

# Diagrams for Living

## The Bible Unveiled

By

Emmet Fox

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### Marriage and Divorce

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. EPHESIANS 5:31,

32 MARRIAGE is one of the most important, if not the most important, of all human relationships. It is a great training school of life. In America, nine people out of ten manage to get married - at least for a time. Thus it seems fitting that this question should be considered in our diagrams for living. Jesus thought marriage so important that his first public act was to attend a wedding. And Paul, in the 5th Chapter of Ephesians, outlines some bold concepts out of which we can formulate a diagram for successful marriage.

There are some people who think marriage is as inconsequential as buying a pair of gloves; and there have been religious teachers who have taught that marriage is an evil thing, and that God is against it. Some people have pointed to the recently unearthed scrolls and the Book of Thomas to prove that some of the early followers of the Christian message were against women and therefore against marriage. That is a dangerous teaching that is usually founded on some psychological or psychic experience, and wherever it has been given forth, it has ended in disaster.

However, normal people get married, or at least think they will one of these days.

Jesus, knowing that, and also knowing that there were those who preached against marriage, went out of his way to attend a wedding and give his blessing to it. That was his first public act. Marriage is a proper relationship and we must come to know the factors that make for its success.

Paul has many things to say on the subject of marriage. His radical views on the duties of husbands and wives are rejected as totally

unrealistic by some, and are accepted as a yardstick for marital behavior, "because the Bible says so," by others. But for the most part people are confused and bewildered, and possessed of the uneasy feeling that somehow they are not living up to the Bible code.

It may be that Paul was just a crusty old bachelor; or he may have had in mind specific instances among the people of Ephesus and some of the Macedonian cities; or he may have been outlining a general moral code for the times.

However, as I have been saying, the Bible was written for all people of all ages, and these accounts have an esoteric meaning for those on the spiritual path. Thus, when the Bible records these words of Paul, please remember that in this case "man" means the "I Am," the conscious spiritual part of yourself. "Woman" or "wife" means your soul; chiefly, in our modern terminology, what is called the subconscious.

When we read..... let every one of you ... love his wife even as himself," it means that you have to develop your human character and lift it more and more toward the divine. Where it says the wife must reverence her husband, it means you must learn to control the soul or the subjective conditions. Where it says "Christ and the church," that does not mean your particular church or somebody else's particular church. The "church" is your personality which means you and your whole environment. So "Christ and the church" has reference to the extent to which you allow the Christ to be expressed in your life. The Bible is telling us - as it always does - that the individual must find God for himself and develop himself spiritually until

he gets full and complete illumination.

Marriage is the most intimate bond in life. It is therefore important to remind ourselves that marriage is first of all a partnership, and any partnership should be maintained on a 50-50 basis. If marriage partners agree on the 50-50 idea, the marriage can hardly fail. On the other hand, if marriage becomes an 80-20, or a 90-10 proposition, something is bound to go wrong. Trouble in any partnership is usually caused by one partner trying to get more than he is entitled to. And so it is in marriage.

However, in marriage one person is often more spiritually developed than the other, and such being the case, the person who is more spiritually developed will have to be prepared to give more and take less. A partnership calls for some kind of sacrifice, and in marriage this is especially true.

Even mature people often expect their marriage to be one continuous honeymoon, but of course this is not the way life is. As a minister, it is frequently my privilege to perform marriages. It is really amazing how many people come to me in the expectation that I can open the book and hand them a happy marriage. Of course I remind them that the marriage ceremony is only the beginning, and the ultimate success of their marriage must be worked out by the individuals themselves.

There are certain things you must understand about yourself if you want to make your marriage a success. You must know that in practically every case the conscious mind of the man is positive to the conscious mind of the woman, and her conscious mind is negative to his. I am not

using the word "negative" in a bad sense, but rather in the way that one might say the seventh step on the stairs is negative to the eighth step. On the other hand, the woman's subconscious mind is positive to the man's subconscious mind, and his subconscious is negative to hers.

This is why a woman should use influence rather than direct force. The wife should, as far as possible, avoid telling the husband. Men do not like to be told. A woman can indicate - and God has given her a million ways for doing so. She can make her feelings known without telling him, and that is because her subconscious mind is positive to his. On the other hand, the man is inclined to use the direct approach because his conscious mind is positive to hers, and women need to understand this.

People imagine when they are getting married that they will live happily ever after, but that is absurd. I speak as a hardened bachelor, but you know the onlookers see most of the game. And in my work of dealing with every kind of problem, I get to know a good deal about people. It is ridiculous to expect to live together month after month and year after year without disputes and difficulties arising.

When there is trouble in the marriage, and if there are no differences there is probably so much indifference that nothing matters, the more spiritually developed partner should get by himself and work spiritually until the anger is overcome.

Never dare to open your mouth or take a step when you are angry. Get by yourself and dissolve the anger or resentment first, and then go straight to the partner and talk it

out, rightly and clearly. Do not swallow things for the sake of peace, for if you do, they will fester in your subconscious and either come out in an explosion that will wreck the marriage or wrack the body. Ill health makes for difficulties in marriage because we are not our true selves unless we are healthy.

Second in importance in marriage is the simple thing of good manners. Good manners are the oil in the machinery of human relationships. Unfortunately, most people keep their best manners and their best behavior for strangers. Yet if you do not like your neighbor, you do not have to speak to him. If you do not like your business firm, you can change it. If you do not like a casual acquaintance, you can let him alone. But in the home, you cannot simply drop the members of the family - and thus good manners are called for. It is amazing that in many homes where knowledge, and culture are taken for granted, good manners are often at a discount. The feeling is, "Oh, it's only my husband - or my wife."

Marriage cannot be taken for granted. It goes on indefinitely, and unless the relationship is taken care of, it will go to pieces. In other words, one must give some attention to maintenance. You spend a certain amount of money painting a house, replacing certain parts, taking care of shrubs and plants. You take care of your automobile. That is maintenance. In marriage, likewise, there needs to be an investment in maintenance, in upkeep, and it is surprising how careless an otherwise fine man or woman can be in considering the feelings of the only person who really matters to his or her happiness.

For instance, under no circumstances should you ever criticize your partner's family. If he wants to do it, let him; but don't you do it. Let him say anything he likes about his family, but don't you say it. The family link is made in infancy, long before he met you. He may have turned against his family, or he may have just awakened to the fact that his brother is a "very bad character." Still, in the inner layers of his subconscious there is an emotional link which will resent criticism from a non-member of the family.

Where a couple have been married for some time, certain peculiarities will be observed in the partner. After all, each is a human being and everyone has certain idiosyncrasies and faults of character. In marriage it is only common sense to avoid treading on these sore spots. If the partner has a violent temper, avoid exciting him. Your own worst fault may not be temper but something just as difficult for you, so help him to control his temper and he will tend to help you to control your fault.

Suppose the other person has views that do not commend themselves to you? Why should you control the religion or the politics or the feelings of another. A true partnership stands on equal rights. So never try to control your husband's or your wife's religion, politics, or personal convictions. Giving him an opportunity for self-expression will tend to make his relations with you stronger, fresher, and newer. If you are a Democrat and your wife announces she is going to go out and help the Republican party, let her, as long as the rest of the marriage is smooth and she is taking care of her part of it.

Suppose your husband is suddenly bitten

with the bug of astrology, and you, his wife, are infuriated. You ridicule his interest. You joke about the stars, and if anything goes wrong with him you say, "Aha! What about the stars now?" If he is satisfactory in other phases of his life with you, then let him have his occasional preoccupation with the planets and the signs. Whatever the hobby or the interest, do not ridicule it or you will undermine the relationship that exists. A hobby is only the outer symbol of something which is happening in the soul. That particular outlook is doing something for the person, and in opposing it you are really trying to destroy that inner thing. Leave it alone, and if it is sound, it will work itself out into the expression it needs. You must not be the one to explode it.

Each person in marriage is seeking in another the qualities which he feels he lacks in himself. This is the basis of sex attraction. Women look to men for strength and protection, for logic, and for the pioneering qualities they feel they lack in themselves. Men look to women for femininity, homemaking, motherliness, and receptive reactions, which in their own souls they seem to miss. This is why in general it is not wise for a woman to seem to be too clever especially before marriage. After marriage she can reveal her cleverness more, but men are a little afraid of women who seem to be too intellectual.

I am in favor of early marriages for most people, and I would urge present-day parents not to oppose young people in marrying. I believe that long engagements are not good. There is no guarantee that one will know the other more at the end of a long engagement than in a comparatively short period. A person will know more in

the first month of marriage than in all the years that preceded it. Parents who have children of a marriageable age should not oppose marriage on the score of youth, nor because of finances. Young people should not expect to start life where their parents left off. Let them marry and attain the good position together.

The chief mistake that men make in marriage is that they rarely demonstrate their affections sufficiently. They take love too much for granted. They may say, "Oh, she vows I love her or I wouldn't have married her!" That is not good enough. Men seem preconditioned perhaps by early training to inhibit and repress their feelings of affection. Obviously this is out of place in marriage. It is not sufficient that a man should love his wife, for women are so created that they like to be told so, and need to be told so frequently.

A husband will find it very useful and important to make thoughtful gifts. He probably did it before his marriage, and there is no reason why he should not continue the practice. His gift should bear evidence that he has made a special effort of thoughtfulness of her. She knows the importance of symbols. It means a great deal to a woman to receive candy or flowers or other tokens of love at a time when there is no reason for it. And, of course, the husband should remember her birthday. A man usually tries to forget his birthday, and a woman pretends she wants to forget hers - but don't let the husband forget it! Also, he should remember their wedding anniversary, even if he has to arrange to have his secretary remind him.

I am certain that many men make the

mistake of forgetting these things, even though they literally adore their wives. And I am just as sure that the wives have entertained considerable doubts about the marriage relationship because of this lack of tangible expression of affection.

And now to the women! Their chief mistake unquestionably is this: They allow the man to get the impression that he has sacrificed his personal freedom. It is not how things are but how you think they are, in marriage as elsewhere, that controls your life. Actually, a woman gives up as much freedom as a man does, but the man does not think so. Every man feels, sooner or later, that his personal freedom has been considerably abridged. Of course, if the marriage is a success, he feels he gets back more than he has sacrificed.

As a rule, men do have a more varied and diversified life, but whatever you do, Mrs. Wife, do not allow him to feel that all this has been cut off. Do not keep asking him where he is going. In a happy marriage he will not be going anywhere you do not approve of. Women should wake up to the fact that men have a standard of honor equal to their own. Most of the opinions to the contrary have been given by cheap novels and cynical plays which do not represent life. The majority of men have just as much self-respect and honor as women have.

But a man does not want to have to come home like a child to tell you where he was at three o'clock in the afternoon or with whom he had lunch. Eventually he will talk and it will come out, if you are tactful. Do not "clock" him in and out. That is all right for the factory but do not introduce it in your home. Do not let him feel that the whistle

blows at six o'clock, or whatever time it is you expect him home.

Now, I am going to tell you something which you need to know, Mrs. Wife. Every married man needs to get away from women altogether now and again. If a man's mentality is to be kept balanced and wholesome, he needs now and again to get away with 11 the boys." He will come back to the atmosphere and sanctity of the home, strengthened and improved and inspired for having been away. It is a good thing for a man to be a man among men from time to time.

Marriage has an important karmic link. It is true that every relationship in life is a karmic link, but most of them are not so important. However, marriage is so important that if you run away from the problems of marriage, they will follow you until such time as you overcome them and put them right. There is not a bit of use running away from the difficulties of marriage because sooner or later you will meet these things somewhere, somehow, and you will have to solve them. What is the good of running from an unpleasant task at ten o'clock when you know very well you will have to come back and finish it at three O'clock? So in the training school of matrimony, people should recognize this and stand their ground and solve the problems if they possibly can.

BUT - and herein comes the question of divorce - there is a limit to what a man or a woman should be asked to put up with. When the thing is absolutely hopeless and the partner gives you no possible ground for making your marriage a success, then I think divorce is the best way out. There is

no sense in prolonging the situation if it is, humanly speaking, entirely hopeless. However, if there is any hope at all, then stand your ground and work the marriage out with prayer. It is extraordinary the power that prayer has in making a marriage go right. Of course, if there are children involved, the problem is doubly serious.

Marriage is so difficult a school because it is such an intimate one. It covers every phase of your life, and you can never get away from it so long as the marriage exists. The tuition of the school is love. If you ever loved the man; if you ever loved the woman - that man or that woman is essentially the same person who stood with you through the ceremony. The original qualities are still there, and there is always a possibility of coming back to the original status if you believe they are there and make an effort to relate to them and draw them forth.

I gave a course of lectures in London, at the end of which a woman approached me and said, "When I first came to these lectures six months ago, I was arranging with my lawyer to get a divorce. But I started praying, and now the man I was going to divorce has disappeared and the man I married has come back" - and turning around to him, she added, "And here he is." There are very few marriages that prayer will not redeem.

The question of marriage and divorce would not be complete without some mention of children and family relationships, for a great deal of misconception surrounds the idea of family duty. What is one's duty to his family? Divine Providence has so arranged it that we are all born and brought up in families; but one's family was never intended to be a bondage. One of the

advantages of family life is that in the home one gets the real truth about himself. The members of a family usually feel at liberty to speak to one another "straight from the shoulder."

A brother and sister never feel any embarrassment in being frank with each other.

However, one must not allow his family to become a bondage to him; not that I want to break up families. No indeed! Although some families need to be broken up. And, thank God, in my short career I have broken up a few families in the right way. I have persuaded brothers and sisters to stop living in the same house.

I have persuaded grown-up children to move to a hotel or to the other side of town, even to another city. But that was to set them free and to set the parents free.

Certainly young children should accept guidance and parental authority; and older children should see that their parents should never want for necessities. However, the so-called "ties of duty" are sometimes overemphasized. Once a child reaches his late teens, he should never let his father or mother hold him back, mentally or spiritually. His parents were brought up a generation ago, but the plan of Providence is that each generation should do new and better things. Even if the parents do not recognize this, the children should.

Children must think for themselves. They must learn to choose their own politics, their own religion, their own friends, their own reactions to life. Of course they will make mistakes, but they will make even more

mistakes by trying to remain in the old rut. A lady once came to me and said, "It's about my boy - he's getting into bad company . I asked her, "How old is he?" And she replied, "Forty-four." I said, "Well, I think it is about time he should!"

It is often much worse in the case of a girl who is brought up tied to her mother's apron strings. A boy is normally allowed more freedom. Sometimes there is that type of mother who just must have some creature to exercise her power over. She will not allow her daughter away from her side. She will not let her have any social life. She will not let her marry. Then in the course of time the mother dies, and the daughter by that time is middle-aged and deprived and insufficient mentally, physically, socially, and spiritually.

These are extreme cases but I wanted to make my subject very clear. Fortunately, these extreme cases are getting to be fewer every day. The old restrictions are breaking down. The mistaken authority is melting away. Indeed, the pendulum has begun to swing the other way in the breakdown in parental authority and a resulting "juvenile delinquency." While this of course is to be deplored, it is not so widespread as it seems. Millions of families are growing up together without the old strict family ties. Fine young men and women are emerging who, in freedom of choice and action, will be the leaders of tomorrow.

Parents must realize that children need love and guidance, and especially do they need parents and all that the word signifies. This is why divorce is so tragic where children are concerned. All children need the influence of balanced parents of a stable

marriage to encourage self-expression and freedom, and to mold personal responsibility and self-reliance.

### **What Jesus Taught About Christmas**

Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord....

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth  
peace, good will toward men.

*LUKE 2: 10, 11, 14*

THE problem connected with Christmas is the same today as it has been since the very first Christmas. just what does it mean? Jesus came into the world. He did his work. He taught us and left us sufficient knowledge to find our salvation. And then he went away. Nineteen centuries later we have not yet found our salvation as a whole. And always it is the same reason - we do not understand the Christ message. We do not realize the true significance of Christmas or of Easter, nor do we comprehend what really happened on Good Friday.

We do not understand what Jesus came to do and why he did it. And it is this lack of understanding which keeps us out of the kingdom of heaven. From the beginning until today Jesus has been the most misunderstood man in history. He was misunderstood by those who crucified him. He has been misunderstood by those who have hated him; and he has been misunderstood by those who have called upon or paid lip service to his name. Until we know something of what he came to do, what he really meant, it is not much use in calling ourselves Christians. Just calling

upon his Dame means very little. He said more than once that just to say, "Lord, Lord," does not bring us into the kingdom of heaven.

Christmas is the most beautiful festival of the year. It is not coincidence that is the feast of the Wonder Child, the baby who grew up to change history, for Christmas symbolizes that mystical thing, the incarnation of God in man. With the advent of Jesus love was born into the world . . . and the thing called true humility, Those that had come before had taught justice, a God of grim mercy; but Jesus taught love and compassion. He put these things into the human race and they will never be uprooted.

Now, it is true that the Christian people have not always exhibited these things through the nineteen centuries since Jesus came. However, they are in the race mind now, and in the not distant future the people of the world will begin to express them. We have stepped across the threshold into a new age, and these things will be brought into expression. The human race is going to cease to fear and hate one another. The time is coming and most of us will live to see it when these great truths that Jesus taught will be expressed all over the world.

To Jesus, divine love was the supreme and vital thing. No other human being has ever loved his fellow men as Jesus loved them. He was not sentimental about it.

To him love was the keynote to life, the gateway to peace and harmony and right action. He loved mankind and he demonstrated it in his life and in his death.

The personal history of Jesus extends from the manger to the cross, about thirty- three years in all. The second chapter of Luke, which I think is the most beautiful chapter in the Bible, explains the birth of Jesus, that event which was to change the whole world. Luke is a great artist with words, and he tells the story with incomparable clarity and beauty. He was a highly cultured man, not a simple fisherman. Thus he had literary qualities that the other evangelists did not have.

Luke was naturally a very kindly man. He was tolerant. He understood people.

Professionally he was a physician - Paul calls him the beloved physician. Physicians are tolerant. They understand human nature. They make allowances. Sometimes the clergy are inclined to be too severe. They expect people to be perfect, but a doctor never does.

Luke begins by saying that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be taxed. This is actually a mistranslation. The Authorized Version of the Bible, the King James Version, is the best, but there are a few mistakes in it.

The decree had nothing to do with taxation. What happened was that the Emperor decided to take a census.

We might ask ourselves at this point why Jesus came when he did. He was probably born 6 or 7 B.C. The modern calendar is based on the supposed date of birth of Jesus, but today we know that an error was made of six or seven years.

But what does it matter? Why didn't he

come generations before or after? The Israelites had been praying for a Messiah for hundreds of years. Why did he come at that particular time. The explanation is that that was the time for a great teacher because it was the first and only time that the world was one. Thus his message could be more easily taken all over the world.

However, we must remember that in those days the world meant the basin of the

Mediterranean. Nobody knew anything about China or Japan or South Africa. The world for practical purposes extended from the north of Africa where the Sahara Desert ends up north to the Rhine and the Danube. North of those rivers the people were considered barbarians and nobody took any particular interest in them. And the world extended on the west to include Wales but not beyond. No one had ever heard of America, and on the east it went to the other end of the Mediterranean and a little bit beyond. That was the world, and in those days there was one emperor, one law, all over the world. It was the ideal time for the Savior to come.

Jesus' parents lived in the north of Palestine in the little village of Nazareth, but they were not descended from people there. They were from Judea, in the south, "of the family and lineage of David." Their ancestral home was Bethlehem, and following the law they went to Bethlehem in order to register for the census.

Bethlehem means house of bread. As we have seen, a house symbolizes a part of your soul, your mentality. Bread in the Bible always means food; not just food for the body, but food for the soul - the food of knowledge, understanding, and spiritual experience. That is the food which God gives you. That is "the true bread from heaven." And Bethlehem, the house of bread, is the consciousness of that Presence.

The Bible calls it the city of David, and David means Divine Love, the Divine Love which dwells in your heart. A divine love outside of yourself, supposedly acting somewhere else, is about as much yours and has as much power to nourish you and keep

you alive as if you put your blood in a jar on the shelf. Divine Love can only subsist for you in your soul. Nowhere else. You must experience it at first hand.

As Mary and Joseph approached Bethlehem, Mary was ready to be delivered of the baby. We are told that there was no room at the inn. The word "inn" in our Bible means a "khan." The khan was not an inn as we understand it, but an enclosure of four walls with a wide opening on one side. Khans were built and placed a day's journey apart on the roads from Jerusalem to Jericho, from Jerusalem to Damascus, etc. People used donkeys or camels, occasionally mules, and took their provisions with them. By going into the khan at night they had some protection from wild animals and possible robbers. And, of course, it was in the khan that one met other travelers and exchanged gossip and news with them.

On that occasion great crowds were on the road, and so when Mary and Joseph got to the khan, they found it full. This presented no great problem because there were a number of caves in the vicinity. Often these caves were used by shepherds and others for protection on cold or stormy nights, and they usually brought their animals in with them. This was the kind of cave in which Mary and Joseph spent that memorable evening. They had everything they needed. And there was a manger in the rock wall in which they could place the infant Jesus. The Bible calls it a stable, but there is nothing dreadful about that. In that old world people took better care of their animals than they did of themselves. In any case, Mary and Joseph could have demonstrated anything they needed, but they were not looking

for material things. The more people have of the spiritual, the less they need of the material. As we review the Christmas story we must remember that everything in the Bible is allegorical as well as mystical. That is why in the Bible we find so many diagrams for living. Everything in the life of Jesus is allegorical as well as mystical. And of course, everything in our lives too is an allegory of our own souls.

Everything that you do, everything that happens to you, is a dramatization of something in yourself. And the life of Jesus is a dramatization of the Christed soul, the soul which has chosen the spiritual path. So the life of Jesus furnishes many diagrams for living as we either follow in the Master's footsteps or try to go it alone.

When the Wonder Child arrived, he did not arrive in a royal palace as some thought he would, perhaps among the Herods. Many of the Israelites, who had been praying for the coming of the Messiah, thought that he would be born in a palace. They were expecting someone who would re-establish a material kingdom and restore the lost glories the Israelites had known under Solomon. And some of the more devout and holy people said he would surely be born in one of the ecclesiastical families attached to the temple; but he was not. He was born to a simple family, and in a stable.

The stable is symbolic of our present state of consciousness with its feelings of unworthiness. It symbolizes the Christ that is born into any one of us the moment that we give our whole hearts to God. That is when the Christ is born, when we make up our minds to put God first in our lives and not second. We feel unworthy, and that our

heart is no place for the Christ. People mistakenly try to make themselves worthy. It is a waste of time. But if we turn to God and say, like the Centurion, "I know that I am not worthy that you should enter my house, but because you are Divine Love, in spite of all my faults and shortcomings, you can make me worthy that you should come to me," then the Christ does it. In other words, the Christ comes into a stable, not into a palace, but the Christ sanctifies and glorifies that stable so that it becomes the temple of the living God.

In the old tradition and the classical pictures of the advent, there is always a donkey, an ox, and a lamb in the stable, and these represent three aspects of our nature. The donkey represents this mind of ours which is often quite stubborn.

The donkey has never been credited with very much intellect, wisely or unwisely.

The donkey stands for the human mind unilluminated by the Christ. The ox stands for the body, the pull of the animal forces which keep many people out of the kingdom. And the lamb represents our spiritual nature. The Christ is born and unites these three.

We observe Christmas in the last week in December. The early Christians wanted to woo their followers away from the pagan Roman celebrations. So they fixed Christmas to take the place of the Roman Saturnalia with its heathen practices.

However, Jesus was not born in the winter. He was born in the spring or early summer. The shepherds, you will remember, were out in the hills with their sheep.

The shepherds of the Christmas story were simple people but very spiritual. For the last four hundred years since the Renaissance, the tendency in the West (in Europe and in America) has been to associate spirituality with culture and education. These go well together, but they are different things. In the Old World it was different. An uneducated man, a shepherd, a plowboy, a mariner, a fisherman, was just as likely as not to be a great saint - in the sense of one who is spiritual and has a contact with God.

And so these simple shepherds had a spiritual understanding. I did not say "poor" shepherds. How can a man be poor who has all he needs? I do not suppose these shepherds had anything but the clothes on their backs, a simple hut to live in, and their sheep; but that was all they needed. Yet they had something more. They had the starry hosts above and the hills and the wind and the everunfolding miracle of nature all around them. And ... they had time to think and meditate and gain spiritual understanding. They had a knowledge of God that hardly any of the learned men of that day possessed, and they knew that something important was happening. All the clever fellows in Rome, Alexandria, Corinth, and other places did not know a thing about it. But the shepherds did. And the wonderful thing happened. An angel appeared.

Now in this day of great scientific achievement and great materiality, there are some people who say, "The appearance of an angel is a beautiful idea but of course it could not happen. Perhaps the shepherds just imagined it. It is not possible to see angels." And they are right too as far as they are concerned. Only those who have the

angel vision will ever see angels. The angels are the inspiration God sends in high moments of consciousness. God sends His angels in times of stress and need and they bring an inspiring thought, a beautiful idea.

They bring healing energy. They bring joy. And they tell you those lovely and ineffable things that you never could know yourself.

Sometimes the angel Gabriel comes into your consciousness, and if you say yes to him, then something wonderful happens. Something is born in your soul which is with you for the rest of your life. But it is your privilege to say no, if you wish.

When you are bitter or cynical, when you give in to disappointment and resentment, when you are critical - these are only forms of the one negative activity - you are saying "no" to the angel, you are saying "no" to God, and consequently you are saying "no" to life. But I counsel you, I urge you most deeply, when the angel comes to you, say "Do not make any excuse. Do not say that you can't believe it yes. or that you are not good enough. Do you suppose God has any illusions about that? Say "yes" to the angel, and you are saying it yes " to the more abundant life.

When the angel first appeared to the shepherds their first reaction was fear. "They were sore afraid." How human! How like ourselves! They were frightened at first because it seemed too good to be true.

This is the tragedy of human nature. We think something is too good to be true; but trouble never surprises us. We regret it, but we do not think it is too bad to be true.

When something new and strange happens the first thing that most people feel is fear. Most people tend to interpret anything unexpected as evil and danger. A great idea that has been helpful to many is "I see the angel of God in every change." Never be afraid because a change comes into your life' God never closes a door without opening another one. So when some change happens and you begin to be frightened, say to yourself, "I see the angel of God in this change." So the angel said to the shepherds - and this is one of the most important texts in the Bible - "Fear not." A great prayer! "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy." And then there was a heavenly host of angels; because when the angel comes and you say "yes" to him, then you get far more than you ever dreamed. And the heavenly music broke out and they listened to it. And, again, those who hear heavenly music are those who have heavenly music in their hearts. There is always heavenly music going on, but it exists only for those who can hear it.

The angels brought the shepherds a message which they could understand. "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." Here was something they were familiar with a manger.

They probably knew the exact cave where the babe could be found. They had been told all they needed to know, perhaps as much as they could understand. How could anyone ever be told more? How could any of us be told any more than we are capable of understanding? The Bible is full of

knowledge and inspiration. The air is tingling with it, but the blind man cannot see the light, the deaf man cannot hear the music. And we are blind and we are deaf to the light of God and the music of the spheres. We do not see and we do not hear and we say, "It is not there," but it is. When Solomon became king of Israel, he did not ask God for riches and honors. He prayed for knowledge and wisdom and an understanding heart, and as a consequence riches and honors were given him in abundance.

These shepherds got their inspiration, they accepted the message, and they did not sit idly by waiting for something to happen. They went and found the Christ child.

And of course, the one thing that matters in our lives from our birth to our death is for us to find the Christ child. We must find him for ourselves, find him in a stable and let him grow up and turn it into a palace, not a material palace, not one built with hands, the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Another important detail of the Christmas story is added by Matthew. Before he found the Christ in the person Of Jesus, Matthew had been a taxgatherer. He sat at the receipt of custom, collecting duties from travelers and merchants who came through Jerusalem from all parts of the world. He had met many foreigners, and it was only natural that he would be particularly interested in some strangers who had come all the way from Persia to pay homage to the infant Jesus.

Matthew calls them Wise Men who came from the East. They were wise because they were spiritual. They had spent much time in prayer and living the spiritual life, and they

knew that something wonderful was happening on the earth. They had seen a star and they followed the star and it led them to the babe in Bethlehem. People who keep near to God know many things that people who do not, cannot know.

The people of ancient times were very astrologically minded. We therefore find the Bible, beginning in the Book of Genesis, full of allusions to the twelve signs of the Zodiac. On the fourth day of creation, God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs [zodiacal signs], and for seasons." In the Book of Judges, we find that the twelve tribes of Israel were arranged in camp according to the twelve signs of the Zodiac, and their banners depicted these signs. So it is not surprising to find that the Wise Men from the East were deeply interested in astrology, and that they followed a star to the manger where the Christ child lay. But what is surprising is that there was not one star but two.

For many years Bible scholars and students of religious history felt that this account of the star which the Wise Men followed must be purely figurative. But more recently some long forgotten documents came to light. Kepler, the astronomer and mathematician, had made some calculations back in 1603- In that year he observed a very unusual conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation Pisces.

There was an heliacal rising of the two planets, which means they appeared so close together that they seemed to be one terrifically bright star. Following a hunch, he figured back from that year and found

that 1610 years before the year 7 B.C. to be exact - the year Jesus was born - there had 'been a similar conjunction of the two planets.

So the star which the Wise Men undoubtedly followed, was actually Jupiter and Saturn in conjunction. And there is a bit of interesting symbology here because in the Jewish tradition Pisces was the zodiacal sign of Israel; Jupiter was considered the Royal Star governing the tribe of Judah; and Saturn was the Protector of Israel.

Consequently, the Wise Men intuitively felt a great event was taking place in Judea.

This was the star of revelation which rose in the east.

The star in the East is the morning star. It is the first gleam, the first dawning of the Christ Truth. In the Bible and elsewhere, as we have observed earlier, the east always stands for spirit, for truth. "The lightning cometh out of the east and shineth unto the west." When you see the star in the east you have not yet found the Christ child, but you are convinced that he exists and that you want him, and that you are going to find him. The Wise Men saw the star in the east and they followed it, and it brought them to the Christ child. They had been seeking God, and one always finds what he seeks.

After the child was born he was taken to the temple in accordance with the laws and the rules of the time. When you are trying to live the spiritual life you must meet the rules and regulations of ordinary life. You cannot be on the spiritual path unless you are a good citizen, a good parent, child, husband, wife, brother, or sister. So they took the

child to the temple and there was the customary offering of two turtle doves that "all things might be fulfilled." The doves stand for inspiration. Later when Jesus began his public work with John the Baptist at the river, "the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him."

At the temple, there was a saintly old man named Simeon who had devoted his life to God, and he too knew what was happening. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Ghost - divine inspiration "that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ." As we have said, when you give your full devotion to God you often learn things before they happen. Daniel knew what was going to happen to him. John the Baptist knew what was going to happen to him. Many others in the Bible have had precognition. And Jesus was the supreme example of this. So Simeon knew just what was happening, knew it months before, perhaps several years. And there was also a woman of great age in the temple, a prophetess named Anna. She too knew what was happening.

Both of these people gave thanks for the appearance at long last of the Messiah for which generations of people had been praying. When Simeon took the infant Jesus in his arms, he blessed God. Rather unusual. How often do we bless God? Usually we are too busy asking God's blessings on us to think of blessing Him. Yet blessing God is a powerful form of affirmative prayer, for it means sending thoughts of love and gratitude to the Giver of every good gift.

Simeon, having made his affirmation of love

and faith, made this remarkable statement: "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people [not just the Israelites]; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." This was not a common concept at the time. Most people thought that when the Messiah came he would come to redeem and help only his own particular nation and race. But they were mistaken and Simeon knew it. Jesus came to redeem the whole of the human race.

"A light to lighten the Gentiles." This statement was prophetic, for when a

Canaanite woman, a Gentile, came to Jesus to heal her daughter, his disciples tried to send her away. But Jesus said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Turning to the woman, he tested her sincerity by saying, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." And she answered, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." And so Jesus healed her daughter, remarking, "Great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

Mary and Joseph having performed their religious duties went back to their home in Nazareth, "and the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." This is the beginning of the life of Jesus, beginning in the manger, and finally finishing on the cross.

Now, before Jesus came on earth he was a great spiritual being, and when he decided to come back on earth, he had to be born a human being. Was he God? Yes, and so are you. Jesus was God but not Infinite Spirit.

The totality of God could not be limited in a human form. Jesus was the expression of God, the individualization of God, just as each one of us is. However, Jesus knew he was God, and we only hope and vaguely believe we are, but we do not know. When we know, then we shall be able to do the works which Jesus did, as he promised we should.

What did Jesus think of Christmas? What did he think of his birth on earth? I am sure most of us have asked ourselves the same question about ourselves. Why were we born? Why are we here? What does life mean? The whole of Jesus' life is the answer to these questions so far as he was concerned, and these answers form many dramatic diagrams for living.

When Jesus was brought before Pilate, he was questioned concerning his activities and assertions. He answered, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." And Pilate asked, "What is truth?" It is a good question.

The search for Truth is unending, not merely by ecclesiastics, philosophers, and scholars, but by scientists too. Every time something "It" is discovered, another facet of Truth has been uncovered, new another milestone on the road to Truth has been achieved.

Perhaps we could define Absolute Truth as God Himself. All other truth is relative to that. Jesus came to bear witness to the Truth of God, and he spent his life demonstrating the power available to those who link their minds with that Truth.

Jesus did not have to come to earth at all. Unlike the rest of us, he chose to come back in order to do a great work for humanity, and therefore he is rightly called the savior of the world. Our spiritual and physical emancipation would have been much slower in coming had it not been for the work which Jesus did in and to the race mind.

In order to help us Jesus had to become one of us, he had to be born of a woman and come back into the human race. Nothing can be helped from the outside. Even God does not help us from the outside. How does God heal us? How does God set us free from sin? How does He forgive us? Not from the outside, but by working in us, changing our consciousness. When the inner is changed, the outer change follows in accordance with that inner change.

Nothing can be saved from the outside and nothing can be destroyed from the outside. No country was ever destroyed from the outside. The Roman Empire was not destroyed by the barbarians; they only came in and took the loot. The Roman Empire was destroyed by deterioration within. Great institutions like great empires die from within. No church was ever destroyed by persecution. On the contrary, "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." When a church dies, it dies from within. We are told very little about Jesus' early life, but when he came on earth he necessarily had to lose most of his advanced consciousness for the time being, to become a baby. A small baby cannot possibly have the consciousness of a man, much less the consciousness which Jesus had before his incarnation. However, with Mary and Joseph as his earthly parents, he was brought up in the proper atmosphere and

with the instruction that he needed. They were wise parents. In spite of their knowledge that he was a very special baby, they did not try to make a child genius out of him.

The first account of Jesus' youth was at age twelve, but his first awakening must have come around the age of seven, possibly a little earlier. The child would cease to be a baby. From then on there would be a continual unfoldment until at the age of puberty it dawned on him who he really was and why he had come. The Jews have their Bar Mitzvah and most of the Christian churches have some kind of confirmation - to correspond with that time when the child is deemed old enough to be responsible for his own spiritual life. So, one day when he was praying and meditating by himself, it suddenly dawned on the boy Jesus, and he remembered how he had planned this before his birth, how he had selected this work, and what lay ahead of him.

The first great opportunity came when his parents took him to Jerusalem for the feast of the passover. He found himself discussing important philosophical and religious questions with the learned doctors and scholars in the temple. "And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." Jesus' parents were a day's journey toward home before they noticed that he was missing.

Retracing their steps, it was three days before they found him in the temple. And while they were amazed at the understanding their child displayed, they treated him just as any parents would handle an ordinary child. "Son," asked his mother, "why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold,

thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." And the account goes on to say that he returned to Nazareth with them, "and was subject unto them." Thus, in spite of his advanced understanding, he continued to be a well-disciplined child.

There has been much speculation about the hidden years of Jesus' life, the time between his first appearance in the temple and the beginning of his public work, a period of some eighteen years. The simple fact is that this time was spent in preparation. No great work is done without adequate preparation, and for the kind of work Jesus had come to do, much time and study was needed as well as hours and days spent in prayer and meditation. Jesus never felt he was too advanced to pray. There are those who get a smattering of the metaphysical teaching and feel if they make a couple of affirmations and the demonstration is not immediately forthcoming, they are ready to chuck the whole business. Not Jesus. Even after he began his public work, he was always praying.

So Jesus got the instruction he needed. He obviously had a greater depth than the teachers, but the good teacher can help the student to realize, control, and express his capacities. A good voice teacher can train a prima donna, though he may never have achieved fame as a singer himself. So there were people to teach Jesus. He traveled, became familiar with the great religions of his day, and began his public work when he was about thirty. He worked for three years, and then went away.

Jesus had great prophetic vision. He foresaw the present Aquarian Age and made indirect mention of it when his disciples were

making preparation for that final passover which has become the Last Supper. He told them to follow the man with the waterpot and the man with the waterpot, the gardener, is the symbol of this Age. Jesus knew beforehand about what would take place around the crucifixion but not in detail. It turned out to be more difficult than he had expected, and he called upon Peter and James and John to help him. He was not infallible. And then he thought that the end of matter and limitation would come much sooner than was to be the case. But in spite of these seeming shortcomings, he was the greatest being that has come to earth up to now.

Jesus came to teach compassion and love of one another. He never wasted a moment in sad metaphysical speculation - the kind of thing which has done so much harm to India and other parts of Asia, the kind of thing which wasted so much time in the Middle Ages when serious-minded men argued how many angels could stand on the point of a needle. Jesus taught the higher metaphysics and the higher spirituality, and its cornerstone was compassion and love. Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

When someone came to him and said, "Lord, we love you," he smiled and replied, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." If we keep his commandments, that is, if we follow his teaching and live the life, then are we his disciples. If we love one another in thought, word, and deed, then are we on our way to the manger, and the Star of the East is going ahead of us to show the way.

This is the story of the Christmas child. But

how wrong it would be to think that the story ended two thousand years ago when Jesus dematerialized in what we call the Ascension. The truth is that the thing is going on all the time and that God means it for everyone. Jesus taught that there might be a Christ child born in every soul. "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many." God has no preferences. There are no reserved seats in heaven. We are all the same in His sight.

We all have the same power and the same capacity. No outer ceremony makes any difference. No organization or person has any corner on this. It is your heart and the level of your consciousness that determines all.

If you keep your heart as the shepherd did, you will begin to know things that you cannot find in a book or a sermon. You will hear the heavenly choir, and the Christ child will be born and you will be there to receive it. After that, "Nothing can by any means hurt you."

### **How To Un-Worry**

For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.

*JOB 3:25*

THE Book of Job is really a study in the origin of evil, and in why things go wrong.

Why do you have pain and sickness? Why do you have sorrows and regret? Why do you sometimes say or do things which you are terribly sorry for afterward, and then worry about how you are going to handle the situation? The Book of Job undertakes

to answer these questions. If we understand why and how things happen, we are on the road to learning how to handle them - how to un-worry.

This book is one of the oldest parts of the Bible. It was probably written by a great Arab sheik, an understanding and spiritual man who had been asked by thoughtful people why things go wrong. He had pondered long on such questions as the origin of evil, why trouble comes to people, and how they can make wrong things right. He decided to put his ideas in the form of a play in which, under the inspiration of God, he dramatizes the things that trouble us, and the way to set them right.

The first act takes place in heaven where God is thought of as a big man with courtiers around and Satan as one of the leading characters. Satan in the Book of Job is not the devil of other parts of the Bible. He is a court official who goes out with the permission of the Lord and takes away all of Job's property. In the play Job is an enormously rich and influential Arab sheik. Most of his wealth would be in flocks and herds. They were taken away. Then his employees were killed, and finally his children were killed - seven sons and three daughters.

Obviously this is a parable and not history. It would be appalling to think that God, who is all-just, all-good, would slaughter these children to teach their father a lesson. The numbers seven and three are important. Here, seven means the seven main aspects of God which Job had temporarily forgotten, so in effect they were taken away from him. The three daughters symbolize the three aspects of man: spirit, mind, and body. In

other words, Job was thinking wrongly. He was judging by appearances instead of the Truth. Job later gave the key to his difficulties when he declared, "The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me." He was bringing more troubles on himself by his own wrong thinking.

Job was greatly stricken by the loss of all his property, but he continued to praise God. The Lord is supposed to have said to Satan, "There, didn't I tell you. Job is really a just man." And Satan replied, "Well, I'm not so sure. We have taken away all his property, but try hitting at the man. Strike at his body and then you will see a change in him." The body is an expression of both parts of our mentality, the conscious and subconscious. This is why it is important to demonstrate health.

Since the body is the nearest part of our expression, we have to get it right. This is why Jesus stressed healing and why the Resurrection meant so much - complete dominion over the body.

So the Lord said to Satan, "We'll give Job another test. Strike at his body, but don't kill him." And Satan struck him with boils, so that Job was in a very bad way with his health. Even then he kept his faith in God, but he just managed to hang on. In utter misery he went out and sat on the ash heap. Isn't that a marvelous expression for depression and discouragement? Sitting on the ash heap? Isn't that just about the way people feel when they have great difficulties or when they are afraid? This, Bible writer understood human nature. Sitting among ashes means a person is wallowing in his difficulties, surrounded by lost hopes, feeling terribly sorry for himself, and

perhaps boring other people with his troubles. That is what Job did.

Then the play introduces Job's wife, and the author says that she was worse than Job. Instead of trying to comfort him, she goaded him and tried to drive out the last little bit of faith. She says to her husband, "Are you such a fool as still to believe in God? Curse God, and die." Remember, the woman in the Bible always represents 'the human soul, the human personality, and especially the feeling nature. The man represents the spiritual side, the Christ within. When things go wrong, it is usually our feelings that let us down, our feelings of fear and discouragement. "What's the use ... Give up your faith in God ... Prayer doesn't work." In the play the woman says it, but it was Job's own mind that was suggesting he turn away from God and let go of his faith. And then his higher self replies, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh." He did not even lose his temper, and when one can keep his temper under control, he is still master of the situation.

However, job had not yet risen high enough in consciousness to overcome his difficulties. He continued to sit out on the ash heap. Bad news travels fast and pretty soon his three friends came around. Job had been famous for his justice, wisdom, philanthropy, and fair dealing. His friends could not understand how a man with these qualities could be suffering as he was. Then one of them chided him, "Remember, I pray thee, whoever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? . . . they that plow iniquity', and sow wickedness, reap the same." In other words, "We have pity for you but you must have been doing some evil things on the quiet." Nice friends!

Pity is always a bad thing. It is a counterfeit. The real thing is compassion. We should not see anyone suffer or in misery without trying to help him. To shrug our shoulders, walk away, and say "What can I do?" is wrong. The first thing we can do is to give him the right thought, to see the Christ in him, to pray for him. And if there is some practical thing we can do, we should do it. That is compassion, one of the shortest cuts into the kingdom of heaven. Jesus taught compassion in his parables, and demonstrated it in his life. He said, "I have compassion on the multitude."

Job's three friends represent the different ways in which we mull over a situation: "Why should this happen to me? I live a good clean life. I try to be fair in my dealings. I go to church . . ." We have all known good people who have contracted a serious illness or gotten into difficulties. And we have all asked the question, "Why do the righteous suffer?" Then came a fourth friend, Elihu, who is described as a young man. Spiritually, youth represents a readiness to receive understanding. Young people are ready to hear and do something new. This young man had studied the Scriptures. He was more thoughtful than the others. He could not believe that God would punish a man who had been good. He looked for another reason. He said to Job, "I don't think God is punishing you. God is testing you for your own good."

That was a little better, but still not correct. God does not need to test us. He already knows everything. It is we who have to find out things, not God. Our temptations, our misfortunes, do test us, but God does not send them. When we make a mistake, or

when a misfortune comes, it is a test of our faith in God. If we stick to our faith, and hold on in spite of appearances, we not only come through, but we make a tremendous spiritual advance.

In the play Job's thoughts have been dramatized. His lower self has been talking to him. He has been going over and over in his mind the reasons for his predicament until his mind is a whirlwind of confused and negative thinking. Then he gets his thought clear and out of this whirlwind of confusion his higher self asserts itself. It seems to him the Lord is speaking directly to him. He is reminded of the majesty and grandeur of the universe. "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?" Mazzaroth means the signs of the Zodiac. The Zodiac gives us about 26,000 years at a stretch, in segments of about 2,000 years at a time. Stars always represent truth that is beyond man's present apprehension. Even as we understand more truth, there will always be more truth to know. As natural science builds bigger telescopes and sees farther and farther into space, there are always more and more stars that come into view.

As Job contemplates the wonders of the universe, the thought strikes him, "Can I bind the sweet influences of Pleiades?" Can I change spiritual law? Of course we cannot change spiritual law, but we can change our reaction to it. We wouldn't really want to change spiritual law. It is the one guarantee of man's dominion. No matter what one may seem to have lost, no matter what mistakes one has made in the past, the spiritual law is there to save him, and to change everything

into harmony and freedom and health.

There is no real freedom in self-will because self-will is a tyrant. The person who does anything he wants to do, whether right or wrong, has no free will at all. He is a slave to the cruelest master of all - the lower self. Freedom is found only by seeking spiritual law. "In His will is our peace." The Bible teaches that the Infinite Power which created the heavenly bodies and maintains them in space is waiting to work in your life, but only if you turn to that Power and allow it to work through you. By yourself, you cannot loose the bands of Orion - bondage to the animal forces within. You cannot guide Arcturus with his sons, but God can.

Man realizes, however dimly, that beyond those influences and propensities which seem to bind him so tightly to the flesh, there is something that is divine. There is some wonderful truth which is only faintly comprehended at this time. And at last in spiritual submission, he no longer struggles with that which he can only vaguely understand, but lets that Power work through him. It is thus, in recognition of his inescapable oneness with God, that the tide begins to turn.

Having begun to see the Truth, Job's higher self continues to reason with him. He is on the path of spiritual enlightenment and he now sees how much he did not understand before. Question after question comes into mind. The inner voice says, "Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee?" As long as we insist upon telling God His business, nothing very

much can come of our prayers. When we dictate to God we are only using our own intellect and will; and how can they make us any better than we already are? A man's problems arise because of some lack within himself and how can the same self that produced the problems overcome them? The ox, the mule, or even the donkey will obediently pull your plow and your cart and take them exactly where you want them to go; but you have to have a destination and know how to get there. The unicorn, on the other hand, will not do chores or follow a prescribed route. He knows where he is going, and you couldn't direct him because with your present consciousness you have never dreamed of such a place. But someday the unicorn will suddenly appear at your side, eyes flashing, nostrils quivering, pawing the ground with impatience. When that happens, do not try to put a bridle on him, or to look for some task for him to do. He will not do it, and there will not be time.

No sooner does he appear than off he will go again. So do not pause to think twice, do not turn to look behind you. Leap upon his back, for he is a flying steed, and he will wing his way to the gates of the morning. On that ride problems are not solved - they are dissolved.

Why do things go wrong? The answer is: because of our false beliefs. The trouble with Job was false belief. He didn't think so, although he had an inkling. He admitted that the things he greatly feared had come upon him. Yet he thought he was a model of spirituality. He was a good man, but he believed in evil. His children were fine children, but he was a possessive parent. He thought he owned them instead of thanking God for them and realizing they were God's

children. He had never mentally cut the umbilical cord. He wanted to run their lives ... and he suffered accordingly.

He believed that there were frightful diseases that could attack the body. He said in effect, "I will never get them, but they do exist"-and thus he got his pains and sores. He believed that his supply came from outer things - his flocks and herds - instead of from God. He confused the channel with the source, and the channel dried up as channels sometimes do. This is why all those things happened to him - because of his erroneous beliefs. p; He had literally thought himself into trouble, and the only way to get out of it was to unthink his troubles. And when he began to unthink them, as the Bible says in its dramatic way, God spoke to him out of the whirlwind. He got his thought clear.

The negative beliefs and false attitudes were swept away. He knew there was really nothing to worry about. He realized that these outer things only had the power he had been giving them in his thought. He cleared his thought, he got his inspiration. And as soon as he saw the Truth, his body was healed, and all his difficulties disappeared. He got back his property and his peace of mind.

The way to un-worry and put things right is to give up your belief in the appearance of things, no matter how distressing or unwelcome. Of course this is hard to do. Most of us have conditioned ourselves to accept the appearance at face value, and as long as we do this we will be filled with anxiety and worry. Job gave up his belief in trouble and limitation and things begin to come right.

There is a very important point in this story. Job had been very cross with his friends, indignant over their behavior toward him. On the surface he had every right to be, for they had accused him falsely. However, Job had learned his lesson.

He now realized that feelings of anger and resentment would only bring more trouble, so he prayed for his friends. It was not until this step on his part that he made the complete demonstration.

We need to remember that if we are going to make wrong things right for ourselves, we have to think of helping our neighbor too. If we find the power to make life good for ourselves and pay no attention to the needs of our fellow man, then not only are we untrue to the Truth but we will lose what we have gained for ourselves. We cannot continue enjoying or receiving blessings unless we also give.

So Job prayed for his friends, and in the final act of the play, he found himself at peace with the world. The Lord gave him twice as much as he had before. He got 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, and so on. And God also gave him seven sons and three daughters to replace the ones he had lost. Children, in the Biblical sense, mean our works, our achievements. Thus the parable is saying that his good works went on again.

Then the family and relatives came round. Previously they had seemed aloof. And in the quaint old-world way the Bible says that everyone gave him a piece of money.

A piece of money when he really needed peace of mind! There are people who think they have discharged their obligations to

humanity if they hand a beggar a dime and tell him not to go and make a beast of himself. But there is a spiritual message here. Money means gold in this instance and gold means the omnipresence of God. That is what Job had not been believing. His relatives and friends probably did not know that, but it often happens that people are led to do things the reasons for which they are not aware of. They also brought an earring of gold. The ear symbolizes understanding, and Job had lacked that. To decorate the ear means to unfold the understanding.

In this parable of Job, as so often happens in the Bible, there is an extra dividend.

It adds an interesting touch by giving the names of the three daughters. The first, Jemima, means a dove - which symbolizes the peace that comes with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus was baptized the Holy Spirit was seen descending upon him in the form of a dove. The second name, Kezia, means acceptance. When you get your inspiration you must accept it, and to accept it means to express it. The third name is Kerenhappuch, which means born of pain, coming out of difficulty. When you pray you get your inspiration. You accept it and use it. You find your peace. Your troubles melt away. Good things come out of pain and difficulty. Wrong things become right.

Whatever happens to you, lift up your heart, because if you hold on to your faith your liberation is very nigh. If you go through the difficulty in faith, you will be far, far above your present level when the demonstration comes. God blesses the latter end more than the beginning.

**The Robe, the Ring, and the Shoes**

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. PROVERBS 4:23  
And, when he came to himself, he said.... I will arise and go to my father. LUKE 15:17, 18  
As I have mentioned several times, the parable is one of the commonest forms in which spiritual truth is veiled in the Bible. Thus it becomes a valuable diagram for living. It must also be emphasized again that unless one realizes that the Bible is a mass of symbolism and allegory, he does not possess the Bible at all. Well-meaning people have read the Bible day after day, year after year, until they almost know it by heart, and yet they have never touched the living thing at all.

Most of the criticism leveled against the Bible by modern thinkers is solely due to the fact that they take the Bible literally, whereas Divine Providence meant it to be taken as parable.

Jesus excelled all others in the teaching of Truth through parable. It is one of the ironies of fate that, being one of the greatest of all literary men, Jesus Christ never wrote a word except once when he wrote with his finger in the dust. He was one of the greatest short story writers of all times, and whoever reads one of his parables feels himself touched because there is a quality in them quite unlike anything else in literature. For instance, the story of the Prodigal Son has no equal. It has color, feeling, lovingness, drama, in addition to the metaphysical truth which we seldom get elsewhere. It seems to sum up the whole story of your life and mine and of all mankind. If all else in the Bible should be lost, the story of the Prodigal Son would itself give the basic message of the Bible.

Living in patriarchal times was this man of vast property. He had two sons, and as often happens in families, the two sons were very much unlike. Has it ever struck you how Providence has made brothers, and sisters too, so exceedingly unlike in character? Not only unlike physically - one with the Jones cast in his eye, the other with the Robinson walk - but very unlike in personality and character. Providence has arranged it that way because different people have different lessons to learn. They are sent, or gravitate, to certain families in order to learn the discipline that those particular families will give them.

In the story the elder brother realizes his oneness with his father. He realizes the goodness of his father and the goodness of things in general, and he stays with his father. But the younger brother is different. He thinks that he will set up in business for himself. He feels restricted by the ancestral home, and he thinks to himself, "Now I will go out and do a bit of exploring on my own account." Many of us can identify with this younger son because usually we have the urge to go out and do something new. We do not feel we have to follow in the footsteps of our father.

### **We are not satisfied with the status quo.**

The younger son came to his father and said, "I know I shall get my inheritance someday, but I would like to have it now, if you don't mind." The father, being very wise, did not argue with him. The one thing you should never do is preach a sermon to the young people. Let them go to church for that, and at least they won't have a chance to blame it on you! So the father said, "Very well, here

is your share, go ahead." The young man went forth, but when he got out he did not find it quite as he had expected. Things took on a different aspect. He did not start the great work he had planned when he was home. He spent his capital on all kinds of foolishness. He bought a lot of things he did not really want and got no happiness from them. He fell into melancholy ways, because the most melancholy thing in the world is what is called "having a good time." How very much suffering is summed up in people "having a good time"! Finally, his money was gone, his fair-weather friends had left him, and he had lost contact with his father. From a comfortable home and a place of respect in the community he had descended to being a swineherd, and to the Hebrew there was nothing lower. In a way it is no worse than having to look after cows or other animals, but to the Hebrew it was a terrible thing because they considered the pig unclean and a curse. So the young son had come down to the very lowest status.

There he was in a foreign country, among strangers, with nothing left - not even his self-respect. And then something happened: a thought came to him. He found himself saying, "I will arise and go unto my father." Where did that come from? From the Prodigal Son? No. He could not do it. The only thing he could do was to go into low company, make a fool of himself and do a thorough job of it. It was the direct inspiration of God, leading him to say, "I will arise and go unto my father." Up to that time he probably had thought over his plight many times, and each time doubts and fears would arise. "I don't think my father would take me back. I don't deserve it. It's too late now."

But when he came to himself - and that means coming to your higher self - when he listened to the voice of God, he heard himself saying, "I will arise and go unto my father." So he did. And the Bible tells us that when he got home, the father came out to meet him. That meant more in the Oriental world than it would today.

This great landowner was used to servants doing his bidding. He was a patriarch and people would come to him. But he was so happy to have his son back that when the son was a long way off, the father ran out to meet him, embraced him, and probably kissed him on both cheeks.

Then we are told in this wonderful Oriental style how the father gave a great feast for him. A feast meant more in those days than it does today. So many people today are on diets or contemplating going on a diet that we are not so free and easy with our feasts. This feast was the real thing, with singing and dancing and the fatted calf that had been killed for the occasion.

Now the elder brother was the good boy of the family. He had stayed home, and of course in consequence of being good and having stayed at home, he felt mighty virtuous. One hesitates to say there is danger in virtue, but there is. The danger is that it makes people feel superior. When you catch yourself feeling very virtuous, be careful, because you are walking on dangerous ground.

This brother felt very virtuous, and when he heard the music and saw the lights flashing in the garden, he said to one of the servants, "What is all this?" And the servant replied,

"Don't you know? Your brother has come back and we are having a party. I killed the fatted calf this morning." And this virtuous person, the elder son, became very angry. You see, he was not really so virtuous as he thought.

Virtuous people seldom are. In his anger, he rushed to his father and said, "What is the meaning of all this? I have been home working all the while and nothing like this was done for me! I have been looking after my family's welfare, and have got nothing for it but my room and board, but this fellow goes out and misbehaves outrageously, spends all his money, and instead of kicking him you give him a feast!" The father simply replied, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."

Now, the Bible is written in such a way that no matter on what level of understanding a person may be, there will be a message for him. Jesus told the story in this way so that those who are not ready for the deeper understanding would still get the lesson that it is never too late to pray. They would realize that they are never so far from God that He will not receive them back. Millions of people are ready for that lesson who are not ready for the deeper thing but both lessons are true.

The deeper lesson is that each one of these sons represents each one of us. The elder son is our higher nature, and the son that went out is our lower nature. As a rule, it is not until we have gotten into difficulties, suffered fear, doubt, defeat, sickness, or positive misfortune, either with ourselves or with someone we love, that we turn and go back to God. Meanwhile, the higher self, the self that knows the Truth but sometimes

forgets it - that self is still with the Father.

Often, like the Prodigal Son, we believe the Truth. We are, for the time being, in our Father's house, but there comes a time when we let the lower self, our selfish desires and emotions, beguile us into going off to a "strange country." For a time the new-found freedom seems wonderful. And then little by little we begin to realize that by leaving the Father, we have cut off our power. We have separated ourselves from the Source of our abundance and well-being. Fear and doubt creep in to produce more difficulties.

And then, having tried everything else, the thought comes to pray and turn once more to Him, and we say, "I will arise and go unto my father." To our surprise, God doesn't say, 'Well, you have kept me waiting. Now I will keep you waiting.'

No, we find that God comes out to meet us. One of the most beautiful things in the Bible is the statement, 'When he was yet a long way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.' God is always ready to meet us more than halfway. The fear is dissolved, the problem is solved, and once more we have the sense of unity with Him.

That is the story of the Prodigal Son and that is really the story of everyone at one time or another. Whenever we have a problem or difficulty, whenever we are fearful or depressed and assailed by doubt, the moment we think, "I will pray. I will treat" - that is the voice of God whispering to us to turn to Him. And then perhaps the lower self says, 'What's the use..... I couldn't demonstrate that now ... It's too much to expect... I'm not ready.' This is still the

husks and the swine.

And then the voice of God comes again and says, "Now the accepted time; now is the day of salvation.... Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

And finally the prodigal comes to himself. He realizes how many there are in his Father's house who have bread enough and to spare, and he says, "I will arise and go unto my Father. I am not worthy but I know He will listen. He'll take care of me." And, of course, God always does.

The people who get peace of mind, freedom, joy, and prosperity are the simple-hearted people, the people who take God at His word without analyzing or subtlety. One can analyze a rose. He can tear it apart petal by petal but of course he will no longer have a rose. And when you analyze God, you have lost God.

When we go to God frankly and sincerely, everything is cleared up. There are no reservations when God works. Divine and complete harmony awaits us when we "arise and go unto the Father."

But the meaning in this parable goes even deeper than this because it is a treatise on the nature of man. It conceals the three great issues of life. We are told that when the Prodigal Son came back, his father not only received him in love and forgiveness, but he turned to his servants and said, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." It is a wonderful picture of Oriental formality. He wanted all the household to know that his son was re-established. That was the way they did it, with ceremony and feasting

and dancing and rejoicing.

The three things, the robe, the ring, and the shoes, represent the three great issues of life - thus giving a deep metaphysical meaning to the story. The robe represents the right attitude of mind - right thinking, right knowing, right action.

The right attitude of mind means the constructive attitude, the victorious attitude, the attitude of mind that realizes that behind every appearance, no matter how distressing, there is the Truth. That is the attitude of mind that heals, for it sees the presence of God everywhere.

Elsewhere the Bible speaks of "robes of righteousness," and in Revelation it speaks of those who have come through difficulties by means of prayer as having their robes washed white in the blood of the Lamb. This is a figurative expression meaning that by turning to God and realizing His goodness and our unity with Him, the lower things in our nature begin to melt away. That is the robe.

The next thing they gave the Prodigal Son was a ring. A ring was put on his hand, symbolizing spiritual unity. That is why a ring is used in marriage. In this parable the ring symbolizes that we are one with God and we know it. We no longer have any reason to feel that we are the prodigal among the husks. We, are not only received back and made His son again, but we are reunited with Him. We no longer are merely depending upon ourselves, but we know that "in him we live and move and have our being." It means that there cannot be any lack anywhere, for we live in a continuum of everpresent divine abundance, and we

bring it into existence by reminding ourselves of our unity with God. Finally, they put shoes on his feet. Feet always represent understanding, and here we have that understanding protected against error and doubt. When we really understand a thing, we are protected against being mistaken' about it. For example, when we really know that two and two make four, then we are protected against the mistake of thinking that two and two make five. So knowledge is protection against misunderstanding.

Divine understanding is achieved through right thinking and knowledge of our unity with God. Thus these three great issues give us dominion. Moses, you will remember, was told to take off his shoes when he came into the presence of God.

Through long prayer and communion with God he had arrived at the point of dominion where he knew that the place whereon he stood was "holy ground." He had achieved conscious union with God where he could take off his shoes. He no longer needed protection for his understanding. He knew there was no place where God is not. Thus, he was always standing on holy ground.

There is one other point in connection with the story of the Prodigal Son. It concerns the elder son. Almost everyone understands the younger son to some extent, but the elder son is not understood. Jesus knew this. The mistake of the elder son boils down to this: He feels he is one with the father but he misses his own individuality, or is afraid of it. He knows that all that the father has is his, but he lacks the courage to do anything with it. Although he is aware of his divine relationship and its implication, he never

has the gumption to do anything on his own initiative. He is angry when he sees his younger brother wasting his substance, but he never has the spiritual enterprise to use it in a good way himself.

So it is with many people, especially those who know something of Truth. They sit down quietly with the knowledge of being one with God and then never attempt to demonstrate it. You must use this metaphysical tool that you have forged in consciousness. You must do something with your metaphysical knowledge besides just possessing it. If you think you possess it and do not use it, then you do not really have it.

The fault of the elder son is his self-righteousness and what we might call his negative goodness. It is all knife and nothing to cut. At some point in your spiritual growth you cease to do the most obvious and wicked things because you are getting higher in consciousness. You understand the law of Karma. You know you cannot accumulate understanding as you might pile up dimes in a piggy bank or stamps in an album, no more than the elder son could accumulate wealth in his father's house. Unless you make use of the understanding you possess today, you will not get any more tomorrow. The reason you do not have any more spiritual understanding than you have today is because you did not use what you had to the fullest degree yesterday. Understanding, like all spiritual power, increases with use.

That is why Jesus points out in the parable of the Ten Talents that the master said to his servant who had received five talents and then doubled them, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler

over many things."

### **Shipwreck**

For there stood by me this night the angel  
of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,  
saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought  
before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee  
all them that sail with thee.

*ACTS 27:23, 24*

THIS chapter is one of the most interesting chapters in the Bible, not especially important spiritually, but of extraordinary human interest. It reveals the literary power of the Bible at one of its heights. It is a wonderful story of a sea voyage and a thrilling shipwreck in the Old World nineteen hundred years ago. As a piece of literature, I maintain that it is unsurpassed. I know of nothing in Marryat or Stevenson or Conrad or any of the other sea writers that is more vivid and real.

To set the stage, we must give a little background on the main character of the story, Paul. Thank God we are getting away from the old view that the people in the Bible were supermen who had nothing in common with ourselves. If you read the Bible account of Abraham, you see what a very human person he was. The Bible also reveals that Moses began on a very low level. He was confused, made mistakes, contradicted himself, and gradually worked through that. Eventually he got more understanding, more illumination, and finally made his reunion with God - which is the goal of all spiritual unfoldment - that place where you are a pillar in the house of God and need go out no more unless you want to.

Right through the Bible we read of people like Samson and Samuel and Elijah, and always it is the same story, people awakening slowly to the importance of spiritual things, grasping a little of it, making mistakes; paving for the mistake, working through it, a little more light, another mistake, more light, fewer mistakes, more and more light, and finally the triumph.

We find the same thing with Paul. He had the problem of so many today, a defect of disposition. Paul did not deliberately do wrong. Almost from boyhood, Paul would rather have been burned at the stake than to have committed deliberate sin. But he had a disposition that made him constantly "kick against the pricks."

When we make these mistakes, of course we have to pay for them. Not that God punishes us; it is the natural working out of the law - for every action there is a corresponding reaction.

Paul had wanted to serve God, so he went out and persecuted Jesus Christ. Jesus was dedicating his life to spreading the truth about God and doing God's will, and Paul persecuted his followers. He had to pay for this . . . and later he had a change of heart, he saw the light. Because Paul was one of the greatest of the sons of men, when he saw he was in the wrong, he had the courage and humility to admit it and go straight over to the other side. I wonder how many people have ever realized what it must have cost Paul to come out in front of his own people where he held such a distinguished place and admit that he had been wrong. Only the truly great can acknowledge their mistakes. Paul was one of them. He openly admitted

that these followers of Jesus, who were so much despised, were right; and he broke with everything and threw in his lot with them.

Paul's life is a study in man's quest for spiritual growth. He was constantly up against a fault in his own disposition. It would cause him terrible pain and suffering for a time, but then he would overcome it and take a step higher. He was on the spiritual path, seeking God each day, and each day he got nearer to God.

There was nothing in the world that could keep Paul away from God except his own faults of disposition.

We all know people who would not deliberately do wrong, who would not tell a lie or even take a penny Dishonestly, yet who have obvious faults of disposition - obvious to their friends, not to themselves - and these are the only things that stand between them and God. A fault of disposition of which you are not aware or which you only dimly suspect may be the only thing that is keeping you from complete unity with God - which means keeping you from health, freedom, happiness, peace of mind, and your heart's desire. In many people it is not overt sin or even want of an intellectual comprehension of Truth, but it is a fault of disposition which prevents that which is intellectually apprehended from being made into spiritual experience. This was Paul's "thorn in the side."

Paul was preaching and teaching around the Mediterranean, which was the center of the Old World. Because Rome considered the Christian movement an insurgency, he was

arrested. Now Paul was a Roman citizen, and because he was stubborn with that rigidity of disposition and intense spiritual pride and pigheadedness (there is no other word to describe that defect in Paul's character), he appealed to Caesar.

Until he got his full illumination, Paul was the complete and perfect snob. This was what Paul had to meet within his own heart. He was intensely proud of his pure Hebrew descent. He had a halfconscious contempt for all Gentiles. He was extremely proud that he came of the tribe of Benjamin, and he thought that all the other Hebrews were a little inferior to him. If they were the chosen race, then Benjamin was the chosen tribe. But he was not only a Benjamite, he was a Pharisee, and if the Benjamites were the chosen tribe, the Benjamite Pharisees were the real chosen people. And among that particular little clique there was one chosen above all, and that was Paul of Tarsus.

All this reveals Paul's problem of disposition to be overcome in his spiritual quest.

And on top of this he was a Roman citizen, that is to say, he had full legal rights in the Roman Empire. He was inordinately proud of this, although he should not have been if he were so proud of being a Hebrew, a Benjamite, etc. However, in that Old World it gave a man great status to be a Roman citizen, and with all his striving and desire for spiritual things, Paul could not forego the status symbol.

Later he overcame all these things. They almost tore him to pieces. They almost broke his heart, as faults of disposition do, but he overcame them ultimately. In the

meantime, he had to suffer much because of them.

So Paul was arrested for his Christian activities. At a certain point in the proceedings the magistrate, whom Paul considered to be very much his inferior, said something, and Paul threw out his chest and replied, "I am a Roman citizen and I appeal to Caesar." The Bible tells us that if he had not appealed to Caesar he could have been set free. Paul should have known the law that when you appeal in that way to Caesar, to Caesar you have to go and God Himself will not save you from it.

You have self-determination, and when you appeal to Caesar, to Caesar you will go. Jesus put the same thought in another way: "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." How many Christians during nineteen centuries have really thought what this means? They say Jesus was God and they worship him and say they are good Christians; but as for the things he said, they do not pay the slightest attention. Jesus refers not only to a sword of steel. He is talking about any mental attitude that you take up in your life. In other words, you will have to meet the consequences of what you think or speak or do. When you appeal to Caesar, to Caesar you will go. It will not be any good saying, "I didn't mean it . . .

That wasn't my intention . . . You have misunderstood me." The Great Law of Being knows you thoroughly and never misunderstands you.

So Paul said, "I appeal to Caesar," and to Caesar he went. A detail of soldiers under a centurion was set aside to take charge of him. The centurion seems to have been a

decent, matter-of-fact type of man. He probably looked upon Paul as a fanatic, but he recognized Paul's basic goodness. The outstanding quality in the Roman character was that rather shortsighted but very efficient, matter-of-fact, no-darned-nonsense-about-me attitude of mind. This was the Roman outlook which enabled the people to do so many things with bridges and aqueducts and roads, and so few things in other important areas of human relationships and needs.

This centurion took Paul into custody and then had to arrange to get him to Rome.

Communications in the Mediterranean were extremely good in the Roman Empire, as good as they were going to be for another eighteen hundred years. Travelers went around the Mediterranean in small ships which were quite good for their purpose and for their time, though a little more knowledge of physics would have made them much handier to manage. The seamen of that day were very good with the power at their disposal.

We are told in this chapter how the centurion and his men first took Paul here and then there, and finally they got a boat which was starting out for Rome. There were about 276 persons on board: the crew, the soldiers under the centurion, and a number of prisoners. So it was a fair-sized boat. Paul was there as a prisoner, of course, but he was treated with great respect. The Roman centurion was a pagan, but he was a gentleman, and he treated his prisoner with great consideration. The hallmark of a gentleman is that he never takes advantage of someone who is in a difficult or inferior position.

The party set sail but not without protest from Paul. He foresaw that there would be difficulties, and he advised them not to sail. He said, "I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives." Of course they would not listen to him. After all, he was a landlubber and obviously a "crank" anyway. What did a rabbi or teacher know about the sea? A religious teacher is sure to be a general fool and to know nothing about the world! And so they paid no attention to him.

Read this 27th Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. It is a marvelous description of a storm at sea which, as I have said, is probably unsurpassed in literature. I wonder why people who undertake to teach the Bible to children, and especially to boys, do not read this chapter to them. I think it would prejudice a boy in favor of the Bible for the rest of his life.

There was a very rough storm and presently they had to throw the cargo overboard. Then they began to throw the ropes and tackle overboard to lighten the ship. They talked about throwing the prisoners overboard too, they were so scared. When people are frightened they are often cruel. Cruelty is almost always the outcome of fear. Wherever you come across a case of cruelty, whether it is individual cruelty, persecution of a particular group by other people, or national cruelty, always there is fear. Fear is cruel, just as love is always kind and healing and liberating.

However, the centurion would not allow that. The storm continued, and the account says, "When neither sun nor stars in many

days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away."

Paul sought God every day, and at this period he got his realization each day. And although to mortal eye all seemed hopeless, Paul stood up in the midst of the group and said, "I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, 'Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.' Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me."

Paul to some extent had the faculty of reading the future, a faculty which belongs to the seer and to those who are diligently seeking God. He knew pretty well what was going to happen within the next few days. Then the sailors, disregarding the tradition of the sea, were going to desert the ship and leave the others. The law of the sea is that the sailor always tries to save his passengers first. Paul read their minds.

Knowing what they were thinking, he told the soldiers that the sailors were going to pretend they were getting into a boat to drop some anchors. He said, "Don't let them go or we all shall perish." The soldiers cut the rope and the boat fell into the sea.

Finally they came to an estuary and tried to save the ship by running it hard aground, but the waves were so great that the forepart of the ship stuck fast and the hinder part was smashed to pieces. Those who could swim jumped out and swam to the shore. The

others got on boards and pieces of wreckage, and finally they all got ashore. It is a wonderful story. If you read it carefully you can almost hear the howling of the wind in the tackle and feel the rocking of the ship.

Paul finally got to Rome full of his own ideas and interpretations, talking a lot about Jesus Christ - but usually putting Paul first and Jesus second. If one studies the life of Paul carefully with a fresh mind, putting aside what some preacher said years ago, he will find it to be an extraordinarily interesting study in human nature. And he will become aware of Paul's continuing battle with his own desires and his frightful egotism. Of course this is not unique with Paul. The besetting sin of religious people, particularly the leaders, has usually been a gnawing egotism that marks most of their lives. Perhaps that is why they seek so hard to find God.

Subconsciously they feel that that egotism is the very devil itself and they must escape at all costs. Normally, as the years go on, it gets less and less, and in most cases there is a final and beautiful triumph when the ego is overcome and God comes first.

Thus it was with Paul. Paul finally got to the place where God was really first, and the teachings of Jesus Christ came first, last, and all the time. But this was not easily accomplished. Almost to the very end when he laid down his life for his principles the "thorn" was with him.

If a great soul like Paul had to meet this defect of disposition, how much more are we lesser souls likely to have our lives shipwrecked by faults of character. Moses came very near wrecking his life through a

fault of disposition. There are others mentioned in the Bible, and there are great seers and saints outside the Bible, like Gandhi, St.

Augustine, and St. Theresa, who have been troubled in the same way. Dwight L.

Moody, the evangelist, said, "My greatest problem is Dwight L. Moody." As we delve into the lives of these great men and women, and particularly when we study Paul, we realize that the thing we need most to work upon is probably some defect in disposition, some fault of character that is holding us back. Probably we need more than anything else to appeal to God for wisdom, intelligence, and more understanding in our hearts. Nothing will enable us to achieve this but the direct action of the grace of God in our souls. If we rely upon the intellect, so-called common sense, we shall fool ourselves the whole time.

Jeremiah says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" This means that it is so extraordinarily easy for human beings to deceive themselves that very few people really come to a clear understanding of their own dispositions and their own hearts. Very few people are really aware of the fault that most keeps them back. All of us are aware of many faults in ourselves, yes, but probably the thing which keeps us back most, the thing that brings most of the grief into our lives, we seldom suspect.

Robert Burns said, "O would some power the gift he give us, to see ourselves as others see us." We need to go a step beyond that and claim that God is giving us the power to see ourselves as we really are. It would be a

shock in a good many cases. Most of us have built up an imaginary figure, the thing that we want to live with. We do not make this figure perfect because we could not accept it if we did.

We say, "Well, of course, he has his faults and failings. Who hasn't? But on the whole he is a pretty darned good fellow and there are many worse than he is," etc.

That is the natural human way, but we have to destroy that built-up figure. That synthetic lie about ourselves has to be discarded if we really mean business. We have to claim the light of God to see ourselves as we really are. And no matter what we see, the power of God can change it.

Isn't it better to know the worst? The person who is afraid of a diagnosis is not facing up to his difficulty. He is sick and he knows it. He has pain but he cannot face the doctor for his diagnosis. When I tell these people to go to the doctor, they say, "But I don't want him to tell me that I have this and so." I say, "You have either got it or you haven't. Seeing the doctor won't give it to you. If you really have a bad heart condition, or whatever it is, you have got it, and the doctor by examining you cannot give it to you. Probably he will say you haven't got it, but if you have, you had better know it. Know what is there and you can spiritually treat it."

So it is with the moral and spiritual condition of our hearts. We had better see what is there and face up to it. Then we can take steps to meet it. Otherwise people go on fooling themselves. In my work I have come across many men and women whose

main and continuing problem was a fault of disposition, yet who did not even faintly suspect such was the case.

One man came to consult me who was having great difficulty in his business life.

Opportunities would seem to open up, but when the time came to sign the contract or undertake a particular piece of business the deal would fall through.

The real difficulty turned out to be within himself. Because of feelings of inferiority concerning his personal appearance, he unconsciously took an over aggressive attitude toward people and toward situations, and this was spoiling things for him.

Sometimes it is a know-it-all attitude. An actress of considerable talent who was doing very well in her professional career found that it was very difficult for her to keep friends. Again the difficulty was within herself. She was extremely opinionated about things and she was constantly getting into arguments with others. When I said to her, "Why don't you, as a matter of policy, let the other fellow win some of the arguments, or better still, why get into an argument at all?" she replied, "But what I say is true." I said, "That may be the case, but you are losing friends through your attitude." After some further counseling and spiritual treatment, she saw the light, and from then on her personal life began to improve.

There are many more common defects of personality that hold people back, such as constant faultfinding and criticism, or giving an "organ recital" in response to the

greeting, "How are you?" I know people who imagine themselves to be on the spiritual path, but it is perfectly obvious to others that they have certain mental habits and faults of disposition that make the thing impossible. Yet they themselves do not suspect it. If they went out picking pockets it would be obvious to them that picking pockets would not go with the spiritual life. The faults of disposition which destroy us are not so obvious.

Sometimes you hear one person say about another, "I have a good mind to tell him about that." It is seldom any use. It probably would not be well received, or if it were well received, it would not be understood.

If you feel that there is something in your personality that should not be there, or if you suspect that there is something that ought to be changed and you do not know what, claim every day that God is Light, that God is not only Life and Truth and Love and the other qualities, but God is Light, and light means knowledge and understanding. Claim, "God illumines my soul so that I see it as it is." Do not ask your friends about it or discuss it with the family. If you need outside help, go to a good spiritual counselor, but prepare yourself spiritually as outlined above. Then whatever advice you get you will perceive with spiritual understanding, and it will be much easier to accept the change that will be necessary.

When Paul at last realized his own difficulties of temperament and disposition, he probably had a bad time for awhile. In spite of the angel that stood by him in the shipwreck, in spite of the sacrifices he had made for the teaching of Jesus Christ, in

spite of the wonderful things that he already was, yet when he got his illumination of self, he probably was appalled for a time. But that disappeared as the Power of God continued to work through him. That Power will not be any less with us if we are willing to face up to our faults of disposition.

Paul went through the shipwreck which is symbolic of the danger of all kinds of shipwrecks in the soul. The angel of God stood by Paul because Paul was a praying man. He thoroughly believed in God even though at times he let his personality get between himself and the Light. But when the test came Paul turned sincerely to God and got his inspiration. And God will do the same for us whenever we sincerely turn to Him without reservation. However, if you insist upon appealing to Caesar, then of course to Caesar you will have to go, and that only means more heartbreak, delay, and disappointment.

### **Second Coming of the Christ**

The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

*II THESSALONIANS: I: 7-9*

IN ALL the ages and in all countries where the Christian message is known, men and women have looked, generation after generation, for the second coming of the Christ. None of the Gospels were written while Jesus was on earth, and the reason is that the early Christians were looking for

the almost immediate personal return of Jesus Christ. Since that time people all over the world have continued to look for his return in the flesh. It is this very thing which has prevented the real second coming of the Christ in the world hundreds of years ago.

Jesus Christ never taught his followers to look to his personality and to worship him. On the contrary, he labored year after year to get the people to accept his teaching and to look away from himself to an impersonal and incorporeal God in the universe Who manifests in man - that which he lovingly called "the Father within." In fact, Jesus made it plain that unless he left them, the Holy Spirit would not come. As long as people looked to a person or an institution, a man or a church, they were missing the divine thing within themselves.

If Jesus had not done what he did in Holy Week, as it is rightly called, and then on Calvary, and over the Easter weekend, and during his post-Easter sojourn, the human race would have had to wait thousands of years longer for true salvation and that sense of true dominion that comes with the second coming of the Christ.

He dematerialized his body in that cave where it was laid. He did that by his thought, and it meant that he definitely had had to overcome a subconscious belief in the power of matter. Having been born into the human race he had acquired certain false beliefs from the race mind, just as we all have accepted false beliefs from the race mind.

Whenever we pray, whenever we spiritualize our thought, we are getting away from the bondage of matter, and we are

lifting the race mind a tiny fraction too.

What Jesus did was of great magnitude. Consequently, he was able to overcome any belief in the power of matter and therefore he was able to melt his body back into the ether, or, as modern science calls it, energy. Today physical science teaches that matter is really little whirlpools of energy. Energy and matter are not the separate things we used to be taught. Science is getting closer to the truth that there is but one all-pervading substance. Some may call it ether; others may call it energy. The name does not matter. There is one divine substance and all things are made of that. Having demonstrated his power over matter and the physical body, Jesus was able to appear to his disciples and friends on a number of occasions after his resurrection. The Bible says it was forty days, and forty in the Bible symbology means an indefinite length of time, usually a matter of weeks. Jesus stayed with them, teaching them and getting them ready for the work that they were to do.

The Bible keeps emphasizing their lack of understanding. We are told that on the road to Emmaus they did not recognize him even when he expounded the Scriptures to them, beginning with Moses and coming up through the prophets and Psalms. We are all guilty of that sort of thing. We hear but we do not always understand. We see and yet we see not. We misinterpret, not just Biblical things, but the actions and motivations of others. However, Jesus knew the shortcomings of his Apostles and he loved them in spite of those shortcomings. His problem, therefore, was to teach them as much as he could before he had to go away and not return.

When Jesus finally went away, for the first time his apostles, students, and friends were thrown back on their own resources. They could no longer turn to him and say, "Oh, the master will do it." There are many who have to be weaned away from reliance on others. Often we become so attached to a teacher, a friend, an employer, a father or mother, and even a job, that we are unable to stand on our own. All the great teachers in every branch of knowledge have said, "Don't rely on me, rely on the teaching." And yet the students go on relying on the teacher.

Jesus knew this, and he knew that unless he personally went away his apostles would never do the great work he wanted them to do. Henry Ward Beecher, the eminent Brooklyn preacher, once said, "Don't do as I do, but do as I say." He was emphasizing this very point, the thing that Jesus repeatedly stressed, each one must get his own contact with God.

This is why Jesus told his disciples a short time before he made the Ascension demonstration, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." They happened to be near Jerusalem at the time, but Jesus meant something more than the material city. We are taking the esoteric meaning of the Bible which gives us keys to our daily living. Jerusalem means that state of mind where we are praying and waiting upon God, where we have a sense of peace but have not yet got any sense of realization. When you get the realization the Bible calls that Mt. Zion.

But when you have not yet got it and are looking for it, that is Jerusalem. So in effect

Jesus was saying, "You must wait until you get some sense of the presence of God. You must find the Christ for yourselves. Then you will really understand from an inner teaching what you now grasp only with your conscious mind." To tarry in Jerusalem is to keep the high watch until you get a sense of the presence of God and the Christ becomes a living factor in your heart.

The disciples did tarry in Jerusalem. They sought the Christ at first hand, and from the day they found him the things that Jesus taught became alive within them.

And then they went out and worked the miracles which changed the history of the world.

So Jesus went away. He transcended, dematerialized, rose in consciousness above the limitations of the three-dimensional plane in which we live, and disappeared.

Then, when his followers came together of one accord and in one place, on what we call the Day of Pentecost, the second coming of the Christ took place for those who were ready to receive it on that day. It was the day when they got their own personal, living, divine contact with God. It seemed to them like tongues of fire lighting on each one. Fire in the Bible signifies the cleansing action of the Holy Spirit. All the old limiting ideas were wiped out of their consciousness and they were "set on fire" with the idea of going out and giving the gospel - the good news - to the world.

That was the second coming of the Christ for the disciples. Having received the second coming of the Christ, which is also called "the baptism of the Holy Spirit,"

these simple, everyday men like ourselves went out and turned the world upside down, performing miracles which still influence the course of human history. And from that day to this, all through history, wherever people have been ready to accept that message and to strive for that experience, the second coming of the Christ has been there for those particular individuals to receive.

We have now reached a stage in the history of the world when the whole of the human race as a body, or at least a large majority of people of every kind and of every race, are ready for the second coming of the Christ; and it is because the general public is ready to receive this wonderful thing that it is beginning to happen. God is outside of space and time, and the Christ power of God, which has existed throughout all eternity, has always been ready if only the human race had been ready to receive it.

Jesus foresaw that as the Old Age waned and the New Age approached, all sorts of external happenings would be seen on the face of the earth. And this is dramatically taking place. Human destiny has turned a corner. We have had the greatest wars in history. We have had the greatest political resolutions in history.

The old Czarist empire, the German empire, the British empire, the ancient Chinese empire, have all been swept away. Monarchies have fallen. The whole of Europe has been turned upside down, as well as the greater part of Asia and Africa. Never before in history has there been so vast a political upheaval. This is because of the change in the race mentality, making it possible for the second coming of the Christ

which is taking place now in the hearts of hundreds of thousands of people.

Jesus foresaw all this, and the Bible calls it "the last days," meaning the end of the Old Age. It does not mean that our planet, the earth, is going to burn up or disappear, but it does mean that the old limited ideas concerning God and man are coming to an end.

It is one's idea of God which controls his whole life. It is the idea which he has of God that governs the kind of health he has, the sort of business he is in, the kind of city he lives in, the type of government he has.

It is man's concept of God which governs his life from beginning to end. Even those who profess no God will find their lives governed by that concept concerning God. However, never before this present age, with the exception of the prophets of old, has man's concept of God risen to such heights, nor risen so rapidly. It is because of this transition from the old to the new that we see so much confusion and turmoil in the world. And with the individual, when the Christ of God has been born in his soul, the whole outer picture will have begun to break up.

The mystics, those wise ones of ancient times, testified that when any man or woman gets a larger concept of God, then his or her personal affairs will change for the better, far better than it was possible to imagine. But do not for a moment think that world difficulties are going to be over in a few months or a few years.

For some years yet the turmoil will go on, and in some parts will get even worse.

But eventually old controversies will settle down and the new world will gradually come in - the new era of spiritual development and understanding. Most of you who read this will live to see it transpire. The change will be far greater than you possibly could dream of.

The true idea of God is individualized in man. God wells in man. God expresses Himself in man, not merely in the prophets and seers of old, nor somewhere in the distant future, but in plain everyday people like ourselves here and now. Once mankind has grasped this true concept of God, most of the evils of the present day will be swept into the discard, into obscurity, never to be seen again. History, as we know it, is largely a chronicle of the faults and weaknesses of mankind, but that is because man has looked for God outside himself. Man has gone against the teaching of Jesus Christ and has tried to find God somewhere else than in his own heart. In this age of the second coming of the Christ, that is going to be changed.

To be perfectly clear about this we must ask ourselves, what is the Christ? The Christ is not Jesus. Jesus was the man who expressed the Christ more fully than anyone else. The Christ is the active Presence of God - the incarnation of God - in living men and women. This is the Christ and it is eternal. In the history of all races the Cosmic Christ has incarnated in man - Buddha, Moses, Elijah, and in many other leaders and teachers, but never to the degree the Christ manifested in Jesus. The reason is that Jesus, more than any other, had made himself aware of the Christ power. However, in this New Age, the Cosmic

Christ will come into millions of men and women who are ready to receive It. This will be the second coming of the Christ for them.

In a very real sense, the Christ already lies dormant in the minds and hearts of men and women everywhere, waiting for that burst of recognition which we call the second coming of the Christ. In the meantime, every time we "salute" the Christ in another we are bringing that day closer in ourselves.

If you seek to experience the Christ other than by direct contact with God, you are doomed to disappointment. People have been forever attempting to take something less than God at first hand. In the first chapter of Acts we find an extraordinary case of just this. Jesus selected twelve apostles. One of them was a failure and the other eleven persevered. After Jesus' transition they came together and selected another apostle to take the place of Judas, who had transgressed.

Because they were not yet endued with power from on high but judged in human consciousness, they made a poor selection. They chose Matthias, a perfectly respectable person, but one who had not experienced the second coming of the Christ. The result? From that day to this no one has ever heard another word about Matthias. He looked the part and nothing more.

It is significant to note that the gap in the apostleship was filled. But the choice was not made by Peter, nor James, nor John, but by the Cosmic Christ Itself. It selected the last man whom the apostles would have dreamed of selecting - Saul, the persecutor. He became the twelfth apostle. And of

course, when he got his illumination, his name was changed to Paul.

In a very real sense, there are two gospels, one hidden behind the other. There is the normal gospel with its face value, and there is the spiritual meaning of the Bible which is, so to speak, hidden behind the other. You may wonder why spiritual truth should be veiled in this way. The answer is that the writers of the Bible wrote under divine inspiration, and they themselves did not always understand the full import of what they were saying or writing. That is not peculiar to the Bible writers alone. All of us do more than we realize when we speak or act.

If we speak or act negatively we do more harm than we realize. And when we speak or act positively and constructively, we do more good than we know. And above all, our thoughts have more effect upon our own lives than we ever realize.

The Bible was written by men with a great deal of understanding, and very often the writer wrote to the highest he knew, but God put even more into it. Thus those who come centuries later - when the race has evolved more in consciousness - see things in it that the writers did not understand at the time.

This was true of Paul. He wrote a great many things, often in a complicated way, that have been misunderstood and misinterpreted. When Paul writes about Jesus coming with his angels, it means this Truth is coming into the world and into the hearts of the people. The general public is getting more and more of it. All the churches are teaching some of it - still using their own phraseology, of course.

But the thing is there. Angels always represent direct inspiration, guidance, help.

When one begins to realize the things that Jesus taught, how he gave all power to God and no power to outer conditions or negative circumstances, how he insisted upon always putting God first - this is Jesus coming with his angels into the individual's heart. If it were merely the popular conception of angels flying around, it might be startling, but it would not really mean anything.

It is the change in our hearts that counts. We need to remind ourselves constantly that nothing can do anything for us except a change within ourselves. For example, what does bad news do except to bring a change within ourselves? It generates fear, disappointment, frustration, etc. in ourselves. On the other hand, what does good news do except to bring a change within ourselves: joy replaces fear, happiness replaces misery, etc.? Nothing can act upon us except as it evokes something in us and through us. Thus, if Jesus simply came on earth and taught these things again and then went away again, what would such a literal second coming do for us? Very little except to remind us once more of what he said the first time.

However, when the Truth that he taught and the great spiritual power that he brought into the world, come into our hearts, they change us completely. That is what the Bible means when it says, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire." It means that this Christ Truth comes in a very vivid and real way into our hearts. It means a living

realization of the Christ Truth.

The rest of the verse, when it is taken literally, sums up the fundamentalist teaching in many of the churches. It says, ". . . Taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction." This may make some people who believe they are saved, feel very comfortable. But does it sound like the Jesus who could forgive even those who crucified him? Could this come from Jesus who made forgiveness a cardinal point in the Great Prayer? Could Jesus, who made love of neighbor the test of whether or not you were a follower of his, have dealt in this spirit of vengeance? This text was never meant to imply that Jesus would come back to punish people who knew not God. That is not the meaning. That is not the teaching of Jesus, and that is not the kind of God we worship. It means that when the knowledge and realization of the Christ Truth comes into people's hearts, it is not a cold and calculated thing. Rather, it comes like a flame of fire that transforms them and completely destroys fear. It destroys those things in ourselves that keep us back from God and it destroys them forever. It takes our limitations, our sins and sinfulness, our faults of character, and destroys them forever.

Those "that know not God" are not the people that do not go to a certain church, or people that we may not approve of. No. Those who know not God are the negative things in each one of us that are wiped out forever - when the Christ comes into our hearts. This is the second coming of the Christ for each one of us. , What does the second coming mean for the human race?

Why are people talking about it so much today? It means that now is the time when the true idea of God is coming to all people. Narrow sectarianism is being dissolved and true ecumenism is coming to the fore. It is no coincidence that the space age and the second coming of Christ for the masses of mankind should arrive at the same time. The step forward always comes when man is ready for it. Moses and the early Egyptians could have had the automobile. Julius Caesar and the Romans could have had the telephone, but man had not yet made himself ready for those things. Always we have to make ourselves ready for the thing we want.

In all ages there have been outstanding souls who were far ahead of their time - and often were martyred or horribly persecuted for their beliefs. Yet Truth has a way of marching on. Columbus, for example, was one of those who was ahead of his time.

Most of the leading lights of that day, including the clergy who were also the scholars, believed the world to be flat. In those days a man could lose his head for daring to teach the opposite, and some of them did. But Columbus stood firmly on his belief that the world was round and he was ready to prove it. And so another link in the chain of Truth was forged.

Man's expanding knowledge of the universe will also prove and disprove a great many other cherished theories and beliefs. He will be forced to drop his old narrow concepts of God - very often a God that has nothing else to do but watch the human race and mete out punishment for its sins. Expanding the horizons Of space, man will discover that God is not only the God of the human

race, but the God of the universe and of the many other races scattered throughout the cosmos.

As the individual opens his heart to the Christ, he will understand more completely his relationship to God and the cosmos, and especially will he realize that this earth with its inhabitants is not an island unto itself.

Jesus, far-seeing seer, gave a hint. He said, "I have other folds that you know not of." And now we are on the threshold of knowing. Just as Jesus came in person two thousand years ago with a revolutionary new concept of man's relationship to God, the time is now here when there is beginning to be a real second coming in the hearts of men and women all over the globe. Jesus' teaching is being completely vindicated, understood, and accepted. The word "vengeance" in the Bible means vindication. Vindication of what? Vindication of the love and goodness and power of God. When you demonstrate the power of a human law, you are said to vindicate it.

Demonstrating the power of God in your life is a vindication of spiritual law. God's truth and goodness are vindicated when the individual genuinely opens his heart to the second coming of the Christ.

### **The Anatomy of Healing**

Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones;  
Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you,  
and ye shall live.  
*EZEKIEL 37:5*

THE GREAT thinkers of history have recognized that man consists of body, soul,

and spirit, and that the key to controlling our lives lies in the soul or mind-soul and mind being synonymous terms. Plato, for example, remarked that we should never attempt to cure the body without curing the soul. Jesus went much further and taught and demonstrated that it is the mind that heals the body and outer conditions. Jesus taught that whatever happens in the outer has had its inception in the pattern held in the mind of the individual. Everything originates in thought, and consequently, if we hold sick thoughts, limiting thoughts, these are going to be expressed in our bodies and in our circumstances.

Many of the Old Testament writers understood this and the prophet Ezekiel is one of them. Ezekiel's story of the Valley of Dry Bones is illustrative of this very idea, and gives a diagram, a ground plan, for any kind of healing. He puts his statements in the symbolical form so much used in the Bible, and he says, "They shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited."

This is one of the many promises or statements of spiritual law in the Bible that says that those who think correctly and know the readiness of God to act, can turn any kind of disharmony into harmony and freedom. It tells us that if we know the Truth and cleave to it, the thing which is desolate shall become like the Garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities fortified and inhabited. Of course, this is a figurative way of speaking about our souls, for a city in the Bible always represents our consciousness.

Ezekiel is telling us that when we have trouble, sickness, fear, lack, when we are in sin, our souls are like a city that has been taken, conquered, and ruined. Usually when that has happened people lose hope. They become disappointed, depressed, and frustrated. They say, "What's the use? I haven't got a chance. Nothing seems to work. I'm finished. I'm ruined."

However, the Bible comes and says that there is no ruin except the belief in ruin.

There is no evil and no limitation except the belief in evil and limitation. It says that if we insist upon seeing the Presence of God where disharmony seems to be, if we will insist on seeing God in that nagging, annoying situation, the waste cities, our consciousness, will be turned into the Garden of Eden - and that is a wonderful state of consciousness to be in.

In the Garden of Eden they did not have to fret about such things as rent, or the latest fashions, and they had perfect social security. They did not have to worry about the thousands of things we worry about today. It was paradise. And here the Bible tells us that paradise can be restored - and, as usual, it tells us how. The answer is to recognize God as the only power. If we put God first, if we really say, "In the beginning, God," and mean it, and not put some idol probably ourselves - in the place of God, then the power of God will come into our souls and bring healing and harmony and true success.

In Chapters 36 and 37 of Ezekiel there are a number of references to Israel. As we have pointed out earlier, Israel means one who believes in God and in the power of prayer.

To be an Israelite in the Bible sense, it is not enough just to believe in God. You must also believe in the power of prayer. If you say, "Certainly there is a God, but the laws of nature cannot change. Things are what they are" - you are not believing in the power of prayer. Unless you believe that prayer can change any condition in your life, or in someone else's, into harmony and success, you do not believe in prayer. You may believe in God, but the God you believe in is hardly worthy of your belief. If God is simply a formality and there is no way to change conditions through spiritual power, then what you have is determinism, materialism, and this is really the dethronement of God.

But this inspired writer tells you that you do have dominion. You have the power to take your life in your hands today and make it something worth while. Nothing that happened yesterday or ten years ago, or the fact that you failed to do something in the past, will prevent you from having harmony and freedom today.

Other people may not understand this, but it matters not, because you have dominion over your own life. You can be free.

If there is some lack in your life - material, moral, mental - that lack can and will be abundantly supplied no matter what it is. It can, unless you prevent it by thinking, "This is too difficult ... it is too late" -or something like that. This story in the Bible comes as a trumpet call to tell us that we must not accept less than perfect harmony and freedom and the joy which belongs to the children of God.

The Bible says the children of God shout for

joy. If you are not shouting for joy in your heart you are not expressing yourself as a child of God. You are claiming a different parentage altogether.

The first part of the story tells us about the glorious things which the knowledge of God brings: crops, herds, abundance of every sort. All the things that man can possibly want or need are his by his divine birthright as a child of God. And then the narrative goes on to the story of the Valley of Dry Bones.

Ezekiel, who wrote all this, was not merely trying to be poetical. He is one of the great prophets of the Bible. He was a man who had given much thought to God and man's relationship to Him. He was a man who learned practicality from the harshness of his times. He had seen his own country torn apart into two warring factions. He had seen sickness and misery and death on all sides. It seemed like a hopeless mess. Yet in his heart he knew that God had given him a message for humanity, not only for the Israelites of those days, but an ennobling inspiration for generations yet to come.

It was probably after one of the hundreds of battles which had taken place, when he had seen many slain in the field, that he began to ponder the questions: What could be done about it? What could God do about such a seemingly impossible situation? Was there any hope? Ezekiel writes that he was taken away in the spirit of the Lord and set down in a valley which was full of dry bones. Valley in the Bible always means trouble and difficult; while the hill or mountain is the uplifted consciousness. The great mystics and seers and teachers in the Bible are always spoken of as going up into the

mountain to pray. This does not necessarily mean that the person actually went up on a mountain. The inference is that he got away from limiting thoughts and outer things to realize the presence of God.

So Ezekiel was taken away in the spirit of the Lord. In other words, Divine Inspiration came to him in a vision. In sharing that inspired vision, he outlined for all mankind a formula for spiritual healing. In the vision, the Lord said to him, "Son of man, can these bones live?" The son of man is your human personality, the thing you have so much trouble with. In other words, just how much faith have you got? And Ezekiel answered, "O Lord God, thou knowest." Ezekiel had enough faith to know that he could not do it, but God could.

This is the first step when you are weighed down with a difficulty and the thought comes to you, -"Is there any way out?" The higher self says, "God knows. With God there is always a way."

And the Lord said, "Prophesy upon these bones." Pray over these bones. And Ezekiel calls out, "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.... Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live."

This is a dynamic approach to the problem. It is the second step, the use of affirmation, spoken with authority. No shilly-shallying about it. No doubt. No hoping for the best. No thinking, "Well, if it doesn't do any good, it won't do any harm." Ezekiel was direct and to the point. "Hear the word of the Lord" the creative Word - "I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live."

Every one of us could demonstrate over our

challenges if we spoke with that kind of authority. And yet Ezekiel had nothing to go on but his faith in God. At first glance, what could be more discouraging than a valley filled with dry bones. Surely no problem could be more seemingly hopeless. But that is the very point. This great story of the Old Testament is a clarion call to the faithful, declaring that there is absolutely nothing that is impossible with God.

God says to the prophet and through him to us, "Speak the word and these skeletons will stand up. Pray for them and they will be covered with flesh. See My Presence in them and the breath of life will come into them, and they will be made living men and women." Ezekiel is really giving us the anatomy of a healing. He is telling us how to do it. It is the graphic description of the building of a wonderful demonstration.

Ezekiel knew what he was talking about. If he had not prayed often and demonstrated the Truth in his own life, if he had not been acquainted with grief, if he had not known what it was to weep, suffer, despair, and finally come through to the Presence of God, he would have turned these skeletons into living men in one quick jump. But his practical experience told him that this is not the way it works with human nature. We have to make our affirmations. We have to pray over the situation. We have to see the Presence of God where the difficulty seems to be. We have to overcome our doubts and fears. And only then does the action of God begin to become visible.

In the parable, first the skeletons stand up, but they are still skeletons. A foolish person might say, "Oh yes, I got this small demonstration, but what good is that when

the thing I really want or need still seems to elude me. If I have to have skeletons, they might just as well lie down as far as I am concerned." Ezekiel sees the skeletons stand up and then sinews and flesh and skin come upon them, but still they are not alive. And the same doubting Thomas will say, "What is the good of prayer. I am not getting any place. I knew this wouldn't work. They may have flesh on them but still they are corpses. I don't want corpses standing in my valley." They are still dead because they lack the Spirit of God.

Ezekiel knew that the demonstration was not yet complete, but he also knew that what God begins, God finishes. He prayed some more. And he heard the voice of God say to him', "Prophesy unto the wind.... and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." Again we get a recognized Bible symbol. The wind stands for the direct action of God, the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "The wind bloweth where it listeth," meaning to say that the action of God takes place where the soul is ready.

Just as the apostles were breathed upon on the day of Pentecost when "they were all with one accord in one place." In other words, they were ready, and as a result they became new men who went out and changed the world.

It is significant that in Greek, the word for wind is "pneuma" and pneuma also means "spirit." It is the Spirit of God which breathed on these skeletons, and the breath came into them and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceeding great army. This was the final step. The demonstration was made. Ezekiel had realized that God is Life, that in

Him there is no death, that it is the Spirit of God that quickeneth. The dry bones had stood up and become living men. That is symbolically the history of every demonstration.

Your life and mine, our body, our affairs, are the embodiment of our concept of God. As long as we have difficulty or limitation at any point in our lives, we have not grasped the truth of God at that point, and thus we embody the negative thing. What we understand we demonstrate, and when we understand sin, sickness, lack, and inharmony more than we understand God, we demonstrate those things - we embody them.

The action of God must be embodied. There is no cause without an effect and no effect without a cause. And so when the wind blew in that valley, the action of God was embodied as living people.

The prophets of old were an amazing group of men. They have no counterparts in modern society. We have had, of course, great leaders like Lincoln and Washington, and there is this much in common with the prophets of old, they all had incredible difficulties to meet, and each met them in their own way. What sets the prophets apart is that their main concern was to bring their people back to God., Other leaders have prayed to God for guidance, for mercy, for victory in a tight place. But the prophets always insisted upon putting God first and giving Him all power.

They knew the human heart because fundamentally they had to meet the same kind of difficulties that we have to meet. That is why this story of Ezekiel and the

Valley of Dry Bones has a meaning for us in this day and age. Ezekiel knew that the Valley of Dry Bones was an apt description of his own soul, your soul, my soul, the soul of every man and woman regardless of when and where they might live.

He knew that there are times when a person feels his soul is really a valley of dry bones, a valley of lost hopes and despair.

Unfortunately, there are many people whose consciousness is not much better than a graveyard of fears, doubts, worries, and frustrations. They have a choice collection of skeletons in the valley of their souls, enough to outfit several schools of anatomy for a long time to come.

But Ezekiel also knew that our souls can become the Garden of Eden, and he has given us the technique for restoring that desirable condition. There is no problem too big or of too long standing, no condition too powerful for God to change and make harmonious. Our hopes, our aspirations, our souls come alive as we take the dynamic approach that Ezekiel took.

### The Power in Your name

And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

*EXODUS 3: 13- 14*

THE ORIGIN and meaning of names is a fascinating study in itself, but nowhere are names more significant than in the Bible. They not only designate important people, places, and things, but because they have symbolical meanings as well, they become for you and me important diagrams for living. That is why Moses was so insistent upon knowing the true name of God.

Shakespeare poses the eternal question, "What's in a name?" He had a deep insight into metaphysics and much of his writing is veiled in symbol and allegory.

The characters in his plays, the greater and lesser characters, are dramatizations of certain aspects of the human soul. Every page of Shakespeare contains occult truths for those who can perceive them. The answer to his question, "What's in a name?" can be found, for instance, in his *Romeo and Juliet*. The boy symbolizes the spirit and the girl the soul or psyche. It was because they did not understand this fundamental relationship that their lives came to grief. And it is because we do not understand the relationship of spirit and soul that our lives are filled with problems and difficulties.

One of the great names of the Bible is Abraham. Abraham was a real person who lived thousands of years ago; but the story of his life comes in the early part of the Bible because his life is used as a living parable. Abraham stands for rational faith, and rational faith is the beginning of the spiritual life. The Bible starts out with a general history of the human race, but the first person of real consequence from the psychological and spiritual point of view is Abraham, or as he started out in life, Abram.

Abram did not learn of his real or spiritual name until he had demonstrated the willingness through faith to follow the light of God wherever it led.

Abram was a Chaldean living in that part of the world. It was a nation of idolators, but in that respect they were not very much different from a good many people today. They worshiped palpable idols of wood and stone and metal. Our idols are more subtle. We call them money, position, power, and pull, and we rationalize this by saying, "Oh yes, I believe in God, but in business and my daily affairs, I have to take a common-sense point of view."

However, Abram was not satisfied with this approach to things. Tradition says that he was very wealthy. He was a patriarch and had position. From the material point of view he should have been satisfied, but he was not because in his heart he wanted something that these things could not provide: a living contact with God.

Under the guidance of God he left all this and launched out to find a new life in a strange land. This did not mean that Abram had solved all his problems for all time, but it did mean that in times of need he turned to God first for help and guidance. The text says that "God tempted him." Now we know that God, Divine Love, never tempts anyone.

What happened was that the unfolding of Abram's nature presented difficulties which he had to overcome. And through his faith and his overcoming, both he and his wife had their names changed.

In the beginning he was Abram and his

wife was Sarai. And then something very unusual and important happened. A letter was added to their names. Not just any old letter like K, L, P, or B - but an H. H is the aspirate, the letter where you breathe, and breath stands for inspiration. The Bible speaks of the breath of God, and you will remember that Jesus breathed on his apostles and said to them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." So Abram was changed to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah. Of course this is all symbolical. Just arbitrarily putting an H in your name will not mean much. There must be a basic change in your soul, and then you become aware of your secret name. This happened to Paul, too. Before he had his revelation on the road to Damascus he was Saul. But with his awakening to the Truth of Being, his name was changed to Paul. In the case of Abraham, he received a promise because of his faith that "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." In other words, through Abraham's experience and the Bible which came to be written, all the nations of the earth will learn in time the power of faith in God and in prayer.

Every person has a secret name known to God, and when you get your inspiration, your illumination, you will receive a new name. Revelation says, "To him that overcometh will I give . . . a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it."

Now, we may ask ourselves, "What is a name?" A name is the sound of an idea. If I say "rose," you think of color, fragrance, and the shape of a rose. Or you think of a time you gave roses to your best girl, or that one rose which reminds you of him. If I should say "lily," "carnation," or "skunk

cabbage," an entirely different set of pictures comes into your mind. So the name of a thing is the sound of an idea or ideas. The name of a person, place, or thing sums up the nature or character of that thing. The name of God ought to sum up the nature or character of God, and so it does.

Up until the time of Moses, the people did not know the sacred name of God. All through Hebrew history the name of God was considered very sacred, the mysterious secret known only to the initiated. This secrecy concerning names is seen in the primitive races too. Primitive peoples are much closer to the race mind, and there are many things we are learning from their customs. One of their customs was to keep the name of ' a child secret until the proper time and then there was a great ceremony. This was true among the American Indians. They usually gave names to their children that they thought summed up the character or qualities, like Running Deer or Laughing Water. The early gypsies did this too.

They kept the name of a child secret because they instinctively felt that the name was the key to his real character or nature.

Moses reflected this general secrecy concerning names and about the Great Name in particular when he asked, "When I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM.

It is a statement that has puzzled religious people down through the ages. In this tremendous statement we find the complete

name of God. God is unconditioned being, incorporeal, without beginning or end, the eternal, ever-ready, ever-present help. Jesus further develops the idea when he says, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

I AM THAT I AM is the complete and final name of God. Any other statement would limit Him in some way. So we begin to see that to know that name gives man power because it identifies the true nature of God. The more we understand the true nature of God the more we will understand our own natures and the power we possess. For make no mistake, there is power in your name when you know how to use it. You may say, 'Well, I've been around a few years and my name hasn't carried too much weight. Oh, names like Rockefeller, Du Pont, and Rothschild may wield power, but not mine.' That may be quite true on the surface, but we shall see that there is great power in your true name.

The priesthoods of the ancient world, and some of the modern ones too, have tried to keep the masses in darkness about the nature and character of God. It has been their aim to make people lean on an organization, while knowledge of the nature of God might make them too independent. Thus the name of God was kept secret because they have felt that spiritual power was summed up in the name of God.

Throughout the Bible the writers speak of the Name of God or the Name of the Lord. For instance, when the Queen of Sheba, whom Jesus called the Queen of the South, came to visit Solomon, the Bible says that she came to test him with hard questions. She came to inquire, not about God, or

about the Lord, but about the NAME of the Lord - thus again emphasizing the Name.

The key to the name of the Lord is found in what we call Jehovah, the personalized God of the Old Testament. Here we begin to get a sense of God expressing Himself as Man. Pure, unconditioned Being - I AM THAT I AM - has now become differentiated as men and women. The word Jehovah is an anglicized version of the Hebrew, which was made up of four letters, Yod, H6, Wau, Hé - spelling "Yevé." These four Hebrew letters represent the masculine and feminine principles, and in this form they mean one God expressing Himself in the souls of men and women. The Hebrews went further with this idea of God and added suffixes, Jehovah becoming Jehovah-ramah, Jehovah-jire, and so on - God as peace, God as health, God as abundance, etc.

God incarnates as Man in you and me, and because we are expressions of God, we share His power; but we have to know this. So it is not surprising that the ancient priesthoods of the Egyptians, the Babylonians, and the Hebrews kept the name of God secret in order to consolidate their own power over the masses. But people have intuitively felt that there was a Word of Power that would give dominion. In many of the secret orders, some of which have come down to the present day, there is a search for the "lost word," the lost secret, which would give the key to life. Man has been given the hope that if he will wait a little longer, or strive a little harder, he will be given the secret. The years have passed. He has waited, and worked, and gained some other insights. But the secret of the Lost Word of Power has eluded him.

In the 30th chapter of Deuteronomy, verses 12 to 14, Moses reveals the secret, and hundreds of years later Jesus identifies himself with this lost word of power. It is strange that we could have missed it. Moses clearly says, "It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."

What is the lost word, the secret Name of God in you? I AM. This is the great secret of the so-called lost word. This is the philosopher's stone of the alchemists, and it is really the secret lying behind all religious and all philosophies.

I AM is your true identity. I AM is your real name, and in that name there is power. I AM is Divine Spirit, your real eternal self. It was never born and will never die. I AM is never sad, never grows old, never worries or sins or knows fear.

However, this I AM is filtered through your consciousness and so you have the power of misusing it, as many people do. You have free will and the power to choose whether you will use it constructively or destructively. You can attach the I AM to your true nature and experience great power, or you can misuse it by misrepresenting yourself in many limited ways.

When you say, "I am," the natural question is, "I am what?" It has to be qualified, and when you qualify it, you limit it. If you say, "I am a man," that means you are not a

woman. "I am an American" means you are not a Frenchman or a Spaniard.

When you complete the I AM, you limit the expression in one way or another. But God is unlimited, I AM THAT I AM, unexpressed, creative power, Divine Mind waiting for expression. God has to be expressed, and Man is God in expression. I AM THAT I AM becomes I AM. Therefore Moses is told, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

Man is one with God, the self-livingness of God, and thus he has the power to attach the I AM to all the attributes of God: freedom, joy, health, success, abundance. Always I AM connects you with Divine Power because you are the I AM of the I AM THAT I AM. I AM is the Word of Power. It is the presence of God in you. It insures that you can go direct to God, that you do not need any intermediary.

All through history, back to the days of Babylon and Egypt, people have been led to believe that they needed an intermediary to approach God, and the Pharisees and the priesthood of Jesus' time tried to do the same thing. However, Moses was instructed to tell the people that God dwells among His people, that the Word of Power is in their mouths and hearts - I AM. That does not mean that someone else cannot pray for you or give you spiritual help. It means that you can and should go to God direct. Every time you say, "I am," you are using the power of God to bring certain things into your life, and what you bring will depend upon how you use the I AM and what you attach to it.

The name Jehovah was given to the people

thousands of years ago and later written down in the Bible, in order that people might know they are one with God, to know that God is the ever-present help waiting to redeem and save. It is the knowledge that the love of God shines through and says, "I am your God and you are my people. I AM THAT I AM but you are I AM, my beloved son in whom I am well pleased."

Jesus knew the Power of the I AM and he used it in many constructive ways. "I am the good shepherd . . . I am the door ... I am the bread of life. I am the way, the truth, and the life." These expressions were commonplace in his everyday teaching. But there were occasions when he gave special significance to the I AM, emphasizing its mystical quality.

Chapter 8 of the Book of John - and John reports the highest teaching of Jesus – gives a good deal of insight concerning the cosmic nature of the I AM. Jesus was teaching in the temple, in the part called the treasury, and he began to speak to the crowd, saying, "I am the light of the world. He that followeth me [my teaching] shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The Pharisees immediately took exception, claiming he was bearing false testimony of himself.

Jesus patiently explained that he was not speaking of his own mind but as he was inspired by the Father. But they would have none of it. As Jesus himself said, there are none so blind as those who will not see.

Finally, to press home the point that he was not referring to Jesus the man but to the cosmic Christ, he said to them, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your

sins." Here we have one of those words in the Bible which are printed in italics. This occurs whenever a word was missing in the original manuscript, and the translators put it in italics to show that the word was supplied by them.

However, in this case the word "he" was not in the original. The translators erroneously inserted it, thinking it was necessary grammatically to complete the sentence. But Jesus is not speaking about himself. He is saying that unless a person believes in the I AM, the Indwelling Christ in every man, he has misunderstood his relationship to God, and he will die without knowledge of the Word of Power.

Jesus continues this thought by saying, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me [inspired me], I speak these things." Again the italicized word was erroneously inserted. The meaning here is that when we come to a true understanding of man's relationship to God, then we shall know that I AM is the presence of God in each one, and that that presence gives dominion.

Then Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." This statement covers many facets of man's life, but in this context it has a special meaning. The Bible says that there were those in the crowd who answered, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" Jesus told them they were judging after the flesh but if they would change their minds and understand that the Son - the I AM - has all power, then they would be free

indeed and no longer have to rely upon intermediaries, or upon some supposed good that came out of the past. And he added, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham," for Abraham was a man of great faith who always put God first. Again they accused Jesus of being a liar.

He replied, "I seek not mine own glory.... Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil.

Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?" Intentionally or otherwise they were completely misunderstanding the tremendous import of what Jesus was teaching.

Said Jesus, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" Jesus ended his dissertation, saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." Jesus was giving emphasis to the mystical nature of the I AM. It is the Cosmic Christ which has always existed but which came to its fullest expression in the person of Jesus. I AM is the eternal self which was never born and will never die.

On another occasion, when Jesus came into Caesarea Philippi, he questioned his disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" In other words, "Who do the people think I am?" And his disciples

replied, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." In passing, it should be noted that the people of that day had a strong belief in reincarnation, for they were in fact saying that Jesus was a reincarnation of one of the prophets.

And then Jesus turned the question to the disciples themselves. "But whom say ye that I am?" And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Jesus could say, and did, "I am the Christ," and so can you. Each one has a secret name known to God, and when you get your inspiration, your illumination, you will receive a new name. In Revelation we read, "To him that overcometh will I give . .

. a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

If you merely think of yourself as Tom Brown or Mary Jones with your aches and pains and bills to pay, you are not thinking with power. But if you say, "I am Tom Brown, the Christ," or "I am Mary Jones, the Christ," then you are identifying yourself with the Eternal and the good. Now, make no mistake, you are not saying you are Jesus, the Christ. You are simply voicing your true identity as a child of God, Tom Brown or Mary Jones, the Christ. This is your new name which only you can use. It is fulfilling the prophecy which Jesus made, "The works that I do shall [ye] also do. . . . Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are

gods?" Thus Jesus becomes the great diagram for living, and I AM is the Way by which we can follow", him in a personal demonstration of the Christ.

Perhaps it may sound a little strange to you at first to say that you are Tom Brown or Mary Jones, the Christ; but then, every new thing seems strange at first. Later you will say to yourself, Why did I not recognize that long ago?

When there is a problem that seems difficult to solve, think to yourself, "I am so- and-so, the Christ." Then think what that means. Can the Christ be sick? Can the Christ be in lack? Can the Christ be stymied by any problem? Of course, if you are going to refer to yourself as Tom Brown or Mary Jones, the Christ, it will be necessary for you to give more than lip service. Your actions must also be in accord with that high ideal.

There is power in your true name when you know how to use it. I AM THAT I AM is the Great Name, and I AM is the greatest name short of that.

### The Resurrection of the World

For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

JOHN 20: 9 THE PEOPLE who lived and worked with Jesus Christ, who knew him intimately, who listened to his teaching and heard his promises -for the most part these people never realized the full import of his mission, that he must die and literally rise again from the dead, a complete and perfect

man. They did not fully understand that, and all through the ages right down to the present time, Christian people as a whole have not understood it either.

Indeed, there are those who go so far as to say that the Crucifixion may have happened, but they cannot believe the Resurrection as historical fact. "It is a beautiful story," they say, "but obviously a myth." They ask for some sort of proof that either of these things actually took place.

There should be nothing hard to understand about the Crucifixion. It was a fairly common occurrence in that day. Just as we have had capital punishment by means of the electric chair or by hanging, the Romans had crucifixion. It was strictly a Roman punishment and not Jewish. The Jews sometimes stoned malefactors to death, as they wanted to do with the woman taken in adultery. So when Jesus was convicted under Roman rule, crucifixion was the normal punishment.

The Resurrection, however, is a different story. It needs corroboration to be believed. For hundreds of thousands of years before Jesus appeared on earth no one had ever resurrected his body, and I might add that no one has done it since.

There were those handful of people before Jesus who had translated their bodies, but they did not make a reappearance on earth.

What proofs are there that the Resurrection did indeed take place? There are a number of them. After the Resurrection, Jesus appeared to two of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. He appeared a number of times to the apostles, sometimes in closed rooms,

sometimes in the open. He was able to satisfy a doubting Thomas

that he was not seeing a ghost, but a real live, flesh-and-blood person. On another occasion he built a fire on the shores of the sea of Tiberias and had breakfast waiting for some very tired apostles who had been out fishing all night. At one time he appeared to a group of five hundred people. And even Paul bases his apostleship on having seen the risen Christ on the road to Damascus. Paul was so convinced of this that, having persecuted the early Christians with might and main, he made a complete about-face, and became one of the greatest exponents of the teaching of Jesus and his resurrection.

However, I believe there is even greater proof than this of the Resurrection. All of the apostles, with the exception of John, died violent ' deaths, Peter himself being crucified upside down in Rome. All of these men had gone out around the Mediterranean basin, giving the teachings of Jesus, preaching his resurrection, and healing the sick and the maimed in his name. In those early days, belief in the Resurrection and second coming of the Christ was the test of the true believer. If the Resurrection had not happened, do you think these men would have gone out risking their lives, being beheaded or crucified, for a myth? No, they had been eyewitnesses of the Resurrection, and they were ready to stake their lives on it.

The Resurrection did take place, but the mass of the Christian people for these two thousand years have not grasped the real significance of it. Thus they have celebrated the feast of Easter faithfully, but with limited understanding, largely missing the

true import of what Jesus came to teach and to do. However, now, in this New Age that we have entered, the time has come when all the people are going to understand this wonderful mystery. Knowing the Truth and practicing it, the human race will at last take the same step that Jesus took and share in his triumph.

Easter is the festival of triumph. It follows what is traditionally called Holy Week.

The word "holy," in the context of our metaphysical study, means whole and complete, not sanctimonious. It means physical health; it means freedom of the soul, peace of mind, and that unity of life which is the will of God for men and women. Easter signifies nothing less than this. For many people Easter commemorates a marvelous event that happened nineteen centuries ago. But they feel it has little bearing on the present day, and thus the Bible, in one of its great moments, loses its spiritual import. Easter is not a thing of the past, but a grand and glorious awakening for us today and tomorrow and for all the days to come.

Long before Jesus came on earth, long before Abraham went out into the new land, the festival of Easter was observed. In the ancient civilizations, long before written history, people kept the festival of springtime, because that is what Easter is. Man has always celebrated the coming of spring with special rites and ceremonies, for he has intuitively felt that regeneration and resurrection are part of the law of life. The true law of our lives has no part in death. Death is not part of God's scheme. By the fundamental law of nature, all living things constantly renew, fulfill a cycle, and renew.

The seasons have followed one another, never failing through all the millions of years that the solar system has been in existence. Following winter, spring has always come. The trees seem to die away.

The leaves fall off, the flowers decay, but spring comes and they are renewed.

Men and women have felt that this process had a special message for them. So always there has been the spring festival following the vernal equinox.

Then Jesus came to the earth. He taught, worked, suffered, and finally died that we might realize that we can make Easter a real thing for ourselves. Jesus, of course, need not have died had he not wanted to. He could have dematerialized his body and gone away to the presence of God without dying, as others, had done. But he wanted to make it possible for us to follow him in the regeneration and resurrection. Sooner or later, as individuals, and as a race, we have to overcome death. Death is the last enemy that shall be overcome. When we have overcome death then we shall have accomplished Easter, and our work will be done. That will be the end of fear, the end of sickness and decay, the end of sin and limitation.

A time is coming when the human race is going to overcome these things. There are those who say that man is necessarily sinful and can never be otherwise. Such an idea is spiritual blindness and an insult to God. Sin, sickness, and limitation are not part of God's plan for us. Sooner or later we are going to overcome them. All the things that make life on earth so difficult - sickness, fear, threats of war, aggression of

one nation against another, one set of people in terror of another set of people – these things will all disappear. Do not listen to the pessimist, for he is at heart an atheist. The truth is that God is good, and as the human race realizes this more and more, these things will disappear.

For hundreds of millions of years the seasons have told us this story again and again. The winter of doubt and fear and frustration will ultimately disappear for the whole human race. Spring will come with its promise, and summer with its fulfillment. That is the story of Easter.

In the life of Jesus Christ we know that Calvary preceded Easter. Jesus had to go through great suffering on the cross - not physical suffering. The driving of nails through his hands, and pressing the crown of thorns upon his head in the hall of Pilate, did not physically hurt because with his knowledge of Truth, he was easily able to demonstrate over pain. Terrifying as physical pain may be, the worst physical suffering is not nearly so bad as mental suffering. On the cross Jesus had to tune in with all the fear, hatred, resentment, remorse, lust, and terror in the race mind, past, present, and future, and rise above it. And that he did.

Calvary had to precede Easter because that is the story of the human heart. No one who has ever done anything really worth while in spiritual development has been able to get there without paying the price. There is no such thing for any of us as getting into the kingdom of heaven without paying a price. Never does Easter morning dawn without the Friday of Calvary preceding it.

The Gospels of Jesus do not say that salvation is a cheap thing or that resurrection is easy. They do not say, "Just take an optimistic outlook; hope for the best; be as happy as you can; and all will be well." That kind of cheap optimism has no place in the Bible teaching. The Bible says that because we are men and women and have free will and self-determination, we are certain to have limitations and difficulties to overcome. Of course, knowledge of the Truth leads us to the realization that all the difficulties which we have to meet are within ourselves.

Anything that seems to attack us from the outside is really but the projection of something within. We have these things in ourselves and we have to overcome them. The overcoming of them involves Calvary. The cross must be overcome first. It is a symbol far older than Christianity. In the ancient world it stood for limitation. So the cross must be overcome. The true symbol of Easter is the circle, which is the symbol of eternity, of spiritual things. The circle, or solar disk if you like, represents triumph.

The great tragedy of Christianity is that so often the churches and the clergy have taught Calvary, leaving the symbol of the cross and its suffering as the last word of the Christian message. Now, it is right that people should have been taught the story of Calvary and what it means. But to send people out into the world with the idea of the cross as the last word is to hobble them psychologically, to impoverish them spiritually. It has left people discouraged and depressed; with their faith and understanding of God undermined and weakened, for it bolsters the erroneous theological concept of the Fall of Man. This

is not what Jesus Christ wanted, and certainly it is not what he taught. The last word in the Christian message is the risen, triumphant Christ - perfect man, perfect soul, perfect union with God. So let us let go of the Crucifixion, cross out the cross of Calvary, and go on to the Resurrection.

Jesus Christ rose again because he had overcome the belief in separation from God. What theology calls the Fall of Man is the belief that we are separate from God. The Truth is that we are not separate - we are the expressions of God. It is as though God is singing a song and that song is man. We are the very self-livingness of God, not created in some past time, but re-created every moment. Because God lives, we live, for we are part of God's self-expression of Himself. Yet people have the belief that they are separate from God, and the Cosmic Law is that what we really believe we experience.

It is this basic feeling of being separate from God that fills man with fear, and under the domination of fear, he does strange things. He begins to choose the lower instead of the higher. He believes he can get some supposed gain by lying or cheating or stealing. He believes he is "on his own" and must fight his way in the jungle of human experience. This belief in separation from God is the major tragedy of human existence, giving rise to many negative things that are faults of belief and not of fact. As soon as we begin to realize our oneness with God, everything changes and everything regenerates.

Jesus was born of a woman, inherited all the race beliefs, and then had to spend his early years in understanding them and mastering

them. He had to grow "in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." Finally, he completely overcame the sense of separation from God in what we call the Resurrection. His body was dematerialized by his thought. Once that is done, the body can always be reproduced again by thought, and that is what Jesus did.

It was early in the morning on that first Easter Day. It was quiet in the garden where Jesus had been laid. The crowds had long since gone. Jesus had been taken down from the cross and his body wrapped in grave clothes as was the custom.

The people had murmured one to another, "Who would have thought this could happen? He was the most popular man in Jerusalem. Why, only this past week some had called him Christ, the King; and others had shouted Hosannah to the Son of David.

Who would have thought it could all happen so quickly, this sudden turn of events?" So Jesus was buried in a new tomb and the entrance was sealed with a large stone. It was all over. The crowds went their way, people shaking their heads in resignation and muttering, "Well, dead is dead." Not all the people. Not Mary Magdalene. She had loved Jesus so much that she was the last one at the crucifixion, and now she was the first at the sepulcher. She came while it was yet dark, just before daybreak, that magic moment when there was a mist rising from the fields and the veil between the two worlds is a little thinner than at other times.

Most of the Hosannah shouting followers of Jesus had gone away after the triumphal march into Jerusalem, and forgot. It is so easy to jump on the band wagon and beat

the drums while the parade is passing by; but let the hubbub cease and these same people disappear as if into thin air. Even some of Jesus' apostles were in hiding for fear of the authorities, and certainly a number of his disciples thought that in the end Jesus was a failure, for - as the Bible so pointedly says - they understood not that he must die and rise again from the dead.

The world does not admire failure even if it is a glorious failure. The world admires success, and nothing succeeds like success with most people, even if it is not the worthiest kind of success. Sometimes in our finest moments we may seem to be a failure, at least to those who look with mortal eye. We may even seem a failure in our own self-image. This is the very time that we need to remind ourselves of the Resurrection story, for it is not the story of defeat but of victory.

Yes, Mary was there at the tomb. She had not forgotten. In her heart of hearts her woman's intuition had told her that in some way she would see him again. Love always finds a way. She was there at the sepulcher . . . and to her surprise and perhaps dismay, she found the stone rolled away from the entrance. Peter and John were off a little way and she rushed over to them, exclaiming, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." Her first thought was that the Roman soldiers had come and taken the body.

Peter and John ran to the tomb. Peter was an older and more stocky man, so John outran him. In a moment Peter caught up to him. And Peter - nothing shy about Peter - went into the tomb first with John behind him. They found Jesus gone ...

but curiously the grave clothes with which he had been bound were lying on the floor. If the Roman soldiers had taken the body away they would not have taken time to unwrap the body and leave the grave clothes behind.

Peter and John were perplexed because they too at that time did not really comprehend that Jesus must literally rise again from the dead. So they went their way to tell the others. But Mary stood there weeping, in a half-expectant hope that her love for Jesus would somehow lead her to find him. And then, not knowing why she stooped down to look into the sepulcher and saw two angels in gleaming white.

As we have said in a previous chapter, there are those who say, "It is an interesting story, but there are really no such things as angels, and therefore Mary couldn't really have seen them." And there is logic in what they say as far as their own perception is concerned. Such people will never see angels until there is a spiritual change in themselves, because those who see angels are those who believe in angels.

Unless you believe that the whole universe is the living garment of God, and unless you believe that His angels are everywhere, you will never see angels. If you believe in angels then angels will come into your life. They will not be the conventional figures that the artists portray, but they will be messengers of God.

As Paul says, "Some have entertained angels unawares." God sends angels whenever you are ready for them and need them. Angels are God's inspiration.

They are the courage God sends in time of difficulty. They are the material aid God provides in an emergency. They are the increase in understanding that is needed to get your healing or your demonstration.

The more we believe in angels, the more certain it is they will be on hand when we need them.

Mary saw the angels and they had a message for her: "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" With that she turned away, not completely comprehending the message. She had not yet gotten her awakening to the true state of affairs. She still thought of the dead Jesus instead of the living Christ. That is what so many people do when some loved one has passed on. They cling to that which they knew and loved, which is understandable. But in the light of what Jesus taught and demonstrated, should we not look to the risen Christ of that loved one? This is perhaps one of the hardest lessons any of us will have to learn. Death is not extinction but a divine promotion.

Well, Mary needed another reminder before she was fully awakened to the Truth.

As she turned away from the tomb, in that dim early morning light she saw a man whom she believed to be the gardener. He asked, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Mary, still laboring under a false belief in death, replied, "Tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus uttered just one word, "Mary." That was enough. There was instant recognition of that beloved voice she had so longed to hear again.

Now it all came back to her. She

remembered what he had promised, that on the third day he would rise from the dead. Yes, she had forgotten the Truth, even as we do.

We have to be reminded again and again and again of it. We turn to other things first, and we find ourselves seeking a living demonstration among the dead cares and hopes of yesterday.

In sudden recognition of Jesus, Mary cried out with joyous exultation, "Master."

She had found him, and as you might expect a woman to do, she ran over to kiss him. But Jesus said to her, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father." This was the first time that he had materialized his body and the demonstration was not quite complete. When we make a demonstration we are not to touch it, so to speak, until we are absolutely sure of it. So many people dissipate their spiritual power by telling everyone about the marvelous demonstration they have made, only to find that it has evaporated into thin air.

Later on, when Jesus had reproduced his body a number of times, he invited Thomas and the others to touch him and see that it was really he with flesh and bones like everyone else. By then he was absolutely sure of the resurrection demonstration.

But here at his first appearance he said something to Mary that is very significant for each one of us. He said, "Go. to my brethren [my disciples] and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

This gives Easter its true significance for us.

It is a magnificent diagram for living as sons of God, for Jesus was claiming for us ultimately everything which he claimed for himself. Not God on one side and man on the other. Not Jesus the divine and man the human.

"Say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father." Jesus is designating us as brothers with a common parenthood. In other words, there is no difference between us and Jesus except in degree. We are not different from him in kind.

This is our charter to spiritual freedom. Jesus is declaring that there is no limit to what any individual can do and become if he understands the Resurrection story, for the Resurrection is the culmination and vindication of the whole of Jesus' life and teaching. In other words, Jesus regained his unity with God, and that regaining of unity meant complete dominion over the body and circumstances.

All evil is a belief in separation from God. Not actual separation, for there can be no real separation, but a belief in separation. If the Resurrection means anything at all, it must mean that sooner or later we have to do the same thing - and that is exactly what it does mean. We have to make the same demonstration that Jesus made, if not here and at this time, then somewhere else at another time. Jesus did not do the work for the whole human race once and for all. He was the way-shower. We have free will and self-determination. We suffer only for our own mistakes - not for somebody else's. The work of Jesus on Calvary and at the Resurrection made it possible for us to do it for ourselves, and each one must do it for himself.

Now, we do not have to die to demonstrate the power of resurrection. I say we do not have to, if we can completely overcome the belief in separation from God.

Please note that I am not saying we shall not die. What I am saying is that if any one of us can overcome the sense of separation from God - and that means also overcoming the sense of separation from our fellow man - then we shall not die.

We shall be translated. Moses did not die; Enoch did not; Elijah did not; John the Divine, the writer of this account of the Resurrection, did not. They overcame that sense of separation. But may I repeat, we must also overcome that sense of separation from our fellow man. As long as I can see danger in another human being, as long as I condemn or resent another human being, I have not begun my unity with God. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen," says John, "how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" It is the message of love again, so often stressed by Jesus and the others. If we want to follow Jesus in the great demonstration, we must cleanse our heart of hatred, jealousy, fear, resentment, and condemnation, and fill our heart with a true divine love for all human beings everywhere no matter who they may be. To realize divine love for all without condemnation or hard feeling of any kind is the road we all must follow if we want to make the eventual resurrection demonstration.

In the course of human experience progress for man sometimes seems impossibly difficult, but this is because we are in the thought of limitation, dependent upon

material things, and thus subject to "the law of the flesh." However, when we catch the vision of the Cosmic Christ and identify ourselves with that, we no longer come under the law of outer things, but, as Paul said, under grace. No human being ever lived who was more under bondage of law than Paul. He was so steeped in it from his earliest days that he almost lost his faith in God. Then he realized the Truth one day, and hundreds of years later, Luther, reading those wonderful words that Paul wrote, was also set free in the same way: "The just shall live by faith." This means that when you see the vision of the divine possibility within you and stretch forth your hands toward it, you are no longer under the law of sin and bondage. The limitations and weaknesses of your own character, the mistakes of the past, no longer have the slightest power to keep you back. You are under the law of grace.

Calvary is past and Easter morning is dawning. It is the dawn of Easter and never again will you have the Thursday or Friday to go through. You are under grace.

This is the real law of scientific prayer. It is withdrawing yourself from the limited condition into the spiritual realm where there is freedom and dominion.

How do you withdraw yourself? By some physical act? No. It is a matter of attention. When your attention is centered on limitation, on your weaknesses or other people's weaknesses, on your difficulties, your sickness, your fears, you are in bondage to these things. As Paul says, "His servants ye are to whom you obey."

But when you lift your attention - your I AM - out of the limited things into the spiritual,

then you are in a state of consciousness where the limiting things no longer have any power.

This is why scientific prayer performs miracles right and left. This is why it turns people's lives upside down, takes them out of beds of pain and sickness, and brings them out of lives of sin and self-contempt. Scientific prayer does this - not now and again, not occasionally, but every day in the week in every quarter of the world. It does it whenever and wherever one raises his consciousness to the presence of God.

Easter is the crowning diagram of our personal destiny. Easter is there to impress upon us, to drive home to us, to brand into our hearts, that the resurrection is an activity that God calls for in all humanity, not just in Jesus. Jesus showed the way.

The resurrection is a practical step for you and me to take today. It is not just a theological belief. It is a fact of nature. It is the Truth of Being. It means a perfect body. It means peace of mind. It means a perfect and integrated soul. It means reunion with God in thought, understanding, and realization. It means the overcoming of every limitation. We can do it; we have to do it; and in the name of Jesus Christ, we shall do it.

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