

FEAR OF THE LORD

By A. J. Truesdell

Spiritual unfoldment is so much a matter of growth that students of Truth seldom remain long in an established state of consciousness. Old orders are constantly being broken up and passing away. Times of consternation, when old states crumble and new ways must be proved, come to everyone in Truth. The seeker of Truth for Truth's sake is constantly launching out into the unknown and is aware of an anticipatory thrill each time he does; for he is sensitive to all spiritual activities, as a musician is sensitive to harmony. Like the musician, he is sensitive also to discord, or the unspiritual. This sensitivity is what is referred to in the scriptural statement, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Achievement of any kind is preceded at times by this nerve-stimulating action. Common examples are the good hunter's buck fever and the good actor's stage fright. Similarly, Scripture, anticipating every experience known to man, advises the working out of salvation "with fear and trembling."

There are different kinds of fear. The fear of the unknown, which is common to all, may best be compared to the sensitivity of steel filings that are attracted by a magnet. The filings seem to be puppets or pawns subject to unknown forces, over which they have no control; but, as they attach to the magnet, they become a unity, through which the magnetic power is transferred. This action, seeming to set up chaotic conditions for a time, is similar to the reaction, in the consciousness of the Truth aspirant, to contact with a higher and unknown Power, whose ultimate object is to unify all things in Itself. In this example, we see how a better understanding can translate fear, or a sensitive, passive, and negative reaction, into positive, potent, and magnetic power.

Fear is defined as dread, terror, awe. So interpreting the "fear of the Lord," we should find some religionists dreading God, being terrorized by God, and completely awed by God. These must be the ones who are trying to hide or escape from God. They may well dread God and be terrorized by such an Adversary; for escape is impossible, capture is sure. Though they "take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea." God is there before them. They may make their "bed in hell," but God is there. Darkness will not cover them, nor can anyone be cunning enough to hide them out. Surely those who do not want to be caught by God should fear Him. The fugitive in the swamp with bloodhounds baying on his trail has a better chance. It is possible for him to elude his pursuers by taking to the water; but not so, when one is being shadowed by the Hounds of Heaven, to be brought before the Judgment Seat of God. Capture is certain; conviction is sure; the sentence to be pronounced is Sonship in the first degree.

There is another kind of fear, with which we are all familiar. This may be called the fear of inadequacy, or of inferiority. We deplore the fact that we feel unworthy, commonplace, inferior. Were it not for this fact, however, there would be no purpose in living. If we did not feel or seem to be of lesser stature than the ideal spiritual concept, we should not enjoy the potentiality of being that one who is "little lower than the angels." As long as this sense of inferiority is directed Godward, we are healthy and in process of becoming complete. It is this consciousness of inferiority directed outward that makes

for various programs of competition, from keeping up with the Joneses to armament races among nations.

If we were assured our seat in the congregation of saints, we might become as complacent and self-righteous as some of our immaculate religionists who have made advance reservations in heaven. If we felt we had arrived we might be reluctant to finish the course. If there were not yet somewhat to be learned, we could close all channels of communication, seal the books, and enter into a state of self-worship; for we should be God. There is no doubt that such a metamorphosis is possible; there is little doubt about its being the ultimate objective. But the point we should consider here is: Would we be content to browse about the city with streets of gold, playing harps for eternity; or, are we more complete and better satisfied with having the opportunity to do our own research in the laboratory of the world, as did Jesus?

It may well be that, when an unexplainable fear comes upon someone, he is being separated unto God (as a steal filing), or is being tracked down by the Hounds of Heaven, or is having his inferiority oriented Godward - that God might work His works through that one who is nothing of himself, but can dare and do all things in God. We are therefore advised, "Be not afraid of sudden fear, . . . for the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken."

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SPIRITICITY, September 1951
A STUDY IN THE LIFE AND WORK OF JESUS CHRIST
By Nell Truesdell

Part III (Continued from Spiriticity, June 1951)
(An Interpretation)

All the experiences in the life of Jesus Christ represent steps that each follower of His must take to redeem his own consciousness from mortal limitation. The outer experiences of Jesus and the manner in which He dealt with them are the observable outpicturing of developments that take place in every man after he has set his inner vision steadfastly toward God. No one, therefore, need go out into the world to make a display of following Jesus Christ by attempting to do, in the sight of men, the things that the Master did. The proving ground is the consciousness of the individual. Accordingly, everyone who attempts to follow the Master deals with the successive unfoldments in his own consciousness, one by one, in the same manner that Jesus handled His experiences.

In His first year of public ministry, Jesus spent eight months in comparative seclusion on a bank of the Jordan River, which symbolizes the stream of thought that is constantly flowing through consciousness. Jesus took time to face this flow of mixed thought streaming through Him from head to foot, and He carefully discriminated between the good and the evil in such a way that the muddy waters of thought were cleared. After this preparation, He was never disturbed again by the so-called power of evil.

When the eight months of contemplation by the Jordan were completed, Jesus returned to Galilee by way of Samaria, where He gave His memorable lesson to the woman at the well. This episode symbolizes the clearing of psychic processes in consciousness, so that one is able to discern the true Wisdom of the Spirit from psychic phenomena, which only imitate Truth.

After Jesus left Samaria, He went to Cana in Galilee, where He had previously changed water into wine at a wedding feast in the early part of the year A.D. 27 (probably in the month of February). The wedding symbolizes Jesus' complete union with God and the water turned into wine symbolizes the fact that His life forces were set on a firm basis in His consciousness so that He was never thereafter bereft of them. Thus, on this second visit to Cana (probably December, A.D. 27), when He was approached by a nobleman whose son lay dying in Capernaum several miles away, Jesus was able to speak the vital, healing word that restored life to the dying boy. Jesus now had complete command of life, and He never lost that command.

The following Spring (probably A.D. 28), Jesus made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to attend a feast. On this occasion, on a sabbath, He healed a man who had been paralyzed for thirty-eight years and was lying by the Pool of Bethesda, hoping for someone to put him into the healing waters. Jesus, after restoring the man to wholeness, spoke boldly to the religious leaders who attacked Him for His breach of the sabbath. "My Father worketh hitherto," He asserted, "and I work." He had attained spiritual stature, and He now openly identified Himself as the Son: "All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him."

The incident of Jesus' healing of the paralytic symbolizes the loosening of the physical body, at a time of rest (the sabbath), from the grip of fear, produced by religious ideas. When the spiritual neophyte fears to overstep the usual bounds of convention or to break the rules of propriety set up by religious authority, he paralyzes both mind and body, so that the consciousness, hoping for healing, lies helpless to rise and enter the cleansing waters of life near at hand. While in this situation, although he desires wholeness, he fears possible rebuff so strongly that, without Jesus Christ, he cannot be healed. But, when he hears the Identity within (Jesus Christ) ask, "Wilt thou be made whole?" he responds instantly. Then, because he is still shaky in his convictions of Truth, he must repeatedly make a bold assertion of sonship to the murderous religious thoughts, similar to that which Jesus made to the religious leaders.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we learn to speak trusting, assured, daring words of Truth to all states of consciousness (psychic, mental, physical, material, and religious), because, just as soon as we venture to live by Truth, all these states, especially the religious, plan a campaign, as it were, to kill the spiritual Identity. Since we realize that they are doing this because their supremacy is threatened and they are exerting themselves in every way to do away with the attack on their authority, we do not fear them; but hold fast to the fact that "the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth."

After the incident at the Pool of Bethesda, Jesus returned to Nazareth, where, visiting the synagogue on a sabbath, He was invited to read and expound the Scriptures. (Please read Luke 4: 16-30.) The townspeople listened attentively as He read the Holy Writ; but, when He started to interpret what He had read according to Spirit and not according to the customary religious explanation, his former friends and relatives were caught in a frenzy of hate that demanded nothing less than death in retribution for His fancied contemptuous rudeness toward their inherited religious beliefs. They never stopped to think on the principle Jesus was exposing to them; they knew only that He was saying something different from what they had expected Him to say. Accordingly, they attempted to kill Him, but He "passing through the midst of them went His way."

The tumult in the synagogue at Nazareth represents a confused attack by the social and religious thoughts in the consciousness of every individual, an attack upon the spiritual Identity for its boldness in daring to speak Truth. Such an assault must be anticipated and dealt with from the basis of Principle. If, however, the thoughts cannot be calmed and convinced, the Identity, rather than letting Itself be killed, should pass through the midst of them and go Its way. In this lesson, we see that we are to adhere silently to Truth and to let the inner clamor that threatens the body - even life - die down. Instead of fighting the unteachable phases in consciousness, we are to move on, so that we can call our disciples (spiritual faculties) into play, and thus be enabled to preach and heal wherever we go in Galilee (the circle of consciousness).

In Jesus' teaching and healing ministry in Galilee, He had many experiences among the throngs of people clamoring for healing and prospering. To keep from being swayed by adulation, on the one hand, and virulent attacks, on the other, He resorted frequently to prayer alone on the top of a mountain, often spending all night in contemplation. Similarly we must minister to the throngs of thoughts in consciousness which need to be healed by the word of Truth. To do this, we must keep the attention of the mind fixed on God. In times of stress we gain assurance by seeking the high place in consciousness (the mountain) and by praying through the darkness of confused states of mind (all night).

In the course of His Galilean ministry, Jesus called His twelve disciples into active participation in His work. Thus the individual calls upon the spiritual faculties to help in redeeming the whole man from the limitation of mortal consciousness. However, he must not allow even the wavering of these faculties, as they undergo the trials of developments to draw his attention for an instant from the goal; to KNOW God.

(To be continued)

SPIRITICITY, September 1951

II THESSALONIANS

By Robert Applegate

Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians was written shortly after the First. We can see by the letter that Paul had been encouraged by the answer that he had received to his first message, but we can see also that there had been two unsatisfactory reactions to the instruction. Paul had taught the Thessalonians that the "day of the Lord," the time of the revelation of Jesus Christ to the individual consciousness, is at hand for all those who are sincere in seeking it. Some reacted to this instruction by asserting that they had already attained the consciousness of Jesus Christ. Others reasoned that, if Christ in them was all in all, and was about to be revealed powerfully, there was no need for them to do anything. They thus became idlers, refusing to work, spiritually or physically. Both of these reactions are typical of certain classes of persons who are introduced to Truth. It is therefore instructive to study the answer that Paul wrote to the young church at Thessalonica.

In answer to those who claimed to have attained the consciousness of Jesus Christ, Paul wrote: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except . . . that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who

opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God, . . . even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." Who is this man of sin, or Satan? In the Scripture, he is represented as Deceiver and the Accuser. As the Deceiver, he is the symbol (and never anything more than a symbol) of ambition, pride, covetousness: or, in a word, the seeking of satisfaction in the attainment of material ends. Often such seeking presents itself to the consciousness as something noble, so that it "as God sitteth in the temple of God." As the Accuser, Satan symbolizes fear and a guilty conscience, that which seeks to persuade a person that he cannot attain the spiritual consciousness.

Paul declares that Satan must be revealed before Christ comes into consciousness; and this is precisely what happens in the consciousness of the person who is newly introduced to Truth. After the first flush of enthusiasm has passed, all the negation hidden in the depths of consciousness comes to the surface, so that either the individual becomes despondent, despairing of ever attaining anything, or else he is tempted to use the power of which he has become aware for the attainment of worldly ends and the gratification of his desires. Paul declares that such a reaction is to be expected, that it is actually a sign of progress, and that the only thing to do is to ignore it and turn the more wholeheartedly to God. "Stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught." The negative reaction is nothing to be worried about, because, when Jesus Christ comes into consciousness, all seeming negation will be destroyed by "the brightness of His coming." Paul concludes this portion of his letter with an assurance, which is for all mankind: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth: whereunto he called you . . . to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

To those of the Thessalonians who refused to work because they thought they were too spiritual for such service, Paul mentions the example that he had provided for them of how a Christian should conduct himself. He alone of all the Apostles of Jesus Christ refused to be supported by contributions from those to whom he ministered, choosing rather to support himself by working at the trade of tentmaking. In this letter to Thessalonica, he gives the reason for this practice: "Yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us." This reminder should have been enough to recall the idlers to their senses, but Paul reinforces it by repeating a commandment that he had given to the Thessalonians while he was with them: "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."

Paul's injunction that those who are unwilling to work should not eat is salutary. If it could be enforced in the world, there would be far fewer cases of insanity, disease, and maladjustment. The practice of Christianity, however, is always a matter of individual choice, and the only discipline that is worth anything is self-discipline. Nevertheless, while it is not always true in the world that those who do not work are not fed, it is unfailingly true in Spirit. Those who do not do the spiritual work of watching and praying receive no spiritual food, no spiritual substance. In Spirit we reap what others have sown, we reap the benefit of all the spiritual work that has been done since the beginning of time; but we must do the reaping; and we do it, as Jesus Christ

taught, by lifting up our eyes unto the fields that are "white already to harvest."

Such is the message that Paul delivers to the Thessalonians. He concludes with a prayer, whose answer is assured for all those who obey the instruction: "The Lord of peace Himself give you peace always by all means."

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Alphabet Of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day of The Month

SEPTEMBER 1951

1. Uphold me ACCORDING unto Thy Word, that I may live.

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3. Sing unto the Lord, BLESS His Name.

4. Wait on the Lord: be of good COURAGE.

5. DECLARE His glory . . . , His wonders among all people.

6. EXALT ye the Lord our God.

7. Worship at His FOOTSTOOL, for He is holy.

8. GREAT is the Lord, and GREATLY to be praised.

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10. HE shall strengthen thine HEART.

11. For such as be blessed of Him shall INHERIT the earth.

12. Make a JOYFUL noise unto the Lord, all the earth.

13. Wait on the Lord, and KEEP His way.

14. They LOOKED unto Him, and were LIGHTENED.

15. MY MOUTH shall praise Thee with joyful lips.

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17. It is good to draw NEAR to God.

18. O love the Lord, all ye His saints.

19. The Lord PRESERVETH the faithful.

20. The effect of righteousness (is) QUIETNESS and assurance.

21. The salvation of the RIGHTEOUS is of the Lord.

22. MY SOUL followeth hard after Thee.

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24. I have put my TRUST in the Lord God.

25. The Lord knoweth the days of the UPRIGHT.

26. The works of His hands are VERITY and judgment.

27. The WORDS of the Lord are pure WORDS.

28. Sow the Fields, . . . which may YIELD fruits of increase.

29. God is ZEALOUS.

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31. Wait on the Lord, and keep His way.

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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.