

## BE GENTLE

By Nell Truesdell

"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness and wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not; and lie not against the truth. ... For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. ... And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

That James had reached a high degree of understanding is revealed in the third chapter of the Book bearing his name. The exercise of kindness is open sesame to the good in all walks of life and among all sorts of people. Kindness is revealed through gentle speech and acts. Gentleness is a quality born with every person; hence, in the nature of everybody is the trait of consideration, mildness, kindness. However, if this fundamental in anybody's make-up has become tarnished or even seems to be lost, it can be regained whenever there is a willingness to resurrect or reacquire it. If a person has allowed himself to become tempestuous, or high-strung, he might have to school his spirit to mildness by severe discipline and even suffering.

However we consider it, gentleness is certainly a quality worth nurturing for through it every phase of our daily life can be successfully administered. We might be good-hearted and generous, we might exercise a protective quality that cares for, provides things necessary, and contributes to the proper management of the interests of others to their advantage; but, if we lack gentleness our services will be accepted with very little sympathetic response for all our trouble and devotion.

At some time we surely have witnessed the amiable person gathering in the good fruits of association with his fellows. Without seeming to lift a finger he manages all who come into his orbit; yet, all are grateful for the privilege of serving him and do so generously and willingly. There is no doubt but that all of us long for the warmth suggested in the gentleness of another when we chance to be the recipient of this wonderful attitude. Whoever is fortunate enough to remember a gentle mother or father, sister or brother, knows the marvelous soothing effect this distinguishing element had on ruffled spirits, depressed moods, or the terrible sense of failure. When in adult life we meet this quality in friends or strangers we react toward them with a feeling of gratitude. We love and become tractable to those who bless us with kindness of heart.

Vegetation responds to gentleness. Plants flourish for those who love them and who treat them courteously. I know one woman who can grow any type of plant in a pot and her house is a bower of happy growing things. She loves her plants, and is gentle when handling them.

In the animal world we are familiar with the deer as best representing the quality of gentleness. The innate gentleness of the deer has forced to full development special means for bodily protection: its sense of smell is acute; its eyes are well developed; and, it is fleet of foot. The young are so marked that they hide from the view of other animals and from the discerning eye of man.

All our tamed animals show forth gentleness when they are well treated. Their natural wildness seems to have been converted into a high degree of docility and the owner of any domestic animal loves to tell his friends about the antics of his pet. Animals exhibit a gratitude that flatters and warms the heart of those who love them. One person can storm at a pet dog in an effort to get him to come forward, and fail utterly; another, with gentleness in his mood can, the next moment, get a ready response.

When the years tame a man, or bring him by force if necessary into right relation with others in his world of affairs, he is usually gentle for, if he is wise, he sees that this attitude produces better results than gruffness and insult.

Being gentle toward God might be a new idea to some people. Often a person will approach God with an air of belligerence, even rebellion, and feel in some way that God has forsaken him. But whenever anybody approaches God in a devoted, tractable mood, he feels better and is uplifted and blessed. Improved outer affairs indicate how great is the blessing.

Gentleness is not a negative quality. It is not passive or vacuous. It is a positive realization that calmness, tranquility, restfulness of spirit are more aggressive than all the striving in the world.

Everything, animate or inanimate, has a soft spot that can be touched. When we contact this yielding center we control whatever it is we are dealing with. So long as we are gentle we are the master and can get full cooperation for as long as we wish. The secret is to continue to be gentle, kind.

I notice that when handling extra heavy things, like moving a large piece of furniture, an approach that is unafraid, undaunted, yet filled with an attitude of peace, does everything toward success in the task without strain or stress or heated effort. Everything has laws governing its nature. A heavy article embodies laws of mass, weight, and gravity. Whoever obeys the governing factors of that ponderous body will be able to "twist it around his little finger." The gentle approach is essential for it will introduce one immediately to the secret of efficient control.

Sometimes our affairs seem to be weighty. We actually suffer under the impact of their heaviness. But we can treat them as we would a heavy object. Just make the gentle approach and get into the spirit of the affairs. Anything is ready to cooperate with us if we will seek to understand it.

In our social circles we call some men gentlemen and others boors. The gentleman is he who seeks to please; yet he does not permit himself to be taken advantage of. He respects others and practices the small virtues in such a way that others are glad to be in his presence. The true gentleman is always friendly and cooperative. To be with him is to be happier, more joyous, and there is a pleasant sense of being elevated.

The gentlewoman wields such an influence also. In the struggle for what are called equal rights the gentlewoman sometimes sacrifices her prerogative in an attempt to appear successful. Yet, whenever she resumes her mantle of gentleness, we feel a glow of contentment and the grace of living in her presence.

Since the reward of gentleness is full cooperation it would be well to consider cultivating this quality more seriously. All of us desire the helpfulness of others. Certainly we desire to be helpful to others. The truth student actually tries more readily and ably to serve his fellows but many times thwarts his good intentions because he is too anxiously aggressive. Such an one could try to be a little more gentle in his approach. He would then rejoice in success for his efforts would bear good fruit to himself and to others.

Often we are ungentle because we are self-conscious, embarrassed, ill at ease. We think a quick gesture of rebuff helps to establish our equilibrium. Usually it does everything but that, leaving us unhappy, frustrated, and more uneasy than ever.

Jesus was always gentle, yet his strength was something all respected and some admired. He is always our best example no matter what quality we are considering. In this quality of gentleness he certainly excelled. He was gentle with his mother, the one person who attempted to hedge him in as she made an effort to keep him to herself. It took him a long time to become detached from her devotion so that he could undertake his appointed work. But he was always gentle with her, even when he spoke positively and directly to her.

Gentleness and thoughtfulness go hand in hand. We love those who remember the little graces that bring spontaneous joy. A friend might remember that we liked a certain article of food and would bring us some of it; or, we might recall that someone favored this or that trifle and how much pleasure we derived from producing it unexpectedly. In the home this quality can be practiced to advantage. It does no harm to cater somewhat to the comfort or peace of those about us so long as we do not begin to force the issue. Then kindness becomes irksome.

Gentleness permits others to express their views and preferences. It does more toward molding correct attitudes than all the dynamic teaching in the world. Did you ever receive a gentle reproach? How quickly it clarified your vision and how grateful you were for it because you knew it was right.

Much of our personal rebellion in any relations with others is the result of strife in the heart. Because of the conflict within we are tempted to lie against the truth - we say things that are not true. Gentleness will heal this habit if we desire to go to enough trouble to soften our heart.

Sometimes we are apt to charge God falsely and through our complaints convince ourselves that it is his fault we are in a terrible predicament. But we should remember that it is his goodness that keeps us alive and that it is his pleasure to give us the kingdom. If we are greatly troubled we can lift up our eyes and heart to him and practice being soft-voiced toward him by ceasing to accuse him of being the cause of whatever it is that is bothering us. When we do that in just ever so little a way we find ourselves relieved. And if we are wise, we continue to be calm, self-contained, and gentle as we remain conscious of his loving presence. For out of conscious relation with him comes the particular good that adjusts everything in our affairs quickly and effectively.

Love, joy, peace, gentleness: these and all other good qualities are but variations of the One Good presented in different lights and tones yet ever remaining undivided, the inseparable One which is the reality of all living. Gentleness is a wholesome quality that harmonizes the thoughts of the heart, heals the body of burdens, and lightens the labor of living. It befriends, it

quickens, it charges the affairs with newness and delight. It satisfies the hungry soul and rewards its devotee with dignity and grace.

"Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great."

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WHAT IS YOUR CHOICE?

By A. J . Truesdell

God is the One Source of all supply. Since all of us are children of God no one has anything except the Father gives it to him. This earth is our playground and our proving-ground. It is the place where we are to use God-given equipment to enjoy all blessings poured out upon us without measure. It is the place where we are to outpicture our belief in a loving Father's tender care and unlimited, timely supply.

An abundance of all good things is the rule rather than the exception. Man has forgotten so much that is true about himself that he needs to take a refresher course in the realities of existence. Whoever does this is amazed. He discovers truths which convince him that everything he had believed in and had done hitherto comprised the hard way of life.

Everybody has been working at a disadvantage because he has believe falsehoods; namely that man is a son of Adam and consequently must earn his living by the sweat of his brow; and, that he is a sinner who insists upon suffering for his sins.

As he begins to investigate himself, he true origin, nature, and character, the conditions he has imposed upon himself seem strange, even unnecessary, and he wonders why they continue to exist after he has discovered them to be untrue. He seems to forget that he has been diligent over a long period of time in accepting and practicing falsity. He has lived for so long by wrong rules that it is difficult for him to practice effectively the right principles which, in the end, are simpler and more efficient and productive.

When a man believes that he is a son of Adam, he accepts the inheritance of Adam. Adam has little to offer; he is the flesh man full of mistakes which are the result of wrong judgments; his pattern of life is that man gets his measure of good by his own efforts and that he must work hard for his supply which consistently appears to be meager; he finds the world a difficult place from which he must wrest his daily bread; that opposition to his progress is the general reaction from every quarter; that every effort, no matter how sincere, is threatened with failure. Even if he manages to accumulate what in the world are called riches, he is not satisfied. The drive within him is to get more than he has, for the Adam man feels lack no matter how much he is able to acquire and call his own.

Even when he awakes to his real nature, that he is a son of God rather than a son of Adam, and takes the promise "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" as his own, he fears that it is just too good to be true. There must be a catch in it somewhere, he reasons.

But there is no catch except in his own habits of thinking and acting, both of which may be changed in the twinkling of an eye when he is thoroughly and sincerely willing to do business in the new way.

Wealth may be obtained through spiritual practice; but the ultimatum of God is unconditional surrender to him, a surrender so complete that a man's affections remain undivided if he wishes to demonstrate continuous unlimited supply. The method of acquiring involves attention, sincerity, and obedience.

Anyone may possess wealth if he is wise enough not to be possessed by wealth. Anyone may be aware fully of his access to the kingdom of God whence comes every good and perfect gift. Over-anxiety or under-valuation will certainly thwart the man who wishes to attain wealth by spiritual means. Greed, which amounts to money-worship, is caused by fear of not having, or fear of losing money. False modesty, or false humility which sometimes amounts to martyrdom, causes a man to try to convince God of his willingness to suffer for his good; or, that he, God, means much more to him than the money he prays for; that he asks for bounty only that he might have opportunity to do so much good in the world. All these are lying attitudes for, if such a petitioner were given even a secured income, he would drop God like a hot potato.

The wise know riches to be a reflection of a rich consciousness. They deal magnanimously with the Cause and neither worship nor condemn the effect. If a man really contacts the rich, heavenly consciousness, he cannot escape the richness of the earth unless he ignores it or repudiates it. Too, if he worships the effect of his rich consciousness he will be drawn into a dilemma and will experience the hardship that will eventually make it self felt through a sense of lack.

When a man first hears the instruction that he is to be free from earning his living by his own laborious efforts, he is incredulous because all his life he has observed that was the way men made their living. He questions if the instruction means that he is to quit doing what he has been doing and just sit around and wait for God to supply him with unlimited abundance, especially in the form of lots of money.

This is a common error that discourages most active people from studying the Principle so seriously that they will have to depend upon it for everything. They do not realize that they are to continue doing what they know how to do to earn supply (while they contemplate the Principle within themselves) until eventually the Principle becomes so real to them that it lifts them out of what they are doing and places them in such sure relation with itself that they know how to depend forever after on it only to supply all their needs.

The ways of the world and the ways of Spirit can never be reconciled on the familiar ground of the world. The things of the Spirit are perceived only from the viewpoint of Spirit. A man must rise into a consciousness of Spirit before he can pass judgment as to whether or not Spirit will provide all his needs.

The mystics of all ages have declared that man's support comes from God; that man can depend upon God and be supplied with every good and perfect gift. Jesus demonstrated beyond question what others have declared. In our day we are loath to admit the possibility of the underlying truth in the declarations; but, at least once in every person's experience there arises an occasion wherein God is the supply for a pressing need, and no other source could or would have sufficed.

The Adam man and the Jesus Christ man are witnesses to the Principle of supply. Adam, who had all things provided for him but who lost his inheritance by becoming enmeshed in effects, was doomed to servitude to get things; and, today as always, they come not to him except under pain of personal effort. Jesus who lived in a world of limited material blessings proved through his Christhood that everything needful was present any instant to provide him and those with him abundantly and satisfactorily. It is up to us which of these symbols we shall emulate.

The other great falsehood that man has believed through the ages is that the is a sinner who must suffer the penalty of sin. Such an one has fallen into delusion. It is possible his religious teaching has inculcated this erroneous belief in his consciousness for man has been taught consistently that he is unworthy of God's love. The sin is believing that a man, created in the image and after the likeness of God, can fall away from his spiritual origin. A man is what he is, and it took Jesus Christ to show that man is a spiritual being, born of God and that he is not a product or son of Adam.

The idea of sin covers mankind in the grey mantle of forgetfulness of his God-hood. Who is a sinner? Can one point to another and make the accusation justly? Where does the idea lie? in the mind of the accuser, or in the accused? This is a hard question, but it requires an honest answer by anyone interested in making a choice for or against the things of Spirit. The answer determines not only what a man will think of himself but what he will think of others.

Sin, and suffering for sin, is a terrible idea that must be eradicated from consciousness. How do this? Jesus gave a simple but sure answer. He said. "Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven."

The earthly father gives us the body; the heavenly Father gives us our life. Our heritage from God is the spiritual ideas that comprise Being. Our make-up is spiritual and the physical manifestation is just the vehicle through which we operate. It has no "mind," and cannot do wrong in any wise. So long as we live we are vitally demonstrating our reality no matter what the appearance. It is only when we forget our real nature and enter a dream-state where we use the world and its illusions as the measure of goodness that we fall into evil ways. But no matter how real they appear, they are dreams and can never become fixed or established.

Through our erroneous thinking we seem to formulate unhappy, unhealthy, and unprosperous conditions; but our thinking can never formulate the truth. It is eternal, established, and forever sinless. With a change in the direction of his vision a man can begin and continue to build a consciousness of God as his Father, and of himself as the son bearing all the qualities of his source. Suffering for imagined sinfulness is done away and there is no more crying or accusing that fruits into the terrible experiences the human being so proudly identifies himself with.

In God there is no lack and no accusation. Jesus brought the doctrine of joy to man; he came to give us the kind of joy he experienced as a Son of God. A man's sense of guilt is healed by his whole-hearted subscription to spiritual reality through his worship of God in Spirit and in truth. His perspective broadens, his sense of values changes. In the inner place of prayer or silence, he learns many interesting things about himself and his source. He learns what

is meant by the terms, secret place, the Christ within, the inner kingdom, and other expressions which had been meaningless when heard and thought about in the old state of consciousness. He learns of righteousness, which means the right way to think, speak, and act, and particularly does he learn the importance of right motives; and, he learns that all of these are subject to his own choice and are influenced or colored by the direction of his attention. If he looks toward the world and its ways, he must submit to what he sees; if he looks toward God and his way, he comes to himself, arises, and begins the journey homeward that ends forever his useless attempts to live in the light of his own understanding and makes him willing to abide contentedly in the Father's house.

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SPIRITICITY October 1946

#### PLOTINUS AS A SPIRITUAL GUIDE

By R. A. Applegate, Jr.

(Chapter I, continued from last month)

This is a good description of the Supreme Power. It agrees with Plato's statement, "The father and maker of this universe is past finding out." And it agrees with the Christian doctrine that the human intellect can never grasp God, and that we can know him only by his gifts. Plotinus may have derived it, in part, from such passages in Plato as Republic 509, where it is stated that the Good is the source of the being of all things, but is above being and above knowledge. Plotinus, however, exalts the Good to a much higher plane than does Plato; and by making it the Creator of Divine Mind (which is modeled on the Demiurge of the Timaeus), makes It the ultimate Source of the visible and invisible universe. Plotinus does not, as some writers have said, nevertheless, make the Good (or God) a Great Blank or the Great Negative. Language was invented by human beings to describe ordinary human experiences and is unable to compass the Divine, but the fact that God is indescribable does not make him empty, nor the fact that he can be described only by negatives make him negative. He is according to Plotinus, not only infinite, but infinity; and even the mathematicians cannot define infinity. He remains the Source of Life, of Intelligence, and of Beauty; the Father and Author of all Being; the Creator of the visible and invisible worlds. He is Omnipotence and Omnipresence; or, in other words, there is no power and no presence that is not he. Truly in him, as St. Paul says, "We live, move, and have our being." In the vision of the One, Plotinus does not say that the vision is of a blank, but of "God in travail of a beautiful offspring, God engendering a universe within himself in a painless labor and, rejoiced by what he has brought into being, proud of his children, keeping all closely by him for the pleasure he has in his radiance and theirs." The Supreme is indescribable because It is above anything that can be conceived by the human intellect or imagination, but that does not necessarily make It a blank. It can be above the pairs of opposites, above all that is known by the human mind, and still not be negative. The one description of the Highest which Plotinus does not qualify is that it is Love; and even the most accomplished rhetorician would have difficulty giving a satisfactory description of infinite Love.

Plotinus does run into difficulty in his ontology. If the Good is all in all, then there can be no evil. However, Plotinus was conscious of the moral struggle within himself; and as Professor Rogers points out in his History of Philosophy, "The consciousness of a moral struggle in ourselves tends to report

itself metaphysically as a division of the world into a good principle and a principle of evil." Plotinus has, to a certain extent done this in ascribing evil to "matter" (hyle); and, in an attempt to make this point of view consistent with the conception of the Good as the only reality, he has described a chain of being descending from the Highest to the lowest, with each stage containing less of the divine than the preceding one.

The Good because of Its fullness, creates Divine Mind by an overflow from Itself, but It is not diminished in so doing, just as a fire, according to Plotinus, radiates warmth without losing any of its own heat (or as you can subtract any quantity from infinity and still have infinity). Divine Mind is the first emanation of the One. It is Omnipresent and is the container (if we may use the term) of the Divine Ideas. It is the divine part of every man. "This we possess as transcending ourselves. And we have It as common to all or as our own particular possession or in both ways. We may possess It in common, since It is indivisible - everywhere and always Its entire self - and severally in that each personality possesses It entire in the highest phase of the Soul." It is a mediation of the Good to man and is the highest really knowable. It is "the veritable intellectual, wise without intermission," and it is also "life." We might describe it as Webster describes Spirit, as "Life or intelligence conceived of entirely apart from physical embodiment." Its existence presents an antinomy, because it transcends the time-space realm and yet It is immanent in every soul; but the contradiction is only apparent and comes from thinking in physical rather than in metaphysical terms. It has a dual action. It contemplates the One, and by that contemplation is filled to saturation, so that from Its over-abundance it produces the All-Soul or the Soul of the All.

Plotinus, as stated above, derived his concept of Divine Mind from the Demiurge of the Timaeus. He departs from Plato, however, in placing the Ideas within Divine Mind. Thus he has escaped from the almost anthropomorphic conception of the Creator looking to something outside of himself and fashioning the universe in the manner of an artist. This seems to me a definite improvement on Plato. Although it is generally accepted that the picture of the creation of the universe in time, in the Timaeus, is just a myth; yet, in placing the ideas outside the Mind that contemplates them, Plato has made the Creator a limited Being.

(to be continued)



Alphabet of  
DAILY MEDITATIONS  
for every week day of the month

October 1946

1. Thou hast kept me ALIVE.
2. I have set the Lord always BEFORE me.
3. Thou shalt COMPASS me about with songs of deliverance.
4. I will DECLARE Thy Name unto my brethren.
5. His EYE seeth every precious thing.

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7. Bring FORTH FRUIT unto God.
8. I will GUIDE thee with mine eye.
9. Thou art my HIDING place.
10. I will INSTRUCT thee and teach thee.
11. Let us JOIN ourselves to the Lord.
12. He hath showed me His marvelous KINDNESS.

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14. LIFT up your heads, O ye gates.
15. The voice of the Lord is full of MAJESTY.
16. Call upon the Lord while He is NEAR.
17. The Lord will be a refuge for the OPPRESSED.
18. Thou shalt PRESERVE me from trouble.
19. Ye ought to be QUIET.

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21. All the ends of the world shall REMEMBER.
22. The Lord is my STRENGTH and my SHIELD.
23. Mercy and TRUTH are met TOGETHER.
24. UNTO thee will I cry, O Lord, my rock.
25. The VOICE of the Lord is powerful.
26. All ... shall WORSHIP before Thee.

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28. Keep this ordinance from YEAR to YEAR.
29. Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in ZION.
30. Have faith in God.
31. Every one that asketh receiveth.

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Repetition of thoughts is a sure way to build them into consciousness. We suggest that you memorize each DAILY MEDITATION and hold it in mind during your waking hours. You will discover the quality of your thoughts improve as you continue the practice.