

was even more unhappy as it was her wedding with the Earl of Bothwell, another paradox of so devout a Catholic as Mary contracting an apparently invalid marriage with a Protestant lord, whose first wife was still living. He soon leaves the stage to flee to the protective custody of the King of Denmark, where he remains till his death. With characteristic lack of judgment of men and women, Mary then throws herself into the arms of her "good cousin," Elizabeth Tudor, only to begin an exile, confined in one English castle after another, until she reaches Fortheringay and the executioner's block.

The story of Mary Stuart is told with fine sense of the dramatic and excellent use of suspense. The chapters of the book are short and crisp as their titles. As literature, it falls midway between the scholarly history, bristling with footnotes and bibliography, and the popular work which borders on fiction. The style is the author's best though at times exacting close reading to follow the complex relationships of the *dramatis personae*. The book commends itself to the general reader who would learn in interesting fashion the details of the tragedy of the Queen of Scots and it should win for itself a place on the shelves of Catholic study-clubs and school libraries.

WILLIAM J. LALLOU

### Book Notes

When there is available but one year to instruct college students in the science of morality, many thoughtful persons have questioned the validity of proceeding on the basis of natural religion alone. *Man and Morals* (By Celestine M. Bittle. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1950. Pp. x + 719. \$4.00) blazes no trails. It is a textbook in ethics and a satisfactory one insofar as the study itself is satisfactory. The author admits the inability of his science to solve all the moral problems of life, "particularly those in the field of the supernatural." Since revealed divine command and sanction are so much a part of the reasonable ordering of life, it seems a game to stop short each time a certain line of demarcation is reached, artificial in the order of experience.

Fr. Samuel Mazzuchelli, O.P., apostle of the Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin Territories, has yet to be memorialized in a definitive biography in English. Pending such a volume, his labors have been recounted by

Mary Ellen Evans in the form of a work of fiction entitled *The Seed and the Glory* (New York: McMullen, 1950. Pp. 275. \$2.50). It is not in any way distinguished among a generally undistinguished company, yet the man was such that he cannot be written about with complete dullness. The son of comfortable Milanes parents, he deserted even the amenities of continental Dominican life for a rough frontier populated by Menominees, Winnebagoes, and immigrant Irish. "Mr. Matthew Kelly" was consumed with a zeal to imitate and move on, never remaining to see his labors flower. The consequence was that he was thought inconstant by bishops and fellow-religious alike. The tragic disaffection with Bishop Loras is tastefully handled, although the full measure of the breach is hinted at rather than told. There is in the novel, fidelity to the man's own memoirs (Englished by Sister Benedicta Larkin, O.P., Chicago, 1915), and to the findings of historians such as Hoffman and Crepeau.

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## CHRIST THE TEACHER AND THE STABILITY OF CATHOLIC DOGMA

Currently there is considerable interest in promoting the cause of a special liturgical feast of Christ the Teacher. Consequently it will be quite advantageous to study the doctrinal mission of Our Lord, especially as it is exercised in His Church of the New Testament. It is obvious, of course, that, during the course of His public life here on earth, Our Lord's activities within the community of His disciples included the work of teaching, and that His teaching then was definitely teaching in the strictest sense of the term. It is no less obvious that, since the time of His glorious Ascension into heaven, Our Lord, as the Head of the Mystical Body which is His Church, has *enlightened* or *illuminated* that society. He has enlightened the Church as a part of that very office by which the Holy Ghost, dwelling within the Church as the Source of its unity and life, has performed a function which has led the Catholic *magisterium* to speak of Him as the Soul of the Catholic Church.

Two questions about this doctrinal activity of Our Lord in His Church are of special interest and importance today. First, is that doctrinal activity in the Church to be classified as teaching in the strict sense of the word, so that Our Lord is properly the Teacher or the *Magister* of the faithful living here and now in His Kingdom on earth? Second, how does this doctrinal activity of Our Lord in His Church serve to explain the inherent stability of Catholic dogma?

The Holy Father's encyclical *Mystici Corporis* contains an excellent summary of the Catholic doctrine on Our Lord's function as the Enlightener of His Church. This teaching is to be found in the portion of the encyclical dealing with Our Lord's work as the *Head* of His Mystical Body. The document explains that, as the *Head* of the Body, Our Lord possesses a superiority in the line of excellence over all the members, and that He exercises his headship by His government of the Church, through His conformity with His members, by reason of the plenitude of supernatural life existent within Him, and finally by reason of the *influxus* of life which He communicates to the Body and its members. By way of this *influxus*, Our Lord gives enlightenment and sanctification

to the Church and to its members. Here is the pertinent text of the encyclical.

In us the nerves reach from the head to all the parts of the body and give them the power to feel and move; in like manner Our Saviour communicates power to His Church so that the things of God are understood more clearly and desired more eagerly by the faithful. From Him there is poured forth into the body of the Church all the light by which the believers are divinely illumined, and all of the grace by which they become holy as He is holy.

Christ enlightens His entire Church, as is evident from almost innumerable passages of the Sacred Scriptures and of the Holy Fathers. "No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."<sup>1</sup> Coming as a Teacher from God<sup>2</sup> to give testimony to the truth,<sup>3</sup> He shed such light upon the primitive apostolic Church that the prince of the apostles exclaimed: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."<sup>4</sup> From heaven He assisted the evangelists in such a way that as members of Christ they wrote what they had learned, as it were at the dictation of the Head.<sup>5</sup> And for us who still linger in this earthly exile, He is today the Author of the faith, as, in the fatherland of heaven, He will be the One who brings this faith to its final perfection. It is He who grants the light of the faith to believers. It is He who divinely bestows the supernatural gifts of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom to the pastors and teachers, and above all to His Vicar on earth, so that they may faithfully preserve the treasury of the faith, defend it energetically, and explain and support it in a devout and diligent manner. Finally it is He who, though unseen, presides over and guides the Councils of the Church.<sup>6</sup>

In the first place, the *Mystici Corporis* insists that the entirety of the light by which the faithful are illumined by God within His Church comes to them from Our Lord, the Head of the Mystical Body. As the same document goes on to explain, this "light" includes not only the interior graces required for the production of an act of faith, but the actual statement of the truths of faith them-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *John* 1: 18.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *John* 3: 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *John* 18: 37.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *John* 6: 68.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. St. Augustine, *De consensu evang.* I, 35, 54 (*MPL.* XXXIV, 1070).

<sup>6</sup> The passage cited includes the last portion of the paragraph marked "49" and the whole of the paragraph marked "50" in the NCWC translation. The original text is found in *AAS*, XXXV, 215 f.

selves. Our Lord is described as "illuminating" the Church insofar as He "has declared (*enarravit*)" the mysteries of the Godhead. Coming as a teacher (*magister*), He enlightened the primitive Church in such a way that the first Vicar of Christ told his Master that he and his companions would not desert Him because He had the words of eternal life. Another aspect of that enlightenment of the Church by Our Lord is to be found in Our Lord's activity in the work of scriptural inspiration. Thus the human nature of Christ is represented as acting as an instrument in the process of inspiration itself.

The *Mystici Corporis* then goes on to describe the doctrinal activity of Our Lord in His Church today. He acts as the *Auctor* of the faith for the faithful here in this world, just as He acts as the *Consummator* of the faith for the souls in heaven. The last section of the citation is an explanation of Our Lord's actual doctrinal work in the Church since the time of His Ascension into heaven, a statement of the manner according to which He works as the *Auctor fidei* within the Church of the faithful.

Here we must note a distinction between the manner of Our Lord's activity in the primitive Church (within the society of His disciples during the course of His public life here on earth) and the way in which He acts with reference to His Church since that period. Both then and now, the *lumen fidei*, the inward supernatural intellectual power by which the creature is rendered capable of accepting the supernatural revealed truths of divine public revelation, must be considered as a gift of God through the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ Our Lord. Christ, as Man, as the Head of the Church has always been the cause of the inward power or grasp of faith in this sense. With respect to the primitive Church and the Church of the time since the Ascension, however, there is a definite difference in another line. Our Lord's teaching function in the primitive Church was that of a direct Instructor. He taught His disciples and the apostles by expressing the divinely revealed truths to them directly in His own words and with His own voice. Since that time He has spoken to the Church through the voice of His ambassadors, men whom He has commissioned to teach with His authority and in His name. We can now briefly consider the function of Christ as the Teacher within the Church with reference to the *lumen fidei* itself throughout the history of the Church.

It is clear that the *habitus* of divine faith and the various actual graces by which man is moved and rendered competent to perform acts of belief in God come to the believer, not only from God but from the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ which acts as an instrument conjoined to the Godhead by the *gratia unionis*. Our Lord as Man is thus the Cause, both by way of efficient causality and by way of His sovereign merit, of the intellectual power or capacity by which each of the faithful is enabled to perform the supernatural cognitive act of theological faith in God. Insofar as this power is produced by the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity, it is attributed or appropriated to the Holy Ghost. The sacred humanity of Jesus Christ Our Lord co-operates in the production of this effect, in such a way that no act of belief is ever performed by any human being independently of Our Lord's humanity, actually working for the effecting of this *lumen fidei* within the intellect of the person He has redeemed.

This, of course, is an effect beyond the power of any merely human teacher. All that the merely human teacher can do in any line, theological or otherwise, is to express the truth which he has grasped and which he wishes to have his pupil come to know, and to adapt that expression in such a way that it will be at once effectively intelligible to the student and an accurate pronouncement of the truth to be conveyed. The mental capacity of the student is something which he can never hope to increase. Yet it is precisely in the way of such an increase in the intellectual capacity of the disciple that Our Lord's primary function as the Enlightener or Teacher within the Mystical Body is exercised.

As far as Our Lord's expression or statement of the divine truths of the Catholic faith is concerned, there is one very special function to which Pius XII refers. As the *Mystici Corporis* reminds us, the divine public revelation which we accept with the assent of theological faith within the Catholic Church is primarily a body of truth which Jesus Christ expressed and set forth effectively to His apostles and disciples during the course of His public life on this earth. Some of that message, furthermore, is contained in the canonical books written by Our Lord's disciples as the instruments inspired by God. Thus the books themselves, and the expression of the truth contained in them, must be attributed to God as the principal cause, and to the sacred humanity

of Jesus Christ as the instrument conjoined to the Godhead. According to the doctrine of the *Mystici Corporis*, then, Our Lord acts as the teacher within His Church in the sense that He is truly the Author of the inspired books containing part of the divinely revealed message with which the *magisterium* of His Church is primarily and essentially concerned.

Even restricting ourselves to the consideration of Our Lord's influence as the Cause or the Author of the inspired books by which the faithful are instructed in the way of eternal and supernatural salvation, His function is something quite different from that of other merely human authors who have labored within God's kingdom in days gone by. St. Thomas Aquinas, to give one highly illustrious example, wrote many books which serve for the instruction of the faithful within the society of Our Lord's disciples. Yet it would be impossible to say that St. Thomas acts now as a teacher, in the strict and proper sense of the term, within the Church. His influence is virtual, emanating from the power which he exercised when he actually taught during his life on earth.

Our Lord, on the other hand, lives now, precisely as Teacher, within His Church. The books of which He is the Author are expounded and explained by men whom He has commissioned, by men who act and teach in virtue of the power which He communicates to them here and now. Thus the work of expressing and of carrying the truth to the disciples within the Church, the function which is pre-eminently the task of the teacher, is something which He is actually performing within the Church at every moment, and which earns for Him, from this point of view, the title of the Church's Teacher or *Magister* in the strict and proper sense of the term.

But, though this be true with reference to the part of divine Christian revelation which is contained in the inspired books, particularly those of the New Testament, we may well ask ourselves about Our Lord's doctrinal function within the Church with reference to the revealed public message as a whole, or even with reference to that portion of it which is not contained in the Sacred Writings. The encyclical *Mystici Corporis* contains adequate instruction on this point also. In this document the Holy Father points to the fact that Our Lord Himself enriches the *ecclesia docens* and particularly the Bishop of Rome with the gifts of wis-

dom, understanding, and knowledge, "so that they may faithfully preserve the treasury of the faith, defend it energetically, and explain and support it in a devout and diligent manner."

Despite the fact that the expression "*divinitus ditat*" is employed in this passage, there is no doubt about the pertinence of this teaching to Our Lord, to the sacred humanity of Christ, the Head of the Mystical Body. As God, or by His divine nature, Our Lord most certainly is the ultimate Source of all the supernatural and natural benefits which come to His creatures. But it is not precisely as God that He is the Head of the Church, and that we are His members. Thus the functions which the Holy Father ascribes to Him in the *Mystici Corporis* are those which He accomplishes in and through His human nature. The granting of the gifts of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge to the members of the *ecclesia docens* is one of these functions. It is obviously something done "in a divine manner (*divinitus*)," since the granting of these spiritual gifts is something of which God alone could be the principal Cause. Here the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ once again acts as an instrument intimately conjoined to the divinity through the *gratia unionis*.

Our Lord's sacred humanity thus performs a real though instrumental work in the granting of these necessary gifts to the leaders of that Church with which He promised to remain until the end of time. The gifts are described, not merely as empowering the *ecclesia docens* to teach and to guard the deposit of Catholic faith infallibly and effectively as long as the Church militant will endure: they are rather depicted as bringing about that actual infallible conservation and teaching. The message which the apostles heard from the lips of Christ, and which they handed over to the Church as divinely revealed doctrine to be preached in the Church militant accurately until the end of time, is taught and guarded infallibly precisely because of the supernatural gifts in the order of cognition which Our Lord in his human nature grants to the *ecclesia docens*.

The three gifts to which the encyclical refers explicitly are all to be found in the list of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. Obviously, however, the benefits named in the encyclical are not precisely those listed among the qualities which sacred theology knows as the *dona Spiritus Sancti*. The gifts of the Holy Ghost, as we know

them in theology, are classed in the category of *gratia gratum faciens*. They are thus listed as supernatural gifts which have to do primarily with the spiritual perfection of the individuals who possess them. The benefits to which the encyclical refers are, on the contrary, gifts conferred upon the immediate possessors for the sake of the universal Church of God. Thus, ultimately at least, they are to be classified among the *gratiae gratis datae*. They are given to move the *ecclesia docens* to the accomplishment of the work for which Our Lord Himself commissioned it. Consequently they can only be understood in terms of that commission.

Our Lord gave His apostles, and thus their successors in the *ecclesia docens*, all the authority indicated by His statement that "He that heareth you heareth me: and he that despiseth you despiseth me: and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."<sup>7</sup> In other words, their teaching is presented as Our Lord's own. Acceptance of their teaching constitutes belief in His message, and the rejection of their teaching involves a rejection of Our Lord and of God Himself. The members of the *ecclesia docens* and of course the *ecclesia docens* as a whole must be considered as an instrument of Christ the Teacher.

It is important to realize, however, in just what sense these men must be called the instruments of Jesus Christ. In the first place, it is at once obvious that they are not instruments in the full and complete sense that the inspired human authors of Sacred Scripture were the instruments of God in the production of those books of which God Himself is truly the Author. The end-product of the process of inspiration, in which these men were employed as God's instruments, consisted of books of which God is the Author, and consequently of books which can be ascribed to God in every statement and expression. We can take any one of the statements contained in inspired Scripture, and say that God teaches this definite truth, this definite statement. On the other hand, we do not say that some definite teaching of the *ecclesia docens* is a statement of God Himself. Thus, merely for the sake of example, when the present Holy Father defined the dogma of the Assumption, he did not say that the words of the definition were the actual words of God, as is the case with Holy Scripture. He stated that he made this definition "by the authority of Our Lord Jesus Christ,

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Luke* 10:16.

of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by Our own authority."<sup>8</sup> What was defined was a divinely revealed dogma of the Catholic faith, one of the truths which had been taught to the apostles and handed over to the Church to be taught accurately until the end of time.

In this way the Holy Father (and consequently the entire *ecclesia docens*), has what we may call an ambassadorial instrumentality. The message which the *ecclesia docens* is charged to preach infallibly, the one body of truth with which it is primarily and essentially concerned, is the divine teaching given by Our Lord. With reference to the message itself, they are the instruments of Christ, in such a way that the teaching is attributed to Our Lord as a principal Cause. It is not their doctrine, but His. The effect is not attributed properly to the instrument but rather to the principal cause.

But, as far as the statement or expression of the doctrine is concerned, the members of the *ecclesia docens* act as principal causes rather than merely or exactly as instruments in the employ of Christ. Thus, for example, the doctrine of papal infallibility is Our Lord's own teaching, but we do not say that Christ defined this teaching as a dogma of the Catholic faith. That definition we rightly call the work of the Vatican Council. In exactly the same way, the truth of Our Lady's bodily Assumption into heaven is one of the truths which God Himself incorporated into the body of His Christian and public supernatural revelation. Yet the definition of this dogma is rightly ascribed to Pius XII. He issued that definition by the authority of Christ and by his own authority. His authority came from Our Lord through Peter, but it was and it remains the authority of Pius XII. His is the authority of the Vicar or the Ambassador of Christ. In this way there is justified within the Church the claim of the Apostle Paul that "For Christ, therefore, we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us."<sup>9</sup>

We can return now to the question of those *gratiae gratis datae* through which, according to the *Mystici Corporis*, the ambassadorial function of the *ecclesia docens* is aided by the doctrinal mission of Christ as the Head of His Church. Do the wisdom, under-

<sup>8</sup> This section of the translation of the *Munificentissimus Deus* is to be found in *AER*, CXXIV, 1 (Jan., 1951), 17.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *II Cor.* 5:20.

standing, and knowledge accorded by Our Lord to the members of His *ecclesia docens*, and particularly to the visible head of His Church, involve the actual possession by these men of the entire deposit of Christian teaching, in such a way that they are always competent to give an authoritative and correct statement of the Christian faith in the face of whatever difficulties or questions that might arise?

Obviously only an affirmative answer may be given to this question, always, however, in the light of the fact that the charism of infallibility is given only to the Holy Father as an individual Bishop, and is given to the rest of the *ecclesia docens*, either gathered together in Council or scattered throughout the world in their various individual local Churches of Christ, only insofar as they are united with the Sovereign Pontiff. In the light of this teaching it becomes clear that the Holy Father, and the rest of the *ecclesia docens* with him, are, through the triumphant power of Jesus Christ, in possession of the truth of divine revelation in such a way that they can always resolve any difficulty or respond to any question about divinely revealed truth by defining what is correct or by condemning what is heretical or erroneous.

This does not mean, of course, that the responses of the Holy Father or of the entire *ecclesia docens* in union with him are always and everywhere instantaneous. The ambassadors of Christ retain their human characteristics in their work for Our Lord in the doctrinal order. And, in the order of human affairs, serious matters are not treated with what might be termed a flippant speed. The teaching function of the *apostolic collegium* is a matter of supreme moment. Consequently it is not only right and proper, but even necessary, that the answers of Our Lord's ambassadors should be, above all, considered responses. Nevertheless, it remains true that the *ecclesia docens* is always competent to take care of the difficulties or questions that may arise on the subject of the message which has been entrusted to it.

A further question suggests itself at this point, a question prompted by the splendid paper read by Fr. Walter Burghardt, S.J., at last June's meeting of The Catholic Theological Society of America in Detroit.<sup>10</sup> The question is this: can the *ecclesia docens*

<sup>10</sup> The paper is to appear in the forthcoming issue of the Society's *Proceedings*.

make new definitions or condemnations without looking towards the monuments of the past? In other words, can the *ecclesia docens*, by looking only into its own consciousness, by examining the content of its own awareness of the revealed message, and consequently without any necessary reference to the past or the monuments of the past, resolve all questions about the Catholic faith? Or, to put the question in still another way, in the most concrete fashion, could the Holy Father have defined the dogma of Our Lady's bodily Assumption into heaven without referring to the teachings and the documents of the past as long as he ascertained the consciousness or the convictions of the *ecclesia docens* on this teaching?

The correct and adequate answer to these questions, or to be more exact, to this question, is far from being a simple matter. It would seem, however, that a realization of the position of the Holy Father and of the other members of the *ecclesia docens* as the ambassadors of Jesus Christ can be quite helpful in arriving at such an answer.

As the Head of His Mystical Body, Our Lord empowers, aids, and actually moves His *ecclesia docens* to the authoritative and accurate statement of His divine message to His disciples within His Church. His ambassadors are commissioned by Him to declare as divinely revealed truth what has been presented as such *semper, ubique, and ab omnibus* by the teaching authority of His Church. Since they are ambassadors, and consequently the principal causes of their own statements of God's message, they are bound to act according to the designs of human prudence (or of the gift of counsel) in the correct performance of this work.

Absolutely speaking, once that it has been ascertained that a particular teaching is being proposed here and now as a dogma of the Catholic Church *ubique et ab omnibus*, it is perfectly certain that this has *always* been thus presented in the true and Catholic Church. But, by the same token, once it has been ascertained that the *ecclesia docens* has really declared such a teaching as Catholic dogma in the past, it is perfectly certain that it is being taught as Catholic dogma here and now everywhere and by all the members of the *ecclesia docens*. Yet the tremendous gravity of the matter involved would seem to make it morally impossible to have a definition issued without recourse to an examination of the belief of the Church at the present time and to the monuments of the past

as well. And it would seem that the charismatic gifts granted by Our Lord to the *ecclesia docens* for the right and proper carrying out of its divine commission must include the availability of resources by which the teaching of the past in the Church may be examined in order to see clearly how the doctrine in question has actually been presented by the *magisterium* in times gone by.

The work of teaching in the Councils of the Church is presided over by Our Lord. He it is who guides these assemblies and moves them to the accurate and infallible declaration of Catholic truth. Here, however, as elsewhere, the Council acts as the principal cause, the one to which the effect is proportioned and ascribed, with reference to the statement of the divine truth. The truth itself, of course, remains the teaching of God through Jesus Christ Our Lord.

Once we realize the implications of the truth that Christ teaches in His Church through the men whom He has commissioned as His ambassadors, we are in a position to gain an insight into the full meaning of the stability of Catholic dogma. We are, furthermore, enabled to see the source of some of the confusion which has gone into certain present-day statements about the development of doctrine.

The *ecclesia docens*, acting as the body of Christ's doctrinal ambassadors, is the principal cause of its own statements of doctrine. Thus it must proceed *modo humano*, with tremendous effort, and with the use of all the available pertinent resources. Thus, that *ecclesia docens* has been compelled, over the course of the centuries, to state the body of truth which Our Lord taught in Aramaic to people of Hebrew background to people of every culture and language in history. First it had to express these very truths accurately and effectively to persons who spoke Greek, but whose cultural background was that of the Hebrews. Then it had to bring out this same body of truth, always accurately, to the people and the mentality of Greece, Syria, and Rome.

It is characteristic of the translation of a document from one language into another that this task involves far more than the mere replacement of each individual word by another in the other language. There are terms which can only be translated correctly by phrases in another language. Likewise there are sometimes

rather complicated phrases which can be rendered correctly by a single word in another idiom.

The difficulties are enhanced in the case of the transmission of a spoken message. The accurate expression of one body of truth in two different languages and cultures must take cognizance of the mentalities of the peoples to whom the message itself is addressed. A statement which is perfectly clear to one age or one civilization will necessarily involve the explicit removal of some possible misunderstanding when it is brought accurately to another age or another culture.

Such has been the task of the ambassadors of Christ. Such has been the actual procedure of Christ the teacher within His Church. What might seem at first sight to be an increase in the content of truth proposed as revealed, turns out to be, in the final analysis, the correct statement of the deposit originally confided to the Church. But it is a statement made to a generation that is the heir to all the cultures of the past. And the precisions which have had to be introduced, by the divinely aided labors of the ambassadors of Christ during the course of the centuries, to preclude the possibility of any misunderstanding of the divine message which might be attributable to the *ecclesia docens* itself, have come to us to aid us in our grasp of that message.

Thus that continual restatement of this same truth, this ever-accurate expression of Christ's ambassadors as His agents in His Church, gives us a definite advance in the knowledge of divine revelation since, through the precisions or explanations (or, if you will, the drawing out of implications), it results necessarily in a lessening of the danger that we may misconstrue that teaching to our own spiritual downfall.

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