

THE CHRISTMAS LIGHT

By Alden Truesdell

Lighting systems and equipment have improved many fold since the advent of Jesus Christ. If the Psalmists and Prophets before His time could reappear, they would be astonished at our methods of lighting houses and places of worship. They would be amazed, possibly perplexed, by our extensive use of various colored electric lights.

Neon lights have transformed our cities, towns, and countryside into fairylands of color and design. Kleig lights represent our entertainment industry. They are also used profusely for advertising purposes to bedazzle and fascinate potential customers. Searchlights sweep the skies and guide aircraft to safe landing in fair weather and foul, and they facilitate navigation of seagoing vessels as well. Blinking lights dot airfields and seashores. X-rays, ultra-violet and infra-red rays and other phases of the science of light render untold service to mankind in every field of human activity. And the simple incandescent electric lamp has brought a reasonable facsimile of daylight into our houses, churches, and business centers.

It is interesting to note that in matters of public worship and individual spiritual communion, not one of these brilliant illuminating methods can compete with the lowly candle. It seems to be a more effective symbol of this sacred than all the resplendent array of modern lighting systems. We understand, of course, that our wax or tallow candle is not the form meant when the word candle is used in Scripture. The term is used inappropriately in the Bible for oil-lamps of earthenware. These lamps burned with a wick that protruded from a small spout at the side, and the lamps were fitted onto, or were of a piece with, a lamp stand, or "candlestick." However, we have come to associate our form of candle with the lights referred to in Biblical times and our symbol is so entrenched in our minds it is difficult to change. There is no actual need to change it, for we know the soft candle-light gleaming on our altars of worship certainly inspires spiritual devotion.

Our Scripture reveals the effect of light upon some of our best known Biblical characters. We discover Job longing for the good old days when the light was in him and he was in good standing with the Lord. We hear his lamentation and note his use of the "candle" as a symbol of spiritual light. "Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when His candle shined upon my head, and when by His light, I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with me."

We, too, are wont to call to mind and lament our past intimate relation with the Lord when we felt that then we had the assurance of His Presence. But research into the past distracts from the light present with us now. If we tend to go back in memory, let us take a tip from Jesus and go far back to that pure spiritual state which obtained for us before the world was: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." "Father, ... thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

The oil lamp, or "candle", was a form of illumination that could be carried into dark places. The Psalmist declared, "Thou wilt light my candle;

the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness. For by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leapt over a wall." The enlightened consciousness is aware of the nature and character of God. "As for God, His way is perfect: the way of the Lord is tried; he is a buckler to all those that trust in him. For who is God save the Lord?"

The sage of Proverbs contributes this interesting comment, "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts." The dire prophecy, "There shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out," echoes the law of compensation.

It appears, then, the difference between the so-called wicked and the righteous is a lighted candle. Evidently light is a valuable asset and is both a reward and a favor from God. Our Master declared, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me shall not abide in darkness." He also said to a vast group gathered about Him, "Ye are the light of the world." And he continued the instruction by telling them not to hide their light by placing it under a bushel but raise it on a candlestick so it might shed light on all within reach of its glow.

In the majority of our places of worship many heads and eyes are cast down. People seem not to be instructed to look upward toward the transcendent Light that sheds its glory from above the consciousness of man. Enlightenment is always uplifting, always inspiring. It causes a man to lift up his head that he might be made free from the limitations of the world of sense and form. The moment he perceives the light, he comes to himself, and his next unflinching step is to lift himself into an upright position so that he might begin at once his trek back to the Father's house. He realizes he must be up and about the business of returning to a state he had formerly known with the Father.

From Genesis to Revelation the Scripture sets forth the effect of spiritual illumination in the heart and affairs of men. We note with interest the change in concept men experienced, from their timid consideration of a problematical spark of spiritual light, to a scientific declaration of an Omnipresent God in whom there is no darkness at all. "There shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light."

No wonder Jesus spoke often of light. As we give our attention to the source of the true Light, we find it rising upon us, and we are re-lighted and delighted in this Light. Our intellects reflect the new enlightenment that fills our consciousness. We voice the gladness and warmth of a new kind of illumination that suffuses the entire being with its living glow and moves us to new animation and zeal. We sing hosannas to the Most High and we bless the hour when the Son of Man came into the world to teach humanity its Divine heritage as the offspring of God.

The Christmas season gives us an opportunity to reflect on the fact that God is with us now, in this present time, in, through, and by the Name of Jesus Christ.

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SPIRITICITY December 1948

MY STUDY

By Nell Truesdell

I have engaged myself in a study of Christian Metaphysics. This term is definitive because the study bears exclusively upon the esoteric doctrine of Jesus Christ. I want to know what He taught. The history of His life and the stories about Him are interesting, but too much attention given to them distracts from His actual message.

The metaphysics of philosophers is not what I am investigating. Theirs is a speculative philosophy in the widest sense, purely intellectual. While each starts with a premise, he never concludes his reasoning in a completely satisfactory manner. The principles expounded are usually abstruse and the discussions following their announcement bewilder the student seeking enlightenment.

Jesus Christ did not offer a philosophy of life. He taught the way of life. All other religious teachers before Him had declared they were seeking the way, but none of them rose to such heights of understanding and practice that he could say with authority, "I am the way."

The Master promised that anyone who sought to understand His teaching would find out what it was. Even in this day the assertion is fulfilled for anyone steadfast enough to investigate it. His command, "Follow Me!" tests the true disciple to whom the principles he taught will be revealed wherever there is a willingness to surrender the self that those principles might be known.

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THE EMPTY PLACES

By Mabel L. Watts

There are many questions besetting people concerning their experiences. They wonder why their lives are not full and complete, why when they guard their thoughts and feelings they still face doors which do not fully open to them. Looking around, they more or less account for the shortages in the lives of others. Grief hinders some; a critical attitude hinders others. Many are ignorantly seeking satisfaction outside themselves, and some desire gain at the

expense of another. People by their actions draw a blue print on which others may trace revealing causes and their effects. Less likely are people to find their own mistakes than those they can observe in others, since it is difficult to be objective concerning one's self.

Yet we propose this test. If you are dissatisfied, if a general pattern persists, occurring again and again with change in detail only, if everything you do fades out before it is completed, then look for the empty places within your own heart. Observe the many times you turn away from thoughts and deeds and recede into a self-made emptiness instead of immediately declaring the Divine Presence, asking to be quickened with new understanding.

In its truth the universe is recognized as God - filled with abundant opportunity for all of its peoples. But how many know the inclusiveness of Divine Truth? How many constantly seek soul understanding that they may achieve Truth? For those who go about judging only from conditions, the world is sadly distorted, even cruel, and their experience justifies this observation; but for those who are willing consciously to grow and to seek out the spiritual principle back of all experience, there are no empty places. Eventually they sincerely understand the Divine factors in life and the once closed doors open wide into undying goodness. What once was emptiness is then understood for that place in heart and mind where the attention was turned away from God thus creating a temporary impasse in experience.

Love rules the universe, for God is Love. Love rules in Goodness and Beauty. Love opens out the inner consciousness of man. Love is Truth. Because this is so, people question among themselves and are never content with things badly executed, unkindly handled; they crave a life filled with the beauty and goodness of God. This is the Divine urge. It is the stretching of consciousness away from the limited toward that which changes not. It is the Spirit moving within the man to self-consciousness in God.

"Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning;
for in thee do I trust;
cause me to know the way wherein I should walk;
for I lift up my soul unto thee."

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TRUTH IS THE CHRIST CHARACTER
By Robert Applegate

Paul says Christ is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God." This is the Truth character. It is your character and mine. It is what you are and what I am. We are in reality the power, the capacity, the doing ability of God; and we are the wisdom, the perfect self-knowing of God. This is true of the true Man, which abides within each of us.

When I met Mr. Jeffery in New York, he asked me what I intended to make of my life. I replied that I hoped to make something of it. Then he said, "You are now what you will be, you have been it from eternity and you will be it to eternity. The end is in the beginning and the beginning in the end and there is no beginning or end, because man is immortal. You are now what you will be, and that is strong, perfect, wise, the son of God."

We are here in this world to learn to become conscious of our own Christhood, or of God. It amounts to the same thing. If we are aware that God is all in all, we shall realize our own divinity; and conversely, if we become

conscious of our own Christhood, we shall know that the same Christ is the reality of every man and is fully present everywhere in the universe. We must, however, first find God within ourselves before we can see Him in another.

We must become conscious of our own divinity. We are not to concern ourselves about demonstrating it. In fact, the less attention we give to the outer the better. If we could be fully conscious of our Christhood, we should fulfill our ultimate destiny. This is not impossible for we can move in the direction of God, or put on our Christhood if we so choose. As we move in His direction, we shall not lose awareness of the external. We shall become more acutely aware of everything that is going on around us, and even at a distance. We shall know the hearts and motives of men, but they will neither disturb nor please us. We shall know the unreality of the outer as we dwell in the realization of perfect inward oneness with God.

The one supreme way to know God is through love. Jesus Christ gave many instructions which implied a fixed adoration of the Almighty: "Watch and pray always." "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord." "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me." "Take no thought." "Repent!" "Believe!"

All these commands are vital. It is good practice to think on them and, as the Psalmist says, "Let thine heart keep my commandment." One instruction emphasized more than any other by the Master, however, was, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another." "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

Jesus Christ said that if we loved him we would obey His instructions. This is not an exhortation. It is a simple statement of fact. If we love Him we shall obey His commandments without any thought or effort. It will be an elemental practice; hence, spontaneous and unpretentious.

All the great mystics have agreed with Jesus Christ in emphasizing love. In reading through Mr. Jeffery's books I have been impressed by how often and how strongly he accents this quality. "Without love," he writes, "all that you do amounts to nothing. ... That which is done from a sense of duty or obligation is devoid of life, spontaneity, joy, and the love that inheres in Christ. It is, in fact, non-action - a mockery of sounding brass. It means nothing, and the rebound of it is hurtful and harmful." He instructs that all life is love and that love is the secret of life, so that, instead of seeking more life, we should seek to express more of the God-type of love (not love in the personal sense, as we like to interpret it); then, we would automatically have more life. He points out further that it is only the Truth that we accept into our affections (not that which we comprehend with our intellect), that is vital. It is when we love the Truth for its own sake, instead of trying to make it work to produce what we think is best for us, that it does work to bless us far above all we had ever dreamed possible.

It is easy to see why love is the way to God. If we love God, we shall give our attention to Him. We always give ready attention to that which we love. And, whatever we give attention to, we move toward and become like; and ultimately, receive all it has to offer. If we love Jesus Christ we shall keep

His commandments. If we love one another we shall obey the law of service, "Give, and it shall be given unto you."

We are in this world to render service. The reason why many who think they are "in Truth" have so much trouble with their affairs is that they do not keep the law of giving, because they do not love sufficiently. They may read "Truth"; they may repeat denials and affirmations continually; they may visit practitioners and attend study classes; but, unless they give they cannot receive.

What a man gives out returns to him. What he seeks to take for his own is taken from him. I can give an example of the effects of giving in my own life. It came about this way:

When I was in the Army, I was stationed at Sheppard Field in Wichita Falls, Texas. It was an unpleasant place; the morale of the men was low and I was afraid I would be stuck there for the duration. I prayed a lot. In the Army you stand and wait and, while we were standing, I prayed. Not for anything specific - I just prayed. Then the thought came to me that, if I was not going to be in the war, at least I could give my blood. That was the one thing I could give; so, I looked around for a blood bank. The nearest one I could find was in Tarrant County, in the city of Fort Worth, Texas. It was not even a Red Cross blood bank, but was for the local hospitals, but I did not know that. So I decided to go to Fort Worth to give a blood donation. The way opened and I was given a pass. One of the boys drove me, and I arrived there early one Sunday morning.

I wanted to attend a Truth service so I looked in the telephone book and was directed to the Dan Waggoner Building. From there I went to the Hotel Texas where the Sunday morning devotional service of the CHRIST TRUTH LEAGUE is held. There I found what I had been seeking for a long time; but I found it only because I had obeyed the impulse to give. I left that service "walking on air." I did not know what it was all about at the time, but I knew inside of me that I wanted to come back, and that knowing lasted until I did come back. I had never felt that way about any other meeting I had attended. The tone was high and true, and it struck home. I came back repeatedly, during the war, whenever I had leave; and now, after five years of study I know I have well begun my life's work.

Soon, after that first meeting, I found myself flying although the doctor had told me that I could not. I was prospered and honored. (Ed. note: Mr. Applegate receive the Air Medal, the Purple heart, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Distinguished Flying medal from England.) I met congenial friends. And above all I was started in the upward way toward the Truth. All this good was the outpouring that resulted from that simple act of giving. The countless prayers I had said prepared the good for me, but it required that act of giving to open the sluice for it to come to me.

If such a small giving could start such a chain of good, imagine what a life dedicated to service in Christ would bring about. It would bring the Christ character into manifestation speedily. It would deepen and increase the consciousness of God so that we should know that "peace of God, which passeth understanding." We should dwell in unspeakable joy, and that joy of the Lord would be our strength.

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Alphabet of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day of the Month

December 1948

1. Ye shall ABIDE in My love.
2. I Am the BREAD of life.
3. Receive the CROWN of life.
4. To the only wise God be DOMINION.
*
6. Blessed is the man that ENDURETH temptation.
7. Find Me and obtain FAVOR.
8. Your faith GROWETH.
9. HAPPY is the man whom God correcteth.
10. I will INSTRUCT thee and teach thee.
11. Thy words shall be JUST.
*
13. He that KEEPETH thee will not slumber.
14. Give the LIGHT ... of the glory of God.
15. God in the MIDST of thee is mighty.
16. NOTHING shall be impossible to you.
17. Set thy words in ORDER.
18. I will PROCLAIM the Name of the Lord.
*
20. QUICKEN me, O Lord, for Thy Name's sake.
21. O Lord, RIGHTEOUSNESS belongeth unto Thee.
22. I SET my face before the Lord God.
23. The glory of the Lord is risen upon THEE.
24. Give thy servant an UNDERSTANDING heart.
25. Wisdom cannot be VALUED with gold.
*
27. He that WALKETH uprightly WALKETH surely.
28. The Lord will go before YOU.
29. Come and see my ZEAL for the Lord.
30. The way of the Lord is strength to the upright.
31. Behold, I go forward.

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Please join us in DAILY MEDITATION.