

## A PRAYER

By Nell Truesdell

I pray for eyes to see, O God; and as I pray, I long for Sight with which to view the glory of Thy Presence in my Soul, and grasp the Light that I am one with Thee.

I pray for ears to hear, O Lord. And as I pray, I search for Thy dear Word by which I hear - Thy Word, the path that I must tread to live for ever in Thy Love.

I pray for a mouth and wisdom, too, that I may speak of sacred things hid deep in heart, and what I Know in secret, God, declare as true of Thee.

I pray for feet, O Lord, for feet to walk the earth and bear to all mankind the Truth that breaks in sunder chains that bind, the Truth that makes hearts glad, the Truth that shouts itself aloud, Thy God, ye people, reigns!  
Amen.

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SPIRITICITY December 1950

## THE COMING OF A MODERN MESSIAH

By Alden Truesdell

As in years past we have been diligent in proclaiming the Christ Truth and have endeavored to identify with that quality of instruction, so again, in this Christmas season, we consider anew the vital and profitable experience of the Christ birth in the consciousness of man. The tendency on the part of the race is to take lines of least resistance and follow practices in worship that have attained popular appeal. Thus the Christmas season arouses memories of former happy occasions and stimulates participation in familiar religious activities, and these responses seem to be sufficient acknowledgment of the most memorable event in history, the birth of Jesus Christ. The Christ story itself is so beautiful; the products of art, music, and religious ritual portraying it are perfected to such a degree that man tends simply, to enjoy and benefit by precedent.

We attended an annual Christmas choral event in a large and expensive church edifice in our city. The score had been composed in the dim past by one of the world's finest writers of music, the chorus had been carefully selected and trained, and the entire performance had been brought to the point of perfection under the direction of capable religious and musical leadership. The general reaction of the congregation was pleasing, engendering a sense of comforting complacency; but the total effect was not vitally inspirational. The legend of the Christ Child's birth was tunefully expressed, the accouterments tastefully, indeed magnificently, arrayed; yet the action described seemed to be identified with times past and future hopes.

Repetition and ritual have a tendency to encourage worship of former epic and future anticipation. We cannot criticize, nor do we discredit the attempts of man to portray deep and significant principles through his splendid formulations. We report our own reaction only and confess our tendency to wonder if many of the accepted practices in religious devotions do not distract from, rather than attract to, the vital Fact of the Christ birth within the consciousness of the individual.

Because man is too prone to take his practice of Principle by proxy, we have few accouterments and little ritual in our devotional services; for we would not insulate the all-encompassing fact that any inspiration, derived through artistic performance, stems from the truth of "Christ in you, your hope of glory" - not from the centuries past nor in the coming brave, new era, but here, now, today. This truth has been adequately expressed by a poet who wrote, "Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born, if He's not born in you, your soul is all forlorn." Confronted with this fact, we see that all worship, all ritual of all religions, and all aspirational practices are but a means to an end; and that end is man's spiritual awakening. To see this Fact and to declare this truth neither endorses one religious persuasion over another, nor does it decry any established conclusion in spiritual matters, but relegates each form of worship to its own subsidiary station. One fact stands: the Child is born, the Truth dawns, the Revelation comes, the Purpose is achieved. Not only has this Fact been graphically exploited in song, saga, and epical story, but it continues to be vitally and even painfully experienced by each person within his own spirit, soul, and body.

It is never too difficult for any human judge to criticize and discredit religious ritual and repetition. Such practice usually bears witness that the judge is making graven images in his own realm of jurisprudence and is building false gods in his own life. Jesus admonished all of us to judge not, but to be partakers if we would be disciples indeed. And Paul taught that we are to let Christ be formed in us. There is no point in quarreling with religious practices; for they are designed to expose principles and laws that apply to all existence. The point is to practice; the proof is in partaking. We are never flattered with the report of a truth beautifully expressed or a splendid devotional service; but evidence of a stirring, a vital action in the interior nature of some person in our midst causes us to be fittingly grateful that God has considered us worthy agents through whom He can do His perfect works.

I once knew a man who, in moments of farcical outbursts, would rub my Truth book on his ample stomach and state in mock seriousness that he would allow this panacea for all ills and aches to do its work on him through friction. This seems and sounds very amusing, but is not too far fetched in exemplifying the attitude many people have regarding Truth. Evident aches and pains cause them to rush for the Truth book, rub in a few declarations, and wait for the disturbance to disappear, as it does eventually. Since this rather casual application of Truth words to relieve pain and solve problems actually is effective, what would be the consequence of complete agreement with Truth so as to be immune from problems? To understand and use the Principle of Truth would cause a person to consider any problem as simply a point of practice - an opportunity to make an example of the efficacy of Principle. A pain would indicate progression, a birth, a bringing forth of some potentiality hitherto pondered only in the heart. Does not the fact of spasmodic relief bear witness to the possibility of permanent perfection in the living of a life? We believe it does; and we believe that a sincere investigation of this phenomenon will lead eventually to the highest teaching to be found in the records of mankind,

the doctrine, or the Gospel of Jesus Christ whose birth the world honors in this season.

The modern man tends to view the Christ character from afar and to accept or reject certain recorded facts: the immaculate conception, the working of miracles, the resurrection. There need be no screening of the record. The very name and nature of the Christ, considered sincerely, will reveal itself to the investigator, and the modern Messiah will be as vital today as He was for the ancients. Experience and observation have proved that all sincere seeking eventually invites consideration of the Christ doctrine; and attention to his teaching is the most habit-forming practice within man's knowledge. If a man is convinced he does not want to be a Christian, he will be wise to leave all investigation to those who desire to agree; for even a casual consideration of the Christ exposition is fraught with amazing reactions and surprising effects that lead gradually to the Christ birth within the consciousness of the inquirer.

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SPIRITICITY December 1950

ELISHA

By Robert Applegate

The world owes its existence to its prophets; for it is literally true that "Where there is no vision, the people perish." If there were no one to look toward the heights, there would be no influx of fresh life into the race consciousness, and thus the race would perish as the result of its own downward viewing. The prophet, however, by his high watch, keeps the race connected with its Source, and brings to it ever-renewed and increasing life and intelligence - and all forms of good, which are but the manifestations of these two qualities. The world has never recognized its prophets, but to them it owes its existence and all the good that it possesses.

The prophet is a spokesman for God. The root meaning of the word prophet is spokesman (from the Greek pro, for; and phetes, speaker); and that is also the meaning of the Hebrew word that is rendered by the English term. In the Book of Exodus it is reported that, when Moses was commissioned to deliver the Israelites from Egypt and when he complained of his inability to speak fluently, God told him to take his brother Aaron as spokesman; and God said, "he thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God." The Hebrew word that is here translated "spokesman" is the same word that is elsewhere rendered "prophet." Thus the relation of Aaron to Moses exemplifies that of the true prophet to God. The prophet does not speak on his own authority; he simply repeats the words of One whom he recognizes as greater than himself.

Since a prophet is a spokesman for God, it is imperative that he know God. Aaron could not have spoken for Moses if he had simply heard about Moses or if he simply believed that there was such a person. He had to know Moses intimately; he had to listen to him attentively and be able to repeat his messages without garbling them. Similarly a true prophet must know God, so that he is able to repeat God's messages without twisting them into unrecognizable forms. This knowing is the prime requisite for the candidate for the role of prophet. There is only one other requirement, and that is the courage to repeat

the message once it has been received. This courage is essential because God's words frequently arouse violent opposition on the part of those whom they are intended to bless.

There have been in all ages many men who have claimed to speak for God. The majority of these have been false prophets, but they have inevitably beguiled and misled the greater part of mankind. They have been glib speakers, and their messages have been pleasing to the ear. Their falsity, however, is easily discerned. Jesus Christ gave the key: "Ye shall know them by their fruits. . . . A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." The man who knows God will do the works of God. He will heal, prosper, and bless those who are receptive to his ministry. He will do works that the world calls miracles, but which are really signs of his knowing of God. Contrarily any man who does not do these works gives proof ipso facto that he does not know God. He is thus speaking on his own authority, and no attention need be given to him.

The main reason that mankind as a whole rejects its true prophets while it follows and believes the false ones is that men desire prestige. Jesus Christ said, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can you believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" The Truth exposes all pretense, and therefore It is unpopular. Personal prestige, however, is a perishable as well as an unsatisfactory possession. The person who pretends to be something of himself will eventually be revealed for what he is; while the person who seeks the will of Him who sent him will be remembered and revered long after he has left the earthly plane. Thus it was with the Hebrew prophets, and thus it is with all sincere speakers of God's words. We do not even know the names of the high priests, the functionaries, and dignitaries of the times of the prophets of Israel; but we both know and revere the names of the true prophets and those who ministered to them.

There have been prophets in all ages, but they have arisen particularly in times of national stress and upheaval. They have arisen in the times of the overthrow of kingdoms to point to a kingdom that is not of this world. They have arisen in the times of the disintegration of civilizations, and their words have been so potent that they have been made the bases of organizations that have outlived the civilizations in which they were born. Thus it has been among all peoples at all times, and thus it was among the Hebrews in the ninth to the sixth centuries B. C.

The civilization which ancient Palestine was a part began to disintegrate in the time of Solomon. Before then it had grown and flourished; after that it deteriorated rapidly. It was increasingly torn by internal conflict and by class oppression. It weakened itself to the point where eventually it was enslaved to another civilization, and it remained under this foreign domination for nine centuries. However it was during this period of social and political disintegration that the great spiritual leaders arose in Israel. There had been prophets in Israel before the time of Solomon, but for the most part they were unimportant figures. Elijah, however, was the first of a regular succession of prophets. He was so great that, without taking any outer measures except the anointing of one man, he founded the succession of great men of God, a succession that lasted over two hundred years and has influenced all subsequent history. He set the tone and the example that all his successors were to follow.

Elijah chose as his successor Elisha, and results were to show how wise this choice was. The story is graphically told in the First Book of Kings. Elisha was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, when Elijah approached him and cast his mantle over him. Elisha asked for leave to kiss his father and mother good-bye, and from that instant he followed Elijah until the older man was carried up into heaven in a chariot of fire.

Elisha was evidently the son of a wealthy farmer. Twelve yoke of oxen is an indication of wealth, and he must have been plowing a large tract of land to need such a team. As the son of a wealthy landowner, Elisha had a life of comparative ease and comfort to look forward to. Without a moment's hesitation, however, he turned his back upon all this and assumed the position of a servant to a man of God. At a later time he was referred to as the man "which poured water on the hands of Elijah." Evidently thus he not only followed Elijah, but also waited upon him and ministered to his needs. This willingness to serve was one of the characteristics of Elisha that explains his greatness. He was willing to step down from a position of wealth and to assume that of a servant, but it should be noted that he did not serve promiscuously. It was a man of God that he waited upon, and he would not have performed the service that he did for any other person.

The second outstanding quality of Elisha was his steadfastness. When Elijah was about to be translated, he walked from Gilgal to Bethel to Jericho and on across the Jordan River into the desert. At every point along the way he requested Elisha to leave him, but Elisha refused to desert his master. Finally Elijah asked Elisha what last favor he could do for him; and the faithful follower replied, "Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." The request was granted; and thus, because of Elisha's willingness to serve and his steadfast loyalty, he received an even greater miracle-working ability than Elijah had had.

After the translation of his master, Elisha started on his own career of active ministry. He became the closest approximation of a Truth practitioner that there was before the advent of Jesus Christ. Like Jesus, he went about doing good. He healed, he prospered, he protected, and he blessed. His name, Elisha, means "God is salvation"; and he became a living manifestation of this truth. When he returned from beyond Jordan, people immediately noticed that there was something different about him and they declared, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha." Accordingly they told him their troubles and expected him to do something about them. They were never disappointed.

The first work that Elisha did was to purify the water at Jericho, where there was colony of prophets that was suffering because the water was poisonous. Elisha cast some salt into the spring and, in the name of the Lord, purified it, so that thenceforth its power to harm was dissolved. A little later, in this same place, he similarly purified a poisonous stew and also multiplied twenty loaves of bread so that they were sufficient to feed a hundred men.

While Elisha was still in the region of the Jordan, he was approached by the three kings of Israel, Juda, and Edom, who were leading an allied army against the Moabites, and who were desperate because there was no water for their soldiers in the region in which they were encamped. The prophet told these men to dig channels in the ground, which, although there was no rain, were soon filled with water. When amazement was expressed at this demonstration, Elisha told the kings that this was but a small thing for God, who would also deliver the Moabites into their hands.

Elisha served not only the great but also the humble. When he was approached by a widow who was unable to pay her debts and was about to lose her two sons as slaves to her creditor, he told her to borrow vessels from all her neighbors and to fill them from the one small pot of oil that she had in her house. When she had obeyed this command, Elisha instructed her to sell the oil that had been thus miraculously multiplied, to pay her debt, and to live on the money that was left over.

(to be continued in the January 1951 issue.)

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Alphabet of  
DAILY MEDITATIONS  
For Every Week Day Of The Month

DECEMBER 1950

1. God is ABLE to make ALL grace ABOUND.
2. He will BEAUTIFY the meek with salvation.
4. Be ye of good COURAGE.
5. God hath DEALT graciously with me.
6. Thy salvation sounded in mine EARS.
7. FEAR not.
8. It is GOD that GIRDETH me with strength.
9. Who is like Thee, glorious in HOLINESS?
11. The INSPIRATION of the Almighty giveth Understanding.
12. The meek will He guide in JUDGMENT.
13. Be KINDLY affectioned one to another.
14. Christ who is our LIFE shall appear.
15. Thy MAKER is thy husband.
16. I have planted thee a NOBLE vine.
18. I have set before thee an OPEN door.
19. Ye shall be to Me a kingdom of PRIESTS.
20. They came to Him from every QUARTER.
21. The Lord shall RAISE him up.
22. Thine eyes have SEEN Thy SALVATION.
23. We have seen and do TESTIFY.
25. UNTO US a Son is born.
26. God will surely VISIT you.
27. Thou broughtest us out into a WEALTHY place.
28. All the promises of God in Him are YEA.
29. He was ZEALOUS for my sake.
30. Christ liveth in me.

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"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.