

AN EARLY CATECHISM

By Robert Applegate

TO MOST OF US the word catechism means a series of questions and answers that we had to memorize when we were young. They did not mean much to us because they did not seem related to "real life." We memorized them, perhaps, and then forgot them.

The word catechism, however, originally meant oral instruction in how to live life satisfactorily. Almost all spiritual teaching has been given by word of mouth. It has been handed down in this way from generation to generation. Most of the instruction Moses gave to the Israelites was handed down in this way for hundreds of years before it was committed to writing. Similarly Jesus taught His disciples orally, and they handed this instruction on by word of mouth. This oral teaching is catechesis and any particular portion of it is a catechism. So all our Scripture is a transcript of catechisms in the form of history (what God has done), laws (how man must conduct himself in relation to God and to his fellow man), and precepts (how man may live his life to the greatest profit).

From the general meaning of oral instruction, the word catechism has come to have the particular meaning of a short summary of the principles of the Christian Way of Life - a summary such as would be given to beginners or to new converts. That is, a catechism is a summary of what we believe and of how we should act in the light of what we believe. There have been many, many catechisms of this sort since the time of Jesus Christ. If we go back to I Thessalonians, which was probably the first book of our New Testament to be written, we find that in Chapters 4 and 5, Paul gives a summary of the teaching that he and Silvanus had given to the men of Thessalonica by word of mouth. This is the earliest formulation that we possess of the original Christian Catechism. Paul writes:

"Brothers, we (Silvanus, Timothy, and I) ask you - and we urge you in the Lord Jesus - that you exert yourselves more and more to conduct yourselves according to the teaching that you received from us. For you were taught how you should live so as to please God, as you are doing. (I Th. 4:1)

(2) For you know the instructions that we gave you through the Lord Jesus: (3) This is the Will of God: (4) your dedication - that you abstain from fornication; (5) that each of you know how to guard his equipment in dedication and honor, (6) not in the passion of desire like the people who do not know God; (7) that you do not overreach or transgress your brother in any business, for the Lord is an Avenger of all these things. . . . For God has not called us in uncleanness, but in dedication.

(8) In the light of God's calling, he who rejects (the instruction) does not reject a man, but God, who gives His Pure Spirit to us.

(4:9) Concerning affection for the Brotherhood, . . . you yourselves are taught of God to value one another. . . . (10) But, brothers, we urge you that you exert yourselves in this more and more, (11) and that you strive to be quiet and to take care of your own affairs and to work with your own hands (as we

taught you), so that you may conduct yourselves rightly toward outsiders and may have need of nothing. . . .

(5:5) We do not belong to the night nor to the darkness. (6) And so we must not be asleep like the rest of mankind, but we must be alert and serious. (7) They who are asleep, are asleep at night; and they who are drunk, are drunk at night. (8) But since we belong to the day, we must be serious and sober, putting on the protection of faith and purity, and the defense of the hope of deliverance. (9) For God has not appointed us to "wrath," but to the possession of His deliverance, through our Lord Jesus Christ. (10) He died for us, so that whether we are awake or whether we sleep, we may live with Him. (11) Therefore encourage yourselves; and be built up into the One Man, as you are doing.

(12) We ask you, brothers, to know those who labor among you, who are your leaders in the Lord, who warn you. (13) Hold them in the greatest honor and affection because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. (14) Brothers, we urge you: Warn the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, bear with those of weak faith, be patient with all.

(15) See to it that no one returns violence for violence. Rather go after that which is profitable for yourselves and for all.

(16) Always rejoice, constantly pray, (17) in every event give thanks; (18) for this is what God wants for you in Christ.

(19) Do not quench the Spirit; do not look down on inspired teaching; (20) test all things; (21) hold on to that which is right; (22) keep away from every form of ugliness.

(23) May the God of Peace make you to be wholly dedicated; and may your spirit, soul, and body be kept whole and flawless until the coming (in consciousness) of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(24) He who called you is reliable; He will do this. . . .

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is with you."

(Translated by Robert Applegate)

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"I am not concerned that I have no place; I am concerned how to fit myself for one. I am not concerned that I am not known; I seek to be worthy to be known."

-- Li Jen, XIV

"Be square without being angular. Be honest, without being mean.

"Sincere words are not fine; fine words are not sincere." -- Lao Tzu

SPIRITICITY, July 1967

ABIDE IN THE LIGHT

By Nell Truesdell

EVERYBODY KNOWS that the sun is our source of light on earth. Everybody knows that when the moon intercepts the light of the sun we have an eclipse - a shadow is cast on the earth.

Within man there is a Sun - the "Sun of Righteousness." This Sun is the Source of Light and Life. The promise is: "Unto you that fear (revere) My Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings." (Mal. 4:2)

Righteousness is right relation with God; healing is restoration.

Man is lived by the Divine Light that streams from center to circumference in his consciousness. This Holy Light touches all that man is and all that he possesses, but It remains untouched - just as the light from the sun touches all creation, but is never touched by any created thing. Yet most persons live in darkness.

Why does man experience darkness? Because the Inner Light is intercepted by an object of some kind: either a thought or a feeling casts a shadow. Man may clear away the object that obstructs the Light. When he removes the object that casts a shadow, the darkness disappears.

Man's thoughts and emotions obstruct the free flow of Divine Light through his consciousness; they cast shadows that trouble him. These shadows are sickness, lack, inharmony, poverty. They have no more substance than does the shadow of the moon upon the earth during an eclipse.

Not only do the shadows cast by the thoughts and feelings have no substance, but the thoughts and feelings of themselves have no substance. They assume the shapes and sizes that man assigns to them; they obscure the Light, and their shadows make man unhappy, uncomfortable, unhealthy, and poor. To dissolve them and scatter the shadows man need only steadfastly give his attention to the Divine Light (the Holy Spirit) within him.

Teach yourself to refrain from dealing with shadows. If you are sick, deal with the Holy Spirit that will dissolve the thought or the feeling that is the cause of your illness. If your affairs are not prosperous, dig out the negation that cuts off the Light. The Divine Light Itself will heal, protect, and secure you. Revere God, abide in His Light, and you will see Light.

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." (Psalm 42:11)

"God is with men. . . . 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." (Rev. 21:4)

SPIRITICITY, July 1967

OVERCOMING

By Alden Truesdell

AFTER many sessions of instruction Jesus said to His disciples: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." The vital things He had spoken are reported, in part, in the Four Gospels. These words are a treatise on the subject of overcoming the world. They are a handbook, setting forth the satisfactory Way of Life that Jesus came into the world to teach us.

There is a well-known religious teaching that places the things of the Spirit beyond the reach of those living in the world and makes it compulsory to leave the world in order to be conversant with Truth. But Jesus gave a formula for living in the world and enjoying peace at the same time even though the world is hostile and belittles the formula. There is a way of living in Spirit, of being in the world but not of it.

Isaiah declared: "The grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day." (Isa. 38:18-19) Death is no automatic entree to heaven; the reservations in heaven must be attended to right here, right now, in this time, in this place, in this life.

Jesus made little reference to the need for overcoming, as He knew that the faithful keeping of His words would bring each seeker up to the point where he would be able to judge for himself the way to go, the thing to say, and the deed to do. He did say that He had overcome the world, and He did say that men could do the things He had done. He promised that they would do them if they kept His words.

If Jesus has overcome the world, this must mean that the world is subject to Spiritual Authority. So, again, man is brought to the necessity of choosing either to accept his spirituality and exercise his spiritual endowment or to forget his nobility and subject himself to inferior supervision. But if the whole world is gained and the soul subjected to material standards, nothing of permanent value has been gained. Rather something of eternal value has been lost for a season, although it will rise again; for man cannot forever deny his sonship to God.

"God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery; . . . which is Christ in you." (Col. 1:27) Overcoming is inevitable for one who discovers this inner Genius, for one who listens to and agrees with the inner prompting referred to as the "still small voice" - the Spirit of Truth that guides in the Way of Truth. The Way of Truth is the way of overcoming; and once the machinery of Truth is swung into action, the way of overcoming is more enjoyable than the way of compromise. Overcoming is restoration; it is the object of all man's aspiration.

Jesus Christ is a perfect object lesson for the one who seeks the Way of Truth. In the Temptation in the Wilderness He handled with skill the ruling ideas that must be overcome. He replaced dependence upon accumulation with dependence upon God. He refused to show off in a display of His own spiritual

power. He refused fortune, fame, and self-exaltation - preferring to love God and serve Him.

It was after this overcoming in the Wilderness that Jesus, as we are told, "returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee."

Jesus Christ did not establish any institution, but many institutions have been founded in His Name. Since a Christ Truth college and a church of the Christ Truth are now in process of being established, it may be profitable to consider the purpose of this effort. Colleges and churches are in evidence on every hand, and the present equipment would seem to be adequate; that is, there would seem to be enough churches and colleges. Yet each institution has its particular quality. There are schools of religion, metaphysics, art, engineering, medicine, etc; but as far as I know, there is no school devoted entirely to the consideration of the Christ Truth - to the Truth as lived and taught by Jesus Christ.

Many schools of Christianity are reluctant to consider the doctrine responsible for the name Christianity. Most schools teach the physical history of the man Jesus and of His predecessors and successors. But few - if any - try to teach and to practice the Way of Life that made this Teacher so superior, that He exercised power unknown before His time is generally acknowledged. That the same power and intelligence He used are available to anyone who will follow Him is not generally conceded. But there is the substance of the Way of Life that He recommended. A school for the study of this Fact of Life seems to be in order - that those attending may learn for themselves to do those things He did and to be where He is in consciousness. We believe that such a school is requisite to the understanding of Life, and that all lesser goals than the Christ Fact of Life are but means to an end.

Everyone who is attracted to a school such as this is already an overcomer to the extent that he has put his spiritual welfare above his inclination to indulge his less aspiring habits. To go in the Way of Truth is a great adventure. The Psalmist described the experience with the words: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God." (Psm. 42:1)

Overcoming is a coming over from an inferior to a superior state. That which is being overcome often cries out and tries to maintain the "good old days." But progress is inevitable. The blessings of the new and better state are for the pioneer souls who, like Paul, have the hardihood to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:14)

(To be continued)

SPIRITICITY, July 1967

HEALING PRACTICE

By H. B. Jeffery

(Notes taken at a public lecture by Nell Truesdell - continued from last month.)

JESUS CONSIDERED FAITH essential to healing, either on the part of the afflicted one or on the part someone closely related to him. He always tried to arouse this faith in the people. Where there was no faith, He did no mighty works.

Jesus knew that faith is inherent in the nature of man, that it is apart of man's being, for without it man would not be.

Faith, being a power in man, is capable of culture, exercise, and growth. Just as any other power or talent, the power of faith can be educed, brought out, and exercised. It will become strong, efficient, and dependable. In developing and exercising faith, we are drawing forth something inherent in our being. Faith is a free gift, or grace, of God.

Since God is Love, He is always ready to impart any element of His Nature that any man requires. When we repair to the Divine, we quicken the faculty of faith. Through a spiritual induction, there comes into our consciousness a reinforced feeling of faith and confidence. "He restoreth my soul." After a session with God we come forth with faith. We cannot explain it, but we are conscious of the fact that our store of faith has increased.

Christianity becomes practical in so far as we have put faith into action. Faith carries us beyond the range of the senses, for they are of short range. Just as science transcends ordinary sense consciousness so faith transcends science, because science does not know or acknowledge the divine laws of being. Faith gives us an intuition, or inner perception, which enables us to see the cause behind a false condition.

Faith is a state of expectation, and in using faith in healing you bring into play what the psychologists call "attentive expectation." Belief is one of the first steps toward faith, but belief must become more active than a mere intellectual perception of Truth before it becomes faith, which includes feeling. Faith goes back into the emotional center. When thought and feeling combine, then the dynamic power of the Mind is set into action. When we touch faith consciously, then we find that dormant hopes are quickened and brought forth.

Arouse the expectant attention of your patient, and a definite healing will result. Fear is the cause of disease; it is a state of mind, just as faith is a state of mind. Fear comes from a seeming disjunction from the Source of Life.

The unconscious department of mind contains the repressions and unfulfilled longings the heart has held. We see these things come up in disguised form; therefore we cannot judge by appearances. We must look back of all phenomena into the Realm of Perfection - the "heavens." There is a point in man where the heavens and the earth meet. Jesus called this the "closet"; He said, "Shut the door." This is not a place in the body; it is a place in consciousness. You do not go inside the body to go into the inner chamber; you

go in consciousness. Here you meet face to face with the Universal - with God. Then there is a fresh influx, a realization. You come face to face with your soul. This is the mortal putting on immortality.

You can restore vitality to any part of the body to which you give attention, for wherever the attention is directed and held, there is always an increased flow of the Vital Principle and there immediately follows an increased flow of blood, which feeds, nourishes, and cleanses the part. We can through directed attention bring fresh nourishment to a depleted organ. But this is not the way Jesus worked.

He worked in a higher manner; He worked directly with the soul of man, knowing that any affliction is the result of disturbance in the soul. A whole chain of action and reaction may be built up and show forth as disease. A deep, intuitive perception is the only thing that can break such a chain by detecting where the trouble is in the soul.

Words and affirmations are on the mental plane. When you touch the Inner Realm of consciousness, there is no outer language. You get back of thought and you abide in a state of consciousness where the principle of knowing operates rather than the principle of language. You arrive at this principle by abiding often in prayer. When you touch the Realm of Reality, you move beyond language; knowing wells up from within. This is how you work in absent treatment. Knowing the Truth, you "create" a response in the one seeking help.

There is no time or space in the Principle. Whatever flashes in consciousness goes to the ends of the earth. You work in consciousness, not in physicality. When you attain the place of communion you are not concerned by the mental atmosphere around the patient.

Jesus aroused faith on the part of the one asking for help; and with this quickening, transformation took place. The Creative Power can restore whole organs. "Behold, I make all things new."

The Divine Nature is always strong and pure, and we contact this Nature when we pray. The healer's first move is to turn toward God, that he may have an inflow of the consciousness of the Divine Life and at the same time be able to arouse expectation (faith) in the patient.

Prayer is attention to the Divine. People will look to you and you must have conscious contact with the Healing Power always. They will soon feel the element of time is eliminated and they will begin to recover rapidly.

(To be continued)

Alphabet of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Day of the Week

JULY, 1967

1. AIM at righteousness, faith, love, peace.
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3. Teach what BENEFITS sound doctrine.
4. There is great gain in gladness with CONTENTMENT.
5. The Father that DWELLETH in Me, He DOETH the works.
6. We have strong ENCOURAGEMENT to seize the hope set before us.
7. Your FAITH is growing abundantly.
8. Be strong in the GRACE that is in Christ Jesus.
*
10. Take HOLD of the Eternal Life to which you were called.
11. The aim of our charge IS to love what ISSUES from a pure heart.
12. In the days of prosperity be JOYFUL.
13. KEEP silent.
14. They LOOKED to Him and were LIGHTENED.
15. Let he MEDITATION of MY heart be acceptable in Thy sight.
*
17. Thou art NEAR, O Lord.
18. Lord, Thou wilt ORDAIN peace for us.
19. Keep yourself PURE.
20. Lead a QUIET and peaceable life.
21. REKINDLE the gift of God that is within you.
22. God gave us a SPIRIT of power and love and SELF-CONTROL.
*
24. Give THANKS in all circumstances.
25. The Lord will grant you UNDERSTANDING in all things.
26. God called us in VIRTUE of His own purpose.
27. Be not WEARY in WELL-DOING.
28. The Lord give thee peace.
29. Take heed to YOURSELF and to YOUR teaching.
*
31. He told us of your ZEAL.

"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."

As electricity is the working power of the electrical principle,
So Spiriticity is the working Power of the Spiritual Principle.

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