

SOME WORDS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

By Robert Applegate, Jr.

"ALL THINGS whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is The Law and The Prophets." (Matthew 7:12)

The expression "The Law and The Prophets" as used here means the Scripture, or that part of the Old Testament that was considered as Scripture at the time that Jesus spoke. The Law was the first five books of the Old Testament, the Torah (as the Jews still call it). The Prophets included the books that we consider as historical as well as those we consider prophetic. The Prophets were divided into The Former Prophets and the Latter Prophets (these were books, not men). The Former Prophets were the six books: Joshua, Judges, I & II Samuel, I & II Kings. The Later Prophets were the books ascribed to the prophets themselves: the Three Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel) and the Twelve Minor Prophets. The Jews grouped the remaining books in what became their Scripture under the general title, The Writings. And so The Law, the Prophets and the Writings is their designation for the Scripture. However, in the time of Jesus, they did not yet think The Writings to be Scripture. So Jesus spoke only of "The Law and The Prophets."

So Jesus Christ in His "Golden Rule" gives us His summary of the Scripture (or, of the Old Testament). This, He says, is it.

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. . . . If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:4-7)

The word "abide" translates the Greek meno which means to remain. It designates permanence. This is clear in the example of the vine that Jesus used. A branch cannot just make occasional contact with the vine; it has to stay attached to the vine if it is to produce any fruit. So we must stay attached to Christ, not just make desultory contact with Him if we are to produce anything worth while.

Meno occurs frequently in the New Testament, because continuance in the Way of Christ is essential. "If ye continue (meno) in My words," said Jesus, "then are ye My disciples indeed." And John wrote, "He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."

Frequently meno means to remain eternally. So Paul wrote: "Now abideth faith, hope, charity" (i.e., faith, hope, and love are eternal; all else passes away). Hebrews 7:24: "This Man (Jesus Christ), because He continueth (meno) ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood." And John wrote: "The world passeth away, and the lust (desire) thereof: but he that doeth the Will of God abideth for ever."

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"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48)

The word translated "perfect" is teleios. It occurs fairly frequently in the New Testament and in the early Christian writings. For as Jesus taught and as His early followers understood, there is a perfection that is the goal of Christian endeavor.

Teleios means that which is complete, that which has attained its purpose. In the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament it is often translated "mature"; and it has that connotation (Paul sometimes uses it in opposition to "childish"). But "mature" does not give the full meaning of this word. A "perfect" man is more than a mature one; he is one who has accomplished the purpose for which he is in this world.

This perfection requires, first, freedom from fear, from anger, from all physical desire; and, second, complete surrender of the will of God, until one becomes fully conscious of his oneness with God. These requirements for perfection become obvious when we examine the way in which the word "perfect" is used.

James, the brother of Jesus, declared that one must control his tongue in order to attain perfection. The tongue is the hardest thing in the world to tame, he says; and if we can master it, we can master anything.

"If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." (James 3:2)

To the rich young man who wanted to inherit eternal life, Jesus said: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the Poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me."

While we may not have to do this to attain the goal of perfection, we certainly have to be willing to do it (for no one can find God who does not value Him more than anything else). The rich young man was unwilling to do it; so he "went away sorrowful," and lost the greatest good that could possibly have come to him. And Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a person who has possessions to enter the Kingdom of God. We must crucify the sense of personal possession."

Surrendering our human emotions, our greed and anger and fear, is but preliminary to the attaining of perfection, which is conscious oneness with the Father. In His last prayer for His disciples (and for us) Jesus prayed to His Father:

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and has loved them, as Thou hast loved Me."

Perfection is a goal to strive for, not something glibly to assume we possess because we go to church on Sunday and abstain from certain taboos, or because we are "well disposed toward Christianity" (as I was told an eminent professor claimed to be).

To Timothy, his most faithful friend and helper, Paul wrote:

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine (teaching), for reproof, for correction, for instruction in

righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (II Timothy 3:17) It is a different word, artios, that Paul uses here, but it means nearly the same as teleios.)

Paul said to the Philippians: "I count all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: . . . that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection; . . . if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect (teleios): but I follow after. . . . I press toward the mark." (Philippians 3:12)

Paul wrote this at the end of his active career, after twenty years of dedicated ministry, of surrender to Christ ("I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"). He did not think he was entitled to rest on his oars. He had not yet "attained."

In Ephesians the perfection that is - or should be - our goal is equated with being as Christ.

"He (Jesus) gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists (heralds of the Good News); and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying (building up) of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of Christ."

Yet this perfection is not something foreign to our nature; it is not the sterile, sanctimonious goodness of the overly religious. Professor C. H. Dodd in his Commentary on Romans writes well:

"The term 'perfect' belongs to the ethical vocabulary of the Old Testament. . . . We may recall that our psychologists regard the impulse toward completeness as 'the most compelling motive of life,' and often find in it the basis of 'natural' ethics. Thus the Will of God for man is not some mysterious and irrational form of holiness (such as leads to superstitious distinctions of days and food and the like). It consists of that kind of life which the renewed mind of the Christian man can see to be good in itself, satisfying, and complete."

I would correct this only by reading "That kind of consciousness" in place of "that kind of life" in the last sentence. For it is the inner that is important and that determines the outer. The outer life is important only as it is an expression of the inner consciousness of God.

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"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." (I John 4:7)

The word translated "love" is agape; and it throws every translator for a loss, because each one knows that "love" is an inadequate rendering, and yet there is simply no other English word that can be used. Ferrar Fenton, who spent forty years reading the New Testament in Greek and who brought out his excellent translation in 1905, translated agape by "friendship," which is perhaps the best possible translation. But the trouble is that we have no

English verb meaning "to be friends with," and again we have to fall back on "love."

The Greeks had several words meaning what we usually mean by the word "love"; but the Christians chose an unusual word to express an unusual quality: that "love" which would rather give than get. The Romans realized this; and instead of translating agape with amor, the usual Latin word for "love" (from which we get "amorous," etc.), they used the word *caritas* ("graciousness"). The English translators Anglicized *caritas* as "charity." But "charity" has become so debased in meaning that it has come to have a pejorative connotation.

Jesus gave us two commands that help us to understand what He meant by "love" - what He urged upon us:

1) "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

2) "Love thy neighbor as thyself."

Jesus "loved" His disciples. But He did not gush over them; He did not flatter them; He did not pamper them. Very often he addressed them as "fools and slow of heart" or "ye of little faith." Yet He had the patience to put up with them, to spend three years teaching them, to pray for them (when He knew one of them would deny Him), and to give His life for them (and for us). Jesus Christ came into the world, went through His ministry, put up with hardships, deprivation, insults, went through the Crucifixion, for our sake, not for His. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." This is love. This is the attitude that Jesus Christ commands us to have and to exercise. We cannot do it; He can do it in us.

"Love thy neighbor as thy self." No one emotes over himself or clings to himself. Everyone seeks good for himself. Everything that anyone does, he does because he feels that it will bring him some form of what he thinks is good. This is the way we "love" ourselves: we desire good for ourselves. So we are told to desire good for our neighbor (and our enemy). Again, we cannot do it, but Christ can do it in us.

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SPIRITICITY September 1960

NEW TRENDS

By Alden Truesdell

IN TODAY'S popular magazines we read of the astounding effects of prayer on plants - that prayer makes them grow luxuriantly and produce abundantly. However, all true gardeners know this, for he who loves his plants and tends them lovingly always draws them into manifestations of beauty and strength and productivity.

It is not unusual nowadays to read articles that relate the efficiency of prayer in healing. Many surgeons pray before undertaking their work for the day. We know of physicians who solicit prayer, especially for complicated cases.

Many actors and actresses pray before appearing in public. They are not ashamed to admit the help they receive from God. In certain social circles too it is becoming fashionable to talk about a Presence that was formerly lightly considered. These tendencies are to be commended and encouraged.

It is hoped that those who are turning their attention to God may be directed in the straightest route to that which they seek. Man senses a higher, a better way of life. For man seeks something higher than himself. His seeking will bring him eventually to the realization that the way of life for which he yearns is within him. "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."

If you will go within yourself, you will find God; and you will discover that He is mighty to heal, bless, and prosper you. If you find God within, you will want to acquaint yourself with Him. When you do, you will know Him to be generous, agreeable, and willing to help you in ways that are best suited to your needs. Soon you will learn that things that had seemed impossible before are the normal experience when you invoke God's help. "With God all things are possible."

There is no new God. There is no new group that is responsible for the splendid exhibits of God in behalf of man. God is Something that the wise of all ages have loved and known. Their words of wisdom astonish and amaze men of today. But the same God is here with men, in this time.

There have always been seekers of Truth like yourself - and finders of Truth, as you will be. They have ever been known as the illumined minority. You will be one of them if you continue in the way of the Christ Truth.

Your Teacher of Truth is within you. If you are earnest in your seeking, an outer teacher will also appear to assist you in the search. He will come "in an hour when ye think not."

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SPIRITICITY September 1960

LET GOD HAVE HIS WAY

By Nell Truesdell

PRIMITIVE MAN sees electricity in violent action as he cowers in his hut during a thunderstorm. Civilized man has harnessed electricity to serve his purposes. However, before he could make practical use of electricity, he had to learn to get electrical charges into motion by the conversion of chemical and mechanical energy into electrical energy. After years of painstaking research and experiment, he is now able to control electricity on a grand scale. By means of conductors, he distributes current to consumers all over the world.

In our homes we flip the switch when we want light. When open, the switch is a terminal where the current ends. But if the wires in the switch are crossed, fuses will blow out because the current will short-circuit.

We consider electricity as representing God and the electric switch as representing man. Like electricity, God is everywhere present; like a switch,

man may be an instrument through which the God-Activity flows freely or he may short-circuit that God-Activity and burn himself out.

Jesus Christ is our finest example of One who let God have His way with Him at all times. He was never ignorant of the God-Activity in Him, nor did he ever use that Activity to advantage Himself. When He had opportunity, He let the God-Activity flow through Him to bless and to heal others.

The decision that man faces is that of willing surrender to God. This means that man must give up his personal will. Since he refuses, he remains ignorant of his divine sonship to God. He short-circuits the God-Activity and burns himself out.

I am reminded of a friend who brought disaster on herself by disregarding a simple rule in the use of electricity. She had mopped her kitchen floor, and then decided to wipe off the elements of her electric stove. The floor was damp; the soles of her slippers were wet; and when she accidentally touched an element that was not disconnected, her damp cloth acted as a conductor. The shock knocked her out. She is still alive but she has a badly damaged body.

Similarly, man blindly takes chances with the God-Activity that pours through him by ignoring the countless opportunities he has to learn about It so that he may let It do Its perfect work through him. Ignorance of any principle will not protect a person from the results of misuse of that principle. The God-Activity that is man's Life will never destroy Its instrument (man); man's ignorance of Its demands will destroy him.

The busy person emphatically brushes such instruction aside and declares: "It's fantastic! I have to make a living in the world!"

The instruction does seem fantastic until it is practiced. The practice is not difficult. Begin with the first waking minute of every day and remember God. Make a prayer of thanks to God for His gift of Life. Above all, we need to love God more.

The heart that is open to God receives the Love of God that is always inflowing to fill the consciousness of a person. He then becomes a conductor for the Activity of God, which will get Itself into expression without damaging the instrument in any way, but which will glorify the person and cause him to shine with radiant light.

To love God more is our essential practice. Love is Power; and he who loves God has the Power of God to use not as he wills, but as God wills.

The following statements are offered in the hope that they may lead you into fuller awareness of God's Presence:

God's LOVE fills my consciousness with POWER.

God's INTELLIGENCE enlightens my consciousness with KNOWING.

God's SUBSTANCE supports my consciousness with PROVISION.

God's JOY quickens my consciousness with VITAL ENERGY.

God's PEACE enfolds my consciousness with TRANQUILLITY.

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EXCERPTS, by Nell Truesdell

Jesus Christ IS the Identity of God in man. Whoever knows this is a son of God and joint-heir with Christ Jesus to the riches of the Kingdom.

"The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." (Romans 8:16-17)

THE OBJECTS THAT surround man are manifestations of images that he has formulated in his intellect and sustained in his consciousness. Having no substance of themselves, the objects disintegrate when man (individually and collectively) abandons his images.

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand forever." (Isaiah 40:8)

THE WORD OF GOD is the utterance of God, the moving Breath from God. This Breath is the creative Power in the universe. God's Word sets His Divine Ideas into motion and that motion assumes form.

"We understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." (Hebrews 11:3)

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Alphabet of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day of the Month

September 1960

1. God is ABLE to make ALL grace ABOUND toward you.
2. Strength and BEAUTY are in His sanctuary.
3. By Him were all things CREATED.
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5. He shall give thee the DESIRES of thy heart.
6. EVERY good gift, and EVERY perfect gift is from above.
7. Our FELLOWSHIP is with the FATHER.
8. GREAT is the Lord, and of GREAT power.
9. God will HEAR me.
10. His understanding IS INFINITE.
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12. He that is JOINED to the Lord is one spirit.
13. God is KIND.
14. The LORD LIFTETH up the meek.
15. In Thine hand is power and MIGHT.
16. The Lord's mercies are NEW every morning.
17. I and my Father are ONE.
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19. With God all things are POSSIBLE.
20. It is the Spirit that QUICKENETH.
21. The inward man is RENEWED day by day.
22. His word runneth very SWIFTLY.
23. Sing unto the Lord with THANKSGIVING.
24. Thy Word giveth UNDERSTANDING.
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26. I Am the VINE, ye are the branches.
27. I Am the WAY.
28. YOURS is the Kingdom of God.
29. Be ZEALOUS therefore, and repent.
30. Truly God is Good.

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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."

SPIRITICITY is the Working Power of the Spiritual Principle
as electricity is the working power of the electrical principle.