for sin, though necessary, is educational; the other that God never gives up but will have His loving way at last."

Isaiah added the concept of the holiness and majesty of God to those which had gone before. In times of threatened national disaster, he preached a policy of utter dependence on Yahweh and the avoidance of foreign entanglements. "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength," was his message from God.

His attitude was developed later into apocalypticism, which found its fullest expression in the book of Daniel. About the same time that Isaiah was prophesying, Micah, aware of the injustice and oppression of the lower classes by the moneyed powers made his immortal statement: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

In Second Isaiah Hebrew monotheism reached its highest peak:

Hark! one says, "Call!" And I said, "What shall I call?"
"All flesh is grass, And all its beauty is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
When the breath of the LORD blows upon it - Truly the people is grass
The grass withers, the flower fades,
But the word of our God shall stand forever."

Second Isaiah emphasized the omniscience, the love, the power, the Omnipresence, and the uniqueness of God. His message was, "Comfort, O comfort my people." "Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and call to her, that her time of service is ended." "Fear not, for I am with you." "I am the LORD, and there is no other; beside me there is no God."

Malachi enriched Hebrew religion by his emphasis upon the fatherhood of God. The concept was an old one; for from early times, Yahweh had been regarded as the father, by adoption, of kings and other important personages, and, later, of the whole Hebrew nation. It was Malachi, however, who used this concept to enforce the brotherhood of man. The author of Job was the first to question the justice of God, but he arrived at the conclusion that for man to seek to understand God's judgments was folly and to justify himself before his Maker was pride. At a later date, the writer of Ecclesiastes, attacking the same problem, came out with a cynical view of God's capriciousness and the sovereignty of chance.

In the time of the Babylonian captivity, Second Isaiah had stressed the transcendence and majesty of God, and at the same time had looked upon Cyrus as a political Messiah. In an even darker period of history, under the Antiochene persecution, the author of Daniel emphasized the incomparable glory of Yahweh, and looked forward to a supernatural Messiah. To the harassed Jews he tried to convey a picture of the greatness of God and therewith the insignificance of Antiochus Epiphanes:

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head was like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame and his wheel as burning fire.
A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was sat and the books were opened. Before such a God the only possible attitude was one of complete humility, and for man to exalt himself was the deadliest sin.

Daniel was the latest book to be included in the Hebrew canon. At the time that it was being written, the Maccabees were beginning to lead the Hebrew nation down the suicidal path of militarism, and the books telling of their exploits were not included in the canon, because they portrayed violence, rather than conquering gentleness, as the correct response to oppression. The author of Daniel, however, had a vision of a kingdom that was "not of this world"; and it was his title for the inaugurator of that kingdom, "the son of man," that Jesus Christ adopted for himself. Jesus added one thing, though, which none of the prophets or writers had grasped: "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you."

Alphabet Of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day Of The Month

JANUARY 1950

2. God is ABLE to make ALL grace ABOUND toward you.
3. I must BE about my Father's BUSINESS.
4. Thou CROWNEST the year with Thy goodness.
5. The Word ... DWELT among us.
6. I have ESTEEMED the words of His (God's) mouth.
7. Thou shalt go before the FACE of the Lord.

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9. Show thy servant Thy GREATNESS.
10. I am the Lord, your HOLY One.
11. INHERIT eternal life.
12. We are JOINT-HEIRS of God.
13. The KINGDOM of God is at hand.
14. Thou shalt LOVE the LORD thy God.

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16. MIGHTY words are wrought by His hands.
17. Walk in NEWNESS of life.
18. OFFER praise unto thy God.
19. The Law of the Lord is PERFECT.
20. They came to him from every QUARTER.
21. The Lord shall REWARD thee.

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23. My SON, be wise.
24. He Who TILLETH his land shall have plenty.
25. Whoso walketh UPRIGHTLY shall be saved.
26. Thy VISITATION hath preserved my spirit.
27. Almighty God, WALK before me.
28. Add YE YEAR to YEAR.

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30. He was clad with ZEAL.
31. Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

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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.