

FATHER

By A. J. Truesdell

What is truth? Who knows the truth? Who tells the truth? Where is truth to be found? All of the wisdom of all the ages has concerned itself with these questions. We might say that all the knowledge of man has been developed and recorded as a result of his search for truth. All great men in the race have been seekers for truth, and their common cry has been, What is truth?

Philosophers have been in disagreement about the question of truth. Most philosophical opinions differ, some declaring one thing, others another. In man's history no one has seemed to speak with authority on the subject save Jesus Christ, and he was nailed to a cross. To say this man was the one authority on the subject of truth would seem dogmatic indeed except for the fact that he proved beyond doubt that he was in possession of understanding which enabled him to do works no other man had done, and to speak as no other man had spoken. Had he not done such works we could assume that he was but another truth-seeker, another questioner like ourselves.

If we are satisfied that Jesus Christ had something superior to the equipment of the average man, something superior even to the wisdom and works of outstanding men, we could save ourselves much time by examining and accepting his teaching. If we need proof of his advent and achievements we might consult the critics who through the ages have bent every effort to read him out of history and rid the race of him, but have failed utterly to do so. We study diligently the theories expounded by the wisest of our philosophers, who were but seekers for truth, and we benefit by accepting their intelligent discourses. Would we not profit more by giving equal attention and honor to the doctrine of the Man we know as Jesus Christ? the one man who knew the truth?

We might examine the opinion of Jesus Christ regarding the question, What is truth? At one time he declared, I am the truth, and we could say this was his answer. Once, while praying to the Father, it is recorded he said, Thy word is truth. Jesus Christ did not say, I seek the truth. He knew himself to be the truth, so he was not looking for truth; he was a living example of the truth and knew that he knew the truth. In some manner he had so merged himself with truth and so emphasized his true nature that he could know nothing else about himself except, I am the truth; or, about God except, Thy word is truth. He was aware that he was the individual expression of the word of God which is truth, so he was not looking for truth, -- he was expressing truth. He was the living truth, the prime example of truth. He was what God intended man to be and he was what man actually is in truth.

He declared the Father was greater than he, but that made him no less true. According to Jesus, man as he is in reality is truth; he is the son of God. The Father of Jesus Christ is the Father of all. Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

When a man knows himself he knows the truth. He knows himself to be true, and this is, in a measure, the answer to the question, Who knows the truth? Whoever knows himself knows truth. Whoever knows the truth declares the truth and the truth defeats every lie. It is true that God is Spirit. Hence, that which appears to be unspirited, or unspiritual, is not true and has no being in

truth. True spiritual man knows that God is Omnipresent. He declares the Omnipresence and Spirit of God and all opposing appearances disappear. Appearances do not vanish because man's word dissolves them, but simply because man has acknowledged and declared that which is real.

True spiritual man declares God to be peace, and all striving, struggling, and warfare disappear. True spiritual man is a man of peace, for God is a peaceful God.

True spiritual man declares God to be love, and love to be spiritual and pure, and all hatred and pettiness disappear to reveal God's loving ever-present, all-competent, all-knowing reality.

God being life, man is a living being. Since God is everlasting life, man is eternally alive.

And so with all qualities or attributes of God. When we speak of the Good, or any quality of God, we speak the truth, we tell the truth.

Scriptural writings deal with fundamentals in man and describe the benefits man may derive through acknowledging the truth. They tell also of his difficulties through neglect of this all-important pursuit. Whenever Scripture describes the achievements of man, it is setting forth correct computations for true spiritual man to accept. Whenever Scripture describes difficulties, it is revealing man as he suffers and shows forth the effects of delusion -- man believing a lie.

True spiritual man is always found considering the things of Spirit. God is Spirit. He knows whence he came and whither he goeth; he knows himself: I came forth from the Father, . . . I go to the Father. These facts sound radical and revolutionary. To express them a man must be oblivious to public opinion. Consider how amazing statements such as these sounded on unprepared ears nearly two thousand years ago.

It is significant that the most self-sufficient character of whom we have record should have need of a Father during his most successful phases of ministry. When about to launch into the deeps of individual ministry, he dispensed for a season with the protective office of mother with a curt, "Woman, what have I to do with thee," for he had known from childhood that he must be about his Father's business. The Father was the indispensable authority and companion. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

The Will, or Divine Determination, was his Father, and is your Father and mine. The son, exercising the prerogatives of a wise Father, knows his success depends upon strict adherence to the law of wisdom. A "father" symbolizes wisdom, as a "mother" symbolizes love. A son of God, exercising the wisdom of God, in a realm where the wisdom of men is predominant, has no choice but to accept his instructions from and submit his entire being to the Higher Wisdom and Understanding of Omniscience.

Jesus Christ, being born of woman but dedicated to the work of the Father, was bound to do things grievous in the sight of his mother, brothers, and sisters, for his aspiration was toward the Father who dwells On High.

It seems to be a masculine trait to adhere to a certain set of rules and to deal with standards and principles in the conduct of the affairs of life. We

go back in memory to austere and dogmatic fathers, and even grandfathers, whose bearing and behavior caused a sense of fear and awe, with a certain respect over all, and we know now that in many of their curmudgeon-like behaviors they were actually endeavoring to conform to principle, and to maintain a standard. I know a father, a successful business man, who is making an effort to direct a son in the way he believes his son should go, in the way he knows from experience is a good way. But the son has seen so much of life in his short, short span, through his activity as an air pilot during the war, that it is very difficult for both men to see eye to eye. Most fathers feel obliged to pass on to their sons the lessons they have learned through subscription to certain standards, or through hard experience, and their sons respond in various ways.

There are two ways of learning the lessons of life. The first is the way of wisdom; of subscription to certain standards and ideals; of receiving, retaining, and practicing instruction from On High. The second way is the more popular but more difficult. It is the trial and error system.

A wise father tries to direct his son in the way of wisdom; or, into what he considers to be the wise way. But no matter which way the son takes, either system has certain test periods during which the student has an opportunity to check up on his progress. In the way of experience, these are marked by certain upheavals and emergencies. In the way of wisdom they take the form of initiations and passing over from one state of consciousness into another (from mansion to mansion in the Father's house). When the lessons learned are applied, each emergency or each initiation makes for progress and growth.

We are not instructed to return to the gods of our fathers; but to the Father of our fathers' gods. The wisest of earthly fathers can teach his children many things. But the Father in Heaven teaches all things. "One is your Father," said Jesus, who, at the age of twelve, knew the way he should go.

The Heavenly Father has an infinite compassion for his sons and would help them make the right choice and pass all initiations, tests, and examinations with honor. He would inspire each one to have boldness in the day of judgment which is when it comes time to use the lessons learned. In such times it is good for the son to stand alone with the Father as the lessons are learned, for mother-love might try to make it easy for him, and thereby cause him to weaken at the critical moment.

There is an unmistakable pathway to immortality, but few there be who find it; and, among those who do, fewer still who remain upon it. But whoever does is he who realizes the constant necessity for the wise counsel of the One designated by Jesus as his Father. Such an One, such a bright and burning principle of truth do we honor this month when all earthly fathers are honored on Father's Day.

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SPIRITICITY June 1947

HANDS

By Louise Elizardi

Have you ever stopped to consider how important a place hands play in our lives? If you happen to be sitting in your living room, as I am, just look around at the objects there and try to visualize the craftsmanship behind each of the beautiful and comfortable furnishings you enjoy. There stands a sofa

with a carved wooden frame. Think of the clever pair of hands that wrought it. The tapestry covering the sofa was woven by a pair of artistic hands. Look around at the paintings on the walls and see the results of hands that so deftly placed strokes on canvasses. And think about the hands that fashioned pieces of Dresden, Satsuma, and Sèvres; all were hands from across the sea.

The hand, a complex instrument, is the most coordinated organ of our body. It can be trained to do anything we may desire. With it we take hold of things, especially the things we love.

The hands are instruments of giving and receiving. The more they give, the stronger they become. Their skill is often a man's whole support; and, the more service he renders, the greater the scope of his influence, and the more extensive his reward.

The heart shows through our hands. Our affections move our hands in loving service. The whole body activity throws itself through the hands and they often are able to do things seemingly impossible. Our ability to grasp and our ability to impart is revealed in our hands. The strong sensitive hand indicates a reliable person, one on whom to depend in time of need.

Jesus used his hands to bless children. We too may use our hands to aid and abet our fellows. Eventually, we discover it is not necessary to touch persons to help them, but we can extend our spiritual hands through our love in wanting to help. To give through our hands is the way each one of us builds a monument to himself.

It would be wonderful indeed if we could meet all the people who helped make one room in our house pleasant and home-like. To have the insight into their ways of living would gladden us in some cases, and in others, make us more conscious of the many blessings our way of life affords us. We are inspired when, with our hands, we try to do something beautiful so that we might have a part in contributing to civilization something good and lasting, whether it be a piece of furniture, a china figurine, a piece of literature, a building, or even the humble services and little things that make up a happy home.

What is your contribution?

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SPIRITICITY June 1947

PLOTINUS AS A SPIRITUAL GUIDE

By Robert A. Applegate, Jr.

Chapter III, DIALECTIC (Continued from last month)

This esthetic ascent is derived directly from Symposium 201 - 211. In another direction, however, Plotinus makes an important contribution to the esthetics of Plato by portraying the artist as not necessarily a copier of copies, but as looking beyond the manifestations of nature to the forming Ideas, and, in a sense, being the corrector of nature. Plato had banished the artists from the ideal state partly because, by copying visible objects, which were in turn copies, they were two stages removed from the Truth; and were deceivers with their protestations that they presented truth. Plato did not seem to realize that it was possible for the artist to use the same method he did, and

to derive his inspiration directly from the Ideas instead of through the medium of an external object. Plotinus corrects this shortcoming. "Still the arts are not to be slighted on the ground that they create by imitation of natural objects; . . . we must recognize that they give no bare reproduction of things seen but go back to the ideas from which Nature itself derives, and, furthermore, that much of their work is all their own; they are holders of beauty and add where Nature is lacking. Thus Pheidias wrought the Zeus upon no model among things of sense but by apprehending what form Zeus must take if he chose to become manifest to sight." Thus Plotinus, as Paul Elmer More says, "Justifies Platonism as the artist's philosophy par excellence."

The three ascents meet in contemplation, and from there the path is the same. This path will be continued even after the vision of the Highest has been won, and will be continued until the vision becomes continuous. Plotinus follows Plato closely in describing the whole ascent. Where he differs from his forerunner is in the last step, that of unification, which will be discussed in the next chapter. The whole ascent, however, may be summed up in the words of Plato: "Of this very process, then, there might be an art, the art of turning the soul round most quickly, and with the most effect. It would not be an art of producing a power of seeing in the soul, for it has that already -- though it has been looking in the wrong direction." This is the purpose of dialectic: to turn the soul toward the Highest and to keep it pointed in that direction. If that is done, both Plotinus and Plato say, the Good will manifest Itself to sight; and then, and not until then, will the philosopher rest from his labors.

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Chapter IV, UNIFICATION

The mystic experience is generally regarded as, at best, containing an element of delusion and, at worst, as sheer hallucination. However, sincerity requires me to say that I believe that it is not only an actual experience, but it is also all that the mystics claim that it is (the conscious union of the soul with God, from which, in reality, it is never separated). Since such a belief determines my judgment of Plotinus, it is necessary to give a brief explanation of it here. Such a doctrine is offensive to most and understandingly so, because its implications are contrary to all our logic and common sense and also to all that we have been taught to believe and accept as true. These considerations, however, are all outweighed by what is for me the only possible interpretation of the life, the words, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Two facts stand out about the life of our Master. The first is the resurrection, and the second is that he never claimed any power for himself that he did not claim for all men. "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do." The resurrection is not accepted by many, but it alone could have changed the disciples from trembling men fleeing from the cross to the fearless missionaries they became. Also it is reported by four men who, unless the event occurred, were either deceived or else liars -- either of which is harder to believe than that the event transpired. And, as St. Paul pointed out, if Christ did not rise then is Christianity "vain".

If the resurrection is admitted, the question remains as to whether Jesus was in some way a special dispensation from Heaven, the one and only incarnation of God; or the representative individual, our elder brother and way-shower, demonstrating in himself what all we may and should become. Both views are true. Jesus was the perfect incarnation of God. He was, as St. Paul says, "The fulness of the godhead bodily." He repeatedly claimed his oneness with the

Father, and he proved that oneness by his resurrection. He claimed this oneness, however, not only for himself, but for all men. "I and my Father are one." "Where I am (in consciousness), there ye may be also." "Our Father." "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." Jesus is the one and only perfect incarnation of God in that he is the one man in the world's history who has become so conscious of his oneness with the Father that he became God. He was not always the fulness of the godhead bodily. If he had been, there would have been no need for him to spend whole nights in prayer and meditation: or, rather, He was, in reality, always the fulness of the godhead, as every man is; but he had to spend long nights in prayer to make the outer appearance conform with the hidden Reality. This is the true significance of the incarnation. Every man is the incarnation of God; and all conception is immaculate, because all birth is spiritual. Every man is the fulness of the godhead, but Jesus is the only One who has ever realized this perfectly, so that he manifested outwardly what had been true from all eternity (and what is true for every man): His oneness with the Father. Jesus rose into such a high state of consciousness of this oneness that He was able to drop His body into the grave and pick it up again transformed into a body of light. He was thus the one perfect Mystic this world has ever seen, and He commanded: "Follow me." Jesus came to tell man of his oneness with God. He said, in effect, "What I am, you are too, but you do not know it. I have come to tell you."

It is usually considered presumptuous for a man to claim oneness with God, but it is not. Jesus was not presumptuous or arrogant although men thought that he was and called him a blasphemer. His constant prayer was, "Not my will, but thine, be done." He was always humble before his Father, as any man must be who makes the claim he did. It makes a man very humble to realize his oneness with God, because he realizes at the same time that "the son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do;" and he sees also the great contrast between what his life should be and what it is. Jesus proved once for all time the oneness of God and Man, and He also proved the possibility of coming into complete conscious realization of that oneness. To the question as to whether the beatific vision is delusion, it is only necessary to point out that Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration was not deluded, nor was He deceived the many nights He spent along with His Father. The mystic experience may on occasion be accompanied by psychopathic manifestations, but it is not of itself psychopathic. Jesus was not psychopathic; nor was John; nor Paul. As a modern mystic has pointed out, "The Real mystics of all time (have) been tongues of fire, uncontrovertible logicians, magazines of scholarship, and the most virile and masculine energies of the age they have invigorated."

The vision of the One is, for Plotinus as for all the mystics, the last step in the mystic ascent; or rather, in the case of Plotinus, as will be shown later, it is the next to last step. The vision is, according to Plotinus, the desire of every heart ("our true love is There"), without which there can be no true peace or satisfaction. ("Until the vision comes, they are still desiring something.") It is the indescribable union of the soul with God, the return of the soul to the Source whence it sprang, to that oneness which it had with the Father before the world was. "This state is its first and final, because from God it comes, its good lies There, and, once turned to God again, it is what it was."

The vision comes, Plotinus insists, not to him who seeks it, but to him who prepares himself for it and waits for it to appear. "We must not run after it, but fit ourselves for the vision and then wait tranquilly for its appearance, as the eye waits on the rising of the sun." The soul must prepare itself by every means possible and then "wait on the Lord." The preparation,

however, must be thorough and complete. Plotinus agrees, as do most mystics that "straight is the gate and narrow the way." Purgation and dialectic must be carried to their ultimate conclusion. The soul must be completely purified. It must have given up all belief in the reality of anything that is opposed to the Good. ("We must strive by entire renunciation to become emancipate.") It must not look to anything external either for help or comfort. Its attention must be directed entirely within, because, although the One is omnipresent, It can be found only within. ("Seek nothing of Him outside.") The intellect must be stilled; and all preconceived opinions must be surrendered. ("Here we put aside all learning.") As two things cannot occupy the attention at the same time, the mind must be emptied of all else before it can receive that which it desires. It must thus surrender all the riches of the intellectual realm. It is as though a man entered a magnificent house. He might admire the splendid furnishings for awhile, but as soon as the master appears, he will give all his attention to his host. The way into the presence of the One is thus by the successive denudation of the Soul of all that has encrusted upon it and even of all that has proved useful and beautiful up to this point. It is by surrendering all. In a word, Plotinus says, "Let all else go."

This via negativa of Plotinus has been criticized, because it does not allow the philosopher to bring over anything of personality into the mystic experience. It is true that according to Plotinus, the personality must be surrendered, because it would be only a hindrance in the experience of oneness; but it is not destroyed by thus being given up; rather it is developed. The surrender is like that of a son surrendering himself to a beloved father who was respected for his all-knowing. The personality, though given up temporarily, is returned after the experience, strengthened and purified; and the only thing that is lost permanently is the sense of separation from the Good and hence from fellow man. That is the only thing that can be lost by surrender to the Source of all. This sense of separation is actually a hindrance to the attainment of full personality. As Dean Inge has pointed out, "So far is it from being true that the self of our immediate consciousness is our true personality, that we can only attain personality, as spiritual and rational beings, by passing beyond the limits which mark us off as separate individuals. Separate individuality, we may say, is the bar which prevents us from realizing our true privileges as persons."

This same principle has been stated by H. B. Jeffery more clearly and beautifully, I think, than by any one else. "The men and women who give up their will, their intellect, their high position in the world, do so because they love the Truth more than they love themselves. They loosen their grasp of all outer things. They surrender their reasoning, their education, their culture, their scholarship, and all their ambition or pride of worldly accomplishments, that they may see God -- for it is the pure in heart who see God. In the Secret Place of silence, abandoning themselves to the Eternal One, they are given the Heavenly Light, and they touch the Inner Essence. They awake to the Holy Spirit. They know. And in their knowing, they become as simple as a child. They have given up their minds, but they do not lose their minds or their faculties. All things are returned to them, are added unto them to be seen and used aright -- with understanding and power. Their minds are illumined, they are raised to the plane above thinking, and become master of their lives."

(Continued next month.)

Alphabet of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day of the Month

JUNE 1947

2. The new AGREETH not with the old.
3. BE BLAMELESS.
4. Be of good COURAGE.
5. Wisdom is a DEFENSE.
6. ENCOURAGE . . . and strengthen him.
7. FOLLOW righteousness.

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9. GODLINESS with contentment is GREAT GAIN.
10. I am the Lord that HEALETH thee.
11. The Lord shall INCREASE you more and more.
12. A JUST man . . . will increase in learning.
13. He that KNOWETH God, heareth.
14. In all LABOR there is profit.

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16. God giveth not the Spirit by MEASURE.
17. As of the Father in My NAME.
18. A good man OBTAINETH favor of the Lord.
19. Watch with PERSEVERANCE.
20. Avoid foolish QUESTIONS.
21. Be RENEWED in the spirit of your mind.

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23. SHOW me the path of Life.
24. Why are ye TROUBLED?
25. How UNSEARCHABLE are His judgments.
26. His Word runneth VERY swiftly.
27. WHOSO WALKETH WISELY, he shall be delivered.
28. YOURS is the Kingdom of God.

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30. Be glad then, ye children of ZION, and rejoice.

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New light and meaning fills a constructive word held in mind while the attention is directed on High. Please keep the DAILY MEDITATIONS with us.

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