

## CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

By Alden Truesdell

Ultramodern sophistication, with its multiple distractions, attempts to relegate the simple story of the birth of Jesus Christ to the realm of legend. In these days of modern obstetrics, with its revealing X-rays, twilight sleep, operations, and incubators, the event of childbirth has taken on assembly line proportions. None of the former mystery, and very little privacy, is enjoyed.

To this generation of air-minded, radio and car-conscious, talking picture and television critics, the stable, the manger, and animals, the star overhead are but unique and clever stage props designed by playwrights to capture the imagination. Little credence is given to a story of Wise Men riding camels over long stretches of desert when anybody old enough to sit up to a steering wheel can cover the distance in racing time. Boys of yesterday's Air-Force today casually hitch-hike by plane from corner to corner of this rather broad country. Lads fresh out of high school streak through the stratosphere at speeds approaching, or as in the case of the XS-1, exceeding the speed of sound.

The wise men of the world speak as experts, and the children of the world give them honor and such rewards as they have to offer -- fame, wealth, publicity, prestige, and worldly power. Then, after having achieved all these rewards, the great ones must completely reverse their way of life, if they are to make further progress. For example, those with musical talent must leave primary teachers and seek to study with masters who offer instructions that encourage talent into genius. They then discover that, after attaining the heights, they can make continued progress only by becoming as little children and letting the inherent talent have its way with them.

Time after time some person full of the wisdom of the world seems to overpower and confound the simple truths we have heard and felt with such sincere satisfaction. The children of the world do indeed seem wiser than the children of Light. But the Christ Child, symbol of Christmas, is a permanent reminder of an experience of being reborn through which all world-weary aspirants to spiritual riches must pass. There are no "big-shots" in the Kingdom of God. Whoever comes, must come as a little child and accept his portion as a pensioner. The greatest born of woman is less than the least in the Kingdom.

The Wise Men of the East and the wise men of the world pay homage to the least in the Kingdom. This Babe, born of Spirit, grows in favor with God and with man. Every facility is provided for his unfoldment. His daily fare is the Word of his Heavenly Father. He is constantly instructed by the Spirit which comes from God to teach him all things and guide him in the way of truth. The still, small voice is his constant prompter. Whatever he has to do is taught him in that hour. He is in the world but not of it.

He who hears the Christmas story must have some affinity for the Christed, childlike concept if he is to understand its full import. The scene must be transported from Bethlehem in Palestine to a place in consciousness, where the great Ideal takes form and gathers substance. The inner meaning of the story must be considered and understood lest one fall into the error of those who are hostile to any idealistic influence. That Christmas has endured and increased

through the centuries is proof of the predominant sympathy of the race for its high Ideal.

When the innocent spiritual concept is first born to consciousness, the ruling thoughts seek to choke it off, or kill it; for they sense a threat to their rulership. This happens in you and in me. We perceive and conceive this splendid Ideal, this Baby-Christ, and our old habits of thinking resent the intrusion. So, the Ideal is driven deep into the Soul-nature where it is nourished and protected from the dominant ideas that would destroy it.

How shall we know when the Christ Ideal is born into consciousness? The experience for each one will be different, but one general characteristic is noted. Once the inner Christ swings into action, further seeking in the outer for deliverance (salvation) ceases. As discrimination develops, we begin to acknowledge and appreciate and value what is happening within. We are satisfied to partake of and enjoy the present hour and what it has to offer; for we know that, when perfection comes, imperfection disappears.

Though we may not realize it, each one is qualified to bring forth the Christ. Such a conception is the effect of wholehearted submission and surrender to the Most High God. Actually, this coming phenomenon is a continuation of the Immaculate Conception, the natural effect of a pure concept of the All-ness of Spirit and the Spirituality of the All. The newly conceived Divine Idea grows and, in the fulness of time, faculties that have been comparatively dormant cooperate with the Man who goes about His Father's business in the world. Ultimately, all power in Heaven and in earth is demonstrated by the victorious, risen Christ.

Christmas is a periodical reminder that we need not be satisfied with the insufficiency of partial knowledge. Christmas is a permanent invitation to higher knowing and the better hope, wherein attentiveness and appreciation are the price of tuition, and enrollment itself is initiation into the wisdom that comes not by learning.

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SPIRITICITY December 1949

CHRISTMAS EVE

By Louise Elizardi

On Christmas Eve,  
I'd like to be  
A little child  
Of two or three.

To know again  
The boundless joy  
Of waiting for  
A cherished toy.

I'd like to hear  
My parents say,  
"Be good! for Santa's  
On his way!"

To dream of things  
That are to be,  
And not to know  
It's fantasy!

Alas! A child  
I cannot be,  
Since I am grown  
As you can see;

But I can spend  
My life in giving,  
And keep the joy  
Of Christmas living.

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SPIRITICITY December 1949

TO OUR FRIENDS

"When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I."

One of the many good things that has happened recently in the development of facilities for the CHRIST TRUTH LEAGUE is that we have been able to build a class room for meetings. The total cost for materials and labor has been \$ 1,116.98. The room is large enough to accommodate all who want to come to study with us. It was made possible by the gifts of friends (saved over along period of time in the League's Bank account), and the loving labor of those within our immediate household who gave so freely of their time and energies. Even the

carpenters (who are not truth students) took a sincere interest in their work and did much more than they would have done under ordinary circumstances.

Interesting demonstrations of loving service and giving (all of which were unplanned) are herewith set forth. For example, Mr. A. H. H. Shaffer came all the way from Wichita, Kansas, for a visit and, during his stay, painted the windows in the class room. Mr. and Mrs. Earl R. Johnson gave the drapery rods. At a meeting in Tyler (in October), Mrs. A. M. Campbell gave me an envelope containing twenty dollars as a contribution to the building fund. Instead of depositing this sum at once, I kept it in my purse for several weeks, although I did not know exactly why. Then, I made a trip to Glen Rose, Texas, to teach a class there, and Mr. and Mrs. E. Lyle Aungst gave the glad news that they had "found" a gas heater (of a special type that I wanted) in a lumber yard that had gone out of business. The heater was new, for it had never been used, but it needed cleaning. They, however, took it to their hotel in the belief that I would purchase it. When I asked the price, they said the owner wanted twenty dollars. How my heart thrilled in the realization that God had already provided for the demand, and I gladly turned over the envelope containing the gift I had received weeks before. These friends informed me they had paid up to \$ 149.00 for this type heater, and they had bought many of them for their hotel.

Gradually our classroom is getting into shape. The inside walls and ceiling are finished. We must now buy two ceiling fixtures, an asphalt tile floor twenty-one feet nine inches by fifteen feet, rugs, lamps, and several other items to make the room beautiful -- and at least twenty-five chairs. Several years ago I had an opportunity to buy enough brown velveteen for draperies, and made them up in the firm belief that the class room would materialize. So, the rest of the furnishings should harmonize with them. If any of our readers wishes to contribute to these furnishings, or give out-right any item mentioned, we should be happy to describe the requirements so that the room will be balanced in equipment. We are giving our piano as our gift of furniture. We plan to make the room attractive, and to dedicate it in spiritual ministry and service to God for the benefit of students and friends of the CHRIST TRUTH LEAGUE.

To those of our friends who have contributed regularly to the upkeep of this ministry we offer gratitude and blessing. Your silent cooperation maintains the work and keeps it solvent. Your names are too many to list in this paper, but we value every gesture of good will that comes to this work in any form whatsoever. Unless we band together for a common ideal, the work cannot grow.

As we sum up the blessings that have come to us during 1949, we remember that God saw, from the beginning of this year, what was best for us, and gave abundantly from His rich store to provide us with needed gifts. We face a New Year. All the Good essential to our progress on very plane will be provided by the same God who took care of us during the Old Year. Increased love for Him, and faith in His over-all goodness toward us will open our consciousness to receive the greater supply.

The time is not too early for you to plan to come to the CHRIST TRUTH LEAGUE for a session during July, 1950. Let us hear from you early in the year so that we may plan to accommodate you. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." God bless you, each one!

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## RELIGIOUS IDEAS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

By Robert Applegate

The Old Testament contains a greater variety of religious ideas than any other similar body of writings. In it we find vestiges of animism and exalted monotheism. We find the priestly concept of salvation through ritual and the prophetic concept of salvation through righteousness. We find references to magic and to sublime visions of God, to blood revenge and to personal forgiveness, to fighting for Yahweh and to utter dependence on Yahweh for protection in the face of overwhelming danger. We find references to human sacrifice and the statement that all that God requires is justice, mercy, and humility. In short, we find the development from a crude to an exalted religion; and in the latter stages of development, we are presented with both the prophetic and the priestly points of view. In such a wealth of material, to trace the development and the variations of religious ideas would require volumes; but this paper will merely mention some of the various concepts of God and of man's relation to God.

Parts of the Old Testament, most notably the contents of Genesis, Joshua, and Judges, were handed down in the form of oral tradition, stories, and poems, for centuries before they were committed to writing. In them we find traces of animism, as in Deut. 1:16, where Yahweh is referred to as "him who dwelt in the bush"; as well as the localization of a host of deities in certain sacred shrines. The patriarchs were not monotheists, but henotheists: that is, each worshipped the god of his particular tribe, while recognizing that other deities held sway outside the tribal limits. We find also, however, many references to sacred places, in each of which a particular god was thought to dwell, or, at least, to manifest himself. The nature of these sanctuaries shows that their sanctity originated in animistic beliefs. Sacred trees were the terebinths of Moreh at Shechem, or Mamre, and of Meonenim. Sacred springs are thought to be indicated by place names compounded with 'En such as, En-mishpat and En-shemesh. A sacred baetylic pillar was set up by Jacob at Bethel and another at the scenes of his covenant with Laban. Sacred mountains were Sinai, Carmel, and the Mount of Olives. Other evidences of primitive belief in a number of divine beings are the references to terephim (household gods), seraphim, (demons), se-irim, and azazel (originally a god of flocks).

Abraham, after his defeat of Chedorlaomer, tithed to Melchizedek, who was a priest of El Elyon. "El Elyon," Millar Burrows remarks, "... was not Abraham's own God, but was later identified with him. ... El Elyon ... was himself a combination of the god of earth, El, and the god of heaven, Elyon." Such a recognition of foreign deities was evidently common among the patriarchs and was practiced also during the Egyptian sojourn, as the incident of the golden calf indicates. The genius of Moses is seen in his opposition to this accepted custom. He set the pattern of complete loyalty to one God, which was emphasized by the later prophets.

Moses introduced the Israelites to a national god, who was "the god of Abraham, the god of Isaac, and the god of Jacob." Yahweh now replaced the tribal deities that had formerly been worshipped. He was, it seems, originally a volcano god, and he appears in Exodus as a god of fire, of the volcano, and of thunder. He was also a god of war, who led the Hebrews in their battles in the wilderness. Originally confined to Mount Sinai, he was partly delocalized by

Moses. His particular habitat remained the sacred mountain, but he also led the Hebrews in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, and he met with Moses in the tent of meeting. He was, moreover, a god who made demands. He commissioned Moses to lead the Hebrews out of captivity; he promised his assistance, and he demanded faith in that assistance. He was a god much like Moses: a leader, compassionate, courageous, quick to anger, and powerful.

It is usual to regard Moses as a henotheist; but he was, as Fleming James remarks, "a practical monotheist." He simply ignored the gods of the Egyptians. He stressed, moreover, two characteristics of Yahweh, which were retained in the ever-expanding Hebrew concept of Deity, and which were of supreme importance: Yahweh was personal God and He was a "jealous God." These characteristics of Yahweh enabled Him both to retain the allegiance of the Hebrews and to maintain His own identity, when He came into contact with foreign deities.

It is a matter of historic fact that the present-day Christian, Jewish, and Moslem ideas of God all stem from the primitive conception of Yahweh, although they differ greatly from this early conception. Arnold Toynbee, remarking on this phenomenon, writes:

It is ... indisputable that the theological content, as opposed to the historical origin, of the idea of God common to these three religions is immeasurably different from the primitive conception of Yahweh and bears a much closer resemblance to a number of other conceptions to which, as a matter of historic fact, the Islamic-Christian-Jewish conception is indebted either much less deeply or not at all. In point of universality the Islamic-Christian-Jewish conception of God has less in common with the primitive representation of Yahweh than with the idea of the high god of a pantheon -- an Amon-Re or a Marduk-Bel -- who reigns in some sense over the whole Universe. Or, again, if we take spirituality as a our standard, the Islamic-Christian-Jewish conception has more in common with the abstractions of the philosophic schools: the Stoic Zeus or a Neoplatonic Helios. Why then is it that, in the mystery play which has for its plot the revelation of God to man, the supreme role has been allotted, not to an etherial Helios or an imperial Amon-Re but to a barbaric and provincial Yahweh? ...

This fact of being alive is the essence of God's nature for human souls that are seeking to enter into communion with Him; and this quality of being a person, which is the essence of God as Jews and Christians and Muslims worship Him today, is likewise the essence of Yahweh as he makes his appearance in the Old Testament. ... When this living God of Israel encounters in turn the various abstractions of the philosophers, it becomes manifest that, in the words of the Odyssey, 'he alone breathes and the rest are shadows.' ...

If this persistent quality of being alive is the obverse of Yahweh's primitive provincialism, we may find that the exclusiveness which is an enduring as well as a primitive trait in Yahweh's character has also some value which is indispensable for the historic role which the God of Israel has played in the revelation of the divine nature to mankind.

This value becomes apparent as soon as we consider the significance of the contrast between the ultimate triumph of this 'jealous god' and the ultimate fiasco of the high gods of the Pantheons of the two neighboring societies which, between them, ground the political

structure of the Syrian World to pieces. ... Both Amon-Re and Marduk-Bel alike were born -- or, more accurately, put together -- to be content with their primal state of suzerainty over a host of other beings less divine, if rather less potent, than themselves; and this congenital lack of ambition doomed them both to drop out of the competition for a monopoly of divinity when Yehweh's devouring jealousy would as surely spur him on to run to the end this race that had been set before them all . ...

(To be continued next month)

Alphabet of  
DAILY MEDITATIONS  
For Every Week Day of the Month

DECEMBER 1949

1. We may APPLY our hearts unto wisdom.
2. The BREATH of the Almighty hath given me life.
3. Thy COMFORTS delight my soul.  
\* \* \*
5. God shall bless thee in all that thou DOEST.
6. Let all thy ways be ESTABLISHED.
7. Take FAST hold of instruction!
8. Man's GOINGS are of the Lord.
9. HOW think ye?
10. All Scripture is given by INSPIRATION.  
\* \* \*
12. The sons of God shouted for JOY.
13. The Lord KNOWETH the way of the righteous.
14. LIFT up your eyes, and LOOK.
15. Be careful to MAINTAIN good works.
16. The Lord he is God; there is NONE else beside Him.
17. Men OUGHT always to pray.  
\* \* \*
19. PREPARE yourselves.
20. Take heed and be QUIET.
21. In due season we shall REAP.
22. Jesus, wearied, SAT thus on the well.
23. It is better TO TRUST in the Lord.
24. The spirit of man goeth UPWARD.  
\* \* \*
26. Your young men shall see VISIONS.
27. The angel of the Lord WENT before them.
28. Rest YOURSELVES.
29. Come to ZION (the within) with songs.
30. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.
31. Him only shalt thou serve.  
\* \* \* \* \*

"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."

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