

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

By Alden Truesdell

The Christmas Candle Service of the CHRIST TRUTH LEAGUE symbolizes the awakening of the spiritual Identity in man and the consequent illumination of his whole being. This awakening and this enlightenment are not something that happens all at once. Rather the process is one of a gradual uncovering in each individual of that infinite and perfect Light which has been and will be forever. However, although the process is actually one of revealing an already established Light, it seems, both to the individual ongoer and the casual onlooker, as though an interior light were continually growing and shining forth in ever greater degree. It is as though one small light were being constantly added to others, until the whole assembly casts a brilliant illumination. This is the action that one seems to observe taking place in himself, as the light within him grows until it illuminates his whole being. Outsiders looking on also can see the light ever radiating with greater intensity; and, although they may not know what it is, they are invariably attracted to it. This is the significance of Jesus' instruction, "Ye are the light of the world. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

In the Candle Service, the progressive illumination of the whole man is symbolized by little candles which everyone present lights and places in a bed of salt, until the group of small lights casts a considerable illumination over the entire room. The service is beautiful and inspiring, but that which is symbolized and clearly portrayed by the service is even more important to every sincere seeker. We may therefore consider some of the gifts, attainments, and blessings that are represented by the individual candles and that add up to produce the enlightenment of the entire man.

Blessed are you when you can meet with compassion the gnashings and lashings of the adversary who works in darkness, and when you can exercise tolerant forgiveness even toward him who actively and openly opposes you. This light will burn more and more brilliantly "unto the perfect day."

Blessed are you when there seems to be nothing left to contemplate but God and the manifestation of God. This attainment is "an Israelite (spiritual quality) indeed, in whom is no guile"; and it gives much light.

Blessed are you when the purpose in your mind and heart conforms to that which you have seen and heard in secret communion with the Father, when you want to shout from the housetops what has been revealed in the darkness within. This is a light that never fails to reveal the actual purpose and plan of Him who hath created.

Blessed are you when you feel that you "know both how to be abased and . . . how to abound"; and when neither is greater, nor lesser. This candle, when lighted, is priceless. This is that for which Paul, the spiritual man who had the most of everything, was willing to sell all.

Blessed are you when the candle is lighted that makes you know and recognize the Spirit of achievement working in and through you; doing Its own perfect works, with or without your cooperation; working so that none can either

hinder It or help It. When this light is lighted, it adds greatly to the illumination of the whole man.

Blessed are you when you find yourself standing firm upon your interior integrity. Another candle has been lighted.

Blessed are you when you surprise yourself by doing mighty exploits easily, when the impossible is accomplished. Another lesson has been learned, another gift has become practical, another candle lighted.

Blessed are you when, meeting a problem, you choose to let it be solved by the way of Truth, so that it becomes a shining example of the Principle of Good.

Blessed are you when additional light is thrown on the picture, so that there comes into consciousness the desire to loosen all lesser helps and discard all compromise. There is no substitute of this candle. This is indeed a lightening light, a far-shining candle.

Blessed are you when you see - actually see - that all this is not a fleeting fancy, not a temporarily inspiring illumination; but an eternal experience, a permanent practice, which is now, was in the beginning, and will be forever.

Whenever we see more clearly, another candle has been lighted; and, when all the candles are burning brightly, we are the enlightened, the illumined. Walking in the light of this inner illumination, we cannot stumble. We little realize sometimes how fortunate, blessed, and favored we are to be able to hear and know such things; for, as Jesus said, "Many prophets and kings have desired . . . to hear those things, . . . and have not heard them."

Jesus Christ is the Light of the world. Christmas celebrates the coming of this Light into each individual consciousness, as each one turns his attention toward It. The first awakening to the Presence of the Light within is the birth of the Messiah. It is, fittingly, an occasion of great joy; but, even though Christ be born, he still must grow and develop and call forth His faculties. This process took Jesus thirty years. We shall therefore not expect thirty-day miracles or Christhood in six easy lessons; but, rejoicing in God's seasons, such as the Holy Christmas Day, we shall grow in grace and understanding, "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

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MAN'S SEARCH FOR GOD, PART I

By Nell Truesdell

Why does man search for God? The primary reason is that he is naturally inclined toward God, as we discover when we study primitive man. Although primitive man was not taught about God, as we know God, he obeyed an urge within him to worship something (anything), which he invested with powers greater than his own. Man has never lost this urge.

From that dark past to the present time, man has attempted to understand himself; for he has reasoned that, if he could know himself, he would find rest. He has, however, gained little comfort from his investigations, primarily because he has centered his study in the outer aspects of his existence (the physical-mental nature). Since these outer phases are subject to change from day to day, man's opinions about himself have swayed unsteadily between favorable and unfavorable findings (the good and the evil), and his conclusions have been imperfect.

Through close study of his physical-mental constitution, man has acquired extensive knowledge about his body and mind. However, since this knowledge concerns those phases of his being that are subject to change and dissolution, it is false. No satisfactory life can be built on such knowledge.

Inasmuch as study of the body, the mind, and their various modes of expression produces no reliable knowledge, man is forced to seek another objective to which to give his attention, in order to find satisfaction. The one realm that he has not investigated thoroughly is that of the Spirit, or God. But man is slowly responding to the fact that a study of God exposes an Identity within, to which he is related - an Identity not subject to the caprice of time, place, or condition.

Our Scripture states plainly that man is created in the Image and Likeness of God. Through this Image and Likeness, man is forever identified with God; and this identification established man as an inherently spiritual Being, related directly to his Creator. However, the Identity within reveals Itself only when It is sought and investigated. Otherwise, It lies quiescent in the midst of man's consciousness and waits for man to turn his attention toward It. During the time that man takes to awake to the presence of this Identity within him, It exerts a silent and almost imperceptible pull upon him. This pull is the urge in man that draws him toward God. Even in an unawakened state, man senses that he is utterly dependent upon Something greater than himself; for, through experience, he has learned that he is not sufficient unto himself. But he makes the mistake of searching in the wrong places for this Something, and often he refuses to admit that It is God.

Man's intellect is filled with misconceptions concerning the Nature of God, which divert his attention from his God-nature within. Man-made theologies further confuse and disconcert him. Nevertheless, the deep longing in the heart of every human being for God is never quite smothered.

When a search for the God-like nature is begun, the changeless identity within consciousness exposes Itself and becomes the Teacher. It reveals to man the truth of his Being, and It establishes in him a secret knowing, which supplants all former knowledge. However, before it yields this knowing, It demands willingness on the part of man to surrender all partial knowledge, acquired through study of his physical-mental nature. In his quest for his Source, man is forced to make a choice between retaining knowledge and attaining knowing. Both are gained by the same process, that of giving the attention to a chosen objective. When the outer nature is studied, knowledge is acquired; when the inner Identity is studied, knowing is attained. Knowledge is transient; knowing is eternal.

The human will holds the reins on man's consciousness. Since the attention has been trained outward, toward the things of sense, the will is set in that direction; and it is not easily reoriented to follow a changed course. The inner strife that arises the instant a man begins to give his attention tot

anew aspect of Being is often the cause of his delay and his abandonment of the inclination to know the things of God. Man has to struggle, moreover, not only with the demands of his own will, but also with the wills of others, who, the instant they become aware of his urge to inquire into his God-like nature, arouse to dissuade him from his course. If he resists either his own will or the wills of those around him, he need not be surprised if these wills oppose him violently from within and without. The things of God are foolishness to the natural man, the man not yet awakened to the Divine within him.

The struggle against contending wills discourages most seekers; but those who press on, regardless of opposition within and without, soon find that they enjoy a freedom never before experienced. The inhering spiritual drift guards and protects them in everyway. Opposing attitudes of mind within the individual himself and in the people concerned about him are deflected for a season. The will of man is tough, but the Will of God is tougher. Any man bent on knowing God has a powerful ally; for alliance with God makes for strength; while alliance with men of the world makes for weakness.

(To be continued)

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PAUL'S CORINTHIAN CORRESPONDENCE

By Robert Applegate

I Corinthians is the longest and most vital of Paul's letters, and will well repay careful study by any serious Truth student. The circumstances, moreover, under which the letter was written are illuminating. We remember that Paul had preached for eighteen months at Corinth and that he had already written the Corinthians one letter. To this letter the Corinthians had replied, asking Paul certain questions about marriage, the position of women, spiritual gifts, and the collection of money for the church at Jerusalem. From other sources, however, Paul had learned a great deal that had not been mentioned in the letter from Corinth. He had heard from "them which are of the house of Chloe" that there was strife and factionalism in the church at Corinth, that the members of the church were practicing immorality of the basest sort, that his own authority and teaching had been questioned, and that even the church services were the occasions of debauchery. In these circumstances, when all his labor seemed to have been wasted, Paul responded, not by relapsing into self-pity and recrimination, but by enunciating in unforgettable words some of the greatest of Christian truths.

Paul, it will be remembered, represents the Word of Truth; Corinth represents the heart, which in the natural man seeks its good in the outer and it thus filled with pride, selfishness, and sensuality. Those "of the house of Chloe" represent the first realizations of Truth in the new student, realizations that are quick to perceive unprofitable cross-currents in consciousness and to report them to the Word, which must then repeat to the consciousness with force and vigor the highest Truth.

Paul's letter to Corinth, therefore, is in fact directed to every spiritual ongoer. Since the letter is long, it may most conveniently be divided into three parts, and each considered separately. First Paul enunciates the

theme that is central to all the Corinthian correspondence, the call to meekness before God: "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." Incidentally, Paul's own life well illustrates what is meant by the Christian virtue of meekness, and the church at Corinth illustrates the effect of the lack of this quality. The second part of Paul's letter contains answers to the questions that had been asked him, and the third part deals with the Resurrection: these will be considered in later articles.

Paul repeats and emphasizes in every way that he can the importance of the Christian of meekness and teachableness before God. First, he states the fact of the inevitable victory of meekness and the self-defeat of pride, a fact which he reiterates throughout the letter, but which is most clearly expressed at the very beginning: "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence." That God has chosen weak things to confound the mighty may well be called an established fact; for, while God is neither arbitrary nor a respecter of persons, history reveals that there is a continual reversal of roles between sophistication and simplicity, between those who think that they know their own good and those who are willing to become as little children in order to learn an entirely new way of life. The stiff-necked reject the doctrine of Jesus Christ, because they are unwilling to surrender their petty pride; the humble and tractable receive the priceless treasure, because they are willing to let all else go. Those who reject the prize sterilize themselves and they become an incubus upon the race; those who accept the instruction become truly "the light of the world" and the saviors of mankind. This is "the foolishness of God," which as Paul declares, is far "wiser than men."

Paul further emphasizes the importance of meekness for the Christian ongoer by citing the example of his own life. Like a true minister, he never sought personal glory or prestige. Rather, he was willing to suffer any humiliation in order to announce the good news to the greatest number of men. "My speech and my preaching," he writes, "was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Always Paul pointed to his works, not as indicating his own strength, but as revealing the truth of his teaching; and he suggested that those who were puffed up in their own sight should examine their own works; "for the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." Paul, moreover, took no credit for himself, but directed the attention of his converts always to God. "I have planted," he declared, "Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." Similarly he would have his students boast of God rather than of their own accomplishments.

Paul sought to bring home to the Corinthians this same lesson of humility before God by pointing out, first, that they had nothing that had not been given to them, so that they had little cause to boast of anything; and, second, that, so long as they were wrangling and comparing themselves with one another, they were simply showing how childish and ignorant they were. Argument and comparison belong to the intellect; and, as long as the intellect dominates the heart (Corinth), no real understanding has been attained. Thus Paul wrote to the intellectual Corinthians, who prided themselves on their spiritual enlightenment: "I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"

This thought brings Paul back again to his central message: the seeming foolishness of the Gospel and yet its inevitable triumph over all worldly wisdom. Paul points up this paradox with all the force at this command. It is the sophistication of the intellectuals and their unwillingness to let go of their mental reservations that prevents them from accepting the one thing that will satisfy them, the Truth for which they are blindly seeking. Thus Paul writes: "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, he taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain."

After pointing out to the Corinthians the inevitable exchange of place of sophistication and simplicity, after mentioning the example that he had provided for them of how a Christian should conduct himself, and after showing them the foolishness of their own boasting and quarreling, Paul finally cut through the whole discussion to the heart of the matter by declaring that no man knows the things of God, or can know them: "The things of God, knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God (in Man). . . . The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. . . . For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." These words contain the essence of all Truth instruction.

That Jesus Christ dwells in every man is difficult to accept. Such acceptance requires, truly, the humility of a little child, the willingness to surrender all mental reservations and all preconceived opinions. Nevertheless, the truth of the statement that "we have the mind of Christ" can be proved by anyone who is willing to pay the price. To fail to pay it is to stultify oneself; to turn meekly and receptively to Christ within is to find success, satisfaction, and life. This is the message that Paul sent to the church at Corinth. It is also for us today.

(To be continued)

Alphabet of  
DAILY MEDITATIONS  
For Every Week Day of the Month

December 1951

1. O Lord, Thou hast . . . kept me ALIVE.  
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3. Ye are BOUGHT with a price.
4. Be of Good COURAGE, and he shall strengthen thine heart.
5. In DUE season we shall reap.
6. I will EXTOL Thee, O Lord.
7. In His FAVOR is life.
8. He GIVETH GRACE to the lowly.  
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10. Give thanks at the remembrance of HIS HOLINESS.
11. Let INTEGRITY and uprightness preserve me.
12. JOY cometh in the morning.
13. We KNOW Him that is true.
14. Thou hast LIFTED me up.
15. To be spiritually MINDED is life and peace.  
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17. NOW are we the sons of God.
18. The temple of God was OPENED in heaven.
19. In my PROSPERITY I said, I shall never be moved.
20. The word of the Lord is QUICK.
21. The Lord will RECEIVE my prayer.
22. It is God that girdeth me with STRENGTH.  
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24. THEY shall be all TAUGHT of God.
25. UNDERSTAND what the will of the Lord is.
26. Everyone that is of the Truth heareth my VOICE.
27. It is God WHICH WORKETH in you.
28. YE are the Light of the world.
29. He hath a great ZEAL for you.  
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31. In Him was life.

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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.