

March

From a series of monthly meditational essays by Eugene Halliday.

Our third month of the year was also the third month of the Roman calendar until 46 B.C. when the Julian calendar was adopted. The Romans named the month from the God Mars, originally a god of the springtime, and of agriculture, but later identified with the Greek God of war, Ares, the son of Zeus and Hera (or Jupiter and Juno).

About the 20th of March falls the spring equinox, in which period the sun rises due east and sets due west, making the days and nights of equal length.

One of the names given by the Anglo-Saxons to March was "the lengthening month", or Lencten-Monath, because in it the days obviously and rapidly lengthen. The quick march towards summer has begun.

It is not accidental that the musical composition written to aid soldiers march to war was called a "March". For in the month of March, sacred to the god of agriculture and of war, all nature's forces go manifestly on the march into the summer-land.

From the earth, now warmed by the spring sun, shoot up the green spears of nature's hidden armies. Having hidden themselves through the long, dark, winter months, life's forces now leap up above the ground to invade the ambient air. From the fingertips of the trees new buds push out with tremendous energy. All nature rejoices at the overthrow of the cold dark enemy.

What is the force that springs forth at this time from the earth, showing its green shoots in plants and trees? It is the force hidden in the seeds that were made last summer when the earth's vegetation received the inpouring energy of the sun.

Just as the coal we dig from the earth and burn in our fire-places derived its energy millions of years ago from the sun, and now gives up this energy for our uses, so each year in summertime the sun's energy penetrates into the earth and its vegetation. It is stored in the dark earth of the winter to give itself up again in the spring.

So also it is with the souls of human beings. It is not a mere figure of speech when we refer to Christ as the "Sun of our soul", and the "Light of the world". The same intelligence that presses from the eternal through the sun to penetrate and re-vitalise the hidden seeds of life in the earth, in Christ presses through to bring new life and hope to mankind buried in the dark materialism of a world become blind to Truth and Love.

Thus in March we see the evidence of the living force of the Divine Spirit, re-energising the hidden seeds of life in the earth, as the same Spirit penetrates into human souls to revitalise them and release them from the dark winter's cold of their material self-isolation.

It is useful to us to realise that winter-time, with its hardness, coldness and

darkness, gives us a picture of a similar state in ourselves, when erroneous ideas of isolation and separateness from each other hardens our hearts, makes cold our calculating minds, and darkens our understanding.

In the depth of the winter, deprived of the sun's vitalising light and warmth, the earth is locked inside itself as an egotistic human being, deprived of Truth and Love, is imprisoned inside the dark processes of his own self-isolated mind.

If it were not for the spring sun's re-vitalising rays the earth would be as winter shows it, hard, insensitive, and as if dead. If it were not for the Spirit of the All-Father penetrating through Christ into the soul of mankind, man also would be as dead.

But the spring sun of March gives its energy to the earth and to the hidden, dormant life within it. And the sun of man's soul penetrates with Christ into the dark, secret places of men's hearts and minds, to re-energise their hidden seeds of Truth and Love, and bring them shooting forth again to partake of the eternal and mysterious Rite of Spring.

Jesus Christ was not merely a figure in human history who appeared nearly 2,000 years ago, and now no longer exists. He is the eternal principal of Light and Warmth, which is universal Truth and Love, inherent in the origin of all things.

In the month of March, "the month of lengthening days", we feel His presence manifestly lightening our souls, our hearts and our minds. The pulse of mankind begins more clearly to beat out the stirring rhythm of the Spring March, in "common time" as musicians say, making us feel more surely that we can once again set out to fight the good fight for Life and Truth and Love, as the All-Father of the universe wills us.

For the spring tells us that our God is not a god of the dead, but of the living, and that Christ came and still comes to bring us not less, but more life, life more wonderfully abundant than our winter-bound minds could comprehend.