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GL 1947

On board the ship:
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Dear Friend:

The desert of the spiritual Ministry is strewn with the bones of those travelers of the spiritual Path who have perished though lack of food, drink, companionship and grace. The desert of the spiritual Ministry is that part of the Path traveled by the initiate usually at the start of the journey to the Promised Land – the fulfillment of divine Consciousness.

Probably every seer, saint, prophet and Savior has come to that place in his spiritual trek where has faced the temptation of lack of funds with which to carry on his Ministry; or lack of that sense of completeness, which results in the temptations of the flesh. But even where divine Grace has been realized in the degree necessary to meet these temptations, or periods of seeming desert experiences, there yet remains the greater temptation and sense of spiritual barrenness which manifests as the personal sense of "I", with its own concept of Truth.

The Ministry of Truth tempts many to enter the Path for some sense of personal gratification – to meet one's personal or family supply, or to gratify one's ego in being known as Practitioner, Teacher, Lecturer or Leader. The desert experience comes quickly to these, and most perish after a short or a lingering period of financial famine or lacking of healings. To some few in this extremity there comes the Christ to purge and cleanse the motives of the heart, and this entrance of the Christ into individual consciousness becomes the Presence leading out of the wilderness into the Land of Plenty.

This journey is less difficult to those who, before undertaking Discipleship, await the call of the Christ, which brings with it the assurance that "I" will never leave you, nor forsake you; that "I" will ever go before you to make the wilderness blossom as the rose; that "My" Presence will take you through the floods and fires and famines of the Path. When this divine assurance is once received there is no longer a temptation to believe that one's supply is dependent on some outside source – on person, patient, student or organization. God is the source and the form of all supply, and this Truth will appear when necessary as loaves and fishes; as gold in the fish's mouth; as a raven bringing food; or as the widow sharing her own and her son's supply.

Only BE SURE that you have received the signal within, which is your passport on the journey. Those, like Judas, whose belief in an outside source of supply, may be led to their own destruction by this sense of lack.

Others set out as Disciples before they attain the full sense of their completeness in Christ, or full attunement with Spirit. To these the desert experience comes as loneliness, or a sense of lack of

companionship, or the temptations of the flesh. When the temptation to believe in a selfhood apart from God arises, the Christ sometimes appears in time, with Its powerful assurance, “Lo, ‘I’ am with you always.” Or one may, for a short period, succumb in agony and heart-break before the gentle voice is heard to declare: “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

Those who have tried to walk on the spiritual waters too soon may find themselves sinking under this temptation. The history of the Ministry is filled with the skeletons of those who have perished through lonesomeness and desire. It is wise to delay one’s entrance into the active Ministry until one has realized the ability to travel and to stand alone – or until the sense of the Christ Presence is so great that one has the assurance that any temptation of sense will ultimately be met.

Above all others, the greatest temptation is that of having one’s own concept of Truth. Where no other temptation can enter, this one often proves the stumbling-block to the entrance of Heaven. Peter is our great example here – showing, in more ways than one, that he was poorly prepared for his work. The denial of the Master in the fateful hour represented Peter’s lack of recognition of the Message. This Disciple had a belief about Truth; he had some measure of faith in Truth; he had even experienced demonstration in proportion to his conviction of Truth. But one thing was lacking: Christ had not uttered Himself in Peter’s consciousness, and so had not dispelled all belief, faith and conviction.

Complete Discipleship comes only when all sense of personal of Truth disappears, and Christ has enthroned Himself on one’s consciousness of Truth. The Christian Ministry shows forth the wreckage of the many who have perished with their faith, belief and conviction of Truth.

To the saint, the seer, the prophet and the Savior: Truth utters and declares Himself, and YOU may know It by Its fruits – “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” (Gal. 5:22,23)

Lovingly yours,

JOEL S. GOLDSMITH