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THE GREAT SCRUTINY

By

GENEVIEVE BURNELL



EASTER GREETINGS

1960

from

Mr. and Mrs. Ansel Douglas

and

Marion Douet

THIS INSTRUCTION  
IS NOT A METHOD,  
BUT A MESSAGE.

THE GREAT SCRUTINY

By

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Condensed from  
Lecture No. 39  
In the course  
APHORISMS IN ACTION

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Published by  
Burnell Library of Religious Research  
2966 East Colorado Street  
Pasadena, California

## THE GREAT SCRUTINY

This is Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Lent, called in the Liturgy "The Feria of the Great Scrutiny." And the lesson that is next in our course in the Aphorisms is called "The Penetration of Nature."

This is a perfect illustration of the way the events of the Liturgical year so often coincide with the metaphysical study we are engaged in when we study Aphorisms.

Penetration of Nature--The Great Scrutiny. Two angles from which we view the same truth--one side based on intellectual philosophy and the other side based on religious faith; both arriving at the same point of perception.

The Gospel lesson describes a miracle; the healing of a man born blind, symbolical



of the human race the Lord came to heal. Some of His healings are instantaneous, and without channels, but this healing is performed through a channel--a secondary cause. Of course, with the Lord there really are no secondary causes because, when He takes hold of secondary causes, He makes them first causes.

How resistant people are to the idea of being healed by secondary causes! Especially if they have had a touch of the idea of metaphysical healing, they recoil from the idea of the secondary cause called "medicine," or that called "doctor," or any of the channels of healing. They want their healings at first hand! And they want to dictate how their healing is to be brought about!

Whenever the Lord takes hold of anything, He puts into it a "first" action. He is not afraid of medicine made of clay

and spittle--the modern word for it might be terramyacin or something of the sort. He is not reluctant to anoint the man's eyes with clay and spittle; it is His own anyway, you know, and no matter where He found it, it would still be His own.

We are talking today about a great and penetrating scrutiny, about looking through the surfaces deep into the Source behind the nature of things, and not being stuck with the things. That's the point of today's inquiry--the goal of the Great Scrutiny, and the goal of the Penetration of Nature. Just one goal!

You know, when people start painting pictures on a window, they lose track of the window; they become so engrossed with the pictures they are painting that they fail to use the window as it was intended to be used, as a transparency.

What are we talking about? We are



talking about people painting pictures in their own minds about things, and being stuck with the pictures. If you focus your attention on the pictures--on the secondary causes, on the clay and spittle--you will be diverted, and carried away into a fantasy based on the images, instead of penetrating through them to the reality.

The pictures are not to be disparaged, they are perilous only when you stop with them as being the reality. Every one of these things, when you understand its true nature, can be a channel through which Truth Itself may proceed.

The story of this healing shows us again how unaware even the Lord's disciples were of what He was teaching them. They saw the man-born-blind standing before the Lord, and, right away, they went along with the picture, and started looking for the cause behind this man's

condition. "Why was this man born blind? Was it because he had sinned, or because his parents had sinned?" They felt that there must be some reason for this condition, because it is not natural for a man to be born blind.

The disciples were simple men, and they were looking at the pictures they painted on their own windows, their own minds. They had not looked THROUGH, they had not penetrated through the pictures.

You know, there are two forms of approach to things, the philosophical, and the religious approach. Human philosophy looks TO the nature of things in themselves, to what it is that has formed the picture, as, what is fire and what is its nature? what is water and what is its nature? what is man and what is his nature? Ah, that is one of the biggest points of contention today--what is man?



There are endless ideas. The query "What is man?" is as old as mankind. Plato answered it by saying that man is a two-legged animal without feathers! Man! There is a story about a woman who thought she was covered with feathers. How was she to penetrate the feathers to find out what she really was? Should the healers peel off the feathers, or tell her why she thought she had feathers, or look into the nature of the feathers?

There have been other mental monstrosities regarding the nature of man, and they are being engendered every day; the reports on science, or on psychology, for instance. Any investigations that stop with the surface are nothing more nor less than mental outpicturings. All kinds of devices are evolved to look at nature to find out what man is. He is even pictured as being merely a bag of

chemicals with a money value of about a dollar.

But we are not stopping with the pictures. This is the Feria of the Great Scrutiny. Let's not stop at any points along the way, but let's carry that scrutiny back to the Source.

Incidentally, how do you think that you can scrutinize anything? Not because of your eyes, not because of the grey matter in your brain; no! Your ability to penetrate the pictures, lies in something that God has given you that makes use of your standard equipment of senses and mind. He has provided you with His Own Spirit, which is the spirit of Understanding, the spirit of Wisdom. God, Life, Absolute Being, Pure Life, Unchangeable, Eternal, Conscious Life--in short, that than which a greater cannot be thought.

So, let us not stop with human



philosophy. Philosophy looks only into nature itself, and into the different qualities that are playing across the nature of man, making pictures to catch the attention of minds unwilling or unable to penetrate through them.

We have just studied the Aphorisms dealing with these qualities--goodness, passion, darkness. There are only three, but the interplay between the three makes up every disposition of man ever known throughout the ages. But the qualities that are of nature are not the man! You can look into the nature of man, you can find his disposition made up out of goodness, passion, and darkness. However, by considering his joy and his sorrow, his activities or his inertia, you have not really found man himself. Qualities! You have not found man at all.

So, we are proposing, in this Great

Scrutiny today, to employ a gift that God has given us, called "faith," which is the ability to see one thing, and to understand another; to penetrate the symbols so that they reveal rather than conceal. A wonderfully enlightening illustration of this is afforded in the story of the "Doubting Thomas." He refused to believe that the Lord walked among men again; he had seen His body dead on the Cross, and buried in the Sepulcher; and he flatly refused to believe, saying that unless he, himself, could touch the nailholes in hands and feet, and put his hand into the opened side, he could not believe. The Lord appeared to him, saying, Thomas, come here and put your finger into the wounds, and your hand into My side; and be not faithless, but believing. In his reaction to this experience, Thomas has given us greater foundation for our faith than all



the quick believing of the other disciples; He responded, "My Lord, and my God!" He saw the Man, and knew the God.

Today's Feria of the Great Scrutiny is the examination of catechumens--those who are candidates for illumination--and the station is held at St. Paul's-Without-The-Walls--the great Basilica of Saint Paul OUTSIDE the walls! Outside the walls of Rome. The Scrutiny takes place outside.

You may feel that you are very much outside! And how are you going to be able to scrutinize? How are you going to be able to look at things, and then through them?

Faith has given us the ability to stand, as it were, outside, and see one thing and believe another!

In the same way we can look at man through any monstrosity pictured by the mind. An animal without feathers! He

would be a worse monstrosity if he had feathers! The feathers are no answer--having them or not having them! Being a plucked fowl is not the answer, nor is having the feathers on!

But there is an answer.

When people try to find out about man, about man's value--all the things they try to find out about themselves, about their own Great Self or about their ego self that they call the "I"--they are led astray, because they seem to be so outside of everything. And yet, faith is given them to be their illumination. The light of faith added to the light of reason, enables you to penetrate through the seeming obscurity of a picture--of a symbol, of the qualities--without having to eliminate anything.

The ability to find the real meaning of man is provided only through faith.

Not through human philosophy, but through religious faith looking at man himself; not finding the answer in man himself, but carrying man back to his Creator Who alone has the key to what man is.

Man is made to the Image and Likeness of his Creator. Because of its resemblance, the image is able to receive the likeness, which is Life Itself. Because man is made to the Image, he can have, also, the Likeness.

Carry man back to God, and find out what man is in relation to God. Only then do you find his value; only then are you able to understand what he is, what he is here for, what his purpose is, and what his end is. Instead of stopping along the way with the pictures that are painted on the mind, we go through the pictures.

Man is made for God.



Solomon said, "Know Thyself."

People try to find out about themselves by looking at their qualities. Oh, you can go through psychoanalysis, you know; it helps. There is no antagonism toward secondary measures. Investigation helps. Find out all you can about why you "tick." Why does your heart beat? How do you digest your food? You can investigate the pictures all you please--but don't stop with the pictures!

You have a choice, you can stop with the pictures, or you can go on through to the real meaning of your life--that you live because God has so loved you that He has given you His own Life to enable you to live.

In our study of the Aphorisms, in the Third Aphorism we learned of the first principle in creation, the Principle of Reality, the principle that apprehends

a thing, and immediately stamps it as real. That principle permeates your entire consciousness, so that no matter what state of mind you may be in--waking, sleeping, dreaming, whatever--that primary principle in your set-up, makes what you are experiencing seem real to you.

The interplay of the qualities! You stamp the pictures as being real, and then you believe that they are real.

You might say, "Oh, if I could just have the quality of goodness--leave out the quality of passion and the quality of darkness--then I would have a wonderful world." You wouldn't have a world at all, because the world you apprehend is merely the interplay of the qualities--stamped by your principle of realization as being something real. That is all the world you know--your mind reflecting on the play of the

qualities.

That matter of reflection! You know, your mind is meant to be a reflective instrument. It was never meant to be a creator; it was meant to be a pure reflector, imaging The Creator.

You can't know a thing about a mirror unless you become aware of it by reason of an image. I am not, of course, speaking about a piece of silvered glass, framed, and hanging on a wall; but I am speaking about the principle of reflection, of which the mirror is but a mechanical illustration.

The power of a reflector is in its nothingness-in-itself; it makes no assertion in the way of images or qualities, and, therefore, the reality reflected is not distorted or colored in any way by the reflector.

In this Aphorism we are studying to-day there is the statement:

\*The utter absence of the  
Three Qualities reveals  
SOUL.

How could you ever have an utter absence of the three qualities, and have that absence reveal anything? Well, if you have the understanding of reflection, you may have the revelation. If you have the understanding of the ability to penetrate nature, you have the utter absence of the qualities, because they never have been anything anyway, and you are not diverted. The picture presented by the mirror does not contest place with what you are yourself; not at all.

Nature is argued as the cause,  
which has the same properties  
as its effects; cause being  
identical with effect in  
spite of appearance.

When you try to find out about yourself, your real nature, you ask, "How tall

\*Notes and Headings of the Seventy-Two  
Aphorisms, Aphorism XIV



am I, how fat am I?" Perhaps you get on the scales; I do every morning and if I have gained half-a-pound I go without breakfast! Fat or thin, long or short, black or white, blond or brunette--all qualities! Then you investigate your disposition; you say, "Oh, I have a joyous disposition, I love activity, I love to get out with people"; or you may be the one who says, "I don't like to go out too much, I would rather stay at home and meditate." Qualities! All Qualities!

All this doesn't tell you a thing about yourself, because your real self is neither long nor short, heavy nor light, black nor white, fat nor thin, pleasant nor painful. And, yet, those are the things you will find out about when you study the qualities themselves--dispositional qualities.

What you really are, magnificently

transcends these objects of knowledge--  
transcends them as supremely as the infinite transcends the finite.

By the investigation of the qualities, you don't know yourself at all. You only know the play of the qualities. And if you are not able to penetrate these qualities, then you go along with the pictures. You do not destroy appearances nor eliminate them, for they do not amount to anything anyway. There is no antagonism, no conflict, no contention between the states of mind--your joy or your sorrow or your whatever--and what you really are.

Know thyself! You do not really produce any objects of your knowledge at all, you know. I have heard people affirming an idea of metaphysics, say, "Well, I have created all this out of my own mind." They forget God! They look to themselves. And what are they doing? They are really

looking to their countercreation; created without any authority out of their own minds.

There is authority, you know, for God's creation. In the beginning God created heaven and earth. And He saw all this that He brought forth, and He pronounced it "good." We, covering over His Creation with the unauthorized counter-creations of our own minds, call this thing "evil" that God has pronounced "good."

There is only one Creator, and that is God. There is no secondary creator. The Principle of Reality is called "The Creative Principle," but it has no creative ability OF ITSELF. God so loved this creature filled with His glory, that He has delegated His creative ability to man, so that man may be a secondary cause--not a secondary creator. Man can even generate himself. He was told to multiply

and fill the world--not with contradictions of God, but to fill the world with His glory. And He does not disparage that creative ability; He permits man to participate in it; and to reflect a true creation, not a false one.

A mirror does not create its images. We have repeated to you many times, the statement: Potentiality MUST be tied to the Absolute; the image MUST reflect Reality. And where is this Reality? Where is this Divine Idea? Saint Thomas Aquinas tells us that the Exemplar Form, the Divine Idea, is God's idea. And, because God has eternally in His Mind His Own Image, He permits it to be manifest, through the qualities of nature, through the laws of appearance; not to divert the image, not so that the image will penetrate into the mirror and become lost--like Alice in a topsy-turvy world



of the Looking Glass--but that you may carry that penetration through, back to the Source. From God, to God, is the only reason for man's journey.

In the Book of Ecclesiasticus we have the statement: Full of the glory of the Lord is His work. His work is full of His glory, not some other glory. And the quotation goes on: Hath not the Lord made the saints to declare all His wonderful works? I have heard people who had read the lives of the saints say, "They don't declare to me the glory of God; they declare to me something very painful, something I don't even like to think about. And as to my own life--I certainly do not portray the glory of God!" If you feel that way, it is because you are looking at the pictures you have painted on your own mind; you have not penetrated through this disguise set up by your

own mind, you have not penetrated through to the answer, to what you, yourself, are. You are looking at your disposition, you are being caught in the play of the qualities.

Do not think that you need to effect annihilation of these qualities--they never have been anything but nature, which is nothing. But you DO have to be able to understand. The Great Scrutiny today is for the PENETRATION of Nature--we look AT these qualities and THROUGH them and find that they cannot in any way antagonize or be in conflict with what we really are.

And even though we cannot define what we are; even though you cannot say, "I'm this shape or that shape, this color or that color, this disposition or that disposition," yet your faith will enable you to accept what you really are. As God sees you, so you are. You may not

know, and you do not have to know; it is not dependent upon your own knowledge; it is dependent upon God Who is the Source of everything.

If you go back only to your nature and say, "These are qualities of disposition, heredity, environment--the sum of my personality," and if you stop there, then you have stopped with a picture you have painted, and not with what you are.

In this wonderful opportunity of Penetration of Nature in the Great Scrutiny, let us not stop at any point. We may think we are "outside." We may feel that we are outside looking in. But there is not any "outside" to God. He is all there is. No matter how high the walls seem to be, how complete the disguise seems to be, still, there is not anything, any state of mind, any place, any situation that can separate you from God.

A person says, "Why is there an image here? The mirror is nothing, it doesn't engender its own image; what is it, then, that I am really looking at when I seem to be seeing an image?" And the answer is that there is no image in the mirror at all because that is the secret of reflection, that there is no image IN the mirror; the image is thrown back to the substance. You are given a power of reflecting the image which God has given you, back to its substance, which is Himself.

When you are making your Great Scrutiny, you do not stop and say, "I am stuck with this picture because, either I have sinned or my parents have sinned--mistakes have been made either in my environment or in my heredity." No! You do not stop with the pictures! Neither do you see in those things any cause.

Penetration by the Great Scrutiny



reveals to you the glory of God. If you can see any cause in anything, it has to be the glory of God--and this is the healing. When the Lord pronounced the healing words over the blind man, even though He used only clay and spittle, the blind man's eyes opened, because the Creator is not only the Creator, but He is the Illuminator also.

When we see an image, the next step is to say, "Well, there is an image so there must be the reflector there; I do not see the mirror, I see only the image, but there must be a mirror there underlying and returning the reflection." There is no potentiality to anything except that which has been given to the mirror TO RETURN--not to keep, but to return.

In the same way, the mystical awareness of God should be underlying everything in your experience. The consciousness of God, the awareness of God's

presence does not contest place with other experiences. You do not have to eliminate the qualities of your life; not when you illumine them with an awareness of God.

Mental states--joy, sorrow, exaltation, dejection, pleasure, pain--all are merely the swing of the pendulum of the qualities. We seem to swing from one mental state to another. Actually all this has nothing at all to do with Truth, or with your awareness of God. People sometimes feel that if they can only get a little more of the quality of goodness into their experience, a little more illumination, a little more happiness, a little more joy, then they are going to be so much more aware of God! One quality or the other is no nearer God; they are qualities and they are nothing, they are just the swing of the pendulum of your mind.

There is no place where God is not;

no state of mind that is nearer to Him, because He is not a state of mind. Many have tried to induce a state of mind that would result in union with God. They hope for a state of ecstasy that will confirm the union. They go after ecstasy, thinking that if they can have ecstasy they are going to have union with God. They do not realize that God is all-inclusive, but that He is not captured by a state of mind.

This is the wonderful lesson in this Great Scrutiny--that whether you are blind or seeing, exalted or sad, in ecstasy, in rapture or down in the dregs of the slough of despondency, you are just as near to God. He is everywhere, and no state of mind can contest place with Him. What does He care what your state of mind is? In any state of mind, you can have your awareness of Him.

In the Liturgy we are nearing the

Passion of the Lord, we are approaching Good Friday, which seems to be the lowest point of the Lord's life on earth. And yet, God is present at that lowest point just as much as He is at the highest point on Easter Morn. He is present everywhere. Are we able to penetrate with the Great Scrutiny and find Him? Or will you have to duplicate Jacob's experience?

Jacob was out in the wilderness, with a stone for a pillow. Later, he said, "Truly, God was in this place and I knew it not." How often could you say that about yourself? You may have searched and searched and said, "Well, God is not here"; and later on you may say, "God was in this place and I knew it not."

\*You are seeking God, dear soul,  
and He is everywhere..."

You go around trying to find Him, here and there, under shis stone or under that

\*Self-Abandonment to Divine Providence,  
J.P.deCaussade, S J page 114



event, through this quality or that quality. And you do not find Him because you are looking for something you can apprehend, and He is everywhere.

You are seeking God, dear soul,  
and He is everywhere, everything  
cries His name to you, everything  
gives Him to you, He passes at  
your side, around you, within you,  
and crosses your path, He remains  
with you, and you still seek Him!  
Ah, you are seeking  
the idea of God.

Isn't this what people do? They are seeking the IDEA of God. In seeking ecstasy, they seek the IDEA of union with God. Of what use is the idea of God? It never satisfies. But people so often try to settle for their ideas of reality, for their ideas of God. No wonder they are frustrated!

Ah, you are seeking the idea  
of God, while you possess  
his substance.

You could not seek for Him, you could not desire Him, even as an idea, unless you had Him.

You are pursuing perfection  
and it is there all the while  
in everything that comes to  
meet you. Your sufferings,  
your actions, your attract are,  
as it were, the sacramental  
species under which God gives  
Himself to you, while you are  
off chasing your sublime idea.

Chasing a will-o'-the-wisp of an idea, when  
God Himself is pressing upon you, no matter  
what your state of mind is.

But God will not come to your  
house clothed in the [splendor  
of an idea]

Never, never does He come clothed in the  
splendor of an idea. That is why the Jews  
rejected Him; He did not come up to their  
idea, and they could not penetrate with a  
Great Scrutiny beyond the idea they had  
painted. Therefore, although He was right  
there with them, they refused Him, reject-  
ed Him, and crucified Him.

God then disguises Himself to  
raise the soul to pure faith,  
thus teaching her to find Him  
under all sorts of disguises;  
for once she has learned the

secret of God, He may disguise  
Himself as He pleases...

It does not make any difference how He disguises Himself--a person who cannot see God everywhere, sees Him nowhere. And the soul that has found God in substance, is so aware of His Presence that God cannot disguise Himself; that soul says,

He is here behind the wall, He is looking through the windows. Hide thyself divine love, leap from trial to trial, bind the soul with Thy attraits and duties, blend, mingle, confuse, break up like spiders' webs all the soul's ideas and standards. Let her lose her foothold and feel no roads or paths nor see any light, let her after having found thee in solitude and in prayer, in her religious exercises, in sufferings, in services to her neighbor, in the avoidance of society and worldly affairs, and then after having tried every known method of pleasing Thee no longer be able to find Thee in any of these things as heretofore. But grant that the uselessness of her efforts...

The very place where the efforts cease is the place of the miraculous.

...but grant that the uselessness of her efforts may lead her to abandon them all in order to find Thee in Thyself, and furthermore in everything, everywhere, without distinction or reflection.

Often we miss the miracles because we are looking for something built up in a sublime idea, and God does not come that way, you know. He could, but He does not.

\* \* \*



Coloured candles

1 doz Blue balloons

Made up for long blouse  
button cotton

22 inch b.p. Zip

Face cream,

Pin shoes

Grey cotton