

SPIRITICITY November 1958

## THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Paraphrased by Nell Truesdell

IN JESUS' day there were in Palestine many rabbis, or teachers, each with his own cluster of disciples. Chief among such men was John the Baptist, who drew great crowds about him as he baptized in the River Jordan and preached repentance. When the people wondered whether or not he were the Messiah (the Anointed Deliverer), John disclaimed any such commission, as is reported in each of the Four Gospels.

No teacher before or during Jesus' time was able to expound a doctrine straight from God. This made Jesus of Nazareth different from other teachers. When He spoke to the people, He cut through the maze of man-made rules that had been built around the original Mosaic Law and showed his listeners that they could be released from religious bondage. At every opportunity, Jesus either implied or openly declared that He had been appointed by God to teach the truth about God and about man. For instance, He taught that God is Good: "There is none good but One, that is, God." He taught that man is the son of God. "Is it not written in your law," He asked the religious leaders, "I (God) said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" Jesus did not hedge in His teaching.

Regardless of the risk of being stoned for blasphemy, Jesus taught through parable and bold statement that He was appointed - nay, compelled - by God to come into the world and show men the way back into God's Kingdom.

My paraphrase of the Parable of The Good Shepherd (as related in John 10: 1-18, 25-30) is an attempt to release a basic meaning in the familiar story, in which Jesus states that He is the true leader; that He knows God; that God knows Him; that He will help His followers to triumph in the final transition - the hour when no man can do anything for himself. The message is clear and undeniable. It is the Truth; it is the Good News.

First, Jesus talks about the sheepfold and the sheep. Then He talks about Himself as the door to the sheepfold (God's Kingdom).

--- In truth I declare to you, the person who does not come in through the entrance of the sheepfold, but gets in by another opening, he is a sneak and a lawbreaker. But the one who comes in through the entrance is the protector of his charges. To the shepherd the night watchman opens; and the sheep recognize his call: for he names the ones that belong to him, and leads them away. And after the shepherd takes out the sheep belonging to him, he walks ahead of them, and they trail behind: because they respond to the shepherd's call. They will refuse to trail behind a newcomer, but will scatter from him: because they do not recognize the call of outsiders.

(Because His listeners did not understand what He was talking about, Jesus said to them again:)

--- Truly, I declare to you, I (the Son of God) am the passageway for My followers. The many teachers who appeared at any time earlier than I (the Son)

are stealers and lawbreakers: but the true followers refused to respond to them. I (the Son of God) am the entrance (to the Kingdom): any person who admits himself by me shall be protected from danger, and shall be supported as he comes and goes.

The sneak breaks in only to rob, and to slaughter, and to render useless: the Son of God is here so that the followers may be protected, and their life be preserved in full measure (to eternity). I am the dependable leader: the dependable leader sacrifices his life in the interest of his charges. But the hired shepherd, to whom the sheep do not belong, observes the devourer approaching, and runs away: and the greedy destroyer makes a surprise attack, and frightens the sheep off in various directions. A hired shepherd takes flight, because he is hired and is not concerned about the sheep.

I, the Son of God, am the dependable leader and I know my sheep, and my sheep know me. As the Supreme One knows me, so also I know the Supreme One: and I sacrifice my life to protect my charges. And I am responsible for followers other than the Jews, people that do not live in this country: I am required to lead them also, and they shall respond to my call; and there shall be one realm and one leader. Consequently, the Supreme One respects me, because I surrender my human existence in order that I may possess spiritual Being. No human being wrests human existence from me, but I surrender it on my own. I am able to relinquish it, and I am able to receive it anew. I have accepted this assignment from the Supreme One.

(To the demand of the religious leaders that He tell them plainly whether or not He was the Christ, Jesus answered:)

---I said it plainly to you, but you are not persuaded. The deeds that I accomplish by identity with the Supreme One, those deeds support my claim. However you are not persuaded because you are not my followers, as I declared to you. My followers recognize my call, and I am aware of them, and they trail behind me. And I endow them with everlasting Being; and they shall never suffer death, nor shall anybody jerk them from my grip. The Supreme One, who gave them to me, is of more consequence than all; and no human being has the ability to wrest anybody away from the Supreme One.

I (the Son) and the Supreme One are the same. ----

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I THANK THEE, FATHER

By Alden Truesdell

THE BENEFITS to be derived from the practice of thanksgiving are recognized in social behavior, where it is customary to give thanks for any compliment, favor, or service. A "thank you" takes little time or effort. It always pays good dividends, for it causes reactions of pleasure, which may extend into helpfulness. Even God will respond speedily and favorably to an attitude of appreciation and praise. It is little wonder that the Psalmist cried, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness!"

The Psalmist seems to have been constantly giving thanks for some desired manifestation of good. He ever expressed appreciation to a magnificent King,

who was above all gods. When we consider some of the expressions of Jesus Christ they seem simple and naive in comparison. But His appreciation was expressed to a close and intimate Presence for benefits already received, though not yet manifest. He always spoke with the authority of a rightful partaker. "I thank Thee, Father, that Thou hast heard Me" - here is the assurance that borders on blasphemy, of which he was accused. "And I knew that Thou hearest Me always" - here is a casual expression based in an assurance of established relationship.

Jesus made no attempt to describe the Indescribable; for He knew that no adjectives or combination of phrases could add to the already established Fact of the Loving Father's pleasure to give all good to His children.

Thanksgiving is more than mere amenity. It is a stimulation from the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us. It is an upsurge of heart-felt gratitude, a process in consciousness that exposes provision already at hand - to be received and used. True thanksgiving, deep within, is a vital, fundamental upwelling emotion; and an emotion is the out-motion of God. Jesus always gave thanks for the unfailing operation of an all-providing Principle, as when He fed the Five Thousand. But He explained that provision alone is not enough. "Man shall not live by bread alone," He warned, "but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

At no time could the worldly-wise be trusted with a knowledge of the Principle by which Jesus Christ fed multitudes; for, if they knew this secret, they would have the multitudes organized, subsidized, militarized - and impoverished. Jesus therefore gave thanks that these things had been hidden from the wise and prudent of the world and revealed unto babes; for so it seemed good in God's sight.

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SPIRITICITY November 1958

MONASTICISM

By Robert Applegate

"TO TEACH men how to conduct their lives, we need guides who combine a knowledge of the modern world with the science of the doctor, the wisdom of the philosopher and the conscience of the priest; in other words, ascetics who have experience of life and are learned in the science of man."

- Alexis Carrel

To most men the word "monastery" probably suggests a forbidding, cheerless place, where peculiar people bury themselves to escape from life. Yet - at least in the first centuries of the monastic movement - the monasteries were radiating centers of life and inspiration. The great monastics of the past performed, for their own age, the service of guides that Alexis Carrel says we stand in need of today. By the purity of their devotion and the sincerity of their purpose, these men kept Christianity from being swallowed up completely in worldliness and empty formality. Quite incidentally, they kept alive the best of the ancient culture of Greece and Rome. By this means and by their discipline and the energy that was derived from it, the monastics provided the materials out of which our present civilization was constructed. Far more than

the emperors, generals, and statesmen, the men who turned their backs on the world have been the makers of history.

We teach the wrong things in our history courses; for who has ever heard of Anthony of Alexandria, Pachomius of Tabennisi, Pambo of Nitria, Basil of Caesarea, or Benedict of Nursia? Yet those men - much more than the Napoleons, Caesars, and Alexanders - have influenced the course of history. Over the centuries the military conquests cancel themselves out. And all social legislation always proves futile. The kings, parliaments, and statesmen are moved by spiritual laws they do not understand and are powerless to control. It is only religion that changes the course of events, for it is religion only that changes men. And for centuries the vital life of our religion was centered in the monasteries.

Yet monasticism has changed the course of history, not by seeking to do so but by seeking something better. It was by despising the world that the great monastics enriched the world. For monasticism is based on a presupposition which, if true, makes it an eminently sensible way of life. That presupposition is that it is possible to "lay up . . . treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt." It is today a commonplace that "you can't take it with you." What is not usually recognized is that there is that which you can and will take with you - your consciousness of God.

We need today a new monasticism to teach men to live for God, to show them how to give themselves that which will last to eternity.

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SPIRITICITY November 1958

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

By H. B. Jeffery

(Continued from last month)

TEMPERANCE OR SELF-CONTROL

THAT TEMPERANCE which is the fruit of the Spirit is perfect Self-control, or the government that is upon the shoulder of the Prince of Peace. It is a control and balance that comes not from the will of the outer man but from the Christ Center within man. True temperance has nothing to do with man's struggle for the victory of his own principles, prejudices, and laws. On the contrary, it is the resting of man's mind and heart in the Eternal Principle, his understanding of the Divine Law, and his obedience to it.

Man, in general, seems restless, impatient, fretful, and resentful. He has a special resentment against any law that he considers restrictive or binding. For he inherently feels his God-given right to freedom. But instead of turning within, man acts with a sense of separateness, and tries to exercise his prerogatives by dominating the conditions in the world about him through his own self-will.

Eventually, man discovers the futility of his own self-willed efforts; and then, as a consequence of his human failure, he often feels that life itself is purposeless, futile, blind. This is because he looks upon the outer rim of human circumstance and judges it to be life. When he endeavors to reason from

this circumference in the hope of finding a solution to the complex and involved problems of life, he finds no solution.

This is a mistaken way of judging and seeking, for the order and law of all life is ever from center to circumference. When a man does not understand this, and therefore does not comply with the law of life, he only finds conditions becoming more complex and confusing, instead of being simplified. But if, in his extremity, he ceases from his own activity; if he stops to observe the contrariness of his going; and if, awakening to the falsity of his way, he reverses his procedure; then indeed the path of righteousness will be revealed to him.

"Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." When a man seeks aright, he will glimpse the fact of a Center of Being within himself, from which his life forces flow. He will see that, in their outflowing, these life forces build circumstance and condition, and determine his relations with his fellow man.

The Center of Being within man is the Central Heart of things and of all true activity. It will prove to be the Center and Secret of life itself. It is the Center and Secret of man's individual life and, indeed, of the whole universe. It is the Real Self of man, from which emerge strength, life, intelligence, and peace.

To seek and to find that Self is to know the All, is to come into a state of peace that passes human understanding, is to drink of the fountain of abundant Life. Hence the admonition inscribed over the temple doors of ancient Greece: "KNOW THYSELF."

"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" said Paul to the Corinthians. "Blessed art thou!" said Jesus, when Peter recognized the Christ Self. And that same Christ Self, which has spoken throughout all ages, still says to us: "Behold Me! Know Me!"

Not to know this Self within - which is changeless, timeless, immortal - is to be totally ignorant, knowing nothing. In such a state of nescience, man is but gambling with uncertainty and deceiving himself with the flitting, substanceless, cinematic picture on the screen of Time.

To know the Divine Center within one's self is to be in the Secret Place of security and power. To live in and from that Place is to be free from the agitation, disquiet, trouble, and tumult of the sense man, as well as from the bickerings, argumentations, disputes, and petty wranglings of the purely intellectual man. Indeed, all the inconsequent and selfish attitudes of the outer man must be willingly cast off and eliminated by one who would find the Divine Center of Life which is the Seat of power, self-control, serenity, understanding.

At the Divine Center there is freedom from desire and strife; for this Center is the abode of Deity, passionless and pure, in whom there is no need nor want. "My ME is God," said the mystic Madame Guyon. "The kingdom of God is within you," said Jesus the Christ. Within this kingdom is the seat of control, the place of the ruling power in man.

The man who is determined not to remain contented with the illusions and shadows of the world of appearance, who resolves to penetrate to the heart of

Reality, he by the simple strength of that determination will dispel every deceptive element that forms the veil of fantasy obscuring man's vision of the Truth. He shall behold the kingdom of the Self and enter into it. He shall know the substantiality and realness of Life. He shall be taught of the One within how to live and have dominion over externals.

When a man consciously lives and moves and has his being in God, all the things ruled over by God become subservient to him; all thoughts, feelings, and emotions are brought completely under his dominion. Then he is the slave of no passion; he bows down to no opinion or man-made doctrine; he worships no idols, nor entertains any falseness of thought or feeling.

God is Spirit, the Principle of purity and holiness. When a man finds the Divine Center within his own being, and abides in it, he must of necessity behold that purity within himself and partake of it throughout his consciousness. In consequence, he becomes wise, well, serene, and strong.

"The disciple is not above his master," said Jesus Christ, "but every one that is perfect shall be as his master." To be perfect is to be pure in heart, without hypocrisy or double-mindedness. "Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in His statutes, and to keep His commandments," said King Solomon to his people. "It is God that girdeth me with strength and maketh my way perfect," declared David.

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," says Jesus Christ. If a man's heart is clear and perfect toward the Divine Self, he will be pure and therefore strong. He will ceaselessly radiate purity and strength, without any effort or conscious thought.

At the Center of Life within man there is no sin, sickness, or death; and he who has found that Center has also found the refuge from these false beliefs and is free from them. There is no time nor space known to him who abides at the Center of Life. All his yesterdays are as naught, having vanished into nothingness. Therefore no sins of the past can point accusing fingers at him to disturb his rightful serenity and peace; neither do remorse, regret, or forebodings enter into his place of habitation within the Father's House.

In this place there is no tomorrow; there is only the Eternal Now. Therefore there is no doubt, bewilderment, apprehension, or uncertainty present to destroy man's happiness by day or to deprive him of repose at night.

The immortal Present is all there is, and in this Present does man live. If he lives consciously in the Present, looking neither into the past nor into the future, he shall behold within, and all about him, the Beauty and Order, the Potency and Power, the Understanding and Wisdom of God; and his life shall be made radiant with the chaste joyousness of these Divine Attributes.

(To be concluded next month)

Alphabet Of  
DAILY MEDITATIONS  
For Every Week Day Of The Month

NOVEMBER 1958

1. He that doeth the Will of the Father ABIDETH forever.

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3. I must BE about My Father's BUSINESS.

4. CONTINUE ye in My love.

5. The Word . . . DWELT among us.

6. I have ESTEEMED the Words of His mouth.

7. Thou shalt go before the FACE of the Lord.

8. Show Thy servant Thy GREATNESS.

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10. I am the Lord, your HOLY One.

11. INHERIT Eternal Life.

12. We are JOINT-HEIRS of God.

13. The KINGDOM of God is at hand.

14. Thou shalt LOVE the Lord thy God.

15. MIGHTY works are wrought by His hands.

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17. Thou shalt be NOURISHED up in the words of faith.

18. I have OVERCOME the world.

19. I will keep thee in all PLACES.

20. Thy Word hath QUICKENED me.

21. The Lord shall REWARD thee.

22. Let my prayer be SET forth before Thee.

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24. TURN to the Lord, thy God.

25. Good and UPRIGHT is the Lord.

26. Ye are of more VALUE than many sparrows.

27. Blessed is he that WATCHETH.

28. Come with singing unto ZION (the inner).

29. The Lord is with YOU.

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"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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SPIRITICITY is the working Power of the Spiritual Principle,  
As electricity is the working power of the electrical principle.