

THE THINGS THAT BE OF GOD

By Alden Truesdell

"HE BEGAN to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. . . . And Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him. But . . . He rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind Me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men."

Materialists, atheists, and indeed the great majority of mankind are so full of the things of men and the things of state that there is no place in their philosophy or economy for the things of God. Such things are all right for the childlike, the gullible, and for parasitical priesthoods; but are hardly worthy of adult, full-grown men or of nations prepared to meet the challenge of reality, say these self-satisfied egoists.

The blindness of the materialist, the negative stand of the atheist, the self-satisfaction of the natural man will not accept the exhibit of the things of God, because they are foolishness unto them. What need have they of love or joy or peace? What is all this foolishness about patience, gentleness, goodness, and faith? And what has love to do with making that business deal? Well, love would make a much better deal in a more excellent way, if it were invoked and permitted to have its perfect way. In considering any of the things of God, it would be easy to be carried away by the potency of the quality considered - whether it is love or joy or peace or any other thing of God.

One of the main objectives of man is power, and man has many notions of what power is and how to get it. But power is one of God's chief attributes. God-Power is, in reality, the only power. But when men consider power, what they have in mind is having power over other men and power that can be seen of men.

A close business associate of mine was filled with this idea of power. He told me of his desire for power long before he attained it. When he saw a picture of a dynamic man pointing his finger at mankind in general, he said, "I want to be that man." He saw that money seemed to be the real power in the world; so he decided to get money. He was a brilliant promoter in the circulation of publications and was able to apply one of his circulation contests to marketing a product and making a sum of money to start him on his way. He attained a degree of power in the field of publications and made a great deal of money.

At the time, I was becoming interested in Christ Truth and he could not understand my interest, as Truth did not seem to be a particularly lucrative field. He got what he set out to get - and even more. For he attracted all the persecutions attending power in the world and what the Scriptures call the "pride of life." He had a broken home, an unhappy affair with his lady business associate; he died early. I do not gloat over the outcome of this friend's ambition, but I do give thanks for the stubborn belief taking form in me that something was wrong with that set-up, and that there had to be a better way of life.

The things that be of God are not glamorous as we are familiar with glamour. Often they seem to be the common, the ordinary, even the inferior things in comparison with the ornate pomp and ceremony of the world or the ultra-fashionable exhibits that are very suave and chic. Indeed we read how God chooses the weak things to confound the mighty, and we remember how improbable it seemed that any good thing could come out of despised Nazareth.

We are called upon many times to revise our own judgments as to what is and is not worthy. One of the best instructions and one of the easiest to overlook is the simple, two-word command, "Judge not." It is so easy to analyze a person or a situation and to come up with a ponderous panacea. But when we understand that "there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so," we are not so apt to clutter our minds with evil judgments.

The atheist is usually unhappy and cynical, because joy is a quality of the thing he denies. The communist invites a coexistence based on trust and is constantly thwarted, because the philosophy he has chosen puts its trust in something untrustworthy. The state as such is not dependable; the Spiritual Department of Being is the only safe hope, because it is always there, always available, and always dependable. "By Me kings reign, and princes decree justice."

We have entire freedom of choice in such matters and may embrace and believe any ideology we care to. But we cannot, by that subscription, make it true. On the other hand it makes no difference to Truth whether we believe it or not. It makes no difference to Truth how many millions of people have believed certain inadequate doctrines for how many thousands of years.

But we know when we hear Truth. We know when we are moving toward the Truth, just as a horse knows when he is heading toward home. There are certain unmistakable overtones which we become aware of when we are being exposed to the pure Christ Truth.

To choose the things of men is to go the way of all flesh. But choosing the things of God, or accepting only God's judgments, opens up a miraculous new way of life. Jesus dealt entirely with the things of God and revealed for man's acceptance a redeemed race and a finished Kingdom.

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SPIRITICITY, MAY 1959

THE SCROLLS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

By Robert Applegate, Jr.

(Continued from last month)

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS help us to understand many passages of the New Testament by revealing the background of thought and belief in which they were written. They bring us closer to the writers of the New Testament and reveal them to us as real persons, just like ourselves, moving through a world much like ours and meeting the same problems we meet. In so doing the Scrolls help to correct some of the hypercritical analyses that scholars have made of our Scripture.

In the "pastoral Epistles" (I & II Timothy and Titus) Paul writes quite a bit about the duties of "bishops," "deacons," and "elders"; e.g.: "If anyone aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a noble task. Now a bishop must be above reproach. . . . Deacons likewise must be serious. . . . Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor," etc. Many scholars have felt that Paul could not have written these words, because there was no such formal organization of the church at the time that he wrote. They have believed - and have often stated as incontrovertible fact - that the Pastoral Epistles were written at a later date and attributed to Paul to give them authority. The Scrolls show that there is no ground for this view.

Paul of course did not use the word "bishop." He used the Greek word episcopos, which is derived from the two words epi, meaning "over," and scopos, a "watcher." It means, literally, an "overseer," or in the Latin equivalent "supervisor." The word episcopos is, further, the exact equivalent of the word that is used in the Manual of Discipline for one of the Essene officials. "If the superintendent of the general membership . . . has something to say to the company, he is to stand up, . . ."

Another passage in the Manual of Discipline reads: "The priests are to occupy the first place, the elders are to come second." So here we have two of the terms that Paul uses in his pastoral letters, and we see that they were in common use before the time he wrote. The word "deacon" is simply a transliteration of the Greek diaconos, which was the usual designation for anyone who served in any capacity.

If we used the words "overseer" and "servant" instead of "bishop" and "deacon" (which have come to have special meanings far removed from their original designations) we would come closer to understanding what Paul was saying.

This does not at all mean that the early Christians deliberately copied the Essene organization. They did not want to start a new organization. They were Jews and they would have much preferred to teach in the synagogues and to maintain all their accustomed religious practices.

Wherever Paul went, he always spoke, first, in the synagogue. When he was thrown out of there, he talked wherever he could. When he found a group of men who would accept his teaching, he taught them; but since he could not stay with them, he appointed the older men to be in charge of the meetings for worship and the care of the needy. The terms used for the men were the common words that were in circulation, being used by the Essenes and possibly by other groups. They were called either "elders" or "overseers." (The words were used interchangeably.) Today we would probably call them "committee members."

Paul and the other announcers of the Good News were forced by circumstances to found a new organization (or, rather, a loose federation of locally independent organizations). In doing so, they used models with which they were familiar and the terms with which they were acquainted. Even the word which appears in our translations of the Bible as "church" (which would be better rendered "congregation" or "assembly") was a common word used for any group that assembled for any purpose. It was the equivalent of the Aramaic word used by the Essenes to designate their community.

The organization of the early Christians remained exceptionally informal and fluid. The Apostles (including Paul), most of whom traveled extensively, were both the chief administrators and the main teachers. Under their super-

vision, the local leaders (elders and overseers) carried on as best they could. Paul's correspondence shows that quite frequently they needed encouragement, correction, and reproof.

Another point is perhaps worth mentioning. Many scholars have maintained that certain expressions in the Gospel and the Letters of John show that they could not have been written by John the Apostle, but must have been written much later by another John who was acquainted with Greek thought. However these very same expressions turn up in the Dead Sea Scrolls, written in Palestine before the time of Jesus; and so we are not surprised to find them in works written by a disciple of Jesus. We remember that, before the disciple John joined Jesus, he had been a follower of John the Baptist; and that the Baptist had probably at one time been an Essene. To find Essene terms in a book composed by the Apostle John is exactly what we would expect, and their presence serves to confirm what until recent times was accepted without question - that the Gospel and Letters of John were written by John the "beloved disciple" and are thus the only documents we have (aside from I and II Peter and Revelation) that were written by one of the original followers of the Master.

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SPIRITICITY, MAY 1959

THE TEACHING OF JESUS

Paraphrased by Nell Truesdell

JOHN, Chapter 11

(WHEN LAZARUS, the brother of Mary and Martha, was critically ill in Bethany, his sisters sent word to Jesus in Perea, a day's journey away. Jesus said to His disciples:)

---- This illness is not the end of Being, but is intended to reveal the Supreme One, that, by it, the Being of the Supreme One in man may be exalted. --
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(Though Jesus loved Lazarus and his sisters, He delayed in Perea for two more days, after which He said to His disciples:)

---- Let us return to Judea. ----

(The disciples warned Jesus that only recently the Judeans had tried to kill Him, but He answered them:)

---- Are there not twelve hours in a day? Whoever walks about in the day does not stumble because he makes his way around in daylight. But when a man walks about in darkness, he stumbles because, of himself, he has no light. Our friend Lazarus is asleep, but I am going to arouse him. ----

(The disciples suggested that Lazarus would wake up by himself, but Jesus said plainly:)

---- Lazarus is no longer alive. I am glad on your account that I was absent, so that your faith may be strengthened; anyhow, let us go to him. ----

(Thomas, called the Twin, argued that all of them should accompany Jesus, even though all might be killed.)

(Since Bethany is only about two miles from Jerusalem, many friends had come to commiserate with Mary and Martha. When Martha learned that Jesus was nearing the village she left Mary in the house and went out to meet Him. "Lord," she said, "if you had been here my brother would not have died. But I know that whatever you ask of God, that will He do for you." Jesus answered her:)

---- Your brother shall exist once more. ----

(Martha replied that she knew Lazarus would be resurrected at the Last Day. But Jesus countered her belief in a vague future with the words:)

---- I am the uplifting and the quickening Principle of Being; the person who has ceased to exist in the world will again exhibit Being; and whoever is conscious of Spiritual Being and trusts in me will not even lose existence. Do you believe this? ----

(Martha replied that she believed that Jesus was the Deliverer, the Agent of God, whom the world waited for; she then went home to tell Mary quietly that Jesus was coming. Immediately Mary left the house. The mourners, who thought that she was going to the tomb to wail, followed along. On reaching Jesus, Mary fell at His feet and repeated Martha's words: "Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died." Seeing the crowd of mourners, Jesus groaned inwardly and trembled.)

---- Where have you laid him? ----

(As the sisters led Jesus to a cave, He wept, and those who noticed remarked how much Jesus had loved Lazarus. Among themselves they recalled His having opened a blind man's eyes; they murmured He might also have kept Lazarus from dying. Meanwhile He showed He was under great pressure by the deep-throated sounds that came from Him. When He arrived at the cave He ordered:)

----Remove the stone. ----

(Martha, sure that, after four days, the body had begun to decompose, said so; but Jesus reminded her:)

----Did I not tell you that if you would trust, you would behold the triumph of the Supreme One? ----

(When the stone was removed, Jesus steadfastly looked up and said;)

---- Father, I thank You that You have favored me. I am aware that You always favor me; but because of the group I say this, so that they may be persuaded that You have made me Your Agent. ----

(Gathering His inner strength, Jesus spoke in a loud voice:)

---- Lazarus, come out! ----

(Lazarus, wrapped in grave clothes and with a napkin tied around his face, came out. Jesus ordered:)

---- Untie him and give him freedom. ----

(Many of the crowd were then convinced about Jesus and believed that He was the expected Messiah. But some rushed to the Pharisees and chief priests to report what He had done. The religious leaders were greatly distressed, because they feared there would be a popular uprising and that the Romans would destroy the Jewish nation and eliminate the priestly privileges. The High Priest Caiaphas, who had psychic insight, quieted them with the assurance that one man would die for the people, rather than that the whole nation should perish. He added that Jesus' death would also gather the Jews that were scattered in other lands into one fold. So from that day the religious leaders united in their purpose to kill Jesus.)

(Jesus, knowing these things, did not go about Judea openly, but retired to a city called Ephraim, near the Samaritan border, where He remained with His disciples.)

(The Passover, probably A.D. 30, drew near and many country people went to Jerusalem to purify themselves. They wondered whether Jesus would come to the celebration. For already the religious leaders had given orders that anyone who knew where He was should report it to them, so that they might arrest Him.)

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SPIRITICITY, MAY 1959

THE POWER OF THE NAME

By H. B. Jeffery

(Continued from last month)

JUST BEFORE His Ascension Jesus told His disciples to tarry in Jerusalem and abide in His Name. They did so for six weeks, and in the seventh week the power of the Holy Ghost came upon them.

Then they went out to teach and to preach; the whole purport and burden of their doctrine was the power of His Name. "His Name, through faith in His Name hath made this man strong," said Peter of a cripple who had been healed "in the Name of Jesus Christ."

"This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders," he continued. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

In His Name the disciples did mighty works: the healing of the sick, the casting out of demons, the raising of the dead, as Jesus had commanded them to do. What Jesus did and what they did, we shall do also, if we have become baptized in His Name and have come into His understanding.

As we take upon ourselves, and into ourselves, the Name Jesus Christ, there will enter into our minds a new perception and a new power of understanding, whereby we may know all things; for the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth. There will enter into the body a higher power, transcending any power possessed by any man who lives in the physical consciousness only. The mind will be renewed, and the body transformed. For "He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." We shall be reborn and become new creatures: children of the Light, all glorious; having a quickened capacity to

attain the unity of faith and the knowledge of God's Son, even unto reaching that measure of development which belongs to the completeness of Christ.

No longer as children, but as full-grown men in Christ Jesus shall we ascend "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

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TO KNOW our sonship to God is the purpose of our existence in the world. To know that the "only begotten Son" within us is the Reality of our Being gives us entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven and Eternal Life. Nothing experienced ever affects the interior Father-Son relationship, not even death. When spiritual Reality is accepted into the consciousness of man, he is exempt from death; for he abides - here and now with the Eternal Father who is Life. This is what Jesus was explaining when He said, "If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death."

A. J. Truesdell

Alphabet Of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day Of The Month

MAY 1959

1. In ALL thy ways ACKNOWLEDGE Him.
2. BELIEVE on the Name of the Son of God.
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4. God is the health of my COUNTENANCE.
5. Whoso hearkeneth unto the Lord shall DWELL safely.
6. I was set up from EVERLASTING.
7. FAITH cometh by hearing.
8. There is GREAT GAIN in GODLINESS with contentment.
9. Take HOLD of the Life which is life indeed.
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11. Christ IS the IMAGE of God.
12. No man is JUSTIFIED before God by law.
13. Be still, and KNOW that I am God.
14. The earth was LIGHTENED with His Glory.
15. Remember His MARVELOUS works that He hath done.
16. Walk in NEWNESS of life.
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18. We OURSELVES are comforted by God.
19. The Lord POSSESSED me in the beginning of His way.
20. He QUIETED the earth.
21. REKINDLE the gift of God that is within you.
22. We look not at things which are SEEN.
23. The Lord TRIETH the righteous.
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25. Lean not to thine own UNDERSTANDING.
26. Be a VESSEL unto honour.
27. He that WALKETH WITH the WISE shall be WISE.
28. Thy YEARS shall have no end.
29. Be ZEALOUSLY affected always in a good thing.
30. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth.

"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.