

By Neville Goddard – 1951

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It has been my privilege and pleasure to address Dr. Frederick Bailes' Sunday audiences in the past few years. Today, I am to extend the privilege in speaking to you, his unseen audience of the radio. This will be a very practical series of talks for my subjects will be drawn largely from the Bible, the most spiritual of all books.

And I am firmly convinced that whatever is most profoundly spiritual, is, in reality, most directly practical.

All mistakes made in Biblical interpretation come from taking statements of which, the intention is spiritual and mystical, and applying those principles or states to persons, places or times instead.

In one sense, not one word of Scripture is true according to the letter. Yet, I say that every word is true; but the Scriptures are true only as He intended them that spoke them; they are true as God meant them, not as man will have them.

A spiritual and symbolical interpretation alone yields truth, whilst a literal acceptance profits nothing. The Bible contains historical elements, but these are always used as picture language of great ideas.

The Gospel narrative is to be studied in order that we may know.

It does not convey knowledge immediately. Getting to know is a gradual process . . . a progressive inner experience. God reveals Himself within us as we are able to receive Him.

The deep meanings have always been recognized partially by a few, as will be found by consulting the writings of the seers of all past ages.

In assigning to the Bible its proper meaning, it is necessary to remember that as mystical Scriptures, it deals primarily, not with material things or persons, but with spiritual significations. The Bible is addressed not to the outer sense or reason, but to the soul.

Its object is not to give an historical account of physical life, but to exhibit the spiritual possibilities of humanity, at large, for religion is not in its nature historical and dependent upon actual sensible events, but consists in processes such as Faith and Redemption.

These, being interior to all men, subsist irrespective of what any particular man has at any time done. The perennial value of the Bible is its symbolic value.

There are great controversies as to what is and what is not historical in the Bible, but let us remember that if we could settle all the historical questions tomorrow, that would not give us religion, nor would it give the Bible a biding value.

Everything depends upon our finding the symbolical value of the facts. A fact of past history has nothing in it for present-day religion unless it stands forth as a symbol of a Reality behind itself.

The Bible is a revelation of Truth expressed in Divine symbolism. From the literal point of view, the wording may sometimes be confusing; it is the symbolism, alone, which is precious and worthy of our best efforts to elucidate. All Scripture was written from the inward mystery and not with a mystical sense put into it.

The stories conceal an underlying meaning, and the task of scripture interpretation is to discover these psychological truths which are expressed in this symbolism.

We, here, are not concerned with the surface meaning of the Scripture, whether it be reasonable or absurd, for in no case does it constitute the inner truth we are seeking.

Throughout the centuries we have mistakenly taken personification for persons, allegory for history, the vehicle that conveyed the instruction for the instruction itself. and the gross first sense for the ultimate sense intended. In most of the little things of life, this confusion is of trivial consequence.

But the error which arises when you carry the confusion into questions of greater moment, such as religion, assumes gigantic proportions.

For centuries, men have sought eagerly for bits of evidence which might be related to the happenings described in the Bible. While most people believe that its characters lived, no proof of their lives on earth has ever been found and may never be found.

This is unimportant for the ancient teachers were not writing history, but an allegorical picture lesson of certain basic principles, which they clothed in the garb of history.

The form of the various stories of the Bible is as distinct from its substance as the form of a grain of wheat is distinct from the life germ within it. As the assimilative organs of the body discriminate between food that can be built into the physical system and food that must be cast off, so do the awakened intuitive faculties discover, beneath allegory and parable, the psychological life germ, and feeding on this, they cast off the fiction which conveyed it.

The Bible is the largest selling book in this country. It is probably the least read and certainly the least understood.

Throughout the Bible, the symbols of stone, water and wine are used.

The stones of the Bible are its literal truths.

The Ten Commandments, we are told, were written on stone.

The water of the Bible is the psychological meaning hidden in these literal truths of stone. that is, the inner knowledge that can make these stories a living reality in your life.

The wine you must make for yourself through the wise use of this living water or psychological truth. This is an absolute necessity to the truly religious man.

This is what Sir Walter Scott meant when he said,

“Man’s greatest education is that which he gives to himself.”

On Sunday morning, I shall speak on, “Are You Stone, Water or Wine?” I shall be taking Dr. Bailes’ service at 10:30 at the Fox Wilshire Theater on Wilshire Boulevard near La Cienega. When you hear this message, you may ask yourselves, “Are you stone, water or wine?” You may judge whether your understanding of the Bible is merely literal, psychological, or truly spiritual and, therefore, profoundly practical.

The Bible is, from beginning to end, all about transcending the violence which characterizes mankind’s present level of being. It affirms the possibility of a development of another level of being surmounting violence.

The point of view taken is that the goal of man is this inner development, which is the only real psychology.

To take the Bible away from its central idea of rebirth, which means an inner evolution and implies the existence of a higher level, is to understand nothing of its real meaning.

The Word of God, that is, the psychological teaching in the Bible, is to make a man different, first in thought and then in being, so that he becomes a new man or is born again.

Whenever an entirely new attitude enters into a person’s life, psychological rebirth to some extent has occurred. Man wants to be better, not different.

The Bible speaks, not of being better, but of another man, a man reborn.

“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God...

Except a man be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again.”

The Ten Commandments were written on tablets of stone for those incapable of seeing any deeper meaning. Stone represents the most external and literal form of spiritual truth, and water refers to another way of understanding the same truth. Wine or spirit is the highest form of understanding it. “Such as men themselves are, such will God appear to them to be,” wrote John Smith, the Cambridge Platonist.

“The God of the moralist is before all things a great judge and schoolmaster; the God of Science is impersonal and inflexible Vital Law; the God of the savage is the kind of chief he would be himself if he had the opportunity.”

No man's conduct will be higher than his conception of God, and his conception of God is determined by the kind of man he, himself, is.

"For such as men themselves are, such will God appear to them to be,"

and what is true of man's concept of God is equally true of man's concept of God's Word, the Bible. It will be to him what he is to himself.

"God is God from the creation,
Truth alone is man's salvation;
But the God that now you worship
Soon shall be your God no more
For the soul in its unfolding Evermore
its thoughts remolding, Learns more
truly in its progress How to love and
to adore."