

## THERE IS NO DEPRIVATION

By A. J. Truesdell

The key to successful living in this world has always been sought. This is indicated throughout the centuries by the several attempts of visionaries making an effort to formulate some sort of Utopia. Such "states" met with rather indifferent success for the tendency, on the part of the masses involved, was to worship the personalities in the government of the ideal state; or, to worship the place where it was being established instead of giving attention to the Principle of Good involved, or idealized. Most Utopias developed into dictatorships.

Often a so-called ideal community can be built up by persons banded together in the throes of religious frenzy. Our Pilgrim fathers came to this land in their desperate search for religious freedom plus an intense desire to escape the penalties of poverty in an over-crowded civilization. In the recent past the Mormons banded together and moved across plains and mountains into what then was a wilderness to establish and develop some of the best planned cities in our country.

About the only way an ideal community can be established permanently is for an entire assembly to have found the Good Law of Life, wherein each person will have entered into individual cooperation with that to which the Scripture refers as the Lord God. Throughout the Bible this Lord God is cast in many characterizations, from the jealous God of Moses to the loving God of Jesus Christ.

The Israelites were taught, "I am a jealous God," by Moses. Ezekiel discovered God to be jealous for his Holy Name. And Paul speaks of provoking the Lord to jealousy and of being jealous with a godly jealousy. Psalm seven tells of God being angry with the wicked every day. The Scripture is filled with descriptions of God as he appeared to the consciousness of the reporter, whether he be law-giver, judge, prophet, king, or psalmist.

Many promises are also in Scripture which seem to indicate a God who not only possessed human characteristics but at times was actually inhuman. Hear Jeremiah report: "I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers." Compare this threat with the doctrine as revealed by Jesus Christ, "It is not the Father's will that one of the least of these should perish."

Although prophecies of disaster are lavish in both Old and New Testaments, we find they apply only in cases where there has been misuse or non-use of the Good Law, or the Principle of Good. In a certain chapter we might read of the dire results that follow misapplication of Principle and in that same chapter will be recorded promises of immunity. The action and reaction of the Good Law can be likened to the actinic ray from the sun which either ripens for use the fruit of the orchard or withers the fruit that is not used. In this example is a subtle suggestion of the working of mental law.

In the thirty-first chapter of Jeremiah we find a new prophecy and a new covenant. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; . . . after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write

it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Prophesies like this were forerunners of later attempts of men to establish visionary governments where all men were to be free and equal and no man need teach his neighbor. But such an experience will come to no one until he is utterly willing to surrender himself and all he has for the glory of God. It will be the time when light will be omnipresent and there shall be no more night. When that time comes, no man will teach his neighbor.

Man may serve what he will. It is his privilege to learn by experience; or, he may subscribe to wisdom and its ways. If a man believes in sin, it is his privilege to sin. He may take what he will and pay the price. However, he ought to understand that he will come eventually to a place where he harvests what he has planted. He may not care for the harvest that is the fruit of sin, so he may plant more wisely. Lessons learned by experience are no less valuable than those learned through the intuitive faculty, or by mental reasoning; sometimes, lessons learned by experience are more beneficial because they have been proved to the bitter end. By experience one learns principally what not to do. Rejection of the unprofitable and acceptance for use of the profitable ultimately becomes habitual. Even God says through the prophet, Prove me now.

Some of the prophets made quite an issue of what happens to those who do not keep the Law. Others laid emphasis upon the good that comes to those who walk uprightly. We can tell by the tone of a speaker whether his attention has been directed to cause or effect; whether the attention has been fixed on the Most High or upon the disarranged ideas outpicturing as evil.

When the expectations are from above, a man coordinates with the Good. Everything Good is expected: grace, glory, gold -- "Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store." These are the things we like to expect from our God, but it remained for Jesus Christ to introduce us to a better concept of God than this. There is no delay about the blessings promised in his Gospel. "He will give" is changed to "now gives."

The grace and glory which were once promised become now the reality for him who will accept. The full basket and store of good things are now the reality for anyone who believes it. Now is negation vanquished. Now are weapons impotent. Now are the tongues rising against one condemned. Now there is no want, no need. Now are we sons of God.

Acceptance of the Gospel over and above the promises of the Law can be likened to the difference between contemplating a good meal and eating it. Now is the acceptable time.

Who is able to recall his concept of prosperity from some past glory and bring it right here and now into this time and place? Who is able to conceive of himself enjoying this moment the blessings he hopes to attain in the future? Who dares to believe that he, in this time, just as he is, is an integral and important part in the kingdom of God, a child of the King? "Now are ye the sons of God."

Who can continue to believe, after teachers and preachers leave off teaching and preaching, that his welfare is dear to the heart of Being? Who

believes that any influence can deprive God's son of his principality? Who dares believe NOW that he is that son of God?

Jesus Christ operates in the present tense, to live and prove that God is no respecter of persons but giveth to all men liberally and equally the sonship that is theirs by virtue of his Fatherhood. God does not withhold any good thing from his beloved son.

\* \* \*

SPIRITICITY August 1946

GOD IS ONE

By Nell Truesdell

It is interesting to trace the God idea through the history of our Hebrew Scripture. The truth student sees the God idea run like a golden thread through the fabric of man's thinking, remaining pure and untarnished even when covered over with misunderstanding and the foolishness and ignorance of human thinking. From the time of Moses, each leader gave to his people some idea of God that enlarged their realization of his presence in their national life.

Moses' concept of God was that the Almighty was a strong-armed, masculine type. Moses looked to a God of power, a God who could lead his chosen people out of bondage, through the wilderness, and into the Promised Land. The Lord was to him, Omnipotent.

Elijah loved the strength of God, physically and morally. Elijah must have been a strong man for the trials he endured while he maintained his concept of God would have destroyed a lesser man. He was utterly fearless when, in the face of gravest dangers at the hand of Ahab and Jezebel, he did not hesitate to announce the reality of the one God. You remember how he ran before Ahab's chariot from Mount Carmel to the entrance of Jezreel, a distance of approximately twenty miles; how, at other times, he endured famine and drought.

But perhaps his greatest contribution to his people, and to us, was that God is perceived in the silence of man's soul. The story is told in the nineteenth chapter of First Kings: Elijah had gone to Horeb, the mount of God, and as he stood at the entrance of a cave there, a great strong wind rent the mountains, but God was not in the wind; then, an earthquake shook the region mightily, but God was not in the earthquake. A great fire raged, but God was not in the fire. And after the fire, a still small voice, and in it God spoke to him.

So, in Elijah, the religious view of God was renewed and deepened in that God was now realized to abide within the consciousness of man while heretofore, he had been recognized as the Omnipotent One, outside.

Elisha added to Elijah's concept the compassion of God toward the common man and his needs. He healed Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria; he recovered a woodman's axe lost in a stream; he cured some food that was poisonous so that it could be eaten; and he did all manner of miracles to help people in need.

Amos, a sheep-herder and dresser of sycamore trees, loved the God of righteousness and justice. His message was that the people too be righteous and just in their dealings with each other as they expected God to be righteous and just toward them.

Hosea advanced the idea of the divine mercy, love, and forgiveness of God. He greatly influenced Jesus who, of course, studied his writings.

Isaiah added the concept of the holiness and majesty of God to those which had gone before. And Micah, conscious of the injustice and oppression of the lower classes by the moneyed powers, made his immortal statement: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Through the centuries the Hebrews were rising higher and higher in their realization of the immanence and goodness of God. As their consciousness expanded their dealings with God and their fellow man took on new color and value. By the time Jesus came into the race, the concept of the Fatherhood of God was established, but he heightened its import through his realization that the one God was the Father of all mankind; hence, all men were brothers.

In our day we study the God idea from many viewpoints and think we have something new. But there is nothing new. God is still God, Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Omniscient. This fact, however, does not discourage us from thinking of him in various ways; rather, it gives a strength that comes to us through his stability, his unchangeableness. Perhaps you might be interested to review some of the terms applicable to God in this present time. A rich vocabulary has developed through consideration of what God is and the proper term to set forth a description of him; so, it is profitable to get acquainted with the exact meaning of some of the most important terms.

Theism, from the Greek word for God, is the term applied to the common belief in God as a personal, spiritual being, with whom it is possible to come into intimate relations.

Deism, from the Latin deus, is a term used to describe the doctrines of a school first promulgated in England during the end of the 17th century which accepted the existence of God as creator and lawgiver, but distrusted the personal relationship, and denied the possibility of miracles.

Pantheism, from two Greek words meaning "all" and "God": God is all-in-all, identical with Nature or with the world.

Polytheism, is a term which means any system of religion or doctrine that recognizes a number of gods.

Monotheism, holding to the doctrine that there is but one God.

Atheism, disregard of God as the First Cause, or Ground, of the universe. On its metaphysical side, Atheism is the denial of anything psychical in the universe outside of human consciousness. In modern thought Atheism has largely given place to the doctrine of Agnosticism which teaches that human knowledge is limited, held within bounds, so description of ultimate reality is impossible; hence, knowledge of God is impossible.

Each of these views seems to be the true one to him who believes in it. If he insists that his view is the only logical conclusion and that all other

men should believe exactly as he, then he is crying loudly that everybody behold his ignorance. The subject of God is serious. The God idea in every man's heart is his strongest idea. It influences everything he thinks, speaks, or does. A man will fight anybody who discredits his idea of God, no matter what the odds against him. But there is a difference between defending an idea and forcing it on others.

What does the word God mean? We must distinguish between the way we think about him in our everyday thought, and what we mean when we reflect seriously about him. In describing God to a little child, we use terminology acceptable to the child-mind. We attempt to give him something he can grasp. All mankind, especially Christians, have been influenced greatly by the vivid imagery of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and by the masterful paintings of great artists who glorified God in human form. Therefore, nearly all of us are anthropomorphic in our view of God for we indulge the tendency to give him the form of man, applying to him human attributes both of body and of mind. When, and if, we do grow out of this limited concept we usually mean, when we speak of God, that he is a supernatural being, a Spirit, who is supremely powerful, the creator of the world, a judge of the wicked, a law-giver, but one with whom we may be on friendly terms.

We feel that we can master techniques by which we can influence him. We learn affirmations, we issue decrees, we beg and plead. We make great effort to control our thinking toward him so that we might get him to cooperate with us according to our will for good.

As we analyze the current concept we see that the God idea resolves itself into the idealization of certain fundamental values which have ranked high in human experience, such as power, righteousness, justice, love. We believe God personifies these ideals.

We know the joy of exercising power over others; we know the fear that chills us when others exercise power over us. We try to live righteously, and we demand that others do so. We attempt to be just, and we exact justice from others. We know what love means between human beings, from the family to the community relations, and our hearts warm as we feel merciful and loving toward others, and glow as we accept these gifts from them.

Not only do we attempt to exchange benefits with each other, realizing that what we give out we get back, but we extend our kindnesses toward the objective world. As we act toward it, we find it exacting from or repaying to us in kind.

Have you ever taken time to observe the effect of praise and gentle consideration on the things you own or with which you deal? If you appreciate what you have use of, you discover to your joy that the things seem to give blessing in return. They wear better, they aid and abet your cause. The productive power of nature, the raging storms, vast oceans, swift rivers, beneficent life-giving sunshine, soft, cooling rains; all these too take on the tone and quality of our consciousness to destroy or to bless. And we call the activity throughout all God.

God as the personification of our ideals, or the embodiment of natural forces fails to answer the heart's cry sometimes quiescent, more often stormy in the consciousness of man. For, there is a Spirit in man that ever urges him toward itself, neither objectively nor idealistically, but rather in a mystical sense. Emerson thought of God as the Over-soul, "the wise silence, the

universal beauty, the Eternal One." The mystics of all ages have felt and experienced God rather than thought or reasoned about him.

Sometimes we think of God as cold Principle, immovable, unconscious of our need. Other times we think of him as the loving, considerate Father, ready and willing to help us in our daily affairs. It might be well to accept and blend the two concepts until we get above the pairs of opposites. We need the warm, comforting love of the Father; his presence is soothing, ever moving in helpfulness toward us when we call. At other times we are strengthened by the realization that we are not going to put anything over on God and the self discipline thus experienced makes us virile, dependable, full of virtue. Whatever the state of our mind, we find God responding to meet our demands, whether as steadfast Principle, or tender care.

No matter where we are in development, the fact remains that God is greater than we. Jesus, in his high state of unfoldment, said, "The Father is greater than I."

It is marvelous that God is accessible to everyone. Though our lives be clogged with the debris of wrong thinking and doing, with steadfast effort we can draw nigh unto God who gives surcease from pain. Nothing and no one can prevent us from turning the attention of our mind God-ward at will. We can open our heart to his love and grace and understanding.

All of us are aware that we have never been tested more than we can bear. But perhaps we have not always realized that it is we testing ourselves, rather than God testing us. It is God who mercifully intercedes for us that we destroy not ourselves. Whatever we are, no matter how far down or up the scale of living in this world, God is the closely near, the heavenly Breath, the golden Light that loves us and renews us in the inner man. "Be still, and know that I am God."

\* \* \*

SPIRITICITY August 1946  
PLOTINUS AS A SPIRITUAL GUIDE, Introduction

By R. A. Applegate, Jr.

For ever thirty years Dean William Ralph Inge of St. Paul's used Plotinus as a spiritual guide, and he said that he never turned to the Enneads in vain, either in distress or in joy. It is in this light, as a spiritual guide, that I should like to present Plotinus and, if possible, to clarify some points concerning his philosophy; for it seems to me that he has, in some respects, been misunderstood even by those who have been his most enthusiastic supporters. That Plotinus regarded himself as such a guide is, I think, obvious from his work, in which the didactic element is prominent; and that he was qualified for this role is shown by the testimony of his life, of which Paul Elmer More says: "We can see that his power over men was owing to a direct experience of the Divine; and when he spoke there came a light upon his countenance and a new beauty upon his features as a testimony of the truth."

Part of the difficulty of appreciating and understanding Plotinus has been caused by the tendency to regard mysticism as an escape from reality by an unhealthy introversion. Dean Inge has successfully confuted this point of view in the first chapter of The Philosophy of Plotinus, where he has pointed out that the mystic is not interested in his states of consciousness as such, but in attaining a knowledge of objective and ultimate truth. "Thus it soon became

clear to me that mysticism involves a philosophy and at bottom is a philosophy. Although it never leaves the pathway of individual and concrete experience, it values that experience precisely as being not merely subjective, not merely individual, but a revelation of universal and eternal truth. And while the intelligence itself is continually enriched and strengthened by the experiences which come to it, so that it changes progressively in correspondence with the growth of its knowledge, it is never a passive spectator of the energies of the will and the raptures of the emotions, but on the contrary is ever active, coordinating, sifting, and testing the whole content of experience, and maintaining a mental discipline not less arduous and not less fruitful than the moral discipline which accompanies it." Mysticism thus should be regarded, not as an escape from reality, but as a search for Reality. It may have its start, in an individual instance, in the desire to escape from the absurdities and inconsistencies of the world of appearances, but escape alone can never be its ultimate goal. Only an overpowering desire to know the truth can supply the drive which is necessary for the rigorous discipline and renunciation of the mystic.

Plotinus, it seems to me, was one of the most clear and forcible exponents of the mystic way of life. In the following paper I wish to give an exposition of his philosophy from the point of view of the ascent to the vision of the Good or of the One, which is the goal of the mystic philosopher. This is "The great mystic quest, which is the journey of the Soul, by an inner ascent, to the presence of God and to immediate union with him." This exposition will, I hope, help to clarify some points regarding the Plotinian philosophy and will, in part, be a defense of it.

There are essentially four steps in Plotinus to the attaining of the vision of the One. The first is to know that the attainment is possible; the second is purgation, or the forcible putting aside of all that would hinder the attainment; the third is the comprehensive mental and moral discipline necessary for success, and which for Plotinus is included under the term dialectic; and the fourth is the vision itself, or the waiting for the vision to appear. These steps are not distinct and separate, but they overlap and are severally present at every stage of the ongoing. However, for the sake of exposition it is necessary to make the division into these four aspects of the one path; and in this paper I have followed this division. The possibility of attainment is, for Plotinus, bound up in the nature of the universe, that is, in the nature of the Good and of man's relation to It. The rest of the steps follow in orderly sequence. Thus the first section of this paper will deal with the ontology of the Enneads; the second, with purgation; the third, with dialectic; and the fourth, with the vision itself.

Except where noted differently, the translation of the Enneads used throughout is that of Stephen Mackenna. Several passages, however, have been quoted from Grace Turnbull's condensation of this translation. This practice has greatly facilitated the work of composition; and also the slight changes which Miss Turnbull has made in the original translation have seemed to me, in many instances, to be improvements. Thus I have followed her throughout in translating nous by "Divine Mind", in place of the "Intellectual Principle" of Mackenna.

We are fortunate in having for Plotinus a good contemporary biography by his disciple and friend, Porphyry. Plotinus was born in Egypt in either 204 or 205 A.D. Neither his nationality nor his exact place of birth is known, although the latter is given by Eunapius as Lycopolis. He received the usual preliminary education in his home town, and then followed the program for liberal education in Alexandria. At the age of twenty, he was seized by the passion for philosophy, and went to hear all the most highly reputed philosophers. He came away from their lectures, however, discouraged until one day a friend directed him to Ammonius Saccas. When Plotinus had heard Ammonius,

he exclaimed, "This is the man I was looking for." He was twenty-eight at the time, and he studied with Ammonius for eleven years. Then in his thirty-ninth year, he formed the idea of traveling to the east to learn of the Persian and Hindu philosophies. He joined the expedition of the Emperor Gordian and traveled with him as far as Mesopotamia. When Gordian was killed, Plotinus made his way with difficulty to Antioch. From there, in 244, he went to Rome, where he spent the rest of his life.

At Rome he founded a school of Philosophy, which soon became popular and fashionable. The Emperor Galienus and his wife Salonina became close friends of the philosopher and promised to help him with his plan to build, as a refuge for philosophers, the model city of Platonopolis. The plan, however, fell through, according to Porphyry, because of jealousy at court.

Many other prominent persons came to hear his lectures. One of these was the senator, Rogantius, who was so influenced by Plotinus' teaching that he gave up his senatorial rank, freed his slaves, sold his own house, and lived and ate only with other members of the Plotinian circle. He was often held up by Plotinus as a model of the philosophic way of life.

Plotinus preferred to teach orally and as a consequence wrote but little, never revising what he did write. When he spoke, the light of Spirit illumined his face, which, naturally handsome, became even more beautiful. He always encouraged questions and was patient and thorough in answering them. In the meetings, he had the platonic and peripatetic authors read and discussed, and he also had his students write treatises against astrology, magic, and the errors of the Gnostics.

The philosopher was always accessible. He was revered for his probity and, as a result, was often called upon to arbitrate disputes. Yet in his twenty years at Rome he never incurred an enmity except that of jealous teachers. Many parents, feeling themselves on the threshold of death, left their children and all their property with him. He was conscientious in his duties as guardian, and always found time to render an accurate account to anyone who requested it.

(Continued Next Month)

Alphabet of  
DAILY MEDITATIONS  
For every Week Day of the Month

AUGUST 1946

1. ABIDE under the shadow of the ALMIGHTY.
2. BEHOLD what manner of love the Father hath BESTOWED on us.
3. Ye are all the CHILDREN of God.  
\*
5. Wisdom is a DEFENSE.
6. God shall help . . . and that right EARLY.
7. Whatsoever thy hand FINDETH to do, do it with thy might.
8. Ye are of GOD.
9. Be not HASTY in thy spirit to be angry.
10. Wisdom IS good with an INHERITANCE.  
\*
12. Eat thy bread with JOY.
13. Yours is the KINGDOM of God.
14. Beloved, LET us LOVE one another.
15. MAKE a joyful noise unto the Lord.
16. Love thy NEIGHBOR as thyself.
17. We receive OF Him.  
\*
19. In the day of PROSPERITY be joyful.
20. QUIT ye like men.
21. REMOVE sorrow from thy heart.
22. Wisdom STRENGTHENETH the wise.
23. I THANK Jesus Christ.
24. God hath made man UPRIGHT.  
\*
26. Through God we shall do VALIANTLY.
27. WALK ye in Him.
28. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy YOUTH.
29. He was ZEALOUS for my sake.
30. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
31. He shall give his angels charge over thee.

\*

DAILY MEDITATION is an opportunity to get in direct touch with the loving Father. The results offer instant help in times of need. Please keep the statements with us.