

Neville 10-11-1968

BEFORE ABRAHAM, WAS I AM

The drama tonight opens to the 8th chapter of the Book of John, where the evangelist writes of the state into which he has entered, saying: "Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham, was I am."

The Bible is a recordation of the eternal spiritual states of the soul which everyone must pass through, beginning with the state of Abraham and culminating in the state called Jesus Christ. It is important, therefore, to distinguish between the man and the state he occupies at the present time.

Always remember that the Bible is address to the man of imagination and not to any mortal man. Blake said: "It must be understood that the persons Moses and Abraham are not here meant, but are states signified by those names. The individuals being representatives (or visions) of those states as they were seen by mortal man in a series of divine revelations and recorded in the Bible." I have seen these states in my imagination. At a distance they appeared as one man; however, as I drew near they became a multitude of nations. One man - represented by multitudes and multitudes of men in harmony - appears as a single being. The ancients saw Him and believing in what they saw they prophesied of the ultimate state, and personified him as Jesus Christ.

No one knows the true authors of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, but I can tell you, they were relating their own experiences when they put words into the mouth of a personification of this ultimate truth called Jesus. Turning to those who were present he said: "Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day. He saw it and was glad." Those who heard him said: "Why, you are not yet fifty years of age, and Abraham saw you?" And he replied: "Before Abraham, was I am." With that remark they took up stones and stoned him.

Now this was not a drama that took place in the secular world. The evangelist is telling the truth, however, for being in the state of Jesus Christ he knew he was the immortal being who was before Abraham. He knew he was God himself, the author of the play called life. This truth every child born of woman will know from experience.

Let us now turn to the Book of Galatians, which is the earliest book of the New Testament. The thirteen letters of Paul were written, distributed, practiced, and called the gospel at least twenty years before the gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were written. In it, Paul speaks of "my gospel," saying: "I did not receive it from a man, nor was I taught it, it came by revelation of Jesus Christ." Then he tells this story: "Abraham had two sons, one by a slave and one by a free woman. The son of the slave was born according to the flesh, the son of the free woman by the promise. This is an allegory: these two women are two covenants. The one who bears the child by promise is Jerusalem from above." This is the state called Sarah.

Paul states quite boldly here that the story of Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah is an allegory. And an allegory is a

story told as if it were true, leaving the one who hears (or reads) it to discover its symbolic representation and learn its lesson. Hagar and Sarah symbolize two covenants, one bringing in slavery and one freedom.

My mother was not named Hagar and the chances are your mother was not either, but every woman who has a child - in the language of symbolism - is Hagar. The child may be born in a palace and his mother a queen. He may know enormous wealth and a life of ease, but he (or she) is still a slave. Whoever wears a garment of mortality must take care of it, for it assimilates and must expel, through some artifice, that which it cannot assimilate. Whether the garment be that of a queen or a scrubwoman, it enslaves its occupant. And no matter how strong the garment, it waxes and waxes until it reaches a peak and then it wanes and wanes and no one can stop its inevitable change and death. So every child born from the womb of woman is a slave.

But there is another birth - a birth into freedom - which is essential, for unless you are born from above you cannot enter the kingdom of God. And the womb from which that birth takes place is the human skull, called Jerusalem from above.

Blake identifies Jerusalem from above with liberty, for after this second birth one is liberated. Having been placed into a world of slavery and death, the second birth is our victory over death. Everyone will be victorious ... but everyone! We came into this world of death, have fought the good fight, and will continue to fight it. We are running a race with our enemy, death, [in] which all will be victorious. Everyone will be resurrected. Everyone will be born from above and all will enter the kingdom of God.

Ask no man to describe the kingdom for you, as eyes have not seen, nor ears heard, nor has it entered into the hearts of men the things God has already prepared for those who enter that state. There are no images here on earth to aid you in trying to visualize that state, so let no man tell you he knows and can describe it to you, for it can't be done.

The New Testament begins: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." If the story of Abraham is an allegory, then the end of the story - called Christ - must be an allegory, for it was established in the beginning that everything would bring forth after its own kind. A carrot seed contains within itself the capacity to become a carrot. An apple seed when planted will bring forth an apple tree, and so forth. So if the origin of any story is an allegory, the end is an allegory. Not knowing how to read scripture, man believes it is secular history and worships states, making mental pictures of them, painting and even sculpturing them; yet every character recorded there is only the personification of a state.

Let me share an experience of mine with you. In my vision I came upon a man in his fifties, about six feet tall, and looking as though he had an infinite capacity of faith. I didn't have to ask his name, for I recognized him instantly. (Wisdom from above is without uncertainty. When you come upon these states in vision, you know who they are). The moment I saw him, I knew I was looking at the state called Abraham. He was standing erect, yet leaning somewhat against the trunk of what looked like an oak tree totally devoid of leaves. Its branches were curled and knotted, resembling the human brain. Twisted around the trunk of the tree was a serpent with a human face, bathed in wisdom and the symbol of the final state called Christ. Abraham was looking - not into space, but time, and I wondered what this wisest of all of God's creatures had whispered into his ear.

Paul personifies scripture by saying: "The scriptures foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles, preached

the gospel beforehand to Abraham." The scriptures must be personified in order to preach. So three thousand years before the coming of Christ, Abraham was given a preview of God's plan of salvation in the form of the gospel. Therefore, Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day; he saw it and was glad.

When I say "I" (or "my") I mean "we," for we are the gods who collectively form God. In the great play, God is fragmented and the one becomes the many. But before the state of Abraham we - in perfect unity - wrote the play for a divine purpose. We agreed to enter the world of death and completely forget who we are in order to make the play real. This we have done and we will return enhanced by the play, but we cannot stop half way or turn back, we must finish the race. Everyone will fight the good fight. Everyone will go to the end and keep the faith we began in the state called Abraham.

The tree I saw was a perfect symbol of the tree of life. In Blake's "Songs of Experience," he said: "The gods of the earth and sea sought through nature to find that tree. But their search was all in vain, there grows one in the human brain." That's where the tree of life is. Having been felled, its roots are inverted in the brain with its branches as man's nervous and circulatory systems. Man is the inverted tree, like the one you would see reflected in the still waters of a lake. Turned down into generation, that tree symbolized as man, will be turned up from generation to regeneration. On that day man is resurrected and returns, bringing back the fruit (the experiences) of this great play of decay and death.

So Abraham is not a person as you are, as I am, any more than Isaac, Jacob, David, and all the others are persons. They are personifications of the eternal states of the soul. So if the origin called Abraham and the fulfillment called Jesus Christ are an allegory, then the fruit (glorious as it is) is also an allegory. And you will reap it to return greater than the being you were when you came out from the Father and came into the world, and no one will be lost... not one.

In the kingdom, however, we will play different parts, just as we play them here. Although sharing one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one God and Father of all, there are ranks in the kingdom just as there are ranks in the army. Those who fill the stars of the crown do so not by merit, but by election - which remains a secret of the Most High. But remember: the least in the kingdom is greater than the greatest on earth. "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord than live in the house of the wicked." Well, a doorkeeper may be on the threshold, but he is in the kingdom. We are told that no one born of woman is greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom is greater than he.

No matter how great, wise, strong, or handsome one is here on earth, he is less than the least in the kingdom of God. So do not be concerned as to what part you play in the body of God, for the least part is greater than anything on earth. In the third great act of God's awakening, you reenter the kingdom violently to discover your position. Entering the body of the Risen Lord like a bolt of lightning, you are the cause of its reverberation, and your entrance denotes your position. There will be no menial parts there, for all will be a necessary part of the body of the Risen Lord.

So, before Abraham, was I am. That is God's name forever and by this name he shall be known by all generations. God preceded his play, so the evangelist is telling the truth when he says, before Abraham, was I am.

Dwell on the words I have given you tonight. Know how truly great you are, then allow everyone to play their

parts perfectly. If someone tells you he wants to feel important, let him feel it. If he wants to make an impression, let him make it. He is playing a part in the world of Caesar and maybe he has to make that impression for a certain self-satisfaction as he passes through the state. If you look at a person spiritually you can see the spiritual state he is in and realize that while he is in the state, he is playing his part perfectly.

We are all immortal beings who pass through states until we reach the state of Jesus Christ, the state designating the end of the journey. And when you enter that state scripture unfolds in you, casting you in the role of the central character and you are awed and thrilled. Prior to that moment in time you would have thought it blasphemy to claim such divinity, but when it happens you can no more deny it than you can the simplest evidence of your senses. And having experienced scripture, you have fulfilled the only purpose of life and you know it.

All of the stories of the Bible are supernatural truths which take place in a remote region of the soul. A lady here tonight said: "As I examined a translucent box covered with skin, you appeared and began to peel transparent skin from your cheeks." She saw correctly. At the end of the journey the skin you wear - which was so responsive to the inner you, that you thought you were it - will be taken off, and your true identity revealed.

I have a little namesake in New Your City. His name is Neville Mark. I saw him a month before he was born and when I asked when he was coming on earth he answered quite innocently: "The tenth of November." A very dear friend of ours was pregnant at the time and expecting her child in December. I shared my experience with her and told her that should her baby be born on the tenth of November and he was a boy, his name was Neville Mark. Well, even though she did not believe me, her baby arrived on the tenth of November and she named him Neville Mark. About three or four years ago I visited the family, and Neville Mark - twelve or thirteen at the time - said to me: "Neville, I know that I am not what I appear to be. If I could only get my body to stand perfectly still while I turn around in it, I would know who I am. I also know I cannot do it until I die, and I can hardly wait to learn my true identity."

This little lad knew what my friend saw, for he knew that the skin which was tightly woven over him hid his true identity. This is true, for everyone here is wearing a mask. One day the mask will be taken off and we will all meet unmasked, yet we will know each other as we did before Abraham. There will be one grand, wonderful, joyous moment when- having returned - we recognize the being we were prior to putting on our masks to play the play of life.

The evangelist knew from his own experience that before the state called Abraham was I am, yet those who heard his story took up stones to throw at him. Now, a stone symbolizes a literal fact. The stones they threw were the facts of his life here on earth. They knew his parents, his brothers and sisters, as well as his educational and social background. They knew he was not yet fifty, yet he was speaking of one who was recorded to have lived two thousand years ago.

Friends here have thrown the same facts at me. I recall one night at a dinner party I told the late Aldous Huxley that these characters were not persons, and he said: "Neville, Caesar and Herod lived and they are mentioned in scripture" And I replied: "I speak of the scripture which is the Old Testament, and they are not there. If you want to accept Jesus as a man, the only book he could have read was the Old Testament. In the temple he was given the book and read the words of the prophet Isaiah. Everything he quoted was from the

Old Testament, as the New hadn't been written."

I am not denying that Paul and the evangelists lived, but they are anonymous. The Old Testament is a recordation of eternal states, and the prophets who recorded them were doing a work the full import of which they did not understand. They inquired as to what time or person was meant, and it was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves, but us.

When the time fully comes, the secret will be uncovered and we will see the end, as we fulfill the state called Jesus Christ. Each will enter it, one after the other, and all will experience everything that is recorded in the scripture concerning Jesus Christ. And when each one of us has had the identical experience, who are we? Are we not Jesus Christ, the perfect man who reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his person!

When you reach that state the work is done and you return to where you were before your deliberate fall. You did nothing wrong, but took the challenge, for only God could die in confidence that he would rise. We are the gods who took the challenge, who came down and entered these masks that decay and die, to find ourselves restored, waxing once more, waning, and dying. Restored, waxing, waning, and dying, over and over until the end is reached. Then there is no more restoration - only resurrection - as we are lifted out of the world of death to enter the kingdom of heaven, the world of life.

Everyone is destined to be in that kingdom, to play his predetermined part, for "Those whom he foreknew he predestined to be conformed to the image of his son, and those whom he predestined he called, and those whom he called he justified, and those whom he justified he glorifies." Everyone, even the least in the kingdom, will be glorified in the body of the Risen Lord and remember: before Abraham, was I am.

Now let us go into the silence.