

Thoughts for Lent . . .

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

By THOMAS PAINE
1793

With respect to Mystery, everything we behold is, in one sense, a mystery to us.

Our own existence is a mystery; the whole vegetable world is a mystery.

We cannot account how it is that an acorn, when put into the ground, is made to develop itself and become an oak.

We know not how it is that the seed we sow unfolds and multiplies itself, and returns to us such an abundant interest for so small a capital.

The fact, however, as distinct from the operating cause, is not a mystery, because we see it; and we know the means we are to use, which is no other than putting the seed in the ground.

We know, therefore, as much as is necessary for us to know; and that part of the operation that we do not know, and which if we did, we could not perform, the Creator takes upon Himself and performs it for us.

We are, therefore, better off than if we had been left into the secret, and left to

do it for ourselves. But though every created thing is, in this sense, a mystery, the word mystery cannot be applied to moral truth, any more than obscurity can be applied to light.

The God in Whom we believe is a God of moral truth, and not a God of mystery or obscurity.

Mystery is the antagonist of truth. It is a fog of human invention that obscures truth, and represents it in distortion.

Truth never envelops itself in mystery; and the mystery in which it is at any time enveloped, is the work of its antagonists, and never of truth itself.

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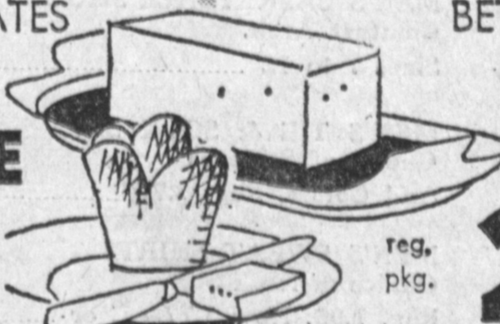
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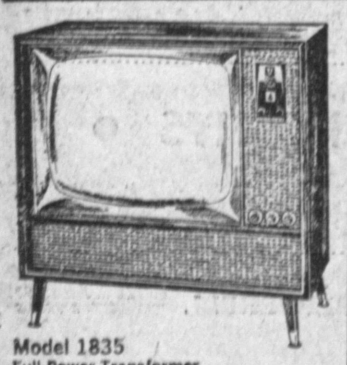
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