

SPIRITICITY April 1958

PROSPERITY

By Robert Applegate

IT IS FREQUENTLY objected, as it was recently in a syndicated column, that it is unchristian to "link religion and prosperity."

Let us consider.

"You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth." - Deuteronomy

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." - Psalm 23

"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." - Psalm 24

"Trust in the Lord, and do good; so you will dwell in the land, and enjoy security. Take delight in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart. . . . I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging bread." - Psalm 37

"Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: 'I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way you should go.'" - Isaiah

"Your Father knows what you need before you ask. . . . Do not be anxious about your life." - Jesus Christ

"My God will supply every need of yours." - Paul

"Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you, . . . as I know it is well with your soul." - John

"Cast all your anxieties on Him, for He cares about you." - Peter

If we are to divorce religion and prosperity, we shall have to eliminate a large part of our Scripture, and disregard the instruction of those we call prophets and apostles, not to mention Him we call Saviour.

Those who object to linking religion and prosperity are quite apt to be those who have never known what it is to be penniless, not knowing where the next meal will come from or where the night will be spent. Obviously, some provision is necessary for life; and so we cannot divorce religion from the question of supply, unless we divorce it from life, as many do.

The crux of the matter is in how we link religion and prosperity, and what we mean by "prosperity." If we desire supply in order to minister to unnecessary desires and to impress our neighbors, and if we seek God for the sake of this supply, then we are making the silliest mistake possible. We are prostituting THAT which is eternal to attain an end that is transitory and unsatisfactory. We are trading the everlasting Joy of God for the disillusionment that always follows seeking things for their own sake.

If we try to use Truth to get things, we are by that act denying the Truth. For the Truth is that man is a spiritual being; that, therefore his desires are spiritual and can be satisfied only by the Spirit. The Truth is that man's life is eternal. But if a man gives himself to seeking that which is transient, he is denying the Truth by his life. He is living a lie.

"No man can serve two masters." We can give our lives to only one thing. So we must choose whom we will serve. And it is an interior choice, which has

nothing to do with our present status in life or our outer responsibilities. We are all seeking satisfaction. Do we expect it from the world or from God? We cannot do both. "You cannot serve (reverence) God and mammon."

Nevertheless, everyone of us is in this world for some purpose. There is something for everyone to do; and the material needed to do it with is provided by our Lord - no matter through what outer channel it comes - if we trust Him for it.

Only as we free ourselves from concern for provision can we give ourselves to seeking God and His Plan for us. For you cannot give yourself to seeking God if you are anxious about how you will pay taxes or buy the children's clothes. Therefore we are told explicitly and repeatedly to surrender all these anxieties. Yet we do not want to do so. We like the feeling of personal responsibility; it is a form of egotism.

It takes a bit of humility to say: "I have no responsibility in this matter; my only responsibility is to look to God."

Socrates defined "prosperity" as having all that you want and a little left over. According to this definition, many who have a great deal of money are not prosperous, because they do not have all they want; whereas some who have much less are truly prosperous. It follows, then, that "prosperity" is a state of mind (or a state of consciousness), which consists of being satisfied with what we have, knowing that we will always have enough to fulfill our godgiven task. So prosperity comes from being willing to surrender our useless desires and to trust God for our genuine needs. It is a high trust in God.

We should not seek God for the benefits, but we should trust Him for the benefits. We all need provision. Are we to look to the government for it, and make a god of the government? Are we to look to our own efforts, and thereby make gods of ourselves - as if we had created ourselves and all our opportunities?

No man lives unto himself alone. Whatever we are, we affect every person in the universe. If we are fearful and insecure, we carry with us a contagion of fear and insecurity. If we have faith in God and confidence in His Providence, we spread abroad an infection of faith and confidence. We live for all men, whether we will it or not.

Even those who have surrendered all they had to follow the Christ have known God as their Provider. The disciples of Jesus left their possessions; but they were never destitute, because they always had all they needed - all they could use. "That is all very well if you do not have a wife and children to support" is the usual objection. Peter had a wife and a mother-in-law, and there is no evidence that they suffered because of his choice.

Other men, in other centuries, have given up their possessions to follow Christ. They could do so only because they knew God as their constant Supplier. The following account, from the anonymous "Sayings of the Fathers," is typical.

"One brought to an old man money, saying, 'Take this for thy spending, for thou hast grown old and thou art ill.' . . . But the old man said, 'Dost thou come to take away my Shepherd after sixty years? Behold for all this long time of my Infirmary, I have lacked for nothing. God supplying me and feeding me.' And he would not take it."

We cannot separate religion and prosperity. We can only decide which is more important to us. There are three relations which confront all of us: our relation to other people, our relation to the things of the world, and our relation to God. We cannot escape any one of these, although we can ignore the last - at our own risk.

Our attitude toward our fellow men and our attitude toward the things of the world reveals very clearly what our attitude toward God really is. If we are right with God, then we think more of what we can give to others than what we can get from them; and we are indifferent to things, knowing that every helpful thing will be provided at the proper time.

If, on the other hand, we are concerned about what others may think of us, and if we are anxious about supply, we give proof that we do not know God or care very much about Him.

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God." The reason we are not to be concerned about provision is that God wants to give us more: Eternal Life, which is not an amorphous, problematical state to be entered after death, but a Consciousness of a Present Reality. Life is eternal; are we conscious of it?

The promise is that whoever seeks the Consciousness of Eternal Life will find it, and will have all necessary things added. In two thousand years, this promise has never been disproved. It has been proved true whenever anyone has been willing to put it to the test.

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WAYS TO DEMONSTRATE

By Nell Truesdell (Concluded)

AN ARTIST remarked to me that she had learned enough about oil painting to have found the line that distinguishes a good picture from a bad one. That line, she said, is very thin.

In all studies, the line that separates what is worthwhile from what is worthless must be discerned, if a person wants to swing over it from mediocrity to mastery.

In his pursuit of Truth, a person must realize that Truth is found, not so much by searching for It, as by waiting on, and listening for the Word of God, which is Truth. He who loves God will hear God's Word, for love and hearing are coordinated. Man has to know the Truth; and when he knows the Truth, he is free. But freedom is a reward given only to him who is willing to acquaint himself with the ONE who does all things well.

God works through the consciousness of man. But only the man who is able to abandon himself to the Almighty becomes an instrument through which the Presence of God is made manifest. Miraculously, this man appears to do all things; but he knows that, of himself, he does nothing.

The desire to demonstrate things drives most students to make continual demands on a God who, to them, is a mere provider. Those who crave the world's goods show themselves to be on the competitive plane, where the person who can demonstrate the most receives the greatest praise.

All human beings feel the urge for a better life on earth. But most people fail to realize that the urge is often God trying to show them that they have arrived at a crucial stage. They face the supreme decision to swing the attention and the will away from the things of the world to the things of God. Only when this swing is made can men use wisely the provision that has already been made for them; only then will they be truly enriched.

To look into the heart - to wait at the heart center until the Word of God is revealed - is to enter the realm of sure demonstration of all needful things. Our worldly needs have already been anticipated. God is the Father who is more willing to provide than man is to receive.

"Be still, and know that I am God; . . . I will be exalted in the earth."

"Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee."

"My soul, wait thou only upon God: for my expectation is from Him."

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EASTER

By Alden Truesdell

THE TRUTH about life is that it is eternal. The Truth about man is that he is immortal.

Jesus Christ came to awaken mankind to this Truth. "To this end was I born," He said, "and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

Jesus was born into the world, lived in the world, ministered in the world, met all the problems of the world - and solved them all by His better Way of Life. He was crucified in the world and resurrected out of the world to prove His spiritual mastery over the enemies of man, including the last enemy, death.

There must be a birth of Christ in every individual life. Each life must reproduce, in some manner, the Life of Jesus Christ - with its Advent, Ministry, Crucifixion, and Resurrection. Many fail to attain, however, because they give so much attention to the Crucifixion that they can see nothing else.

Many Christians make reservations and consider themselves within their rights in doing so. Several well-known clergymen have voiced their doubts as to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and in so doing have revealed their spiritual understanding to be on a par with that of the more negative do-it-yourself religions of the East, which attempt to attain by occult mental practice that which Jesus accomplished for us by the vicarious Atonement. The salvation of man is not to be found in the perfecting of mental practice, but in a new birth - a spiritual metamorphosis.

"I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the Will of Him that sent Me." Jesus was able to submerge His will completely, that the Will of God might be done - that His ministry might not be wasted. "And this is the

Will of Him that sent Me," He said, "that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him may have everlasting life."

Jesus came with a new approach to life. He came here to make all things new, and in this He transcended all other teachers and saviors. He expounded a Kingdom "not of this world," yet operative in this world. He said: "Take no thought for your body." - "The flesh profiteth nothing." Yet He healed fleshly bodies and brought deceased individuals back from death to life in the body. The Kingdom "not of this world" is effective in this world and in the equipment required in this world. The invisible God is the stability of man.

The object of man's existence is to become aware of the relation between God and the manifestation of God - between the Creator and the creature. This relation is spiritual and can be comprehended only through spiritual understanding. Such understanding comes of aspiration. It comes because of man's discontent with all the limitations and circumscriptions of life in the world. It comes as a Response to man's cry for help - for release and relief.

"Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee." When this Reply from the Almighty comes, it must not be taken lightly, but it must be given full attention and full cooperation. A man being rescued from a disaster in the world would give full cooperation to his rescuer. And such a man, who had his life saved in the world, would feel considerable gratitude. But this Reply from the Invisible comes to save man from life in the world to Life in Eternity - to transport him from mortality to immortality in this present time.

"Jesus Christ . . . hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light." The seemingly impossible achievement of overcoming death and opening to man's aspiration the gates to Eternal Life is what we celebrate on Easter and shall learn to celebrate every day.

"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

"My sheep hear My Voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."

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THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

By H. B. Jeffery (Continued from last month)

KINDNESS OR GENTLENESS

Never withhold the kind word which opportunity offers for you to speak; for it may cause a new birth in the life of some wayfarer - opening his eyes to new vistas and directing his feet toward the very path that leads to the purpose for which he was born. It may, indeed, become a saving grace to him - bringing to both the speaker and the hearer a rich reward in the spiritual harvest of joy and satisfaction.

The Orientals say that by kind thoughts, kind words, and kind deeds, man enters paradise. Gentle thoughts, words, and deeds are flowers whose exquisite fragrance raises the consciousness to the enjoyment of bliss. They are fruits that satisfy the hunger for happiness.

Are you unhappy and unsatisfied? Try sowing seeds of kindness in the form of gentle thoughts, generous words, and friendly acts, toward someone who seems to be in the "slough of despond" or laboring under a heavy load of care and discouragement.

Does life seem to you uninteresting and purposeless? Speak a kind word to someone and watch its effect. You will see new light come into the eyes and new vigor stir the flame of him to whom you have spoken. The beholding of this new radiance and fresh strength will thrill you with enthusiasm. It will give you a deeper realization of the Spirit of God in yourself; and this, in turn, will reveal to you new objects of interest and a new purpose in life, toward which to press forward.

Does there seem no reason for being? Watch for an opportunity to serve another and a chance to speak a kind word. You will be rewarded by a revelation of the Creator's reason for your life, and you will receive light as to the way of living it.

The Universe is one, and everything in it has purpose and reason for being. Every created thing has place and part in the great whole; and every life, however seemingly inconsequent, is necessary to the perfecting of the whole.

Kindness, put into expression, uncovers this truth and gives man the light with which to see and understand the reason for living. The act of kindness will prove to be the action of God in man; and this activity - recognized as of God - will enhance the life of man, enlarging his capacity to bear the fruits of the Spirit and to reap a rich harvest according to their likeness. The world also, and indeed the entire universe, will exhibit new aspects of kindness. There will be revealed an innate friendliness, cooperative with the creative aspirations and ideals of man, who, being renewed in the Spirit, will again exercise dominion in that realm where flourish the fruits of the Spirit.

Kindness attracts people and knits them together, making them friendly, like-minded, and akin. It is a unifying force, inclining the heart toward charity and amicableness. It makes for sociability and neighborliness, and inspires cooperative endeavor for the betterment of living conditions in the community. It is a leaven in the collective consciousness, which instills good feeling and a desire for the general welfare.

Kindness advances the health and harmony of society and of the individual. One of our poets has written:

". . . just the art of being kind
Is all this sad world needs."

Kindness gladdens the heart, dispelling sadness, lightening the burden of sorrow, and lessening the heaviness of bereavement. The exercise of it, in the understanding of its nature as a fruit of the Spirit, imparts to kindness a healing quality and makes of it a spiritual medicine.

One of the most prolific causes of disease in body and in mind is sadness. "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?" asks Macbeth. Jesus did so by administering the fruits of the Spirit to the sick and the sad and the weary. And His voice is still saying: "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also. . . . All things are possible to him that believeth."

(Next month: "Goodness")

Alphabet Of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day Of The Month

APRIL 1958

1. We are AMBASSADORS for Christ.
2. This day will I BEGIN to magnify Thee.
3. Here am I: for thou CALLEST me.
4. The Lord will DELIVER us.
5. The ETERNAL God is thy refuge.
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7. Be FILLED with all the FULNESS of God.
8. GIVE and it shall be GIVEN unto thee.
9. The Lord on HIGH is mighty.
10. The righteous shall INHERIT the land.
11. Thou shouldst . . . see that JUST One.
12. He KEEPETH the paths of judgment.
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14. There is none LIKE Him.
15. God is gracious and MERCIFUL.
16. NARROW is the way, which leadeth unto life.
17. His tender mercies are OVER all.
18. This day we PERCEIVE the Lord.
19. QUENCH the violence of fire (anger).
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21. RIGHTEOUS art Thou, O Lord.
22. SEEK the glory of the Lord.
23. TAKE no THOUGHT for the morrow.
24. UNDERNEATH are the everlasting arms.
25. God giveth us the VICTORY through our Lord.
26. The WAY of life is above, to the WISE.
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28. YE are bought with a price.
29. Have a ZEAL for God.
30. Trust thou in Him.

"When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

SPIRITICITY is the working Power of the Spiritual Principle,
As electricity is the working power of the electrical principle.