

FATHER

By Alden Truesdell

IN THE Lord's Prayer we have the model of communication between the children of God and the Creating Father of the children.

Jesus could find no word more appropriate to describe His beloved Father in Heaven than the word identified with the earthly parent. Some commentators have said this was a compliment to Joseph, of whom we no doubt hear too little. It was a case of a model father being relegated to near obscurity by being connected with such an illustrious Son.

Let us consider Joseph for a moment; let us get the picture of this story of the birth of Jesus from the perspective of Joseph. The account reads:

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost."

This would be a difficult situation for any bridegroom to face, a problem requiring a great deal of tolerance. Many men would have given a different account of themselves than that recorded of Joseph in this First Chapter of Matthew, which goes on to say:

"Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example was minded to put her away privily" - no vindictiveness, no self-righteousness, no publicity - a gentle tolerance and consideration. For Joseph was a spiritual man, as is evidenced by the angel of the Lord appearing unto him in a dream. The angel addressed him by his name Joseph, but added, "Thou son of David." This connected Joseph with the geneology from Abraham with which the Book of Matthew begins.

The angel went on to explain about Mary: "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins."

The account goes on to say: "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called His name JESUS."

So Joseph was completely obedient to the instructions of the angel.

There was another father of this time who had a similar experience with this same angel. This was Zacharias, and the report of this is found in the First Chapter of Luke. You all know the story - how Zacharias and his wife Elisabeth seemed to be in good standing with the Lord. Zacharias was a priest; Elisabeth was of the daughters of Aaron. Both were "well stricken in years" and they were childless. While Zacharias was burning incense at the altar in the Temple, there appeared to him an angel of the Lord. When Zacharias saw him, he was fearful; but the angel reassured him, telling him that his prayer had been heard, that he would be the father of a son, who would be named John.

And said the angel: "Thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at this birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord; . . . and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God."

Zacharias was doubtful, saying, "I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years."

Then said the angel: "I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God and am sent to shew you these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season."

So Zacharias was unable to speak until these things had happened.

Modern fathers are pictured as being in great distress and confusion in such times as these reported, but few modern fathers have quite this same problem to contend with. Yet the problems they do have are important to them. Modern fathers are no less good fathers because their off-spring are not predestined to be wayshowers and saviors (although they all have the potentiality). Indeed many fathers might wish their children were so destined, as their own responsibility might be less, their reward greater.

In those New Testament times the father was head of the family, an authority over all the members of that community. And the fathers, the earthly father, Jesus met in His family life were men of calibre of Joseph and Zacharias. He paid them high compliment when He used the term "Father" to describe the Heavenly Presence He knew so intimately and referred to as "My Father" or "Our Father in heaven." He advised the use of the term "Father" in addressing Divinity rather than any name on earth, but He did not miss the opportunity for a comparison and a lesson. He said that, if the earthly parent will give good things - a loaf rather than a stone, a fish rather than a serpent - how much more will the Heavenly Father give of the Whole Good, or the Holy Spirit, to them that ask Him.

Modern fathers might envy Joseph and Zacharias their ability to go into consultation with Gabriel, as they feel the problem of their progeny require such authority for solution. Some fathers feel the only element of salvation they can see in their father-and-child relationship is the tax-exemption for each dependent. But fathers have an honorable office and are not supernumeraries.

There are many good fathers in the world, and fathers who are not so good. But even the best father in the world is not good enough to perceive and promote the perfect potentiality of his child. For this reason all men, all women, all children, are advised to call no man upon the earth "Father." For One in Heaven is Father of all - and all men are brothers.

This truth of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man is often cited, but seldom acted upon. It would seem to require a predestined Saviour to acknowledge it and live in the consciousness of it completely. But is it not true that, if one Son of this Universal Family was able to show forth the heritage of His Divine Creator, then every brother has a similar potentiality?

Where this theory becomes a rule of action and a way of life, the Father is heaven becomes real and vital. But the sons must acknowledge Him in all their ways.

The Father is in the Son; the Son is in the Father. Both are in you, as Jesus Christ declared to his Father, "I in them, and Thou in Me."

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SPIRITICITY June 1960

FAITH, HOPE, WORKS

By Nell Truesdell

A PERSON may focus rays of sunlight through a lens and burn a piece of paper, set chips afire, or burn his skin. If an ill effect is produced, neither the lens nor the sunlight is at fault. Whoever focuses the lens controls the results.

In the spiritual realm there are two things that, when brought into right relation, make something happen: Faith and Hope. Faith, concentrated through Hope, produces works (or manifests as things). In the Book of Hebrews a seer put it this way:

"Faith is the Substance of things hoped for."

Faith is Substance. Faith is the Essence, the Light, the Stuff out of which things are made. Hope is the lens through which Faith converges into an effect, or demonstration of some thing.

Faith, we must remember, is immaculate. Faith is always Itself - the pure Living Substance of God. If things or works belie this, the fault lies entirely with us. Our lens of Hope is out of focus, or it is blurred by selfish purposes, worldly longings, ignoble yearnings.

Whether things are beneficial or are destructive depends upon the way that we use our Hope. We may choose either to focus our Hope toward the world or toward God. If we hold our lens of Hope steady toward God, the Faith (Substance or Light) of God will converge to manifest in good things and as good works. If we hold our lens of Hope toward the world, its lightless light (which is darkness) will concentrate to manifest in imperfect things and useless works.

"If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

"Have faith in God!"

"Faith without works is dead."

"I will show thee my faith by my works," wrote James. The worldly man places great value on what he calls "good works." He strives to support family, business, the welfare of strangers, and so forth. To meet the demands on his resources, he makes the mistake of turning his lens of Hope toward the world - a realm with light so dim that his efforts to focus that light manifest as need, want, lack, regardless of the amount of the world's goods he may garner. Even in the midst of so-called plenty, the worldling cannot fill the bottomless void of need.

The psalmist struck an encouraging note when he wrote:

"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."

Hope is the channel in man's consciousness through which Faith flows into manifestation. We must remember that the results of Faith, in passing from invisibility into visibility, are molded and controlled by our Hope. Faith is not made impure by an impure Hope; but the appearance, the demonstration of some thing, falls short of being perfect when we have misdirected our lens of Hope.

Faith is Substance. Faith gives "body" to things and to works; it makes them substantial. However, to have good things and to do good works we must clean our lens of Hope and hold it steady toward God. We must wait on God expectantly and thankfully for as long as it takes us to attain a good focus. Then the very Faith of God will appear as wholesome works and rewarding things. God already knows what things we have need of before we ourselves know; and it is always His good pleasure to bless His children.

Faith, Hope, Works:

These three represent:

- 1) God-Substance
- 2) Man's aspiration toward God
- 3) The result of man's aspiration toward God

"My soul," the Psalmist ordered, "wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him."

And Jesus Christ declared, "The Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works."

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SPIRITICITY June 1960
SOME WORDS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
By R. A. Applegate, Jr., Ph.D

"THUS IS the resurrection of the dead: . . . It (the body) is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written: 'The first Adam became a living soul.' But the last Adam becomes a life-giving spirit. But not that which is spiritual is first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven." (I Corinthians 15:42-47)

This is probably as unintelligible to most people as it was to me for many years. Yet Paul had something definite to say. He knew what he meant, and it is worthwhile listening to him and trying to find his meaning; for he had an amazing grasp of spiritual Truth.

The first stumbling block we run into is the word "natural." This, although you would never guess it, is the adjective of the word that is translated "soul." I have already said in an earlier article that, for the first-century writer of Greek, the word psyche ("soul") meant the ordinary, everyday consciousness, by which we are aware of ourselves and our surroundings. Socrates had given to the word this meaning and had shown with irresistible logic that the consciousness is the part of us that is immortal. His teaching was put into writing by Plato and became so popular that it became a part of the everyday thought of the ancient world. So anyone in the first century must have used the word psyche with the meaning that Socrates gave to it.

But there is more to this word than that. For the writers of the New Testament were Jews, who had been brought up on the Old Testament. Paul particularly, who had been a Pharisee, was thoroughly saturated in the Old Testament. Therefore when he uses such a common religious word, he uses it in its Old Testament meaning.

The Hebrew word corresponding to the Greek psyche is nephish. Its original meaning (like that of psyche) was breath. Thus we are told in the Creation Story that God "breathed into man the breath of life, and man became a living breath"; that is, a living soul or a living being. (Since the breath is the most obvious manifestation of life and the most urgent necessity for life, it is an obvious symbol for life.) But this breath of man, or life of man, is the natural breath which he shares with the animals. So, again in Genesis, we are told that God gave Adam and Eve dominion over all the animals, birds, and serpents, "in which is the breath (nephish) of life."

So nephish meant the natural breath, or the natural life, of man and of animals. And the expression to "save one's nephish" (or, to "save one's soul") meant most often simply to preserve one's life. Thus in the Twenty-third Psalm, "He restoreth my soul" meant originally: "He protects and enriches my life."

We can say then that for Paul psyche (which is the Greek equivalent of nephish and in the Greek Old Testament translates nephish) meant the natural, animal part of man, or man's consciousness of himself as an animal. In this psychic part of man are all his emotions and appetites as they are related to the physical world. (Psychology, psychiatry, psycho-analysis, psychotherapy, psycho-somatic medicine, deal with this psychic [animal] part of man's being and do not penetrate to the core of man, which is spirit.)

The Greek word that is rendered "spirit" is pneuma: the Hebrew word that corresponds to it is ruah. Again, both pneuma and ruah originally meant breath. But in the Old Testament ruah refers to the Breath of God. In the very beginning of Genesis we are told: "The Breath of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light." This Breath, which carries the Divine Word, "Let there be," is the original Creating Activity of God. (As the Apostle John wrote in his prologue, It was incarnated in Jesus Christ.)

God breathes His Breath into men who are receptive to it and who are purified to receive it. This is inspiration - the inbreathing of the Divine Breath; and we are told: "The inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding."

So we have the natural breath of man, with which he is born and which he shares with the animals; and we have the Divine Breath (or Life), which man can receive by devotion and which he shares with God alone - or, rather, with God and with those others who have attained a life devotion. (This is "the communion of the saints"; i.e., of those who are devoted.)

Adam is the Hebrew word that means man. Paul was a great deal more sophisticated than we sometimes give him credit for being. He knew that God did not fashion with His hands out of the dust of the earth a human being, whom He named "Adam" and from whom we are all descended. But he also knew that there is a truth in this story, and that it is the story of every man. (Primitive man perceives truth intuitively, but he cannot express it logically. So he tells a story embodying the truth that he has perceived. But the truth is not in the details of the story; it is in that which the story seeks to convey. It is the literal-mindedness of later interpreters that makes the story look ridiculous, when actually it is sublime. There is truth in all myths, but it is never in the outer details of them. So it is with this myth of creation.)

For Paul, Adam is the designation for generic Man. And the word body does not mean simply the flesh-and-blood form; it is closer to meaning what we designate "personality." Further, the natural antithesis for us is between spirit and matter, not as for the ancients between heaven and earth. For us "heaven" and "earth" have misleading spatial connotations.

So we are now in a position to see what Paul is saying in his discussion of the resurrection. We may translate his words as follows:

"It is sown a psychic (physical-emotional) personality; it is raised a spiritual personality. If there is a psychic personality there is also a spiritual personality. Thus it is written (in Genesis): 'The first Man became a living psyche.' But the last Man becomes a life-giving spirit (or, breath). But not that which is spiritual is first, but that which is animal, then that which is spiritual. The first Man is materially-minded; the second Man is of the Spiritual Realm."

This is, or should be, the story of every man. We are first conscious of ourselves as apart of the animal creation, as sharing with the animals in all the animal appetites, and as subject to the animal dissolution known as death. This is what Paul calls the psychic body, or the natural life; it is the animal life which almost all men are leading. The resurrection is our rising out of this life (that is, out of the consciousness of ourselves as animal-like beings) into the Life of Spirit, which Paul calls the spiritual body.

In other words, Paul is saying that, just as we have been conscious of ourselves as human animals, so we may become conscious of ourselves as spiritual beings. And this is the resurrection from the dead because in the Spiritual Realm there is no death. This all takes place in consciousness, because we are spiritual beings, made in the image and likeness of God, already ("there is a spiritual body"); but we are not conscious of the Truth of ourselves. We live in the dream-state of the first Adam, and our resurrection is our awakening to the Reality of ourselves - of our Being in God.

The metaphor of planting that Paul uses is appropriate. (Jesus used it too: "Unless a seed of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.") A seed is entirely different from the plant that springs from it. A seed is an insignificant, seemingly dead bit of matter; the plant that comes from it is a thousand times larger and more beautiful, and is full of life. So is the new Man entirely different from the old man, although we cannot say just how. "It has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

A seed must be planted before it can produce anything. If we keep it because we fear to lose it, it is sterile. Similarly, the human personality has to be buried in forgetfulness of self, devotion to God, before there can be the resurrection of the Self. "It is sown a human personality; it is raised a spiritual personality." This is something to strive for.

"I count all things but loss," said Paul: "and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ: . . . that I may know Him and the power of His Resurrection; . . . if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

Alphabet of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day of the Month

June 1960

1. Call, and the Lord shall ANSWER.
2. BLESSED BE the Lord.
3. CREATE in me a CLEAN heart.
4. DELIVER me in Thy righteousness.
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6. We ENJOY great quietness.
7. The righteous shall FLOURISH.
8. O how GREAT is Thy GOODNESS!
9. HEAR, O Lord, and HAVE mercy on me.
10. Nothing shall be IMPOSSIBLE to you.
11. The JUDGMENTS of the Lord are true.
*
13. Thou has KEPT me alive.
14. By the Word of the Lord doth man LIVE.
15. Thou, O Lord, art in the MIDST of us.
16. Build the house for My NAME.
17. ON Thee do I wait all the day.
18. God is a PRESENT help.
*
20. QUENCH not the Spirit.
21. Bring forth the best ROBE. (consciousness)
22. STAND upon thy feet, and I will SPEAK unto thee.
23. In THEE, O Lord, do I put my TRUST.
24. Thy right hand UPHOLDETH me.
25. The VOICE of the Lord is powerful.
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27. WALK in all His WAYS.
28. Thou has taught me from my YOUTH.
29. Have a ZEAL for God.
30. Thou art my God forever.

* * *

"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."

SPIRITICITY is the Working Power of the Spiritual Principle
as electricity is the working power of the electrical principle.