

CRUCIFIXION-RESURRECTION

By Robert Applegate, Jr.

FEW of us doubt the truth of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ: that a man named Jesus was nailed to a cross outside Jerusalem about the year A. D. 30. The question is: What does the Crucifixion mean to us in the year A. D. 1965?

It means, first, that we do not look for our good, or our satisfaction, in the "world" or in human nature. ("World" as the word is used in Scripture means very nearly what we mean by "human nature.") It was not the Jews or the Romans who crucified Jesus; it was human nature: the same human nature that killed Socrates and Joan of Arc; that, here in America, persecuted Anne Hutchinson and others; that, in short, has persecuted all its prophets, saviors, and saints.

At the trial of Jesus Christ, it was not Jesus who was on trial. He came out of the experience unscathed. It was not even Pilate and Caiaphas and Annas who were on trial, although they did not come out of the experience as well as Jesus did. What was on trial was human nature, and it was found guilty. Just before the event, Jesus said: "Now is the judgment of this world; now is the ruler of this world (human nature) thrown out."

Today we do not like to think about the Crucifixion. One reason for this is that morbid religion has dwelt so much upon the negative aspects of it - the suffering and the cruelty - that we have been repelled. But the first followers of Jesus Christ were not loath to talk of the Crucifixion; they could scarcely open their mouths without mentioning it. So Paul wrote to Corinth: "I decided to know nothing among you, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified: . . . to the Jews (the religious) a scandal and to the Greeks (the intellectuals) foolishness; but to them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the Power of God and Christ the Wisdom of God." To the early followers of Jesus Christ the Crucifixion was not morbid; it was the Power of God. It was not defeat, but victory.

In thinking of the Crucifixion, give attention to the response of Jesus to it; this is the important thing. He knew from the very beginning that men would whip Him, spit in His face, crucify Him, wag their heads at Him. But He never let it make Him descend to the human level. If He had, He would have failed. But He knew that God is and that God is still in charge of His Universe. "For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame." This is the thing to think about.

Before His trial, Jesus said: "For this purpose I have come to this hour. . . . Be of good courage; I have overcome the world." On the cross, in the middle of the greatest humiliation men could devise, He could say: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Is this not the greatest victory? Is this not overcoming the world: i.e., human nature? And what Jesus did He did for all. By acknowledging it, we partake of it and enter into it. Human nature is not only judged; it is thrown out -- of us.

Paul said: "Our old man has been crucified with Him. . . . I am crucified with Christ. I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. . . . May I never boast except in the Cross of Jesus Christ our Lord, by which the world is crucified to me, and I to the world."

The more we think about the Crucifixion - the more we give our attention to it - the more our littleness, our meanness, our fears, our doubts, our desires, are crossed out. I do not know why; all I know is this is the way it works. And this, I think, is at least part of what Paul meant by saying our old man is crucified with Him. It is these negative attitudes that keep us from our good, that are our enemies; for God is always giving Himself to us and only we can hinder Him. So wholehearted acceptance of the Crucifixion is the way to our good.

But the Crucifixion is not the end of the story. Many men have been crucified. The Roman general Varus crucified 2,000 at one time, at Sepphoris, just three miles from Nazareth. And it is possible that Jesus as a young carpenter was forced to make some of the crosses for this execution and that he witnessed this spectacle of 2,000 men dying in the sun. I say this not to be shocking, but to dispel the notion that Jesus was an impractical dreamer who knew nothing of the realities of life. Jesus knew quite well what life in the world is. As John, His closest disciple, wrote: "He knew all men and He needed not that anyone should tell Him about men." He knew something more. However the point is that many men have been crucified; only One has been resurrected. "If Christ has not risen," Paul said, "then our preaching is empty and your faith is empty."

The idea is common that in this scientific age, it is childish, unsophisticated, unreasonable, to believe in miracles, in Eternal Life, in the Resurrection. And this idea is subtle; it has a way of sneaking into our minds and settling down there, whether we consciously accept it or not. It pervades the mental atmosphere in which we live. So it is good to bring the idea out into the open and examine it.

Is it unscientific to believe in miracles, in the Resurrection? No. Science cannot disprove these things and tends to support them. For science points to a world in which the causes of events lie in a realm that is unseen and that is beyond time and space. All nuclear physics points in this direction. Further, science has now come to the point where it cannot say whether this physical world that seems so real has any being at all - apart from our perception of it. So belief in the Resurrection cannot be unscientific. Moreover science is based not on reason, but on rigorous examination of the evidence. And in this case the evidence is in favor of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. "These things were not done in a corner," as Paul said.

The Resurrection is reasonable. It is understandable. To try to explain it away leads to unreasonable contradictions. So the question again is: What does it mean to us?

- 1) First, it means hope. No matter how hopeless a situation may be, you cannot consider the Resurrection without experiencing hope.
- 2) It means joy. Easter is always a joyous day, and every Sunday is Easter. Originally every day was Easter (and still should be). After the Ascension of Jesus Christ, His followers gathered every day to talk of His Resurrection. When this was no longer possible, they came together on the first day of every week. They were Jews and Saturday was their holy day; but they came together also Sunday, because it was the Lord's Day, the Day of His Resurrection. It still is.

- 3) The Resurrection means power. If you read through the account in Acts - and everyone should - the things that stand out are the joy and the power of Jesus' students. Wherever these men went things were changed. Two thousand years later we feel the effect of what they did and said; that effect has spread all over the globe. That is power. And this power is as available today as it was at that time. The reason we do not know it, is that the Resurrection is not as real to us as it was to those men and women who had lived through it. If the Resurrection were as real to us as it was to them, we would have the same joy and the same power they did.
- 4) The Resurrection means fearlessness. After the Crucifixion, the disciples were scattered and fled; after the Ascension, they said to the same men from whom they had run away: "Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, God has raised up." They were no longer afraid of what men could do to them. It is the same with us. The more we think about the Resurrection - the more real it is to us - the less we care about what anyone may say or do to us.

The disciples had no fear of death; the Resurrection does away with the dread of death. For it shows that death is only an appearance; it is not the end of Life. Jesus went through death in the sight of mankind to show that it is nothing. It was not the end of Life for Him; it is not the end of Life for us. "I ascend to My Father and your Father," He said, "to My God and your God." Paul wrote to Timothy: "Jesus Christ has abolished death (made it ineffective), and has brought Life and Immortality to light."

- 5) The Resurrection means forgiveness and therefore freedom. The Apostles proclaimed Jesus Christ, the Resurrection, and the forgiveness of sins in His Name. The "forgiveness of sins" is the canceling out of mistakes, for this is what the words originally meant. The Good News is that we can become as little children with a fresh, clean life ahead of us. Our sins are forgiven; our mistakes are canceled.

So, what should we do? When men asked Jesus this, He said: "This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent." When the jailer at Philippi asked Paul what he should do, Paul said to him: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Over and over again, in one form after another, Paul wrote; "By Grace (the kindness of God) are you saved (delivered from whatever you want to be delivered from) through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God - not of works, least any man should boast."

The Apostle John wrote: "God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him should not die, but should have eternal life."

This is an unsatisfactory answer to most of us. We want to do something; and particularly we want to be known as doers. Besides, look at all the people who say they believe; and we do not want to be like them. They are narrow, censorious, joyless; but they say they believe. All I can say is: Try it. Ask yourself: Do I believe in the Resurrection? What does it mean to me? You will learn more in this way than by much study of other men's opinions. Those who have truly believed, not simply said that they did, have changed the world and have known a joy they all say is indescribable.

Go back and read the account of the first followers of Jesus of Nazareth. See what the Resurrection meant to them. It will make it come alive to you. You will catch some of their enthusiasm, their faith, and their audacity.

This is the work of God: that you believe.

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SPIRITICITY, OCTOBER 1965

THE CHURCH

By H. B. Jeffery

EVERYTHING takes on new life where there is peace, poise, and a sense of the Presence of God, who is the Author of Peace, the Giver of Peace, the God of Peace. Peace gives a quickening energy to what you set your attention upon. Animals, plants - all living things - respond to the beatific essences that come to us and work through us when we learn to love the Law of the Infinite.

Love That which gave you being: the Author of your life, the Preserver of your life, the Giver of all good.

Those that know are drawn together by the law "Like attracts like"; and this is the "Church." The Church is invisible; and the outer form is just a picture to let you know that there is such a thing, that there is a Church, that there is a gathering of them that know. There is a union, a oneness, that makes for power and strength and dynamic energy and healing power. It makes a place of health-giving and restoring. I recommend that those who are in a state of unrest and turmoil and sickness turn here to find surcease and help. The Church is a living organism. It is a body of those persons who are alive to the things of the Spirit, who stand in the Spirit and for the Spirit. They are messengers, open avenues, agents, through which the Spirit works.

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SPIRITICITY, October 1965

THE LAW OF INCREASE

By Alden Truesdell

"THERE IS that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."

That which "withholdeth more than is meet" does so because of a fear of lack. It gets what it fears. For fear attracts to us the thing we are afraid of. That which "scattereth and yet increaseth" understands God's All-sufficiency and the law of giving and receiving.

Many people entering into the study of Truth get the idea of giving in order to receive, before they have developed a consciousness of at-one-ment with the Source of supply. These may temporarily impoverish themselves, for they are giving from their own limited accumulation. Many others try to get all the

benefits of Truth while giving as little as possible. The best way to level off, to get the right balance between giving and receiving, is to keep the law of tithing.

This practice of tithing is the closest thing to a guarantee of providence as yet discovered. And tithing is the cause of more satisfaction than any formula known. Tithing is the best way of becoming truly prosperous. It is the best way even to attain a fortune though there may be quicker ways. Attaining by tithing gives assurance of satisfaction in that which is attained.

The prophet Malachi, speaking for the Lord, tried to bring to the attention of his people their foolishness in forsaking the law. He cried: "Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye say, Wherein shall we return? Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings."

This seems to be a stumbling block for many. Although they did not bring anything with them into the world and will not be able to take anything out of it, yet they still believe they own something and that, when they give, they are favoring God, rather than keeping God's law with God's own substance.

"All things come of Thee," David said, "and of Thine own have we given Thee."

Tithing is not for the benefit of God or for the benefit of His ministers and teachers; it is for the benefit of the tither. And so Malachi goes on to say: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, . . . and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessings that there shall not it be room enough to receive it."

Could any offer be fairer than this?

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SPIRITICITY, October 1965

ROADS

By Nell Truesdell

THERE are three roads that everybody travels in a lifetime. The first road extends from infancy to maturity. It slopes upward, and frequently the pitch is almost perpendicular so that our ascent is difficult.

Perhaps at some time you have climbed the steep face of a rocky mass. Your progress was slow, and often you had to stop to catch your breath. If your shoes had nails in the soles you made your way up with less effort because you were able to hold your footing on smooth rocks.

The feet symbolize that phase of understanding that comes into direct touch with the earth. We ascend our first road in life with less difficulty if our feet are shod with the preparedness of the Gospel of peace. There is a peace that passes understanding that sustains us in our struggle upward if we search for it and find it.

The infant is forced to gather knowledge of many things with haste if he is to keep up with the demands of his family and his surroundings. The child spends years in school. Education is always on a steep upgrade and often all the faculties of a student are drastically tested. The youth attempts to gather sufficient knowledge to prepare him for his work in the world. In many cases his studies continue into fields of research that prolong the school-period indefinitely.

When his period of preparation terminates, the youth enters into his lifework. He faces the tasks he must do to make his living in the world. He enters the road that he has prepared himself to travel. This is the road of maturity.

After the first flush of enthusiasm, the mature person is apt to settle down. He has learned to handle his job successfully, and his lifework makes few demands on his imagination and energy.

This is the time when the road ahead becomes uninteresting because it has no ups or downs. We walk and work, using the same muscles day in and day out. Even our soul tires with the monotony of our journey. When we reach this humdrum experience we need to cultivate interest in communing with the Lord with special care and devotion. For if we do not we are apt to vegetate.

I have read that even animals tire with the monotony of work they are forced to do in the same way and at the same pace, day after day. Sledge dogs that pull heavy loads over trackless snow-covered terrain are easily dispirited, not from fatigue, but because there is nothing novel to attract their attention. They require constant driving along a monotonous way, until they catch sight of a depot flag. Then they fly over the road with newly aroused interest, hardly feeling the weight of the load they are pulling.

Then there is the road in every person's life that declines or goes down. Along this road, each one needs the multiplied powers of God's Grace. Along this road we may have to give way to some one else so that we may be freed from burdens that overtax our strength and resources.

Do you remember when you climbed tall trees for fun or scaled the side of a mountain to prove your stamina? The ascent was easy. You kept your eye set toward the heights. Your enthusiasm carried you up. However, when you had reached the top and there was nowhere else to go, you had to think about the descent. And this shocked you with a sudden fear. Danger of slipping filled you with dread. I have read of youths who had to be rescued from high ledges because their fear blinded them to the way down.

Walking downstairs is harder than walking upstairs. On the way up your weight is partly carried by your breath; but coming down you are mostly dead weight.

Right here we may consider how necessary it is for us to appreciate the spiritual Breath that sustains us at all times on our roads through this life experience. If we commit our way unto God we shall be inspired by a super-intelligence that enables us to do the right thing at the right time without waste of time or energy. Too, we shall have the protection of good judgment that will save us from unnecessary human experiences.

"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass: and He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday." (Psalm 37:5)

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A LETTER

Dear Mrs. Truesdell:

I THANK you sincerely for all the kind messages you have been sending me, and for your reminder of my subscription due.

At ninety-five plus I am still carrying on happily, for indeed the Truth has penetrated into some of my innermost being, and these last years have been the most productive of my life.

Naturally the physical body seemingly is deteriorating, and the mental faculties also to a degree. But Life is abundant, and has another receptacle.

I thank our Father that you and the staff are able to carry on His work efficiently. May His constant Presence more and more enrich each one of you individually and give you needed wisdom and love to carry on.

I am enclosing \$5.00 cash for my subscription. Please disregard whatever change there may be and use it for any purpose.

Lovingly, signed: Mary C. Moisley

NOTE: This dear friend of the CHRIST TRUTH LEAGUE has blessed us with her grace and beauty of illumined age. Her kindness and her inspiration have given us spiritual strength and courage. We are grateful for her precious friendship.

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Alphabet of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Weak Day of the Month

OCTOBER, 1965

1. Now will I Arise, saith the Lord.
2. BLESSED is the man whose strength is in THEE.
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4. The Lord is nigh unto all them that CALL upon Him.
5. He will fulfill the DESIRE of them that fear (revere) Him.
6. Our soul is ESCAPED: the snare is broken, and we are ESCAPED.
7. The Lord shall lead them unto living FOUNTAINS.
8. GIVE unto the Lord, O ye mighty; GIVE unto the Lord GLORY.
9. Whom have I in HEAVEN but Thee?
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11. The INWARD man is renewed day by day.
12. We are JOINT-HEIRS of God, through Jesus Christ.
13. I have KEPT the faith.
14. I will LOVE Thee, O LORD, my strength.
15. Stand MATURE and fully assured in all the Will of God.
16. Our Help is in the NAME of the Lord.
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18. He OPENEST His hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.
19. The Lord PRESERVETH all them that love Him.
20. Do not QUENCH the Spirit.
21. The salvation of the RIGHTEOUS is of the Lord.
22. The Lord is my STRENGTH and SONG, and is become my
SALVATION.
23. He that TILLETH his land shall have plenty.
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25. His Countenance doth behold the UPRIGHT.
26. Thy testimonies are VERY sure.
27. May the God of Peace sanctify You WHOLLY.
28. Sow the fields which may YIELD fruits of increase.
29. He told us of your ZEAL.
30. The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.

"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."

As electricity is the working power of the electrical principle,
So Spiriticity is the working Power of the Spiritual Principle.

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