



(Photo by Jim Burton)

Peace Pilgrim's Progress

NUMBER EIGHT

Peace Pilgrim, Cologne, N. J. 08213

VARIETY IN CALIFORNIA

It is a joy to walk through California in the winter - through the warm sunshine of an irrigated desert, atop a cliff overlooking the blue Pacific or along a beach, through orchards and vineyards and nut groves and cultivated fields, over scenic mountain passes. California's mountains are majestic and lofty and often snow-capped, so if you wish you can ski in the morning and come down to the ocean for a swim in the afternoon. In Southern California trees seem sparse, although palm trees line the city streets, eucalyptus trees line the desert highways, there are live oaks on the hills, cottonwoods in the arroyos and graceful pepper trees near the houses. Northern California, with its massive redwoods, seems to be a land of trees. Just about anything can be grown in California, from citrus fruit and tropical dates to apples and vegetables that are usually grown in the north. California is a land where seasons are not very pronounced - for instance, in San Diego, sometimes called the City of Eternal Spring, it is always warm in the daytime and cold enough for a coat or blanket at night. In this seasonless land flowers often disregard the proper blooming time. It is not uncommon to see chrysanthemums, poinsettias and jonquils blooming happily with geraniums, petunias and other summer flowers. In some sections no house is complete without a garden, and there are flowers everywhere. About April the desert comes to life, and blossoms with a profusion and a beauty that defies description.

NEW CALIFORNIA

When you realize that California's chain of missions was started nearly two hundred years ago, the state does not seem very new, but actually most of the growth is new and most of the people are new Californians. The pioneer spirit still survives sufficiently to make new things welcome, so many interesting new things have established themselves in the Golden State. Some seem quite worth while - others seem transient. Since it is in the process of rapid new growth, California faces some new problems. Most acute among them is the smog problem, which is centered in the Los Angeles area. At times I encountered smog so thick I could not see across the street and so irritating to my eyes that tears ran down my cheeks. Probably all industry in this area will need to be muzzled with smoke consumers or moved, all home heaters that send smoke into the air will need to be changed, and even cars will need to be equipped with devices to eliminate fumes. California's southern seacoast is worth reclaiming - it could be an earthly paradise.

THE CHOICE IS OURS

We are living in a crisis period. We who are living in the world today must make the choice between a nuclear war of annihilation and a golden age of peace. Those who do nothing are choosing war - in which direction the tide of world affairs is strongly drifting. Since we have not attained disarmament, we are sitting on a powder keg with a lighted fuse. Those who do something meaningful for peace become a part of the stirring and awakening in that direction and help to accelerate it. We cannot stay where we are, and as to which way we go - the choice is ours!

COMMEND THE GOOD

May I suggest a peace project which everyone can undertake. Whenever you learn of people who have done something on the good side, commend them and give them moral support. This applies to those around you, of course, but it also applies to those in your government and in the United Nations. All not-good things are transient things - containing within themselves the seeds of their own destruction. They will fade away if the good is strengthened, so let's commend the good and strengthen it!

SUGGESTION FOR A PEACE PRAYER GROUP

At the first meeting consider inner peace. Pray about it and discuss it. If you become aware of some block which is hampering your spiritual progress, concentrate between meetings on removing that block. At the second meeting consider harmony among individuals. If you realize that you are out of harmony with some person, do something between meetings to remedy this. At the third meeting consider harmony among groups. Between meetings try to do something as a group to show friendliness toward or to help some other group. At the fourth meeting consider peace among nations. Take action between meetings by commending someone who has done something good for peace or by writing a letter to your local newspaper recommending some constructive peace measure. At the next meeting start all over again.

LETTERS TO CONGRESSMEN

In answer to numerous inquiries, I would like to say that I do believe in writing letters to Congressmen, and below is a letter which I recently wrote: I have never met a modern military man who did not realize that military victory is a concept which became obsolete with the coming of the nuclear age, and most civilians realize this also. We now face the problem of eliminating physical violence in this immature world where psychological violence still exists. If we who conquered the atom by applying scientific principles cannot create a peaceful world situation by applying psychological principles we will all perish together.

Congressmen in this crisis period have a great responsibility, for they cannot avoid making momentous decisions. They can make choices that surviving remnants will condemn them for or choices that flourishing future generations will extol them for. May they prove equal to the new age!

The new age demands higher values. Those who spoke of peace were once called idealists, but in this nuclear age the idealists have become the only realists. We have always thought of ourselves as having high ideals. Let us apply some of them in this crisis situation and lead mankind away from annihilation toward a golden age of peace.

Let us ask in the United Nations for the establishment of a world language to be taught as a second language - thus promoting better understanding among nations. Let us establish a Peace Department to do extensive research on peaceful ways of resolving conflicts, inform other nations of our action, and ask them to do likewise.

Yes, let us prepare for peace! With the instinct of self-preservation pushing strongly in that direction, it may break out at any time and find us totally unprepared!

OUR TIMES

On the one hand it can be said, "How tragic that our material advancement has gotten so far ahead of our spiritual advancement that we stand on the brink of destroying all life on earth." On the other hand it can be said, "How good that we finally realize that military victory is impossible, so that immature

people and even not-good people now have an incentive to lay down their arms." Both statements are true. From where we are now we can move either toward a nuclear war of annihilation or toward a golden age of peace.

THE WRONG SHALL FAIL THE RIGHT PREVAIL

Nothing which is contrary to God's laws can endure. All not-good things in the world are transient things, containing within themselves the seeds of their own destruction. We can help them to fade away more quickly only insofar as we remain in obedience to God's law that evil must be overcome with good. Those who create something which is evil in order to overcome something else which is evil only double the evil.

LETTER TO AN APPREHENSIVE PEACEMAKER

I am in good health and good humor as always. These things are dependent upon harmony with divine purpose, not upon world events. My inner peace remains in spite of any outward thing. Only insofar as I remain in harmony can I draw others into harmony, and so much more harmony is needful before the world can find peace. This does not mean that I am not concerned about world happenings. A time like this calls for much peace prayer and peace effort. All right work and all right prayer has effect - all good effort bears good fruit - whether we see the results or not. In spite of the darkness in the present world situation I am not discouraged. I know that just as a human life proceeds toward harmony through a series of hills and valleys, so a society has its ups and downs in its search for peace. There is within the hearts of people *(a)* deep desire for peace on earth, and they would speak for peace if they were not bound by apathy, by ignorance, by fear. It is the job of the peacemakers to inspire them from their apathy, to dispel their ignorance with truth, to allay their fear with faith that God's laws work - and work for good. Knowing that all things contrary to God's laws are transient, let us avoid despair and radiate hope for a warless world. What we dwell upon we help to bring into manifestation.

*Editorial corrections added to the original newsletter appear in italicized gray brackets. i.e. *(correction)*