

The Bible as Our Life

Book I

(Genesis – Ruth)

Peggy M. Brook

THE FOUNDATIONAL BOOK COMPANY
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(A series of articles on the Bible reprinted from "Ideas of Today")

Peggy M. Brook

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INTRODUCTION

The articles in this book have been reprinted from a series in "Ideas of Today", a periodical published by The Foundational Book Company during the years 1951-1977. The purpose of "Ideas of Today" - in the words of its editorial note - was to "draw attention to the ideas or fundamental spiritual factors active in every field." It maintained that "to understand these ideas in their spiritual Science helps to accelerate their influence in the entire range of human thought and endeavour."

The Bible stories presented here have been interpreted through using the Key to the Scriptures given by Mary Baker Eddy in her book "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" and through the unfolding light thrown on the use of this Key by John W. Doorly who unlocked the spiritual Science contained in the Bible, lecturing and writing extensively on his findings.

Any fundamental, deep-rooted teaching naturally develops its own terminology, but because the purpose of "Ideas of Today" was to share a universal sense of Truth, these Bible articles aimed to present an interpretation in general terminology which could be understood by any unbiased honest spiritual seeker. The Bible is the Book of Life; the spiritual facts it illustrates are basic to all mankind, but ultimately only a pure and spiritually scientific sense can discern them and experience their living reality, no matter in what language they are couched.

These twenty-four well-known stories cover the Scriptural record from the Book of Genesis to the Book of Ruth. The series in "Ideas of Today" continued until the Book of Job and further reprints will appear at a later date.

PEGGY M. BROOK

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Note

Since the publication of this book a continuation of these articles has now been printed under the title "The Bible as Our Life - Book II."

This volume interprets in the same vein twenty-seven well-known stories from the Old Testament beginning with the birth of Samuel, the first prophet, and ending with the story of Esther.

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The Great Overture of Creation

(Genesis 1:1 - 2:3)

The Two Records

THINKING about the two records of creation which begin the Bible, one is suddenly struck with the contrast between them in their symbolism, atmosphere and range.

The first record presents us with a majestic account of the light, the firmament of the heavens, the earth with all its fruitfulness, the immense celestial system, the prolific life in the waters and in the open firmament of heaven, man and woman made in the image and likeness of their great creator with dominion over the whole earth, and the peace and rest and glory of it all.

And then, the second record - a tawdry story taking place within a little circumscribed piece of the earth called the garden of Eden. A garden consisting of a few trees and a river and populated by two people and a talking serpent!

In contrast with the first account this story seems quite ludicrous. And yet, is it not within the scope of that little garden that most of us mortals are trying to live - within the scope of the personal senses and their limited outlook? The two people seem to represent the tendency we all have to divide creation into two, - ourselves and others. And the serpent? The constant depressing whisper of negative thinking and living which makes us dissatisfied, unsure of ourselves; that which gets us to "eat" of some theory whose fruit only makes us more and more conscious of the nakedness of material existence and of its frustrations.

But what of the first record of creation, which opens the Bible? In contemplating its vastness, one's whole being expands and we can see why people gain so much real satisfaction from conquering fear, accomplishing the so-called impossible, pitting themselves against great odds and winning through - descending to depths never before thought possible and ascending to heights never before attained. In so doing they are really finding some measure of the man that is referred to in this first record, - the man with dominion over all the earth. This surely is the man that we must represent, for is it not true that whenever we find something native to our aspirations there is a satisfaction of achievement and a sense of fitness that has no superfluous element? It is the key in the lock, so to speak.

If we compare these two contrasting accounts of creation step by step we can see how the symbols of that first creation story present us with

certain great fundamentals in the design for living, rather as an overture often presents the main themes of a musical work; whilst the second shows the dreary results of reckoning life from a premise of matter, the "dust of the ground."

"Let There Be Light"

And so we can take the first day of creation and thoughtfully contemplate the vastness of light, the beauty of it, its usefulness, and its impersonality. It brings colour and warmth. Everything grows because of the light. There is light for the rich, light for the poor, light for the old and for the young, light for the Indian and the African, the European and American - it is "no respecter of persons." Moreover, when it is daylight, it will come in freely wherever it is allowed to do so.

"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" - "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light" - "Arise, shine; for thy light is come" - "I am the light of the world" - "In thy light shall we see light." How the Bible teems with the presence of this light! And the writers could surely not be referring to physical light. The feeling one gets from pondering this light, as it permeates the Scriptural narratives, is of the presence of a supreme intelligence that is available to every man as he turns his thought for guidance towards the boundless warmth of an intelligence outside himself.

By contrast with this, the second record of creation begins with a miserable, wet mist. The darkness, the obscurity, the smudged outlines, the confusion, the restriction that one commonly associates with mists seems leagues apart from this glorious light. But nevertheless it is a realistic symbol of unenlightened gropings based solely on matter and the human brain.

A Symbolic Account?

We could ask ourselves whether we have a right to take this record in such a symbolic way. Surely yes, for the light, the waters, the earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars are all used in a symbolic way throughout the Scriptures. Moreover, was not this record written by men whose lives were spent in the contemplation of the spiritual? And would they have been interested in recording merely a physical story of how the world began? Was there not something far more fundamental

and spiritual in this record than is generally seen? Frank Spiva writes in an article entitled "The Bible and Astronomy":-

The fact that the Bible and its account of creation has stood the length of time it has proves that its existence has a purpose, but in that its account of creation does not parallel the scientific findings, then the account of creation must of necessity have some meaning beyond that which we have heretofore thought it to have. Can it be that with these scientific findings we will be compelled to re-analyse the Bible and find therein truths as astounding as those we have discovered in the sky?

Yes, astounding truths, but maybe very simple truths, if we are willing to challenge materialistic theories and seek primal and perpetual cause in intelligence and ideas rather than in matter.

The Firmament

And so we can turn in thought to the second day, with its symbol of the firmament to divide the waters above from the waters beneath. That great dividing of waters which follows the breaking of the light is surely a tremendous symbol of a great separating process that immediately takes place once the light breaks in any sphere of activity. How true this is, for one has often experienced a singular clarity of vision and out of many ways one distinct path has been, as it were, "separated" out, as one has turned unreservedly to the light of a superior, unlimited intelligence.

And now, by contrast, what is taking place in the garden of Eden? Man made of the dust of the ground with the spirit of life breathed into him. No clarity there. Literally - just mud and air! An apt description of what our thinking resembles when we are trying to get clear on some issue with a limited and material sense of our ability.

"And God called the firmament Heaven," the first record declares, and what heaven it is to be able to turn here and now to an intelligence that is so ordered and pure that it continually operates as a great separator of order from chaos, clarity from confusion, strength from weakness - "the waters above from the waters beneath."

The Earth and Its Fruitfulness

And then we come to the dry land, formed on the third day by the gathering together of the waters, the dry land which brings forth grass,

herb, and fruit tree - abundant fruitage. What of this dry land? Is it not a symbol of certainty, something to stand on, something that never lets you down? And from such certainty fruit must always spring. To stand on fact assures propagation in any sphere. Touch ever-operative spiritual fact and we unleash undreamed-of fruitage.

But how can we be certain of spiritual things? Only by experience, as in any realm. No one knows the real satisfaction, safety, and fruitage in any subject until they have put their whole selves into it, and no one can do it for them. As we put our whole selves into any activity, be it golf, music, or art, we just *feel* ourselves to be a part of that activity, and a satisfaction, a safety, and a feeling of identification with its rhythm comes to us.

Not so if we are creeping about in the Adam mist. Here the story tells of a man confined in a garden full of restrictions. Not standing free on the wide earth with the firm ground of spiritual fact beneath his feet, but unsatisfied, surrounded by animals, with no help meet for him. How like our mortal experience this would seem to be, when we are beset by uncertainty, hedged in by self-imposed limits, and finding no lasting satisfaction in the animal qualities of this mortal man parading before us.

The "help meet" for man surely lies in certainty and safety, that inner poise which is so fruitful. From experience we inevitably learn that the natural fruit of an inward peace is always the best help meet for any of us, whether we are married or single or whatever our relationships. But search how we may, we find this inward peace only as we feel ourselves to be identified with a great primal cause whose nature is altogether good and purposeful.

The Sun, the Moon, and the Stars

And so this leads us on to the contemplation of the fourth day, with its vast symbol of the solar system - the sun, the moon, and the stars. What a magnificent symbol to indicate the operation of a supreme Principle! It is the central day of this creation story, - the hinge, as it were.

An observatory with its vast yet intricate calculations involved in the observation of the stars, and a sense of co-ordination and system springs to mind in contemplating this day. The Bible speaks of the morning stars singing together, and we can almost hear this paean of joy as we ponder the harmonious inter-relation of the solar system.

If this is a symbol of the Principle of all things and its government of

being, then why are we not availing ourselves of such a Principle? This is telling us of a universe of light - of ideas - working in harmony with one another to rule over the day of well-being and happiness, and even over the night of darkness, doubt, and fear. Why are we not availing ourselves of it? Because, as mortals, we have lazily accepted the mist as reality, and at this point in the second record a deep sleep falls upon Adam. He sleeps, a rib is taken out of him, and from this act of separation the division into sexes emerges.

May this sleep symbolize the mesmerism that would keep us from finding and using a spiritual Principle of harmonious government? We shut our eyes to the possibilities of such a Principle being available to us here and now. Closing our eyes to this robs us of a feeling of completeness, and gives rise to the tendency to divide creation into two, - ourselves and others.

How often one has found conflicting interests, misunderstandings, and quarrels solved, when instead of reckoning individuals as isolated units, each operating under the influence of a separate personal will, one has reckoned relationships from a higher standpoint. Such a standpoint acknowledges one governing Principle, moving every part of its creation in harmony with every other part, and thus moulding even human will in accordance with its purpose. The wonderful results from such calculations open our thought to the possibilities which a deeper research of the spiritual meaning behind this day opens up, particularly in the field of international relations.

From this story of the creation up to this point, one can see that an intelligent Presence, a pure and ordered Presence, a definite and satisfying Presence, and a Presence that operates in a systematic and harmonious way is being revealed through these great symbols. It is leading now in the fifth day to a sense of prolific life, and then on to its climax in the sixth day with a man made in the image and likeness of God and equipped with absolute dominion.

No wonder this creation leads to such a man, for it contains no limits except the natural flow of true classification and order which bind only discord and chaos. Throughout this entire creation the "seed is within itself," like reproduces like, and there are constant reiterations of its being "good," climaxing with the statement, "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."

The determination of many of us to live as confirmed believers in the Adam record of creation seems to resemble the attitude of Plato's cave-dweller who doggedly sat in the entrance to his cave with his back to the sunlight, believing that the shadowy figures he saw on the opposite wall were real and living.

The Waters Bring Forth

Returning to our journey through these "days," we come to the fifth day with its creation of abundant life in the sea and fowl flying in the "open firmament of heaven." We can recall the sense of unlimited possibilities and the feeling of the prolific good that is ever-available to us whenever we begin to reckon ourselves consciously as an integral part of harmoniously operating being, as seen in the fourth day.

Because Jesus understood the fact that "I and my Father [the Principle of all being] are one," he could also say with conviction, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." As proof of this he fed the five thousand, found money in the fish's mouth, took the limits off Lazarus' sense of life, and raised the daughter of Jairus.

Had Jesus thrown his weight into the Adam counterfeit at this point, there would have been no such convincing signs of limitlessness, for here Eve listens to the serpent's whisper and partakes of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; the result is an awareness of nakedness and shame. Jesus' consciousness of existence remained above earthy whisperings. He never came down to argue with limitation or impossibility, nor did he indulge in the kind of broad-mindedness that takes in a mixed standard of good and evil, and the result was that he was able to "clothe" every situation with richness. He showed forth to all men the bounty and abundance of real living.

These are the true values of life. We don't have to suffer nakedness of friendship, nakedness of supply, or nakedness of health. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." If Jesus was drawing *mentally* on a spiritual law of abundance to prove these things, and even to destroy the "last enemy" of limitation in his own experience, where is that law now? It must be still available; and it seems as though the prophetic writers wisely hid the dynamic fundamentals of Life in the great symbols of this grand story of creation. What wonderful symbols to use, for they are so vast and embrace such a multitude of detail that they can be expanded and developed in all kinds of ways throughout the Bible record.

Man with Dominion

And so we come to the sixth day with the living creatures on the earth and the climax of all creation - man, made in the image and

likeness of God with dominion over everything. Yes, that is the man we feel to be when we have found ourselves as living in the light of an ever-present intelligence, utilizing a "firmament" that is ordered and clear, standing on the "dry land" of tangible spiritual fact, conscious of moving in a harmoniously operating system of being, and thus experiencing a richness, an abundance, and an unlimited sense of existence that must truly make us exclaim, "*This is being man, the man that is blessed and fruitful and is conscious of dominion!*"

What a contrast between this picture and the Adam man at this point! With him and those around him it is just a succession of curses. The serpent is cursed, the woman is cursed, Adam is cursed and turned out of Eden, and Cain destroys Abel. How true are the words of the Psalmist, "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more." And how sensible was Isaiah to command, "Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

But is this the man whom Jesus exemplified? No, he realized his quality as image and likeness of an unlimited power that is infinitely good and whose creation is declared to be very good also. From that standpoint he never moved. This may have necessitated his spending many hours in a quiet and exalted mountain of thought. Not as a recluse, but just as any man who is wedded to his lifework devotes hours to it in order to accomplish anything, and loves to do so.

And God Rested

No wonder the fulfilment and seal of this creation in the seventh day is "And [God] rested." The feeling this gives us is akin to the feeling a mother must have when she beholds the beauty and loveliness of the child she has just brought forth. Indeed the dawning of these days through a number of evenings and mornings is to us rather like a birth - the birth of the nature of our fundamental cause and therefore, surely, the birth of *our* true nature. We all feel the touch of this day of rest when we really wake up to our birthright as given in this first record of creation. As we do, we experience the constant presence and comfort of the motherhood of our cause drawing us to the fulfilment of our manhood - sometimes tenderly, sometimes imperatively, but always irresistibly. Jeremiah expressed the activity of this motherhood when he wrote, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee."

Down in the Adam story Cain is expelled into the land of Nod, "a fugitive and a vagabond." There is no warmth of inclusion in a plan of creation, no tender mothering for Adam and his progeny. But there is no need to experience this sense of exclusion and unsatisfied restlessness; we *can* experience rest if we turn towards the light of a spiritual intelligence and let it lead us step by step to ultimate fulfilment.

Indeed, in the Adam record of creation - which occupies the first thousand years of Bible history - there are flashes of light, such as the tree of life in the midst of the garden and the river that leads out of the garden. These symbolize how the light of spiritual values, as illustrated in the opening chapter of Genesis, brings men out of a limited material sense of existence.

Thinking these things over, one realizes that to build on certain fundamentals, to follow a proved principle, and test it out for oneself is essential in any human subject. This must also apply to the working out of life itself. Does the Bible present the fundamentals of Being in its opening chapter, illustrate their use throughout its pages, and tell the story of the greatest demonstrator of these living fundamentals, so that it is a real scientific textbook for our practice of life today? It surely does, and in subsequent articles we shall see how this can be so.

Noah and the Ark

(Genesis 5:28 - 9:29)

The Plan of the Bible

TO TAKE THE BIBLE literally often strains one's credulity; to regard only its moral teaching tends to reduce its message to the Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount; but to interpret it as a consistent unfolding of a practical spiritual plan through the medium of myth, allegory, saga, and Jewish history is to find the whole Book a living structure, charged with dynamic spiritual power, available to everyone.

A recent discovery has been made regarding the plan of the Bible which helps enormously to focus the Book as a whole. As everyone knows, the historical story in the Bible purports to occupy a period of five thousand years. Recent research by John W. Doorly has disclosed the illuminating fact that each thousand-year period has a quite distinct tone permeating it. It is as if the cycle of a thousand years is used to stress one clear-cut facet of being through high-lighting specific events. Moreover, if the record of each thousand years is considered in relation to the themes of the great overture of creation as given in the first chapter of Genesis, an amazing correspondence is seen.

For instance, the *first* day is concerned with the coming of light, the motive power behind all creation, and the *first* thousand years of Scriptural history deals entirely with the basis of creation, - what it is and what it is not.

The *second* day focuses on the firmament which is erected to divide the waters above from the waters beneath. The *second* thousand years of Scriptural history is used to present the story of Noah's separation from the waters by means of the ark - an obvious correlation.

The outstanding feature of the *third* day is the dry land and its fruitfulness. In the *third* thousand years the great seeking process, starting with Abraham and ending with the children of Israel, was - for what? A promised *land*, - a fruitful land flowing with milk and honey.

The divine government indicated by the system of the sun, moon, and stars in the *fourth* day finds a clear counterpart and detailed expansion in the kingdom period, which forms the *fourth* thousand years. Its keynote is government, symbolized through kingship and the majestic message of the prophets.

Finally, the abundance of the *fifth* day is reflected in the overall tone of Jesus' mission. He himself declared, "I am come that they might

have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

The sixth and seventh days are foreshadowed in the Book of Revelation, specifically in the opening of the sixth and seventh seals.

Surely this plan, so plainly discernible in the Scriptures, is the literal import of Peter's words, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

The Purpose of Noah

The Bible, then, from start to finish, has a systematic plan. It is not primarily concerned with history, but with illustrating the working of great, warm, living, spiritual tones of being. A story such as that of Noah and the flood cannot therefore be intended to be read merely as a colourful tale which occurs in various forms in many ancient mythologies, nor as an incredible historical event. Rather does it live to modern thought as a practical working illustration of the "firmament" of spiritual understanding and its ability to deal with the deluge of materialistic theories.

To give some heed to the story of how the patriarch Noah survived the flood may be instructive in these days when we are continually "flooded out" with news of international tension, war, fear of disease, and harmful propaganda of various kinds. Sometimes it is difficult for the individual to know how to stand up against these mesmeric "floods." Noah was wise. He built an ark. It weathered the storm. He was the Old Testament equivalent of the "wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock."

But what can one make out of this story of Noah and his ark if one considers them as representing timeless fundamental factors in life?

The whole account appears to be an illustration of something Godlike being preserved in spite of the deluge which a rabid materialism always brings upon itself. Could one, then, take Noah as standing specifically for "spiritual values," since whatever happens, spiritual values live on? Nothing can destroy a fundamental trust in the government of good and its ultimate triumph. Nothing can destroy the love that depends not on an object for its love, but loves to love for the real substance that there is in loving. Spiritual values may be lost sight of for periods, when the "ark" that holds them looks like a little speck on the flood waters of materialism. But they survive and come forth stronger than ever before, and "overspread" the whole earth. Nothing can overwhelm that which

is essential power. But this story shows how we can hasten the appearing of the "dry land," how to build the ark that preserves spiritual values and how to deal with the floods.

Noah's Three Sons

Right at the beginning one reads of Noah's three sons, - Shem, Ham, and Japheth. "Three" is a fundamental symbol in the Scriptures. In relation to man it is commonly acknowledged that he is a threefold proposition of body, mind, and soul. For our purpose here let us call these three the physical, the moral, and the spiritual.

The story, therefore, would appear to tell us that spiritual values (Noah) are not distant, ethereal conceptions. They unfold to us these three levels of thought (Ham, Shem, and Japheth - the physical, the moral, and the spiritual). They take care of them and preserve them. Finally, at the end of the story, is shown the place and relationship of those three. "God" shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan [the descendants of Ham] shall be his servant." Does this not indicate that as our understanding of the spiritual increases, it exercises a constant influence in the moral realm, and the physical has to serve it and be obedient to it?

The Ark

But in this narrative there is a very important factor which dominates the whole story - namely, the ark. If we try to be Noah, and yet build no ark, the floods can overwhelm us.

What is this ark, which later, in another form, protected the infant Moses in the bulrushes? It is obviously a symbol of safety, of something that sustains and preserves, and in this case something that real spiritual values must build if they are intelligent and practical.

It is true to say that every subject has its "ark," its structure, which is the ordered way in which it expresses itself, and through which it may be understood. Understanding is an ark. There is safety and "staying power" in understanding. No one is safe in mathematics, engineering, music, or in any other subject unless he understands it. Without understanding he can be "caught out" by many unexpected things. A real understanding preserves one, and it can only be gained in an ordered way. Should spiritual reality be any different? And may we not be caught out in life time and time again because we have not

built an ark of real spiritual understanding?

The Building of the Ark

These, then, are the instructions. Firstly, it is to be made of gopher wood, - an evergreen, - implying the obvious fact that we can only hew out a permanent understanding of reality from elements that are in themselves eternal. We can never learn of Spirit from matter, of the infinite from the finite, of the indestructible from the destructible. So the building material of spiritual values is the "evergreen" of indestructible spiritual good.

Secondly, "rooms shalt thou make in the ark." Rooms are usually set aside for special purposes. Just as the understanding of any intelligent subject is possible because of its ordered classifications, so this "ark" of spiritual understanding must also have specific categories, as given, for instance, in those seven great spiritual tones of the days of creation. Through these all may grasp it.

Thirdly, the ark is pitched "within and without with pitch." This presumably was to make it completely watertight, filling in the cracks between the boards. There is consistency in spiritual understanding. It covers every contingency both "within and without," - in our own thinking, and in our contacts with the outside world.

Firstly then, we find that we are dealing with units that are altogether good and indestructible. Next we begin to understand something of their categories. Then we grasp the inescapable wholeness of this spiritual structure.

The ark also has specific length, breadth, and height. Real spiritual understanding would get nowhere without an ordered *line* of light. The Psalmist sang, "Order my steps in thy word." But this line of light also has *breadth*. It is neither rigid nor narrow (in the negative sense of that word). Jesus, the friend of publicans and sinners, was a wonderful exemplar of true tolerance and compassion. And with all its breadth, spiritual understanding never loses *height*. Jesus kept his mountain-top vision whilst mingling with and healing the multitudes. Moreover, he saw that the breadth of his living depended on the height of his vision. He said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me [unto the truth I am representing]." So our "ark" must have length and breadth and height.

Is this ark an impossible ideal? No. It *is* an ideal. And ideals in any sphere are not reached overnight, but on thinking it out, one finds that its details of construction are pure spiritual common sense.

Noah is to have a window to the ark. Spiritual understanding is no "boxed-in" proposition. It is open to the fresh light of new inspiration and also looks out on the world, alert to observe and learn from the "signs of the times."

The ark is also to have a door, to admit Noah and his household and to be firmly shut in time of flood. Our entry into the ark through following the spiritual is also our protection when the storms come.

Finally, there are to be three stories. Again, this symbol of "three." In mathematics there are the three planes through which the subject expresses itself - pure, abstract, and applied. These three "stories" in the ark would seem to indicate similar planes in the realm of spiritual understanding. When this range is recognized, many apparent contradictions in that realm are resolved.

We have spent some time decoding the building instructions for the ark, and such a critical analysis may perhaps be tedious to those who seek quick results and are impatient with detail. But the understanding of spiritual values is not an academic subject to be learned in a year or two. The ark of spiritual understanding, built by spiritual values, represents living fundamentals, cultured over the years in thought and in life, but its essential requirements are given in these few verses in Genesis.

The Filling of the Ark

And now, the ark constructed, we read that it is to be "alive" with all Noah's household and every kind of animal - fowl, cattle, creeping things. Nothing is excluded. This is a wonderful aspect of the story, for it indicates that spiritual understanding is a live proposition. It embraces all the varied manifestations of living, and is not some isolated, bare state of thought associated with suffering saints and a cheerless life. The animal is a favourite symbol of the Bible writers. It is quite natural for us to associate the quality of peace with the dove, purity and innocence with the lamb, and strength and valour with the lion, for instance. It is these and similar qualities representing the whole gamut of human experience that spiritual understanding gathers in and preserves from the flood.

Our values are not safe today if their fundamental basis is not recognized to be spiritual. Why was Jesus able to allow his body to be killed by jealousy and hatred and yet preserve and reproduce it when the flood of revenge had spent itself? Surely it was because he had consistently taken his sense of life and of what constitutes body -

substance, structure, circulation, inspiration, and so forth - into the "ark" of spiritual understanding. He had seen the real nature and essence of those elements to be spiritual and that nothing could destroy those living spiritual values. His body, as apparent to those around, was a mere symbol of those values, which could be manifested at will in whatever form was necessary.

One might think that to be "Noah" means withdrawing from the world, a step that many of us would be loath to take. But no. It involves primarily a mental withdrawal from mass thinking, not a segregation from our fellowmen. Does not Paul's command, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate" mean, "Cease the habit of taking every phenomenon at its material face value. Expand your thought to the *spiritual* cause of phenomena"? One might add, "Have the courage to come out of the ruts, as Noah did. Dare to think spiritually and expansively." We don't then leave the material world as we know it - we truly live in the world, but not of it. Joy becomes more permanent because it is not based on the fleeting happenings of matter, health becomes more attainable because its source is found in the soundness and balanced values of spiritual understanding; and likewise a natural and moral manifestation of substance follows in the wake of the satisfying richness of spiritual understanding.

The Ark in Action

Then the floods may come. But what do they do? As in the Bible story, they serve only to lift the ark higher. With a properly constructed ark no flood can do anything else. The culminating flood of opposition in Jesus' career lifted his ark to a supremely convincing proof of eternal life. But we must be wise and steadfast enough to remain serenely within the ark, relying wholeheartedly on spiritual understanding and trusting in the eventual triumph of good. Then the "dry land" will assuredly appear.

A comforting detail of this story is given when it says "the ark went upon the face of the waters." It didn't stand still. It went. And sometimes when the waters seem very high and wide and we are battling through, it is good to realize that our "ark" must be going "upon the face of the waters." And we need to remain in it. We may have no outside landmark by which to gauge our position. It may all look a watery waste to us, but our ark will never let us down. Moreover, when the "dry land" appears we shall find that we have covered a great deal of mental territory and that the experience does

leave us on the "mountain-top."

The Raven and the Dove

The sending out of the raven and the dove to see if the waters are abated is another interesting part of this story. The raven goes to and fro and is of no use to Noah at all, whilst the dove eventually gives him his answer.

The raven is a bird of prey and was an object of superstition. The dark forebodings of superstition are of little use in assessing one's real position in time of flood. Superstition does not just refer to avoiding ladders, fearing Friday the 13th, and so forth. Many religious beliefs are nothing more nor less than superstition, for they produce that "irrational abject attitude of mind towards ... God" which is one of Webster's definitions of "superstition."

But a dove is different. In the Scriptures and as defined in Webster, it is a symbol of the Holy Spirit (or what we might term the spiritual Principle of the universe), particularly as working in the affairs of men. If from our ark of spiritual understanding we send out a "dove," - if with an intelligent, reasoned, spiritual outlook we survey the scene, - we may not get immediate results in the initial stages, but if we persevere, there will first come to us the promise of abated floods, and then the realization of their disappearance.

The Rainbow

After Noah has come forth from the ark, God makes a covenant with him that the waters will "no more become a flood to destroy all flesh." The token of that covenant is the rainbow. "I do set my bow in the cloud," God declares. That bow is basically sevenfold in colour. Is it coincidence or is it a carefully chosen symbol? The same scribes who wrote this story also wrote the record of the seven days of creation. May they not have had in mind that the understanding of those seven days, indicating great fundamental spiritual values of being, will always act as a radiant promise when the clouds of materialism threaten their storms? And then there will be no flood.

One is struck by the fact that previously in the story Noah waited *seven* days and then again *seven* days in the procedure of sending out the dove. As he did this, the floods abated little by little. All through the story, the various numerals that occur appear to be used in very

specific ways, and as one gains some understanding of the spiritual facts illustrated by each day of creation, so it unlocks this Bible symbolism.

Noah Becomes a Husbandman

The final step in this story is that Noah becomes a husbandman, gets drunk on the fruit of his ground, and is found by his sons "uncovered within his tent." A vivid lesson. It is so easy to become intoxicated with the fruits of our own efforts, but if we allow this to happen it eventually leads to a sense of nakedness, for self-love strips man of his rich spiritual potentialities.

It is an interesting detail in the story that Ham (the physical standpoint) makes much of his father's nakedness, whereas Shem and Japheth (the moral and spiritual standpoints, here influenced somewhat by Ham) walk backwards and cover up this nakedness. It isn't until Noah *awakes* that these three standpoints are given their right position. This incident would seem to indicate that the tendency in human experience is either to make too much of sin, or else to try and cover it up without facing up to it. But when spiritual values are awake and alert, then they see the true status of the physical, the moral, and the spiritual, for this is where Noah declares that "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."

A Permanent Ark

Does one not see the richness and value of this story as it is translated into daily living? In its entirety it constitutes a detailed illustration of the second day of creation, of the operation of the firmament or ark which separates the waters above from the waters beneath.

Today we need to face up to the fact that we cannot embrace spiritual values and make *overnight* the great spiritual "come-back" which men are being urged to make, nor can we do it through religious emotion and sentiment alone. That does not last. One of the greatest miracles on earth is a consistent spiritual conviction, remaining steadfast throughout the years, and the strongest hope of achieving this is when reason and revelation are balanced in thought and spiritual values are supported by a real understanding of spiritual fact, not just propped up by belief, emotion or mere faith.

If every man individually can take his Bible and chart his own way

through with the aid of the compass given in the days of creation, he will surely build an ark of spiritual understanding which is proof against any storms.

Abraham's Journey

(Genesis 11:27 - 25:8)

The Third Thousand Years of Bible History

THE PATRIARCH whom Paul alludes to as "faithful Abraham" conjures up for us a picture of a man who resolutely set out to seek "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"; a man who in spite of all obstacles finally saw the fulfilment of the promise of an heir out of his own bowels; a man whose faith led him ever onwards.

But as one goes deeper into this story, one finds that it reveals more than the importance of faith. Rather does it illustrate the development of a definite spiritual understanding of reality, and how it operates to translate every man's experience step by step out of a material sense of things into a spiritual.

The story of Abraham is related in Chapters 11-25 of Genesis and is the opening symbol of the third thousand years of Bible history, illustrative of the third day of creation.

As is known, the Bible begins with a wonderful overture, symbolizing through seven days of creation the fundamental values of life in an ordered range. It indicates their vastness and power, thus exposing the littleness and fallibility of garden of Eden values. This latter story makes up the first thousand years of Bible history.

The second thousand years, introducing Noah and the ark, goes a step farther, indicating how these values must be thoroughly cultured, how there must be an ark of spiritual understanding in order to escape from the floods of materialism.

And now the third thousand years illustrates how this ark structure, or spiritual understanding, is a constant factor working in every individual's life and actively translating it in detail. This whole period, therefore, teems with a sense of journeying. Abraham journeys, Jacob too, Joseph goes down into Egypt, the children of Israel wander through the wilderness to the Promised Land - all a great sense of how definite spiritual understanding impels every man's journey from a material sense of things to a spiritual, until he sees the fulfilment of the conviction "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

An intelligent spiritual understanding is no quiescent state. Let us remember that this third thousand years illustrates the third day of creation, where the waters are gathered together - there is an ordered moving and sorting out of all the currents of human thought - and the

dry land appears, - spiritual understanding is apparent as a firm and definite factor. This dry land brings forth grass, herb, and fruit tree - spiritual understanding is fruitful. There is nothing static there!

"Get Thee out of Thy Country"

In keeping with this impelling force of spiritual understanding comes the first command to Abraham, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." A definite, clear-cut spiritual understanding irresistibly compels us to come right out of all our limited reasoning and limited activity based on the conclusions of mortal education, into the unlimited possibilities resulting from a spiritual basis.

Just as Jesus said that we cannot put new wine into old bottles, so when definite spiritual understanding begins to stir within us, we can no longer remain with a reliance on material theories regarding life in matter. Our whole basis of thinking changes. Abraham moved from Ur of the Chaldees, the home of astrology and superstition, into the Promised Land. Definite spiritual understanding moves us from an unintelligent basis of fatalism, chance, nihilism, or materialism, to a certain and safe spiritual basis of reasoning, from which stem unlimited opportunities and blessings.

Separation from Lot

But not all at once did Abraham realize the promise of fruition and greatness. To begin with, he had Lot as a companion. Lot means "hidden, dark coloured." A very apt symbol of every mortal's almost unconscious and automatic acceptance of the testimony of the physical senses. This habit of accepting material evidence at its face value so often remains hidden until the journey with definite spiritual understanding is undertaken in earnest. Then it is inevitably found that there is strife "between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle." "Light and darkness cannot dwell together." Every man knows how the dawning of knowledge, for instance, at once dispels ignorance, but often it is not until knowledge begins to come to a man that he awakens as to how ignorant he is. Just so, Abraham started his journey quite happily with Lot until his return from Egypt. The Egyptian experience, undertaken in time of famine, illustrates the futility of turning to the darkness of materialism when faced with a

"thin" time. (See Gen. 12:10-20.) When Abraham was once more on the path and calling "on the name of the Lord," he awoke to the drag that Lot was on his progress forward. And so he called for a separation.

How often, in moments of great inspiration, we have been so uplifted that we have had a supreme desire to give up everything in our life that hinders our progress towards spiritual things. It is an exhilarating experience, but we find, as this story of Abraham illustrates, that we cannot just get rid of Lot in one moment. We have to learn how to deal with him systematically, until he no longer intrudes.

The interesting fact is that until we *have* separated, and seen clearly that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," we cannot really deal with the flesh and its theories.

The Range of Spiritual Vision

It is a fact that always after true separation there dawns an even clearer vision, and real consolidation begins. Separating from Lot, in the sense of pursuing the reality and substance of spiritual values as opposed to merely physical values, brings wonderful vision. Abraham was told, "Look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."

The four points of the compass are used for calculating direction. What more natural, therefore, than that the prophetic writers should use such a symbol to indicate processes of spiritual calculation? The "four," like the "seven," was adopted as a symbol and used in different connections throughout the Scriptures, culminating with the city foursquare.

What are these four spiritual processes? Historically they figure as the revelation of the Word through the Hebrew prophets, the coming of the Christ with Jesus' birth, the development of Christianity as the outcome of Jesus' mission, and today in this scientific era progressive thought is discovering that all these phases are but facets of a universal, spiritual Science, timeless and ever-available. Practically, these four are operative here and now in your experience and my experience as the eternal flow of spiritual revelation; its power to redeem and regenerate man; the acceptance of every man's inescapable unity with the demonstrability of that power; and its whole range and system as ever-operative fact.

Facing up to Lot

Like the illustration of Abraham, definite spiritual understanding sees the tremendous possibilities of spiritual calculation once there is separation from the dragging companionship of Lot. But Lot is not finished with yet. The very next moment we find him involved in a warfare between various kings. He is captured and Abraham has to rescue him.

This is an interesting cycle of events which occurs in different ways mainly in the third thousand years of Bible history. A journey takes place, but with an opposing factor alongside; then there is a clean-cut separation; and finally a return to deal with that factor intelligently and authoritatively.

With Jacob and Esau there is the same pattern. These contrasted elements grow up as twins, then Jacob is forced to flee from Esau, but finally after many vicissitudes and a great struggle he meets Esau again and faces him rightly before Esau passes out of his experience. Joseph, too, grows up with his brethren, is then separated from them when sold into Egypt, but finally is united with them on a new basis. Again, with Moses' experience a similar trend is seen; his birth and childhood take place in Egypt, then he is compelled to flee the country, only to return later (after an illuminating spiritual experience) to deal with the Pharaoh in an authoritative way and bring the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage.

This recurring cycle parallels amazingly the first three days of creation. Spiritual light dawns. It enforces a separation of the waters above from the waters beneath. Then on the third day the waters are gathered together and the dry land appears - in other words, the waters are controlled and the dry land of spiritual understanding brings forth fruit.

What does this mean in man's experience? It can mean this: spiritual Truth dawns on him. He is willing and glad to leave a material sense of things and to give himself wholly to pursuing the spiritual in its ordered unfoldment. Indeed he must, because it is impossible to imbibe spiritual Truth and cling to materialism simultaneously. There comes a time, though, when our positive sense of Truth compels us to return and deal with the claims of a material sense of existence, even as Abraham rescued Lot from being beaten up, Jacob faced Esau, Joseph met and reformed his brethren, and Moses broke the chains of Egyptian bondage.

These instances show that none of us can just leave evil or materialism on one side and operate as ostriches - we have to deal with

it. But we cannot deal with it negatively or immaturely, - as neophytes. We must first have a clear sense of ordered spiritual values. Is not that in a broad sense what the Bible teaches us through its first three thousand years of Hebrew history? First, it presents a range of spiritual fundamentals, then it shows how spiritual values must build an ark, a detailed spiritual understanding and now in this third thousand-year period it illustrates how that spiritual understanding translates every man's experience step by step and in detail out of a material sense of things into a spiritual.

On Abraham's return from rescuing Lot he meets Melchizedek, of whom Hebrews declares that he is "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life" - a wonderful symbol of the type of man which Christ Jesus represented. Whenever man "rescues Lot," - that is, sanely and with dominion translates the carnal and sensual beliefs that tempt him, instead of just letting them be beaten up in senseless warfare, - then he does indeed meet Melchizedek. Some measure of the ideal manhood which Christ Jesus represented dawns on him and blesses him richly.

The Promise of an Heir

Then the great promise comes to Abraham that out of his own bowels will come forth an heir, and this promise is repeated many times until it is finally realized.

It is irresistible that real spiritual understanding *does* bring forth fruit, even as in the third day of creation the dry land brings forth grass, herb, and fruit tree.

In the Bible a wife signifies an ideal, - that to which one weds oneself. Here Abraham is told that his own wife will give him this child. He has not to look elsewhere. If faithful to our spiritual ideal as we see it in all its purity, we do experience the right individual fruitage. Learn mathematics and it will work for you in your individual experience as surely as it does for the most expert mathematician. Imbibe spiritual values and the same thing must happen. Out of our *own* loins must come forth the fruits of health, happiness, and dominion.

The Bondmaid - a Human Expedient

But Abraham doubts this and takes the bondmaid, Hagar, to wife. Often the temptation comes to doubt a spiritual ideal. We are not ready

to trust purely spiritual means in working through a situation. So we adopt a human expedient. It may be that a human expedient has to be adopted for a while, but it is always temporary, and finally progress brings about its dissolution.

Paul speaks of the son of the bondwoman and the son of the freewoman as typifying the two covenants - law and grace. In this instance we see how the human expedient, Ishmael, is taken care of until at length it has to be cast out. The divine Principle of being is infinitely gentle, and again as Paul writes, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

Circumcision - a Symbol of Purity

And so Abraham journeys on with the son of the bondwoman, but with the promise still being reiterated that he will bring forth seed and be a father of many nations. As a token of this fruitful covenant, circumcision is established.

Does not the rite of circumcision fundamentally symbolize purity, the cutting off of uncleanness? And surely it is clear that fruitfulness is an inevitable outcome of purity in any sphere. To take an everyday example: if anyone desires to be "fruitful" in music, the more he keeps purely to the pursuit of music and lets nothing side-track him, the more abundant is his fruitage in that sphere. It logically follows that if we wish to experience consistent health, unimpaired happiness, changeless love, satisfying substance, unbroken relationships, we must keep to the constant culturing of the pure basis of these values and recognize them as fundamentally spiritual - we must "circumcise" ourselves from a material basis. A material basis finitizes all these blessings.

Change of Names - a Turning-point

At this point in the story God declares a change of name for both Abram and Sarai. In each case the change of name implies that the labouring is over and that there is a realization of the inherent and natural fruitfulness of spiritual understanding. As personal mortals, men labour to achieve an understanding of fundamental spiritual values, but do we not suddenly get glimpses as we push forward of the wonderful fact, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine"? It seems as though our whole nature changes as we feel this. To look out from

the basis of unity with our Cause, in accordance with man's status in the first chapter of Genesis, really does change our "name" or nature as allotted to us by mortal education. We leave the mortal classification of ourselves and take on our God-given identity, which must have the nature of freedom, dominion, right activity - all the qualities associated with an infinitely good God or Principle.

Then, like Abraham, we are really ready to welcome the three angels who come to our tent door, as at this point they came to Abraham and reiterated the promise of a son through Sarah. We recognize the infinite Cause to be in itself threefold, - Father, Mother, and Son, or, in other words, to have the essential nature of creativeness, conceptiveness, and factual form. And whatever the Cause is, so must man be.

In any undertaking in life the mental and spiritual quality of creativeness, initiative, or fatherhood is available to every man in an individual way. Likewise the quality of motherhood, or the ability to care for and protect any right idea that is born to one. And in turn the idea itself must be an eternal spiritual fact being brought to light in the way in which it can be understood.

Whenever man exercises his right to express creative ability, conceptive mothering ability, and the conviction of the irresistible nature of the fact behind the idea which he would bring forth, then indeed is birth natural and safe.

And so, after the final fading out of Lot, and Abraham's experience with Abimelech the Philistine king, Isaac, the true seed, is born of the pure union of Abraham and Sarah.

A Right Sense of Sacrifice

Isaac grows, and there comes the time when the son of the bondwoman and the son of the freewoman can no longer dwell together and God tells Abraham to cast out Ishmael. This is inevitable in every spiritual journey. Human expedients serve their purpose, but as the pure spiritual conception grows, the time comes when we are compelled to relinquish them. Abraham was reluctant to do so, for he was fond of Ishmael, but there is a law of progress which never forces us to let go of any experience until a more real and substantial form of that experience is already present with us, if we did but recognize it. Jesus could lay down his human sense of life only because he had already seen what true life really is.

In the very next incident in Abraham's journey, we find him so keen on this sense of sacrifice that he sincerely believes it to be the divine

will that he shall sacrifice even his very own son, the rightful heir. But he is not allowed to do so. Instead of his son being the sacrificial victim, Abraham is given a ram caught in a thicket. Religious zeal would tend to make us think that we must give up the present fruit of our spiritual idealism, which may be very dear to us and very right for us to have. It is not *that* which we have to give up, but rather a sense of sin and guilt and self-condemnation (a ram was used as a guilt or trespass offering). This sense would keep us tangled up in finite and limited views of all things, and prevent us from naturally and joyfully accepting abundant blessings resulting from our spiritual vision.

Preserving True Values

There is a lovely conclusion to this story of Abraham. It ends with three incidents which have a common denominator. There is Abraham's attempt to sacrifice Isaac, the burial of Sarah, and Abraham sending his servant to find a bride for Isaac. These incidents are all connected with preservation and perpetuation, and when taken in detail paint a wonderful picture of how the Principle of being in its nature as Love takes care of the present, the past, and the future.

Abraham was not allowed to sacrifice Isaac, the present outcome of his ideal, even though he was willing to do so. At the same time Sarah, his ideal, was becoming outmoded to him and was passing away. The symbol of our ideal changes as we go on our journey, but even as Abraham built a perpetual memorial to Sarah, so need we to remember that that symbol served its purpose in the past and cannot be tossed aside carelessly and looked upon as wasted. Its lessons remain. In the final incident of sending his servant to find a bride for Isaac is shown the necessity of wedding the present symbol to ideals that are pure and lovely, and thus ensuring their unfettered development in the future.

Finally Abraham weds Keturah and then passes out of the picture. The symbol changes to another aspect of spiritual being in its ordered development.

A Rich Field

This saga is rich in detail and offers a truly rewarding field of study. We have but indicated its import and that only from one particular aspect. But any seeker anywhere can take this story of Abraham, and if he approaches it with spiritual sense and a deep desire to feel its

message, he will find that it speaks to him in his own way and that it will yield just what he needs to quicken his own spiritual journey here and now.

Isaac - Son of Promise

(Genesis 17:19 - 35:29)

From Abraham to Joshua

THE THIRD THOUSAND YEARS of the Bible record is rich in the history of individuals, great patriarchs and leaders, whose stories are familiar to multitudes. But let us take this period and lift it out of the history of individuals into picture-lessons applicable to every man.

What then do we find? A very wonderful portrayal of the essential elements of man's true identity through the illustrations of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the children of Israel, Joseph, Moses, and Joshua. These are the great personalities of this period. According to the various lexicons the following is the significance of their names: Abraham - "father of a multitude"; Isaac - "laughter"; Jacob - "striver with God"; Israel - "ruling with God", and therefore the children of Israel stand for those who accept God's rule; Joseph - "increase, addition"; Moses - "drawer out" or "taken out of the water"; Joshua - "saviour."

Let us go a step further and ask ourselves, What do these mean to us today in living terms of idea?

Abraham stands for the quality of fidelity to a pure ideal as expressed by any individual in his life. Fidelity to a worth-while ideal is always the "father of a multitude" of blessings.

Isaac represents the happy and certain conviction that we are the "sons of God," as the apostle John declares. He typifies the status of the prodigal's brother as indicated in the words, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."

But a balanced manhood compels us not to neglect Jacob. His struggles show the necessity of utilizing spiritual strength to face up to and grapple with all the odious characteristics of the carnal mind which would try to besmear man's God-given identity. Jacob is the contender, the fighter.

How necessary one feels Isaac to be as a link between Abraham and Jacob, as we shall see.

And then there are the children of Israel, later becoming the twelve tribes of Israel. Taken in detail and as a whole, they illustrate the inescapable workings of a spiritual Principle, causing every man to forsake a material concept of being and accept the rule and government of divine power.

Joseph is another essential constituent of true identity. Jacob's blessing on him gives the womanhood sense. The fact that his name

means "increase" or "addition" emphasizes the capacity of true womanhood to accept every experience as a blessing and so quietly translate it into something that enriches and increases. All men, whether male or female, need that womanhood which can discern the good and the loveliness in every situation and thus let every experience enrich them.

But they also need true manhood. And so Moses is necessary - the great symbol of moral courage and leadership. He was called Moses because he was "drawn out of the water," and his mission was to draw the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. Release from bondage can never be accomplished through any watery, wishy-washy characteristics. And when a situation calls for bold action and moral courage, "Moses" is needed.

And yet we also must give room to "Joshua" - "saviour." Joshua seems to stand for that motherhood quality which discerns the good in every individuality, and by fostering this, obtains unity and true relationship.

As one studies these characters, typifying essentials of man's identity, one sees how vital they are to one another and how they balance each other. Remembering that this third thousand years in the Bible corresponds to the third day of creation, when the dry land of certainty and safety is apparent and is fruitful, one can see that there is no certainty nor safety, no assured fruitfulness in man's experience, without a balanced and intelligent use of these divine, ever-present qualities.

The Place of Isaac

When we think of the stories of the patriarchs of this particular period, maybe we consider Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Joshua, but the character of Isaac does not stand out so much to us. One perhaps may recall him as the fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham that he should have an heir out of his own loins, or as the much loved son whom Abraham nearly sacrificed. But little heed is generally given to him as revealing a wonderful aspect of man's true identity. And yet the prophets and the New Testament writers always refer to the one God as "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," which leads one to suppose that Isaac plays a fundamental part in the characterization of spiritual being.

Coming as he does between Abraham and Jacob, Isaac presents a marked and helpful contrast. He took no long journeys like Abraham,

he had no mighty struggles like Jacob; rather did he have everything done for him. He accepted his position of sonship and of being the rightful heir in a natural, calm way.

Men need "Isaac." To be always concentrating on fidelity, pushing forward, come what may, with grim determination, or alternatively always striving and struggling with the discords that seem to stand in one's path, presents a wearying proposition - all "Abrahams" and "Jacobs," but no "Isaac," whose name means "laughter." Sometimes, when the journey seems hard and the struggle severe, we need to pause and give time to cultivating "Isaac" - the satisfying, peaceful fact of man's inseparable unity with his divine Cause, man's divine sonship. This brings a sense of certainty and calm, so that joy and true laughter are the inevitable outcome.

Everywhere one finds a need for that happy sense. Uncertainty and doubt bring depression and sadness, but the certainty that comes from spiritual sense, declaring of man's true identity, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine," brings joy and happiness. True, it needs "Abraham," "Jacob," "Joseph," and so forth to maintain this attitude, and these other aspects of being require to be emphasized in certain situations, but "Isaac" is also an important factor in the balanced reflection of all that these symbols illustrate to us of life. In modern vein, Sir Winston Churchill is reported to have said that one cannot deal with the most serious things without also understanding the most amusing.

There is no place today for gloomy religionists and "miserable sinners." The negative outlook of climbing up to God from the "fallen man" position must surely give way to the "new man" whom Paul pleads for, "the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." There are many evidences that a sad and dreary sense of spiritual things is changing. And it certainly should. One learns of the early Christians that one of the things characterizing them was their happiness and joy. And one reads over and over again in the Scriptures passages such as "The joy of the Lord is your strength," and "In thy presence is fulness of joy." Moreover, when Jesus came presenting such a complete sense of man fully equipped with the power of his divine Cause, the angel announced this coming with the words, "I bring you good tidings of great joy."

The Birth of Isaac

Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah as the "son of promise" when Sarah was "past bearing." At his birth Sarah declared, "God hath made

me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me." The natural fruit of a spiritual idealism eventually comes to every seeker, and the story of Abraham illustrates the misconceptions of being that have to be seen through before this "new birth" can take place. When man becomes conscious of the fact that he and his divine Cause are inseparable, and Lot, Egypt, and all that they stand for pale into insignificance, then he is equipped with natural spiritual power and Isaac is born - the realization of divine sonship becomes apparent, and joy and happiness is the inevitable outcome.

The Rightful Heir

Now, Abraham, doubting the promise of a son out of his own loins, had previously taken the bondwoman, Hagar, to wife. Hagar had borne him Ishmael. But as Isaac grew and became of age, the command came to cast out the bondwoman and her son. As the sense of divine sonship is weaned and becomes "of age," man finds in his life experience, or in any particular problem he may be working through, that he no longer needs a temporary human expedient. If he adheres to a pure spiritual idealism, it ultimately brings forth a conception of life that is altogether satisfying and all-inclusive, and he needs no lesser reliance.

It is interesting that Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians draws the comparison between the son of the bondwoman and the son of the freewoman, comparing them to the difference between law and grace. In summing up he says, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." This is the whole message of the new man as presented by Jesus in the New Testament. It is the "Blessed are ye" superseding the "Thou shalt not." In the Old Testament Isaac represents the first small glimpse of this fact.

The Attempted Sacrifice of Isaac

As Isaac grows, the next incident we read of in connection with him is the well-known story of Abraham attempting to sacrifice his son, believing it to be God's will. There sometimes comes a period when fidelity, amounting to an over-conscientiousness, would try and sacrifice the laughter, the joy, and the happy contentment resulting from a quiet conviction of sonship or oneness with man's divine Cause. A real enlightened spiritual understanding eventually shows the fallacy of this.

All that has to be sacrificed is the ram caught in the thicket - a sense of guilt and sin. (A ram was used as a guilt offering.)

A Bride for Isaac

The time comes when this sense of sonship must be wedded to an ideal, and so, in the story, we read that after Sarah's death, Abraham sends his servant out to find a bride for Isaac.

It is an interesting point that Isaac is usually found to be operating either in connection with Abraham or with his own wife, Rebekah - seldom alone. This indicates that at this point in the unfoldment of spiritual understanding, this happy sense of sonship with our divine Cause must have behind it that fidelity which operates in human experience as the determination to seek the spiritual, come what may, and a firm adherence to a spiritual ideal that in its very essence is practical and "down to earth" in the true way, - a characteristic which Rebekah expresses.

Abraham sends his servant back to his own kindred to find a bride for Isaac, but he will not let his son go back there in person. May this not mean that this new-found, happy sense of sonship cannot go back to the old sense of things and wed itself to an outgrown ideal, but nevertheless something that is familiar and natural to its background is brought up to its level? To take a practical example: there is a story of a woman who gave much promise as a writer. She also loved spiritual truth. There came a point when she might have had a career as a writer, but by this time her sense of the spiritual was so certain and brought her such great joy and happiness that she could not return to wed herself to the ideal of just writing, worthwhile as it was. But that ideal was brought forward to the level of her new-found experience and she used her pen to spread the understanding of spiritual fact.

Throughout this story of seeking a bride, there are two facts which stand out. Firstly, the wonderful single-mindedness and obedience of Abraham's servant, and secondly, the quality of thought symbolized by Rebekah, the expression of which identified to the servant that she was the right ideal for Isaac.

The servant was told that the damsel who came to the well, and in response to his request for water, would say, "Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also," was the one whom he should take as a bride for his master's son. This pure ideal would not only refresh or inspire the high sense of manhood as symbolized by the servant, but also the ten camels that accompanied him, - the lesser manifestation. In the Bible

the number "ten" is used as a symbol of the application of spiritual fact in human experience. It apparently originated with the ten fingers which touch and handle things, and thus it came to mean the present tangibility of spiritual fact to every level of thought. It is significant that this servant had *ten* camels, and that the pure ideal he was to find for Isaac not only had to refresh him but also had to take care of the ten camels - the application of spiritual fact in human experience.

It is said that when Rebekah was brought back to Isaac, he took her into his mother Sarah's tent and "was comforted after his mother's death." Such an ideal always brings a feeling of comfort, because it covers our need for continual spiritual refreshment and also our desire to see the power of spiritual fact demonstrated in human experience.

Isaac's Sons

Isaac is thus wedded and has two sons, Jacob and Esau. From this point the story changes and we follow Jacob through his difficulties with Esau and his consequent struggles. Isaac, this happy sense of sonship, as we have seen, must always be accompanied by other graces of Spirit. Abraham has now passed out of the picture, and it is Rebekah, the practical ideal, and Jacob, the striver, who take the stage. If it were not for these qualities, our "Isaac" could lapse into mere complacency. But there is a warfare to be fought, and Jacob reminds us of this.

Isaac with the Philistines

Isaac does lapse, however, and Genesis 26 tells us of this lapse. In a time of famine he goes to sojourn with Abimelech, the Philistine king, and there, as Abraham did before him, he calls his wife his sister.

Abimelech stands for human knowledge, human ways and means, and Isaac looks to those in time of famine. This leads him to take his ideal lightly and falsify his relationship to it. And it does the same in our experience. We stand the chance of temporarily losing our practical spiritual ideal when we turn to human knowledge, human ways and means. But reason, an active faculty of the human mind, saves us, even as Abimelech was the means of saving Isaac. And our sense of sonship and its richness returns to us.

Isaac then became prosperous and dwelt in the land of the Philistines for a while, and it was there, after this experience with Abimelech, that

he dug three wells, calling them respectively Esek (*contention*), Sitnah (*hatred*), and Rehoboth (*enlargement*). May not the digging of these wells correspond to our search for spiritual inspiration? When we are awakened from the mistake of turning to human knowledge and methods in time of famine of any type, at first it does not always seem easy to gain inspiration. The human element struggles against it, even as the Philistine herdmen contended with the diggers of the well. This human element resists it and even seems to hate it. But eventually, when we are willing to let go of limited, stereotyped and rigid thinking and open our thought to unlimited possibilities, inspiration flows and there is no strife. It is letting this enlargement of thought take place that eventually brings inspiration and peace. Then we can make a covenant with Abimelech as Isaac did; that is, a right relationship is established between spiritual sense and the human picture.

Isaac's Blessing

The next and last time Isaac figures in the Bible story is when he blesses Jacob in mistake for Esau, the elder twin. Isaac's blessing went to the son who should have had it, in spite of his desire to bless the Esau, the venison-bringer, the symbol of pleasure in the senses. Here it was Rebekah - practical idealism - and Jacob - the alert, active, willing-to-work element - who took charge of the situation. Again one learns from this incident that Isaac - the happiness, the laughter, and the joy - must also be accompanied by practical idealism and the willingness to work and face up to things, or it stands the danger of drifting into furthering the merely physical.

It is interesting that after this incident Isaac, impelled by Rebekah, sends Jacob away to Rebekah's people to find a bride. The value of Rebekah and her kindred, illustrating practical idealism, is emphasized here, and it is not until that wedding has taken place and Jacob has intelligently resolved the division between Esau and himself that Isaac passes out of the picture.

Many of the Bible commentaries speak of Isaac as a link to join the stories of Abraham and Jacob. A link is vital in any chain, and here one realizes that the happy sense of sonship which is Isaac's positive contribution in the chain of spiritual unfoldment, brings an indispensable comfort and assurance at this point. But let us remember that manhood is essentially a balanced proposition, and that *all* the constituents of true identity as set forth in this third thousand years of Bible history are vital. Each of us individually must and can "put on the

whole armour of God." It is our birthright, and Jesus voiced the present possibility of this when he commanded, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Jacob - the Spiritual Striver

(Genesis 25:19 - 49:33)

The Bible Re-interpreted

TODAY the Bible is being regarded increasingly as a symbolic presentation of eternal truths disguised as people, places, and things. Less and less do spiritual thinkers take its stories as mere records of historical incidents. Writers like Maurice Nicoll, for instance, in his books *The New Man* and *The Mark* interpret people and events in the Scriptures in living terms of every man's mental and spiritual journey.

As one looks deeper, however, one finds even more than this. One discerns that the Bible contains a definite *pattern* of spiritual idealism, an essentially ordered way. This is infinite in variety, though based on unchangeable common denominators, just as music is vast in its scope though based on seven notes and the few functions of tone, rhythm, melody, and harmony.

The Bible opens by presenting in ordered sequence seven great spiritual fundamentals, symbolized as "days of creation." Then, through the medium of clearly defined periods of history, each consisting of one thousand years, it shows by means of people, things, and historical events the working out of these fundamentals in every man's experience. It thus fulfils Peter's statement that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years. (See II Peter 3:8.)

In previous articles we have taken the first two thousand years of Bible history and the beginning of the third, and considered how they show the living operation of the first three days of creation, - the great fundamentals of being symbolized by the light, the firmament, and the dry land.

In the third thousand years, illustrating the appearing of the dry land, - definite spiritual identity, - we are seeing the various mental and spiritual qualities necessary to manifest this identity. First Abraham - a symbol of fidelity; next Isaac - a symbol of happiness and assurance; and now Jacob - the spiritual striver.

A Story of Contrasts

When we think of the patriarch Jacob, two familiar pictures usually spring to mind. The one is of Jacob's dream, where he saw the ladder reaching from earth to heaven with angels ascending and descending

upon it. The other is of Jacob's struggle, when he wrestled all night with an angel and as a result his name was changed from Jacob to Israel, "a prince of God."

These incidents, taken together, give the key to the whole import of the Jacob story. Jacob, as a character, symbolizes the great contrasts in man's experience, the two ends of the ladder - earth and heaven. And his life story illustrates the warfare each man must undertake in order to resolve this dual concept of existence.

All through this narrative we are presented with contrasts, with a twofold sense of things which has to be resolved. Jacob is born a *twin*. His uncle Lagan, to whom he flees in time of trouble, has *two* daughters, who become Jacob's *two* wives. He also weds their *two* handmaidens. Again and again the symbol of "*two*" appears, and confirms this theme of the warfare between man's fundamental spiritual nature and the carnal mind's lie about him.

The True Supplanter

As we find our way through the Old Testament, though, there is a recurring pattern from which we can derive comfort. This focuses in the story of Jacob and Esau. Although twins, Esau - a symbol of the material - emerges first from Rebekah's womb, and Jacob - a symbol of the spiritual - second. Esau is the elder, therefore, and the promise to their mother before they are born is that "two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." This is the recurring pattern. Always the younger child is the symbol of the spiritual and becomes the superior, taking on the status of the "firstborn."

What does this imply in man's experience? That which appears to every one of us to be the elder in our make-up and to have been with us the longer is so often the material sense of existence. The Cains and the Esaus claim to have the place of "firstborn" with us. Happily the Bible record shows that this is not a permanent state of affairs. Our new-born spiritual sense, which may seem younger and less familiar to us, eventually takes its rightful place as the fundamental reality of our being, and it is fruitful and governs the material concept. This transition seldom takes place without a struggle. Hence the necessity of Jacob, whose name means "striver with God" and also "supplanter," illustrating the supplanting of the material outlook by the spiritual.

Right from the outset, Jacob exemplifies the tackling of this argument

of the devil that man's primal nature is material. As the boys came out of the womb it is related of Jacob that "his hand took hold on Esau's heel." Our sense of spiritual good may be a "babe," but the determination to grapple with the merely material concept of life inevitably strengthens that babe until its dominion is natural and no longer a struggle.

The next step in our warfare with the flesh is to put first things first. We read in Genesis 25 that Esau comes in faint from the field and demands from Jacob some of his "red pottage" to sustain him. The latter seizes the opportunity to grant this sustenance in exchange for the birthright, and the deal is made.

The material sense of existence gets weary and faint from its unsatisfied chasing of unsubstantial matter. In its weariness it turns to the spiritual element for relief. And its need is met, but quite naturally in exchange for the acknowledgment of the superiority of the spiritual, its identity as "firstborn," - its right to first place in man's trust and affections. Sooner or later the physical has to hand over its sense of initiative and dominion to the spiritual element, because the spiritual *is* the First Cause, the supreme power in the universe.

The birthright carried with it a blessing, which was bestowed on the firstborn by the father. In this instance Isaac, with eyes that are dim, sets out to bless Esau. But Rebekah, overhearing Isaac's intention, determines that Jacob shall be the recipient of the blessing instead, for she recognizes his worth. She therefore disguises Jacob as Esau and, thus deceived, Isaac pronounces the blessing on Jacob.

Here it appears that questionable means are used to forward the interests of the spiritual. But may we not draw this parallel in human experience? If we have an alert motherhood sense which values and loves the spiritual and sees its wonderful possibilities, we at all costs promote it. Sometimes we may not know enough to do it graciously and harmlessly and as a consequence we are forced to flee from the ferment that our immature grapplings produce, even as Jacob is forced to flee from the wrath of Esau. But we have established something in the right direction. In our early zeal we are sometimes tempted into trusting material methods for the promotion of spiritual ends, but if our desire is sincere, then it is taken care of ultimately.

Jacob's Ladder

And so Jacob flees to Lagan, but on his way, when the sun is set, he comes to a certain place and remains there all night. He takes of the

stones of that place and makes them into a pillow and rests. As he rests, he sees a ladder reaching up to heaven and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. He discerns the wonderful fact of the correspondence of the divine with the human.

Often when the "sun is set" in man's experience, - there is no fresh revelation coming through, - it is wise to "take of the stones of the place" where we are, - the spiritual facts that are tangible to us and which are within our reach. If we rest on them, we inevitably begin to feel the power of God both lifting us up to fresh revelation and also showing us the right footsteps to take humanly.

When Jacob saw this vision, he said, "Surely God is in this place, and I knew it not." We often have the sense that the divine power is present in a church or when we are with spiritual thinkers or even alone with our uplifted thoughts, but that our everyday life is divorced from this power. We therefore try to gain good through material ways. We soon see our mistake and begin to recognize that the divine Principle of being is present and available to us in *every* phase of human experience, for there can be nothing outside of infinity. When we fully realize this, the conflict between the human and the divine begins to be resolved.

"Faithful over a Few Things"

And so Jacob goes on his way until he comes to his uncle Lagan's house. Lagan has two daughters, Leah and Rachel. Again, Leah the elder, seems to symbolize the merely human good, whilst Rachel, the younger, a spiritual idealism. Jacob falls in love with Rachel and agrees to serve Lagan seven years for her hand. At the end of this period he is given Leah instead, and is forced to serve another seven years for Rachel.

Who would not want, like Jacob, to be wedded to the spiritual ideal, - a state of understanding that has dominion and is at peace? We are often willing to work for it to the exclusion of all else, but we have to learn also that we cannot side-step the working out of human existence. We must allow our spiritual idealism to transform our daily lives. No one can jump into a sense of glorified being, and Jacob's "go-getting" nature is tempered by his experiences with Lagan. He learns that there is an ordered way of Life, and that being "faithful over a few things" inevitably makes us "ruler over many."

As we become aware of the fact that there is an ordered way and that spiritual unfoldment is not a haphazard journey, our thought becomes receptive to an understanding of what constitutes this ordered way. And

so it is logical that at this point in the story Jacob's wives, Leah and Rachel, give birth to twelve sons, for when their purpose as Scriptural symbols is considered, the order of their birth clearly presents the ordered unfoldment of spiritual idealism in human experience.

Jacob's Struggle

It is when Jacob leaves Lagan and is on his way to meet Esau again that he goes through the tremendous struggle at Peniel. Here he is alone, wrestling all night with an angel until the breaking of the day. As the light dawns, the angel is prepared to end the encounter, but Jacob protests, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." He sees, through great warfare (as many men have done), that the breaking of the light must be accompanied by a corresponding change of name or nature, or it is not "the *light of the world*." And so his name is changed from Jacob, "striver with God," to Israel, "a prince of God."

And the angel at Peniel now declares, "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men." Not only must we be conscious of the dominion that the spiritual gives us, but this must also be demonstrated "with men," - in the realm of human experience as well. It was only because of this that Jacob could meet Esau fearlessly face to face on a new basis, and have such a meeting result in blessing.

The vital point about this whole illustration of Jacob is that we can only solve the problem of the relationship between the human and the divine in the proportion that we recognize the fact that there is only *one* fundamental reality, - the divine. So long as human problems sit heavily on us, or we are frightened of them or antagonistic towards them, then the material and finite is obviously still a very real factor to us. When Jacob met Esau again, he said that he saw his brother's face "as though I had seen the face of God." May not this statement mean that we eventually shall see that spiritual fact lies behind every phenomenon and that the only reality of that phenomenon is the spiritual? True spiritual sense can gaze fearlessly and lovingly on every situation and translate it or reverse it to yield a blessing, for it sees through appearances to the fundamental spiritual fact, which is always good.

Translating Every Situation into a Blessing

It is interesting that the last picture given of Jacob is where he is reunited to his favourite son in Egypt at the time of famine. The Jacob

symbol of wrestling meets the Joseph symbol of true translation and it is this latter process which we now begin to use more consciously.

Before Jacob leaves the scene, he pronounces blessings on all his twelve sons. Our wrestlings lead us to see the place and purpose of each stage in man's spiritual journey as represented by these sons, and the blessing of each stage. This discernment never operates until we are willing to deal with the human picture through realizing that spiritual reality alone is fundamental. We cannot discern the clear-cut way of Life when thought is befogged by belief in Spirit and matter as equal realities.

And so the Jacob saga with its working out of "double-mindedness" merges naturally into the wonderful story of Joseph, with its message of how to turn every adverse circumstance into a blessing. Thus the Bible story leads us on from stage to stage logically, simply, and irresistibly.

The Twelve Tribes of Israel

(Genesis 29:31 - 30:24, 35:16 - 20, 49:1 - 33)

MANY THEORIES, including the well-known Anglo-Israelite theory, have arisen about the twelve tribes of Israel, but the aspect which surely concerns us most is that of their relevance to the lives of every man and woman.

One might ask, What have Israelitish tribes to do with my life? The answer is, Nothing - as tribes. But as symbols of states of thought they form an amazing pattern which teems with life and purpose.

In this article we shall confine ourselves to one phase of this pattern, and that is the tremendous significance to every individual of the order of their birth.

These tribes developed from the twelve sons of Jacob, eleven of whom were born to him during his sojourn with Laban. This period with Laban symbolizes experiences we all go through in order for our idealism to become practical. We see that we cannot invade the kingdom of heaven, and begin to realize that there is an ordered way. So it is natural at this point that the birth of these sons, as recorded in Genesis, Chapters 29 and 30, should present a wonderfully ordered unfoldment of every man's spiritual journey.

Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah: Man Awakens

Jacob was wedded to Rachel and Leah, Rachel typifying spiritual idealism and Leah merely human good. Jacob loved Rachel, but it sometimes seems as though our spiritual ideal does not always bring forth at once. The merely human good claims to be more fruitful, and so it is Leah who first gives birth. She calls her firstborn *Reuben*. His name means "See, a son." It is as if the human proposition is saying to us, "I am fruitful, I can bring forth fruit for you." In the prophetic blessings on his twelve sons before he dies Jacob accuses Reuben of defiling his father's bed. This is what the human claims to do. It claims to be the "father" of all our experiences, until we wake up to see that all origin is in a divine Cause.

But "Leah" goes on bringing forth, trying to make herself attractive. And so *Simeon* is born. Simeon means "hearing." The human picture ingratiate itself with us through custom and education - just hearing and accepting popular belief. Nothing much is recorded of Simeon acting on his own. This is natural, for being merely a hearer never gets

man anywhere. The apostle James said of spiritual education, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only."

The trouble with just being a hearer is that that state of consciousness so often leads to joining up with a more dominant power, and this is what happens to Simeon. He is always associated with *Levi*, the next son to be born to Leah. Levi means "joined." It was from the tribe of Levi that the priesthood came. Does not priesthood claim to join man to God and thus fool many "hearers"? Jesus, on the other hand, said that "the kingdom of God is within you," and therefore every man is irresistibly joined to God direct, not needing any intermediary. The priesthood gradually drifted into a form of ecclesiastical despotism, and so often when that happens with us we wake up!

Here the human yields to disclose *Judah*, the next son. Jesus was descended from the line of Judah - he was "the lion of the tribe of Judah." At this point there dawns a spiritual understanding of God and man. When Judah is born, it is the first time Leah speaks of God, and it also says that then she "left bearing."

From Reuben to Judah, then, a picture of mortals in their initial search for God is clearly portrayed. The human level claims to be a creator - not only of mankind but of all our experiences. We become hearers of every theory and join ourselves to something that we believe will carry us to God, until the seed of true spiritual sense that is within every man asserts itself - "Judah" is born. Our experiences lead us to the point where we open our thought to the possibility of individually understanding spiritual Truth. Jesus' declaration rings true for *every* individual, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." No one has to know it for us. We are all capable of knowing it for ourselves.

As in all Bible interpretation, one can also take the purely positive aspect of these births. A true idea of God is born (Reuben), we listen and hear the divine message (Simeon), we find ourselves joined to its eternal Principle (Levi), and a Christlike understanding comes to light (Judah).

Dan, Naphtali, Gad: Man Overcomes and Progresses

After Judah is born, our spiritual ideal, Rachel, begins to become active, and her handmaid, Bilhah, brings forth *Dan*. Dan means "judgment," and is used in the Bible to symbolize the activities of the carnal mind. Jacob calls him "an adder in the path." It is as if our many troubled experiences (Bilhah = "troubled") compel us to see that there

is a carnal mind, the old serpent, to be dealt with, before our spiritual idealism can really be fruitful and yield to us the dominion that Jesus had.

To deal with this serpent whom Jesus called a "liar" may initially mean many wrestlings between our newly awakened spiritual sense and the insistent human picture, even as Rachel at this point wrestled with Leah. And so the next son born to Bilhah is *Naphtali*, whose name means "wrestling."

Through our wrestlings we begin to prove that the spiritual alone is real, so that the merely human proposition yields to a sense of spiritual progress. And the son born at this point is *Gad*, whose name means "a troop." Our experiences show us over and over again that once we awaken to the fact that there is a claim of a serpent to be handled and we resolve to take up the challenge to deal with it, our wrestlings lead us to a great measure of spiritual progress. It is said at the birth of Gad, "A troop cometh."

Asher, Issachar, Zebulon: Man Bears Fruit from God

And inevitably the next son is born, *Asher* ("happy"). Jacob said of him that "his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties." It would seem at this point that true spiritual progress enriches us and blesses us through bringing into our lives great fruitfulness in health, substance, and dominion. It is an interesting fact that Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, brings forth the latter two sons, for her name is associated with bitterness. So often we allow the bitter experience of the human picture to force us to spiritual progress and fruitage, when we could all come the positive way if we would and not the way of suffering.

Asher seems to be the stage of development when we have to be very alert and awake. Jesus was always instant about this particular phase. When we are yielding "royal dainties," or spiritual understanding is bringing forth fruit, we need to watch that the false creative sense - believing that we ourselves are originators or creators - does not reassert itself. Jesus always insisted on the fact that "I do nothing of myself ... the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

Reuben re-enters the story at this point and brings mandrakes or "love-apples" to Leah. These were meant to promote conception. If we in any way believe that spiritual fruitage is the result of our own efforts, we are back where we started, - giving power to the merely human proposition, and the outcome of it will be *Issachar*, the next son. Issachar means "hire," for Rachel had hired her husband to Leah

in exchange for the mandrakes. And so our ideal becomes temporarily defiled in our thought, with the result that we become burdened with a false weight of responsibility. Jacob said of Issachar that he was "a strong ass couching down between two burdens." He "bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute." How like us that is when we take on the onus of spiritual fruitage ourselves, instead of granting it all to a divine source!

Because we are dwelling in the lower human realm and have temporarily laid aside our pure ideal, we drift into *Zebulon*, whose name means "dwelling." Of Zebulon Jacob said he should be "an haven of ships." With the false "Issachar" ruling, the tendency is to take in every kind of "foreign ship" carrying "foreign goods," for we have temporarily allowed the standard of one supreme power to lapse.

How different this sequence from Asher to Zebulon can be when seen in the positive light! When we reckon all spiritual fruitage as coming from God (Asher) then we are able to bear any burden, for it is never seen as *our* responsibility, but God's (Issachar). Jesus exemplified this when he said, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." And inevitably we become a true "haven of ships," able to give shelter and rest to all who come our way (Zebulon). Jesus' "Zebulon" was "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Joseph and Benjamin: Man Finds God as All-in-all

Salvation is always irresistible, because there can only be one fundamental Truth, to which sooner or later every man must awaken. And so the climax of this spiritual journey begins to appear.

Dinah, the female of "Dan," has to be dealt with at this point. She is Leah's last attempt at conception. Dinah symbolizes the erroneous female sense in every mortal which would masquerade as a false sense of fulfilment of the human personality rather than fulfilment of the divine.

This makes room for our spiritual ideal to bring forth, and finally Rachel for the first time conceives. She bears *Joseph*, a wonderful symbol of true womanhood. His name means "adding," and there is no end to the increase that can come to all of us when our spiritual ideal brings forth freely and effortlessly. The blessing on Joseph which Jacob pronounces is very lovely. He says that Joseph is "a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall": and the whole blessing teems with the sense of true womanhood and motherhood.

It is at this point that Jacob leaves Laban. It was not until after he had met Esau, Dinah had been exposed, and Jacob had returned to Bethel that Rachel gave birth to the last son, *Benjamin*. At his birth Rachel died, and she called him "Ben-oni," "son of sorrow," but his father called him "Benjamin," "son of my right hand." This particular phase of the spiritual ideal has fulfilled itself, and now "the right hand" of God fills the picture. May not Rachel's death symbolize that at this stage man fully realizes that the mothering and tending of his own true selfhood, or indeed of any activity, belongs to God alone? The divine Cause *is* the only power and will ultimately be recognized as such.

The Message of the "Twelve"

And so this twelve-fold cycle has a very pertinent message for us. Here it is instanced by the twelve tribes. Later and on a higher level it is illustrated by the twelve disciples. The number "twelve" of itself means nothing, but it is said that its use by ancient writers was derived from the twelve signs of the Zodiac which were believed to control the affairs of men. In the Bible it seems to illustrate the ordered workings of spiritual fact in man's experience.

Does not this particular instance that we have taken offer a unique guide to spiritual development? Firstly it shows that the forever facts of spiritual reality are continually awakening man's spiritual sense; then, his divine nature aroused, he inevitably begins to deal with the carnal mind and progress spiritually; the outcome of this is abundant fruitage and blessing; and finally he learns that the divine Power is All-in-all.

This symbol of the twelve tribes has been but lightly touched upon here. As, with spiritual sense, one quietly ponders its detail and enlargement, it yields rich treasures, for the purpose of all these Biblical symbols is a spiritual one. They are alive and vital today if we have eyes to see.

No wonder the twelve foundations of the city of God in Revelation were "garnished with all manner of precious stones."

Joseph - From Dreamer to Ruler over Egypt

(Genesis 37:1 - 41:45)

THE STORY OF JOSEPH is colourful and simple - a story to be told to children. Yet, as so often with a simple tale, the good depth-bomb charge it can release in the sleepy waters of complacent, stereotyped thinking is astounding.

In the main, Joseph typifies spiritual idealism, with the emphasis on the quality of womanhood. Jacob's final blessing on Joseph (given in Chapter 49 of Genesis) accentuated the womanhood qualities of love, patience, endurance, and fruitfulness. And as we read of Joseph's career, listening for the underlying practical message of its symbolism, we can see that it illustrates how spiritual idealism inevitably proves itself step by step in human experience until it reigns supreme, even as Joseph became ruler over Egypt. But the process is not vague nor mysterious. It is lawful, ordered, and clear in every detail.

Up to this point in the Old Testament, Egypt has figured little, but here the whole story is concerned with how to deal with Egypt, the material sense of existence with which we all find ourselves surrounded. Joseph sold into Egypt and working his way through to dominion presents an amazing pattern of the ordered spiritual translation of material living and thinking.

Joseph the Dreamer

Let us go to the beginning of the story in Genesis, Chapter 37. It relates that Joseph was Jacob's favourite son, to whom he gave a coat of many colours. In the Scriptures the clothes of an individual often symbolize his state of thought. For instance, Jesus wore a seamless robe, and in the Apocalypse the woman was "clothed with the sun" and the harlot "arrayed in purple and scarlet colour." This many-hued garment given to Joseph may signify an understanding of God's perfect nature, in the same way as the seven-hued rainbow in the story of Noah emphasized the protecting power of God's perfect nature, promising salvation from further floods. ("Seven" in the Bible was always a number signifying perfection or completeness.)

At the outset, though, this spiritual understanding is not yet seen as practical. Joseph was a dreamer. Two of his dreams are related. In one, he and his brothers were binding sheaves in the field and all his brothers' sheaves bowed down to his sheaf. In the other, the sun and

the moon and the eleven stars bowed down to Joseph. Do not both these dreams indicate that spiritual idealism is superior to all else? But, as Joseph's experiences go on to illustrate, that idealism is not a dreamy absentmindedness and a love of abstract metaphysical truths. It involves vision above all, but the true vision that includes alertness, intelligence, and active obedience to spiritual laws.

Joseph's brethren were jealous of him and his dreams. What a true picture that is of many a man's experience! He may have a vision, see the supremacy and power of the spiritual and what it can accomplish. Then less worthy considerations which claim to have grown up alongside and been the elder (even as Joseph's brethren) seem almost jealous of this spiritual light and determine to wipe it out. Unless man is exercising real intelligence and alertness, these considerations may gain a temporary victory. But always it is merely temporary. The spiritual is the reality and finally nothing can obscure it.

But Joseph was not alert at this point. The text says that he was "wandering in the field." If spiritual idealism just wanders and is not definite and active, it is inevitably "sold into Egypt," as he was. Just as the brothers stripped Joseph of his coat, dipped it in the blood of an animal and took it home to Jacob to fool him that his son had been killed, so these unworthy material considerations would attempt to rob man of his understanding of the spiritual, besmear it, and tell lies about it.

Joseph's Three Egyptian Experiences

Nothing, however, can quell spiritual idealism. Joseph thrives in his new surroundings, and through a chain of three experiences he at length becomes ruler over all Egypt. Those three experiences are, first, that he becomes overseer in the house of Potiphar; second, that he has a brief spell in prison; and third, that he is finally released from prison and brought to Pharaoh to interpret his dream.

These three instances symbolize clearly the workings of spiritual idealism in its relation to the three strata of life, - the physical, the moral, and the spiritual.

Overseer in Potiphar's House

First, Joseph worked for Potiphar, whose name means "an African bull," - physicality. Potiphar was captain of the guard, which one might

interpret as a symbol of the regimented nature of physical beliefs. It is very apt when one thinks of physical laws such as contagion. In a time of contagion, the human mind usually operates like soldiers bidden to obey a command unhesitatingly. Yet many, many instances could be cited of those who have taken an intelligent individual stand on a higher law against epidemics and have not fallen victims to them.

The story relates that Potiphar put *everything* under Joseph's control. "He made him overseer over his house ... he left all that he had in Joseph's hand." This illustrates the dominion which spiritual idealism begins to assume over physical beliefs. One has met many people who have become "rulers over Potiphar's house," - people who govern their bodies through understanding spiritual idealism. We are told that Potiphar did not have to think about anything connected with his house. Joseph did it all. Is not this a very pertinent illustration of Jesus' command, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on"? He said that our "heavenly Father" will take care of all these things for us. To-day we may think of that heavenly Father as the presence and availability of an omnipotent Mind or spiritual Principle, which, when accepted unreservedly and understood, is found to dominate the lesser realm of the physical.

Stripped of His Coat

The story goes on to tell how finally Joseph was fooled by Potiphar's wife, who wanted him to lie with her. He refused, but she "caught him by his coat" as he escaped from her clutches, and then used the coat as false evidence to accuse him of immorality. And so Joseph again lost his coat! And this time he was put in prison.

In the first instance when he was stripped of his coat of many colours, the lie was concerned with the physical, - that is, that a beast had devoured him. This is the lie mankind has to meet, namely, that animal nature or the physical is more powerful than spiritual idealism. It is the claim of the so-called laws of materia medica and physiology. But they are man-made and not fundamental, and can only temporarily rob man of a superficial sense of spiritual things, something he has not yet made his own. His fundamental spiritual identity is never touched. And so Joseph in Potiphar's house went on straightaway to prove the supremacy of spiritual idealism over physical beliefs.

In the latter instance of losing his coat the lie was concerned with the moral. It attempts to strip off man his Christ-like character, witness

against his fundamental purity, and so imprison him. But again man can lose only an outward veneer of goodness. His innate goodness is never defiled, although this lie claims that man's identity as the image and likeness of God can at the same time be sinful and fooled by material idealism (Potiphar's wife). It is the lying claim of false theology, that man, made in God's image, can fall and be a "miserable sinner."

Joseph in Prison

What does this claim do? It imprisons humanity. Men are fettered by this theory that man is a poor little mortal gaoled by self-condemnation, self-pity, inferiority, and hopelessness.

There are other prisoners in this prison too! The higher moral qualities, such as humanity, honesty, affection, hope, moral courage, are all prisoners as long as this pantheistic belief holds sway. They would try to operate unfettered and with power, but the belief that man is half good and half bad, half spiritual and half material, keeps them bound. True spiritual idealism declares that all sin is the carnal mind, the one liar, and never a part of man's true make-up. Sin does not belong to man as God's image any more than a mistake belongs to arithmetic. True, the mistake has to be corrected if the problem is to be solved, but it is always corrected from the realm of true values in which the mistake does not exist as an entity.

What is the effect of spiritual idealism in the realm of the moral? Let us turn back to the Bible story. As in Potiphar's house Joseph rose to rule it, so the same thing happens in the prison and "the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it." What a wonderful statement! When spiritual idealism governs moral values, hope no longer remains unfulfilled, joy uncertain, nor does affection turn to hatred. True morality, based on unchanging spiritual values, is free to accomplish all good.

This is further illustrated by the dreams which the king's butler and baker had whilst in prison with Joseph. The butler dreamed that he saw a vine with three branches bearing grapes, and he pressed the juice of the grapes into Pharaoh's cup. The baker, on the other hand, dreamed that he had three white baskets on his head and in the top one were bakemeats for Pharaoh, which the birds of the air were eating.

Joseph interpreted these dreams and said that the butler would be released from prison, but that the baker would lose his head. In the butler's case, surely the lesson is that if we take the natural wine of

divine inspiration and let it bless and inspire the human picture (symbolized here by pressing the juice into Pharaoh's cup), then we are never bound in a purely moral prison. We have risen out of this merely moral sense into an acknowledgment of the unchanging reality and power of the spiritual and its ability to refresh every lesser level.

On the other hand, if we are interested in merely making a good outward moral show, presenting to all the world appealing-looking "bakemeats" which we have made ourselves, - trying to appear personally sweet, personally attractive, and so on, - these have no basis, no natural root in the divine being, and so we can be robbed of them. Any preying immoral belief can carry these bakemeats off. They are so often of the head and not of the heart, even as the baker's baskets were carried on his head. To hold aloft an outward pretence of goodness dies in the prison of merely human morality. Drawing goodness from the divine ideal, the true vine, frees man and enables him to serve humanity in real ways.

Joseph as Interpreter Becomes Joseph the Ruler

It was through the butler that Joseph eventually came out of prison. Pharaoh had a dream and no one could interpret it, and the butler suddenly remembered Joseph and his ability to interpret such phenomena. So Joseph was brought out of prison and told the dream. It was of seven fatfleshed kine and seven leanfleshed kine who came out of the same river. And the seven lean kine ate up the seven fat kine. Then seven rank and full ears of corn and seven thin ears appeared to Pharaoh and the same thing happened: the thin ears ate up the full ears. Joseph foretold from this dream that there would be seven years of plenty in Egypt and then seven years of famine, and in those latter years all the plenty would be eaten up. He advised Pharaoh to appoint a man "discreet and wise," who could gather up all the food of the good years and store it against the lean years. Pharaoh agreed to this and promptly appointed Joseph as such a ruler.

A vital point arises from this story. What are these seven fat kine and seven lean kine, which emerge from the *same* river? The prophetic writers were familiar with the seven days of creation as symbols presenting the completeness of God's nature. In these days was expressed the allness and onliness of the infinite Being in seven vast fundamental categories. They realized that anything unlike this perfect spiritual creation was an exact lie or counterfeit of it. So here they presented the richness of the divine nature (the seven fat kine and the

seven full ears) and its exact counterfeit (the seven lean kine and the seven thin ears). The *same* river and the *same* earth give birth to them, for a counterfeit cannot be original. The carnal mind, from which all evil comes, is an imitator only and always. Paul says of the son of perdition, "he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

So here a most wonderful scientific fact is portrayed. Looking out on the world with unenlightened vision, the human mind sees the poverty-stricken and ill-favoured happenings destroying both physically and morally what it feels are the good and substantial values in human experience. It realizes that to look to its new god, physical science, is to look in vain. This god has already proved that it can be a god of unthinking and cruel operation. As here the thin ears of corn were "blasted with the east wind," so the misuses of physical science are "blasted" with the purpose of the anti-Christ.

But Joseph gives the remedy, namely, to store up the food of the seven plenteous years which will take care of the famine of the seven lean years. If men will have the foresight, the vision, and the love to give themselves to understanding the great fundamentals of spiritual being, they will be able to deal with their counterfeit, which comprises all the evil in human experience.

It is obvious today that we are dealing with mental forces. But the important point to be recognized is that we shall never find in the human mind the universal answer as to how to cope with the complex interplay of these mental forces. It is not personal minds we are dealing with. Paul says, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world." Therefore, the answer must lie in so culturing an understanding of the great Mind or spiritual Principle of the universe that such a consciousness automatically detects the negative, lying claims of its counterfeit and forestalls or obliterates them. It is in Bible language the "mind of Christ" versus "the carnal mind." There is no final power but in putting on the "mind of Christ."

And so Joseph is made ruler over Egypt. Spiritual idealism, operating in fact as the true medicine, the true theology, and the true science, has proved itself the superior in Potiphar's house (the physical), in prison (the moral), and in true interpretation (the spiritual), the latter ability leading to rule over the whole of Egypt.

From this standpoint Joseph operates positively to bless and succour not only the Egyptians, but even his own brethren.

Joseph and the Famine

(Genesis 41:46 - 50:26)

HOW TRUE it is that intelligent spiritual idealism, recognized as the underlying reality and power behind all existence, is the only thing that will meet the famine in world thought or in individual thought today.

In the story of Joseph one sees how spiritual idealism as mere theory (Joseph as a dreamer) has to be proved as practical and operative in human experience. It must be proved as supreme in the realm of the physical (Joseph as overseer in Potiphar's house), the moral (Joseph in charge in the prison), and the spiritual (Joseph interpreting Pharaoh's dream). Then it indeed begins to rule the whole of material existence in such a way that it forestalls every famined situation (Joseph as ruler over Egypt).

Up to this point Joseph has had to prove the supremacy of the spiritual over the physical and moral strata of life through bitter experience, but from here on the story changes. Joseph is now *ruler*, and he acts with authority. With us, it is as if our spiritual idealism has to grow and develop in our lives through overcoming adversity, until we see the spiritual as the fundamental reality of all being. Then we begin to identify ourselves with it and so look out on our universe as ruler. Naturally we still have to deal with moral and physical evils, but now we do it on a different basis.

Gathering Corn "Without Number"

We read in Chapter 41 of Genesis that as soon as Joseph became ruler over Egypt, "the earth brought forth by handfuls" for "seven plenteous years," and he gathered up the corn "until he left numbering, for it was without number." This is the sort of foresight that intelligent spiritual idealism expresses. It is a symbol of true spiritual education. No longer do we wait until a famine of health or a famine of substance or of harmonious relationship hits us, and then scramble around for sustenance under such trials. If we understand "Joseph," we shall be alert enough and have love enough to gather systematically an understanding of reality through entertaining spiritual ideas, which, in turn, will sustain us in time of famine.

It is interesting that this systematic gathering takes place during "seven" years, for, as we have seen, it is the symbol of the seven days of creation in the opening chapter of the Bible which reveals to us the

fundamental values of spiritual reality. Certainly as we begin to "gather" ideas from the spiritual meaning of those days, they are "without number." They become to us numerals of infinity.

Manasseh and Ephraim

No wonder that at this point in the story two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, are born to Joseph. The meaning of "Manasseh" is "forgetting." In naming him, Joseph said, "For God ... hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house." In naming Ephraim, which means "fruitful," he said, "For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

This would symbolize exactly what happens as we begin to "gather" an ordered understanding of God from pondering the spiritual message of those days of creation. We find the nature of God and therefore our own true nature, for man is His spiritual image and likeness, the reflection of God, fathered and mothered by Him. And what must happen as this fact is understood? There is born irresistibly the "forgetting" or obliterating of the struggle to reach God from the standpoint of being a sinning mortal born of material conception (Manasseh). And there comes too the acceptance of a blessed sense of true fruitfulness (Ephraim), for we begin to realize what it means to be the man who is made in the likeness of God with dominion over all the earth.

There is Corn in Egypt

After the seven years of plenty there follow seven years of dearth. "And the famine was over all the face of the earth." In Canaan Jacob and his sons experience it and they hear that there is corn in Egypt.

A pertinent story of progressive development from the merely moral to the spiritual standpoint is unfolded here. Joseph had originally come from the land of Canaan, and Jacob and his remaining sons seem to represent an aspect of religious thought that Joseph had left behind - that which emphasizes mere morality. By "mere morality" is meant the stressing of moral standards on a negative mortal and human basis, as opposed to the true morality which is the natural outcome of a spiritual basis of thinking.

Jacob hears that there is corn in Egypt and urges his sons to go down and buy it. He typifies honest religious thought, which is conscious of

the famine of inspiration and real "works" within its own domain. This enlightened mentality is roused to see that there is "corn in Egypt," and does not hesitate to seek it there. It recognizes the fruits of the Spirit being proved in the world, even in "Egypt," outside the confines of religious organization. This must be so, for God is universal.

The Ten Brethren Come to Buy Corn

And so Jacob sends his ten sons to buy corn. Benjamin he keeps behind, for he fears to lose him. This symbol of the ten sons stands for the same type of thought as the Ten Commandments, the Law. It is the "Thou shalt not" - the negative moral standpoint - which must be carried forward to the "Blessed are ye," - the ultimate positive spiritual standpoint of man eternally blessed because for ever one with God.

When the ten brethren arrive to buy corn in Egypt, they do not recognize Joseph and he does not make himself known to them, but accuses them of being spies. A spy is one who appears to be what he is not. Is this not true of religious thought that has lapsed into the merely moral? Jesus called the Pharisees "whited sepulchres" and was constantly exposing their hypocrisy. With the dual basis that man is made in the image and likeness of God and yet is a miserable sinner, thought has no chance but to be twofold and hypocritical in its operations. The only clean and intelligent standpoint is to acknowledge one perfect God reflected by one perfect manifestation. Everything other than that is the operation of the carnal mind and its lies, which *has to be disproved*, but on the basis of its illegitimacy as no part of an infinitely good plan.

Benjamin Must Accompany the Brethren

Before Joseph sends the brethren away, he requests that they bring Benjamin, their youngest brother, to him. Benjamin plays an important part in this story, for it is when the ten brethren bring Benjamin to Joseph that all twelve sons are reunited and the symbol changes from the ten of the merely moral sense into the twelve of a pure spiritual sense, which naturally embraces true morality.

When Joseph sends away the brethren he gives them the corn, but also returns their money in their sacks. Does not Joseph's action here indicate that a clean, clear-cut sense of scientific, spiritual Truth takes nothing from us, but rather enriches us in every way? The tendency of

old theological thought is to believe that the spiritual demands the giving up of something that we still value, and it thus emphasizes the way of sacrifice. The higher way is presented in the words of St. Paul, "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." This process is foreign to merely moral thought and it fears it. When the brethren see the money returned in their sacks, they are afraid.

At length the corn is all eaten and the time comes for them to return to Joseph for more, but they dare not return without Benjamin, for Joseph had said, "Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you." Why cannot the merely moral and limited religious sense see true scientific spiritual idealism without Benjamin? It was at the birth of Benjamin that his mother, Rachel, died - the human sense of mothering and being humanly responsible for spiritual development passed away. Rachel called him "Ben-oni," - "son of my sorrow," - but Jacob called him "Benjamin," - "son of my right hand." The Benjamin state of thought that will unite a sense of religion that merely emphasizes the moral outlook (the ten brethren) to a truly scientific, spiritual idealism (Joseph) is that which is willing to give up a limited, organized, and personal sense of spiritual development and recognize all initiative, all power, as emanating from a divine Principle that is universal and infinite. In the Bible the "right hand" is always used as a symbol of power.

And so the eleven brethren come to Joseph and he eventually makes himself known to them. It is Benjamin that has united them. When enlightened religious thought, as represented by Jacob, is willing to let Benjamin go, - to let go its human sense of responsibility and false motherhood regarding the development of the spiritual seed, - so making room for wider conceptions, then true scientific spiritual idealism (Joseph) is revealed to it, and tremendous blessing and fruitage follow.

Joseph now sends his brethren away to fetch their father and eventually the whole family come down into Egypt where they are given the land of Goshen to settle in.

Joseph Feeds the Egyptians

Then Joseph begins to deal with the famished Egyptians. Egypt, a physical sense of existence, has to yield up its false sense of values in order to experience the substance of spiritual reality. Joseph made the Egyptians give up first their money, then their cattle, and finally yield

their land and themselves as servants to Pharaoh in order to obtain corn. Spiritual idealism impels, step by step, the exchanging of a finite, physical sense of existence for eternal spiritual values.

It is interesting that Jacob and his sons had to take a step further out of their land into unity with Joseph, and their corn was given them "without money and without price." It is as though religious thought has to *move forward* to scientific spiritual idealism, but at the same time nothing good is taken away from it. On the other hand, with the Egyptians, who typify the physical sense of things, there has to be a complete exchange of values. A matter basis must yield to a spiritual basis and human existence be in complete subordination to the spiritual in order for it to survive.

Just as Jacob represented the more illumined side of Canaanite thought, so Pharaoh represents the more enlightened side of Egyptian thought, for he saw the value of Joseph. The fact that the Egyptians, under the guidance of Joseph, had to give up everything to this Pharaoh, surely indicates that spiritual idealism forces every man to surrender a material sense of values and subordinate himself to the highest and most enlightened state of consciousness. Then he is sustained.

Joseph Illustrates True Womanhood

Before Jacob dies in Egypt, he blesses all his sons, and when he comes to Joseph his blessing teems with a sense of the womanhood of man.

As one ponders this story in its essence, it would seem to bring to mind Jesus' parable of the leaven which a *woman* took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened. Through the three measures of spiritual idealism operating as the true medicine, the true theology, and the true Science, we saw how it leavened the physical, the moral, and the spiritual in the three experiences which led Joseph to become ruler over Egypt. And now again, from a new standpoint of conscious spiritual idealism, we have seen this leaven at work in spiritually scientific education, the result of which impels the moral to step forward into the spiritual, and finally translates physical sense out of itself through its yielding up of its beliefs.

It is true womanhood that brings this to pass. Is it not the true woman qualities of spiritual intuition, love, and patience which enable every one of us - whether male or female - to discern the spiritual impulsion that lies behind every situation, and so to love and mother this

underlying reality that through active patience and endurance it at length stands supreme and only?

How true, in their deepest meaning, are the words of the poet:-

Think truly, and thy thoughts
Shall the world's famine feed.

Moses - Preparation for His Mission

(Exodus 1:1 - 4:31)

AT THE OPENING of the Book of Exodus we find the Israelites in bondage to Pharaoh in Egypt. A Pharaoh had arisen "who knew not Joseph." Joseph stands for the quality of spiritual idealism which is able to dwell in the "Egypt" of mortal existence and turn every phase of it into a blessing. But when that quality is apparently no longer "alive," mortal existence can become an enslavement with more and more burdens imposed by the "Pharaohs" of material theories.

But there is always a way out. Spiritual truth, which is the saviour to every situation, may lie hidden, but it is *never* absent. Being the fundamental reality of the universe, how could it be? And so, in this instance, Moses is born, that colossal character who was destined to deal trenchantly with Egypt and lead the children of Israel out of bondage.

The Missions of Joseph and Moses

Joseph and Moses are both compelled to tackle Egypt, but through different circumstances and in different ways. Joseph the dreamer was sold into Egypt by his brethren. He represents the state of thought that has always loved the spiritual and when face to face with mortal existence quite naturally avails itself of spiritual understanding to overcome every adverse situation.

Moses, on the other hand, was born in Egypt of Israelite parents, but through untempered zeal in springing to the defence of a fellow Israelite he was forced to flee from Egyptian rule into Midian. There he received God's command to return to Egypt and deliver his brethren, the children of Israel, from bondage. Moses, therefore, represents the state of thought that, though accustomed to Egypt, suddenly awakens to its dangers and the urgent necessity of dealing with them. But it has to learn to tackle the whole problem from its very foundations on the basis of the onliness of the spiritual, its self-existence and self-completeness.

Joseph allowed himself to be sold into Egypt and was forced to deal with the problem from *inside*, whereas Moses fled from it and was compelled by God, when *outside* the land, to return and tackle the false gods of Egypt with authority.

Joseph brought all his brethren down into Egypt. Moses led them all out. Yet both activities have a place in the pattern of life. Joseph

illustrates how the leaven of Truth is at work in world thought individually and universally, leavening the world's sense of medicine, theology, science. Moses, on the other hand, illustrates how fundamental spiritual fact must be seen as completely separate from mortal existence, and how men need the great moral courage which accompanies spiritual vision. They need it in order to tackle the mesmerism which subordinates the spiritual to the material until all vision fades and men attempt to use the spiritual merely to build up treasure cities in matter, even as Pharaoh did.

This is a familiar pattern. A pure "Joseph" vision is born, develops, and eventually rules over materiality. Jesus was the supreme example of this. But let years pass and the vision fades; then the truths associated with that vision just become slaves to the outward fruits. At that point a "Moses" is needed, - the quality of awareness of spiritual law, unswerving obedience to that law and the courage to face its implications. Moses is known as the lawgiver and is associated with the rigidity of Mosaic law, the smoke and fire and thunderings of Mount Sinai. Well may we appreciate the gentler message of the Gospels (though Jesus never hesitated to rebuke all types of evil) and yet, when human consciousness is bogged down in materiality and the spiritual appears to be more and more subordinated to mortal theories, it needs trenchant, uncompromising Truth to arrest the situation.

Motherhood and Womanhood Care for the Spiritual Idea

Whenever the human heart calls out for its need to be met, there is always the answer born from the great motherhood of the Principle of the universe. Moreover, qualities of motherhood and womanhood never cease to care for the idea that is born until it is firmly established.

How clearly one can trace this in the familiar story of Moses' birth. His mother saw that he was a "goodly child." In order to save him from being thrown into the river, which Pharaoh decreed must be the fate of every male Hebrew baby, she made him an ark of bulrushes and laid it on the river's brink, charging his sister to watch what should become of him. Pharaoh's daughter found the babe, had compassion on him, and brought him up in her palace as her own son. Through Moses' sister, his own mother was called as a nurse to him, And so he was preserved.

The operation of true spiritual discernment and love, faith, watchfulness, and care for the spiritual idea never cease from the earth, even in the darkest hours. These wonderful womanhood qualities may

temporarily lie hidden, but they continue to exist and are bound to bring forth and preserve ever new presentations of the eternal spiritual ideal which saves and delivers mankind.

There Must Be Cultured Spiritual Understanding

When Moses had grown to young manhood, he saw an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew and he slew the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. This became known and Pharaoh sought to kill Moses. So he fled to Midian.

At this early stage it would seem that the lesson is learned that no mortal belief can just be cut off and hidden away in the shifting sand of unreasoned prejudice. It is like trying to destroy a vice through sheer human will-power. It is never properly dealt with in this way, and if we make an ally of mortal will in one instance it can come back at us and destroy us in another. Only intelligent understanding of the divine power that is wholly good and altogether satisfying can give us the discernment and the natural strength to deal with all the claims of Egypt.

And so Moses is forced into the land of Midian and again we see womanhood taking its place in this unfoldment. The priest of Midian, Jethro, had seven daughters, and the text says that "Moses was content to dwell with the man." He married one of his daughters and became a shepherd to his father-in-law's flock.

We are constantly meeting this symbol of "seven" representing the complete nature of God as illustrated in the seven days of creation. May not its entry into the story at this point signify that the "Moses" thought must understand the sevenfold nature of God and temper its obvious hot-headedness and impatience with something of the womanhood of God? And also become a shepherd, - learn to watch over and guard thought? All this equipment is necessary to tackle Egypt successfully, for it is not only a man-sized job but needs womanhood as well.

The Burning Bush

Then the call came. Moses was performing his job as a shepherd at "the backside of the desert" when it came. He saw a bush that burned with fire but was not consumed. God spoke to him out of the bush and told him that he was to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt.

The significance of the burning bush is great. In its immediate context

it surely must have conveyed the fact that even though the children of Israel were in captivity and passing through the furnace of affliction, the wonderful developing spiritual idea they represented was still not consumed. There is always a remnant that never can be quashed.

In a wider context how stupendous is this fact! This bush that burned with fire but was not consumed, Shadrach, Meshech and Abed-nego unharmed in the fiery furnace, and the supreme demonstration of Jesus untouched by death and the grave, all indicate that spiritual identity is not *in* matter. It cannot be impaired by the heat and fury of mortal experience in its varied manifestations, no matter how the senses testify. To understand this fact in a degree is to experience the healing of sin and disease. To understand it more fully, as Jesus did, is to experience the overcoming of death.

Moses had to see that the spiritual identity of all creation is one with its divine Principle and therefore can never be interfered with by any mortal condition. This vision is necessary in order to face Pharaoh and his claim to power and so free the children of Israel.

The Revelation of the I AM

The great revelation that came from the midst of the burning bush was that of God as the I AM. When Moses begged to know the name of God, the nature of God, the answer was "I AM THAT I AM." Some Bible commentaries translate this as meaning "I am - always - that which I am - now, and always have been" which again gives the sense of the unfailing continuity and intact nature of spiritual being.

This name also implies that whatever and whoever can utter the phrase "I am" can only utter it as God's witness, for there is only the *one* I AM, the *one* Life or Being. In the presence of the consciousness of this one Being, anything contrary to it can only declare "I am not." All true being is the "I am" of the one I AM, even as in a subject such as mathematics all facts are the presence of mathematics itself. Could mistakes be personified, they could only declare of themselves, "I am *not* - in the science of mathematics." Only from the basis of having no place nor part with the eternal spiritual idea, with God or good and His image and likeness, can mortality with its beliefs of sin, disease, and limitation of every kind be dealt with.

The Three Signs

After this revelation of the I AM Moses raises two objections to his mission, namely, the disbelief of the people and his own lack of eloquence.

First he is given three signs whereby to meet the people's disbelief of his divine authority. In essence they are the same three signs that Jesus gave. The Master dealt with sin, he dealt with disease, and he dealt with death. At this point, though, there is no record that Moses used any more than the first sign, - dealing with sin.

At the burning bush this was portrayed by God commanding Moses to throw down his rod, and as he did so it immediately became a serpent. Moses fled from before it, but was given the divine command to take it by the tail. As he tackled the serpent, it once more became a rod in his hand. The rod is a symbol of divine power. When we loose our hold on divine power and let it fall to the ground in our thought, we are terrified by what we see of evil. But does not this symbol indicate that evil has no entity of its own? It is just a vacuum and the exact counterfeit of divine power. Tackle this counterfeit, handle it firmly by reversing it, and the serpent disappears, leaving us only conscious of wielding the rod of God.

This is, of course, a very typical illustration of Moses' mission. He had to tackle the mortal picture as represented by Egypt, but he had to tackle it as the exact counterfeit of the one and only power, as we shall see. The whole basis of his work was that of the onliness of the spiritual, its self-existence and self-completeness, the one I AM.

The second sign given to Moses at the burning bush was of the healing of disease. He was told by God to put his hand into his bosom, and when he drew it out, it was leprous. He was bidden to repeat the action and his hand came out healed. The heart was often referred to as the bosom and was thought of as the centre of all real motives and deep affections. May not this sign indicate that disease has no power nor entity of itself? It is only an outward phenomenon of an inward conviction, a conviction from the depths of the heart. Jesus' words come so aptly to mind here: "Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith."

The third and last sign given to Moses was to take of the water of the river and pour it upon the dry land, where it would become blood. Presumably the river referred to was the Nile, which, to the Egyptians, represented the great creative source. But it was the river of Egypt and

therefore had a fleshly import to the Bible writers. Its waters implied a strong belief in material life. Nothing grows on land where water has turned to blood. Moses was to uncover the fact that gross materialism can only mean finiteness and eventual death.

This third sign, in its true and positive meaning, was supremely demonstrated by Jesus. He took of the water of life in Spirit, not in matter, and this stream of pure, living water coursed so abundantly in his consciousness that it overflowed to give life all around him. He said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Also, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

And so these three signs were convincing proofs of the reality of the spiritual and its power to overcome sin, disease, and death.

Spiritual Teaching

But Moses' other objection had still to be met - his lack of eloquence. God says that he will be with him and teach him what to say, but nevertheless he is given Aaron as a spokesman. These two work together, Moses standing for the spiritual initiative and Aaron for the letter through which that spirit is temporarily conveyed. The name "Aaron" means teaching and he figures in the story as expressing the necessity of having some form of teaching in order to awaken man intelligently to his spiritual birthright. Aaron, therefore, is quite prominent at the beginning of Moses' mission, but passes out of the picture as the children of Israel journey through the wilderness and are ready to take up the strain themselves. The letter passes away, and the spirit takes form in individual inspiration.

Moses' Preparation Universal

Moses is now equipped to tackle Egypt. His preparation is type and symbol of the preparation that is always necessary for dealing with the basic beliefs of mortal existence.

First, the spiritual idea must be preserved through the active qualities of true motherhood and womanhood. As it grows and sees the necessity of tackling Egypt and all it stands for, it will have to put Egypt aside for a while whilst culturing a spiritual understanding of God and learning to watch and guard thought. Then it is ready to see the counterfeit nature of evil and how all the fires of hell can never destroy

the fundamental identity of all creation. It is ready to accept and understand the one I AM and the power of that I AM to disprove scientifically the claims of sin, disease, and death, and intelligently meet the demand for spiritual education.

To decode this story as the handling of the problem of evil throughout all time will bring to anyone a tremendous sense of the certainty and power of spiritual fact.

Moses - The Plagues of Egypt

(Exodus 5:1 - 12:30)

HOW CAN WE free ourselves and others from the bondage imposed by a mortal sense of existence? It needs more than human policy, ways, and means. The only individual who freed himself completely from such a bondage was Christ Jesus. He even broke the claims of the "last enemy" itself. But how? Through *divine power*, - divine power consistently and intelligently applied day in and day out. Many of us are willing to accept this fact. Are we also willing to follow the ordered disciplining of thought and life in order to emulate his example? True, it demands much of us, and yet he who knew and lived this spiritual discipline also declared of his life experience, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." *Real* peace is found in the overcoming of all limitations through spiritual ascendancy. The alternative would ultimately seem to be a suffering existence with no ray of positive hope to illumine it.

The Scriptures as the Way of Life

Jesus adjured us to search the Scriptures, for they testified of his way. Step by step they give the blueprint of the Christ way, but in order to feel its living quality the Bible must be spiritually interpreted. As we do this, we find the ordered way to eternal life here and now.

We find, first of all, the great spiritual values of Being clearly set forth in the opening chapters of Genesis through seven "days of creation." We go on to see that these spiritual values constitute the "tree of life," which promises an eternal consciousness of life to all who eat of it. We see that there is a way out of the garden of Eden, - the limited, material view of existence, - but how? Through spiritual understanding. And so there follows the story of Noah building his ark, illustrating how every man can build an understanding of these spiritual values. Then the next great development in the Bible story is the period of journeying; this illustrates, through various phases of experience, how we have to live these spiritual values in our life-journey and prove their reality and permanence. We do not get very far in this, however, before we realize that to have spiritual supremacy in our lives, the mortal concept of existence with all its theories, claims, and limitations must be faced up to and tackled. In the Book of Exodus this mortal concept of existence is symbolically represented by Egypt. Joseph came

face to face with it and was forced to deal with it, even as every mortal is. But, as we journey spiritually, we find that we come to a point where we are ready to learn how to deal with the claims of this mortal concept of existence intelligently and systematically through spiritual Science rather than mortal suffering. We see that the root evil to be tackled is, as St. Paul says, the "carnal mind," or "enmity against God."

Moses Faces up to Pharaoh

In the last article in this series we considered Moses' birth and preparation for his mission as constituting the pattern whereby we can prepare ourselves to handle the problem of the carnal mind in all its ramifications.

And now in Chapter 5 of Exodus Moses goes into action! He and Aaron encounter Pharaoh for the first time and demand the release of the children of Israel. This demand is met with a stern refusal and even an increase in the burdens imposed upon the Israelite slaves. Is this not our experience time and again when we first stand up to the one liar in any situation? In fact there is great comfort and encouragement to be found in this story, for in spite of Pharaoh's repeated resistance to Moses' demands, intelligent spiritual power, persistently applied, defeats this Egyptian ruler and the Israelites are freed.

There is a prelude to the plagues which Moses, at the command of God, now brings upon the Egyptians. Moses and Aaron visit Pharaoh the second time and Aaron throws down his rod, which immediately becomes a serpent. Pharaoh's wise men and sorcerers follow suit and the same thing happens. But what is the result? Aaron's rod swallows up all the other rods. A wonderful promise lies in this incident. Mental systems based on the human mind will claim to do the works of God, sometimes deceiving, as Jesus prophesied, "the very elect." But true spiritual education (as symbolized by Aaron's rod) is always superior, for it has divine power behind it. This prelude is amplified in the plagues which follow. Until the middle of the third plague the magicians of Egypt claim to emulate the works of Moses and Aaron, but there comes a point when they can no longer do so and spiritual power sweeps forward to victory.

The Plagues of Egypt

First, let us consider what these plagues are that are visited upon the land of Egypt. The Book of Exodus records ten of them, but Bible commentaries explain that the combining of different records has caused the editors of the story to repeat three plagues and that therefore, in effect, there are only seven. They are: - (1) The river turned to blood. (2) A plague of frogs. (3) A plague of lice and flies (one plague repeated). (4) A plague of murrain, and boils and blains (one plague repeated). (5) A plague of hail. (6) A plague of locusts and of darkness (one plague repeated). (7) The slaying of the firstborn.

It is logical that there should be seven plagues when we remember that those great spiritual fundamentals of the seven days of creation express the completeness of the divine nature, its presence and power. How could one deal with the carnal mind except through the powerful facts of this full range of spiritual consciousness, for within this range is found the specific counterfact to every form of evil under the sun? In human experience, the positive system of arithmetic must contain within itself the answer to every mistake that could be made about it. No mistake could lie outside the illusory realm of exact counterfeits.

So here in Exodus the plagues illustrate how an understanding of the great fundamentals of Being, consistently held in consciousness in an active, vital way, analyse the counterfeit claims of the one liar, and expose them to their own self-destruction.

Let us take each plague and see how this is so.

The First Plague - The River Turned to Blood

Moses approaches Pharaoh early in the morning (a detail which implies a freshness and awakens of thought vital in tackling the problem of evil) and tells him that if he does not let the children of Israel go, the river will be turned to blood, all fish will die, and there will be nothing for the Egyptians to drink.

The Nile caused Egypt to flourish. Without the irrigation of the waters of the Nile nothing could grow. What is it that causes the mortal concept of existence to flourish in any age? If we go to the root of the problem, it is the carnal mind, that "enmity against God." This belief of a carnal mind claims to have formed a deep channel in human consciousness and is constantly pouring in its subtle arguments to exclude the spiritual and keep alive a mortal concept of existence. As, through revelation and spiritual education, we actively put on the Mind

of Christ, what must it do? It must expose the deadness of this carnal mind, and this is symbolized here by waters turned to blood.

The Mind of Christ, teeming with life-giving, refreshing, eternal ideas, must expose the limited, finite, and dead nature of the carnal mind and its channels of thought. As this is exposed, men may dig around trying to find refreshment in "Egypt," even as the Egyptians dug for water, but the mortal concept of existence cannot give it. It has no infinite resources, and this exposure must ultimately turn men to the only life-giving source, - the Mind of Christ.

The Second Plague - Frogs

But Pharaoh does not yield, and so the next plague takes place. This is a plague of frogs which come out of the river and enter into the houses, the bedchambers and the beds, the ovens and the kneading troughs of the Egyptians. The frog was a symbol of something unclean. The Revelator speaks of "three unclean spirits like frogs" coming out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.

This plague exposes the complete disorder that follows from the "unclean" belief that Spirit and matter are equally real and mingle in creation. Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Also, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." Because he understood this fundamental fact of Being, there was no confusion in his thought about the way he had to take and no muddled interference with his ordered working out of that way. If he had believed the flesh and Spirit to be equal realities, he would have been confused all along and unable to take the clean, clear-cut way of Spirit that he did.

The great fundamental fact of the pure reality of Spirit, therefore, must expose the disorder and confusion that results from having two opposite realities in thought, symbolized here by these unclean creatures entering into every department of life.

At this point Pharaoh grows uncomfortable, but does not yield.

The Third Plague - Lice and Flies

This third plague is a turning point, for here a division is made between the Egyptians and the children of Israel, and here also the magicians of Egypt who had been able to emulate the plagues before, could now no longer do so.

What is this third plague which seems so important? It is a visitation of lice and flies on man and beast. The lice came out of the dust of the ground, and this is the first plague that actually settles on the *person* of man. Is this not a symbol of the earthy, irritating, and unsatisfying claims of the five physical senses? The great fact of spiritual sense as constituting the eternal identity of man, - spiritual sense which is unchanging, calm, and supreme, - must uncover the claims of the physical senses in all their agitated, itching, and swarming nature.

This third stage always assumes importance in the Bible, for it is a "point of no return." In the third day of creation the waters of material sense are dealt with and the dry land of spiritual identity appears. A definite stage is reached. In the third thousand years of Bible history a journey has to be made to the Promised Land. One must *make* the journey in order to reach the land. There can be no stalling. And the journey means honestly facing up to the claims of sense and dealing with them in one's life. It is a clear-cut step where spiritual sense is supreme and only, and is seen as constituting the very identity of man. Hence the division which is placed here between the Egyptians, as representing the mortal concept of existence, and the Israelites, as representing the spiritual sense of existence. Also the failure of the power of mere "wonder workers" (the magicians).

The Fourth Plague - Murrain, Boils and Blains

Pharaoh's heart is still hardened, and so the fourth plague is brought about.

This is one of murrain upon the cattle and boils and blains upon man and beast. The pestilence referred to is a skin disease and symbolically it exposes the claims of a finite personal sense. Values that are merely personal are only skin deep and the great impersonal Principle of the universe must expose their unhealthy and harmful nature. Love that is based on a divine Principle and loves because it knows the loveliness of that Principle's creation and the ephemeral nature of all that is unlike it, is a love that is clean, healthy, and enduring. It is the same with all qualities that are based on Principle. And it is inevitable that the consciousness of this must expose the pain and pestilence of finite personal sense.

The Fifth Plague - Hail

Before the fifth plague takes place, Moses is told to gather in from the field all the cattle and take them into houses, for this plague is one of hail that will beat down everything that is exposed to it.

The general belief is that nothing can escape the cycle of birth, growth, maturity, and decay. Job said, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." This ultimate beating down of life until it passes out is not the fact of Being. The fact of Life, divine Life, the one and only Life, is that it is eternal, never beginning and never ending, and this is bound to expose the cruel and merciless belief that life can end in no life. True life can never be beaten out of man, either in essence or in character. If we obey the command given to Moses to gather into our house all our cattle from the field, - that is, see all expressions of life as having their fundamental place in eternal consciousness, - we shall always witness and experience the preservation and protection of divine Life.

The Sixth Plague - Locusts and Darkness

All through these visitations Pharaoh has had moments when he has weakened, but as soon as the situation eases for him, he again becomes adamant. This serves to show how exact and thorough we must be in our handling of evil, or we never really get clear of it.

The sixth plague is a plague of locusts and of darkness. It is believed that they constitute the same plague, because the locusts went over the land in such swarms as to form a big dark cloud obscuring all light. They ate every green thing and nothing could escape them. This is a very apt symbol of mass mesmerism, which attempts to deplete man of the real spiritual truths which sustain his birthright of immortal manhood and dominion. Jesus also said, "Ye are the light of the world," and that light of manhood is a light that cannot be obscured.

So here we see how the realization of the man of God's creating, made in the image and likeness of God, must expose the belief of a weak mortal man, depleted by the mass mesmerism of the lying carnal mind.

The Seventh Plague - The Slaying of the Firstborn of Egypt

And so we come to the final plague, which is the slaying of the firstborn of Egypt, followed by the Passover and the eventual escape of the children of Israel.

This slaying of the firstborn of Egypt illustrates the fact that divine Love, the motherhood of God, must expose the belief that the mortal concept of existence has any right in the divine plan, the infinite womb of Love. The firstborn always had the birthright, but if "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever," how can there be a place for any claim of the carnal mind?

As one takes these great plagues, and thinks them through with alert spiritual sense, one realizes that they constitute one of the most powerful stories of the handling of evil, as vital today to free men from bondage as to the Israelites of old.

The Passover

(Exodus 12:1 - 51)

The Bible our Unfailing Guide

THE BIBLE is the chart of life in every detail. Not one situation nor stage of man's spiritual development is omitted. It is an encyclopedia of life. Whatever we need to know by way of an answer to living is contained in the Bible, if we consult it with spiritual sense. And more than this, it outlines an ordered way of salvation, right through from Genesis to Revelation. True, the ordered way embraces a lifetime and more of spiritual seeking and experience. It is not a guide book that presents a quick way to salvation. But the pattern is there irresistibly, and in proportion to our desire and love for spiritual things, so we find ourselves propelled by and embraced in the divinely ordered way.

The Slaying of the Firstborn of Egypt

Through the story of the plagues of Egypt, the process by which Moses brought the children of Israel out of bondage, we have seen how there comes a stage in man's ordered spiritual development when he is impelled to face up to and handle intelligently the problem of the carnal mind. As he does this, what *must* happen? It is inevitable that he then begins to realize his true estate as the son of God, and that realization becomes foremost in his life and supersedes the mortal concept of existence. Is not this the meaning of the seventh and last plague, which involves the slaying of the firstborn of Egypt and the passover, followed by the crossing of the Red Sea?

The slaying of the firstborn of Egypt surely symbolizes the destruction of the desolating belief that the mortal concept of existence has first place with us and that it can continually reproduce itself as our "firstborn." God had told Moses to say to Pharaoh before he ever tackled Egypt, "Israel is my son, even my firstborn. Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn." And this slaughter is exactly what took place. But release from the mesmeric influence of the mortal concept of existence demands the systematic and intelligent tackling of evil, even as Moses tackled Egyptian power. This can only be done through an active, alert sense of spiritual values and their ordered operation, as we saw throughout the plagues. At this particular stage of

spiritual development in the Bible story the positive fulfilment of release from bondage is the passover. The "negative" fulfilment is the slaughter of Egypt's firstborn.

The Spiritual Meaning of the Passover

What is the spiritual meaning of the passover? Surely it signifies a passing over from a material way of reckoning to a spiritual way of reckoning. It virtually takes place over and over again in our experience whenever we have a problem to face. We "eat the passover" as we begin to take in the spiritual facts behind that problem and calculate the solution spiritually rather than regard it through the unenlightened mortal concept of things.

When Jesus ate the final passover with his disciples, he was at the point when he was prepared to calculate his whole existence spiritually. He had been eating the passover all his life in many different ways, but this was his *last* supper. He was then willing to give up all concessions to matter. It was the greatest pass-over from matter to Spirit.

The children of Israel at this point were about to pass over from being in bondage to Pharaoh to taking on their status as the firstborn of God. This was accomplished through destroying Pharaoh's hold little by little in a systematic way. Do not we do exactly the same thing as we awaken to handle spiritually and intelligently the claims of the carnal mind that would keep us in bondage? Then we are freed, even as the Israelites were, to cross the Red Sea, the ebbing and flowing currents of human fear, and begin to gain a more and more spiritual sense of existence through the healthy process of the wilderness journey.

Chapter 12 of Exodus gives interesting instructions as to just how this passover must take place, what shall be eaten at this feast and how it shall be eaten. Naturally, these can be read merely as instructions for a material rite or ceremony, but as we have seen before, the reading of the Bible on this level means little. Jesus always taught his disciples through parables, and the inspired prophetic writers who were responsible for the Old Testament were also teaching great spiritual truths through using the symbols of myth, saga, history, ritual, and so on.

The Two Aspects of the Passover

The overall picture of the passover is twofold. It signifies (1) the

passing over or protection of man's true spiritual identity in the time of the carnal mind's self-destruction, for the Lord passed over the houses of the children of Israel so that they were preserved and safe while the firstborn of Egypt were destroyed. And (2) the passover or passage from a material to a spiritual sense of existence, which is signified by the true meaning of the actual feast of the passover.

Jesus illustrated this first sense of the passover when he was able to say at that great passover supper, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." In earlier days this same sentiment had been expressed in the prophetic words of Isaiah, "As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it." Truly, at the last supper Jesus had lifted his thought, even as "birds flying," to this point of complete protection and deliverance.

This second sense of the actual passover *feast* implies an ordered and perpetual spiritual culture, as we shall see, and such spiritual culture enables us to pass over continually from a material sense of existence to a spiritual sense. Paul must have been conscious of the ultimate spiritual reality, but he also saw that "that day [the day of Christ] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."

So this passover feast implies an ordered spiritual process and one that is very active and alive. The word "pass" means "To go; to move; to proceed; ... to make a transit; to be impelled on; ... to advance through all the steps necessary to validity or effectiveness." Indeed, dictionary definitions of this word teem with a sense of activity and movement.

The Ordered Stages of the Passover

How do we eat this passover? And what are the stages of man's continual spiritual development?

In Exodus 12 we read that, first, the children of Israel are told to take a lamb in the first month of the year, "a lamb for an house," according to each man's eating. Secondly, they are told that the lamb must be without blemish and that on the fourteenth day it is to be killed. Then the next stage is that its blood must be struck on all the door posts of the children of Israel's houses, the lamb must be roast with fire, and the whole congregation must eat it, leaving nothing until the morning.

The fourth instruction is that they must eat it with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet and their staff in their hand, for God will pass

over the land and slay the firstborn of Egypt and save the Israelites. Then they are given a fifth command, that they are to eat unleavened bread for seven days, and that this eating of unleavened bread for seven days is a feast to be observed by them for ever. Then these instructions are given to the elders of Israel to carry out, and finally they are performed, - the firstborn are slain and the Israelites are freed.

The Passover Feast Interpreted

The great feature of this passover is the eating of the Paschal lamb. Can the mere physical eating of a lamb accomplish anything? Then what does the lamb stand for? When John the Baptist saw Jesus, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God." Jesus was known as the Lamb of God because he was a pure spiritual manifestation of his divine Cause, appearing in such a form as could be understood at that time. The command to eat the lamb, therefore, must mean that we have to partake of those pure spiritual qualities, to assimilate them, so that they become the very substance of our being right where we are. And this assimilation takes place step by step.

First, every man partakes "according to his eating." Whatever mental state or stage men are at, there is always just the right spiritual idea at hand to meet their need and lead them forward.

Secondly, the lamb is to be "without blemish." Spiritual idealism must be pure. It was a "pure river of water of life" that issued forth from the throne of God in the Book of Revelation. The Psalmist sang, "The words of the Lord are pure words," and "Thy word is very pure, therefore I love it." To test the purity of any spiritual teaching, one can always ask: Does it lead me away from materiality, away from self, away from finiteness and limitation? Does it lead me to a pure spiritual sense of being?

Thirdly, after killing the lamb, its blood had to be sprinkled on the door posts of the houses of the children of Israel, so that when the Lord passed over the city He would spare those houses that showed the blood. May not this be a symbol of the evidence of our earnestness? Blood always stood for sacrifice in the Bible, and when we have chosen to partake of or assimilate a pure spiritual idealism, there must be a willingness to let that idealism translate our lives and lead us to sacrifice self-will and sense-testimony and limited beliefs about life. Only in this way do we become conscious here and now of our spiritual identity, which can never be touched by the carnal mind, but is eternally preserved and protected.

It is at this point too that we actually eat the lamb, - take it in and become one with it, become one with the pure spiritual idealism we have chosen.

There are some wonderful points brought out at this third stage. First, the command is, "Eat not of it raw," which, spiritually interpreted, surely gives the sense that through whatever channel Truth comes to us, - be it through the life of Jesus, or a book, or whatever it is, - let us not approach that channel in a literal way. To take the Bible "raw," for instance, would be to take it literally and in an uninspired way. This has always proved indigestible to men, even as raw meat is believed to be. The lamb had to be roast with fire, the fire that always signified purification or spiritualization of thought. Spiritual sense must for ever be in the forefront in assimilating Truth.

Also, the lamb was not to be "sodden at all with water." We cannot accept Truth in a diluted, watered-down way. It may be taken in a simple way, but never in a diluted way.

And nothing must be left until the morning. Just as the manna was fresh every day, so our digesting of spiritual idealism must always be new and inspired.

To follow the *fourth* instruction and eat the passover in a state of preparedness to make a journey surely must mean that we are willing to put into practice what we understand, and be alert to move wherever the divine Principle of being impels us. As we see these wonderful truths and assimilate them, they do push us out into greater activity under divine direction.

And then how naturally follows on the *fifth* command, to eat unleavened bread for seven days and to keep this feast of unleavened bread for ever. If we want to remain on the job spiritually, and always have a new, fresh, and continuous sense of spiritual activity, the most practical thing is repeatedly to ponder the deep meaning of those seven days of creation which have been the great mainspring of the Bible story all along. Just as a musician regularly practises his scales to keep up his standard, so a metaphysician needs continually to practise his spiritual scales.

Then the *sixth* stage is that the elders of Israel are commanded to put the whole process into operation. This would seem to be the point when we see that all these so-called stages are the outcome of the irresistible operation of man's higher nature. The "elders" so often typify the higher nature of man, and it is this higher nature that impels our seeking of spiritual idealism in the first place.

In the last and *seventh* stage, therefore, the fulfilment of this particular step in spiritual development is assured. The children of

Israel eat the passover and are liberated to cross the Red Sea into the wilderness.

Conclusion

To view the passover in this way, as a practical guide to a more spiritual sense of life here and now, opens up a new meaning to Jesus' command at the passover supper with his disciples. He took the bread, blessed it, brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body." Surely Jesus was not commending a physical ceremony, but rather urging his disciples to assimilate the bread of Truth even as he had done. If we are faithful in continually keeping *this* feast of the passover, we shall be freed from "Egyptian" bondage and on our journey to the Promised Land in deep earnest.

The Crossing of the Red Sea

(Exodus 14:1 - 31)

The Challenge of the Red Sea

TIME AND AGAIN we all have our Red Sea to cross. We come to a situation where we must either go forward and right through and so on to victory, or stall, and be taken back again into some kind of Egyptian bondage.

The Israelites had been brought out of Egypt to the very fringe of the Red Sea, and there they encamped. But they were still not free from Pharaoh's clutches. Directly he heard that they had fled from Egypt, he "made ready his chariot" and all his army and "pursued after the children of Israel."

How persistent this mortal sense of life claims to be! It would relentlessly hold men in bondage, building up treasure cities in matter, even as the Israelites were being compelled to do. Once forget Joseph - the spiritual ideal - and one soon finds oneself a slave to the mortal sense of existence, building treasure cities which, as a slave, one can never enjoy, until a Moses of renewed spiritual conviction liberates one. Even so, this liberation does not come in a moment, as the story of the Exodus shows, but it is a sure and certain process in spite of the determined hold that this mortal sense of existence claims to have.

What finally destroys its hold? The crossing of the Red Sea is a step which needs much courage and faith, for it is an advance into territory unknown to the physical senses, a passage into an untried land of reliance on spiritual values alone.

It is interesting that this sea should be called "Red." Is it a coincidence or a significant fact that the name "Adam" is from *adamah*, meaning the red colour of the ground? Also that Esau was "red, all over like an hairy garment" when he was born, and was later given the name of Edom, meaning "red"? Both these characters are types of the physical or mortal concept of man.

Is this not the great crossing that we must all undertake, - namely, a determined willingness to face up to the carnal mind's insistence that man should be absorbed in mortal life and a slave to material theories? We accomplish this by trusting spiritual conviction and going forward to a greater reliance on the spiritual Principle of man's being. This inevitably leads to the Promised Land where we increasingly realize in every detail of life man's inherent dominion as the son of God.

"Transition to a New Experience"

But whenever we are faced with a new step forward, all the temptations of fear, ignorance, and even laziness would seem to beset us. In Exodus, Chapter 14, we read that when the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were still in pursuit, they feared, and said to Moses, "it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness." All the longings to return to an outgrown position assail us at this point. But what is the positive action that is necessary? Even what the children of Israel had to do - to go forward and trust a higher spiritual leading.

How true this is in every department of life! Even in the pursuit of any human science or art, for instance, the very point at which you feel a sense of a "dead end" is the departure platform for a renewed vision of the subject. Norman Colquhoun speaks of this stage in painting as "a sort of black night of the soul" which, he declares, "is only a transition to a new experience."

"Stand Still, and See the Salvation of the Lord"

This transition can never take place through the fevered action of fear or through human push or pull. It must be the result of a quiet and calm state of receptive thought that can hear and be obedient to a higher power than human will.

And so Moses gives the command to the children of Israel, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord ... the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

The Psalmist echoed these words when he wrote, "Be still, and know that I am God." These commands bring comfort, for they imply that at such stages of experience, if we will only pause and trust the divine Principle of our being, it will show us the way so that the enemy is destroyed and our peace is held.

When thought is calm, we hear that inward spiritual voice impelling us to go forward. Here the command came to Moses to lift up his rod over the sea and it would divide and become dry land, so that the Israelites could cross, but the Egyptians would be destroyed. The rod was a symbol of divine power. At the burning bush, when Moses let it fall to the ground, - when he let go his sense of divine power, - he fled before the serpent of evil which he saw. But as he faced up to the evil and handled it, divine power once more became a staff upon which to

lean. And so, at this point, our trust in divine power must be maintained and lifted up *above* the waters.

There is yet another comforting detail in this prelude to the crossing of the Red Sea. The angel of God and the pillar of cloud that had preceded the Israelites in their flight from Egypt, now removed and went behind them, so that it came between them and the Egyptians, and thus protected them. That which originally led us in our forward step out of bondage forms a defence behind us. How often, when faced with some new impasse, one has recalled a particular spiritual illumination or some definite spiritual conviction that guided one in the past in a similar situation, and this has somehow been an assurance that the enemy cannot and will not overwhelm us. Though at times the mortal sense of existence seems dangerously near to engulfing us, this "pillar of the cloud by day" and "of fire by night" is a protection.

And then we move forward. Divine power opens the way for us. We are not asked to walk on the water. The Red Sea divides and the dry land appears before we have ever set foot on it to cross over. If we stand our ground and place our entire trust in spiritual power, conscious of its ever-availability to protect and guide us now, as it has done in the past, we shall *always* see the way forward and it will be an easy, natural way. The difficulty and the struggle is to "stand still" in the face of the enemy and then determine to go forward, trusting in the spiritual. But once the decision is made, the journey is easy.

The Gospel writer Luke seems to be aware of this fact, for in his record of Jesus' struggle in the garden of Gethsemane when he prayed that the cup might pass from him, Luke writes that "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." But that struggle ultimated in Jesus being able to say, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done," and from then on there is no more record of a suffering sense with Jesus. Luke even states that Simon carried his cross for him. Once we are willing to link ourselves and our so-called future with the one eternal spiritual Cause, suffering ceases, and the way ahead becomes clear and definite.

Salvation an Intelligent and Ordered Process

If we have earnestly followed the ordered story of the Bible as the way of life, we can see that at this point a trust in divine leading is no blind faith. This Book of Life has presented us in its opening chapters with the ordered spiritual values of Being, and it has shown us that there is a way out of the Eden of material theories. It has indicated how

we may build an ark of understanding and illustrated through the lives of the patriarchs the steps we need to take in our journey to the Promised Land. The early pages of the Bible have also told us in no uncertain terms, through the symbol of Egypt, that there is a problem of evil to be tackled and how to tackle it. So if we take the Scriptures as an ordered guide, showing us the way of life, our trust in divine power, when we face any Red Sea, is no blind faith.

At this point in the story of the Exodus, Moses lifts up his rod, the waters divide, and the dry land appears. In essence, these three actions symbolize the operation of the first three days of creation - the light of spiritual power dawns (the first day), the firmament of understanding separates the waters above from the waters beneath (the second day), and the dry land of definite spiritual identity establishes itself (the third day). This order is an irresistible, universal law, always at work, and in any situation it comes to us as a turning to spiritual power (the first day), a realization of the reality of spiritual fact, its onliness and its inability to do anything but bless (the second day), and our willingness to accept it and let it transform our present experience and bring forth satisfying fruit "after *its* kind," even as the third day symbol promises. Over and over again, in the Hexateuch, there is evidence of the dawning of these three days and their wonderful consequences.

The Destruction of the Egyptians

And so we cross the Red Sea in safety. And not only this, for we witness the complete destruction of the enemy, even as was foretold.

The Egyptians attempted to follow after the Israelites through the Red Sea, but the Lord "troubled the host of the Egyptians" so that the wheels of their chariots came off and they were compelled to flee. Finally, Moses lifted up his hand over the sea and the waters rolled back and engulfed the Egyptians and destroyed them.

This is such a certain rule, - namely, that to go forward, relying understandingly on the divine Principle of our being, will *always* weaken the power of the enemy and ultimately result in its total destruction. The very same waters which at first threatened to be impassable, and which then rolled back and formed for the children of Israel "a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left," were the means of destroying the Egyptians. How often one proves the truth of this! And the greatest example of it can be seen in Jesus' crucifixion. He went right through those "waters" which threatened destruction, and that very experience enabled him to prove the eternity of life to the

complete confusion of the carnal mind which had vainly sought to kill spirituality. Divine power is supreme and always has the initiative.

The story ends that when the children of Israel woke up the next morning, they saw all their enemies "dead upon the sea shore." There is always a very certain sense of proof in being able to look back on our enemies and see them as dead. We no longer fear them, for they are dead factors to us. And what are our enemies? The mortal sense of existence fights with such men of war as self, limitation, fear, envy, jealousy, disease - all that could be termed "enmity against God." Enmity against God is enmity against man, God's image and likeness, and this enmity is always destroyed as we go forward, relying on man's forever unity with his spiritual Cause, the one and only power.

And so we advance into the wilderness, where we learn yet more of the infinite provision and protection of spiritual power, until we gain the Promised Land of consistent spiritual dominion in our lives.

From the Red Sea to Mount Sinai

(Exodus 15:1 - 18:27)

FROM THE RED SEA to Mount Sinai was the Israelites' first taste of the wilderness. They had set out on a journey which was to lead them eventually to the Promised Land. It was a journey highlighted by the great spiritual teaching of Moses. But that teaching had to be proved, and when living in obedience to it, the children of Israel experienced divine guidance, protection, and sustenance at every stage.

The Wilderness

The wilderness plays an important part in our journey Spiritward. Jesus underwent a "wilderness" experience, and it strengthened him for his mission to the world, for it was immediately after his forty days in the wilderness that he embarked on his great teaching and healing ministry. The Israelites were forty years in the wilderness - not forty days - for they laboured through this period and worked it out through bitter experience, rather than with the authority and dominion of the Christ which Jesus manifested.

What does the wilderness stand for - that great desert which lies between Egypt and the Promised Land? Surely it is a transitory stage where the mortal concept of existence is being left behind as a basis from which to operate, and thought is accepting the spiritual facts of Life as fundamental. With us, it would seem to imply a journey, but with Jesus it was much more a matter of holding his ground. Jesus was so conscious of his Christ selfhood that he was not fooled by the temptations in the wilderness. Let us always remember, though, that the Israelites could have entered the Promised Land more quickly if they had not been afraid to go forward. After only two years in the wilderness they had their chance at Kadesh Barnea to enter the land of Canaan, but they feared "giants" and were faint-hearted. So they wandered for another thirty-eight years.

If we have the vision of the Christ, hold to it, and operate from that standpoint, our progress can be rapid. But the comforting thing is that whether it is forty days, forty years, or two years, the Promised Land is ultimately reached. Salvation is an irresistible process, because the spiritual Truth behind all creation is fundamental, inescapable fact.

Miriam's Song of Rejoicing

The stages in this wilderness journey are so true to life. For instance, whenever we cross a Red Sea we rejoice, and for a while our rejoicing fills the picture. Is this not most beautifully symbolized in this Exodus story by Miriam singing her Song of the Redeemed, which is related immediately after the Red Sea passage? But lovely as any victory may be, life is never static. Fresh vision must continually unfold. So our journey Spiritwards continues.

The Waters of Marah

At the outset the Israelites went three days through the wilderness without finding water. Then, when they found it, the waters of Marah were bitter; they could not drink of them, and murmured against Moses. But what did Moses do? He took a tree and cast it into the waters and they became sweet.

In the Bible a tree so often typifies the Principle of Life which is strong and enduring and offers a full salvation to men. The "tree of life" which was "in the midst" of the garden of Eden appears again in the last chapter of the Book of Revelation, still "in the midst," bearing fruit, "and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

What makes our Marahs sweet? Surely the recognition that behind the spiritual ideas which we imbibe is a great Principle of Life, working out its plan according to irresistible divine order and system, bringing salvation and blessing in its train. Without the knowledge that we are becoming acquainted with a provable Principle of harmony, which brings a full salvation to man, our strivings would be bitter and unrewarding.

Thirsting and Hungering

And so the journey continues until at length the children of Israel hunger and again murmur against Moses.

Thirsting and hungering are two great requisites in this wilderness journey. Surely thirsting indicates our need for that flow of spiritual inspiration which refreshes and inspires, whilst hungering indicates the necessity of taking in the solid spiritual facts of Being which sustain and support and enable us to grow spiritually. Jesus gave his disciples bread and wine at the Last Supper. He must have realized their need not only

of the great facts of Truth, but also of a living and inspired sense of Life and Love.

This symbol of bread and wine, or meat and drink, conveys a sense of the letter and the spirit, for we must have both, and both are of divine origin.

The Quails and the Manna

Here in the wilderness the children of Israel are fed with flesh in the evening and bread in the morning. Every evening quails came up and covered the camp and the Israelites fed on them, but in the morning they ate the manna which fell from heaven. The quails would appear to be merely phenomena of the earth, whilst the manna is a phenomenon from heaven. "At even," when light is obscure, there may be an attempt to take in a higher sense of things, even as the quails symbolize thought that rises up from a merely earth-bound sense, but we are never really sustained except by spiritual facts which come from the divine source.

The manna fell as dew, which refreshes the ground and makes it fruitful. When the dew went, it left behind it a small, round thing which tasted like "wafers made with honey" and which the Israelites called "manna," meaning "What is it?"

There is a lovely sense of freshness and spontaneity about this manna. It came new every morning and had to be collected day by day. No one was allowed to hoard it or it went bad on them. Every man had to gather it for himself and it was always found that each had exactly what he needed - no more and no less. What a wonderful symbol this is of the spiritual refreshment that is given us as we journey through our wildernesses. At this stage we may not fully understand these sweet revealings - even as the Israelites called the manna "What is it?" - but nevertheless they sustain us and meet our need day by day until we are ready for stronger meat.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus referred to this incident of the manna in his great discourse on the bread of life. He indicated so clearly that this sweet inspiration which is sufficient at a certain stage of the journey must eventually give place to partaking of much stronger meat. He urged on his disciples the eating of his flesh and blood - understanding the substance and inspiration of his proof of what true life really is. He said, "He that eateth of this bread shall live forever" - he who understands what Life really is shall experience something of the eternity of that Life, a completely new and higher sense of life.

Moses Strikes the Rock

After the experience of the manna, the Israelites began to thirst. Before, at Marah, there had been water, but it was bitter. Here there was no water at all, and the people were ready to stone Moses.

As we journey we often feel this desperate need for fresh inspiration. Truth has sustained us and carried us forward, but time and again we feel parched for new inspiration, and because of this dryness are almost ready to crucify the great courage that has led us forward to this point.

It is here at Meribah that Moses strikes the rock and water pours forth to refresh the children of Israel. It is said that Moses was not able to enter the Promised Land because of his action on this occasion. Does the striking of the rock indicate the forcing of inspiration through struggle and argument as sometimes we seem almost compelled to do when we are up against an uninspired situation? Meribah means "dispute, quarrel," and it would seem to indicate the warfare that at times we undergo before inspiration flows. But this method cannot proceed from the ultimate "Promised Land" state of consciousness, where inspiration never ceases to flow. Jesus described such a standpoint when he said to the woman of Samaria, "Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

The Warfare with Amalek

Nevertheless, the water does come forth from the rock, but warfare begets warfare, and so immediately Moses has to fight Amalek, a symbol of a mortal sense of man. Amalek was a grandson of Esau. This is the well-known battle where as long as Moses held up his hands - a symbol of divine power - the Israelites prevailed, but when he let them down the Amalekites prevailed. Moses' hands were heavy with personal responsibility, and so a stone was placed for him to rest upon, and his hands had to be supported by Aaron and Hur. Aaron means "teaching" and Hur means "liberty, free."

One feels that these incidents which occur after the striking of the rock are all illustrating the un wisdom of taking on a personal sense of responsibility with regard to spiritual progress. We force inspiration - maybe through this false sense - and then we have to fight a mortal and personal concept of ourselves and only gain the victory when we at

length rest on the rock of spiritual fact. Also spiritual education ("Aaron"), coupled with a sense of freedom ("Hur") from burden and responsibility, always support us in our hour of need.

Jethro Visits Moses

This dropping of the weight of false responsibility has to go yet further before the real acceptance of the government of divine Principle can come to us. Chapter 18 of Exodus tells of the visit to Moses of his wife and father-in-law, Jethro. Jethro tells Moses that he will wear himself out by taking all responsibility for the people on to his own shoulders. He advises him to judge the "hard causes" himself, but appoint other able men to judge the small ones.

What wonderful advice this is to all of us in our journey Spiritwards, when we are inclined to trouble about this little fault and that little fault and weigh ourselves down with personal responsibility over every little failure. If we keep our eye on the big picture, the spiritual ideal, the details of daily life will be taken care of - they will not be neglected - whilst we shall surely be led to a wider and more wonderful vision of the spiritual, even as Moses received his revelation from Mount Horeb immediately after this experience.

A Summary

Looking back on this period since the exit from Egypt, what have we seen? After the Passover, the Israelites took a clear-cut step forward: they crossed the Red Sea. They were determined to separate themselves from bondage, for there was no going back once the passage had been made. This step was followed by Miriam's Song of the Redeemed. Then they came to Marah where the bitter waters were made sweet by Moses casting in the tree. Then their hunger was met by the quails and the manna. Following this provision, their thirst was assuaged by Moses striking the rock. This led to the fight with Amalek, and finally Jethro showing Moses the wisdom and the love of laying off a false sense of responsibility.

Incident by incident we can trace in these chapters man's first steps on his journey to the Promised Land. The great move forward out of bondage to a mortal sense of things, which impels us across the Red Sea of material reckoning, is always followed by a period of great rejoicing. Then often we thirst and need to be refreshed by glimpsing

something of the purpose of the wonderful Principle which is impelling us forward. Not only this, for we must also have the daily bread of substantial spiritual facts to sustain us throughout the journey. Many times on the way we thirst for fresh inspiration, and it always comes. If it comes through pressure and conflict, which is sometimes the case, then we have to learn to conquer the mortal sense of man, and drop off a false sense of personal responsibility. As we do this, we are able to receive a wonderful revelation of spiritual facts, even as Moses then went forward to receive his great vision on Mount Horeb.

And so the Bible is truly the Book of Life, - the life of man, the life of you and me. Every incident is pertinent to the varied experiences of men and women everywhere in their journey Spiritwards.

Moses on Mount Horeb

(Exodus 19:1 - 40:38)

MOST OF US are familiar with the fact that Moses gave the Ten Commandments from Mount Horeb, but it is not so well known that it is part of one great revelation, in which Moses made seven ascents of this Mount, and on each ascent received a specific spiritual message.

That there should be seven ascents is not surprising when one follows the Bible story through and realizes how often this sevenfold symbol occurs. The first chapter of Genesis establishes the great scale of spiritual values with its "seven days of creation," and then these values appear again and again. For instance, in the story of Noah he remained "yet other seven days" in the ark; in the story of Joseph there had to be seven years of plenty and seven lean years; with Moses there were seven plagues visited upon the Egyptians. All these instances, as we have seen, illustrate in some particular way the operation of the complete range of God's nature, since "seven" was always used by the ancient writers as a symbol of perfection and completeness.

Moses - The First Great Teacher

It is an interesting fact that this teaching from Mount Horeb is the first instance in the Scripture of spiritual teaching as such. In the earlier stories it was the *lives* of the patriarchs which taught the lessons. Noah, Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph were not spiritual teachers, but we can see how every incident in their *lives* illustrates the ordered way of the spiritual seeker. But now we come to the first teacher of spiritual idealism. In one way the Israelites had been learning lessons ever since Moses first came to them as their deliverer from Egypt, but now they were in a position where they could appreciate the Principle of what they had been learning, for they had already experienced much of its operation. It would seem that Moses, at this point, could crystallize for them in a systematic way the spiritual facts that had been operating in their experience all the way through their great exodus from Egypt.

The Place of Spiritual Teaching

A very wonderful fact comes out here. In this ordered deliverance of the children of Israel we can trace three distinct stages from the opening

chapters of Exodus until the teaching from the Mount. First, Moses appeared as the deliverer of the Israelites and they accepted him as such. Secondly, there was the separation from Egypt through the visitation of the plagues; and thirdly, the Israelites journeyed through the wilderness, experiencing the leading and providence of the divine Spirit. Then they were ready for systematic, spiritual teaching.

Matthew records the same pattern with Jesus, though from the point of view of the teacher rather than the student. First, there took place his birth as the deliverer; then followed his baptism, which was a symbol of purification and separation from materiality, which is what Egypt stood for in the case of the Israelites. After this, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, there to prove his unity with that Spirit and its ability to impart steadfast, spiritual sense. This led into the fourth stage, where he taught his disciples, which teaching Matthew records as the Sermon on the Mount.

Again, there is a similar pattern even with these ascents themselves. The first three are really a preparation, as we shall see, and then in the fourth ascent Moses is given the Commandments and the Judgments, - the core of his whole teaching. Indeed the Commandments have remained throughout the ages as the basis of Christian teaching.

Does not one learn from these parallels that there must be a proper preparation of the heart before systematic, spiritual teaching can really be appreciated? This consists of, first, accepting the divine deliverer; then being willing to separate oneself from material concepts, and then going on to experience in some degree the translating power of the spiritual in one's life. This third stage of going forward spiritually and being willing to be changed "into the image of the heavenly" seems to be the vital stage if one is to be blessed and benefited by spiritual teaching. Paul said, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain." If the Christ consciousness, which is the core of every man's being, is touched and arises with power, creating in us the willingness to put off the old man and put on the new, then what we hear in the way of sincere, spiritual teaching will *never* be in vain. It will achieve its mighty purpose.

This divine pattern applies to the so-called "teacher" also, no less than to the student, as we saw with Jesus' development and with Moses. No individual can be used to teach spiritual facts purely and effectively unless he too has experienced something of these three stages in his life. What is more, it is only then that anyone can appreciate the wholeness and systematic operation of the Principle. In other fields this is true also. A child is taught arithmetic, beginning with the numbers and going on to the four processes of addition, subtraction, multiplication,

and division. But it is not until much later in his development that it dawns on him that those facts are really the whole basis of arithmetic. After he has used the rules of arithmetic countless times and worked out many problems, he then begins to realize in a practical and vital way that all there is to arithmetic fundamentally is merely those initial processes working in higher and higher realms. So it is in following the Principle of all being.

Moses on the Mount

Moses' seven ascents and descents of Mount Horeb seem to crystallize the pattern of ordered spiritual development in a very clear way. These ascents begin in Exodus, Chapter 19, verse 3, where God first speaks to Moses from the Mount.

It is always helpful to take these stories out of the literal reading into a higher sense. For instance, with Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, it has been said that it indicates more the Master's mood than a material location. And here, too, we can surely interpret God calling to Moses out of the mountain as uplifted spiritual sense becoming conscious of the eternal facts of the divine Principle. This is an experience we can all share. Directly we take the Bible stories out of time and place and physical objects and translate them spiritually, every happening is applicable to all men in all ages. Surely this is why the Bible is the *Book of Life*, of eternity. None of its pages are "dead" history; when spiritually translated, each incident can live to us as our present experience in the particular aspect in which we need it.

The First Ascent - God the Deliverer

The first message that Moses receives from God is, in essence, to remind the children of Israel that it was divine power that brought them forth from Egypt - bore them "on eagles' wings" - and that if they accept the law of God and are obedient to it, they will become "an holy nation." This is the first thing any of us needs to do in spiritual development, namely, to acknowledge a divine power outside of ourselves as our deliverer and to be willing to accept and obey divine law. Through our own human efforts we can do little, but conscious of a power outside of ourselves which we are willing to obey, and trusting in its intelligent guidance, we can fulfil the divine purpose which broods over all.

The Second Ascent - Purification

But, as we have seen all along in so many of the Bible stories, this demands something of us. And so when Moses ascends Mount Horeb the second time, he is commanded to sanctify the children of Israel and to tell them to wash their clothes and so be ready for the third day. Also there are to be bounds round about the Mount so that no one can touch it, on penalty of death. Just as with the second stage of baptism in Jesus' life, there has to be this purifying process. Nothing can receive the divine message nor touch it but thought which is pure. What does this mean? With every seeker, once he becomes aware of a spiritual power outside of himself that is his salvation, he must be willing to entertain the spiritual fact in his life consistently day in and day out. He must "wash his clothes," - clothe his mentality with pure, spiritual facts instead of soiled material beliefs and opinions. Moreover, he cannot touch the altitude of spiritual power unless he is willing to go the way of Spirit.

The Third Ascent - Chemicalization

And what so often happens as one goes forward spiritually? There takes place what is here described on Moses' third ascent as smoke and fire and "the whole mount quaked greatly." As the spiritual facts of being enter our lives and begin to translate us until we awake in His likeness, it may stir up and chemicalize accepted human beliefs, even as an acid and an alkali meeting produce a disturbed situation before a new and peaceful state comes about. Paul understood this fact clearly and that is why he could say that he rejoiced in tribulation. He saw that it was merely the putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new. And here again, on this ascent, it is emphasized that only the new man can touch the Mount. We cannot approximate spiritual power except with spiritual sense, Soul-sense.

The Fourth Ascent - Scientific Spiritual Teaching

And so this leads naturally to Moses' fourth ascent, when he was given the Commandments and the Judgments. At this point we are ready to appreciate the Principle of all being and its scientific interpretation through definite laws and rules. It is something living to

us then, and something impersonal. It gathers our experiences together and interprets them as the forever operation of the divine Principle in our lives. These Commandments and Judgments are so rich in meaning that we will consider them in a later article. Suffice it to say that on this fourth ascent is revealed the core of spiritual teaching.

The Fifth Ascent - The Divine Coincidence of Life

After this, on Moses' fifth ascent, he was told to take up the Mount with him Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel, and it is said that "they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness ... also they saw God, and did eat and drink" (Exodus 24:10, 11). Translating this symbolically, it is as if understanding something of the great spiritual Principle behind all things, its harmonious laws and rules, and of man's forever oneness with that Principle, lifts us to behold a new universe, a new sense of life. We still "eat and drink" - we live in the world, but not of it. Is not this what Jesus exemplified in the fifth thousand years of Bible history? He demonstrated this coincidence of the divine Life with the human more than any other individual has ever demonstrated it. And this was because of his conscious unity with the Principle of the universe, whom he termed "my Father."

The Sixth Ascent - The Structure of Man

This irresistibly leads on to the sixth ascent, when Moses was given instructions for building the tabernacle and establishing the priesthood. In all these chapters dealing with the tabernacle one can trace, detail by detail, the pattern of the new man, divine consciousness, which springs forth from this new sense of life. As we translate these building instructions step by step, out of a material structure into the spiritual facts which constitute man, we are truly dissolving the "earthly house of this tabernacle." Paul declares "that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Here is portrayed this "house," - the structure of the ideal man, the man made "in the image and likeness of God."

Sometimes, though, this ideal seems impossible to realize, and its coming appears so long delayed that mortals get discouraged and turn

to materially visible aids for help and comfort. Because Moses delayed so long to come down from the Mount on this occasion, the Israelites made a golden calf and began to worship it. When Moses eventually did come down, he saw this picture of unfaithfulness and he broke the stones on which the Commandments were written. This is often taken to mean that he saw that human thought could not take Truth in such a concentrated form - it had to be broken up, even as "precept must be upon precept, ... line upon line, ... here a little, and there a little" (Isa. 28:10).

The Seventh Ascent - The Motherhood of God

This interpretation would seem to be borne out on Moses' seventh ascent, when he had to hew out his own tables of stone for God to re-write the Commandments. The divine motherhood of God is so universal and tender that it enables every individual to find his own way to God - to hew out his own tables - within the overall pattern of Love's design. One of the lovely facts about true motherhood is that it never lets go of its ideal, but always adapts that ideal to meet the need of each individual child. On this seventh ascent the message Moses received was of "the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." Here, too, the tabernacle is actually built, and much emphasis is laid on everyone bringing offerings for this tabernacle out of a willing heart. In fact, with this building of the tabernacle, the demand that we must have a willing heart for this work is stressed fourteen times.

And so we see that the last stage in this spiritual development is really the beginning. If we love the spiritual, then little by little our steps will be divinely mothered until the "building of God," the "house not made with hands," is established. And in this house of spiritual consciousness we shall always find home and heaven.

So we see how Moses' experience on Mount Horeb leaves us with a much wider impression than of the Ten Commandments alone. It teaches a mighty unfoldment of the spiritual facts of the divine Principle as they take place in the life of any spiritual seeker.

The Ten Commandments - I

(Exodus 20:1 - 11)

WHEN JESUS WAS ASKED by a lawyer, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" he replied by giving two - "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Jesus ended by saying, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." This practical teacher of spiritual living took Moses' Ten Commandments and summarized them in these two great demands.

But how can we love God? And how can we love our neighbour? We are commanded to love God with all our "heart," - a really heartfelt allegiance and love, not a mere sense of duty; with all our "soul," - a word often used in the Bible as a synonym for spiritual sense; and with all our "mind," which implies an intelligent love. Do the Ten Commandments give us a guide as to how we can love God with all our heart, soul, and mind? Spiritually followed, they most certainly do.

The Purpose and Construction of the Commandments

As is well known, the Hebrew Decalogue, the Ten Words, was given to Moses on Mount Horeb. After three months' journeying through the wilderness, the children of Israel camped in the wilderness of Sinai, and it was here that Moses made seven ascents of Mount Horeb to receive the divine instructions. The Commandments were given to him on his fourth ascent.

The great point that stands out with regard to the Commandments is that they are not just a moral code. Rather do they present the irresistible demands of the great spiritual fundamentals of Being in all their simplicity and power.

It is commonly accepted that the first four Commandments relate to man's duty to God and the second six to man's duty to his neighbour. It is not so well known, however, that many Jews regarded as the First Commandment the first words of God to Moses on his fourth ascent up Mount Horeb, namely, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Exodus 20:2).*

* See the Westminster Dictionary of the Bible, p. 598

The extraordinary thing is that if one takes this statement as constituting the First Commandment, the familiar sevenfold pattern which runs throughout the Scriptures can be traced in the first four and again in the last six Commandments. Yet this is not strange, for just as the entire musical scale appears in every fundamental musical exercise, so the great sevenfold scale of spiritual values, initially presented in the seven days of creation, is bound to enter into every great pronouncement in the Bible, though admittedly the order of presentation must vary according to the purpose of the pronouncement.

On this occasion Moses had been three times up Mount Horeb and received instructions from God, and now on his fourth ascent the divine revelation begins with seven great statements regarding man's relationship to God.

Deliverance from Bondage

"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

First it is declared that it was God who brought the Israelites "out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." The ancient Egyptians called their native land *Kemet*, or "the black land," because of the dark soil of the Nile mud, and Egypt was always a symbol of darkness to the Israelites. What delivers from darkness? Light. "The people which sat in darkness saw great light" (Matthew 4:16). The light shone on Peter in prison and brought his deliverance. It came to Paul on the road to Damascus and effected his conversion. The light of the divine Mind or infinite intelligence is always present to deliver out of the bondage resulting from ignorance, apathy, self-will, or the many other mesmeric suggestions of the carnal mind. The first day of creation tells of the coming of this light.

"No Other Gods"

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

There is more to salvation than this, however. The second statement, which is commonly regarded as the First Commandment, demands, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Is not this a similar declaration to "Let there be a firmament" to divide the waters above

from the waters beneath, - the purpose of the second day of creation? Jesus said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," and "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." He also stated, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." This great spiritual teacher was speaking from experience. He obeyed this Commandment by throwing his all into the spiritual scale, and in so doing he proved the power of Spirit to quicken and deliver under all circumstances. To be obedient to this demand means understanding the spiritual, trusting in it, and adhering to it in every situation, for it is the fundamental substance of all creation. It has been proved that in Spirit alone resides man's greatest strength.

"No Graven Image"

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, ... Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;"

Immediately following this all-important demand of having only one God comes the command not to make a graven image and bow down to it and serve it. This is similar to the previous Commandment and some believe that they constitute one Commandment. Yet there is a difference, in that making a graven image is concerned with attempting to confine the infinite Cause in something finite and then worshipping the creature of man's own creation. As Isaiah said of idolatrous worshippers, "They worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made."

The desire with idol worship is to have something to bow down to that is tangible to the material sense. This is surely the origin of all images in churches. In a different vein medical practitioners believe that to give a patient something tangible to cure him, such as a pill or a bottle of medicine or something he can see, taste, smell or feel, gives him faith in the remedy. It is well known that many medicines given to patients are merely coloured water and yet it is an image tangible to the material senses and the mortal bows down to it.

The third day of creation gives a sense of definiteness and tangibility in its symbol of the dry land appearing, but far from being a man-made form, such as the prophets deplored, it symbolizes the appearing of a tangible spiritual reality which is always there. The "earth" or "dry land" which comes to light in this third day was never created by man.

In fact, there is no sense at all of creation or *making* something in this third day. The earth, as a symbol of definite spiritual identity, *appears* to our spiritual sense as the "waters" of unstable, ever-changing, material theories are put to one side.

This Commandment also shows that we suffer from believing in graven images of any kind - ancient or modern - until the "third and fourth generation." Again, may not this "third and fourth generation" have a connection with the third and fourth days of creation? We need to remember that to these Hebrew writers the sevenfold pattern of Being formed a natural background to their thought. When the understanding of spiritual ideas dawns on any man, he becomes conscious of their definite outline and identity, which is unknown to material sense, but vividly known to spiritual sense. Then he begins to worship God as a Principle and not as a finite personality or anything that could be confined within limits. This is the truth about the third and fourth days of creation - the "third and fourth generation."

"Love Me, and Keep My Commandments"

"And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

And so it is as if this Second Commandment yields a final statement embodying the fourth day of creation, when it concludes, "And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments." The fourth day with its symbol of the solar system, with all the celestial bodies moving in harmony with one another, giving light upon the earth, is a truly wonderful illustration of God's government of the universe, including man. When we feel ourselves naturally willing to love and keep these Commandments, - to love the light, to love the purely spiritual, to love and feel safe in the real tangibility of the spiritual, and to love to let the government of divine Principle into our lives, - then we experience God's mercy. But one has the sense that "mercy" here is not the mercy of pity, but the mercy of grace and blessing. Like the thousands of heavenly bodies, each in their appointed place giving light, so every man has his gracious and blessed place in the divine plan.

Not Taking God's Name in Vain

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

To obey the next Commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," means to live with a real purpose, and it follows on quite naturally from the previous demand. "In vain" means "to no purpose." Accepting the one Principle as the great Cause behind our being, and being willing to love and obey that Cause, cannot help but make our lives abundantly fruitful and purposeful. The fifth day of creation teems with symbols of abundance and inspiration, with the appearing of the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air and the command to be fruitful and multiply. Obeying this Commandment means that we take the "name" or the nature of God into everything we do and everywhere we go, and thus enrich our lives and the lives of others in multitudinous ways that are beyond all stereotyped human reckonings. If God really lives to us as a tangible, vital presence, the Life of all life, then we cannot take His name in vain - the divine Life irresistibly expresses itself in our human experience.

The Six Days of Labour

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: ... For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, ..."

The last Commandment of these first four which stress man's relationship to God clearly parallels the last two days of creation. It tells of the six days that man needs to labour, and then commands that he rests on the seventh day and does no work, even as God rested on the seventh day in the creation story.

"Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work." The fact that man is made in the image and likeness of God does not mean that on his part he has nothing to do. To realize his estate, he needs to become conscious of this wonderful fact. Consciousness is the key word, and consciousness demands work. The apostle James knew this when he admonished the Jews to be doers of the Word and not hearers only. He likened hearers only to him who beholds "his natural face in a glass ... and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." He is no longer conscious of that man. And we are not the man

of God's creation with dominion over all the earth unless we are really conscious of God. Consciousness of God constitutes man. Therefore we seem to have to labour six days - to labour to let in the light, to keep our eye on the spiritual, to trust the definiteness of spiritual sense, to let divine Principle govern our being, to live what we understand of the spiritual, and to maintain this consciousness against all else. Then we rest in divine Love's assurance.

Though this may seem a labour at the outset, if we persevere, our experiences eventually bring us to the point when spiritual values mean more to us than all else, and the labour goes out of the journey. Then "six days" we may work, but they are days which we can regard as Jacob regarded the years he had to work for his ideal, Rachel: "they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." "Love makes all burdens light."

The Seventh Day of Rest

"But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, ... therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."

How naturally, therefore, these first four Commandments end with the command to keep the sabbath day. No work was to be done on the sabbath, for in the seventh day state of consciousness power becomes grace. Jesus must have been speaking from this standpoint when he said, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

If one could restate these first four Commandments in modern terminology as scientific, spiritual facts, conveying the timeless sevenfold symbolization of God's nature, they might read thus: God's nature

- as Mind leads out of bondage to material beliefs;
- as Spirit demands adherence to its purely spiritual nature;
- as Soul demands acknowledgement of one infinite identity alone - God;
- as Principle demands obedience to its commands;

- as Life demands a continuous living proof of its ever-presence;
- as Truth demands work in order to become conscious of true manhood;
- as Love demands fulfilment, which is resting in action.

The Ten Commandments - II

(Exodus 20:12 - 17)

IN THE LAST ARTICLE in this series the first four Commandments were considered as presenting the demands of the great fundamentals of Being in all their simplicity and power. In this article we shall take the last six Commandments in their particular message of the application of spiritual fact to human experience.

This twofold manifestation of spiritual law is a very fundamental concept. The Commandments were written on two tables of stone. Jesus epitomized all ten of them in two statements - "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God ..." and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." To-day the Ten Words are commonly accepted as summarizing two standpoints - man's duty to God and his duty to his fellow man, always better paraphrased as man's relationship to God and his relationship to his fellow man. In a much larger context, are not these two standpoints the purport of the two Testaments? The Old Testament, beginning with its presentation of God's divine nature in the opening chapter of Genesis, declares the Word of God and man's relationship to it; the New Testament shows the application of that Word through the ideal consciousness or Christ. This Christ, manifest as Jesus, clearly illustrates man's relationship to his fellow man. But the works of the great Exemplar, his proofs of divine power manifest in human experience, were based firmly on this Word of God. He adjured men to obey the Commandments and to study the Scriptures, but he saw the Word of God as life itself; he recognized the great fundamentals of spiritual being as *his* very being and the life of all men. So the Word became flesh, as it were, and dwelt among men, a healing and regenerating power.

The first four Commandments have shown us man's duty to God by presenting us with the demands of the great sevenfold Principle of being. These demands insist on the fact that man's nature must be God's nature, for man is the "image and likeness" of God.

The Divine Source of All Creation

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

And now what of the last six Commandments, which are concerned

with man's duty towards his neighbour and to the universe around him? Jesus proved that this is dependent on his successfully carrying out his duty towards God, - finding his relationship to God. So much so, indeed, that opinion has been divided as to whether the fifth Commandment to "honour thy father and thy mother" should be included in duty to God or to one's neighbour. It would seem to be the pivotal Commandment between the two, embracing both relationships, for truly to honour even one's human father and mother involves a correct answer to Jesus' question, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?"

The Hebrew prophet Malachi asked, "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?" Later Jesus urged, "Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." He also implied that his mother and brethren were those who obeyed God's will.

The first requisite, then, in order to have a true relationship with oneself, as well as with one's human relatives and one's fellow man, is to reckon God or the divine Principle of the universe as the one Father and Mother of all, and indeed the source of all sonship. Is not this the great relationship that Jesus stressed over and over again? He said, "I and my Father are one," "I came forth from the Father," "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do," "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

But Jesus never claimed a divine Father unique to himself. He taught his disciples a universal prayer, which began, "*Our* Father." He constantly spoke of "*your* Father" and "*the* Father." It was this continual awareness of his divine source that enabled Jesus to demonstrate spiritual power in human experience. He consciously based his life and works on divine origin and not on human origin, and implied that we should do the same.

So here in this *fifth* Commandment are we not being bidden to base all our reckonings regarding man on the fact that the true man is the direct offspring of the one infinite Cause? This Cause is eternally creative and self-sustaining and therefore has the nature of Father, or the divine Life of all. It is also a Cause which embosoms its entire creation in a loving plan, and therefore has the nature of Mother, or the divine Love which broods over all. A divine Father and divine Mother implies a divine Son, and this Commandment, obeyed, results in true sonship and the reward of true sonship in the words, "that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

Letting the Divine Translate Human Experience

"Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal."

One might ask: But how does such a high standpoint of true relationship enter our human experience? The universe around us does not always testify to this spiritual perfection and it does not appear to be true that every man is the son of God. Interpreted spiritually, the remaining Commandments tell us how these spiritual facts can be proved in our lives, - how this divine ideal translates itself to human experience. Of course it is true that we can and should take these last five Commandments literally, for they are the basis of man's relationship to man in civilization today. But there is also a higher sense of them which, if understood, will not only enable men to obey these Commandments more easily in their literal import, but will also deal effectively with the carnal mind that would make a mockery of man's attempt to live in obedience to his highest ideal.

Take the first of these three Commandments, "Thou shalt not kill." Mercifully, the majority of mankind take this command to heart in a literal way. But if we press further back to its higher meaning, does this not adjure us to let the spiritual origin of man translate itself into the minutiae of our daily living? Often when the ultimate spiritual facts of life dawn on thought, men can become so imbued with the higher realm that they fanatically "kill" all mortal or even human impulses and desires. This is to take the attitude of a recluse or a hermit. But the great Teacher of spiritual living never did that. He lived in the world, but not of the world. He never cut off or killed any natural human development, but fulfilled every step in working out his own salvation. He even allowed himself to be baptized by John, supporting his action with the words, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

At the same time, in translating the universe around him, Jesus never "committed adultery" in the sense of mixing the human and the divine. Again, one can of course take this Commandment literally, but in its higher meaning it would seem to convey an important point in this process of translation. Jesus rendered "unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Of dishonest Pharisaical attitudes and practices he said, "Ye are of your father the devil"; on the other hand, he discerned the spirit of a pure love in the Magdalen in spite of outward appearances. He sifted from the human picture the mortal and carnal element and also traced every vestige of

good in that human picture back to the one God.

In this way he could not help but obey the third of these Commandments, "Thou shalt not steal." Again, one knows the literal meaning of this command to be all-important, but taking a more metaphysical interpretation, does not the fanatical outlook on spiritual things steal something from the working out of a full salvation? Jesus never missed out one step in the ordered way of working out the coincidence of the divine with the human. In saying to Judas at the Last Supper, "That thou doest, do quickly," Jesus was allowing every step of translation to be worked out perfectly to the glory of God.

And so Jesus did not "kill off" the human, but translated it. He did this through letting his cultured spiritual sense face up to and discern that which was of the carnal mind in human experience and that which was of God. This resulted in an ordered salvation, with every facet seen in its right place and fulfilling its proper function.

If we really understood and obeyed the spiritual import of these commands, we should also find ourselves quite naturally obeying their moral implications, but on a scientific, spiritual basis and not merely on a good human basis.

Bearing Witness to the Spiritual

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

With this true sense of spiritual translation, we cannot then "bear false witness" against our fellow man or our universe. Through this divine process of translation we begin to bear witness to the true universe, the universe of Spirit.

Literally to "bear false witness" against one's neighbour is to declare as true about him that which is false. In a higher context, then, to bear false witness against one's fellow man or the universe is to take a purely material view of them or a view that is half material and half spiritual. Jesus declared before Pilate that the whole purpose of his mission was to bear witness to the truth, the truth that he said would make men free. That truth was obviously to be found in the realm of spiritual fact. "It is the spirit that quickeneth," said Jesus; "the flesh profiteth nothing."

The Kingdom of God Within

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's."

Maintaining the spiritual facts of the universe in this way, we find the kingdom of God within us. The command not to covet anything that belongs to one's neighbour is important in its ordinary interpretation, but spiritually it must refer to cultivating that state of thought which is known as "peace of mind," where no unsatisfying sense of life makes us full of covetousness. This peace can only come when we begin to put on the Mind of Christ. This means, as we have seen, not only becoming aware of an eternal spiritual heritage, but also letting these spiritual facts so translate themselves in our human experience that they reveal the true spiritual universe operative here and now, even as Jesus proved. It is then impossible to "covet" anything, for we find that the answer to any and every problem lies at hand in the realm of thinking, in the realm of ideas.

Can we not see the implications of this Commandment in Jesus' words regarding the coming of the kingdom of God, that wonderful state that we would term "peace of mind"? He said, "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Peace of mind never comes from "outside" happenings or events, neither can those rob us of that peace. If we are allowing spiritual translation to take place in our lives, and letting the divine Spirit transform every human experience, then we shall eventually say, even as Jesus did, "I have overcome the world." In such a state of consciousness there is no place for covetousness.

A Summary

And so can we not see in this great Hebrew Decalogue a most wonderful statement of the Word of God and its operation as an eternal Christ?

Might we not sum up the Christ process discernible in the last six Commandments in this way: When we see the divine Principle as the one Father-Mother of the universe, expressing itself through a perfect Son or manifestation, we may say, "But what about human experience? Does one just cut it off because it isn't divine?" And then straightway comes the command, "No, do not kill it. Translate it. Exchange the

objects of sense for spiritual ideas. In so doing, do not mingle the divine with the human, thus committing 'adultery' but trace all evil back to the one liar and all good back to the one God. If you translate in this way, you will find the true identity which lies behind every phase of experience and no category will have its right status stolen from it." This process shows us the real universe - it bears witness to the spiritual and eternal. In this way we find a true peace of mind, the kingdom of God's ideas within us.

Every man must ponder these Ten Words for himself, but as he does, what a wealth of deep spiritual meaning and practical instruction for living he will find in them!

The Lessons of Kadesh-Barnea

(Numbers 13:17 - 14:12 and Deuteronomy 1:1 - 46)

The Opportunity to Enter the Promised Land

THE GREAT SPIRITUAL TEACHING which Moses delivered to the children of Israel from Mount Horeb was followed by eleven days' journey through the wilderness to Kadesh-Barnea. It was here that the first opportunity arose for the Israelites to enter the Promised Land, but that opportunity was not taken.

At the beginning of the Book of Deuteronomy Moses recapitulates the story of the wanderings of the children of Israel from Mount Horeb to Kadesh-Barnea and tells of their opportunity of entering the land at that point. They sent up spies to reconnoitre and the more progressive of them reported favourably and advised an immediate conquest. But the majority of the children of Israel believed there were giants to be overcome, and because they were terrified and faint-hearted, they would not go forward. Hence their wanderings in the wilderness for another thirty-eight years.

In man's journey towards the realization of his spiritual estate, the opportunity to enter the land or consciousness of spiritual dominion is constantly presenting itself. Are we taking it and going forward? Any man who has the "boldness to enter," as the Book of Hebrews says, becomes in his turn a spiritual pioneer in some individual direction. And the world needs spiritual pioneers, clear spiritual thinkers who understand the substance and reality of spiritual fact and who have the courage of their convictions, so that they base their actions upon this inspired yet logical and natural basis.

The Bible always has a message of comfort and encouragement for every stage of experience, though, and even in these wilderness wanderings the comfort is there. The story shows that whether we are able to rely boldly and completely on the spiritual facts we have learned, and so to trust them that we gain spiritual dominion quickly, or whether we become aware of the truths of these spiritual facts through the slower method of suffering a wilderness journey in human experience, the Promised Land is eventually reached. It is there for every spiritual adventurer because it is the fundamental truth of his being.

What is the Promised Land?

Let us consider for a moment what the Promised Land means in terms of spiritual development. Literally it was a land which the Israelites had to inherit by conquering certain enemies and then ruling supreme over the territory formerly governed by those enemies. Is not this an obvious symbol of man's spiritual understanding warring with and finally gaining ascendancy over mortal and finite beliefs about life, until spiritual sense rules supreme over the human picture, even as Jesus ruled supreme over his visible body after his resurrection? Ultimately Jesus ascended, which state of consciousness is more nearly symbolized by the holy city in Revelation, where John the Revelator says that he saw "no temple therein," - no body or material structure. But the Promised Land seems to symbolize a state of consciousness on the way to ascension - a state of resurrected thought which has dominion over a body formerly ruled by finite theories and beliefs.

What are the qualities necessary to inherit the Promised Land? From the account given in Chapter 1 of Deuteronomy and in other passages in the Pentateuch we can discern three states of thought to which the promise of spiritual inheritance naturally fulfils itself, and at the same time three states of mortal thought which are obviously excluded from entering the land. The promise is given to Caleb, Joshua, and the "little ones," and is withheld from the fearful, from Moses himself, and from the hypocritical type of thought.

Caleb - "As the Heart"

Caleb and Joshua were two of the men chosen to spy out the land at Kadesh-Barnea. They were the ones who knew no fear and wanted to enter straight into it. What do these two stand for in terms of states of consciousness?

The name Caleb means "as the heart," and on the few occasions when he comes into the story he is associated very much with the living spirit of Truth as opposed to the letter. The quality which Caleb typifies is that which is stressed many times at the end of Exodus when the Israelites built their tabernacle. They all brought gifts out of a "willing heart" and the women who spun the curtains had to be those "whose heart stirred them up." All their offerings for this tabernacle had to come from the heart, even as man's consciousness of spiritual reality can only be established through a pure unselfed love of the good and a genuine desire to see that good fulfilled. The Psalmist sang, "Who shall

ascend into the hill of the Lord? ... He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart." The sixth Beatitude promises, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." In fact, all through the Bible the value of that which is of the heart is emphasized. The words of comfort given to Daniel in his time of weakness and fear are lovely in this respect: "Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thy heart to understand, ... thy words are heard." When our whole heart longs to understand the infinite good and see it proved irrespective of personal aims, ambitions, and desires, then we cannot help inheriting the Promised Land of spiritual dominion. As a well-known hymn says, "How blest are they whose hearts are pure."

Joshua - "The Saviour"

In this inheritance Joshua also plays a very important part. As well as accompanying Caleb in spying out the land at Kadesh-Barnea and reporting favourably on it, he was later chosen to be the actual leader to take the children of Israel over the Jordan into the Promised Land.

Of course, the name Joshua is the same as Jesus and means "the Saviour." Whereas Moses taught the Israelites the law and shepherded them through the wilderness, it was Joshua who, after taking them across the Jordan, led them in war against their enemies and settled them in the land. The concept of "Saviour" is always associated with the Christ, and the Christ mission involves so letting spiritual facts translate themselves in human experience that man realizes his God-given selfhood here and now. It is the present realization of "Thy kingdom come." John, the beloved disciple, says of the Christ, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." The inspired Word of revelation must be seen as "God with us" in our lives right here and now, and this is the mission of that state of consciousness called Joshua or Jesus. The Promised Land could not remain an abstraction or a place to which the children of Israel were always journeying. They had to inherit it. It had to become their environment in which they lived. And Joshua brought that about.

The fact that the names Joshua and Jesus are associated with salvation gives a wonderful clue to this Christ activity, a clue in line with Jesus' declaration, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." A living sense of spiritual fact takes every phase of human experience and instead of cutting it off and destroying it, translates or saves it until the one and only divine creation is realized, with no supposition of an opposite.

So in order to inherit the Promised Land, we not only need the "Caleb" quality of a whole-hearted love of spiritual good and a pure desire to prove that good regardless of personal considerations: we also need "Joshua," the Christlike consciousness which is willing to "save" humanity through translating everything in human experience back into its original spiritual essence. These states of thought are ever valid passports into the Promised Land.

The "Little Ones"

There is yet another classification which is mentioned in the first chapter of Deuteronomy, namely, the "little ones." They, too, were to inherit the land. This is reminiscent of Jesus saying, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." The "little ones" naturally typify childlike thought, its freshness, innocence, and purity. Can one not also see these "little ones," though, as symbolizing new, young, fresh ideas, developing and growing in an ordered way until they naturally inherit the land? They can typify a sense of pure spiritual education, - from small beginnings to logical fulfilment, - and education such as Isaiah advocates when he says, "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." The facts of spiritual being seem to begin as "little ones" in our thought, but as we follow the line of light they naturally lead us to inherit the full effulgence of spiritual dominion.

Caleb, Joshua, and the "little ones" - they shall inherit the land. What a wealth of meaning there is for us in that simple prophecy, - that what wins through is a pure heart, a willingness to let the Christ come to the flesh, and the humility to accept the natural unfoldment of spiritual education.

The Three States of Thought Excluded from the Promised Land

Turning to the other side of the picture, what is it that keeps us out of our inheritance? Chapter 1 of Deuteronomy indicates three states of thought that are excluded - the fearful, the Moses state of consciousness, and the hypocritical. These appear to be the exact opposites of the positive spiritual attitudes already considered.

It is obvious that one cannot inherit spiritual dominion with a fearful heart. So much fear is ignorance, or else materiality, and so much fear

is conquered merely by going forward in a situation. Many of man's fears are imaginary. Here the children of Israel believed the land of Canaan to be inhabited by giants and that God had brought them to the land to destroy them, both of which fears were groundless. When like Caleb our whole heart embraces spiritual good and we love it above all, our fears subside; in fact, there is no room for fear. To a great extent this is illustrated in ordinary human activities. For instance, to one who loves swimming and everything to do with it, the water has no fears, whereas another individual to whom swimming has no appeal and who perhaps even dislikes the water is assailed by all kinds of fears in connection with it. Whenever we love an activity and are therefore glad to apply ourselves to it, we eventually find a natural, effortless dominion in that activity. Fear can never bring dominion. "He that feareth is not made perfect in love." But the promise forever stands that "perfect love casteth out fear" and perfect love is available to all. It is man's birthright.

The next veto concerns Moses himself. There has always been much questioning as to why he was never allowed to enter the Promised Land. It has generally been conceded that it was because he struck the rock at Meribah when the Israelites were thirsty. However this may be, it would seem to indicate that merely a sense of divine law cannot give us spiritual dominion. We need the spirit of the Christ, as we saw exemplified by Joshua. Moses is necessary - spiritual teaching, and understanding of the Word of God, is essential - but it must always yield to the Christ spirit if we are going to realize the kingdom of God here and now. Jesus said to the Jews, "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world." The living spirit of the Christ never takes the attitude of "Thou shalt not" (though that may be necessary at the outset of man's spiritual journey) but saves and delivers humanity through natural spiritual translation, and so gives life and never restriction and death. Two statements of Jesus' purpose (one stated negatively and the other positively) brim over with the life-giving nature of the Christ: "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" and "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

And finally, Deuteronomy in its first chapter indicates a third negative state of thought. It tells the story of how the Israelites, ashamed of their failure to obey God and go right into the land of Canaan at Kadesh-Barnea, finally decide they had better advance anyway, because it is God's command. But Moses is told by God to say to them, "Go not up, neither fight; for I am not among you; lest ye be

smitten before your enemies." However, they went ahead regardless of this warning, and so were destroyed by the Amorites. This confirms the Psalmist's words, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." It is no good pursuing a spiritual course merely from a sense of duty. It becomes hypocrisy. Every step of our way must be living to us. All our "little ones" must be alive, spontaneous, vital, fresh ideas - unique and real to us - or our so-called "spiritual" activity is purposeless and doomed to failure. Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" and when the very Word of God at any time *is* spirit and life to us, then we are always assured of a natural Promised Land inheritance in any particular situation.

So the incident at Kadesh-Barnea highlights the conditions of spiritual inheritance. But, as the Scriptures so often adjure us, though our God-given birthright is from eternity we have to claim it. And through what do we really claim it? Through this selfsame fact of our God-given birthright. Thus the "last" virtually becomes "first" and the "first" becomes "last." Always "it is God which worketh in [us] both to will and to do of his good pleasure." This is our eternal strength and comfort.

The Crossing of the Jordan

(Joshua 1:1 - 4:24)

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE Book of Joshua we read that the Lord told Joshua, "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them."

This passage over the Jordan is the second of the two great crossings which the Israelites had to make on their journey from the bondage of Egypt to the dominion of the promised land of Canaan. Each crossing heralded a new phase of experience for them. The first was over the Red Sea, marking their emergence from a life of slavery in Egypt to a progressive state of being travellers in a wilderness. This second crossing was over the river Jordan, again a forward move from being pilgrims in a wilderness to becoming conquerors and rulers in a new land.

These two events, so similar in type, are great in contrasts. The Red Sea passage, made in haste with an enemy pursuing the Israelites, is a very different proposition from the crossing of the Jordan, which was a considered step forward, undertaken at God's command in a quiet, ordered, logical way. Here there was no enemy behind, but rather an enemy in front that had to be intelligently conquered in order to inherit the land. At the Red Sea, great faith alone was demanded of the Israelites. At the Jordan they could rely on what they now understood of divine law after forty years of Moses' spiritual teaching and their own experiences in the wilderness.

Crossing the Jordan - A Great Turning-Point

The name "Jordan" means "descender," and whenever this river is mentioned in the Bible, it is usually at a great turning point in spiritual development. Here it marks the passage of the Israelites from the wilderness into the Promised Land. Now they were to go forward with authority and stand on what they understood of God's law, and so conquer their enemies.

Can one not see how every incident in the Scriptures, when spiritually interpreted, lives as the experience of every sincere seeker after Truth? If we take this story, for example, we can trace in it the pattern of any man's spiritual journey. He is aroused and saved from a dreary "Egyptian" bondage to materiality. Then, spurred onward by

necessity, mingled with great faith, he crosses the Red Sea and begins a wilderness passage. Here he imbibes the spiritual facts of Being, listening to God's Word whilst learning many practical lessons, though often through suffering.

But there comes a time when he is ready to cross the Jordan and to work out his life from a new standpoint. No longer is he merely a seeker for Truth, for in some measure he has found Truth. He continues to seek, but on a different basis, namely, that of standing on the spiritual truths he has discovered and looking out from these truths as constituting his very life, his natural habitat. He begins to work on the basis of these spiritual facts as being the one fundamental reality behind all things. Moreover, he lets these fundamentals govern his life in the way of God's appointing, instead of merely seeking the spiritual for the main purpose of improving his life in *his* way. Before, he was *working up* to perfection, whereas the new standpoint is *working out* from perfection.

This change of standpoint is apparent in many places where the river Jordan appears in the Bible record. For instance, in the Book of Kings it is the Jordan which those two great prophets, Elijah and Elisha, cross at the very point when Elijah's mission is yielding to Elisha's. Elijah illustrates the working up to God, whilst Elisha shows the working out from God.

Again, the river that is mentioned at the change-over point between the Old and the New Testaments is the Jordan. Here John the Baptist was found baptizing his followers in its waters before his mission yielded to the mission of Jesus. John's attitude of "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" was one of merely trying to improve the human, an initial preparatory step of working up to perfection, whilst Jesus' dynamic command, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" takes the standpoint of perfect God and perfect man as the basis of all true spiritual reckoning.

And so this river is well named Jordan, "descender," - that which typifies thought grounded in the higher level of the spiritual, and from that standpoint "descending" into the valley and working out the human picture in a divine way.

Joshua Leads Over the Jordan

What type of thought is it that leads us over the Jordan? It is Joshua, that is, "Saviour." No longer is Moses at the head. Moses, which means "to draw out," was instrumental in leading the Israelites out of

bondage, spiritually educating them, and improving their position. But Joshua takes over the leadership across the Jordan and into the Promised Land.

Both the names "Jesus" and "Joshua" mean "Saviour," and in the same way that Jesus fulfilled the mission of John the Baptist and saved and delivered men from every ill that flesh is heir to, so Joshua fulfilled the mission of Moses and led the Israelites across the Jordan into the Promised Land of spiritual dominion.

Nothing can really save and deliver but pure spiritual values. Jesus proved this. He worked on the basis, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing," and yet on this very basis he healed all manner of so-called *fleshly* ills. In proportion as we allow the realization of the spiritual as the only saviour of mankind to take possession of our consciousness, we shall cross the "Jordan" into a greater and greater measure of authority over the flesh and all its ills.

Vital Precepts for the Journey

To undertake this journey certain precepts must be obeyed, and in the Book of Joshua the opening chapters record Joshua's commission and the commands God gives him in order to take this great step successfully. He is told that God will be with him and to "be strong and of a good courage." Strength and moral courage are derived from an understanding of spiritual values. Faith may sometimes falter, but a faith that has advanced to spiritual understanding always enables us to endure.

Then Joshua is told never to depart from the law of Moses - "turn not from it to the right hand or to the left" and "to meditate therein day and night." As in any activity, if there is to be progress and dominion, it is necessary to ponder continuously the laws and rules regulating that activity. In the human sphere, men who have made great discoveries or become successful in business will tell you that they "eat, drink and sleep" with their subject. They are constantly thinking about it. Should this be any different in the realm of spiritual discovery? Jesus was a "whole-timer" in this realm. It is true that we reap the fruits of our sowing, and as Jesus himself said "for whosoever hath, to him shall be given."

Rahab the Harlot - The Demand for True Sacrifice

Running parallel always with this divine urge to go forward and live with a conscious sense of spiritual dominion is the willingness to lay down *our* way and *our* outlining of life. And one senses that the story of Rahab the harlot, which is inserted in Chapter 2 of Joshua, immediately preceding the actual crossing of the Jordan, is a wonderful illustration of just this process.

Rahab lived in Jericho, the first town in enemy territory. Its name means "the city of palm trees," and it was the storehouse for Jerusalem. It symbolizes a limited, mortal sense of reckoning life, with all its fleeting pleasures and accumulating pains. But Rahab lives "on the wall." This would indicate that she was looking out from Jericho, typifying thought that is weary of the senseless round of material thinking which just turns in upon itself. Indeed, "Rahab" means "large and extended" or "broad." It is Rahab who receives the spies sent ahead by the children of Israel, houses them, keeps their coming secret from the King of Jericho, and finally trusts these spies to save her and her family when the Israelites eventually return to capture the city. For this purpose she is to mark her house by a scarlet thread in the window, which Scofield says "speaks, by its colour, of safety through sacrifice."

A harlot is often used as a positive symbol in the Scriptures, and in fact there are three harlots in the line of Jesus. Positively, it seems to typify thought that is big and broad and no longer content to wed itself to a stereotyped and conservative material outlook. Rahab took in the two spies, the advancing spiritual idea. It was new to her. It was likely to destroy the city in which she lived. It was going to change her life. She had to trust it. And she did.

When a great step forward dawns on us, are we Rahab? Do we count the cost, or do we open the door and welcome the advanced guard of spiritual progress? Do we then give it continuous lodgment and trust it to care for us in *its* way, although this may mean a new life for us? The scarlet thread in the window symbolizes the sacrifice of narrow, rigid, conservative ways of thinking and living that the Rahabs are willing to make for the onward march of spiritual progress.

The Ark Leads the Way

And so, with the spiritual urge to go forward on one hand, and the willingness to lay aside our material reservations on the other, we are ready for progress.

Chapters 3 and 4 of Joshua tell of the actual passing over Jordan. One of the main points about this crossing is that the ark of the covenant of the Lord, carried by the priests, precedes the Israelites. They must follow the ark.

As soon as the feet of the priests who bear the ark rest in the waters of Jordan, they divide, even as the waters of the Red Sea divided, and there is dry ground. Then the priests bearing the ark are commanded to stand firm on dry land in the midst of Jordan until everyone is clean passed over.

In the Red Sea passage there was no ordered advance as there is here. There the Israelites appear to have gone over in a mass, pursued by the enemy. Also, waters divided when the *body* of people started across, but here it was when the *priests'* feet touched the waters of Jordan.

What significance have the ark and the priests? The ark housed the testimony, the Commandments, - those Commandments which, as we have seen, reveal the Word of God and its forever translation to mankind through an eternal Christ. The priests were in charge of the holy things and bore the ark. So may not their place with the ark at the head of this procession mean that what leads us forward to this new standpoint is an inspired sense of what God is and what He does for man, - a real and intelligent grasp of God's nature and how it operates in human experience? If we never lose sight of this, it will enable us to go forward safely.

How lovely are the words God gives to Joshua to tell his priests - "Ye shall stand still in Jordan." So often in a transitional stage, when spiritual progress is urging us to leave an old landmark and accept the new, we need to trust our spiritual sense and "stand still in Jordan." There is always a time to advance and a time to stand still, and standing still in "the midst of Jordan" gives the sense of that balanced outlook which is aware of the divine fact and the human need, - mid-way between the Promised Land and the wilderness. There is no sense of fanaticism and no dimming of spiritual vision, but rather the calm realization that there is a safe and certain way of coincidence between the human and the divine.

Two Memorials Signifying the Operation of a Changeless Principle

A song of deliverance follows the crossing of the Red Sea, but here at the Jordan, after their passage, Joshua is told by God to erect in Gilgal a memorial of twelve stones. These were to be taken from the

midst of Jordan in the place where the priests' feet stood firm and were to be carried over by a man from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Joshua also had to set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan.

What are these twelve? This number was always used in the Bible as a symbol of divine government and its universal range, possibly stemming from the twelve signs of the Zodiac, believed to control the destinies of men and nations. The twelve tribes of Israel are symbolic of the workings of the divine Principle through every state and stage of universal thought. Likewise the twelve disciples. The emphasis is on the workings or activity of a changeless Principle in an infinite range of universal experience.

It would seem that at this point in our journey, no longer is our move forward merely an act of faith or an isolated experience; it is a step taken on the basis of understanding the workings of a divine Principle. Those workings are the permanent operation of a changeless Principle which can be used by anyone at any time.

There were two memorials of twelve stones erected, one in the promised land of Gilgal, which means "a circle," and one in the midst of Jordan. The divine Principle of all being stands to be used absolutely and relatively - both in the realm of eternal spiritual values and in the relative "time-world" where these divine facts meet every human need. The waters of Jordan roll back on this "time-world" memorial - human experience comes and goes - but the underlying divine Principle of the universe nevertheless remains firmly there to be used. Many waters have flowed over Jesus' supreme demonstration for humanity, but his Principle and its operation still stand to be rediscovered and used over and over again by any sincere spiritual seeker.

And so we journey on. True, the Promised Land is not ours all at once; enemies must be met and conquered, but with a new standpoint they begin to be intelligently defeated, until at length man rules over the beliefs of material existence with a greater sense of dominion and authority.

The Conquest of the Land of Canaan

(Joshua 5:1 - 11:23)

IN THEIR JOURNEY TO THE PROMISED LAND the children of Israel at length left the wilderness and crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan, even as every man in his spiritual journey finds himself inevitably crossing over to a new standpoint, namely that of looking out from the spiritual as the great fundamental fact of being, rather than looking towards it as a far-off goal. But this does not mean that immediately all one's problems are solved and that from then on man has a rosy pathway. There are enemies to be conquered and victories to be gained before ruling unchallenged in the Promised Land.

The Book of Joshua presents an idealized picture of these victories, portraying the Israelites as assured conquerors, sweeping into the land of Canaan with one victory after another. The Book of Judges, on the other hand, although it relates much the same story, does not do so in such an idealized form. Joshua gives the ideal pattern of conquest in the journey from sense to Soul, whilst Judges illustrates the picture as it is so often worked out in human experience. But, whether the attainment of dominion in the Promised Land is realized through positive spiritual knowledge, - through understanding the spiritual Science of being, - or through man's experiences impelling him to such a knowledge, which is often a suffering way, both Books show that the same end is achieved, for salvation is inevitable, since God is good and the only fundamental power.

Preparation for Conquest

In Chapter 5 of the Book of Joshua we read of the preparations that Joshua made before going forward to conquer the Canaanite enemies. His very first act after crossing the Jordan was to circumcise the children of Israel. When a man goes forward on a higher spiritual basis, he needs to establish consciously in thought the reliability of the spiritual and that it is the great fundamental substance of all life. Is not this the true meaning of circumcision? Paul writes, "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Moreover, at this point also, the Israelites keep the Passover, which is the same kind of symbolism - abstaining from fleshly beliefs and partaking of spiritual concepts. It is interesting that it is recorded here that the manna now

ceased and the children of Israel ate of the corn of the land. No longer does inspiration come in a miraculous way, but one is fed naturally by taking in the truths that lie all around, for spiritual inspiration gradually becomes the natural, intelligent atmosphere of one's being and one sees "sermons in stones, and good in everything."

One more encouraging event took place before the Israelites went forward to conquer Jericho. This is described as Joshua seeing a vision of "a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand." In answer to Joshua's question, "Art thou for us or for our adversaries?" he replied, "Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come ... Loose thy shoe from off thy foot: for the place whereon thou standest is holy." The conviction comes that whatever we have to meet, the battle is not our personal responsibility. Divine power is behind us, and if we loose our sense-based outlook (symbolized by the shoe), we shall realize that man forever stands on a spiritual foundation, a divine basis.

The Conquest of Jericho

And so we go forward to conquer Jericho, the first enemy. Jericho was known as the city of palm trees. It was a storehouse of material goods, and as such it seems to stand for mortal existence with its pleasures and pains and material ways of reckoning life. In the parable of the good Samaritan the man who fell among thieves was on his way to Jericho - which throws light on why he was robbed and beaten up. Man always is in trouble when he leaves "Jerusalem" for "Jericho."

Here the Bible records that Jericho was "straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in." What an apt description of this mortal basis of reckoning once something spiritual approaches! The material outlook appears dead and limited and confined. How did Joshua conquer it? He was commanded by God to encompass the city with his men seven times without making any sound with the voice - only the trumpets were to blow - and then on the seventh day they were all to shout with their voices and the walls would fall down flat.

The interesting thing is the ordered way in which the host had to walk round the city. They were divided into four companies. First, the men of war; then, seven priests blowing their trumpets. These were followed by the ark, and finally all the people brought up the rear. Is not this the way that any one of us conquers the "Jericho" of a mortal basis of reckoning life with all its limitations and restrictions? First, we

must be prepared to stand up to it and fight, - we must be "men of war." This attitude, though, needs to be backed up by an active spiritual understanding. The seven priests blowing their trumpets are a very trenchant symbol of the active declaration of Truth in all its completeness (which is the significance of the "seven"). Behind this is the realization of the safety and peace of the all-encompassing divine plan, symbolized by the ark. To the Israelites the ark represented the presence of God with them, and in the conquest of our Jerichos we need this quiet, satisfied realization of "God with us," supporting our forward moves. Finally, the people bringing up the rear signify that everything in us must follow and support the highest motives that we have. Our whole self must be in the scale.

When the band were encompassing the city, the command was, "Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout." The seven priests blowing their trumpets was to be the only sound. Does not this indicate that the voice of Truth, declaring spiritual facts, should be the only utterances that one can allow in dealing with a mortal and limited sense of things?

On the seventh day the command came from Joshua, "Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city." And when they shouted, the walls fell down flat and every man went up "straight before him." The seventh day state of consciousness is always that wherein we fully realize that God is all and evil is nothing. And then not only do the trumpets of Truth continue sounding, but our whole being resounds in one concerted response. The Psalmist expressed this whole-hearted attitude when he sang, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and *all that is within me*, bless His holy name." Man's conscious being at this point responds fully to his Creator.

The promise was that when the walls fell down flat, "the people shall ascend up every man straight before him." This is a comforting promise, indicating that if we follow the divinely ordered pattern of conquest, we do not have to submit to a long battle. The Israelites did not even have to fight the inhabitants of Jericho. It was a "walk-over." And they conquered the town solely through obedience to God's spiritual requirements. The Scofield Bible comments on this incident: "The central truth here is that spiritual victories are won by means and upon principles utterly foolish and inadequate in the view of human wisdom."

In the ensuing destruction of Jericho, the harlot Rahab was saved. Rahab lived in Jericho, but she had her house on the wall. She seems to typify thought that is weary of the mortal and is alert enough and big

enough to recognize the spiritual and its value, for she had welcomed and assisted the children of Israel when they came as spies to Jericho before crossing the Jordan. And so she and her household were saved. In the destruction of "Jericho," nothing is ever wiped out that has any upward tendency. How comforting it is to realize that the *least* vestige of Truth is always preserved.

One of the commands given to the Israelites after the destruction of Jericho was that they must keep themselves "from the accursed thing," which meant that they were not allowed to appropriate any of the spoils of victory. What could not be burned was to be dedicated to God. It is surely true that if after a spiritual victory we take anything unto ourselves in the way of self-glorification or pride of achievement, it becomes a snare to us, as it did in this case. How wise it is to let the errors and evils be burned and give to God the praise for all the richness of good that comes from such an experience.

The Conquest of Ai

The very next city in the path of the Israelites was Ai, which meant a "mass" or "heap" and would seem to stand for the false ego, a material sense of identity which always tends to build itself up into an impenetrable mass. At first the Israelites tried to conquer Ai and were defeated. Then it was discovered that they were weakened and their efforts frustrated by the fact that one of their number, Achan, had secretly taken of "the accursed thing." At the outset Joshua's attitude towards the destruction of Ai reveals the error of relying partly on God and partly on man's belief in his mortal ego. He said, "Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few." He did not put his all into the battle, but was half-hearted. When one is consciously aware that there is only one power at work, then one puts everything into the scale of that one. Jesus was deeply conscious of the fact that "I can of mine own self do nothing" and that "the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works." Therefore he never held back any part of himself in his allegiance to this one power, and so gained victory after victory.

Achan's sin had to be uncovered and destroyed before the Israelites could go forward and conquer Ai. The ultimate destruction of Ai is a story of victory gained by placing troops behind and in front - behind in ambush and in front to draw out the enemy and so encircle and destroy them. Is not this what Jesus did when he allowed the Jews to

crucify him? He drew the enemy out, but because all his life he had been resolving the belief that his true identity was ever imprisoned in matter, he had "troops" behind as well as before, and so the enemy was surrounded and defeated.

Building an Altar of Whole Stones

It is an interesting detail that at this point in the story of the conquest of Canaan, Joshua paused and built an altar of whole stones. And it was an altar "over which no man hath lift up any iron" - it had to be of natural stone, not chiselled with any tool.

As we push forward and inherit the land of spiritual dominion, we often need to pause and build an altar of whole stones, - re-establish the spiritual facts in our consciousness. But this must always be according to fresh, God-given, individual inspiration and not according to some set formula which has been chiselled or pre-digested.

Dealing with the Gibeonites

And so we go forward to meet the Gibeonites. Gibeon means "that which is lifted up or the elevation of iniquity." It would seem to indicate hypocrisy and shows how we are fooled by the good human sense which is not based on the spiritual, but is morality on a merely human basis. It deceives us as these Gibeonites deceived the Israelites, putting on old garments and old shoes, pretending they came from a long distance, and requesting the Israelites to make a league with them. Joshua made such a league. Then when their real identity was uncovered, he did not destroy them, but followed the advice of the princes who said, "Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation."

Is not this the rightful place of moral values? They may deceive us by claiming equal place with the spiritual, but sooner or later we recognize them for what they are and see their true usefulness. Spiritual sense never destroys them, but makes these qualities into servants of the spiritual.

Five Kings Attempt to Destroy Gibeon

There was a wonderful sequel to this happening, for immediately afterwards five kings of Canaan arose and attempted to destroy Gibeon and its inhabitants. The Gibeonites appealed to Joshua to save them, which he did, and then he went on to dispose of these five kings.

As soon as the moral becomes the servant of the spiritual, it is safe. When the five physical senses - the five kings of Canaan - arise to try and destroy the true moral sense, it has its appeal to the spiritual and is saved. Is there not a wonderful lesson in this? For instance, it could mean to us that if we want to preserve a lovely friendship, we must let it be subordinate to the spiritual, and then when something based on the five physical senses wants to destroy it, its spiritual basis will preserve it. The same rule applies to all that is dear to us in human experience.

Final Destruction

And so Joshua defeated these five kings. Then he conquered six enemy cities and overthrew the kings of the North, until at the end of Chapter 11 the Bible record states, "And the land rested from war."

Joshua's latter victories are recorded briefly, but reading them as symbolism one can trace step by step the intelligent destruction of the carnal mind and its lies.

Jesus declared, "I came not to send peace, but a sword." He also said, "My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." And it is true that if we desire to experience peace and realize our God-given dominion here and now, we must be willing to fight with spiritual weapons and see through the wiles of the devil until with Jesus we can say, "I have overcome the world."

The Judges of Israel - I

From Ehud to Gideon

(Judges 1:1 - 8:35)

WHEN THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL first entered the Promised Land, they were ruled by judges. These judges were men who arose through natural spiritual choice to rule the Israelites in their new land. They came from no organized hierarchy, no priestly dynasty, but were, as Scofield states, "the spiritual ancestors of the prophets; that is to say, men raised up of God, the theocratic King, to represent Him in the nation." He adds that "not one of the chosen deliverers had anything whereof to glory in the flesh." This is consistent with all the circumstances and events concerned with the children of Israel entering the Promised Land, for nothing was accomplished through humanly accepted means or advantages.

The Book of Judges illustrates government through the rule of individual spiritual sense in its spontaneous operation, rather than government through the organized institution of a monarchy with kings ruling by reason of fleshly descent.

Man's Christ Selfhood as a Judge

The Book of Judges records seven apostasies of the children of Israel when they departed from the purity of their spiritual allegiance and took on foreign gods, and seven deliverances, when they were brought back to the pure spiritual values which were their very birth-right. The comfort of this Book lies in the repeated assurance one derives from its story that the spiritual selfhood of man is finally irresistible, and that no matter how far he may stray from the divine ideal, there is always salvation for him, since good is the fundamental reality of his being. Time and again the Israelites lapse, get into difficulties, and in their distress call upon the Lord. And each time a judge arises and delivers them.

The journey of the children of Israel to the Promised Land symbolizes the journey of any spiritual seeker to a state of consciousness where he both knows and feels the safety and satisfaction of his status as the son of God. As the monotheistic Israelites ruled in the land of Canaan, so the spiritual seeker, understanding the one divine Principle of all being, at length rules over the trials and tribulations of the flesh. How often he lapses, though, even on the threshold of such a state of dominion. And how reassuring to realize that man's Christ

selfhood is a mighty force that irresistibly arises to save and deliver him directly he turns towards the spiritual with real desire.

Deliverance here is always through a judge. Is not this quality of true judgment that which saves us when we are tempted to fall away from our spiritual standard? There can be no true judgment without a standard, and the standard of man is his spiritual status of being God's image and likeness with all the dominion and fruitfulness which this implies. This great fact has to be proved, however, in human experience. And such a process involves continual judgment - not judgment on a humanly moral basis, but a constant awareness of and obedience to man's higher selfhood, his Godlike identity.

What judges? It is the office of the Christ to judge, for the Christ declares the true facts of God and at the same time intelligently exposes and rejects the carnal mind's lies. Jesus said, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son ... and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." The Father - the divine Principle of all being - can know no judgment, even as the principle of arithmetic knows only the correct computations. But the student has to work them out, and his ability to "judge" in such matters is the result of his intelligent understanding of the changeless arithmetical principle. Similarly, the stupendous life-problem has to be wrought out by every man, even as Jesus wrought it out.

Jesus' ability to judge righteous judgment in every situation was due to his conscious awareness and understanding of his Christ selfhood. And the Christ selfhood of every sincere seeker will always arise as a judge and deliver him, for the divinity of man is the reality of man.

Ehud - "He That Praises"

As one takes in detail the story of the judges of Israel, one sees how each judge who arises has a unique mission of deliverance, even as the arguments of the carnal mind which claim to induce man to sickness or sin are met by a specific spiritual truth. For instance, when it is related in Chapter 3, that the children of Israel have lapsed and are in bondage to Eglon, King of Moab, it is Ehud who delivers them. Moab always has the significance of thought that turns in upon itself in a self-absorbed way, for the Moabites were the descendants of Lot's incestuous marriage with his own daughters. Eglon means "a circle," which, used in a negative context, as here, implies an enclosed, inward-turning attitude. He is destroyed by Ehud, whose name means "he that praises." Praise in its true sense is always an outward expression. The

quality of real, unselfed praise has the power to deliver thought from turning inward, absorbed in self.

Though the story of Eglon and Ehud as told by the Scriptural writers is a somewhat gory one, how transformed and helpful it becomes when seen as the destruction of self-absorption through the awakening of man's Christ selfhood in its spirit of outward vision and true praise - looking for, seeing, and rejoicing in the spiritual good that is reflected everywhere.

Deborah - "A Bee"

In the next chapter in Judges we read of Deborah, the first woman judge. Again, here is a specific answer to a specific problem. The Israelites were in bondage to Jabin, King of Canaan, whose captain of his host was Sisera. Jabin means "he that builds" and Sisera "array." Jabin dwelt in Hazor ("enclosed") and Sisera in Harosheth ("silence" or "deafness"). From the meanings of these four names and from the story that follows, it would appear that the enemy here is the state of thought that is not merely self-absorbed, but is concerned with building up the false ego, mentally arraying the mortal personality in impressive attire, deaf to the demands or interests of its fellow-man. It is the aggressive, bullying type of false manhood, which claims to influence men and nations. That which arises to deal with it is Deborah, a woman judge.

Deborah means "a bee" - at first sight a strange meaning. And yet, pondering more deeply, how apt is this symbolism of a bee in connection with the qualities of true womanhood, with its selflessness and universality and the ability of those qualities to deal with the self-aggrandizement and inflated ego of false manhood. The Encyclopedia Britannica says of the bee colony that its "wonderful condition of law and order ... has made the bee community a model of good government for all mankind ... The mission of the worker-bee is *work*; not so much for itself as for the younger members of the community to which it belongs ... it is a model of socialism in an ideal form, possessing nothing of its own yet toiling unceasingly for the good of all." Truly a sweet symbol of universal love in practical operation.

At the time of their enslavement to Jabin, the children of Israel went up to Mount Ephraim to Deborah for judgment. Man, enslaved by egotism, with its self-glorification and pride, frees himself by turning to the true womanhood qualities of selflessness, meekness, universality, and love. Yet Deborah does not operate alone. She calls on Barak

("lightning") to make war with Sisera. To be able to deal with the aggressive tendencies of the carnal mind, there must be the balance of womanhood and manhood qualities. Alert action and intelligence must accompany patience and love. A sense of the true status of man gives to meekness a quiet, irresistible strength.

Thus, together, Deborah and Barak defeat Sisera, the final blow being dealt him by yet another woman - Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. Again, taken literally, this story is a crude one, as recorded in the Book of Judges, for it relates that Jael killed Sisera by smiting a nail into his temples. But read symbolically, with spiritual inspiration, the smiting of Sisera in his temples, even as David smote Goliath in his temples, illustrates how true womanhood divests the bombastic, puffed-up nature of the carnal mind of its claim to intelligence and power.

Gideon - "Great Warrior"

The next judge who arises is Gideon, a type of true manhood. His name means "great warrior," and he was to deliver Israel from the Midianites, by whom they had been overrun. Midian means "contention," and the Midianites were wandering tribes who were not actually inhabitants of Canaan, but were marauders. Is this not symbolic of the type of thought that is unstable and full of contentiousness? Because it has no fundamental stability, it is always arguing for or against something, but never from any established basis. Certainly there must arise true manhood to deal with this state of thought, true manhood with its rocklike, certain fundamentally principled nature. Gideon was a "great warrior," but he did not just "contend" with the enemy. His basis was utter reliance on a spiritual Principle.

The Call of Gideon

When the "angel of the Lord" first came to Gideon to arouse him to his mission, he was threshing wheat by the winepress. Part of Webster's definition of "thresh" is "to go over again and again in the manner of threshing grain" - a wonderful symbol of the consistent threshing out of spiritual values from the chaff of unstable material beliefs. That quiet pondering of the Word of God which develops into cultured spiritual sense is the quality that in a time of instability and uncertainty comes to man's aid and delivers him from his enemies.

At first when Gideon is urged by God to arise and save Israel from

the Midianites, he demurs, on the grounds of his family being poor and that he is "the least" in his father's house. But God says, "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." How often one feels that sense of inadequacy when the call comes to defeat some aspect of the carnal mind, but when one realizes that power does not depend on the human personality, but on the ideas of God as they exist in the Principle of being, then one can go forward and trust their infallible operation in spite of everything. What is this "one man" that gains the victory but man in the image and likeness of God? Is this not the only man who has unlimited power? And this man must be of the nature of spiritual idea.

Divine Preparation for Battle

In the actual defeat of the Midianites, Gideon has to prove still further the power of spiritual idea steadfastly maintained over the hordes of contentious beliefs that claim to sweep over everything. At the beginning of Chapter 7 it is recorded that God said to Gideon, "The people that are with thee are too many to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me." This victory was going to prove that there is no safety in numbers. It doesn't matter how many specious arguments and baseless "contentions" are arrayed against the spiritual Truth, the steadfast consciousness of true manhood must prevail. It was the same type of lesson that Elijah was afterwards to learn when he saw that God was not in the whirlwind, the earthquake, or the fire, but in the "still small voice."

Here Gideon was told to reduce his numbers systematically. First, all who were afraid were commanded to return. One can never gain a spiritual victory without the courage to go forward. Second, a test was imposed upon the remaining men whereby they were all brought down to the water to drink. The ones who bowed down to drink were not chosen for the battle, but the ones who "lapped, putting their hand to their mouth," went forward with Gideon to victory over the Midianites. The Bible Commentaries throw light on this incident, for they say that the enemy were directly across the river, and those men who thought of nothing but assuaging their thirst were the ones who rushed straight to the water and bowed down to drink, averting their eyes from watching the enemy. Those who lifted the water up to their mouths, drank whilst keeping a wary eye on their opponents.

Does not this incident bring out that the meeting of the human need

is not the be-all and end-all in any battle? True, our human need should be met in every situation, but let us not be so absorbed by that aspect that we pay little heed to the real enemy, the carnal mind, which is "enmity against God." Only if we are alert to its purpose and movements can we go forward to final victory. The three hundred men who lapped symbolize thought so spiritually resurrected that it is awake to the enemy, whilst also experiencing the meeting of the human need.

Victory Through God's Means and Methods

Gideon finally routed the enemy in a battle which was fought by most unusual means, as indeed so many of the Israelites' battles were. His men were divided into three companies and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers and lamps inside the pitchers. When Gideon blew with his trumpet, then the men were to blow their trumpets, break their pitchers, and let the lamps shine forth. And they were to shout, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." They did this and the enemy were confounded and destroyed one another.

Here is a wonderful symbol of the divine process of destroying the carnal mind's lies. As we saw in the fall of Jericho, the trumpets always stand for the declaration of Truth, the clear statements of Truth. And in any situation we need to know the definite, clear-cut truth regarding it. The pitchers are symbols of individual life. One could think of them as each man's pitcher containing an individual sense of life. But here the men were required to break them open and let the light of Love shine forth. And this process of sounding the trumpet and then breaking the pitcher so that the light within shines forth and confounds the enemy is surely the pattern for any spiritual victory. We often see and declare the spiritual truth about a situation which confronts us, but the next step is to break open our pitcher of life and let that truth operate in our lives in the way of God's appointing. If we have this willingness, it will always bring the light of Love and a great victory.

Gideon's victories led the people finally to say, "Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also." But Gideon was truly wise and answered them, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you." His whole mission has been one of proving that "one on God's side is a majority" and that of his own self he could do nothing.

What lessons one can learn from this Book of Judges of the power of man's innate Christ selfhood to arise and deliver him in every situation.

The Judges of Israel - II

Abimelech and Jephthah

(Judges 9:1 - 12:7)

FOLLOWING THE STORY of that great spiritual warrior, Gideon, the Book of Judges tells of two rulers who arise in contrast to one another, first Abimelech, and then Jephthah.

Abimelech illustrates the attempt to govern through human will and its inevitable fatal results, whereas Jephthah shows the necessity of letting God govern, and being willing to lay down all human desires in order to defeat the enemies to true progress.

Abimelech Forces Himself as Ruler

At the time when Abimelech arose, the Israelites had lapsed from their spiritual standard and had gone "a whoring after Baalim and made Baal-berith their God." Before they could repent and return to the one God, Abimelech forced himself into the position of ruler by killing off his seventy brothers, all except Jotham the youngest, who hid himself. Abimelech made his excuse for this violent deed in the form of a question to the men of Shechem, "Whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal [Gideon], which are threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you?" Here was an obvious attempt to create a dictatorship, which always involves the unbridled use of human will.

Abimelech was not content with being merely a judge, and in Chapter 9, verse 6, we read that they "made Abimelech king." This was quite out of keeping with the rulership of Israel at that time. The judges arose through natural spiritual selection, whereas the kingship, which was a later form of government into which the Israelites lapsed, involved hereditary rule and an organized sense, which was foreign to the highest spiritual convictions of the children of Israel. Their government was most naturally a theocracy and not a kingdom ruled by personal kings.

The Fable of the Trees

Jotham means "perfection of the Lord," that which sees the Godlike answer to a situation. When he heard of his brother Abimelech being made king, he went up to Mount Gerizim, the mount of blessing, and

related to the Israelites the lovely and significant fable of the trees, which begins, "The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?"

The same request was made to the fig tree and to the vine, and they replied in like manner. But finally, when all the trees invited the bramble to reign over them, it said, "If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon." Jotham's fable illustrated just what had taken place, likening Abimelech, with his upstart claims, to the bramble.

There is a lovely lesson to be seen in this tale of the trees. It illustrates how every idea in creation has its distinct individuality. It brings forth fruit that is natural to it. If it would try to take on an individuality that does not belong to it, it would lose its own fruit.

In any question of government, - whether in nations, communities, or families, - it is always essential to remember this, for true government involves the natural expression of individuality and a respect for this. There is no true oneness in any aspect of government until men appreciate the value of each individual expression within the whole. A dictionary definition of "harmony" puts this aspect clearly: "Completeness and perfection resulting from diversity in unity." Paul stressed this very point when he wrote in I Corinthians, Chapter 12, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord." The entire chapter emphasizes the value of individual expression within the whole, taking the body as an illustration - "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ."

What a wonderful thing it is to realize that there is a divine plan and that every individual has his unique expression in that plan. He does not have to push and pull to find it, but he finds it primarily through his conscious awareness that he *has* a unique destiny. It is not a question of fatalism, however. Because the plan is fundamentally spiritual and entirely good, the definiteness of man's individuality is based on the certainty that every expression of the divine Principle of the universe has a unique spiritual purpose, which is entirely positive and good. This can work itself out in human experience through a variety of ways, but the *spiritual purpose* is definite and will always be fulfilled, no matter what the human circumstances may be.

In this fable it was the bramble that falsely exalted itself - the

bramble that is wild and runs everywhere, and never grows high enough or thick enough to afford shade, yet proudly invites others to trust in its shadow. Because this type of unstable, ambitious thought cannot fulfil its promises, it invariably destroys itself and others along with it - fire comes out of the bramble and devours the cedars of Lebanon. Is this not what eventually happens with all evil dictatorships if not checked? They run wild over everything and everyone and finally destroy themselves and all who have trusted in them.

Abimelech's Downfall

Abimelech reigned three years and then "the men of Shechem dealt treacherously" with him and a man called Gaal arose and joined himself to these men of Shechem. Gaal means "contempt, abomination, rejection," and it is true that when a dictatorship begins to get the upper hand in any form of government, there gradually arises among the community a feeling of "contempt" for such authoritarian dealings. They are held in "abomination" by many and there is a movement to "reject" them. But Gaal was not successful, for mere contempt and disgust with the evil results of human will are not sufficient to deal with such results. Negative reactions can never deal with negative impulses. Only positive good can make any impact.

Abimelech's end did eventually come, however, and it immediately followed on from Gaal's rebellion. What was it that overcame him? Two factors. One, a strong tower at Thebez, and two, a "certain woman" who "cast a piece of a millstone upon" him. Abimelech encamped against Thebez, which means "fine linen or silk." All the men and women of this city had gone up into the top of a strong tower. Does this not symbolize an uplifted state of spiritual thought? So often in the Bible a tower is used in this way. And from this tower a "certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all to brake his skull." Just as the qualities of true womanhood destroyed Sisera, so here ambition, pride, and human will are destroyed, first by uplifting thought beyond "contempt, abomination, rejection" to higher spiritual values, and then by using the "woman" qualities of watchfulness and steadfastness.

The symbolism in these early stories is often crude, but nevertheless behind it can be discerned the eternal truths of Being.

Jephthah - "He That Opens"

The story continues with two more judges arising, Tola and Jair, and then Jephthah the Gileadite, who is in complete contrast to Abimelech.

Jephthah means "he that opens," and he seems to typify thought that is open and willing to serve God and to let God's will be done, instead of using human will.

Jephthah was the son of a harlot, even as Abimelech was the son of a concubine. Harlotry in the Bible is sometimes used as a negative symbol and sometimes as a positive one. Negatively, it gives a sense of unlicensed freedom, as in Abimelech's case, but positively it typifies that which rebels against rigid conservatism and operates spontaneously in obedience to the spiritual. This was vividly illustrated with Rahab of Jericho and again here with Jephthah, who was the outcome of this type of thought.

Jephthah Rejected and Then Recalled

Like Abimelech, Jephthah had brethren, but instead of killing them, as Abimelech did, and making himself king, his brothers thrust *him* out of their father's house, and he went and dwelt in the land of Tob. Later, however, when the Ammonites attacked Israel, the elders of Gilead sent for Jephthah to come and help them. Jephthah eventually agreed, with the proviso that if he defeated the enemies of Israel he would be made their head. This is quite a different proposition from Abimelech, who made himself head through sheer human will and without any justification. Here leadership was dependent on victory over the Ammonites. The Ammonites were descendants of Lot, who had children by his own daughters, and therefore they always stand for self-centred, finite beliefs of material existence with their claims to limit man through sin, sickness, and death.

The rejection of Jephthah and his hurried recall is very typical of the human mind. In times of prosperity it would reject thought that is open to the spiritual and wants to do only God's will, but when an enemy arises in the form of limitation to the point of death, it would hastily turn to this spiritual sense of life with its unlimited, divine idealism. But the spiritual is not just a power to be used in time of trouble. Jesus was always very insistent on this fact. He uncovered the error of being attracted towards the spiritual through love of "the loaves and fishes." He also told the disciples not to rejoice that the devils were subject unto

them, but rather rejoice because their names were written in heaven. Therefore Jephthah insisted that if he defeated the Ammonites he must be acknowledged as the head of Israel. We cannot just use spiritual values when we are in difficulties. If they are the fundamentals of being, the fundamentals of *life* itself, do we not need to acknowledge their kingship always whatever the human circumstances?

The Israelites agreed to make Jephthah head if he conquered the Ammonites and so he returned to Mizpeh, where he communed with God. He always had this close sense of relationship with his divine source. First Jephthah tried to parley with the enemy, but finally he was forced to fight them. Before this took place, however, it is recorded that the "Spirit of the Lord" came upon him. The whole story is so different from the experience of Abimelech, who pushed forward with human will to gain his own ends, and never waited for the "Spirit of the Lord," - the divine will.

Jephthah's Vow

At this point Jephthah made a vow that if God delivered the children of Ammon into his hands, whatever came forth out of the doors of his house to meet him when he returned, he would sacrifice to God. He did defeat the Ammonites, and when he returned home it was his only daughter who came out of the house to greet him "with timbrels and with dances." Jephthah was grieved beyond measure, but he told his daughter of his vow. She agreed that he must keep it, and so this virgin maid was sacrificed to God.

If one merely took this story literally, it would be a cruel and devastating act, but if we take the spirit of its symbolism is it not telling us that spiritual victories often demand the sacrifice of a cherished human ideal? Obviously this does not mean the death of someone we love, but the setting aside of some value on a merely human basis, for Jephthah's daughter was sacrificed to God. To sacrifice anything to God always meant giving up something that belonged to one personally and granting it to God as a gift. In a practical way we can think of it as giving up reckoning intelligence, government, or power, for instance, as belonging to us personally and granting it to God, reckoning all things as emanating from the great First Cause. And so if we sacrifice our most cherished human ideal to God, we are really reckoning God as the Creator and Father of all idealism, and laying down our personal claim to it as originator or protector.

And so Jephthah saved Israel from the Ammonites through reliance on God alone, and he judged Israel for six years.

The maintenance of true individuality is such an important factor in man's experience, and do not these two incidents show, firstly, that it cannot be forced in a personal way? Such an attempt leads to rebellion and desolation. Secondly, that if man is willing to follow the divine will and sacrifice a merely human sense of values, his true individuality is irresistible?

The Judges of Israel - III

Samson

(Judges 13:1 - 16:31)

OF ALL THE ISRAELITE JUDGES the last is the best known. He is, of course, Samson, a name that means "distinguished, strong;" indeed it is Samson's legendary strength, which lay in his seven locks of hair, that has made his name synonymous with strength even today.

The Birth of Samson

Unlike the history of the other judges, the prophetic writers record Samson's life from birth to death. And in many respects it has a curious analogy with the life of Jesus, though the whole story is crude in comparison with the gracious yet dynamic operation of the Christ which the Master illustrated. Samson was forceful and rough, for he seemed to lack the womanhood qualities of Jesus. Perhaps this accounts for his great desire for womanhood throughout his life.

Samson was born of promise and typifies a progressive idea of Truth. His mother had been barren until an angel came and told her that she would conceive a child and that he would be a Nazarite, which meant, among other things, that he must never shave off his hair.

At the time of his birth the Israelites were in the hands of the Philistines, their persistent enemies. Samson spent his life dealing with them, though in a rather unorthodox manner.

Samson Seeks a Philistine Bride

Samson's very first action was to go down to the Philistines, where he saw a woman in Timnath whom he wanted to marry.

Now, the Philistines controlled the iron tools and weapons and had great commercial advantage over the Israelites. Their national god was Dagon, who was half man, half fish, so they worshipped the physical and were termed by the Israelites "the uncircumcised Philistines." They symbolize, therefore, mere human knowledge, - worldly thought with its trust in material values. In going down to the Philistines for a bride Samson was seeking some kind of meeting-point, whereby worldly thought could be translated from reliance on material values to the recognition of spiritual Truth as fundamental to the whole universe.

Was not this also the mission of Jesus in a much greater way?

Viewed positively, one feels that the continuous urge which Samson had to wed himself to a Philistine woman illustrates the recognition that Truth is a whole and that there can be no divided universe in Truth. One universal Truth lies behind all phenomena.

Samson's father and mother did not share this larger vision that was impelling their son. They wanted him to take a wife from among the Israelites. At this point they represent conservative religious thought, which is often content to remain confined in a small circle and to stay in subordination to human knowledge. But the developing spiritual idea cannot be held back when the time is ripe to go forward.

Samson Slays a Lion

Samson, therefore, went on down to Timnath, though a young lion stood in his way and roared at him. The famous story then follows of how Samson rent the lion with his hands and later, when he returned to the same place, he found the animal's carcase with a swarm of bees and honey inside it. He partook of the honey, giving it also to his parents, though he did not tell them where it came from.

So Samson here illustrates what every man learns when he feels Truth impelling him out of religious boundaries into finding the universal sense of Truth. Spiritual Truth *must* be everywhere, but in proving this, one has first to tackle the carnal mind's entrenched claim that animal nature is to the fore, and roars at us whenever we try to substantiate this universal sense. Peter wrote, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." If we have the courage to face up to and handle this adversary, then it is an act that sustains and blesses us.

The fact that Samson did not tell his parents where the honey came from would seem to indicate that conservative religious thought can be blessed by the results of such a stand, but it is often not yet ready to appreciate the metaphysical process involved.

This experience of Samson's originated the well-known saying, "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." This was the riddle he put to thirty Philistine companions who attended his wedding. He gave them seven days in which to solve it. Are these seven days a symbol of the great "seven days" of creation at the beginning of the Bible, which describe in their symbolic way the spiritual factors underlying God, man, and the universe? Only in a spiritual understanding of these factors can one experience the certainty

and strength to deal with the roaring of the carnal mind in its attempt to prevent the translation of worldly thought, tear its frightening façade to pieces, and be sustained and blessed by the result.

The human intellect always wants to be "in the know" and so these thirty companions persuaded Samson's wife to entice the answer from him, and she did, but it availed them nothing. When Samson found they had obtained the answer through underhand means, he slew the thirty Philistines and left his wife.

One cannot grasp the wonderful translating power of Truth through the human intellect. The innate unity that lies behind all phenomena can only be perceived through spiritual sense. So also the ability to rend the carnal mind's efforts to prevent such a unity becoming manifest can only be accomplished through spiritual sense. Just learning the process involved through mere human intellectualism avails nothing in these matters. Jesus said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

Samson Destroys the Philistine Corn

The next development is that Samson returned to the Philistines only to find that his wife had been given away to another, so he tied firebrands to the tails of three hundred foxes and sent them through the standing corn of the Philistines.

This is again a crude story of the period, but may it not illustrate that if the human (as represented by Samson's Philistine wife) just goes back to wedding itself to the ideals of merely human knowledge, then its fruit will be destroyed? Was Samson striving to show that it is vital to maintain a true wedding of the human and the divine (in the sense of seeing universal spiritual Truth behind all phenomena), or there can be no lasting fruitage in human experience? The Master said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."

Samson Breaks Attempts to Bind Him

This progressive sense of Truth, as represented by Samson, eventually became an embarrassment even to the men of Judah. They appeared quite content to remain under Philistine rule. Therefore, when Samson had fled to the rock Etam, it was the men of Judah who agreed to bind him and deliver him into the hands of the Philistines, even as

later Jesus was rejected by his own people. They bound him with two new cords and handed him over, but he broke the cords on his arms and with the jawbone of an ass he slew a thousand Philistines.

Religious organizations on the whole do not favour a progressive vision of Truth. The men of Judah here represent this religious conservatism. Were the two new cords with which they tried to bind Samson "pride" and "fear"? Pride and fear are the main contributors to a narrow religious outlook, and they operate to prevent progressive spiritual vision. Humility and love, stemming from God, however, can never be turned aside, and will always loose the bonds of pride and fear and free the developing spiritual idea. Samson slew his enemies with humility, just as Jesus did - the humility which made the Master say, "the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do." Such humility, coupled with love, unleashes great power. The symbol of the ass's jawbone indicates humility, of course, for the ass was regarded as a humble servant.

Samson at Gaza

So Samson freed himself, and once more we find him going down to Gaza, where he went in to a Philistine harlot. He was still seeking to find a point of contact, but the Gazites were out to kill him. However, Samson was alert and awake and did not stay there, but arose at midnight, carrying away the doors of the gates of the city on his shoulders to the top of the hill at Hebron. Hebron means "alliance, society, friendship." One feels again that Samson's great desire was to lift human thought, and so translate it that this oneness of spiritual Truth that lies behind everything could be manifested.

Samson and Delilah

Finally comes the well-known story of Samson and Delilah. Samson loved this Philistine woman, whose name means "languishing." Delilah was urged by the lords of the Philistines to entice Samson and find out where his strength lay, that they might bind him. There were five lords of the Philistines, a symbol of belief in the testimony of the five physical senses, that binding testimony which Jesus was constantly disproving.

Delilah asked Samson on four occasions to reveal the secret of where his strength lay. Three times he fooled her, but the fourth time

he fell for her wiles. First he pretended that if he was bound with seven green withs his strength would go. Delilah did this, but Samson burst the withs asunder. It was the same with the new ropes, and with the weaving of his locks with the web. But finally Samson told her the truth - that if she cut off his seven locks of hair his strength would be gone. Foolishly he went to sleep upon her knee and then Delilah shaved off his locks and he became weak "like any other man."

One can see that the first three answers Samson gave to Delilah were to do with something binding him from outside, something extraneous to him, and this could never rob him of his strength; but the last answer meant being robbed of that which innately belonged to him and thus he was temporarily shorn of his strength. If he had not been tempted to sleep, though, would he have been robbed?

How true it is that nothing from outside can rob us of spiritual strength. It is only if we allow ourselves to become divided from our own conscious realization of the spiritual origin of all creation that we can lose spiritual strength and dominion. If we remain awake, this can never take place.

Samson in Prison

Perhaps tempted by the languishing, sensual atmosphere of the human scene, Samson was robbed of his sense of oneness with the freely flowing divine order. His seven locks of hair, which were never to be cut, are a wonderful symbol of the divine order flowing freely and naturally from its source, never to be "trimmed" or "cut" or codified by creed, doctrine, or formula.

Samson's eyes were put out and he had to grind in the prison house at Gaza. Lack of vision and slavery to human knowledge is the temporary outcome of letting the spiritual fall into the hands of human intellect. It is only temporary, though. In the prison house Samson's hair grew again, and on Dagon's feast day, when the Philistines called for Samson in order to make sport of him, he got the little lad who held him by the hand to lead him to the pillars on which the Philistines' building stood. Praying to God, he took hold of the pillars and brought the whole building down, slaying all the Philistines and himself.

Thus this representative of Truth in a measure symbolized the overthrow of the foundation of human knowledge, but at a price. He had the strength of manhood which, without true womanhood to temper it, will try to force its way through to proving the universal nature of Truth and thus never realize complete fulfilment, although making a

certain indelible impression. Centuries later Jesus, the greatest representative of Truth, also overthrew the foundation of human knowledge, but his demonstration of manhood was balanced with true womanhood. This made him say, "I came not to destroy, but to fulfil," and his way of life is the perfect example of how to translate human experience so that each one can finally say, "I have overcome the world," and experience an individual sense of resurrection and ascension.

The Judges of Israel - IV

Micah and his house of gods - A Levite and his concubine

(Judges 17:1 - 21:25)

THE BOOK OF JUDGES tells the story of thirteen judges who were raised up to govern Israel when she first entered the Promised Land. It emphasizes individual government, the keynote being, "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." When the Israelites strayed from the one God and were overcome by their enemies, a judge arose and delivered them. There was no judicial hierarchy, though. The judges were men raised of God.

In every man's spiritual journey the deliverer is always God-impelled individual spiritual sense. Nothing else can bring him into his heritage of dominion over all the earth, although, as the Bible goes on to show, individual spiritual sense is in its essence also collective and universal.

True Individuality is Indivisibility from God

Because the Book of Judges essentially stresses the importance of the individual in true government, the prophetic writers, after telling the story of Samson, the last of the judges, end this Book with two rather curious tales which teach, through negative illustration, that stability and unity can only come about through true individuality, - an awareness of being undivided from the motherhood or love of God.

Both these stories are concerned with the question of being related to or uniting with some particular form of idealism. The first tells of a man called Micah whose relationship with an idolatrous mother resulted in him having a house full of false gods with a Levite for his priest. The second involves a Levite "who took to him a concubine" and the results of this relationship. In each case a Levite is involved, which is interesting in that "Levi" means "joined." The Levites were the tribe whose sole job was to be in charge of the tabernacle. They had no portion of land as an inheritance, for they were to be consecrated to God, - "joined" to God, as it were, in a particular holy relationship. From the Levites came the priesthood, and in a negative sense they symbolize religious separateness or exclusiveness. The Levites had a different status from all the other tribes and the attitude they represent is one of "holier than thou," either in individuals or in organized religious bodies. It was a Levite who "passed by on the other side" in

the parable of the good Samaritan. As so often occurs in Bible imagery, when interpreted positively they symbolize the exact opposite - the unity of God and man, the oneness of all creation as being "joined" to the one Creator.

Micah and His House of Gods

In Chapter 17 we read about this man of Mount Ephraim called Micah, who took eleven hundred shekels of silver from his mother. When she pronounced a curse upon the man who had taken them, Micah restored them to her and straightway she blessed him and took two hundred of the shekels to make a graven image and a molten image which were placed in Micah's house. This led Micah to have a house full of gods. In the course of time a Levite came to Micah's house, looking for somewhere to sojourn, and Micah persuaded him to dwell with him and consecrated him as his priest.

What is this story telling us in the picture language of the Bible? What do the "eleven hundred shekels of silver" represent? Two of the great numerical symbols in the Scriptures are those of the "seven" and the "four." In fact, they open and close the Bible respectively. As we have seen, the seven days of creation in the first chapter of Genesis present an ordered statement of great spiritual fundamentals, - the numerals of infinity. And the heavenly city which "lieth foursquare," described in the last chapter of Revelation, indicates that perfect spiritual building is a four-dimensional proposition. This we can clearly see in the Bible record where the one Principle of being reveals itself through the operation of the Word of God, the Christ, and Christianity, leading to today's revelation of Science. These may appear to be spiritual processes evolved in time, but as divine revelation, translation, demonstration, and interpretation, they are ever-present spiritual operations - a divine, infinite calculus of being.

Therefore we have the "seven" and the "four" - "eleven" factors in all, which constitute the basic structure of universal spiritual Truth.

In the case of Micah he had eleven hundred shekels of silver. Tens or hundreds added to a number always denote spiritual truth in its application to the human picture, the "ten" originating with the ten fingers which touch and handle things.

Could one interpret this, therefore, as representing thought that takes the divine system and its healing and regenerating power, but instead of developing it freely and individually under the guidance of God's motherhood, restores it to the care of a false mother sense? For what

does Micah's mother do with it? She takes two hundred shekels, makes false gods, and puts them into Micah's house, until he has a house full of gods.

Does not this whole incident mean that at a certain stage every spiritual seeker needs to take the spiritual fundamentals of being, and, trusting the divine motherhood, let the Mind of Christ, which belongs to all men, unfold them to him naturally in an individual way, instead of looking to other persons or organizations to develop them? If he makes the mistake of looking to persons or organizations, immediately the door is open to dualistic thought (the two hundred shekels of silver) and before long he will find himself saddled with all kinds of false gods, - bowing down to personal sense, conservatism, codes, creeds, limitations and divisions of every kind. Our experiences lead us to see that if we let anything but our eternal oneness with God "mother" us, we shall be saddled with false gods; whereas if we trust the divine motherhood, it will lead us gently and surely every step of the way, as a shepherd guides his sheep into the fold.

A Levite Becomes Priest to Micah

The story continues that when a Levite passed by, looking for a place to "sojourn," Micah made him his priest and declared, "Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest."

Is this not what can happen with thought that trusts its idealism to the care of any external motherhood, be it a person, a priest, or an organization? False gods of personality, creeds, wealth, etc. begin to arise, but as long as men believe they are joined to something holy, they can fool themselves that they are safe.

This was a lesson that Israel had later to learn through very bitter experience. She had her temple and her religious heritage, but eventually her living individual spiritual sense began to fade, and false gods were worshipped. Israel's prophets were continually arousing her to this danger, but believing that she was a "chosen" people and that mere ritualism and creed were safety-valves, she did not heed them, and had to learn her lesson through the suffering of captivity, as men often choose to do.

The Danites Rob Micah

Chapter 18 goes on to relate how the tribe of Dan, who were looking for an inheritance, eventually came and consulted the priest, the Levite, at the house of Micah. They were told to "go in peace" for God was with them, and with this assurance they went on their way and destroyed the people of Laish who "dwelt careless ... quiet and secure," but not before the Danites had taken away Micah's Levite and robbed his house of all his gods. Micah was desolated, but really it was the best thing that could have happened to him.

In Jacob's pronouncement on Dan he saw that Dan was "a serpent by the way, an adder in the path that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward." The Danites seem to stand specifically for the carnal mind. Is it not true that if men trust their spiritual idealism to a finite motherhood, in the form of a material person or an organized body, then false gods arise and the whole set-up is liable to be subject to the inroads of the carnal mind? Here it is also clearly exposed that the carnal mind, armed with the imposing "false gods" and the religious respectability of the "Levite," can destroy the state of thought that dwells in a careless indifference to spiritual demands, the people of Laish?

Though Micah was desolated, it was really the greatest blessing to him, for it must have forced him back to individual spiritual sense, - to a conviction of his simple, real, innate unity with God, the one and only Mother of all. If we will only trust this Mother, it will guide us into the true temple "not made with hands," - ever-present spiritual consciousness, which the carnal mind can never desecrate nor rob, for it is "hid with Christ in God."

The Levite and His Concubine

The last story in the Book of Judges is again of a Levite. This Levite had a concubine. She left him and he followed her to fetch her back. After many adventures they lodged with an old man in Gibeah, a city of the Benjamites. In the evening "the men of the city, certain sons of Belial," demanded that the Levite should be brought out to them. The old man refused their request, but finally the Levite threw his concubine out to them. They defiled her and left her as dead. In the morning the Levite found her at the door. He took her home, and then follows the crude tale of how he cut her into twelve pieces and sent them into all the coasts of Israel.

These bloodthirsty stories that occur all through the Old Testament would be sordid unless one realized that the prophetic writers were using them as symbolic illustrations of a spiritual lesson.

What can this incident mean? Its overriding message seems to be that every spiritual thinker needs to love and value the spiritual above all else and really wed himself to it and cherish it in order that the oneness and unity of the spiritual idea may be demonstrated here and now.

A concubine was a secondary wife who could more easily be put away than a wife. The Levite here seems to stand for thought that "joins" itself to a spiritual ideal, but that ideal is not its wife, its *all*. It does not take first place in thought. A concubine, too, was usually a slave or servant, a role which spiritual idealism should never play. Is not the true relationship man serving his ideal, and not his ideal slavishly serving him?

The type of thought here appears to want to be joined to an ideal, but merely to satisfy itself humanly. And so that begets the same type of thought in the Benjamite "men of Belial." In throwing out his concubine to these men, it symbolizes that if the ideal is given out unwisely in response to mere clamour and pressure, it will only defile it and eventually all life and inspiration will go from it. It then becomes a dead body which can be cut up and divided into separated parts, rather than seen as one united whole, a living, universal spiritual Science.

It is interesting that in the next chapter the action that punishes these Benjamites for their forcing of this situation is Israel gathering together "as one man" to fight them. This sense of being "as one man" is emphasized over and over again. Finally the last chapter of Judges tells how Benjamin was accepted back into the twelve tribes again and there was unity among them.

The Need for True Motherhood and Womanhood

And so these two incidents which, on first reading, may seem harsh and to have little relationship to today, when illuminated by the ever-present Christ, Truth, spring to life as examples of vital spiritual facts. First, we see the importance of trusting the divine motherhood in spiritual growth instead of handing over a developing understanding of the spiritual facts of being to a false mothering. And second, we see the necessity of wedding thought fully to the spiritual ideal, and so loving, cherishing, and valuing it that there is no temptation to share it

unwisely in response to the pressure of popular demand.

And so this Book of Judges with its insistence on God-impelled individual spiritual sense sows the seed of true government which are to spring up and flourish in the next period of the Scriptures, - the great kingdom period.

Ruth

(Ruth 1:1 - 4:22)

THE BOOK OF RUTH is the story of a wedding, and a most unusual wedding according to Jewish law and custom, for it tells of the marriage of an Israelite to a Moabitish woman. The law of Deuteronomy forbade foreign wives, and yet this Book was incorporated into the Hebrew canon and was much loved by those who did not share the rigid sense of the law.

It is so sweet and simple in its theme, following the often bloodthirsty tales of Judges, that Peake says, "It is like a pastoral symphony after a surfeit of martial music." Goethe called it "the loveliest little idyll that tradition has transmitted to us."

The Book of Ruth - Its Higher Purpose

But what is the timeless spiritual significance of this story - Boaz, an Israelite, marrying Ruth, a Moabitess? Throughout the Old Testament the Israelites are a symbol of the spiritual idea. The Moabites, on the other hand, were descendants of Lot by his own daughters, and as such stand for a material sense of existence, propagating itself through its own limited concepts, and bound by the human picture. But the Christ ideal, forever at work, is always leavening this human picture, and Ruth represents the consequent reaching out in human thought for the unity that there must be between the spiritual idea and the human picture. Is there not a constant search for this relationship, this coincidence between the human and the divine? Jesus was the one individual who balanced these apparently opposite factors perfectly, and so he lived *in* the world but not *of* it, proving always the supreme power of the spiritual to translate every human condition. This marriage of Ruth and Boaz formed a direct link in the line of Jesus, and in the story we can see a very definite spiritual process of how the coincidence between the human and the divine develops to thought.

This little Book has only four chapters. The first chapter tells how Ruth seeks the spiritual through her selfless following after Naomi, her mother-in-law, when she returns to her native land of Judah. The second chapter shows how the spiritual sustains both her and Naomi as Ruth gleanes in the harvest fields of Boaz. The third chapter relates Ruth's awakening to the relationship that exists between Boaz and

herself, and she indicates the rightness of a marriage between them. And the last chapter records that marriage and its consummation, with Ruth and Boaz united and bringing forth a son who was destined to carry forward the line of Jesus.

In the first chapter the scene is set in Moab; in the second, it is in Boaz' harvest field in Judah; in the third, the setting is the threshing floor of Boaz; and the last chapter leaves us in the city. These four chapters are each distinct in the specific picture they paint. The Scofield Bible terms them: "Ruth deciding, Ruth serving, Ruth resting, Ruth rewarded." Looking deeper into this little Book, one cannot help but feel that, spiritually interpreted, here are four divine standpoints of revelation unfolding themselves.

The Awakening

But how does the story go? The first chapter tells of a man called Elimelech and his wife Naomi, who went to sojourn in Moab because there was a famine in Judah. Is not this what mankind often does? When there would seem to be a famine in Judah, a lack of spiritual food, spiritual inspiration becoming thin and meaningless, even would-be religionists turn to Moab, - to the limited concepts of a material sense of existence.

This couple had two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, whose names mean respectively "sick" and "pining." So-called spiritual idealism certainly does yield a sickly and dwindling offshoot when it lowers its standard by seeking substance outside of the purely spiritual.

Then Elimelech dies, Elimelech who means "my God is King." A consciousness of God as the great power begins to pass out of the picture, as it always does when one seeks satisfaction in limited mortal concepts. But there is an attempt to keep the offspring going by wedding them to two Moabitish maidens, Orpah and Ruth. Orpah means "youthful freshness, hind or fawn," whilst Ruth means "friendship." How often one sees a human and dwindling sense of religion attempt to keep itself going through thinking up fresh and novel attractions, and through emphasizing the importance of friendship and community work. These things can be vital and necessary when they are the outcome of the pure, strong spiritual ideal (as we can see later with Ruth), but when used merely as props to bolster up a sick and pining idealism, they are ultimately of no avail. Mahlon and Chilion die.

And so Naomi is robbed of all the male representatives of her

family and there would seem to be no light for her. But at this point she awakens and decides to return to the land of Judah. Both her daughters-in-law make as if to follow her, but she tries to dissuade them. All she knows is that she must return to Judah, to the purely spiritual, come what may. It is here that the contrast between Orpah and Ruth is brought out. Orpah - perhaps standing for a mentality that is as yet unstable and flits from one thing to another - remains behind, but Ruth chooses to follow Naomi, no matter what the future holds for them. She says to Naomi, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."

The Christ ideal is a living power, eternally at work, and it is forever touching the human picture and causing thought to be uplifted to the point when it desires to follow the spiritual wholeheartedly. Ruth, meaning "friendship," a sense of love, is the womanhood quality (whether expressed by male or female) of a deep love for God and for man which sees that the spiritual alone has the answer in life and is willing to forsake all to find it.

And so Naomi returns to Judah with Ruth. Her experiences, bitter as they have seemed, as she says, are shortly to be translated into joy, even as our bitter awakening from the belief that material sense can enrich us leads us ultimately to the abiding joy and satisfaction of spiritual sense.

The Christ Feeds and Sustains

What a wonderful contrast *is* the joy of the second chapter! Here there is a harvest field yielding rich harvest. Boaz is the husbandman. His name means "strength," and he is "a mighty man of wealth" - all the manhood qualities which were lacking in Moab. Boaz is a symbol of the Christ ideal, the Christ consciousness which is rich in substance and blessing. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" said Paul.

Ruth goes to glean in Boaz' harvest field, and Boaz, noting her, gives full permission for her to do so, caring for her and instructing his reapers to treat her well and "let fall ... handfuls of purpose for her." Reaping and gleaning are different forms of gathering a harvest. To reap is "to gather as the fruit of labour," whilst to glean is "to gather after a reaper" and usually in "scattered or fragmentary parcels."

In this harvest picture can one not see a symbol of the eternal Christ ideal at work, causing men to sow the spiritual seed, wait for the harvest to ripen, and then reap, and gather the harvest in the natural rhythm of spiritual order?

It is the Christ which draws men to this spiritual culture, the type of ordered spiritual culture which Jesus must have shared with his disciples. Because this "harvest" work is continuously going on in differing ways in different ages, there is always an overflow of spiritual ideas for the simple seeking thought to glean in a way acceptable to it. Without "reapers" there could be no "gleaners."

In the law of Deuteronomy permission to glean after the reapers was given to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. Is it not the stranger, or thought that is newly awakened to the light of the spiritual, and the fatherless, who represent the longing to find a true sense of origin and support, and the widow - anyone who has been widowed away from materiality - who can and indeed do "glean" truths in this rich harvest field of Christ revelation?

There is such a loving, tender, universal sense about Boaz' attitude to Ruth, a true symbol of the compassionate, comforting Christ idea. Though it is necessary to gather the harvest in ordered bundles, Boaz instructs his men not to be too "neat and tidy" over it, but to let go handfuls on purpose for Ruth to glean. One notices here that the handfuls were not dropped through carelessness, but "of purpose."

A harvest is essentially an ordered activity. Spiritual reality is essentially an ordered whole - "Order is heaven's first law" - but the Christ also meets every need by giving Truth to the "gleaners" in the way that seeking thought can appreciate and understand. What a lesson is here! The Christ spirit never gives overwhelming "bundles" of Truth to "gleaners," but "handfuls" that thought can naturally accept. Yet the handfuls that fall are the same grain, and they are dropped on purpose; and in this story the true relationship that lies behind Boaz the husbandman and Ruth the gleaner, expressed in such tender care and sustenance, leads Ruth on from being a gleaner to wedding the husbandman himself.

The Coincidence Between the Human and the Divine

And so Ruth sought and she found. Yet this is not sufficient. To find the human picture blessed by the divine is wonderful, but thought pushes further to the question, "What is the relationship between the two?" Chapter 3 tells of Ruth's awakening to this relationship, and it

came through the "mother" thought, through Naomi. In the first verse of Chapter 3 Naomi says to Ruth, "My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?" and is this not what so many desire, - rest or satisfaction on this question of what is the relationship between the human and the divine?

Naomi has discovered that Boaz is one of their next kinsmen, and as such, according to Jewish law, should wed the widowed Ruth. And so she lays a plan that Ruth shall go to Boaz when he winnows barley in the threshing floor, and when he lies down, shall lay herself down at his feet, tell him of this relationship, and leave it to him to do what is expected of him.

It is interesting that this incident takes place in the threshing floor where Boaz is winnowing barley, separating the grain from the stalks. It is a refining process. In the same vein Ruth has to wash and anoint herself before going down to Boaz. A metaphysical fact that any seeker learns in his search for Truth is that before there can be coincidence, there has to be separation. That may seem paradoxical, but it is a spiritual law. Abraham had to separate himself from Lot before rescuing him, Jacob had to separate himself from Esau before seeing his face as "the face of God." Without an understanding of the realm of Spirit there is no pure standpoint from which true translation can take place. It was Jesus' realization of the fact that "it is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing" which enabled him to deal with the flesh - heal the sick, redeem sinners, and raise the dead. So Boaz winnowed and Ruth washed herself.

When Ruth lies at Boaz' feet and he suddenly turns and finds her there, she says, "Spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman." What a wonderful statement this is! As thought becomes purified, it beholds spiritual Truth as the fundamental fact which spreads over the whole universe - the human picture is related to it, is a "near kinsman." All human phenomena are merely the spiritual seen "through a glass, darkly." Pope approximated this truth when he wrote:-

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is, and God the Soul.

But it would seem that this fact can only be arrived at spiritually through purity of thought. As we seek the spiritual with singleness of vision and find the pure Christ ideal, a consistent purity of thought will irresistibly lead us to the realization that there is only one universe and that all that we see around us are but states and stages of the light

breaking, the one light of all the world.

The story relates that Boaz is willing to fulfil this relationship, but he tells Ruth that there is a kinsman nearer than he who should first be given the opportunity to do his part in this way. This "nearer kinsman" would seem to represent an exalted religious sense of the Christ ideal, out of touch with the world, whilst Boaz gives a picture of the scientific and therefore universal sense of this Christ ideal which operates as salvation to the world.

One Universe

The scene of the last chapter is laid in the city where the case concerning Ruth is put before this nearer kinsman. He is told that if he takes on the parcel of land that was Elimelech's and belonged to the family, he must also take on Ruth the Moabitess. This kinsman says he will not take on his right, giving as his reason, "lest I mar mine own inheritance," and so Boaz buys the parcel of land and weds Ruth.

An exalted religious sense that sees only one side of the picture - the absolute - fears to wed itself to the human, for it is afraid of marring its inheritance, contaminating its standard. Only Science, a divine Science of the Christ, can wed itself rightly to the human through spiritual translation. Why? Because the *Science* of the Christ must be a completely whole proposition. It must take account of the letter and the spirit, understanding and demonstration, manhood and womanhood, the relative and the absolute, the human and the divine. The pure Science of the Christ never compromises its facts, but it interprets those facts as they operate at every level of experience, for it is a Science of *being*, not of merely intellectual or transcendental thinking.

And so Ruth and Boaz are wedded, and out of that union comes a son, Obed, whose name means "server." Obed was the father of Jesse, who was the father of David, "beloved." How true it is that a sense of service which is akin to humility and love, is the quality that will always preserve the line of the spiritual.

This is again indicated when, at the birth of Obed, the women say to Naomi that her daughter-in-law, Ruth, who bore this babe, "is better to thee than seven sons." Is not this saying that true womanhood in all its realness and purity - pure spiritual sense that loves in the deepest meaning of the word - is better than a merely intellectual understanding of this great Biblical symbol of the "seven"? But when inspired by Life and Love this symbol melts into a consciousness of completeness and universality that embraces all creation in one undivided plan. Such is

the over-riding message of this little Book of Ruth - no separateness, no division, but one universe, moving in accord with one divine Principle to fulfil one blessed plan.

No wonder the story of this wedding was loved and had to have its place in the Hebrew canon. How truly exact too that it should be placed between the third thousand-year period of Bible history stretching from the garden of Eden to the Promised Land, illustrating our journey from sense to Soul, and the fourth thousand years, when the universal government of *one* divine Principle is the message of the great Israelite prophets.

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