



(Photo by Jim Burton)

Peace Pilgrim's Progress

NUMBER NINE

Peace Pilgrim, Cologne, N. J.

IN THE WEST

When I began my walk rhododendron was outstanding in the gardens and yellow broom was queen on the hillsides. I walked north along the fertile rain-soaked west coast of Oregon and Washington surrounded by big beautiful trees. To the east were the Cascades, with Mount Hood towering on the Portland skyline and Mount Rainier towering on the Seattle skyline - on those happy occasions when they emerged from the clouds. To the west were the rugged Olympics. I explored the scenic Columbia River Valley, and traveled up to meet a group of Canadian friends at Peace Arch Park between the two countries. West of the Cascades I have never seen more verdure. East of the Cascades there is sage brush desert except where irrigation creates an oasis. In Montana I climbed the Rockies and crossed the Continental Divide. From Montana I went to visit Yellowstone Park for the first time and saw some amazing sights I had never seen before - geysers, steam vents, seething mud holes, boiling pools which were often very colorful - besides all the animals and the scenic beauty. In Idaho I walked along a river where great springs leaped from a canyon wall and cascaded into the stream. Whenever I enter Idaho I remember the remarkable display of spring wild flowers I enjoyed during my first walk there. In Utah - the Mormon State - I was given very fine hospitality - a bed every night and ample food. In Nevada - which has no laws against gambling - I walked past steaming springs and past beautiful Lake Mead which is formed by Hoover Dam. When I first saw Colorado I wrote: It is a sea of towering mountains - many of them snow-capped - and the landscape is so beautiful it is sometimes hard to believe it is real. I have now discovered that there are also many level places and many bustling cities, but I can still understand why map-makers and road-makers have some difficulty with Colorado. In Wyoming the mountain peaks did not seem to tower so because I was right up among them, and up there in the grasslands I saw the deer and the antelope play. The remembrance of the grandeur of the western scenery is only surpassed by the remembrance of the many wonderful western friends.

HOPEFUL SIGNS

Some of the steps toward world peace that I talked about when I started out on my peace pilgrimage have now been taken or at least begun. An extensive people-to-people approach is well under way - with student exchanges and cultural exchanges. I participate by corresponding with people in other lands. This approach would be greatly facilitated by the establishment of a world language to be taught as a second language in all school in the world. Research on peaceful ways of resolving conflicts is now being done at a number of our colleges - and also by our neighbor, Canada. I would like to see the establishment of a Peace Department in the President's Cabinet - to do such research, to deal with our national problems in connection with world disarmament and world peace (like the adjustment of our economy to a peacetime situation, which must be consciously dealt with) and to be an example to the world. Steps in the direction of war prevention are now being taken by our Peace Corps. Certainly war prevention is the pattern for the future - getting into any situation where trouble is just beginning to remedy the cause of the trouble before strife develops. Ultimately war prevention means putting every group of people in the world into a position where they can supply for themselves the basic necessities of life. And we have also taken the first concrete step toward world disarmament - the nuclear test ban agreement. Many more steps need to follow to make this world a safe place in which to live.

WHO'S BOSS

The lower self - the animal self - is controlled by the body's wishes for comfort and convenience, by the mind's demands, by the outbursts of the emotions. The higher self - the divine self - controls the body and the mind and the emotions. Now that I have found inner peace - which is the life controlled by the higher self - I can say to my body, "Lie down on that cement floor and go to sleep," and it lies down and goes to sleep - and it doesn't complain. Or I can say to my mind, "Shut out everything else, no matter how interesting, and concentrate on writing that letter," and it shuts out everything else and concentrates - and it doesn't complain. Or I can say to my emotions, "Be still even in the face of this terrible situation," and they are still - without complaining. Of course, the higher self is controlled, but not by the body and mind and the emotions - the higher self is controlled by God.

RANDOM THOUGHTS

ON OUR TIMES. All things contrary to God's laws will pass away. With how much violence they will pass away is up to us. Insofar as we are willing to let them go there will be less violence - insofar as we have been able to build the new within the old there will be less violence, so let us work on that. Let us help the phoenix to rise from the ashes - let us help lay the foundation for new renaissance - let us help to accelerate the spiritual awakening until it lifts us into the golden age which could come!

ON PEOPLE IN OUR TIMES. In order to help usher in the golden age we must see the good in the people - we must know it is there, no matter how deeply it may be buried. Yes, apathy is there and selfishness is there - but good is there also. It is not through judgement that the good can be reached, but through love and faith. Love can save the world from nuclear destruction. Love God - turn to Him with receptiveness and responsiveness. Love your fellow human beings - turn to them with friendliness and givingness. Make yourself fit to be called a child of God by living the way of love!

ON IMMATURITY. What people really suffer from is immaturity. Among mature people war would not be a problem - it would be impossible. In their immaturity people want - at the same time - peace and the things which make war. However, people can mature just as children can grow up. Yes, our institutions and our leaders reflect our immaturity, but as we mature we will elect better leaders and set up better institutions. It always comes back to the thing so many of us wish to avoid - working to improve ourselves!

ON FEAR. There is no greater block to world peace or inner peace than fear. What we fear we tend to develop an unreasoning hatred for - so we come to hate and fear. This not only injures us psychologically and aggravates world tensions, but through such negative concentration we tend to attract the things which we fear. If we fear nothing and radiate love, we can expect good things to come. How much this world needs the message and the example of love and faith!

ON PROBLEMS. Problems are set before us for our spiritual growth. It is important that we recognize them as opportunities and solve them in accordance with the highest we know. It is not important that the outcome be according to our wishes.

ON PROBLEM SOLVING. Insofar as people succeed in solving their problems fairly and efficiently at a grassroots level they retain control over their lives. Insofar as they delegate their problem solving to a higher authority they lose control over their lives.

ON SEPARATION. Associations formed in this earth life are not necessarily for the duration of the life span. Separation takes place constantly, and as long as it takes place lovingly not only is there no spiritual injury but spiritual progress may actually be helped.

ON HEALTH. Needful and gradually coming into manifestation are health centers which will stress coming into and remaining in good health by coming into and remaining in harmony with the physical and psychological laws. This is the healing of the future.

ON VACATIONS. Most interested in vacations are those who are doing things they are not called to do which they want to get away from for awhile. I couldn't imagine feeling the need of a vacation from my peace pilgrimage.

ON FREEDOM. No one is truly free who is still attached to material things - or to places - or to people. We must be able to use things when we need them and then relinquish them without regret when they have out-lived their usefulness. We must be able to appreciate and enjoy the places where we tarry and yet pass on without anguish when we are called elsewhere. We must be able to live in loving associations with people without feeling that we possess them trying to run their lives. For anything that you strive to hold captive will hold you captive, and if you desire freedom you must give freedom.