

SPIRITICITY July 1955

## THE JEALOUS GOD

By Robert Applegate

"I the Lord thy God am a jealous God."

This statement, which occurs repeatedly in the Old Testament, seems primitive to many; yet it contains a truth which, in this day, we will do well to remember. The statement was first made by Moses when he instructed the Israelites in the wilderness between Egypt and the Promised Land, and it was repeated by Joshua when he led the children of Israel in "to possess the land." These men could not have expressed themselves any differently; and if they had done so, they would not have been understood. However we should not let the form of their words blind us to the truth that is in them. For were they saying anything different from what Jesus declared when He said: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other." The jealousy of God, therefore, is not to be understood as an attribute of God but as the picturing of a condition that is inherent in the nature of man and his relation to his environment - physical and spiritual. No man can serve two masters, any more than he can face in two directions at once.

Many men attempt to serve two masters (the world and God), but they inevitably end up holding to the one and despising the other; for truly "a house divided against itself cannot stand." The attempt to give the allegiance in two directions simultaneously sets up an intolerable division within the consciousness. This division cannot stand, and everyone must turn in one direction or the other. He must choose whom he will serve with the reverence and the worship of his heart.

The error that Moses and Joshua warned their people against is what has been called in modern terms "religious syncretism" and what is designated in the Bible as "whoring after other gods." This phenomenon is quite evident today. In the metaphysical field, many have turned to the eastern religions and have tried to combine them with Christianity and with Greek philosophy. The orthodox religious bodies have long been trying to make their peace with the gods of science and rationalism, with social customs and the accepted mores, with the human desire for external show. This is not to say that any of these are evil, or that they are not desirable in their place; but it is to say that they are not God and should not be put in the place of God.

All the prophets and spiritual leaders mentioned in the Bible inveighed against the practice of idolatry and pointed to it as the cause of all human woes. And the warnings against this perverse practice are not confined to the Old Testament, but they are repeated with renewed emphasis in the New. The Apostle John wrote to one of the churches under his jurisdiction, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." John was not referring simply to images of heathen gods. Rather, an "idol" is anything less than God that is put in the place of God. We have many idols today, just as men have always had many idols. How many people do you know who worship physical comfort, money, social position, prestige, their family, their city, their nation? These are our idols; and, if we persist in worshipping them, we cannot help but bring disaster upon ourselves - not that God will be angry with us and punish us, but that we cannot worship these things without turning our backs on God and despising Him.

This is not to suggest that these relative goods have to be spurned, but that they should be regarded as what they are: gifts of God. We should be so in love with the Giver that we are indifferent to the gifts. And, in any event, we must ever worship the Giver first and never let the gifts distract us from Him.

Idolatry has been well described as "an intellectually and morally purblind worship of the part instead of the whole, of the creature instead of the Creator, of Time instead of Eternity." Today, as a nation, we are engaged in worshipping "the American way of life." This is extolled, praised, magnified on all sides. This we regard as the supreme gift, which we would give to all the less fortunate peoples on earth. This is our favorite idol. Yet, if our way of life is pleasant, if it is more desirable than any other we know of, then our hearts should overflow with gratitude to Him who gave it to us. For we did not achieve it by our own efforts.

"Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God: . . . lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; . . . and thy gold and thy silver is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; then thine heart be lifted up, . . . and thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth."

This country is great and prosperous, not because we are more virtuous or more intelligent than other people, not even because the founders of this country were wiser than other men; but because the founders and settlers of this country remembered God more steadfastly than any other people. In part, the difficulty of breaking in the wilderness and founding a new nation forced them to this remembrance, just as the ease of the present century and our position of world supremacy tempt us to forgetfulness. At the Constitutional Convention in 1787, when tempers were warm and no progress was being made, Benjamin Franklin rose to say, addressing George Washington:

"How has it happened, sir, that we have not hitherto once thought of humbly applying to the Father of Lights to illuminate our understanding? In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayer in this room for the divine protection. . . . I have lived, sir, a long time; and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of men."

Throughout all our history, this faith in God as our Guide and Protector, as the Giver of all good, has been reiterated by the great and the humble. During the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln had the vision that "this nation under God" would have "a new birth of freedom." In our own day, Sir Winston Churchill has summed up the outlook for the future of all the nations on the earth: "What we must have is a return to God."

It will be noticed that none of these men referred to returning to the church, which is the usual interpretation of their words. The church claims to be the instrument of God, but how many find God in the church? The worship of the church is but another form of idolatry.

We worship our way of life, and we worship our democratic institutions; but democracy is not God. Rather, only God can make democracy work. This is amply proved by history; for there have been democracies before ours, and they have decayed and disappeared as soon as they became the object of the adulation that is due only to the Creator. In the words of a modern historian, every form of idolatry "has a fatal effect upon the object of idolization, . . .

transforming one of the ineffably sublime works of God into an abomination of desolation standing where it ought not." Such idolatry, he goes on to declare, has always been "a very potent cause of the breakdowns of civilizations." It is true that the Lord our God is "a jealous God," for the alternative to worshipping Him is destruction. It is because Moses perceived this truth that the religion he founded brought forth the Saviour of mankind.

We live in a century of immense change, of uncertainty, and fear of the unknown. In this time what this country needs, and what the world needs, is men and women who can turn back from all partial forms of good to worship, love, and reverence the Giver of all good. Such are, in all ages, "the light of the world."

In both Hebrew and Greek, the words "jealous" and "zealous" are the same. And just as God seems to be jealous for our loyalty, so is He zealous to give us all that He has and is, whenever we permit Him to do so. However, if we turn our backs toward Him, He will not force His good upon us. He could not do so without denying us the right of free choice, which would be to deny us our manhood. But if we turn to Him with love, trust, and reverence, He will pour out upon us "a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

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THE WORDS OF LIFE

By Alden Truesdell

"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart."

"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Everything that man does, he does by means of his words. Similarly, everything that God does, He does by His Word. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made out of the things which do appear." This Word is the life of man, and it is man's privilege to know this Word, to partake of it, to abide in it.

Every word has substance and character far beyond its printed form. It has been said that if you cut a word, it will bleed; and it is true that words are living and carry with them the quality of the speaker or writer. Words are the building materials in the consciousness of man. Many lives have been changed by words dropped casually by friends or acquaintances. Often, too, a man will remember words spoken by a teacher or a parent, long after the parent and the teacher are gone; and he may marvel at the wisdom of these instructors.

But it may be that they taught better than they knew, using words that they themselves understood but superficially.

True words have a depth of meaning that is not apparent on their surface. Such words have the capacity of revealing ever deeper and deeper truths as familiarity with them increases. Often some familiar quotations cause the man who has memorized them to think that he knows their meaning; but in some time of extremity, they reveal an unsuspected, precious content.

I have forgotten much about my early schooling, but one thing I remember is a set of quotations (one for every letter of the alphabet) which one of my teachers was wise enough to make us memorize. I shall remember this teacher after I have forgotten all the others. The maxims are, in part:

- A) A thing that is worth doing is worth doing well.
- B) Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another.
- C) Conquer thyself; till thou hast done so, thou art a slave.
- D) Dare to be true. Nothing needs a lie. A fault that needs it most grows two thereby.
- E) Errors, like straws, upon the surface blow; he who would seek for pearls must dive below.
- F) Faith is the substance of things hoped for.
- G) Goodness consists not in the outward thing we do, but in the inward thing we are.
- H) Habit is a cable; we weave a thread of it each day, and it becomes so strong we cannot break it.
- I) In knowledge there is power.
- J) Just as the twig is bent, the tree inclines.
- K) Keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile.
- L) Love never fails.
- M) Make hay while the sun shines.
- N) Not what we give, but what we share; for the gift without the giver is bare.

These words meant little to me as they were transferred from the blackboard to my notebook and from notebook to memory, but they have changed in content over the years. Every time they have come up in memory, they have spoken their truths with greater authority and have taken more substance to themselves. I am sure they have influenced my life more than I realize, and that, while they seem to have changed, it is I who have grown - in part because of them. These words are good words, but there are better ones; and the best of all words are those that were spoken by Jesus Christ, who promised:

"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

"If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death."

"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

Those who have found the words of Jesus Christ and "eaten" them (even though they have not seemed to make much sense) will, in due season, find themselves in possession of a heritage so powerful and self-perpetuating that they will be astounded at themselves. When a man abides in Christ, and Christ's words abide in him (as a living presence, not as mechanically repeated formulas), then the words that come to him have deep meaning and great authority. They contain soft, spiritual essences that are capable of ministering to all God's children. "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait and in His word do I hope." "He sent forth His word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions."

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . In Him was life; and the life was the light of man." When any man seeks God, he seems to find a small spark within himself. Like a spark made with flint and iron, it should be nurtured into a small flame and carefully tended. If this is done the flame will grow of itself until it becomes an all-absorbing Light. Whoever gives himself to loving and nourishing this Light will find that it is the Reality of his being, the Word of God by which he is what he is. He will know that he may, if he wishes, abide in this Light forever; for it is the eternal Word, or Christ.

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SPIRITICITY July 1955

ASK WHAT I SHALL GIVE THEE

By Nell Truesdell

When Solomon ascended the throne of Israel, he was young and unspoiled. When God asked him what he wanted most in life, he replied: "Give therefore Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad."

At this point in his life, Solomon was overwhelmed by the magnitude of his responsibility to the people of his kingdom. His thought was not of himself but of them. He referred to them as God's people ("Thy people"); and he set aside all self-desires as he confessed to God: "I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or to come in."

All his life, Solomon had seen his father David's dependence on God for guidance in all matters (for on the whole David's eye had been towards God). At the time of his succession to the throne, Solomon was unsullied. He had not yet acquired the lust for power, for riches, or for advantage over neighboring kingdoms. All he desired in his heart was to know the right and good thing to do in ruling God's people. Later, as he experienced the false strength of personal rulership, he betrayed his finer inclinations and made slaves of the people he had once longed to rule justly. He married foreign wives, who through their connections, could give him political advantages and replenish his coffers. But the seeming benefits that these wives brought into the kingdom

were offset by the false gods that came with them. Soon the pagan forms of worship enticed the Israelites with their pageantry and elaborate public processions. But mere show and empty display deplete and devitalize people, so that they become as shabby as the pomp and ceremony that they participate in. Prescribed rituals in worship dull the mind and strip men bare of their spiritual potentiality. The idols that they ignorantly worship squeeze them dry of vigor.

So it was with Solomon's kingdom. Outwardly, he was the envy of all other kings, because they did not bother to look beneath the surface of outer riches to see human suffering, monumental indebtedness, and ruthless transgression of all ethical relations between king and subjects. Even those kings most victimized by Solomon childishly continued to trust him.

Today, as it was with Solomon, God asks each person what it is that he wants: "Ask what I shall give thee." Does anyone answer, "I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or to come in. . . . Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart." All evidence points to the contrary. Most men ask God how best to make a pending deal, so that they may gain over others. Or they ask for success in bartering a brand of merchandise, or for an appointment to a political office, or for "good luck" to win at the races - or for anything but understanding of the principles that control (and could reform) the conditions in which they find themselves. Perhaps the basic reason why men do not ask for understanding is that they know the gift would change them. Everybody resists change, for everybody is adjusted to the existing mode of life. Consequently what everybody wants is to make a demonstration of gain right where he is. The prospect of a readjustment in consciousness terrifies people; for they sense that it would involve a reconditioning of present mental attitudes and of relations with others; a reorganization of material affairs and of whatever else has been made part of life. Fear of change is the strongest binding power among men, who feel (if they do not understand) that to go straight to God means that all they have been familiar with must be by-passed, ignored, surrendered. But, only so, may God's Will be discerned.

Everyone who has ever turned to God without thought of the consequences has reported that it was the best move he ever made in his life. Nevertheless, for most people the Unknown remains Something to shrink from, rather than Something to move toward. Still there are no halfway measures to get to God or to receive His benefits. In any movement God-ward, a person must put all his trust in Him whom he would know. For he cannot stand fast where he is and hope to move toward full spiritual blessings. A true incident may illustrate this point:

A lady suffering from arthritic pains sent for a practitioner, who knowing the patient's unbending criticism of others, suggested that she change her way of thinking about her acquaintances. At this, the patient snapped: "You change your thoughts. That's what I am paying you for!"

Many persons fear that spiritual blessings will not be adequate to meet their needs, forgetting that Jesus Christ has already proved the adequacy of agreement with God; that He has promised: "All these things shall be added unto you."

The secret of acquiring things is this: They insist upon being added unto you, instead of being wrested from some outside (imaginary) source. Since there is no source of anything, but God, it is well for us to practice looking toward Him for what we want.

Before Solomon had ascended the throne of Israel, his father told him:

"Be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man; and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and His testimonies, . . . that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and withersoever thou turnest thyself; that the Lord may continue His word, which He spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee a man on the throne of Israel."

Solomon forgot this charge.

Alphabet Of  
DAILY MEDITATIONS  
For Every Week Day Of The Month

JULY 1955

1. The way of life is ABOVE to the wise.
2. How BEAUTIFUL . . . are the feet of him that BRINGETH good tidings.
4. Be of good COURAGE.
5. I DETERMINED not to know anything . . . save Jesus Christ.
6. The ENTRANCE of Thy Word giveth light.
7. The Lord make His FACE to shine upon thee.
8. Thou shalt GROW up as a tender plant.
9. Thou art . . . an HEIR of God, through Christ.
11. The Lord shall INCREASE you more and more.
12. To him that is JOINED to all the living there is hope.
13. My KINDNESS shall not depart from thee.
14. LACK ye any thing?
15. Let the Lord be MAGNIFIED.
16. NARROW is the way that leadeth to life.
18. Thou OPENEST Thine hand.
19. PREACH PEACE by Jesus Christ.
20. Thou shalt QUICKEN me again.
21. RETURN unto Me; for I have REDEEMED thee.
22. SEEK ye first the kingdom of God.
23. God doth TALK with man.
25. Blessed are the UNDEFILED in the way.
26. The works of His hands are VERITY and judgment.
27. Cause me to know the WAY WHEREIN I should WALK.
28. A thousand YEARS in Thy sight are as YESTERDAY.
29. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of ZION (within).
30. Be Thou exalted, O God, above the heavens.

"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.